

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

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| Name of Interviewer | Arlene Crampsie |
| Date of Interview | 17 th Jan 2011 |
| Location | Clanree Hotel, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal |
| Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname) | Hugh Devenney |
| <u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u> | |
| Gender | Male |
| Born | Year Born: 1947 Home County: Donegal |
| Education | Primary: St. Eunan's NS, Laghey, Co. Donegal Secondary: Vocational School, Donegal Town, Co. Donegal |
| Family | Siblings: 3 sisters & 2 brothers |
| Club(s) | Four Masters; Drumbar |
| Occupation | Night Porter Great Northern Hotel, Bundoran |
| Parents' Occupation | Farmers |
| Religion | Roman Catholic |
| Political Affiliation / Membership | Fianna Fáil |
| Other Club/Society Membership(s) | N/A |

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| Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname) | Micheál Naughton |
| <u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u> | |
| Gender | Male |
| Born | Year Born: 1972 Home County: Sligo |
| Education | Primary: Stokane NS, Co. Sligo Secondary: Enniscrone Secondary School, Co. Sligo |
| Family | Siblings: 5 sisters & 6 brothers |
| Club(s) | Four Masters [Donegal]; Castleconnor [Sligo] |
| Occupation | General Manager Clanree Hotel |
| Parents' Occupation | Farmers |
| Religion | Roman Catholic |
| Political Affiliation / Membership | Fianna Fáil |
| Other Club/Society Membership(s) | Pioneer Association, Donegal Branch Irish Hotel's Federation, Laghey Cumann Fianna Fáil |

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| Date of Report | 23 rd July 2012 |
| Period Covered | 1960s – 2011 |
| Counties/Countries Covered | Donegal, Sligo, Cavan, Down, Dublin, Waterford, Armagh, Americas, USA |
| Key Themes Covered | Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Material Culture, Religion, Media, Emigration, Involvement in GAA Abroad, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Rivalries, Irish Language, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Challenges, Outsiders' Perspectives, Relationship with the Association, Food and Drink, Socialising, Relationships, Economy / Economics |
| Interview Summary | <p>Hugh and Micheál reflect on their involvement in ladies football in Donegal. They discuss their contribution to the sport at club, county, and provincial level, and they describe their various roles in administration and training. They outline the history of ladies football in their club, Four Masters, and in the county, and they discuss the challenges they faced in the early years, namely, opposition from the men's county board and lack of coverage in the media. They also explain how the status of the sport has gradually changed since the early '90s. In addition, they describe the excitement of winning the 2010 TG4 All-Ireland Ladies Intermediate Final and the events surrounding that occasion. Finally, they consider the significance of the GAA in their lives.</p> <p>00:00 Introduction</p> <p>00:39 Hugh recalls his earliest GAA memory: seeing an Ulster final in the 1960s, Donegal versus Down. Excitement, few cars, getting a lift.</p> <p>01:32 Micheál remembers walking or cycling to play underage for Castleconnor GAA Club, Sligo. Family of 12, importance of sport.</p> <p>02:27 Description of Castleconnor. Toggling out in cars, no dressing rooms. Community-based club. Pride of wearing jersey. Red and white strip. Playing different positions. Mentions Sligo footballer Mickey Kerins, his cousin. Also other family members who represented Sligo. Involvement in</p> |

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| | <p>GAA in Donegal since he moved.</p> <p>04:15 Hugh recalls playing for Drumbar. Walking several miles, changing in a derelict house, no dressing rooms. Rivals St. Nauls. Playing underage, minor, and junior with Drumbar. Also playing with Four Masters GAA Club when Drumbar disbanded. Later involvement with ladies football.</p> <p>05:32 Hugh discusses the rivalry between Drumbar and St. Nauls. Also with Donegal Town. Explains why Drumbar collapsed, low numbers. Outlines history of Drumbar. Compares pitch in Four Masters with that of Drumbar.</p> <p>07:19 Micheál discusses Castleconnor's rivals: Enniscrone, Easkey Sea Blues. Amicable rivalry. Castleconnor winning underage county titles, pride in beating rivals.</p> <p>08:14 Micheál reflects on his parents' interest in GAA. Their attendance at matches, watching on TV, listening on radio. His brothers' interest in sport. Football discussions at mealtimes. Aga Khan Cup at RDS, Dublin, highlight of summer.</p> <p>10:12 Hugh describes his family involvement in GAA. His brother emigrating to America and playing for his county there. Also playing for Drumbar. His parents' lack of interest in the sport. Ponders the origins of his passion for football: school, friends. Mentions Donna Dunnion who got him involved in ladies football.</p> <p>11:45 Hugh outlines the formation of ladies football in Donegal. Starting in 1991. Mentions Dermot Foy, Sean Gallagher, Mary McHugh. Gradual improvement. Winning All-Ireland junior title in 2003. His involvement in county board in 1992. Mentions individuals who contributed to ladies football: Danny Duggan, Alan Kane, Hugh's nephew Kevin Barron, Ann McKenna. Hugh's involvement at county level and with Four Masters. Recalls asking Micheál to get involved with Four Masters and his contribution.</p> <p>15:38 Micheál recalls moving to Donegal, working for Brian McEniff. Playing with Bundoran and coaching at Four Masters simultaneously. Success of Four Masters, winning 1996 ladies football senior title. Positions at county board level and club level. 2010 was the highlight for Donegal ladies football: three national titles. Achievement of reaching Croke Park.</p> <p>19:26 Hugh explains inception of ladies football at club and county level. Dominance of St. Eunan's. Rivals MacCumhailis. Mentions Joan Barron of St. Eunan's.</p> |
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| | <p>20:53 Explains how ladies football was started in Donegal. Monaghan's success. Lists Donegal clubs involved in ladies football: Glenfinn, Urris, Four Masters, Naomh Bríd, Ardara, Termon, Glenswilly, Malin, Carndonagh.</p> <p>22:07 Hugh describes the initial negative response of the men's county board to the introduction of ladies football. Different now. Success of integration in Ulster. Helpfulness of 2010 county board.</p> <p>23:33 Need for committee to set up ladies football. No committee in Four Masters club for years. Mentions Danny Dunnion managing Four Masters, his daughter Donna asking him to get involved. Challenge of getting enough players in early days. Growth of club. Success of club. 1992 All-Ireland Senior Football champions. Mentions Martin McHugh. Micheál's success in forming a panel.</p> <p>28:07 Micheál reflects on starting underage coaching in Four Masters. Commitment of girls. Importance of praising and encouraging girls, compared to training boys. Completing coaching courses. Hugh's lack of experience before coaching girls in Four Masters. No formal coaching in early 1990s. Hugh outlines his various positions at provincial and county boards.</p> <p>31:03 Micheál describes his coaching style. Teaching girls self-belief and respect. Mentions Yvonne McMonagle. Girls' doubt in their abilities. Importance of taking the sport seriously.</p> <p>32:54 Challenge of getting pitches to train and play on in the early years. Training in Drumboe now. Family involvement in the GAA, overlap in ladies and men's football.</p> <p>35:15 Hugh describes the challenge of playing on the Four Masters pitch in the late 1990s. Improvements in recent years. Mentions men's footballers trying to block ladies from getting into Tir Chonaill Park. Strength of present relationship between the two. Reasons for lack of respect for ladies football.</p> <p>37:23 Discussion of pitches used by clubs in Donegal.</p> <p>38:04 Lack of cooperation between men's and ladies county boards. Attitude in early 1990s towards ladies football.</p> <p>38:45 Hugh describes difficulty of getting pitches for ladies football county team in the 1990s. Few men involved in ladies football. Hugh's nieces playing.</p> |
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| | <p>40:21 Hugh reflects on the importance of winning the junior All-Ireland title in 2003. Influx of new players. No support from county board.</p> <p>41:50 Structure of the sport in Donegal. One county board, three divisions. Fixtures committees.</p> <p>42:22 Micheál outlines the early success of Four Masters. His highlight was the first county senior title in 2006. Celebrations, homecoming with the cup. Mentions Emer Carr, Rena Brogan, Laceys, Donna Dunnion, Bridgeen Carr. Joy of involvement in sport.</p> <p>44:58 Micheál describes celebrations in Donegal town after the win. Mentions Kevin Sinclair, photographer. Blue and white. Boost to the club.</p> <p>46:32 Hugh explains how Donegal's All-Ireland junior title in 2003 came about. Funds becoming available. Fundraising banquet. Good panel of players. Meals for players after match. Mentions manager Maxi Curran. Mentions player Kelly Lacey. Hugh was president of Ulster council, handed cup to team. Lengthy celebrations. Crowds in Donegal town.</p> <p>50:40 Micheál describes events leading up to 2010. County chairman in 2009, girls travelling to America. Quality of players. Selecting his team. Mentions individuals involved with team: Barney Curran, Maria Devenney, Hugh Devenney, Caroline Duffy. Importance of self-belief for players. Mentions playing against Cavan, Longford.</p> <p>57:45 Pressure on players as Donegal's reputation improved. Mentions Kildare and Waterford. Mentions Joe Brolly and Pdraig McShane. Significance of this win in promoting ladies football. Micheál winning Manager of the League in 2010. Yvonne McMonagle winning an All-Star.</p> <p>01:01:28 Micheál reflects on the organisation involved in getting to an All-Ireland. Sorting kits, liaising with Ulster Council, Croke Park, media build-up, training of team. Mentions Tyrone's Brian Dooher. Also mentions Maria Devenney and her husband, Alan. Pre-match training in Sligo. Itinerary of weekend. Stopping in Kelly's Inn on way to Dublin, meeting Mickey Harte, who made a speech. Practicing in Croke Park on the Saturday. Attending mass. Warm up in St. Pat's College, Drumcondra. Mentions Grainne Houston. Micheál making a DVD of the team's sporting highlights, watching the DVD on the bus to Croke Park. Garda escort to Croke Park. Staying in Bewley's Airport Hotel.</p> |
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| | <p>01:09:40 Micheál describes how he managed his own nerves. Praying. Keeping busy. His feelings on the sideline. Mentions Niamh Hegarty. Waterford's resilience. Nerve-wracking to watch.</p> <p>01:14:05 Hugh describes what 2010 meant to him. Outlines the team's progress to the All-Ireland Intermediate Ladies Football Final. Ulster final, he had an official role and couldn't cheer, Donegal beating Cavan. Mentions Aoife McDonnell. Mass in Whitehall. Mentions Yvonne McMonagle, Eilish Ward, Geraldine McLaughlin. Describes celebrations in various towns in Donegal.</p> <p>01:20:36 Discussion of sponsorship of club and county. Clanree Hotel sponsoring county team. Also mentions the Great Northern Hotel, Bundoran. County board hosting fundraising draw, talent contest. Hugh recalls the team playing Tipperary, praised for their manners by hotel manager.</p> <p>01:22:33 Micheál recalls a fundraising event in 2007 with €100 tables. Inspired by Brian Dooher. Raising €20,000. Paying off debts. Also raffles, guest score, bag-packing.</p> <p>01:24:14 Hugh explains how Ulster Council works. Fixtures, appeals, disciplinary committees. Monthly meetings. Executive committee and county delegates. Full-time paid administrator and development officer. Hugh working unsociable hours. Ulster's progress in integrating men's and ladies sports.</p> <p>01:28:36 Micheál discusses the challenge of acting as chairman of the county board and manager of ladies football team. Explains role of chairperson. Responsibility. Fundraising and spending decisions. Monthly meetings. Attendance at games. Presentation of cups at all levels. Time-consuming.</p> <p>01:30:46 Discussion about male-female ratios on county board and Ulster Council.</p> <p>01:31:49 Hugh reflects on relating to women at administration level. Positive. Micheál discusses the team effort, unity of their goal.</p> <p>01:32:53 Discussion about role of media in ladies football. Success in getting media coverage. Hugh mentions the difficulty of getting the media to cover ladies football. Change in late 1990s, when Donegal team improved. Significance of TG4's coverage of the games. Needs more followers. Fastest-growing sport in Ireland.</p> |
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| | <p>01:36:04 Micheál discusses the lack of coverage of the ladies football final on RTE. Lack of coverage on <i>The Sunday Game</i>.</p> <p>01:36:35 Hugh discusses the lack of camogie in Donegal. Sports mentioned at integration meetings: men's GAA, ladies football, camogie, rounders, handball.</p> <p>01:38:12 Hugh mentions the Gaeltacht competition for clubs in the Gaeltacht. Importance of speaking in Irish at presentations.</p> <p>01:38:59 They mention the 2006 county final and 2010 All-Ireland final as best memories.</p> <p>01:39:48 Sporting heroes: Barry Dunnion, Kelly Lacey, Yvonne McMonagle, Brian Dooher, Donna Dunnion, Emer Carr.</p> <p>01:41:50 Micheál recalls watching a game in New York, his nephew Pat Naughton playing for Sligo. Hugh describes watching a match in New York.</p> <p>01:42:48 Micheál explains his loyalty to Sligo GAA. The difficulty of managing a Donegal team that beat Sligo.</p> <p>01:44:11 Discussion of the future of ladies football in Donegal. Strong underage teams, competing at Ulster level. More pitches for the sport. Optimism for the sport.</p> <p>01:46:03 Micheál considers his disappointments in the GAA: Sligo being beaten by Armagh in 2002, the lack of people available to help out in ladies football, lack of coverage on RTÉ. Hugh mentions the ladies football losing the Mick Talbot Cup in 2009.</p> <p>01:47:41 Hugh reflects on the significance of the GAA in his life. Recreation. Micheál describes his passion for Gaelic games at all levels. Stress reliever. Socialising.</p> <p>01:49:17 Hugh praises the referees in Donegal. Mentions Gerard McHugh,</p> |
| <p>Involvement in GAA</p> | <p>Hugh:</p> <p>✓ Supporter ✓ Player ✓ Manager ✓ Coach ✓ Steward</p> <p>✓ Chairperson ✓ Committee Member <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p> <p>✓ Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer ✓ Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> |

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| | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____</p> <p>Micheál: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coach <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steward <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input checked="" 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>Hugh: Played for 6/7 years.</p> <p>Micheál: Played for 20 years. Won Under 14, Under 16 and Minor and a Bundoran Division 3 Title.</p> |
| <p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p> | <p>Hugh: Has been involved in administration of ladies football since 1992.</p> <p>County: Chairman, Vice-chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, PRO, Delegate to Ulster Council, Delegate to Central Council</p> <p>Ulster: Fixtures and Referees Secretary, Oifig na Gaeilge, President of Ulster Council</p> <p>Central Council: Vice-President</p> <p>Micheál: Has been involved in administration of ladies football since 2004.</p> <p>Club: Chairman, Treasurer, Delegate to County Board</p> <p>County: Chairman, Vice-chairman, Delegate to Ulster Council, Delegate to Central Council</p> |
| <p>Format</p> | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p> |
| <p>Duration</p> | <p>Length of Interview: 01:50:09</p> |
| <p>Language</p> | <p>English</p> |

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: _____Arlene Crampsie_____

Date: _____23/07/12_____