

Remembering **BENNETTSBRIDGE**
County Senior Hurling Champions of

1971



*Souvenir Booklet recalling
Bennettsbridge's 1971 County Senior Hurling Championship victory,
an the occasion of the team's reception by Coiste Co Chill Chainnigh,
at the 2021 County SH Final.*



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Fáilte



Tá áthas orm ar son Cumann Luthchleas Gael Cill Chainnigh fáilte a chur roimh the surviving members of Bennettsbridge, the Kilkenny Senior Hurling champions of 1971 ar ais go dtí UPMC Nowlan Park.

Following the year-long Covid enforced break from full attendances and Jubilee teams on our County Final Day, today's game takes place in a vastly changed venue from fifty years ago. Even by the time when Páirc Uí Nualláin UPMC was built céad bliain ó shin, the Bridge had made their mark winning their first Senior County Hurling title in 1890. Since then the success of the Bennettsbridge club through the forties and fifties has made it an integral part of the place. Ten years ago in 2011 we honoured the side's predecessors the "Bennettsbridge Giants of the 60's" after their wins of 1960, 62, 64, 66 and 67 with whom many of the 71 team grew up watching and others playing major parts with them.

Today the jubilee side that are being honoured in conjunction with the Springhill Court Hotel commenced their campaign with a first round 3-11 to 2-6 win over James Stephens, who then took the pre Back Door route of the Losers Group to the Semi-Final. The quarter final saw the Bridge's closest championship call as they came from seven points behind from the time of the current dara briseadh uisce against newly promoted Windgap. Played in Thomastown they eventually recorded a two point 7-3 to 4-10 victory into the Grennan Castle goal. The semi-final saw them record by a 3-12 to 3-6 win over their neighbours Young Irelands from Gowran before they captured their 12th title with a 3-10 to 1-7 win against the holders and the new kids on the block The Fenians.

In 1972, the year following the side's victory, the Bridge appeared in black and white in the first ever edition of the Kilkenny's Year Book where its cover was adorned by the Clubs McCarthy Cup winning captain Noel Skehan. The edition cost 40p and included the much understated Bennettsbridge Co-operative Creamery Advert for its "Choicest Creamery Butter" that added "The Home of Good Hurlers - Bennettsbridge".

To everyone, the Bennettsbridge teams of the era were way more than just Good Hurlers as they travelled the country to the main hurling counties attracting huge crowds and participating in and winning the great fete and carnival tournaments. Played for lavish prizes that included suit lengths, the games were the predecessors of the current Provincial and All Ireland Club Championships that the Bridge would surely have won.

Today, as we honour the green and gold hooped heroes that entertained so many and played a huge part in the promotion of hurling, their inspiration to the club's legacy has the club back at senior level. It has also seen the facilities expand and grow with the latest addition being the extensive club rooms. We also recall those who brought further honour to their county in winning All Ireland medals, captaining their county teams and winning All Stars and Player of the Year awards. Sadly Watt Kennedy, Paddy Treacy, Kevin Dunne, Mick Treacy and Martin Treacy of the historic team are no longer with us, but their achievements and friendships are still fondly recalled.

Sa deireadh, I extend Míle Buíochas to the Springhill Court Hotel and their Manager Emma Jayne Eaton for honouring the Jubilee team with their partners who will be provided with a special memento and a voucher for the occasion. Thanks also to our PRO Paul Fitzgerald and Gerry O'Neill the man behind Year Book and match programs for their work in researching and producing this leabhar álainn.

Tá súil agam go mbainfidh sibh taitneamh as an ócáid speisialta seo that renews and enhances the memories of those great days.

*Seamus Breathnach,
Cathaoirleach Coiste Contae Cill Chainnigh.*

Living in Kilkenny for over 14 years I have grown to be a passionate hurling fan.

It is a great pleasure to be representing the Springhill Court Hotel in sponsoring The Bennettsbridge, Senior Hurling County Champions 1971.

The Springhill Court Hotel has been working with Kilkenny GAA and honoured many famous teams over the past 25 years.

I would like to congratulate The Bennettsbridge, Senior Hurling County Champions 1971 and hope they have an enjoyable reunion day and I'm sure many stories will be shared again of the famous day 50 years ago.

I would like to wish the hurlers, their supporters and our many customers in attendance at today's games our very best wishes and I look forward to seeing two fantastic games of hurling.

Emma – Jayne Eaton

General Manager

Springhill Court Hotel Kilkenny



*Emma – Jayne Eaton
General Manager
Springhill Court Hotel*

Acknowledgement.

The programme committee wish to acknowledge the support of the Kilkenny People, whose match reports are used throughout.



THE LAST VICTORY OF A GOLDEN ERA

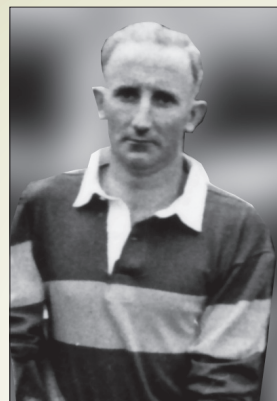
The victory in the 1971 County SH Final marked the last in a magnificent series of eleven titles won by a Bennettsbridge team which dominated Kilkenny club hurling over a period of a quarter of a century, from the fifties to the early seventies. They won these titles in 1952, 1953, 1955, 1956, 1959, 1960, 1962, 1964, 1966, 1967, and 1971, while also contesting the 1958, 1965, 1968, 1972 and 1974 finals.

The following is a brief history of Bennettsbridge hurling from the late Paddy Buggy:

In 1941, Ned Lyng arrived as Principal of Bennettsbridge N.S. Intensely committed to fostering a love of hurling, and with a keen eye for the promising young player, he entered the first Bennettsbridge school team in the Kilkenny Schools' League in 1943. The following year brought the first schools' title when Bennettsbridge beat Ballyhale in the final at Nowlan Park. The late Dick Carroll was captain and John McGovern was a prominent member of that team. So began a great hurling career and a great Bennettsbridge team that was to appear in 16 County finals between 1952 and 1974, winning 11 senior county titles. Remarkably, McGovern appeared on all 11 teams.

In 1946, Father Patrick Nugent was appointed as Curate in Bennettsbridge, and most would agree that his influence on the subsequent phenomenal success of the 'Bridge was crucial. From the moment of his arrival, he immersed himself in the affairs of the club and set himself the target of achieving a Kilkenny Senior Championship title. It is a matter of history now that he not only fulfilled this ambition but had seen the club win a Minor title in 1947, Junior titles in 1948 and 1951, six Senior titles by the time he was transferred to Cullohill in 1960. He was, undoubtedly, the master tactician behind the team, and the standards he set were of the very highest.

The practice ground for all 'Bridge teams was the property of Paddy O'Neill, a man of great involvement with club and county hurling. Known as the "Wood", no rent was ever required for its use. The Wood, historically significant in that William of Orange and his troops struck camp there in 1690, is today the site of Bennettsbridge's outstanding club grounds opened in 1989.



Sammy Carroll

On Sunday mornings in the 50's and 60's, the Wood was the scene of great activity as the young men of the area



SCHOOLS' HURLING CHAMPIONS 1944

Front: Jim Brennan, John McGovern, Terence Hayes. Dick Carroll (Capt.). John Kelly, Jim Dobbyn, Paschal Lyng.

Middle: Eamonn Jordan, John Norris. Frank Murphy; Paddy Kennedy, Tommy Martin, Joe Galway; Jackie Power, Billy Dobbyn.

Back: Rev. N. Sandvoss. C.C., Mr. Ned Lyng N.T., Ven. Archdeacon Drennan, P.P.



gathered to play hurling. As Johnny McGovern recalls, if there was no game in the afternoon, the players gathered in the field after 11 o'clock Mass, the hurls were thrown in a heap on the ground and Sam Carroll undertook the job of dividing them alternately into heaps until two teams were formed. Sam was one of the greatest club hurlers I have seen or played against, and evidently was also an astute off-the-field operator

for, as McGovern recollects, he invariably contrived to finish up on the stronger team!

Henry Drea, Matty Hayes, Dan Kennedy and Michael Kealy were other dedicated and efficient dub officials who had a major influence on the well-being of hurling in Bennettsbridge.



BENNETTSBRIDGE JUNIOR HURLING CHAMPIONS - 1951

*BACK: L. Ryan, L. Cleere, M. Kelly, P. Ryan, P. Lyng, M. Jackman, J. Wemyss, P. Kelly, J. Dobbyn, J. Carroll.
FRONT: R. Bolger, R. Galway, L. Hackett, T. Walsh, R. McGrath, J. McGovern, J. Nolan, M. Phelan.*



Bennettsbridge team who won the 1952 Kilkenny Senior Hurling Championship Final by beating Tullaroan, 5-3 to 4-5.

*Back: Liam Ryan, John Galwey, James Marnell, David DeLoughry, James Nolan, Patrick Ryan, Dan Kennedy, Michael Galwey, Rev. Father Nugent, C.C., Michael Jackman, Liam Egan, Michael Kealy, Secretary, James Dobbyn, James (Sam) Carroll.
Front: Richard Galwey, Liam Hackett, Richard Carroll, John McGovern (Captain), Michael Kelly, James Dowling, Thomas Walsh, William Dobbyn, Michael Phelan.*



JOHNNY McGOVERN

VETERAN OF ALL THE VICTORIES

From an article by Paddy Buggy In Kilkenny Yearbook 1996

JOHNNY McGovern is widely acclaimed as one of the most outstanding, most determined and soundest defenders in the history of hurling. If I was asked for one word to describe Johnny, it would be "consistency". He didn't know how to play

a bad game. Five foot eight inches tall and weighing a little over 11 stone, his was an outstanding career on the hurling fields of Ireland. He was, furthermore, a tremendous sportsman. I doubt if he ever took unfair advantage of any player during his long involvement with club and county.



Johnny McGovern was a star on the Kilkenny Minor teams of 1949 and 1950, winning the All-Ireland against Tipperary the second year. He won a Junior All-Ireland in 1951 and went on to win Senior All-Ireland medals in 1957 and 1963 when he played at centre-forward. He won a National League title in 1962, captained Leinster to Railway Cup honours in 1954, playing on Willie John Daly of Cork. He won five Leinster championships, two Oireachtas medals, played with the Rest of Ireland and is, of course, the holder of a record 11 County Championship medals with Bennettsbridge.

Johnny's first appearance with Kilkenny was against Antrim in the National League in 1952, and his involvement with the county ended in 1965. He won numerous tournaments with Bennettsbridge who were, in those days, more than a match for the best in the country, playing regularly against the likes of St. Vincent's, Glen Rovers, Thurles Sarsfields, Mount Sion, Blackrock, St. Finbarr's and the best of the Kilkenny clubs in the 50's and 60's. A great Tipp character, the late Jacksie Ryan, recalling the 'Bridge's tournament exploits throughout the county in those days, remarked that "In their day, they built more churches and schools than any team in the country."

Johnny's abundant hurling talents were well documented in the newspaper reports of his day. Some contemporary reports will help convey the esteem in which the 'Bridge man was held throughout the country in his heyday. From a report on the Kilkenny-Wexford Leinster Final of 1957:-

"At the end of the first quarter, scores were level, with Wexford attacking deep in the right flank of the Kilkenny defence. Suddenly, over from his post on the left wing swooped Johnny McGovern. He checked the Wexford raid, got the leather into his hand and, hopping the sliotar on his hurley, started diagonally upfield. Evading tackle after tackle, he broke out of Kilkenny territory, and as he approached midfield, he found himself in

the clear. There he balanced ball on stick in the best egg-and-spoon style and went speeding on. It was an inspired movement which placed the Wexford defence in a nasty dilemma: should they go to meet McGovern or let him come to meet them, or fall back to guard the goal; and it was while they momentarily hesitated that the stocky Bennettsbridge star reached the 50 yard mark and thence sent the leather sailing into the Wexford goalmouth. From that centre came Kilkenny's first goal, and so began the landslide of scoring which engulfed the champions' hopes in such spectacular fashion."

From 1959:-

"From his success with the Kilkenny Minor team in 1950 to the present time, the sturdy Bennettsbridge man, Johnny McGovern, has been consistently brilliant. Johnny has, through thick and thin, been top man in that part of the field which has been assigned to him. Even when the result was a foregone conclusion, he was still there battling away, beating his man and sending the ball into attack, as big-hearted a hurler as Kilkenny ever produced."

Johnny was injured by a very heavy tackle from the late Duck Whelan in the drawn All-Ireland final between Kilkenny and Waterford. Excellent as Waterford were, with such outstanding men as Flynn, Barron, Morrissey, Kiely,

Grimes, Walsh, Power, etc., I am convinced that there would have been no replay if Johnny had not to leave the field with a broken collar bone. Johnny played in the replay, but the shoulder was still very tender and he now believes that he should not have lined out on the second day. In any case, Waterford had a comfortable victory.

Other quotations extolling the excellence of McGovern are:-

"Unlike many noted Kilkenny hurlers from Lory Meagher to Jim Langton and Clohosey, McGovern is not a stylist. He doesn't delight you with the sweetly doubled overhead ball or the well-timed drop-puck, but his virtues are solid and substantial. He is first of all a worker, a dogged and determined bulldog type,





active and tireless. In physique he is stocky, but with strength and solidity of chest and shoulder. A quick and decisive tackler, he clears without hesitation, seldom venturing to lift and strike unless he has ample time to do so."

And again:-

"If one were to pick out a single incident from his many fine displays over those years which typifies the man's fighting spirit and will to win, one could hardly overlook his astonishing solo foray through the Tipp defence in the dying moments of the '58 semi-final, and the defiant point with which he crowned it."

The half-back line is a vital sector on any team, for an attack thwarted is an attack started. Johnny McGovern was sharp and incisive in the tackle. He never allowed an opponent to settle on the ball. His play was varied and while he was quick to clear

his lines, he would, when the occasions demanded, solo into the opposing half to place a team-mate or finish the move.

He considers that Tim Flood, Jimmy Doyle, Tim Sweeney, Jimmy Smyth and Jimmy O'Brien were the pick of the many outstanding forwards he played against on the inter-county scene.

Today, Johnny is retired from employment and resides with his wife at Bennettsbridge where his interest in Kilkenny hurling is as keen as when he played the game.

A quiet and popular man, he is admired and esteemed by the team-mates and opponents of other days who wish him well, with many years of health to enjoy his gardening and his travels through Kilkenny and neighbouring counties.

BENNETTSBRIDGE'S 17 COUNTY FINAL APPEARANCES

1890: John Cody, Pierce Cody, James Dunne, Michael Dullard, Michael Grady, John Kennedy, Michael Cranny, John Foley, Denis Foley, Thomas Nolan, Ml Holohan, M Shortall, Michael Greene, Thomas Greene, Thomas Power, W Doyle, Paul Doyle, P Reddy, P Finnigan, J Grady, J Dunne.

1952: Micky Phelan, Derek Galway, Liam Hackett, Jack Galway, Jim Nolan, Jim Dobbby, Johnny McGovern, Dan Kennedy, Tom Walsh, Mickey Kelly, Dick Carroll, Sam Carroll, Jimmy Marnell, Paddy Ryan, Jimmy Dowling. Sub: Mick Galway.

1953: Liam Cleere, Derek Galway, Jack Galway, Jim Dobbby, Jim Nolan, Tom Walsh, Johnny McGovern, Dan Kennedy, Jimmy Dowling, Mickey Kelly, Dan Kennedy, Sam Carroll, Liam Hackett, Paddy Ryan, Mick Galway.

1955: Liam Cleere, Derek Galway, Jack Galway, Joe Galway, Timmy Kelly, Billy Dobbby, Johnny McGovern, Sean Holden, Jimmy Dowling, Mickey Kelly, Dan Kennedy, Sam Carroll, Frankie Ryan, Liam Hackett, Mick Galway.

1956: Liam Cleere, Derek Galway, Jack Galway, Joe Galway, Paddy Moran, Timmy Kelly, Johnny McGovern, Jimmy Dowling, Mickey Kelly, Dick Carroll, Dan Kennedy, Sam Carroll, Sean Holden, Liam Hackett, Mick Galway.

1958: Tlarry Cleere, Derek Galway, Jack Galway, Joe Galway, Paddy Moran, Dick Carroll, Johnny McGovern, Jimmy Dowling, Sean Holden, Mickey Kelly, Tom Skehan, Sam Carroll, Frankie Ryan, Liam Hackett, Dan Kennedy. Subs: Billy Dobbby, Timmy Kelly.

1959: Liam Cleere, Martin Treacy, Jim Dobbby, Jack Galway, Seamus Cleere, Timmy Kelly, Johnny McGovern, Jimmy Dowling, Dick Carroll, Paddy Moran, Henry Drea, Sam Carroll, Mickey Kelly, Liam Hackett, Mick McCarthy.

1960: Liam Cleere, Martin Treacy, Jack Galway, Jim Dobbby, Paddy Moran, Seamus Cleere, Johnny McGovern, Dick Carroll, Jimmy Dowling, Mickey Kelly,

1890 Bennettsbridge 1-4, Callan 0-1.

1952 Bennettsbridge 5-3, Tullaroan 4-4.

1953 Bennettsbridge 3-11, Slieverue 3-6.

1955 Bennettsbridge 6-6, Mooncoin 1 -4.

1956 Bennettsbridge 2-8, John Lockes 3-3

1958 Tullaroan 1-12, Bennettsbridge 3-2,

1959 Bennettsbridge 4-6, Erin's Own 1 -4.

1960 Bennettsbridge 4-5, Glenmore 3-4.

1962 Bennettsbridge 5-7, Lisdowney 2-8.

1964 Bennettsbridge 4-9, Glenmore 1-4.

1965 Mooncoin 2-8, Bennettsbridge 1-8.

1966 Bennettsbridge 4-8, Mooncoin 2-4.

1967 Bennettsbridge 3-10, Thomastown 1-4.

1968 Rower Instiogie 3-9, Bennettsbridge 3-7.

1971 Bennettsbridge 3-10, Fenians 1-7.

1972 Fenians 3-10, Bennettsbridge 1-6.

1974 Fenians 0-10, Bennettsbridge 0-6.

Timmy Kelly, Sam Carroll, Frankie Ryan, Mick McCarthy, Sean Treacy.

1962: Liam Cleere, Martin Treacy, Liam Bennett, Jim Dobbby, Timmy Kelly, Seamus Cleere, Tom Lineen, Mick McCarthy, Paddy Moran, Mickey Kelly, John McGovern, Sam Carroll, Frankie Ryan, Dick Power, Dick Carroll.

1964: Liam Cleere, Martin Treacy, Tony Bennett, Jim Treacy, Larry Cleere, Seamus Cleere, Johnny McGovern, Paddy Moran, Tony Kelly, Noel Skehan, Dick Carroll, Sam Carroll, Sean Treacy, Mick McCarthy, Paddy Treacy.

1965: Liam Cleere, Martin Treacy, Tony Bennett, Jim Treacy, Timmy Kelly, Seamus Cleere, John McGovern, Larry Cleere, Paddy Moran, Jim Bennett, Tony Kelly, Sam Carroll, Noel Skehan, Dick Carroll, Paddy Treacy. Sub: Sean Treacy.

1966: Noel Skehan, Martin Treacy, Larry Cleere, Jim Treacy, Paddy Kealy, Seamus Cleere, Johnny McGovern, Paddy Moran, John Kinsella, Paddy Treacy, Jim Bennett, Sam Carroll, Noel Ryan, Tony Kelly, Mick McCarthy. Sub: Timmy Kelly.

1967: Noel Skehan, Martin Treacy, Larry Cleere, Jim Treacy, Paddy Kealy, Seamus Cleere, Johnny McGovern, Paddy Moran, Tony Kelly, John Kinsella, Jim Bennett, Sam Carroll, Noel Ryan, Mick McCarthy, Paddy Treacy.

1968: Noel Skehan, Martin Treacy, Larry Cleere, Jim Treacy, Paddy Kealy, Seamus Cleere, Johnny McGovern, Paddy Moran, Conor O'Brien, Pat Lalor, John Kinsella, Sam Carroll, Noel Ryan, Jim Bennett, Paddy Treacy. Sub: Liam Cleere.

1971: Noel Skehan, Conor O'Brien, Larry Cleere, Jim Treacy, Paddy Kealy, John Holohan, Pat Lalor, Paddy Moran, Wattie Kennedy, Christy Hayes, Paddy Treacy, John Kinsella, Noel Ryan, Kevin Dunne, Johnny McGovern.

1972: Noel Skehan, Conor O'Brien, Larry Cleere, Jim Treacy, Paddy Kealy, John Holohan, Pat Lalor, Paddy Moran, Phil Cullen, Wattie Kennedy, Jim Bennett, Christy Hayes, Noel Ryan, Kevin Dunne, Paddy Treacy. Sub: John Dowling.

1974: Noel Skehan, Phil Cullen, Larry Cleere, Jim Treacy, Paddy Kealy, John Holohan, Pat Lalor, Paddy Moran, John Dowling, Barry O'Brien, John Kinsella, Wattie Kennedy, Noel Ryan, Kevin Dunne, J Holohan. Subs: Paddy Treacy for K Dunne, Christy Hayes for J Dowling.



1971 COUNTY SH CHAMPIONSHIP CAMPAIGN - ROUND 1

'BRIDGE FINISH IN TYPICAL STYLE

Bennettsbridge 3-11, James Stephens 2-6

IN A GAME that fell below expectation, Bennettsbridge beat Stephens' by 3-11 to 2-6 in a senior hurling championship first round tie at Nowlan park on Sunday. The game was not quite up to the classic fare provided by the sides in last year's campaign but it was still very entertaining up to the closing five minutes. James Stephens were short seven of their regulars and they will be thankful for the losers' group which lets them back into the championship again when they will be stronger.

This was quite a workmanlike performance by Bennettsbridge who look capable of recapturing some of their former glory if the form of the young players promoted works out as expected. W. Kennedy, for example, who has left the junior side for the higher grade, was a distinct success in this game.

The hurling was rather patchy and it looked a cake walk for the winners when they led by 0-5 to 0-2 at the end of an unusually low-scoring first half while playing against a stiff wind. But James Stephens did not surrender without a fight and they were only a goal behind with 10 minutes remaining.

These 10 minutes told the tale, however, as the 'Bridge putting in their traditional late spurt, forged safely ahead and were clearly on top in the last five minutes.

QUITE A FORCE

James Stephens — no doubt thrown out of gear by the absentees — rarely reached their top form and depended very largely on some outstanding individual performers. On the other hand, the winners had few weak links and on Sunday's form they are going to be quite a force in the championship. The strong wind and showers which made the going slippery did not help the hurling and excuse can be found for the players failing to make the best use of opportunities. But this did not apply all round and if the game lacked the 'bite' that one expected from it, some of the players mastered the conditions admirably to give us some splendid

hurling.

Noel Skehan, in the Bennettsbridge goal, deserves a big share of the credit from his team's victory. He made two extraordinary saves from close range and generally his hurling was well above his normal best, which is saying a lot.

FULL-BACK LINE

Bennettsbridge packed considerable strength into their full-back line where Larry Cleere, Conor O'Brien and Jim Treacy, pitted against the strongest sector in the James Stephens set-up, came through with flying colours.

Des Murphy, Sean Leahy and Eddie Byrne constituted the greatest threat to Bennettsbridge and almost all the James Stephens scores came from Eddie Byrne and Sean Leahy. But against a less stout full back line their tally would have been infinitely greater.

The "Bridge were also well served in the half back line, Paddy Kealy proving particularly sound with Pat Lalor also showing up in style and John Holohan doing well in the centre.

Paddy Moran dominated at centrefield where he had token assistance from Christy Hayes while John Kinsella starred in the attack getting good support from Ned Ryan and Watt Kennedy.

Mick Moore was sound in the James Stephens goal and F. Larkin put in a power of work at right full back. Newcomers Denis Parsons and Michael Larkin also did well. Eamon Morrissey was in fine form on the half line where D McCormack and Mick Drennan shaped well.

Mick Taylor had a fine game at centrefield but there was a noticeable lack of power in the attack, especially in the half line which was given very limited scope.

levelled a minute later. Mick Taylor put James Stephens ahead with point from a free but Bennettsbridge were on terms again in the 14th minute when John Kinsella sent over the bar from a free.

Watt Kennedy had a point for the winners in the 16th minute and John Kinsella added another from a free to leave the half time scores:

Bennettsbridge 0- 5

James Stephens 0-2

In less than a minute after the restart, the sides were level again when Eddie Byrne crashed home a good goal and the city men were in front when Sean Leahy sent over the bar in the third minute. Paddy Treacy, with a point, again levelled matters in the fifth minute.

Eddie Byrne and Watt Kennedy exchanged points and there was a further exchange of points between John Kinsella and Eddie Tallent. It looked as if Bennettsbridge might take over completely when Paddy Moran had a point and Watt Kennedy a goal from a free but the Village hit back in style with a goal by Sean Leahy from a free to put them level again.

In the last ten minutes, Bennettsbridge had the upper hand. A goal by Ned Ryan stretched their lead by a goal. John Kinsella pointed from a free, and after Sean Leahy had sent over the bar from a free, Kevin Dunne put on a goal, and John Kinsella two points, one from a free.

Bennettsbridge: N. Skehan, L. Cleere, C. O'Brien, J. Treacy, P. Lalor, J. Holohan, P. Kealy, P. Moran, C. Hayes, E. Ryan, J. Kinsella, W. Kennedy, P. Treacy, K. Dunne, N. Ryan.

James Stephen; M. Moore, F. Larkin, D. Parsons, M. Larkin, E. Morrissey, D. McCormack, M. Drennan, N. Morrissey, M. Taylor, L. O'Brien, P. Dowling, E. Tallent, D. Murphy, S. Leahy, E. Byrne.

Mr James Murphy Tullogher, refereed.

How the Scores Came

JOHN KINSELLA opened the scoring with a Bennettsbridge when point from a free in the fourth minute and Eddie Byrne,



KILKENNY PEOPLE, OCT. 8, 1971

1971 COUNTY SH CHAMPIONSHIP CAMPAIGN - ROUND 2

BENNETTSBRIDGE STOLE THE HONOURS

Bennettsbridge 7-3, Windgap 4-10.

A GOAL with the second last puck of the game gave Bennettsbridge a two point win—7-3 to 4-10—over Windgap, in the senior hurling championship in Thomastown, on Sunday, after one of the most dramatic games of the campaign. The shot from Wattle Kennedy, which virtually robbed Windgap of the spoils, was a real anti-climax to a game that almost had a sensational result!

Paddy Walsh got his hurley to Kennedy's shot from about 35 yards out but the greasy ball glanced off his stick and rolled over the goal line.

Windgap supporters could hardly believe their team had lost. They were leading by seven points with nine minutes remaining and by four points with three minutes to go. Bennettsbridge had all but conceded victory when they mounted their final assault which paid off.

Lack of experience told against Windgap, last year's junior title holders, who showed a commendable spirit of enterprise and who would have well deserved the honour if they had succeeded.

A downpour before the game made underfoot conditions and the ball very slippery but it was mostly fine for the duration of the game. If the hurling did not reach classical standards, it lacked nothing in excitement and the closing minutes were full of drama.

LOOKED SAFE

When Windgap led by 4-10 to 4-3 in the 21st minute of the second half they looked home and dry. Instead of concentrating entirely on defence to play out time, they still kept pegging away at the Bennettsbridge goal without getting the scores, while, Bennettsbridge timed their rally to perfection and just barely got home.

This was a comparatively poor performance by Bennettsbridge, who sadly missed Jim Treacy who has just had an operation for an appendix. The defence was not at all as sound as usual and a more perent attack would have exacted a far greater tally.

Windgap, on the other hand, lifted their game to great heights and were in front from the 13th minute of the first half to the 30th minute of the second half.

Two men deserve all of the honours in the Bennettsbridge side, Paddy Moran scored three goals and two points, the three goals and a point coming from placed balls. Two goals came from frees around centrefield and the third came from a '70'.

GREAT GOALIE

After Paddy Moran, Noel Skehan had the biggest say in the Bennettsbridge victory. He made at least two 'miracle' saves from close range and his goalkeeping over the hour was top class. Conor O'Brien did well at full back for the winners but both Martin Treacy and Larry Cleere have given many better performances. Pat Lalor was only good in patches, while John Holohan and Paddy Kealy failed to make any appreciable imprint.

In the attack, the honours go to the trio manning the full forward line, Noel Ryan, Kevin Dunne and Ned Ryan, each of whom had a goal, while Paddy Kealy got the other goal.

Paddy Walsh did well in the Windgap goal and Tom Kenny, John Kenny and Tom Mackey were a sound full-line. Kieran Purcell was outstanding at centre half, while Tom Barry put in a considerable amount of useful work at centrefield. Bobby and Paddy Jackman also figured prominently, while Joe O'Shea, Eamon Meehan and Seamus Meehan showed up well in attack. Phil Walsh tacked on a vital goal at the end of the third quarter.

How the Scores Came

JOHN KINSELLA opened the scoring with a Bennettsbridge point from a free in the 5th minute but the sides were level a minute later when Joe O'Shea sent a nice shot over the bar. He put Windgap ahead with a point in the 7th minute but following a centre by Paddy Moran from a free, Paddy Treacy shot to the net. O'Shea had Windgap's third point from a free in the 10th minute. Wattie Kennedy put Bennettsbridge on the move and Kevin Dunne finished for a good goal in the 12th minute. Windgap

hit back with a goal by Seamus Meehan in the 13th minute. Bobby Jackman had another goal to put Windgap ahead by 2-3 to 2-1 and Joe O'Shea increased the lead to two points when he shot over the bar in the 16th minute.

Windgap tacked on two more points, one by Tom Barry in the 17th minute and another by Seamus Meehan in the 20th minute. Kieran Purcell added another from a free from centrefield. A well directed shot by Paddy Moran from a free from centrefield went all the way to the net in the 25th minute. Noel Skehan made a great save under pressure and Joe O'Shea sent over the bar from a free in the 27th minute to leave the half-time scores:

Windgap 2-8

Bennettsbridge 3-1.

Seamus Meehan opened the second half scoring with a Windgap point after four minutes, but Bennettsbridge were back in a minute for Paddy Moran to score another goal from a free. Eamon Meehan replied with a Windgap goal. Paddy Moran had a Bennettsbridge point in the 14th minute but a goal by Phil Walsh left Windgap in front by 4-9 to 4-2 at the end of the third quarter.

Noel Skehan made another spectacular save when Joe O'Shea doubled on a Kieran Purcell centre, conceding a '70' which Kieran Purcell sent wide. Paddy Moran pointed a Bennettsbridge free in the 21st minute and Ned Ryan shot to the net six minutes later to leave Windgap leading by four points - 4-10 to 5-3 - with three minutes remaining.

Paddy Moran: sent to the net from a '70' and Wattie Kennedy added the goal that gave Bennettsbridge victory with the second last puck of the game.

Bennettsbridge: N. Skehan; M. Treacy, C. O'Brien, L. Cleere; P. Lalor, J. Holohan, P. Kealy, P. Moran, P. Hayes, J. Kinsella, P. Treacy, W. Kennedy, N. Ryan, K. Dunne. E. Ryan.

Windgap: P. Walsh, T. Kenny, J. Kenny, T. Mackey; G. Kenny, K. Purcell, R. Jackman, P. Jackman, T. Barry; J. O'Shea, E. Meehan, T. Meehan, J. Power, S. Meehan, P. Walsh.

Mr Dick Dowling, Glenmore, refereed.



LEAD UP TO THE SEMI-FINALS

SENIOR SEMI FINALS ON SUNDAY

THE COUNTY championship hurling semi-finals at Nowlan Park on Sunday in which last year's finalists, The Fenians, the holders, and James Stephens, clash and neighbouring parishes Bennettsbridge and Gowran are in opposition should provide entertaining fare for what should be a very big crowd.

The greatest interest will be centred in the James Stephens -The Fenians clash. It is their third vital clash in the past three year and while James Stephens came through successfully on the first occasion to add to their list of county senior hurling titles, the result was reversed when they met again in the 1970 final. This was, perhaps, the best display in their career by The Fenians and they have not looked back since. On the other hand, James Stephens have slumped slightly from the great heights they reached when beating Johnstown in the 1969 county decider.

While they have been impressive enough in their games to date this year, they have not been quite at full strength; Mick Crotty has been in America where he has been showing his skill and missed some of his club's championship fixtures. He will be in action on Sunday and should be fully fit after his American sojourn.

James Stephens are likely to have their full side on Sunday and they will be stronger than they have been. There is a lot at stake in this game as both sides will be keen to get into the final.

Fan Larkin is likely to choose whatever position in the James Stephens defence is in most need of his services, and Mick Crotty will likely take his place at centre field or in the attack: James Stephens have Eddie Byrne to put the necessary vigour into their scoring efforts and Sean Leahy will make the maximum use of the frees.

Throughout the field James Stephens are strong and there is so much at stake that they will be making an all-out effort.

For The Fenians the big names are Pat Delaney and Pat Henderson. On the last occasion the sides met in the county

final Pat Henderson exercised a tremendous influence. He could do so again on Sunday. Pat Delaney, without figuring as prominently as usual in the scoring honours, contented himself by making the openings which were readily availed of. The Fenians will be severely handicapped by the absence of John Moriarty who is not fully recovered from his recent accident. He will be a very serious loss. But Mick Garrett, Paddy Broderick, Shem Delaney, Nickey Orr, County Councillor Martin Fitzpatrick — to mention but a few — are not likely to suffer a loss of confidence and Moriarty's absence will only help to strengthen their determination. It is hard to evaluate The Fenians without Moriarty and it is equally difficult to size up their real strength. It all adds up to what should be a thundering game.

THE BRIDGE FANCIED

Bennettsbridge must be fancied to account for Gowran in the second semi -final though Gowran are not incapable of springing a surprise. There is keen parish rivalry between the sides and Gowran, who have proved themselves a strong finishing side, will be all-out.

Bennettsbridge have had one serious shock in the campaign when they scraped home against last year's junior champions, Windgap, at Thomastown but this game must surely have helped to get rid of the complacency.

Bennettsbridge are taking the challenge seriously and have trained hard. Gowran have also trained hard.

Bennettsbridge at their best are certainly a very strong combination and Paddy Moran, Noel Skehan, Pat Lalor and John Kinsella provide Gowran with very serious problems. Brendan Phelan is playing at his best now and Gowran have a very skilled forward in Mick Dwyer. They will not give in easily and, despite the power which Bennettsbridge can put into their hurling, they might find their task difficult enough.





KILKENNY PEOPLE, NOV 5, 1971

COUNTY SEMI-FINALS

Noel Skehan's Heroism Saves the 'Bridge

Bennettsbridge 3-12, Gowran 3-6

NOT FOR the first time goalie Noel Skehan came to the rescue of his club, Bennettsbridge who beat Gowran by 3-12 to 3-6 in the senior hurling championship semi-final at Nowlan Park on Sunday. Bennettsbridge qualified to meet The Fenians in the county final.

Not alone did he make some amazing saves from all angles — and many of them from close range — but he sustained an inordinate amount of injuries and was eventually fenced to retire.

The game was marred by rather frequent outbursts of fighting and the referee, Mr James Murphy, Tullogher, was extraordinarily lenient. With neighbouring parishes clashing it was to be expected that there would be plenty of "needle" in the game, but there was far too much of it and it was fortunate that there was not more serious injury.

The game provided little in the way of spectacular hurling and Gowran almost created a big surprise when they rammed home two goats within a minute to cut a nine points lead to three points 10 minutes from the end but they did not follow up their effort and the winners finished more confidently.

Apart from Noel Skehan, Paddy Moran, John Kinchella, Paddy Treacy, Kevin Dunne and Jim Treacy, when he came on as a sub just before half time, few of the Bennettsbridge players made any real impact. They did enough to win and that was all.

Gowran had outstanding-players in Brendan Phelan, Mick Dwyer, Pat Drennan and Andy Kennedy (goalie). They played quite well and might have done a little better. They obviously lacked experience but they have shown a gradual improvement and could yet become a force.

TOO VIGOROUS

The game was played far too vigorously and this spoiled what might have been an entertaining encounter. It did not detract, however, from the fine individual performances of men like Noel Skehan, Paddy Moran, Jim Treacy, John Kinchella and Paddy Treacy for the winners, and Brendan Phelan, Pat Drennan, Mick Dwyer, Larry Dwyer and James Byrne for Gowran.

Gowran led most of the way in the first half, but Bennettsbridge, after surrendering the lead in the third minute, regained it again in the 26th minute. Bennettsbridge forged steadily ahead in the second half and looked like coasting to an easy win up to 10 minutes from the end. Then Gowran struck with two quick goals, but Bennettsbridge recovered and finished worthy winners.

Martin Treacy, Conor O'Brien and Larry Cleere did not provide much cover for Noel Skehan and it is doubtful if Bennettsbridge were altogether satisfied with the switch which brought Pat Lalor to centrefield and Christy Hayes to left half back. Christy Hayes did reasonably well against Tom Carroll, a hard-working Gowran half forward, while Pat Lalor had his moments at centrefield.

Paddy Moran for Bennettsbridge and Brendan Phelan for Gowran were the dominant figures at mid-field. Paddy Treacy and John Kinchella were the most successful Bennettsbridge forwards, but Kevin Dunne showed that he has a lot of potential and his scores were cleverly taken.

Andy Kennedy in goal, Johnny Greene and Pat Drennan were

the stars of a sound Gowran defence while Mick Dwyer, a very, stylish hurler, gave a brilliant display in the attack. Larry Dwyer and James Byrne also impressed, while Tom Carroll was quick to take his chances.

JOHN KINCHELLA opened the scoring with a Bennettsbridge point in the 2nd minute, but a minute later Mick Dwyer finished a Gowran raid to the net. Gowran had the ball in the 'Bridge net again immediately after, but the whistle had gone for a free out. Kevin Dunne put on a Bennettsbridge point in the 9th minute but Larry Dwyer replied with a Gowran point four minutes later. Paddy Treacy had a good point for the winners and, after a great save by Andy Kennedy in the Gowran goal, Gowran attacked for Tom Carroll to send over the bar in the 6th minute. The 'Bridge replied with a point by Ned Ryan in the 15th minute, and John Kinchella in the 20th minute to bring the sides level.

Kevin Dunne and Paddy Treacy added two more Bennettsbridge points and James Byrne had a Gowran point in the 22nd minute. Tom Carroll had a Gowran point in the 25th minute and John Kinchella sent over the bar from a free in the 26th minute. Jim Treacy came on as a sub for Bennettsbridge and John Kinchella raced through the Gowran defence to crash to the net. Mick Dwyer Mick Dwyer pointed a Gowran free to leave the half-time scores:

Bennettsbridge: 1-8

Gowran: 1-5

How the Scores Came

Gowran made a good start to the second half with a point by Mick Dwyer but John Kinchella in the 3rd minute and Kevin Dunne, with a nice over-head shot, following a centre by Paddy Moran in the 6th minute, added goals for the winners to give them a lead of eight points (3-8 to 1-6). Paddy Moran stretched the lead further with a point from a free in the 13th minute. Mick Dwyer, with a well timed shot, sent all the way to the net from a free and in less than a minute James Byrne had the ball in the Bennettsbridge net to narrow the lead to three points (3-9 to 3-6).

Noel Skehan retired at this stage and was replaced by Liam Cleere. The Bridge finished strongly and Paddy Moran, John Kinchella and Paddy Treacy had a point each to close the scoring.

Bennettsbridge: N. Skehan, M. Treacy, C. O'Brien, L. Cleere, P. Kealy, J. Holohan, C. Hayes, P. Moran, P. Lalor, W. Kennedy, P. Treacy, J. Kinchella, N. Ryan, K. Dunne, E. Ryan.

Sub.—L. Cleere (for N. Skehan).

Gowran: A. Kennedy, M. Murphy, M. Drennan, J. Greene, P. Roche, P. Drennan, M. Carey, S. Kelly, B. Phelan, T. Carroll, M. Dwyer, L. Dwyer, L. Comerford, T. Dooley, P. J. Byrne.

Mr J. Murphy (Tullogher) refereed.



COUNTY SEMI-FINALS

Superb Display by The Fenians

The Fenians 3-15 James Stephens 2-6

THE FENIANS (Johnstown), Co Senior hurling championship title holders, gave a superb display when beating James Stephens, last year's county finalists, by 3-15 to 2-6 in the semi-final at Nowlan Park on Sunday. They were even more convincing than their 12 points margin might suggest.

James Stephens fought courageously against the odds and battled gamely to the end. The game followed a somewhat similar pattern to last year's county decider but was completely at variance with the final before in which a Johnstown side, starting to find its feet, lost heavily to their victims of Sunday. Despite the appreciable margin between the sides at the finish, the game was far more entertaining than might be imagined and even among the vanquished there were some really outstanding players, Dinny McCormack, for instance, who started at left half back and finished up at centre half when Niall Morrissey retired with a knee injury, gave a wonderful display.

The Fenians were slow to start. They did not go to the front until the 21st minute of the first half. But they were playing quite assuredly from the start and for James Stephens supporters, even the most optimistic among them, it was apparent that the crunch would come sooner or later.

Johnstown are a well-balanced side and unlike their opponents, every man on the team from the goalie P.J. Ryan to left corner forward Paddy Broderick, who was more prominent on the half line, left an impact on the game. There was plenty of 'needle' in this game too, and referee James Murphy of, Tullogher could not be accused of being harsh. Quite a lot of petty infringements, and infringements that were far from petty, escaped severe attention and though there were a few occasional flare ups the game ended without any serious incident and James Stephens, in the end, accepted defeat in a very sporting manner.

It was to be expected that both sides would be all-out. They had a county Championship final victory each in their confrontations over the past couple of years and it was not surprising that this 'rubber' tie should be very hotly contested.

A GREAT SIDE

By their victory, Johnstown proved themselves a great side — one of the best to come on the senior championship scene since Bennettsbridge in their hey-day. They played top class hurling and though they were slow to settle down, they monopolised the second half to such an extent that James Stephen hardly raised a gallop.

In spite of all their splendid artistry, the winners had to fight hard for every ball. The city side never gave up trying and despite the dice being so heavily loaded against them they put on two goals and a point in the last 12 minutes.

In addition to playing a particularly attractive brand of hurling, the Johnstown mentors deployed their forces to the best advantage.

The switch which brought Pat Delaney to full forward to curb

the ebullient Fan Larkin and Billy Watson to centrefield was a master stroke. In an effort to retrieve a deteriorating situation, F. Larkin manned several positions from full back to the half forward line but the task was too much for one man.

The winners were a goal ahead at half time, 1-5 to 0-5 but they led by 11 points, 2-10 to 0-5, at the end of the third quarter. The game was as good as over at this stage,

P.J. Ryan played his customary sound game in the winners' goal and their full back line of Shem Delaney, Nicky Orr and Martin Fitzpatrick all played the games of their lives. The James Stephens full forward line of P. Dowling, Sean Leahy and Eddie Byrne were out of it.

SOUND HALF BACK

Pat Henderson at centre half back has had very many better games but his strength and fine striking had its effect. His two flankers, Paddy Murphy on the right and Seamus Grace on the left, were in splendid form, the reliable Grace turning in his usual sound game.

Johnstown had the upper hand at centrefield but not until they settled down. Liam O'Brien, the James Stephens, top scorer, started well but Mick Garrett and P. Walsh, and later Mick Garrett and Billy Watson, exercised tremendous influence in the second half.

Pat Delaney was the star of the attack. He was originator of several Johnstown attacks that brought the desired results and his goal in the 20th minute of the second half was a particularly fine effort. All the Johnstown forwards must be given top marks for their part in the win, John Moriarty was obviously in need of the outing following his recent accident which left him immobile for some time but Paddy Dowling, Paddy Broderick, Frank Holohan, who came on as a sub and crashed home a goal and a point in quick succession, Billy Watson and Tommy O'Connel all won high marks.

Mick Moore made some great saves in the James Stephens goal but only Fan Larkin in the full back line and later in other positions, and Dinny McCormack came up to expectation in the defence. They were unlucky to lose Niall Morrissey with a knee injury. Mick Leahy, Paddy Larkin and Eamonn Morrissey tried hard to stem the tide,

Mick Taylor rarely showed his true form at centrefield and though Mick Crotty tried desperately hard and Sean Brennan came reasonably successful out of his duel with Pat Henderson, the James Stephens attack generally failed.

The Fenians: P.J. Ryan, S. Delaney, N. Orr, M. Fitzpatrick, P. Murphy, P. Henderson, S. Grace, M. Garrett, P. Walsh, J. Moriarty, P. Delaney, P. Dowling, W. Watson, T. O'Connell, P. Broderick.

James Stephen: M. Moore, M. Leahy, F. Larkin, P. Larkin, E. Morrissey, N. Morrissey, D. McCormack, M. Taylor, L. O'Brien, M. Crotty, S. Brennan, D. Murphy, P. Dowling, S. Leahy.

Mr J. Murphy (Tullogher) refereed.



KILKENNY PEOPLE, NOV 12, 1971

COUNTY FINAL PREVIEW

Stage Set for Sunday's County Final

SUNDAY'S County Final between the holders, The Fenians and Bennettsbridge is rather unique in that it is the first time the sides have met in a county decider.

Bennettsbridge are trying for their 13th county title. They have been victorious 11 times since they came into prominence in the early 1950's while they had chalked up a previous win away back in 1890.

Johnstown are contesting their third successive final. They lost to James Stephens in 1969 but reversed the result the following year. They have also a victory in the early years of the century — when a Johnstown side strongly buttressed by famous Tullaroan men won out. In those days, Tullaroan had a number of Johnstown men in their line out,

If the form books points in the direction of the holders no one will be more eager to point to the formidable task facing them than the Johnstown players and supporters themselves. They well know that in a final no side can put as much into it as Bennettsbridge and they know too that having got this far, Bennettsbridge will not surrender readily. It can be said that both sides are a little lucky to be in the final. The Fenians had a narrow escape against Castlecomer while their opponents were desperately lucky to overcome a devastating Windgap challenge that failed for want of experience.

Judged on the basis of the form shown in the semi-finals, The Fenians should have the edge. They scored readily over James Stephens while Bennettsbridge had to struggle to beat Gowran.

WELL BALANCED

But while this may be anything but an accurate guide line there is no doubt that Johnstown are now better than ever. Their attack and defence have improved immensely even on last year and they are the best balanced side in the county. Bennettsbridge may not be as well balanced but they have potential match winners and their history over the last two decades shows that the greater the demand made on them the greater will be their effort.

P.J. Ryan, in goal for The Fenians, may not reach the status of his opposite number Noel Skehan, but he has been consistently sound. They have outstanding defenders in Shem Delaney, Nicky Orr and Martin Fitzpatrick in the full line and Dick Dowling, Pat Henderson and Seamus Grace on the half line. Donal Walsh and Mick Garrett are set a stiff task at midfield where they come up against two inter-county players in Paddy Moran and Pat Lalor. But Bennettsbridge will find it anything but easy to contain an attack which includes Pat Delaney, John Moriarty, who will be counted on to step up on his semi final form, Paddy Broderick, Billy Watson, Tommy O'Connell and Frank Holohan. It is not unfair to any of his colleagues to that Noel Skehan has been the main architect of the Bennettsbridge successes against both Windgap and Gowran and the Johnstown forwards will be quick to realise the futility of trying for goals against him.

JIM TREACY BACK

With Jim Treacy back, Larry Cleere and Conor O'Brien will play

with greater confidence in the full back line and, despite the task that faces them, Paddy Kealy, John Holohan and Christy Hayes - now switched from centrefield to left half back - will be trying hard to keep their end up.

It is impossible to imagine Pat Lalor and Paddy Moran surrendering midfield mastery but the Bennettsbridge attack will have to show up better than in their previous games. Wattie Kennedy, P. Treacy and John Kinchella man the half line and all are well capable of getting scores. Paddy Treacy has shown improved form and the same can be said of Kevin Dunne at full forward. Noel Ryan and Ned Ryan are quite capable of taking full advantage of any chances that may come their way.

COULD BE EPIC

This could well be an epic Co Final. Both teams have trained very earnestly. If The Fenians maintain their semi-final form they will be hard to beat but if there is any team in the county capable of beating them it is the 'Bridge.

CONFIDENCE IN BOTH CAMPS

Judging by the enthusiasm shown in the training stints there is plenty of confidence in both camps. Both teams have trained under lights and there has been a full turn-out in both Johnstown and Bennettsbridge,

John McGovern is in charge of training in Bennettsbridge and he is satisfied that the team will field perfectly fit.

Caltex Award winner Seamus Cleere, the greatest hurler ever to grace Croke park, feels that it could be a great final.

"While there is great enthusiasm among the players and supporters you cannot be over confident with Bennettsbridge on the way they have played in their previous games and also because Johnstown are playing so well", he said.

"But the 'Bridge tradition is there and it rarely fails. You can be certain that the lads will pull out all the stops on Sunday".

Pat Henderson is quietly confident about a Johnstown victory but is well aware of the task facing the side.

"The general feeling is that we are favourites — that is going on semi-final form. But the record Bennettsbridge have built up over the years is an intimidating one as far as I am concerned. It is always very hard to beat them".

Pat thinks that Paddy Moran is the danger man on the "Bridge side. "He is a danger at any time and his shrewdness in picking up loose balls around the half line and getting scores is something we will have to watch very carefully"

He has a healthy respect for all the Bridge players and he is very conscious of the great tradition they have built up over the years which is a very valuable asset when it comes to a final.

"You can never count on getting anything easy from any of the Bennettsbridge players, not necessarily their players who have inter county experience," he said.

Johnstown have trained in a field belonging to Mr Ned Curran, Johnstown, and the training has been done under the supervision of Paul Skehan.

"We are confident, but not over confident and I think it should be a great county final" Pat said.



BENNETTSBRIDGE PEN PICTURES

Noel Skehan – Noel Skehan first came into prominence when he won an all Ireland minor medal in 1962. He won all Ireland senior medals as a sub in 1963, 1967 and 1969 and had two trips to New York. He holds three Oireachtas medals won in 1966 (sub) 1967 and 1969 (sub); 1967 and 1969 (sub). Has three county championship medals won in 1964, 1966 and 1967.

His brilliant displays against Windgap and Gowran have been mainly responsible for his side being in the final. He won Leinster senior medals in 1967, 1969, and 1971, and won a county junior football medal with Bennettsbridge in 1968.

Larry Cleere - Larry Cleere was a sub on the Kilkenny team beaten by Tipperary in the tempestuous National League final of 1968. He was on the Kilkenny intermediate team that lost to Wexford in 1964. He played with Warwickshire in the all Ireland championships when living in England. He won county senior medals in 1964, 1966 and 1967, and won county junior football medals with Bennettsbridge in 1968.

Conor O'Brien - Conor O'Brien played in Kilkenny's National League games against Tipperary and Limerick. He was on the Kilkenny minor team in 1965 and won an under 21 county championship medal in 1967. He plays for University college in the Dublin championships and in the Fitzgibbon cup. He won a Leinster under 21 medal with Kilkenny in 1968.

Jim Treacy - Jim Treacy won all Ireland senior medals in 1963 (sub), 1967 and 1969, and had two trips to New York. Recently chosen on the Carroll's all stars side he will travel to San Francisco next March. He holds five Leinster senior medals won in 1964, 1966, 1967, 1969 and 1971 and three Oireachtas medals won in 1966, 1967 and 1969 and a National League medal won in 1966.

He captained Kilkenny in their all Ireland final triumph in 1967. He won senior county championship medals in 1964, 1966 and 1967 and won Railway cup honours with Leinster in 1971.

Paddy Kealy – Paddy Kealy won senior county championship medals in 1966 and 1967 and an under 21 county championship in 1967. He has played on the Kilkenny county minor side and won a Leinster under 21 medal in 1968. He won a county junior football medal with Bennettsbridge in 1968.

John Holohan – John Holohan will be attempting to win his first county championship medal as he was in England when Bennettsbridge won their last county title. He helped London in the 1966 all Ireland junior championship final when they lost to Wicklow in a replay. He played for Kilkenny in the Leinster minor final in 1964 when they lost to Laois. He won a county junior football medal with his club in 1968.

Christy Hayes – Christy Hayes is also trying for his first county senior championship medal. He won an under 21 county championship medal with Bennettsbridge and a county junior medal in 1968.

Paddy Moran – Paddy Moran won all Ireland senior medals in 1963, 1967 and 1969; and won Leinster senior medals in 1963, 1964, 1966, 1967 and 1969. He won Oireachtas medals in 1966, 1967 and 1969 and helped Leinster in their Railway cup successes in 1964, 1965 and 1967. He played in two minor all Irelands in 1956 and 1957. He has made a welcome return to the county side this year after a year's absence. He won a National League medal in 1966 and won county championship medals with Bennettsbridge in 1956, 1959, 1960, 1962, 1964, 1966 and 1967. Paddy has had three trips to America and won Leinster and all Ireland medals with Cosets (Carlow) in the factory league.

Pat Lalor – Pat Lalor won two Leinster senior hurling medals with Kilkenny in 1969 and 1971 and a Leinster under 21 hurling medal in 1968. He won a county under 21 hurling championship medal in 1967 and a county junior football medal in 1968. Has yet to win a senior county title.

Wattie Kennedy – Wattie Kennedy is son of Dan Kennedy who captained the Kilkenny team that beat Cork in the 1947 all Ireland final, one of the greatest finals ever played. He won a county under 21 hurling medal in 1967 and this is his first year to hold a permanent place on the senior team. He is trying for his first senior medal.

Paddy Treacy – A man who has adapted himself to many positions, Paddy Treacy has played with Kilkenny in National League games. He has won four county senior medals with Bennettsbridge and was on the Bennettsbridge junior football side that won county honours in 1968.

John Kinchella – One of the more experienced of the Bennettsbridge forwards, John Kinchella won an all Ireland senior medal when he came on as a sub for Tom Walsh in the 1967 final against Tipperary. Won Leinster senior medals in 1967 and 1969 and an under 21 medal in 1968. He played minor for Kilkenny in 1964 and 1965. He won an Oireachtas medal in 1967 and had a trip to New York that year for the world cup triumph over New York. Won county senior medals in 1966 and 1967, an under 21 county medal and a county junior football medal in 1968.

Noel Ryan – Holder of two county senior medals won in 1966 and 1967 Noel Ryan has played for Kilkenny in the National League. He won an under 21 county medal in 1967 and a county junior football medal in 1968. He won a county minor football title with St John's.

Kevin Dunne – Like John Holohan Kevin Dunne was on the London team that lost the 1966 all Ireland junior final to Wicklow at Nowlan Park. Son of the late Johnny Dunne who won all Ireland medals with Kilkenny in 1933 and 1935 he is trying for his first county senior medal on Sunday.

Ned Ryan – Winner of two county senior hurling medals as a sub, Ned Ryan is trying for his first medal as a regular member on the team on Sunday.



FENIANS PEN PICTURES

PJ Ryan – A member of this year's Kilkenny under 21 panel PJ Ryan has helped The Fenians to senior and junior county honours. He won a Leinster factory hurling league medal with Roadmaster Caravans in 1969.

Shem Delaney – Shem Delaney played against Limerick in the recent National League game. He was also recently selected for the county football side but did not travel. Has helped the Fenians to Junior and Senior County Championship honours in 1968 and 1970 respectively.

Nicky Orr – A member of the Kilkenny senior hurling panel, Nicky Orr won a Leinster senior medal as a sub in 1971. Was on the intermediate county team defeated by Kildare in the 1969 Leinster final. Has won a junior, and senior county medal.

Martin Fitzpatrick – Martin Fitzpatrick has won junior and senior county medals and played with the Under 21 county team beaten by Wexford in the 1969 Leinster Final. Plays with Avonmore Creameries in the Leinster Factory Hurling League.

Dick Dowling – Though not on the side that won junior Co honours in 1968 Dick Dowling has progressed so much that he played as a half forward in the 1970 county final. He was one of the stars of the victory over James Stephens in the semi final and has really found his best position at right half back.

Pat Henderson - Captain of the Kilkenny team in the 1971 all Ireland final. Pat Henderson won 2 all Ireland senior medals in 1967 and 1969 and has had two trips to New York. Helped Leinster to Railway cup honours in 1967 and 1971 when he came on as a sub. Won three Oireachtas medals in 1966, 1967 and 1969 as well as a National League medal in 1966. Won a minor all Ireland medal in 1961 and has helped The Fenians to junior and senior county honours captaining them in the senior triumph.

Seamus Grace – Seamus Grace helped his side to junior and senior county honours. Although he has never played for the county in any grade he must be considered one of the stars of the side, continually turning in top displays in all his games.

Donal Walsh – A son of Paddy Walsh who played in the 1931 All Ireland final. Donal Walsh is just coming back into form after missing a number of his side's earlier games due to a troublesome knee injury. Won a senior county medal last year and was a sub on the junior winning side of 1968

Mick Garrett – Another of the county senior panel, Mick Garrett has helped his club to junior and senior county honours and has figured on Kilkenny Under 21 and Intermediate sides in recent years. Has also played on the Kilkenny senior team.

John Moriarty – This Tipperary born player has been a big acquisition to The Fenians and won a county senior medal in 1970. Won a Leinster senior hurling medal in 1971 (sub) and also helped Roadmaster Caravans to a Leinster factory league medal in 1969.

Pat Delaney – One of the strongest players in the game Pat Delaney won an all Ireland senior medal in 1969 and won two Leinster senior medals in 1969, and 1971. Won a trip to New York in 1969 and won an Oireachtas medal for 1969.

Has won senior and junior county honours. Was a sub on the 1960 all Ireland minor winning combination and won a Leinster Intermediate medal in 1967. Gained a Railway cup medal last St Patrick's day when he helped Leinster to victory.

Paddy Broderick - One of the most improved players on the side Paddy Broderick is deadly on frees and has helped his club to junior and senior county honours. Played against Limerick in the recent Oireachtas tournament.

Tommy O'Connell – A former Newpark Sarsfields and Eire Og club man Tommy O'Connell came to prominence when he scored three goals against Waterford in the drawn 1959 and 1966 (sub) and an Oireachtas medal in 1959. Won a county senior medal last year. Was a sub on the 1957 all Ireland minor team beaten by Tipperary.

Billy Watson - Captain of the Fenians on Sunday Billy Watson has helped them to junior and senior county honours. Played his best ever game in the defeat of James Stephens – won an All Ireland minor medal as a sub in 1961.

Frank Holohan – Like most of his team mates Frank Holohan has won senior and junior county honours. Came on in the semi-final and scored a vital goal, and a point. Has played for the Kilkenny minors but without success.

Pat Murphy – Pat Murphy won senior and junior county medals but was off the side in some of the earlier games. Is a utility player who was at corner forward in the semifinal but has done most of his hurling at half back or midfield. Won a Leinster factory league medal in 1969.



COUNTY SENIOR HURLING

Droichead Binéid



FIR IONAIÐ

Liam Cleere
Michael Burke
Martin Crowe
Ned Ryan
Liam Bookle
Frankie Ryan
John Dowling
Joe Holohan
Johnny Dunne
Martin Treacy (RIP)
Michael Treacy (RIP)

SELECTORS:

Henry Drea
Watty Ryan
Dan Kennedy



Noel Skehan



Conor O'Brien



Larry Cleere



Jim Treacy



Paddy Kealy (C)



John Holohan



Pat Lalor



Paddy Moran



Wattie Kennedy (RIP)



Christy Hayes



Paddy Treacy (RIP)



John Kinsella



Noel Ryan



Kevin Dunne (RIP)



John McGovern

THE RE
THE MAN in
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HURLING FINAL 1971

Na Fininí



PJ Ryan



Shem Delaney



Nickey Orr



Martin Fitzpatrick



Dicky Dowling



Pat Henderson



Seamus Grace



Donal Walsh



Mick Garrett



Johnny Moriarty



Pat Delaney



Paddy Broderick



Tommy O'Connell



Billy Watson (C)



Frank Holohan



FIR IONAI D

Fergus Farrell

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COUNTY SH FINAL 1971

BENNETTSBRIDGE DASH TOO MUCH FOR THE FENIANS

Bennettsbridge 3-10, The Fenians 1-7

Sunday 14th November 1971 Nowlan Park

BENNETTSBRIDGE, playing with all the traditional skill of their best days over the, past two decades, completely upset the apple cart by scoring an easy 3-10 to 1-7 victory over the holders, The Fenians, (Johnstown), in the Kilkenny senior hurling championship final at Nowlan Park on Sunday.

This will not rank among the greatest finals, though it did provide entertaining hurling. Most of the entertaining hurling was provided by Bennettsbridge, however, and the final outcome was a complete anti-climax,

Bennettsbridge left no doubt in anyone's mind about their superiority and after being held down to a single point in the first half Johnstown were lucky enough to put a reasonably respectable appearance on the scoreboard by adding a goal and six points in the second half and confining the 'Bridge second half tally to two goals and two points.

Johnstown were strong pre-match favourites. The manner in which they disposed of James Stephens in the semi-final entitled them to this honour. They could be excused for under-estimating the strength of the opposition for any resemblance between this form

by Bennettsbridge and the form shown in their previous games in the campaign is purely co-incidental.

What caused Johnstown's collapse? It is really hard to know. They did quite a lot of hurling without getting much return. Perhaps their greatest blunder was underestimating Bennettsbridge.

AT THEIR BEST

This was Bennettsbridge at their best. From the word go they set about their work with a vigour and zest that was in keeping with the best Bennettsbridge tradition. They were in complete command in the first half and though Johnstown started the second half as if they might make a game of it, their effort failed to last and before 10 minutes had passed Bennettsbridge still had a lead of 10 points. Johnstown rallied again and by the end of their third quarter they had narrowed the gap to six points. This was the crucial stage. This was where Johnstown should have made their effort but try as they might, they were completely powerless against a solid Bennettsbridge defence that never wilted.

THREE SCORES

In the last quarter three scores were added – a point for Johnstown and a goal and a point for Bennettsbridge.

The disparity in the scores robbed this final of a lot of the glamour, though in fairness it must be said that Johnstown deserved a better reward. But this was in a large measure due to the fact that some of their big guns did not measure up to the demands made on them.

This was by far the best performance by Bennettsbridge since their last county final in 1967. In fact it must rank among their best games of the past 20 years. Every man played his part. Their defence improved out of all proportion. This was due largely to the confidence inspired by Jim Treacy's return, Paddy Moran, the dominant figure at centrefield, and the three men that mattered most in the attack, Kevin Dunne, John Kinchella and Paddy Treacy hit peak form and had a big say.

While chief honours must go to Paddy Moran and Jim Treacy, it is fair to say that every man on the side rose to the occasion.

For once, Noel Skehan had a comparatively easy time in the goal. He had no chance whatever to stop Billy Watson's shot which brought Johnstown's only goal. The tall Watson reached to a high ball in a crowded goalmouth and tapped it cleverly into the net.

But it can hardly be denied that Bennettsbridge would never have reached the final were it not for the brilliant work of Noel Skehan against Windgap in the second round and Gowran in the semi-final and if he

was rather less conspicuous on Sunday because of having far less

to do, there is no Bennettsbridge man more entitled to the medal.

SOUND DEFENCE

The suspicion surrounding the Bennettsbridge full back line was removed. Jim Treacy had a wonderful game at left full and both Conor O'Brien, who lined out at right full back and Larry Cleere at full back, stepped up on their previous games.

Paddy Kealy had his best game for quite some time. Not since his early days, when he showed such promise, has he played as well. John Holohan also turned in a first class display while Pat Lalor,



Bennettsbridge Captain, Paddy Kealy, with the Tom Walsh Cup



despite an injured leg was very sound.

The Bennettsbridge mentors made no mistake by plumping for Wattie Kennedy as Paddy Moran's centrefield partner while the switch of Christy Hayes to left half forward was another master stroke – Hayes had his best game so far in the 'Bridge jersey. Bennettsbridge caused quite a surprise by recalling John McGovern to the attack. John won a junior county medal in 1947 and

since then he has been a regular on the senior side until he retired a few years ago and took his place on the junior team. He made things hot enough for the brilliant Johnstown defender Shem Delaney and moved out to the half line occasionally during the game. Kevin Dunne, a son of the late Johnny Dunne who won all Ireland medals with Kilkenny in 1933 and 1935, proved himself the must improved man on the Bridge team. He notched a personal tally of

FIGURES OF THE GAME					
	Goals	Points	Frees	70's	Wides
FIRST HALF					
BENNETTSBRIDGE	1	8	6	0	5
FENIANS	0	1	3	2	5
SECOND HALF					
BENNETTSBRIDGE	2	2	5	0	2
FENIANS	1	6	6	0	7
TOTAL					
BENNETTSBRIDGE	3	10	11	0	7
FENIANS	1	7	9	2	10

SCORES BY THE CLOCK			
TIME	TEAM	SCORE	SCORER
FIRST HALF			
5 min.	Bennettsbridge	POINT	John Kinsella
6 min.	Bennettsbridge	POINT	Christy Hayes
9 min.	Bennettsbridge	POINT	Paddy Treacy
10 min.	Bennettsbridge	POINT	John Kinsella
14 min.	Bennettsbridge	POINT	John Kinsella (free)
15 min.	Bennettsbridge	GOAL	Kevin Dunne
17 min.	Bennettsbridge	POINT	Christy Hayes
18 min.	Bennettsbridge	POINT	Kevin Dunne
27 min.	Fenians	POINT	Pat Delaney
30 min.	Bennettsbridge	POINT	John Kinsella (free)
HALF TIME SCORE:		BENNETTSBRIDGE 1-8 FENIANS 0-1	
SECOND HALF			
1 min.	Fenians	POINT	Donal Walsh
2 min.	Fenians	POINT	John Moriarty (free)
4 min.	Fenians	POINT	Pat Delaney
5 min.	Bennettsbridge	GOAL	Kevin Dunne
7 min.	Bennettsbridge	POINT	Paddy Moran
8 min.	Fenians	POINT	Pat Delaney
10 min.	Fenians	GOAL	Billy Watson
12 min.	Fenians	POINT	Paddy Broderick
15 min.	Bennettsbridge	POINT	Paddy Treacy
18 min.	Fenians	POINT	John Moriarty
21 min.	Bennettsbridge	GOAL	Paddy Moran
FULL TIME SCORE:		BENNETTSBRIDGE 3-10 FENIANS 1-7	

two goals and a point and made quite an impression when he moved out to the half line. Paddy Treacy, who has been very consistent, also gave a scintillating performance while John Kinchella was outstanding at left half. Noel Ryan contributed to the Bridge effort. While Bennettsbridge deployed their forces effectively, the Fenians overdid the switching and Pat Delaney and Billy Watson were continuously changing positions. None of the changes worked.

It is only fair to say to say that Pat Delaney put in a tremendous amount of work but the Fenians' attack never made the same impact that brought the scores against James Stephens. P.J. Ryan had a good game in the goal though Paddy Moran's shot from a free 60 yards out, which reached the net looked cap able of being stopped. One of Kevin Dunne's goals came from a slip-up in the defence and might have been saved.

PLENTY IN HAND

But even allowing for these rather easy goals, Bennettsbridge still had plenty in hand and if more was demanded it would obviously have been forthcoming. Martin Fitzpatrick did good work in the full back line in the face of heavy pressure, Pal Henderson was sound at centre half and Seamus Grace put in a tremendous hour's work. Dick Dowling had great difficulty in coping with John Kinchella. Mick Garret and Donal Walsh had their moments at midfield but Johnstown could never really get on top here.

The Johnstown attack was disappointing. Certainly Pat Delaney played his part but more was needed from John Moriarty, Tommy O'Connell and Frank Holohan, Billy Walton was an earnest trier and most of the scoring efforts were left to Pat Delaney and himself.

HOW THE SCORES CAME

THE first wide came in the third minute when Paddy Moran's long-range drive was slightly off target but Bennettsbridge pressure brought the first score in the 5th minute, a point by John Kinchella. P.J. Ryan made a good save in the Johnstown goal and when Paddy Moran centred, Christy Hayes had another Bennettsbridge point in the 6th minute.



BENNETTSBRIDGE COUNTY SH CHAMPIONS 1971

Paddy Moran again put Bennettsbridge attacking and Paddy Treacy shot a good point in the 9th minute. A minute later John Kinchella again sent over the bar. Johnstown had a good chance when Pat Henderson centred from a "70" but the attack ended in a wide. Billy Watson came to the half forward line and Pat Delaney took his place in the full line and Johnstown brought on John Murphy for Paddy Broderick.

John Kinchella sent over the bar from a Bennettsbridge free and after a Johnstown attack had again failed, the winners came back for Kevin Dunne to shoot to the net after a stirring tussle in the Johnstown goal area. This left the score 1-5 to 0-0 at the end of the first quarter.

Christy Hayes added a point to the tally two minutes later and after Noel Skehan had made a good, save Kevin Dunne was again on the mark to shoot a nice point in the 18th minute. Pat Delaney opened the Fenians' account with a point in the 27th minute and just before the 30th minute John Kinchella sent over the bar from a free to leave the half time scores :

Bennettsbridge - 1-8

Fenians - 0-1

The Fenians started the second half in great style and Donal Walsh sent the ball sailing over the bar in the first minute. John Moriarty added a point from a free a minute later and after being

placed by Billy Watson, Pat Delaney had another point in the 4th minute.

The Fenians' hopes were dashed when Kevin Dunne scored a good goal and Paddy Moran followed with a point in 7th minute. The Fenian continued the fight and a Pat Delaney point in the eighth minute narrowed the gap to 10 points. Paddy Broderick returned to the Johnstown attack and Johnny Moriarty found the net in the 10th minute. A point by Paddy Broderick in the 12th minute cut the lead to 2-9 to 1-6.

Paddy Treacy scored a great Bennettsbridge point in 15th minute and Johnny Moriarty replied with a point for the Fenians. In the 21st minute Paddy Moran sent all the way to the net from a free 60 yards out and this was the last score of the game.

Bennettsbridge: N. Skehan, D. O'Brien, L. Cleere, J. Treacy, P. Kealy, J. Holohan, P. Lalor, P. Moran, W. Kennedy, C. Hayes, P. Treacy, J. Kinchella, N. Ryan, K. Dunne, J. McGovern.

The Fenians: P.J. Ryan, Shem Delaney, N. Orr, M. Fitzpatrick, R. Dowling, P. Henderson, S. Grace, D. Walsh, M. Garrett, J. Moriarty, P. Delaney, P. Broderick, T. O'Connell, B. Watson, F. Holohan.

Subs - J. Murphy for P Broderick, P. Broderick for F. Holohan. Mr James. Murphy, Tullogher, refereed.

KILKENNY'S COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL RESULTS 1971

Senior Hurling	Bennettsbridge	3-10	Fenians	1-7
Junior Hurling	Newpark Sarsfields	1-11	Graignamanagh	2-3
Under 21 Hurling	Rower Inistioge	3-8	James Stephens	0-10
Minor Hurling	James Stephens	6-12	Ballyhale	2-7
Under 16 H	O'Loughlins	7-8	Rower Inistioge	3-4
Senior Football	Railyard	3-10	Thomastown	0-3
Junior Football	Fenians	0-15	Slieverue	0-3
Minor Football	Dicksboro	3-1	Kilmoganny	0-8

KILKENNY COUNTY BOARD OFFICERS 1971

COUNTY BOARD

Chairman	Michael O' Neill
Secretary	Paddy Grace
Central Council	Nicholas Purcell
Leinster Council	Bob Aylward
Registrar	Liam Moore

Kilmacow
Dicksboro
Graigie
Knockmoylan
Kilkenny

FOOTBALL BOARD

Chairman	Mick Meally
Vice chairman	Francis O'Brien
Secretary	Seamus Delaney

Railyard
Kilmoganny
Clann na Gael

NORTHERN BOARD

Chairman	Edward Curran
Vice Chairman	Liam Ryan
Secretary	John Ivory

Urlingford
Clara
Lisdowney

SOUTHERN BOARD

Chairman	John Reade
Vice Chairman	Joe Walsh
Secretary	Joe Walsh

Ballyhale
Thomastown
Thomastown

UNDER 16 BOARD

Chairman	Tom Brennan
Vice-chairman	Sean Leahy
Secretary	Michael Ryan

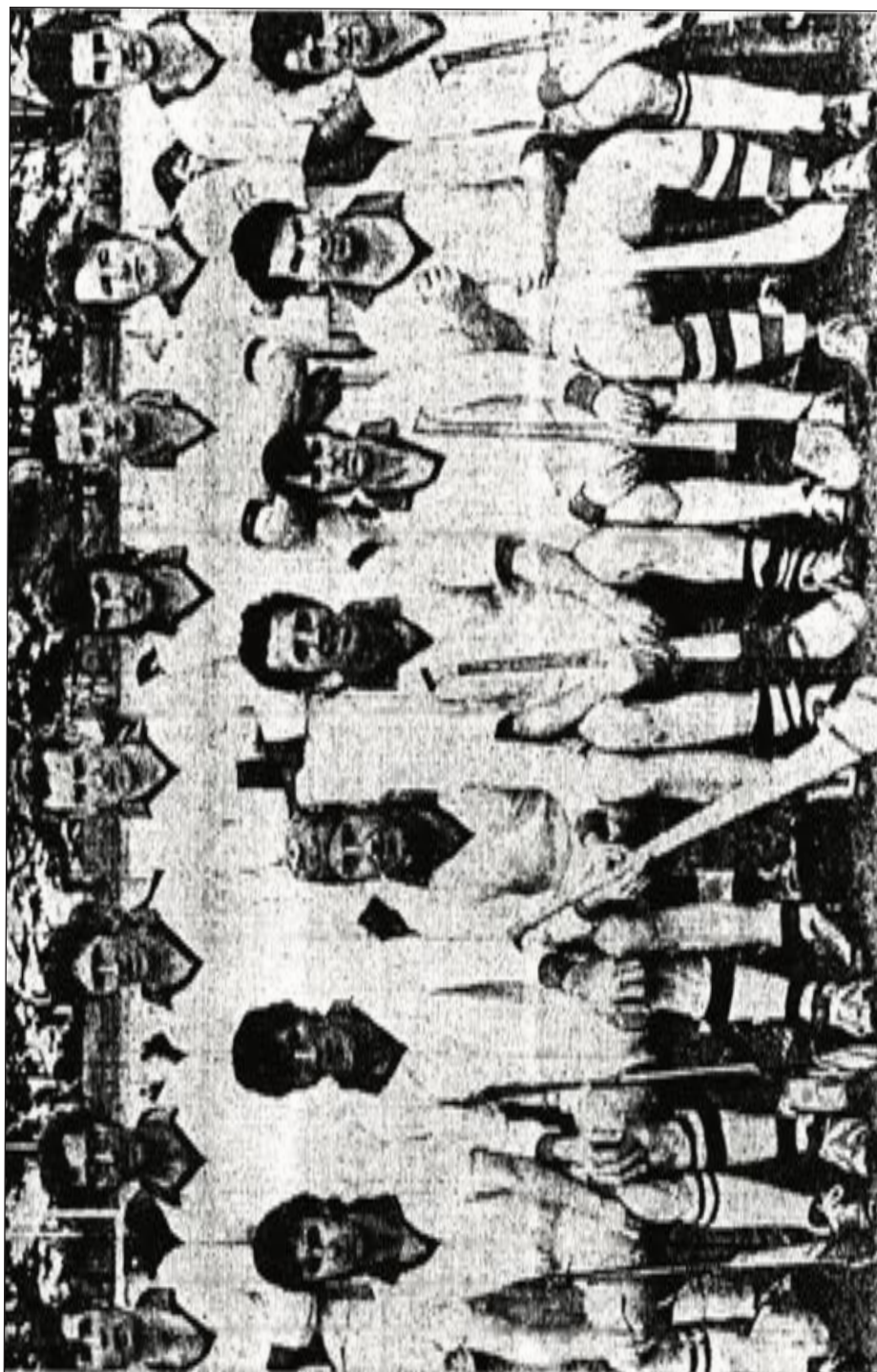
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BENNETTSBRIDGE - KILKENNY COUNTY SENIOR HURLING CHAMPIONS 1971.

Behind: Paddy Moran, Larry Cleere, Noel Ryan, John Holohan, Conor O'Brien, Kevin, Dunne, Walter Kennedy.

Seated (from left): Paddy Tyacy, John Kinsella, JimTreacy, Paddy Kealy (caph), Noel Skehan, Christy Hayes, John McGovern, Pat Lalor.



THE FENIANS (Johnstown)—Kilkenny County Senior Hurling Finalists, 1971.
Seated (from left,): Paddy Broderick, Pat Delaney, Tommy O'Connell, Billy Watson, John Moriarty, Frank Holohan, Seamus Delaney.
Behind: Martin Fitzpatrick, Seamus Grace, Mick Garrett, Pat Henderson, P.J. Ryan, Nicky Orr, Dick Dowling, Donal Walsh.



GOLD WATCHES & SUIT LENGTHS

The Era of the Great Tournaments by Kieran Cuddihy



The club produced a marvellous seven-a-side team which won many tournaments throughout the 1950's. This team was known as 'The Ring Dazzlers' and the panel was: Dave DeLoughry, Frank Brady, Dick 'Stokes' Power, Jim 'Sam' Carroll, Paddy 'Galar' Kelly, Seamus Cleere, Martin Treacy, Mick McCarthy and Larry Cleere. The team coach was James Hayes.

ABOUT 10 MILES south west of Waterford stands the small village of Dunhill. About one mile outside the village you will find the playing fields of the local GAA Club. While the well manicured grounds may seem unremarkable now, 50 years ago they regularly hosted one of the most hotly contested hurling tournaments in the country.

Players now have league games, Byrne Cups, Alwyard Cups and other challenges to keep them occupied until the championship kicks off in earnest but that wasn't always the case. Before the introduction of league hurling at club level, teams might only have played between 4 and 5 games every year in order to win a local championship. If they were unlucky enough to be beaten in an early round, that spelled the end of their competitive hurling until the following summer.

In an effort to increase the amount of games in the club calendar, tournaments began to be organised in the late 1940's that enticed the leading club sides from across all the hurling counties with promises of top prizes for the winning team.

Dunhill held just such a tournament and double All Ireland winner Johnny McGovern remembers competing there every May

with Bennettsbridge from 1957 to 1963.

"The big one was in Dunhill and there was some great teams playing at that tournament. Tommy Glasheen was a marvellous organizer and he used to get the top teams to compete every year like ourselves, Mount Sion, Eire Og, St Aidan's of Enniscorthy, St Finabarr's and Glen Rovers."

"I hurled senior with the 'Bridge from '52, mostly from left half back. There were 12 teams playing in Kilkenny at Senior at that time, the same as now. But the difference was that you only played maybe 3 or 4 games because there was no League or Byrne Cups or that sort of thing. That is how the tournaments started actually, they were something to do on all those weekends when there were no other matches. They filled a gap."

"There was a great interest in the tournaments because all of the top stars would be playing. The intercounty players would always play if they could so you had the likes of Christy Ring competing. That meant people were happy to travel from all around to the games. At Dunhill there would be huge crowds, it really would be packed."



What attracted clubs to the tournaments, aside from the chance to compete against the best other counties had to offer, was the calibre of prize up for grabs. In Dunhill, the winning team all won Hogan Stand tickets for the next ten years of hurling and football All Irelands.

When Thomastown began to host tournaments, they offered gold watches to the winners. Martin Treacy, another double All Ireland winner from the 'Bridge remembers well how prestigious it was to win such a prize.

"Thomastown held the gold watch tournaments and we did the double out there in 55 and 56. GL Ryan used to supply the watches and I still have them, they were a very precious thing to win."

"What would happen is the club hosting the tournament would pay for the prizes and then put them on display in local shops and pubs in the weeks leading up to the tournament. This created great interest in the tournament and I have to say we were delighted to have won those watches on both occasions."

"I remember one of the best prizes we won though was at a tournament in Ballincurry in Tipperary, the home of the great runner John Joe Barry. We won an electric razor there and these were very rare back then, very few people would have had electric razors. We won that twice, once against St Aidan's and the other time against Callan."

In Cahir, they offered suit lengths to the victorious team but there was a catch. "After you won it, you still had to go and find a tailor to make up the suit. That probably cost about one weeks wages to get that done" remembers Johnny. "The problem then was that everyone on the team had the same suit so when we turned up at a wedding or a funeral we looked like we all part of a big band or something".

The tournaments also provided a great opportunity of raising funds for local projects. "Down in Cork at that time, Dr Lucey had a Church Restoration Fund and he ran tournaments to raise money" says Martin. "When we were going to more local games, there were two Hackney Cars out in the Bridge at the time. They were owned by James Hayes and Mikey Wymess and later Seamus Lawlor. But if we were going down to Cork, Cody's Hotel of John Street used to drive us down in a bus."

"We would have to start getting toggled out on the bus when we were about 20 minutes outside Cork and then we would play down in the Mardyke. We were very well looked after down at those tournaments, they wine and dined us at the Imperial Hotel."

The quality of prize and standard of opposition meant that the tournaments were always more than mere exhibition games and competition was fierce. The format was usually that about 8 teams would be invited to play and on the same day every week for three or four weeks, the host club would stage a round of games culminating in a final.

"The tournaments were very competitive, we picked our championship team based on the tournaments" recalls former Waterford captain Joe Condon. "They became our training every week for the summer. Because you had the top players in the country in-

volved, you always did your best to beat them. I can tell you, there was absolutely no holding back in those games whatsoever."

"I played in tournaments in Waterford and Wexford a lot but the best tournaments I played in were always in south Kilkenny, especially Mullinavat. There were unbelievable teams down in south Kilkenny then. Take Kilmacow for example, they had 15 players that could have all made a county team. Hurling was their life."

"Kilmacow, Mooncoin, Glenmore and Slieverue all had great senior teams in Kilkenny and we loved playing against them. Kilmacow had Mike Flemming and Charlie and Pat Forristal and Glenmore had the Barrons and Slieverue had the Walshes, Donovan and Rocket."

It wasn't only players that were starved of action. Fans responded enthusiastically too to these new tournaments. Buses would be organised to ferry people around the country and many people even took to their bikes in order to get to games.

"On the roads up to the pitch there would be piles of bikes all along the ditches. And there was a great atmosphere" remembers Joe. "There would be a big carnival around the tournaments. Clubs would have made big money by running them and would have wanted to attract as big a crowd as possible. I remember that Glenmore used to have a van up in the corner of the field selling drinks and snacks because there was no pub in the village back then. It was a different time".

Frankie Walsh, Waterford's All Ireland winning captain in 1959 once played in a final in the Dunhill Tournament "in front of at least 10,000 people. They had tractor trailers all around the pitch for people to stand on so they could see. And that size of a crowd wasn't that unusual."

"With so many people coming to watch the games, it promoted hurling in a big way. When else would you have the top stars of the game competing in all these small little parishes around the country."

Alas the popularity of the tournaments were to prove their downfall. The GAA became concerned that the prizes on offer meant that the game was becoming semi-professional. There were also worries that clubs were beginning to prioritise the tournaments over local championships. In and around the mid 1960's, county boards began to introduce a league structure. These additional games squeezed the tournaments out of existence and by the late 70's they were no more.

Johnny McGovern feels that the end of the tournaments was a loss to hurling in general. "These tournaments were great for players like me to play in. I got to cut my teeth against the likes of Christy Ring and the Rackards and all the great players of the time."

"When the tournaments ended, it was a terrible blow. Not just to the players, but to the clubs who hosted them and to all the fans who used to love packing up every week and going to see their teams play."



Bennettsbridge Celebrate, 1971

Back: N Purcell (Count Chairman), P Moran, J McGovern, M Crowe, M McCarthy, K Dunne, L Cleere, P Lawlor, J Holohan, J Kinsella, S Cleere, M Walsh (Official), J Holohan, W Kennedy, Fr P Comerford CC, T Kelly, J Dowling, M Bourke.

Centre: N Skehan, M Treacy, Rev J Murphy, PP, P Kealy, Captain, P Fanning, President GAA, M Hayes (Official), J Treacy, Rev P Nugent, P Treacy.

Front: P Hayes (Official), H Drea (Official), C Hayes, J Dobbyn (Officer), M Kelly (Officer).



BACK IN THE BEGINNING

*Bennettsbridge won their first County Final in 1890, beating Callan 1-4 to 0-1. In those days, County Champions represented their county in subsequent inter-county competitions, and so Bennettsbridge represented Kilkenny in the Leinster quarter final, where they met Castlebridge representing Wexford. The game was played in Baile na nDéise in Waterford city, and the report of the game (below) is from the **Munster Express** of November 9th 1890. Castlebridge won by 1-3 to 0-2 and went on to beat Kildare and Dublin (in the Leinster Final). They met Cork in the All Ireland Final, the first meeting of the two counties in a decider. The game was unfinished and the title awarded to Cork on the grounds of excessively rough play by the Wexford men.*

(The teams were 21-a-side in those days.)

THE INTER-COUNTY HURLING AND FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS KILKENNY V. WEXFORD WEXFORD WINS THE HURLING; THE FOOTBALL MATCH A DRAW

ON SUNDAY last the matches between these two counties for the hurling and football championships came off at Ballynaneeshagh, in a field kindly given by Mr. James Hally. The day was all that could be desired if we except the heat, while the attendance was immense, there being certainly not less than 12,000 spectators of the games. Three boats left New Ross for Waterford in the morning conveying about 2000 passengers from Wexford, while the Kilkenny contingent turned up in full force.

We feel compelled, as we have been on many similar occasions, to condemn strongly the conduct of the bystanders who would insist on crowding in on the playing ground and interfering with both the contestants and the officials. The result was that the hurling match, instead of concluding in an hour, lasted over two, while the football match remained unfinished, the score of the rival teams being level.

The competing clubs were Bennettsbridge (Co. Kilkenny champion team) and Castlebridge (Co. Wexford champion team) for the hurling and Ballyhale (Co. Kilkenny) and Wexford the champions of their respective counties for the football.

Mr. D Fraher, Dungarvan, acted as referee and discharged his duties with the utmost impartiality, though his patience was many times sorely tried by the insistence of persons interfering in matters with which they had no concern. He was assisted by Messrs. Thos. Barry, Maurice Kiely, Michael Healy and John Gleeson, goal umpires.

Proceedings opened with the hurling match, which was won by Castlebridge by a goal and three points to two points. Neither of the teams are anything like first-class and would not have the most remote chance of beating Mooncoin, Moycarkey, Meelick or some of the Dublin clubs. The Wexford men pucked far better than their opponents, but the latter had considerably the best of it in the scrimmage. Both teams seemed to be rather afraid of each other, and it was only in the last ten minutes that anything like tough work was to be witnessed. Had the Kilkennies played in the same style during the earlier portion of the match the result would most likely have been far different as they threatened to make a goal on three occasions but failed, the presence of the crowd having a great deal to do with their non-ability to score.

The Castlebridge captain won the toss, and elected to play with the wind, which blew pretty freshly. Bennettsbridge at once assumed the offensive and compelled the Wexfordians to puck off, when the compliment was at once returned. After Kilkenny had pucked off, they had to do so again, and the play became fast

and furious in the centre of the ground, when the Castlebridge men made a capital rush, and after two good scrimmages, scored a point, and afterwards had to puck off twice, after which they added a second point to the score, and again a scrimmage in front of the Kilkenny's goal took place with no result, and a lot of up and down play ended by another puck off from the goal by Castlebridge, and again another, and a short series of runs ended in Castlebridge making a goal- pucked by James Daly two minutes before call of time.

When the leather was put in play for the second half, Wexford got on it, but had to act on the defensive, and then with a piece of fast play ran the ball to the front of the Bennettsbridge goal, and continued to have the beat of the game for some time and scored a point, and then Kilkenny had to puck off twice, when they took possession and very nearly scored a point. The Castlebridge culbair pucked off, and off this puck Kilkenny placed the first point to their credit. After puck off, the play became very fast, and a desperate scrimmage ensued at the Wexford points posts and the ball striking one of the crowd, the second point was awarded to Kilkenny. For the last ten minutes the play was very hot, but no score was made, and the score at the call of time was as follows; - Castlebridge, 1 goal 3 points; Bennettsbridge, 2 points.

Teams-

Castlebridge- M.Daly, captain and culbair; P. Devereux, T. Devereux, G. Brown, W. O'Leary, M. Brown, J. Leary, J. Rossiter, J. Murphy, L. Cannon, John Murphy, P. Furlong, M. Lacy, P. McDonnell, W. Furlong, G. Synnott, W. Doran, E. Leary, O. Daly and G. Daly, M. Lacey.

Field Umpire- Patrick Furlong.

Bennettsbridge – Pierse Coady, captain; Michl. Brady, culbair; M. Green, Thomas Power, John Shortall, John Brady, James Reddy, Thomas Nolan, James Dunne, Michael Dollard, John Dunne, D. Foley, Thos. Green, M. Cranny, Ptk Reidy, M. Holohan, W. Doyle, John Kennedy, Patrick Kennedy, Patrick Finnegan, John Cuddihy.

Field Umpire – Philip Aylward.

Referee–Mr Dan Fraher (Dungarvan)



OLD ADVERSARIES MEET AFTER 30 YEARS

*The Bennettsbridge team that played Mooncoin in the County Final of 1965 at the re-union with their opponents of the day.
Seated (l-r): Noel Skehan, Martin Treacy, Sam Carroll, Tony Bennett, John Kinsella. Jim Treacy, Paddy Treacy, Johnny McGovern.
Back (l-r): Paddy Moran, Jim Dobbyn, Jim McCarthy, Larry Cleere, Christy Hayes, Mickey Kelly, Seamie Cleere, Henry Drea.*

TEAMS PREVIOUSLY HONOURED ON COUNTY FINAL DAY

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1989 Kilkeny Senior Hurling Team 1939 | 2005 John Lockes Senior Hurling Team 1955 |
| 1990 Carrickshock Senior Hurling Team 1940 | 2006 Kilkeny Senior Hurling Team 1957 |
| 1991 Kilkeny Senior Hurling Team 1947 | 2007 Tullaroan Senior Hurling Team 1958 |
| 1992 Éire Óg Senior Hurling Teams 1939 & 1947 | 2008 Kilkeny Minor Hurling Team 1960 |
| 1993 James Stephens Senior Hurling Teams 1935/37 | 2009 St. Lachtain's Senior Hurling Teams 1961/63 |
| 1994 Thomastown Senior Hurling Team 1946 | 2010 Kilkeny Minor Hurling Team 1961 |
| 1995 Tullaroan Senior Hurling Team 1948 | 2011 Bennettsbridge Senior Hurling Teams 1960's |
| 1996 Kilkeny Junior Hurling Team 1946 | 2012 Kilkeny All-Ireland Minor Team 1962 |
| 1997 Graigue Senior Hurling Team 1949 | 2013 Kilkeny Senior Hurling Team 1963 |
| 1998 Dicksboro Senior Hurling Team 1950 | 2014 Mooncoin Senior Hurling Team 1965 |
| 1999 Carrickshock Senior Hurling Team 1951 | 2015 Rower Inistioge Senior Hurling Team 1968 |
| 2000 Kilkeny Minor Hurling Team 1950 | 2016 Kilkeny Senior Hurling Team 1967 |
| 2001 Kilkeny Junior Hurling Team 1951 | 2017 Kilkeny Senior Hurling Team 1969 |
| 2002 Bennettsbridge Senior Hurling Teams 1950's | 2018 James Stephens Senior Hurling Team 1969 |
| 2003 Kilkeny Junior Hurling Team 1956 | 2019 Fenians Senior Hurling Team 1970 |
| 2004 Slieverue Senior Hurling Team 1954 | |

Appreciation.

The Chairman and members of the Kilkeny GAA County Board would like to express their thanks and appreciation to the Springhill Court Hotel for their generous sponsorship of this event.



FESTIVE DINING THROUGHOUT DECEMBER

FESTIVE DINING IN OSCAR'S BISTRO

All include a glass of Mulled Wine & Mince Pie

Festive Lunch

2 Course: **€24**

3 Course: **€28**

Festive Dinner

2 Course: **€25**

3 Course: **€30**

Afternoon Tea

€22.50

Open for festive dining 1st to 22nd December & 27th to 30th December.

FESTIVE DINING IN THE PADDOCK BAR

» Enjoy our Carvery Lunch, Afternoon and Evening Bar Menu or sample our Wine & Cocktails Menu served throughout the Festive Season.

Pre-booking is essential

Contact Kerry

events@springhillcourt.com

or Call 056 77 21122