

*Remembering **The Fenians** Treble County Senior Hurling Champions*

1972

1973

1974



Luach
€3

***Souvenir Booklet recalling **The Fenians'** 1972, 73, 74 County Senior
Hurling Championship victories, an the occasion of the team's reception
by Coiste Co Chill Chainnigh, at the 2023 County SH Final.
Nowlan Park, October 29th, 2023***





GIFT A MEMORY THIS FESTIVE SEASON



LYRATH ESTATE
KILKENNY

LYRATH.COM

T +353 56 776 0088 E info@lyrath.com
Lyrath Estate, Paulstown Road, Kilkenny.

LYRATH ESTATE GIFT VOUCHERS

Choose from Estate Accommodation, Gourmet Dining Experiences,
Delightful Afternoon Tea or pure relaxation at Oasis Spa.



FÁILTE

Tá athas an domhain orm, ar son Cumann Luthchleas Gael Cill Chainnigh, to welcome in conjunction with the Lyrath Estate Hotel, the Fenians side who were the 3-in-a-row Senior Hurling Champions from 1972 to 1974 to today's St Canice's Credit Union Senior County Final in UPMC Nowlan Park.



Fenians GAA Club was founded in 1968 with the coming together of the two clubs in the Johnstown Parish, St Kieran's and St Finbarr's. There was instant success with the Fenians winning the 1968 Junior Final by defeating Glenmore. Their success at Senior was staggering. The Fenians competed in six Senior County finals in a row. Of those six finals, three were against Bennettsbridge and three against James Stephens. Their maiden Senior final in 1969 ended in a loss to James Stephens but, in 1970, they turned the tables on their rivals James Stephens, and secured their first Senior title. In 1971 they would lose to that great Bennettsbridge side. However, over the next three years, the Fenians proved victorious and joined Mooncoin, Carrickshock and, much later, Shamrocks Ballyhale, as one of only four clubs to achieve a 3-in-a-row.

The first final in 1972 saw the Fenians reverse the 1971 loss against Bennettsbridge. On Sunday 19th October 1972 on a wet and windy day, the Fenians, inspired by County players Pat Henderson and Pat Delaney were triumphant on a scoreline of 3-10 to 1-6.

In 1973, the Fenians defeated James Stephens in an enthralling Final. The Fenians looked to be in trouble at half time, trailing by 4-6 to 2-2 but showed the customary Fenians fighting spirit to overcome their rivals by 7-8 to 5-10 in the end.

The Fenians completed the 3-in-a-row in 1974, overcoming Bennettsbridge in atrocious weather conditions by 0-10 to 0-6. Between 1977 and 1981, the Fenians would compete in three more finals, winning the 1977 final against the Rower Inistioge.

The 1974 team would later create history by becoming the first Kilkenny club to win a Leinster Senior Hurling Club Final by beating St Rynagh's of Offaly by 2-6 to 1-6 in the final but unfortunately, they lost the All-Ireland Club Final to Cork powerhouse St Finbarr's by 3-8 to 1-6.

It was no coincidence that the golden period with Fenians GAA club was also mirrored at County level with Fenians players playing prominent roles in the County's success between the years 1969 and 1975.

I extend Mile Buiochas to the Lyrath Estate Hotel and their Manager, Emma Jane Eaton, for honouring the Jubilee team who will be guests of honour with their partners at a celebration dinner and will be provided with a special memento of the occasion. Thanks also to Gerry O'Neill and Mary Morgan for their work in researching and producing this souvenir booklet.

The 3-in-a-row was an outstanding achievement for a small rural club and, to this day, the club has maintained that great fighting spirit and contributed so much to Kilkenny Hurling both on and off the field.

P.J. O Cionnaith
Cathaoirleach Coiste Contae Cill Chainnigh



'Lyrath Estate are delighted to sponsor the presentation to today's special guests the Fenians Senior Hurling Teams of 1972, 1973 and 1974. who won the County Senior Hurling Title three years in a row over 50 years ago.

The teams, along with the officers of Kilkenny GAA County Board, will be honoured at a special Dinner later this evening as guests of Lyrath Estate.

This final is always a highlight on our calendar, and as a proud GAA woman myself I love getting to be a part of the big day and share in the celebrations!

Best of luck to the entire group and hope their reunion will be a memorable one.'

General Manager, E.J. Eaton.



HOW THE FENIANS CAME TO BE

The extraordinary rise of the Fenian Hurling team which culminated in five County SH titles between 1970 and 1977 can be traced to the County JH title victory of 1968, or even perhaps to the success of the Johnstown MH team of 1960 which reached the County Final of that year only to be beaten by Mooncoin in a replay.

A NEW CLUB IS FORMED

Johnstown's glorious run in the 1960 minor hurling championship was reflected in their representation on the Kilkenny minor teams of 1960 and 1961. Pat Delaney was on the panel in 1960, Pat Henderson was centre back in 1961, with Willie Waltson also on the panel. But for the club, there followed a series of barren years in which it failed to proceed beyond the first round of the junior championship. Hurling folk followed Pat Henderson's career on the Kilkenny senior hurling team and rejoiced when he won his first senior All-Ireland medal in 1967. In 1966, Johnstown mustered a formidable junior hurling team around Pat Henderson, with Pat Delaney, Seamus Grace, Frank Holohan and Nicky Orr in support. However, in a controversial ending to a championship game against Coon, in which the referee added on an extra eight minutes, Johnstown were defeated by a single point. Arising from recriminations immediately following the game, and much as happened in 1959, a group of players and others broke away and again entered a separate team in 1967, known as St. Finbarr's. There were two teams in the parish that year, St. Kieran's and St. Finbarr's. Neither progressed further than the first round, St Kierans being defeated by Coon and St Finbarrs by Conahy. Prospects were bleak but a new dawn was heralded by the progress of the U-21 team that same year. The U-21 team of 1967 was drawn from players of both clubs in the parish. Unburdened by the animosity between the two clubs, the players soon formed into a closely knit unit and there was great spirit in the team. The whole parish, long starved of success, rallied behind the players. Early victories over Ballyragget and Freshford led to a showdown with Coon in the Northern Final. In a torrid match, Johnstown emerged victorious and qualified for this first ever U-21 Final against a Bennettsbridge team that had Pat Lalor, John Kinsella and Pat Kealy in its ranks. The Johnstown players may have felt overawed playing against a club with such an exalted tradition and it was also their first game in Nowlan Park. In any event, the team did not achieve the fluency of earlier games and victory went to Bennettsbridge. The team was: Michael Dowling, P. J. Ryan, Billy Tobin, Richard Dowling, Shem Delaney, Nicky Orr, Diarmuid Broderick, Joe Burke, Fergus Farrell, Laddy Ryan, Donal Walsh, Paddy Broderick, Michael Garrett, Martin Fitzpatrick, Séan Dermody,

THE FOUNDING OF THE FENIANS

The achievement of the U-21 team signalled that the best prospects of a bright future in Johnstown hurling lay in a single unified team drawn from the whole parish. Nobody doubted that the parish had fine hurlers in Pat Henderson, Pat Delaney, Willie Watson, Séamus Grace, Jim Maher, Pat Murphy and Micky Carroll. It was felt that a team containing these players and supplemented by the up and coming U-21 players would make a bold bid for the Junior Championship. On the 16th March 1968, the Fenians' Hurling Club was formed. Here is the text of the minutes of the 1st annual general meeting.

"At an extraordinary general meeting in the C.Y.M.S. Hall Johnstown on March 16th 1968 between the St. Finbarrs club and the Johnstown club, a new club was formed. It was called The Fenian Hurling Club. Rev. Fr. Malone was unanimously elected as Chairman. Paul Skehan, Michael Gannon, Paddy Henderson (Ballyspellan), James Ryan, Edward Curran, Pat Henderson were elected committee members. The committee was elected as follows; The Finbarr's club picked three members two from the Johnstown club and one from their own and the Johnstown club did likewise. The committee was to have full authority for the administration of the club - selection of teams etc. It was proposed to purchase a new set of jerseys which would be the property of the committee. The committee was left with authority to name the club, select jerseys and raise funds. It was agreed that training would alternate between the sportsfield and Dwan's field every second week. The members of the Johnstown club were to provide nine roots of ash as members of the Finbarr's Club already had a similar number. These were to be used to provide hurleys for the club."

Proposed by: Ed Curran. Rev. Fr. Malone. CC, Seconded by: P. Fitzpatrick.



Back in 1914, Johnstown or Baile Sheáin won their first county title.....

Champions - With a little Help from their Friends!

Fenians 3-1 Erin's Own (City) 0-0

The 1914 Kilkenny senior hurling championship was an unusual one.

First Tullaroan were drawn to play Mooncoin in the opening round, but the Tullaroan men objected to Ballyhale as the venue. The dispute dragged on. Tullaroan did not travel on the appointed day and they were thrown out of the championship. Mooncoin progressed to the semi-final where they were drawn to meet Johnstown. But it was a Johnstown team with a difference, for half of the team came from Tullaroan. It was presumably possible to do this since none of them had yet played in the championship. John Holohan of Johnstown was the captain. Pierce Purcell from Crosspatrick had won a junior All-Ireland with Tipperary in 1913 and had lined out with Tipperary in the 1911 game won by Kilkenny which was played in place of All-Ireland final that year.

Also in the team were Jim Byrne, Michael Morrissey, Andy Holohan, E. O'Brien, William Shortall, Jim Scott, W. Dwan. Tom Dunne hailed from Ballycallan. The Tullaroan contingent included Pat Clohosey, Sim Walton, Phil Hogan, Dan and Mick Kennedy, Larry Walsh, Dick Grace. Johnstown played Mooncoin in St. James's Park on 21 June. The game ended in a draw, according to the Mooncoin book



- but Mooncoin objected to Johnstown being awarded the game because of the presence of the Tullaroan hurlers and the game was refixed for Waterford on 13 September. It was eventually played there on 11 October. Johnstown emerged victorious on the score Johnstown 3-3, Mooncoin 2-0.

The final against Erin's Own was played in St. James's Park in 1915. The game began an hour and a half late, and "The Whip" was not too impressed with the hurling on the day. The attendance was large, and although there was a little encroachment, it was nothing much to cavil about. Weather conditions were bad. Before the game a very heavy shower of sleet and hailstones fell to a depth of several inches. With the sunshine that followed, the pitch became very heavy and the players found it difficult to maintain their equilibrium. Add to that a greasy ball and one can see how the standard of play was not the most exciting. John Lalor, Hon. Sec. Kilkenny County Board, refereed the game.

The city team played against the wind but with the advantage of the sun. It was they who attacked from the throw in but were repulsed and for a time exchanges were even. Sim Walton missed a point for Johnstown and an Erin's Own attack inspired by Matt Gargan proved equally fruitless. The only event of note at this stage was the breaking of Clohosey's hurley. The reporter remarked: "This was the fourth caman



that had been broken, a fact that prompted the observation by my friend 'Fox' Maher, Want of use'. Clohosey was provided with a hurley after some delay".

Exchanges were even for a time and the play improved, but not for long. After twenty-three minutes' play, Johnstown succeeded in getting a goal, and this put just a little life in what was a very dead exhibition. But after a few passages of play "the game resumed the dullness for which it will be long remembered. There was missing and muffing in abundance all over the field. Johnstown were now doing all the pressing, but a good defence and bad judgement prevented them increasing their lead. A fast shot from Walton went wide by a very narrow margin but he soon made amends. Getting possession from the puck out, he landed the ball in the net for a good goal. Honours were even in the following exchanges, and shortly after the half-time whistle went, leaving the scores:- Johnstown 2-0, Erins Own 0-0.

On the change of ends Erin's Own took the advantage of the wind and the sun was not so strong. Johnstown had only a lead of two goals - not a very formidable advantage with the wind, and the hopes of the city lads ran high. However, there were disappointments in store, for immediately on the ball being set in motion Johnstown assumed the upper hand and swarmed around the Erin's Own posts. This was the most exciting passage of the game as Johnstown began a battle royal for supremacy. "It lasted for about five minutes, and it was delightful to see the defenders standing out so manfully against

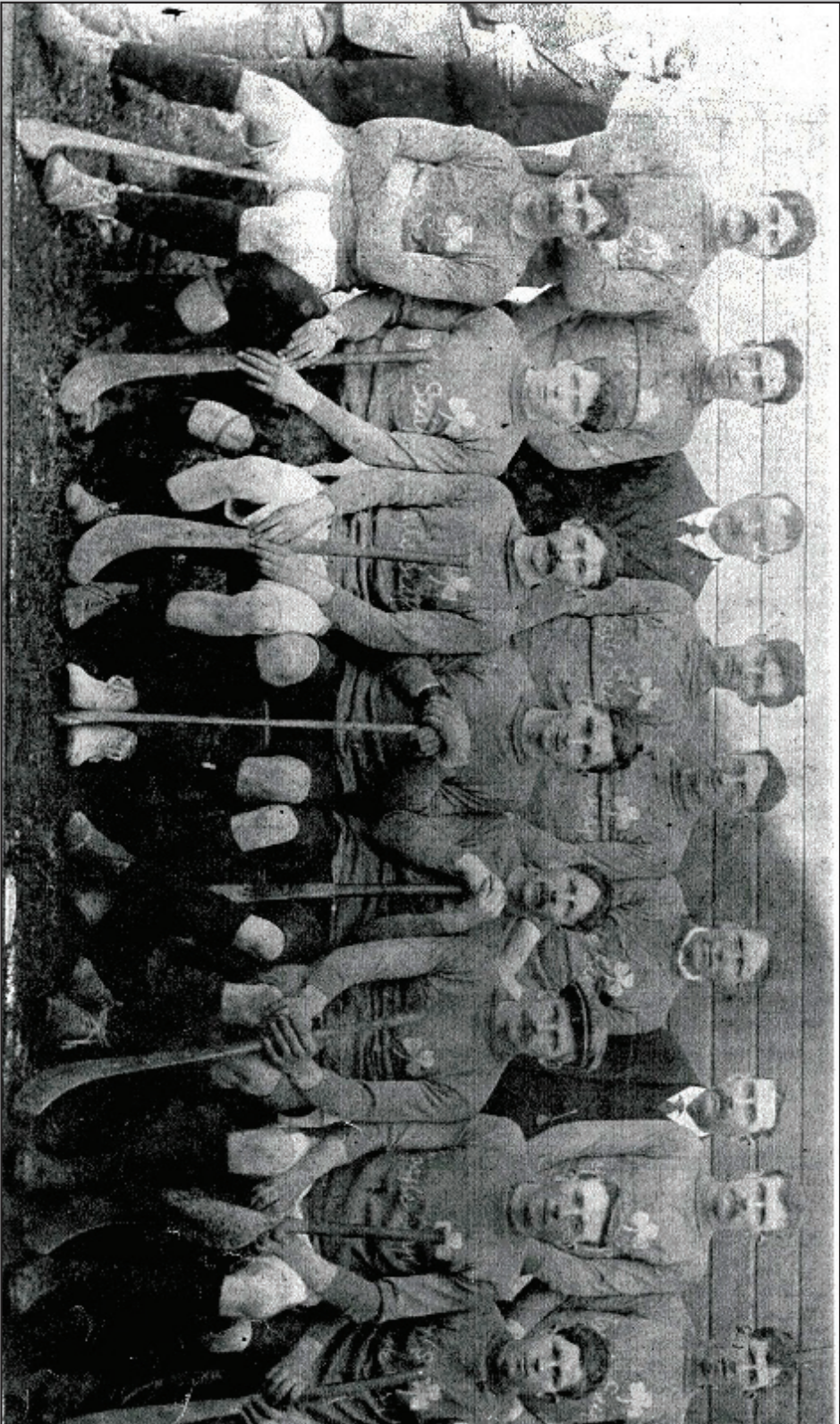
the "sniping" of their opponents. In and out the ball travelled, and the crowd cheered every clearance to the echo. After a tough struggle the defenders were victorious. There were overs and overs and overs. Only rarely did Erin's Own make an incursion into their opponents' territory, and they were always repulsed. A marvellous goal by Walton was the next interesting movement. Having deceived his opponent on the right he swung round to the left and from about 70 yards out landed the sphere in the net amidst general acclamation. It was old times again. Purcell scored a nice point, and, shortly after, the long whistle went, leaving Erin's Own pointless.

The final scores were:- Johnstown 3-1, Erin's Own 0-0". This was the first senior championship win for Johnstown and the last until 1970. The club received £4 in expenses for the final. The teams were:

Johnstown: John Holohan (captain), Pierce Purcell, Jim Byrne, Wm. Shortall, Pat. Clohosey, Mick. Morrissey, Sim Walton, Phil. Hogan, Dan Kennedy, Mick Kennedy (Martin Oge's grandfather), Larry Walsh, Tom Dunne, E. O'Brien, Andy Holohan. The newspaper included the famous A.N. Other on the team.

Erins Own: (St. Canice's):- M. Leahy (Captain), J. Kerwick (goal), J. Rochford, P. Lanigan, J. Lennon, I. McCormack, Denis Brennan, M. Gargan, T. Neary, R. Brennan, J. Brennan, J. Brennan, James Brennan, P. Lennon and P. Burke. (F O'F)





Baile Sheáin 1914



1972 COUNTY SH FINAL

Between 1969 and 1978, the Fenians contested eight Senior Finals and won five of them. Their apprenticeship, though tough, was shortlived. Following the resounding defeat at the hands of James Stephens in 1970, who themselves were seeking their first title since 1937 (when they defeated Dicksboro), they went on to win the final proper in the same year. Following defeat at the hands of Bennettsbridge in 1971, the Fenians embarked on what was to become a peerless three in a row. Since the introduction of the parish rule which prevented players gravitating towards successful clubs, no team had put more than two titles back to back. Tribute should of course be paid to the Carrickshock team of the forties and Bennettsbridge who won numerous titles in the fifties and sixties. But the magical, seemingly unattainable in the modern day, trinity of titles became the hallowed achievement of

the Fenians. However, when only five points up at half time, having played with a gale, victory against Bennettsbridge in the 1972 final did not look likely. The Fenians displayed their by now well known tactical guile and steel. In playing numerous players at midfield at different stages, they successfully stemmed the supply of ball into the ever threatening Bennettsbridge forwards. Pat Hendersons, striking into a wind he later described as 'contrary' and 'not as beneficial as it seemed' was outstanding, nevertheless. The vital sector of midfield, was dominated by Mick Garrett and Paddy Broderick broke 'Bridge hearts with his scores. Despite the brilliance of Skehan and Treacy and the efforts of Watt Kennedy up front, the 'Bridge had no answer to the increasingly familiar Fenian will to prevail. The first step on an historic journey had been taken.



Paddy Broderick



Billy Watson



Pat Henderson



John Moriarty



Pat Delaney



Dickie Dowling



THE FENIANS OVERCOME THE ODDS

THE FENIANS 3-10 BENNETTSBRIDGE ... 1-6

Any betting man courageous enough at the interval to place a bet on the Fenians holding out in the second half against the champions, Bennetsbridge, in the Kilkenny Senior Hurling Championship final at Nowlan Park, Kilkenny, yesterday, would have got handsome odds. After playing with a galeforce wind and backed by heavy rain, their lead at halftime was only five points—14, of which only the goal came from play, to 0-2. - But what a turnabout the second half proved to be! The Fenians, who could do nothing right with the wind, carried the game to the defending champions against the wind, which admittedly had slackened off somewhat, and by the end were most deserving winners. It was a dreadful day for hurling, and with the wind and rain sweeping along the pitch from the Railway End, ball control was almost impossible and footholds treacherous. In the first half the 'Bridge defender s covered themselves with glory, none more -than Noel Skehan in goal, and all six backs played with great confidence and courage. Yet when The Fenians faced the wind and rain they never flinched and after ten minutes of the second half had stretched their lead with a goal and two points. Five minutes later Bennetsbridge reduced the lead to six points, but that was as near as they got and they were fighting a losing battle to the end. With Pat Delaney at centrefield in the second half and Pat Henderson at centre-half back opening

up, the hurling was as good as conditions would allow, but Bennetsbridge had no answer and even the reliable defence of the first half wilted under the pressure. In addition to those two, the new champions had stalwarts in P. J. Ryan in goal, Mickey Orr, Shem Delaney, John Moriarty, P. Broderick and M. Garrett. No blame for defeat could be attached to Bennetsbridge men Noel Skehan, Jim Treacy, Pat Lalor. John Holohan and P. Moran. But the attack proved surprisingly inept.

SCORERS: The Fenians; P. Broderick (1-6, 0-6 from frees), T. O'Connell, W. Watson (1-0 each), P. Delaney (0-2), M. Barrett, P. Henderson (free) (0-1 each). Bennetsbridge: W. Kennedy (04, 0-3 ifrom frees), K. Dunne (1-0), C. Hayes and P. Moran (0-1 each).

THE FENIANS: P. J. Ryan; S. Delaney, N. Orr, M. Fitzpatrick, R. Dowling, P. Henderson, P. Murphy; M. Garrett, W. Watson; W. Fitzpatrick, P. Delaney, P. Broderick, J. Moriarty F. Holohan. T. O'Connell.

BENNETTSBRIDGE: N. Skehan; C. O'Brien, L. Cleere, J. Treacy; P. Kealy, J. Holohan, P. Lalor; P. Moran, P. Cullen; W. Kennedy, J. Bennett, C. Hayes; N. Ryan, K. Dunne, P. Treacy. Sub; J. Dowling for Cullen.

Referee—R. Dowling (Glenmore).



PJ Ryan



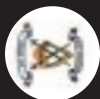
Martin Fitzpatrick













Nickey Orr

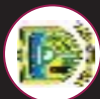


COUNTY SENIOR HURLING FINAL 1972


















Na Fininí

			
P.J. Ryan	Shem Delaney	Nickey Orr	Martin Fitzpatrick
			
Dickie Dowling	Pat Henderson	Pat Murphy	
			
Mick Garrett	Billy Watson		
			
Billy Fitzpatrick	Pat Delaney	Paddy Broderick	
			
Johnny Moriarty	Frank Holohan	Tommy O'Connell	



Droichead Binéid

			
Noel Skehan	Conor O'Brien	Liam Cleere	Jim Treacy
			
Paddy Kealy	John Holohan	Pat Lalor	
			
Paddy Moran	Phil Cullen		
			
Watt Kennedy	Jim Bennett	Christy Hayes	
			
Noel Ryan	Kevin Dunne	Paddy Treacy	



Fenians are Kilkenny Champions Holders played wrong way!

THE FENIANS.....3-10 BENNETTSBRIDGE.....1-6

By John D Hickey

ALTHOUGH there was not a shred of doubt about the justice of the outcome of the Kilkenny Senior Hurling Championship final in which The Fenians (Johnstown) defeated title-holders, Bennettsbridge, by 3-10 to 1-6 at Nowlan Park, Kilkenny, yesterday, the losers seemed to me to commit a grievous tactical error, which contributed to their downfall. Much to my astonishment when Noel Skehan won the toss, the 'Bridge elected to play against a wind of almost gale force and rain of a density that must have impaired vision. But at the interval, at which stage the Fenians led by only 1-4 to 0-2, it appeared the losers had adopted a judicious course. Such had been the wind's carry of the ball that there seemed little point in resuming the encounter - a runaway Bennettsbridge victory seem in prospect. It is my assumption that the apparent security in which the losers found themselves at the interval turned out to be a hidden enemy in the camp. The Fenians, on the other hand, must have considered that their ambition was beyond attainment, and that nothing less than courage far beyond the call of normal duty and frenzied effort would save them from a humiliating rout. On the restart, there was a marked lack of urgency in the play of the 'Bridge side, whereas the Fenians set out to defy the opposition and their allies - the wind and rain. That they did. In the first eight minutes of the second half they put on 1-2 without reply. Then as if to punish the losers for having spurned their good fortune in winning the toss, the elements took a hand in the proceedings. The wind dropped considerably, and the rain abated. But even before the day blew itself to comparative meekness, it was obvious that the warrior Fenians were capable of taming the weather-assisted Bennettsbridge. While every man in the victorious side will be hailed for many a day in the Johnstown parish, their success, their second in the event, could not have been forged had it not been for the superlative performances of Pat Henderson and Pat Delaney. The part the pair played in the success was even greater than the contribution

they made to the triumph of Kilkenny in this year's All-Ireland final. the length of some of the balls Henderson struck when the wind was howling was astonishing. Everything he did had the stamp of class. The Johnstown men behind the scenes also deserved much credit for the victory, as the switch of the devastating Delaney from the "mark" to midfield at the start of the second half demolished the losers in the area. In addition to lording it in the centre of the field, Delaney gave assistance of incalculable value to the attack, and clearly caused alarm, if not panic, to spread through the defeated side every time he even moved to a ball. But this victory, in which success over Bennettsbridge in a decider meant as much to The Fenians as did an All-Ireland football final win for Offaly over Kerry, was by no means a two-man achievement. In Johnny Moriarty, Nicky Orr, Pat Murphy, Shem Delaney, a brother of Pat, Mick Garrett, Paddy Broderick, Billie Watson and Tommy O'Connell, the victors had other men who frequently won my admiration. Best for the losers - the superstitious among their followers will surely ruefully comment that they were seeking their 13th title - were brilliant goalkeeper, Noel Skehan, Jim Treacy, Paddy Moran, Pat Lawlor, Conor O'Brien and John Holohan.

Scorers for The Fenians were: Broderick (1-6, five pts. from frees), Watson (1-0), O'Connell (1-0), Pat Delaney (0-2), Garrett (0-1) and Henderson (0-1). The losers' marksmen were: Watt Kennedy (0-4, three from frees), Kevin Dunne (0-1), John Dowling (0-1) and Moran (0-1).

The Fenians - P.J. Ryan, S. Delaney, N. Orr (capt.), M. Fitzpatrick, D. Dowling, P. Henderson, P. Murphy, B. Watson, M. Garrett, B. Fitzpatrick, T. O'Connell, P. Broderick, J. Moriarty, F. Holohan, P. Delaney.

Bennettsbridge - N. Skehan, C. O'Brien, L. Cleere, J. Treacy, P. Kealy, J. Holohan, P. Lawlor (capt.), P. Moran, P. Cullen, W. Kennedy, J. Bennett, C. Hayes, N. Ryan, K. Dunne, P. Treacy. Sub.: I. Dowling (for Cullen).



Fenians 1972 County Senior Champions

Back: Jimmy Ryan, Dickie Dowling, Billy Fitzpatrick, Martin Fitzpatrick, Shem Delaney, Mick Garrett, P.J. Ryan, Billy Watson, Pat Henderson, Dickie Behan. Front: Paddy Broderick, Frank Holohan, John Moriarity, Nicky Orr, Pat Murphy, Pat Delaney, Tommy O'Connell (Young Supporters: Seamus Behan Sean Behan.)



1973 COUNTY SH FINAL

Since their fateful meetings in 1970, there was something special about the meetings of the village and Fenians. Two clubs, relatively new to senior success, had managed to strike up a rivalry that caught the imagination of the hurling public almost immediately. Hence, the Final of 1973 was as keenly awaited as it was contested. The Fenians had benefited from tough outings against Mooncoin and Rower Inistioge but the village looked like winners at half time. They owned

midfield, and, having scored freely, seemed certain to have secured victory. But they were hit for five goals in the second half, three of which were scored by Billy Fitzpatrick. The Johnstown boys had made it two back to back. Éire Óg referee, Paddy Johnston, who officiated at many important games involving the Fenians around this time, acquired the unenviable tag of Paddy 'Johnstown', for his alleged bias towards the Fenians, a point vehemently contested by many of the team!



Frank Holohan



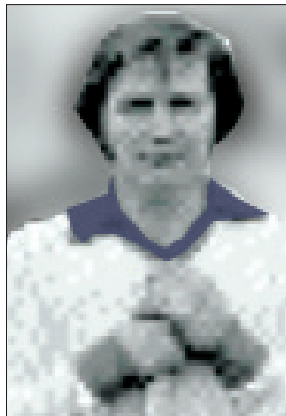
Tommy O'Connell



Frank Hawkes



Shem Delaney



Pat Murphy



Billy Fitzpatrick





The Fenians to keep Kilkenny SH title

The Fenians.....7-8 James Stephens.....5-10

By John D Hickey

BARELY can there have been such a bewildering hurling transformation as about 9,000 enthralled spectators saw at Nowlan Park, Kilkenny, yesterday, when the title-holders, The Fenians (Johnstown) scored a 7-8 to 5-10 victory over James Stephens, in the Kilkenny Senior Championship final.

So superior were the losers in the first half – they led by 2-3 to 0-0 after eight minutes by 4-6 to 1-2 after 28, and 4-6 to 2-2 at the interval – not only on the scoreboard but right through the field that there seemed little point in prolonging the torture of the Fenians.

A goal a minute before the interval did something to allay the alarm of the Fenians supporters but it still seemed beyond the bounds of possibility that they could overhaul the eventual losers.

In the sixth minute of the hour referee, Paddy Johnston, who handled the game with admirable commonsense saw cause to send off the loser's Joe O'Dwyer and the Fenian's Stan Delaney.

It will, I feel sure, always baffle me that a Johnstown team which looked bedraggled in one half could become a side of such splendour as we saw in the other. Within ten minutes of the resumption, the winners put on 3-3 to their rivals one point to take the lead for the first time – 5-5 to 4-7. The levelling point came quickly from the village and with 16 minutes still remaining they held the lead of 5-8 to 5-6.

Majestic as The Fenians had been one felt that they would crack at that stage but not a bit of it. Instead we saw them tumble back for 2-2 in the space of five minutes. Nine still remained and the Village were far from bowed but all they could muster was two points in the dying minutes of a glorious second half against right worthy victors.

What a hurler is Pat Delaney. He was the man who galvanised the champions into action and time and again in the second half he performed

wondrous deeds that baffled as much as they uplifted even the strictly neutral observer.

This, however, was by no means a one man triumph. Pat Henderson, his brother Ger, who will surely soon join him on the county team, Michael Garrett at midfield, Johnny Moriarty, Paddy Broderick, Nicky Orr, Dick Dowling, Billy Fitzpatrick, P.J. Ryan, Jerdy Murphy and Martin Fitzpatrick, will also be the toast of Johnstown folk.

James Stephens went down with colours flying and that they did so, was largely due to the stout-hearted endeavours of Mick Crotty, strangely subdued after a brilliant first half, Liam O'Brien, Fan Larkin, Dinny McCormack, Michael Leahy, Paddy Larkin, Ned Byrne and Tom Ryan.

Scorers – The Fenians – Billy Fitzpatrick (3-0), Pat Delaney (2-1), Johnny Moriarty (1-2 pts. from a free), B Watson (1-0), P Broderick (1, one from a free), D Dowling (0-1), Gerdy Murphy (0-1), and Michael Garrett (0-1). James Stephens – Tom Ryan (3-1), M. Leahy (1-1), N. Byrnes (1-1), L. O'Brien (0-2 from frees), M. Crotty (0-4), T. McCormack (0-1).

The Fenians: – P.J. Ryan, S. Delaney, N. Orr, M. Fitzpatrick, G. Henderson, P. Henderson, P. Murphy, D. Dowling (capt.), F. Hawkes, J. Moriarty, P. Delaney, P. Broderick, B Fitzpatrick, B. Watson, M. Garrett. Sub. – J. Murphy for Hawkes.

James Stephens: M. Moore (capt.), F. Larkin, E. Cody, P. Larkin, D. McCormack, B. Cody, N. Morrissey, L. O'Brien, M. Power, M. Crotty, M. Leahy, P. Murphy, T. Ryan, J.O'Dwyer, N. Byrne. Sub. – T. McCormack for Power and ? O'Brien for P Murphy.








Na Fininí

	PJ Ryan		
			
Shem Delaney	Nickey Orr		Martin Fitzpatrick
			
Ger Henderson	Pat Henderson	Pat Murphy	
			
Dicky Dowling	Frank Hawkes		
			
Johnny Moriarty	Pat Delaney	Paddy Broderick	
			
Billy Fitzpatrick	Mick Garrett	Billy Watson	

COUNTY SENIOR HURLING FINAL 1973

Seannus Stiofáin

	Mick Moore		
			
Fan Larkin	Eamon Coady	Paddy Larkin	
			
Dinny McCormack	Brian Cody	Niall Morrissey	
			
Liam O'Brien	Mick Power		
			
Mick Crotty	Mick Leahy	Des Murphy	
			
Tom Ryan	Joe O'Dwyer	Ned Byrne	





Rise and make way for... THE BOLD FENIAN MEN

THE FENIANS (Johnstown).....7-8
JAMES STEPHENS.....5-10

JAMES STEPHENS' supporters must still be wondering what happened. Leading at half time by 10 points (4-6 to 2-2) and playing like winners, the city side completely collapsed in the second half. At one stage in the first half many fans were talking in terms of leaving at half time as The Village, at this stage, looked set for a runaway victory.

Paddy Broderick was off target on a few occasions at the start and looked as though luck was not on his side. But what a difference in the second half. The Fenians hit The Village with everything they had and stars of the first half – Liam O'Brien, Mick Crotty and Fan Larkin – were almost inconspicuous in the second.

Billy Watson, 'Schemer Supreme' of the Johnstown attack, got the vital scores while Billy Fitzpatrick, improving with every game, started the 'goal rush'. Pat Delaney and Paddy Broderick improved out of all recognition in the second half and G. Murphy, who came on as a sub, and Mick Garrett when he moved out, all contributed to this wonderful comeback.

Only champions could fight back like The Fenians and, although The Village could have won, the north Kilkenny men deserved their victory. How did P.J. Ryan stop some of the shots taken at him? Why did Ned Byrne persist in rising the ball in the square when goals were there for the asking? Would Joe O'Dwyer have made a difference had he not received marching orders with Shem Delaney in the first half – immediately after he had scored a fine goal? There are questions which are bound to be asked in Gaelic circles for some time. The greasy ball must have contributed to the high tally of goals scored – 12 in all. When one takes into

consideration that the County's top goalkeepers were in action, this is almost incredible. How often has a team lost a match before with all their forwards scoring – four of them getting goals and the other two a good tally of points – and still lose? Many would say that 25 points is enough to win any game, but then The Fenians are a great team and on Sunday they proved it once and for all.

For the record, they have contested the County Final every year since 1968 and found time to win the Junior Football Final in 1971. By the looks of things they're there for some time to come. On the way to the final, the champions defeated Mooncoin and The Rower/Inistioge. James Stephens beat Bennettsbridge and Galmoy.

James Stephens: M. Moore, F. Larkin, E. Cody, P. Larkin, D. McCormack, B. Cody, N. Morrissey, L. O'Brien, M. Power, M. Crotty, M. Leahy, P. Murphy, T. Ryan, J. O'Dwyer, Ned Byrne.

The Fenians: P.J. Ryan, S. Delaney, N. Orr, M. Fitzpatrick, G. Henderson, P. Henderson, P. Murphy, D. Dowling, F. Hawkes, J. Moriarty, P. Delaney, Paddy Broderick, B. Fitzpatrick, M. Garrett, B. Watson.

Referee: Paddy Johnston. Linesmen: Eddie Leahy (O'Loughlins) and Dick Dunphy (Mooncoin).

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GAME

Billy Fitzpatrick's goal on the half time whistle which put The Fenians in a challenging position. Billy was 'chief executioner' in The Fenians win over Mooncoin in the semi-final. On Sunday he gave Paddy Larkin the 'thumbs down' when Johnstown needed it most.

Tom Ryan's two goals from 21 yard frees, proving what a great striker he is. The Tipperary-born insurance official, realising how difficult a wet ball can be to control, shot low and it paid dividends. Who said Tom would have swung things our way if he'd

been marking Bernie Hartigan of Limerick in this year's All-Ireland?

Billy Watson's deceptive side-steps making full use of every ball he received, his scores coming when Watson felt his team needed them. How good this player is we'll never know – he only does enough to win!

Mick Crotty's brilliant opening half, scoring point after point, making it look easy. When playing this way one can easily understand why the Irish Chicago papers dubbed him one of the best hurlers ever when he hurled in the U.S. for the Harry Bolands.

P.J. Ryan's brilliant saves. "Only the man upstairs could have stopped them," one fan exclaimed as P.J. got his stick to one 'rasper' from Ned Byrne. Played very well all through and at 23 years of age has a long career in front of him.

Dessie Murphy's sporting handshake for his replacement, Scanie O'Brien. This was sportsmanship for all to see, and if tradition was broken by this, it is for the betterment of the game. Murphy is no mean exponent of the code and could well have been annoyed at being taken off.

Paddy Johnston's refereeing was impartial but, while one must accept that it was impossible to please everybody, Paddy had many critics when he put Joe O'Dwyer and Shem Delaney to the line after Dwyer had scored a good goal. Granted the referee had to take strict action to keep the game in check, but perhaps a caution would have worked at this stage. To his credit, however, his linesmen toggled out immaculately in black and amber jerseys and white togs, and umpires in white coats, in keeping with the new image of the G.A.A.



Fenians 1973 County Senior Champions

Back: Neddy Dowling, Mick Dowling, Nicky Orr, Billy Watson, Martin Fitzpatrick, Frankie Hawkes, Pat Henderson, Tom Dermody,

Mick Garrett, P.J. Ryan, Paddy Fitzpatrick, Ger Henderson, Pat Delaney.

Front : Paddy Broderick, Gerry Murphy, John Ryan, Frankie Hickey, Dickie Dowling, John Moriarty, Shem Delaney, Pat Murphy, Billy Fitzpatrick



1974 COUNTY SH FINAL

In reaching the county final of 1974, the Fenians arrived on the cusp of an unprecedented achievement. Winning one county final in Kilkenny is a great feat but to be one away from a three in a row in the post-parish-rule era was breathtaking. In the final against Bennettsbridge, poor weather conditions mitigated against a classic final. That both defences were to the fore was reflected in the scoreline of ten points to six, in favour of the Fenians. However, what the game lacked in purist-pleasing skill was more than made up for in strength of character. In any war of wills, only one team was going to win. Twenty seven frees were conceded in total and seven of the sixteen scores came from those frees. Both NickyRyan, Nicky Orr, Frankie Hawkes, Mick Garrett, Pat Henderson, John Moriarty, John Power. Orr and Jim Treacy revelled in the battle of attrition, and Noel Skehan even played outfield in an attempt

to turn the tide. When Paddy Johnston sounded the final whistle, it sounded an historic victory, one that bore testimony to character on the day and in the years previously. It ensured the Fenians' place in the annals of great club sides. When, in 1977, the Fenians defeated Rower-Inistioge it marked the end of a chapter in their history. Though they went on to contest two finals in 1978 and 1981, this team's golden age was at an end. A team that never shirked adversity but relished it. A team baptised by Fr. Pierce Malone, had confirmed the belief of many that this was one of the great sides. A team that reaffirmed the maxim that skill means nothing unless allied to strength of body and character. Above all a team that showed exactly what unity of purpose could achieve. The Fenians of this era played hurling because they loved it, and it showed.



Ger Henderson



Gerry Murphy



Paddy Fitzpatrick





FENIANS' THREE IN A ROW!

The Fenians.....0-10 Bennettsbridge...0-6

A COUNTY final without a goal. That must be unique in Kilkenny. The Fenians completed a hat trick of senior championships when they beat Bennettsbridge by 0-10 to 0-6 in a final that was disappointing in standard and extremely difficult for players and spectators because of the atrocious weather.

If the no goal situation is unique those looking for coincidence will notice that the 10 to 6 points tally was carried a stage further in the weeks, The Fenians having 10 and Bennettsbridge 6.

Johnstown came through the junior championship campaign in 1969 and they have appeared in all the county senior hurling finals since, winning three out of the five.

Though firm favourites The Fenians got a tougher game from the 'Bridge than most people expected and the winners had it all to do to stay in front. Led by four points, 0-6 to 0-2 at the interval the 'Bridge got on terms with four points scored in the 4th, 5th, 9th and 11th minutes but their effort ended there and The Fenians, though rarely seen at their brilliant best monopolised the scoring from then on.

Though this was not the 'Bridge of old, which could show its shattering power when the chips were down, they did have a chance after getting on level terms but their attacking movements lacked the necessary thrust. In any case P. J. Ryan in goal and Nickey Orr offered stonewall

resistance and several promising moves faded out when Orr came on the scene and anything that passed him was capably dealt with by Ryan.

Elsewhere The Fenians exerted a devastating influence and two men who did tremendous work in carving this win were Pat Henderson and Pat Delaney. Pat Henderson, though he has had better games on more exalted occasions, was a pillar of strength in the defence and Pat Delaney gave a classical exhibition, though paradoxically he came away with only a single point.

For Bennettsbridge Paddy Moran gave a thundering display of vintage Moran hurling and if he had got better support the issue would have been closer.

Dick Dowling and Martin Fitzpatrick manned The Fenians rearguard well as flankers for Nickey Orr and Pat Henderson got fair support from his brother Ger and Shcm Delaney. Frank Hawkes and Mick Garrett performed fairly well at midfield despite Paddy Moran's commanding presence.

Billy Fitzpatrick was top scorer for the winners with four points all from frees. Billy

Watson came late on the scene but his vital point was a very clever piece of work. Johnny Moriarty was well held while Gerry Murphy who has played so well as a defender seemed entirely miscast at left corner forward.

Pat Delaney's second half point when he grabbed a Noel Skehan puck out and returned a lovely drive was the best score of the game.

Noel Skehan like P. J. Ryan, performed magnificently in the 'Bridge goal and Phil Cullen, Larry Cleere and Jim Tracy put up a powerful rearguard. Paddy Kealy, John Holohan and Pat Lalor have all seen better days, though they stood up well to sustained pressure.

Burry O'Brien gave a very impressive display in the attack and Watt Kennedy figured prominently occasionally but more was expected from John Kinsella. Kevin Dunne, Joe Holohan and Ned Ryan.

Billy Fitzpatrick (0-4 from frees); Billy Watson (0-2); Pat Delaney, Mick Garrett, John Moriarty and Paddy Broderick (0-1 each), scored for The Fenians and Watt Kennedy (0-4, 0-3 from frees); John Kinsella and Burry O'Brien (0-1) scored for Bennettsbridge.



Captain Martin Fitzpatrick is carried shoulder high with the trophy after the match.

Scores by the clock

FIRST HALF

1 min.	The Fenians point, P. Broderick.
4 min.	The Fenians point, W. Fitzpatrick (free).
9 min.	The Fenians point, W. Fitzpatrick (free).
17 min.	Bennettsbridge point, W. Kennedy (free).
18 min.	Bennettsbridge point, B. O'Brien.
24 min.	The Fenians point, W. Fitzpatrick (free).
27 min.	The Fenians point, J. Moriarty (free).
30 min.	The Fenians point, B. Watson.

SECOND HALF

4 min.	Bennettsbridge point, W. Kennedy (free).
5 min.	Bennettsbridge point, J. Kinsella.
9 min.	Bennettsbridge point, W. Kennedy.
11 min.	Bennettsbridge point, W. Kennedy.
17 min.	The Fenians point, W. Watson.
23 min.	The Fenians point, W. Fitzpatrick (free).
27 min.	The Fenians point, P. Delaney.
30 min.	The Fenians point, M. Garrett.



The Fenians had points in the 1st, 4th and 9th minutes and after an eight minutes scoreless spell Watt Kennedy pointed a Bennettsbridge free. Barry O'Brien had a Bridge point but Tire Fenians added to their tally with points in the 24th, 27th and 30th minutes.

In the second half Bennettsbridge had the first four points (4th, 5th, 9th and 11th minutes) while The Fenians had the last four (17th, 23rd, 27th and 30th minutes).

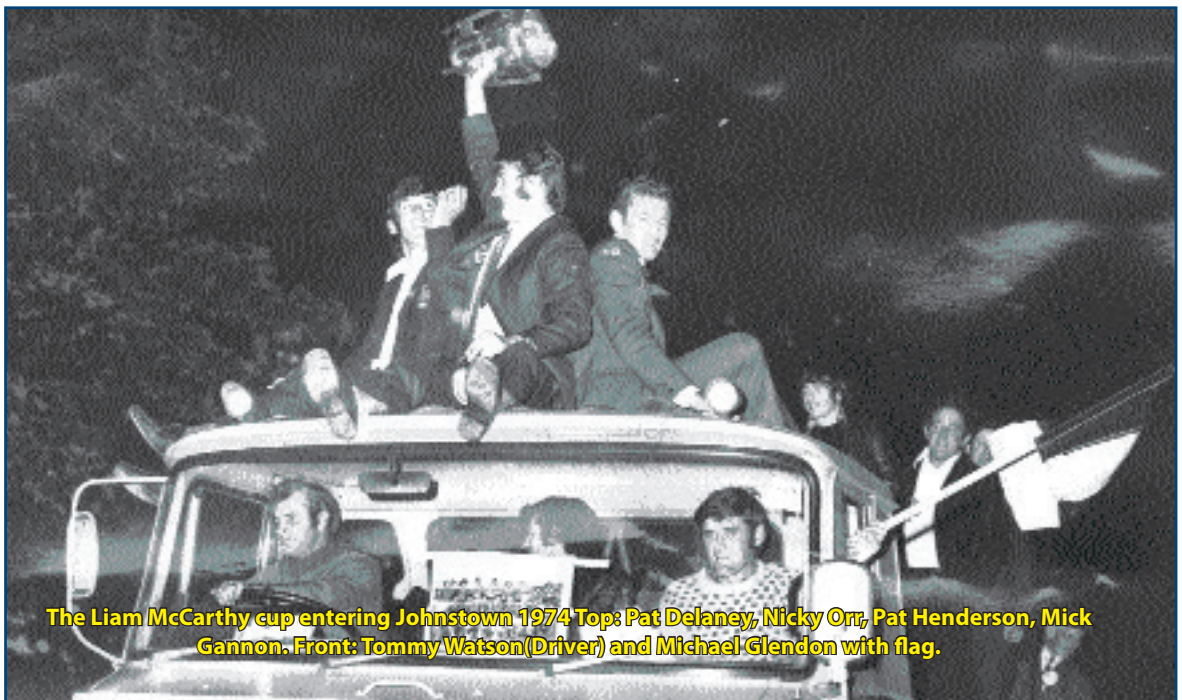
The Fenians - P. J. Ryan, D. Dowling, N. Orr, M. Fitzpatrick, G. Henderson, P. Henderson, S. Delaney, F. Hawkes, M. Garrett, J. Moriarty, P. Delaney, P. Broderick, W. Fitzpatrick, W. Watson and G. Murphy.

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



As Noel Skehan picks himself off the ground, 'Bridge backs Larry Cleere and Jim Treacy have a word with Fenians forward, Billy Watson

Figures of the game					
FIRST HALF					
	Gls	Pts	W	F	10's
THE FENIANS	0	6	4	9	0
BENNETTSBRIDGE	0	2	4	8	1
SECOND HALF					
THE FENIANS	0	4	6	6	2
BENNETTSBRIDGE	0	4	2	4	1
TOTALS					
THE FENIANS	0	10	10	15	2
BENNETTSBRIDGE	0	6	6	12	2



The Liam McCarthy cup entering Johnstown 1974 Top: Pat Delaney, Nicky Orr, Pat Henderson, Mick Gannon. Front: Tommy Watson(Driver) and Michael Glendon with flag.



**Fenians Senior Champions 1974 Back: Nicky Orr, Billy Watson, Pat Henderson, Ger Henderson, Martin Fitzpatrick, P.J. Ryan ,
Mick Garrett, Pat Delaney.**

Front: Paddy Broderick, Shem Delaney, Dickie Dowling, Frankie Hawkes, John Moriarty, Gerry Murphy, Billy Fitzpatrick.

OPPONENTS

FENIANS 1972, 73, 74



James Stephens - County senior finalists 1973

Back: Denis Parsons, Jimmy O'Brien, Dinny McCormack, Tom Ryan, Mick Power, Mick Leahy, Ned Byrne, Mick Crotty, Sean Georgie Leahy, Niall Morrissey, Eamon Cody, Tom McCormack, Sean Brennan. **Front:** Pat Butler, Phil Fan Larkin, Paddy Larkin, Des Murphy, Mick Moore, Liam Chunky O'Brien, Joe O'Dwyer, Brian Cody, Seanie O'Brien.



Bennettsbridge - County senior finalists 1974

Back: Paddy Kiely (Capt), Joe Holohan, Larry Cleere, John Holohan, John Kinsella, Paddy Moran, John Dowling, Wattie Kennedy
Front: Ned Ryan, Jim Treacy, Noel Skehan, Phil Cullen, Pat Lalor, Kevin Dunne, Barry O'Brien.



All Ireland Club Championship 1974-75

The Fenians were the first Kilkenny club to reach the All-Ireland Club hurling final. Their achievement was a notable one and is recalled here by BILLY FITZPATRICK.

Fresh from their exploits in the Kilkenny county senior championship of 1974 the Fenians began their third assault on the club championship in determined fashion. In the first round they met Wexford county champions Rathnure, powered by the Quigleys. It was a bruising encounter, with the play often being spoiled by rough tactics. Not surprisingly, Gerry Kirwan had a busy day. He sent three players to the line in the second half, including the present writer, and booked three more. But there was plenty of good hurling in the match which the Fenians won by 4-7 to 1-7. In what was a hard earned victory, Pat Henderson, Nicky Orr, Gerry Murphy, Mick Garrett (scored 1-2), Pat Delaney (scored 1-1) and John Moriarty (scored 1-2) were most prominent for the Fenians.

Naomh Eoin, the Carlow county champions, were the Fenians' opponents in the second round at Nowlan Park. Long before the final whistle sounded, the qualifier for the third round was decided. The Fenians led at half time by 2-10 to 0-1, at full time by 5-14 to 0-4.

Faughs were their opponents in the third round played in Nowlan Park. Faughs had many Kilkenny connections, especially one, Tommy Moore, whose son-in-law Bernie Ryan did much for hurling in Johnstown. The Fenians dictated most of the play in the first half with Pat Henderson playing very well. Thereafter, they were far from impressive. Although they won by 2-9 to 1-7, their second goal only came in the last seconds of the game. Pat Henderson, Pat Delaney (1-1), Johnny Moriarty (0-5), Billy Fitzpatrick (0-2), Mick Garrett and Nckey Orr caught the eye most.

LEINSTER FINAL

In the Leinster final, Fenians faced St. Rynagh's of Offaly, not for the first time in the club championship. It was a tough, rugged encounter played in heavy conditions, yet both sides played some fine hurling. The Fenians had the better of the first half but some bad shooting allied to some strong tackling by the Rynagh's defence left them at the interval with eight wides and three Billy Fitzpatrick points, all from frees. Rynagh's took their limited opportunities in that opening half and were level at half time, 0-3 each.

The Fenians upped their game considerably in the second half. Their defence, ably marshalled by centre back Pat Henderson, was tight, their midfield of Mick Garrett and Gerry Murphy came more into the game. Nevertheless, St. Rynagh's went ahead in the 42nd minute with a great goal from substitute Matt Moylan. There were tremendous exchanges in the Rynagh's goalmouth after this and only some desperate measures by the Offaly defence kept out the Fenians. When Paddy Fitzpatrick finished a Henderson-Pat Delaney move to the net to level the scores were level once more. Ten minutes from the finish, Mick Garrett made sure of victory when he took a fine pass from Billy Fitzpatrick and lashed the ball past Damien Martin. Rynagh's did try in those last ten minutes but the Fenians' defence held firm. Shem Delaney, Nicky Orr, Pat and Ger Henderson were in magnificent form in the winners' defence. Garrett had a good hour at mid-field and scored 1-1 into the bargain. Most impressive in attack were Pat Delaney, who took a couple of early knocks, and Billy and Paddy Fitzpatrick who contributed between them a goal and four points. The Fenians had done it at last. They had won a Leinster championship, the first team from Kilkenny to do so.

ALL-IRELAND SEMI-FINAL

In the All-Ireland semi-final, played in Ballinasloe, the Fenians were faced by the home team, Ardrahan. The Fenians opened their account with a well-taken goal by J.J. Tobin. They added on seven further points as Ardrahan wasted chance after chance. Indeed, Ardrahan's one score in the first half, a point, only came in the 29th minute. At the break the Leinster champions led by 1-7 to 0-1.

The pep talk at the break must have helped the Connacht champions, for within a few minutes Ardrahan had scored three points and had gained a penalty from which they added another. Ardrahan's Michael Bond and Vincent Mullins were on top at midfield. The Fenians were under some pressure. Nicky Orr, who seemed to keep his best form for these games, and the half-back line of Ger Henderson, Pat Henderson, and Dick Dowling were equal to the task. Ardrahan could not break through for a goal. At the other end, Billy Fitzpatrick stretched the Fenians' advantage to five points, 1-8 to 0-6. Some positional switches helped and soon the Leinster champions were home and dry. They won in the end by 2-13 to 1-8. Reports of the game single out Billy Fitzpatrick who scored 1-8, the same total as Ardrahan. He was joined on the scoresheet by J.J. Tobin (1-1); Johnny Moriarty (0-2), Willie Watson (0-1) and Pat Henderson (0-1); Michael Bond scored four points for Ardrahan. The Fenians were on their way to Croke Park for the club final on 16 March. Excitement in the parish was at fever pitch.

ALL-IRELAND FINAL

The Fenians' opponents in Croke Park were the Munster champions, St. Finbarr's. Munster teams had won all four club championships up to then, Roscrea (1971), Blackrock (1972, 1974) and Glen Rovers (1973). The Fenians had a daunting task. Despite a rather heavy sod, both sides played some good entertaining hurling before a disappointingly small crowd of 3,000. The tackling and clearing of the Fenians' defence were splendid. The Fenians led at half time by 0-5 to 0-4.

They had hard luck almost immediately after the interval when Paddy Fitzpatrick hit the crossbar. Pat Delaney broke through for a great goal in the eighth minute to put them 1-5 to 0-5 in front. The Fenians were holding on to a 1-6 to 0-8 lead when former Cork star, Charlie Cullinane was introduced to the Cork attack. Three goals in a five minute spell per Jimmy Barry Murphy, Jerry O'Shea and Charlie Cullinane dashed Fenians' hopes. A point from Joe Ryan seventeen minutes from the finish was their only other score. They were beaten by 3-8 to 1-6. The report of the game mentions the brilliance of the losers' full back trio, especially Nicky Orr and Martin Fitzpatrick who kept Charlie McCarthy scoreless from play. Pat Henderson had his hands full with Jimmy Barry Murphy. Mick Garrett, John Moriarty, Billy Fitzpatrick, Pat Delaney, and Joe Ryan tried hard.

The team and scorers were: P.J. Ryan, Shem Delaney, Nicky Orr, Martin Fitzpatrick, Gerry Murphy, Pat Henderson (0-1), Ger Henderson, Frankie Hawkes, Michael Garrett, (0-1) Johnny Moriarty (0-1), Pat Delaney(1-0), Joe Ryan (0-1), Billy Fitzpatrick (0-2); Willie Watson, Paddy Fitzpatrick. Sub: Pat Murphy. Paddy Broderick, J.J. Tobin and Eugene Grehan also played important roles in the championship run.

Selectors that year were: Paul Skehan, Mick Gannon, Dick Behan and Paschal Tynan (Club Chairman)



Reunion of Fenians Players of the 1970's

Back: Margaret Fitzpatrick (Rep Paddy RIP) , Pat Henderson, Mick Garrett, Billy Fitzpatrick, Ger Henderson, Frankie Hawkes, John Ryan.

Front : Johnny Moriarity (RIP), Nick Orr, PJ Delaney(Rep Pat Delaney RIP), Patrick Murphy (Rep Pat Murphy (RIP), Shem Delaney, PJ Ryan (Senior)



Johnny Moriarty

RIP

PM O'Sullivan

Although Johnny Moriarty only played with Kilkenny for one season, he stands out as a distinct figure in this hurling tradition.

Why? Because this man, who passed away last July, was a Tipperary native. When? 1971, when his native crowd beat his adopted crowd by three points in a searing Senior All Ireland Final.

Kilkenny's cohort of outsiders might well be the smallest of any hurling culture. Before Moriarty, there were two other non natives, both of them also from Tipperary: Roddy Nealon (father of Donie) and Connie Keane. They briefly featured during the 1920s.

What happened in 1971? You have to trace intriguing swerves. Johnny Moriarty was from Triandra Cross, a step outside Gortnahoe on the way to Urlingford. Born in November 1945, he grew up during one of Tipperary's most famous eras. He began as a goalkeeper with Gortnahoe Glengoole. "We didn't win a lot," he said in a 2017 interview. "The only medal I ever got was a Junior Mid Final against Moycarkey-Borris."

Moriarty gave a spell during the late 1960s working in London. He initially hurled with a club named Young Irelands, before being headhunted by the much stronger St Gabriel's. Then the decisive swerve: "I went to Johnstown, to a job with Roadmaster Caravans. Vera [his wife] is from Folkscourt. My mother was a Kilkenny woman, from out the road in Beggar. So it wasn't difficult to settle here. We got married in 1969."

He continued: "Then I started hurling with Roadmaster, in the Factories League. We had a right strong crew, PJ Ryan and Nicky Orr and plenty others."

Roadmaster did not require a goalkeeper due to Ryan's talent between the posts. Here was another kind of swerve. "PJ was a great goalie," Moriarty noted. "So they landed me out to wing forward. I liked it and started hurling well. Mick Gannon used come and watch Roadmaster hurl. He asked me to join up with The Fenians."

"Yes, I thought long and hard about the move. But eventually I had to say: why not? They were a smashing team, on the way up. I went to them the year I was married."

Johnny Moriarty started catching the eye as a

livewire wing forward. Kilkenny mentors, who now included Mick Gannon, did not fail to notice. Johnstown's new recruit

started featuring in stripes as of late 1970. He started all five league ties in early 1971, up to when a playoff with Wexford got lost by a point. Subsequent panel shake up meant he was not with Kilkenny during the Leinster Championship, when Dublin and Wexford were defeated. But a strong performance for The Fenians against The Rower-Inistioge in early August spun him into a wing forward spot for the All Ireland semi final against London.

"I was going well in training," Moriarty recalled. "So they reckoned they'd chance me. But it didn't happen on the day, and I was taken off at halftime. I felt sluggish and out of sorts."

He was retained for the All Ireland panel but Ned Byrne came into the forwards. Was it difficult for his family, Johnny Moriarty in black and amber? There was a note of hesitation in that 2017 interview: "My father really wanted me to get an All Ireland medal. It would have meant everything to the family. But maybe not against Tipp... He was a roarin' Tipp man, out and out. What he actually felt on the day, I don't really know. People at home told me he was very torn, up in the Stand."

That Sunday evening, he was done with stripes. The governing note was magnanimous: "I never had any bitterness over not being called back afterwards by Kilkenny. I got my chance. I was just proud to have played with some truly great hurlers, especially with so many of them from Johnstown"

Nothing daunted, the same man hurled away with force. Although The Fenians lost to Bennettsbridge in 1971's Senior Final, they took three in a row between 1972 and 1974. Johnny Moriarty stayed omnipresent on those champion sides, still tireless and incisive at wing forward when a fifth Senior title arrived in 1977. He signed off via a Junior A Final win over The Rower-Inistioge in 1980 and coming on as a sub in 1981's Senior Final.

A terrific sense of humour never waned: "I'd have loved to get an All Ireland medal. But it wasn't to be. Maybe I didn't do too bad for a small man from Tipp!"





TEAMS PREVIOUSLY HONOURED ON COUNTY FINAL DAY

- 1989 Kilkenny Senior Hurling Team 1939**
- 1990 Carrickshock Senior Hurling Team 1940**
- 1991 Kilkenny Senior Hurling Team 1947**
- 1992 Éire Óg Senior Hurling Teams 1939 & 1947**
- 1993 James Stephens Senior Hurling Teams 1935 & 1937**
- 1994 Thomastown Senior Hurling Team 1946**
- 1995 Tullaroan Senior Hurling Team 1948**
- 1996 Kilkenny Junior Hurling Team 1946**
- 1997 Graigue Senior Hurling Team 1949**
- 1998 Dicksboro Senior Hurling Team 1950**
- 1999 Carrickshock Senior Hurling Team 1951**
- 2000 Kilkenny Minor Hurling Team 1950**
- 2001 Kilkenny Junior Hurling Team 1951**
- 2002 Bennettsbridge Senior Hurling Teams 1952, 53, 55, 56, 59.**
- 2003 Kilkenny Junior Hurling Team 1956**
- 2004 Slieverue Senior Hurling Team 1954**
- 2005 John Lockes Senior Hurling Team 1955**
- 2006 Kilkenny Senior Hurling Team 1957**
- 2007 Tullaroan Senior Hurling Team 1958**
- 2008 Kilkenny Minor Hurling Team 1960**
- 2009 St. Lachtain's Senior Hurling Teams 1961 & 1963**
- 2010 Kilkenny Minor Hurling Team 1961**
- 2011 Bennettsbridge Senior Hurling Teams 1960, 62, 64, 66, 67**
- 2012 Kilkenny All-Ireland Minor Team 1962**
- 2013 Kilkenny Senior Hurling Team 1963**
- 2014 Mooncoin Senior Hurling Team 1965**
- 2015 Rower Inistioge Senior Hurling Team 1968**
- 2016 Kilkenny Senior Hurling Team 1967**
- 2017 Kilkenny Senior Hurling Team 1969**
- 2018 James Stephens Senior Hurling Team 1969**
- 2019 Rower Inistioge Senior Hurling Team 1968**
- 2020 No Jubilee due to Covid**
- 2021 Kilkenny Senior Hurling Team 1969**

Appreciation. The Chairman and members of the Kilkenny GAA County Board would like to express their thanks and appreciation to Leyrath Estate for their generous sponsorship of this event.



LYRATH ESTATE KILKENNY

ENJOY AFTERNOON TEA
FOR TWO
AT LYRATH ESTATE
THIS WINTER



LYRATH.COM

T +353 56 776 0088 E info@lyrath.com
Lyrath Estate, Paulstown Road, Kilkenny.

