

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	26 th Aug 2010
Location	Interviewee's home near Shraduff, Clonaslee, Co. Laois
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Paddy Bates
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1942 Home County: Laois
Education	Primary: Clonaslee Boys School, Co. Laois Secondary: Patrician College, Ballyfin, Co. Laois. Third Level: St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin; University College Galway
Family	Siblings: 2 brothers and 2 sisters Current Family if Different: Wife (Eileen), 2 sons and 2 daughters
Club(s)	Clonaslee GAA; Kilcavan Football Club [Laois] Dóchas Éireann, St Patrick's College GAA [Dublin]
Occupation	National School Teacher [Retired]
Parents' Occupation	National School Teachers
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	INTO; CESI (Computer Education Society of Ireland); Teachers Centre Association; Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann; Mental Handicap Association; NCCA

REFERENCE NO. LS/1/13

Date of Report	31 st May 2012
Period Covered	1890-2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Laois
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Coaching, Administration, Celebrations, Education, Media, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Irish Language, Culture, Scór, All-Ireland, Club History, Irish History, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, The Troubles, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds
Interview Summary	<p>Paddy reflects on his career playing hurling for Clonaslee/St. Manman's Club and for Laois. He recalls his father's involvement in the GAA locally. He explains how he used his position as national school teacher and principal to promote hurling among local children. He describes the challenges of training hurling teams and also the administration involved in running the club. He discusses his pride in the GAA and the Irish language, the role of the GAA in community life, and the role of women in the organisation.</p> <p>00:19 Discusses his involvement in hurling for most of his life in Clonaslee. Describes local history of hurling. Clonaslee joined the GAA the year after it was founded. The club won the first Laois senior title in 1890.</p> <p>01:04 Recalls how in 1949, when Laois were beaten by Tipperary in the All-Ireland Senior Hurling Final, his father bought a car to go to the match. No electricity in Clonaslee at the time. Many locals came to their house to listen to the match. Standing for the national anthem.</p> <p>01:50 Describes visiting a man who had played hurling for Laois in 1909 when they were in the Croke Cup final, which Laois won. Mentions Clonaslee players on that team: John Troy, Tom Blake. This man walked to the match and back.</p> <p>03:00 Describes hurling on the road and on the village green. Recounts specific incident of being chased off the green by an old man on the anniversary of Bloody Sunday in Croke Park. Tradition of not playing games on Bloody Sunday in the late 1940s, early 50s.</p> <p>04:08 Recalls being an altar boy in the 50s. Brought to matches on Sundays by priest, Father Doyle, who had been chairman of the local hurling club in the 30s. Recalls running onto the field in county matches at half time to retrieve broken</p>

	<p>half-hurl. Using a board at school for a hurl.</p> <p>05:21 Explains how his father came to Clonaslee to teach in 1926. Very involved with local hurling club. Won championships in 1933 and 1936. One of the founders of Laois Juvenile Board, the first juvenile GAA board in the country. Reactions to the formation of such boards. Mentions Sean Barrett, also a teacher, involved in setting up the board.. Recalls buses going from Clonaslee to finals.</p> <p>07:37 Explains that hurling was originally the only sport in Clonaslee. His father started the juvenile football team. Recounts the amalgamation of St Manmans with Clonaslee. The progress of the football team. The hurling club starting in 1887, the first Laois GAA convention.</p> <p>09:46 Mentions local landlords, the Dunnes. Recounts stories of the origins of various branches of the Dunne families. Describes Brittas Castle being burned down in 1942. The Dunnes provided fields for hurling. Describes the smell of leather, cow dung, and grass that he associates with hurling. Recalls field in Cuan an Buachlainn where a tournament match was played.</p> <p>13:25 Discusses how his father came from The Heath in Laois, where football was the main sport. Recalls his father using a hairgrip to thread footballs. Describes his father's enthusiasm for encouraging hurling. His own pride when Laois won the senior championship in 1975 and 10 of the team were his past pupils.</p> <p>16:34 Emphasises the value of fostering an interest in hurling among young people. The importance of carrying on the tradition of hurling, football, handball. The benefits of involvement in sport: discipline, friendship, the ability to lose well.</p> <p>18:11 Recalls playing for Laois, taking frees. Recounts playing a Division 2 league match in Croke Park, aged 17. Mentions Christy O'Brien, who played for Leinster. His first time playing in Croke Park,, being mistaken for O'Brien with his helmet on. Playing tournament matches against Freshford from Castlecomer and Erin's Own from Wexford. Travelling for matches, playing Maynooth, UCD, Glen Rovers in the early 70s. Mentions Moling Morrissey, who played for Carlow, and then played for them.</p> <p>22:14 Describes being only 8 when he played for Under-14s. Explains how scarcity of boys in rural areas gave everyone the opportunity to play for their club. Reaching county finals in</p>
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	<p>that age group. Winning county championships at junior intermediate and senior levels.</p> <p>24:53 Ponders his preference for wearing the club jersey over the county jersey. His pride in his club.</p> <p>26:01 Discusses playing junior and intermediate the same year because of scarcity of players. Mentions playing in The Racecourse in the Dunne estate. Also mentions Caseys' field, Mathews's field, and Murrays' field. Father Keogh's involvement in getting Clonaslee its own field.</p> <p>27:16 Describes Clonaslee's strength over the years. Population of 1200 produced two adult teams and underage teams. Clonaslee's strength today.</p> <p>28:51 Mentions blacksmith and historian Ollie Hyland, secretary of the club for years. Recalls being told after mass the details of the match they were to play that day. Mentions Father Ryan, who won a college medal with St Kieran's in his time. Also Father Doyle, who drove them to matches, and Harry Gray who played for Laois. Listening to Michael O'Hehir.</p> <p>32:33 Recounts story of Laois being beaten in the 1934 All-Ireland Minor Hurling Final by Tipperary. Contentious decision by the referee to play additional time. Mentions Billy O'Neill. Also Seamus O'Riain of Tipperary, former president of the GAA.</p> <p>33:30 Discusses the role of the GAA in the community. Explains how members of the hurling club were involved in every other aspect of parish life; for example, building a curate's house in Clonaslee in the 1950s. The value of volunteering and cooperation. Role of the GAA in parish funerals.</p> <p>36:28 Reflects on the lack of priests helping with juvenile teams nowadays. Involvements of primary teachers and gardai in the GAA. Discusses the Féiles, the Laois-Offaly Féile in 1987 he was involved in, organising drivers. Mentions John Dowling, president of the GAA then; Micheál Ó'Muircheartaigh, Mick Dunne of Clonaslee. Also Pat Carlan, local secretary of GAA, and his wife. His faith in the amount of work the young generation is doing.</p> <p>41:31 Ponders the lack of media focus on GAA events in comparison to coverage of soccer. The lack of coverage about the 2009 Laois-Offaly Féile.</p> <p>43:20 Describes how participation in hurling and football</p>
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	<p>made his school life in Ballyfin College easier. Winning a Leinster junior championship. Mentions Sean Buckley, later captain of Kilkenny, who hurls in Ballyfin. Buses to matches in such schools as St Kieran's College, St. Peter's, St. Joseph's in Marino. Mentions Des Foley who played for St. Joseph's then.</p> <p>45:44 Recalls going to St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra. Senior hurling team there. Recalls playing against Lar Foley and Des Foley. Playing UCD. League system in Dublin. Playing Faughs, against fellow Laois players. Explains that he also played for Clonaslee. Recounts playing a match in Portrane during a bus strike and walking 10 miles each way. Also played basketball in St. Pat's. Also played for Laois at the time. Mentions Bill Flynn, Mick Fitzgerald, Ger Blake. Few championship matches at the time and no leagues for clubs so clubs participated in tournaments in the 1960s. Mentions Martin Coogan of Kilkenny he played against in Durrow.</p> <p>50:37 Describes dances after the tournaments. Big crowds at matches compared to nowadays.</p> <p>51:36 Recalls his father's death when he was in St. Pat's and his return home to teach in Clonaslee. Principal teacher aged 20. His interest in history.</p> <p>53:32 Discusses teaching P.E. using hurling skills. Showed explorer Tim Severin the pupils in Coolderry hurling.</p> <p>57:18 Reflects on the changes in teaching, with more rules nowadays. Compares the freedom in primary schools to the restrictions of secondary school.</p> <p>01:00:23 Discusses his views on the lack of departmental interest and funding in sports. High pupil-teacher ratio.</p> <p>01:03:49 Describes the role of the GAA in school identity. Explains how Coolderry National School was defined by hurling. His son playing for Laois in a senior Leinster semi-final. Good sportsmanship of GAA supporters. Johnny Pilkington and his son being good friends despite playing against each other.</p> <p>01:08:27 Describes the challenges of working with juvenile teams: getting enough cars to bring to matches, few cars years ago. Builders bringing whole teams in pick-up trucks. Toggling out beside a ditch. Old people talking about going on dreys, horse-drawn carriages, to matches.</p> <p>01:10:53 Mentions coaching under-12s, under-14, under-16s, and the senior team who won the championship in 1975,</p>
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	<p>helped by Tom Neville. Recalls the celebrations afterwards: bonfire on the green, bringing the cup around to pubs. Playing Leinster championship soon afterwards. His sons also playing for Laois. Mentions inspector Jackie MacNamara who hurled in St Pat's and in Africa.</p> <p>01:15:07 Describes organising coaching courses in Laois on how to coach juveniles. His approach to coaching: emphasis on ground hurling, hitting the ball overhead, hurling both sides, hurling in lines. His belief that there's too much focus on fitness and muscle building in sport today at the expense of skills.</p> <p>01:18:12 Recalls his duties as secretary for the club. Mentions player Mickey O'Connor from Cork. His stint as chairman of the club at a time when the amount of administration involved increased. Mentions Paddy Grace of Kilkenny. Also mentions people who volunteered their time to talk to Laois clubs: Seamus O'Riain, Kevin Heffernan, Tom Neville, Tony Doran, DJ Carey, and Brian Cody. Also mentions Mick Dunne, a past pupil of his father.</p> <p>01:26:04 Mentions Pat Carl, Pat O'Connor, who won All-Irelands and worked the next day. Working the day after winning the county final himself.</p> <p>01:26:51 Discusses the challenges he faced when he ran the club. Trying to get the field developed. Getting a full team for matches. Mentions Seamus O'Riain's efforts to get clubs to own their own grounds. Difficulty of donating parish fields to clubs. Recounts the history of the development of Croke Park, formerly Butterley's Amusement Park, bought by Frank Dineen for £500, treasurer of the GAA at the time.</p> <p>01:30:14 Describes the development of camogie in Clonaslee. Two primary schools playing both camogie and hurling. Juvenile and adult camogie. His daughter played camogie for Trinity College Dublin.</p> <p>01:31:52 Outlines the role of women in the GAA. Traditionally making sandwiches. Mentions a female chairman of Clonaslee in the 1970s, while he was secretary, Mrs O'Keeffe. Increased involvement of women in camogie.</p> <p>01:33:55 Recounts Mrs O'Keeffe's time as club chairman. Buying ice cream for the team after a match. The club's efforts to get more women involved. Women's participation at county board level.</p> <p>01:35:27 Describes the Scór element. Mentions Gerry</p>
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	<p>Russell, match commentator on Radio 3. Recalls toggling out in Maureen Potter's dressing room. Mentions Marty Corcoran and Liam Conroy. Explains how Scór was viewed by some as an inconvenience. Recalls playing the accordion in the Gaiety Theatre in Dublin.</p> <p>01:38:08 Explains how participation in Scór contributes to Gaelic culture.</p> <p>01:40:15 Reflects on the difficulty of teaching Irish in schools with inadequate external support. The need for Irish to be used outside of schools. His views on the need to revive hurling as well as Irish in Gaeltacht areas.</p> <p>01:45:47 Discusses the role of the GAA in his own Irish identity. Irish people speaking Irish abroad.</p> <p>01:48:00 Describes the lack of Irish used in the club when he was secretary. The priority of looking after practical club tasks, with no time to think about Irish or music.</p> <p>01:49:15 Mentions James Young who went to New York to the All-Stars. Irish name on his passport. Too much emphasis on writing Irish.</p> <p>01:52:14 Discusses the importance of the GAA in his Irish identity. Bringing his English son-in-law to a match in Croke Park, the son-in-law's response. Comparison between playing on English soccer teams for money and GAA teams for pride.</p> <p>01:55:25 Pride in the Laois jersey</p> <p>01:57:51 Ponders the future of hurling in Laois. The lack of medals won by the county, despite having good teams. His son playing on the Laois team that beat Kilkenny and won the Walsh Cup. The amount of lads playing hurling in Laois.</p> <p>01:59:15 Describes getting the most satisfaction out of playing hurling with his club and county. The most important thing he has done is training the children in school. Mentions Nicholas English, Tony Doran who also gave back.</p> <p>02:00:44 Reflects on how the GAA has disappointed him occasionally, as the Catholic Church has disappointed him. His pride in the history of the GAA. His specific disappointment in a referee's decision during a Laois versus Kilkenny game which his son was playing in.</p> <p>02:04:10 Discusses his respect for Sean Dowling, who played hurling for Tullamore. Also Seamus Ó Riain. Pádraic Flynn, Sean O'Siochain, Maurice Prenderville.</p>
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REFERENCE NO. LS/1/13

	<p>02:06:03 Describes the way small clubs got their own fields as the most important change he's seen in his time. The uniqueness of this to Ireland.</p> <p>02:07:46 Reflects on the way family life combined with his hurling life. The whole family going to matches. Family being his priority. His pride when his sons played hurling for Laois and Leinster. Mentions Brian Carl, Kevin Brady, Ger Brady.</p> <p>02:10:32 Discusses his interest in music, drama. His father's interest in football until he came to Clonaslee and his switch to hurling. His father's role as club secretary. Mentions a brother of his mother who played for Laois in the 1932 All-Ireland Minor Football Final.</p> <p>02:13:27 Discusses what hurling and the GAA mean to him.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): Club website administrator</p>
<p>Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p>Played hurling and football from age 3 – 43 years with Kilcavan, Clonaslee, Mountmellick, Patrician College, Ballyfin, St. Patrick's Drumcondra.</p> <p>Played Intermediate (1969-62), Senior (1975) and Junior (1968) Hurling with North Laois. Played hurling with Laois.</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Secretary and Chairman of Clonaslee GAA. Currently website administration for Clonaslee GAA.</p> <p>Chairman of club development committee on Laois County Board</p> <p>Chairman of Laois Féile na nGael</p>
<p>Format</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Length of Interview: 02:15:04</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: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 30th May 2012