

## "A special day for Clonduff"

by Clonduff Chairperson, Brian McGreevy in "The Hogan Stand" November 2009



**All Ireland Kilmacud Champions 2009**

**Back – Benny Corrigan (Manager), Kieran Trainor, Eamonn O'Reilly, Jason Brown, Conor óg O'Hagan, Darren O'Hagan, Keith Farrell (Selector); Front – Finbarr McConville, John Fegan, Paul McConville (Capt), Aidan Carr and John McPolin**

The Clonduff GAA club has been one of progress over the past few years, but last month saw the Down outfit celebrate one of their bravest achievements thus far by capturing the All-Ireland senior football sevens' championship at Kilmacud Crokes. Chairman, Brian McGreevy, was in the capital for his club's historic triumph and shared the unique experience with Hogan Stand.

Following in the footsteps of the club's Camogs the week previous, Clonduff's senior footballers came through this tournament impressively, winning all their games to advance to the final and defeat fellow Mourne opposition in the form of Longstone. The Clonduff men had come close in previous years, but never quite made the reach for glory, but September 19, 2009 would be their day.

"It was a special day," said Brian. "We'd been knocking on the door for the last four or five years now and there may have been some fears that we wouldn't get there in the end. Thankfully, though, we've done it this year and it is a huge lift to the club."

Brian has been chairman of Clonduff for the past four years now and has enjoyed some great times with the club, as well as experiencing some tough times, but two All-Ireland titles in the space of a week of each other is something he admits will be tough to top.

Clonduff's senior Camogie team set the tone and made history on September 12th by winning the Kilmacud All-Ireland Sevens Shield for the first time, after defeating every side which came their way in a 32-team competition.



**All Ireland Kilmacud Shield Champions 2009**

**Back – Eileen Hamill, Maura Quinn, Guinevra McGilligan, John Crossey, Sheenagh McConville; Middle – Karen Gribben Sara Louise Carr, Lorraine Maginn, Kitty Fegan, Leann McParlan; Front – Kitty McGilligan, Orla Maginn, Ciara Havern, Fionnuala Carr (Capt), Ursula Quinn and Paula Gribben**

After easing through their group stages, the Down women defeated Castledawson of Derry by 4-9 to 2-3 to advance into the semi-finals, where they meet Carlow side Myshall. In a titanic battle, Clonduff edged their Leinster opponents by 4-5 to 4-4 to book their spot in the final. The final threw up an intriguing encounter with fellow Mourne rivals, Ballycran, waiting for Clonduff in the decider. Both sides had already met in the county final previously, when the Yellas were



**Clonduff U16 Footballers at Brynsford Tournament with mentors Sean Fearon and Liam McGreevy**

victorious, and there were no surprises here as Clonduff cruised to a 4-12 to 3-4 victory to collect the shield, which captain Fionnuala Carr was only glad to get her hands on.

"I suppose the fact that our Camogie team had won their tournament in Kilmacud the week previous was an inspiration to the club," said Brian.

"We went down with a good team. Players like Aidan Carr and John Fegan aren't just players you will get in any club and they were determined to give a good account of themselves when they got down there."

Clonduff, who were awarded the Irish News 'Club of the Year' in 2008, headed into this year's All-Ireland Sevens competition as 25-1 outsiders, with Antrim champions St Gall's the heavy favourites.

Managed by Benny Corrigan, Clonduff's squad of ten, which consisted of Kieran Trainor, Eamon O'Reilly, Jason Brown, Conor óg O'Hagan, Darren O'Hagan, Finbarr McConville, John Fegan, Paul McConville, Aidan Carr and John McPolin, were drawn in a tricky group.



**History Sub-Committee that organised a 'Tribute Night' to Clonduff Sons – Kevin Mussen and Patsy O'Hagan, stalwarts of Down's Breakthrough team – on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of winning their first Ulster title in 1959. Back – Tommy Kelly, Fintan Mussen, Sheenagh McConville, Anita Brannigan, Colin Brannigan, Gerry Curran, Eoin Murphy and Brian Canavan; Front – Jerry Quinn, Marie Milligan, Patsy O'Hagan, Kevin Mussen, Marie Walls and Brian McGreevy**

First up for the Down men was an opening test against Cork and Munster kingpins, Nemo Rangers. On paper, the Rebel outfit would be the team to choose for most neutrals, but Clonduff laid down an early marker when they outclassed the Corkonians with a 4-8 to 0-3 hammering.

The manner of that victory would have sent an early warning that Clonduff were in this tournament to go all the way, but they met a sterner task in their next game against Padraig Pearses, where two vital goals helped Corrigan's team to a narrow 2-11 to 3-7 over the

Roscommon outfit. With a final group game with Louth side St Patrick's (managed by former



Burren and Down Great John 'Shortie' Trainor) in a 'winner takes all' situation the Yellas emerged winners 3-14 to 2-14 to maintain their 100 per cent record to reach the quarter-finals.

All-round team performances and their superior fitness had been the difference for Clonduff up until now, but the contribution of eventual 'Player of the Tournament' Jason Brown between the posts had been key. Jason had spent most of the season in rehab following cruciate knee surgery in September 2008.

**Lá na gClub 10<sup>th</sup> May 2009 – Club Officials cut the Cake – Brian McGreevy, Dean A Davies, Marie Walls, Anita Brannigan and Jerry Quinn**

Into the knock-out stages, and in a tournament strongly dominated by Ulster clubs, Clonoe O'Rahillys presented themselves as the next test to a Clonduff side. Jason was immense in goal against the Tyrone champions, denying them the net on several occasions, to help his team cling on to a 1-10 to 0-9 win and make their way into the semi-finals.

Every year, Clonduff haul bus loads of support with them for this annual occasion and they were treated to a mouth-watering encounter when their side were drawn against Armagh giants Crossmaglen Rangers with a place in an All-Ireland final at stake. After Cross's shock defeat to Pearse Ogs in the Armagh SFC a few weeks prior, Clonduff knew that they were coming up against a side which were out for blood.

Benny's charges hit the ground running against the south Armagh side with early goals, which paved the way for a 4-14 to 2-8 victory after a remarkable performance to earn their way into the final.



**Shane Milligan is presented with his U13 Handball Championship medal – the club's first Juvenile Handball Champion in 17 Years!**



Pictured Left – Cabra A Team that won the Boley Sevens Tournament in July 2009.

Back Row – Conor Donnan, John Morgan, Joe Murnin, Paul Kelly; Front Row – Gavin Macken (San Francisco), Seamus Morgan, Kieran Kelly and Eugene O’Hagan (New York).

This was the fourth such event and three players had returned from the US (all on Cabra teams) especially to play in the Sevens. A very pleasing aspect of the day was the number of participants who have moved into the parish and have not previously played for Clonduff teams - the Sevens is about community and craic! After the first round of games some of the players were finding the pace just a bit much (it is an over 30s event though in hindsight some players should have been asked to produce their birth certificates) and it was agreed to reduce the playing time to 5 mins each way. Gerry Coughlin (Clonduff Senior Hurling Manager and qualified referee) and Henry Brown (Minor player and Young Whistler) took charge of the games

Just one game away from coveted All-Ireland glory, Clonduff would meet the winners of former champions Longstone and Castlewellan, which guaranteed an all-Down final. The ‘Stone came through to face Clonduff in a thrilling decider which would go down to the wire.



U12 Camogie Team that won County Championship in 2009 pictured with Eileen Hamill, Ursula Quinn and Guinevra McGilligan

After taking in a 0-4 to 0-3 lead at the break, the Clonduff team produced an unwavering second-half display, which saw another sublime performance in between the posts by Jason Brown. In the end, it was a clean-sheet of goals which proved decisive in the final, as Clonduff ground out a 0-11 to 0-8 victory to claim the club's first All-Ireland Sevens title in the men's senior grade.

The club were further honoured when Jason Brown was awarded the 'Player of the Tournament' for his excellent performances in goal, but it was a real team effort from all the players and management team of Benny Corrigan and Keith Farrell which really won the day for Clonduff (Collie Rodgers is also part of the management team which helped prepare the boys for the tournament but was unable to attend on the day). Jason's mother Paula fulfilled her annual customary role team nurse.

After that Clonduff were treated to the customary banquet at Kilmacud Crokes, before making their way back across the border to bring the cup back to its new home. Whatever time you can claim the title of All-Ireland champions is always a good time, but Clonduff is a club that has been truly progressing across all grades and codes in the GAA.



**Under 8 Players and Mentors Paul Close (with child in arms), Sean Gribben, Stephen Morgan, John Norris and at the Longstone Tournament in 2009**

After being cited as the AIB Down 'Club of the Year' in 2000, Clonduff went one better 12 months later by being awarded the Ulster 'Club of the Year'. In 2007, the Clonduff outfit were Club Maith Platinum Winners as one of the clubs who piloted the scheme in Ulster, and last year they were again honoured at Provincial level by 'The Irish News' as 'Club of the Year'.

"We are known for being an integrated club, which is at the heart of the community," said Brian. Our belief is that the more young people that are involved in sport, the less anti-social behaviour there will be.



**Clonduff Scór na nÓg Instrumental Musicians – Stephen, Mary Catherine and Sean Murray**

"We're battling on all fronts with regards to our Gaelic heritage and culture as we have men's and ladies' football, hurling, Camogie, Scór and Handball to offer members of this club at nearly every age level. In our 125 programme of events we had a go at Rounders on club Day – this is something which was close to our hearts from our school days."

Clonduff have enjoyed success in those codes down their history as well. In 2000, the club won their ninth Down SFC title, while on the ladies' front last year saw them record an elusive three-in-a-row of county titles. The Club has two senior Camogie titles to their name – the first of which was won in 2007 when eight of the players collected medals in both Camogie and Ladies Football.



**The U10 Football team that competed in An Ríocht Tournament with mentors Patrick McConville and P J McGreevy**

The Club has earned 41 county and five All Ireland Scór titles to go along with three Junior Hurling titles, two handball crowns, and representation on the Ireland team at the World Handball

Championships in October 2009 held in Portland, Oregon.



**Mentor (and Referee) Paula Cairns with the U14 Ladies team that reached the County B Final in 2009**

This year with the hard-earned All-Ireland triumphs added to that impressive record, and with the ever-growing participation of Clonduffians in Gaelic Games additional playing facilities are high on the agenda and the commencement of the first phase of the development is imminent.



**The U14 Hurlers reached County Final in 2009 pictured with mentors Paddy Branagan and Damian Farnon**



“The provision of a new sand-based flood-lit pitch will be underway before Halloween this year”, confirmed the Chairman. “The project will be funded in partnership with Sport Northern Ireland who have agreed to invest £245,000 for the benefit of future generations of the people of Clonduff.”

**Right – The platform party at the unveiling of the first Townland Stone – a project undertaken by a specially convened Club sub-committee to mark the twenty-three townlands in the Parish of Clonduff during GAA 125 Year. The first stone was unveiled on 8<sup>th</sup> May by National 125 Chairman Jarlath Burns.**

**Standing (left to right) – Jarlath Burns, Jerry Quinn, Brian McGreevy, Marie Walls, Anita Brannigan, Mary Savage, Noel Fitzpatrick, Dean A Davies, Sheila Gribben, Marie Milligan, Sheenagh McConville, Brendan Murray; Front – Maura Quinn, Gerry Curran, Ursula Murphy and Kieran Muphy**



This investment demonstrates Sport Northern Ireland’s commitment to improving and creating new facilities which will help support increased participation and to develop sporting talent.

Brian is confident that the investment into the pitch will help to attract, enhance and nurture some of tomorrow’s young stars.

The future looks very bright for everyone involved with Clonduff GAC!



**The Architect’s impression of the finished development**