



Celebrating 50 Years at the heart of Thurles Community - Part 1

Peake Villa AFC was founded in the quiet country district of Dualla, Co. Tipperary in 1967. It's founder members were John Walshe, Matthew Ryan, Willie Moloney and Jim McEntee, three of these people being from Boherlahan and the latter from Thurles.

The name was based on the combination of the townland where the club was formed PEAKE, Gale, Thurles, Co. Tipperary. Jerry Quigley of Cabragh, Thurles was the first player to sign and play for Peake Villa and his family were great friends of Ron Saunders the Aston Villa manager at the time. Hence the combination of the two give the club its name of Peake Villa.

In 1967/68 Peake Villa played in the old Tipperary County Junior League Division 2 finishing runners up and also entered a youth team in the youth league. Just like the people of any other country district, the people of Boherlahan and its hinterland looked on this foreign game with suspicion, and in some cases with contempt.

After many months of struggling with local GAA officials the founder members made

decision to break up for a while. It was shortly after this decision that John Walsh moved to Thurles and immediately realised the potential of the town to supply another good soccer club. John was joined by Matty Ryan, Willie Moloney, Jim McEntee and Seamus Power who provided the manpower for getting Peake Villa off the ground. Villa's first game was a youth's challenge against a team from Ballingarry, which they won.

The seeds of the present club had been planted, and it was after this game that John Walshe started to organise a club. It was now 1969 and two years since the break up in Boherlahan. A meeting was called and an open invitation was printed in the local press. There was a large turnout and the club committee was formed.

It's members were John Walsh, Tommy Harris, Johnny O'Dwyer, Joe O'Grady, Matthew Ryan, Willie Moloney, Jimmy Cleary, Noel McGuigan and John Butler. Games were played at Dublin Road, Dualla, Cashel. The club entered teams in the Tipperary League, Tipperary Youths League, Munster Youths and the usual FAI competitions.

In its first year 1969/'70 in the Tipperary League Villa were runners-up in the junior league and also runners-up in the Munster Youths Cup. The club spent a couple of years solely in the Tipperary League and a decision was then taken in 1972/73 to enter the junior team in the Kilkenny League. At this time the club played their games at the pitch in Loughtagalla, Park, Thurles.

Villa started in the 2nd Division and played exceptionally well for two seasons, but on each occasion were just one place short of promotion.

It was in the season 1974/75 that Villa were finally promoted to the first division, which was greatly due to the

outstanding efforts of Kieran Fogarty as Manager.

Peake Villa is the only club to have won the Kilkenny Shield two years in succession, 1973/74 and 1974/75, and as a 2nd Division side on both occasions.

Throughout the clubs existence a youth's policy has been earnestly practised and as a result of this, even in the early years, their youth achievements have been outstanding. Villa reached the final of the Munster Youth's Cup for three years in succession, 1969/70 to be beaten by Janesboro (Limerick), in 1970/71 to be beaten by Johnsville of Waterford and in 1971/72 again fail at the final hurdle, this time to Wembley of Limerick.

In the season 1973/74 Villa were beaten by 2-1 by Shelbourne in the quarter-final of the FAI Youths Cup in Harolds Cross, Dublin. The first team brought junior cup success to the club when they won the Shield.

In the season 1974/75 Peake Villa youths won both the league and youths cup in the Kilkenny League and also won the Tipperary Youths League in the same season. The junior first team were successful in retaining the Shield, and won promotion to Division 1 and were pipped in the Kilkenny Cup Final.

During these years Peake Villa also staged some exhibition games in Thurles Greyhound Stadium to promote





soccer in the town. Waterford United and Swansea were invited in the 1972/73 season and proved to be a huge success with local people and others from around the county supporting the venture. After a very sporting game Swansea emerged as 4-2 victors.

The following season Villa themselves played Waterford and were unlucky not to win, again before a large turnout.

Throughout the clubs time in the Kilkenny & District League there were many players who represented the club on both the junior and youth Oscar Traynor teams. Noelie Jordan, Tony Cleary, Kevin O'Dwyer, Noel Whelton, Robert Stakelum, Joe Mullins, Martin (Birdie) Ryan, Jimmy Connors and Jim Turner were players who proudly represented Peake Villa on these teams.

The season 1976/77 marked the long established liaison that Peake Villa had in the Kilkenny League as a

new rule stipulated that clubs from Munster were prevented from playing outside the province.

Peake Villa now decided to diversify and with Thurles A.F.C. decided to amalgamate forces and enter a team in the League of Ireland under the name of Thurles Town A.F.C. This was indeed a courageous step and it was the first time that senior soccer was brought to Tipperary. Thurles Town traded their wares for many seasons at League of Ireland level, enjoying a large following. The team also acquitted themselves well at this higher level.

However because of escalating costs in running a senior team, it was decided to withdraw from the League of Ireland. in 1984/85.

Peake Villa reformed and joined the T.S.D.L. and gained promotion from Division 4 in its first year. The club gained promotion again the following year in the 1985/86 season and

the Youths team were beaten cup finalists.

In 1986/87, for the third successive season, the junior team won promotion and would play in the prestigious 1st Division. In the same year 'Lady Luck' once again failed to shine on Peake Villa as both the Youth and Junior teams tasted cup defeat in their Tipperary Cup finals. The junior team had a successful run in the Munster Junior Cup, reaching the last sixteen and were beaten by Temple United of Cork.

In 1987/88 the junior team played in the 1st Division and had a good run in the F.A.I. Junior Cup reaching the last thirty-two, and were eventually beaten by Keadue Rovers of Donegal.

In 1988/89 the junior team went from strength to strength and consolidated their position in the T.S.D.L. 1st Division.

From its very inception Peake Villa has shown a commitment to youths football and in 1988/89

Peake Villa entered its first schools underage team in the T.S.S.D.L. league at u12 and won the u12-Cup that season. They were managed by Pat Kelly (native of Waterford), current vice-chairman of SFAI who was working in the Thurles TAX Office at the time.

In 1989/90 the club suffered the indignity of demotion to the 2nd Division of the T.S.D.L. Peake Villa were now deeply involved in schoolboy football and won the under-13 double by being victorious in the under-13 League and Cup.

In 1990/91 Peake Villa reorganised themselves quickly and did not remain long in Division 2. They bounced back and gained promotion to Division 1 as runners-up. They continued their success formula at schoolboy level with their all-conquering under-14 team, winning the League and overcoming illustrious opponents, Johnsville, from Waterford, in the South-East Championship. This

under-14 team also reached the last 16 of the S.F.A.I. national competition, where they were unlucky to loose to Ballyhaunis of Mayo.

In the 1991/92 season the first team performed well in Division 1 of the T.S.D.L. The under-15 won the League and defeated Tramore in the South-East Championship,. The reached the S.F.A.I. quarter-finals only to succumb to Rangers of Dublin.

In 1992/93 the official and successful amalgamation with St. Ailbe's was another significant milestone in the club's chequered history. This pooling of resources, facilities and player pool heralded a new breath of optimism for the club.

The club fielded two junior teams, one in the new Premier Division and the second junior team competed in the new 1st Division. It also had one youth, under-17, under-16, under-15 and under 14 teams. The club now had access to excellent



playing facilities at the Greyhound Track, Tower Field and Loughtagalla Park.

The new committee included: Chairman: John Walsh; Secretary: Patrick Treacy; Treasurer: Michael Brett; PRO: John Butler; and other committee members included Danny Dunne, Michael Byrne, Sean McLoughlin, Bernard Keane, Martin Doyle, Seamus Woodlock, Michael Purcell, Martin Turner. To mark his lifetime service to soccer in Thurles Jimmy Cleary was made Life President, a testimony of his dedicated service to the club for 21 years.

Six members of the club

have given over two hundred and fifty years of service to the club. John Walsh from 1967 to present day (50 Years); John Butler from 1967 to 'present day (50 Years); Jimmy Cleary from 1971 to present day (46 Years); Liam Ryan from 1972 to present day (45 Years); Michael Brett from 1986 to present day (31 Years) and Seamus Woodlock from 1987 to present day (30 Years).

The club is cemented on a strong base at schoolboy and youth level. The powerful influence of the club young player development has had a very beneficial effect on its junior teams. For the current season

2016/2017 the club is very proud that the majority of the very successful junior teams are made up of players that started at under-age level with the club.

In September 2013 Peake Villa established its Schoolgirls section after one of our own girls who had played with the boys was called to represent Ireland at u15.

For the season just passed of 2016/2017 Peake Villa catered for the following age groups:
100 Academy Players for u5-u9 Boys and Girls.
170 Schoolboys Players with teams at u10 x 3, u11 x 3, u12 x 3, u13 x

2, u14 x 2, u15 and u16. 80 Schoolgirls Players with teams at u10, u12, u14 and u16.

24 Boys Youth Players and 45 Junior Players with two teams, Junior A and Junior B.

The club has over 50 qualified male and female coaches providing coaching and guidance to all 22 teams.

The current committee includes Chairman: Seamus Woodlock,; Secretary: Brian Cleary (grandson of Jimmy); Treasurer: David Donovan; Assistant Treasurer: Michael Brett; PRO: William Kelly; committee members include Thomas Bourke, Paddy

Butler, Kevin Cummins, Damien Byrne, Ciaran Lynch, John Walsh,. Facilities are looked after by Martin Cooke, John Murphy and Liam Ryan.

The schools sub-committee members are William Kelly, Brian Cleary, David Donovan, Paddy Butler, Kevin Cummins, Damien Byrne from main-committee and also include coaches Thos Brennan, Derek Smee, Tommy Mockler and Paul Twomey.

The club is in year 7 of a 10 year development plan that was initiated by the Peake Villa Committee back in 2009. We established our aims of club



development into 12 phases.

Phase 1 - Completed 2009: Upgrading of the existing club house to provide two additional small dressing rooms

Phase 2 - Completed 2009: Provision of an 80m x 40m all-weather Astro Turf facility for training and community use. This was enabled by a national Sports Lottery Grant, North Tipperary Council Grant and club fund-raising.

Phase 3 - Completed 2014: Acquisition of additional land to allow for expansion. This was completed with the assistance of the Tipperary County Council and fund-raising by the club.

Phase 4 - Completed 2014; Development of a site improvement plan to be submitted for planning.

Phase 5 - Completed 2015: Secure Tipperary County Council planning permission for the clubs development plan.

Phase 6 - Completed 2015: Levelling and Drainage of the main pitch, funded by 50% National Sports Grant and club fund-raising.

Phase 7 - Completed 2016: Tarmac the front car-park to improve parking at club to facilitate the increased number of players participating with the club.

Phase 8 - Target 2017: Erect a perimeter secure fence as required by planning.

Phase 9 - Target 2017: Site levelling of side-training pitch and top playing pitch.

Phase 10 - Target 2017: Provision of lights as required by planning at front of club, side-training pitch.

Phase 11 - Target: 2018 Improve site-drainage and improve road access as identified in planning. Erect a spectator fence around the main pitch as recommended by FAI facilities department.

Phase 12 - Target 2018: Building of new club house and Storage shed as per planning permission.

Through the volunteer work of the committee and coaches we have successfully raised the necessary funds to acquire our own land, build what we have and now we are building for the future. We the committee are justifiably proud of the 7 phases of work completed since we started the plan in 2009. We have three years and 5 phases left for completion. We are endeavoring to maintain our exemplary record of achieving our goals within budget, within time-scales while maintaining a full schedule of supporting 22 teams.

The club would like to acknowledge the grants and the support it has received from the Government Bodies, Tipperary County Council and National Sports Authority. The soccer sporting bodies of the Football

Association of Ireland (FAI), the Schoolboys Football Association (SFAI), the Women's Football Association (WFAI), the Munster Football Association (MFL), the Tipperary Southern & District League (TSDL) and the Tipperary School Boys & Girls Southern & District League (TSSDL).

The local business who have donated generous sponsorship down through the years when asked and especially the people of the Thurles community and its environs for their continued financial and supporter support.

The club prides itself of the service it provides to the local community and schools by making our facilities accessible to others.

We provide our facilities for training of the Presentation Girls and the Thurles CBS Boys soccer teams and our pitches are used for the school's fixtures.

The local "Football for All" use our facilities to cater for the football of the special needs community in the town.

Our AstroTurf is available for hire by the local clubs every day from 8:00pm to 11:00pm in the evening. We hold the FAI annual summer soccer camp with over 220 children participating in the 2016 camps (July and August) and we hold the Easter Soccer Sisters camp with 30 girls attending.

In addition, we host the home Munster Schools matches for the Presentation Convent School, Ursuline Convent School and Thurles CBS and the home College games for LIT Thurles. The facilities are also used for the SPAR Primary competitions for County Tipperary and the local FAI RDO officers for South and North Tipperary use our facilities to run FAI coaching courses and ETP matches.



Celebrating 50 years at the Heart of Thurles Community



50th Anniversary Dinner Dance

Sunday June 4th 2017 Tickets €30 each

Anner Hotel 7pm Reception - 7:45pm Dinner

Tickets available from any committee member

Visit our Facebook Page & Website for information on upcoming events!

www.peakevillafc.com

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