DÁIL STARS

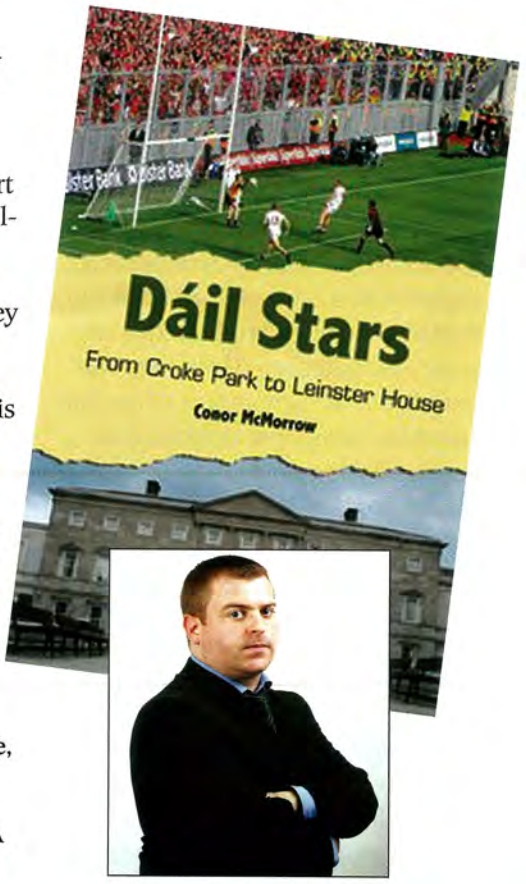
from Croke Park to Leinster House

Conor McMorrow

"Explores the remarkable journey of how the GAA has been a breeding ground for Irish politicians for over a century..."

CONOR MCMORROW picks an All-Star team of politicians whose prowess on the playing field or in GAA administration has been matched by their success in Irish politics. By devoting a chapter to each of the 15 'Dáil Stars' the book tells each player/politician's individual GAA and political story using candid interviews and archive material for the historical figures. Among the Dáil Stars featured are Eoin O'Duffy, Austin Stack, Jack Lynch, Dan Spring, Jimmy Deenihan, Martin Ferris, Henry Kenny and more.

- Filled with anecdotes gleaned from candid interviews and archive material, Dáil Stars moves from the thrill of winning All-Irelands to the cut and thrust of political life.
- How Blueshirts founder and former Ulster GAA Secretary, Eoin O'Duffy, invited a Nazi spy to an All-Ireland final.
- How Mayo football star and TD Henry Kenny, father of Enda Kenny, invited TDs to his own all-night 'wake' in the Dáil bar.
- Sinn Féin TD Martin Ferris on winning an under-21 All-Ireland title as an IRA fugitive on the run.
- Fine Gael TD and Kerry legend Jimmy Deenihan on his heart-to-heart with John B Keane about entering politics.
- Six-time All-Ireland winning dual star Jack Lynch and when the whiskey goes 'below Thurles'.
- How Sean Flanagan, the GAA's 'original Roy Keane', tried to scrap his own government department as a minister.
- Des Foley, the Arms Trial and the medal robbery, plus the 'Also-Rans': GAA stars who unsuccessfully stood for election.



The Author:

Conor McMorrow is a Political Correspondent with the Sunday Tribune, where he has worked for the last five years. A native of Monaghan, he is a member of the Sean MacDiarmada GAA club. He now lives in Dublin.

KILLARGUE

Drivin' Leitrim Timber Dave Sheridan talks to Bláithín Gallagher

Dave Sheridan is a young religion and music teacher from Killargue in North Leitrim now working in Dublin. He is also an excellent flute player who sees a great love of Irish traditional music in Leitrim. While Dave does not play totally in the local style, he does acknowledge that most styles in Irish traditional flute playing, including his own, came from John McKenna. McKenna, from Drumkeeran, has influenced almost every flute player, either directly or indirectly through his recordings in the mid 1920s and 30s. He was the first traditional flautist to be recorded and therefore, has the earliest known style of flute playing. It is through the many local musicians who helped him learn music from an early age that he developed and refined his talent. In particular, a session that took place on the last Saturday of the month in the Aras Breffini in Manorhamilton, was very important to him. Here, local musicians like Seamus Ferguson, Sean Farrell, Seamus McGowan, John Hamilton and Paddy Gilroy among others, would often play until the early hours of Sunday morning. Michael O Brien and the late Seamus Horan from Drumkeeran, were also very influential on the development of his music.

Dave believes that is through the various committees including the John McKenna Society, the Joe Mooney Summer School and the Ballinaglera Traditional Society and their festival & schools that helps secure the future of Irish traditional music, particularly among the younger generation. Leitrim has seen a growth in the number of up and coming younger musicians who are showing great talent. These festivals give Dave a chance to keep in touch with the local music scene where he enjoys teaching the flute.

Dave has released two solo albums. His first *Sheridan's Guesthouse*, was named after the caravan he used to travel to the many traditional Irish music festivals the length and breadth of Ireland. This caravan played host to many musicians over the years and hence the name "Sheridan's Guesthouse". Accompanying Dave on the various tracks on this album include Seamie O Dowd; Brian Mc Donagh of Dervish, Leitrim man Brian Rooney (The Godfather); Damien O Brien; Oliver Loughlin plus many more local musicians.

Dave has just launched his second solo album *Drivin' Leitrim Timber*, again a traditional Irish flute album. This album gets its name from the 'Drive' or 'Lift' in the music; 'Timber' refers to the Wooden Flute that Dave plays and of course the 'Leitrim' part speaks for itself. Dave has a great pride in Leitrim, its culture and its music. Among the well known musicians playing on the Album are Brian McGrath from De Dannan, Mick McCague of "At The Racket" and Neil Lyons, the 2008 World Bodhrán Champion.

This latest album tries to stay as local to Leitrim as possible with the choice of tunes included. At least eight of the tunes on the CD come from Leitrim. Three were written by Charlie Lennon who is a fellow North Leitrim man. Other tunes include 'Lough Allen', 'The Leitrim Lilter' and 'McKenna's'. 'GreyRidge Breeze', a waltz written by Sheridan himself also features on the album. Of course 'grey ridge' is the literal translation of the Gaelic form of Leitrim, 'Liath Druim'. Both of these albums are available from www.sheridansguesthouse.ie. It is musicians like Dave Sheridan that keep the musical heritage of Leitrim on the map.