

# The New Tipperary Rangers 1945-1961



by Seamus J. King

A junior G.A.A. club was formed in the Laffanbridge-Ballinure area in 1945. It was called the New Tipperary Rangers and it continued in existence until 1961. It was a hurling and football club and it gave many hours of recreation and camaraderie to the locals at a time of limited travel and diversion. Cars were few and far between at the time so

home-grown sport was the order of the day.

The area of the new club was part of the Parish of Killenaule and the hurlers and footballers should have been playing with the Killenaule Club, but the locals felt Killenaule was too far away at a time when transport was limited. Also, they felt a greater affinity with the Mid division and they affiliated mostly with that division during their existence. John Bergin, who had been prominent in the formation of the club, became a selector with the team and Mid board delegate also.

The name was taken from the townland in which the playing field of the club was located, Armitage's in New Tipperary. In fact, the place hadn't been long named. A development of houses in the area was given the name by the local postman, Jack 'Coffey' Murphy, in order to facilitate his deliveries, and it stuck.

## A Mid Junior Title

The club affiliated in junior hurling Number 2 in 1945, 1946, 1947 and 1948. In the last year, they won the Mid championship. Twenty teams affiliated in the competition and they were divided into three areas. New Tipperary Rangers were in Thurles Area 2 and qualified for the semi-final. They defeated Rahealty by 4-4 to 3-2 in the semi-final on a wet day at Thurles.

*We'll honour in song and in story the names of our Ballinure men,  
Who wielded the hurleys in glory and won a great fight that was grim,  
For to Thurles they travelled one Sunday, when the rain was lashing  
down fast,  
They walloped the lads from Rahealty, Yes!, right from the first to the last!*

They went on to beat Clonakenny B, by 2-5 to 2-1, in the final. This was also played at Thurles on December 5 and the issue was in doubt until the final quarter. The Rangers, who had undergone a special course of training under John Bergin, played against the wind in the first half and were two points in arrears at half-time. Clonakenny put up a great stand for fifteen minutes after the interval, preventing Rangers from scoring, but in the closing stages New Tipperary got the upper hand and ran out winners by four points.

Roger Shanahan, whose contribution to the victory over Rahealty was important, and who is thus mentioned in the ballad of the victory: 'When up ran bold Roger Shanahan, his hurley clenched tight in his hand! Let it hail, rain or snow we'll continue, so come on and strike up the band.' has a good memory of the players, who won the championship, and the places they played:

1. Philip Bulfin, 2. Roger Shanahan, 3. Michael Kevin, 4. Tom Shelly, 5. Jimmy Foley, 6. Patsy Carey, 7. Willie Fanning, 8. Philip Fanning, 9. Paddy Nolan, 10. Dinny Fogarty, 11. Sean Cormack, 12. Mark Dwyer, 13. Jim Cormack, 14. Dick Morris (capt.), 15. Paddy Cormack. Subs: Michael Cormack, Ned Hayes, Johnny Hanly.

The victory forced the Rangers to play in the Number 1 championship in 1949 but they reverted to Number 2 in 1950. Then in 1952 and 1953, an indication of the strength of the game in the area, the Rangers affiliated in Number 1 and Number 2 in these two years.

The club continued to affiliate at Number 2 level in 1954, 1955, 1956 and 1957, but without any success. They also affiliated in the Mid in junior football in 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949 and 1953.

The club also encouraged young players from 1950 onwards. They obviously hadn't enough players to field a team on their own and they affiliated with Moycarkey-Borris in 1950, 1951, 1952 and 1953. While they had no success the combo team made it to the



**New Tipperary Rangers – Mid Tipperary No. 2 Junior Hurling Champions 1958.** Front l-r: Paddy Nolan, Willie Fanning, James Fahey, Philip Bulfin, Ned Hayde, Gus Bulfin. Middle l-r: Patsy Carey, Sean Cormack, Jim Cormack, Dick Cormack, Tom Morris; Back row, left to right: (half-hidden, in cap) Philip Fanning, Dinny Fahey, (in shade) Philip Hayde, Patsy Murray, Michael Kevin, ? , ? , (with head leaning to right) Paddy Cormack, Ned Ryan, Michael Cormack, Mark Dwyer, Michael Hanley

Mid final stage in 1950 and 1951. Then in 1955, 1956 and 1957 New Tipperary Rangers fielded a minor team of their own.

## The South

New Tipperary Rangers affiliated in the South in 1958. This change came about because of a county board ruling that the club couldn't play in Mid-Tipperary as there was a senior club in the Killenaule parish, and most of their members resided in that parish.

The Rangers affiliated in the South junior B championship and were defeated in the final by Wild Rovers. The game had a sequel at board level, when the report of the referee, John Shortall, was discussed. The official reported that after the game he was rushed by supporters and players of the losing side and was struck by two players, who were named in the report. The chairman accepted the report of the referee and said that he had no option but to suspend New Tipperary Rangers for 12 months.

The suspension prevented New Tipperary Rangers from affiliating in 1959, but they did in junior A in 1960. They didn't do very well. They don't appear to have affiliated in 1961, when the club went out of existence.

In March 2012, a monument to the memory of the New Tipperary Rangers was erected at Noan, Ballinure. The committee responsible included Michael Bulfin, Steve McCormack, Ned McCormack, Johnny Hanly, Roger Shanahan, Michael Fanning and Miceál McCormack. Of the six surviving members of the 1948 New Tipperary Rangers team that won the mid No. 2 junior championship, three were present, Patsy Carew, Jim McCormack, Fethard, and Roger Shanahan, Cashel. Kindest regards were sent to the absent Phil Fanning, Clonmel, Jack Fanning in Dublin and Mark O'Dwyer in Annacarty.



Rogie Shanahan, aged 90, the last survivor of the New Tipperary Rangers team, with his wife, Maura, at the monument to the club near Ballinure.