

GAA Oral History Project
Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Mark Farrelly
Date of Interview	18 th June 2012
Location	Interviewee's home, near Clane, Co Kildare
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Mary Weld
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Female
Born	Year Born: 1949 Home County: Kildare
Education	Primary: Kilcock Presentation Convent, Co. Kildare. Secondary: Cross and Passion College, Kilcullen; Rosse College, Dublin Third Level: NUI Maynooth
Family	Siblings: 3 sisters; 1 brother
Club(s)	Rathcoffey GAA Club [Kildare]
Occupation	
Parents' Occupation	Farmer [Father]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Fine Gael
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Rathcoffey Historical Group

Date of Report	17 th July 2012
Period Covered	1950s – 2012
Counties/Countries Covered	Kildare, Dublin
Key Themes Covered	Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Officials, Administration, Education, Religion, Media, Emigration, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Irish Language, Culture, Scór, All-Ireland, Club History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Outsider's Perspectives, Politics, Socialising, Relationships, Economy / Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Mary talks about her introduction to the GAA, and the involvement of various relatives in the game. She explains how she first got involved, her life in club administration, and how this eventually became an involvement at county and national level. She explains how her role in the GAA impacted on her family, and also how central she thinks the GAA is to the spirit of the nation, to local communities and to young people.</p> <p>0:28 Earliest memories. Mary describes being in the Nally Stand in Croke Park in 1956, watching Kildare play in the Leinster Senior Football Final. She describes how she travelled to the match.</p> <p>00:50 She talks about her mother who was originally from Kilcock, later moving to Rathcoffey. Her mother's father Tommy Kelly won All Ireland titles with Kildare. Mary describes how her mother brought her and her 4 siblings to matches and to Croke Park. She tells a story about travelling in a green Hillman car.</p> <p>01:52 She talks about following Kildare around the country, and also going to club matches.</p> <p>02:25 She talks about her brother John's involvement in the GAA. He played football for Kilcock and Rathcoffey. She talks about her and her brother's involvement in administration in the GAA.</p> <p>03:08 She talks about why she was interested in the GAA and discusses ladies football.</p> <p>03:26 She talks about how she was appointed secretary of</p>

	<p>Rathcoffey in 1972.</p> <p>03:46 Mary also describes how she managed the underage football teams in Rathcoffey from 1973-1975.</p> <p>04:30 She talks about how she was secretary of Bord Na nOg in Kildare for a time.</p> <p>04:50 Mary tells how she was appointed a delegate to the county board along with her brother John. She talks about how she felt going to the first meeting and getting to know the people there.</p> <p>05:31 She talks about becoming the county registrar in 1975. She talks about being the first female in the country to be elected onto a county board. Mary describes her role, and how she was treated.</p> <p>07:10 Mary discusses how the position of vice-chairperson became open in 1981 and she decided to run after she consulted with the outgoing vice-chairperson Hugh Canby, originally from Laois. She won the election, and was re-elected in 1982 and 1983.</p> <p>07:50 She talks about not running for re-election, and about having a young family.</p> <p>08:35 Mary discusses how she became involved in the GAA. She talks about her mother Mary Kelly, and her grandfather Tommy Kelly who started playing for Kildare in 1904, winning a Leinster Senior Football and All Ireland Senior Football title in 1905. Mary still has her grandfather's 1905 Leinster medal. Mary talks about her mother's influence on her.</p> <p>09:50 She gives her views on the GAA today.</p> <p>10:25 She talks about going to meetings etc. and the effect it had on her lifestyle. She talks about how her husband used to play for Clane, and Rathcoffey.</p> <p>11:45 She talks about how she was treated during her time in administration.</p> <p>12:30 Mary talks about Shay Fahy and Larry Tompkins, and gives her views on the incidents which led to Larry leaving Kildare to play for Cork.</p> <p>13:55 Mary describes her time as a manager of the underage teams in Rathcoffey. She mentions Father Lloyd from Maynooth who helped train the team. She mentions Imelda Delaney who brought them on a bus to the games.</p>
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	<p>15:16 She gives her thoughts on what it was like managing the teams, the u10s, 11s, 12s and 14s. She also talks about often joining up with Straffon, and mentions Mick Hannigan the principal in Straffon at the time</p> <p>16:14 She describes travelling to the games. She mentions John Tutty who played for Rathcoffey, and Clane. She talks about the rivalry between Rathcoffey and Clane.</p> <p>17:35 Mary discusses the interest in managing the underage teams. She describes organising an event in Rathcoffey Hall which the club bought for £4,000 in the early 1970s. She talks about Pat Mangan coming to present the medals at the event.</p> <p>19:11 Mary gives her views on juvenile football today in the GAA.</p> <p>20:45 She talks about her time involved with the adult team in Rathcoffey. She also talks about living in the country.</p> <p>22:25 She talks about going to Primary School in Kilcock, and the GAA's influence in her getting to know people in Rathcoffey.</p> <p>22:50 Mary describes all the different function they held in the club hall, and in particular mentions winning a county title with a play they performed in the Scór competiton.</p> <p>24:27 Mary describes how her involvement with the county board impacted on her involvement with Rathcoffey. She also talks about following the players she managed at underage level when they went on to play at adult level.</p> <p>25:56 She talks about following Kildare over the years and binging her children to games. She mentions her son Michael who played for his school, club, and won a championship with Warrenstown College.</p> <p>26:50 She also talks about her daughter Sarah who played ladies football for Dunshaughlin in Meath.</p> <p>27:10 She talks about following Kildare in more recent years. She talks about her husband and her father-in-law going with her.</p> <p>28:30 She talks about travelling to the games over the years, and mentions that she will be going on the train to Croke Park for the first time to see Kildare vs Down in the 2010 All Ireland Senior Football Final.</p> <p>29:03 She describes the changes she has seen in the GAA over the years. She discusses club centres and drinking and</p>
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	<p>how they impact on the club. She also discusses the changes in the facilities in Rathcoffey. She mentions Farrington's seed merchants who gave Rathcoffey the use of a field.</p> <p>31:04 Mary tells how the club have bought land and build 2 pitches and a centre, and are now draining a 3rd pitch for use.</p> <p>31:55 She talks about what facilities were like years ago and compares it to today.</p> <p>32:38 She talks about what the facilities were like when she was managing, and the availability of equipment.</p> <p>33:55 She talks about the changes to club life and the GAA today. She talks about players fitness and professionalism in management today.</p> <p>35:36 Mary talks about the people who are against change in the GAA. She mentions in particular the opening of Croke Park to Soccer and Rugby.</p> <p>36:45 Mary tells the story about how a person she knows wouldn't watch Ireland play in the World Cup because of the GAA.</p> <p>37:30 Mary talks about attending a soccer fundraising event in the 1970s and she talks about how she felt at it, and why she felt that way. She also talks about the rules at the time which banned GAA players from playing Soccer or Rugby.</p> <p>39:53 She talks about the GAA's impact on Ireland as a whole.</p> <p>40:35 Mary discusses a project she has done on female administration in the GAA. She gives various figures of the amount of female involvement at administration over the years since she has become involved. She mentions Kathleen O'Niell who was secretary of Rathcoffey and was elected P.R.O. for Kildare in 1985. She mentions that it was 1991 before any other county elected a female to a county board.</p> <p>42:47 She discusses the change in the amount of females on count boards around Ireland. She says that there were 3 female officers on county boards in 1992, and there were 8 in 2005, 10 in 2007, and 9 in 2008. She also states that some county boards didn't respond to her so her figures may not be exactly correct.</p> <p>43:50 She reflects on the fact that she was the first female to be on a county board and gives her views on how females</p>
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	<p>are seen within the GAA.</p> <p>45:16 She discusses how females are viewed in the GAA in Kildare. Mary also discusses men's attitudes to females in the GAA.</p> <p>46:00 She also discusses the length of years people spend in positions in county boards.</p> <p>47:20 Mary gives her views on how clubs can help with getting females involved in the GAA, and her views on men who serve for a long time on county boards.</p> <p>48:04 She talks about being well informed and knowing how to behave when in positions.</p> <p>48:45 Mary discusses ladies football and camogie. She discusses the connections between these sports and the GAA.</p> <p>50:14 Mary talks about the GAA clubs sharing facilities with ladies football and camogie and gives her views on this. She also gives her views on how county boards should deal with ladies football and camogie.</p> <p>51:41 She talks about administration nowadays and. She again mentions Kathleen O'Niell who now works full time as the county secretary in Kildare. Mary talks about the way the county board is run today, and discusses the challenge in getting a balance between finding someone who is well qualified for the specific job, and someone who has an understanding of the GAA.</p> <p>54:07 Mary gives her views on how the GAA is run today, particularly at club level.</p> <p>55:13 She talks about the possibility of a female holding a position in Croke Park, or even a non-paying position in Croke Park. She also discusses the idea of having a rule of at least one female on county boards.</p> <p>57:00 She discusses female interest in GAA.</p> <p>57:45 Mary reflects on how she would feel if a female was elected president of the GAA.</p> <p>58:45 Mary reflects on how she felt when she was elected to the county board, and about her mother dying a year before she was elected. She also discusses her grandfather's involvement in administration. He was a delegate to the Leinster Council from 1918 to 1946.</p>
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	<p>1:00:20 She also reflects on her time as an underage manager.</p> <p>1:00:42 She talks about going to watch her children play football.</p> <p>1:03:01 She talks about the rivalries she has come across in the GAA. She talks about the rivalry between Clane and Rathcoffey, and mentions how she is from Rathcoffey and how her husband is from Clane.</p> <p>1:04:05 She also describes the rivalry between Kildare and Meath. She tells a story about a match in which Meath beat Kildare by a point, and Mary remembers mother telling her daughter's boyfriend who was from Meath to get out of the house.</p> <p>1:06:07 Mary talks about how her mother was the first female to ever hold the Sam Maguire Cup. Her mother's father handed the cup to her on pitch the first year it was presented.</p> <p>1:07:20 Mary talks about how she felt when Kildare lost the 1998 All Ireland Senior Football Final.</p> <p>1:08:13 She talks about the controversy in the 2010 Leinster Senior Football Final and the GAA's handling of it.</p> <p>1:10:06 Mary discusses supporters coming onto the pitch after matches in Croke Park.</p> <p>1:11:29 Mary talks about the Leinster Senior Football Final in 1998, and beating Meath in it. She also talks about going to International Rules matches in 1998 in the hope that it would ease the hurt of Kildare losing the All Ireland Final that year.</p> <p>1:13:25 Mary talks about her interest in hurling. She says how her mother's cousin is married to Theo English, former Tipperary hurling.</p> <p>1:14:50 Mary gives her final thoughts and female involvement in the GAA.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input 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>

REFERENCE NO. KE/1/4

Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 01:15:00
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: Mark Farrelly

Date: 18th June 2012