

DERRY GAA OFFICIAL MATCH PROGRAMME

# OAKLEAFERS



## Doire v Luimneach

2023 National Football League

Round 1 | Saturday 28 Jan | Owenbeg

Official Sponsor of Derry GAA

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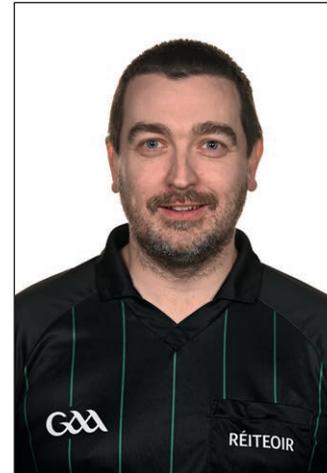


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## Today's Match Officials



**REFEREE: Noel Mooney**

**Debut on national panel: 2012**

**Years refereeing: 15 years**

**Club: Cavan Gaels**

**County: Cavan**

**Brief list of major matches refereed to date:**

- All Ireland Minor Final 2019 - Galway vs Cork
- National Football League Division 1 Final 2022 - Kerry Vs Mayo
- National Football League Division 3 Final 2016 - Kildare Vs Clare

- National Football League Division 4 Final 2022 - Clare Vs Tipperary
- All Ireland Junior Football Final 2016 Kerry vs Mayo
- Ulster Minor Football Final - Monaghan Vs Tyrone
- Ulster U-21 football Final 2015 - Donegal Vs Tyrone
- Ulster Club Senior Championship Final 2018 - Gaoth Dobhair Vs Scotstown
- Dr McKenna Cup Final 2016 - Tyrone vs Derry

**What do you enjoy most about being a match official?**

• Enjoy staying involved in the GAA, enjoy the buzz of refereeing games and staying fit. You get to meet a lot of people when you travel to games across Ireland.

**What advice would you give to young/new referees?**

- Build a strong team of umpires around you.
- Try and bring umpires to club games you are refereeing, so you have the support you need.
- Talk to players during the game, if players ask you questions in a polite and courteous way, answer those questions when you can and show the players respect, but know the line you have to cross if a player is not asking questions in the right way. Show your authority in a game but don't be ignorant or cocky about it.

**STAND-BY: Niall Mc Kenna** (Muineachán)

**LINESMAN: Mark Loughran** (Tír Eoghain)

**SIDELINE OFFICIAL: Eoin Murphy** (Fear Manach)

**UMPIRES: Michael Mooney, Bernie Quinn, Martin Sheridan, Andy McEvoy**

## Fogra

This edition of 'Oakleavers' is dedicated to Bernie Mullan on the occasion of his 80th birthday. Pages 8-11 contain some testimony to how Bernie, a friend, a leader, a local GAA authority and the

teller of some of the corniest jokes ever told, is viewed by those who have known him best.

I would like to thank all of those who have contributed to this match programme. We are very fortunate to have some of the most talented photographers and

knowledgeable GAA writers underpinning this production. We hope you enjoy it and thank you for your support. Here's to 2023. Onwards and Upwards!

Míle buíochas  
**Diarmaid MacPéice**  
Ofigeach Caipreamh Poiblí  
Doire C.L.G.

DERRY GAA ARE INDEBTED TO ALL OUR SPONSORS FOR THEIR ONGOING SUPPORT



# A Little Progress Each Day Adds To Big Results

By Odhrán Crumley

**'Sure it's only January football, it means nothing.'**  
- Your opinion on this quote is purely dependent on your counties results throughout the month of January.

Ship heavy defeats or any defeats at all and it's down to the heavy training burden, sure you don't want to be primed in January. Sure how many of men have we to come back and better learning now than come the summer.

In this condensed inter-county calendar, the split-season as it is more affectionately known. There is no time to grow into the year, to build as you move and prime yourself for the big summer Sunday's just as the league edges closer to completion. Now you have to almost hit full flight early doors and maintain it throughout if, not your beat. Trying to back catch-up doesn't work circa, Tyrone 2022.

There was signs last Saturday that the Tyrone hangover could quickly blow over towards a full blown crisis. But, in truth that would be unfair on what was an outstanding Derry performance in Armagh. Derry flew out of the block and raced into an early 0-7 to 0-1 lead at the break in truth, the only negative from an Oakleaf perspective was that it could have been 2-10!

A Tyrone resurgence was expected and it did arrive in a short form of sorts. Darren McCurry's major levelled it, ten minutes into the second half and they signs all pointed to a

Red Hand takeover aided by the breeze and the arrival of Cathal McShane, Peter Harte and Conor Meyler to the field of play.

Ardent Derry supporters feared the worst and in reality, in times gone by, Derry sides have been known to wilt and even ship a heavy beating of their own. This Derry side under Rory Gallagher are very different instead they battled back the elements and rattled in two further majors one coming from school-boy, Niall O'Donnell who hit three points in a school hurling game only days previous. Overawed by taking on Tyrone and the 2021 All-Ireland kingpins? No chance, not this boy.

Derry seem to have unearthed a gem in Lachlan Murray and the body of work that makes Derry's underage structure the envy of many is really coming to the fore and the word coming from

Owenbeg seems to suggest that, this conveyor belt isn't running out of steam yet.

Today – marks the start of the National Football League and home to Limerick to many seems like a handy start for The Oakleifers, on paper it'll be termed that way but, sure paper is yet to win anything. Derry will be guarded well against that and there is no chance of any such thoughts.

Division Two is a minefield with a vast array of tests. Ardee away to Louth managed by Mickey Harte provides a different challenge, then Meath under Colm O'Rourke come to Owenbeg. Before a trip to 'Newbridge of Nowhere' and then the Dubs roll into Celtic Park. A real spell that can decide the league trajectory. To top it off Clare come North and Derry go South to Cork.

Now the real stuff starts and sure wasn't the January ball enjoyable...

## 2023 Allianz Football League Division Two Fixtures

**Round One**  
Saturday, January 28  
Derry v Limerick  
(Owenbeg, 3pm)

**Round Two**  
Sunday, February 5  
Louth v Derry (Ardee, 2pm)

**Round Three**  
Saturday, February 18  
Derry v Meath (Owenbeg, 5pm)

**Round Four**  
Sunday, February 26  
Kildare v Derry  
(Newbridge, 2pm)

**Round Five**  
Saturday, March 4  
Derry v Dublin  
(Celtic Park, 5pm)

**Round Six**  
Sunday, March 19  
Derry v Clare (Owenbeg, 1pm)

**Round Seven**  
Sunday, March 26  
Cork v Derry  
(Páirc Uí Chaoimh, 2pm)



# ARE YOU IN?

## DON'T MISS A MOMENT WITH THE 2023 GAA SEASON TICKET

If you're already there in your mind, why not be there in person with the **2023 SEASON TICKET**? With no physical card you'll manage your tickets on your ST account. Get more of the action, more often, at a great value price.

- Benefits of a 2023 GAA Season Ticket include:**
- Entry to all your county's Allianz League matches in your chosen code
  - All Allianz League Semi Finals/Finals/Relegation (regardless of county involvement)
  - For football, entry to your county's opening Championship match. Two Championship matches for hurling
  - Option to buy tickets for your county's remaining Championship matches
  - Access to bring a friend when available
  - One Championship match 'Opt Out' and still qualify for All Ireland Final should your county qualify
  - Entry to AIB GAA Club Senior Championship Finals

**THE COST**  
**ADULT €150\*<sup>o</sup> U16s €30\*<sup>o</sup>**  
**ADULT CLUB+ €250+\***

To buy tickets or get more information visit [gaa.ie/seasonticket](http://gaa.ie/seasonticket)

\*Adult Club+ includes Club Championship in your County  
<sup>o</sup>Division 3 & 4 football prices (Adult €100, U16s €20)

## Eterno

By Dermot McPeake

**On 29 December 2022 the Brazilian Football Confederation announced the death of Pelé with a powerful image.**

'Eterno' - Eternal in Portuguese - was emblazoned across a section of the iconic photo of Pelé and Jairzinho at the 1970 World Cup final after Brazil's opening goal in the 4-1 victory over Italy.

It prompted global tributes. Three days of national mourning were declared by the Brazilian government. Edson Arantes do Nascimento hasn't kicked a ball in anger in 45 years, yet millions of people of all ages have an opinion on why he was 'Rei - King'. Why?

The stats stack up for sure. 1283 career goals, 3 World Cup wins, 77 goals for his country. Yet stats alone don't scratch the surface of explaining brand Pelé, which is thought to be worth upwards of \$25 million per annum.

The American artist Andy

Warhol, who famously studied fame, once said: "Pelé is one of the few who contradicted my theory: instead of fifteen minutes of fame, he will have fifteen centuries."

That a 15-year-old boy playing for Santos and the Brazilian national team a year later, born into poverty in the Minas Gerais state, became the ultimate winner in life, perhaps goes some of the way to explain his longevity.

US Senator Robert Kennedy was so taken with Pelé's rise from poverty that he discussed buying the New York Cosmos soccer club, who the Brazilian later signed for in 1975.

"Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope," said RFK in a speech in South Africa in 1966.

That 'Ripple of Hope' speech, as it has become known, contains many of the

universal traits associated with Pelé, either knowingly or unknowingly.

Throughout his life Pelé never lost the love for what he had become. It's the theme of a thought provoking feature for ESPN by Wayne Drehs ahead of the 2014 World Cup.

"I've seen people cry when they meet him. I've seen people yell that he's a fraud. But everywhere, he's treated like a god. He thrives on the pulse of this love affair," writes Drehs.

Pelé was human. He had flaws. But ultimately he had a sporting gift, he had humility and he loved and recognised his part in a game that gave hope to millions of people.

We have our own heroes. We saw our own ripple of hope last summer in Clones and Croke Park. We look forward to another year.

Love your club, love your county, and your county and your club will love you.



# Bernie Mullan

## A Man For All Seasons

Loved and respected throughout the GAA, Bernie Mullan celebrates his 80th birthday this month. To mark the occasion, 'Oakleafers' presents a spectrum of reflections from Bernie's colleagues in the local media and GAA circles.

### Michael Wilson (Sports Editor, Derry Journal)

"I'll ask Bernie."

Three words every potential Derry GAA scribe is obliged to commit to memory upon his or her induction to the Oak Leaf club and county scene. Three little words that are the Derry GAA equivalent of a swiss army knife but which will provide their user will infinitely more solutions than the most quintessential of multi-tools. Believe me, as a County Down sporting emigrant, I'm speaking from experience.

Arriving at the Derry Journal more than 20 years ago, Bernie's great friend, Seamus Mullan, and Mr Limavady Wolfhound himself, Chris McCann would have been my initial points of reference for all things Gaelic Games in those early days, and two better men for the job of babysitting a Down exile you'd be hard pushed to find. However I was also keenly aware of another sage like presence in the background.

In those pre-internet days, and on the rare occasion neither Seamus nor Chris was available, with me in danger of drowning under the weight of double checking which Derry player scored 1-03 in their 1998 Ulster Championship opener against Monaghan (it was Eamonn Burns by the way!), the name 'Bernie' was handed to me with all the confidence of a winning lottery ticket.

I remember hearing of him long before making the

acquaintance and the first thing that struck me was the need for only one name. Now, anyone involved in any sport knows a singular named title is reserved only for those special few. Think Pele, Tiger and the likes. In GAA, the mononym is every rarer and only ever really utilised for surnames but here was a man requiring no more than the forename chosen by his parents to be recognised county wide.

The softly spoken titan in question was of course well worth his billing as over those ensuing 20 odd years Bernie has proved the most genial of GAA encyclopedias. It's not understating it to say many Derry reporters would have been lost without him, this one included.

Should it be St. Patrick's, Waterside's defeat of Rosemount's Derry Hibernian team in the 1891 Derry senior hurling final or that famous 1993 All Ireland win, Bernie possesses the sort of knowledge that not even the vast expanses of the internet can rival. Go on try it, test it out. See if you can find the result of that same St. Patrick's club's July 1890 friendly against St. Patrick's of Dublin online?

I know it because Bernie told me. Better still, he was able to tell me which Dublin hotel the now defunct city hurling team stayed in for the game!

It's fair to say that Bernie's appearance in the press box or stand of any fixture is a

guarantee that should the onfield action not exactly stir the senses, then one of Bernie's famous anecdotes will keep you entertained. In fact, my only gripe is I'm often listening to Bernie recounting another GAA tale when I should be watching the action! (Now you know where the many mistakes come from - It's all Bernie's fault!).

The positions he's filled and roles he's played for Derry GAA over the years are too many to mention. He is the epitome of what the GAA should and I feel privileged to have worked alongside someone I consider a legend of Derry and Ballerin Gaelic Games. However, I'm even more proud to call him a friend.

So, as another county season rolls into view, the big questions are; Will Derry achieve promotion? Can they retain Ulster? Who will win the All Ireland? How will the club season pan out. . . .

You know what, I'll ask Bernie!

### Dessie McCallion (BBC Foyle)

The GAA's strength is in its roots - and there are few roots so well embedded in the Association than Bernie Mullans.

For too many years to mention, the Ballerin man has been an integral part of all that is good in Derry.

The sport is about community, it's about club and it's about county - and Bernie



photo by Cathal McOscar

has epitomised all of that in a lifetime of dedication.

I first met Bernie back in the early 90s when he was the County PRO. My first memory was him asking me to leave a press area on the side of an open-sided lorry at the newly refurbished Celtic Park.

“This is for press only, you’ll have to stand down there,” he said to a sheepish, fresh faced young reporter as he clambered back down off the lorry and to use all of his 5’7” to try to watch the game.

I thought I’d mark his card at that time, but never got the opportunity as from that moment on, our relationship grew to friendship and respect.

I remember asking him and then chairman Harry Chivers back in early 1992, if there was any chance that myself and Derry Journal photographer Larry Doherty would be allowed to travel on the Derry team bus to a National League match. My view was nothing ventured, nothing gained and to my surprise we were allowed to travel. It was a generous offer and one which helped, as it allowed us to get to better know Eamon Coleman, Mickey Moran, many of the Derry panel, backroom staff and others.

The full extent of that trip came to the fore in the subsequent 18 months as we became know to many of the Derry team that won the Sam Maguire. Although in the background to many, the role Bernie played was significant. To many of the press around Ulster and much further afield, Bernie was the first point of contact, and aside from those tagging out, Bernie was the face of Derry.

He has been honoured as PRO of the Year, but that only touches on the influence Bernie has had within the corridors of power.

Softly spoken, but ultra efficient at getting what he

needs, Bernie’s role in the provision and development of Owenbeg cannot be underestimated, and many of the facilities we see today can in many ways be attributed to his influence.

Other areas where he had big influence were behind the scenes, dealing with issues that needed sorting, regardless at what level, and sussing out and meeting with prospective new managers.

One such manager who had an enormous amount of respect for the Ballerin man was the late great Brian Mullins. I remember going to Carndonagh to meet the former Dublin midfielder and a half hour meeting turned into a four hour discussion, a great afternoon’s craic and during that lengthy conversation Mullins spoke of his great respect for two people in the whole Derry set-up that he had the utmost respect for – Brian McGilligan (who he felt was the best player he had managed in Derry colours) and Bernie Mullan.

I’ll finish with one of my favourite days in the company of Bernie – and there were quite a few good ones!

It was a Sunday when Dublin were in Ballybofey to play Donegal and Derry were in Killarney to take on Kerry, in Division One of the National Football League. Dublin and Derry chartered a plane between them – Dublin flew to Eglinton, Derry got on at Eglinton flew to Farranfore then travelled to Fitzgerald Stadium for the game before returning via Farranfore to Eglinton, and when they got back Dublin were waiting to board to return south. It was a great way to travel to the match, we left Derry at 10.30ish and we were back home for about 5.

Bernie and I spent most of that day together and it wasn’t until we were halfway back

to Derry that we realised the brandy on the plane was free. We just looked at one another, shaking our heads, and agreed it was too late to make much of an impact on a bottle of Hennessy! Would’ve been fun trying to drive home from Eglinton, but I’m sure we’d have given it a go.

Since then Bernie has been a constant, a friend, a smiling face, a font of knowledge – but above all a decent man! I’m sure there are many who will pay Bernie greater tributes than I, but what I can say – in more 35 years of reporting sport, there are very few, if any, who have been better to deal with. It’s been a privilege to work with him.

### Sean Bradley (Former Derry GAA Chairman and PRO)

Every County and every club have people who are universally known by their Christian name only (sometimes a nickname). These are folk who are universally respected and liked for their unique talents and abilities.

In Derry and Ulster generally, if you hear the phrase “Bernie will handle that”, you know immediately who we are talking about.

Bernie Mullan has been involved in GAA affairs all his adult life, with both club and County. He has been a key member and official of Sarsfield’s Ballerin from his teens, and has been a key officer of Derry County Board through good times and bad. To say that he is unflappable would be an understatement. Whether in the boardroom or at the sideline, Bernie is coolness personified.

When you examine the developments both on and off the field of play that Bernie has been involved with, you begin to realise what an influence he

has had on the GAA in Derry.

His own club have reached the pinnacle of an All Ireland Club Final (1976), and have recently opened a modern community facility, including two pitches, at their grounds. They play football (ladies and men), hurling, and camogie, and participate in Scór. Like a lot of rural areas, the club is at the heart of the community. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Bernie has been a guiding light in the affairs of Ballerin for 60 years.

At County level, Bernie has been central to the action for a similar amount of time. As Secretary and Chairman of the North Derry Board, he administered underage and adult football to ensure that Gaelic games flourished in the area. At County Board level, he took over as PRO in 1993 and used his skills and dedication to promote Derry at all levels. His sensible advice and cool summation of events are a necessary ingredient of many controversial decisions.

I have written most of this in the past tense, which of course is an error. Bernie will be present today, and at all significant events, as either a reporter for the local press, or in some official capacity. His role with Club Derry (the fund raising body for Derry GAA), had contributed greatly to the success of that essential body. The “big ticket” infrastructure projects of the last 50 years (Owen beg and Celtic Park), have flourished because of his involvement.

This brief accolade will give you a flavour of the hectic and successful career of Bernie in Derry GAA. Like all volunteers, he gives of his time and talents generously. This has been possible though the dedication and support of his family – his late wife Betty and daughters Brenda and Sinead and their families. Long may he continue to be what we all

recognise as “Bernie”

### Chris McCann (Former Derry PRO and Sportswriter)

Bernie Mullan - a welcoming presence and font of knowledge.

From the moment I started reporting on Derry GAA, Bernie Mullan was a welcoming presence. I still remember the first GAA match I covered as a journalist. It was a National League Hurling game between Derry and Roscommon in March 1998. I was on placement at the Irish News sports desk from my training course at Derry tech and to say I was wet behind the ears, well that would be an understatement.

I nervously took my seat in the old wooden cabin perched on top of the Celtic Park Terrace not really sure of the correct etiquette, but Bernie immediately made me feel at my ease. Giving me tips on how I should lay out my notes and that the easiest way to record the scorers was by marking them off against the players names on the programme, and then walking me down to the changing rooms post game to get quotes from Derry boss Kevin McNaughton.

It might sound like pretty basic stuff but as student reporter trying desperately to not appear out of my depth, it immediately made me more comfortable. I know other reporters who have worked the Derry beat have found him similarly helpful. But that’s just what Bernie does, he puts people at their ease and helps them out if he can.

In the decade and a half that I covered Derry GAA as a journalist Bernie was always someone you could rely on. Need some historical background for a feature, I could ring Bernie, need a

number for a player, manager or club official Bernie had them. Need details from a game that you’d missed for a round-up piece, Bernie would happily furnish me with the information I required.

In December 2008 I was made redundant from my role with the Derry Post. I was still covering games on a freelance basis, but money was tight. But I could always rely on Bernie for a lift to games saying me precious pounds on petrol. And sitting in Bernie’s motor on trips down the country, sometimes alongside Sean Bradley, was an education, the Ballerin scribe’s depth of knowledge of Derry GAA is immense. If you’re a car travelling to Celtic Park or Ballinascreen or further afield with Sean and Bernie, you have access to decades worth of Derry GAA history and anecdotes, I always emerged from those journeys a fair bit more knowledgeable.

Similarly, when I was county PRO Bernie was equally helpful – providing features and support in producing programmes or providing advice in dealing any tricky communications issues that might arise – if Bernie could be of assistance then he would be.

These days my now all too rare attendance at matches club or county games is purely in a spectating role but even as he’s taking his notes for the week’s GAA coverage in the Northern Constitution, Bernie always finds time for a chat, asking how we’re getting on in London.

Saturday will be one of those rare occasions that I make Derry National League game in person. I’ll be looking out for the Sarsfields man in his trademark flatcap for quick chat, and I know I’ll come away a word of two the wiser.



# DOIRE DERRY



**1**  
**Odhran Lynch**  
Odhran Ó Lionsigh  
*Machaire Fiolta*

**2**  
**Chrissy McKaigue**  
Cristóir Mac Taidhg  
*Sleacht Néill*

**3**  
**Eoin McEvoy**  
Eoin Mac an Fhiobui  
*Machaire Fiolta*

**4**  
**Conor McCluskey**  
Conchuir Mac Bhloscaidh  
*Machaire Fiolta*

**5**  
**Padraig McGrogan**  
Padraig Mac Gruagáin  
*Droichead Nua*

**6**  
**Gareth McKinless**  
Gearoid Mac Fionn-laidh  
*Baile an Doire*

**7**  
**Conor Doherty**  
Conchuir Ó Dochairtaigh  
*Droichead Nua*

**8**  
**Conor Glass**  
Conchuir Glas  
*An Gleann*

**9**  
**Brendan Rogers**  
Breandan Mac Ruairi  
*Sleacht Néill*

**10**  
**Niall Toner**  
Néill Ó Tomhnair  
*Leamhaigh*

**11**  
**Paul Cassidy**  
Pól Ó Caiside  
*Baile Eachaidh*

**12**  
**Ethan Doherty**  
Éatan O'Dochartaigh  
*An Gleann*

**13**  
**Benny Heron**  
Bearnárd O hEachthigheirn  
*Baile na Scrine*

**14**  
**Shane McGuigan**  
Seán Mag Uigáinn  
*Sleacht Néill*

**15**  
**Lachlan Murray**  
Lachlan Ó Muiri  
*Diseart Mhártain*

**FIR ÍONAID:**

16	<b>Ryan Scullion</b>	Rian Ó Scolláin	<i>Baile na Scrine</i>
17	<b>Paul McNeill</b>	Pól MacNeill	<i>Sleacht Néill</i>
18	<b>Shea Downey</b>	Shea Mac Giolla-Domhnaigh	<i>Leamhaigh</i>
19	<b>Padraig Cassidy</b>	Padraig Ó Caiside	<i>Sleacht Néill</i>
20	<b>Mark Doherty</b>	Marc Ó Dochairtaigh	<i>Droichead Nua</i>
21	<b>Oisín McWilliams</b>	Oisín MacUilinn	<i>Suaítreach</i>
22	<b>Ben McCarron</b>	Bearnárd MacCarrghamhna	<i>Baile Stíl</i>
23	<b>Niall Loughlin</b>	Néill O' Lochlain	<i>Grian Loch</i>
24	<b>Conleth McGuckian</b>	Connlaodh Mag Eocháin	<i>An Gleann</i>
25	<b>Niall O'Donnell</b>	Néill O'Domhnaill	<i>Baile an Doire</i>
26	<b>Anton Tohill</b>	Anton O'Tuathail	<i>Suaítreach</i>

**BAINISTÍOCHT:**

Bainisteoir: **Rory Gallagher**



# LUIMNEACH LIMERICK



**1**  
**Donal O Sullivan (JC)**  
Donal Ó Súilleabháin  
*Moin a Lin*

**2**  
**David Connelly**  
Daithí Ó Conghaile  
*Áth Dara*

**3**  
**Séan O Dea**  
Séan Ó Deá  
*Cill tSile Drom Caoin*

**4**  
**Barry Coleman**  
Barry Colmáin  
*Rath Caola*

**5**  
**Brian Fanning**  
Brian Ó Fainín  
*Pailis na Gréine*

**6**  
**Cillian Fahy**  
Cillian Ó Fathaigh  
*Dromcolloille Beal an Atha*

**7**  
**Michael Donovan**  
Micheal Ó Donnabháin  
*Gallbhaile*

**8**  
**Cian Sheehan**  
Cian Ó Siodhcháin  
*Caisleain Nua Thiar*

**9**  
**Iain Corbett (JC)**  
Iain Coirbin  
*Caisleain Nua Thiar*

**10**  
**Paul Maher**  
Pol Ó Meachair  
*Ath Dara*

**11**  
**James Naughton**  
Sean Ó Neachtain  
*Naomh Seanan*

**12**  
**Gordon Browne**  
Gordon De Brún  
*Na Piarasigh*

**13**  
**Adrain Enright**  
Adrian Mac Ionnrachtaigh  
*An tAthair Uí Castasaigh*

**14**  
**Cathal Downes**  
Cathal Ó Dubháin  
*Cill Dioma Pailis an Chraonri*

**15**  
**Davy Lyons**  
Daithí Ó Laighin  
*Ath Dara*

**FIR ÍONAID:**

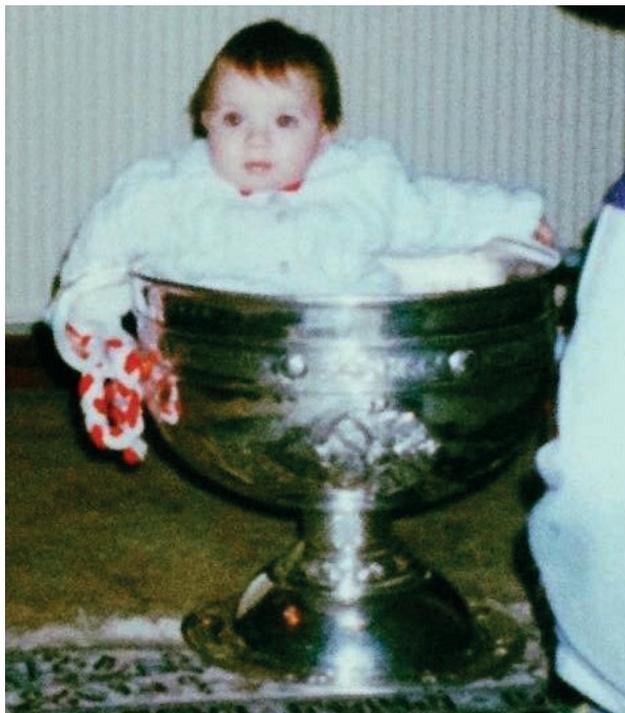
16	<b>Aaron O Sullivan</b>	Aaron Ó Súilleabháin	<i>Pailis Na Greine</i>
17	<b>Jim Liston</b>	Séamus O Liostún	<i>Gearoid Uí Griofa</i>
18	<b>Tony McCarthy</b>	Antoin Mac Carthaigh	<i>Cill Dioma Pailis an Chraonri</i>
19	<b>James Molyneaux</b>	Séamus Ó Maolagáin	<i>Dromcolloille Beal an Atha</i>
20	<b>Colm McSweeney</b>	Colm Mac Suibhne	<i>Gearoid Uí Griofa</i>
21	<b>Eoin O Shea</b>	Eoin Ó Se	<i>Moin a Lin</i>
22	<b>Tommy Griffin</b>	Tomas Ó Griofa	<i>Gearoid Uí Griofa</i>
23	<b>Killian Ryan</b>	Cillian Ó Riain	<i>Mungairit Naomh Pol</i>
24	<b>Hugh Bourke</b>	Aodh De Búrca	<i>Ath Dara</i>
25	<b>Robbie Bourke</b>	Riobaird De Búrca	<i>Ath Dara</i>
26	<b>Peter Nash</b>	Peadar de Nais	<i>Cill Dioma Pailis an Chraonri</i>

**BAINISTÍOCHT:**

Bainisteoir: **Ray Dempsey** Roghnóirí: **Martin Barrett, Michael Downey, John Chawke, Anthony Maher**

# Summer of Hope

By Orlagh Mullan



**As a baby of 1993 (no, I don't want to talk about how old that makes me this year), I was born into Derry success.**

At not even three months old I was wrapped up in my granny's finest knitwear and stuck in the Sam Maguire Cup - a picture that still sits proudly in the kitchen.

Other good days followed but for those born in the more recent years, there really hadn't been much to shout about when it came to Derry football.

Having started my short-lived career of journalism in 2016, I was used to the 'how do I put a positive spin on this' approach to a Derry game.

Rory Gallagher's arrival certainly signalled a change in fortunes, but miracles can't be worked overnight and although the 2020 Armagh game under RG's early stewardship was a spirited fight, it was clear the finished product was some distance away.

As a scribe (with an obvious bias), you go into a game where you're backing the underdog with a degree of optimism but a heavy dose of reality. It's a lot easier to go up and ask a man to give you some pearls of wisdom when he's just come through a mammoth championship battle than when he's just seen

it slip from his grasp at the last second.

... And so it comes to Ballybofey in 2021. It was my first time visiting as a reporter and another one of those 'hopeful but optimistic' danders through the turnstile. Progress had been made but Donegal were... Donegal.

Rory Gallagher is easy heard at the best of times but with a limited, Covid-related crowd and a seat in the stand behind the Oakleaf dugout I was like a real life RG cam. Fascinating to say the least. It's not difficult to see how he could get a player motivated to do whatever it takes to win.

I think the Derry faithful amongst us couldn't believe our luck at how the match was playing out and when Benny Heron touched the ball towards goal I was out of the seat and the laptop was nearly off the wooden bench and into the empty row in front (professional, I know). I couldn't understand why nobody on the pitch was celebrating like buck mad and then the reality hit. I had the perfect view of McBrearty's winner, poetry in motion and one of the best scores I've ever seen live given the circumstances, but I was that thran I didn't even give it Score of the Game.

And so came 2022. When the draw was made one of my immediate thoughts was 'sure at least we have the qualifiers back'. A bit pessimistic no doubt, but playing your rivals in their back yard after they've won Sam isn't exactly a dream scenario.

Well, what do I know? (or as Eamonn Coleman would

have said 'what do you boys know?') The post pitch scenes in Healy Park were like a release of years of frustrations. You'd have thought it was All-Ireland final day. I was scurrying around trying to find a player who wasn't been engulfed by 100 youngsters just to try and get a few words out of them of what had just happened.

So you start to think, that was decent, but Monaghan now - dear God, this Ulster championship is some craic! After the first half (which again involved a lot of unprofessional jumping around and some odd looks in the press box) I was entirely convinced wthe glory days were back, albeit a shaky second half spell brought me back to reality. Over the line again and I remember (after another long wait and search

of a busy pitch) I eventually got chatting to Chrissy McKaigue. As I was interviewing him people were saying 'go and win it now' and he replied with the confidence of a captain who had full belief, but who also wasn't getting too far ahead of himself.

Jumping in the car to Clones knowing you're going to watch your own county is a different experience altogether. My car was out of action so I was borrowing my da's and the dodgy roads in didn't do me many favours but eventually I blagged my way into the parking and set up in the press box. Even that is so typical of Ulster final day. Cramped, plugs at a premium, old rickety benches - the opposite of some of the high tech, plush press boxes across the country but, like everything

about Clones and Ulster final day, it all just adds to the atmosphere.

The tension that day was indescribable, much like the final whistle. The photos of the crowd on the pitch, the looks on the faces of supporters young and older, the togetherness and the joy and the magic of how Derry had defied all the odds and shown everyone that the bookies' odds mean nothing!

A generation of children inspired to be the next Shane McGuigan, Conor Doherty, Brendan Rogers, Odhran Lynch or Conor Glass.

We didn't get the big one but it was a summer of change, a summer of hope and a summer of memories.

Now, let's do it all again.

photo by Margaret McLaughlin



# Choose The Hassle And Cherish It

By Chris McCann

I don't get to attend too many Derry matches in person these days, but I'll be in the stand at Owenbeg today. The afternoon I'll spend getting to Owenbeg and watching the Ulster Champions take on Limerick is something I'll cherish.

In our super connected world, many of our games can be seen somewhere, either on television or online. I was able to watch all four of Derry's McKenna Cup games thanks to the marvels of streaming, and pretty much every key game in our club championships was available to view on Derry GAA TV.

These are developments that I'm massively appreciative of.

In days gone by, Irish exiles in London might have had to wait until the local paper made its way across the water to the corner shops of Holloway Road and Kilburn to glean details of the weekend's action. Joe Mulholland, doyenne of Derry refereeing, tells of how he used to drive to the highest points of the English capital in the vain hope of tuning into RTE on big match days before he had a eureka moment of ringing home and getting his sister to place the phone beside the radio. Back in the days before free minutes on mobiles this entailed a fairly lavish outlay on phone bills from the Moneymore maestro.

In many ways you actually get a clearer idea of what's happening at a game when you're watching it from home. Sat on my sofa in Highbury

watching on a 60-inch screen, my view is from the optimum angle at the halfway line and I have the benefit of replays and analysis.

But to quote a GAA marketing campaign from a decade back, nothing beats being there. That sentiment might sound trite, but it is nonetheless true. The experience of attending a game is about much more than just the watching of the component parts; the passes, blocks, tackles and scores and form the execution of the match.

I made it to two Derry games last year, the day of exultation against Donegal in Clones and the All-Ireland quarter-final filleting of Clare.

I'd watched the win over Tyrone in the Faltering Fullback, the pub that sponsors my London club Eire Óg and took in the game against Monaghan in my flat, live on BBC iPlayer in the virtual company of the excellent Thomas Niblock and Marty Clarke.

Both afternoons were thoroughly enjoyable, particularly seeing the hubristic confidence of my clubmate, Stewartstown native John Lee, crumble as we humbled the Red Hand gang. But like watching Glastonbury on the TV, it's fine but you're only getting a superficial taste of the experience. You're missing the sights, sounds and smells that occur away from the main stage and there was no way I wasn't going to see Rory Gallagher's team in the

flesh last summer.

The in-person match day experience starts long before the ball is thrown-in and it doesn't conclude when the long whistle blows. It's all the more rewarding for the extra effort required.

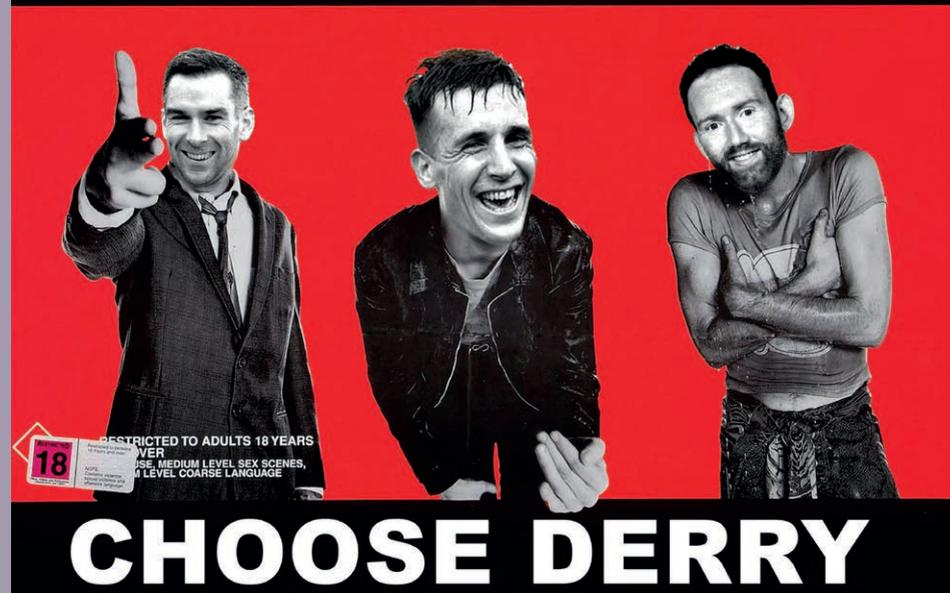
For the Clare game the outrageous rates that Dublin hotels were charging meant that an overnight wasn't possible. My match day started at 4am; involved five buses (there was inevitably a rail strike), two tube trains, two planes and black cab and a few jars with family and friends in a 21-hour round trip. I was banjaxed by the time our taxi pulled up in front of my North London apartment block, but it was a good banjaxed, time, energy and money well spent.

Granted that was a fairly extreme example but for households all over Derry that day started early; involved logistical coordination via lengthy WhatsApp exchanges of long drives, meet ups with family and friends and maybe even a pint or two.

But we choose to do it because all the hassle, all the effort, the planning befitting a minor military campaign - particularly for those travelling with kids - required to get a group of people to a specific location for a specific event at a specific time, is worth it.

It's a choice we make because we know that there's no experience that quite matches it.

# Gaaspotting



**So we choose** the sorting and allocating of tickets. **Choose** arranging pick-up times. **Choose** someone inevitably not being there at the arranged pick-up times. **Choose** three 14-stone men jammed into the backseat of a Volkswagen Polo. **Choose** the queue into Clones. **Choose** the smell of the frying onions from the burger stand. **Choose** getting parked up at Owenbeg. **Choose** complaining about the parking at Owenbeg. **Choose** the pint in Fagan's or the Creighton. **Choose** driving past a busload of lads pulled up outside Aughnacloy relieving themselves at the side of the road. **Choose** the 20th retelling of embellished anecdotes with clubmates. **Choose** ham sandwiches out of the boot and tea from a flask with a bag of southern Tayto. **Choose** the Benny Heron GOAT army. **Choose** the disagreements on selection. **Choose** Bandy McGuigan giving out to the opposition mentors. **Choose** the halftime draw ticket. **Choose** never ever in a 1000 games winning the half-time draw. **Choose** Gareth McKinless's yellow card. **Choose** Conor McCloskey's lung bursting runs. **Choose** Conor Glass's majestic fielding. **Choose** Shane McGuigan's elegant finishing. **Choose** the last gasp winner. **Choose** the repeated Galway heartbreak. **Choose** the defeated trudge back to the car. **Choose** the 'if only we'ds'. **Choose** the 'how bad was that ref today?' **Choose** the pitch invasion. **Choose** the victorious strut back to the car. **Choose** negotiating the exit from Owenbeg. **Choose** the funereal pace of the queue out of Clones. **Choose** waiting at your car for an hour before you even get into the funereal paced queue out of Clones. **Choose** the four-hour drive home while your companions doze off in the back seat. **Choose** getting home shattered. **Choose** attending GAA matches. **Choose** being there. **Choose** Derry. **Choose** the hassle and cherish it.



# A Growing Oak

By Michael McMullan

GaelicLife

If you are looking for the best example of stability in Derry's upward trend, look no further than Paudi McGrogan.

The Oakleafers' 2017 Ulster minor winning captain, who made his 50th senior appearance in last summer's Ulster final win over Donegal is set to make his 28th consecutive start at Owenbeg this afternoon.

Today is Rory Gallagher's 36th game as manager and the 2020 league win over Longford was the only game McGrogan didn't feature in, having started on every other occasion.

On top of that, the Newbridge man was only replaced three times, late on by Declan Cassidy, Ben McCarron and Jack Doherty, shaving just 14 minutes off an otherwise ever-present run.

McGrogan is just one starting appearance ahead of goalkeeper Odhrán Lynch. Thomas Mallon started in Gallagher's first game in charge against Monaghan in Inniskeen in late 2019, with Connlan Bradley's McKenna

Cup appearance last January in Ballybofey the other game Lynch didn't wear the number one jersey in.

Conor Doherty makes his 25th consecutive start today. Of Paul Cassidy's consecutive 28 appearances since he marked his debut with 1-1 as a sub against Longford in the first game after Covid, all but three were as a starter.

You soon get the picture of how Derry have built a core. Shane McGuigan and Brendan Rogers have each started 28 times under Gallagher. Chrissy McKaigue is one behind. Only for two All-Ireland hurling campaigns with Slaughtneil, those figures would've been higher.

Speaking after last week's McKenna Cup final, the Derry boss stated that a player only could count themselves as experienced if they'd played "35 or 40" times at inter-county level.

The revolving door is no longer there at the gates of Owenbeg. Under Damian McErlain and Damian Barton's combined four years in charge,

83 players represented Derry in league of championship.

Over the last three years, before visit of Limerick, that is now under half at 38.

The previous two managers used seven different goalkeepers including current number one Odhran Lynch who is under the guidance of Ronan Gallagher - brother of Rory - who took over from Thomas Mallon as goalkeeping coach for 2023.

I remember writing a letter on December in my Sideline View column in a County Derry Post pleading with Santa to send us a settled team.

There was also a conversation with a former county player where we agreed it was nigh on impossible to name of the spine of the team for the following season.

To be fair to McErlain, Barton and the late Collie McGurk on the hurling front, they were preparing teams with at least on hand tied behind their back. It was the era before the split season when Slaughtneil were dominant in Ulster and

left the county without a full deck until late in the league.

By that stage, the game was up as Derry chased a season that was always getting away. Add in those who opted out of panels for a plethora of reasons. There was zero continuity. At least any level that allowed a team ethos to take root.

It is any wonder the county plummeted into a decade of decline after the NFL title in 2008 that should've been the springboard.

With the constant changing of personnel, it was impossible to build an understanding between a goalkeeper and his defence. Without regular games, players' match fitness and sharpness level at county level never stood a chance. There was little chance to foster team spirit or any resemblance of a kick-out strategy.

Eventually things began to change. The minor class of 2015, under Damian McErlain, annexed an Ulster title they weren't expected to win.

What followed was a flow of minor teams getting to Ulster finals. David Clifford blitzed Derry in the All-Ireland final two years later and more recently Martin Boyle led a management team that went one step further to land the Tom Markham Cup in an epic 2020 decider in on a sunny afternoon in Tullamore.

Throw in the 2018 Ulster u-20 title, the return of Conor Glass and Rory Gallagher coming on board and soon the pieces of

the puzzle came together.

Now, stability meets potential in the fusion of two key ingredients. Another is togetherness. Last summer, the Derry squad lived out of each other's pockets. Weekend after weekend, if they weren't in the big yellow bus heading for a championship challenge they were cocooned away in a hotel in Limavady, plotting their next step.

With that vibe radiating from the camp, the chance of a Tyrone ambush was very, very real, yet few saw it coming. When it did, it shot a jolt of energy across the county.

Monaghan were put to the sword before Derry fans ensured 80 minutes of nail-biting hell in the final.

Brendan Rogers and Conor Glass ran Donegal ragged on an afternoon when the final whistle signed the an invasion of thousands of Derry fans across the St Tiernach's Park pitch

"It was just our time," bellowed out captain Chrissy McKaigue. Derry were back in the big time.



simple thing, getting two league points in the bag. Then it's on to the next challenge and hoping momentum is again the best friend Derry can find.

At the forefront will be a Derry team with regulars at their core, men typified by Paudi McGrogan.

## The top 10 starters from Rory Gallagher's 35-game Derry managerial stint

Name	App's
Paudi McGrogan	34
Odhrán Lynch	33
Brendan Rogers	28
Conor Doherty	28
Shane McGuigan	28
Chrissy McKaigue	27
Benny Heron	25
Niall Loughlin	25
Conor McCluskey	25
Paul Cassidy	25



THE WARRIOR'S CODE presents...

# Country Roads Take Me Home

By Steven Doherty

'Culchie is a pejorative term in Hiberno-English for someone from rural Ireland. The term usually has a pejorative meaning directed by urban Irish against rural Irish, but since the late 20th century, the term has also been reclaimed by some who are proud of their rural or small town origin.' Wikipedia

Apart from the arrival of a half a dozen police Land Rovers at the fag end of the night, Glack GAC's Centenary Gala went off with little drama.

There was much discussion and indeed consternation when the Glack committee decided to hold the 'big do' not in our normally comfortable abode of the Drummond Hotel, but to take the trek into a big city hotel up in Derry. A crowd of Glack men in a swanky big hotel, what could possible go wrong?

Fears were soon allayed, however, and the event was a triumph. Indeed, I don't think I've ever felt prouder to be a Glack man, and I know many at the Gala that glorious night shared those feelings.

But they say the rural club is dying. It's that lazy narrative where predominantly country clubs perennially struggle to field teams. However, with more and more folk able to work from home these days we've seen a gradual drift homewards from the big towns and cities as Gaels increasingly find they can make a living from in that homely place they were born and bred. The rural club is sure to benefit.

It takes many good men and women to keep a 'country' club surviving and indeed thriving. And chief among

those from my Godly part of the world in Glack is Chairman Stephen McElhinney.

'Skinny' McElhinney as he is incorrectly known spends most night's 'down at the field' helping, organising, planning. Whatever it takes. And he's not alone in Glack. He's not alone throughout the Oakleaf County and beyond. Many hands make light work.



The word rural, of course, is the politically correct way of saying 'culchie', and it's an actualisation I have struggled to accept or embrace for most of my early life.

A culchie, you see, isn't born realising they are a culchie. But there comes a moment in every culchie's life when it suddenly dawns on them, and they mutter to themselves, almost in shock, "Jesus, I'm a culchie."

My time came pretty early in life.

Scientific research suggests there are three phases a culchie goes through before full acceptance of 'culchihood'. After the initial shock revelation they rail against it,

and I did. "I'm not a culchie, I'm from Glack!" I'd often reply when under fire from 'white collar' Limavady halyins ganchin at me.

By the grace of God I was born in Glack, of course. We lived there for seven years. It was the best seven years of my life.

Seeking adventure, however, Tommy Doherty took his young family the short journey down the hill to the bright lights of Ballykelly.

The move from Ballykelly Primary School to secondary school would be a big one for our young hero and made all the more difficult when your parents decide to send you to the rugby and cricket playing Limavady Grammar School, as opposed to my preferred choice – St Mary's (where I'd hoped to continue playing Gaelic football badly).

A difficult time for young Doherty, I like to think their unpalatable decision was part of a cross community initiative and my folks wanted me to meet Protestants. Or, more than likely, a big grant was involved. Nonetheless I took my oil and did my parents bidding and it was off to the Grammar for the bull's licked Glack cub.

After an uneasy bedding in period I soon took to my new educational environment and found that Protestants were dead on once you got to know them.

Around this period my father had built a house on an abandoned hilltop of land historically named Sheep Hill.

My mother is a wonderful, loving woman. Fuelled on Bacardi and Embassy Red cigarettes she somehow

reared four maverick sons. That in itself was a herculean effort.

Both kind and highly intelligent, 'me Ma' did, however, make one fatal mistake which would impact her first born's life irrevocably.

As was Limavady Grammar School policy all uniforms were to be labelled, and my mother in her wisdom, and hoping to distinguish me from any other of the many (wrongly) perceived S Dohertys, decided to label every item on my Limavady Grammar School uniform 'S DOHERTY, SHEEP HILL'. (yes, in capitals and in bold).

As you might imagine this episode was akin to the difficult narrative in Johnny Cash's titular character in A Boy named Sue.

My mother had metaphorically challenged me – 'Son this world is rough. And if a man's gonna make it, he's gotta be tough.'

For years throughout the unforgiving school corridors I was known as 'S Doherty, Sheephill' to howls of ensuing laughter. And that was just from my friends. There was rarely a day when someone didn't call me 'S Doherty, Sheep Hill' or made some disparaging reference to my place of residence – Sheep Hill.

'Jesus, I AM a culchie!' The realisation had set in. My culchie credentials could no longer be denied and I shared much of their DNA.

All culchie's dream of building a house in their father's back garden. And many live to see this dream come true.

Culchie's are brilliant at wearing a pair of Jeans, particularly boot cut. The waist width and leg length come easy to us, and brown boots often complete a dazzling look for dancing or car park fighting.

A culchie likes only two types of music – country and western. Every culchie loves



Garth Brooks and has at least five of his tapes in their motor. Swanky culchie's have an 8 disc CD player, with Garth Brooks in every slot. Younger cubs will slip in the odd Nathan Carter album en route to the Donegal Rally in their souped up 10 year old Subaru.

A tasty fish supper is always washed down by a carton of full fat milk. Sunday is always carvery day, and a sixty mile drive to nowhere in particular. It was all beginning to add up to me.

Culchie men receive three things for Xmas – boxer shorts, socks and Lynx Africa. I knew a guy who's mother-in-law bought him Lynx Excite by accident and he got shot of the woman soon after. It was never going to work out.

Country folk carry a healthy suspicion of their neighbour, and share a weakness for 'a nice bitta ham'. We love Veda bread. And fadge.

And a culchie is never happier than when they are on a Carnival swingboat, and trying to 'keep her lit' while the young buck with the well-worn

brown leather money satchel tries in vain to put the brake on her.

The third and final phase of culchihood is acceptance. Eventually we grow to wear it as a badge of honour. It's who we are. It's where we come from. It's our kin, our neighbours and friends. We just breathe cleaner air and speak with more exotic accents. We don't need to learn Ulster-Scots as Ulster Scots is a culchie's mother tongue.

But best of all we love the GAA. We love our county Derry, and we love and cherish our club.

Some say the rural club is dying. But it won't die on 'Skinny' McElhinney's watch. And there's plenty of good men and women like the tireless Glack chairman in every well run 'country' club in Derry and beyond.

Here's to the next 100 years!

#GlaicAbu



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 NACH BHFUIL MUIO AR AN BRÁIRC IMEARCHA.  
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**TÁ AIT DÚINN UILIG ANN**

IT'S JUST A BITTA CRAIC

IT'S JUST A FEW QUID

IT'S JUST A BIT MORE THAN LAST TIME

IT'S JUST A LAST CHANCE TO WIN BACK WHAT YOU LOST

IT'S JUST THIS WEEK'S WAGES

IT'S JUST NEXT MONTH'S RENT

IT'S JUST NOT GOING TO STOP UNTIL YOU'VE GOT NOTHING LEFT

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