

## **Moynalvey/Kiltale Parish**

Moynalvey GFC represents the parish of Moynalvey & Kiltale and is situated in south east Meath with a population of approximately 1,700 people. The famous writings "The Four Masters" say the name Moynalvey is derived from a woman's name "Ailbhe" as Magh – Ailbhe or Ailbhes Plain.

Cogan in his "History of the Diocese of Meath" states Moynalvey union consists of the following parishes – Galtrim, Derrypatrick, Kiltale and Kilmore. Kilmore where our football pitch is located – hence named Kilmore Park – did have its own Church and graveyard but the church is now in ruins. The graveyard is in use to this day and contains many fine tombstones dating from the early 1700s. The graveyard itself is believed to have been in use since the mid 1500s.

### **The Early Years**

The first club in Moynalvey was formed in 1934 by Jim Crickley, Peter Brien and Richard "Dobbins" Walsh and played under the name of "College Park". One of the mainstays of the team in the early days was Jimmy Reilly who played at full forward for Meath for a number of years.

The club changed its name to Moynalvey in 1938 and continued to take part in adult competitions until the early fifties without any notable success. Around this time hurling was started in the club with a Junior team being formed. Moynalvey reached the Junior B hurling championship final in 1958 but lost out to a Gormanstown side which included Mick Garrett, who was later part of Galway's great three in a row All Ireland winners of 1964, 1965 & 1966.

### **The 1960s**

The sixties were very successful as regards hurling and underage football. In 1961 the club reached the final of the rural Under 14 football championship and although beaten by Yellow Furze, many of this side formed the backbone of successful Moynalvey football and hurling teams in later years. In the following year (1962), the Junior hurling championship was won with Brendan Lyne, Sean Murphy, Eddie and Tommy Kelly, and Bob Melia starring against Wilkinstown in the final. The club celebrated Under 17 football championship success in 1964 when Navan De La Salles were beaten in the final. Among the stars of that triumph were Derek Melia, Richie Melia, Seamus Crickley, Tony Hoban, John Heraghty and Pat Kelly. A Junior B football team was formed in 1965 and the hurlers defeated Athboy in the Junior final also in the same year. Richie Melia, Seamus Crickley, Eddie Kelly, Tony Heraghty and Tommy

McCormack were some of the heroes in this victory.

Moynalvey quickly made an impact in the intermediate hurling grade by reaching the 1966 championship final but lost out to Baconstown. However, they made no mistake in 1967 when, with Derek and Richie Melia, Seamus Crickley, Tony Heraghty and Paddy Kelly all playing significant roles, they defeated Dunboyne in the decider. Richie Melia was later to win an All Ireland Junior hurling championship medal with Meath in 1970, followed by two National Hurling League Division 2 awards. The hurling section of the club was disbanded however in the late sixties with the reforming of clubs in Kiltale and Rathmolyon. And so football became the main interest again.

## **The 1970s**

In 1972 Moynalvey reached the semi final of the Division 2 championship against Batterstown and it took three games to decide who would meet Summerhill in the final. And hard though Moynalvey strived for a final tilt with neighbours Summerhill, they were pipped by a point in the second replay. Batterstown went on to win the decider by 13 points and Moynalvey were left to think of what might have been! The Moynalvey Division 2 team performed consistently over the next few years and reached the final of the 1973 league which was not played until October 1974 when Nobber were overcome after a replay. Moynalvey qualified for the league final in 1979 and were becoming known as the "league specialists". Cyril Maguire, Meath "Hurler of the Year" in 1977, who had taken up residence in the parish boosted their hopes by signing for a Division 3 side when his ability could have enabled him to hold his own at the top grade.

## **Major Success**

Moynalvey's first major success came on Easter Sunday 1979 with the defeat by one point of Kilmainham in the final of the Winter League. During the following months Moynalvey showed indifferent form in the Junior B championship with there being a humiliating defeat at the hands of United Gaels (Drumconrath) but a narrow win over Clonard enabled them to get another tilt with United Gaels in a play off. This time there was sweet revenge with a 21 point victory and they went on to a 3 – 8 to 1 – 3 victory over Boardsmill in the semi final. Cortown were their final opponents but Moynalvey proved too strong winning by 1 – 13 to 1 – 2 to bring an adult championship to the club at last.

Moynalvey took promotion to the Junior ranks in their stride reaching the semi final in 1980. In 1981 they won the Junior County Championship defeating St Michaels in the final after a replay. Playing in their first ever Intermediate County Championship in 1982 they reached the semi final and then in the following year of 1983, they made no mistake and were worthy Intermediate

champions after beating St Marys in the final. There follows a number of lean years in the senior ranks until 1994 when the club captured its first ever trophy at senior level defeating Navan O Mahonys to win the final of the 1993 Feis Cup. The Junior C Championship was also won in 1993.

## **Underage Successes**

The club has always put great effort into underage football in the parish and this brought its rewards and insured a continuous flow of players to the adult teams. Over the years the club has contested many league and county championship finals at underage level winning Under 14 leagues in 1981 and 1987, Under 12 championship in 1987, three minor county championships in amalgamation with Kilcloon in 1991, 1992 & 1993 as well as Under 21 county championship in 1993.

## **The 00's**

The early noughties were not as successful for the club at adult level with the first team suffering a rapid decline with relegation to the Intermediate ranks after a spell at Senior level, before dropping to Junior level. However, a Junior C championship title was secured in 2003 by the 2nd team with victory in the final over Ratoath. With a lot of work taking place by a dedicated number of individuals at underage level, this has meant success is beginning to emerge again within the Club, with Under 12 titles in 2005 and Under 12, 14 and Minor league successes in 2006. These have been followed by a Cumann na mBunscoil win, along with Under-12, 14, 15 titles & also an Under-21 C Championship title in 2008. These under age successes have progressed to adult level with the First Team contesting a Junior A Final against Clan na Gael in 2007 only to be bet by the minimum. However the club regained its Intermediate status after claiming the 2008 Junior A Title with a defeat of Ratoath in the final, before going on to win out the Leinster Junior Championship with a defeat of Rochfortbridge of Westmeath in the Final, having defeated St. Pats of Donabate & Mooncoin of Kilkenny along the way. However the fairytale of an All Ireland Final appearance became unstuck in the All Ireland Quarter Final with defeat against the eventual runners up John Mitchell's of Lancashire.

## **Recent Years**

Following the return to the Intermediate ranks in 2009 Moynalvey held their own at that level before the club regained its Senior status once again when claiming the Intermediate Championship in 2011, defeating Gaeil Colmcille in the final. Moynalvey went on to represent Meath in the AIB Leinster Intermediate club football championship only to fall at the first hurdle when going down to the Louth Intermediate champions O'Raghallaighs.

2011 turned out to be another successful year as the club also contested the Division One Minor Championship Final, losing out to Ratoath in the Final, while also gaining Division 2 Minor League Honours. Four of this talented Minor team represented the County Minor Team in 2011, Anthony Forde, Padraic Harnan, Cillian O'Sullivan and James Kelly. Members of this talented minor side were also blooded at adult level with the injection of youth paying dividends on the Intermediate championship winning team. Other minor players were also blooded in the second team, which clinched the Junior 'C' Football Championship with defeat of Na Fianna in the Final and also gained promotion to Division 2 of the reserve league.

While in 2012 the club also had three County minors, Padraic Harnan, Cillian O'Sullivan and Brian Harnan, who contested an All Ireland Minor Championship Final in Croke Park, losing out to Dublin.

The club is proud to have in their ranks players to have represented Meath at Minor, Under 21 and Senior level. Liam Harnan represented the club with pride and has 2 All Ireland medals whilst Cathal and Barry Sheridan and Willie Byrne are also holders of All Ireland medals at various age groups. Other players to represent Meath over the years include Robbie Melia, Aidan Crickley, Paddy Kelly, Paul Harnan, Declan Tuite, Tommy Fay & Adrian O'Halloran, whilst present day players John Donoghue, Mark O'Sullivan, Cillian o'Sullivan and Padraic Harnan are the most recent members of the Club to have represented Meath at adult level.

A proud club, there are certainly many fond memories to look back over and hopefully some more big days won't be too far around the corner!