

Tuarascáil an Rúnaí 2014

(Tipperary Co Secretary's Annual Report)

Réamhrá

Bliain eile caite, cómhhdáil eile buailte linn agus 'sé mo phribhléid arís mo chuntas a chur rómhaibh don ochtú uair. Dá mbeifeá ag iarraidh graf a thaispeáint d'eachtraí na bliana 2014, bíodh cinnte de nach líne díreach a bheadh ann, bhí a leithéid sin d'éagsúlacht againn idir an sonas agus an donas. Beidh an chuimhne is mó ar an mbliain de bharr Tiobraid Árann a bheith pairteach i gcoimhlintí den scoth sna cluichí ceannais i mí Meán Fómhair, an bolscaireacht a bhain leo, an caoi a chuir John O'Dwyer 'Hawkeye' faoi scrúdú roimh an domhain mór, ach i ndeireadh na dála an briseadh croí a bhí againn ar an dá lá.

Once again it's a privilege to present my eighth report to Tipperary GAA County Convention. If one were to present 2014 on a graph, it would be far from a straight line as we experienced so many highs and lows. Our senior hurlers were a typical example winning the Waterford Crystal in January, losing three league games on the trot in March, avoiding relegation in April before ending up playing extra time in a May League Final. Knocked out of the Munster Championship in June and still end up playing in two All Ireland Finals in September. Our Senior Footballers gained promotion to Division 3 and won the Division 4 League Final and went on to win their first Munster Championship game in eleven years, lost to Cork in the Semi-Final by two points in the final minutes, beat Longford and Laois in the qualifiers before bowing out to Galway and missing out on an All Ireland Quarter Final place. It was a disappointing end for all our other Inter County teams with the U21 hurlers giving us the best entertainment when they took All Ireland three in a row champions Clare to extra time in Cusack Park. We failed to compete in three of the six Munster Club championships due to a backlog of fixtures and our greatest hope and Co. SH champions Thurles Sarsfields fell at the first hurdle. Co. Board continue to improve our financial position with novel fundraisers taking us to the West End in London and the Galway Races in Ballybrit. But the year will best be remembered for the September hype and our participation in two All Ireland Senior Hurling Finals where John O'Dwyer tested "Hawkeye" in front of an audience of millions all over the world, only to end in heartbreak on both days. Over the next few pages I will review 2014 with you but first of all here is a brief summary on a month by month basis since the 2013 Convention:



TIM FLOYD
County Secretary

Month by Month Highlights & Congratulations

December 2013

- Thurles Sarsfields retained their Co. U21 "A" hurling title with victory over Kilruane McDonaghs in Dolla 0-15 to 2-08. Aidan McCormack was Man of the Match
- Moyne Templetuohy Óg won the Co. U21 "B" hurling title with a 2.09 to 0.09 victory over Borrisokane at Moneygall.
- Tipperary Senior Hurlers held a charity Fun Run in Thurles and raised over €40,000 which was equally shared between the Friends of St. Luke's and Suir Haven Thurles.

January 2014

- Tipperary Intermediate Hurlers received their Munster and All Ireland medals in the Watermill Thurles.
- Mouthguards became compulsory in Gaelic Football for all grades from January 1st 2014.
- Brendan Cummins honoured with Civic reception by South Tipp County Council at County Hall Clonmel.
- In the January Tipperary GAA Draw held in Kiloscully, Barry O'Brien Nenagh Eire Óg won his second car in recent years whilst Martin Farrell Thurles Sarsfields won €10,000.
- Ger Ryan Former Tipperary PRO is elected PRO at the 2014 Munster Convention in Woodlands Hotel, Adare and succeeded Ed Donnelly who completed his three year tenure.
- Loughmore Castleiney GAA Club won three awards at the Annual Annerville Awards.

February 2014

- In the February GAA Draw held in the Sarsfields Social Centre Francis Collins Borrisoleigh won the Skoda Octavia whilst Noel Wrest Mountrath with the Castletown GAA Club won the Skoda Fabia.
- All County Quiz held in 40 venues around the Counties with 46 clubs taking part.
- GAA Annual Congress held in Croke Park and Cavan's Aogan Farrell is elected Uachtaran Tofa.
- Ed Donnelly takes on the role of acting PRO Tipperary County Board on a temporary basis from mid February.

March 2014

- In the All Ireland Scór na nÓg finals held in Castlebar, Borrisoleigh won the inaugural Léiriú competition whilst Sean Treacy's came 4th in the Table Quiz.
- In the March GAA Draw held in Brosnan's Cashel, Ned & Marie Young Toomevara won the Octavia Car whilst the second car went to former Co. Chairman Noel Morris Borrisokane.
- Scór na bPaistí Co. Finals were held in Halla na Féile Caiseal and 19 clubs were represented.
- Tipperary U21 Football Team advanced to the Munster Final with victories over Waterford 0.19 to 2.03 in Dungarvan
- Drom & Inch's Sally Young received a GAA Presidents Award in Croke Park where special emphasis was placed on the contribution of women to the GAA.
- The all county champion table quiz, team represented Holycross Ballycahill and they were J.P. Stakelum, Tony Hanrahan, John Smyth and Philomena McCullagh. Sean Treacy's team of John, Sheila and Geraldine Carey plus Noel McMahon were

second and they went on to represent Tipperary at the All Ireland Table Quiz Final in Castlebar, following in the footsteps of their Scór na nÓg team. Moyne Templetuohy came 3rd in the Co. Final following a play-off with Sean Treacys

- Tipperary won 2 of the 10 prizes in the National Club Draw held in Croke Park on St. Patrick's Day.
- Holycross Ballycahill won the All Ireland Junior Hurling "B" Final defeating Templeglantine Limerick 2-12 to 1-09 in Rahenagh Limerick
- The new Lisheen Mines Hurling wall was officially opened at Dr. Morris Park.
- Following impressive victories over London (in Ruislip), Clare, Antrim and Leitrim, Tipperary achieved promotion to Division 3 and a place in the Division 4 final of the Allianz Football League.
- Tipperary Senior Hurlers lost 3 league games to Kilkenny, Clare and Galway before bouncing back with victory over Dublin in the final group game in Semple Stadium.

April 2014

- In the April GAA Draw held in the Tipp Inn Toomevara, the Templemore Parish won the top €15,000 prize whilst Ballybacon Grange's Donal Sweeney won the €10,000 second prize.
- Colaisté Phóbál Roscrea defeated Cross and Passion Antrim to win the All Ireland Post Primary School Senior "B" Hurling title.
- Tipp Senior Football team won the Allianz Football League Division 4 Final beating Clare 1-16 to 1-15 at headquarters. Captain Paddy Codd accepted the trophy and Conor Sweeney won Man of the Match as well as finishing top scorer across all the Divisions in the League.
- In the All Ireland Senior Scór Final Newport Instrumental Musicians and Sean Treacy's table Quiz team both lose out on All Ireland honours in Castlebar.
- Tipperary U21 Footballers lost to Cork in the Munster Final at Pairc Ui Rinn 1-18 to 3-08.
- Tipperary Minor Hurlers lost to Limerick and Clare and exit the Munster championship.
- Tipp Senior Hurlers defeated Cork in the Allianz League Quarter Final and Clare in the semi-final to qualify to play Kilkenny in the final on May 4th.

May 2014

- Clonmel Commercials won the Co. U21 "A" football Final beating Aherlow Gaels whilst Cahir won the U21 "B" Football title defeating Lorrha and capturing the new "Sean Mockler Cup".
- Brendan Cummins was honoured by the Tipperary Association Dublin with the "Tipperary Person of the Year" Award whilst Michael Berkery won the Hall of Fame.
- Tipperary GAA stormed London's West End on Friday May 16th and held a very successful corporate Lunch Fund-Raiser in The Inter Continental London Park Lane Hotel. 300 people attended and special quests Nicky English, Niall Quinn, Eamon O'Shea, Brendan Cummins and Philly Ryan were all interviewed by MC Paul Collins.
- Tipperary Senior Hurlers were pipped by one point in extra time against Kilkenny in the Allianz League Final played in Semple Stadium on May 4th.

June 2014

- Tipperary Senior Hurlers lost the Munster Championship semi-final to Limerick in Semple Stadium 2-18 to 2-16 and head into the All Ireland Qualifiers
- Tipperary Senior Footballers defeated Limerick by 2-14 to 1-11 winning their first Championship game since 2003. Tipperary Junior Footballers lost to Limerick on the same evening 1-13 to 1-10.
- Tipperary Intermediate Hurlers recorded a dramatic extra time victory over Limerick 3-16 to 1-22 in the semi final, but suffer a heavy defeat to Cork three weeks later in the Munster Final in Pairc Ui Rinn.
- In the May / June GAA Draws held in the Templemore Arms, the big winners were Siobhan O'Brien, Silvermines (€15,000), Maeve De Loughrey Nenagh (€10,000), Martin O'Grady Moyne Templetuohy (€10,000) and Billy Ryan Mitchelstown (€15,000)

July 2014

- In the July GAA draw held in Hickey's Bar Silvermines Maura Grace Cloughjordan won the Skoda Octavia whilst Mullinahone's Ann Vaughan won the 2nd Prize of €10,000.
- Tipperary U21 hurlers exited the championship after losing a thrilling semi-final to Clare 5-19 to 1-25 in Ennis after extra-time.
- Tipp Senior Hurlers advanced through the qualifiers with impressive victories over Galway, Offaly and Dublin to set up a first ever all semi-final clash with the Rebels in Croke Park.
- Tipp Senior Football bow out of the All Ireland qualifiers just one step away from the Quarter Finals following defeat to Galway 4-17 to 4-12 in Tullamore.
- Tipperary Co. Board hold their first ever very successful Galway Races Day on July 28th and 300 patrons supported the event.

August 2014

- In the August GAA Draw held in Mullinahone Willie Lawrence Golden won the €15,000 and the Skoda Fabia 2nd Prize went to Anthony Moynihan St. Marys. Benny Walsh also St. Marys won the €6,000 Jackpot in the Weekly Lotto Draw.
- Paul Fitzgerald Fethard, retired after minding the goals for Tipperary Senior Football for almost 10 years.
- CJ Kickhams launched their club history called "The Green above the Red".
- Tipperary Senior Hurlers qualifies for the All Ireland Final v Kilkenny following a very impressive 2-18 to 1-11 victory over Cork in Croke Park in front of 69,000 spectators.
- Brendan Cummins won his 8th All Ireland Poc Fada Title in the Cooley Mountains.

September 2014

- Tipperary & Kilkenny ended level at the end of a pulsating All Ireland Senior Hurling Final which drew lavish praise from hurling people all over the world. Three weeks later Kilkenny won the replay.
- Nenagh Éire Óg became the first Divisional Senior Hurling champions defeating Burgess in a North replay.
- Moyle Rovers won the Co. Minor Hurling "A" title defeating Newport Gaels 3-14 to 2-14 whilst Kildangan won the Minor Hurling "B" title defeating Loughmore Castleiney 5-17 to 0-05 in a double bill played in Semple Stadium.

October 2014

- Drom & Inch captured the Mid Senior Hurling title with a one point victory over Upperchurch Drombane whilst JK Brackens won the Mid Senior Football title with victory over Moyne Templetuohy (AET).
- Mullinahone won the South Senior Hurling title with a 2-11 to 2-08 victory over Killenaule.
- Eire Óg Anacarty retained their West Senior Hurling title with at 1-14 to 0-09 victory over Clonoulty-Rossmore.
- The October GAA Draw was held in Phelan's Bar Roscrea and Freda Bourke Toomevara with the JK Brackens club won first prize of a Skoda Octavia and William Gleeson Portroe won the Skoda Fabia.
- Two Tipperary players Jason Forde (right corner forward) and Cathal Barrett (right corner back) were selected on the Bórd Gáis Energy U21 hurling team of the year.
- Seven Tipperary Players were selected on the 2014 Senior Hurling All Stars. Darren Gleeson, Brendan Maher, Paudie Maher, Shane McGrath, John O'Dwyer, Seamie Callanan and Patrick "Bonnar" Maher were the magnificent seven whilst Cathal Barrett captured the Young Hurler of the Year Award.
- Tipperary Co. Board honoured the 1964 & 65 Tipperary All Ireland winning Senior teams at the Co. Senior Hurling semi-finals in Semple Stadium.
- Skeheenarinky capture the Co. Junior Hurling "A" title in Cashel by defeating Nenagh Éire Óg 1-14 to 1-12 but were defeated the following weekend in Munster by Feohanagh Castlemahon.
- Tipperary Co. Board confirmed that Eamon O'Shea, Mick Ryan and Paudie O'Neill will remain on as the 2015 Senior hurling management team and they will be joined by Declan Fanning Killenaule.
- Tipperary U17 Footballers won the Daryl Darcy Munster Trophy by defeating Clare in the Gaelic Grounds 0-12 to 0-10.

November 2014

- Noel Dundon launched his book on Tipperary Senior Hurling Captains *Captains of the Premier Ship*
- Killenaule won the Co. Junior Hurling "B" Final beating Rosegreen 0.11 to 0.09
- Thurles Sarsfields won the Dan Breen Cup as Co. Senior hurling Champions by defeating Loughmore Castleiney 2-22 to 3-11 but fell to Cratloe in the Munster Club by 1.18 to 0.14.
- Moyne Templetuohy captured the Jacksie Ryan Trophy and the Co. Intermediate title with victory over Thurles Sarsfields 1-18 to 0-10.
- Inane Rovers are 2014 Co. Junior "A" Football Champions following their Co. Final victory over Sean Treacys 2-06 to 0-05.
- The 1989 Clonoulty Rossmore Co. Senior Hurling Champions were honoured at the Co. Senior Hurling Final
- Ciaran McDonald travelled to Australia as part of the Irish International Rules Panel and played in the test match.
- Gortnahoe Glengoole won the Co. Junior Football "B" title beating Éire Óg Anacarty by 1.09 to 1.03.
- John O'Brien retired from Inter County Senior Hurling after 14 years service during which he won 2 All Ireland and 5 Munster Medals.
- Eoin Kelly announces his retirement from Inter County career during which he won 2 All Ireland, 5 Munster and 2 National League Medals.

Tipperary Senior Hurling

DATE	VENUE	TEAM	SCORE	TEAM	SCORE	REFEREE
Waterford Crystal Cup						
<i>Preliminary Rd</i>						
12/01/2014	MacDonagh Pk	Tipperary	3.20	LIT	0.05	D Kirwan
<i>Quarter Final</i>						
19/01/2014	Austin Stack Pk	Tipperary	2.16	Kerry	0.08	D O'Driscoll
<i>Semi Final</i>						
02/02/2014	Dr. Morris Pk	Tipperary	2.30	UL	0.22	C McAllister
<i>Final</i>						
07/02/2014	Gaelic Grounds	Tipperary	4.22	Clare	3.11	J Sexton
Allianz Hurling League						
<i>Round 1</i>						
15/02/2014	Semple Stadium	Tipperary	2.13	Waterford	0.16	Colm Lyons
<i>Round 2</i>						
23/02/2014	Nowlan Pk	Kilkenny	5.20	Tipperary	5.14	Diarmuid Kirwan
<i>Round 3</i>						
09/03/2014	Semple Stadium	Clare	4.15	Tipperary	0.20	James Owens
<i>Round 4</i>						
16/03/2014	Pearse Stadium	Galway	3.16	Tipperary	1.19	Anthony Stapleton
<i>Round 5</i>						
23/03/2014	Semple Stadium	Tipperary	1.19	Dublin	0.19	Brian Gavin
<i>Quarter Final</i>						
30/03/2014	Semple Stadium	Tipperary	3.25	Cork	4.19	Barry Kelly
<i>Semi Final</i>						

20/04/2014	Gaelic Grounds	Tipperary	2.24	Clare	2.17	Colm Lyons
<i>Final</i>						
04/05/2014	Semple Stadium	Kilkenny	2.25	Tipperary	1.27	James Owens
Munster Championship						
<i>Semi Final</i>						
01/06/2014	Semple Stadium	Limerick	2.18	Tipperary	2.16	Barry Kelly
All Ireland Championship						
<i>Qualifiers</i>						
05/07/2014	Semple Stadium	Tipperary	3.25	Galway	4.13	Colm Lyons
12/07/2014	Portlaoise	Tipperary	5.25	Offaly	1.20	Alan Kelly
<i>Quarter Final</i>						
27/07/2014	Semple Stadium	Tipperary	2.23	Dublin	0.16	Brian Gavin
<i>Semi Final</i>						
17/08/2014	Croke Park	Tipperary	2.18	Cork	1.11	James Owens
<i>Final</i>						
07/09/2014	Croke Park	Tipperary	1.28	Kilkenny	3.22	Barry Kelly
<i>Final Replay</i>						
27/09/2014	Croke Park	Kilkenny	2.17	Tipperary	2.14	Brian Gavin

In comparison to our early exit from the Championship in June 2013 in the All Ireland Qualifier, 2014 was a long topsy turvy year which lasted over ten months from December 1st 2013 to September 27th 2014. During that period Tipp supporters experienced different emotions from disappointment to elation during 19 competitive Inter County Games. At the end of it all, the only trophy we have is the Waterford Crystal and two sets of runner up medals for the League and All Ireland Championship. Strangely enough Tipp Supporters seemed happy at the end of it all considering the signs that were there after losing three League games in early March and exiting the Munster Championship again to Limerick on June 1st. I suppose the marked improvements in the closing stages of the League and in our journey through the All Ireland Qualifiers we won the hearts of the fans. Eamon O'Shea, Mick Ryan and Paudie O'Neill were in their second year at the helm and a surprising addition to the back room team was Armagh's Kieran McGeeney whose advisory role was really very limited to observing and consultation on the physiological attitude of our players. Pre-Season games in December 2013 against Westmeath, Wexford, UCC and Offaly had us ready for the opening round of the Waterford Crystal in Mid January. Tipp had convincing victories over LIT in Nenagh, Kerry in Tralee and UL in Dr. Morris Park to advance to the final v Clare in the Gaelic Grounds. In the final Tipp fielded an experimental team with one eye on the League opener one week later. On the other hand Clare had eight of their All Ireland winning team on show but celebrations and the team holiday would soon tell. Tipp had the better start and led by seven points after 20 minutes but three goals by the Bannermen before half time gave them a one point lead at the break. In the second half Denis Maher scored two goals and Conor Kenny one to secure victory for Tipp as Clare's exhausting 2013 took its toll. A 14 point win with an experimental team on the weekend before the opening of the league was just the boost Eamon O'Shea needed to kick start his year.

Allianz League

Waterford came to Semple Stadium for the League opener under lights and dominated for most of the game as Tipp's indiscipline gave the "Decie" boys nine points from frees. Goals win matches and Noel McGrath spectacularly found Seamie Callanan with a visionary pass to give the Drom man an easy green flag mid way through the second half. In the final minute misfortune struck Waterford with the teams level as a long range free by Darren Gleeson went all the way to the net to give Tipp victory and an early League boost. It was back to Nowlan Park for the third time in nine months for our second round against Kilkenny who were hurting from an opening league defeat to Clare. Doubts were expressed about the venue following the storm winds blowing the roof off the old stand but with that side closed the reduced capacity of 18,000 would add an extra dimension to this clash of great rivals. The capacity crowd were treated to a ten goal feast as Tipp set the pace with the aid of a strong breeze in the opening half. Led by an on form Seamie Callanan Tipp built up a ten point lead on 30 minutes but this was reduced to six points by half time. With the wind at their backs Kilkenny levelled twenty minutes into the second half and they were still level going into the final five minutes. Games turn on small things and during those vital minutes a brilliant hook deprived Callanan of his fourth goal whilst at the other end an intercepted pass gifted Mark Kelly the opportunity to kick home the game's conclusive score. So another defeat to the old enemy but a lot of positives in comparison to the unimpressive victory in the opening round over Waterford.

A challenge match with Wexford in Clonmel the following Saturday allowed the selectors run the rule over fringe players ahead of the third round clash with All Ireland champions Clare. A much more focused Clare came to Semple Stadium than the Waterford Crystal final as a below strength Tipperary were exposed once again. Despite scoring 20 points our lack of goal scoring potential cost us dearly as Clare's pacey forwards ran in four goals to give them a seven point victory. The following Sunday Tipp headed to Salthill for a crucial tie with Galway. Once again a poor display from what seemed a strong Tipp side saw our backline exposed as the tall Jonathan Glynn caused havoc in the first half. A three point defeat created a sense of panic which was evident in the dressing room afterwards as players vented their frustration. Our final game was now a relegation battle as well as a possible qualifier depending on other results. The Dublin game was switched from Nenagh to the Stadium in anticipation of a big crowd. Trailing by six points after 20 mins the signs were ominous but Tipp rallied to leave just one point between them at the break. A Bonnar Maher goal mid-way through the second half inspired Tipp and a Noel McGrath point with 12 minutes to go gave us the lead for the first time. Tipp had the required three point lead with seven minutes remaining but this was reduced twice and restored finally with a Ronan Maher point in injury time. Drama followed as Dublin substitute Niall McMorrow had a gilt-edged chance to point in the final seconds but his effort dropped short. As the news of Kilkenny's victory over Waterford by the required three points emerged there were sighs of relief all round as the news spread that Tipp had qualified for the League quarter finals and Dublin faced a relegation play off with Waterford. Cork were our

quarter final opponents having topped Group 1B and they came to Semple Stadium the following Sunday. With key players injured Tipp still got off to a flying start with two goals in the first seven minutes from Denis Maher & Niall O'Meara. John O'Dwyer kicked a third before half time but the rebels also scored three in the first half including a Nash speciality to go ahead by two points at the break. Nash had a chance to level it at the end but Tipp's packed goaline saved the day to give Tipp a one goal victory and a third joust with Clare in three months. The Gaelic Grounds was the venue for the League semi-final double as Kilkenny defeated Galway in the opener. Tipp hit the ground running and played their best hurling to date with fluent movement excellent passing and ferocious tackling. Goals by Patrick Maher in both halves at vital stages kept Tipp's noses ahead despite Clare's efforts to claw back the lead. Players like James Barry and Cathal Barrett were now settling in nicely in the back whilst Paudie Maher, Conor O'Mahony, Brendan Maher and Michael Cahill were closing ranks to reduce the concession of goals. This was a surprisingly comfortable win for the Premier by seven points which set us up for yet another crack at Kilkenny in the Allianz Final. Once again the clash was a classic going to extra time with plenty of talking points. TJ Reid got Kilkenny's two goals from dubious penalty awards which could well have been frees out for barging. Also the awarding of a point to Colm Fennelly from an obvious wide ball and an incorrect call on giving a free against Cathal Barrett. Once again the players were bitterly disappointed as the habit of losing to Kilkenny is one they long to break and is now becoming an obsession and maybe even more important than winning titles.

Munster Championship

Reaching a League final against all the odds should have been the ideal preparation for the championship opener against Limerick on June 1st. Eight League games gave us a settled team and all key players were hitting form at the right time. Still Munster title holders Limerick were coming to Semple Stadium to banish the ghosts of 2012 when they lost a game they should have won. 2013 would also serve as a health warning for Tipp when we were in the exact same position having lost the League Final also to Kilkenny. Last year we were hot favourites and looked on course for victory in the second half but fade out in the final 20 minutes leaving us with no complaints.

Once again having turned the corner in the League, Tipp seemed to be on top of their game and entitled to the favourites tag. The first half was intense with most of Limerick's scores coming from frees including a Shane Dowling goal from a 20 metre free. Playing against the wind Tipp reeled Limerick in and a trademark Bonnar Maher goal after 20 minutes levelled matters. The teams were still level at half time and Tipp were comfortable as they looked forward to wind assistance in the second half. We got the ideal start as Gearoid Ryan goaled after one minute but it seemed to fire up Limerick more as they stormed into the game and stayed in touch with point's right through the half. Tipp were three points up with as many minutes to go when Kevin Downes burst through our defence and laid off to Shane Dowling who weaved around many players before unleashing the vital goal. Tipp were stunned and seemed under a spell as Limerick's Thomas Ryan and Seamus Hickey tapped on the winning points in injury time as Limerick supporters roared them over the line. Only three weeks after being in a losing Tipp dressing room following the league final defeat, here we were again bitterly disappointed. A lot of bloodletting was experienced over the following week as a local news paper printed an article which caused major public reaction. This opened the whole debate on amateur players whose hobby is hurling and who are not contracted to anyone, but yet the public expect them to behave like professionals.

In all walks of life we have role models especially in sport and impressionable youth are influenced by what they see and hear and very often try to emulate them. In the main these influences are good and our hurlers and footballers are a credit to their clubs and County. Isolated incidents occur in all walks of life and hurling is no exception. I have seen our player's grow in maturity over the past six years with a clear vision and focus and winning trophies is their priority. Tipp had a five week wait for their entry into the three qualifiers and weeks to know their opponents. Having drawn the runner up of Galway and Kilkenny we were given a home draw. As expected Kilkenny beat Galway so the tribesmen came to the Stadium on Saturday July 5th as part of a double header with Tipp v Longford in the Senior Football Qualifier. Victory for the footballers set the pace in the opener and playing into the wind our hurlers were happy at the break to be level. In the first ten minutes of the second half Tipp were rocked by two goals from the big full forward Jonathan Glynn and Galway were in the driving seat for home. But good positional switches moving James Barry to full and Paudie Maher to centre back worked a treat as Glynn was curbed and Paudie stormed into the game. Within six minutes Tipp were level as Callanan bagged his second goal and drove the final nail into a tired Galway in the 35th minute as he completed his hat-trick to finish with a personal tally of 3.08. To illustrate our dominance in the last minutes we scored 2.10 to Galway's solitary point as Tipp went on to win their first championship game under Eamon O'Shea's management, but even more significant was a first victory in five championship games in a row across three years. Relief all around and Semple Stadium roared its approval from the stands.

Next up was Offaly as part of another double ball with the footballers in Portlaoise. Creedon's men once again set the pace with a remarkable comeback against Laois to record a historic victory. Tipp had an inspired start in the hurling with Corbett and Bonnar goaling within four minutes and Corbett and Callanan added two more to put us ten points up at the break. Offaly fought back in the second half to reduce it to four points but Tipp's firepower up front was too strong and we ran out easy winners scoring 1.14 in the final 20 minutes and qualified for the All Ireland Quarter Final. The draw pitted us against Dublin as Leinster Runners-up and with All Ireland titles holders Clare already eliminated by Wexford the pathway was really opening up and our supporters sensed it. Semple Stadium hosted the quarter final double bill with Wexford and Limerick providing the opener. Indeed Wexford's inclusions caused panic following their victory over Waterford the previous weekend as stand tickets were bought up over night as 43,000 spectators descended on the Field of Legends. Wexford's bubble burst in the opening game as Limerick atoned for losing the Munster Finals. In the second game Tipp's settled look came unstuck as Michael Cahill was injured and Shane McGrath took his chance to eventually earn him an All Star. Dublin's anticipated physical approach and intensity never materialised as Tipp raced into 0-15 to 0-08 half time lead. Two goals from John O'Dwyer in the second half sealed it for Tipp as they ran out easy winners and qualified to meet Cork in their first ever All Ireland semi-final meeting in Croke Park. August 17th was the focus and the build-up was electric as the novel pairing at this stage of the championship captured everyone's imagination. Also it would measure the merit of the two different routes to arrive at this stage with the Rebels direct journey as Munster Champions against Tipp's scenic route through the qualifiers following a first round defeat. The game proved an anti-climax as Tipp out-hurled the Rebels especially in the second half

scoring 2.17 from play and just one point from a free. A Shane O'Neill error laid down the marker for Tipp and a two point lead at half time after a lack lustre first half was acceptable considering the forwards hadn't sparked at all yet. With the backs closing ranks and not giving an inch, forwards got into their groove and opened up Cork with a performance straight off the training pitch. Callanan's second goal mid way through the second half was the catalyst to kick for home with a performance of confidence, the ideal preparation for an All Ireland Final.

All Ireland Senior Hurling Final

An All Ireland final appearance was not on the cards in February/March as we limped our way unconvincingly through the league. It definitely did not look a possibility on June 1st when Limerick once again derailed us in the Munster Championship semi-final. But the qualifiers had helped to strengthen Tipp's resolve and complete us as a team as our backs were now leaking less goals, mid field were settled and our forwards were firing as a unit with all six now scoring and a far greater work rate, in chasing back after opposition backs launching attacks. Speculation on team selection occupied supporters' minds right up to the final day with much Tipperary focus centering on the availability of Michael Cahill whose injury was not fully recovered but the Tipp selectors kept faith with the semi-final team.

The presence of the '89 Tipp All Ireland Jubilee team added to the occasion but Kilkenny's victory in the minor final over hot favourites Limerick did not allow us get carried away. The final proved to be a thriller with top drawer hurling from both sides. It was tit for tat in the first half as Tipp built up a six point lead thanks to a "typical" Bonnar Maher goal. Kilkenny replied with a Richie Power goal to leave just two points between them at the break Tipp's form was consistent right through the second half despite a TJ Reid goal within one minute of resumption and another Richie Power goal mid way through. Missed penalties by Callanan in the first half and Bubbles in the second proved crucial. With five minutes remaining Tipp trailed by three points but two points by Bubbles and one from Jason Forde had the team's level in injury time. Kilkenny centre back and Brian Hogan broke up field but Pdraig Maher stopped him in his tracks and Referee Barry Kelly deemed the Kilkenny man charged and awarded Tipperary a free deep inside our own half. John "Bubbles" O'Dwyer stepped up and in front of 82,000 spectators plus millions of TV viewers the famous "Hawkeye" judged he put it millimetres wide of the post. A dramatic conclusion to an epic final that will go down as one of the greatest in history. The replay was fixed for three weeks later on Saturday September 27th with stand tickets reduced to €50 for adults and juvenile tickets available at €10. Whilst Tipperary once again kept faith with the same starting 15, Kilkenny did not, changing the keeper and two half backs as Eoin Murphy, Pdraig Walsh (5) and Kieran Joyce (6) and John Power (15) were all named on the starting line up. Once again the game opened at a ferocious pace and there were early signs of a different Kilkenny as they hooked Tipp twice and blocked once in the opening two minutes. Another vital hook in the 18th minute by JJ Delaney denied Seamus Callanan of a certain goal but ten minutes later the same Callanan scored the only goal of the half as he raced on to a Corbett pass to rifle past Eoin Murphy in the goals. This gave Tipp a two point lead at half time and despite Kilkenny's intensity and work rate, Tipp supporters were happy that we stood up to the challenge.

A feature of that first half was Shane McGrath's three excellent points but key forwards like Bonnar, Lar and Bubbles were being held which was a worry. At the start of the second half, Kilkenny set a blistering pace with five unanswered points in eight minutes and Darren Gleeson denied Colin Fennelly a goal. Tipp were still two points down in the 20th minute when Callanan opted to take a point from a penalty but almost immediately Kilkenny's Richie Power replied with a goal to a deafening roar as Sheflin made his entry at this stage. Five minutes later John Power had the ball in the net again after Gleeson saved twice from Michael Fennelly. With seven minutes remaining Tipp were six points down and a Callanan goal in the 68th minute had just two points separating the sides as we fastened our seat belts for another grand stand finale. Three minutes added time only produced one more score, a point to Colin Fennelly but Woodlock was denied a chance of extra time as his shot for goal was blocked by Paul Murphy. As the final whistle went it was Kilkenny who claimed their tenth title in fifteen years and their 35th in total. Tipp would have to wait another year to challenge for their 27th title. Hats off to Kilkenny as they learned from the drawn game and closed Tipp down with a display of intensity that reduced our scores from play from 25 down to 10 which tells its own story. Kilkenny is the monkey on Tipperary's back and until we shake it off that obstacle will continue to give us heartbreak. Other Counties may give us temporary set-backs but Kilkenny won't be going away so we need to raise our bar once again and meet their challenge. We have the players, management team and the structures in place to mount another attack in 2015.

"Bring it on."

Tipp Team and panel in All Ireland Final

Darren Gleeson Portroe, Cathal Barrett Holycross Ballycahill, James Barry Upperchurch Drombane, Paddy Stapleton Borris-ileigh, Brendan Maher Borris-ileigh Captain, Pdraic Maher Thurles Sarsfields, Kieran Bergin Killenaule, Shane McGrath Ballinahinch, James Woodlock Drom & Inch, Gearoid Ryan Templederry Kenyons, John O'Dwyer Killenaule, Lar Corbett Thurles Sarsfields, Noel McGrath Loughmore Castleiney, Seamus Callanan Drom & Inch, Patrick Maher Lorrha Dorrha Subs: Michael Cahill Thurles Sarsfields, Conor O'Mahoney Newport, Shane Bourke JK Brackens, Jason Forde Silvermines, John O'Brien Toomevara, Darragh Egan Kildangan, Paul Curran Mullinahone, Eoin Kelly Mullinahone, Denis Maher Thurles Sarsfields, Ronan Maher Thurles Sarsfields, Conor O'Brien Eire Óg Anacarty, Thomas Stapleton Templederry Also on Panel: Niall O'Meara Kilruane MacDonaghs, Liam McGrath Loughmore Castleiney, Conor Kenny Borrisoleigh, Michael Breen Ballina, Tadhg Gallagher Kildangan, Colin O'Riordan JK Brackens

Tipperary U21 Hurling

DATE	VENUE	TEAM	SCORE	TEAM	SCORE	REFEREE
Munster Championship						
<i>Semi Final</i>						
16/07/2014	Ennis	Clare	5.19	Tipperary	1.25 AET	Cathal McAllister

TJ Connolly who had served with Ken Hogan for the previous four years took over the manager's role as Ken stepped down

after five years involvement with this grade. TJ was joined by Ken Dunne, Niall Curran and Noel Morris who was stepping up from the minor grade with six of the 2013 team which lost the 2013 Munster Final to the same opposition. Tipp were backboned in defence by three senior panellists, Cathal Barrett, Michael Breen and Ronan Maher plus Liam McGrath, Dan McCormack and Jason Forde who now captained the side. But Clare were chasing three in a row Munster and All Ireland titles and had already accounted for a hotly favoured Limerick side in the Quarter Final. With seven of their senior side which included household names like Tony Kelly and Colm Galvin, this was going to be a massive task for Tipp against hot favourites Clare in their own back yard. Tipp had a disastrous start conceding two goals in the opening minutes but aided by ferocious tackling and determination they dragged themselves back into this game to only trail by 2.06 to 0.10 at the break. A Tadhg Gallagher goal early in the second half gave Tipp the lead and Tipp extended the lead to four points in the 47th minute. Clare goaled and points were traded as Tipp lost John Meagher for what seemed a very minor incident in the closing minutes.

It was Clare who levelled to earn a draw with an Aaron Cunningham point and the game went into extra-time. Clare had six consecutive points in the first period of ten minutes to lead by three. Great saves by Clare keeper Hogan coupled with good fortune off the uprights giving Clare two gift goals resulted in a Banner victory at the end by six points. If ever there was a game where a team was glorious in defeat this was it. Scoring 1.25 and conceding two early goals plus two more fortuitous goals in the final period of extra time. Tipperary played heroically and gave us great hope for the future. TJ Connolly and his selectors are to be complimented for producing a highly competitive team and gave the Banner side their hardest game of 2014 as they went on to achieve a unique three in a row Munster and All Ireland titles. Hopefully in 2015 this same management team who will have the 2012 All Ireland winning minor teams at their disposal will bring us a much yearned title. Our opening 2015 game is a semi final against Limerick in the Gaelic Grounds.

Tipp v Clare: Paul Maher Moyne Templetuohy, Tom Fox Eire Óg Anacarty, Michael Breen Ballina, Cathal Barrett Holycross Ballycahill, Ronan Maher Thurles Sarsfields, John Meagher Loughmore Castleiney, Tomas Hamill Moyne Templetuohy, Seamus Kennedy St. Mary's, Bill Maher Kilsheelan Kilcash, Colin O'Riordan JK Brackens, Liam McGrath Loughmore Castleiney, Dan McCormack Borris-ileigh, Stephen Cahill Thurles Sarsfields, Jason Forde Silvermines Captain, Sean Maher Clonoulty Rossmore Subs: Tadhg Gallagher Kildangan, Dylan Fizzle Cashel King Cormacs, Conor Hammersley Clonoulty Rossmore, Barry Heffernan Nenagh Eire Óg, Steven O'Brien Ballina, Jimmy Maher Upperchurch Drombane, Sean Nally Holycross Ballycahill, David Sweeney Kildangan, Brian Hogan Lorrha Dorrha, Jason Ryan Toomevara, Odhran Floyd Newport, Sean Hickey Sean Treacys, Lorcan Egan Loughmore Castleiney, Mark McCarthy Toomevara, Jack Loughnane Kildangan, Joey Hennessy Loughmore Castleiney, John McGrath Loughmore Castleiney, Conor Lanigan Thurles Sarsfields, Jack Peters Kilruane MacDonaghs

Tipperary Intermediate Hurling

DATE	VENUE	TEAM	SCORE	TEAM	SCORE	REFEREE
Munster Championship						
<i>Semi Final</i>						
01/06/2014	Semple Stadium	Tipperary	3.17	Limerick	1.22	Damien Fox AET
<i>Final</i>						
25/06/2014	Pairc Ui Rinn	Cork	4.15	Tipperary	2.08	D O'Driscoll

Having won two All Irelands and Munster titles in a row, Michael Ryan (Fethard), Sean O'Meara, Eamon O'Dwyer and Michael Ferncombe stepped down and into the breach stepped 2001 All Ireland medallist John Carroll (Roscrea) and with him came Sean O'Meara (Mullinahone), John Ryan (Upperchurch) and Anthony (Bricky) O'Neill from Cappawhite. Having only been appointed in March, this group immediately set about their task of pulling a new team together as they could not call on any of the players who participated in the 2013 Final. However they could go back 12 months and pick from the 2012 All Ireland Champions and this they did with players like James Logue, Paudie Whyte, Christy Coughlan, Joe Gallagher and Ronan Sherlock all joining the panel. They also included players with County U21 experience who would have aspirations of using this grade as a stepping stone to the Senior side. Challenge games were played against Waterford, Wicklow, Kerry and Meath and a formidable panel was prepared to do battle with Limerick as a curtain-raiser to the Senior on Sunday June 1st in Semple Stadium. Tipp opened smartly assisted by the wind and a goal by Tommy Heffernan in the third minute looked like putting us on our way. At half time we led 1-10 to 0-07 but it was Limerick who had the upper hand in the second half and it took two frees by Tony O'Brien (St. Patrick's) to bring us level at the end of 60 minutes. Limerick looked in control again in extra-time and led twice but were hauled back with goals from Tony O'Brien and Kevin Fox to have the teams level and heading for a replay before Tommy Heffernan popped up for the winning point.

This win lined us up for a possible three in a row Munster titles and a trip to Pairc Ui Rinn three weeks later against the Rebels who looked impressive beating Waterford and Clare. Adrian Ryan and Kieran Morris were added to the Tipp panel as we headed into the Lions den. On a warm summers evening the hard ground caused havoc for the Tipp defence as two hopping balls in the opening minutes deceived our backs and Cork corner forward David Drake pounced for 2 early goals to kill the game. At half time they led by 2-6 to 0-4 and midway through the second half they stretched their lead to 18 points. Despite losing Sean Curran to a red card Tipp finished the last quarter strong and scored two goals to put respectability on the scoreboard. This was a disappointing display as we relinquished our grip on the Munster and All Ireland titles in a display that really disappointed an enthusiastic management group.

Tipperary v Cork team: James Logue Ballingarry, Pa Ryan Clonakenny, Andrew Ryan Toomevara, Daire Quinn Nenagh Eire Óg, Brian Stapleton Templederry Kenyons, Ronan Sherlock Silvermines, Aidan McGrath Loughmore Castleiney, Joe Gallagher Kildangan, Paudie White Clonoulty Rossmore, Sean Curran Mullinahone, Michael Sheedy Portroe, Tommy Heffernan Nenagh Eire Óg, Tony O'Brien St. Patrick's, Bill Walsh Carrick Swan, David Collins Drom & Inch, Subs: Adrian Ryan Templederry, Kieran Morris Moycarkey Borris, Denis Stapleton Sean Treacys, Kevin Fox Eire Óg Anacarty, John Sheedy Portroe

Also on panel: Darragh Mooney Eire Óg Anacarty, Kevin Walzer Mullinahone, Stephen Buckley, Joe Carroll Roscrea, Paul Ryan Clonoulty Rossmore, Bobby Bergin Clonakenny, James Waters.

Tipperary Minor Hurling

DATE	VENUE	TEAM	SCORE	TEAM	SCORE	REFEREE
Munster Championship						
<i>Quarter Final</i>						
10/04/2014	Gaelic Grounds	Limerick	3.17	Tipperary	2.11	Joe Larkiin
<i>Play Off</i>						
30/04/2014	Cusack Pk Ennis	Clare	1.23	Tipperary	0.12	Nathan Wall

Liam Cahill took on the managers role following William Maher stepping down after two years and John Sheedy, Sean Corbett and TJ Ryan came in as selectors. With just three of the previous years side in Brian Hogan, Darragh Peters and Willie Connors this was a formidable task playing favourites Limerick who had seven of their 2013 Provincial winning team and boosted by their schools success with Ard Scoil Rís and Doon CBS in Harty Cup. Still a good panel was put together including dual players Willie Connors, Paul Maher, Alan Tynan and Stephen Quirke. Limerick had the better opening with three points in three minutes and the signs were ominous as Tipp struggled for possession and only registered one point from play in the first half trailing by 0.12 to 0.06. An early goal by Limerick star forward Cian Lynch seemed to put the game out of sight but two goals in six minutes by Paul Ryan and Andrew Coffey gave Tipp momentum mid way through to second half. Barry Nash (of 2013 Hawkeye fame) sealed it for Limerick with two goals in the last quarter which allowed the Treaty side run out easy and deserving winners.

In the losers' play-off Tipp faced Clare who lost to Waterford in their opening game and easily beat Kerry in the losers group. Showing three changes Tipp faced into the Lions Den of Cusack Park hoping for a major improvement on their opening game. The Premier took the challenge to Clare in the opening half and showed far greater intensity especially Stephen Quirke and Alan Tynan who scored nine points between them to hold a 0.10 to 0.09 lead at half time. A harsh sending off for Tommy Nolan before half time was a major turning point as the Tipp challenge totally capitulated in the second half. Despite scoring the opening point it was Clare who took over and led by their star full forward Alan Shanagher they went on to score 1.14 without reply and the Banner side ran out easy winners. Towards the end frustration caused two further sending's off as both Willie Connors and Chris McCullagh saw red as Tipperary's evening in Cusack park turned into a nightmare for Liam Cahill & Company. So two defeats by nine points and fourteen points leaves Tipp with a lot of work to do to catch up with the others in 2015. The same management team will be in charge and an opening game with Waterford in Semple Stadium in April will be the focus with the winners facing Clare in the Munster Semi-Final.

Tipp team v Clare: Brian Hogan Lorrha Dorrha Captain, Conor Ryan Nenagh Eire Óg, Jack Skehan Holycross Ballycahill, Willie Connors Kildangan, Paul Maher Kilsheelan Kilcash, Darragh Peters Kilruane MacDonaghs, Andrew Coffey Nenagh Éire Óg, Bill O'Connell Loughmore Castleiney, Billy McCarthy Thurles Sarsfields, Liam McCutcheon Templederry Kenyons, Stephen Quirke Moyle Rovers, Alan Tynan Roscrea, Tommy Nolan Drom & Inch, Michael Dunne Mullinahone, Paul Ryan Toomevara Subs: Pa Ryan Newport, Liam Fahey Rockwell Rovers, Chris McCullagh Moycarkey Borris, Gavin Ryan Upperchurch Drombane, Cian Darcy Kilruane MacDonaghs, Conor Floyd Newport, Gavin O'Halloran Carrick Swans, Ross Peters St. Mary's, Ronan Teehan Gortnahoe Glengoole, Robert Holohan Newport, Enda Heffernan Clonoulty Rossmore, Michael Dunne Mullinahone, Robbie Long Drom & Inch, Brian McGrath Loughmore Castleiney, Shane Neville Lattin Cullen, Kevin Ahearne Drom & Inch, Shane Hennessy Nenagh Eire Óg, Willie Coffey Toomevara

Inter County Football 2014

The secretary of the Football Committee, JJ Crowley gives his own in-depth analysis of all our Inter-County Football teams during 2014, so I will just give a short commentary on each.

Senior Football

Peter Creedon remained at the helm and Eoghan Cooney replaced Gerry McGill as selector whilst Michael O'Loughlin and Tommy Toomey continued at his side. The appointment of Donegal native Mickey McGeehan as Coach was a significant one as he brought a whole new dimension and freshness to the table as did the introduction of speed coach Haley Harrison.

Tipperary joined with Clare, Waterford and Limerick in boycotting the McGrath Cup as a protest vote against the seeded draw for the Provincial Senior Football championship. This may have worked to our advantage as high quality challenge games replaced it during January against top class opposition from Offaly Kildare and Dublin IT. In the opening Allianz League game against Carlow in Dr. Cullen Park, Tipp had the ideal start when two goals in the second half from Conor Sweeney and Philip Austin completed a comprehensive performance. The following week Waterford came to Clonmel Sportsfield for the second round hurting from a seven point defeat to Clare in their opener. The Decie boys dominated the first half and a goal from a penalty before half time gave them the lead. Tipp had five points on the trot after half time to regain control but Waterford's superior fitness and strength dominated the final period and we were lucky to hold out for a draw as the visitors lost a chance of victory with a shot wide of the posts from full forward Whyte. A three week break and a trip across the water brought Tipp up against London in Ruislip. In almost unplayable conditions Tipp did the necessary and helped by a Barry Grogan penalty ran out easy winners and completed a novel week-end.

The following Sunday at home to Clare in Semple Stadium as part of a double bill with the hurlers, the footballers overcome the Banner. A goal in the first minute by Conor Sweeney marked Tipp's intentions and a second by Barry Grogan who earlier missed a penalty strike gave Tipp half time lead. Clare rallied in the second half but a successful Grogan penalty this time kept them at bay to give Tipp victory. The hurling clash v Clare preceded this game and our footballers were forced to witness the negative attitude of the majority of premier supporters leaving the Stadium when the first game finished. Seven days later Tipp recorded another home victory over Antrim as Grogan and Sweeney bagged three goals between them to put Tipp top of the table and inline for promotion. Mission accomplished in Carrick on Shannon as the Premier scored five goals against a fancied Leitrim side who had only lost one game to date in the League. Our half back line of Kiely, Acheson and Leahy were now launching many attacks from their line linking up with the forwards with great effect. The final group game against Wicklow was an opportunity for Creedon to give his panel a run-out and rest U21 players Quinlivan, Steven O'Brien and Ian Fahey.

Wicklow came to Semple Stadium with a slim hope of promotion and ended up victorious in a most bizarre finish. Tipp led by seven points at the end of 70 minutes but an amazing three goal blitz by Wicklow in injury time salvaged victory for the Garden County but a win in Leitrim for Clare denied them promotion.

Top of the table Tipperary went on to play Clare in the Division 4 League Final three weeks later in a rare Croke Park appearance. A Conor Sweeney goal in the first half gave Tipp a one point half time lead and the backs had to withstand immense Clare pressure to survive. The introduction of Ciaran McDonald in the second half after a long and serious injury lifted the team to hold on for a one point victory and Paddy Codd lifted the first silverware for Tipp footballers in five years. Focus now turned to the Championship and a first round clash with Limerick just over one month later in the Gaelic Grounds. Tipp were looking for their first Munster Championship win since 2003 against a side having played in Division 3 in 2014. For most of the game Tipp outplayed Limerick with fast pace, high tempo football and led by nine points mid way through the second half. A late Limerick surge reduced it to four points but Tipp sealed victory with two late points to get their first championship victory over the Treaty in four outings in recent years. This put us directly into the semi-final against Cork three weeks later in the Rebels den in Pairc Ui Caoimh. Tipp went into this game as rank outsiders with the bookies listing Cork at 1 to 25 to reach the Munster Final. After all this was David v Goliath, Division 4 v Division 1 so that was expected. Amazingly Tipp were two points up with just three minutes left in ordinary time and this was after clocking up 14 wides. Even the remedial introduction by Cork of dual star Aidan Walsh after 20 minutes failed to halt Tipp but his impact was the difference in the closing minutes as he kicked three of the four points to clinch it for Cork and inflict heartbreak on Tipp.

Two weeks later the Qualifiers drew us against Longford who shocked Division 1 league finalists Derry in Round 1 of the qualifiers.

A home draw in Semple Stadium was a bonus especially as part of a double bill with the Tipp hurlers who faced Galway. Tipp continued where they left off in Paric Ui Caoimh and dominated from the off with Michael Quinlivan's goal giving us a seven point half time lead. Longford's fate was sealed mid way through the second half when a long ball from Conor Sweeney was fisted to the net by Peter Acheson now playing at centre forward. A seventeen point victory in a controlled and disciplined display was the dramatic news of the day. Tipp allowed themselves a chance to dream of a possible All Ireland Quarter Final spot. Laois were next up in another double bill with the hurlers in Portlaoise. Tipp stormed into the game and two Connor Sweeney goals had us 2-10 to 1-03 ahead at half time. Tipp might have been disillusioned to see supporters leaving Semple Stadium in March after the Tipp v Clare hurling curtain raiser but the same supporters were now giving them a half time standing ovation in Portlaoise. Laois bounced back in the second half and scored four second half goals to draw level with less than ten minutes remaining. But Tipp didn't panic and sealed victory in the final minute with a Barry Grogan goal. Relief all around and a growing confidence from a tight finish as Tipp were now just 70 minutes away from an All Ireland Quarter Final. Only Galway stood between us but this was the team that knocked us out of the 2013 qualifiers. This time it was stand alone on Saturday July 26th in O'Connor Park Tullamore as the hurlers faced Dublin the day after in the All Ireland Quarter Final. Unfortunately a below par performance especially by our full back line allowed the Tribesmen score four goals in a seven minute spell on both sides of half time. Tipp fought back bravely in the second half and replied with four goals. But the Galway points total was too much to claw back as time ran out in a five point defeat. Despite this, 2014 was a really defining year for Tipp football as we laid down a marker that we have developed a really serious team that is capable of competing with the best.

The All Ireland Minor winning team of 2012 are coming of age and led by Peter Creedon continuing as manager and Mickey McGeehan as coach we have an excellent back room team. Combining the U21 Management with the senior is a positive step as it provides an automatically extended senior panel whilst the younger players gain the experience of being involved from the start in the senior set up.

U21 Football

David Power was in his second year as manager and once again was assisted on the line by Gerry McGill and Pat Moroney. Expectations were high as this was the All Ireland Minor team that won that historic 2011 All Ireland. Four games in the Longford based Hastings Cup prepared the team well with victories over Leitrim and Wicklow before losing to Meath but winning the shield over Mayo was a nice piece of Silverware at the start of the year. Fielding four of the Senior Football panel in Steven O'Brien, Michael Quinlivan, Ian Fahey and Philip Quirke and aided by the assistance of Kerry native Pat Flanagan, this group carried strong Tipperary hopes after a disappointing 2013 campaign when we finished poorly against Cork in the Munster Final. In the opening game in Fraher Park Tipp had a facile nine point victory over a hastily prepared Waterford team winning by 0-19 to 2-03. The semi-final was another away game in Miltown Malbay one week later and despite a major challenge by Clare for three quarters of the game, Tipp pulled away comfortably in the end scoring 2-11 to 0-1 in the final quarter to record a very impressive 2-22 to 0-09 victory. A three week break before the Munster Final v Cork was ideal for preparations but the loss of Captain John Meagher through injury was a serious blow. Cork had won all the Munster U21F titles since Tipp's historic victory over Kerry in Tralee in 2010 and were now chasing their 4th in a row. But all these Tipp players had experienced beating Cork at minor level over the last few years and had no fear of the red jersey. Tipp travelled to Pairc Ui Rinn for their third away game of the season under lights and were hit with a storming display by the rebels in the opening quarter and were lucky to be only five points down at the break thanks to a goal before half time by sub Colman Kennedy. Tipp rallied in the second half and by the 10th minute were level helped by a Steven O'Brien goal, but despite a Greg Henry goal in the closing stages, Cork finished the stronger to win by four points 1-18 to 3-08 and collect their fourth Munster title in a row. This was a major disappointment and it begs the question how our standards have dropped from beating this same Cork team at minor level in 2011 by eight points to now losing to the same Cork outfit at U21 level 3 years later. Looking at the power and physique of Cork it is obvious that the advantage is most of these players are part of UCC and CIT and are exposed to the intensive Sigerson Cup Campaigns which UCC won this year. Only Michael Quinlivan from Tipperary played Sigerson in 2014. Also Cork have half a dozen of the panel playing Division 1 senior Football whilst Tipp's three or four senior panellist were playing Division 4. At least promotion to Division 3 will help close this gap and maybe the move in 2015 to have our U21's training with the seniors will improve our intensity and fitness. Eleven of the nineteen players used in 2014 are underage again in 2015 so we still have the basis of a strong team.



Tipperary Co Board Delegates and partners at Congress in Croke Park in Feb 2014

Minor Football

Charlie McGeever was now in his second year as manager with Kieran Healy, Niall Fitzgerald and Shane Stapleton as his selectors and they set out to reach their fourth Munster Final in a row. Three games in the Leinster Minor Football League was good preparation with Longford (Lost), Wicklow (Drew) and Louth (Won). Our first round Munster game was against Waterford in Fraher Field under lights. Eight of the panel had also been involved the previous week's minor hurling defeat to Limerick at which key forward Alan Tynan got injured. Waterford provided a stiff test in this football opener and despite Tipp leading by four points at half time it was the Decie boys who led going into the last ten minutes of the game. But Drom's Jamie Bergin sealed the issue with his second goal in the closing stages to put Tipp into the semi-final against the Kingdom three weeks later they had a decisive victory over Clare. Kerry came to Thurles on May 7th led by Manager Jack O'Connor and laid down an early marker with a goal in the first minute. Another green flag after ten minutes made Tipp's task even harder but we stood up to fierce pressure to only trail by 2-03 to 0-04 at the break. Kerry continued to dominate the second half and kicked points at ease and were it not for the excellent saves by Jack Brady in the Tipp goals, the 2-18 to 0-07 defeat would have been a lot worse. This was a very young Tipp side with 12 under 17 so this experience should stand to them as we look forward to the same management team getting the best out of this group in 2015.

Junior Football

The U21 management also took on the Junior Football task and David Power, Pat Moroney and Gerry McGill were joined by Brian Whyte and Shane Gavin. Their influence was obvious as half the panel were under 21 which really was a development squad for the future Tipp senior Football teams as it should be. Played in the Gaelic Ground as curtain raiser to the senior between the same counties Tipp started poorly and Limerick gained the initiative from an early stage with a goal after 5 minutes. Tipp were chasing the game from there on and eventually lost by 1-13 to 1-10 despite introducing U21's such as Colman Kennedy, Jason Lonergan, Greg Henry, and Paul Shanahan. The idea of a Junior Football team is good if it's used as a Senior "B" squad with all players involved having a chance to progress. Therefore the management links with the U21 was a good idea and should be continued.

Football Summary

Tipperary has made a lot of progress in Football in recent years. Setbacks this year in Minor and U21 should not deter us from driving on as the positive progress of our seniors gives our players a new focus. Co. Board invest equal finance in football as hurling so we want to see a return for the investment as much as anyone. The failing is at club level where many of our clubs show complete disregard for Gaelic Football and where that mentality exists it will always be an uphill struggle.

Fixtures: Club v County

The club championships fixture schedule is an ongoing bone of contention as the Inter County scene leaves a very narrow window of opportunity to play our club games. Trying to meet Provincial club deadlines exacerbates this dilemma especially if our County teams achieve their ultimate goal by reaching finals and when a replay occurs, its chaos. 2014 tested our fixtures schedule to the limit as our Senior Hurlers and Footballers reached the Allianz League Final, played in the All Ireland Qualifiers after losing the first round to Limerick, reached the All Ireland Senior hurling Final, Replay three weeks later. Co. C.C.C. secretary Tom Maher outlines in his report to Convention the difficulties experienced in 2014 resulting in our failure to provide a team in three of the six Munster club championships Senior Football, Intermediate Football and Intermediate Hurling. The following Inter County Schedule summary for 2015 will give an idea of what we are up against when it comes to

putting down club fixtures when clubs have players on County teams.

- January: Waterford Crystal & McGrath Cup if Tipp reach finals
- February: Allianz Hurling League (2 weekends), Allianz Football League (3 weekends)
- March: Allianz Hurling League (4 weekends), Allianz Football League (3 weekends)
Munster U21 Football Championship
- April: Munster U21 Football Final plus All Ireland Semi Final & Final
Allianz Hurling & Football Play-offs & finals
- May: Munster Senior Football Championship Quarter Finals
- June: Munster Senior Hurling Championship 1st Rd & Munster Senior Football Semi-Final
- July: Munster Senior Hurling & Senior Football Finals or All Ireland Qualifiers
Munster U21 Hurling Championship
- August: All Ireland Senior Hurling & Senior Football Semi-Finals
All Ireland U21 Hurling Semi Final
- September: All Ireland Senior Hurling & Senior Football Finals

It's a big challenge to dovetail a club fixture programme in and around Inter County dates above which are set in stone in the National Masters Fixture Plan as they are tied in with Live TV etc. Our own club fixtures plan tries to accommodate the scenarios of our County Teams advancing in the League and Championship but even that could not cater for all the worst possible scenarios (or best depending on the argument) that occurred in 2014. We need very straight forward simple championship systems especially within our Divisions which will not hold up the latter stages of our County play-offs. Our County CCC needs to exert more power to exercise maximum control on fixtures being played within our Divisions. I would recommend that regular review meetings with our clubs be held similar to the one that was held between Co. C.C.C. and the Football clubs in September this year. These should be held every two months where our Co. CCC officers could outline to the clubs where we are and the problems we face. This could be done as a presentation at a monthly Co. Board meeting or otherwise and would allow clubs the opportunity to offer solutions for remedial action to be taken in advance of the problems arising.

The 2014 Munster Intermediate Club Championship

This was not a subject I wished to drag into my report to convention but when there are inaccuracies and untruths being put into the public domain, it is my duty as an officer of Tipperary Co Board to present the real facts and protect the integrity of the Board. Most of the following points were contained in the statement read out on Tipp FM Radio but they are repeated here for the benefit of those who did not hear it and basically to put the Tipperary Co Boards side of the story on record. The following sequence of dates relating to Tipperary's non-participation in the 2014 Munster IH Club Championship spells out our actions from the outset;

- Sept 11th (Thurs):** Following the drawn All Ireland SH Final, Tipperary Co Board Officers met with Munster Co Officers to discuss club fixtures.
- Sept 16th (Tues):** Tipperary Co. CCC met with Tipperary SF Clubs and outlined the impossible task of reaching Munster SF and IF deadlines. At this meeting it was also stated that we could not reach the IH date and the Moyne Templetuohy chairman was present and did not raise any objection at this stage.
- Oct 13th (Mon):** Tipperary Co Secretary sent an email to Cappelquin through the Waterford Secretary requesting an agreement to defer the Tipperary v Waterford club quarter final fixture two weeks from 26/10/14 to 9/11/14. This was rejected by Cappelquin.
- Oct 16th (Thurs):** Tipperary Co Board Officers met with Munster Co Officers once again to plead our case for more time to complete our championships.
- Oct 18th (Sat):** Tipperary Co IH Quarter Finals
- Oct 20th (Mon):** Tipperary Co Board sent correspondence to Munster Co requesting a postponement of the Munster IH Club Quarter Final v the Portlairge champions for two weeks which would also mean a postponement of the semi final for one week of the winners versus the champions of An Chlár. We outlined that the Munster Final would still be on schedule for week-ending 23/11/14 as per fixtures programme.
- Oct 21st (Tues):** The above request was turned down by a meeting of Munster CCC at which all the counties with the exception of Tipperary were against it.
- Oct 23rd (Thurs)** At Munster Councils request, the Tipperary Co Secretary sent a report on our Club Championship position as at 23/10/14 (as is normal). In that report we confirmed that we would meet Munster deadlines in SH, JH and JF but we also stated we would not be ready for the dates set down for SF, IF and IH.
- Oct 25th (Sat)** Tipperary Co IH Semi Finals (St Marys V Thurles Sars & Clonakenny v Moyne Templetuohy)
- Oct 28th (Tues):** Tipperary Co Secretary sent an email to Moyne Templetuohy following their Co Semi Final victory informing them that they would not be participating in the Munster Club championship as we had failed in our request for a postponement of the Munster Quarter Final v Cappelquin.
- Nov 2nd (Sun):** Tipperary Co IH Final (Moyne Templetuohy v Thurles Sarsfields).

As you can see from the above, Tipperary Co Board explored all avenues available to them in seeking a deferment of the Munster Quarter Final v the Waterford champions fixed for 26th Oct. We failed to get agreement from the Waterford representatives, Cappelquin and our request for a postponement from Munster Council was rejected.

- On the week-ending 26th Oct when the Tipperary representatives were due to play Cappelquin, our Co Semi Finals were going ahead which involved three teams who could possibly have gone on to play in the Munster Championship. To say an agreement could have been reached to forward a representative before this stage was not a consideration as Munster Council cannot allow counties to nominate teams to go forward except in limited circumstances which are set out in Rule.

To say Cappoquin could have been on stand-by to play the following day Nov 26th following the semi finals on Sat 25th is ridiculous hindsight for if St Marys had beaten Sarsfields they would also have been in the frame. Also to say Moyne Templetuohy could have played week-ending Nov 2nd (Co Final week-end) was not a consideration as Cappoquin were not agreeable to play that week-end.

- Before a fixture change is considered by Munster Council CCC, agreement must be reached between the participating counties. In this case the earliest Cappoquin were prepared to play after Oct 26th was week-ending Nov 16th or three weeks after the date fixed for the game. This was not acceptable to Munster Council as all the other counties involved would then be affected. The quarter-final would go back three weeks, the semi-final at least two weeks and so on.
- To say that Moyne Templetuohy was not aware they would not be participating in the Munster Club Championship is untrue as the email to the club on Oct 28th clearly informed them of the situation.
- The so called “damning correspondence” only received by the Moyne Templetuohy chairman on the Sun morning of the DRA Hearing is an exaggeration and sensationalism to say the least. This correspondence was taken from a report sent by the Co Secretary to Munster Council on Oct 23rd giving the updated position of our six championships with Munster Council deadlines. This is a standard requirement from all counties to enable Munster CCC to finalise their fixtures. This report only stated that Tipperary “would not be ready” for the Oct 26th Quarter Final date and did not say we would not have a team for the Munster IH Club championship.
- Complaints by Moyne Templetuohy of short notice receiving relevant correspondence is inconsistent as their own DRA application was lodged on Tues night Nov 4th but they only supplied copies of their documentation to Munster Council on Fri Nov 7th, just 48 hours before the case was heard which gave Munster Council a very short time to prepare its case.
- To say Tipperary Co Board showed no support to Moyne Templetuohy at their DRA hearing is disingenuous as we were not requested by the DRA to attend, or invited by Moyne Templetuohy or Munster Council to be present as a witness.
- To say that Munster Council threatened Moyne Templetuohy with a massive €50k bill if they were granted the interim relief sought by the Club from the DRA hearing is incorrect. The Munster Council representative at the DRA hearing will verify that the chairman of the DRA (not Munster Council) during the Hearing raised this issue stating that if Moyne Templetuohy get the interim relief (postponement of Cappoquin/Feakle game) then they must be prepared to accept the full costs of this postponement in the event that they subsequently lose the substantive case at a Full Hearing.
- In a radio interview the word “disconnect” was used to describe relationships between Tipperary Co Board Officers and the clubs and even the word “chasm” was used to exaggerate and sensationalise this opinion. In response Tipperary Co Board Officers would say relationships with our clubs is very healthy as the following examples reflect;
 - > We have in place an all-county draw for 27 years which despite dwindling numbers and profit to Co Board, is maintained to provide a very lucrative source of income for our clubs. This also involves regular visits to our clubs with draws and presentations
 - > Since Nov 1st we have embarked on a Club Visitation Programme where we attend club meetings to advise and listen to members.
 - > As a reward to our club officers we supply every club with six match passes at a nominal fee which allows them entry to all adult club matches within the county.

It's ironic that the word “disconnect” was used as it does not seem to reflect the opinion of the Moyne Templetuohy Club in this issue as on two occasions the Tipperary Co Secretary has received correspondence from the Moyne Templetuohy Club Secretary on the 31/10/14 and again on the 5/11/14 thanking and complimenting our officers and Munster Council for their efforts in trying to have Tipperary represented in the Munster IH Club Championship.

In conclusion it is not the wish of any Co Board to deprive one of its clubs of the opportunity to participate in a provincial championship. Tipperary Co Board would have been proud to put Moyne Templetuohy forward as our representatives if we were allowed but despite all our efforts above it just was not possible. Moyne Templetuohy has proved themselves worthy county champions and we congratulate them on this achievement. We look forward to seeing them join the very competitive senior grade in Mid Tipperary and we wish them the best of luck at this level in 2015.

Co. Finances

Having turned the corner last year showing a small surplus following five deficits in a row, I am happy to report on positive progress again in our accounts. Whilst reaching finals carries extra expense especially when they go to replays, there is also rewards to be gained from the spin-off. Reaching the League Final is the real cash cow and we have a lot to be grateful to Dublin's Nial McMorrough for missing the point opportunity which allowed us into the play-offs. The addition of quarter finals in the hurling added to our football success winning Division 4 and the combination of the two was worth an extra €50,000 in this area. The extended year and appearing in two All Ireland's gave our Merchandise Shop a major boost and yielded an extra €75,000 dividend to Co. Board following two slack years. Fund-raising also benefited from the high profile and trips to the West-End in London and the Galway Races were well supported and increased returns in this area. Whilst our gate receipts dropped slightly we are still €100,000 up on 2012 and the reduction was due mainly to the delay in completing our championships after the All Ireland Finals when the multiplicity of games forced spectators to choose between games they attended. I am confident our team expenses are better controlled and the extra costs in senior hurling are well compensated by Central Funding team grants and very active Tipp Supporters Club and Friends of Football. We feared earlier the interest in our Cúl Camps was dwindling but in 2014 they bounced back with an extra 500 children attending which gave our Games Development section a welcome cash injection to finance their activities. The maintenance costs in Dr. Morris Park will continue to rise with the installation of a generator to power the new floodlights and the additional fuel costs associated with this. Even though our dressing room complex is only 25 years old, it has seen massive usage during this time with eight inter-county teams training there plus Development Squads, Juvenile blitzes, Camogie, Ladies football, schools etc all having slots there. It's a lot of wear and tear on the building and repair bills are now starting to mount up as this complex has passed its sell by date. So the signs are positive that we will return an improved surplus once again this year and with this improved cash flow we will be able to honour our commitment to the four divisions and return the loans they gave us two years ago to improve the floodlights in Dr Morris Park.

The Premier Plan – Unfinished Business

The report in this booklet from our Strategic Plan Implementation Committee is a fair indicator of how this County is doing. The GAA is a very broad based organisation and success should not be confined to winning All Irelands, as before this can happen we must put solid foundations in place. We have achieved many of the objectives set out in the Strategic Plan and it has been instrumental in producing marked improvements in areas like Referees Recruitment, Player Welfare Policies, new championship structures, new County website and developing the Croke Park accounts package. We have also advanced the development at Dr. Morris Park and our Inter County teams are all competing at the highest level with distinction. The turnaround in our County Finances was also helped by the Strategic Plan which focussed on creating extra income streams and careful control of team expenditure.

So we could say that all is rosy in the garden as we see out the final year of the plan in 2015. But it's not and a lot of work remains to be done if we are to come anywhere near achieving the objectives in the plan. The most disappointing aspect has been the unwillingness of so many clubs to produce "relevant productive Action Plans". Less than a dozen out of 72 clubs have launched Club Plans which is baffling as other Counties have almost 100% success. In these modern times it is totally unprofessional not to put in place a planned approach on how we hope to carry on our business. Clubs talk about lack of numbers without any survey of population, local school attendance, age profiles etc. At least if you have such information in a Plan you can decide how you progress and who you progress with if you need to form group teams with other clubs. Also if you are considering purchasing extra ground and carrying out development, is it not wise to put a plan in place as to how you will finance this and also what numbers will be using it in three to five years time. Over the past few weeks the County Officers and Strategic Plan Implementation Committee have been visiting clubs to encourage club plans. These winter months are the ideal time to plan once the AGM is complete and to hold workshops and forums to get the views of the different groups in your catchment area. It's a renewal process for a club and can earmark a new beginning if it allows all members and age groups to have their say.

The other area that has not yet been fulfilled in the Co. Strategic Plan is our failure to "provide a coordinated programme of meaningful games appropriate to player's needs and abilities through an effective co-ordinated fixtures planning system." I have partly addressed this under fixtures planning but that only deals with Club v County issues. We have enough teams in the County at all grades but when you divide them to accommodate four divisions there is a serious imbalance ending up in meaningless competitions. We should set a target to have at least six teams in every championship competition even if that means crossing Divisional Boundaries. We should re-examine our County Leagues and find out why they are not attractive to our clubs. Maybe we should look at other Counties where leagues are successful and adopt their structures. We should also examine how other Counties seem to be able to relegate from Senior Hurling up to four teams in one year whilst we are forced to water down relegation motions to two per year or else clubs won't vote in favour. Overall "The Premier Plan" has proved to be a vital tool and the outgoing Chairman used it very successfully as a handbook during his three year stewardship as it gave him a roadmap to carry out many of his objectives.

Another Famine or a New Beginning ?

At the recent launch of Noel Dundon's excellent book *Captains of the Premier Ship* reference was made to the famine years and only one All Ireland victory every decade in recent times. What went wrong during those barren years when Liam MacCarthy was missing from the county for eight continuous years or more? How close were we during those years and were we at least getting to finals? Just like Kilkenny are our big obstacle to success in modern times, who dominated during those famine years? Finally, was our lack of success a follow on from a lack of titles at Minor & U21? We have now gone four years since an All Ireland Senior Hurling title and maybe it's a good time to see if there are any similarities between those three famine periods and modern times. Incidentally it's interesting to note that in the current period, we won 4 Munster Senior Hurling titles in 5 years between 2008 and 2012 and the one we failed in 2010 was compensated by winning the All Ireland. The following is a brief analysis of the three famine periods leading to just one All Ireland Senior Hurling title in every decade since the 1970s.

1972-1988 (17 years): The early 1960s were dominated by Thurles Sarsfields who could have won 11 titles in a row only for Toomevara in 1960. Carrick Davins and Roscrea dominated the second half of the 60s with Moyne Templetuohy (1971) depriving Roscrea of 6 in a row. Moneygall won their double in the Mid 70s followed by Kilruane MacDonaghs three in a row at the end of that decade. Borris Ileigh were the big team of the 80s winning three County titles with Moycarkey Borris grabbing two. It is interesting to note that during this period Tipperary won their only three All Ireland Club titles with Roscrea (1971), Kilruane (1986) and Borris Ileigh (1987). Despite this dominance Tipperary failed to even reach an All Ireland Final for these 16 years and we only won a Munster Title in 1987 after 16 years. We beat Waterford and Cork in 1973 and didn't win from the semi final win over Cork 1/7/1973 until beating Clare in Round 1 at Limerick end of May 1983. Galway was our bogey Team in the 1980s and when we eventually got to the final in 1988 with Nicky English as captain, the Tribesmen deprived us of victory. Earlier that year we won the League under captain Pa O'Neill which was only our second during that 17 years. The other was in 1979 when Paddy (Bowler) Williams was captain. During those 17 years Kilkenny & Cork won 11 All Irelands between them, Galway 3, Offaly 2 and Limerick's last in 1973. At underage Tipperary won eight Munster U21s followed by 4 All Ireland titles including the three in a row in 79/80/81. Around the same time we won three minor All Irelands in 76/80/82 so it's not as if the talent was not around to produce senior players. We even promoted our U21 selectors to Senior in Autumn 1981 when Mick Minogue, Danny Morrissey, Billy Carroll, Paddy O'Meara and Phil Lowry (Upperchurch Drombane) were appointed. The concept of Coach was introduced in 1984 when Donie Nealon took on the role and in 1985 we secured our first trophy since the 1979 League when Jack Bergin as Captain brought us the Ford Centenary Cup which has not been played for since and the trophy now resides in the Lár Na Páirce museum. Our fortunes finally turned in 1986 when Co. Chairman Michael Lowry secured Babs Keating as Manager along with Theo English and Donie Nealon which led to us winning Munster and reaching our first All Ireland in 17 years in 1988 followed by that much yearned All Ireland title in 1989.

1992-2000 (9 years): Toomevara dominated this nine year period achieving three in a row twice, 1992- 94 and 1998-2000 (also

won in 2001) which led to Tommy Dunne captaining us to a League title in 1999 and All Ireland victory in 2001. Prior to this the mid 1990s were bleak with only one Munster title in 1993, when Michael O'Meara was captain and one National League in '94 when George Frennd lifted the trophy. Babs stepped down after 1994 when we lost the Munster Championship to Clare who were managed by Len Gaynor and Fr. Tom Fogarty took over with Ken Hogan & John Kennedy as his selectors. Len Gaynor returned to Tipp as Manager in Autumn 1996 with Michael Doyle and Murt Duggan but only to suffer defeats to his former Clare team, in the Munster and All Ireland Finals. This was the period when the "underdogs" took control and Offaly (2), Clare (2) and Wexford (1) won half the All Ireland titles but Kilkenny still took three and Cork one. Tipperary did not fare too well at under-age either with just one All Ireland U21 title in '95 and at Minor William Maher raised the Irish Press Cup for the first time in 14 years.

2002-2009 (8 years): Toomevara continued to dominate the first decade of the new century winning six Co Senior Hurling titles with only Mullinahone in 2002 depriving them of seven in row after a three year lapse (1995 to 1997). During this eight year famine period Toomevara won four County titles but no All Ireland club despite eleven County titles in 18 years. Nicky English stepped down after the All Ireland Semi Final defeat to Kilkenny in 2002 and Michael Doyle took the reins for one year with Liam Sheedy and Kevin Fox as selectors. Ken Hogan, Jack Bergin and Colm Bonnar succeeded them in 2004 with no success. Babs Keating returned for championships 2006 & 2007 in the hope he could rekindle our fortunes with John Leahy and Tom Barry, but to no avail. Liam Sheedy was appointed manager in Autumn 2007 with Eamon O'Shea and Mick Ryan as selectors and raised hopes winning Munster titles in 2008 and 2009 with Eoin Kelly and Willie Ryan as captains after a six year gap since 2001. During this period the old hurling powers regained control with Cork winning two All Irelands and Kilkenny commenced their current winning regime by winning six. At underage we failed to win any All Ireland Under 21 despite winning four Munster but at least our fortunes were turning in Minor with two in a row All Ireland titles in 2006 (Joey McLoughney Captain) and 2007 (Brendan Maher Captain) under Liam Sheedy and Declan Ryan as Managers. Still the signs were looking good with 2 Munsters and one National League in 2008/2009 but with Kilkenny looking for a five in a row in 2010 it was not going to be easy to stop them. But thank God we did.

Summary

So after that 40 year trip down memory lane what have we learned to convince us that this current period is different even though we are heading into our fifth year without Liam McCarthy? We are at least contesting All Ireland Finals having participated in four of the last six and just one team, Kilkenny, is our big obstacle. Winning All Ireland Minor Hurling titles leads to eventual success as we saw in 1996 which led to the 2001 title and the double in 2006/07 laid the foundations for senior success in 2010. Based on this our 2012 Minor title should bear fruit soon as these players now come of age. Winning Munster Senior Hurling titles as we did with four over the last seven years is no longer an indicator of dominance as Limerick and Cork have found out in 2013 and 2014. Our luck at U21 level seems to have run out but our performance against Clare this year leading to extra time in Ennis was very encouraging considering this Banner side have won three in row All Ireland titles. We haven't won the National League title since 2008 but again we have been reaching finals with Kilkenny again denying us (2009, 2013 & 2014). In our club scene the pendulum has firmly swung back to Mid Tipperary winning the last six County titles with three different teams. Sarsfields dominance in the '50s and '60s led to many All Ireland's for Tipp so maybe that great division will lead us back to glory days again. To conclude, I think we are in a far healthier state now than in previous famine periods and the foundations are laid for All Ireland glory very soon again.

Remembering loved ones who died during the past year

During 2014 we lost some great Gaels, young and old, male and female. The following are a few who I feel deserve special mention for their outstanding service to the Association and who had close links to the County Board at some level.

Tom Collum: (JK Brackens), passed away on Dec 21st 2013 after a long illness. A native of Co. Limerick, Tom came to the Garda College in 1964 and later transferred to the local Garda Station. He was the Youth Liaison Officer for North Tipperary for eleven years until his retirement in 1997. Tom's interest in the G.A.A. was legendary. His expertise in coaching field games was highly rated and he helped in no small way in setting up the excellent coaching structures that we now enjoy. His contribution to the G.A.A. from local to national level was honoured when he was presented with an award by Christy Cooney, the then President of the G.A.A. His organisational ability was to the fore at Páirc Shileáin or Semple Stadium on match days. Another role he excelled in was as a Servicing Officer for Post Primary Schools in Tipperary and Munster. His organisational ability was greatly appreciated by games teachers throughout the region. For over twenty five years he was the JK Brackens club co-ordinator in the County Board Draw. Tom Collum was a great friend and colleague and we will always have fond memories of his time with us.

John Moloughney: (Clonakenny GAA) was one of the GAA's real gentlemen whose love for his Club and County was second to none. John was Chairman of the Clonakenny GAA Club for 27 years and Vice Chairman of the Mid Tipperary GAA Board since December 2011 and was due to be elected to the position of Board Chairman at this year's Mid convention which was an honour he was hugely looking forward to. Prior to being elected as Mid Board Vice Chairman, John had served as Referees Coordinator in the Division for over a decade. John was also well known as the man behind the camera at GAA matches and events throughout the Division and further-a-field for many years.

Flor Coffey: a former Tipperary All-Ireland winner was a native of Boherlahan, He graduated to the Tipperary Senior Hurling panel in 1943 having played inter-county hurling at Minor (1937 & 1938) and Junior (1939 & 1940) level. Flor won 2 All-Ireland Senior Hurling medals, lining out at left corner-back in the 1945 success versus Kilkenny while he played at centre-back on the 1949 team which defeated Laois in the final. At club level, Flor won a County Senior Hurling medal with Boherlahan in 1941 before transferring to Thurles Sarsfields later in his career, helping them to win the 1952 County Senior Hurling title.

William Lonergan: represented Tipperary at Minor and Intermediate Hurling level, winning Munster and All-Ireland medals in 1959 (Minor) and 1966 (Intermediate). William also won three South Senior Hurling medals with his club in 1959, 1974 (as captain) and 1978. William was a worthy recipient of a Sean Gael award in 2013

Ailbe Burke (Shannon Rovers President), won 2 Munster & All-Ireland Intermediate Hurling Medals.

Owen Killoran: (Roscrea) made a tremendous contribution to Tipperary and Roscrea during a short GAA career. He was right half back on the Tipperary U21H team that won the 1964 All Ireland and was captain in '65 when they retained Munster but lost to Wexford in the all Ireland Final. His allegiance turned to rugby in 1966 and Rule 27 did not allow him to play GAA at that time which was Tipperary's and Roscrea's big loss.

John Costigan: (Cahir), excelled with the Friends of Tipperary Football organizing many a Golf Classic, checking the score cards, and generally advising on all aspects. He helped immeasurably with fundraising, and at the time of his death he was treasurer of the Friends. The general thread running through all John's activities, Golf and GAA, was providing recreation and giving youth the opportunity to excel.

Kitty Nealon: (Burgess), was the perfect host to everyone who called at the Nealon home in Newtown and she was Donie's constant companion at all games and social occasions.

Eamon Ryan: (Littleton) was a keen follower and supporter of Tipperary Hurling, attending all League and Championship matches no matter where the venue. For many years he purchased a Tipperary Hurling season ticket and he was a member of the Tipperary Supporters Club and Friends of Tipperary Football as well as a supplier of many Subaru cars to the Tipperary GAA Draw down through the years.

Michael Hogan: (Grangemockler) was a nephew and namesake of the Tipperary footballer shot dead in Croke Park on Bloody Sunday 1920.

Dermot Hogan: Coolderry and Burgess died following an accident while working on his family farm in Coolderry. Dermot was manager of the Offaly U21 hurling team.

Biddy Stapleton: Borris-Ileigh was a Tipperary GAA Draw Co-Ordinator with Borris-Ileigh GAA Club, along with her husband TF, for almost 27 years. She was a great supporter of "Borris" and Tipperary teams and would be seen at GAA matches throughout the year regardless of venue or conditions.

Rory Leahy: a former Tipperary player was a nephew of the late Paddy Leahy and brother of Seamus Leahy (Clonmel). Rory played against Clare in the first round of the minor hurling championship in 1942 but the championship was abandoned due to wartime restrictions and was not resumed until 1945. He was under age for the two years during which no championship was held. In 1943 Rory was on the Munster Colleges team which won the All-Ireland and in the same year he was on the Tipperary senior team which won the 4 Counties League, a competition which was intended to give counties some games at a time when the National League had been discontinued. In 1944 he was again on the Tipp team which won the same competition. In 1946 he was on the Tipp team which beat Galway in the Monaghan Cup in London. As a club player he alternated between Nenagh and Boherlahan and before moving to work in Kuwait in 1947 he won a co championship with St Mary's London. He moved to Canada in the late 50's where he settled in a small town in the Rocky Mountains.

Jackie Lanigan: (Holycross-Ballycahill), captained the Tipperary Intermediate Hurling team to All Ireland honours in 1963 representing the Thurles Kickhams club. He was Senior secretary in Holycross Ballycahill club from 1984 right through that golden era when they won 5 Mid Senior titles between 1985 and 1997 and the Co Title in 1990

Paddy Maher: (Moneygall), served as secretary of North Tipperary Board for 13 years from 1977 having been secretary of his own club previous to that. During his time as secretary Moneygall GAA enjoyed its most successful period ever with great success on the field as well the construction of the clubhouse building, one of the first of its kind in the country. He also served terms as chairman of North and Co Bord na nÓg as well as being a member of the Semple Stadium Management Committee for many years.

Jack Kennedy: (Moneygall & Nenagh Eire Óg) was Treasurer of the North Tipperary Board from 1972-75. He played his hurling and football with Moneygall and held a number of administrative roles in both the Moneygall and Nenagh Eire Óg clubs. His sons Michael John and Philip all played at different levels with Tipperary and Philip captained Tipperary in back to back All Ireland Under 21 Hurling titles in 1980 and 81 before later playing SH with Tipperary and will be especially remembered for his performance in that epic 1984 Munster Final clash with Cork.

John Skehan: (Mullinahone) played minor, under 21, junior and senior championship football for Tipperary and will best be remembered for his great displays on the Mullinahone/Ballingarry hurling teams of the 60's. He watched with pride in 1990 when his twin sons Philip and Michael wore the blue and gold with Tipperary minor hurlers.

Jimmy Quirke: (Galtee Rovers) was a member of Tipperary Football Board since 1982 serving on the Management Committee for many years. His contribution to the GAA was recognized in a Sean Gael award and his selection as a Life President of Galtee Rovers GAA Club.

Larry Ryan: (Templederry) was a stilesman at gates throughout Tipperary and Munster. He was also a driver for many Tipperary minor and under 21 hurling players travelling from North Tipperary to Thurles for training and games from the late 60's to the early 80's. A great supporter for his club and county, Larry was well known in particular for his presence behind the town goals in MacDonagh Park, Nenagh for games.

Club members and supporters all have their special memories of loved ones lost during 2014 and we remember all of them at convention time.

Ar dheis Dhé go raibh anamacha na mairbh go léir.

Buíochas

I would like to express my appreciation to those elected personnel who complete their term of office at this Convention.

- Sean Nugent as Cathoirleach Chontae for three years steered the ship through a very difficult recessionary period. Having recorded financial deficits in County Board Accounts for three years, he guided us back on course with a surplus in his second and third year. He was a hard taskmaster but believed in high standards and set the bar high for fellow officers and sub committees. These challenges bought the best from all of us and made us stronger as a unit. Winning the All Ireland minor hurling final in his first year gave him great satisfaction as a former Co. Minor Selector. He will be disappointed not to have won a Senior title having come so close this year but he left no stone unturned and can walk away knowing he threw his heart and soul into leading the County during his three years. I wish him well as he steps down at this Convention and as Central Council delegate he will continue to play a very active part in representing Coiste Chontae Thiobraí Áránn.
- PJ Maher steps down as Munster Council delegate due to the five year rule. Following in his late father's footsteps he proudly represented his County at Provincial level and his shrewd and steady influence was always to Tipperary's advantage. I hope he continues to stay involved as his advice and experience on all risk issues is invaluable.
- Michael Bourke assumes the role of Cathoirleach Choiste Chontae at this convention and I look forward to working with him for the next three years. He is achieving a lifetime ambition to lead his County and has waited patiently for this opportunity. The experience he gained as Mid Chairman and also Chairman of their Centenary Committee plus his past three years as Leas Cathoirleach and Chairman of the County CCC will stand to him in good faith. He takes command in good times with finances in good shape and our Co. Senior Hurling and Senior Football teams playing with confidence. Co. Treasurer Eamon Buckley heads into his seventh and final year in this role and his careful financial management has the County on a very sound financial footing. Andy Fogarty has settled into his role as PRO and he is well capable of following in the footsteps of his very accomplished predecessors.
- To our Co. Management and Co. CCC committees I express my sincere gratitude for the hard work and commitment throughout the year. As you browse through the various reports in this book from all our sub-committees you will realise the amount of work that is going on in the County and I thank them all for this support. During the year we took on two new Games Development officers with David Needham (Lorrha) taking over from Tadhg O'Connor in North Tipperary and Pádraig Malone (Portroe) replacing John Cummins in the South Division. Both men hit the ground running and have made immediate impacts to complete a top class Coaching & Games service along with Kevin Halley (West) and Andy Ryan (Mid) led by Co. Games Manager Dinny Maher and Co. Coaching Officer John Smith. Our assistant Treasurer Michael Power is a valuable back-up to our Co. Treasurer on match days and to myself with his in depth knowledge and experience of managing accounts. Jimmy Minogue as Development Officer continues to give solid advice to clubs and assistance with grants and club plans. Seosamhain Ni Chathail took over the role of Scór Chairperson as part of her Cultural Officer brief and she is very committed to the promotion of our Irish Language and Culture in her own calm and unimposing style. Nicholas Moroney is an excellent Children's Officer and has been instrumental in solving many clubs issues over the past year. Co. IT Officer Ed Kinane gives a lot of his expertise on a voluntary basis to County Board and has worked extremely hard in developing our Co. Website and advising clubs when requested.
- The staff in Lár na Páirce are always willing to support and assist all sectors when required. Their good humour and harmony makes it a very happy and satisfying environment to work in. Tom Maher has joined the staff as Office Administrator and in addition to his CCC Roles with County and Post Primary Schools he will also now have direct responsibility for ticket distribution and Co. Board Financial Accounts. The GAA Shop enjoyed a busy year with two All Ireland's and is delighted to make a valuable contribution to Co. Board accounts this year. Well done to Marion, Molly and all the part time staff who put in trojan work during 2014.

Conclusion

We have just looked back on an exceptionally busy if not very successful year. Our Senior Hurling and Senior Football teams commence 2015 with an air of confidence and an ambition to go another step further. For the hurlers this is an Allianz League or All Ireland title. For our footballers it's promotion to Division 2 and a Munster Senior Football title or an All Ireland Quarter Final. This year's U21 Hurling team is the 2012 All Ireland winning Minor team and our minor football team has ten of the 2014 teams still underage. Maybe the U21 Football or Minor Hurling teams will bring home the laurels in 2015 or maybe the Intermediate Hurlers or Junior Footballers will be the ones to follow. Whatever the New Year holds for the Premier County we look forward to our teams participating at the highest level and giving maximum performance to make us proud.

We bid farewell to a memorable 2014 when Blue and Gold colours were flying across the County. We did not win an All Ireland but the spirit of Tipperary was lifted enough to give us renewed confidence in our hurlers and footballers. 2015 beckons as the hopes and dreams of Tipperary Supporters rest on the shoulders of our Senior Hurlers and Footballers. I hope in 2015 it will be adorned with raised trophies and glorious accounts of All Ireland titles.

Críoch

Fágaimid slán le bliain sonrach ina raibh an Gorm & Órga in airde go bródúil trasna an chontae. Níor bhuamar aon corn ach d'ardaíodh spioraid Thiobraid Áránn ionas go mbeidh muinín athnuachtha againn in iománaithe agus peileadóirí an chontae sa bhliain atá romhainn. Tá súil go leor againn ó imreoirí sinsire an chontae. Tá dóchas agus muinín agam go mbeidh an cornchláir lán i 2015 agus go mbeidh cuntaisí iontacha á scríobh ar bhuanna Thiobraid Áránn i gCraobhanna na hÉireann. Ar aghaidh le Thiobraid Áránn.

Tadhg De Flóid

Runaí Choiste Chontae