DRIBBLING A BALL

Alice Nutman Granddaughter of Eva Reynolds, Paviour, Drumhanny, Mohill, who now lives in Southend, Essex

I DON'T KNOW when we started playing football. Mum (Sally) and Gran (Eva) tell us that we dribbled a ball from the moment we started toddling and this was probably my Uncle James's fault, who was ten when I was born. Whatever the reasons, we have always wanted to play and as soon as we were old enough we joined the boys' teams at seven. I was lucky enough to have another couple of girls in my squad, but Katharine was the only girl in her team.

One of my earliest memories of her playing at this age was of her not playing. At seven she was small and cute, especially in the green and white Catholic United kit modelled on the Celtic squads. She was always there at the touchline shadowing her manager waiting for the minutes when she would get to play for her team. When she appeared it was always the opposition who noticed her skill, somehow her own team were distracted by her gender. Perhaps it was because she looked so cute!

As the years progressed, the problem became more pronounced and as I reached the grand old age of eleven, I was soon too old to play with the boys! As football is our world, life without it was not an option, so Dad was persuaded to start an all girls' team. The first ever for Catholic United and as girl footballers are in shorter supply than boys, Katharine and I could play together.

So began three seasons of fantastic and enjoyable football. We entered the Essex County Girls' Football League and for the first two seasons were champions and cup finalists. During this time Katharine was selected by Colchester School of Excellence, which meant she was playing Saturdays too, against the likes of Arsenal, Fulham and Southampton.

Mid way through the season I was given the call from Colchester too. One memorable day I went to watch Katharine play Chelsea and the under 14s were short; I grabbed my boots and kitted up. Since then we have both played every Saturday with mid-week training twice a week.

Our real taste of the high life in football began when our school entered our team in the Coca Cola School Competition in the 2004-2005 season. We started playing local girls' schools and easily moved into the regional knock outs. As the final approached, the venues for our matches became more prestigious and we will both be able to tell our children we played at the QPR stadium and at St Mary's in Southampton.

It was a golden run to the final in May 2005 at Villa Park. Our supporters travelled by coach and the atmosphere was electric. As the captain, I took the responsibilities of the day seriously. We were here to win and become England's School Champions! Our opposition were tough, West Bridgford had some talented players too, but we were determined.

In the first half neither side dominated as we settled into play. Then, after twenty minutes, Katharine scored a fantastic goal with a shot from 40 yards out. The goalie and the opposition were stunned. St Bernard's were in the lead and we were ecstatic.

In the second half it was my turn. Katharine played a through ball and I took it past the defender to face the Bridgeford goalie and placed the ball in the back of the net. We were the winners!

As the Nutman sisters were the goal scorers, we were hot news. We appeared in our local paper, The Sunday Mirror and the Metro. We even had a small spot on the BBC local news. Was this our fifteen minutes of fame?

Then once again Katharine surged forward when an England scout spotted her in our usual Saturday match at Colchester and she was asked to join the under fifteen squad in Easter 2005. Since then she has attended two training camps and attends regular fitness sessions. Of course I'm really proud of her, but as football is my life I hope that I will be able to join her too.

If not maybe another type of football beckons. When home on holiday my cousin, Michelle Holahan, took me to a Gaelic Football match near Manorhamilton. Now that looks like a game I could really get stuck into!

United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 109th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

House of Representatives

Dennis J. Kucinich
of Ohio
In the House of Representatives
In Honor and Recognition of Tom McCaffrey

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and remembrance of Tom McCaffrey, beloved husband, devoted musician, and teacher to so many. Mr. McCaffrey dedicated his life to encouraging and inspiring Clevelanders and brought them that which they had never felt and taught them the joy, warmth, power and strength of Irish traditional music.

Mr. McCaffrey was born in 1916, in Mohill, County Leitrim, Ireland where he worked on the family farm until coming to America in 1955. Mr. McCaffrey was unable to resist the allure of music and at ten years of age he took up the fife and flute. After a year of flirtation with the woodwinds, Mr. McCaffrey found his true love and calling in the fiddle. For knowledge Mr. McCaffrey turned to his father, also a teacher and player of the fiddle, and sought all musicians who traveled through town. It was not long before he mastered the fiddle and with his fine, strong voice, Mr. McCaffrey was requested at local festivals and dances. In Cleveland he teamed up with Tom Byrne, a master flute player and fellow inspirer, to record the album Irish Music From Cleveland. *Mr. McCaffrey and Mr. Byrne had a lifelong friendship full of music and laughter.*

At the age of 83, Mr. McCaffrey found his other great love, Alice Kelly. Mr. McCaffrey was known to always have a smile and story ready and never hesitated to share his wealth of knowledge or his music. Though recorded at the Smithsonian Institute Mr. McCaffrey's music will truly live on in those whom he taught and in the hearts of all that have heard him play.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor and remembrance of Mr. Tom McCaffrey, whose smile, charm, wit, and Irish wisdom will be remembered and shared and whose memory will live in the tunes and tales. I offer my deep condolences to his wife, Alice, to all his family and friends and to the many who have been inspired and touched by all that he has given.

(Appearing in the Congressional Record in September, 2006; Volume 151)

Irish fiddler and storyteller honoured

Thomas McCaffrey, Irish Fiddler, storyteller and friend to many died on August 2nd 2006 in Cleveland, Ohio, USA aged 90 years.

Tom was born in Corraterrif, Mohill, Co. Leitrim. He was a brother of the late Terry (Ohio, US), Sr. Mary Anthony (India and Terenure), and Michael (Corraterrif). At the age of 10, Tom took up the fife and flute but soon found his true love and calling in playing the fiddle. For knowledge, Tom turned to his father, also a player and teacher of the fiddle and sought out musicians who traveled through Mohill and surrounding areas. It was not long until he mastered the fiddle and with his strong fine voice was asked to all the local festivals, dances and weddings. He was a member of the local Dramatic Society and many other organizations.

Tom emigrated to Cleveland in 1955, bringing with him his love of Irish music, dance and storytelling. There he teamed up with Tom Byme, a Sligo man. Tom Byrne was a master flute player. Between them they recorded the album 'Irish Music from Cleveland'. The couple were welcome to any gathering and their partnership led to musical recordings by the Smithsonian Museum Folkways Music Archives.

'The Emeralds' Ceili dance band, of which Tom was a leading member, played at festivals from Nashville to Toronto and also at weddings and parties across the area. He supported traditional Irish step dancers at the feiseannas. He was also President of the Cleveland Irish Musicians, volunteered with the local Comhaltas organization and with the Irish Music Academy of Cleveland.

In 1987, Tom was honoured to be named Grand Marshall for the St Patrick's Day Parade and was selected by the State to receive the Governor's Award for his efforts in preserving the music of Ireland. He received a commendation by President Ronald Regan for his contribution to Irish Culture in the United States.

Tom McCaffrey dedicated his life to encouraging and inspiring Clevelanders, teaching them the joy, warmth and strength of Irish Traditional Music. In 1989 a video 'The Gentle Bard' was produced to preserve this memory. It has been distributed to Colleges, Clubs and cultural organizations throughout the world.

A fitting tribute was paid to Tom in the House of Representatives, when during the proceedings of the Congress in September 2006, Dennis J Kucinich asked that the Speaker and colleagues join him in 'honor and remembrance of Tom McCaffrey, whose smile, charm, wit and Irish wisdom will be remembered and shared and whose memory will live in the tunes and tales'.

Tom is survived by his wife Alice Kelly-McCaffrey, his niece Madeleine Huber, his step children, grand nieces and nephews.

'Go ndeana Dia trocaire ar a h-anam'