



SPA REVIEW 2015 - 2016



SPA GAA CLUB

KILLARNEY, CO. KERRY www.spagaa.com





Chairman's Welcome

I would like to welcome everyone to the new edition of the Spa Review. The Review has been dormant for several years, but the club certainly hasn't been!

Since our last publication we have had the construction of the sports hall and, despite mixed views, it is a valuable asset and generates vital income for the club, as well as being used for the indoor training of our teams during the winter months. We also had the demolition of the old dressing rooms and clubhouse and they were replaced by the fabulous structure we now have today. We have new dressing rooms, a general purpose hall, a gymnasium, a kitchenette and meeting rooms.

Furthermore, we had the purchase of the adjoining property which enabled us to construct a second full-sized pitch, training pitch and car parking facilities. We are at present constructing an all-weather pitch which should be completed in the coming weeks. These developments are a credit to the vision of the previous Chairmen and the work of the Executive Committee members over the years. A special mention also to James Cahill whose expertise in securing Lotto, Sports Capital and Munster Council grants is ongoing and is greatly appreciated, and has contributed hugely to the developments at Spa GAA Club.

With the facilities in place and the tremendous efforts of our Scór officers and mentors, the Spa club have been hugely successful in Scór at the different grades. The club have won All Ireland titles in Set Dancing (5) and Figure Dancing (7) in Scór Sinsear, and in Scór na n-Óg the Spa club has won All Ireland titles in Set Dancing (1), Figure Dancing (1) Recitation (1) and Trath na gCeist/Quiz (2 consecutive titles).

In 2009/2010 Spa represented the county in the All Ireland Intermediate Football Final in Croke Park which was an incredible achievement and a great occasion for the whole club. We have since contested a number of County Intermediate Finals (2012, 2014 and 2015). I would like to thank the managements and selectors for their dedication and hard work over the years with the various teams. We also have a number of players who have won All Ireland Junior and Minor medals with the county teams.

In 2014 Spa had the honour of captaincy of the All-Ireland winning Kerry Minor team and it was a proud moment for everyone in the Spa club when Liam Kearney and Dan O'Donoghue lifted the Tom Markham Cup in Croke Park after a 20-year wait. In 2015 the Kerry minors repeated their All Ireland victory and Spa were represented on that team by Michael Foley and Evan Cronin. We also extend our best wishes to Dara Moynihan who is a member of the current 2016 Kerry minor panel.

Ladies Football was also introduced to the club in recent years and has been going from strength to strength ever since. The ladies football teams continue to develop and grow, with success emerging in all levels, from Coiste na nÓg right up to senior grade, and we currently have two Spa players, Cassandra Buckley and Linda Bruggener, competing with the Kerry Ladies Senior team. I wish to thank the trainers and coaches of all the players from Coiste na nÓg level right up to Senior.

I would like to thank the various committees in the club who are continually fundraising and generating vital income for the ongoing running of the club. The Lily of Killarney is the biggest annual social event for Spa and has been running since 1974 and is still as popular and as prestigious today and creates important revenue for the club.

The introduction of the Club Lotto in May 2012 proved to be very successful and has encouraged new and old members to become involved and has also established a link with our friends and followers overseas, as well as being the biggest source of income for the club. I would like to thank all those who support the lotto, especially Chairman of the Lotto Committee Tadhg Hickey and his team who oversee the smooth running on a weekly basis.

Thanks to the Community Employment Scheme and to our supervisor Donie Foley who provides excellent candidates to Spa GAA. They provide clubhouse and grounds maintenance throughout the year and the pristine condition of our facility is testament to their work. Also to Breda O'Shea and the Rural Social Scheme workers who contribute to specific grounds projects at our club.

I would like to thank the Spa Review Committee who have put together this publication and gathered articles, photographs and historical memories to share with us. I hope you all enjoy this issue and we hope that this will once again become an annual publication.

Our thoughts are always with the families and friends of our deceased members, former players, committee members and supporters of Spa GAA and the local community who contributed their time and energy in the promotion of the club during their time with us.

Finally, I would like to wish all our members the very best for the 2016 season and I hope that the Review will encourage volunteers to get involved in every aspect of our wonderful club.

Gerard Mangan
Club Chairman



Spa Contribution to the Kerry Juniors

Spa have had great contributors to the Kerry jersey at all grades and have always been very proud to do so and that counts most regularly at Junior, where Spa players have been very key components between the white lines and, in 2010, the most important person on the sideline in that great All Ireland win – our own Sean Moynihan was the proud manager of that team. Anthony Morris was a teak tough defender in the green and gold in 1998 and 1999, just as he was in our own blue and gold.

Ross O'Donovan helped the Kerry Juniors all the way to the All Ireland Final in 2002, when they lost out to Wicklow, who had former All Star Kevin O'Brien in top form, by an agonizing 4-9 to 2-12. He lost out at semi-final stage to Meath in 2003. He was still a main forward for Kerry in 2004, with Ivor Flynn at midfield, but they went down to Cork in the Munster semi-final.

Andrew Garnett had taken Ivor Flynn's midfield berth with the Kerry Juniors in 2006, when they finally reached the promised land. They beat Waterford, Tipperary, Cork, and Meath along the way before facing off against Roscommon in the All Ireland Final. Stephen Wallace, who would blood Spa talent with the Kerry Junior team along the way to managing them to their own All Ireland win nine years later, scored the vital goal as Kerry won out by 1-9 to 0-10 in a thriller.

By rule, any Kerry player that played and won in an All Ireland Junior Final is ineligible for the following year, which meant that Kerry had to field an entirely new team for 2007. Mike 'Stam' O'Donoghue lined out at corner forward, but they fell at the first hurdle to Clare.

Andrew Garnett was back in midfield for the 2008 campaign and Mike Stam O'Donoghue had scored 1-2 along the way to an All Ireland semi-final, but they lost out to Roscommon at the penultimate stage. Spa had three players wearing the geansaí in 2009, with Andrew Garnett (0-1), Mike 'Stam' O'Donoghue (0-3) and Niall O'Mahony (0-1) all starting against Cork in the Munster Final, but that is as far as they got, crashing out by 3-10 to 0-9. Aidan Cahill at corner back and Mike Stam at centre forward for Kerry started all through the 2010 campaign, with Brian Gleeson coming off the bench for Aidan in the semi-final against Lancashire. A convincing win there put Kerry into the final against Sligo but the Yeats' county were just as impressive in their win over Kerry in the final at Pearse Stadium. Andrew Garnett from midfield scored a superb goal against Cork in the 2011 Munster Final but Cork just edged out Kerry by 0-10 to 1-5.

2012 was an annus mirabilis for Spa with the Kerry juniors. Sean Moynihan was the shrewd manager, with Willie Cahill one of his selectors, and Andrew Garnett, Mike Stam O'Donoghue, and Niall O'Mahony started every game. Lest anyone suspect favouritism, Andrew was a midfield colossus and regular man of the match contender throughout, while Niall scored 0-12 along the way and Mike Stam 1-12. Kerry beat Mayo by 0-19 to 1-7 with a blistering display in Ennis.

As ever, the bill for winning the All Ireland came due the following year, with Kerry having to field a completely new team, and they fell at the first hurdle to Tipperary.



All Ireland Junior Winners 2015,
Liam Kearney and Dan O'Donoghue

Stephen Wallace took over the Kerry Juniors in 2014, with former Spa stalwart Fergus Clifford beside him, and a young team that had Andrew Garnett and Shane Lynch made it all the way to the All Ireland Final playing great football. It all came undone at the final stage though, as two goal-bound efforts by Kerry came back off the post and Cavan went on to win by 2-14 to 0-14.

Wallace was back in charge in 2015, looking to put an even younger team into the next stage of the Kerry football development. Two of the first calls he made were to the winning 2014 minor winning captains, and Dan O'Donoghue and Liam Kearney immediately came on board, Dan at corner back at Liam at midfield. Both won rave reviews along the way as Kerry beat Tipperary by 8 points and Cork by 9 points. They had seven points over Wexford and the great Mattie Forde in a tough semi-final before facing off against Mayo in the final. Kerry's stellar display was probably their best, and a haplessly gallant Mayo were swept aside by 2-18 to 0-10.

Stephen Wallace has great respect for Spa's commitment to Kerry football and the players he both managed and played beside in the Kerry jersey. "Any of the Spa lads I ever dealt with always had a fantastic attitude. They were very grounded and level-headed, no airs and graces whatsoever, and always very well coached along the way. I won one beside Andrew; he was only a young lad starting out and I was a fairly grizzled veteran at that stage I suppose – I thought I should try to mind out for him a little bit. Sure, with the size off him, he didn't need much minding! I managed him then last year – his attitude and approach hadn't changed a bit. Shane Lynch started every game for us until the semi-final, he picked up bit of illness that hampered him at that point; he was very unlucky. This year we had Liam and Dan – listen, that pair are two of the hottest prospects in Kerry football right now. They are fantastic and I have every confidence that they will go on to wear the senior jersey for Kerry."

Jimmy O'Sullivan Darcy



Kerry Minor Homecoming Celebrations



Liam Kearney (Captain), Dan O'Donoghue (Vice-Captain) and Jack O'Connor (Kerry Minor Manager) with the Tommy Markham Cup at the Captain's Homecoming night in Spa.

On Tuesday September 23rd 2014 Spa had the honour of hosting the traditional "Captain's Night" celebrations for the victorious Kerry minor team. The Club welcomed Jack O'Connor and his management team and the players, who were bringing the Tommy Markham Cup back to Kerry after a 20 year wait. Led by two Spa players, Kerry minor Captain Liam Kearney and Vice-Captain Dan O'Donoghue, the team and management arrived by open-top bus to a roaring bonfire and a huge crowd from both Spa and the wider community.

Past and present players and so many of our club members, both young and old, were there to greet the young champions. Jack O'Connor said of the night "I remember that there was a great atmosphere, a real club atmosphere. Everyone and anyone came out, including a lot of great players like Mick Gleeson and Michael McAuliffe. Spa have been a great club for producing young players over the last few years. Liam Kearney and Dan O'Donoghue were great joint captains for us last year. We all really enjoyed the night up there. Spa is a very well run club and it's a club that's going places."

Deirdre O'Sullivan Darcy

Spa Contribution to the Kerry Minors

Spa has always taken great pride in its juvenile development and that has regularly paid off, not just for the club, but for the county as well. The likes of Mick Gleeson and Donie O'Sullivan regularly graced Croke Park's environs before the schoolteachers went on to nurture many budding young footballers in their footsteps – Seanie Kelliher, Sean Cronin, Pat Cronin, and John Cahill all represented Kerry during the seventies. Mike McAuliffe was a three year minor and twice top scorer for the Kerry minors from 1980-82, twice top scorer in the Championship, before going on himself to mould young footballers in Lissivigeen NS. Denis Cremin captained the team in 1982, while Joe O'Leary was a Kerry minor in 1983 and 1984.

Maurice Cronin wore the jersey in 1987, Francis Doherty won an All Ireland in 1988, and Colm Healy was there in 1989. Garrett Doolan played for the minors in 1991, while Anthony Morris, Peter Wickham and Sean Lynch, stars of Kerry's All Ireland winning Vocational Schools, had green and gold jerseys in 1992. Kerry won the All Ireland in 1994, but there was no Spa representative on the panel. In fact, there was a small hiatus of Spa players with the Kerry minors and a hiatus in terms of Kerry minor success as well – it would be a full score of years before the Tom Markham Cup would come back to Kerry.

There were many Spa players who worked on bridging that gap. Mike Stam O'Donoghue captained the team in Croke Park; he played in 2004 and 2005. Shane Lynch was beside him in his second year. Byran Russell was there in 2006 and Adam O'Reilly and Cian Tobin were beside him in 2007, Cian was there again in 2008 and Michael Finnegan was on John Kennedy's panel in 2009. All this long while, Kerry's hunger for success was growing, but to no avail.

In 2013 East Kerry won the County Minor Championship, backboned by a strong Spa side (for the next two years, Spa would enter the County Championship in their own right, reaching a semi-final and quarter-final in the two years).

Naturally, incoming minor manager Jack O'Connor (no stranger, of course, to winning All Irelands with Kerry teams!) cast his eye towards the Spa field when selecting his panel.

In 2014 Spa had three minors – Liam Kearney, Dan O'Donoghue (Dan won a Colleges C All Ireland with Colaiste Ghobnatan of Ballyvourney that year, trained by Mickey Ned O'Sullivan), and Shane Cronin. Shane's year, unfortunately, was interrupted by injury, and Dan and Liam were joint captains of a team determined to end a two decade wait, backboned by the Hogan Cup winners of PS Chorca Dhuibhne.

Clare were well beaten by 2-16 to 0-7 and Tipperary were dismissed by 2-18 to 0-7 in Kerry's first two games. A Jordan Kiely goal pushed Kerry seven points clear in the Munster Final in Pairc Ui Caoimh with ten minutes to go but Cork rallied and it went to the wire. Kerry's nerve held with some great points to win by 2-17 to 2-13 and Dan and Liam lifted the Tadhg Crowley Cup together.

Kerry had their homework done and beat Kildare comfortably by 2-15 to 1-8 in the All Ireland quarter-final; Dan started and Liam was very impressive when sprung from the bench. Kerry were sluggish in the first half of the semi-final against Mayo but defended well, trailing by 0-4 to 0-3 at the interval, but really turned on the power in the second half to win by 1-14 to 2-7, a very late goal no consolation to Mayo.



That pitted them into an All Ireland Final against a strong and defensive Donegal. It was a very hard battle, just as an All Ireland Final, but in the end Kerry had won by 0-17 to 1-10. A Kerry famine had ended when two Spa men lifted the Tom Markham Cup, Dan and Liam brought it back to Spa with their team-mates in an open top bus.

There were two Spa minors on board for the 2015 Kerry minors as well, forwards Michael Foley and Evan Cronin. While it had always been accepted that the 2014 team would be a strong force, the 2015 minors were never really expected to get past a very strong Cork team.

The opening game didn't exactly reveal too much – Kerry brushed aside a very facile Clare by 0-14 to 0-3. Then it was Cork in Austin stack Park under floodlights.

Cork were as good as had been foretold, a strong and fast team playing great football. Kerry were far better than predicted, an amazing display in a thrilling rollercoaster game. The sides were deadlocked into extra-time, and still deadlocked in the dying seconds, when the ball came to Michael Foley...one nerveless shot later, and Kerry were through to the Munster Final, 0-16 to 1-12.

Tipperary have a great recent record at minor, but Kerry dominated the first half and looked home and hosed at the break. Tipperary came back strongly in the second half but Kerry had enough in the bag to win by 2-14 to 1-11. A defensive Sligo were confidently dispatched by 2-12 to 1-6.

Michael Foley gave a man of the match display in the 1-11 to 1-6 win over Derry in the All Ireland semi-final, notching 1-3 from play in the process.

It was Tipperary who awaited in the final in Croke Park, a Tipperary side under Charlie McGeever who had earned a lot of respect en route. A perfectly poised Kerry showed them plenty of respect but neither deference nor complacency. Kerry led by 2-8 to 0-4 at half-time and kept the pressure on in the second half, winning a very one-sided final by 4-14 to 0-6.

After twenty years with no All Ireland minor medal won by Kerry men, there have now been four won by Spa men in just the last two years.

Roll on 2016!

Jimmy O'Sullivan Darcy

Memorable Awards Night

In November 2014 Spa launched their inaugural Awards Night following a decision by the Club Executive Committee to commemorate three Spa men who proudly wore the blue and gold jersey in their playing days - John Doyle, Pat Corcoran and Aidan Cronin. An Awards Committee was set up with Andrew Garnett, Anne Holland, Adrian O'Sullivan, Ivor Flynn and Sean Kelliher to organise an event that would celebrate and acknowledge the achievements of the members, the hard working officers and the dedicated players.

The event was held at the Torc Hotel with MC Michael Gleeson and the aim of the night was to recognise and mark the accomplishments and triumphs of all sectors within the Spa Club, and to acknowledge the inspirational volunteerism involved in its success. As well as the player of the year accolades, presentations were also made on the night to the recipients of the Cultural Award and the Lifetime Achievement Award. The Club also welcomed two special Guests of Honour, the 2014 winning Kerry Minor captain Liam Kearney and vice-captain Dan O'Donoghue, who arrived to a standing ovation carrying the Tommy Markham Cup. There was also a collection made on the night with all proceeds donated to the Irish Cancer Society.

In November 2015 Spa packed the function room at the Torc Hotel for a second year in a row, where the club again celebrated and recognised the work of the members and players over the previous year. As well as the player awards, the Cultural Award and the Lifetime Achievement Award, the Committee also invited Spa players who proudly wore a Kerry jersey during the year - Kerry Minor champions Michael Foley and Evan Cronin as special Guests of Honour, along with Kerry Junior champions Dan O'Donoghue and Liam Kearney and Kerry Ladies player Cassandra Buckley.

Deirdre O'Sullivan Darcy



The 2014 Award Winners as chosen by the committee and team managements: Lifetime Achievement Award (Fr Tim Cup) - John Kelly; Cultural Award - Sheila McCarthy; Senior Ladies Player - Sinead Cronin; Senior Player of the Year (John Doyle Award) - Andrew Garnett; Junior Player of the Year (Pat Corcoran Award) - Aaron Farrell; Young Player of the Year (Aidan Cronin Award) - Liam Kearney



The 2015 Award Winners as chosen by the committee and team managements: Lifetime Achievement Award (Fr Tim Cup) - Johnny Cronin; Cultural Award - Sheila Curtin; Senior Ladies Player - Karol Fleming (also nominated Linda Bruggener & Miceala O'Connor); Senior Player of the Year (John Doyle Award) - Shane Cronin (also nominated Dan O'Donoghue & Ryan O'Carroll); Junior Player of the Year (Pat Corcoran Award) - Conor Gleeson; Young Player of the Year (Aidan Cronin Award) - Eric O'Donoghue. Special Guests of Honour: All Ireland winning Kerry Minors Evan Cronin and Michael Foley, Kerry Junior Champions Dan O'Donoghue and Liam Kearney and Kerry Ladies player Cassandra Buckley



5 Year Plan

Acting on a directive from Croke Park, in 2010 Chairman Sean O'Sullivan requested a committee be formed to co-ordinate a 5 Year Plan for the club. The brief for the planning process was clear - it was imperative for the club to have a plan, developed by the members, for the members, that would allow it to grow and develop over the next 5 years. Accordingly, a group met in September 2010 and the plan was formally launched in March 2011 by Uachtaran Cumann Luthchleas Gael, Christy Cooney. The focus of the plan was to be volunteer-led, to maximise participation across all sectors of the club and be constructed around the values and traditions of the club.

The committee divided into sub-committees to investigate and report on the following areas:

Coaching & Games Development

The key projects were: Coaching & Games Officer; Under-Age Games Programme; Coaching Games Sub-Committee ; Coaching Education; GAA Code of Best Practice and Code of Behaviour; Annual Cúl Camp

Finance & Fundraising

The key projects were: Finance Sub- Committee; Annual Budget; Audited Accounts

Facilities & Development

The key projects were: Ball Stop Screens; Juvenile Pitch Upgrading; Improvement of Indoor Facilities

Communications, PR & Social/Cultural

The key projects were: Scór; Irish Language Promotion; Newsletter

Club Structure & Administration

The key projects were: Club Constitution; Volunteerism; Club Sub-Committee Structure; Alcohol & Substance Abuse Prevention Policy


In addition to the ideas generated by the committee, both the wider club membership and the community participated in a Club Workshop in January 2011, which was ably assisted by facilitators from the County Board. The ideas generated from the workshop added greatly to the work of the committee and helped capture the aspirations of the membership. It also gave the plan added impetus to have it ultimately published within the required timeframe.

The plan was established to provide a road map for the future of the club and it has certainly been a success regarding the re-energised awareness of volunteerism, as is evident for example in the success of the weekly lotto which was launched in May 2012, in the recruitment of new club officers, the continuing development of Ladies Football which was launched in the club in 2011, and the ongoing maintenance and upgrading of facilities.

It is important that not only the aims but the vision of the plan are kept alive by current and future generations of the club. We have a huge responsibility to nurture what has been given to us from club members from the 1940s to the present day, and to continue to develop and maintain the club to the highest standard so that future club members will benefit.

With the Plan now reaching its 5 year target, many milestones have already been reached, while others will be finalised within the next few years. Some of the goals may be a little aspirational, especially in the current economic climate, however the whole process certainly helped generate debate, encouraged new volunteers to get involved and gave the club new impetus. Volunteerism is the core principle of any club and as Spa continues to meet new challenges each year, it is vital that members be willing and able to participate in the progress of the club.

Deirdre O'Sullivan Darcy



Top field under construction



U6 and U8 boys with All Ireland winning Kerry Minor Evan Cronin at a meet-and-greet at our morning academy

Mol an Óige - U16 Boys

We had a squad of 25 extremely dedicated boys at U16 level in 2015, and they committed fully during all training sessions and games. They were a young team, with just under half being in their final year at U16 level.

Training involved regular outdoor and indoor (strength and conditioning) work, and we even organised a talk by a nutritionist on Good Friday night! This was beneficial to both players and parents, and well worth attending.

The season kicked off with the East Kerry League and it was an encouraging campaign for the boys.

Next up was the County League. The boys had an outstanding start in June, with a fantastic win over John Mitchels. Spirits were high but, unfortunately, the success was not to be repeated again in the League, with some very tough losses for the lads.

Lee Strand U16 County League

- 24/6/15 Spa 5-15 John Mitchels 4-9 Div 3A
- 15/7/15 Spa (H) 1-3 Ballymacelligott 2-7 Div 3A
- 22/7/15 Spa 2-3 Glenflesk 5-21 Div 3A
- 29/7/15 Spa (H) 1-8 Kilgarvan/ Tuosist 6-18 Div 3A
- 5/8/15 Spa 5-7 Fossa 9-6 Div 4

Victory was ours in October though, when we rounded off the season in the East Kerry Division 3 final, by defeating Kilcummin at Furies.

I would like to thank all the players for their outstanding efforts throughout the year against opponents who were often older than a lot of our team, and much more physical than us; 13 of our 25 boys remain at U16 level in 2016. We wish the 12 boys moving up to minor level the best of luck this year.

Thanks also to the parents, supporters, Coiste na nÓg committee, and visiting coaches for their expertise in once-off sessions throughout 2015.

Trainers

Paul Fahy & Kevin Healy

U14 Boys Review Promise shown for the future

Our U14s took part in a local Feile U14 Section B competition in April. The lads had a comprehensive victory over Knocknagoshel/Brosna before losing narrowly to Beaufort in their second game and then bowing out to a very strong Austin Stacks team in the 3rd game.

The following month, we took part in the County League Div 3. We lost by a small margin to Kerins O'Rahillys, in a thriller, before comprehensively beating Listowel at home.

We were exceptionally unlucky to lose by a point away to a very strong Dingle team before losing to a very strong Beaufort team in the final league game. Due to results falling our way, we qualified for the semi-final to meet Beaufort away once more. Despite a bright opening half, we lost comprehensively and went out of the competition.

Training was generally well attended throughout the year. However, in order to generate more training games, we combined our training slots with the U12's, which proved very worthwhile. Great thanks must be extended to the U12 coaches Paddy Mulvanny and Ivor Flynn for facilitating this.

We then took part in the East Kerry League, coming up against physically stronger teams in Kilcummin, Furies and Fossa. Our lads played with great heart throughout but, on these occasions, fortune didn't favour the brave.

Spa went on to play Dr Crokes B in the East Kerry Championship and won well before eventually crashing out in the semi-final to Currow, away in a cracking game.

It's been a tough year on the field for this age group, but their attitude and work ethic were exemplary throughout. If they bring these attributes with them as they mature physically, they'll be a match for any team in 2016.

I also wish to thank the rest of the management team, Robert Cremin, Neillie Kerins and Tomas Kelliher, for their dedication throughout the season and look forward to brighter days ahead.

Adrian O'Sullivan



U16 Boys: East Kerry Division 3 Champions 2015



U12 Boys 2015

U12 Boys

The U12's started training in February and trained all the way through to the last week of November. This shows the interest and dedication this group has in improving as footballers.

Whilst 2015 was not a hugely successful year results wise, the boys' skill levels increased hugely throughout the year. We were in division 3 of the County League, and came up against much physically stronger teams, but performed admirably every night and kept improving as the league went on. The fact we were relying on u10s each night (all of whom were outstanding) to make up our team, meant we always faced stronger teams. In East Kerry we were in division 2, and had great performances and results.

We feel it is very important to work with this age group and do everything possible to keep them interested and playing as numbers are really tight. While numbers are not huge, the boys make up for it in talent, enthusiasm and dedication. We look forward to following their progression up the ranks in Spa, and wish them all the best in the future. We'd like to thank the parents who helped, for their support. Finally we'd like to thank the Chairman John, and especially our Secretary Bernie, for their enormous dedication and help.

Ivor Flynn, Paddy Mulvaney & Frank Hickey

Spa's Contribution to St Brendan's College's Hogan Cup Success

St Brendan's College recorded an historic, third Hogan Cup title in Croke Park on Saturday April 2nd 2016, defeating St Patrick's College, Maghera (Derry), on a score-line of 2-13 to 2-6 in the All-Ireland Colleges' Final.

Spa were represented by four players on the panel during the 2015/2016 campaign - David Carroll, Dara Moynihan, Evan Cronin and David Spillane, who all played their part in the school's first Hogan Cup title in 24 years. In fact, the last Spa player to bring a Hogan Cup medal to the club was John Doyle (RIP) who was part of the winning Sem team of 1992.

Under the management of Gary McGrath, Hugh Rudden and Arthur Fitzgerald, the young team overcame St Flannan's, Colaiste na Sceilge and Abbey CBS in the group stages. They topped their group to proceed to the quarter finals v Corca Dhuibhne, semi-finals v St Flannan's before a comprehensive victory over HS Clonmel in the Corn Uí Mhuiri Munster Final.

Good Prospects for U10 Footballers

More than 20 youngsters trained with the Spa U10 boys all throughout 2015.

Some of the squad played with Spa Muckross in the Community Games and won the county final, but were narrowly beaten by Monolea (Limerick) in the Munster preliminaries.

Spa players included: Timmy Moynihan, Christopher Healy, Cian Russell, Danny Coffey, David O Sullivan, Aidan Cronin, Fionn Daly and Emmet Spillane. Well done county champions.

Go Games 2015 – wins over Furies and Kilcummin Challenge games includes wins over Beaufort, Listry and Gneeveguilla. This squad of players has good prospects going forward into U12 next year

The squad will continue to train in October and November We hope to return for gym training in early 2016.



U10 Boys with Kerry Minor Evan Cronin before the All Ireland Minor Final 2015



Spa members involved with the Sem: Dr Gary Stack, David Carroll, Evan Cronin, Dara Moynihan, Shane Cronin, Niall McCarthy, David Spillane

They contested the All-Ireland semi-final in Nenagh against St Benildus College, Stillorglin (Dublin) before beating a highly-rated St Pat's team in the All-Ireland final. A superb achievement from these young players.

Deirdre O'Sullivan Darcy



Spa Senior Football Team

Senior Team County Finalists 2015 - Back (L-R): M Moynihan, A Giles, A Fleming, H O'Donoghue, S Fenton, A Garnett, C Spillane, T Hussey, C Hickey, J Devane, A Cahill (Capt), M O'Donoghue, D O'Donoghue, C Cronin, J Spillane, B Lynch, E Cronin, D Moynihan, P Cronin. Front (L-R): (Mascots JJ O'Donoghue & Joey McCarthy), A Farrell, C Tobin, M Foley, L Kearney, M Finnegan, S Lynch, S Cronin, M McCarthy, B Lynch, C Kearney, C Cronin, R O'Carroll, P Russell, D Spillane

2010 was an annus mirabilis for Spa, with the reigning Kerry Intermediate champions (we beat Currow in the 2009 Final) going all the way to Croke Park and a date with destiny, only to lose out by 1-7 to 0-8 at the final hurdle to Cookstown Fr. Rocks. The championship run energized the whole club and helped us to win Division Two and get promoted.

2012
Spa won a tough opening round of the Intermediate, beating Waterville by 0-13 to 0-9. The quarter-final against St. Marys was a thriller, finishing level at 1-15 to 3-9. The replay in Cahersiveen was even better. Spa, with the wind, had a goal by Craig Hickey and 0-4 from Cormac Cronin to lead by 1-8 to 1-3 at the break, but St. Marys hit 0-7 without reply to go in front. With the clock running down, Jamie Spillane nailed a free, Niall O'Mahony scored a beauty and fed Andrew Garnett for another, and Spa won out by a single point. There was an incredible and slightly ridiculous three month wait for the final against Finuge. When it finally arrived, Spa were just a bit ring rusty. They could and probably should have won it, with Mike Stam O'Donoghue outstanding (he won an East Kerry All Star this year), but just couldn't get clear and the sides ended level. The replay was another epic, but at the final whistle Finuge led by 1-12 to 0-12 and Spa just couldn't close that gap.

2013
Club stalwart Conor Gleeson agreed to come in as manager but Spa were out of their depth as yet in Division One of the County League, and with key players like Mike Stam O'Donoghue, Andrew Garnett, and Niall O'Mahony injured for a good portion of the season, were consigned to relegation. Losing the opening round of the Intermediate Championship to Listowel Emmets in Spa was another blow, and Spa subsequently lost out to Kenmare Shamrocks in the Intermediate Shield.

2014
With Sean Moynihan reprising his role as manager and injured players back in the fold along with a rising crop of young talent, Spa's fortunes began to take a big upturn. The Intermediate was again our big goal and we opened with a convincing 0-13 to 0-8 win away to Castlegregory. In May we drew a thriller against Listowel Emmets, 1-14 apiece, and had to wait until July 19th to face them at home. Unfortunately, the long hiatus had seen Listowel badly depleted and Spa won a very one-sided replay. That put us into a derby semi-final against Glenflesk, great friends but also close rivals. With the incentive of a berth in the final awaiting, Spa pulled out all the stops and rattled the net four times to win by 4-13 to 0-13.

That pitted us against Ardfert in the Intermediate final, and Spa dominated the first half, but were unlucky with goal chances and just led by 0-7 to 0-4 at the break.

It wasn't enough, as the Cathedral City drew on all their experience and a David Griffin goaled sealed their title – Spa were among the first to congratulate them when they later won the All Ireland crown.

We drew our opener against Listowel in Division Two of the County League and lost three on the trot, but got back to winning ways against Skellig Rangers and John Mitchels. We lost out by a point to Desmonds and lost again Glenbeigh/Glencair. At that stage things looked worrying, but Spa rallied and landed big wins against Listry (3-15 to 0-11) and Legion (3-11 to 1-6). That left us secure in the final round against Gneeveguilla, whose 1-10 to 0-11 win pulled them out of relegation trouble.

This was the closest O'Donoghue Cup competition in many years, with long-term champions Crokes bowing out in the first round. Spa finally lost out to Rathmore by a point after extra-time in a semi-final replay; the margins were never finer! Shane Cronin and Andrew Garnett won East Kerry All Stars. In the end, no Intermediate title and no league promotion, but a very solid year and the sight of two Spa minors lifting the All Ireland minor cup was testament to strong foundations being laid for the future.

2015
Spa were favourites against Annascaul in the Intermediate opener, but had to battle very hard for a 1-12 to 1-10 win. Next up was a thrilling draw with Kenmare Shamrocks; it finished 3-14 to 2-17 after one of the best games all year. The replay was another thriller; this time Spa came home with a 2-12 to 2-9 win. Spa hit top gear against John Mitchels to record a 2-16 to 1-10 win to reach the final. Both sides missed good chances, with St. Marys' goalkeeper Austin Constable pulling off some superb saves, and a tour de force by Bryan Sheehan saw St. Marys take the honours and they followed in Ardfert's footsteps by going on to win the All Ireland – another case of so near and yet so far for a gallant Spa.

In the County League, Spa started with a draw (Laune Rangers), a win (Gneeveguilla) and a loss (John Mitchels), before beating an understrength St. Marys. They went down to Templehoe (5-15 to 4-4) before recording four wins on the trot. They lost to Rathmore but beat Currow to get into a promotion play-off in what was proving to be a long winter season. They got past St. Marys by 1-11 to 1-8, St. Marys first defeat in a long time, but were held to a draw by John Mitchels in January 2016 in Brosna before going down in the replay and just missing out on promotion. Shane Cronin's phenomenal year was topped off with the John Doyle Award.

Jimmy O'Sullivan Darcy

Success for Lady Footballers

Ladies Football was very successful once again in 2015. Promoted in every age group to a higher division which shows the development within the club. It's not always about winning but of course it's great to come away with silverware as the rewards of hard work and training. 2015 saw us as U15 County Champions, Senior County Champions and ended the year as Club of the Year.

History was created in the Club to win senior county champions when we joined Rathmore to take the Randles Brothers' Senior Championship title in September against Castleisland in an exciting final to win by 2 pts. Club of the Year is a team effort by officers, coaches, parents and players. So everyone deserves a bula bos for fulfilling all our duties as a club. This was a huge honour as this is not an easy title to win.

We also saw Cassandra Buckley with Kerry Senior Ladies as Munster Champion defeating the All Ireland Champions Cork in Mallow. Mairead Bennett also donned the Kerry jersey with U14s and is on track once again with U16 panel for 2016. The future looks bright and huge thanks to everyone involved.

Anne Holland
Spa Ladies Chairperson.



U15 County Champions



Our future lady footballers Erin Holland, Grainne Spillane and Orlaith Spillane



Spa/Rathmore Senior Ladies County Champions 2015

Spa and Kerry Ladies player Cassandra Buckley with the Munster Cup

Spa u12, u14 and u16 girls pictured in Spa with the young visitors from St Avertin, Tours, France (twinned with Killarney). These young boys and girls were introduced to Gaelic Football for the first time





Spa Muckross Community Games – 2015 Review

2015 got off to a great start with Treasa O'Sullivan securing 1st place in the U16 County Recitation Competition in February. This was not the talented all-rounder's first county gold medal, as she had represented Kerry at National level in both swimming and recitation in other years.

The following month, our boys U10 indoor soccer team progressed to the County final, where the lads emerged as runners up after a nail-biting finish. Team: Timothy Moynihan, Oisín Lynch, Aidan Cronin, David O'Sullivan, Emmet Spillane, Christopher Healy, Fionn Daly, Eric Moriarty and Danny Coffey.

The U14 Quiz competition took place in April. The overall winners that night, Kilcummin, eventually went on to win Gold at the National finals, so the standard was extremely high, with approximately 22 teams travelling from all over the county.

Team: Ben Flavin, Cian Murphy, Diarmuid Cahill, Julia Olabode, Louise Fleming and Treasa O'Sullivan.

All roads led to Tralee swimming Complex on 19th April. Great credit is due to all the Spa Muckross swimmers who participated on the day. This is a highly competitive event, and for some swimmers, it was their first time competing. Competitors included, Caolan Mitchell (Gold), Grace O'Connor, Faye O'Neill (Silver), Cathal Coffey (Certificate), Ethan O'Neill (Silver), Treasa O'Sullivan (Gold), Aisling Coffey, Niamh Coffey (Gold).

There was no lie in to be had on the May bank holiday, when our U14 girls football team braved the wind and rain to compete in the County competition. As with the quiz, the eventual winners, Cromane / Killorglin went on to secure top prize in the National Final, so there was a very high standard of football on the day.

May also saw the Cross Country competitions take place where, Marie Courtney and Cian Lynch both secured places on the Kerry teams going forward to the National finals.

After a 10 year wait, in June 2015, Spa Muckross became U10 Gaelic Football county champions. The boys progressed to the Munster quarter finals later that month, but luck was not on their side in many ways on that day.

Team: Christopher Healy, Cian Russell, Maidhce Lynch, Tom Benson, Darragh Murphy, David O Sullivan, Luke Courtney, Daniel Coffey, Emmett Spillane, Leah McMahon, Oisín Lynch, Aidan Cronin, TJO Sullivan, Neil Carroll, Fionn Daly and Timothy Moynihan

The County Athletics Competition held in June saw a huge turnout of children. Spa Muckross had a very successful 2 days and final results were Kianan O'Doherty (Gold – High Jump), Ruth Courtney (Silver 100m & Shot Putt), Cian Lynch (Silver 100m) Tristan O'Donoghue (Certificate 1500m). Silver medals were awarded to our relays; U10 mixed (Ali O'Donoghue, Leah McMahon, Mark Daly, Oisín Lynch & Timothy Moynihan), U14 Girls (Caoilinn O'Donoghue, Elizabeth Stack, Grace Courtney, Mairéad Bennett, Marie Courtney & Ruth Courtney) & U16 Boys (David Culloty, Gary Vaughan, Kianan O'Doherty & Tristan O'Donoghue).

Athlone I.T. was a hive of activity in August for the National Finals. Caolan, Niamh and Treasa proudly donned the green and gold and performed brilliantly in their individual competitions. Kerry has an excellent Cross Country track record, and 2015 was no exception. Cian's u12 team blasted home to win gold, and Marie repeated her 2014 success with her team's 3rd place finish.

A huge thanks to the trainers and committee members, who are all parents of the young people that compete with Spa Muckross Community Games.

While 2015 brought great success, it also brought sadness to many families. Condolences to all those who lost a loved one during the year, and in particular to the family of Joan Herlihy who was heavily involved with Spa Muckross Community Games for many years, taking charge of coaching our Rounders teams, and holding the position of Treasurer. Having competed in the Long Puck competition in my own youth, John Wickham was always generous with his advice in this area. They will be warmly remembered and greatly missed by all that knew them.

Bernie Courtney
PRO Spa Muckross Community Games



U10 Boys and Girls County Football Champions



Aileen O'Sullivan, winner of €15,400, the largest Spa Lotto jackpot, being presented with her cheque by Gerard Mangan (Chairman), Mick O'Connell (Seller) and Tadhg Hickey (Chairman of Spa Lotto)

The Launch of Spa's Club Lotto

It was an early summer evening in a packed Jimmy O'Brien's Bar, Sunday 13th May, 2012, when legendary commentator Michael O Muircheartaigh launched the Spa GAA Club Lotto.

Amid building anticipation in the bar below, a team of volunteers worked diligently upstairs, sitting on beer barrels and crates, sorting tickets, while a constant flow of traffic came in the side door and up the narrow stairs delivering their first week of ticket sales.

There was a mix of tension, excitement and nervousness in the rarefied air of the former medal and trophy shop. There couldn't be a mistake on launch night. How many tickets will we have sold? Will we collect enough to cover the first jackpot if it goes tonight? We needn't have feared.

The hard work, organising and planning started several months before that great night. The initiative to launch the lotto came from then chairman Andy O'Sullivan, Ballaugh.

Having put together a committee spanning all facets of the club, Andy did what all good leaders with a capable team do and left us get on with it under the clear instruction of having everything in place to launch in May 2012. Meetings were held well in to the night in true GAA fashion.

Fossa GAA Club, allies on the western side of the parish, were generous enough to show us how they run their lotto. Old fundraising schemes were revisited. Maps of the Spa hinterlands were consulted and areas divided up to be managed by dedicated club men and women. No area was to be missed. Stalwart club members were approached and asked to sell tickets weekly. Few were found wanting.

Public venues were selected to hold the weekly draw; a social scene was spawning from the lotto. The vibrant Spa community would be visible in different venues around Killarney every Sunday night from here on gathering tickets, and currency.

The resourceful Johnny 'Batt' Cronin and Chairman Andy located the lotto machine and ticket drum from the ever blurring Meath/Dublin border in a deal completed in darkness outside the Conroy Hall. William Herlihy expertly crafted a wooden frame for sorting the tickets, and, like the still-in-use stretcher he sourced from the old Garda Barracks on New Street in 1983, this too will stand the test of time.

Not to be ignored, the younger, tech-savvy members of the committee suggested introducing an online method of buying lotto tickets. It was debated, at length. Eventually Chairman Andy ruled that the lotto was progress and not going online would be hypocritical. It would happen. The revolution to start a lotto in Spa was almost complete.

In a final publicity push, John O'Leary (Lissivigeen and of national PRO fame) gave us a plug on his weekly Saturday afternoon slot on Radio Kerry. The presenter, by now engaged, had the audacity to question whether Spa were the last club in Ireland to start a lotto. He may have been right, but the tone was enough to embolden our commitment to the cause. We were ready.

Since that first draw, dedicated teams of helpers and sellers turn up week-in, week-out. The reach is wide. We have weekly players from Knockmanagh to Bermuda, Cumeen to Copenhagen, Gortdromakeerie to Sydney, Kilbreen to New York. If the clubhouse is the centre of Spa then Cronin's shop is the centre of the lotto. A source of tickets and a drop-off point for sellers. A place of call on Monday for results. Above all, ferocious sellers themselves.

And so, after almost 190 draws, 6 jackpot winners, more than 700 lucky dip winners and prizes awarded of over €85,000, the lotto continues to be the single biggest source of revenue for the club, and, with ambitious plans for future club developments its continuing success is more important than ever. As good as it has been up to now, more helpers and sellers could make it truly great.

My sincere thanks to all those who help out, sell and support on a weekly basis to make the lotto the on-going success that it is.

Mile Buiochas.

Tadhg O'Leary
Lotto Committee Chairman



Bridie O'Mahony winning the Spa Lotto Jackpot in August 2013. Pictured with Neil O'Mahony, Anne Holland, Ger Mangan, Jim Gleeson, Tadhg Hickey, Assumpta O'Donoghue and Paul Casey.



The '31' Championship of Kerry Still Popular after all these years

Legendary seanchai Eamon Kelly, in his many radio and television programmes including the Rambling House, really encapsulated the manner in which the inhabitants of rural Ireland organised their many social events each winter, which included the Station and Threshing dances.

Gamble and Bidy Ball Nights included marathon, card sessions culminating with a night of music song and dance which, if not interrupted by a visit from the local parish priest, often finished by day break.

While many of such events which were very much part of the life of the Spa/Lissivigeen community are now but a distant memory for those of us old enough to remember them, one social pastime that has stood the test of time is card playing. The annual Spa '31' Championship of Kerry is growing in popularity each year since it was initiated as a fundraiser for the Spa GAA club back in 1972.

Following the revival of the GAA club in Spa in the mid 1960s, training continued in Jack Doherty's Pit, in Tiernaboul, and later in the O'Keeffe family field at Tullig.

Success led to a demand for a permanent pitch and an approach was made to Denis O'Keeffe with a view to purchasing six acres. A committee was put in place to raise the necessary finance for the purchase and development of this facility. Among the fund raising events were local donations, the organisation of the Lily of Killarney Festival and weekly card drives culminating in a grand final to be known as the '31' Championship of Kerry

Initially, such weekly card sessions, followed by a set dancing session, were staged in the Ryan Hotel (now Hotel Killarney) and, as the weeks passed, card players and set dancers from all over the county converged on the Ryan Hotel each Wednesday night.

As well as being a financial bonanza for the club, such events proved to be most enjoyable social occasions for all involved.

When the Ryan Hotel decided to close for the winter season of 1973, an approach was made to John C Cooper, then the proprietor of the Castle Heights Hotel, with a view to accommodating such events. John C acceded to this request and again such events even surpassed the success of the earlier season.



31 Card Drive Committee: Dave Herlihy, Paddy B Lynch and Paddy O'Keeffe

Card players from as far away as Waterville, Reenard, Caherciveen, Rathmore, Headford, Kilgarvan Kenmare, Kilcummin and Gneeveguilla flocked to those weekly sessions as well as the cream of the set dancing fraternity from many areas.

Such events continued in the Castle Heights until Spa developed their own clubhouse on the current site and which saw those events continuing in the newly developed clubhouse.

While 44 long years have elapsed since the aforementioned committee assembled to organise such weekly sessions and while many of the illustrious names who graced those tables in the Ryan and Castle Heights have now passed to their eternal reward, their memories and contribution still live on in the lore of card playing in Spa.

The club also wishes to acknowledge the contributions card playing and set dancing have made to the club and also the contribution made by so many wonderful club committee members who have organised and stewarded such events.

In 2016, the organisation of this event has been in the ever capable hands of Dave Herlihy, Paddy O'Keeffe and Paddy B Lynch and the stage has been set for a grand final in the Torc Hotel, Lissivigeen.

John Kelly



Presentation of cheque to Irish Cancer Society 2015 with proceeds from Awards night.



2015 joint-winners of Know Your Sport - Kenneth Clifford, Tony O'Sullivan and Jason Arthur - with Coiste na nÓg Chairman John O'Donoghue



Golf Classic: Dan Morris, Eileen Magee and Sean Kelliher

SPA GAA Golf Classic

A fund-raising, Spa GAA Golf Classic was staged at Killarney Golf Club, on Friday June 3rd. The Spa club is currently carrying out some major developments, including the laying of an all-weather playing pitch and alterations to the clubhouse involving the provision of a larger gym, office areas and toilets upstairs. The developments are estimated to cost around €175,000.

"All this work is vital for our club, but obviously needs a lot of money so the golf classic is an important fund-raiser," said Spa chairman Ger Mangan at a reception to announce details in the Killarney Oaks Hotel.



Eve O'Donoghue (sponsored by The Shire Bar) was crowned 43rd Lily of Killarney in the Gleneagle Hotel on May 27th 2016

The Lily of Killarney - Still going strong after 40 years

The Lily of Killarney was first chosen in 1974 as part of a festival to raise funds for the club. It was suggested that Jules Benedict's famous opera, Lily of Killarney, would be the most apt title for the one-week festival which had its base in Dan O'Donoghues field at the "Trains' Bridge", Park Road.

The organizing committee, of which Frank Moynihan was commander in chief, drew up a programme of events for the week in June 1974. McFadden's Amusements were booked nightly and other events included a Cork/Kerry senior club football tournament which included teams such as Nemo Rangers, St. Finbar's, Austin Stacks and Shannon Rangers, and juveniles and veterans football matches.

The highlight, of course, was the selection of the Lily of Killarney at the Gleneagle Hotel, on the Sunday night. Twelve finalists were selected from dances the length and breath of the county and beyond and Eileen O'Connor, from Dromlusk, Blackwater, was crowned the very first Lily of Killarney. She received the Healy/Cronin Perpetual Trophy (still being presented to the winner) and a cash prize.

Since then "The Lily" has taken on many different formats and has grown in popularity over the years. The event has for many years been organized by the ladies committee of the club and under their auspices has grown into one of the major social events of the year in Killarney.

The 2015 and 42nd Lily of Killarney was selected at a buffet/dance in the Gleneagle Hotel, Killarney on Friday, 22nd May. This year, 30 young ladies representing local business interests took part. In a new direction for the event, each of the girls was interviewed on stage by MC Ray O'Sullivan. They were also interviewed by a judging panel earlier in the evening.

At the stroke of midnight, Sarah Dineen, representing Top of Coom, was announced as the new Lily of Killarney. Along with the Healy/Cronin Perpetual Trophy, Sarah also received a cash prize, a trip to the Killarney/London Reunion and numerous other prizes sponsored by local businesses. She has promoted the event at a number of events throughout the year including Killarney Races and Regatta, and recently at Killarney/London Reunion.

Sheila Curtin
Chairperson, Ladies Committee



Lily of Killarney 2015, Sarah Dineen from Top of Coom Pub, surrounded by the Spa Ladies Committee: Sheila Curtin (Chairperson), Catherine Carroll, Sheila Cronin, Julie Flynn, Breda Hickey, Geraldine O'Neill, Susan Hayes, Marie O'Keeffe, Denise Gleeson.



Top media award for John O'Leary

Described as one of the most efficient and capable county PROs, well-known Spa club member John O'Leary won the Gaelic Writers' Association PRO of the Year award, in 2015.

The presentation was made by Marty Morrissey, of RTE, at a function in Dublin, last October. John, who had been secretary of Spa for five years ending in 1996, has been PRO of Kerry County Board for the past four years, bringing characteristic dedication to the role.

As with all leading GAA counties, Kerry is continually the focus of national media attention, with an insatiable demand for information about what's happening there, especially when the county is doing well in the All-Ireland championship.

Newspapers, TV and radio stations are regularly in contact with people like John, who has to fit in his GAA work with his normal employment. In his case, much of his GAA work is done after tea-time in the evenings.

One of his big tasks when Kerry are in an All-Ireland final is to co-ordinate a major media briefing in the week prior to the big day. In 2015, for instance, he had to deal with more 60 media personnel, including a half-dozen TV crews, several radio stations and newspaper journalists and photographers.

He would help in arranging interviews with management and different players, all the time trying to ensure each media outlet – often demanding people – is kept satisfied.

"If Kerry are in the All-Ireland final that takes up about 25 per cent of my total work for that particular year," he explains.

"As well as all that, there are routine Co Board activities, columns each week for the local press, material for local radio and the Co Board website, which has 30,000 followers, organising match programmes and dealing with queries all the time. And that's not forgetting the success of the Kerry hurlers."

John went to work in Dublin with An Post, in 1972, and became very active with the Postal Gaels GAA club, of which he was secretary.

On returning to Kerry, in 1983, he became involved with Spa as a player and committee member, later becoming secretary. After completing his stint as secretary, he became PRO of the East Kerry Board, in 1998, and held the post for ten years.

During this time, he was also on the PR and Marketing Committee of the County Board and was board delegate for St Patrick's hurling club. Having completed his officership with the East Kerry Board, he got involved with St Patrick's for a number of years.

Never losing interest in Spa, he has seen the club go from strength over the years, which he attributes to the willingness of local people to support the club at all times through 600 Clubs, the Lotto and other fundraisers.



Chairman Gerard Mangan congratulating John O'Leary, Kerry Co. Board PRO, on this prestigious National Award

"More than the average number of people are always prepared to get involved in the Spa club in a voluntary capacity and in different jobs," he says.

"Some clubs depend on the success of their senior team, but this should not be so: there are many other things going on in a club. Spa is a very vibrant club with a wide range of activities.

John believes every club should aspire to success in the provincial, or All-Ireland championships. This can be a magical adventure for a club as was witnessed locally in 2009/'10, when Spa reached the All-Ireland intermediate final, only to be defeated by Cookstown, Co Tyrone, in Croke Park.

"The whole thing gave a huge boost to our club. I remember up to 500 people were at a dinner in the Burlington Hotel, the night before the match. We might have lost the battle, but we won the war," he says.

Any club worthy of the name should set out at the start of the year to win a county title, he urges, and then, hopefully, progress to provincial or national honours.

"We can see what all that means through our own experience and the experience of other Kerry clubs such as Brosna and Skelligs Rangers, to name just two as examples," he says.

Donal Hickey



Outstanding success in Scór

Scór is the cultural side of the GAA. Our club has been very successful in East Kerry, County, Munster and All-Ireland championships over the years.

We have a strong Scór committee, under the watchful eye of Sheila McCarthy for the past 11 years. Spa was the only club in Kerry/Munster to win an All-Ireland in the Senior Scór, in the INEC, Killarney, on April 2nd this year.

We hold one. Amhranaoicht Aonair 1990: Siobhan O'Brien. Rince Foirne: 2002, 2003, 2004, 2007, 2010, 2011 and 2016. Rince Seit: 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008. Mairead Mangan holds 12 All-Ireland titles in dancing and her sister, Triona, holds 11 medals. This is a record in the GAA.

We won our first Scór na nÓg All-Ireland title in 2014 – a double with Recitation (Allison Fitzmartin) and Rince Seit. This was a huge accomplishment for a small club to win six All-Ireland titles in three years in Scór. Long may it continue.

Anne Holland



Scór Sinsear All Ireland winning Figure Dancers 2016- Back: Ciara O'Shea, Trish Murphy, Katie O'Connor, Claire Moynihan, Fiona Kelly. Front: Ann Marie Nelligan, Mairead Mangan, Aoghán O'Fearghail (GAA President), Sinead Cronin



Scór na nÓg All Ireland winning Quiz Team 2016: Michael Aherne, Daniel O'Sullivan, Aoghán O'Feraghail (GAA President), James Lynch, Thomas Fleming



Scór na nÓg All Ireland winning Rince Seit 2014- Back: Anna O'Connor, Kianan O'Doherty, Eoin O'Donoghue, Aine Brosnan. Front: Liam Spillane, Rachel Moynihan, Erin Holland, Gary O'Sullivan



Scór na nÓg All Ireland winning Quiz Team 2015: James Lynch, Thomas Fleming, Niamh Clifford and Michael Aherne.



Scór na nÓg All Ireland Recitation Winner 2014: Allison Martin



Spa Welcomes the Killarney Advertiser to Lissivigeen

On Friday March 1st, 1973, the first edition of Killarney's free Advertiser arrived in local business premises and into the homes of Killarney. In the past 43 years, it has made a major contribution to the local community by way of advertising, news and, especially, to all sports in the region.

The idea of a free Advertiser came from Minish native Danny Casey and the community of Killarney and its environs owe him a debt of gratitude for the contribution this weekly publication has made to the area. We in the Lissivigeen/Spa area are delighted that its main printing department is now based in the Upper Lissivigeen area and wish it every success in the years ahead.

The following is an extract from the sports page of the first edition, by then Spa PRO John Kelly, and which was produced by our own Frank Moynihan:

"Spa GAA club, winner of the O'Donoghue Cup over the past two years, is proving as successful off the pitch as on it. It has been running a 31 Card Drive and buffet dance in the Castle Heights Hotel and is thus providing entertainment to suit all tastes and all ages.

"The qualifiers of the weekly card drive who will go forward to the final of the 31 Championship of Kerry to date are - Michael Fitzgerald and Arthur E O'Keeffe, Patrick Cronin, Kilbreen, and Patrick Cronin, Knockmanagh, Johnny Cronin and Pat McCarthy, Archie Cronin and Tom Joe O'Sullivan, Dave Slattery and John "Dunn" O'Donoghue, Con Doolan and John Kelly, Tim Kelly and P Warren.

"As well as the card drive, a novice polka set competition has been run off and the winners were - Mrs Mary Spillane, Mrs Peggy O'Callaghan, Mrs Celine Healy and Mrs Patricia Moynihan, Donie Moynihan, Michael Moynihan, John Joe Healy, and Denis Moynihan. The winners received a cup and set of medals presented by Jimmy O'Brien. 'An open polka competition, open to Kerry, has been scheduled for Wednesday March 14th, and a second heat on March 28th, and here patrons will see dancing at its best"

Yes indeed, happy memories of great nights in the Castle Heights, 43 years ago. The club has enjoyed a wonderful relationship with the weekly Advertiser and its staff since 1973 and I look forward to continuing this relationship in its new location in the years ahead.

John Kelly

Closure of Cronin's Shop - Passing of another landmark in the community

Wednesday evening March 30th, 2016, as Patrick Cronin turned the key on his community shop at Curtin's Cross for the last time, was an occasion tinged with a degree of sadness for the many members of the local community and commuters who frequented this establishment on an almost daily basis.

It also marked the passing of another landmark in the local community which once had five similar shopping establishments - two in Lissivigeen, Jamesy O'Donoghue's and Dave Daly's, and three in the Park Road, owned by Maurice O'Sullivan, O'Leary's, Upper Park Road, and Maggie Kelly's at The Cross.

Maggie Kelly retired from business in the mid-1970's and the Cronin family commenced trading there in 1979. During the intervening 37 years their shop provided a vital service to the community and, as well as being a shopping centre for many of us, it doubled as a therapeutic social centre where neighbours met and chatted on subjects which included sport, farming and, occasionally, politics.

Patrick kept the racing fraternity briefed on forthcoming meetings in Killarney, Cork, The Curragh and maybe Cheltenham. For the punter not interested in an elaborate wager on the horses, he advocated a two or five euro wager on the weekly Spa GAA Lotto.



Gene Cronin, Sarah Cronin, Marie Cronin and Patrick Cronin pictured outside the shop on March 30th 2016 -the day it closed

In recent years, Cronin's topped the club Lotto sales and recorded many winners. While Gene kept daily callers briefed on how Rory McIlroy, Padraig Harrington and other luminaries of the golfing scene were faring, when Brendan came to the shop the subject changed to farming and the latest prices at mart and factory. Sheila and the two Marys also had a kindly welcome for their customers and often revelled in the banter outside the counter.

As well as their contribution in the shop, the Cronin family have also made a huge contribution to both Spa GAA club and Spa-Muckross Community Games club as players, athletes, officers and supporters. I wish to avail of this opportunity to extend a special word of thanks to the entire family for their contribution and to wish the staff and management of the shop every success in the years ahead.

John Kelly



Recalling the historic 1966 season for the GAA in SPA

1966 East Kerry Champions: Spa won the East Kerry League on August 30th 1966 before the inaugural East Kerry Championship (currently known as the O'Donoghue Cup Championship) commenced a short while after in September 1966. The first Championship concluded with Spa defeating Gneeveguilla in the Final on Easter Sunday 1967. Five playing members, namely Paddy Dennehy, Mick Kissane, Timmy Joe O'Sullivan, Flossy McCarthy and Denis Fenton are deceased as well as Tadhg O'Sullivan and Donie O'Leary of the management team (RIP).

Front (L-R): Mick Gleeson, Denny Doolan, Fr Michael O'Donoghue, Jim Gleeson, Connie Doolan, Sean O'Sullivan, John B Cronin and Flossy McCarthy (RIP).

Back (L-R): Tadhg O'Sullivan (Trainer, RIP), Jack Morris, Paddy Dennehy (RIP), Brian Fenton, John Joe Foley, Mick Kissane (RIP), Tom Morris, John Kelly, Denis Fenton (RIP), Barry O'Connor, Tim Joe O'Sullivan (RIP), Donie O'Leary (Selector, RIP). Missing from photo: Donie O'Sullivan & Sean Moynihan

During the ten-year period following the formation of Spa GAA club in 1948, the club enjoyed much success on the playing fields of East Kerry winning a junior title in the year of its formation and, a year later, annexing a senior title when defeating a star-studded Headford side in the 1949 final.

In 1952, they lost to Listry by a three-point margin in the senior final, but made amends by winning a second junior title. The senior side continued to compete with limited success until 1956 when, due to the lack of an adequate under age structure, the club reverted to junior status and could be deemed unlucky to lose three finals in this grade to St Agatha's, Glenflesk.

Due to retirements and the lack of a minor team, it was regrettable that Spa decided not to affiliate to the East Kerry Board after those successive defeats.

With the formation of the St Finan's Hospital club in 1956, a number of former Spa players assisted St Finan's to win the EK Rural League in 1960 before losing to Dr Crokes in the 1964 O'Donoghue Cup final.

As this was always to be but a "temporary little arrangement", it was to pave the way for the revival of the Spa GAA club. Despite the fact that a club did not exist in the area after 1959, under age football was now once again flourishing in the district and much of this success could be attributed to the development of the East Kerry National Schools' competition (a forerunner to Bord na nÓg).

Another significant development was the success being achieved by the Naomh Mhuire National Schools' side (an amalgamation of Lissivigeen, Tiernaboul and Loughquittane schools) in the East Kerry Schools' competition which had been in existence since 1954 and which provided excellent competition for pupils.

In the early years, Naomh Mhuire was coached by the late Tadhg O'Sullivan, who went on to serve as Spa chairman for a record seventeen seasons.

The success of this team in the schools' competitions created an awareness that once again the seeds were being sown for the revival of the Spa GAA club which came to fruition at a specially convened meeting in the old Macra na Feirme Hall in Tiernaboul, in March 1962, when it was decided that the time was now ripe to reform the club under the chairmanship of Con Doherty with Paddy Dennehy as secretary and Johnny Doolan as treasurer.

The committee consisted of Timmy Joe O'Sullivan, Tom Morris, Jack Morris and Denny Doolan. Delegates to the East Kerry Board were Paddy Dennehy and Johnny Doolan.

A minor team was affiliated to the Board and when it proved unsuccessful a decision was made to amalgamate with Glenflesk in 1963, with the majority of the Spa members on the team being products of the successful Naomh Mhuire side. This amalgamation won the 1963 EK minor title.

Buoyed by this success and the fact that St Finan's became defunct in 1965, a decision was taken at the 1966 club AGM to enter the O'Donoghue Cup competition.

While regular training sessions continued in Jack Doherty's Pit in Tiernaboul and, after the club decided to enter the senior grade, a field was rented from Denis O'Keeffe. A training regime was organised under Tadhg O'Sullivan, John "Dunn" O'Donoghue and Timmy Joe O'Sullivan all now deceased (RIP).

After losing narrowly to Listry in their opening game, this setback appeared to motivate the side to greater effort and, with training now being stepped up, they recorded a narrow victory over Gneeveguilla in Fitzgerald Stadium.



With the advent of the school and college holiday season, Spa were soon augmented by Donie O'Sullivan and Mick Gleeson, while Pat Casey and Johnny Doolan, now back from maritime service, had returned to dry land. The services of this quartet paved the way for further success in the competition. After edging out a strong Rathmore side in the semi-final in July, the scene was now set for a final clash with a fancied Kilcummin side.

With county players Donie O'Sullivan, Mick Gleeson and Pat Casey dominating the centre area, Spa enjoyed a slight edge in the opening period and, with the game very much in the balance midway through the second period, a long centre from Pat Casey reached Paddy Dennehy who careered goalwards before unleashing a pile driver to the Kilcummin net, a score which proved crucial to the eventual outcome.

Spa were now crowned O'Donoghue Cup champions in their first season in senior ranks. Bonfires blazed and the team savoured a notable victory which paved the way for further success.

At a meeting in September 1966, it was decided to initiate a championship (which nowadays is the format for the O'Donoghue Cup) and, after defeating Dr Crokes in the opening round, Spa went on to defeat Gneeveguilla in the final of this competition, on Easter Sunday 1967.

The panel of players which lined out in those competitions included: Mick Kissane, RIP, Denny Doolan, Jack Morris, James Gleeson, Johnny "Batt" Cronin, Donie O'Sullivan, (capt), Fr Michael O'Donoghue, Pat Casey, Tom Morris, Brian Fenton, Mick Gleeson, Mickey Cronin, RIP, Sean Moynihan, Paddy Dennehy, RIP, John Kelly, Sean O'Sullivan, Timmy Joe O'Sullivan, RIP, John "Dunn" O'Donoghue, RIP, Joe McAuliffe, Dan Joe "Farmer" O'Sullivan, Johnny Doolan, Flossy McCarthy, Seanie Moynihan, Denis Fenton, RIP, Connie Doolan, John Joe Foley RIP. Selectors: Tadhg O'Sullivan, RIP, Con Doherty, RIP, Mick Fitzgerald, RIP.

While 50 long years have elapsed since that August evening, in Fitzgerald Stadium, when a Spa side comprised of youth and experience won for the club the first of their ten O'Donoghue Cup titles, this is still the victory which is often recalled when games in bygone days are being discussed.

Hopefully, despite the fact that many of the stars of that era have passed to their eternal reward, this victory will be celebrated later in 2016.

John Kelly

SPA man's son stars for Dublin

Interest among Spa people, and Kerry folk in general, in the 2015 All-Ireland football final between Kerry and Dublin was heightened by the fact that Brian Fenton lined out at midfield for the metropolitans.

His father, also Brian, hails from the Spa area and is a former player with the club. Now retired, Brian Senior was member of the Garda Siochana, based in Dublin.

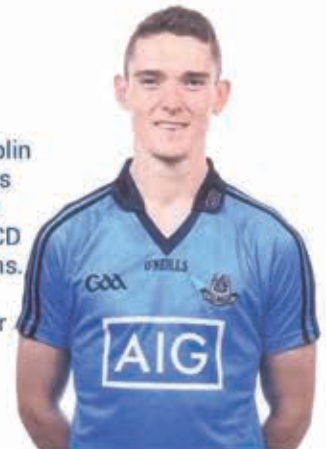
Not only was Brian playing in his first All-Ireland, 2015 was also the year in which he established himself as a member of the Dublin team. He performed brilliantly on the day and made a huge contribution to the Dublin victory, also being honoured with the RTE Sunday Game Man of the Match award.

It was an emotional occasion in many ways for the 22-year-old as he remembered his late mother, Marian, who had died only two years previously. "She remains quite the motivation for me. It was an emotional time at the final whistle.

As might be expected, his father was always keen for him to play football. "The Kerry blood definitely helps," he noted with a smile after the All-Ireland.

"It's definitely something that was built into me. I'm lucky in a way. I was lucky to have him (father). He's always there for me. He's been brilliant. My main support, my main man." Brian, who played Sigerson Cup football with UCD, has a degree in physiotherapy.

He has also credited legendary Dublin GAA figure, the late Dave Billings, as being key to his rapid development as a player. Another influence in UCD was former Dublin star Brian Mullins. Brian Fenton is a member of the Raheny club, which includes former Dublin midfielder Ciaran Whelan among its notables and for whom Brian has high regard.



Clearly a dedicated and talented player with a bright future, Brian surely has a long career ahead with the Dubs and will, in all probability, continue to be a thorn on the side of Kerry and many other leading teams.

He visits Killarney regularly and enjoys meeting his relatives and friends from Spa.

Another player of Kerry pedigree on the 2015 Dublin team was Cian O'Sullivan, whose father, John, is a Kilgarvan native and whose mother, the former Noreen Casey, is from Ballyhar. Cian has relatives in the Spa area.

Both Brian and Cian also won All-Star awards for their performances in 2015.

Donald Hickey



Reflection on SPA GAA Club and the legacy of Tadhg O'Sullivan



I must admit to being distracted as I settle myself to write these few words. An 'earworm' has invaded, is playing havoc and isn't inclined to vacate the premises. There's no need for readers to be revolted by my own personal hygiene standards. If you're not familiar with the term, let me explain. The origin of the word was in the early 1990's and it refers to a catchy piece of music that, after hearing, repeats again and again in a person's conscience. There's no distracting from it!

This morning brought the sad news of the tragic demise of popular rock icon David Bowie. Since hearing the news, I've fallen victim to stuck-song syndrome. Readily identifiable tracks such as 'Oh! You Pretty Things' and 'Changes' are in repeat play on this particular frequency all day. Throughout the day many tributes have been shared and the artists 'legacy' has been mentioned frequently in the discourse following the unexpected and disappointing revelation.

With all the talk around the centenary of the 1916 Rising or, maybe due to my status as a father facing middle- age, I have been thinking about the concept of 'legacy' too often to be normal lately, certainly to an unhealthy degree.

Aside from the Easter Rising centenary, 2016 marks a number of other significant anniversaries which you probably unaware of. Easter Saturday, March 26th, marked the tenth anniversary of the official opening of Spa Sports Hall and Clubhouse facilities. It does not seem ten years since former Uachtarán C.L.G, Seán Kelly M.E.P. and the then Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism, John O'Donoghue, joined us to celebrate a milestone in our history, an occasion marking the culmination of an absolutely inspiring community effort.

As in all communities, leadership was required to initiate, navigate and complete a project of such a scale. Our facilities now stand symbolic of the spirit and commitment of a community and also represent a vision which progenitors of the project dedicated themselves to. In the decade since the dream became reality, multiple individual and team national titles have been welcomed back to our new home.

These titles were achieved both on and off the playing fields, as our members have and continue to excel in sporting and cultural pursuits. Many days and nights of a social flavour have been enjoyed. Our Sports Hall is a fine facility for our teams to have access to and is a significant revenue generator.

In his notes acknowledging the occasion back in 2006, Seán Kelly wrote that:

"Spa is ready for another generation and another era of glory. How proud your founding fathers must be, especially stalwarts like the God of Spa, the late Tadhg O'Sullivan and that wonderful gentleman and sportsman, the late Donie O'Leary. It's great to see the ideals they cherished still being adhered to."

I never saw either man in action on the playing fields, nor was I part of any club meetings where they would, undoubtedly, offer wise counsel. I did witness both support Spa teams and their passion was clear for all to see.

Recent research and casual inquiry, more than anything else, has informed me of incredible influence both men had in progressing our club, enhancing life in the community and inspiring others into action.

Eighty years ago, in 1936, Tadhg O'Sullivan was selected at wing back on the Kerry team to play Mayo at the official opening of Fitzgerald Stadium. He also played intercounty football for Dublin and Wicklow.

Fifty years ago, in 1966, Tadhg, originally of Knockragh, became chairman of Spa GAA Club. He would hold the position until 1983. That same year (1966) Spa won the O'Donoghue Cup for the first time. All written sources claim that this was unexpected from a young team, many of whom were U21.

The club won seven during his chairmanship, as well as its first County Intermediate championship in 1974. He led the club with prudence and determination to finance and finalise the purchase of our current home from the O'Keeffe family, who themselves had generously let the club use their land for a playing field for a number of years.

In a souvenir match programme, brought out for the occasion of the opening of the original Spa complex in May 1979, Tadhg was sure to acknowledge the event was "due to the hard work and dedication of voluntary workers who gave their time and their skill in a labour of love," adding that it was his "sincere hope that the youth of this area will maintain their involvement in our Gaelic games."

Anecdotes aren't needed to see that young people mattered to him. The facts suggest this certain truth. Prior to becoming chairman, Tadhg, as principal of Lissivigeen N.S., persuaded the East Kerry Board to begin the first juvenile competition in the area. This vision showed his belief in investment in youth. His team, Naoimh Mhuire, would be a nursery for Spa and some of his graduates would play a crucial role in the 1966 O'Donoghue Cup triumph.



Much has been written about him, but not so much in recent years. Mick Gleeson and John Kelly, both giants in their own right, have often articulated Tadhg's importance to club and community. Gladly, their words have been chronicled. After Tadhg retired from the position of club chairman, John Kelly wrote that he was more than a chairman, more like an "organiser in chief of the entire community". In the same publication, Mick Gleeson detailed that:

"Tadhg sought not the glorification of the self; rather did he expend his energies for the welfare of all. All for Tadhg was and is the community- Education, Sport, Water Scheme and so much more." Mick described Tadhg as having "possessed an intolerance for half-heartedness," as well as having both "an affinity with the person who was prepared to make the effort" and a "commitment to youth, to sport and above all else to human beings and life". I quote both men from an interesting booklet that was brought out by the club in to coincide with the centenary of the G.A.A. in 1984. True to form, John Kelly dedicated time to edit that particularly informative history of the club.

It's vital that in the future members of the Spa community know of Tadhg and what he stood for. In years to come who will tell of the rich legacy which this Spa "God" left and of the community spirit which he led and inspired? We must ensure that the current (and future) youth of the community know of our own iconic figure. We are all proud of our Spa identity, proud to belong to a community that has enriched our lives. Part of identity is being aware of what has made us what we are. Tadhg is central to that.

Ten years after our complex was opened, fifty years after he began his eighteen year chairmanship (the most successful in the history of the club), is it time to give Tadhg O'Sullivan's name a permanent place on the building which was bravely pursued and completed in the spirit he advocated?

The late Dermot Fleming, originally of Tiernabouli, aptly wrote in 2000 that the Spa identity is characterised by "idealism, courage, gaiety and rebelliousness."

If it was ever decided to name our club complex or ground after Tadhg O' Sullivan, future generations will be told that Spa G.A.A. Club is a community where there is a vision, but also where there is an intolerance for half-heartedness, where there is an affinity for the willing and where there is a commitment to youth, to sport and to life.

Another well-known tune, 'Golden Years', takes its place as part of David Bowie's substantial artistic legacy. In the song he reassures a loved one: "Come get up my baby, look at that sky, life's begun Nights are warm and the days are young"

Tadhg oversaw the golden years in the young days of Spa. Those who have carried on in his spirit have helped create an environment that should help to bring about another era of glory. Encouraging steps have been taken. There cannot be any standing still. In 2016, whether we choose to honour Tadhg O'Sullivan or not, his legacy remains in the heart of Spa. Let us hope that his name will too be recognised and remembered by future Spa members and that future activists, in all their endeavours, will be inspired by his incredibly selfless community spirit.

Kieran Herlihy



Spa Senior Football Team 2010, All Ireland Finalists, in Croke Park. Back (L-R): B Russell, Dr G Stack, A O'Reilly, M Finnegan, S Fenton, S Lynch, A Garnett, K Herlihy, F Clifford, P Murphy, K Healy, A Cahill, H O'Donoghue, M O'Donoghue, C Tobin, A O'Sullivan, A O'Sullivan, P Russell, J Morris, M McAuliffe (selector), J Kelly (physio). Front (L-R): S Moynihan (manager), W Cahill (selector), P Cronin, S Devane, C Cronin, C Gleeson, T Lynch, J Devane, N O'Mahony (captain), E Cronin, D O'Sullivan, B Gleeson, MP Doherty, P Kelleher, P Casey.



The White Bridge - Where It All Began



Whitebridge: Waiting for the Creamery, not far from the Woodford in 1940

"The land that we dreamed of would be of a people who valued material wealth only as a basis for right living. Of a people who were satisfied with frugal comfort and devoted their leisure to the things of the spirit--a land whose fields and villages would be joyous with the sounds of industry, with the romping of sturdy children, the contest of athletic youth..."

While the aforementioned romantic vision address by Eamon De Valera, on St Patrick's Day 1943, was never fully realised, it could well describe the rural Ireland of the 1940's which many of the older generation alive today experienced and lived through. World War 2 was raging across Europe and, while Ireland remained neutral, it did not escape the harsh reality of that terrible war, with bombs being dropped in Belfast, North Strand, in Dublin, and Wexford.

Food and fuel were rationed and members of the farming community were obliged to give one-third of their total acreage to the growing of wheat and potatoes to help maintain an adequate supply of food for the nation.

Oblivious to such happenings abroad, the community around Lissivigeen developed their own level of self-sufficiency. Milk realised 4p to 6p a gallon at the travelling creamery, which came daily to the White Bridge; wheat was sown, threshed and taken to Eadie's Mills, Ballymalis, to be ground into flour; where possible, a pig was reared and killed and turkeys sold at the Christmas market.

The area had two shops, Jamesy O'Donoghue's, which sold everything from household goods to food, farm utensils and paraffin oil for the tilly lamp. Dave Daly, at Lissivigeen Cross, doubled as a shopkeeper and harness maker. Up the Mallow Road, Mike Moloney ran a harness making business.

The local national school was then a four-teacher establishment, which provided a satisfactory level of education to the youth of the community. At that time, secondary education was deemed a luxury for those who could afford it.

Owen O'Keefe and, later, his son, Arthur, very generously provided playing facilities for the pupils and it was common practice to see a group of lads mount the nearest wall and engage in a game of football in the nearest of O'Keefe's fields. I have often wondered if those of us who availed of this facility fully appreciated this gesture by the O'Keefe family.

The late 1940's saw the erection of a Macra Na Feirme Hall, again on O'Keefe's land, and it was here that regular social events were held, as well as lectures on farming and woodwork classes organised by the VEC in Kerry. A notable event to be held in this hall was a celebration to honour the Lissivigeen set which won the annual set dancing competition in Barraduff hall, in 1953.

While the older generation offered prayers and novenas for the ending of the war, Lissivigeen played its part in defending the area in case of an invasion. We always felt safe as we witnessed the members of the LDF (Local Defence Force) march into Killarney, each Sunday morning, to be put through their paces by an Irish Army officer.

Apart from the social activities in the Macra hall, Tom Cooper's cinema became the mecca for film-goers. I can well recall the throngs that packed the cinema during the screening of *The Dawn*, a local film produced and directed by Tom Cooper himself and based on the War of Independence. There was a local link with *The Dawn* as one of the chief characters, namely Brian Malone, was laid to rest in O'Keefe's field overlooking the old school.

The Hall Hotel, now The Killarney Heights (which has a link with a former President of the GAA Sean Kelly), was a popular hostelry for the local lads.

The area also has a long GAA tradition dating back to the 1900's when two footballers from Lissivigeen, Denis and Thado O'Keefe, donned the county colours in 1900 and 1901 and also won three county championships with Dr Crokes. But for the fact that they both emigrated prior to 1903, they surely would have figured on the team which won Kerry's first All-Ireland title that year.

This GAA tradition continued through the 1900's until 1947 when, due to retirements and emigration, Lissivigeen became defunct and the current Spa club was founded in 1948, carrying on the great tradition of the GAA in the area.

Each Sunday afternoon and during the long summer evenings, the youth of the area would assemble at The White Bridge on a pitch made available by the McGillicuddy family. After the game, the evening would conclude with a dance on the bridge.

The team, which competed regularly in East Kerry competitions and in seven-a-side competitions, had a huge input from local families such as Doherty's, O'Donoghues, O'Keeffes, Cronins, Moynihans, Healys, O'Sullivans, Gleesons and Loughnanes. The late Pat Doherty often recalled that if he blew a whistle he could assemble the Lissivigeen team within half an hour, as they all resided in close proximity.

Because of tough times, football boots and togs were not always readily available, and it was common practice for women to convert flour bags into togs for the lads.



The late Arthur D O'Keefe once proclaimed that the Lissivigeen team was one of the first in Ireland to enter into the realm of sponsorship, as they appeared regularly in gear bearing brand names such as "Pride Of Erin" and "Sunburst" which in that era were popular brands in the flour manufacturing business. St Stephen's Day marked the annual trip to Gneeveguilla to plays the locals and attend a dance later in one of the local dance halls.

While the area met the criteria for self-sufficiency, it had one serious deficit - namely the lack of a proper water supply. Local lore has it that a renowned Sliabh Luachra poet once commented that he was unable to source a proper drink of good "spring water" when travelling through the area. A pump was situated half ways between The Cross and Jamesy O'Donoghue's shop, but apparently this was very ineffective during the warm summers.

Conscious of the need to address this serious situation, a committee was formed in the mid-1960s and, with the financial aid of a Group Water Scheme as well as pick axes, shovels and local endeavour, a half-mile of plastic piping was laid to bring water from the river Flesk to a reservoir in Eugie Scannell's land. For the first time, water was available locally on tap.

The bombing of Pearl Harbour, Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought the World War to an end in 1945 and, once again, white bread, tomatoes, bananas and oranges were appearing in local shops. The travelling creamery was replaced by a unit of the Dairy Disposal Board, at Cloghane and, with the advent of the showbands and rock 'n roll, the Macra hall became defunct.

As stated, emigration and retirements brought down the curtain on the Lissivigeen football club, but the members still active, including Mick Healy and Arthur D and Ted O'Keefe, gave their allegiance to the fledging Spa club, figuring on both senior and junior teams in subsequent years. The ending of the war also brought an end to the activities of the local LDF, now replaced with an active Community Alert Branch.

The four-teacher school has been replaced by a new fourteen-teacher school to meet the education needs of an expanding local community and the area now has its own pub and hotel.



Maurice Casey, manager of the San Francisco u14 Girls who competed in the All Ireland Féile in 2014, presenting Chairman Ger Mangan and Mayor of Killarney John Joe Culloty with a commemorative framed jersey.

There you have it - the story of how a local community surmounted the hardships of one of Ireland's most depressed economic periods by working in harmony to make their community a better place. And, while many who danced in the local Macra hall and donned the black and white jerseys of the Lissivigeen team have passed to their eternal reward, they have left us a legacy to be treasured. As we pass The White Bridge, memories of times past come flooding back. It was there it all began...

John Kelly



All Ireland winning Kerry Junior Team 2012. Included are Spa members Sean Moynihan (Kerry Junior Manager), Willie Cahill (Selector) and players Andrew Garnett, Michael (Stam) O'Donoghue and Niall O'Mahony.



James Devane, Spa Schools Officer, with Laura O'Carroll at the Annual School's Blit.



Rambling House in Spa. Cupán Tae anyone? Sheila McCarthy, Mary Culloty, Ann Mangan, Ray O Sullivan, Cathy O Sullivan, Mary Kenneally and Eileen Aherne.



Members of the Social Initiative Programme: John Kelly, Sean Kelliher, Jim Gleeson, Sean O'Sullivan



Club Sponsorship from Dalys Supervalu Supermarket Ger Mangan, John Daly and Shane Lynch



Mayor of Killarney John Joe Culloty with the 2015 All Ireland winning Scór na nÓg Quiz Team and Figure Dancers



Brendan Downes, GM of the Torc Hotel, presenting the Coaching Committee and juvenile members with sponsorship for the Coiste na nÓg Academy on Saturdays



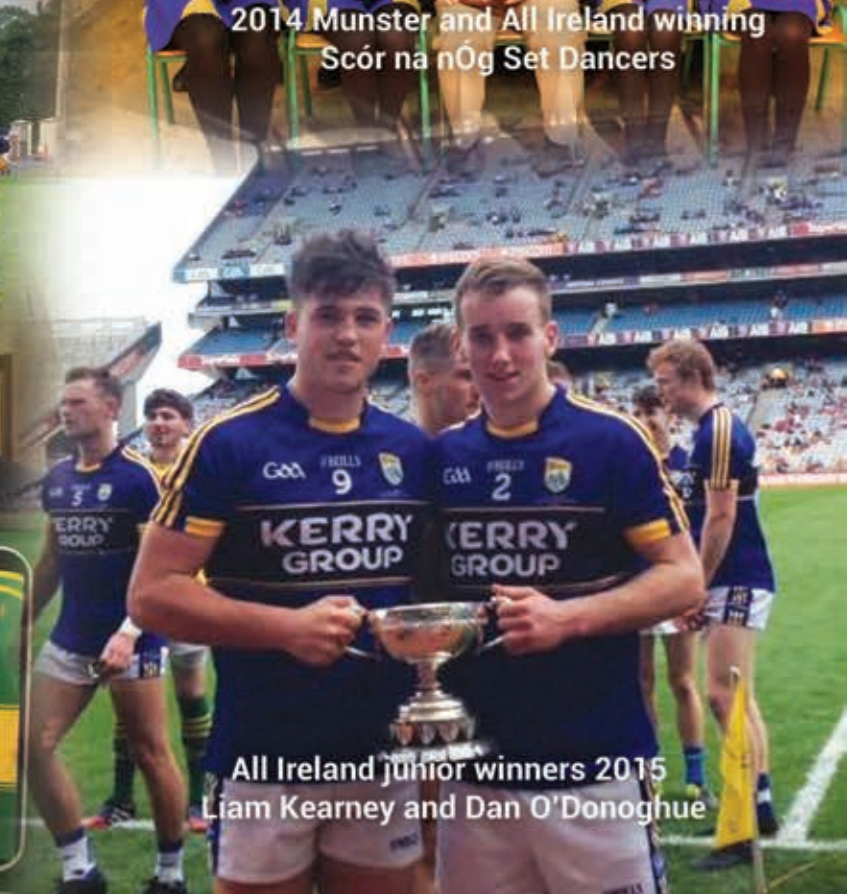
2014 Munster and All Ireland winning Scór na nÓg Set Dancers



Co. Junior League Group 2 Champions 2015



Chairman Ger Mangan making a special presentation to 2015 All Ireland winning Kerry Minors Evan Cronin and Michael Foley



All Ireland junior winners 2015 Liam Kearney and Dan O'Donoghue