

## GAA Oral History Project

## Interview Report Form

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| <b>Name of Interviewer</b>                          | Tommy McCann  |
| <b>Date of Interview</b>                            | 10 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2010   |
| <b>Location</b>                                     | N/A   |
| <b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname) | Tom Matthews  |
| <b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>   |   |
| <b>Gender</b>                                       | Male  |
| <b>Born</b>   | <b>Year Born:</b> 1937<br><b>Home County:</b> Louth   |
| <b>Education</b>                                    | <b>Primary:</b> Collon National School, Co. Louth.<br><b>Secondary:</b> Christian Brothers School, Drogheda, Co. Louth. |
| <b>Family</b>                                       | <b>Siblings:</b> 3 brothers,; 1 sister  |
| <b>Club(s)</b>                                      | Mattock Rangers GFC [Louth]   |
| <b>Occupation</b>                                   | Publican  |
| <b>Parents' Occupation</b>                          | Publicans   |
| <b>Religion</b>                                     | Roman Catholic  |
| <b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>           | N/A   |
| <b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>             | N/A   |

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| <b>Date of Report</b>             | 16 <sup>th</sup> July 2012  |
| <b>Period Covered</b>             | 1940s - 2010  |
| <b>Counties/Countries Covered</b> | Louth, Meath, Cavan   |
| <b>Key Themes Covered</b>         | Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Administration, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Education, Religion, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Rivalries, Irish Language, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Challenges, Outsider's Perspectives, Socialising, Economy/ Economics   |
| <b>Interview Summary</b>          | <p>Tom Mathews recounts his early involvement in the GAA, the roles he has filled in club administration and the closeness of his family's pub with the Mattock Rangers scene. In the course of the interview, he outlines key milestones in the club's history and sheds light on such issues as the roles of women and the clergy, the challenges which have accompanied local population growth and the development plans the club has set in train. Local club rivalries are highlighted as are the declining contribution of the big towns in Louth to underage development.</p> <p>00:00:05 Tom Mathews introduces himself as a member of Mattock Rangers GAA club. Mentions that he owed his nickname to the soccer player, Stanley Matthews.</p> <p>00:00:50 Earliest memories of GAA: travelling to Croke Park for the 1948 Leinster final, Louth V Wexford. Return for All-Ireland semi-final V Cavan.</p> <p>00:02:14 Travelled with John Waters, first Chairman of Mattock Rangers club who worked in his family's pub in Collon.</p> <p>00:02:30 Early involvement in club, as a player and on committees.</p> <p>00:02:55 Family background in GAA – father didn't play.</p> <p>00:03:20 Beginnings of short playing career in 1955-56. Others roles subsequently held within club, including that of Chairman.</p> <p>00:03:46 Informality of Gaelic football in school. Games played in playground, no leagues.</p> |

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|  | <p>00:04:03 GAA landscape in Collon prior to foundation of Mattock Rangers in the early 1950s.</p> <p>00:04:45 Local Louth heroes: Stephen White, Eddie Boyle, Jimmy McDonnell, Jack Regan and Frank Reid.</p> <p>00:05:15 Admiration for Seán Purcell of Galway – ‘the best Gaelic footballer I ever saw...’</p> <p>00:05:25 Family pub as a conversation point about Gaelic football and a ‘shrine’ to Mattock Rangers.</p> <p>00:05:45 Administrative role within club.</p> <p>00:06:02 Highlight in playing career: winning of second division championship in 1960, winning junior championship in 1961 and losing senior final in 1962 – references to Newtown Blues attracting teachers and Guards to play for them.</p> <p>00:07:05 Losing two finals to Cooley in the 1970s.</p> <p>00:07:35 Club success since 2002 and its impact on Gaelic football in area – reference to absence of local competition from other sports.</p> <p>00:08:15 Highpoint in Louth GAA history: Mentions the team of 1948-53.</p> <p>00:09:00 Reference to Louth team of 2010 and hopes for the future. Concerns about the quality of underage football in the county and the poor performance of the two big towns in producing players. Refers also to decline in St. Mary’s Ardee and contrasts current profile of club with what it has been in late 1940s and 50s.</p> <p>00:10:45 Reflects on changes in Gaelic football since the late 1940s in terms of style of play.</p> <p>00:11:49 Efforts of Mattock Rangers to develop underage.</p> <p>00:12:20 Main club rivals – Newtown Blues, Cooley and St. Patrick’s.</p> <p>00:12:45 Impact of economic boom on Collon – reference to population growth, the development of new estates and the difficulty in getting newcomers involved in club.</p> <p>00:13:20 Lack of interest of new settlers (including non Irish nationals) in club activities.</p> <p>00:13:55 Strength of women’s involvement in club and the</p> |
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|   | <p>activities they are engaged in.</p> <p>00:14:25 Development of club facilities, in particular second pitch for training.</p> <p>00:14:54 Club sponsorship: mentions that brother, a former player with club, is a sponsor.</p> <p>00:15:17 Difficulty of maintaining voluntary ethos of GAA and reference to huge costs of running inter-county teams.</p> <p>00:15:55 Diminished influence of Catholic church in GAA – reference to past prominence of Christian Brother schools in Ardee and Drogheda. Reference also to diminished interest among teachers.</p> <p>00:16:35 Contrasts quality of existing facilities enjoyed by young people with the conditions that prevailed in earlier times.</p> <p>00:17:20 Reasons for pride in GAA: Irishness and contribution to young people.</p> <p>00:18:00 Difficulty in promoting Irish language.</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 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><b>Record as a Player</b><br/>(Titles won; Length of time played)</p>    | <p>Played for five years</p>  |
| <p><b>Record as an Administrator</b><br/>(Positions held; how long for)</p> | <p>Club Committee Member for 15 years</p>   |

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| <b>Format</b>   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual |
| <b>Duration</b> | Length of Interview: 00:18:30   |
| <b>Language</b> | English   |

**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:        Tommy McCann

Date:            10<sup>th</sup> Nov 2010