

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Padraic O'Connor
Date of Interview	6 th Oct 2010
Location	St. Patrick's Clubhouse, Lordship, Co. Louth
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Pat Finnegan
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1954 Home County: Louth
Education	Primary: Rampark NS Secondary: Bush Vocational School
Family	N/A
Club(s)	St. Patrick's GFC
Occupation	Fitter
Parents' Occupation	Farmers
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Fianna Fáil
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Community Alert

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Date of Report	30 th May 2012
Period Covered	1960s – 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Louth, Meath
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Rivalries, Scór, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Challenges, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Food and Drink, Socialising, Relationships, Economy/ Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Pat Finnegan, chairman of St. Patrick's GAA club in Louth, opens the interview by discussing his earliest memories of Gaelic games, including reference to school leagues and the social life around his early informal participation. His family's involvement with the GAA in Louth is also sketched out. As well as stories about travelling to games in overcrowded cars, Pat recalls some of the highlights in the St. Patrick's club's history – the 1972 junior final and the 2003 senior championship final. Pat talks about the impact of economic recession on the club and its activities; furthermore, he considers the challenges which face both the club and the GAA generally. Club rivalries, in particular that with Cooley, are discussed as is the involvement of St. Pat's players with Louth county teams, including Louth captain in 2010, Paddy Keenan.</p> <p>00:00:10 Earliest memories of the GAA: playing in school leagues, playing games on his own family pitch, John Finnegan's, at night and calling into Sheelan's shop on way back, playing marbles.</p> <p>00:01:20 Family background: mentions two Uncles, Joe and Gerry who played, as did his brother Paul, who played with St. Pat's and went on to referee at inter-county level. On his mother's side, his grandfather, Peter O'Hanlon, played with Louth.</p> <p>00:02:10 Recalls getting lifts to matches and tells story of legs out of window as players were packed into a car.</p> <p>00:02:49 Selects one memorable game: the 1972 junior final, which St. Pat's won as well as reaction to the 2003 Senior championship final victory – throwing water bottle in the air.</p>

	<p>00:03:30 Interviewer tells story of Pat Finnegan handing around what appeared to be a bottle of lucozade to others at a match: 'Little did we realise what was in the bottle of lucozade...' [laughter]</p> <p>00:03:57 Impact of the GAA on his life: talks about the facilities, living at the 'corner of the football field', the numbers of kids playing football.</p> <p>00:05:03 Says his wife 'can look out the window' if she wants to see him.</p> <p>00:05:20 Talks about his enjoyment of being club chairman and the place of St. Pat's club in the local community. In the context of current recession, it says it 'really binds the parish'.</p> <p>00:06:00 Considers the future development of the GAA and his preference for remaining amateur.</p> <p>00:06:10 Talks about his admiration for various players: Eugene Sheelan, Pat Murphy for Lurgan, Gerard Carr, Henry Donnelly, James Sheelan. Mentions also the club masseur Tommy McKeever and tells of boys going to him for a rub for the dances.</p> <p>00:07:20 Refers to those who had built the St. Pat's club.</p> <p>00:07:40 Interviewer tells a story about Tommy McKeever not tending to injuries 'above the knee'. [Laughter]</p> <p>00:08:08 Considers the changes in facilities, pitches and coaching in the GAA, sponsorship and the amount of finance required to run a club.</p> <p>00:08:56 Mentions the disappointment of losing the 2006 county final and the 2010 Leinster final debacle involving Louth and Meath.</p> <p>00:09:30 Discusses the importance of rivalries and reflects on the Carlingford 7 a side in the early 1990s, when Mick O'Connell came up to referee a final involving St. Pat's and Cooley Kickhams.</p> <p>00:10:25 The big challenges facing the rural club: talks about the impact of recession, lack of work and the threat of emigration. Comments on the impact of sponsorship on club revenues, of emigration from clubs and the prospect of losing players from Louth county team.</p> <p>00:12:10 Considers the work of the St. Pat's club and what they might do in relation to underage development – refers to the difficulty in getting volunteers on committees and involved</p>
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	<p>with teams.</p> <p>00:13:05 Comments on codes and age groups catered for by the St. Pat's club.</p> <p>00:13:20 Talks about the array of activities conducted in the club hall – 'we have a good bowls team', set dancing, kick dancing etc.</p> <p>00:14:05 Refers to his short-term ambitions for the St. Pat's club: talks about potential to win senior titles, to the quality of young players and getting them on Louth county teams.</p> <p>00:14:45 Talks about the cost to the club of having players involved with the county. Recalls having 7 players involved with county, not having them for club matches, the difficulty of re-integrating them etc.</p> <p>00:15:20 Comments on having a St. Pat's man like Paddy Keenan as Louth captain. Mentions cousins Dessie and Ray Finnegan also playing for county team.</p> <p>00:15:40 Interviewer tells story of seeing - as county chairman - players coming out on pitch and Paddy Keenan, 'captain fantastic', putting his shoulders back....</p> <p>00:16:30 Talks also about having a club man involved as Chairman of Louth county board and refers to St. Pat's continued interest in that year's championship.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</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 checked="" 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>Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>N/A</p>

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Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 00:17:35
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: _____Padraic O'Connor_____

Date: _____30/05/12_____