

FR. TOM  
BURKE'S  
HURLING CLUB

# FR. TOM BURKE'S HURLING CLUB

In 1958 a group of disgruntled hurlers who played with the Galway Hurling Club called a meeting in Hibernian Hall, Roxbury. These disgruntled fellows were Matty Duggan, his brother Walter Duggan, Mike Fahey, Jimmy Elwood, John King, Paddy Grealish and his brother-in-law Mike Grealish, Michael Collins, his brother Bartley (our current President), Tom Lane and Larry Bohan. The meeting lasted a few hours. It was all about breaking away from the Galway HC and forming a new hurling club in Boston. At that time there were many good hurlers left on the sidelines with no chance to play. These "disgruntled few" thought it would be good for the Gaelic games, particularly hurling, if another team was formed.

A week passed while these men thought about a name for this new hurling club that they were going to form. Finally, they came upon the name of Fr. Tom Burke. This was the name of a very famous team in the Claddagh (a part of Galway City) which had won many championships over the years with star hurlers like Colie and Bartley Finnerty, who eventually came to Boston and played with the Toms, plus Fr. Tom Burke was a great Irish orator. Other names were mentioned but they kept coming back to Fr. Tom Burke and that it was – a new hurling club was formed in Boston and The Claddagh song became their chant.

Several more meetings were held to sign up new members and players; plans on how to raise money to buy hurls and balls; to decide on the team colors – black and green became their colors from the lines in the Claddagh Song – "those green and black jerseys I remember them still, here's a toast to you Claddagh at the foot of Fairhill". In the next few years, men like Eddie Flaherty, Tom Greene, Jimmy Cook, Danny Duggan, Frank Flaherty, Joe Connell (RIP), Tommy Lemihan, Larry Darcy, Seamus Hynes, the Finnerty brothers, John Joe Greally, Mike Hession, Sean and Seamus Nestor, the Audley brothers, Sean Acton and Sean Flaherty to name a few joined the club. In the late 70s and early 80s there was an influx of young Irish to Boston. Among them was a young Moycullen man by the name of Padraic Lydon who has been a great asset to the club on and off the field. He has held many positions in the club as well as being a GAA Board delegate. Another young man that has also put his heart and soul into the club is Joe Grealish via Catlegar – who for years was the ~~king~~ pin of the backline.

By the mid 80s things were beginning to change in football and hurling. It seemed the clubs were lacking much needed talent. Not to say that those they had were not good, but in order to win a championship and compete with the likes of Chicago and San Francisco (New York had super players but were not included in the North American Board), they needed to recruit the "county player caliber". So began the search for hurling talent and Fr. Toms recruited some great players in the names of Mickey Coan (Galway), Connolly Brothers (Galway), Gerry McGrath and the Carroll Brothers (Tipperary), Aidan Staunton (Galway) and Dick O'Hara (Kilkenny) to name a few. In the mid to late 80s and early 90s, several other young players were added to our roster – Mickey Joe Hynes, Jay Lyons (the only Irish American to play hurling in Boston), James O'Donohoe, Matty Donohue, the Folan Brothers, Mike Grealy, Gerry Martyn, Pat Costello, Dermot Fox (one of the best goalies in Boston) and the Brennan Brothers.

In 1996 a junior hurling team was formed under the leadership of Tom Morrissey, Pat Costello, Dermot Fox and James O'Donohoe. They won the New England Junior Championship and went on to the finals in San Francisco. Although they did not win, they fielded a great team.

This club is a close knit group who celebrate losing as heartily as they celebrate winning. There were many hard fought games played on many fields over the years (as noted below). The club traveled to Hartford, Springfield and Montreal for charity and challenge games.

Over the years, Fr. Toms and the Boston GAA played in many fields. Just to jog your memory, I will mention a few: Brighton Field, Russell Field North Cambridge, Columban Fathers in Milton, Tech Field in Brookline where Fr. Toms played for many Cardinal Cushing Field Days, Manning

Bowl in Lynn, Dilboy Field the home of the GAA for decades and now our wonderful new playing field at the Cultural Center in Canton which opened in 1999 and which Matty Duggan, one of the Fr. Toms founding members, says "I waited 41 years to see this".

Below is a sampling of some of the club awards over the years:

1959, 1961, 1962 New England Hurling Champions  
1980, New England Hurling Champions  
1983, New England Hurling Champions  
1987, New England & North American Champions  
1995, New England Champions  
1997, Fox Cup Champions  
1997, New England Junior Champions

Nancy Duggan, who has been the club secretary for at least 15-20 years, submits this club history. Sorry for any errors or omissions.



THE GREAT FATHER TOM BURKE 1830 - 1883

Contrary to the beliefs of many, Fr. Tom Burke was not a hurler nor was he an athlete. He was a born orator, the greatest that Ireland has given to the world .

He was born on Kirwins Lane in Galway City but early in childhood moved to Dominick St. Because of poor health, he was brought up in Oranmore where he learned to be a fluent Gaelic speaker. He was baptized Nicholas and took Thomas Aquinas as his religious name. He had a love of oratory, literature, music, fun-making and pranks. He entered the Dominican Order in 1847 and went to Italy for his novitiate, excelling in theology. As a sub-deacon of 20, he was sent to England to re-establish the Dominican Province and was ordained there in 1853. He was such a brilliant priest and scholar that he was called to Tallaght, Ireland to found a novitiate and House of Studies. He was appointed Rector of the Irish Dominican College of San Clemente in Rome in 1864 and his fame as an orator followed him. In 1867 he was called to Dublin where he was the eulogist for O'Connell and then chosen to be the Bishop of Dromone's theologian at the Vatican Council in 1869. In 1871 he was sent to Belgium to revise the Book of Constitutions and in 1872 he set out for America. He preached in New York and in Boston where he spoke at the Coliseum to 40,000 (greatest paying audience the U.S. had known) for the aid of the Orphan Asylum. He went on to speak in St. Louis, Chicago, Cleveland and New Orleans before he became ill and returned to Ireland, leaving a reputation in America such as no orator had ever before made in this country.

Despite his illness, he did much travelling upon his return and his last few years were spent in constant pain. He gave his last speech in Donegal.

It was said that the death of this great orator and excellent religious had placed in mourning not only his Order and all Ireland - but the Universal Church.



### FATHER TOM'S HURLING CLUB-1959

**FRONT ROW:** P. CASSERLY, W. MCKAY, W. DUGGAN, M. MCQUALTERS, M. FAHEY, M. DUGGAN, B. FAHERTY, J. FLAHERTY, J. JOYNT, J. CONNELL, B. COLLINS

**MIDDLE ROW:** T. GANNON, M. COLLINS, F. FLAHERTY, P. O'DEA, E. FLAHERTY, P. O'BRIEN, P. GREALISH, T. GREENE, M. MADDEN, J. COOKE, M. DAVIS, S. NESTOR

**BACK ROW:** M.GREALISH, J. DUNLAP, C. SULLIVAN, L. BOHAN, R. BURNS, J. KING, J. FEENEY, D. HACKETT, J. CLOHERTY, T. LANE

# FR. TOM BURKE'S HURLING CLUB

## 1980 NEW ENGLAND CHAMPIONS



## 1983 NEW ENGLAND CHAMPIONS

FRONT ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: M. HANLEY, J. LYONS, J.J. GREALLY, G. McGRATH, D. DUGGAN, K. O'CONNOR, P. LYDON

BACK ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: G. McDONAGH, J. HORAN, J. McGRATH, T. CONNOLLY, J. McGLONE, M. DUGGAN, O. KIERNAN

# FR. TOM BURKE'S HURLING CLUB

## 1987 NEW ENGLAND & NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPIONS



The Galway-dominated Fr. Tom Burkes Hurling Club of Boston, New England Champions and North America Champions of 1987. Front row, l. to r.: John Greene, Craughwell (Treasurer); Pa Magee, Loughrea; James Murphy, Caslegar; John Brennan, Oranmore; J. Lyons, U.S.A.; Tom Hennessy, Limerick; Joe Grealish, Captain, Castlegar; Gerry Martyn, Oranmore; John Kelleher, Mervue; John Consodine, Cork; Donal Dalton, Waterford; Larry Darcy, Manager, Moycullen; Eddie Flaherty, Selector, Moycullen.

Back row, l. to r.: Aidan Staunton, Kiltormer; Gerry McDonagh, Selector, Athenry; John Connor, Castlegar; Gary Cloherty, Ragoon; Pat Costello, Oranmore; Pat Brennan, Oranmore; Matty Donoghue, Moycullen; Pat Gill, Ballinderreen; Bernard Keady, Killimordaly; Dermot Lane, Ballinderreen; Jimmy Donoghue, Moycullen; Brian O'Shea, Clare; Michael Horan, Meelick-Eyrecount; Michael Duignan, Offaly; Dathai Regan, Offaly; Dick O'Hara, Kilkenny; Matty Duggan, Claregalway; Joe Morrissey, Athenry and Bartley Collins, President, Castlegar.

# FR. TOM BURKE'S HURLING CLUB



## 1995 NEW ENGLAND CHAMPIONS!

**Back Row, Left to Right:** Michael O'Brien, Larry Darcy, Seamus Folan, Patrick Lydon, Pat McGee, Joe Grealish, John Cooke, Michael Folan, Michael Grealy, Pierce Grealy, Mairtin Staunton, Dermot Fox, Vincent O'Sullivan, Mick O'Hara, Brian Carr, Willie Burke, Mattie Donohue (Selector), Pat Costello (Manager), Bartley Collins

**Front Row, Left to Right:** Aiden O'Rourke, David Hanniffy (Captain), Des Teehan, Tom Faherty, Ronan Hanley, Brendan McNamara, Pat Barrett, James Donohue, Eamon Ferris, Daragh Coen, Gerry Martyn, Aiden Staunton, Liam McDonagh



## 1997 NEW ENGLAND JUNIOR CHAMPIONS!

**Back Row, Left to Right:** Dermot Fox (Manager), Dermot Harrington, Vincent Jordan, Emmet Burke, Pat Kelly, Rurai Lyne, Michael Joe Hynes, Tom Morrissey, Robbie Dooley, Kieran Doyle, Niall Flaherty, Vincent O'Sullivan, Mattie Duggan

**Front Row, Left to Right:** John Daly (Trainor), Michael O'Riordan, Pat Costello, Peter Heaney, Adrian Walsh, James Donohue (Captain), David Hanniffy, Aiden O'Rourke, Larry Bluett, Peter Hanley, Bartley Collins, Patrick Lydon,

**Mascots:** Dylan and Jason Costello