

Ryan, Padraic and Lauren McHale at the celebration to mark Pat Murphy's 50 years with Celbridge GAA Club. Pics: Bridie Maughan

Celbridge GAA President's 50 years of service celebrated



Conor, Darragh and Emmet Murphy (Pat's grandsons).



Edel Murphy, Tess Denner and Helen Leonard.



The Chairman of Celbridge GAA Noel Dunne with Mick Wright and Theresa Brady.

by Kate Donoghue

A LARGE CROWD gathered at the Celbridge GAA clubhouse last Saturday (25th February) to celebrate the contribution of President Pat Murphy to the organisation.

Pat has been actively involved in the club for over 50 years and it hosted Saturday night's event as a tribute.

It took the format of the 'This Is Your Life' biographical documentary series, in which the host surprises a special guest and takes them through their life with the help of the 'big red book'.

The host in this instance was Celbridge club chairman Noel Dunne and the special guest of honour was president, Pat Murphy.

With the assistance of Pat's big red book, Noel recounted his life story, drawing anecdotes from others such as former county footballer, Mick Wright, club vice president, Andrew O'Sullivan and Pat himself.

Between them, they told of a lifetime that has revolved around Gaelic games, beginning with Pat playing for the boys school at age 13 and continuing to his current presidency.

After leaving school, Pat took up work in Donaldson's Printing Works, now Colourtrend Paint factory, before entering the bar trade at the Palace Bar on Fleet Street.

This would lead to his appointment at Norris's (now the Village Inn, Celbridge), where he would welcome newcomers to the village and actively recruit for the club.

"Many would agree," said Noel, "that on first contact with Pat Murphy the initial question would be 'do you play football or hurling?', followed by 'are you available for training on Tuesday?'"

GAA career

In 1953, Pat began playing football with the boys school team before he moved to Dublin at 16 and took up hurling with Kilmacud Crokes.

For three years he played with Crokes, winning a Dublin Minor Champi-



Some of the past Chairmen of Celbridge GAA: (l-r) Willie Pierce, Andrew O'Sullivan, Pat Murphy, Willie Holmes, Eileen Colgan (representing her late husband Ger Colgan), Pat White and Gerry Deegan.



Edel Murphy with her friends, Lorraine Kelly and Caroline Fowler.

onship during that period in 1957.

He came back to Celbridge in 1958 and added Kildare Junior Football Championship and Jack Higgins Cup wins to his belt.

Because there was no hurling being played in Celbridge, Pat played for Ardclough and secured himself a 1959 Junior Championship win. Noel said:

"As a result of this championship, Pat joined the Celbridge hurling committee and reformed the hurling club in 1962; success followed immediately.

"Celbridge reached the 1964 Hurling Championship final only to be beaten by Salins by a single point – still a great achievement in a short period of time."

In 1966, Pat joined the Celbridge GAA Club commit-

tee, serving as club chairman for 10 years, juvenile chairman for another three and a member of various club committees before another stint as chairman from 1989 to 1991.

Added to this were six years as a County Board delegate and involvement with St Wolstan's throughout the 1980s.

It wasn't by chance that Pat had such a love for the GAA. His father, Owen "Skipper" Murphy, was an avid supporter throughout his own lifetime.

Pat's commitment is a continuation of his father's legacy, who also spent a lifetime involved in the GAA be it as a player, County Board delegate or in his 30 years as president.

Noel spoke about how a challenge for the club for many years was the lack of a permanent home and

playing field, especially as the town experienced rapid growth:

"For many years the pitch moved from various locations around Celbridge, from a pitch beside the Setanta to St Patrick's Park to Dublin Road, until eventually the present-day site and clubhouse we have now.

"Like his father before him, he became an Honorary Club President and continues in that role, taking an active part and great sense of pride in the blue and white.

"His interest in all is unsurpassed and he looks on in anticipation as to who will be the future of Celbridge GAA."

Family life

GAA played a part in the marriage of Pat to Betty Murphy, from Straffan, whom he met at the presen-



Tom Keating, Pat Murphy and his sister Patricia Murphy and Jess Denner at the celebration.



Olive and Francis Mann.



At the presentation to Pat to mark his 50 years with Celbridge GAA: Andrew O'Sullivan, Vice-President Celbridge GAA, Pat Murphy, Noel Dunne, Chairman Celbridge GAA and Jim O'Shea, Secretary.



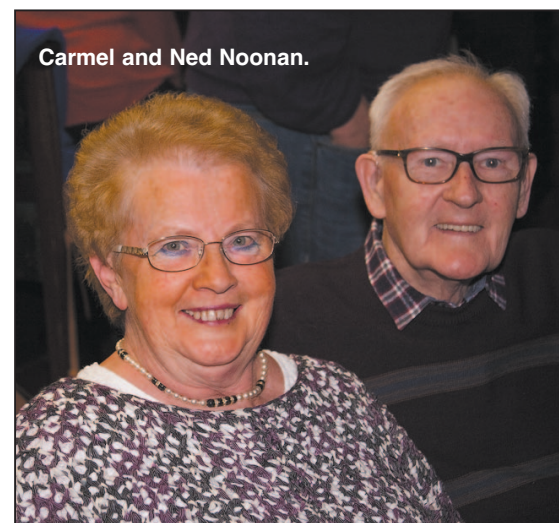
Pat Murphy with his sons and daughters: (l-r) Eoin Murphy, Aileen Scally, Mairead McHale, Pat Murphy, Edel Murphy and Eamonn Murphy



Marie Murphy, Helen Morrissey, Ursula Murphy and Nell Byrne.



The special cake made for Pat's party.



Carmel and Ned Noonan.



Sadie O'Sullivan, Miriam O'Grady and Claire Powell.

tation of Junior Championship Medals in Ardclough in 1960.

They married in 1963, and Noel explained that together they have taken part in the organisation of many GAA functions throughout the years.

Pat and Betty have five children: Eoin, Eamonn, Mairead, Edel and Aileen and nine grandchildren: Rebecca, Emmett, Anna,

Darragh, Conor, Lauren, Ryan, Amy and Adam.

Noel said Pat has "high hopes for a county player but at this stage it has skipped one generation!"

"Greatest asset"

"One could say the biggest achievement over the last number of years was building a permanent home, the size and competitiveness of the club in all

ages and codes," Noel added.

"However, without the people, it would just be another building in Celbridge; the people are its greatest asset.

"So for Pat, this is not just a celebration of his 50 years on the committee but a celebration of what we all achieved with humble beginnings and friendship."



Pat Murphy with his grandchildren: (back, l-r) Lauren McHale, Rebecca Murphy, Conor Murphy, Pat Murphy, Darragh, Emmet and Anna Murphy.