

by B. Colvert

Rathcore Rhapsody



The 15th IPA Golf Championship took place at Rathcore Golf and Country Club on the 28th of August 2008. Twenty one teams from all areas in the Section competed for the Tipperary Crystal Perpetual Trophy and other valuable prizes which apart from the (a) highest score also included (b) nearest pin on the 9th hole and (c) longest drive on the 10th hole.

My first phone call on the 28th was from a concerned Denis Dunne, in Clonmel, who looked out at mist and drizzle and wondered if it might spoil the day's sport. I assured him that Mullingar was cloudy bright and that I would bring good weather to the venue, which I duly did and the games were played in warm sunshine; it'll be a toss up between me and the Infant of Prague to see who will bring fine weather to the next big event.

The approach to Rathcore from Enfield is by way of tortuous winding roads; I wondered if this might be characteristic of the dog-leg drives on course which is rated amongst the best five inland golf courses in Ireland. You are nearly there when you reach Boggan Bar, a picturesque thatched tavern. Next you see the impressive entrance; stone piers and ornate gates and railings which I later learned were formerly the entrance to Mountjoy Gaol, built in 1850 and originally the first place of detention for those sentenced to transportation to Van Dieman's Land. It would seem that I was not the first rogue to pass between the



Boggan Bar



Imposing entrance (Mountjoy historic piers & railings)



Rathcore Rotunda Club House



Ancient Fort

pillars; then again I was in good company on the day.

The club house is a rotunda building designed to harmonise with the listed, historic 'raths' or 'forts' preserved on the golf course. The attractive club house is well appointed and comfortable; one is impressed by the quality of the workmanship especially by the solid timber furnishings of oak, red deal & Oregon pine; indeed some of the wood formerly graced Bolands' Mills of 1916 fame. The in-house services, staff, bar & restaurant, fresh flowers and splendid views over the course left nothing to be desired.

Rathcore Golf & Country Club is owned by cousins Mick and Austin Lyons; keen sportsmen they were inspired to develop the drumlins, watercourses and prominences which drew pre-historic tribes to this rich landscape. Mick Lyons holds two All-Ireland Football medals from victories with Meath in 1987 & 88. Club Captain is Denis O'Keeffe, House Manager, Michael Moran, Green Keeper Andy Christie, but how could they succeed without Aileen McDonnell who provides a sparkling welcome.

A drive round the course in a buggy reveals a scenic countryside, mature oak trees, forts, a motte, swans, wild duck, and small lakes with trout. Other wild life, I am told include hares and bush rabbits which are much too shy to come out on this busy course during the day. The lakes feed the streams and provide water hazards which together with sand traps etc offer a significant challenge to the most elite golfers. Mark your diary on the 27th of August in 2009 when the 16th IPA Golf Championship will again be fought out in Rathcore.



Water hazard

The winners of the 2008 competition were

1st.	Limerick	95. John Reilly, Liam Sheehan & Ted O'Donovan.
2nd.	Templemore Staff	85. Cormac Moylan, Dermot Moylan & Martin King.
3rd.	Galway West	85. Seamus Burke, Frank Larkin & Gerry Dillon.
4th.	Sligo	85. Kieran O'Brien, Gerry McMahon & Michael Barrett.
5th.	Dundalk	85. Joe Whelan, Brendan Duffy & Brendan Keane.
6th.	Donegal	84. Dave Charlton, Gerard Dalton & John Malone.

Longest Drive
Nearest Pin

Gary Lynch, Wexford.
Tom Dooley, Longford – 2'-5".



The Offaly team prepare for tee off on the first hole

Prizes were awarded at the end of an enjoyable meal. Introductions were provided by Donal Sweeney, Social Secretary, who lauded the good service and excellent food; he gave a very amusing speech about his experience on the course where he lost five balls; however his unerring olfaction guided him back to a tender steak. He called on Club Captain, Denis O'Keeffe to speak and he in turn offered a warm welcome and played on Donie's speech about the lost balls. The hilarity continued in President Billy Saunderson's address though he was careful to pay tribute to the club, the food and service; he outlined the success of this competition over the years, a success that was due not only to the players today but also very much in the keen competition involving so many IPA golfers in Branches and Regions on the way to the final. He paid tribute to Cassidy Print and Packaging who sponsored the prizes and continually support IPA Section Ireland in so many ways.



Panoramic view of Rathcore Golf Course



The winning Limerick team display first prizes awarded by President Billy Saunderson



President Billy Saunderson with Ian McCullen & Mark Kernohan, competing visitors from British Section

Finally President Saunderson conferred the prizes, concluding with the 'Tipperary Glass Perpetual Trophy' on John Reilly, the Limerick Captain, who gave a very stirring and appropriate speech.

All that remains to report is the announcement that in September 2009 Ireland will promote an International Golf Classic, which will be announced at the IEC in Moscow. At present it is mooted that one of the prizes at Rathcore in August 2009 will be an opportunity to play in the Classic in September. It is anticipated that there will be keen rivalry in the preliminary competitions next year. The toast was Go mberimid beo ag an am seo arís.



John Reilly, Limerick Captain, accepts the Tipperary Crystal Perpetual Trophy

