

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

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| Name of Interviewer | Arlene Crampsie |
| Date of Interview | 15 th March 2010 |
| Location | Interviewee's home, Granard, Co. Longford |
| Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname) | Jody Sheridan |
| <u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u> | |
| Gender | Male |
| Born | Year Born: 1946 Home County: Longford |
| Education | Primary: Granard Boys School, Co. Longford |
| Family | Siblings: 2 brothers & 7 sisters Current Family if Different: Married to Catherine with 3 daughters and 1 son |
| Club(s) | St Mary's, Granard [Longford]; St Mary's [London] |
| Occupation | Pat the Baker |
| Parents' Occupation | Salesman [Father]; Housewife [Mother] |
| Religion | Roman Catholic |
| Political Affiliation / Membership | Fianna Fáil |
| Other Club/Society Membership(s) | Choir |

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| Date of Report | 12 th June 2012 |
| Period Covered | 1954 – 2010 |
| Counties/Countries Covered | Longford, Dublin |
| Key Themes Covered | Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Fundraising, Material Culture, Education, Religion, Emigration, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Challenges, Alcohol, Violence, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Professionalism, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Economy/Economics |
| Interview Summary | <p>Jody talks about his involvement with the GAA in Longford. His local club was Granard and he recalls playing for them down through the years with his friends. He reflects on the rivalries they had with neighbouring clubs, which resulted in some epic battles. Jody was also on the Longford team that won the National League in 1996, a great occasion. They were well respected as a team and were often invited to tournaments around the country. He also worked in club administration at Granard, filling whatever position was necessary. He and his lifelong friends loved to play football and go to All-Ireland finals in Dublin. The GAA is different today to what it was back then, and Jody gives his opinions on pressing issues within the Association. A club man through and through, he is immensely proud of his community's achievements.</p> <p>00:25 Earliest memory is playing with a paper ball on the main street.</p> <p>00:45 He went to the convent and there was no football there, but then he went to the boys' national school and played football there. It was 1954 or 1955.</p> <p>01:15 The paper ball was quite heavy and was like an oversized sliotar. 20 or 30 would participate in those games.</p> <p>02:10 There was a minor club at that time, and then they went to junior and senior. Before that it was schoolboys' Under-14 level.</p> <p>02:50 Recalls serving Mass with Canon O'Kane on a day they</p> |

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| | <p>were to be presented with medals by Din Joe. He got a slap for not doing his job.</p> <p>03:50 There was a small yard in the school but no pitch. Later they played in the barrack field in the town.</p> <p>04:05 His father often collected money at the schoolboy matches, and one time he collected 60 pounds.</p> <p>04:30 His father helped out with the club and was big into football.</p> <p>05:05 Jody played at all levels as he got older and with Granard St Mary's won numerous competitions.</p> <p>05:25 Rogie Martin trained a lot of those teams.</p> <p>05:35 From the late 1980s to the 1990s they won eight underage championships. Rogie was a trainer and Jody a selector, but they never won a senior championship with that group, who lost 3 finals.</p> <p>06:00 Granard won senior championships in 1966, 1967, 1970 and 1982.</p> <p>06:45 Matt Smyth and John Scanlon organised an exhibition of medals.</p> <p>07:05 There were seven Granard men on the 1966 Longford panel and there were some great matches.</p> <p>07:20 Granard and Clonguish often met in finals.</p> <p>07:45 Recalls a tournament when they played Bryansford from County Down in Killinkere. Rogie scored two goals and three points and Snitchy Ferguson, a famous footballer, was referee. Afterwards the referee said it was the best game he had ever seen except for St Vincent's in Dublin.</p> <p>08:50 A St Mary's Parish Park Committee was formed. Ballymore was part of the parish then. They went to Higginstown and the same people that did Croke Park did their pitch. The parish park was at the technical school.</p> <p>10:05 There wasn't much drinking done when they were younger. Dances were over at midnight and there were no late nights.</p> |
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| | <p>10:50 They played football all the time just for enjoyment - Jody, Rogie, Martin, Big Jack, Peetie and 'Taxi'.</p> <p>11:20 He was seen watching Longford Town play by Fr McGee and got a 12 month ban, so he started a soccer team called Spartak.</p> <p>11:55 They played soccer in the park, as it was for the use of the whole town.</p> <p>12:30 Recalls a Fr Lehane catching them playing soccer in the Barrack Field with a ball with a bladder in the barrack field as schoolboys. Fr Lehane punctured the ball.</p> <p>13:05 They had a dressing room at their club and were one of the first in Longford to have one.</p> <p>13:40 The pitch was kept in good condition.</p> <p>14:20 Pat Scanlon, who was in the army, used to train them, but they were pretty fit anyway and there weren't many injuries.</p> <p>15:00 Their colours were blue and white.</p> <p>15:15 In the 1940s there was Granard Shamrocks but they broke up.</p> <p>15:35 They got their jerseys from a local, Noel 'the taxi' Connor. His sons play for Abbeylara.</p> <p>16:10 Abbeylara are the strong local team now.</p> <p>16:30 Clonguish and Longford Slashers were big rivals of theirs; now Abbeylara are their rivals too.</p> <p>17:00 Abbeylara and Mullinalaghta amalgamate at minor level and that helps them. Ballymore is also nearby.</p> <p>17:45 When Jody was younger there were seven Sheridans playing for Granard. The Martins were a big family too - Charlie, Hughie, Johnny, Patsy and Rogie. There was Bobby and Nicky Burns, and the Rourkes.</p> <p>18:25 The club was an essential part of the community. In his father's time they ran a carnival for a few nights a year. They collected at the church gate and held dances in the Granard - Tommy Quinn and Tommy Kiernan would give them two</p> |
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| | <p>nights a year.</p> <p>19:25 Recalls selling newspapers with Pat Scanlon for the club.</p> <p>19:50 In the late 1970s celebrations went to the pub but in the 1960s it was quieter - when the match was over that was it.</p> <p>20:25 Slashers were a good club and Jody admired them for playing open football, just like Down used to play.</p> <p>21:00 There is too much throwing and hand-passing now.</p> <p>21:55 They lost a few players to emigration but not many. They had a lot of farmers on the team and three priests played with them. Fr Fulham, Fr Brennan, Fr Gerry O'Brien all played. They called Fr O'Brien 'George' after George Best.</p> <p>23:00 He was from Cornafean and knew the umpires at a game they were at and told the umpire to signal for a goal. He is in Barnacoola now.</p> <p>23:45 Some guards played for them, but that would not happen now. They had a few from the bank too - Jimmy O'Donnell and John Nallen. The town teams got them quicker.</p> <p>24:40 The Kiernan's were great clubmen - Dessie and Tony.</p> <p>25:30 Jimmy Flynn from Ballymahon was chairman. Fr McGee did not like Jody and his clubmates and they often had rows. Mick Higgins was a great man, as was Bertie Allen.</p> <p>26:50 Bertie worked with Bord na Móna and he got some other men jobs there and they left Killashee to play for Clonguish.</p> <p>27:55 Rogie's mother went to every match and she smoked a lot. She offered Jody a cigarette if he scored a goal.</p> <p>28:40 Pat Scanlon's son plays for them now.</p> <p>28:55 Johnny Macken surprised him once with the red flag of Abbeylara while they were in the church, which Jody did not like at all.</p> <p>29:10 Jimmy Macken and Paddy Tierney started the club.</p> |
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| | <p>29:15 Patsy Martin was chairman, and Barry Clyne was a good clubman.</p> <p>29:40 The 1966 team had seven from Granard - Bobby Burns, Mickey Burns, Terry McGovern, Peter Sheridan, Dessie Kiernan, Sean Rourke and Jody himself. They all won National League medals with Longford.</p> <p>30:20 In 1968 they lost the All-Ireland semi-final to Kerry and Vincent Daly, a Granard man, was captain.</p> <p>31:05 They had a good county team at the time, and Clonguish and Slashers were good too.</p> <p>31:40 Smiler Fay played with Slashers and was a great character. He is a brother of John Fay.</p> <p>32:35 In 1966 they played in Croke Park and stayed in the Spa Hotel. They were invited to places like Kerry for tournaments.</p> <p>33:15 Jody had already played at Croke Park at Under-21 level. Sean Donnelly told him he would get a game in 1966 if they were playing well, but they weren't and lost - although they won the series.</p> <p>34:10 He has been singing a song since 1966 and Frank Kilbride recorded it and released it. Jody has sung it in five continents.</p> <p>34:50 Jody played with the Jimmy Magee All Stars from 1968 and always sang it.</p> <p>35:25 Jody sings the song 'The Boys In Blue and Gold'.</p> <p>40:00 He was in Dublin in 2008 with Ollie Cassidy and they went to a play. Before that they went to a Cavan pub and Jody recognised a man there who had been a footballer from Louth. His name was Kevin Behan and played in 1957. After the play they went to Mulligan's pub in Dublin and went back to the pub they had been in but there was nobody there.</p> <p>43:20 Remembers a song, The Might Of Granard, from 2001.</p> <p>43:55 Someone from Killashee wrote The Boys In Blue And Gold.</p> <p>44:20 Jody was secretary of the senior club, selector,</p> |
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| | <p>president and chairman of the minor club. Tommy Gallagher is chairman in 2010.</p> <p>45:35 He liked being a selector the best. They won a game in 1982 and afterwards he got a box in a pub. He was a selector and was on the panel and a townie was angry because a guard got his place on the team. They went to Johnny Lynn in The Sportsman's Inn in Edgeworthstown.</p> <p>47:10 He was a selector on the county team for a year with Smiler Fay. It was split into north and south then.</p> <p>47:35 There are eight teams in North Longford - like Mullinalaghta, Granard, Abbeylara, Colmcille, Dromard - and eight in south Longford - Slashers, Ballymahon, Carrickedmond.</p> <p>48:30 Volunteers are very important to the GAA and Jody doesn't like the idea of pay-for-play.</p> <p>49:50 The secretary in Longford is paid now.</p> <p>50:10 He got a ticket from Fr Jim Duignan for his first All-Ireland in 1962. Jer O'Shea scored three goals for Kerry against Roscommon. Gerry O'Malley was playing with Roscommon and everyone hoped he would win an All-Ireland.</p> <p>51:05 He went to the 1964 All-Ireland between Kerry and Galway. His friend Barry had a car and they stayed with his sister. They went to the Kingsway and arranged to meet two girls before the game. Barry got a call during the night - his father had died. Galway player John Donnellan's father died the same day.</p> <p>52:30 He goes to the All-Ireland every year. He used to work for Pat the Baker and Pat would say that if Mayo won the All-Ireland he would pay for dinner.</p> <p>53:20 They used to take the bus but then John Macken would drive them. They would go to Birmingham's, and The Snug beside the Mater Hospital. They would eat on the way home in Virginia or Kells.</p> <p>54:20 Local man John Farrell has gone to over 50 All-Irelands.</p> <p>54:40 There was a hurling team in the area in the 1920s.</p> |
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| | <p>55:30 The John Joe O'Reilly tournament had teams from Leitrim, Longford, Cavan and Meath. It was a great tournament to win.</p> <p>56:00 There is an old man in Cornafean who still talks about the 1968 game between Granard and Clonguish. Jody got a bad belt in that game and was taken to hospital. The game finished 2-6 to 2-6 but Granard won the replay 4-10 to 2-5. Terry McGovern used to say 'Rub it into them' after the win.</p> <p>57:25 Rogie Martin is his GAA hero. He was a great man to play with and was very dedicated. He also liked Sean Donnelly of Slashers, Brendan Barden, Jackie Devine and Dessie Barry.</p> <p>58:30 Best memory is Longford winning the League in 1966.</p> <p>58:40 1969 final against Clonguish is the worst memory. They were leading with a few minutes to go and Jody's brother Martin 'Luther' and Rogie both hesitated over a ball and a Clonguish man pounced and set up a goal.</p> <p>01:00:10 Lots of people play rugby and soccer now. There is nobody from Drumlish or Granard on the county team in 2010 which is a worry. The Longford Town soccer team is popular.</p> <p>01:00:40 They are starting people playing football too young and they end up giving it up after minor.</p> <p>01:02:05 Jody loved to play football. He hated to lose.</p> <p>01:02:30 Jimmy Magee is a great character.</p> <p>01:03:00 He met Mick O'Connell at an All-Ireland final and Mick used to call him 'Longford'. He would be Jody's best ever player. Peter Canavan was also really good.</p> <p>01:04:10 He made lots of friends through football and loves the GAA but is worried about people getting paid within the Association.</p> <p>01:04:40 Teachers in schools could do more. Maurice Fitzgibbon was a great teacher who never played football.</p> <p>01:05:10 Ex-players don't get involved and that is a shame.</p> |
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| Involvement in GAA | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steward <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person <input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____ |
| Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played) | Played from 1956 – 1984. He won 3 schoolboys; 3 juveniles; 3 minor championships; 2 Under 21's; 4 senior championships; 3 Leader cups; 6 John Joe Reilly's; 1 National League; 1 O'Byrne Cup; 1 Gaelic Weekly. |
| Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for) | Jody has been involved in administration from 1980 – 2010. He was Minor Club Chairman for 3 terms; Selectors with Schoolboys, Juveniles, Minor, Senior; Secretary of Senior Club; Vice-President of Club. |
| Format | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual |
| Duration | Length of Interview: 01:05:54 |
| Language | English |

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: _____ Arlene Crampsie _____

Date: _____ 12/06/12 _____