

## GAA Oral History Project

## Interview Report Form

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| <b>Name of Interviewer</b>                             | Regina Fitzpatrick  |
| <b>Date of Interview</b>                               | 3 June 2009   |
| <b>Location</b>  | Boston College, Dublin  |
| <b>Name of Interviewee</b><br>(Maiden name / Nickname) | Seán Seosamh Ó Conchubhair  |
| <b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>      |   |
| <b>Gender</b>  | Male  |
| <b>Born</b>  | <b>Year Born:</b> 1935<br><b>Home County:</b> Kerry   |
| <b>Education</b>                                       | <b>Primary:</b> Killahan N.S.<br><b>Secondary:</b> CBS 'The Green' Tralee                             |
| <b>Family</b>  | <b>Siblings:</b> 1 brother<br><b>Current Family if Different:</b> Dawn (wife); 2 sons and 2 daughters |
| <b>Club(s)</b>   | Kilmoyley GAA (St. Ercs)  |
| <b>Occupation</b>                                      | Clerk – Bacon Factory   |
| <b>Parents' Occupation</b>                             | Small farmers   |
| <b>Religion</b>  | Roman Catholic  |
| <b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>              | N/A   |

REFERENCE NO. KY/1/8

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| <b>Date of Report</b>             | 5 November 2009  |
| <b>Period Covered</b>             | 1864-2009  |
| <b>Counties/Countries Covered</b> | Kerry, Clare   |
| <b>Key Themes Covered</b>         | Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Refereeing, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Fundraising, Education, Religion, Media, Emigration, Involvement in GAA abroad, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Identity, Rivalries, Irish Language, Culture, Scór, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Alcohol, Violence, Politics, The Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Opening of Croke Park, Relationship with the Association   |
| <b>Interview Summary</b>          | <p>0:00 Introduction.</p> <p>:15 Born in 1935 in townland of Baltovin in North Kerry – near the hurling club of Kilmoyley.</p> <p>:40 Parents were small farmers. Conditions under which they worked – Economic War of the 1930s, The Emergency.</p> <p>1:25 Description of Kilmoyley – type of land and farming in the area.</p> <p>2:14 Neither of his parents were involved in the GAA or Gaelic sports but were very interested in it – first cousin of his mothers was the exception, Maurice ‘Mossy’ Nolan of Ardahan – a good hurler – won county championship with Abbey Doran and Kilmoyley – played with Kerry County hurling team and was Chairman of the North Kerry Hurling Board, then became a referee – refereed for 40 years in the aftermath of the Civil War – a risky time to referee especially in North Kerry. Pitches not enclosed then – people rushing the pitch – many games called off or ended early.</p> <p>5:00 Story about one game that Mossy Nolan was refereeing when he came very close to injury.</p> <p>5:46 Dan Harris – helped on their farm – he played for Kilmoyley – remembers when he was 10 hearing Dan talk about playing and thinking it must be a great honour to play for your club – very influential on his life. Developed an ambition to play for his club.</p> |

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|  | <p>6:29 His father taking him to local matches – seeing the bicycles going passed their house on their way to matches - going to the match on a pony and trap – how they heard about matches.</p> <p>7:34 Visiting home of Mossy Nolan and listening to his brothers reminiscing about great games and players of the past – the Quans, the Corrigans, the Harrisers, the Mancells.– always had an interest in local history.</p> <p>8:34 Sporting heroes growing up – The Rackard brothers of Wexford – was at 1956 All-Ireland when they defeated Cork – description of play of Christy Ring and Art Foley –relationship between Cork hurlers and Wexford hurlers at the time. – popularity of that Wexford team.</p> <p>10:26 Went to Kilahan National School – no hurling played there – Hurling was introduced into Kilmoyley school by Declan Lovett and Kilmoyley’s subsequent success attributed to him.</p> <p>11:35 Started hurling with Kilmoyley when he was seventeen – he was a goalkeeper – also played a little football, also in goals.</p> <p>12:15 CBS Tralee very strong on Gaelic sports – mainly football in Kerry – college football – St Jarleths of Tuam, St Mels of Longford, St Patrick’s of Cavan all had very strong teams at the time.</p> <p>13:28 Reading about the death of PJ Duke of Cavan and of John Joe Reilly – football was the only thing discussed.</p> <p>14:29 Why he started playing – wanted to be part of the community – hurling was the only thing discussed in the community.</p> <p>15:09 What it was like going to matches growing up – going in pony and trap – teams togging out in someone’s yard. – father going into a public house for a drink – Seán worried he’d miss the start of the game – the excitement and importance of it.</p> <p>17:02 Got a car in 1949 – going to senior county football matches in Tralee – not as exciting as when Kilmoyley were playing.</p> <p>17:55 Ardfert would have been Kilmoyley’s rivals in the late forties and early fifties and its with Ballyduff since 1955.</p> <p>18:55 Wrote <i>Kilmoyley to the Rescue</i> – history of Kilmoyley</p> |
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|  | <p>club – Kilmoley playing hurling since the 1700s – description of pre-GAA hurling. Strong hurling heritage in Kilmoley.</p> <p>21:00 Story about his friend – Mike Joe Horgan, shouting ‘Come on Kilmoley, the home of the hurlers’ impact of those words on him.</p> <p>21:38 Formation of Kilmoley club – no official record – already hurlers there – became affiliated in Kerry GAA possibly in 1888 – took part in first Kerry senior hurling challenge – met Kenmare in county final – controversial final well documented in the newspapers.</p> <p>23:08 Club called Kilmoley Robert Emmett’s – founded close to the centenary of the death of Robert Emmett (1903) – The changed name to St Eirke’s – St Eirke a local saint who baptised St Brendan in the locality – where he lived is still preserved and known as Tearmainn Eirke – he travelled with St Patrick – journey’s of St Patrick – St Eirke wa san authority on the Brehan Law – story about St Eirke going to Kerry – tradition around the birth and baptism of St Brendan – St Eirke returning to Slane where he came from – the local GAA field called Naomh Eirke.</p> <p>26:04 Getting involved in administration of local club in 1954 – became secretary – 1914/15-1945 very poor period for hurling in Kilmoley – 1946 Kilmoley won North Kerry Junior League – 1948 – won senior county championship – club in debt when he took over in 1954 – fundraising for club to clear the debt – cleared debt and bought hurleys, sliotars, first aid equipment – story about a match against Listowel when they ran out of hurls – player had to play with half a hurl.</p> <p>28:28 How he fundraised – got game from London that dispensed prizes; ran a draw; ran dances – foreign dance which was against GAA regulations- pretended that it was in aid of the dramatic society – books still in profit when he left the club.</p> <p>30:20 Was secretary from 1954-59 – 1960 moving to Tralee and working as a clerk – ended his official connection with the club but stayed in touch and continued to supported them and eventually wrote their history – worked on it for 10-12 years – it became a history of the club and of the parish – researching the book – launched by Micheál Ó Muircheartaigh – story about the finding out the history of the parish hall.</p> <p>36:34 Place of the GAA club in the community – no other interest in Kilmoley – the weather and hurling where the only two topics of conversation – when they didn’t have a hurling</p> |
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|  | <p>field. 'Kilmoyley was hurling and hurling was Kilmoyley'</p> <p>39:00 The GAA and local identity – local girls knitting hats in the Kilmoyley colours – involvement of women in the club – story about Kilmoyley winning the four in a row – importance of hurling to everyone in the parish.</p> <p>40:37 Important because of the tradition of playing hurling in the parish.</p> <p>41:42 changes in the GAA over the years – building enclosed pitches very significant – first one in their locality was in Ardfert – changes have always been for the good of the association – good leadership within the GAA on a national level – decisions on foreign games decision, televised games, allowing soccer and rugby to be played in Croke Park.</p> <p>44:32 Views on the GAA and the Irish language – references to Scór.</p> <p>48:07 Involvement in Scór in Tralee with the Austin Stack club – his son Brian winning the recitation section one year; participating himself – the Scór All-Ireland - feels Scór should be better supported by clubs – resources needed to develop Scór – value of Scór, especially in the winter time – widens the scope of the GAA from strictly sport to cultural events.</p> <p>52:26 Involvement of women in the GAA – increase in the last twenty years –maybe because their brothers were involved and they saw a role for themselves there.</p> <p>53:38 No current camogie club in Kilmoyley or Ardfert – was camogie club there years ago – camogie very weak in Kerry – ladies football very popular.</p> <p>54:45 Supporting hurling in a football dominated county – no difference, there is a strong hurling heritage – also follows football.</p> <p>55:29 Winning the 1953 minor hurling championship and then the North Kerry minor hurling league when he was involved with the team.</p> <p>56:15 Loosing the 1982 All-Ireland Final – goal by Seamus Darby</p> <p>56:55 Deal with the loss of a game – there's always the next day.</p> <p>57:21 Winning in 1953 – cup filled with lemonade – most of their successes came after the book was published –</p> |
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|  | <p>celebration in the pub.</p> <p>58:31 Poem written after they won the 1953 County Minor championship – going to a rambling house and the poem given to him then.</p> <p>59:58 Description of rambling house – open fire – talking – playing cards.</p> <p>1:00:55 Seán's great-grandfather Seán Ó Braonáin was a Gaelic poet was from Kilmoyley – recites a couple of verses of one of his poems – some of his writings in the Royal Irish Academy – his works were put together by Pádraig de Brún.</p> <p>1:02:56 Impact of the political situation in Kerry on the GAA – Civil War in North Kerry at the end of 1923 were horrific – challenge game in 1924 between the republican internees and those who hadn't been imprisoned – John Joe Sheehy was on the run – Con Brosnan was a Free State officer got permission for John Joe Sheehy to come out of hiding to play for Kerry and then go back into hiding – healing influence of the GAA after that period – people reunited to play for the green and gold.</p> <p>1:07:05 Motivation of people to carry on playing Gaelic sports during Civil War period – surpassed political differences.</p> <p>1:08:15 The Catholic church and the GAA – local parish priest was the president of the local hurling club usually – no big role in it – blessing of new grounds etc.</p> <p>1:09:08 Future of hurling in Kerry – still hope to win an All-Ireland sometime – success of Clare in the 1990s – it can be done.</p> <p>1:10:35 Challenges facing Gaelic Games – coverage of other games – children have more choices – prominence of cricket in Ireland before the foundation of the GAA – crowds at GAA games – getting caught up in a crowd coming out of a match in Ennis Road – GAA lucky not to have had a Hillsborough disaster – GAA have done a good job in recent years on crows control.</p> <p>1:13:30 Need for GAA to get into primary schools like soccer and rugby – need to start early – need to spend more money on hurling in counties where they have hurling but they are not doing very well with it – should send coaches into the weaker counties to try and support it.</p> <p>1:14:55 Important to him that his children have carried on his love of Irish language and Gaelic games – difficulties facing</p> |
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|                                  | <p>the Irish language.</p> <p>1:16:06 Brian (his son) played hurling; Rory (son) played Gaelic football. Daughters involved in Scór.</p> <p>1:17:12 Part of the GAA in Gaelic culture –‘that’s my Ireland’ – wonders what he would have done in his youth without the GAA.</p> <p>1:18:30 Ireland would be very different without the GAA – 1916 would still have happened – didn’t like comedian talking about 1916 on the Late Late Show the previous week – admiration for the men of 1916.</p> <p>1:20:20 GAA and the diaspora – letter from 1932 he came across from men from Kilmoyley who had emigrated to America hoping that some day the Kerry hurlers would visit America.</p> <p>1:21:10 His son Brian getting up early in Chicago to watch the All-Ireland – emigration in the 1920s of those on the Republican side – emigration of Con Dea to Chicago – a first cousin of his fathers emigrated to Australia and died there – he was brought back to bury him in his own graveyard – no work for Republicans in the first 10 years of the Free State government.</p> <p>1:24:15 Employers of the Free state were more likely to play rugby than Gaelic games and so the same prejudices weren’t seen in picking GAA teams. Pallatines that moved from Germany to Ireland after 1720 – province in South West Germany – Fitzelles in Kerry – they took part in everything – played hurling etc – Old English protestants didn’t get involved.</p> <p>1:26:12 Aftermath of the Civil War still continues – out of the six North Kerry TDs, four are Republicans – knows where all of the ambushes were – what way local families would vote.</p> <p>1:27:26 The importance of the GAA in his life.</p> |
| <p><b>Involvement in GAA</b></p> | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____</p>   |

**REFERENCE NO. KY/1/8**

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| <b>Record as a Player</b><br>(Titles won; Length of time played)    | Minor hurler and footballer, senior hurler and footballer (goalkeeper)   |
| <b>Record as an Administrator</b><br>(Positions held; how long for) | Secretary of Kilmoyley Hurling Club (1954-59); Secretary of North Kerry Hurling Board; Secretary of St Brendan's District Football Club. |
| <b>Format</b>   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual  |
| <b>Duration</b>   | Length of Interview: 1:28:31   |
| <b>Language</b>   | English  |

**To be filled in by Interviewer:**

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Signed:      Regina Fitzpatrick

Date:      5 November 2009