

Limerick football medal travels from Australia to Donegal

Another chapter to county's All-Ireland success of 1887

YET another 1887 All-Ireland football medal has surfaced.

Won by a Tipperary man, playing football for Limerick in 1887, it has recently found its way to Gaoth Dobhair in Donegal, after crossing the world from Australia!

Michael Slattery was born in Ballywilliam, Co. Tipperary in 1866, and played with the Limerick Commercial, the team that won the first ever All-Ireland football final in 1887 against Dundalk's Young Irelands.

Speaking on RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta, Donegal woman, Sally McCafferty, explained how the medal had made its way into her possession, having travelled from Ireland to Australia and back again over the last 120 years or so.

Michael Slattery emigrated to Brisbane in Australia in the 1890s, and there he met and married Margaret Jane Murphy from Cork. They had two children, a son and a daughter. The son's name was Bill Slattery, and he inherited the medal from his father.

Said Sally: "In 1914, Bill met a woman named Sarah Jane and they fell in love, however Sarah Jane was a Baptist, and Bill, a Catholic, and they were forbidden from marrying. As a symbol of his love, Bill gave Sarah Jane the medal and said that he hoped they might meet again in the future.

"More than 20 years later they met again by chance, and as Sarah Jane's parents had passed on, they were free to marry. They had no children, and they passed the medal on to their Godchild and neighbour Michael Quinn. As he is quite elderly now and has no children of his own, he in turn has

passed this medal to Joe McCafferty and asked him to find a good home for it, knowing that Joe's family back in Ireland had a great interest in football, and indeed, it is Joe's family in Donegal who now have the medal".

Sally also explained that she had been in touch with the GAA about the medal. The GAA records, however, show that medals were not given out to the 1887 winning teams until 1912, by which time, Michael Slattery had emigrated, and that those medals were gold, therefore mystery still surround the medal's origins. The medal itself is handmade in silver and the inscription reads: Won by MJ Slattery, and then on other side - Football Championship 1887 of All Ireland.

Anyone who has any information is asked to contact RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta in Donegal at 074 9531244 / 1850 66 55 33.

Relocate Meelick bus pickup point, says consultant

A REPORT commissioned by a Clare County Councillor claims that the Department of Education and Bus Éireann "are in breach" of health safety and welfare regulations in relation to access to the school bus morning and evening, for the children of Meelick.

Labour Councillor, Pascal Fitzgerald, commissioned a consultant to prepare the report after representations were made to him by parents fearful of their children's safety on the road as they take the bus to school.

The report found that the children are required to walk in excess of 1,000 metres through largely unlit roads with a minimum of footpaths most of the way. In addition, the road is very narrow and winding with many blind bends.

The consultant concluded: "This is totally against safe practice and it is my opinion that the Department of Education and Bus Éireann are seriously in breach of the Health Safety & Welfare 2005 Act, in failing to provide safe access and egress to the school bus. There is no practical reason why the bus cannot pick the children up in the village centre where there is adequate lighting and wide roads.

"I strongly believe that in the event of an accident occurring as a result of these conditions, that both parties would be held liable for failing in their duty of care. There is an urgent need for proper signposting of these areas and the removal of the hazards".

On another issue, he found that in an estate in Meelick the fire hydrants were totally inaccessible, and in the only one he was able to open, there was no standpipe connection available. All of the hydrants were on the roadway in a position where they could be blocked by parked cars.

Cllr Fitzgerald said the report highlights a potentially deadly situation in relation to the schoolchildren, and speaks for itself. "I took action and commissioned the report after numerous complaints from residents in the Meelick area.

"It's sobering to think that you have to go to these lengths to highlight such basic issues. We all know the public reaction when there is an accident or somebody is killed.

"I would appeal to the appropriate authorities to sit up and take note and act on the report's conclusions," he concluded.



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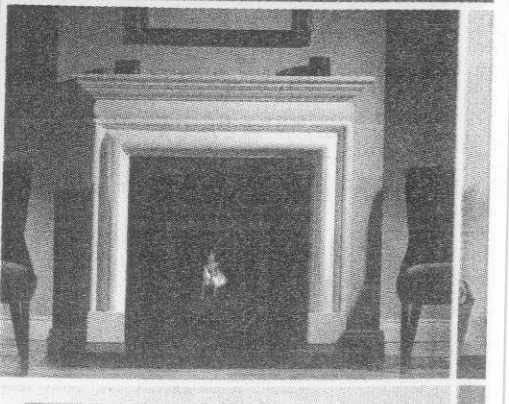
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