A Hurling First - 25 Years on

BUFFERS ALLEY
ALL-IRELAND CLUB CHAMPIONS 1989

1989 - 2014
Chairman’s Address

A Chuirde,

Reaching back to the team of 1989, there is a remarkable bond of respect between Buffers Alley people and their hurling men. We forever recall their skill, their manly sporting fame and that great quality of theirs which defies description, and which we call ‘heart’.

We endow our hurlers with a dimension reserved exclusively for those relied on in moments of great sporting struggle to man the goal, defend the line or drive that all important goal.

Photography and Press Reports are now central to recall so many happy sporting occasions and we owe our photographers and reporters a great debt. The power of the single picture has been remarked on by many people. I hope that this souvenir booklet will bring joy to many as they recall events from the great hurling season of 1988-’89, and I have no doubt, though the years will pass and times will change, that no matter where life leads us, in these pages, the people of Buffers Alley and their hurling men will always be together.

The American World Champion boxer, Muhammad Ali, once said “champions are made from something they have deep inside them – a desire, a dream, and a vision”. To me this sums up the spirit of the 1989 team that is being honoured today marking the 25th anniversary of their Club All-Ireland win on St. Patrick’s Day 1989.

Micheál Ó Murchú
Cathaoirleach Buffers Alley GAA
16ú Márta, 2014
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Although a club with a long and proud tradition, the period from 1965 to 1992 must surely rank as the golden era in the history of Buffers Alley. During this period the club created a truly imposing record and, along with Rathnure, became the dominant force in Wexford hurling, claiming a dozen county senior championships. During this time, the club also won a number of football titles, were involved at every level from under-12 upwards, exerted an incredible local and national influence on camogie, played their part in juvenile and adult Scór, won the All-Ireland 7-a-side title, and was one of the first clubs in Wexford to develop its own playing facilities and club complex. While all of this was achieved in a remote and predominantly rural heartland, with the resources drawn from a significantly small number of people, it was made possible by the remarkable commitment, dedication and loyalty that Buffers Alley people show to their club. The same family names have been an influential part of ‘the Alley’ since its inception.

Although founded in 1900, it took all of sixty eight years before the now famous club was to land its first senior hurling title. Prior to the intermediate win in 1965, the club had but three junior hurling titles to its credit. However, this third incursion into the senior ranks turned out to be the instigation of something great and the beginning of a very special period in the club’s history. From this launching pad, the subsequent twenty-five year period saw the senior hurlers record another eleven championship victories and ensure that the Buffers Alley name became one of the most famous and respected in the country.

Not content with local success, it wasn’t long before they also made their mark on the bigger stage. Following only their second county title, the club unsuccessfully contested the provincial decider of the inaugural club championship in 1971, where the challenge of St. Rynagh’s of Offaly proved too strong. A similar fate befell them when they again faced St. Rynagh’s in the final of 1982 and many began to wonder if that provincial breakthrough might be beyond them. But this was eventually put right at Nowlan Park on a November Sunday in 1985 with victory over other Offaly side, Kinnity, on a scoreline of 3-9 to 0-7.

The stage was now set for participation in the All-Ireland series and the first real possibility of going all the way. Victory over Cushendall of Antrim in the semi-final ensured a showdown with Kilruane-McDonagh’s of Tipperary on St. Patrick’s Day 1986. The club had now finally arrived on the biggest stage in club hurling. However, when they again came up short by just two points, with many of the stars in the twilight of their careers, it was deemed by most to have been the last hurrah for this team, and many began to wonder where another opportunity might come from. And while the team resolved to stick together and promised themselves that they would be back, few really believed it.

But back they came. Following a positive start to the 1988 Wexford championship with comfortable victories over Cloughbawn, Oulart/Ballagh, Faythe Harriers, Rapparees and Duffy Rovers in the group games, people again began to realise that this team wasn’t quite finished yet. The first of a series of ‘frights’ came in the drawn semi-final against Cloughbawn which finished on a scoreline of 1-15 to 2-12, with victory coming the way of the Alley in a low scoring replay. All was now set for the ‘dream’ county final, and if one thought that things were scary in the drawn semi-final, it was nothing to what lay in store in the first half of this final with Rathnure. Struggling to come to terms with the early pace, and with
everything the opposition touched turning to gold, prospects didn’t look encouraging when trailing by nine points at half time. However, things turned completely in the second half and with more than a little help from that ageless warrior, Tony Doran, few could believe it when the Alley went on to forge a dramatic draw – 3-11 to 2-14. Then, at rain sodden Wexford Park a week later, they called on all their reserves of courage and stamina to comprehensively lower the colours of the reigning champions. Players and supporters alike now genuinely began to take note that rumours of the demise of this team were indeed premature.

This victory provided the platform for what many believed they would never see – another crack at the provincial and All-Ireland series. Following a five point victory over Carlow Town Hurling Club in a high-scoring opener of the Leinster championship, the first real test came in the semi-final against Seir Kieran of Offaly, when the team had to again withstand some intense early pressure before eventually pulling through in a nail-biting Seán Whelan driven epic encounter on a scoreline of 1-12 to 1-7. Then on a sunny December Sunday at Dr. Cullen Park in Carlow, with Mick Butler scoring ten points and the twenty-one year old Eamonn Sinnott a colossus at midfield, the Leinster title was secured with a sweet victory over Ballyhale Shamrocks of Kilkenny – 1-12 to 1-9.

Following a short break it was back to training on St. Stephen’s Day in preparation for the All-Ireland semi-final in which Four Roads of Roscommon provided the opposition. This game took place in mid-February and, on a scoreline of 2-19 to 0-9, the Tom Dempsey inspired outfit had little difficulty in disposing of the Western challenge. I can still see the smiles in the dressing room in Wexford Park that afternoon when word filtered through that the Munster champions, Patrickswell of Limerick, had been beaten in Kilmallock by O’Donovan Rossa of Antrim in the other semi-final. The scene was now set for an occasion that many believed they would never again see – Buffers Alley back in Croke Park on St. Patrick’s Day for the All-Ireland Club hurling final.

St. Patrick’s Day 1989 was a dry but windy day. What turned out to be an historic victory looked anything but safe in the early stages, though, as O’Donovan Rossa began the game like a team inspired. Their crisp hurling, sure control and great stickwork sent shivers through the Buffers Alley supporters in the crowd. When they jumped into a five point lead after just nine minutes, a period which also included a first-minute disallowed goal and a number of superb saves by Henry Butler, it looked as if they were on their way to victory. All-star Ciarán Barr was rampant and causing havoc in the Alley defence, who were also struggling at midfield. But the Alley mentors and players refused to panic, and in a couple of shrewd positional switches which saw Matty Foley and Paul Gahan and later Tom Dempsey and Eamonn Sinnott swap places, they began to settle. Gahan plugged the gaps down the middle and snuffed out Barr, whereas Dempsey won much more midfield ball and ensured a greater supply to the forwards. The all-important score came in the 14th minute when Mick Butler flicked on an Eamonn Sinnott centre and Séamus O’Leary burst his way through to plant the ball to the net. While the Alley were now in control and should have availed of other goal scoring chances before the break, they still retired one point to the good – 1-5 to 0-7. One might have expected O’Donovan Rossa to return with all guns blazing and begin the second half as they had the first, but that didn’t transpire. In fact, it was the Alley who set the tone of the new half. Tom Dempsey pointed a few early frees, while Paddy Donohoe’s disputed goal mid-way through the half put the game beyond doubt. While the dominance of the remaining period didn’t result in the scores that would have completely wiped out the Rossa challenge, the Alley still recorded a famous and historic victory and brought the All-Ireland Club Championship and the Tommy Moore Cup to Wexford for the first and only time, on a scoreline of 2-12 to 0-12.

This was a unique and special day for Buffers Alley players, mentors and supporters, and brought to an end a long and arduous campaign stretching over fourteen games. Grown men stood on the Croke Park turf in tears as Pat Kenny received the Tommy Moore Cup. The sight of a Wexford man receiving the cup of victory after achieving All-Ireland senior hurling
success was something we hadn’t seen since 1968. And while Tony Doran had been part of that great occasion, and Mick Butler and Martin Casey also had special links with that day, half of the Buffers Alley players were too young to even remember it. In fact, a whole generation of young Wexford people had grown up without knowing a moment like this. Defeat had been Wexford’s lot so often on the big days that we began to believe that it was all we deserved and that we were destined to be forever second best. But the men from Buffers Alley would not accept that. The dream of All-Ireland glory seemed shattered forever three years earlier when we lost that final that many believed we should have won. A number of key players were well into the veteran stage and a lesser body of men would have let a disappointment like that force them to accept the inevitable. Not so this bunch of players, who always believed in themselves and in their ability to be the best. Those moments along the way when all seemed lost were now quickly forgotten. They had hit back against Rathnure in the county final and they had hit back again after a poor start on this occasion.

On a personal note, it was a real joy to see Pat Kenny up there beside G.A.A. president, John Dowling, almost bursting with pride and unable to contain his excitement as he snatched the cup and waved it aloft long before the president had finished his speech. “It is a proud occasion for Buffers Alley, for Wexford, and for hurling”, proclaimed the President. All present concurred. Pat’s own few words came from the heart. They were proud to win the title for Buffers Alley and Wexford for the first time. It was a dream come through and he thanked everybody involved for all the hard work that now suddenly seemed so worthwhile. He thanked especially the team trainer, the selectors Jack Hall, Piere Butler and John Doyle, and the medical people John O’Brien and Mick Gahan. He had words of gratitude, too, for all the club officers and supporters. It was a team effort, indeed a united club effort that made this dream finally come through.

And in the midst of all the excitement of victory, he didn’t forget one man who had given sterling service to Buffers Alley for many years. Colm Doran, who had been hospitalised a few days earlier for a back operation, was not part of the panel for this greatest day in the club’s history. But the fact that Colm actually defied doctors’ orders to attend the game typified something else that is the hallmark of the Alley – a close knit and strong unity, based on years of family tradition and dedicated community support in their own rural stronghold. And speaking of the Dorans, this victory had one other special significance. For the club’s most famous son, it was the crowning glory in an illustrious career, and it saw Tony Doran, who had been such an inspiration to Buffers Alley teams for over a quarter of a century, add that one elusive medal to his already tremendously impressive collection.

The All-Ireland Club Champions were feted with a civic reception the following evening, hosted by Gorey Town Commissioners. There were jubilant scenes as over a thousand people cheered the Buffers Alley team, led by their cup-waving captain Pat Kenny, as they paraded up the Main Street headed by St. Michael’s Pipe Band. Buffers Alley had done the Gorey District proud in Croke Park and now the Gorey District did Buffers Alley proud in this ‘welcome home’. Other celebrations continued for a number of weeks but yet didn’t hinder the preparations for the upcoming Wexford championship which the Alley went on to win again in 1989. While they added two more in 1991 and ’92, as well as the ’92 Leinster title, it continues to be a source of disappointment that the club has been comparatively unsuccessful since.

Nevertheless, the historic winning of the first All-Ireland Club title for Wexford is an honour that belongs to Buffers Alley forever - the first Co. Wexford club to be acclaimed the best in the world of hurling. While bonfires blazed as a long-cherished dream was fulfilled, surely nobody could have imagined that twenty-five years later it would remain unequalled. Meanwhile, we continue to relish the achievement – that piece of history that was made in Croke Park on St. Patrick’s Day 1989. While everybody realised at the time that it was a unique and special day for the Buffers Alley Club in particular and Wexford hurling in general, in hindsight, few could have realised that it was as special as it has turned out to be.
While Buffers Alley did not take the title and so continued the sequence of not toppling Rathnure in six final meetings, they did prove themselves champion in side-line management. Not only in the changes that they made to transform the team performance, but also in recognising the error of their own ways.

The first half gambit of placing seasoned Mick Butler at centre forward to take on the power-packed might of Jim O’Connell totally backfired. O’Connell was everywhere, sweeping up breaks from midfield, meeting puck-outs. His mobility left him almost an extra man because youngster John Gahan was struggling at midfield in his first final appearance for the Alley and down the right flank of the attack, inspired John Codd and mercurial John Murphy were playing havoc with the Alley defence.

Rathnure were unstoppable in that opening half, with both midfielders and all forwards except Pat Codd getting among the scores.

Although bringing off a fine double save just over halfway through the half, Alley goalkeeper Henry Butler was uncertain and caused missed heartbeats for his defence and Alley supporters throughout the hour. Mick Butler was switched away from the centre forward spot. Martin Casey replaced John

Gahan and the Alley wing backs switched to pit Paul Gahan against danger man John Codd.

At half-time the Alley made further match-winning switches, sending Casey to centre forward where he eclipsed O’Connell and snatched two points, bringing Seán Whelan to midfield where he provided the muscle which talented Eamonn Sinnott fed from, and putting Tony Doran out to corner forward.

Slowly Buffers Alley battled their way back into contention, and the sides were at double scores 0-14 to 0-7, when the old warhorse, Tony Doran struck. All-Ireland winner of 20 years ago when Henry and Mick Butler and his full back rival Martin Quigley were minor All Ireland winners, 42 year old Tony poached an opportunist goal.

The Alley almost had a second within a minute when Mick Butler’s shot hit the bar, but after a serious of abortive scoring efforts, Paddy Donohoe snatched a second goal for the Alley. A minute later Paul Gahan pointed a long-range free and the sides were level.

Being over hurled at midfield, Jimmy Hoholan stamped his character on the game when rousing himself in the exchanges and helping out an over-worked defence.
And he opened up the chance which Marks Morrissey accepted for a Rathnure goal. Holohan sent in a shoulder-high side-line puck from 40 yards which deceived the defence to leave the goalscoring ace with a simple chance.

Back came the Alley. An inspired Paul Gahan put over another free from half way, between points from Martin Casey and Seán Whelan, and the sides were level again.

But the wily Holohan was still conjuring up chances. His lofted centre behind the Alley defence was snapped up by captain John Murphy who beat the lunging Henry Butler and the retreating backs for goals. But the wise old heads were still in there creating chances and when Buffers Alley were awarded a 21 yards free, Mick Butler sent a deceptive hopping ground shot to the corner of the net.

Level again; Butler had a shot saved by John Conran before Dickie Murphy’s final whistle after a redeeming second half which put a 30 minute gloss back on Wexford hurling. By our watch the final whistle came a full minute early. For their second chance Buffers Alley owe a lot to Matty Foley, who turned in a superb second half performance at centre back and to Paul Gahan.

Alongside the heroic efforts of Doran and Butler too, the young men of Buffers Alley showed their character, with sterling second half performances from Eamonn Sinnott and Tom Dempsey.

For Rathnure, elegant John Conran was “Mr. Reliable” with Martin Quigley outsmarting Tony Doran and Jim O’Connell a first half bastion. Jimmy Holohan showed too that he can turn it on when the going gets tough and up front Morrissey and Murphy tormented the Alley defence.

Referee Dickie Murphy booked Pat Kenny in the first half, but never had to impose himself on a game which was a second half showpiece of free-flowing fast and furious hurling.

Buffers Alley: Henry Butler; Barry Murphy; Pat Kenny; John O’Leary, Paul Gahan (0-2 frees), Matty Foley, Seán Whelan (0-1), John Gahan, Eamonn Sinnott; Tom Dempsey (0-2, 1 ‘65); Mick Butler (1-3, 1-0 from 21 free, 1 from ‘45 and 2 frees); Paddy Donohoe (1-0); Seamus O’Leary; Tony Doran (1-0); Fintan O’Leary (0-1); Subs: Martin Casey (0-2) for John Gahan; John Donohoe for Seamus O’Leary. Referee: Dickie Murphy (Rapparees).

(Report: Guardian Newspaper)
Buffers Alley, the “old men” and “no hopers” of the 1988 Wexford hurling, won the county senior hurling crown when they dethroned long-time rivals, Rathnure, on double scores (2-10 to 1-5) in a replay at Wexford Park. Indeed their superiority was even more pronounced than the score line suggests.

Many circumstances combined to assist the Kilmuckridge men, however, Rathnure’s “superior than thou” attitude in the second half of the drawn game proved costly, and eventually the elements favoured the challengers.

A Wexford senior hurling championship game has never been played in worse conditions – and Buffers Alley revel in the heavy going. The incessant rain left the majority of the playing surface under water and it was a travesty that the authorities firstly allowed the game to go on and secondly allowed it to continue.

That the contestants stuck so gamely to their task and the hour was completed without serious injury is a wonder. In addition to praising the durability of all the players one must also commend the high standard of sportsmanship in the most trying of conditions.

I was at all times aware that Rathnure, as county champions, had the most talented hurlers, but understood also that they needed good ground and weather conditions to produce their best. The tight marking, slower, and more physical Buffers Alley team made no secret of the fact that they wanted a “heavy sod”.

Everything went their way. It had rained practically non-stop for two days. The mud and rainwater of Wexford Park was ankle deep. The ‘ speedy’ were at a serious disadvantage.

The Gods continued to smile on the men from the Macamores. They had advantage of the wind in the opening period, and they made full use of it! They whipped over five points in the first eight minutes and many spectators were still only arriving at the enclosure. In ten minutes they led 0-6 to 0-1 and Tony Doran, Mick Butler and company were tearing the Rathnure rearguard to shreds.

Buffers Alley quickly established what they had suspected – Rathnure did not relish the weather or ground conditions. They stormed in to attack with all forwards astonishingly confident in the mud. One might even say they were “foot perfect”.

Sweet Revenge for Buffers Alley in ‘Gain’ County Final

RATHNURE OUTCLASSED IN THE MUD
Rathnure goalie, Ted Morrissey had to come to his team’s rescue three times under pressure, before he was beaten by Seamus O’Leary. The corner forward swooped in from the right, picked up the “dead” ball effortlessly and he was travelling right across goal when he unleashed a low drive from about 25 yards that had “goal” written on it all the way.

Even at that early stage there was cause for concern in the ranks of Rathnure supporters. Yes, they realized that they would be having wind advantage later on. But the signs were ominous. Worse happened. The man to whom they would have looked most of all in these conditions (in any conditions) for assistance, Jimmy Holohan received a hand injury and had to leave the field. Rathnure were “in the pits”.

The alley hammered home every advantage. As Rathnure searched frantically for a winning formula, and this certainly included a reliable mid-field partnership, in the absence of Holohan, the challenger’s mid-field pair of Seán Whelan and Eamonn Sinnott kept up the flow of play to their attack.

And then the man who has been the driving force behind Buffers Alley for two decades, and who twice this year rescued the team from defeat (v Cloughbawn and in the drawn match), Tony Doran, burst into the limelight once more. He got in at the end of a movement that had been initiated by two other veterans of the team, Mick Butler and Martin Casey, and the ball was again at the back of the Rathnure net.

The Buffers Alley onslaught was ongoing and before half-time had built a lead of 2-8 to 0-2.

The new champions scored only two points in the second half, as their opponents did in the first, but they defended in a way far superior to what Rathnure had exhibited earlier. At no stage did the latter forwards look as if they might score a goal from play.

Encouraged all the way by the tenacious Pat Kenny, there was sterling defensive work particularly by Paul Gahan and John Donohoe. The Alley lost the services of their centre back, Matty Foley, and it was a big blow –but it did not inconvenience them to the extent that Rathnure suffered at the loss of their star. Full-blooded, tackling was the order, and the members of the holders’ attack lost their bearings. Even points were difficult to get and Rathnure sorely missed the accurate free-taking of Holohan. Then despair set in... Their single ‘major’ score came from a penalty by Marks Morrissey as injury time was being played.

At the end of the day Buffers Alley were delighted. They had “pulled one over” on the team that had denied them for so long.

But there is another reason that will make this victory “famous” in Kilmuckridge and Monamolin. It is the first time that Buffers Alley beat Rathnure in a senior final.

The circumstances of the semi-final draw, and the advantage of weather conditions, will all be forgotten. All that counts is that in 1988 Buffers Alley chalked up their eight senior hurling success – this time at the expense of the club that did most to frustrate them in the past.

They are the second winners of the ‘Gain’ trophy. All the winners will be acknowledged by their own faithful followers as heroes and the question will, inevitably be posed (again) will the Butlers, Fr. Casey and Tony Doran be retiring. I doubt it.

They have shown (again) that they are as good as any of the youthful hurlers of the county. It does not augur well for our prospects at inter-county level, but it is a fact.

Henry Butler kept goal very well all year and he was superb in this final. In front of him team captain, Pat Kenny, was a tower of strength and was ably assisted by his cornermen Barry Murphy and John O’Leary. As stated wing backs, Paul Gahan and John Donohoe, were outstanding and so was Matty Foley until his injury.

I have also already referred to the energetic play of Seán Whelan and Eamonn Sinnott. The latter, after an exceedingly busy, but rather
doubtful year, suddenly came good for his club.

Enough cannot be said in praise of the big-hearted men of the Buffers Alley attack. Fearless and prepared to accept defeat only after the final whistle has blown, the trio of Doran, Butler and Casey, hammered home the great approach work of the younger Tom Dempsey, Paddy Donohoe and Seamus O’Leary.

Casey, who was substituted in previous games, was ideal for this sort of test and his inclusion at centre-forward had a big bearing on the result. Tom Dempsey is another inter-county player who “got things together” for this game while the foraging of Paddy Donohoe brought him forward many points in the estimation of neutral followers. Seamus O’Leary’s goal was the score that inspired his team – Doran’s was the one that crushed the champions.

Rathnure will have many excuses. There will be many who will have sympathy with them. They will, one hopes, learn the lesson that no opposition at this level of the game should be treated lightly.

They had few stars on this occasion. Martin Quigley had another great set-to with Tony Doran and perhaps it is the first time that he has come off second best. Yet no one can dare fault him for defeat.

David Sheehan, Jim O’Connell, John Conran, James Redmond and John Murphy tried everything they knew and won honour in defeat.

**Team:** Henry Butler, Pat Kenny (Capt.), John O’Leary, Paul Gahan, Matty Foley, John Donohoe, Seán Whelan (0-1), Eamonn Sinnott, Tom Dempsey (0-1), Martin Casey (0-1), Paddy Donohoe (0-1), Mick Butler (0-4), Tony Doran (1-2), Seamus O’Leary (1-0). Subs: Colin Whelan for Matty Foley (inj.), Ben Martin, Fintan O’Leary, John Gahan, Colm Doran, Matt Furlong, Marney Burke, Harry Lee, Michael Murphy, Ger Sweeney. Referee: Dickie Murphy. Man of the Match: Paul Gahan.
COUNTY FINAL DAY 1988
Buffers Alley qualified to meet the Offaly kingpins, Seir Kieran, in the semi-final of the Leinster hurling club championship on Sunday week when they disposed of the surprisingly strong challenge of Carlow Town at Carlow on Saturday by 5-8 to 4-6.

Everything appeared to be going according to the script in the first half when the Alley cruised into a 3-6 to 1-2 interval lead with 2 goals from Fintan O’Leary, the first after only 25 seconds, and the third from Tom Dempsey. The Carlow goal came from a well-struck Joe Hayden sideline ball.

The Alley were being helped by a slight second half breeze and seemed to have it all wrapped up. But it did not work out quite like that.

A very eager and fit Carlow side, that boasted some fine hurlers, hit back with 1-3. A Tom Dempsey goal put the Alley back in control it seemed, but Tadgh Doyle had Carlow’s fourth goal from a penalty to leave only three points in it.

Brendan Hayden hit a Carlow point and with five minutes to go the home side were doing all the pressing. However, they could not close the gap further and in the last minute Tony Doran set up Mick Butler for the clinching goal.

The Alley backs were a trifle shaky and will not be happy at conceding so many scores. It could have been worse but for some fine saves by Henry Butler. Seán Whelan and Eamonn Sinnott did pretty well at midfield, and the Alley forwards were quite sharp, Dempsey and O’Leary nabbing two goals each. Tony Doran was scoreless for the hour, but distributed the ball to good effect.

The game was noteworthy for the return to competitive action of Colm Doran. He came on as a sub for John O’Leary when the Alley were ten points ahead, his first outing of the season. He did look a little rusty, but showed some of the old dash also.

Carlow were surprisingly good and Joe and Brendan Hayden, Brendan Doyle and Tadgh Doyle can be very happy with their displays. It must be remembered that for the past two years Rathnure only managed to overcome the Carlow champions by a single point on their way to the Leinster titles double.

TEAM: Henry Butler, Barry Murphy, Pat Kenny, John O’Leary, Paul Gahan, Matty Foley, John Donohoe, Seán Whelan (0-1), Eamonn Sinnott, Tom Dempsey (2-2), Martin Casey (0-1), Paddy Donohoe, Tony Doran, Mick Butler (1-4), Fintan O’Leary (2-0), Subs: Colm Doran for J. O’Leary, John Gahan for J. Donohoe.
A GOAL direct from a sideline puck by Seán Whelan five minutes from the end was the clincher for Buffers Alley as they earned a place in the Leinster hurling club final with a hard-earned win over Offaly champions, Seir Kieran, at Athy on Sunday.

This score put the Alley four points clear in a gripping encounter contested in bitterly cold conditions, and they were not going to be caught. Points from a Tom Dempsey free and by Martin Casey from play put the icing on the cake.

The Offaly men had fought back to level terms with ten minutes left and were looking dangerous.

Tom Dempsey sent in a free from over 70 yards out on the right wing. It was signalled wide, but there were vehement protests from the Alley forwards led by Tony Doran, and the referee ordered the white flag to be raised, after consultation.

Just a couple of minutes later cam e Whelan’s killer goal, when the Offaly ’keeper appeared to be distracted by Tony Doran. It was no more than the Alley deserved, as they had fought with all their usual tenacity to overcome very stubborn resistance from the first time Offaly champions.

The Alley was without Seamus O’Leary, who has a back injury, and Colin Whelan came in at wing back. Tony Doran lined out at corner-forward with Mick Butler facing Eugene Coughlan in the full-forward berth.

This play worked well in the county final and it worked here again. Doran caused consternation in the first half, shot two good points that could have been goals, and his opponent was replaced after just 20 minutes.

Seir Kieran started the better and dominated the first quarter but shot eight wides and the Alley actually led by 0-3 to 0-1 after being on the rack. Then a long free into the Alley goal mouth seemed harmless but Pat Kenny fouled Joe Dooley and Dooley himself exacted full revenge when he blasted to the net to give his side the lead for the only tim e in the game 1-1 to 0-3.

The Alley then began to hurl in earnest and applied steady pressure to the interval which yielded points from Doran, a great effort from Martin Casey after a flowing move and two from frees from Mick Butler, who was not finding the range. A Joe Dooley pointed free was the only reply and the Alley led by 0-7 to 1-2 at half-time.

Points were swapped on the restart but then Seir Kieran had one of their best spells and applied strong pressure. There were a number of defensive scores but the Alley did not yield, despite some desperate goalmouth scrambles.

Seán Whelan, and Tom Dempsey switched and both benefited. Dempsey and Eamonn Sinnott who was booked, won back midfield superiority while Whelan posed a serious threat from the half forward berth. John Gahan came on for a struggling Paddy Donohoe on the other wing of the attack.

A Billy Dooley point after twenty minutes brought the sides level, and the game see-sawed back and forth at a frantic pace until Dempsey’s disputed point and Whelan’s sideline- puck goal swung it decisively to the Alley.

It was essentially a team victory but Seán Whelan, Pat Kenny, Matty Foley, Martin Casey, Tom Dempsey in the second half and Paul Gahan played very well. Barry Murphy improved greatly after a shaky start, and Henry Butler made some good saves but caused some heart-tremors by blocking down a number of high balls in front of his goal. Tony Doran took his points well and was generally a threat to the Offaly defence.

The Alley will now meet the Shamrocks of Kilkenny in the Leinster final, and a win there would give them a great chance or clinching that elusive first All-Ireland club title for the county. The champions of Galway, Tipperary and Cork all gone and the Leinster winners will probably be favourites to win out.

This win by Buffers Alley did something to restore flagging pride in the county and also redressed the balance for two very disappointing defeats by Offaly early in the year in the League semi-final and the Leinster final.

**Buffers Alley:** Henry Butler, Barry Murphy, Pat Kenny, John O’Leary, Paul Gahan, Matty Foley, Colin Whelan, Seán Whelan (1-2), Eamonn Sinnott, Tom Dempsey (0-5), Martin Casey (0-2), Paddy Donohoe, Mick Butler (0-1), Tony Doran (0-2), Fintan O’Leary. Sub: John Gahan for Donohoe.

**Seir Kieran:** Liam Coughlan, Seán Coughlan, Eugene Coughlan, Paddy Connors, Paddy Mulrooney, Michael Coughlan, Ger Connors, Pat Mulrooney (0-1), Kieran Dooley, John Dooley, Jimmy Connors (0-2), Noel Bergin, Michael Mulrooney, Joe Dooley (1-3), Billy Dooley (0-1). Subs: Johnny Abbot for P. Connors, Joe Mooney for M. Mulrooney.

Referee: Paddy Delaney (Laois).

(Gaelic Parade 24th Nov. 1988).
Any club that can win nine county championships in an eleven year period, take only one provincial title in that period, and still have the courage to fight again, deserves the utmost respect.

That Buffers Alley finally came through to win their second title in Sunday’s Leinster Club senior hurling final at the expense of Kilkenny champions, Shamrocks, at Dr. Cullen Park, Carlow, is more than just reward for their perseverance and makes up for the frustration and wait since their only provincial success of 1985’86.

For Buffers Alley, as in their county final games with Rathnure, it was a victory for sheer courage and commitment, which was backed up by no little skill, but it was the same courage and commitment that the Kilkenny champions failed to overcome as they staged their victory effort in the third quarter. There was sheer jubilation in the Alley camp on the sounding of the final whistle, and just how sweet this victory meant to the small rural parish could be seen in the broad victory smile of that great warrior Tony Doran. It was a smile of a job well done, but also one which showed that Wexford hurling still has much to offer.

While the heavy pitch did not lend itself to fluent hurling, it, nevertheless, provided quite an interesting struggle, although one could term it a game of two halves with the Alley clearly the dominant force in the opening thirty minutes, while on the resumption it was the Shamrocks who took up the initiative with the Wexford champions fighting a magnificent rearguard action. It turned out to be a rousing second-half with both sides showing the will to win, which all helped contribute to an entertaining game. Buffers Alley in their thirty minutes supremacy played some delightful hurling, while The Shamrock’s deft stick work in the second period was not enough and they had to rely on the superb free taking of midfielder, Ger Fennelly, to bring them within sight of victory.

It was two magnificent Buffers Alley scores which in the end proved the real difference between what were two very evenly matched sides. The first arrived in the tenth minute when the red head of Tony Doran went hurling through the air. In one deft movement he fetched a Tom Dempsey lob from the air and in a startling turn and strike he left Kevin Fennelly helpless for a magnificent goal, which brought the crowd to its feet.
Their second most decisive score arrived on the stroke of full-time. Clinging desperately to a two point lead, it was another veteran Mick Butler who sailed over a magnificent point from all of forty-five yards out on the sideline, which sent the cup on its way to the North Wexford parish.

It was fitting that two such magnificent efforts should play a vital part in this magnificent victory and in the destination of the title. The standard of hurling all through was quite high, but it is those two mammoth efforts which will be sung for many a long day down Kilmuckridge way.

Both teams looked remarkably sharp after such a long season, but it was the Alley who settled much the quicker and in the process they clearly unsettled the rhythm of the Kilkenny champions, and never once over the hour were the Wexford champions headed, and they held an interval lead of 1-10-0-2.

Shamrocks pepped up their pace on the resumption and Ger Fennelly punished some reckless fouling in the Alley defence, and as the game entered the final three minutes, the Shamrocks were on the offensive with only two points separating the sides 1-11 to 1-9.

But it was when matters looked like going against them that the Alley showed the determination of the champions. They fought their way back into the Shamrocks territory for Mick Butler to swing over that delightful clinching point.

There is no denying but that Buffers Alley deserved their victory in the end. This was a victory brought about by their ability to take scores at crucial times, and it was these scores which decided the destination of the title, for it took too much out of the Shamrocks in their efforts to regain the initiative.

It was a victory not alone for Buffers Alley but also for Wexford hurling. With the game going through such demoralizing time in recent months, it was badly in need of a lift, and this is what the men from the Alley really did.

(Proud moment! Pat Kenny holds the cup aloft after receiving it from Leinster Chairman, Jack Boothman, following the Alley’s victory in the Leinster final against Shamrocks of Kilkenny.

They brought pride back into Wexford followers with their courage, skill and it is this type of commitment which could well see them become the first Wexford club to lift the All-Ireland title.

While it was the veterans who picked off the crucial scores, one had to be impressed by the play of Colin Whelan at left half-back, Seán Whelan and Eamonn Sinnott at mid-field, and the non-stop effort of Paddy Donohoe at wing-forward. The coolness of the veterans whose experience inspired the younger players around them were crucial factors in what must be termed a team victory.

It will be difficult to defeat such courage and commitment, which backed up by no little skill, will see the Alley mount a mighty challenge for that elusive title. Let’s hope this type of effort will spread right through Wexford hurling in the New Year.

Team: Henry Butler, Barry Murphy, Pat Kenny, John O’Leary, Colin Whelan, Matty Foley, Paul Gahan, Eamonn Sinnott, Seán Whelan, Tom Dempsey (0-1), Fr. Martin Casey (0-1), Paddy Donohoe, Mick Butler (0-10 – 8 frees, 1 ‘65), Tony Doran (1-0), Fintan O’Leary. Subs: John Gahan for Fintan O’Leary, Matt Furlong for Matty Foley.

(Echo, 9th Dec. 1988)
Buffers Alley could not have had it easier. Without moving into top gear they had sixteen points (2-19-0-9) to spare over second-class Four Roads, Roscommon and Connaught title-holders, in the All-Ireland senior hurling championship semi-final at Wexford park last Sunday.

Approximately 2,000 followers including 500 from the west of the Shannon, basked in the bright Spring sunshine, but if it was hurling thrills they came for they were disappointed. It would be ludicrous to suggest, however, that followers of the Kilmuckridge team went away unhappy.

The Wexford champions were ‘light years’ ahead of this opposition in hurling skill and physical fitness. They had the advantage of the breeze and had the sun in their backs in the opening period. Determined defending was expected of the team that lowered the colours of Galway champions, Abbeyknockmoy, but at a very early stage it was evident that they did not possess what it takes to keep Tony Doran, Mick Butler and company in subjection for the duration.

That the Four Roads defenders were “hardy” goes without saying. Their play for the most part for keeping the opposition from scoring was to place themselves physically in the way. Standing on the ball, taking the stroke of the hurley on any limb that might prevent contact with the ball, and holding an opponent’s hurley or jersey, were tactics that made life miserable for the Buffers Alley forwards in the first quarter.

But in that time referee John Long punished severely the Four Roads defense, Mick Butler was at his best free-taking form and thanks mainly to his accuracy the Wexford men were leading by five points without reply in that spell.

Then, after Tony Doran had stretched the lead with another very fine point, came the first of the game’s two goals. A ground clearance by Roscommon full-back Seamus Dowd was snapped up by right half forward, Tom Dempsey. He raced on to the ball at full speed, tore through the centre of the defence and “let fly” from about twenty yards. Keeper Adrian Tully had no chance as the ball whizzed well wide of his despairing dive to the right. Even then it was a case of magnitude of the Buffers Alley victory margin.

Dempsey immediately added a point before Seamus O’Leary slammed home the second ‘major’. Just three minutes after Dempsey’s goal, the corner forward availed of a major blunder in the Four Roads full back line to send the ball first-time to the net. At that stage the Alley were 2-7 to nil in front and they went on to lead by 2-10 to 0-2 at the interval.

Quite honestly, there were few in attendance, even amongst the very vocal Four Roads supporters, who anticipated a change in the trend of play in the second-half. There was one Roscommon mentor, however, who insisted that the match was there for the winning by his team. And he wasn’t joking. Following the game he was still in the same frame of mind – which Four Roads should have taken control and won in the second half.

In truth, they were not equipped to do anything of the kind. They strove gallantly but the Buffers Alley men were content to contain their challenge.
At the end of the third quarter the Wexford champions had tacked on another six points in reply to two from the opposition (2-16-0-4) and in the dreary last fifteen minutes, with the crowd streaming towards the exits each team had a further three points.

The standard of play declined as the hour progressed. It is not possible to produce good hurling at half pace and the urgency was, most certainly, gone from the Kilmuckridge effort. Henry Butler in the winner’s goal has rarely had a quieter afternoon. But the game was only seven minutes in progress when he was given a little moment by a wild-swinging Tom Fallon. The referee cautioned the Roscommon corner forward when Butler, in catching a high ball, was felled with a blow to the head. Thereafter he was called on to save five or six shots from long range.

The opposition keeper, Adrian Tully, was also “in the wars”. Towards the end of the first half, and having conceded two goals, he sustained a hand injury as he tussled with forwards well away from his goal and he was replaced by Michael Gately.

In the second half, Four Roads introduced Tom Finnerton for George Coyle and Michael Donnelly for Tom Fallon without the desired results. The strength of the winners was shown with the introduction of John Gahan for Paddy Donohoe. It showed that no one can be complacent about holding his place on this Buffers Alley team and the younger brother of Paul Gahan was quite efficient.

One could not let the occasion pass without reference to the standard of refereeing. It is perplexing how an official of the experience of John Long would be so whistle happy to the detriment of the enjoyment of the game.

We would generally give vent to our feelings against a referee when in a losing situation. Let it be said when the Wexford side came out on
top in easy fashion that he consistently sacrificed continuous play for petty and obscure reasons.

His decision to disallow a Buffers Alley goal in the fifth minute was mystifying and to hear his reason and see the video of the game would be very interesting.

The best feature of the Buffers Alley team is their balance. They are a much better and more discipline team now than they were when winning the Wexford title. Their defence is most consistent, the midfield partnership of Seán Whelan and Eamonn Sinnott is terrier-like and the scoring sextet possesses just about every asset.

From a ‘county’ point of view the new-found enthusiasm of Tom Dempsey is gratifying. On Sunday he had his best game for two years. He was incisive and accurate. It is a pity that Paul Gahan will not be available to the county selectors for the championship. But Barry Murphy, Pat Kenny and Matty Foley will definitely be on the short list. The latter is another that has been improving rapidly and in this encounter he was in direct opposition to the best player (Paul Dolan) in the visiting team.

In attack, as always, Tony Doran and Mick Butler were the architects. The “ageless wonders” had some delightful points from play. In particular, Doran’s deft touches caused much pleasure but left many wondering about the standing of hurling amongst the “younger generation”. What the visitors lacked in skill they more than compensated for in “heart”. They tried all the way. The efforts of Seamus Dowd and Frank Carty in defence were brave. They also had two good workers in their midfielders, Michael Cunniffe and Gerge Coyle while Paul and Paddy Dolan never shirked in attack.

One must accept, however, that they may have been fortunate to overcome the Galway champions, and one expects higher class performance at this level of competition.

BUFFERS ALLEY: Henry Butler, Barry Murphy, Pat Kenny (Capt.), John O’Leary, Paul Gahan, Matty Foley, Colin Whelan, Seán Whelan, Eamonn Sinnott, Tom Dempsey (1-4), Fr. Martin Casey (0-2), Paddy Donohoe, Mick Butler (0-9), Tony Doran (0-3), Seamus O’Leary (1-1). Subs: John Gahan for Paddy Donohoe.

(Echo, Feb. 17th 1989)
Buffers Alley step out on Croke Park this Friday to take on O’Donovan Rossa of Belfast in the All-Ireland club hurling final, and they are determined to take this title and the Tommy Moore Cup back to Wexford for the first time.

They field exactly the same team that clobbered Four Roads in the semi-final at Wexford Park. Colm Doran is hospitalized and is out of the subs panel, but other than that the Alley report a clean bill of health.

It’s tough on Colm to miss out on his club’s “big day”. He was trainer of the Alley team that played Kilruane McDonagh’s in the 1986 final, when they lost a game that was there for the taking.

The following comment was recorded in a desperately disappointed Alley dressing room after the game “Nerves played a big part. We should have won, but no matter how hard we tried, we just couldn’t put it together. Now is the time to stick together. We will be back”

Few outside the Alley really believed that. Their great chance was gone, especially for the older members of the squad, was the general feeling. Three years later the Alley is still together, and they most certainly are back.

This Friday’s final gives Buffers Alley a chance to atone for that bitter disappointment of three years ago. It gives them a chance to put the icing on a most remarkable period in the club’s long history by being crowned champions of Ireland, and it is a chance to give hurling morale in Wexford a shot in the arm, living proof that with hard work and commitment. Wexford hurlers are capable of being the best in the country.

I think Buffers Alley can win it this time. But only if they come to terms with the mental problems posed by the big occasion, as well as with the physical ones posed by O’Donovan Rossa. This is where the cruel experience gained three years ago should prove invaluable. They are now battle hardened and should be able for all the pressures of the big day.

Buffers Alley have the experience and the ability to win, and the players must believe in themselves. But that is not the same thing as complacency or over-confidence. O’Donovan Rossa are there on merit and will concede nothing easily.

Bro. Michael O’Grady, former Wexford senior hurling coach, thinks the Alley can win if they play their natural game and are on top form. He saw O’Donovan Rossa shock his native Patrickswell in the All-Ireland semi-final.

“They are a competent team, not a great team. Patrickswell missed some scores that could have won the game for them, and as the game went on O’Donovan Rossa improved as they began to believe they really could do it” he says.

Therefore, it is very important that Buffers Alley take control of the game and impose their will on it from an early stage. They should set the pace, and make sure it is played the way they want it. They are capable of doing that.

Fr. Jim Butler has put his charges through a very tough training regime since Christmas and they have played countless challenge games. They certainly looked sharp against Four Roads, but the opposition was too weak to make a fair assessment.

Fr. Butler also believes the Alley can win, but is very cautious about the unknown quantity that is O’Donovan Rossa. “We can do it, but will need to reproduce the form we showed against Rathnure in the county final replay and against the Shamrocks in the Leinster Final” he says.

Experienced selectors, John Doyle, Jack Hall and Pierie Butler, feel that they have come up with the best blend and have left the team
exactly as it started against Four Roads. They should have the mix right by now; the final will be the Alley’s 14th game in this campaign.

**Henry Butler** had some uncertain moments last year, but was back to his best in the closing stages of the Leinster campaign. He is fronted by a very strong full-back line in Barry Murphy, Captain **Pat Kenny** and the sound **John O’Leary**.

**Matty Foley** has been a real “find” at centre-back, using his height well under the dropping ball. He is flanked on the right by the elegant emigrant, **Paul Gahan**, who is now displaying bite as well as style, and the hard working **Colin Whelan** on the left.

Dashing **Eamonn Sinnott** and the very reliable **Seán Whelan** makes a strong midfield pairing. In the half-forwards, **Tom Dempsey** appears to be back at his considerable best, while **Fr. Martin Casey** is very fit and hard to contain. **Paddy Donohoe** sometimes struggles but has grabbed some vital goals.

**Tony Doran** may be making his last appearance in Croke Park and he is still the man the Antrim defenders will fear. He has had one of his best seasons, scoring a whole series of important goals. **Mick Butler** is still a handful for the best and a deadly free-taker, while **Seamus O’Leary** is an elusive runner and a clean striker of the ball. He again keeps Fintan O’Leary out of the side.

What of O’Donovan Rossa? Belfast based, they were very strong in hurling in the late sixties and goalie **Paddy Quinn**, **Seán Collins** and **Jim Fagan** have three Ulster club medals from that era. They then became more noted as footballers and this year was their first time to win the Antrim championship since 1977, beating Cushendall in the final – the side beaten in the All-Ireland semi-final by Buffers Alley in 1986. They had a tough fight against Lavey of Derry in the Ulster Final and then had that sensational win over the Munster champions, Patrickswell.

Ciarán Barr, the first Ulster hurling All-Star, is their best known player, figuring in the forwards; his brother Mark will be at corner-back and the three Murray brothers are also very influential, especially captain and full-back **Damian**.

In a recent National League game, Limerick were leading Antrim by twelve points when Rossa’s **Donal Armstrong** and **Ger Rogan** were introduced and they inspired such a fight back that they only lost by two points, and were unlucky not to win. Armstrong is a player the Alley will have to curb.

According to Tony McGee of the Belfast Irish News, O’Donovan Rossa plays a direct, fast-moving game, keeping the ball travelling. They went to Limerick confident of reaching the final and were not surprised at their win. They are also quietly confident of beating Buffers Alley.

While the Antrim champions deserve the utmost respect, I feel the overall ability, the expertise and the never-say-die spirit of Buffers Alley will triumph on this occasion. I think after a searching examination, they will be crowned hurling kings of Ireland this Friday, and a long cherished dream will be fulfilled.

*(Guardian 16th March, 1989)*
HENRY BUTLER: One of the longest serving goalkeepers in club hurling. Henry is now one of the veterans of the current side. He has represented his county in all grades of hurling, but will be hoping to win his first All-Ireland senior medal on St. Patrick’s Day.

BARRY MURPHY: A strong player in the Alley’s last line of defense. A player who came through the under-age ranks with much success, he has represented his county in all grades of hurling, being a regular member of the senior side a few seasons back. Had one of his best years for a long time in 1988.

PAT KENNY: Pat having forced his way back into the Wexford senior side has recovered his appetite for the game. A strong defender on the edge of the square, he is a player who could have a vital bearing on the outcome of this final.

JOHN O’LEARY: Possibly one of the most under-rated defenders in the side. His contribution goes mostly un-noticed, but one will see few scores come off this consistent defender. He has won numerous under-age medals with the club as well as county senior medals.

PAUL GAHAN: This could possibly be Paul’s farewell game for some time for the club. Now domiciled in England where he emigrated two months back, it is not known if he will be available in the future. Winner of four senior medals with the club, he is a top class defender.

MATTY FOLEY: Matty has settled in well to the unaccustomed position for him of centre back. Another player who has collected underage titles with the club, he was also a member of the Alley side when they lost the last club final in ‘86.

COLIN WHELAN: Younger brother of Seán, he will be making his first appearance in the club final scene. When brought in for the Leinster Club Final he had an outstanding game and he will prove a difficult opponent for any forward.

SEÁN WHELAN: Seán has represented his county at every level. A member of the Buffers Alley senior team since 1981, and winner of six county senior medals, Seán will be hoping to win his first All-Ireland club medal.

EAMONN SINNOTT: Eamonn who won his first senior club medal last year will be hoping to add an All-Ireland medal to his collection. A stylish hurler who has won many under-age honours with the club, he could have a vital influence on the destination of the title.

SEAMUS O’LEARY: Winner of six county championship medals as well as numerous underage awards. He has represented Wexford in all grades of hurling, commencing his career as a goalkeeper in minor. He will be hoping to make it a torrid afternoon for the O’Donovan Rossa goalkeeper.

TOM DEMPSEY: One of the most stylish forwards in the team. Despite only being in his early twenties he is looked upon as one of the more experienced players in the team. He has won Leinster minor and under-21 medals with Wexford, while he also helped St. Peter’s College to an All-Ireland College’s Final game. Tom is the holder of six senior championship medals.

MARTIN CASEY: A native of Causeway, Co. Kerry, Martin won his first senior hurling medal with the club as a substitute in 1968, and now has nine such awards. A one-time stalwart with the county senior team, he has also captured two Leinster club and an Intermediate Football award, and won an all-Ireland Minor hurling medal with Wexford in 1968. He also managed the Co. minor team in 1987 and has been a loyal and dedicated servant to Buffers Alley. Looking to add to his collection of medals today.

PADDY DONOHOE: Paddy only became a regular in the side during the 1988 championship campaign. He came up through the underage ranks and had his finest hour in the final replay with Rathnure.

MICK BUTLER: Brother of goalie, Henry, Mick has won nine county senior hurling championships medals and holder of two Leinster senior medals with Wexford as well as numerous other awards at senior and under-age level. Mick, the side’s free taker, is the leading scorer for his side.
TONY DORAN: Tony will be hoping to win the only award that has eluded him in his illustrious career. One of the all-time greats of Wexford hurling, he feels he will have achieved his greatest honour if he can inspire this small rural parish to the All-Ireland club title.

 BEN MARTIN: Substitute goalkeeper. Ben has been denied the opportunity to display his excellent netminding prowess at the highest level due to the excellence of Henry Butler. However, he is a competent culbair with the club’s Intermediate hurling team and holds a host of Co. Senior medals.

FINTAN O’LEARY: Fintan captained the Wexford U21 team that won the Provincial title in 1987 and has represented Wexford and St. Peter’s College with distinction. He is in sharpshooting form and should make a huge impact if called up today.

JOHN GAHAN: John made his first Co. Final appearance this year in the drawn game and was rewarded with his first Co. senior medal. He has donned the purple & gold jersey for Wexford and is a very reliable and skilful sub to have in today’s panel.

MARNEY BURKE: Marney was a member of the Wexford minor hurling panel that qualified for the All-Ireland final in 1980 and scored the match winning goal in the Co. Senior final of 1983. Has won five Co. Senior Hurling titles.

MATT FURLONG: Matt who originally played with Blackwater is a noted footballer but has been involved with Buffers Alley hurling and football for a while now. Won his first Co. Senior hurling medal last October. Matt came on as a sub in the Leinster Final v The Shamrocks.

JOHN DONOHUE: John holds two Leinster Club and two Senior Co. medals and playing at centre back is one of his best positions. He is a very competent and skilful player. His brother Paddy is on the starting 15 today.

GER SWEENEY: Ger has given many years of sterling service to Buffers Alley, manning the mid-field position on many occasions. He has won 6 senior Co. Senior titles, 2 Leinster Club and is hoping to finish it off today with the much sought after All-Ireland club medal. Has represented Wexford on many occasions winning u21 Leinster in 1979.

HAR LEE: Har played for Wexford in U21 Hurling in 1987, winning a Leinster medal. Won his first senior county medal last October and is hoping to add an All-Ireland Club medal to his silverware today.
Tom Lawless (2nd left) of the Alley Bar and Ger Sweeney, Sweeney Sports, Gorey, presented Tom Dempsey and Barry Murphy with a set of jumpers to commemorate the occasion of the club reaching the All-Ireland Club Hurling final, to be held in Croke Park on St. Patrick’s Day.

L to R: Henry Butler, Tony Doran & Seamus O’Leary took a break from training to pose for the photographer leading up to the All-Ireland.

L to R: Also taking a break from training – Tom Dempsey, Mick Butler, Har Lee, Ben Martin.
In underage hurling in Wexford over the past five years, Tom Dempsey was hailed as a forward with a tremendous future. He was the idol of under-age players and seemed set for what one could only describe as one with a bright future in hurling.

When Dempsey is on song, Buffers Alley is a far different side and this was never more evident than in the Leinster Final and the semi-final victory over Four Roads. Dempsey, in the Four Roads victory, possibly had his best game for over twelve months and his display transformed the Alley challenge.

Following his successful under-age career, Dempsey has had somewhat of a chequered passage at senior inter-county level, often finding it difficult to command a permanent position on the Wexford side.

He did not have a great start to last year’s championship campaign, but blossomed in the county final, and so far 1989 has been along the same lines. Although a marked player, his club will be looking to him to guide their fortunes from the forty in this historic bid.

It is a tribute to Dempsey’s ability that he can still flourish in the positions which are largely unsuitable while at the same time he can prove an accurate free taker from a long range. Clearly in the eyes of the selectors he is the individual best equipped to cope with new challenges, and his talents can be seen to advantage in any of the forward positions, while he is also a half-back of remarkable talent.

Dempsey’s adaptability is admirable and, obviously stems from his positive attitude. While Tom is the hurling jewel in the Alley attack, he still craves for that All-Ireland medal, which once achieved and hopefully on St. Patrick’s Day will prove a forerunner for Wexford’s bid for provincial and All-Ireland honours.

Although still in his early twenties, Tom is looked upon as a player with an abundance of experience having been part of an inter-county scene since he was seventeen, while also assisting his club to many thrilling county titles.

Tom, like his colleagues, respects the Antrim champions, particularly following their shock victory over Limerick champions, Patrickswell, in the All-Ireland semi-final.

Tom Dempsey is an extremely influential part of the Buffers Alley set-up and, though lately, his colleagues have proven they can win with style even when their diminutive forward is not at his best, his value to the Alley attack remains incalculable.

Tom respects the challenge of the Antrim side. While not knowing a lot about them, he says for them to travel to Limerick and defeat the home side in the semi-final, marks them out as a side to be given the utmost respect.

While Buffers Alley followers talk openly about the threat of Ciarán Barr, the first Antrim All Star, their O’Donovan Rossa counterparts fear Dempsey every bit as much. There is no doubt either that whichever of the two players makes the greater contribution on Friday can swing the All-Ireland his team’s way.

(The Echo Fri. 17th March, 1989)

THANKS A LOT

All the Buffers Alley players, mentors and officials greatly appreciate the support they have seen from all parts of the county during their Leinster and All-Ireland campaigns, indicated by the remarkable attendance of over 5,000 people at Wexford Park semi-final win over Four Roads.

They also appreciate the consideration shown to them by Wexford Co. Board officers and the senior hurling selectors. They put in a request for players to be released from county duty in the run up to the All-Ireland final, and this request was granted without hassle, despite the importance of the games the Wexford team was involved in. The Alley will look their best at Croke Park on Friday – they have been presented with new jerseys by Co. Wexford Farmers Co-op. and with knicks and socks by Waterford Foods, through Matty Casey.

(Guardian, 16th March, 1989)
Colm will miss out....

COLM DORAN, one of the great Buffers Alley stalwarts and one of the best half-backs produced by Wexford, will miss out on his club’s big day in the All-Ireland final this Friday. Colm was hospitalized for an operation on his back last week and is unlikely to even be in Croke Park for the final.

One of the most determined and tigerish defenders in the game, Colm graced Wexford senior teams for many years, winning an All-star Award at right half-back in 1973. He has been a regular on Buffers Alley teams since their county final victory in 1968 when he joined his brothers Bill, Joe and Tony on the victory rostrum.

Colm trained the Alley team that reached the All-Ireland club final in 1986, but has been on the fringes of the present panel because of injury problems, coming on for a while against Carlow Town. His heart will certainly be in Croke Park this Friday, and he is sure to figure too in the thoughts of his colleagues as they try to fulfil a cherished dream by winning the All-Ireland title.
‘Old Boys Union’

Buffers Alley look to...

...DAD’S ARMY... Fr. Martin Casey, Mick Butler, Tony Doran and Fr. Jim Butler

CEAD MILE FAILTE AND CONGRATULATIONS TO BUFFERS ALLEY

MENU

FRESH CREAM OF VEGETABLE SOUP

ROAST STUFFED LEG OF LAMB, MINT SAUCE

CHOCOLATE GATEAUX

TEA / COFFEE
BUFFERS ALLEY became Wexford’s first All-Ireland club hurling champions at sunny Croke Park on St. Patrick’s Day when they weathered a whirlwind start by Antrim champions O’Donovan Rossa, imposed their will on the game and eventually were comfortable winners 2-12 to 0-12.

It was a keenly contested, entertaining game, with the Antrim challenge stronger than many would have anticipated. The Alley players deserve every credit for a very determined display and for refusing to panic under the early onslaught.

But credit must also go to the sideline team who made some very shrewd moves, did not resort to panic measures either and made the minimum necessary number of switches, allowing the players to settle. The Alley lined out as expected, with Tony Doran moving to the corner in a switch with Mick Butler before the game started, a move that has become the norm since the county final.

In the first ten minutes it looked as if Buffers Alley were going to be swept off their feet. It was 6 points to 1 after ten minutes and but for the brilliance of Henry Butler in goal it would have been much worse. Butler made a half dozen saves in that frenzied period, one an unbelievable reflex effort from a point blank shot in the fifth minute. The defence was in disarray in front of him, being outpaced and caught out of position by the fleet-footed Antrim forwards. They were pouring through gaping gaps in the middle and picking off some lovely points led by all-Star Ciarán Barr who slapped over three points from play. The
only Alley answer was a Mick Butler point from a free and wides from long range by Tom Dempsey and Seán Whelan. The alley after ten minutes switched Paul Gahan to centre back from the wing, in a move with Matty Foley. Shortly after Tom Dempsey went to midfield in a move with Eamonn Sinnott.

And suddenly the Alley began to settle. Gahan plugged the gaps down the middle and snuffed out Barr who eventually had to move to full forward, where he got little change from Pat Kenny. Dempsey won more midfield ball and the Alley began to make their strength feel and to take control.

O’Donovan Rossa were to get only one more point in the last twenty minutes of the half, while the Alley notched another 1-4 and missed a few more. The vital goal that really settled their jangling nerves came in the 13th minute. Mick Butler flicked on a hard Sinnott centre and Seamus O’Leary burst his way through to plant the ball in the net. Tony Doran, who seemed to have the measure of his opponent, should have had another goal only three minutes later. He tore in along the end line in typical fashion, but he didn’t throw the ball up very well and his palmed effort was somehow batted away for a ’65 which Tom Dempsey pointed. A pointed Butler free had the sides level (1-3 to 0-6) after 18 minutes. There were just three more points to half-time, two of them for the Alley. One was a lovely effort from Doran who leaped high and had the ball over the bar in a twinkling and the other came from Seán Whelan just on half time to give the Alley a 1-5 to 0-7 lead.

The Alley now seemed in control, but would O’Donovan Rossa come out with all guns blazing in the early minutes again? Instead, it was the Wexford champs who got in the decisive early blows and the title was wrapped up with five minutes of the re-start. Dempsey pointed two frees and sandwiched in between them was the killer goal, Seamus O’Leary broke through again and the ball broke to Paddy Donohoe who slammed to the net through a crowded goalmouth, possibly helped by a deflection. The defenders protested that O’Leary had travelled on into the square, but the score stood after consultation and it was 2-7 to 0-8 and the Alley were clear.
They totally dominated the next fifteen minutes but did not get the scores that would have wiped out the Rossa challenge. Points from Doran and Dempsey were all they had to show from the 5th to the 24th minutes, but the Antrim men were now well held and never looked like getting back into it.

Eamonn Sinnott did get a lovely goal in the 7th minute, palm ing to the net as he was fouled and felled. The Ref called back play for a penalty. Mick Butler went low and the ball was cleared. They should have had another goal mid-way through when a shot from Seamus O’Leary was fumbled; Mick Butler hit the rebound weakly and goalie Quinn somehow managed to recover and scramble clear again. Points from sub Paddy Rogan and Ciarán Barr left only five points in it with five minutes left when the Alley should have been out of sight, and legs were now getting a bit weary. But there was no way back for the Antrim men now – victory was not this time going to be cruelly snatched away. Tony Doran, looking as lethal as at any time in the last twenty odd years, led again by inspiration and he bulled his way through for a point.

Paddy Donohoe got another and Matty Foley finished with a great score from midfield. The Antrim men fought to the end and Barr had the last word with his fifth point, but it was Buffers Alley’s day.

(Gaelic Parade, The Guardian 23rd March, 1989)

**Team:** Henry Butler, Barry Murphy, Pat Kenny (Capt.), John O’Leary, Paul Gahan, Matty Foley (0-1), Colin Whelan, Eamonn Sinnott, Seán Whelan (0-1), Tom Dempsey (0-4), Fr. Martin Casey, Paddy Donohoe (1-1), Mick Butler (0-2), Tony Doran (0-3), Seamus O’Leary (1-0). Subs: Ben Martin (sub-goalie), John Donohoe, John Gahan, Fintan O’Leary, Marney Burke, Matt Furlong, Harry Lee, Ger Sweeney.

**Trainer:** Fr. Jim Butler; Selectors: John Doyle, Pierie Butler, Jack Hall.
Buffers Alley Senior Hurling

Photos: Ger Hore Archives
All-Ireland Club Champions 1989

Photos courtesy Tony Doran.
Buffers Alley Senior Hurling

Photos courtesy Tony Doran.
All-Ireland Club Champions 1989

New Chairman Lauds Buffers Alley’s Victory

Buffers Alley’s historic win in the All-Ireland Club Championship on St. Patrick’s Day was a real tonic for Wexford hurling. Wexford County Board Chairman Joe O’Shaughnessy told last Monday night’s mini-convention in Murphy Flood’s Hotel, Enniscorthy.

In congratulating the victorious team and all associated with the historic victory, Mr. O’Shaughnessy believed the win would prove to be a turning point in the fortunes of Wexford hurling and that could only be good for the game in general, he said. In winning the coveted All-Ireland crown, Buffers Alley displayed all the characteristics associated with Wexford teams of the ‘50s and ‘60s said the new Chairman and victory was made all the sweeter by the Buffers Alley men, coming from behind, he added.

Shortly after winning the crown on Friday afternoon last, Mr. O’Shaughnessy surprised many in the Buffers Alley dressing room at Croke Park when he said the club’s win far surpassed any league win which the county could have achieved. He said the County Board had stood by the Buffers Alley players, and victory on Friday was “worth more than any league victories Wexford could have achieved”.

The decision of the Buffers Alley club to withdraw their players from the County Panel during the build-up to their All-Ireland Club bid has been a source of some controversy on the home front and Mr. O’Shaughnessy’s remarks will not find favour in every quarter.

We’ve done it! . . . A delighted Seamus O’Leary, scorer of the vital first goal, gives a victory wave as he walks off Croke Park pitch.

Wexford’s newly appointed Vice-Chairman, Mr. Paddy Wickham also joined in the tributes to the Buffers Alley team at Monday night’s mini convention. He said their win was a great one in every sense of the word and could do nothing but good for Wexford hurling.

Mr. Ciarán O’Neill of the Leinster Council was of the same opinion when he addressed convention. He spoke of his sheer delight at Buffers Alley’s win and said Friday last was one of his happiest ever in Croke Park. He was particularly happy for the team members in general but “for my old friend – the red fellow” in particular.

The historic win was certainly the main talking point at the mini-convention with Gaels throughout the county united as never before in their praise of the Kilmuckridge-Monamolin men. Many agreed with the new Chairman when he said the win could well signal a turning point in Wexford hurling and if that be the case, then victory will prove all the sweeter with the passage of time.

TOMMY MOORE CUP

This cup is awarded to the winners of the All-Ireland Club Hurling Championship in memory of the late Tommy Moore, a native of Ballyragget, Co. Kilkenny. Tommy Moore was prominently associated with the Faughs club in Dublin for most of his adult life. He was Chairman and Treasurer for 40 years until he stepped down in 1969, but was immediately elected President. Following his death in May 1973 the club President presented the trophy in his honour to the Central Council of the GAA and is presented each year on St. Patrick’s Day to the winners of the Club All Ireland Final.
We had the Clash of the Ash, the lark in the park, north met south (east), the Tony Doran legend entered a new chapter and Buffers Alley came home with the Tommy Moore Cup, marking them as men apart, Club All-Ireland Hurling champions.

For a brief spell on Friday afternoon, St. Patrick’s Day, Wexford sporting aspirations centered on a rectangle of turf in the citadel of Irish national sport as the men from the north of the county (Buffers Alley) took on the men from the north of the country (O’Donovan Rossa) and earned their place in the annals of Irish Hurling.

Eighty minutes later the tiny north Wexford community earned its rightful place in the hearts of Gaels everywhere where the team captain Pat Kenny lifted the Tommy Moore Cup. It took a full twelve months for the distinctive green shirted hurlers to earn their place in Croke Park; it took two action packed periods of thirty five minutes each to make it all worthwhile. But there had been heart stopping minutes in between; moments when it looked as if the Alley were about to be ousted from the ultimate achievement and moments when it looked as if Wexford sporting hopes would once again be dashed on the jagged rocks of fate.

The entire event had taken on a carnival air from early morning when bright weather prospects boded well for those who considered an afternoon on the terraces of Croke Park better value than the home entertainment of St. Patrick’s Day parade and the cosy comforts of the ‘match’ on TV.

The men from the Alley arrived early at Croke Park. Team trainer, Fr. Jim Butler and up and coming starts Paul Gahan and Tom Dempsey led the charge to seats overlooking the tunnel in the Railway end and corner from where they viewed much of the Football final. Later, the Alley’s ‘red headed’ hero Tony Doran and brothers Henry and Pierie Butler arrived to join their colleagues. There was little sign of nervousness but the odd change of stance, the nervous tapping of a foot, the hardened jaw and betraying some signs of concern at the match to come.

Shortly before the off, they were joined by incoming County Board Chairman, Joe O’Shaughnessy and Secretary Seán Ormonde. Both men wished the Wexford representatives all the best, reminding them that the hurling supporters of Wexford would be with them at every stroke. Then, they retired quietly to allow the team and mentors to ready themselves for the match.

The Alley supporters were there in numbers erupting en masse as Pat Kenny led his men on to the pitch. One’s heart quite literally sank after than opening jubilation as the cheers of the Northerners grew louder and they swept home a five point lead. Alley’s short range marksman Mick Butler found it hard to find his rhythm in the opening exchanges and only some classic Tony Doran ‘catch’ and runs kept Wexford’s hopes alive. The buzz tore through the assembled crowd on each occasion when the distinctive red head player collected the ball and headed for goal with all the force of a bison at full belt, but it was when Mick Butler finally found his range and Seamus O’Leary sank that opening goal that the Alley supporters knew that they were on track.

But there were many more unsettling moments before the end as the men from Belfast earned due respect from their Wexford hurling masters.

The talk at half-time was of a heroic Doran and
the efforts of the Alley’s younger players in rising to the occasion “it’s going to be close, but I think that we have them now” one Alley faithful confided to me. “They have quietened Barr, but they could still take it” said another. Thirty five minutes later the Tommy Moore Cup was going home to a fitting resting place at the club’s complex at Monamolin. Tony Doran was chaired from the field and even the most partisan observer rose to applaud the Alley effort. The ‘green and yellow’ were swallowed up in a wave of shouting, cheering supporters and the kissing and hugging, the back slapping and the whoops of delight were still going on as Pat Kenny finally accepted what he later described as ‘the cup that cheers’.

Back down in the Buffers Alley dressing room, Michael Sweeney was having difficulty keeping order on the numbers anxious to make their way to begin the celebrations in earnest. The players made their way back in twos and threes, there were tears in the eyes of some of the club mentors and County Councillor, Joe Murphy, the man who had led the club to its first ever senior title was literally tingling with excitement.

But where was Tony, the question was on everyone’s lips “he is being interviewed by Michael Lyster’ said one, ‘he is still out on the pitch’ said another ‘they will pull him apart’ ventured a third.

By the time he did arrive, having battled his way through clapping, slapping, cheering supporters, all hailing the rebirth of the Doran legend, most of his colleagues were already on their way to the Grand Hotel in Wicklow where the meal would take place. The Grand was jammed; it seemed that more people had made their way to the fine Wicklow hostelry than had even cheered in Croke Park on that day. They jostled for position in the bar and each had his own story of the day. Had not, Paul Gahan’s switch been vital, what about that goal, what was all the complaint about Paddy Donohoe’s goal, and wait for it, what did you think of Tony?

Then it was back to Monamolin where the joint was jumping until the early hours and the legend has it that the last reveler left the complex at 10am on the following morning and went straight to a nearby shop to buy the papers to see how the match had really gone.
There were scenes of jubilation when the Buffers Alley team and mentors arrived back at the club complex in Monamolin on Friday night. Undoubtedly the man they all wanted to get near was the veteran Tony Doran who was showered with back slaps and messages of congratulations on finally winning the only medal which up to St. Patrick’s Day had eluded him.

It was fitting that a club of the stature of Buffers Alley should be the first to bring the coveted All-Ireland club title back to the Model County. They have been to the forefront of Wexford hurling for many years, but on St. Patrick’s Day they finally reached the pinnacle and the All-Ireland title.

There were jubilant scenes in Monamolin. The Alley arrived in a cavalcade of cars carrying the trophy which Wexford had longed to get for so many years. Inside the complex one could hardly hear the words of welcome such was the cheering and noise. Such scenes have not been seen in Wexford since the All-Ireland victories of 1968.

As one veteran said “Let’s hope this will prove an inspiration for Wexford hurling and we will see the McCarthy Cup back in the Model County in September”.

(The Guardian 24th March, 1989)
Celebrations in the Clubhouse on St. Patrick’s Night 1989

(Photos: Paddy Murphy, Photography, Enniscorthy)
Buffers Alley Senior Hurling

(Photos: Paddy Murphy, Photography, Enniscorthy).
ALL IRELAND Club Hurling champions, Buffers Alley, were feted in Gorey on Saturday night last following their historic Croke Park victory on St. Patrick’s Day. About a thousand people turned out to cheer the champions at a civic reception hosted by Gorey Town Commissioners on the town’s main street, outside the Market House. There were jubilant scenes as the Buffers Alley team led by their cup-waving captain Pat Kenny, paraded up the Main Street headed by the St. Michael’s Pipe Band. There was further ear-splitting cheering as the team mounted the platform.

Town Commissioners Chairman, Joe Funge, said it was a privilege to welcome Buffers Alley to Gorey after their historic win over O’Donovan Rossa (Antrim) and he called for a “big Gorey welcome”. The crowd duly responded.

Mr. Funge said that Pat Kenny and his men did the Gorey District proud in bringing the first-ever All-Ireland Club Championship to Co. Wexford. In coming back after a disappointing start, they showed what true champions were made of. Mr. Funge singled out for special mention the 43 year old Buffers Alley ‘veteran’ Tony Doran and said he had ‘played a blinder’. He congratulated him on achieving his complete collection of All-Ireland medals. Said Mr. Funge; “It is a long time since Wexford won an All-Ireland. I hope the county team will take a leaf out of Buffers Alley’s book and put the Boys of Wexford on the march again.

Cllr. Joe Murphy, who was a member of the first Buffers Alley team to win a county senior championship, introduced the team-members to the crowd and there was an extra loud cheer for Tony Doran.

Cllr. Rory Murphy, Vice-Chairman of Wexford Co. Council, paid tribute to what he described as a “marvellous Buffers Alley team which had brought great honour to the county”.

Cllr. Murphy said he was deputizing for Council Chairman Lorcan Allen who was in the United States. Cllr. Allen had spoken to him on the ‘phone that morning and sent his congratulations to Buffers Alley on a great win. Cllr. Allen’s message to them: “I am with you in spirit tonight”.

Joe O’Shaughnessy, Chairman of Wexford Co. Board of the GAA; Oliver Murray, Chairman of Gorey District Committee; and Rev. Walter Forde, C.C., Gorey joined in the tributes.

Buffers Alley Captain, Pat Kenny, thanked Gorey Town Commissioners for the Civic Reception and said it was more than they ever expected. He thanked everyone for their big welcome and for the support during the campaign.

Tony Doran, thanking everyone for the big welcome said it made “victory all the sweeter” when you know your efforts are appreciated so much. He also thanked all for their wonderful support over the years.

Team Trainer, Rev. Fr. Jim Butler, also associated himself with the thanks on behalf of the officials.

The attendance at the Civic Reception also included Jim Mulhall, Vice-Chairman of the Commissioners, Cllr. Michael D’Arcy and Jack O’Brien, Gorey District Secretary GAA.

BUFFERS ALLEY captain, Pat Kenny, with his two sons Barry and Bobby at the Civic reception in Gorey for the All-Ireland champions.

(Photograph courtesy People Newspapers)
A large gathering in Kilmuckridge at the welcome home ceremony.
THE FINAL CHAPTER in the greatest year in the history of Buffers Alley GAA club was written last Friday night when over 300 people attended the club’s annual dinner-dance and victory celebrations at the Hydro in Kilmuckridge.

On display were the Wexford, Leinster and All-Ireland club hurling championship trophies, and also some impressive camogie silverware, as this was an occasion shared by the GAA and camogie clubs.

Chairman, Mick Butler, said that they had fought back from the disappointment of three years ago when beaten in the All-Ireland and county finals to achieve their most cherished goal on St. Patrick’s Day when taking the All-Ireland club title to Wexford for the first time. ‘Now we are not the first club in Co. Wexford, but the leading club in all Ireland’”. It was just reward for all the dedication, commitment, and hard work, put in by everybody, Butler said with pride.

And the future looked quite secure as the club’s Bord na nÓg teams were doing well at U12 and U14 levels, he said. And he did not forget the footballers amid all the hurling euphoria – they had reached the county Intermediate Final and put up a good show. And the Alley had reached another landmark during the year – all debts are now paid off their club grounds and complex and all who helped to achieve this were warmly thanked.

Fr. Connolly, PP, the Club President talked of his pride in the club’s great achievements and said they had joined an elite band as the All-Ireland club title had been won by only six counties and thirteen clubs. He had a word for all those who had worked to keep things going in the old days when the rewards were few.

Dorothy Kenny, the Camogie Club Chairperson spoke in Irish and English and joined in the congratulations. The women had every reason to be happy also – they won the Wexford senior title for a remarkable fourteenth successive year in 1988.
Fr. Martin Casey (member of 1989 team) and Fr. Laurie Kehoe were among the large attendance at the victory dance in The Hydro.

Elsie Cody (nee Walsh) Buffers Alley and Wexford Camogie star, and her husband Brian (right) the Kilkenny and James Stephens hurler, with Seamus Kenny (centre) at the Buffers Alley victory dinner dance.

Peter O’Brien, a member of the Buffers Alley team that won the Co. Junior championship in 1928, had a chat about hurling with Tony Doran at the Buffers Alley victory celebrations in The Hydro on Fri. night.

Ann Kenny, Joan Sweeney, Moira Kenny and Brigid Kenny enjoying the celebrations.

Jim Kenny, father of Pat (Capt.) and Kathleen Corcoran enjoying the victory dinner dance.

Tommy & Mary O’Loughlin with Peter O’Brien at the victory dance.

(Photos: Paddy Murphy, Photography, Enniscorthy).
County Chairman, Joe O’Shaughnessy, said Wexford’s fortunes had been sagging and a lot of people were disillusioned, but Buffers Alley had given them all a tremendous boost to confidence and morale which he hoped would lead to a Leinster title this year.

Danny Lynch, the GAA National PRO travelled from Croke Park to present the All-Ireland and provincial medals and said the Alley’s win had been the culmination of many years of dedicated effort which would be savoured forever in their parish. Fr. Connolly presented the county medals.

Pat Kenny, the most successful Alley captain of them all, had one last duty to perform – he made presentations on behalf of the players to team trainer, Fr. Jim Butler and selectors John Doyle; Pierie Butler and Jack Hall. “The Three Wise Men”, as he called them.

Pat will be succeeded as captain this year by Tom Dempsey who was congratulated on being selected as a replacement hurling All-Star. Tony Doran was also congratulated on being named B & I “Personality of the Month”, the “Irish Independent”, “Sport Star of the Week” and the “Powers Sports Person of the past 25 Years”, while Elsie Cody got the “Powers Silver Jubilee Camogie Award”.

It was a most enjoyable night as the Buffers Alley club and its supporters basked in the glow of their achievements. But already thoughts are turning to this year, with much talk about the county championship draw being made this week.

And Mick Butler rang out a warning to all – Buffers alley will not be content to rest on their laurels, they will be all out to retain the Wexford championship and take their tenth senior title since 1968. Only one club – the James Stephens of Kilkenny has managed to retain their County title the year after winning the All-Ireland; Buffers Alley aim to be the second.
10th Anniversary Celebrations
March 1999

(Photos: Mary Foley)
All-Ireland Club Champions 1989

(Photos: Mary Foley)
Tony Doran, the man from Boolavogue, was just three weeks short of his 43rd birthday when he won his club All-Ireland medal. When I visited him at his farm in Monagrena, Monamolin, he recalled the time and what it meant, ‘Winning the All-Ireland title with Buffers Alley was my greatest thrill’. You’d have to go back to 30 years ago before the club championships ever started; it was something we didn’t even dream of as a struggling Junior club. To win the All-Ireland was the icing on the cake.

Four of the team had been there from the start – goalkeeper Henry Butler, his brother Mick, Fr. Martin Casey and myself. Fr. Martin had a great influence on the club and was very loyal to us, maintaining the link, no matter where he was stationed as a priest. Buffers Alley encompasses Kilmuckridge and Monamolin. The Butlers are from Kilmuckridge. Another person involved from the start was my brother Colm but though he played in an earlier round in our All-Ireland year, he was hospitalized with a back operation before the final. He still got out to see us win. In all we have won 12 county Senior Hurling titles including our first in 1968 and I was associated with 11 of those wins, playing in 10 and coming on as a substitute in the 11th. Fr. Martin Casey has all 12 medals, missing just two finals.

‘We didn’t go out at the start with the intention of winning the All-Ireland. We went out at first to win the Wexford title and beat Rathnure at last. To beat Rathnure eventually in a replay was our biggest club achievement up to that date. At the time we thought nothing could surpass that achievement. After that we beat Carlow Town, none too impressively, then Seir Kieran of Offaly in a very close shave. Another close game with Ballyhale Shamrocks on a windy day and we had won Leinster. O’Donovan Rossa (Belfast) were a very good team. Early on they had the run of us and we were very slow to settle’.

**COMPARISON WITH 1968**

To be quite honest I can hardly remember anything about the All-Ireland win of 1968 but I’ll always remember 1988-1989. I never felt too old with the younger lads but used to wonder should I make way in the team for younger players.

There was great joy after we won. We dined en route home with the Moore Cup in the Grand Hotel in Wicklow Town and it seemed all the parish was there before us. Eventually we arrived back to our own Clubhouse in Monamolin where we all celebrated together until the small hours. We have our own bar facilities and it was the ideal place to celebrate our success. We had a great reception in Gorey on the following night and returned to our local pub in Monamolin, Tom Lawless’s later. Before we got our own Headquarters, Lawless’s had always been our celebration spot on nights after County Final successes. I never drank alcohol in my life but still partook and enjoyed all the celebrations. We also celebrated after a few nights in Robbie Hammels of Kilmuckridge and about a week after that another night out was had in Boggans of Kilmuckridge.

We bought our club grounds in 1971, developed in by degrees and opened it officially in 1975. We opened our clubhouse in 1978 and it has become the focal point of the whole area. It is a second home for me and all my family. I was honoured to be selected on the AIB Jubilee team especially when I saw many of the great names that were not lucky enough to be selected. At the time we won the All-Ireland, Mick Butler was Chairman of the club, I was vice-Chairman (both of us players) and Joe Doran, my brother, who was another player from the 1968 era. was Club Secretary.”

*(Interview with Tony Doran for the book “For Love of Town and Village” written by the late Jack Mahon).*
MAN OF THE MONTH

Tony Doran is awarded the B and I Line/GAA Personality of the Month trophy for March by Donal O’Meara, B and I Line, in recognition of his performance for Buffers Alley in the All-Ireland Hurling Final. Back L to R: Bill Doran, Jack Hall, John Doyle, Joe Doran, Henry Butler, Fr. Jim Butler, Bill Nolan (Co. Treasurer Wexford GAA), Pat Kenny (Capt.), Pierie Butler. Front L to R: Fr. Martin Casey, Donal O’Meara, Tony Doran, Colm Doran.
Alley: the only Wexford club to win All-Ireland

By Alan Ahern

There could only be one candidate for the down memory lane feature in the week that is in it. Monday next marks the 25th anniversary of the sole All-Ireland Club Senior hurling success by a Wexford team, and we salute the Buffers Alley heros of 1989 who beat O’Donovan Rossa from Belfast in Croke Park on a 2-12 to 0-12 scoreline.

For the photograph itself we actually move back to the end of 1988 as this is the 15 that lined up for the drawn county final against Rathnure in Wexford Park. Those two big-hitters really brought out the best in each other during that game, with the Alley denying the black and amber a three-in-a-row with a double scores 2-10 to 1-5 win in atrocious conditions on October 23 after playing a 3-11 to 2-14 draw one week earlier when this picture was taken.

Wexford sides were able to make a serious impact outside the county at this time. Indeed, the man from Moncoinin and Kilcudmore had only been denied the Al-Ireland title at the final hurdle in 1986 by Kilcurris McDonagh of Tipperary, and Rathnure had gone on to win Leinster in ’87 and ’88, losing the decider to Bcra-Riagh of Tip. In the former year and the penultimate round to Athy from Galway eleven months later.

Therefore, the Alley were determined to give it another serious crack when they stopped their arch-rivals in their quest for three county and provincial crowns in succession. However, they received a timely warning that nothing could be taken for granted in Carlow on November 6 when Carlow Town gave them plenty of problems before going down by 5-6 to 4-6 in the provincial quarter-final. Coim Doran returned in that game after a long injury lay-off but the Alley relaxed too early after easing into a 3-6 to 1-2 interval lead.

A fortnight later Cusack Park in Athy hosted their 1-12 to 1-7 semi-final success over St. Kieran from Clann na Mara in Offaly, and two weeks after that it was back to Dr. Cullen Park for the big showdown with heavy-hitters Rathnyle Shannocks from Kilkenny. This was a real game of two halves, with the Westwood men leading by 1-10 to 0-2 at the interval but having to hold on for dear life near the end.

They ended up victorious by 1-12 to 1-8, with a Tony Doran special after just ten minutes making all the difference before Ger Fennell rescued a penalty off the crossbar for the eventual losers. The other Alley veteran, Mick Butler, chipped in with ten points, nine from placed balls, with his solo effort from play proving to be the last score of a hard-earned but deserved victory.

This success opened up a real window of opportunity because Four Roads of Rosecommon had sensationally seen off Abbeyknockmoy from Galway in the Connacht decider so they provided the All-Ireland semi-final opposition in Wexford Park on February 12, 1989.

The game itself went along predictable lines as the underdogs were hammered by 2-18 to 0-9 after falling in anomers by 2-7 to nil by the 21st minute following goals from Tom Dempsey and Seamus O’Leary. The air of inevitability surrounding the outcome seemed to influence the organiser too as there was criticism over the lack of a match programme and a PA system for a game which attracted more than 8,000 people.

Mantenos Jack Houlihan, John Doyle, Piers Butler and trainer Fr. Jim Butler stepped up the preparations for the big day, with Antrim champions O’Donovan Rossa setting up a novel final by accounting for Portlaw in the quarter-finals.

The Alley were determined to go one better than three years earlier, and the spirit in the team was epitomised by 45-year-old veteran Tony Doran who bridged the gap between the last side from Wexford to win an All-Ireland Senior title in Croke Park at inter-county level 21 years earlier. He picked off three points in the memorable 2-12 to 0-12 victory, and it was a very special occasion for the giant-hearted veteran who had been the life and soul of his club and this talented outfit for so long.

Any expectations for a repeat of the semi-final were quickly dimmed as Rossa thundered into a quick 0-8 to 0-1 lead, but the ship had been steadied by the interval when the favourites led by 1-5 to 0-7. Moves of Paul Gahan to centre-back and Tom Dempsey to midfield worked, with the setting goal coming in the 18th minute when Mick Butler flicked an Eamonn Sinnamon centre into the path of Seamus O’Leary who burst through to finish.

A great start to the second period effectively sealed the title as 1-2 was added inside five minutes. Tom Dempsey pointed two frees and sandwiched in between was Paddy Donohoe’s goal which he slammed home in a packed goalmouth. The next quarter of an hour was dominated even though just two more points were added, but late scores from Tony Doran, Paddy Donohoe and Martin Gahan led Pat Green with the pleasant task of walking up the steps of the old Hogan Stand to accept the Tommy Moore Cup on a great day for Buffers Alley and Wexford.

The final line-out was: Henry Birt; Barry Murphy, Pat Kenny (capt.), John O’Leary; Paul Gahan, Matty Foley (c.;), Collin Whelan, Eamonn Sinnamon, Seán Whelan (0-1), Tom Dempsey (0-2, 2 frees, 1-65), Fr Martin Casey, Paddy Donohoe (1-1), Mick Butler (0-2, 1 free), Tony Doran (0-3), Seamus O’Leary (1-0). Subs. - Ben Martin, John Donohoe, John Gahan, Aine O’Leary, Mamey Burke, Matt Furlong, Har Lee, Ger Sweeney. Coim Doran released cut owing to a back operation one week earlier.

Photo courtesy of Alan Ahern, People Newspapers
### ALLÍ AN B’FUARAIE (Buffers Alley)

**Duthchas:** Glas i Seo (Green and Gold Sash)

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**Fhrionaíd:** S. Ó Donoghue (John Donoghue), R. Ó Gacháin (John Gahan), F. Ó Laoghaire (Martin O’Leary), M. Ó Bór (Brian Bourke), M. Ó Fhúir (Matt Furlong), A. Ó Laoire (Harry Lee).

### Ó DONABHÁIN ROSSA (O'Donovan Rossa)

**Duthchas:** Gorm is Beó (Blue and Yellow)

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**Fhrionaíd:** A. Ó Hamill (Aidan Hamill), P. Ó Ruaidhri (Paddy Rogan), S. Ó Seán (Sean Shannon), B. Ó Gormaí (Brian Garvey), C. Ó Conaill (Chris Connelly), G. Ó Conaill (Ger Connelly).

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