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*Design Identity and the G.A.A.*

*by*

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Fig.16, Model of the proposed Croke Park.

Fig.17, Croke Park directly the development of the new Cusack Stand.

Fig.18, The Guinness/Hurling advertisement.



# *Introduction*





## INTRODUCTION

The G.A.A is a national body too, which, although it rigidly eschews politics, still preserves in its constitution and general government the patriotic ideas for the well being of Mother Eire, common to all sections in politics. It is not an organisation simply catering for hurling, football and handball. It has from the beginning kept close touch with for instance, the Irish language and industrial revival, and it has in many ways shown practical proof of its sincerity helping on those movements. Its rule books are printed in Gaelic as well as English and one of its rules enforces the use of home-manufactured goods in the associations work ..... I think I can fairly say that the association has a claim upon every Gael and that it is the patriotic duty of every Irishman to belong to it.

( T.O' hAonghusa, p11.)

The above passage taken from 'An Gaedheal Og' ( The young Gaels ) was compiled for the purposes of the G.A.A.'s Dublin Schools League, during the first quarter of the twentieth century.

One would glean from reading the entire contents of the above pamphlets, produced for the purposes of acquiring young blood into the Gaelic Athletic Association that unless involved in the association, excommunication from the country was likely to ensue.

The G.A.A. evolved as an important element of cultural nationalism at a time when cultural awakening and revolution had reached a crescendo. 'The Irish Literary Revival', 'The Celtic Revival', 'The Gaelic League' and the 'Gaelic Scoile' were all established during the mid to late 19th century alongside the political, militant and nationalist movements such as the Irish Republican Brotherhood (the I.R.B.) for example.

The inaugural meeting of the G.A.A. was held in Hayes Hotel, Thurles, Co. Tipperary on November 1st 1884 and thus a sporting organisation was born. The purpose of the meeting was to establish a regulating body to organise 'Gaelic' games and make them the preferred pastimes of the Irish people. To reinforce that the G.A.A. was an organisation of Irish games for Irish people a ban was



established prohibiting players or spectators of foreign games to join the G.A.A. along with members of the British army and the R.I.C.

The G.A.A. from its humble beginnings 114 years ago has become the most popular sporting organisation in the country and is recognised as the largest amateur sporting organisation in the world.

My interest in the G.A.A. stems mainly from the fact that my paternal grandfather was captain of the Donegal Senior Football team during the late 20's and early 30's of this century. I am always deep filled with pride when I over-hear stories recounted by elderly gentlemen at football matches of the exploits of Charlie Mc Dyer on the field of play, told to them by their fathers and the conclusion is that Charlie Mc Dyer was the greatest footballer ever to pull on a Donegal jersey.

As a craftsperson studying in the area of jewellery and silversmithing I intend this study to examine the legacy of trophies pertaining to the G.A.A. with primary emphasis being placed on the All-Ireland Senior Football trophy, the Sam Maguire Cup.

I consider it essential to the understanding of the style of trophies employed that a knowledge of the history of the G.A.A. be established alongside an understanding of the fervently nationalistic people of the time who put great emphasis on Irish cultural identity and antiquity.

The biggest questions relating to the trophies of the association are centred on their over-reliance on antiquity as a design source, and the statements they made and continue to make about the G.A.A.'s identity and the national identity.

Given that trophy design has not changed for so many years, the question arises, if this trend is symptomatic of a backwards looking attitude within the G.A.A.

The opening chapter's focus is on the history of the G.A.A. and its role in the cultural development of this country. This in turn reflects the emotional turmoil of the people of the time in their quest for identity and the cultural awakening that ensued which the G.A.A. were so central to.

In the second chapter I have outlined the G.A.A.'s approach to design in relation to the trophies pertaining to the association. The main question raised is whether the continued reliance of the G.A.A.



on antiquity as a design source is relevant in today's terms, to their own identity and in turn the national identity.

The third chapter deals with the advancement made by the G.A.A. in architectural spheres in relation to the proposed developments to Croke Park, G.A.A. Headquarters. These developments on Croke Park bring into question the G.A.A.'s current stance on identity.



# *Chapter 1*





## CHAPTER 1

In this chapter I intend to trace the cultural significance of the Gaelic Athletic Association from its origins in 1884 and its role as an expression of Irish identity.

For the realisation of this it is essential to understand the history of the G.A.A. and the circumstances which lead to its inauguration. This in turn highlights the feelings that stirred among the people of the time and their longing for a sense of Irishness, of such cultural richness and distinct identity, that had been feared lost to time.

There was a great resentment among the Irish people of the late 19th century and early 20th century as regards the theft of their identity over many generations by foreign invaders particularly the English. Their language, games and many other cultural traditions had been lost due to laws that had been passed prohibiting the practice of same.

Here are some examples of the laws passed pertaining to Gaelic games from 1367-1695

### (a) Statute of Kilkenny 1367.

This law was passed at a parliament convened by the Viceroy, Lionel, Duke of Clarence. It was concerned with maintaining the racial identity of the Anglo-Normans in Ireland. It prohibited the Normans and the Irish living among them, that is mainly within the area of the pale, from practising Irish customs or sports.

Following is a published translation (from Norman-French) of the paragraph relating to the games.

Also, whereas a land, which is at war, requires that every person do render himself able to defend himself, it is ordained and established that the commons of the said land of Ireland, who are in divers marches of war, use not henceforth the games which men call hurlings, with great clubs at ball upon the ground, from which great evils and maims have arisen, to the weakening of the defence of the said land, and other games which men call quoits, but that they apply and accustom themselves to use and draw bows and throw lances, and other gentle



6 Item p' ce q' tunc est in quibusdam partibus & regnum suum ubi non per se definitur ordinari est et establie q' les r'les de la dit' tunc d'icel' q' est en d'icel' p'ces de la quereur/m'p'ent de s'arret les j'nes q' come appelle Goringe ont g'rauntz bastons a p'ces q' la tunc dont g'rauntz m'ltos et m'rim'os s'ont d'icel' q' en ensell'ement de la d'efense de la dit' tunc & ill'os j'nes q' come appelle Coitings tunc s'ont aff'ement q' a d'icel' de v'p' & tunc q' v'p' & g'it'ic de L'innoc' et al'os g'rauntz j'nes q' v'p'ol'ent un u'nal' dont de g'rauntz m'rim'os & q' liges tunc r'elles q' s'ont p'issent le m'alty c'tra u'ny' p'ces et s'ont v'p'ol'ent un u'nal' de tunc s'ont v'p'ol'ent s'ont p'ces et tunc p'ces et tunc a la v'olunt' m' s'ont q' la d'icel' d'icel'.

(b) STATUTE OF GALWAY, 1527

1 Item it is ordered enacted and statuted that n'ght p'ce' man is p'nd... of n'ght d'eges or r'nd'ers p'ce' 60 or q' p'nd'ed ut r'p'os'it op' s'ont p'nt' on'ly to p'nt' in l'ong' b'at' p'ce' tunc d'icel' and q' m'ltos q' d'icel' a p'ce' to p'nt' at any tunc s'ont p'nd'ed in d'ange' q' s'ont and v'p'ol'ent un u'nal' to v'p'ol'ent un u'nal' q' s'ont p'nd'ed q' d'icel' d'icel' n'ght s'ont p'nt' or p'nd'ed. s'ont v'p'ol'ent un u'nal' q' s'ont p'nt' into tunc r'elles. out on'ly tunc g'raunt' b'at' a tunc p'nd'ed of tunc p'nd'ed tunc d'icel'.

(c) SUNDAY OBSERVANCE ACT, 1695

Be it further Enacted, by the Authority aforesaid, That no person or persons whatsoever, shall Play, Use, or Exercise any Hurling, Commoning, Foot-Ball Playing, Cudgels, Wrestling, or any other Games, Pastimes or Sports, on the Lord's-Day, or any part thereof. And if any person or persons shall Offend therein, and be thereof Convicted in such manner, as hereinafter Directed; Every such person and persons, shall Forfeit the Summ of Twelve Pence sterl. for every such Offence, to be immediately paid to such Justice of the Peace, Officer or Officers, before Whom such Conviction shall be.

Fig.1, Laws pertaining to the G.A.A. from 1367-1695.



games which appertain to arms, whereby the Irish enemies may be better checked by the liege commons of these parts; and if any do or practice the contrary, and this be attaint that he be taken and imprisoned, and fined at the will of our Lord the King.

(b) Statutes of Galway, 1527: a modernised text of the statute relating to the games is as follows:

1. Item: It is ordered, enacted and statute that whatsoever man is found, of what degree or condition so ever he be of, playing at quoits or stones (except shooting with long bows, short crossbows or hurling darts and spears) to pay every time so found doing eight pence; and also at no time to engage in the hurling of the little ball with hockey sticks or staves, or use the handball for playing outside the walls, but only to play with the great football on pain of the penalty noted above.

(c) Sunday Observance Act, 1695:

This act of the Irish Parliament issued in the reign of William III prohibited hurling, commoning (ground hurling) and football on the Lords Day with a penalty of twelve pence for each offence.

(National Library facsimile documents).

The above examples also give us an idea of how long the games have been in existence by the dates in which the laws were passed. In relation to dating the age of the games it has also been suggested that some carvings on ninth century stone crosses around the country illustrate a figure holding a crooked object and a small round object. The figure is recognised as the biblical David holding shepherds equipment but we might be excused for assuming that the carvings include a caman (hurling stick) and a ball. It is tempting to imagine a tenth century story-teller being inspired by those carvings to add a suitable episode to the tale of Cu Chulainn. (O Maolfabhail 1973 p.60). This story emphasises the importance of Gaelic games to Irish people even in Celtic times.

The legendary Cu Chulainn is the most famous exponent of the game of hurling. His boyhood name was Setanta and numerous hurling clubs around the country have adopted that name. The story goes that Setanta slew the hound of Culann by striking a sliotar



(hurling ball) with his caman (hurley stick) which shot down the great animal's neck and choked him. As compensation for Culann's loss, Setanta offered to guard the house of Culann until a pup of the hound be trained to do the job. Hence Setanta acquired the name Cu Chulainn (Hound of Culann).

As I stated earlier, the G.A.A. was founded on November 1st 1884 and although there remains some doubt as to the number of people present at the inaugural meeting, its foundation may be accredited primarily to Michael Cusack and Maurice Davin.

By 1884 Cusack was promoting the idea of a national organisation for the preservation of traditional games and pastimes. He was supported by two nationalist newspapers, 'United Ireland' and the 'Irishman', which published a number of anonymous letters by him. On 11 Oct 1884 both papers featured his article 'A Word About Irish Athletics' in support of which Maurice Davin submitted a letter which appeared in both papers a week later.

Davin (1864-1927) was a farmer near Carrick-on-Suir who had been a famous athlete in his youth, with a number of international victories to his credit.

Consequently his views on sport were of considerable interest and his reputation as a moderate nationalist meant that he was well regarded by the catholic middle classes. (National Library G.A.A. document facsimile folder)

In Michael Cusack's article 'A Word About Irish Athletics' he writes  
No movement having for its object the social and political advancement of a nation from the tyranny of imported and enforced customs and manners can be regarded as perfect if it has not made adequate provision for the preservation and cultivation of the National pastimes of the people. Voluntary neglect of such pastimes is a sure sign of National decay and of approaching dissolution.

Further into the article Cusack launches an attack on the sheer existence of athletics in Ireland being held under the rules of the Amateur Athletic Association of England. On this point he had this to state..... Two years ago every man who did not make his living



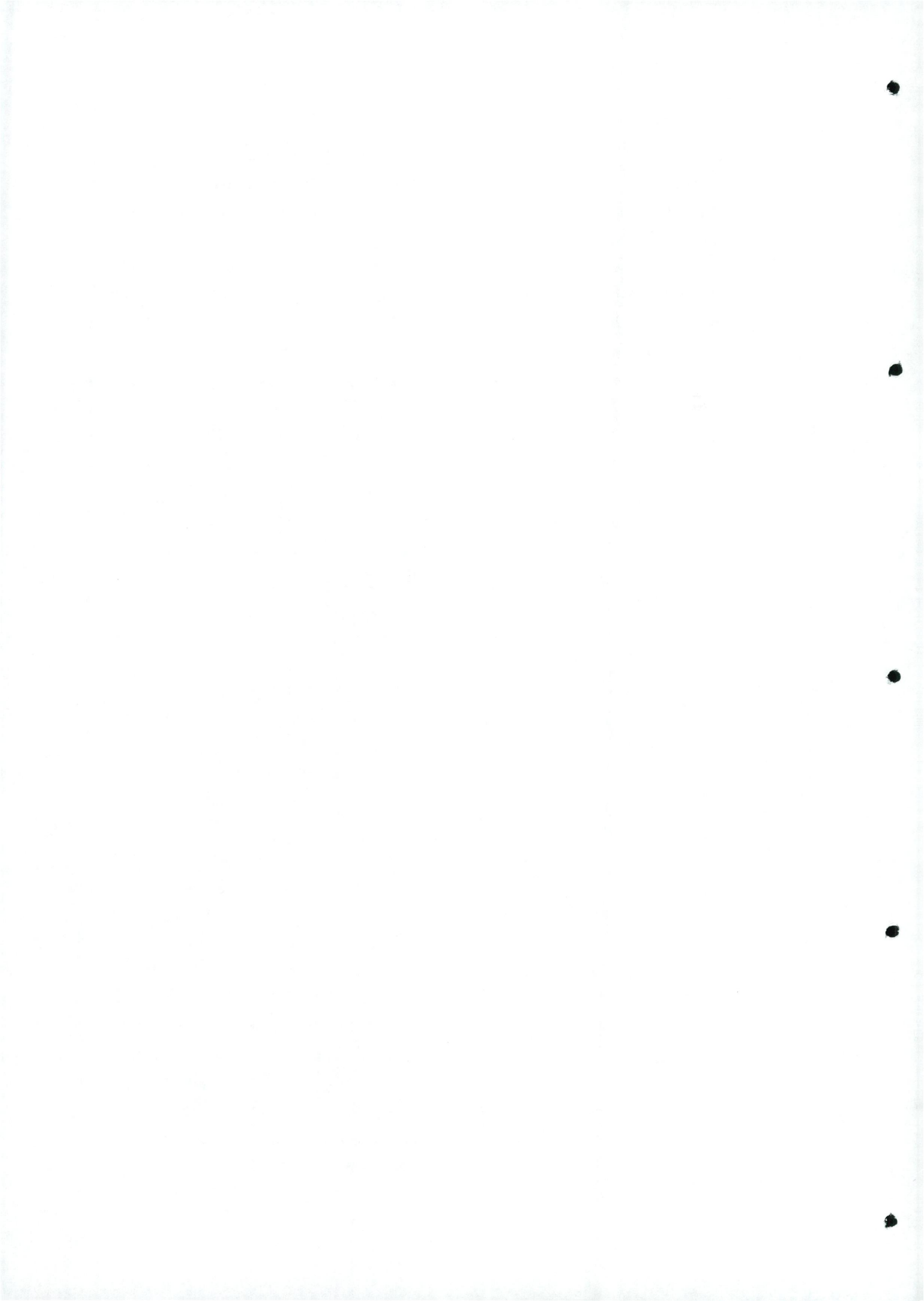




Fig.2, Founders of the G.A.A., Michael Cusack, above and Maurice Davin, below.



either wholly or partly by athletics was allowed to compete. But with this concession came a law which is as intolerable as its existence in Ireland is degrading. The law is, that all Athletic meetings shall be held under the rules of the Amateur Athletic Association of England, and that any person competing at any meeting not held under these rules should be ineligible to compete elsewhere. The management of nearly all the meetings held in Ireland since has been entrusted to persons hostile to all the dearest aspirations of the Irish people. Every effort has been made to make the meetings look as English as possible - foot-races, betting and flagrant cheating being their most prominent features.....We tell the Irish people to take the management of their games into their own hands, to encourage and promote in every way every form of athletics which is peculiarly Irish, and to remove with one sweep everything foreign and iniquitous in the present system. The vast majority of the best athletes in Ireland are Nationalists. These gentlemen should take the matter in hands at once, and draft laws for the guidance of the promoters of meetings in Ireland next year. The people pay the expenses of the meetings, and the representatives of the people should have the controlling power. (The Irishman, Oct 11 1884).

We can conclude from the above article that the opinions, of Michael Cusack of the English and their customs reflected the opinion of the general public at the time.

We have to remember that during the late 19th century the establishment of other organisations to represent Ireland's cultural richness and distinct identity were being put into action, i.e.. the 'Gaelic League and the 'Land Celtic Revival'. Therefore it was inevitable that the native Irish games would be harnessed in some sort of organised form. The Gaelic Athletic Association was the culmination of that ideal. The G.A.A. worked very forcibly as an expression of Irish identity by, primarily, preventing English influence in particular by encouraging Gaelic games as the preferred pastimes of Irish people.

Maurice Davin in response to Michael Cusack's article wrote a





[Established over a Century.]

**THE COMMERCIAL AND FAMILY HOTEL**

AND POSTING ESTABLISHMENT,  
THURLES.

**LIZZIE J. HAYES, Proprietress.**

Fig.3, The site of the inaugural meeting of the G.A.A. on  
November 1st 1884



letter to the editor of 'The Irishman' which appeared in the newspaper on Oct 18 1884. The contents of same basically state approval and encouragement of what Cusack had intimated and initiated by the publication of his article. Davin concludes with.....

If a movement such as you advise is made for the purpose of reviving and encouraging Irish games and drafting rules, &c., I will gladly lend a hand if I can be of any use. (The Irishman Oct 18 1884).

In a letter which appeared in both the 'Irishman' and 'United Ireland' on November 1st 1884 Cusack announced that Davin and himself had issued invitations to all interested to meet that afternoon in Miss Hayes' Hotel in Tipperary. The historic meeting took place as arranged and was reported in a number of nationalist newspapers.

The most complete account of the historic meeting that has survived is that of the 'Cork Examiner', Monday morning, November 3rd 1884. The article states that the meeting was held .....

for the purposes of forming an association for the preservation and cultivation of our national pastimes.....On the motion of Mr. Cusack, seconded by Mr. Power, Archbishop Croke, Mr. Parnell and Mr. Davitt were appointed patrons of the new association; and on the motion of the same gentlemen, the title of the new association was fixed as 'The Gaelic Association for the Preservation and Cultivation of National Pastimes'.

Mr. Cusack then proposed that Mr. Maurice Davin - an athlete who had distinguished himself so much both in Ireland and England - should be president of the association. The name of Davin was one well respected by all Irish athletes,.....the formation of a general athletic association for Ireland - composed of representatives from all the leading clubs - to regulate the management of all meetings, to frame rules of their own for the government of such meetings, and put an end once and for ever to their being bound by the rules of the English A.A.Association (hear,hear).

.A very important step taken by the newly formed association was that they sought the approval of the Catholic Church, because as with all other organisations of the time the Church's approval was







Fig.4, The first patrons of the G.A.A., from left, Charles Stewart Parnell, Dr. Croke Archbishop of Cashel and Michael Davitt.



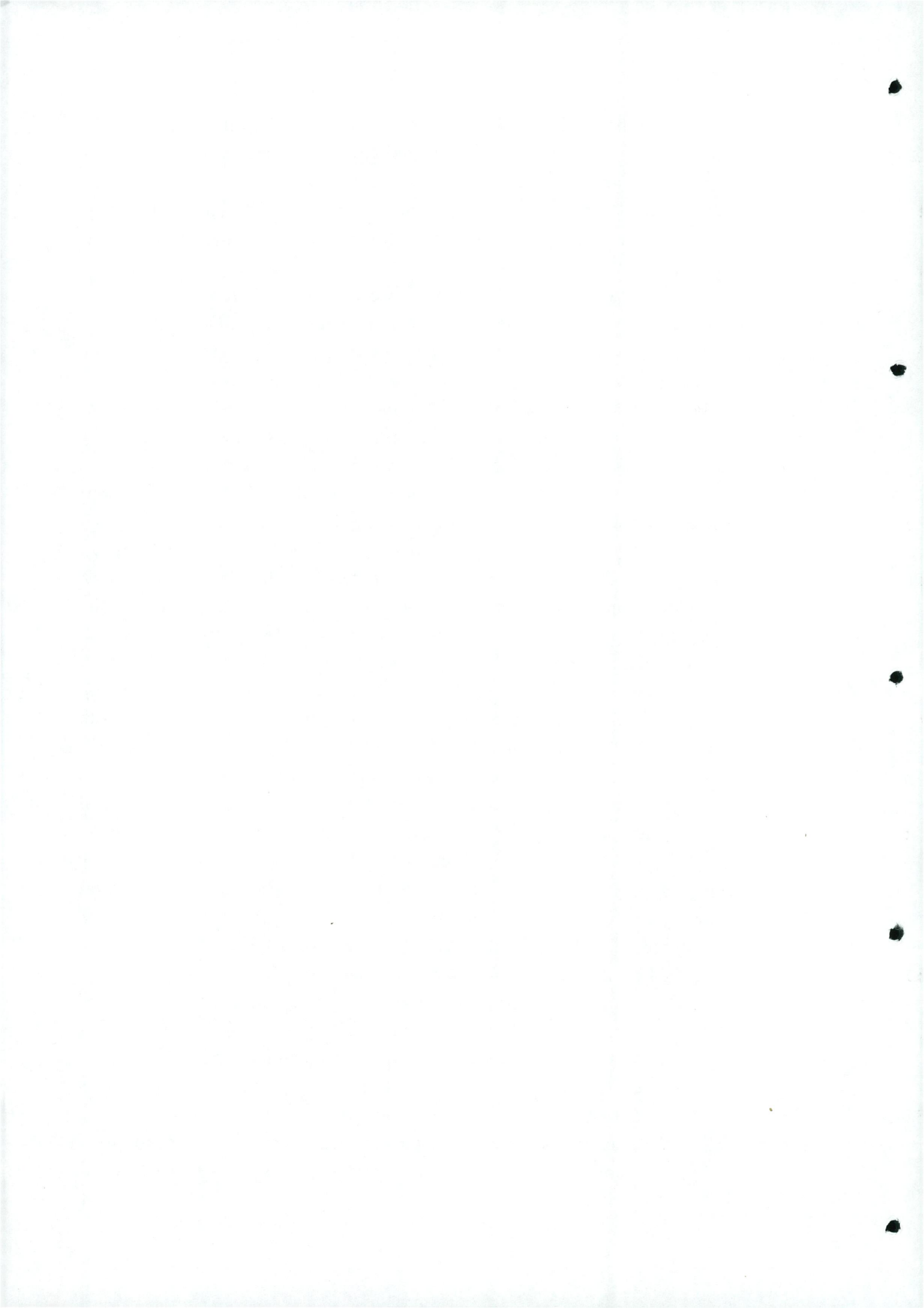
priority; as they wielded so much power, they could dictate public opinion. In the beginning Archbishop Croke became a patron of the association and therefore initiated acceptance of the new organisation. His letter of acceptance (which I will deal with later) certainly shows him in a very much nationalist light and his eager acceptance of the G.A.A. was not shared by all the clergy.

The early years of the G.A.A. were quite turbulent ones due to the questions raised of where their loyalties lay. By 1895 the G.A.A. after only eleven years in existence were on the verge of extinction after an attendance of only 15 at the 1894 congress. The problem that lay within the association was the rapidly increasing number of its members becoming involved in Fenianism and the G.A.A. being used as a fenian front. The Catholic Church being in total abhorrence of any form of violence took action. Many priests forbid their congregations to have any involvement with the G.A.A. for fear that they may become involved with the Fenian Movement. To add insult to injury the G.A.A. suffered a further blow with the Parnell crisis. The association had become predominantly Parnellite. Some of the Parnell leadership committees were controlled by the I.R.B. (Irish Republican Brotherhood). The result was a split in the G.A.A. which almost paralysed it.

The G.A.A. made the decision to abstain from involvement with the I.R.B. but the republican movement and the G.A.A. were still closely linked.

1898 was an important year in Ireland's history as it marked the centenary of the '1798 Rising'. The impact of this nation-wide movement on the fortunes of the nationalist cause had been widely overlooked by the G.A.A. and due to indecision by their Central Council they missed out on 'Official' participation.

Marcus de Burca writes that 1898 marked.....the beginning of the revival of nationalist agitation after 1891 and led both to the re-unification of the parliamentary party and to the Sinn Fein movement. Clearly I.R.B.-inspired and largely I.R.B.-controlled, the '98 centenary began as early as January 1897.....Inside a few months every section of nationalist opinion had given its support. Local committees were formed on which Home Rulers of both factions, as well as Fenian and religious and cultural



figures, all outdid one another in devising ways of honouring the 'United Irishmen' of a century before. In September 1897 two seats on the executive council of the principal '98 centenary committee were offered to the G.A.A., but due to indecision by their Central Council they were not taken.

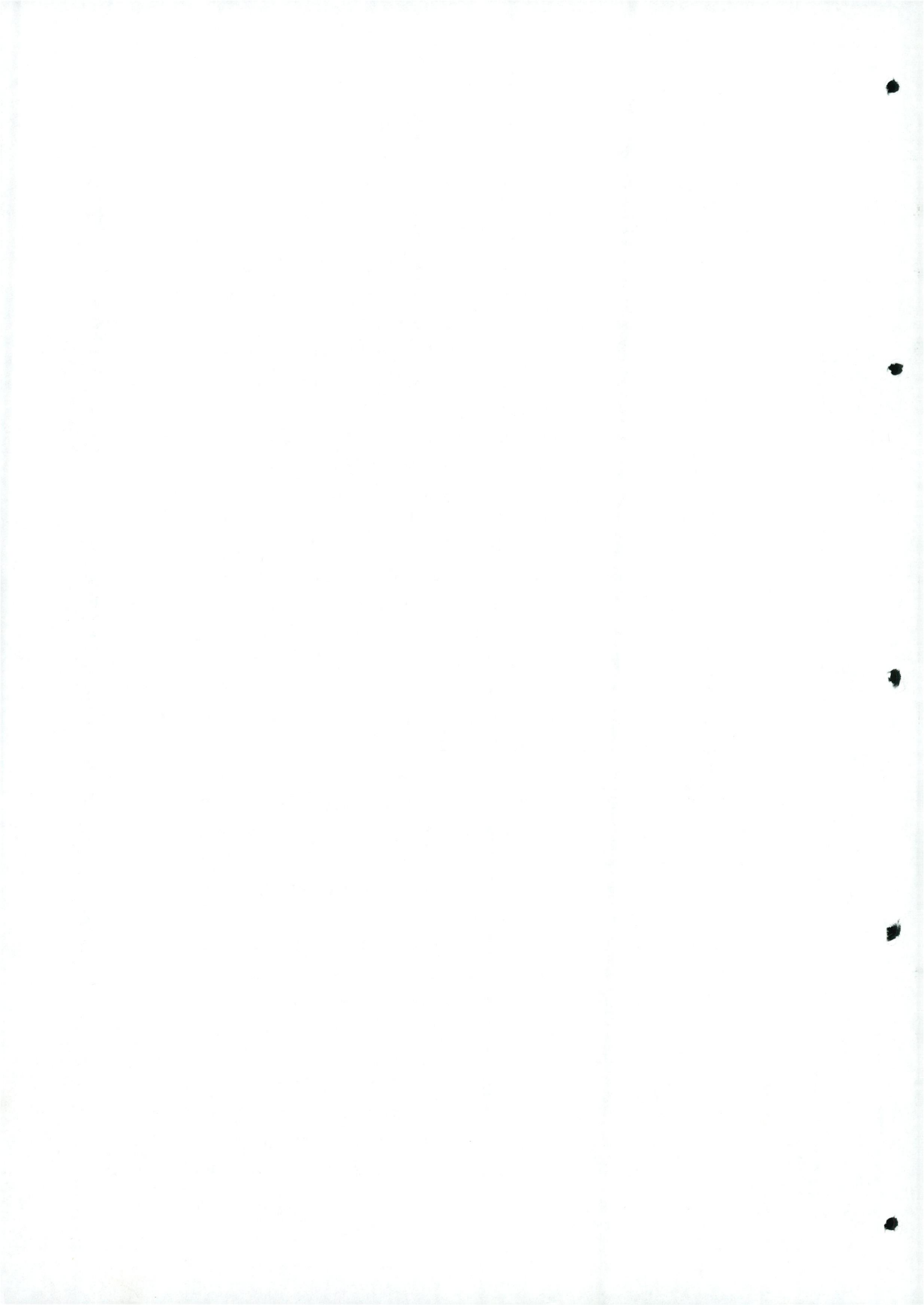
Even so.....the extent of the G.A.A.'s participation in the centenary movement was such as to suggest that the leading officers were now out of touch with the rank and file members. This had been the case at the time of the convention of 1887; it was to be the case again in the years immediately before the '1916 Rising'. Everywhere in 1898 members of the G.A.A. were active in the various forms of local celebration, exploiting the influence they had gained in the association and using their experience of committee work in the G.A.A. to further the centenary movement. (Story of the G.A.A., Marcus de Burca.)

The G.A.A. failed to build on its successes in the 1898 movement due to a continued lack of support from the Catholic clergy, despite the lead given from 1895 onwards by Archbishop Croke.

Dr. Croke's (Archbishop of Cashel) letter agreeing to become patron of the association in 1884 has come to be regarded almost as the constitution that binds the G.A.A.. Archbishop Croke if not militant was certainly anti-British.

I have selected some aspects of same said letter to illustrate Dr. Croke's opinions and therefore the opinions of the Irish people, as the clergy were not only the spiritual guidance of Ireland but also the social and political.

One of the most painful, let me assure you, and, at the same time, one of the most frequently recurring reflections that, as an Irishman, I am compelled to make in connection with the present aspect of things in this country, is derived from the ugly and irritating fact that we are daily importing from England not only her manufactured goods, which we cannot help doing, since she has practically strangled our own manufacturing appliances, but together with her fashions, her accent, her vicious literature, her music, her dances, and her manifold mannerisms, her games also and her pastimes,



to the utter discredit of our own grand national sports, and to the sore humiliation, as I believe, of every genuine son and daughter of the old land.....Indeed, if we continue travelling for the next score of years in the same direction that we have been going in for some time past, condemning the sports that were practised by our forefathers, effacing our national features as though we were ashamed of them, and putting on, with England's stuffs and broadcloths, her 'masher' habits and such other effeminate follies as she recommend, we had better at once, and publicly, adjure our nationality, clap hands for joy at sight of the Union Jack, and place 'England's bloody red' exultingly above 'the green'.....I shall be happy to do all that I can, and authorise you now formally to place my name on the roll of your patrons.....In conclusion, I earnestly hope that our national journals will not disdain, in future, to give suitable notices of those Irish sports and pastimes which your society means to patronise and promote, and that the masters and pupils of our Irish colleges will not henceforth exclude from their athletic programmes such manly exercises as I have just referred to and commended. ('The Nation', 27th Dec. 1884).

I think that Archbishop Croke's letter generally sums up the intensity of feeling in this country at the turn of the century. Strong resentment at the loss, contamination and corruption of the national identity are emphasised and the ardent yearning for the restoration of same was in one way attained by the Gaelic Athletic Association.

Expansion by the G.A.A. from 1901 onwards was part of the general revival of the whole nationalist movement which began around that time. In the 1890's the bitter factional aftermath of the Parnell Split had caused many young nationalists to divert their energies into cultural activities, of which the steady growth of the Gaelic League became the most noticeable result. The '98 centenary movement followed by the rival support by nationalists and loyalists for the opposing sides in the Boer War, the launching in 1899 with I.R.B. support of





Arthur Griffith's weekly paper 'United Irishman' and the ending in 1900 of the split in the Irish Parliamentary Party; all created an atmosphere favourable to a move away from cultural nationalism towards political nationalism. By building on the cultural foundations laid by bodies like the League and the G.A.A. men like Griffith and Clarke gradually won support for a more outspoken, self-reliant and less conciliatory brand of nationalism than that of the parliamentary movement. (Marcus de Burca, 'Story of the G.A.A.').

Dr. Douglas Hyde, first President of Ireland, and founder of the Gaelic League wrote on the important steps towards nationhood that were taken in this country, firstly in the formation of the G.A.A. and later the Gaelic League. He writes.....

.One society is improving the intellect, the other the physique of Ireland. Neither of them is complete without the other. Well-developed Irish brains in well-developed bodies is the true ideal of the Gaelic League. Well-developed bodies with well-developed Irish brains should be the ideal of the G.A.A.

(G.A.A., S. O' Ceallaigh).

The Right Rev. Mgr. Michael Hamilton, B.A., B.D., neatly summed up the national aspect of the associations work when he said.....The Gaelic Athletic Association was the first organisation to call the Gael back to his own; it was the first organisation to make Irish compulsory in the country by putting into the rule book that all correspondence should be addressed in Irish; and it was the first organisation to stand up and support Irish industries by putting in its rule book that all its official notepaper be of Irish manufacture. It was the G.A.A. through Croke, Cusack and Davin, that gave a clarion call to Irishmen to stand on their own feet; and it was the G.A.A. on the field and in the forum, on the hillsides and in the valleys, that brought Irishmen back to the proud position of possessing the freedom which they enjoy in their own land today. (G.A.A. S O' Ceallaigh).



# HELP THE PRISONERS

BY ATTENDING THE

## Great Hurling Contest TIPPERARY v. DUBLIN

AT

### CROKE PARK

ON

## Sunday next, April 27

IN AID OF

### The Republican Prisoners' Dependents' Fund

**SPLENDID HURLING ASSURED  
SEVERAL BANDS WILL ATTEND**



Fig.5, A Poster advertising a match in aid of "The Republican Prisoners' Dependants' Fund". Included in the photograph shown are Michael Collins and De Valera



When the old Fenian organisation the I.R.B. was revitalised at the beginning of this century, members of the G.A.A. and the Gaelic League were the main sources of recruitment.

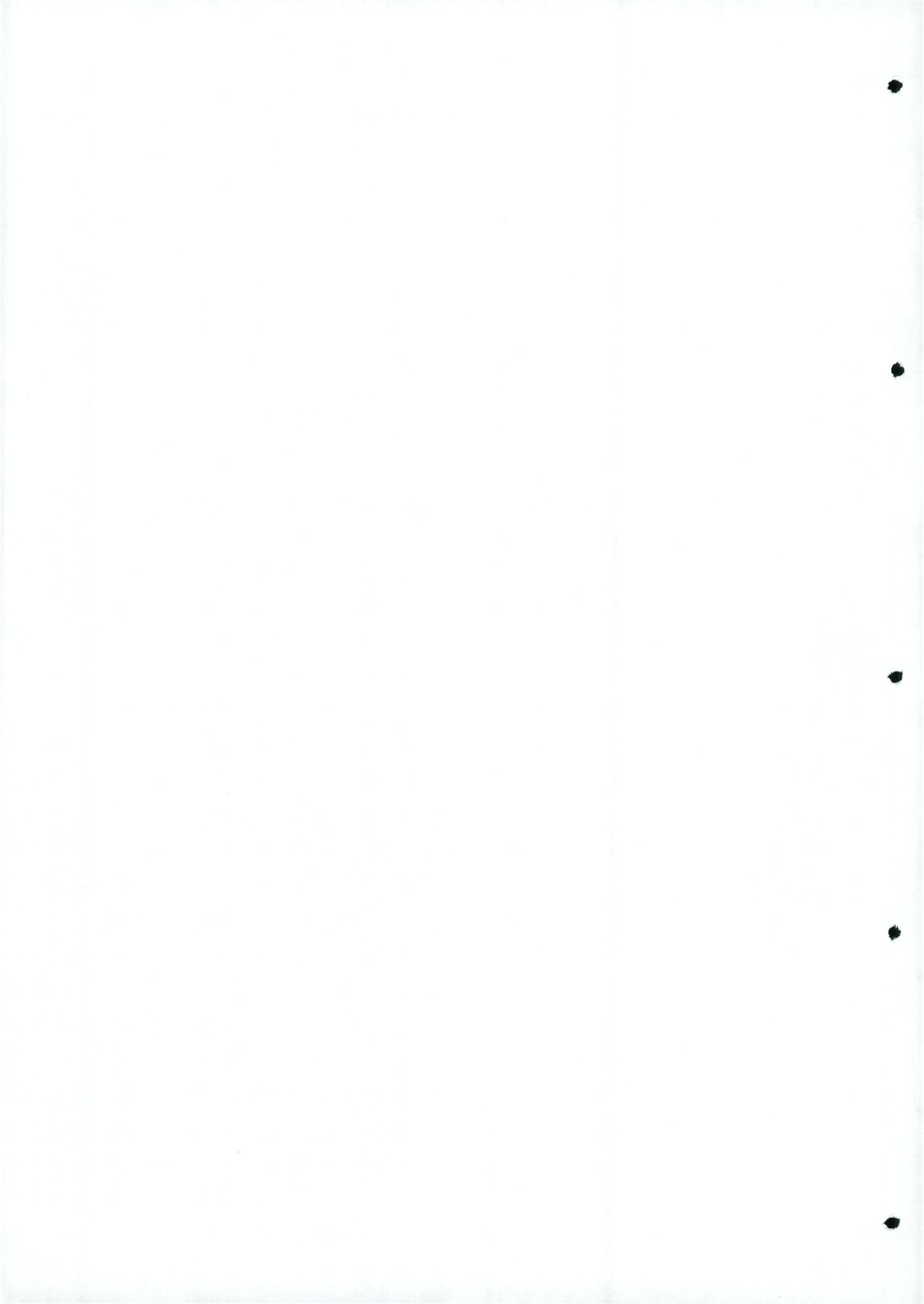
It was generally accepted that if a man belonged to either of these organisations he was fairly sure to be possessed of the qualities invaluable in an I.R.B. man - perseverance, sincerity, honesty of purpose and moral courage.

It was through the G.A.A. that Michael Collins was introduced to the national movement. (S O' Ceallaigh). Michael Collins played an active part in the London G.A.A. through the playing of Gaelic games and later in the organisational aspects of the various London clubs. It was not long before he became Treasurer of the London County Board. His abilities didn't go unnoticed by the I.R.B. and Collins was initiated into the Brotherhood in November 1909. By 1914 he had become Treasurer of the movement for the entire South of England.



# *Chapter 2*





## CHAPTER 2

Dublin architect Charles Mc Carthy once wrote.....

All great art must - in its origin, in its growth, in its making - be instinct with the spirit of the country which has produced it, and therefore, in the true meaning of the word, essentially nationalistic.

(Paul Larmour, 'Arts & Crafts Movement in Ireland').

In this chapter the main issue dealt with is the G.A.A.'s trophy designs, in particular the All-Ireland Senior Football trophy, the Sam Maguire Cup.

The biggest question in relation to the trophies is whether their over-reliance on antiquity has any bearing in today's terms of design in Ireland. The question also arises as to the implications that this continued source of design has, on the identity of the G.A.A., and subsequently on the national identity.

The first chapter dealt with the historical issues and circumstances which highlighted the emphasis on cultural identity. This led directly to a cultural revival that relied on the past to establish itself.

I begin this chapter with some of the ideas that surrounded the Arts and Crafts Movement in Ireland at the turn of the century and a history of some forms of trophy designs employed.

As I stated above, the main emphasis is on the Sam Maguire Cup, as I believe that it is the most appropriate in support of my argument.

Paul Larmour questions.....To what degree Irish Designers and craftsmen should rely on Celtic ornamental details to achieve a national character in their work was a matter on which there was no common agreement at the turn of the century, but the need for some kind of 'national' character in Irish art and design seems to have been commonly understood.

This sentiment is strongly evident from the legacy of trophies in use in the country pertaining to the G.A.A.

The vast majority of G.A.A. trophies are two-handled cups. Two-handled cups were made in Ireland from the latter half of the seventeenth century.....The two handles suggest the traditional





Fig.6, The Ulster trophy, the 'Anglo-Celt Cup' in the hands of Co. Derry captain Henry Downey.



loving cup, 'to drink crosse one to ye other', and convenient to pass from hand to hand.....As the eighteenth century progressed two-handled cups grew taller, with higher feet and stems, and they adopted the decorations of the periods through which they passed.....from 1725.....evolved a taller plain cup, usually with a central moulding around the waist to which the handle was attached. At this period the Irish silversmiths were using a harp-shaped handle introduced by the Huguenots, which is very much in the Irish idiom....and has.....the distinction of being recognizably belonging to this country.....During the first years of the eighteenth century two-handled cups began to become popular as racing trophies, a purpose which continues to present day. (Robert-Wyse-Jackson, 'Irish Silver')

This form of two-handled cup was also adapted by the G.A.A.. The Ulster Senior Football Trophy i.e.. the 'Anglo-Celt Cup' shown in Fig.5, is an example of this.

In the early 1900's the matter of an art revival was seen as an important element in the whole Irish revival. Paul Larmour writes.....

As the Gaelic League's own newspaper *An Claidheamh Soluis* put it, in reference to the Oireachtas Exhibition of 1906: 'We look to this model display of arts and crafts to prove in yet a new way that, enkindled by the language movement, Ireland lives'. (Arts & Crafts Movement in Ireland).

As for these arts and crafts, Douglas Bennett writes, on the Arts and Crafts Society exhibition of 1899 which in his words.....'appears to have been rather dull as far as originality in silver was concerned'. Originality is also a trait lacking in G.A.A. medals and trophies, which is hardly surprising, when considering the era in which they were produced.

Silversmiths such as Hopkins & Hopkins, (official medallists to the G.A.A. at the beginning of the 20th century) and West & Son, exhibited copies of the Ardagh Chalice and Meythers in 1896, with nothing very original. Interlacing work was popular on most silver articles, copied from manuscripts and the Ardagh Chalice.

Perhaps the most famous of all the G.A.A. trophies would have



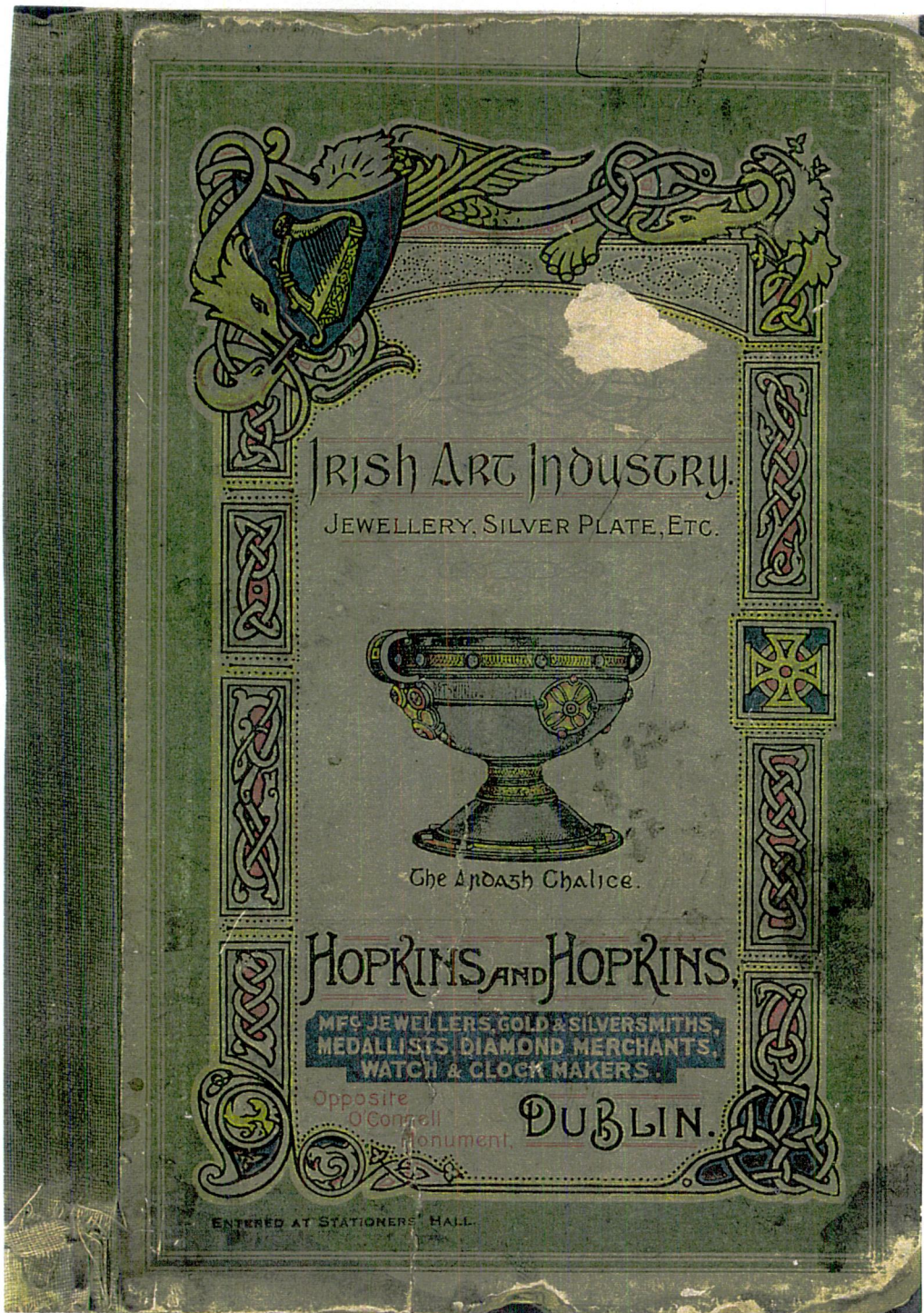


Fig.7, The front cover of Hopkins & Hopkins pre-World War I catalogue, with an illustration of the Ardagh Chalice.







Fig.8, Some of the G.A.A. medals produced by Hopkins & Hopkins, including an All-Ireland medal, top, now produced by John Miller & Son. (Photographs kindly donated by P.J. Mc Elroy who played for Co. Down in 1968).





St. Patrick's Medal.  
Winstanley Armistice.



HOPKINS.



Queen's College, Galway, Medal.

OPPOSITE O'CONNELL

Celtic Crosses.



No. 91.

Silver from £6  
Gold     " 15



No. 92.

Silver from £  
Gold     " 15



No. 93.

Silver from £10  
Gold     " 60



No. 94.

Silver from £6  
Gold     " 12



No. 95.

Silver from £  
Gold     " 11

OPPOSITE O'CONNELL MONUMENT, DUBLIN.

Fig.9, Pages from Hopkins & Hopkins catalogue, illustrating the type of Celtic work being produced at the time.



to be the All-Ireland Senior Football trophy, known as the 'Sam Maguire Cup'. To begin with, the cup's namesake 'Sam Maguire' deserves a mention. Sam Maguire was, interestingly enough, of Protestant descent was from Dunmanway, Co. Cork. On leaving school he joined the Civil Service and was assigned to duty in London. There he grew to manhood and prominence - first in the G.A.A. and then later in the I.R.B.. He was an outstanding footballer and played in three All-Ireland Finals - 1900, 1901 and 1903 - captaining his London team on the two latter occasions (the London county team play in the Connacht Championship to make up the number of counties competing in that province to this day).

As his playing career came to a close Sam devoted his energy to the administrative side of the associations affairs. He was a regular delegate to Annual Congress; Chairman of the London County Board, and finally, a trustee of Croke Park. But however great, Sam Maguire's role in the G.A.A., it must take second place to the role he played in the War of Independence.

It was he who recruited fellow Corkman Michael Collins into the Republican Movement in 1909, and it might be said that Collins served his apprenticeship under Maguire. Eventually Sam Maguire reached the rank of Major General and Chief Intelligence Officer of the I.R.A. in Britain. By then Collins was directing intelligence in Ireland and the two regularly had consultations in Dublin. During the War of Independence, all major republican operations in Britain were under the control of Sam Maguire. He left England in 1923 and died a comparatively young man on February 6th 1927. He is buried in the Church of Ireland cemetery in Dunmanway.

It is only fitting to emphasise how unique Sam Maguire's contribution to the G.A.A. and to his country actually was, considering his religious persuasion. Although fellow Protestant, Douglas Hyde was one of the first patrons of the G.A.A., very few of the faith actually played Gaelic games, especially during the troubled times. Sadly the division remains today.

The Sam Maguire Cup itself was presented to the G.A.A. in 1928 as the trophy for the All-Ireland Senior Football Final. Arrangements for the provision of the trophy by former comrades and friends of Sam's, including Dr. Patrick Mc Cartan, Dr. Mark Ryan, Commandant Jerome Hurley; Tommy Moore and well known publican

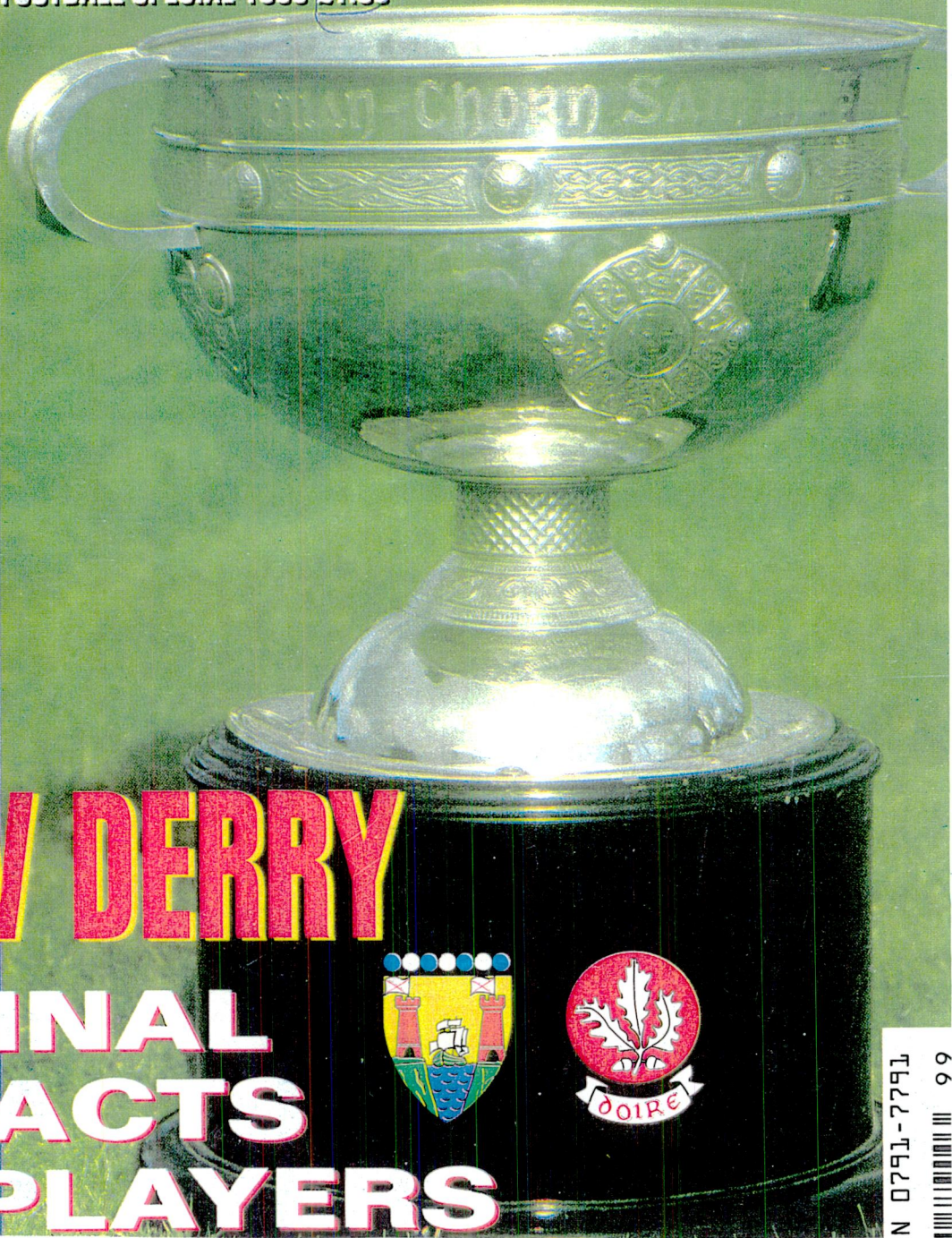
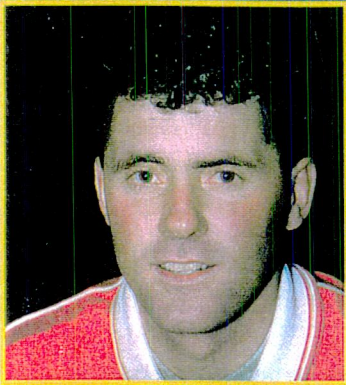


# GAAEL SPORT



*The Official GAA Monthly Publication*

**OL 3 ISSUE 8 ALL-IRELAND FOOTBALL SPECIAL 1993 £1.50**



## CORK V DERRY

## THE FINAL THE FACTS AND PLAYERS



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Fig.10, The Sam Maguire Cup, All-Ireland Senior Football trophy, on the cover of Gael Sport Magazine.





and G.A.A. personality Jim Kirwin, whose licenced premises were often used by Michael Collins and Sam Maguire as a secret rendezvous. The cup was commissioned to commemorate the work of Sam Maguire for the G.A.A. and for Ireland.

The original cup was wrought by hand by Hopkins & Hopkins of Dublin to the design of the Ardagh Chalice. (Ann-Marie Sheerin, Donegal Annual, 1992).

The Cup was replaced on its 60th anniversary in 1988 by an exact replica. The reason for this being, that the adoring multitudes who had clambered in the past to touch the exquisite piece and sixty years of celebration had all taken their toll on the cup; therefore, the G.A.A. commissioned Kilkenny based Gold/Silversmith Desmond A. Byrne, to replace a very much battered Sam, with an exact replica. The new Sam known as 'Sam Og' (little Sam) stands 16" high, 17" wide and on top of its wooden base 22" tall.

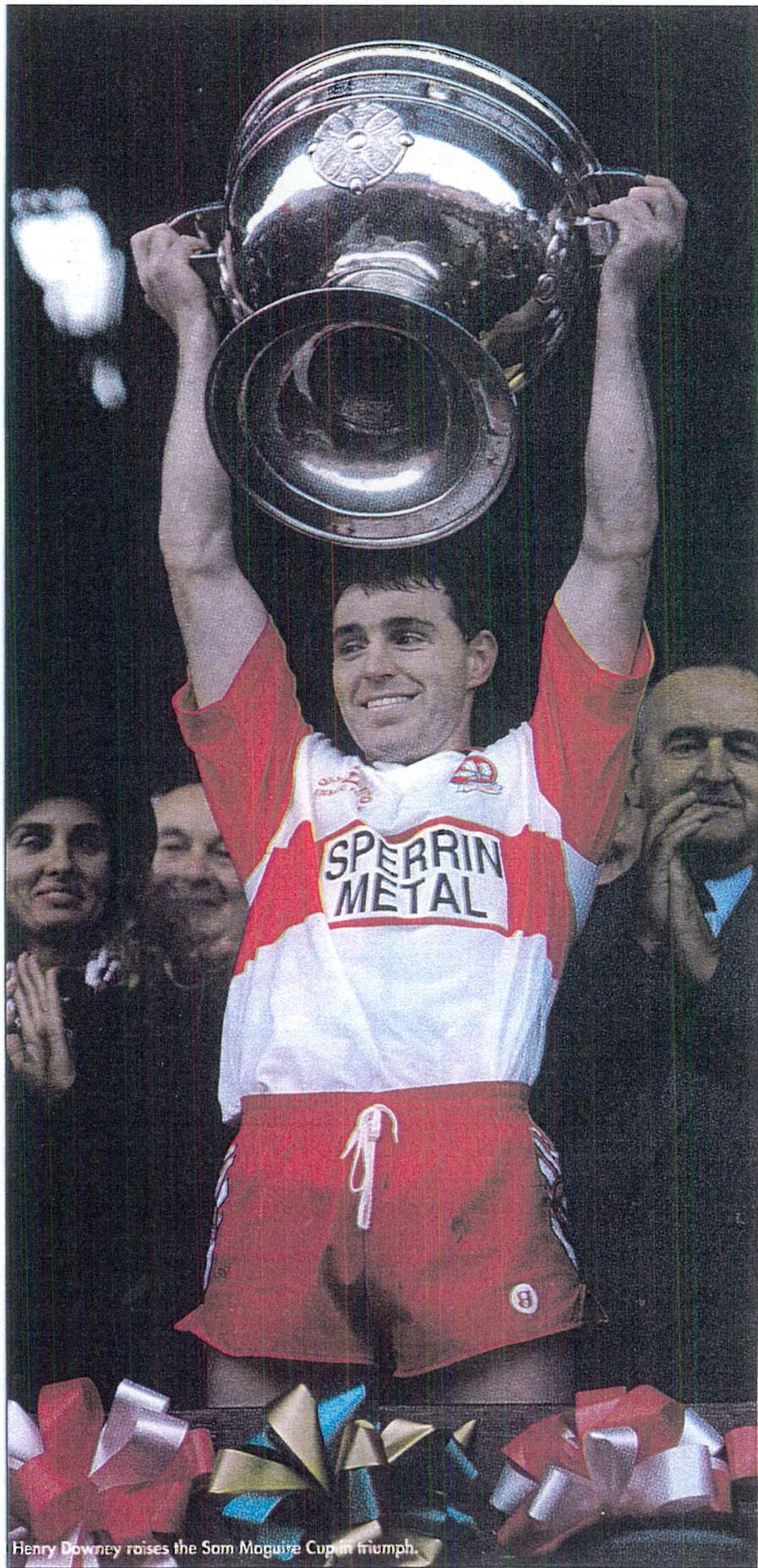
I visited Des Byrne in Kilkenny to enquire about the mammoth undertaking that was involved in the replication. Mr. Byrne who has been a silversmith for the past 40 years, described the work as "a great challenge", as it was "the biggest single piece in silver" he had ever worked on. He describes how everything about making a replica of the Sam Maguire was a challenge. The suppliers of the silver, Johnson and Mathey of Dublin (now Cooksons) just didn't have a flat sheet of silver large enough, for the bowl of the cup, sitting on the shelf.

The bowl diameters alone are 17" wide by 9" deep and an intense 100 hours of work were required to hammer out this section alone. Even with regards to stakes, (which the sheet is hammered over to create the bowl shape) the sizes required were unavailable. Mr. Byrne had to make his own wooden stakes to accommodate the bowl. He estimates, in total, that the creation of Sam involved over 500 hours of labour.

The cup consists of two bowls, one of which forms the body of the trophy, the other inverted to form the base, a stem, two handles and twenty Gaelic mounts, including an engraving of Sam Maguire himself. Even down to the last fada over the Gaelic writing on the cup, the new one is meticulous and weighs a netty 7.5 kgs.

I asked Mr. Byrne, if the design of the trophy, had been left up to him, what he would have deemed suitable. His response was that





Henry Downey raises the Sam Maguire Cup in triumph.

Fig.11, The Sam Maguire Cup in the hands of Co. Derry captain Henry Downey.



he wouldn't have made it as big, not because of the work involved but because of the amount of damage it incurs. The old saying of, 'the bigger they are, the harder they fall' is most suitably apt in this case. He also instigated that he would have produced a more contemporary style trophy, but, with the incorporation of a Gaelic flair, that is so crucial to the core of the G.A.A.

I personally feel that the G.A.A. missed an important and commemorative opportunity, in the re-creation of Sam, for the simple fact that the potential for the creation of something 'Fior Gaelach' i.e.. purely Irish, and in a modern Irish context was totally ignored. The chance, in my opinion to commemorate a new state of Irish consciousness and identity, obviously, was never even considered.

I as much as any person in this country, realise the importance of the much loved Sam Maquire cup and I recall with fondness, my innumerable expeditions around the county of Donegal, after we won the Sam in 1992, to catch a glimpse of the most coveted prize in the land. But I would suggest that, the trophy is perhaps less important than the emphasis that people first put on it and more symbolic. I feel that the trophy is symbolic, naturally, of the winning of an All-Ireland. The winning of an All-Ireland, for any county creates the most incredible feelings of unity, pride and identity, that I feel, couldn't possibly be experienced anywhere else in the world. Everyone from the triumphant county, whether G.A.A. supporters or not, want's to be part of the hype and celebrations surrounding the event. I remember, before our win in '92 that every town in Co. Donegal, was decked in buntings and decorations of the county's colours of green and gold. Sports commentator Michael Lyster for R.T.E. found it amusing that people in the county had even painted their chimney pots green and gold. After the winning of the title on All-Ireland Sunday, he suggested that the whole of the houses would now be painted green and gold in Donegal. I would like to know, if he ever realised that this was no exaggeration. This is only one slight example of the euphoria that surrounds this kind of win.

People congregated from all areas of Donegal to view the cup and the footballers accompanying it. My suggestion is that, this occurrence was not to marvel at the splendour of the silverware, but merely, to be in the presence of the symbol of All-Ireland glory. By



being in the presence of the cup and perhaps touching it enhances the glory of the win, by making the dream reality; the reality that their county were the champions of Ireland. I have never heard of a scenario where people from other counties, come to the cup holders county to view the trophy; proving that it is what it stands for and not its design that's important.

There is a reluctance within the G.A.A. to change anything for fear of compromising any of the values central to it. I feel it would be appropriate, especially now, as we are fast approaching a new century, to consider the commissioning of an Irish contemporary style trophy. This trophy should be directly inspired by Gaelic games, the G.A.A. itself and make reference to same in some manner. At present, the only element of the Sam Maguire cup pertaining to Gaelic games or the G.A.A. is its namesake, Sam Maguire himself. This scenario of continued reliance on antiquity as a design source for trophies, as an Irish and G.A.A. identity, reflects on the G.A.A. as being backward looking in their philosophy. It suggests that they view their own identity as belonging to another chapter of Irish history, not the present day. This in turn questions how they view the national identity, as out-dated as their trophies?

The breakdown of trophies, pertaining to the G.A.A. is as follows. The two main trophies are the Sam Maguire Cup, All-Ireland Senior Football trophy and the Liam Mc Carthy Cup, All-Ireland Senior Hurling trophy. Next there are 8 provincial trophies, for the provincial titles of Ulster, Munster, Leinster and Connacht, i.e.. two per province, one for football and one for hurling. There are also 2 League trophies, one for the football League champions and one for the hurling. Then there is the inter-provincial football competition, with the Railway Cup as the prize. This totals 13 trophies for the bigger competitions. If we then consider, that each of the 32 counties in Ireland have two trophies, one each for their football and hurling club championships and the overall, Club Championships trophies, the total now stands at 69. This is before consideration of any of the Minor, Under 21, B-Championships and all the under age awards.

It would be futile to examine all of the G.A.A. trophies in detail as, from the design aspect of things, nothing innovative has occurred. I have included images of a number of the trophies to illustrate this point.







Fig.12, The League football trophy, in the hands of Co. Dublin captain John O'Leary, below and the League hurling trophy above.



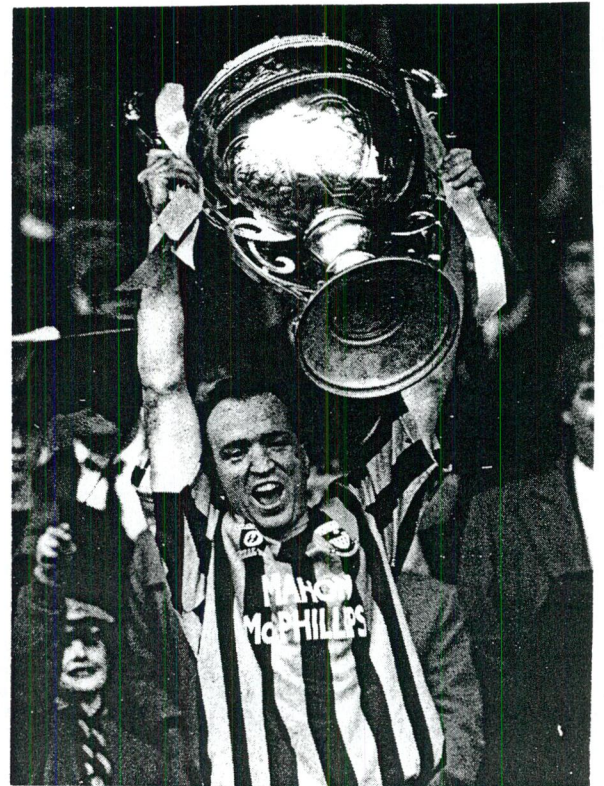
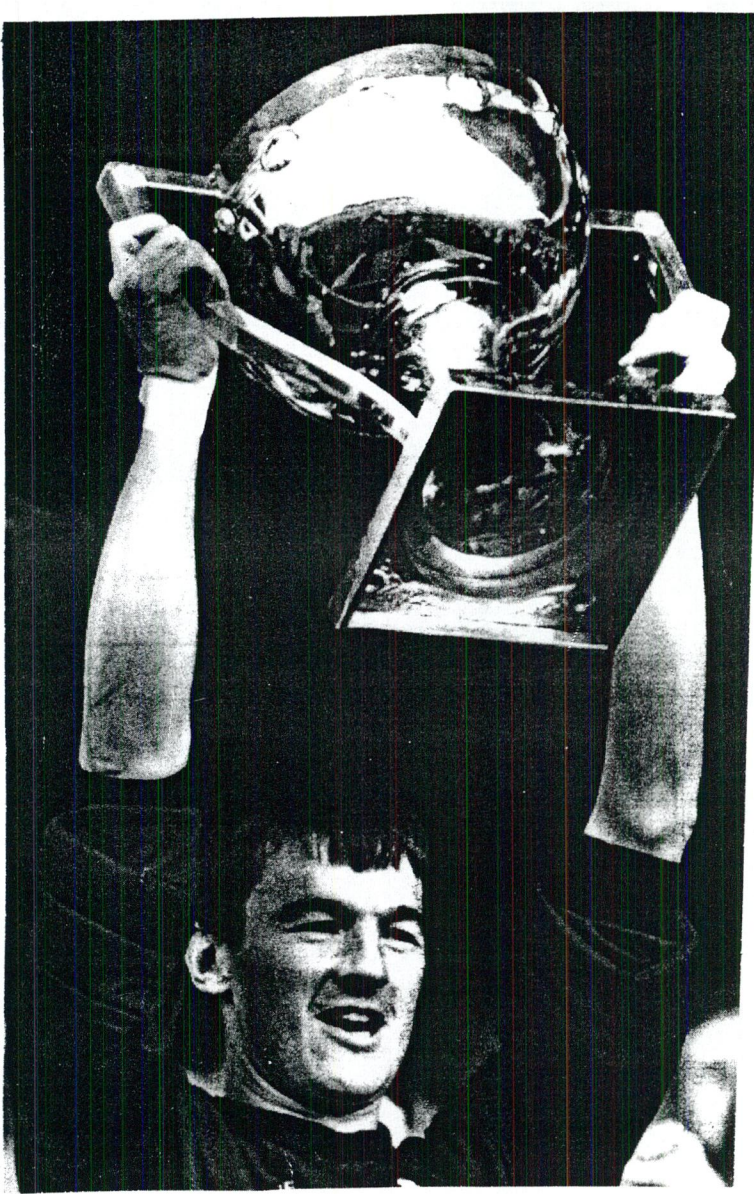


Fig.13, The Leinster football trophy, above and the Leinster hurling trophy below.



Fig.14, The Liam Mc Carthy Cup, All-Ireland Senior Hurling trophy in the hands of Co. Kilkenny captain Liam Fennelly.

# *Chapter 3*



## CHAPTER 3

### The Future.....?

Although the G.A.A. have not progressed in any way in relation to trophy design, they have more than delighted the architectural spheres with the proposed developments to Croke Park.

In the early years of the century the G.A.A. was obliged to rent grounds for important matches in Dublin. In 1913 the Central council had accumulated a large sum of money for the purpose of erecting a bronze statue to Archbishop Croke at Thurles and it was decided to devote part of this fund to the purchase of a 'Croke Memorial Park' in Dublin. A number of sites were inspected and it was eventually decided to bid for the 9 acre City and Suburban Race course commonly known as Jones's Road sportsground which the Association often rented. It was then owned by Frank Dineen, a former President of the Association who accepted the offer of £3,500.

Croke Park was to provide accommodation for the central administration of the G.A.A. which then moved out from premises in O' Connell Street and it had the potential for the development into the fine stadium it now is. (National Library, G.A.A. facsimile documents)

The above passage was written in 1984 and 'the fine stadium it now is' is developing into something none of us could have imagined possible in 1984. At present phase 1 of the development, the Cusack Stand is completed and it is estimated that the entire development should reach completion by the year 2008.

The Croke Park development project will cost in excess of £110 million and it has been estimated that over £30 million of that sum has been spent on the Cusack Stand alone.

The Cusack Stand is the effective launching pad for what will be the G.A.A.'s greatest under-taking to date, while they've spent money on developments elsewhere, Croke Park, the nerve centre of the organisation has had little done to it since 1959 other than a £1 million worth remedial work some years ago.

It will testify to the G.A.A.'s leadership in the





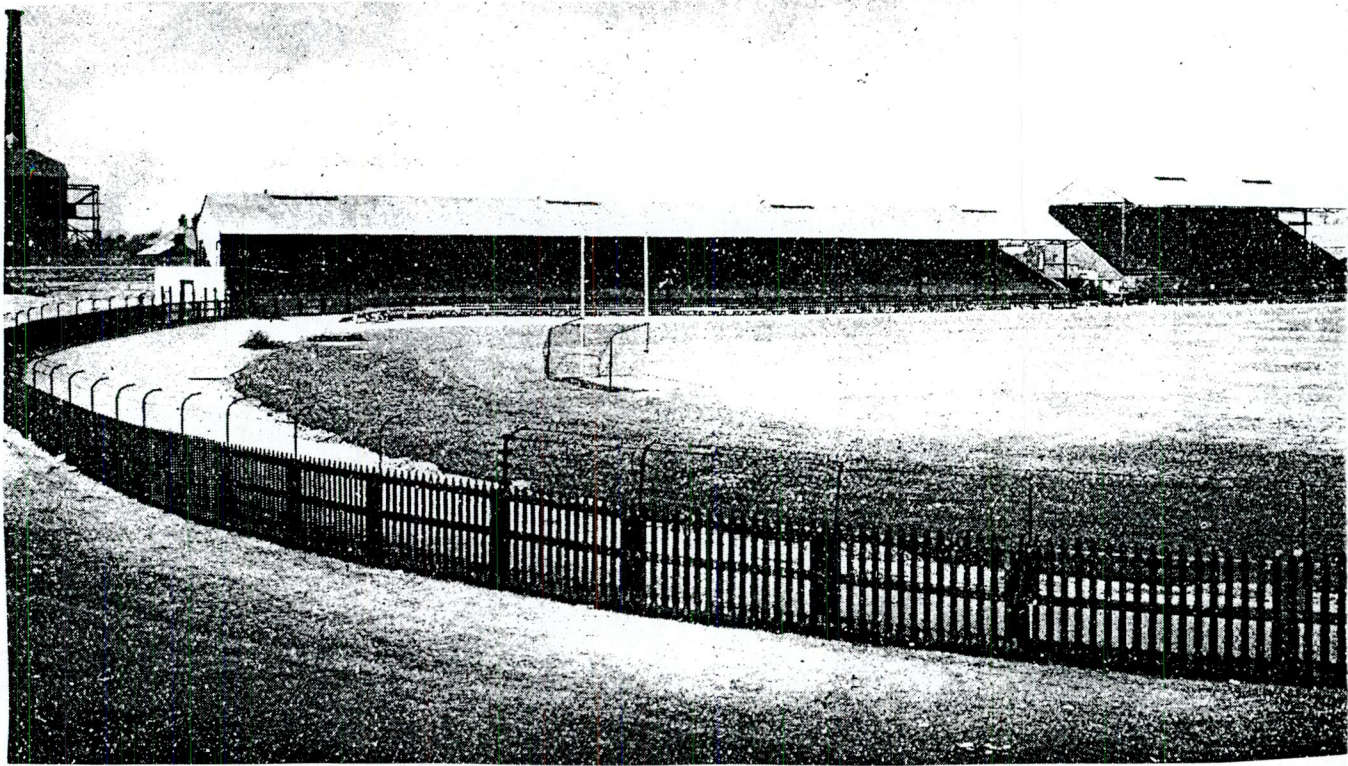


Fig.15, Croke Park as it was in 1924 with a race track circling the pitch.



provision of sporting facilities which ultimately is an investment in its future. A number of the worlds leading stadium designers were consulted for the project. (Gael Sport, p.19, June 1993).

The G.A.A. employed Lobb Partnership from the U.K. and H.O.K., a sports facilities group from Kansas City in the United States. These companies, along with Irish Architects Gilroy McMahon and Irish based structural Engineers Horgan Lynch of Dublin formed a team that devised a master plan. This plan was latter modified, as a cost cutting exercise when the Irish based members of the team joined forces with Seamus Monaghan & Partners, Quantity Surveyors, to produce a slightly reduced version.

J.V. Tierney & Company later joined the group as Mechanical and Electronic Consultants. Together they have designed the infrastructure to support, what has been described as a system "with the lighting capacity for a small town".(Gael Sport, June '93)

In relation to the new developments at Croke Park the G.A.A. are confident that they found the best available domestic and international advice for the project. The author of the article on Croke Park, from Gael Sport magazine June '93 expresses that "precedents will be set in sports stadium construction on both a global and a national basis".

At present the Cusack Stand is completed and this will later be linked to the new Canal End and Hogan Stands, forming a continuous horse-shoe effect. The bottom and top tiers will provide the main spectator facilities while the centre tier will provide Corporate Hospitality facilities and accommodation for season ticket holders.

In the February 1994 edition of Gaelic World magazine, Mick Dunne talked to Des McMahon, of Gilroy McMahon Architects, on the concept of the new stadium for Jones's Road.

McMahon talked about the immense amount of preliminary work that went into the conception of the new stadium. "When I'd been appointed, the G.A.A.had already been advised by expert international master planers, a combination of a group from Kansas City and London. The Kansas City group were particularly experienced in this type of facility, having built at least a dozen of the new stadia in America: the ones we see



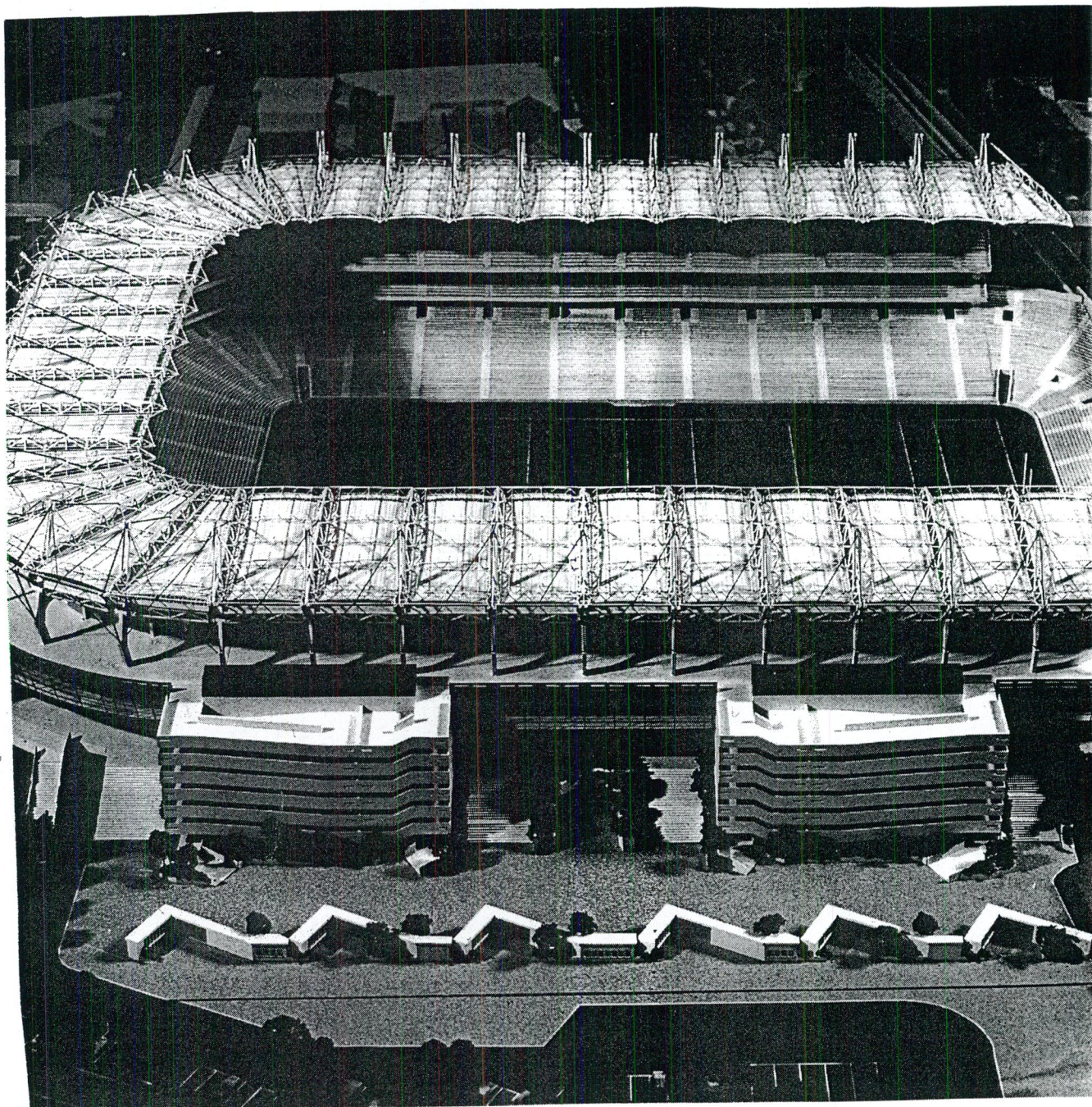


Fig.16, The shape of things to come, the model of the proposed park.



Sunday after Sunday on the American football on television, in the Superbowl and games like that.

I think America was really the only continent that had been taking on the concept of a sports stadium and rebuilding it. I mean, if you think of it, there isn't much difference between the Colosseum and Wembley - it's just an arrangement of tiered seats to give a good view of a facility whereas the Americans had been looking on this on a much larger dimension; it was part of the leisure requirement, part of the social requirement".

(Gaelic World, Feb., '94).

In this interview conducted by Mick Dunne, Mr. McMahon goes on to tell of how, when his firm applied for the job of developing Croke Park, that the Americans were even on the interview panel, so they would have had an input into his selection and appointment. Before the design of the Cusack Stand was finalised, for the first phase of the development, G.A.A. officials and Des McMahon visited and studied similar facilities all around the world. The architect describes how most of the better stadia are the ones that we would have seen in the Italia '90 World Cup. They visited Rome, Turin, Milan, Barcelona and six of Germany's better stadia including Cologne, which Mr. McMahon considered to be the best of the lot. McMahon described that in the course of developing a brief and identifying the scope of work and what the G.A.A.'s aspirations should be, Liam Mulvihill (Director General of the G.A.A.) visited several others in Spain and France as well. Des McMahon also explains that the group visited a number of the American stadia. They included three in New York; Canada, where they saw the Skydome, in action with Gaelic games and also Kansas, Miami, Buffalo, Washington, Baltimore, Atlanta, St. Petersburg and Tampa.

McMahon states that, what distinguishes the Cusack Stand from the more recent ones built in Europe is the ease of circulation by the introduction of ramps as well as stairs.

Des explained the schedule during the building of the stand.....

The end result has to be a building that is not only safe and functional etc. but, in its imagery, is a manifestation of the national games. In its size its not going to be evocative of Jones's Road, but of the whole north city and





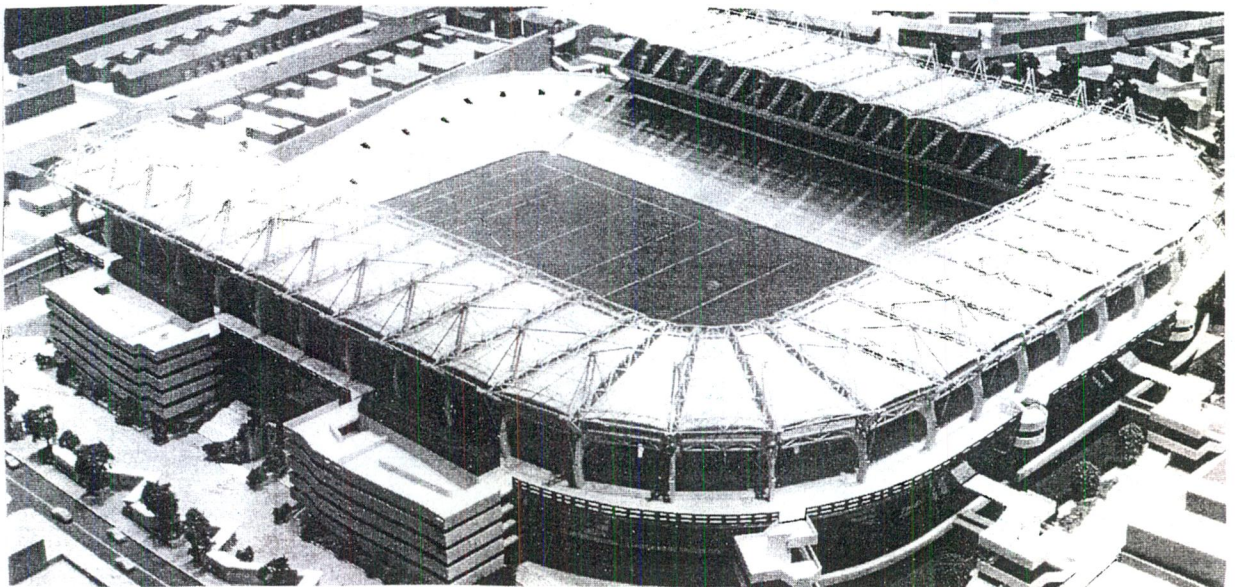


Fig.17, Croke Park as it was, directly before the new Cusack Stand was built. This view taken from the Hogan Stand shows the old Cusack Stand in the centre, as it was. Below' is another view of the Park of the future.



lets hope it's a landmark, historical and cultural, that we're all so proud of. (Gaelic World, Feb.,'94, p.13.)

An article in Gael Sport, June '93 had these items to add about the new stand.....

Danny Lynch believes that it will be an epoch in the history of the G.A.A., one that will augment the organisation's profile both at home and abroad.

Indeed the recent announcement that there will be live coverage of games right through the Championship season in 500 close circuit venues in the United States and Canada demonstrates the huge interest now being generated in the G.A.A.. So it is important that the organisation provide an adequate show-case for similar future undertakings, in order to project the right image.

Above all else the Cusack Stand will signify the fruition of a dream, one that will bring the G.A.A. into the next century with its head held high, boasting a headquarters and stadium of world-wide acclaim.

The new Cusack Stand alone has already made an impact on the north Dublin skyline and we wait anxiously for the completion of a stadium which undoubtedly, will, not only provide an awesome spectacle in the city, but will also be a talking point, both nationally and internationally. This awesome feat of architecture will also provide unbounded promotional accolade for the G.A.A.

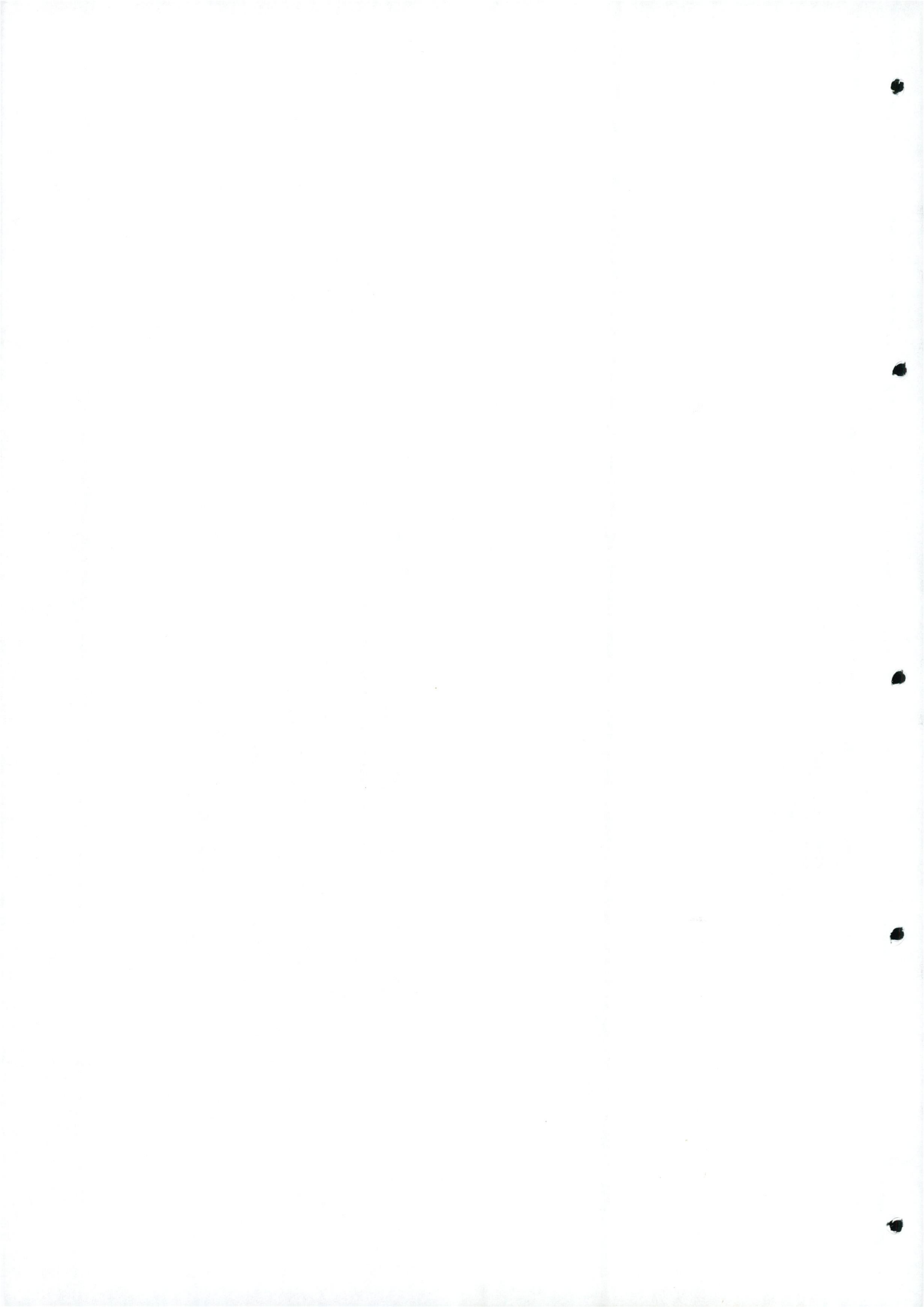
The Croke Park developments prove that the G.A.A. are capable of considerate design that fits its purpose. The logic behind the new stadium was a modern, safe and well facilitated sporting accommodation. The G.A.A. sought every possible type of advice to maximise on its potential.

Hopefully the developments signal a change of philosophy for the G.A.A.; looking to the future as opposed to their backwards looking attitude, particularly in relation to their trophy design.

The new Croke Park will provide the G.A.A. with the identity of being a very much modern organisation. Therefore, perhaps it is time for them to apply the same logical approach to their trophy designs. In this respect, they need not seek international advice, as quite a large number of designer/silversmiths exist in this country at present.



# *Conclusion*



Conclusion....."Nobody Said It Was Going To Be Easy".....

The G.A.A. are certainly moving in the right direction with the proposed developments to Croke Park. In other areas such as advertising the G.A.A. are also making breakthroughs that are definitely enhancing their image. Slogans such as "This Man Can Break Hearts At Seventy Yards" and "This Man Can Level Whole Counties In One Second Flat" are examples of slogans used by Guinness to promote the Hurling Championship.

Before Guinness became the official sponsor of the Hurling Championship, G.A.A. advertising was less than dramatic, with players' endorsements of farm products etc.. The Guinness advertisement in my opinion takes on the appearance of an action-packed trailer to a film. The advertisement begins very dramatically with flashes of images of players in full battle on the field of play, clips of a muddy sliotar, a smashed hurley and a helmet crashing onto a wooden dressing-room floor are shown with very dramatic choral over-tones. The sequence continues with the camera encircling a man, adorning his helmet quite slowly and deliberately, as if in preparation for war and then ends abruptly with a heavy metal plate crashing to the ground, with "Nobody Said It Was Going To Be Easy" cast onto it. The advertisement is of such a high standard as would be associated with large sportswear companies, such as Nike or Adidas. Therefore this campaign may be as a direct response to the many dramatic and fashionable campaigns pertaining to English soccer marketing. In the Guinness/Hurling advertisement, there is no mention of the sponsor until the end when the logo appears. The product is now hurling.

In general the marketing of the G.A.A. has become big business, with magazine publications such as 'Gael Sport', 'Hogan Stand' and 'Gaelic World'. The live coverage of some of the more important matches on programmes such as 'The Championship' on Ulster television and 'The Game On Sunday' on R.T.E. have also enhanced the image of the association. Even the football and hurling strips of the various counties are varied from time to time, but not as much as the English Soccer League.

I think that the trophies pertaining to the association should be next on the agenda for a serious reconsideration of design. The





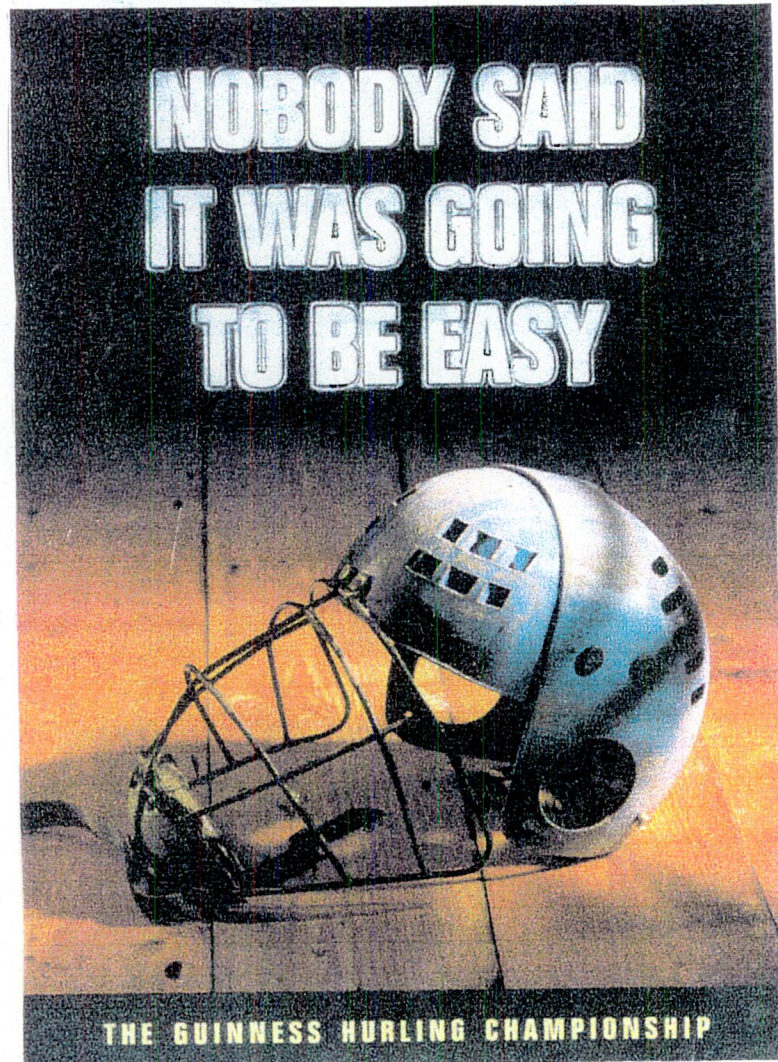


Fig.18, The Guinness/Hurling advertisement campaign.



continued reluctance to change, in this area, raises serious questions about the G.A.A.'s identity and what they consider the national identity to be.

As I have stated throughout this thesis, their over-reliance on antiquity has little or no bearing on modern Ireland. The trophies, at the time they were produced, said something about an Irish identity and were appropriate for their time and place.

In the Ireland of today and in the G.A.A., identity is still crucial, but it is not the same identity that the G.A.A. persist in representing us with. The problem that arises is, whether we have the self-confidence as a nation to reconstruct our identity. Our ideals and values have radically changed throughout this century and therefore, in turn, the projection of our identity must be altered. Over-reliance on icons from another era is not befitting of our nation today. Persistence in this realm is symptomatic of a backwards looking society.

Inspiration for design can come from anywhere and in the G.A.A.'s predicament I would suggest the investigation of modern Irish icons such as themselves, in relation to the Croke Park developments and as a modern Irish association.

In creating trophies with a purely Irish and modern flair I think that inspiration should be sought from areas such as modern Irish art and design, contemporary Irish film, theatre etc. All of these reflect the changing identity of Ireland and can inspire modern icons for the Irish society of today. Especially with the wealth of talent that exists in the country at this present point in time in the field of silversmithing, it is unfortunate that these peoples' talents are not being utilised to further promote the G.A.A. by reconstructing their identity and in turn the national identity.

Croke Park, by 2008, will have evolved into the most modern and well equipped stadium in Europe. With the new stadium as a backdrop and statement of modern Ireland, would it not be beneficial that innovative trophies projecting a similar image be presented in such surroundings. Change is always difficult but.....

"Nobody Said It Was Going To Be Easy"

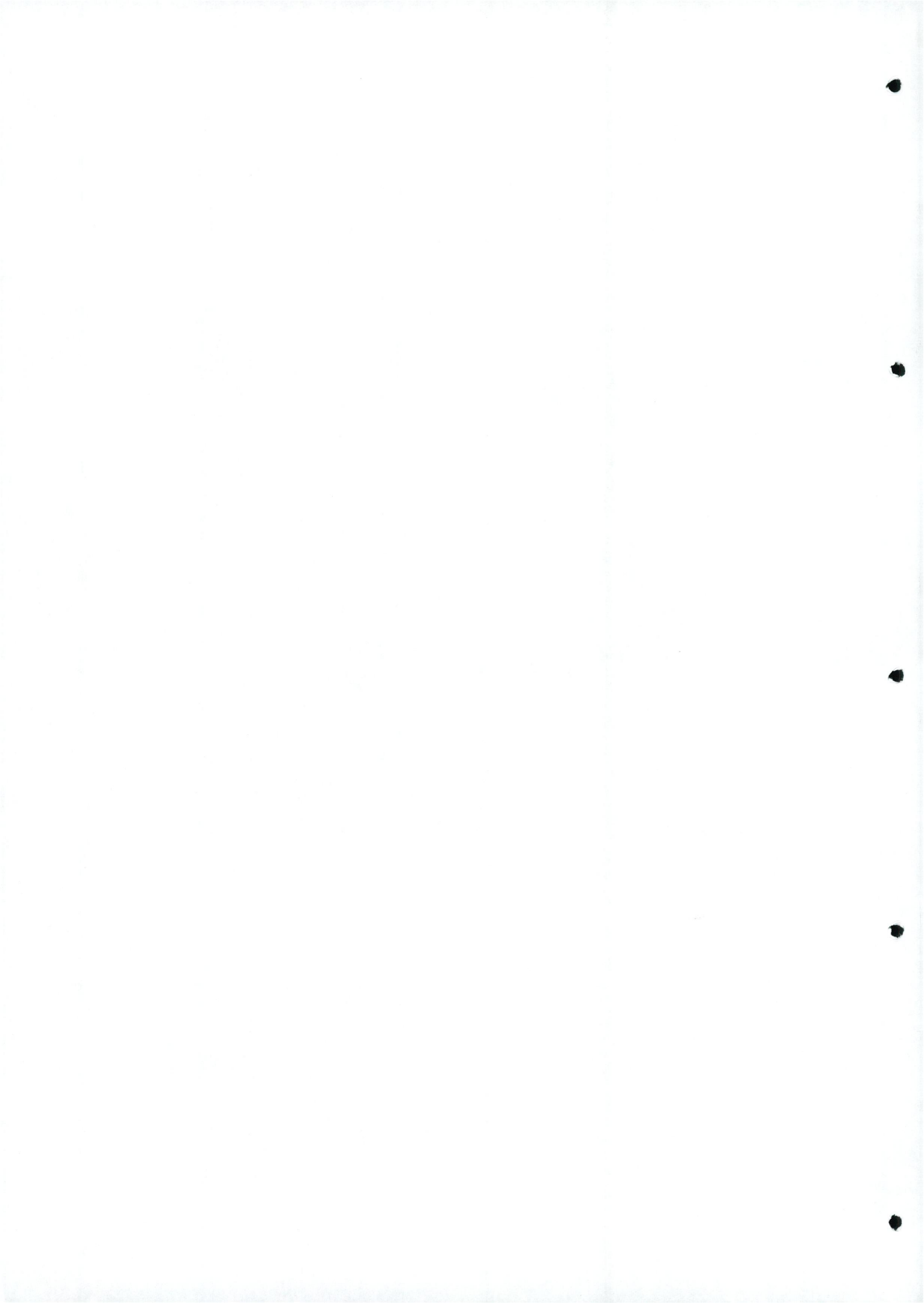






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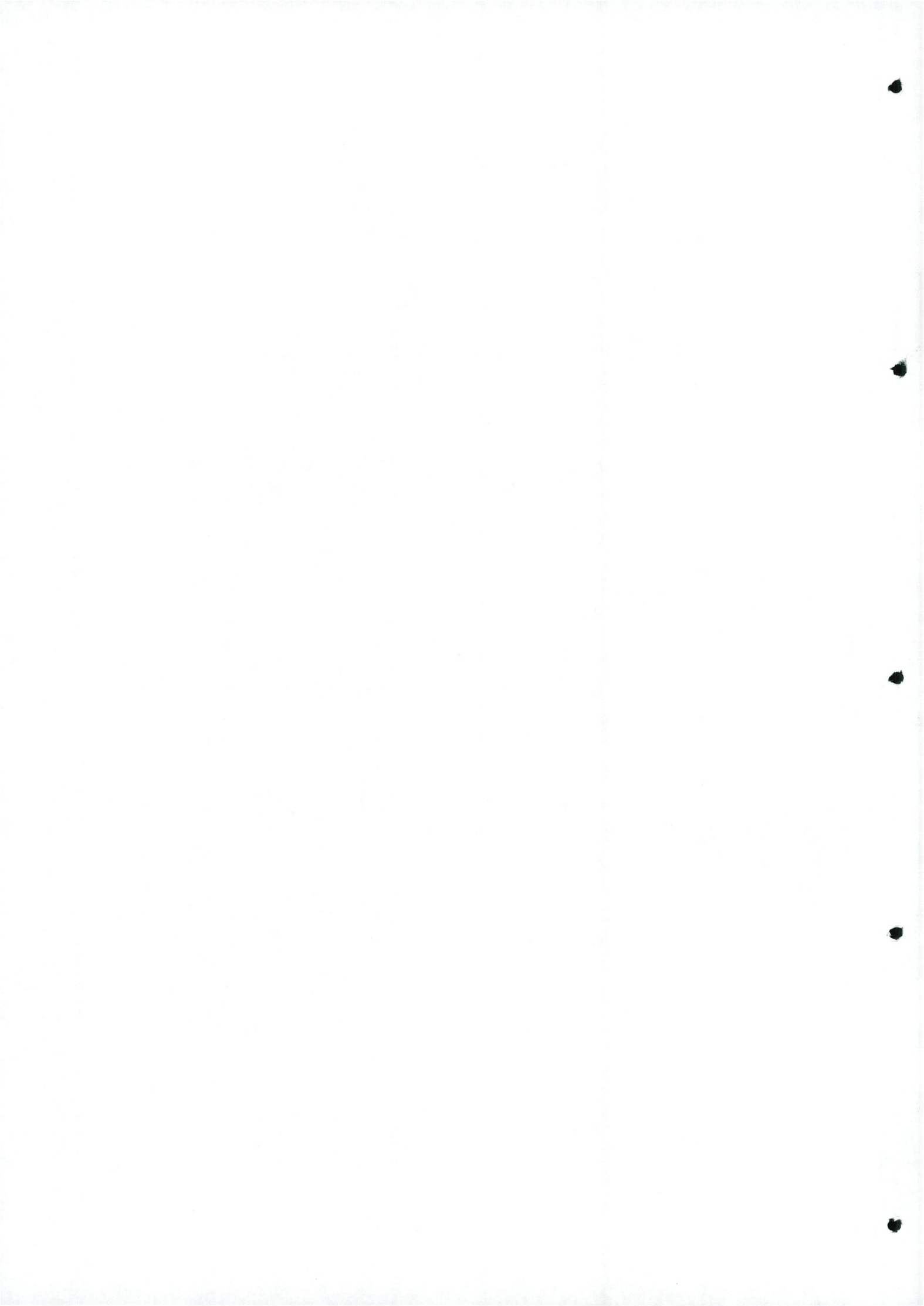
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