



# The Wild Geese

Exploring the heritage of the **IRISH** worldwide



## Happy Birthday, GAA

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becoming mere West Britons".

A police report written by Inspector A.W. Waters in the mid-1880s claimed that the GAA had been founded by the Irish Republican Brotherhood with the intention of getting "the muscular youth of the country into an organisation, drilled and disciplined to form a physical power capable of over-awing and coercing the home rule government of the future".

In 1918 the GAA was banned by the British government but Gaelic games were still played. It was very closely associated with the nationalist cause and got caught up in the troubled politics of the age. In 1919, the association took a decision to expel any civil servants who had taken the Oath of Allegiance.

In November 1920, RIC policemen and British soldiers entered Croke Park during a football match between Tipperary and Dublin. They fired indiscriminately into the crowd and onto the field, killing 14 people, as a reprisal for political violence that had taken place earlier in the day elsewhere in Dublin. The day came to be known as Bloody Sunday.

Due to the countries' interlaced history and the similarities in the games themselves, the GAA and the Australian AFL came up with an international game with incorporated rules. Compromise Rules Football or International Rules Football consisted of various elements from either game. Annual matches have taken place between an Irish national team drawn from the ranks of Gaelic footballers, against an Australian national team drawn from the Australian Football League.

The venue alternates between Ireland and Australia. In December 2006 the International series between Australia and Ireland was called off due to excessive violence in the matches but resumed in October 2008 when Ireland won a two test series in Australia.

The GAA has grown to become the largest and most popular sporting organisation in Ireland with over 1 million members including those in clubs beyond the island of Ireland.

Today, the GAA has more than 2,600 member clubs.

On this day in history:

1884 - The foundation of the Gaelic Athletic Association.

The Gaelic Athletic Association was founded at 3 pm on Saturday, 1 November 1884, in the billiards room of Lizzie Hayes' Commercial Hotel, Thurles, County Tipperary.

All present that day had come in response to a circular published in the national press, or had been invited privately by Michael Cusack and Maurice Davin, both of whom were leading figures in Irish athletics. From its very beginning the GAA was considered to be no mere sporting organisation, with T.E. O'Sullivan their first historian noting that the association was founded by men who wished to "foster a spirit of earnest nationality" and as a means of "saving thousands of young Irishmen from