

Documents for the new Leaving Certificate History Case Studies the GAA to 1891

These documents are intended to supplement the documents in the GAA chapters of *Movements for Reform 1870 – 1914* (pages 146–63). They can be printed off and given to students. They should be encouraged to start each document by noting who wrote it, when, where and for what purpose.

Documents 1, 2 and 3 are the foundation documents of the GAA. They appeared in Parnell's newspaper, *United Ireland*, which was edited by one of his lieutenants, William O'Brien. These documents show why the men who founded the GAA acted and what they hoped to achieve. The attitudes they betray show both the differences and the similarities of view among them. These three documents are very suited to questions about the origin of the GAA. These questions can be organised in line with the recommendations in the Department syllabus under the headings of Comprehension, Comparison, Contrast and Contextualisation, along the following lines:

Comprehension –

[Doc.1] What does Cusack say is a 'sign of national decay'? What kind of people manage 'all the meetings held in Ireland'? List two things he tells the Irish people to do.

[Doc. 2] What does Davin think is wrong with 'English handbooks'? Which athletic activities does he think attract most young men? What does he think of (a) Irish football and (b) hurling?

[Doc. 3] What 'ugly and irritating fact' does Croke mention? Make a list of the 'Irish' and 'English' games that Croke compares. What does he think will be the result if 'we continue travelling in the same direction as we have been going for some time past'?

Comparison – answers must be supported by quoting words or phrases. What is Davin's attitude towards 'English sports'? How does that compare with the attitude of (a) Cusack and (b) Croke? Can you suggest any reason for the differences? What did each man hope an Irish sporting movement would achieve? Can you see any differences in their aims?

Criticism – answers must be supported by quoting words or phrases. In the case of each man, say whether you think he was motivated by (a) love of sport, (b) hatred of the English or (c) nostalgia for a lost world.

Contextualisation – answers must be supported by quoting words or phrases. What developments in the world of sport encouraged these men to support the formation of a purely Irish sporting organisation? What political developments in the early 1880s made these men feel that Ireland should have a separate sporting organisation.

Document 5 shows the first set of rules for Gaelic football and hurling. They were drawn up by the GAA in January 1885. A good exercise might be to compare them with the current GAA rules and see how these have developed. What internal evidence is there that the men who drew up these rules were uncertain about how these games should be played? Can you think of any reason to explain that? A reference to Davin's letter would be relevant in answering this point.

Documents 7 and 8 show us the GAA through its own eyes. The advertisement for its sports (7) shows how important athletics as opposed to team games were in the early days. The wider cultural activities also contrast with today's GAA. *The Gael* (8) was a short-lived GAA paper which also gives some insight into the development of the organisation.

Document 9 shows men playing hurling. But note the date. It is before the GAA was set up. Clubs like this had difficulty finding other clubs to play with – a factor in Cusack's decision to set up the GAA.

Document 10 are press reports of early GAA activity. 10b was almost certainly written by Cusack who reported on the GAA for *United Ireland*. Students should know that this was Parnell's newspaper and in the early years very sympathetic to the GAA, and that the report on the Phoenix Park games was probably written by Cusack, who also features as the referee. These documents could be used separately to illustrate various aspects of developments within the GAA in its early years – how clubs started, the American invasion, and the GAA's response to the Parnell split.

Documents 11, 12 and 13 are the Special Branch reports on GAA activity. They were written monthly and annually by the RIC District Inspectors and sent to Dublin Castle where the Inspector General read them and commented on them. The column on the right is reserved for his comments.

The Northern Division report from 1888 is interesting as it shows the authorities attitude to the GAA at its expansionary stage. Students may find it interesting to see how closely the RIC monitored all kinds of nationalist movements, besides the GAA. The extract from South Western Division report (1891) shows the decline in GAA support after the Parnell split, as does the list of clubs and membership from the South Eastern Division in the same year.

Students may find it difficult to read these hand-written reports, so it may be worth making a typescript copy, while showing students what the originals looked like.

Documents 14 and 15 show some of the issues apart from IRB involvement which arose in the early years of the GAA. One related to Sunday games. In Britain in the late 19th century sabbatharianism was strong and none of the English-based sports organisations approved of them, unlike the GAA. This always generated tension among the Catholic clergy as these letters show. The role of drink and publicans is also an issue. In Document 14 Croke is exercising his role as patron to recommend moderation. Logue, on the other hand, came from Armagh where Sunday sport was a more sensitive issue than in the south. He was clearly not too keen on the GAA. Students could be asked to note and explain the differences between the two archbishops.

A word about Irish Athletics

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.

...The strength and energy of a race are largely dependent on the National pastimes for the development of a spirit of courage and endurance. A war like race is ever fond of games requiring skill, strength and staying power...But when a race is declining in martial spirit, no matter from what cause, the national games are neglected at first and then forgotten....

... a so-called revival of athletics was inaugurated in Ireland. The new movement did not originate with those who had ever had any sympathy with Ireland or the Irish people. Accordingly, labourers, tradesmen, artists and even policemen and soldiers were excluded from the few competitions which constituted the lame and halting programme of the promoters.

Two years ago every man who did not make his living either wholly or partly by athletics was allowed to take part. But with this concession came a law which is as intolerable as its existence in Ireland is degrading. The law is this, 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 those rules should be ineligible to compete anywhere.

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. Swarms of pot-hunting mashers sprang into existence. They formed ‘Harrier’ clubs for the purpose of training all through the winter after the fashion of English professional athletes, that they might be able to win and pawn the prizes offered for competition in the summer.

We tell the Irish people to take the management of their games into their own hands, encouraging and promoting in every way, every form of athletics which is purely Irish and to remove with one sweep everything foreign and iniquitous in the present system. The vast majority of athletes in Ireland are Nationalists. These gentlemen should take the matter in hand at once and draft laws for the guidance of the promoters of meetings in Ireland next year. The people pay for the expense of meetings and the representatives of the people should have the controlling power. It is only by such an arrangement that Irish athletics can be revived and that the incomparable strength and physique of our race will be preserved.

(United Ireland, 11 October, 1884)

2

Part of Maurice Davin's letter replying to the article

Dear Sir,

I am pleased to see that you take an interest in Irish Athletics. It is time that a handbook was published with rules, etc. for all Irish games. The English Handbooks of Athletics are very good in their way but they do not touch on many of the Irish games which although they are much practised, are not included in the events or programmes of athletic sports. Weight throwing and jumping appear to be going out of fashion in England but this is not the case in Ireland although these events are too often left out of the programmes of what might be called the leading meetings...

I have some experience of those things and see numbers of young men almost daily having some practice. It is strange that for one bystander who takes off his coat to run a footrace, forty strip to throw weights or try a jump of some kind. Irish football is a great game and worth going a long way to see when played on a fairly laid out ground and under proper rules. Many old people say hurling exceeded it as a trial of men. I would not care to see either game now as the rules stand at present. I may say there are no rules and therefore those games are often dangerous. I am anxious to see both games under regular rules... if a movement such as you advise is made for the purpose of reviving and encouraging Irish games and drafting rules, etc. I will gladly lend a hand if I can be of any use.

Yours truly,

Maurice Davin

Deerpark, Carrick-on-Suir, 13 October 1884

(United Ireland, 18 October, 1884)

3

Part of the letter from Archbishop Croke of Cashel, accepting the position of patron of the GAA

My dear sir - I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your communication inviting me to become a patron of the Gaelic Athletic Association of which you are, it appears, the hon. Secretary. I accede to your request with the utmost pleasure.

One of the most painful...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 nearly 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 of every genuine son and daughter of the old land.

Ball playing, hurling, football kicking according to Irish rules, 'casting', leaping in various ways, wrestling, hand-grips, top-pegging, leap-frog, rounders and tip-in-the-hat and all such favourite exercises and amusements among men and boys may now be said to be not only dead and buried but in several localities, entirely forgotten and unknown. And what have we got in their stead? We have got such foreign and fantastical field sports as lawn tennis, polo, croquet, cricket and the like - very excellent, I believe and health giving exercises in their way, still not racy of the soil but rather alien on the contrary to it as are, indeed for the most part, the men and women who first imported them and continue to patronise them.

And unfortunately it is not our national sports alone that are held in dishonour and dying out but even our most suggestive national celebrations are being gradually effaced and extinguished, one after another as well. Who hears now of snap-apple night or bonfire night? They are all things of the past, too vulgar to be spoken of except in ridicule by the degenerate dandies of the day.

No doubt there is something rather pleasing to the eye in the 'get up' of a modern young man who, arrayed in light attire with party coloured cap on and racket in hand, is making his way, with or without a companion, to the tennis ground. But for my part, I should vastly prefer to behold, or think of the youthful athletes whom I used to see in my early days at fair or pattern, bereft of shoes and coat, and thus prepared to play at hand-ball, to fly over any number of horses, to throw the 'sledge' or the 'winding stone' and to test each others mettle by the trying ordeal of 'three leaps' or 'the hop-step-and-jump'

Indeed if we continue travelling for the next score years in the same direction as we have been going for the same 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 effeminate follies as she may recommend, we had better all come and public abjure our nationality, clap hands for joy at the sight of the Union Jack and place 'England's bloody red' exultingly 'above the green'.

Deprecating as I do any such dire and disgraceful consummation and seeing in your society of athletes something altogether opposed to it, I shall be happy to do all I can and authorise you now formally to place my name on the roll of your patrons..

+ T.W. Croke
Archbishop of Cashel

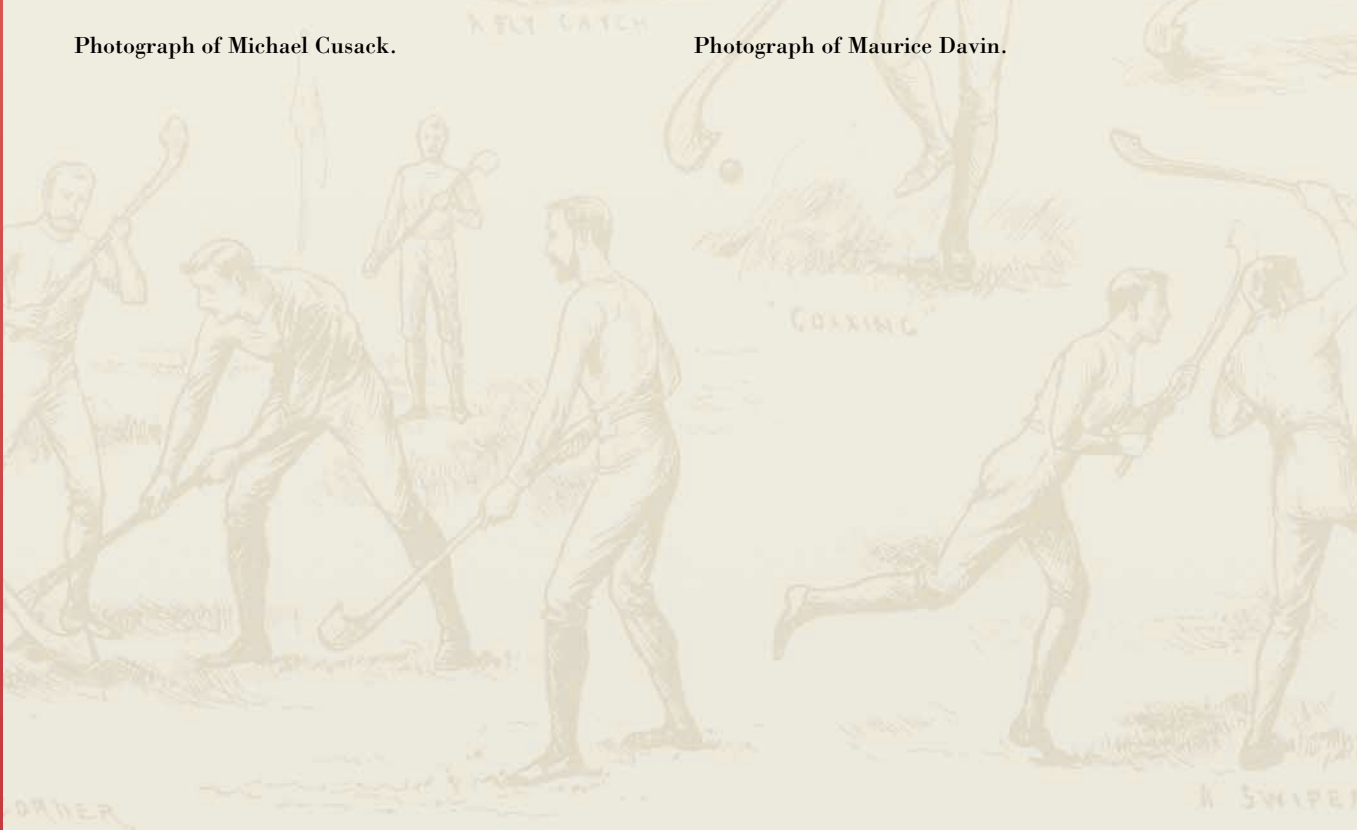
(United Ireland, 27 December, 1884)



Photograph of Michael Cusack.



Photograph of Maurice Davin.



5

The first GAA rules for football and hurling

Football

1. There shall not be less than 15 or more than 21 players aside.
2. There shall be two umpires and a referee. Where the umpires disagree the referee's decision is final.
3. The ground shall be at least 120 yards long by 80 in breadth and properly marked by boundary lines. Boundary lines must be at least five yards from the fences.
4. The goal posts shall stand at each end in the centre of the goal line. They shall be 15 feet apart with a crossbar eight feet from the ground.
5. The captains of each team shall toss for choice of sides before commencing play and the players shall stand in two ranks opposite each other until the ball is thrown up, each man holding the hand of one of the other side.
6. Pushing or tripping from behind, holding from behind or butting with the head shall be deemed foul and the player so offending shall be ordered to stand aside and may not afterwards take part in the match, nor can his side substitute another man.
7. The time of actual play shall be one hour. Sides can be changed only at half time.
8. The match shall be decided by the greater number of goals. If no goals be kicked, the match is a draw. A goal is when the ball is kicked through the goal posts under the crossbar.
9. When the ball is kicked over the sideline it shall be thrown back by a player of the opposite side to him who kicked it over. If kicked over the goal line by a player whose goal-line it is, it shall be directly thrown back in any direction by a player of the other side. If kicked over the goal-line by a player of the other side, the goalkeeper whose line it crosses shall have a free kick. No player of the other side to approach nearer than 25 yards of him till the ball is kicked.
10. The umpires and referee shall have during the match, full power to disqualify any player or order him to stand aside and discontinue play, for any act which they consider unfair as set out in Rule 6.

5

The first GAA rules for football and hurling

Hurling

1. The ground shall when convenient be 200 yards long by 150 yards broad or as near that size as can be got.
2. There shall be boundary lines all around the ground at a distance of at least five yards from the fences.
3. The goal shall be two upright posts 20 feet apart with a crossbar ten feet from the ground. A goal is won when the ball is driven between the posts and under the crossbar.
4. The ball shall not be lifted off the ground by hand when in play.
5. There shall not be less than 14 or more than 21 players at the side in regular matches.
6. There shall be an umpire for each side and a referee who will decide in cases where the umpires disagree. The referee keeps the time and throws up the ball at the commencement of each goal.
7. The time of play shall be one hour and twenty minutes. Sides to be changed at half time.
8. Before commencing play, hurlers shall draw up in two lines in the centre of the field opposite to each other and catch hands or hurleys across, then separate. The referee then throws the ball along the ground between the players or high up over their heads.
9. No player is to catch, trip or push from behind. Penalty, disqualification to the offender and a free puck to the opposite side.
10. No player is to bring his hurley intentionally in contact with the person of another player. Penalty as in rule 9.
11. If the ball is driven over the side lines it shall be thrown in towards the middle of the ground by the referee or one of the umpires; but if it rebounds into the ground it shall be considered in play.
12. If the ball is driven over the end lines and not through the goal, the player who is defending the goal shall have a free puck from the goal. No player of the opposite side to approach. The other players to stand on the goal line but if the ball is driven over the goal line by a player whose goal it is, the opposite side shall have a free puck on the ground 20 yards our from the goal posts. Players whose goal it is to stand on the goal line until the ball is struck.

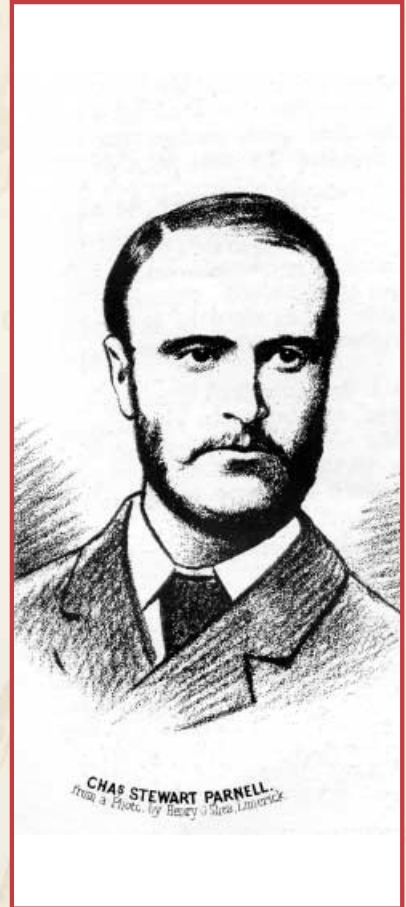
(United Ireland, 7 February, 1885)



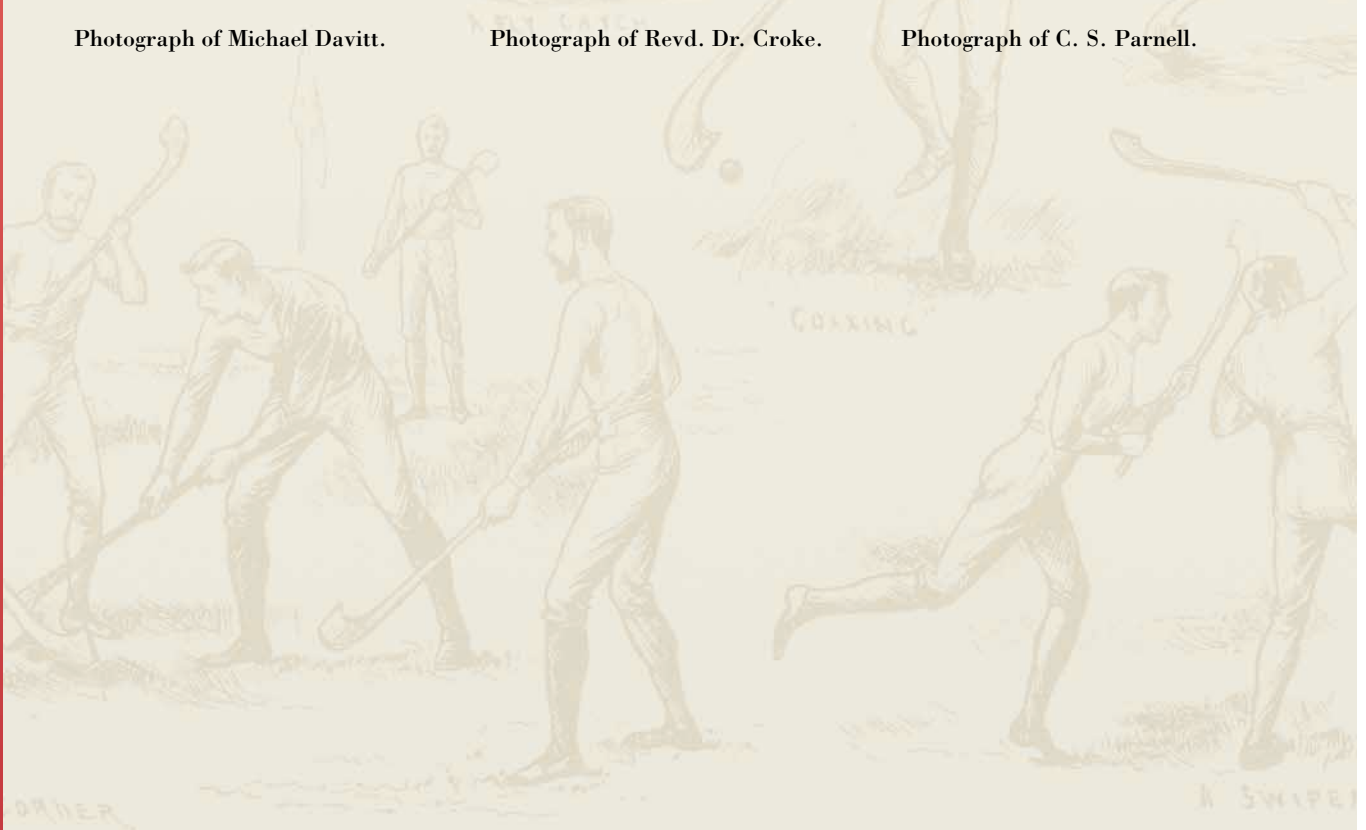
Photograph of Michael Davitt.



Photograph of Revd. Dr. Croke.



Photograph of C. S. Parnell.



**G A E L I C A T H L E T I C
S P O R T S**

**ON WHIT-MONDAY,
June 14, 1886,**

To be held in the extensive

**CORPORATION GROUNDS,
Adjoining the**

**A B B A T O I R ,
NORTH CIRCULAR-ROAD**

Close to

PHOENIX PARK,

Patrons :

THE MOST REV. T. W. CROKE, D.D.,

Archbishop of Cashel,

CHAS. STEWART PARNELL, Esq., M.P.

MICHAEL DAVITT, Esq., T.C.,

President:

MAURICE DAVIN, Esq., Carrick-on-Suir.

Vice-Presidents:

J. E. KENNEDY, Esq., Cork;

J. H. STEWART, Esq., Dublin;

J. K. BRACKEM, Esq., Templemore;

FRANK B. MOLONEY, Esq., Nenagh.

Amongst the Prizes to be competed for are -

The Sexton All Ireland Challenge Cup.

The Nagle Challenge Cup.

The Cochrane Challenge Cup.

Grocers' and Vintners' Assistants Challenge Cup.

The G.A.A. Executive (two) Challenge Cups.

The Treasurer's Cup (confined to Counties Dublin and Wicklow).

126 Magnificent Hand-made Solid Silver Celtic Presentation Crosses for members of the winning teams at Hurling and Football, besides Watches, Gold Breastpins, Plated Goblets, Books, etc.

The LORD MAYOR and LADY MAYORESS

Have kindly signified their intention of being present.

The Programme will be made up of the following events:-

Three hurling matches, three football matches, and three flat races as follows:-

One-A 100 Yards, even start, open to competitors who never won a prize in running matches.

One-A 150 Yards, even start, open to competitors who never won a first prize in running matches.

One-A 220 Yards Handicap, open to competitors who never won a first prize in running matches.

Throwing the 7lbs and 14lbs weight, and slinging the 56lbs,

Open to competitors who never won a championship.

Jumping-1st-Three standing jumps (with or without weights).

2nd-Hop, step and jump, or two hops and a jump.

3rd-Running long jump.

These later only open to those who never won a first prize for jumping.

Prizes for racing, jumping, and weight-throwing will be allocated as follows-If three compete, one prize; if six compete, two prizes; and if twelve or more compete, three prizes will be given; and not more than two prizes can be won by any competitor in these contests.

Irish Jig (special prize), open to amateurs only.

Tug of War-Selected team of Hurlers v Football.



THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE
GAELIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION.

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 7th, 1888.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

THE THURLES CONVENTION.

On Wednesday last, in accordance with the arrangements made by the Provisional Committee (Messrs. Davin, Power, Frewin, and O'Riordan), the representatives elected by the various counties, met at Thurles. There were close on a hundred delegates in attendance. Before the proceedings commenced, and while the delegates were being admitted, some questions of dispute arose as to the admission of the delegates from Limerick, Kilkenny, and Waterford. In the latter county two conventions were held—one at Kilmachthomas, and the other in Waterford City. In Kilkenny a misunderstanding arose as to where the convention should be held, and the result was that two conventions were also held there—one in the Workingmen's Club and the other in the Tholsel; while at Limerick a small section of the delegates assembled at the County Convention, headed by from the meeting, and afterwards formed the Rev. Eugene Sheehy, C.C., withdrew another, and carried out the business. These questions—as to who should represent the counties referred to at the Convention held to-day—were submitted to His Grace the Archbishop of Cashel, and he decided that the delegates elected at Kilmachthomas Convention should be admitted, and that the other questions should be decided at the meeting, which course was accordingly adopted.

When His Grace of Cashel and the Provisional Committee issued their circular to clubs, they distinctly laid down that all County Conventions should be summoned by the late County Secretaries, and presided over by the County Chairman.

The meeting held in Waterford was summoned by Mr. Fisher (Co. Sec.), and that held in the Workingmen's Club, Kilkenny, was summoned by Mr. Geary (Co. Sec.), and presided over by Mr. P. J. O'Keefe (Co. Chairman).

In defiance, however, of the laws which were made by the Provisional Committee, the delegates from the illegal meeting were allowed to sit, act, and vote at the meeting, while those who honestly endeavoured to carry out the spirit of the first circular, issued with the approval of His Grace of Cashel, were rigorously excluded.

The Rev. Father Scanlan and several other clergymen were in the reading-room of the Young Men's Society during the meeting, and endeavoured in every way, such as sending in "notes" to their friends, to further the policy which they have adopted.

The following were amongst the delegates present:—

County Cork—Rev. C. Buckley, C.C., Buttivant; T. O'Riordan, P. N. Fitzgerald, E. O'Brien, J. C. Forde, W. Troy, and Alderman Horgan.

County Waterford—(1st set)—W. G. Fisher, P.L.G., T.C.; M. Tierney, T.C.; and N. M'Veale.

The following letter from the Archbishop was read amid loud applause:—

TO THE DELEGATES OF THE G.A.A., IN CONVENTION ASSEMBLED AT THURLES.

The Palace, Thurles,
January 4, 1888.

GENTLEMEN,—Allow me to congratulate you on the very satisfactory results, as far as I know, that have hitherto attended your desire to reconstruct the Gaelic Athletic Association and place it on a solid and satisfactory basis, as well as on the becoming and brotherly feeling that has manifested itself so conspicuously, and almost without exception, in the County Conventions that have been recently held. I trust that your present meeting—the crowning one of all that are past—will be equally successful in this respect, while otherwise productive of even more beneficial results. I have no desire, gentlemen, nor have I a right, to interfere in any way with your deliberations; but it can hardly be said that I am entering on a province that does not belong to me as patron of your society if I venture to offer, as I do, a few facts for your consideration, and a few practical suggestions thereon. First, then, I beg to call your serious attention to the grave matter of *drink* in connection with our Gaelic sports.

no small injury to themselves. Hence, I would respectfully suggest that it be ruled somewhat as follows:—

First, that the sale of porter and ale, and of course of all alcoholic drinks, be strictly prohibited on, and, as far as possible even near, the field in which athletic sports are held.

Secondly, that in selecting the locality for such sports, the immediate neighbourhood of public-houses be specially avoided.

Thirdly, that no prizes be henceforth accepted from publicans—at least, when there is good reason to believe, as there nearly always is, that they have offered them solely, or chiefly, with a view of attracting customers to their shops.

Fourthly, that no tournament, no county or district games, be held on Sundays or holidays of obligation (if that be at all practicable), and that even parochial or inter-parochial competitions be not begun on such days before two o'clock.

I have good reason to believe that the country at large expects you will substantially make such regulations as I now suggest; and I pray you, therefore, either now or at some future, but not distant time, to give them practical effect in your respective counties.—I have the honour to remain, gentlemen, your very faithful servant,

+ T. W. CROKE,
Archbishop of Cashel.

The Archbishop's letter was received with loud applause.

The Chairman ruled that the elections should be proceeded with, and vacated the chair, which was taken by Father Buckley, who asked were there any candidates to be proposed.

Mr. Crowe (Limerick), asked was it competent for a person in proposing a gentleman to offer any observations as to his claims (cries of "no, no," "yes, yes," "no speeches," and some confusion.

Messrs. Maurice Davin and E. M. Bennet were then proposed as candidates.

Alderman Horgan said that, in the interests of harmony and unity, he would propose a man who, he was sure, they would all feel proud of—a man well known in the Gaelic world, and who would meet with their unanimous approval—that man was Mr. John Mandeville, Mitcheltown, and late of Tullamore Gaol (loud cheers, and great excitement).

A Delegate—He is drawing a red herring across the track.

Mr. Fleming, B.A., Waterford—They are putting forward a fellow-prisoner of Mr O'Brien, and they refused to pass a vote of sympathy with him before (cheers, and excitement).

Mr. P. J. Kelly—Any man that has done anything to overthrow landlordism meets with our approval—Mr. Mandeville has it (cheers).

Here followed great confusion, amidst which, Father Buckley said he had no desire, under Heaven, but to see things carried out fairly and honourably, and he wanted to see their deliberations reduced to decorum and order. He found three persons there proposed, and he asked would any more be proposed.

Mr. Crowe (Limerick)—I have great pleasure, for the sake of unity, in withdrawing the name of Mr. Bennet.

[Cries of Davin and Mandeville].

Father Buckley said he would ask the delegates to be very quiet, and not to be making any demonstration, for they were both very worthy men. He was then going to take a division between the two candidates, when

Alderman Horgan said—I would not have the name of John Mandeville put to a division to-day. If you do not elect him unanimously, I will withdraw him.

A Voice—Did he give you permission to nominate him or run him against Mr. Davin (cheers and groans)?

Alderman Horgan—There is a gentleman accusing me of running Mr. Mandeville against Mr. Davin. I did not. I was running him on his own merits.

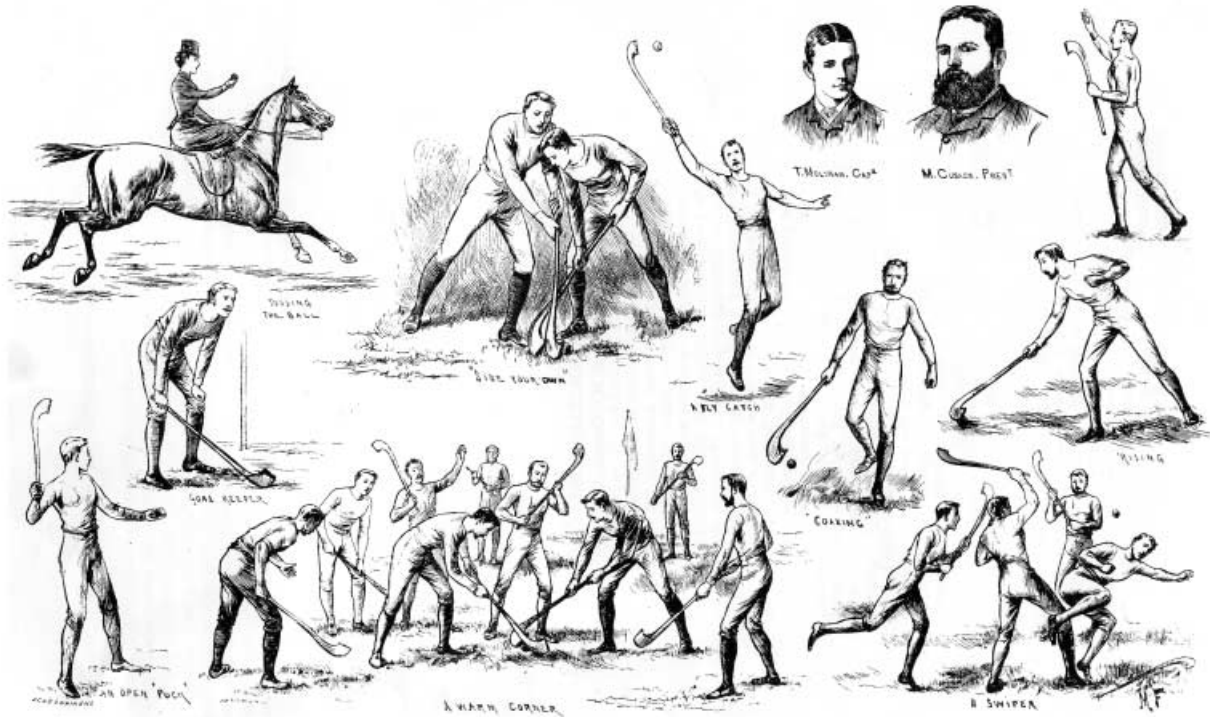
Chairman—There is very little difference between Mr. Mandeville and Mr. Davin, if there is any at all.

Father Buckley then proposed the name of Mr. Davin, as President of the Gaelic Athletic Association, and the opposition acquiesced.

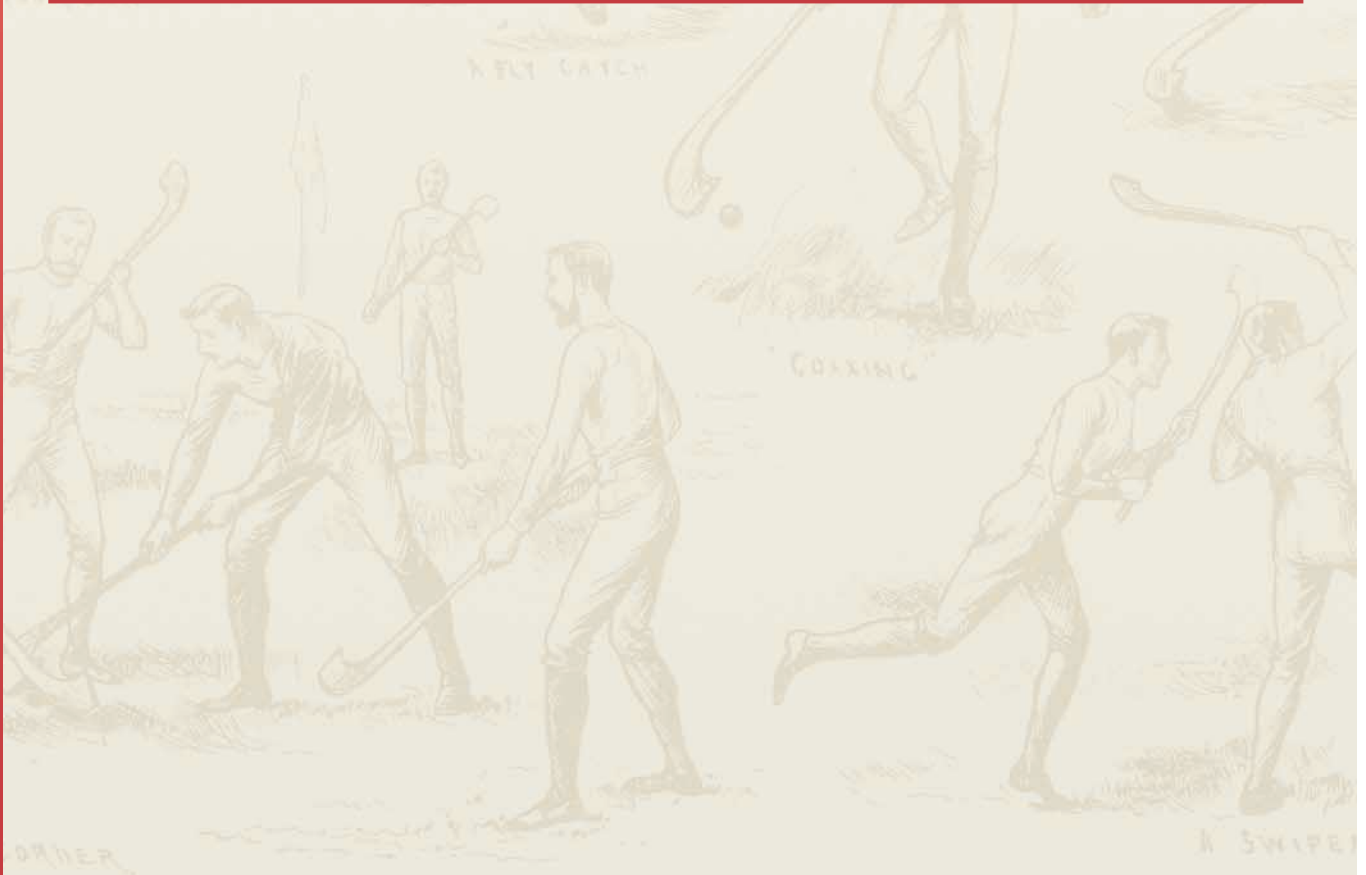
Mr. Davin took the chair, and returned thanks, and the election of secretary was then taken up.

Dublin Metropolitan Hurling Club

THE ILLUSTRATED SPORTING AND DRAMATIC NEWS, March 22, 1884.-21



THE DUBLIN METROPOLITAN HURLING CLUB



10a**The Phoenix Park**

Those who frequent the Phoenix Park on Sundays now find almost every available batch of ground swarming with football-players and hurlers. Even the Phoenix cricket ground has been invaded by the hitherto neglected working people of the city. The grounds of the Metropolitan Hurling Club, the Polo-grounds, the Fifteen Acres, etc. were last Sunday crowded with ardent supporters and admirers of the open-air pastime recommended by the Gaelic Athletic Association. On the Nine Acres, the Grocers' Assistants Gaelic Athletic Club had a splendid practice match in which those who are to play the representatives of the Dalkey branch of the GAA next Sunday week took part. On the Fifteen Acres, the Michael Davitt branch fought a stubborn fight against the Faugh a Ballagh Branch from half past eleven to half past twelve o'clock and were defeated by only one goal, notwithstanding that their men were younger and that they had evidently less training than their opponents. The honorary secretary of the GAA acted as referee.

United Ireland, 27 February, 1886

10b

Headford (Co. Galway) Mr Charles Lynch, D.L. J.P. who has for several years endeavouring to revive National pastimes in his locality is getting up a club composed of his tenantry and others who wish to join in the parish of Shrule. He has given the free use of grounds adjoining Ballycurran Castle for the players and spectators. We cannot too earnestly comment the patriotic conduct of Mr Lynch who has given free access to his lawn to the Gaelic football players of his parish and who has undertaken in person the duty of organising the club and instructing the players.

United Ireland, 24 July, 1886

10c

The annual convention of the GAA was held yesterday in Thurles, six hundred delegates attending. Mr P. N. Fitzgerald was chosen chairman. Several priests objected on the grounds that his selection would give the association a political tinge and to do away with such an impression, Major O'Kelly was proposed and seconded by two of them, whereupon great disorder arose. The priests, about twenty of them, withdrew and the meeting unanimously declared for Mr Fitzgerald. Mr Bennet, chair of the Ennis Board of Guardians was elected president. The suspended clubs held a meeting elsewhere and resolved to form a new association with Mr Davin as President.

The London Times, 10 November, 1887

10d

Cork 14 September 1888

Yesterday evening forty four members of the GAA arrived in Cork prior to starting for America. They are what is known as the Gaelic invasion team and it is their intention to give exhibitions of hurling and other national games throughout the United States. Among their number are Maurice Davin, president of the association, Father Concanan from Tullamore, Dr John Daly and B. Frewen. On their arrival in Cork the athletes were met by a band and were of course accorded an ovation by some crowds that had assembled to meet them.

The Times, 15 September, 1888

10e

A meeting of the Dr Croke branch of the GAA was held in Kilkenny on Sunday night at which there was a decided difference of opinion. A resolution was proposed expressing approval of the action of their President, Mr Sheehan, MP, in opposing Mr. Parnell's leadership. An amendment was proposed that the club refused to endorse Mr Sheehan's action. A heated discussion ensued and eventually the amendment was rejected. The meeting broke up with some loud cheers for Parnell, while others cheered for Dillon and O'Brien.

London Times, 26 December, 1890

10f

Mr Parnell in Galway

Mr Parnell was presented with a large number of addresses from different national bodies... Mr Parnell in replying said that the addresses represented no mushroom bodies. He was sure the GAA in particular was longing for a general election to show the stuff they were made of. (Loud cheers.) He knew that wherever the GAA was strong, the constituency was safe. They would know how to keep public opinion right and on the straight road to Irish nationality. They had acted in the face of unexampled intimidation but as long as they stood by him, he was not a bit afraid of the whole of those against him. (Cheers) They must not allow any defeat to discourage them... time was against their enemies because they had nothing to rest upon but a foundation of lies and hypocrisies...

The London Times, 16 March, 1891

10g

Dublin July 22

The GAA held a convention in the Pillar Room of the Rotunda, Dublin tonight. Delegates were present from a number of country districts. Mr P. J. Kelly, President, occupied the chair. The following resolution was passed: That this convention is resolved to support the policy of independent opposition and freedom of opinion under the leadership of Mr Charles Stewart Parnell.

The London Times, 23 July, 1891

Secret.
501 S.
7033
1
20022

SOUTH WESTERN DIVISION.

Crime Department—Special Branch.

SUBJECT *Yearly Report of Crime Special
Work in above Division during Year 1891.*

Cork, 16th January, 1892.

DIVISIONAL COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE
CRIME SPECIAL
RECEIVED
23 JAN 92
CORK.

R. I. CONSTABULARY OFFICE
RECEIVED
17 JAN. 92
DUBLIN CASTLE
CRIME SPECIAL BRANCH

D.C.

I have to report that during the past year in I. Cork City the I.R.B. organization has played a considerable part in political affairs. With very few exceptions all the prominent members have taken the Parnellite side in the split, & have worked steadily to further the interests of that section of the Nationalist party. The principal event on the year's record here is the Parliamentary Election to fill the vacancy caused by the death of the late Mr

Inspector General

Submitted.

J. C. Fenner
Acting for D.C.

Cork
16. 1/92

D.C. Cork.

The report on the personnel of the C.S. Branch has been omitted. The usual list of Special men with a report as to each should be given. also a list of selected men and the usual list of informants showing those newly obtained. *Healey*

22nd Jan 92

by the Special Branch
has been used in criminal
prosecutions - but irrespective
of this we have procured
& transmitted information,
& intelligence, constantly
on passing & coming events;
we have received infor-
mation which enabled
steps to be taken to ensure
the safety of persons liable
to attack; & we have
followed the progress,
& carefully noted the
working of secret &
political criminal
societies during the
year, & kept Government
informed of the various
developments connected
therewith -

III. Gaelic Athletic Association

The G.A.A. which promised
in

in 1887 & 1888 to be a considerable factor in the political history of Ireland, is at the present moment tottering to its fall. It is torn by dissensions, and in finance has been the victim of fraud. The clerical wing particularly seems to have gone out of hand, & to be completely disorganized. However in Cork there is much talk amongst the J.R.B. section of reorganizing the Association, & running it purely as a Fenian branch. This may work for a time in the larger cities, but in rural districts will end in failure.

We have now 44 Branches
in

in the Division as compared with 72 last year under clerical influence - and 50 as compared with 63 under Fenian control - showing in all a decrease of 41 Branches.

IV. Young Ireland Society

There are six Branches in the Division, but the Society outside Cork is not of much importance. The tendency generally is to lean towards Parnellism, & in Cork W. O'Brien M.P. was deposed from being President & Mr. J. Redmond M.P. appointed to succeed him. After the split the Anti-Parnellites left in a body, when it was found the Society was £80 in debt - this
the

South Eastern Division

List showing the number of G.A.A. Branches
by Counties with approximate numerical strength

No	County	No of Branches	Approximate numerical strength	Remarks
1	Carlow	"	"	
2	Kilkenny	"	"	
3	Queens	20	623	
4	Tipperary N.R.	"	"	
5	Tipperary S.R.	4	182	
6	Wexford	8	214	
7	Wexford	2	140	
8	Wicklow	7	400	
	Totals	41	1559	

52/W.
8276

NORTHERN DIVISION,
Crime Department—Special Branch.

SECRET

SUBJECT Monthly Secret report
June 88

ARMAGH. Date, 4th July 1888

Mr. Fuller & Co.

Nothing of importance has occurred during the past month in regard to secret societies which exist in this Division.

A new I.R.B. informant, who has been secured during the month in the City of Down says that although the I.R.B. are strong there, there was never such disorganization existing amongst them as at present.

According to the informant's story, the members are just now dissatisfied about their subscriptions being unaccounted for & there appears to be no man at the head of affairs in the City who is able to keep the list-book in hand.

Submitted
J. Muller
I.W.O.
4. 7. 88

The Inspector General
Under Secretary

The steady increase of the G.A. Association in this Division is worth notice. It is however not of such importance in Ulster as elsewhere in Ireland, as it appears the Northern Division be kept well in hand by the Chief.

JUN 10/88 H. Curran
D. H.

Charles Danniace is the present Centre but his influence seems to be on the wane & but for the fact of his being an old member, he would probably be deposed.

A prominent I.R.B. man named Neal McDewitt left Derry for America in March last because the society at home was too tame for him. He went out to join the extreme faction in America & it is doubtful whether he will come home again or not.

A sharp look out is being kept up for him & in case he does return, it will be necessary to keep close supervision over him as he is a dangerous man.

A large I.R.B. meeting was held at a place called Straw near Draperstown in the Co. Londonderry on the night of 1st June in connexion with some victims which are pending in that

neighbourhood.
The meeting was held on
the road side.
Some of those present were
in favour of giving all
the trouble possible while
others who had friends
who were about to be evicted
were opposed to this course
as it would only make it
more difficult for the tenants
to obtain favourable terms.
There was no decision
come to.

I am making inquiry with
regard to the evictions in
question & shall report
particulars as soon as I
am in a position to do so.

Information was received
last month that on the
night of 20th May there
was a large I.R.B. meeting
in Newry which was held
in the f.a.a Club rooms
there.

A match had been played during the day near the Town between the members of a f.a.a. branch from Dundalk & a Harrow Club & after the members had been entertained in the evening in the Club rooms some were asked to retire & the remainder about 80 in number formed an I.R.B. meeting.

It was resolved that as the football season was nearly out & as few opportunities offered during the summer of their meeting together under the guise of the f.a.a. they should hold I.R.B. meetings regularly, at least once a month & keep the organization in proper working order.

In the other I.R.B. Centres in the Division there have

been very few meetings held of late & there is no unusual activity going on.

There has been a new Ribbon Lodge recently formed at Ballymacpharke in the Meagherafelt Dist. Co. Londonderry by seceders from the Honeystaghan Lodge owing to disputes amongst the members about the appointment of a master.

The new Lodge has very few members so far but it will increase no doubt in time.

The Ribbon Society is still strong & active in this part of the Co. Londonderry but no outrages can be traced to it.

Two meetings of the Glen Ribbon Society in the

Some County were held during the month.

The last was a large one & the members assembled under the pretence of attending an annual bonfire which takes place every on 23rd June.

This society is in touch with the City of Derry where Dominic Gallagher issues orders in person to members from the Glen who call to see him.

Two new branches of the G.A.A. have been lately formed – one in the City of Derry & the other near Frossinagh.

This association is steadily increasing, but it still continues in this Division without any exception to be under the nominal control of the Clerical party, its

Meetings are everywhere attended by the local Police & open supervision is being kept on all members suspected of being connected with the Fenian organization.

With the exception of the north western portion of the Co. Donegal, the Division is in a settled condition & rents are being well paid as a rule.

The Plan of Campaign still exists on the manuscript estate but many of the tenants have settled with the landlord & there is a disposition amongst the remainder to come to terms.

The National League is not making progress, but in the part of Donegal to which I have alluded

it has undoubtedly been
& is still exercising
its influence for evil
both as regards boy-
cotting & the payment
of rent.

I was engaged assisting
Mr. Hamilton R-M whilst
holding preliminary inquiries
at Dunsloe & Falcarragh
most of last month &
I was also at Loddorough,
Kinneghan, Castleblayney,
Dundalk & Newry.

W. Rees J.
C.S.

To the delegates of the GAA in convention assembled at Thurles.

The Palace, Thurles
4 January 1888

Gentlemen,

Allow me to congratulate you on the very satisfactory results, as far as I know, that have hitherto attended your desire to reconstruct the Gaelic Athletic Association and to place it on a solid and satisfactory basis...

I have no desire, gentlemen, not have I a right to interfere in any way in your deliberations; but it can hardly be said that I am entering into a province that does not belong to me as patron of your society if I venture to offer, as I do, a few facts for your consideration and a few practical suggestions thereon...

... I would respectfully suggest that it [the GAA] be ruled somewhat as follows.

First that the sale of porter and ale and of course of all alcoholic drinks be strictly prohibited on and as far as possible even near the field in which athletic sports are held.

Secondly that in selecting the locality for such sports, the immediate neighbourhood of public houses be specially avoided.

Thirdly that no prizes be henceforth accepted from publicans - at least when there is good reason to believe, as there nearly always is, that they have offered them solely or chiefly with a view of attracting customers to their shops.

Fourthly that no tournament, no county or district games be held on Sundays or holidays of obligation, (if that be at all practicable) and that even parochial or inter-parochial competitions be not begun on such days before two o' clock.

I have good reason to believe that the country at large expects you will substantially make such regulations as I now suggest; and I pray you therefore either now or at some future but not distant time to give them practical effect in your respective counties.

I have the honour to remain, gentlemen, your very faithful servant,

+ T. W. Croke
Archbishop of Cashel

*(The Gael, the official Journal of the Gaelic Athletic Association
January 7, 1888)*

The Gaelic Athletic Association

There is however, one abuse lately sprung up and daily growing which, as bishop charged with the grave responsibility of promoting among the youth of my flock a spirit of religion and habits of temperance, I can no longer pass over in silence.

Some time since a movement was set on foot to revive the old Irish games and thereby develop the manhood and national spirit of our young countrymen. This movement and its motives have my heartiest sympathy and would merit any countenance and encouragement. But laudable as the object may be, if it can be gained only by the sacrifice of Sunday's duties, of the spirit of religion and the habits of temperance among our young men, it is not worth the price.

Lately a great prelate whose voice seldom appeals in vain to the hearts of Irishmen, procured the adoption by the Gaelic Athletic Association of a rule which would go far to remove the abuses to which I refer, but I am sorry to learn that in parts of this archdiocese little heed has been paid to the rule in question. Young men assemble early on Sundays, sometimes to practice, sometimes to play set matches outside their own parishes. Of these, many have no opportunity of hearing mass before leaving and even those who have, few I fear take precautions to do so; none of them can by any chance hear any instruction. Instances even have occurred in which football matches have been played quite close to the church at the very time when the people were assembled to assist at the Holy Sacrifice, thus disturbing by unseemly noise and excitement a congregation engaged in the discharge of a most sacred duty.

Nor is the evil confined to those actually engaged in the game. They draw after them the children of both sexes, thus depriving them of instruction in the Catechism. Yes and they draw after them too foolish old men who would be better employed telling their beads in a quiet corner of the church and praying for the end which is so close upon them. They furnish moreover, especially by their inter-parochial matches, an excuse for the keeping open of public houses on Sundays, thus exposing themselves and the spectators to the dangers of intemperance. It is very evident such a profanation of the Sunday and turning of the people away from the religious duties, to which the chief part of the day should be devoted, can no longer be tolerated.

Hence I exhort the clergy to set their faces against this abuse and neither to countenance, nor as far as in them lies, tolerate any athletic club in their parishes that will not keep, at the very least, within the lines of the rule laid down by his Grace, the Archbishop of Cashel.

(Freeman's Journal, 13 February, 1888)

