



SOARING SLIOTHAR



*A Centenary of
Kildare Camogie
1904-2004*



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1904-2004

Published by Kildare County Camogie Board 2004

Written and edited by Joan O'Flynn

Published by Kildare County Camogie Board 2004.

All proceeds from the sale of this publication go directly to the Kildare County Camogie Board.

Soaring Sliothar was written and edited by Joan O'Flynn. Joan is a member of the Celbridge club since 1995. Since 2003 Joan is Chairperson of the Kildare County Camogie Board and was County Secretary for two years, in 2001/02. Joan originally played with Fr. O'Neill's, the Ladysbridge/Ballymacoda club in her native east Cork in the 1980s and was a member of the first London county camogie team in 1987.

The title of this publication, *Soaring Sliothar* is taken from a poem *The Camogie Player*, published anonymously in *Our Games Annual 1962* and printed in *GAA Ballads of Rebel Cork* ed. Jim Cronin, Brendan Barry, John Arnold and Jimmy Smyth CLCG Coiste Chontae Chorcaí 2001 p.476.

Cover photo: Six players, Saoirse Ferguson Naas, Martha Brady Celbridge, Amy Beattie Johnstownbridge, Caoimhe Broderick Kill, Ciara Hamilton Maynooth and Laura Morrin Cappagh hold aloft the National League junior cup won by Kildare in 2004. This photo was taken at the 2004 under 9 blitz finals in Kill in June 2004.

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While every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the contents of this publication, the editor and publisher cannot accept responsibility for any inaccuracies or misrepresentations.

Editor's Acknowledgements

The writing of *Soaring Sliothar* was facilitated by a number of people, some knowingly, others unknowingly. The publication pulls together material from a wide range of sources and I received a lot of support and assistance from many people.



Since June 2004, this project has dominated my time and our kitchen table so to Jim Henchey, at home, a very special word of thanks and appreciation.

The minute books of the Kildare County Camogie Board are an invaluable resource and an extremely important historical and social record that enable this story to be told. The attention to detail of the minute takers provide many facts and much of the commentary on the efforts to play, promote and develop Kildare camogie, especially over the last fifty years. A very special word of appreciation to people who were responsible for those minute books, either in the role of county secretary, assistant county secretary or minute takers. Your words form a significant part of this story.

Special word of thanks to Michael Dillon, Omega Typesetting, whose expertise helped bring this publication to fruition.

The research and/or writing of the following contributors, and the provision of photographs, is also gratefully acknowledged.

CHAPTER 2 FOCUS ON CLUBS

Allenwood Paud Malone; **Ardclough** Phyllis Finneran; **Ballyroe** Fran Miller; **Broadford** Vincent Sutton; **Brownstown** Margaret Sexton; **Cappagh** Phyllis Bambury; **Caragh** History taken from Souvenir Brochure of Official Opening of Tom Lawler Memorial Park 1979; **Carbury** Caroline O'Donoghue; **Castledermot** Rosanna Curran; **Celbridge** John Magee, Gerry Ryan; **Clane** Rose Merriman, Michael Clifford, Marie Woods, Lisa Curtin, Deirdre Grace, Clare Kirwan, Molly Delaney; **Confey** Eddie Ryan; **Johnstown Bridge** Bernard Doran; **Kildangan** Margaret Sexton; **Kildoon** Margaret Sexton; **Kill** Marie Cullen; **Kilmeade** Margaret Sexton; **Leixlip** Loretta Shinnors; **Maynooth** Martin Connolly and Colm Hoban; **Moorefield** Bernie McSweeney; **Naas** Máire de Burca and Clare McGovern; **Nurney** Margaret Sexton; **Prosperous** Marianne Feeney (Johnson); **Rathangan** Lillie Whelehan (Kennedy) and Bernadette Fitzpatrick; **Rathcoffey** Mary McCabe

and Helen Berns; **Sarsfields** Deirdre O'Sullivan; **St. Laurence's** Matt and Patricia Keatley Doyle; **St. Patrick's College Maynooth** Details taken from Cill Dara Yearbook 1981; **Straffan** Carmel Walsh and Fiona Farrell; **Stratford-on-Slaney** Bridie and Frank O'Neill; Annie and Sheila Osbourne and Baby Parkes. **Suncroft** Margaret Sexton.

Geraldine Mooney and Margaret Sexton for additional research at Kildare County Library, Newbridge.

CHAPTER 3 ADMINISTRATION AND PROMOTION OF CAMOGIE

Special thanks to Marie Woods, Clane. Thanks also to Máirín Fulham (Secretary of Leinster Council of Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael); Ciara Tallon (St. Laurence's); Orla Bambury (Cappagh).

CHAPTER 4 'THE LILYWHITES'

Particular thanks to The Leinster Leader, the Kildare Nationalist, the Liffey Champion, the Meath Topic and Kildare County Library, especially Mario Corrigan. Thanks also to Margaret Sexton; Miriam Malone, Broadford; Marie Farrelly, Broadford; Ernie McMullen, Moorefield; Máire Uí Scolaí, National PRO of Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael.

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Mile buíochas do chách.

JOAN O'FLYNN

September 2004

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Message from President of Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael

I WELCOME the opportunity to contribute to this book which is being published by Kildare County Camogie Board to mark the celebration of the Centenary of the game of camogie.

The publication of this book, whilst essentially a history of camogie, records the life of women in Kildare through the game and also the contribution that women made to the community over the last 100 years. The experiences and the achievements of Irish women in sport are very often 'hidden' or not well known and so this book will rectify this.

Kildare camogie has much to be proud of in the history of camogie. With over 30 clubs telling their story and the special tributes to Kildare women who played the game with distinction, it is evident that camogie was a major force in the sporting life of Kildare people. In a county not always synonymous with the ancient games of hurling and camogie, Kildare camogie players have attained All Ireland and Leinster successes. Schools have made a measurable contribution to the promotion and the development of the game.

I look forward to reading this book and expect to derive the same enjoyment from it as those who have proudly played for Kildare camogie clubs and county teams. My congratulations to all those associated with the publication of the book and continued success to Kildare camogie.



*Miriam O'Callaghan,
National President of Cumann Camógaíochta
na nGael 2004*

MIRIAM UÍ CHEALLACHÁIN
Uachtarán
Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael



Acknowledgment of Sponsors

Kildare County Camogie Board is indebted and grateful to the following (at the time of going to print) for their sponsorship towards the Kildare celebrations of the Camogie Centenary 1904-2004:

- Bank of Ireland, Celbridge
- Caragh Gaelic Football Club
- ESB
- Leixlip GAA
- Maynooth GAA
- P J Wallace Cycle and Trophy Centre, Clane
- Rathcoffey GAA
- Rent A Fence
- Wheatfield Residents' Association, Ardclough



Congratulations
to the
Kildare Camogie Board
on the publication of
Soaring Sliothar
and
continued success
in the next century



Foreword

THE centenary of any organisation is a unique occasion. It provides an opportunity to look back, remember and celebrate. This is what *Soaring Sliothar* is about.

It is not a definitive history but a collection of facts, stories, details, memories and photos.

The experiences and the achievements of Irish women in sport are very often 'hidden' or not as well known as others. In that respect, Kildare County Camogie Board is very pleased and proud to publish this book. It makes visible and expresses the collective effort of the women of Kildare to play and develop camogie, Irish women's national game.

One of the interesting aspects of the book is the number of clubs, who at different times played camogie in Kildare. Spread throughout the north and south of the county, over thirty clubs tell their stories in Chapter 2. Today there are eighteen clubs in the county and this is as high as it has ever been and is the highest in recent times.

Chapter 3 reflects on experiences of various county boards down the decades. It also provides insights into the extent of social change for Irish women over the last century. Several episodes at county board meetings are recalled that were concerned about women's attire, married women playing camogie, bans on 'modern dancing' and 'foreign dancing' and knitting for funds. These are benchmarks that tell the extent to which the administration of the game has changed, in the context of change for women in Irish society. However, the ongoing need for funds remind us that some things have not changed at all!

The County Board is very pleased to pay special tribute to 18 women who played camogie with outstanding distinction. The Team of the Century and the three 'special recognition awards' honour a unique collection of women who excelled in camogie skills, determination, teamwork and ability.

Chapter 4 pays further tribute to the outstanding

achievements of women who played in the Kildare colours. Today, Kildare camogie plays in the lilywhite colours but this chapter tells us this was not always the case. Kildare's dominance of national junior camogie at the end of the 1980s and up to 1990 is recalled and the excellence of this and other teams is recorded.

The chapter on young women and girls, Chapter 5 Mol an Óige, is one that, regrettably, suffers from the ready availability of records. However, it is important to include and record the experiences of camogie in schools and elsewhere. Chapter 3 and 4, of course, also include details on under-age and juvenile camogie at club and county level.

The occasion of a centenary is also a time to look forward. It is an exciting time for camogie in Kildare. There are strong foundations to build and strengthen the game even further. At the end of 2004 there will be a four year development plan for Kildare camogie and, in tandem with developments at national level, we look forward to more integration with the other units concerned with promoting gaelic games in the county, the Kildare GAA, the Kildare Ladies Football and Kildare handball authorities. Chapter 6 addresses some of these issues.

Putting together *Soaring Sliothar* has been an interesting and informative exercise. We hope that you enjoy it and that it is a fitting testament to the women and men of Kildare, past and present, that enjoy and love camogie.

Kildare County Camogie Board is very proud to acknowledge and celebrate the combined efforts of past and present generations, and the supporting efforts of our families, in keeping alive and developing the playing, administration and promotion of the unique cultural and sporting gift that is camogie. This book is a contribution to that objective in 2004 - the centenary year of the Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael.

September 2004

KILDARE COUNTY BOARD CENTENARY COMMITTEE

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