

On Gaelic Games

Seán Moran

Cusack and the Dergvale hotel's place in history



One of the disadvantages of the convenient and spacious media centre in Croke Park is that there's no need to return to the office after matches in the stadium. That walk used to bring us past the Dergvale Hotel in Gardiner Place and temptation beyond breaking point frequently meant quick pints to gather ourselves.

The premises has a big place in GAA history so it always felt appropriate that it should also have a place in the first draft of that history, which would be rattled out later in the afternoon.

This was admittedly a long time ago, pre-internet and when such work practices didn't sound as outdated as sticking hot poker into pots of ale. Owners Gerry and Nancy Nolan could be forgiven for confining their interest in the GAA to the big match-day experiences, which have previously been compared to re-enactments of Rorke's Drift, as waves of spectators fall on the premises but they have also proved conscientious curators of the hotel's history.

For a couple of years in the late 19th century, 4 Gardiner Place was home to GAA founder Michael Cusack's family and his academy, a school specialising in gearing candidates for the Victorian civil service examinations.

In this he was particularly successful. On January 5th 1884, The Irishman published the results of those attending his academy and stated, "Mr Cusack is the only grader in Dublin who secured a pass at any of these examinations".

He was reported to be earning £1,500 per annum during the heyday of his school. A plaque marking the site of the academy was unveiled on the weekend of the Centenary All Ireland hurling final in 1984 - ironically the last time an All-Ireland wasn't played at nearby Croke Park - but its significance goes beyond that.

Brother Seán MacNamara is the most zealous keeper of the flame. Happily still with us after his 94th birthday last month, he published The Man from Carron 15 years ago on the centenary of Cusack's death and has lectured widely on the subject.

His research turned up, amongst other things, an original diary. The twin emphases of this work are to reinforce the central importance of Cusack to both the GAA, which he founded, and the cause of Irish nationhood as well as to convert everyone to the view that the GAA's birthplace was not Hayes's in Thurles but another hotel, the Dergvale.

In 2010 the Dergvale unveiled a memorial to its famous previous occupant and screened a DVD, which was scripted and presented by Brother MacNamara. He pointed out that the letters inviting people to attend the inaugural meeting in Thurles on 1st November 1884, were sent from Gardiner Place on October 27th.

Croke Park is the most visible symbol of the GAA but in MacNamara's view the stadium, rather than one of its stands, should have been named after Cusack but he has accepted that this is not going to happen at this stage.

Since the centenary of the founder's death, his presence has been amplified by the installation of Paul Ferriter's fine sculpture just outside the GAA Museum.

November is the month for these reminiscences. Last Monday was the 137th anniversary of the GAA's foundation in Thurles or its formal establishment to give Brother MacNamara's case its due. Later this month will be the 114th anniversary of Cusack's death.

Another less remarked on November event is the erection of a memorial in Dublin's Deansgrange cemetery in the GAA's 125th anniversary year of 2009.

It was to commemorate Thomas St



George McCarthy, a former rugby international and policeman, who was also one of those who attended the meeting in Hayes's Hotel.

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celebrations, his cause was taken up by former Armagh captain Jarlath Burns.

Although Cusack later fell out with the GAA, there was a reconciliation before his death and for all his reputation for hot-headedness, his drive and ambition helped to establish the fledgling association.

On the centenary dedication of the commemorative centre in Carron in 2006, former Clare manager Ger Loughnane spoke.

Racing News

Tarnawa set to be Irish Breeders' Cup banker

Dermot Weld's set to be hot favourite for \$4m Turf despite outside draw

BRIAN O'CONNOR
Racing correspondent

Tarnawa is set to start one of the hottest Breeders' Cup favourites over Friday and Saturday's action in Del Mar and appears to be an Irish banker at US racing's biggest meeting of the year.

have his first Breeders' Cup starter with Twilight Jet drawn on the inside of the Juvenile Turf Sprint while Glounthaun will try to supply a fifth Ballydoyle success in the Juvenile Turf.

They are the only Irish runners on Friday with Tarnawa leading the bulk of the raiding party 24 hours later.



James McDonald reacts after riding Verry Elleegant to victory in the Melbourne Cup at Flemington Racecourse. PHOTOGRAPH: JAMES ROSS/SPA

very happy to go. We think that the [change] is definitely a good thing.

Twilight Payment's attempt at back-to-back Melbourne Cup victories barely began at Flemington in the early hours of yesterday morning and Joseph O'Brien's topweight could eventually finish only 11th behind the local superstar, Verry Elleegant.

Winx. The British hope Spanish Mission stayed on to be third.

It completed a remarkable comeback for McDonald who was hit with an 18-month ban in 2016 for profiting from a \$1,000 bet made for him by a

years, perhaps the best outcome of all for Racing Victoria officials was that all 23 runners returned without serious injuries.

Return to action
Closer to home, jumps action continues to step up a gear this weekend with the Stayers champion Flooring Porter set to make his return to action in Sunday's Lisnallen Hurdle at Navan.

Jessica Harrington is also facing an anxious few days with her Irish Champions Weekend winner Real Appeal first reserve for Saturday's \$2 million Mile on Turf.

O'Brien's Mother Earth and Paddy Twomey's Pearls Galore are drawn nine and 12 respectively among the 14 Mile runners.

They feature among 13 Irish declarations in all over the two days of action which begins on Friday.

Michael O'Callaghan will

News

Pressure on Sport Ireland to revisit directive on return of indoor sport

Basketball, squash and volleyball among sports affected by restricted access

IAN O'RIORDAN

Pressure is mounting on Sport Ireland to urgently revisit the latest Government directive on return to indoor sport, which requires the use of a Covid-19 certificate (vaccine or recovery) for accessing all indoor sporting activities and events.

While elite senior players are exempt, the issue concerns underage training and match participation, not just given the fact the under-12 category have yet to be approved for vaccination but also because it is not permitted to ask under-18s of their vaccination status, many schools and club competitions up to that age group are also being cancelled.

According to the latest eight-page document released by Sport Ireland, it is envisioned that these measures will remain in place until approximately February 2022.

Where individuals have mixed immunity status, pods of up to six participants is permitted (excluding adult coaches/instructors); for vaccinated individuals no fixed capacity limits apply to these activities; vaccinated spectators attending indoor sporting events should be fully seated.

Further feedback
Basketball Ireland are among the governing bodies of sport to highlight their concern, after cancelling all schools and juvenile competitions over the weekend. In the meantime, senior national league and international can proceed. Basketball Ireland are awaiting further feedback from Sport Ireland.

Other indoor sports impacted by the directive include squash and volleyball. Squash Ireland this week issuing a statement of information to

their membership as to why underage competitions have also been cancelled for the time being.

"It is clear from the guidelines that a greater range of activities is feasible where all participants provide proof of immunity to Covid-19 infection. The board of Irish Squash wants to ensure that our sport can restart for as many people as possible both within our clubs and at competitive events."

"Therefore we have agreed that for any tournament that is open to players from more than one club, all participants



Basketball Ireland cancelled all schools and juvenile competitions over the weekend

must provide proof of immunity to Covid-19 as a condition of entry. This applies to all senior and masters competitions. It also applies to any junior entering into a senior event.

"The situation for U12 and U18 players in junior competitions is unclear at present and Sport Ireland have requested clarification on this from the Department of Sport. Whilst awaiting this information, we cannot proceed with junior competitions listed on our calendar. We appreciate that this is a difficult situation for many people and we will provide a further update as soon as possible."

CLASSIFIED EXTRA

LEGAL NOTICES: THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (CROSS-BORDER MERGERS) REGULATIONS 2008. MOTORS FOR SALE: David Golding. APPOINTMENTS: SITUATIONS VACANT: ARACHAS CORPORATE Brokers Ltd. SHOPPING & SERVICES GUIDE: PETS: BISCUIT. PLANNING APPLICATIONS: SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL. INTERIORS & EXTERIORS: ATTIC INSULATION: RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY: EVERY THURSDAY IN THE IRISH TIMES