

## History of Croke Park

Today Croke Park is home and headquarters to the Gaelic Athletic Association. Each year thousands of GAA fans follow their team to Croke Park, however few are aware that the history of the stadium dates back to 1864 and that the stadium has been known by five different names.

On April 16th 1864 a plot of land was leased to Mr. Maurice Butterley and became known as 'Butterley's Field'. In 1894 a company called the City and Suburban Racecourse and Amusements Grounds Ltd. purchased Butterley's Field and began leasing it out for sports meetings, whippet racing and gaelic games. Butterley's Field then became known as the City and Suburban Racecourse.

By 1908 the City and Suburban Racecourse was up for sale and on December Frank Brazil Dineen bought the grounds for £3,250. Frank was a former President of the GAA and intended that in time the GAA would purchase the grounds from him. The GAA had made a profit of £1,273 in 1907 and felt that to buy the grounds would put the Association severely in debt. Once purchased Frank set about making changes to the grounds, the pitch was re-laid, terracing was erected and the name was changed to Jones Road Sports Ground.

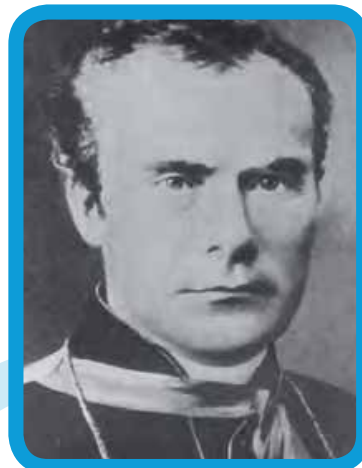
In 1913 the GAA organised a Croke Memorial Tournament to raise funds for a monument to the GAA's first patron, Archbishop Thomas Croke. The final of this tournament was played on March 4th 1913 between Kerry and Louth in Croke Park in front of a then record attendance of 26,000. The game ended in a draw and the replay was set for June 29th. For the replay the gates were closed after 32,000 spectators had been admitted but thousands more swarmed in over the walls. The two teams were level at half-time but Kerry eventually defeated Louth 2-4 to 0-5.

All attendance records for a GAA match were smashed and the GAA had made 365 profit. The tournament was a huge success and the GAA could now afford to erect a monument in Croke's memory and also purchase a new central GAA sports ground. Later that year the GAA purchased Jones Road Sports Ground and re-named it Croke Memorial Park. The name Croke Memorial Park was quickly shortened to Croke Park and the stadium became the GAA's national grounds and administrative headquarters.

Since 1913 Croke Park has undergone significant changes. A new terrace area at the northern end of the ground was created in 1917 using the rubble from O'Connell Street in Dublin, which had been destroyed during the 1916 Rising. This terrace became known as Hill 16. In 1924 a new stand was built along the Jones Road side of the stadium and named the Hogan Stand, in honour of Michael Hogan from Tipperary who had been shot during Bloody Sunday 1920. A new Cusack Stand was completed in 1938. At the Canal End new terracing was built in 1948, the Nally Stand was built in 1952 and the 'old' Hogan Stand was replaced in 1959. Thereafter development of the stadium slowed.

In the 1980's a grand plan for the entire redevelopment of Croke Park was announced. This redevelopment was staged in four phases, a phase for each stand, starting in 1993 with a new Cusack Stand and culminating in 2005 with a new Hill 16. The redevelopment was completed in just 12 years with no disruptions to any All-Ireland

Today Croke Park is one of the largest stadiums in Europe and is truly one of the most historic stadiums in the world.



## What's in a name?

During its long history GAA headquarters has been known by many different names: Butterley's Field, The City and Suburban Racecourse, Jones Road Sports Ground, Croke Memorial Park and finally Croke Park. Once the GAA purchased the stadium in 1913 it was decided to name it in honour of Archbishop Thomas William Croke of Cashel. In 1884 Archbishop Croke was invited to become the first patron of the GAA, an invitation he happily accepted. Archbishop Croke supported the GAA and its games until his death, often providing prizes for competitions.

## At the GAA Museum

Experience a Croke Park behind-the-scenes guided tour.

Follow the Stadium's history on the Croke Park Timeline exhibition.

## Working as a historian – Using Evidence

The GAA Museum collects match programmes as they contain valuable information on historic GAA matches. The first match programme below is from the 1913 All-Ireland Hurling Final while the second match programme is from the 1913 All-Ireland Football Final. Note the different names of the stadium on the two programmes. The GAA purchased Jones Road Sports Ground and re-named it the Croke Memorial Park in 1913.

Look closely at the two programmes, compare the information and answer the following questions.



## Questions

1. What two teams played in the hurling final?
2. What two teams played in the football final?
3. What is the name of the referee for both matches?
4. Are there any clues on the two programmes to tell you when Jones' Road became Croke Park?
5. What was the name of the printers who published both programmes?

## Find Out

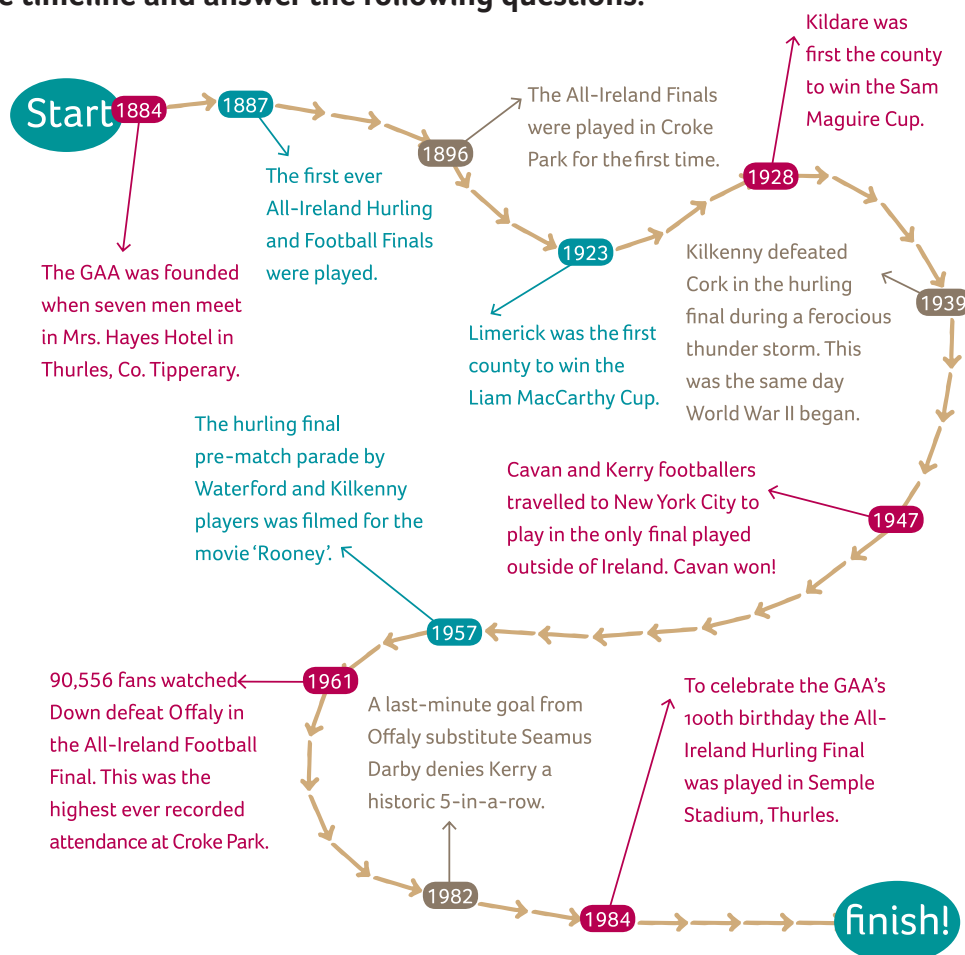
Who won the 1913 All-Ireland football and hurling finals?

What is the capacity of Croke Park today?



## The Big All-Ireland Final Timeline

Follow the timeline and answer the following questions:



### Questions

1. Where and when was the GAA founded?
2. What year were the first finals played in CrokePark?
3. Who was the first county to win the Sam Maguire Cup?
4. What movie was filmed at the 1957 hurling final?
5. How many fans went to the 1961 football final?

### Activity

Imagine that you have won an All-Ireland na! You worked and trained hard and now your moment of All-Ireland glory has arrived as you take to the podium in Croke Park to receive the trophy in front of thousands of fans.

1. Describe your feelings?
2. Write your All-Ireland winning speech



## Working as a historian – Using Evidence

The following newspaper article appeared in the Irish Independent on Monday September 8th 1941, the day after the All-Ireland Football Final. The article reports on transport to the match. By 1941 the war was raging for two years and rationing was in place. Read the newspaper article and answer the questions below.

**Opening Score**



Galway opening their scoring with a point.  
—Irish Independent Photo (McM.).

**Thousands Cycled To The Final**

**B**ICYCLES solved the transport problem for many of the 45,000-odd people who got to Croke Park yesterday for the All-Ireland football final.

They came city-wards, five and six abreast, along the roads from the mountains of Wicklow, the pastures of Westmeath, and the plains of Kildare.

Two young men sporting the Kerry colours, who wheeled a tandem into a cycle park on Jones's Road, came from Killarney.

They were Michael Halfpenny (21) and Fred Harry (23), both of Dundalk, who had been on holiday in Killarney and decided to cycle to Dublin for the final.

The owner of a cycle park near the football grounds said his customers included a party from Galway.

At the Army Hostel in O'Connell St. was a young soldier who had cycled from Athlone. About 30 others had made the same journey. Trains arriving at Kingsbridge on Friday and Saturday brought about 5,000 people. A special train from the West on Saturday, with two ordinary trains, brought 1,500 people. Three trains arriving from Belfast up to 1 p.m. yesterday carried 2,500 passengers, while trains from Dundalk and Drogheda carried another 2,000. About 1,500 people arrived at Aston's Quay by bus yesterday morning.

Among the Diplomatic representatives at the match were Dr. Heupel, German Minister; Comendatore Berardis, Italian Minister and Senor Ontiveros, Spanish Minister.

Mr. J. D. Kearney, Canadian

**RESULTS**

Kerry ...	1 goal 8 points
Galway ...	7 points
Attendance ...	45,512
Receipts ...	£3,540

High Commissioner, who was accompanied by Mrs. Kearney, told an *Irish Independent* representative: "I think it was a wonderful game. But the Minor Hurling match between Cork and Antrim took my fancy. It was the first time I had seen a hurling match."

Mr. P. McNamee, President, G.A.A., presenting the cup to Mr. W. Dillon, captain of the Kerry team, referred, in Irish, to the game as "clean and hard-fought." He congratulated Kerry on having won their fifteenth championship, and paid a tribute to the splendid stand made by Galway.

**MEDALS PRESENTED**

At a reception and collie to the teams, held in the Mansion House last night, under the auspices of the Gaelic League, Aid. Doyle, T.D. Lord Mayor, presented the medals to Mr. Sean Brosnan of the Kerry team.

Aid. Doyle said that as an old player he congratulated Kerry on its great victory, and Galway on its splendid showing.

Mr. Brosnan said their victory was sweet inasmuch as it was Kerry's 15th victory. Paying a warm tribute to Galway, he said there was an old friendship between the teams; they had travelled to the U.S.A. together.

(Report of Final—Page Five).  
(Special Article by Gertrude Gaffney—Page Two).

**Victory Symbol**



Bill Dillon, Kerry captain, with the Championship cup at Croke Park.  
—Irish Independent Photo (R.).

**Ruhr Works Ablaze**

—R.A.F. Claim

(Reuter and Press Association)

**W**ITH intense A.A. fire rattling against their bombers, R.A.F. pilots, on Saturday night, heavily attacked an important

**Warning To Britain And U.S.A.**

If Britain and the United States do not understand Japan's real intentions, and continue to act as in the past, they will have to be finally driven out of East Asia, Major Shozo Nakajima, a member of the Japanese Information Board, who

### Questions

1. How did thousands of people travel to the All-Ireland Final?
2. Why do you think so many people travelled to the match in this way?
3. Who won the match and what was the final score?
4. Name three places that people came from to watch the match.
5. Name the captain of the Kerry team who is pictured with the cup at Croke Park.

### Write Your Own Newspaper Report

Imagine that you were at the 1939 All-Ireland Hurling Final. Write a newspaper report mentioning the following:

- Date, time and location of the match
- The weather
- The final scoreline
- The outbreak of World War II

Remember you can give an opinion of the hurling match, however, you cannot give an opinion on the War, only the Facts!

