

Le Chêile

Community Magazine



February 2019

No. 372

EDITORIAL

February 1st marks the beginning of Spring in the Celtic calendar. Internationally it begins in March. St. Brigid's Day replaced the pagan feast of 'Imbolc', which celebrated the new lambs, 'bolg' being the belly in Gaelic and with it went the indications of pregnancy and fertility. With Spring came the primrose and a host of new life. The word 'Spring' we are told is of Indo-European origin -the language which preceded all the languages of Europe and Asia. It is said to come from 'Spreng', meaning rapid movement, as in the Irish 'spreag se amach' ('he jumped out'). It also applies to a brisk flow of water from the ground and in a general way to the beginning of things. Surprisingly it is said that the use of the word to designate the season did not commence until 16th century, replacing the previous term 'Lent'. The etymological meaning of Lent is 'long days'. I hope that gets you up and running and ready for the challenges ahead.

With the arrival of February a sneaking optimism creeps into our everyday lives, with the lengthening of the days, the nest-building activity of the crows, etc. It is time to stir ourselves and take a positive view of the on-coming year. Hopefully it will be a successful one for all of us, both individually and in our community undertakings. The Community Council, as usual had it's A.G.M. on the last Monday of January and a renewed and enthusiastic committee is gearing up to face the challenges of the year ahead (it' 46th), the challenges of Community Games, improvements to the Abbey, Heritage, etc.

The Musical & Dramatic Society is busy getting ready for its next Musical (Funny Girl). The St. Patrick's Day Com-

mittee are targeting the 17th March. The G.A.A. Has had it's 135th A.G.M. and is still serving the community.

CALENDAR

Saturday 9th February

Clane & Rathcoffey Community Games Swimming Competition in the K Leisure Pool, Caragh Road, Naas from 5.30 -6.30pm. Be at the pool at 5.00. [Entry forms will be distributed to the 5 schools of the Area on Mon. 4th]. No late entries on the day. See Notice Board in the Street.

Wednesday 13th February

Clane Local History Group present a Talk by John McLoughlin 'Lord Rosse (Birr Castle/ Telescope) and his immense contribution to Science' in Clane GAA Club 8pm. Admission is free and all are welcome.

Monday 25th February

Monthly Meeting of Clane Community Council in the Evergreens Room of the Abbey Community Centre. Commencing 8 pm.

CLANE & RATHCOFFEY COMMUNITY GAMES SWIMMING

Will be at the K LEISURE POOL (off the Naas-Caragh Road) on Saturday 9th Feb. Between 5.30 and 6.30 pm. It is essential to be there at 5 pm. Entry forms will be available at the 5 schools in our area on Monday 4th Feb. Those residing

EDITOR'S DEADLINE

The deadline for receipt of material for the March issue of Le Chéile is

Monday 18th February

To 142 Loughbollard please.

Tel. 045-868474.

E-mail: mcevoyclane@gmail.com

Get Le Chéile on www.clanecommunity.ie

within the area but attending schools outside may obtain forms by phoning 045 868474. (Make early contact as entry forms will not be accepted at the Pool.)

Preparations are being made for the 2019 Community Games. Anyone interested in helping please contact:- Martina at 0872022298

CLANE LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Clane Local History Group will present a Talk by John Mc Loughlin 'Lord Rosse (Birr Castle/Telescope) and his immense contribution to Science' in Clane GAA Club on Wednesday 13th February 2019 at 8pm.

Admission is free and all are welcome.

CLANE TENNIS CLUB

We are glad to announce that our Sports Capital Project commenced in January and we hope to have it completed by June.

Includes installation of 2 "Midi Courts" for 6 to 8 yrs.,

Resurfacing of 3 courts with All Weather Synthetic carpet and extension to clubhouse with patio.

Clane Tennis Club has over 130 Adult members and 185 Juniors playing throughout the year and members of KARE and pupils of Clane Schools also availing of our facilities.

Total cost will be €160,000 of which the club will receive €105,000 from Sports Capital Programme. We will of course need to raise funding over the coming year and our committee will be organising various events.

We will have top class facilities with 5

All Weather, Floodlight courts and 6 teams competing in Dublin and Kildare leagues.

Membership is now open to all with Special offer of 2 Months free for new members to end March 2020. Call to club any Tues. evening for details.

The club is also participating with Town and Village Renewal and wants to play our part in improving facilities with landscaping etc.

Look us up on Facebook for all information.

Clane Golf Club notes- February

Competition Results for January:

Christmas Holiday Competition- 2 best 9 holes Stableford:

First: Tommy Carew (9) 45 pts.
Second: Felix McKenna (23) 43 pts.

Third: Eamonn Howlin (15) 41 pts.

W/E 4- 10th January- 9 Hole Stableford

First: Noel Cruise (20) 25 pts.
Second: Eamonn Howlin (15) 24 pts.

W/E 11TH January- 9 Hole Stableford, Spring League.

First: Felix McKenna (23) 25 pts.
Second: Anthony Dunne (17) 23 pts.
Third: Padraic Rooney (13) 23 pts.

W/E 18TH January- 9 hole Stableford, Spring League.

First: Tom Bryan (23) 24 pts.
Second: Noel Cruise (21) 23 pts.
Third: James Malone (21) 22 pts.

Spring League teams first three leaders

Seamus Carew, Bernard Campbell & Tom Bryan 87 points
Maurice Byrne (Captain), Ted Murray &

Felix McKenna 85 points
Padraic Rooney, William Lacey & James
Malone 84 points.

See our website: www.clanegolfclub.ie-
**See video of an aerial view of the golf
course.**

Forthcoming events:

- Mass for deceased members at
Clongowes Church 8.00 a.m. on Sun-
day 24th February.
Captain's (Mr. Maurice Byrne) Drive
-in follows after the 8.00 a.m. Mass
on Sunday 24th February"
- Captain's (Mr. Maurice Byrne) Drive
-in follows after the 8.00 a.m. Mass
on Sunday 24th February.
- There are a few places available for
new members & we particularly en-
courage younger members to join &
annual subscription is very attractive-
ly low.
- Play golf when you want- you don't
have to put your name on a time
sheet. Enjoy your golf without pre-
booking or waiting!

Eamonn Howlin
Club Secretary
Phone: 087 1215 396.

THE EVERGREENS

What a happy feeling that Spring is around
the corner -leaving behind the dark and
dreary days of Winter. Yes life and nature
are emerging once more bringing new hope
and gladness to our hearts. I Can already see
crocuses, snowdrops and daffodils ("tossing
their heads in sprightly dance") in gardens
and hedgerows all around me and even ce-
rise cyclamen peeping above ground.

Its late this year the holy season of
Lent, Easter being 21st April -the most
important feast of the Christian Calendar,
as we recall the death of Jesus and then his
rising to new life. February is an important
month with so many feast days. We have
1st February St. Brigid, 2nd Candlemas
Day and one of the most important days -
the 11th, which is the feast day of Our La-
dy of Lourdes -healing day of the sick. Our
Lady appeared to St. Bernadette several
times entrusting her with amazing messag-
es -she was to be Our Lady's ambassador
to call the world to prayer, penance, pil-
grimage and conversion -a wonderful saint
indeed to evoke with our problems on 11th
February.

Hope WYD went well this year, it
being from 22nd Jan.—27th. This time
Winter was chosen for it so as to avoid
Panama's Summer rainy season. Pope
Francis' message was very important at this
special chosen place.

We Evergreens have settled back
after our Christmas break and are looking
forward to our various activities ahead for
the new year -and these are many. I'm sure
there are many more senior citizens who
would like to join us, so do come along on
Tuesdays at 2.30—4.30. A Céad Míle
Fáilte awaits you.

We would like to wish the inimita-
ble Mary Dunne and her harh working St.
Patrick's Day team all the very best for the
St. Patrick's Day Parade. As we all know,
this is a Day of Days for young and old
alike and there's something for everyone-
entertainment of all kinds -caint, craic,
ceól, comhrá and what have you. We also
wish CMDS the very best -these talented
artistes supreme are rehearsing for their
next musical "Funny Girl".

Slán go foil agus go neirí go geal libh.

Maureen Spain (PRO)

I.C.A.

The final activities of 2018 were the annual Christmas Draw & the Senior Citizens' Party. The Draw was held on Dec. 6th in the KARE Centre. The lucky winners were -Paddy Naughton, Nathan Losty, Julie Doyle, Sinéad Lynch and Dan O'Brien. Sincere thanks to all who so generously supported same. On Sunday 9th we gladly welcomed one hundred plus local ladies and gents to the annual 'get together' in the G.A.A. Centre. This happy group blended perfectly and were a pleasure to entertain. A number of guests did their own part and sang some old favourites, adding to the enjoyment. Of course, Richie Hayden kept his lively music flowing all afternoon and created a great party atmosphere. The usual willing band of volunteers helped everything to run smoothly - Caroline and the cheerful students from Scoil Mhuire did Trojan work. 'Peter the Great' carried out the role of Santa Claus -which he has perfected at this stage, with a merry twinkle in his eye. Last but not least, sincere thanks to the G.A.A. Club and staff for (once again) use of the venue and facilities, without which, this Happy Day would not be possible.

We are easing back into our Thursday night gatherings, the first of which was on January 17th at the KARE Centre.

Belated Happy 2019 to all.

For information please contact:
Hon. Sec. Eileen O'Brien (086 3447803)

P.R.O. M. O'Connor.

CLANE COMHALTAS

Music lessons started back on Tuesday 22nd January in Scoil Mhuire, Clane from 6.15 pm--8.15 pm.

Tin whistle, fiddle and flute. For more information contact 087 266 0509.

CLANE COMHALTAS SESSION on the last Friday of every month in Clane G.A.A.
All welcome.

CLANE G.A.A.

Clane Get Fit

Earlier this month more than 192 people were at Clane GAA to sign up to this years Get Clane Fit program! After the first weeks activities they have lost a combined 260 Kgs (just over 40 stone). That's an incredible achievement and shows what can be achieved through, determination, teamwork and hard graft. A big thank you to our main sponsors Condron's Super Valu, Clane.

In addition a big thank you to our local businesses and fitness clubs who have got involved in such a great community program; thanks to the Westgrove Leisure Centre , Benny's All Aspects Gym, Zumba with Leanne, Mariesa Kennedy Pilates , Ken's Invigorate Gym, Clane Boxing/Kickboxing in the industrial estate, SuperValu nutritionist Fiona, Physio Tony Coffey and many many more. Such a great effort from the participants and their team captains, the first of many life changing weeks.

Well done to all from Clane GAA.

TOMMY CONNEFF

The following article was first published in Le Chéile Feb. 1975. This year marks the 109th

anniversary of the death of Clane's famous athlete in 1910.

Tommy Conneff was born at the forge in Kilmurry in 1866. The original house no longer stands but on older maps it is shown between the present Conneff residence and the road.

Little is known of him as a boy except that he was small in stature. When fully grown he only reached five feet five inches. He had short-cropped sleek black hair and was by reputation quiet, hardworking and diligent. As a lad of 18 he watched his first sports meeting in Clane in June 1884. Tradition has it that this was in the 10 acre field opposite the Dispensary or Doctor's House on the Ballinagappa Road, now the John Sullivan Wheelchair Centre. The field of course is now the site of Oatfield Estate. Up until the fifties at least it was still known to some as the "sports field". The sports meeting of June 1884 must have been a great occasion if we can compare it to the sports meeting of July 17th 1887, the published list of winners of which takes up half a page in the Leinster Leader. The organizers were Dr. John O'Connor, M.D., Clane and James Kelly, who worked as a baker in Celbridge and lived on the side avenue into Clongowes. The last surviving contestant that the writer can account for was a very old man, Billy Reddy who died over fifty years ago and who along with his sister Agnes, owned the two storey thatched house and shop which stood on the site where Londis is now.

A single event can have a significance that defies imagination. Out of this sports meeting was to grow an athletics career which was to capture the imagination of millions and out of which international records were to be set up, some of which were to last for a life-

time. On the local level it led to the establishment of the Clane Gaelic Athletic Club, formerly known as "William O'Briens" This was established in 1884 and O'Connor and Kelly were its first Chairman and Secretary. This of course was the year of the establishment of the G.A.A. nationally and Dr. O'Connor was one of those present at the inaugural meeting in Thurles.

In passing it must be commented that these major athletic meetings, which were popular in almost every parish 140 years ago drew huge crowds and were focused mainly on young men, amongst whom were a number of celebrity contestants. Wagering was an essential part of the proceedings and it drew huge crowds and huge enthusiasm.

In June 1885 Conneff made his debut on the home track. He failed in the sprints, for which he never possessed the essentials of height and weight, but won the 440 yards and half mile races from runners of provincial repute. Later that season he won the half mile and mile at Carbury and the mile events in Kilcock and Celbridge. His best performance that year was his contest over half a mile with J.J. Manning, the Irish distance champion of his day, at Monasterevan. He had twenty yards start and was beaten by three yards in 2 mins. 0 2/5 secs., not a bad time any day under the conditions which prevailed. Subsequently he ran another great race against a noted Leinster runner at Kildare. That finished his first year's experience, and it was not an unworthy prelude to a great career.

Conneff made his first appearance at a major Dublin meeting in June 1886, in his 20th year, taking the half mile at the Caledonian Games, Ballsbridge, with an 18 yard advantage in moderate time. Next month, in the colours of Haddington Harriers, he won the Irish Amateur Athletic Association Cham-

pionships at 880 yards and a mile in 2 mins. 0 2/5 Sec. and 4 mins. 32 2/5 sec., respectively on a rain soaked track. In June 1887 he secured a "hat-trick" at Limerick, taking the 880, one mile and two miles, now being attached to Inchicore Gaelic Club. Incidentally, "Conneff Corner" in the Inchicore district is named after Tommy. He went on to win the I.A.A.A. four miles at Ballsbridge on 23rd July in 20 min. 55 4/5 sec., an Irish record. At this time Conneff was employed in the commercial department of the "Freeman's Journal".

His first international was at the Exhibition Grounds in Manchester in August 1887. Here he took on the English Champion, F. Mills and the visiting Anglo-American wonder runner, E.C. Carter. Conneff ran a tactical race and trailed the leaders in the two mile event like a shadow. Mills raced away from Carter around the final bends and was hailed by the 40,000 crowd as the easy winner. Conneff now commenced his effort. He streaked past Carter and set his sights on Mills. He narrowed the gap steadily until he established his supremacy over him too and swept through the tape with the remarkable time of 9 min. 45 4/5 sec. The athletic world was agog. Carter asked for another match, over four miles this time, and Conneff was willing. So on the 20th August, 1887 there were 20,000 in Ballsbridge to see what probably was the greatest race of all times on this island. Once more Conneff allowed Carter to make the pace and they ran the first mile in 4 min. 52 sec. Carter piled on the speed in the second mile but the "little lad" hung on, trailing him at his dead ease. The third mile was rattled off in record time. Down the back stretch, after the bell Carter charged away in a well timed sprint, assured of his victory. One can only imagine the surprise of this seasoned world champion when the little Irishman

made his bid and ran the American out of the race with a new World Record time of 19 min. 44 2/5 sec.

It is thought that it was Carter who persuaded Tommy Conneff to emigrate to America. On his departure he was presented with an illuminated address and a wallet of sovereigns by the Clane Gaelic Athletic Club or the William O'Briens as they were known at the time. There he enrolled with the Manhattan Athletic Club, and returned in June to win the English Mile Championship in Crewe. In early July he made an Irish Mile record of 4 min. 26 1/5 sec., and two days later, also in Ballsbridge, he beat his old opponent Carter over five miles by 240 yards. Tommy won the American 5 mile title in October, by almost half a mile, and the following year retained it, running the legs off the great Syd Thomas, English 4 and 10 mile holder. In September, 1890 in Montreal, Conneff took the Canadian 2 miles in record time and also took the 5 and 10 miles United States titles. 1891 saw him winning the 1 mile and 5 miles at New Orleans, the former by 40 yards from A.B. George and the latter by 10 yards from Carter, and he beat Carter by 75 yards for the Canadian 2 miles crown at Toronto. In September of that year he made the American mile record of 4 min. 21 2/5 sec. at Manhattan. At the Boston Games of August 1893, he broke the world record for the mile when he chalked up 4 min. 17 4/5 sec. He added an American 1/4 mile record at Bergen Point in September. He is reputed to have done the mile in 4 min. 10 sec. in training but this would not count. Despite this it is said that training was not his strong point and he was soon to go off it altogether. For the next two years he disappeared from the public eye. In 1895 friends persuaded him to train for a match between New York and London. This led to him setting up a

new world record for the mile of 4 min. 15 3/5 sec., which stood for 16 years. On August 21st he registered a new record for the 1/4 mile which lasted up until 1931(36 years). He could have bettered this but he was saving himself for the 3 miles, which he also won.

In 1896 he turned professional and ran a series of matches with F.E. Bacon at the Old Worchester Oval. In 1897 he met George Tincler over a mile and, although in poor condition and defeated, he forced Tincler to do 4 min. 15 1/5 sec. He was now 31 and far past his best. That race settled Conneff who, however was full of praise for his adversary, saying "I never knew how to run a mile till today. Tincler is the greatest runner I have ever met and I think he is capable of running the mile close to 4 min. 10 sec. I ran as well as ever I did and I am satisfied with the result".

When the Spanish-American war broke out he enlisted with the U.S. army and saw service in Cuba, Puerto Rico and later in the Philippines. It was from here that the report of his tragic death in Manila reached Ireland. The sporting world was in a state of shock. The Manila "Daily Bulletin" of October 11th 1910 carried the report of Sergeant Conneff's tragic death by drowning when he apparently fell into the Pasig river. He was described as a peaceful and passive man and very popular with his comrades. He was aged 44. The body was brought to San Francisco for burial in the national cemetery in the Presidio. It is fitting that Clane G.A.A. grounds should be called after Conneff. Their fates have been intertwined since 1884 and like Conneff winning everything there was to be won in football and hurling.