

## GAA Oral History Project

## Interview Report Form

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| <b>Name of Interviewer</b>                          | Regina Fitzpatrick  |
| <b>Date of Interview</b>                            | 11 <sup>th</sup> May 2010   |
| <b>Location</b>                                     | Interviewee's home, near Kilkenny City  |
| <b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname) | Tom O'Donoghue  |
| <b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>   |   |
| <b>Gender</b>                                       | Male  |
| <b>Born</b>   | <b>Year Born:</b> 1961<br><b>Home County:</b> Kilkenny  |
| <b>Education</b>                                    | <b>Primary:</b> Kilkenny CBS, Kilkenny City<br><b>Secondary:</b> St Joseph's Mill Hill Fathers, Freshford, Co. Kilkenny |
| <b>Family</b>                                       | <b>Siblings:</b> 4 brothers<br><b>Current Family if Different:</b> Wife, 1 daughter & 2 sons                            |
| <b>Club(s)</b>                                      | Dicksboro GAA [Kilkenny]  |
| <b>Occupation</b>                                   | Hurley-Maker  |
| <b>Parents' Occupation</b>                          | Carpenter/Hurley-Maker [Father]; Housewife [Mother]   |
| <b>Religion</b>                                     | Roman Catholic  |
| <b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>           | N/A   |
| <b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>             | Guild of Irish Ash Hurley-Makers  |

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| <b>Date of Report</b>             | 12 <sup>th</sup> June 2012   |
| <b>Period Covered</b>             | 1922-2010  |
| <b>Counties/Countries Covered</b> | Kilkenny   |
| <b>Key Themes Covered</b>         | Travel, Supporting, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Officials, Administration, Fundraising, Material Culture, Education, Media, Role of Women, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Economy/ Economics  |
| <b>Interview Summary</b>          | <p>Tom talks about his involvement with all things GAA in Kilkenny. There was a strong tradition of hurling in his family, with relations having won All-Ireland titles in their time. Tom stated playing the game at school and went on to play for the Dicksboro club. Although he enjoyed playing the game, his career was cut short when he suffered an eye injury at work. He maintained his involvement with the club, training Dicksboro camogie teams. He also followed in his father's footsteps and got involved in hurley making. Tom talks about the ins and outs of the business, the changes in how hurleys are made over the years, the specific requirements of individual customers and the challenges that traditional hurley makers are likely to face in the future.</p> <p>00:15 Born in 1961 in Kilkenny City and moved to Drakelands at 20 years old.</p> <p>00:45 Grandfather, Paddy, won an All-Ireland senior medal with Kilkenny in 1922 after beating Tipperary.</p> <p>01:10 Mother's brother, Jimmy Coyne, won a junior All-Ireland with Kilkenny.</p> <p>01:20 Son won a minor All-Ireland and an Under-21 All-Ireland with Kilkenny.</p> <p>01:25 Wife's father was chairman of Graigue-Ballycallan hurling club when they won their first senior hurling championship.</p> <p>01:45 Clubs linked with family are Graigue-Ballycallan and Dicksboro - of which his grandfather was a founding member.</p> <p>02:00 Hearing stories about the history of Dicksboro, formed in 1908.</p> |

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|  | <p>03:15 Greyhounds and GAA a big part of family life when he was growing up.</p> <p>03:35 Running greyhounds at different races around the country.</p> <p>03:50 Playing hurling in St Fiachra's place growing up.</p> <p>04:10 Getting involved with Dicksboro.</p> <p>04:40 Going to school in the CBS and playing Tullaroan. One of his opponents wearing wellingtons. Getting injured. Getting treated by teacher Tommy O'Brien.</p> <p>05:50 Enthusiasm for hurling and sharing opinions on the game.</p> <p>06:30 Differing opinions on games and reasons for that.</p> <p>07:50 Differing opinions on who is the best hurler out of Christy Ring, Mick Mackey, Lory Meagher and DJ Carey.</p> <p>08:15 New stars like Henry Shefflin and Joe Canning emerging.</p> <p>08:35 Talking about the Kilkenny team in the household growing up. Questioning selectors' decisions.</p> <p>09:10 Hurlers and club members calling in to talk about the game.</p> <p>09:40 Playing with Kilkenny CBS and St Patrick's parish. Missing out on playing in the Féile na nÓg. Winning titles.</p> <p>10:25 Playing minor, Under-21 and intermediate with Dicksboro and losing finals.</p> <p>10:45 Losing the sight in his left eye and retiring from playing the game.</p> <p>11:15 Getting into making hurleys for a living.</p> <p>11:35 Becoming a selector with Dicksboro.</p> <p>11:45 Training the camogie team and winning titles.</p> <p>12:15 Running street leagues with Dicksboro.</p> |
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**REFERENCE NO. KK/1/16**

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|  | <p>13:00 Type of club that Dicksboro is. Developing young players and reaping the rewards of that.</p> <p>14:10 Facilities they have.</p> <p>14:25 Mooncoin developing their facilities.</p> <p>14:55 Changing role of women in the GAA. Anna Walton treasurer of Dicksboro fundraising committee and work that she did in the late 1970s/early 1980s. What they did to raise funds.</p> <p>16:25 Women's involvement at the top levels of the GAA.</p> <p>17:00 Changes he has seen in his time involved with Dicksboro.</p> <p>19:15 Difficulty of being a manager of a team and why. Questioning refereeing decisions.</p> <p>21:55 Opinion on paying referees. Differing interpretation of rules by referees.</p> <p>23:00 Role within the GAA that he has enjoyed the most.</p> <p>23:20 Dicksboro and winning an All-Ireland and the satisfaction that brought.</p> <p>24:35 Camogie involvement. Difficulties he faced at the beginning.</p> <p>25:50 Relationship between the Camogie Association and the GAA.</p> <p>27:15 Benefits of holding the Under-21 hurling All-Ireland final and the camogie senior All-Ireland final on the same day.</p> <p>27:55 Difference between working with hurling teams and working with camogie teams.</p> <p>28:55 Hurley-making in his family. Dowlings and Mick Neary also making hurleys.</p> <p>29:30 Father repairing hurleys for Dicksboro in the 1960s and Tom following in his footsteps.</p> <p>30:40 Starting out as a carpenter.</p> |
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|  | <p>31:00 Learning how to make hurleys.</p> <p>33:35 Differences in how he and his father would make hurleys. Improved equipment available to him.</p> <p>35:05 Where he gets his ash from. Working with Coillte and suppliers like Ger O'Connor.</p> <p>35:55 Where his father got his ash from.</p> <p>36:40 Age that ash should be in order to make a good hurley with it.</p> <p>37:05 Benefits of Irish ash. Ash from England and Wales.</p> <p>37:45 Number of hurleys that come from one ash tree.</p> <p>38:55 Being able to spot a good tree.</p> <p>39:20 Father telling stories about knocking ash. Putting their bicycles on a lorry when they set off. Getting the ash split in Kilkenny.</p> <p>40:25 How far the tradition goes back in his family. Grandfather stitching hurling balls. Hurley making on his mother's side.</p> <p>40:55 Watching his grandfather stitching hurling balls. How he learned to do that.</p> <p>41:55 Superstitions in the business.</p> <p>43:00 Fluctuation in ash supply over the years. Going to Costellos for his supply.</p> <p>43:40 Suppliers getting ash from abroad.</p> <p>44:20 What he does after he collects his supply of ash.</p> <p>46:05 Getting the balance and spring of a hurley right.</p> <p>47:30 Inspecting a hurley to make sure it's right.</p> <p>48:05 What he likes in a hurley. Differing tastes among people.</p> <p>48:35 People that come in looking for hurleys and the</p> |
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|  | <p>requests that they make.</p> <p>50:25 Making hurleys for inter-county players.</p> <p>51:05 Difference in camogie hurleys.</p> <p>51:35 Increase in popularity of hurling and reasons for that. Young people looking up to their heroes in the game.</p> <p>53:25 Increased popularity of rugby through the Heineken Cup.</p> <p>54:20 Different grades for the 'weaker' hurling counties which help maintain the popularity of the sport.</p> <p>55:00 Kilkenny's poor performance on football. His opinion of football.</p> <p>55:30 Effect of increased popularity of hurling on the hurley-making industry. Increased competition.</p> <p>56:40 Idea of hurley making being in the blood.</p> <p>57:05 Changes in shape of a hurley.</p> <p>57:45 Style of hurleys in Kilkenny.</p> <p>58:45 People copying styles favoured by stars of the game.</p> <p>01:00:15 What makes a good hurley maker.</p> <p>01:01:05 Difference between a handmade and a machine-made hurley.</p> <p>01:02:40 Specific requests of customers.</p> <p>01:03:10 How they developed hurley-making machines.</p> <p>01:03:50 His son's involvement in hurley making.</p> <p>01:05:15 Guild of hurley makers in Ireland. Brian Dowling chairman.</p> <p>01:05:45 Carbon fibre hurleys coming in.</p> <p>01:06:35 Mending hurleys.</p> <p>01:07:35 Selling hurleys online.</p> |
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|   | <p>01:08:10 How word about his business spreads.</p> <p>01:09:05 Seeing players using his hurleys and how that feels.</p> <p>01:09:55 Recognising his hurleys on the field of play during a game.</p> <p>01:10:40 Players' superstitions about their hurleys.</p> <p>01:11:20 Future for traditional hurley makers. Impact of recession.</p> <p>01:12:20 Enjoying what he does.</p> <p>01:12:55 Kilkenny's prospects of completing a five-in-a-row of hurling All-Irelands in 2010.</p>   |
| <b>Involvement in GAA</b>   | <p><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</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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____</p> |
| <b>Record as a Player</b><br>(Titles won; Length of time played)    | Played hurling until he was 20 years old  |
| <b>Record as an Administrator</b><br>(Positions held; how long for) | Chairperson of Dicksboro Juvenile Hurling Club; Chairman of Dicksboro Camogie Club; member of various Dicksboro Committees.   |
| <b>Format</b>   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual   |
| <b>Duration</b>   | Length of Interview: 01:13:43   |
| <b>Language</b>   | English   |

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**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: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 12<sup>th</sup> June 2012