

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

<b>Name of Interviewer</b>	Regina Fitzpatrick
<b>Date of Interview</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> Mar 2010
<b>Location</b>	Sligo Park Hotel, Sligo
<b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname)	Tommy Kilcoyne
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1945 <b>Home County:</b> Sligo
<b>Education</b>	N/A
<b>Family</b>	<b>Siblings:</b> 2 sisters & 1 brother <b>Current Family if Different:</b> Wife, 2 sons & 2 daughters
<b>Club(s)</b>	Coolaney – Mullinabreena GAA [Sligo]; Erin's Hope [Galway]
<b>Occupation</b>	Retired School Principal
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	Primary School Principal [Father]; Post Mistress [Mother]
<b>Religion</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	None
<b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>	PTAA

**REFERENCE NO. SO/1/2**

Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Rory O'Beirne
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1943 <b>Home County:</b> Sligo
<b>Education</b>	N/A
<b>Family</b>	N/A
<b>Club(s)</b>	St Farnan's GAA [Sligo]
<b>Occupation</b>	Retired
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	N/A
<b>Religion</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	Fianna Fáil
<b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>	PTAA

**REFERENCE NO. SO/1/2**

Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Gerald O'Connor
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1958 <b>Home County:</b> Sligo
<b>Education</b>	N/A
<b>Family</b>	<b>Siblings:</b> 5 siblings
<b>Club(s)</b>	St Patrick's GAA [Sligo]
<b>Occupation</b>	Publican
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	N/A
<b>Religion</b>	N/A
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	Fianna Fáil
<b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>	N/A

REFERENCE NO. SO/1/2

<b>Date of Report</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> June 2012
<b>Period Covered</b>	1880s - 2010
<b>Counties/Countries Covered</b>	Sligo
<b>Key Themes Covered</b>	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Education, Media, Emigration, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers Identity, Rivalries, Irish Language, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish, History, Family Involvement, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Outsider's Perspectives, Politics, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Opening of Croke Park, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Food and Drink, Socialising, Relationships, Economy / Economics
<b>Interview Summary</b>	<p>Gerald, Rory and Tommy discuss the book that they have put together on Sligo GAA for the Association's 125th anniversary. They trace the roots of the GAA in the area and describe how it evolved over time, whilst also giving insights into the social and political backdrop. They talk about the ups and downs of the GAA in Sligo and about how things have changed so much over the years, often for the better. The three reflect on what makes the GAA unique and why it is important as an Association. Dedicated clubmen and fans of Gaelic games as well as scholars, they share their own personal opinions on the GAA, and revisit the best and worst days of their experiences over the years.</p> <p>00:35 Book they are releasing.</p> <p>00:50 (Gerald) How the idea for the book came about. John McTiernan having written a centenary history.</p> <p>01:25 (Tommy) GAA 125th anniversary committee being set up by the county board. Complications.</p> <p>02:25 (Tommy) Jonathan Davey and John McTiernan assisting them in their work.</p> <p>02:55 (Tommy) Doing the research and editing.</p> <p>03:20 (Tommy) Length of book.</p> <p>03:30 (Gerald) Tommy having worked as county board</p>

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	<p>secretary and how that helped.</p> <p>03:55 (Rory) Where they got material from and what they have covered in the book</p> <p>04:35 (Rory) Changes in the inter-county scene between 1985 and 2009.</p> <p>05:25 (Rory) Increased coverage of GAA and more records being kept since 1985. Using Tommy's reports.</p> <p>05:55 (Rory) Increased number of competitions taking place.</p> <p>06:20 (Gerald) Underage structures expanding.</p> <p>06:50 (Rory) Minor football coming in late.</p> <p>07:15 (Gerald) Sligo's success since 1984.</p> <p>07:45 (Gerald) Beginnings of Sligo GAA and great grandfather of 2010 Sligo treasurer Peadar Niland.</p> <p>08:15 (Rory) Rail links when Sligo GAA started up.</p> <p>08:35 (Tommy) Competitions when the GAA started out.</p> <p>09:20 (Tommy) Clubs often changing their names over the years, like Mullinabreena - Coolaney.</p> <p>10:05 (Rory) Clubs encouraged to take on the name of a patriot in the early years.</p> <p>10:25 (Rory) Mayo club Ardnaree in one of the first draws for the Sligo county championship.</p> <p>10:45 (Rory) Ballaghaderreen remaining in Mayo championship although it is in Roscommon.</p> <p>10:55 (Gerald) Why Ardnaree was moved to Mayo.</p> <p>11:40 (Gerald) Pa McHugh a driving force in Sligo when the GAA started.</p> <p>11:55 (Tommy) Gaelic games in the county before the GAA was formed.</p> <p>12:30 (Rory) Many athletics clubs locally and nationally before the GAA.</p>
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	<p>12:50 (Gerald) Handball before the GAA.</p> <p>13:10 (Rory) Handball in Sligo in 2010. Ball alleys disappearing.</p> <p>13:50 (Rory) Success at handball.</p> <p>14:15 (Rory) Changing fortunes of Sligo GAA sides and reasons for that.</p> <p>15:35 (Gerald) Management becoming more professional.</p> <p>16:25 (Gerald) John McTiernan writing about political dimension of the GAA.</p> <p>17:25 (Rory) Impact of emigration in the 1980s.</p> <p>18:05 (Tommy) Teams living together before games in the 1930s and 1940s.</p> <p>18:40 (Tommy) Decades when Sligo had good teams.</p> <p>18:55 (Tommy) Sligo reaching an All-Ireland final in 1923 but never playing it.</p> <p>19:20 (Tommy) 1970s team featuring Micky Kierans</p> <p>20:00 (Tommy) Relationship between inter-county success and the strength of the GAA in Sligo.</p> <p>21:10 (Tommy) Young players inspired by older teams.</p> <p>22:05 (Rory) Underage structures and parents' involvement.</p> <p>22:55 (Tommy) Improving structures at primary schools level.</p> <p>23:30 (Rory) St Attracta's reaching an All-Ireland final. Eamon O'Hara playing for them in the 1990s. Summerhill reaching a Connacht final.</p> <p>24:10 (Tommy) Shane Filan of the pop group Westlife a promising footballer.</p> <p>25:10 (Rory) Popularity of soccer in Sligo.</p> <p>26:00 (Tommy) Former GAA Presidents Paddy Buggy and Mick Loftus working on encouraging the GAA in city areas in</p>
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	<p>the 1980s.</p> <p>27:00 (Gerald) Social centres at GAA grounds.</p> <p>28:30 (Gerald) Floodlit pitch at Tourlestrane.</p> <p>29:00 (Gerald) Club facilities becoming more professional.</p> <p>30:10 (Gerald) Ladies football, underage and Scór reaching out to many members of the community.</p> <p>31:10 (Tommy) Benefits of ladies football.</p> <p>31:50 (Rory) Demand for use of pitches.</p> <p>32:25 (Gerald) Increased cost of running a club.</p> <p>33:35 (Tommy) Not as much sponsorship in 2010. Increased need for sponsorship.</p> <p>34:50 (Gerald) Man going from Enniscrone To Coolaney to get a football.</p> <p>35:05 (Gerald) Pat Kerins ferrying teams to games on a cattle truck.</p> <p>35:40 (Rory) People cycling to games.</p> <p>36:40 (Gerald) Trying to involve non-playing members in clubs to raise funds. Other fundraising drives.</p> <p>37:30 (Rory) Curry having a 'thousandaire' competition.</p> <p>37:55 (Rory) Difficulties in finding volunteers.</p> <p>38:15 (Tommy) Importance of volunteers.</p> <p>39:00 (Rory) Families involved in the GAA across different generations.</p> <p>39:30 (Tommy) Father as secretary and Tommy taking over as secretary in 1970.</p> <p>40:15 (Rory) County chairman John Murphy's family's involvement in the GAA.</p> <p>40:55 (Gerald) Father playing GAA when he was younger. Other families contributing.</p>
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	<p>41:30 (Rory) Grandfather, Patrick, and his involvement. His uncle secretary of a team in 1907. Father's involvement.</p> <p>42:20 (Gerald) Church of Ireland influence in the county.</p> <p>42:45 (Rory) Noel Morrison and other Church of Ireland players - Charlton, Sandy Cuff, Jim Dorran, Stanley Beckett.</p> <p>43:20 (Gerald) Lifting of Ban and using soccer players.</p> <p>43:50 (Gerald) Adherence to Ban and Pat Fanning's opposition to lifting it.</p> <p>44:20 (Tommy) Being at the 1971 Congress when the Ban was abolished. Micheál Keogh voicing his disapproval.</p> <p>45:30 (Tommy) Atmosphere at Congress that year. Talking to Seamus Duke from Roscommon.</p> <p>46:30 (Tommy) Opening of Croke Park. Media depiction of events.</p> <p>47:35 (Tommy) Nationalist aspect of GAA and its importance.</p> <p>49:10 (Rory) Changes in media coverage of the GAA. Local radio and TG4.</p> <p>50:00 (Gerald) Coverage in newspapers. Sligo Champion, Sligo Weekender, Sligo Post.</p> <p>51:05 (Tommy) Reporters like Joe Jennings and Leo Grey covering games.</p> <p>52:00 (Tommy) GAA in the household growing up. Father county secretary.</p> <p>53:50 (Gerald) Getting involved in administration.</p> <p>55:10 (Rory) GAA in his family. Cousin, Paraic Lang, and his GAA involvement.</p> <p>56:45 (Rory) What motivates him to be involved.</p> <p>57:25 (Tommy) Looking forward instead of backwards.</p> <p>57:50 (Gerald) Trying to improve all the time in his work as PRO.</p>
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	<p>58:40 (Gerald) Benefits of his GAA involvement.</p> <p>59:10 (Rory) Knowing people he meets at games.</p> <p>59:50 (Tommy) Importance of youth to the GAA.</p> <p>01:00:40 (Tommy) Importance of teamwork in the GAA.</p> <p>01:01:30 (Gerald) Negotiating difficulties that crop up at administrative level.</p> <p>01:02:20 (Tommy) Enjoying success when it comes.</p> <p>01:02:40 (Gerald) Last five minutes of a tight game.</p> <p>01:03:05 (Tommy) Undertaking a project and seeing it bear fruit.</p> <p>01:03:20 (Rory) Launching his club history.</p> <p>01:03:40 (Gerald) Arranging a 125th anniversary poster.</p> <p>01:04:20 (Rory) Importance of marking anniversaries.</p> <p>01:05:15 (Tommy) Get-together of a Connacht team that had lost a Connacht final.</p> <p>01:06:00 (Gerald) Killian Coole, a South African, working on them with a project and his thoughts on the GAA.</p> <p>01:07:15 (Tommy) Involving immigrants in the GAA. Former GAA President Seán Kelly involved.</p> <p>01:07:45 (Gerald) Sligo Sports and Recreation Partnership and their work on integration.</p> <p>01:08:55 (Tommy) Getting overpowered with work at times. Suffering heavy defeats.</p> <p>01:09:45 (Rory) Players suffering serious injuries. Unsavory incidents at games.</p> <p>01:10:15 (Gerald) Losing narrowly to Kerry in 2009.</p> <p>01:11:05 (Tommy) Rivalries.</p> <p>01:12:00 (Rory) Importance of local rivalries and role of</p>
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	<p>divisional boards.</p> <p>01:13:00 (Tommy) Introduction of ladies football.</p> <p>01:13:30 (Rory) Introduction of qualifier and need to tweak it.</p> <p>01:14:00 (Gerald) Cost of insurance for clubs.</p> <p>01:14:40 (Gerald) Hurling in Sligo. Paul Seevers playing for a long time.</p> <p>01:16:40 (Rory) Women's involvement at administrative level.</p> <p>01:17:20 (Gerald) Hopes for the future.</p> <p>01:18:30 (Tommy) Hopes for his club, for Sligo and for the Association.</p> <p>01:19:25 (Tommy) Issue of player power.</p> <p>01:19:45 (Rory) Hopes for the future.</p> <p>01:20:45 (Gerald) Importance of participation and not just winning titles.</p> <p>01:22:05 (Gerald) Being proud of their work. Attention to detail.</p> <p>01:23:30 (Gerald) Appointing their first full-time administrator, Eamonn McMunn</p> <p>01:24:25 (Gerald) Value of all the people who volunteer for the GAA.</p>
<p><b>Involvement in GAA</b></p>	<p><b>Tommy:</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input 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 type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):</p> <p>_____</p>

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	<p><b>Rory:</b></p> <p>✓ Supporter ✓ Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach ✓ Steward</p> <p>✓ Chairperson ✓ Committee Member <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer ✓ Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):</p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>Gerald:</b></p> <p>✓ Supporter ✓ Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson ✓ Committee Member <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p> <p>✓ Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):</p> <p>_____</p>
<p><b>Record as a Player</b> (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p><b>Tommy:</b> Played for 20 years and won 1 Sligo Junior Football Championship</p> <p><b>Rory:</b> Played for 15 years.</p> <p><b>Gerald:</b> Not specified</p>
<p><b>Record as an Administrator</b> (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p><b>Tommy:</b> Sligo County Board Secretary, 1970 – 2007; Árd-Comhairle delegate 2010.</p> <p><b>Rory:</b> Chairman of St Farnan’s GAA (5 years) and PRO (10 years)</p> <p><b>Gerald:</b> Sligo GAA PRO; Secretary of St Patrick’s GAA (5 years ongoing)</p>
<p><b>Format</b></p>	<p>✓ Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
<p><b>Duration</b></p>	<p>Length of Interview: 01:29:36</p>
<p><b>Language</b></p>	<p>English</p>

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**To be filled in by Interviewer:**

I hereby assign the copyright of the content of the above to the GAA Oral History Project on the understanding that the content will not be used in a derogatory manner. I understand that I am giving the GAA Oral History Project the right to use and make available to the public the content of this interview.

Signed: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> June 2012