

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Arlene Crampsie
Date of Interview	10 th March 2010
Location	Longford Arms Hotel, Longford, Co. Longford
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Marie Matthews
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Female
Born	Year Born: 1962 Home County: Cavan
Education	Primary: Clonoose NS, Ballmachugh Secondary: Cnoc Mhuire, Granard
Family	Siblings: 3 brothers Current Family if Different: Married with 1 daughter and 2 sons
Club(s)	St Columba's Mullinalaghta [Longford]; Ballymachugh [Cavan]
Occupation	Housewife
Parents' Occupation	Farmer [Father]; Postmistress [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Fine Gael
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

REFERENCE NO. CN/1/5

Date of Report	24 th May 2012
Period Covered	1960s – 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Cavan
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Education, Media, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Rivalries, Scór, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Challenges, Sacrifices, Politics, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds
Interview Summary	<p>Marie talks about her involvement with the GAA in Longford, and with her own club Ballymachugh. She talks about playing in her youth when Cavan were prominent on the national stage and other teams would come to play them and would be hosted by different families in the community. Marie helped establish a Mullinalaghta club and encountered many difficulties - from not knowing exactly what to do, to struggling to find enough people to take part, to being denied access to local pitches. She also had to fight her corner in order to get grants which would cover expenses. There was a lot of administrative work to be done and that meant travelling long distances to attend provincial and national council meetings. As she goes about her efforts Marie is constantly reminded of the disparity between how the men's and ladies games are treated, but still she commits herself because she is passionate about the GAA. She also offers her opinions on the prospect of professionalism, which she feels goes against the grain of everything that the Association stands for.</p> <p>00:20 Earliest memory is going to a county final in Breffni Park at the age of 7 or 8.</p> <p>01:05 Home club is Ballymachugh and she was also involved with Mullahoran.</p> <p>01:35 The ladies team in Ballymachugh goes back to the 1970s when Cavan were doing well nationally.</p> <p>01:45 Mullahoran amalgamated for the senior championship;</p>

	<p>they won an All-Ireland Club Championship.</p> <p>02:30 Recalls hosting Kerry teams who were up for the weekends.</p> <p>03:10 They travelled by cars to games and sometimes rented buses.</p> <p>03:25 When she was married she lived in Longford but still followed Cavan.</p> <p>03:50 Going to Clones was the highlight of the year.</p> <p>04:15 Kerry and Cavan used to have huge clashes and she enjoyed those games.</p> <p>04:30 Games were played on club pitches.</p> <p>04:45 Tom Dowd was Cavan and Ulster chairman at the time and he would ask them to put visiting teams up. He was involved with the Crosserlough Team.</p> <p>05:25 She started a club in Mullinalaghta in 1998 and had no clue how to go about it.</p> <p>05:45 They started with a junior team and then got underage teams going and have enjoyed success.</p> <p>06:20 In 1984 Mullinalaghta and Abbeylara came together and the girls' sides soon followed suit.</p> <p>07:05 In 1998 Martin Reilly was involved in ladies football and he helped them out regarding procedures for setting up a club.</p> <p>08:30 They had no money but the men helped them a lot.</p> <p>09:00 Her husband got involved in training teams as did another footballer and the chairperson.</p> <p>09:45 A ladies dressing room was built and they were very happy with that.</p> <p>10:25 When playing her main rivals were Ballyhaise.</p> <p>10:30 They won two junior championships and although they were in a large parish, their numbers were small.</p>
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	<p>11:25 They had some trouble in the past - 30 years ago - being allowed to play on the men's pitch so they had to play in Westmeath.</p> <p>12:10 Camogie players were allowed play on the pitch back then; it was much stronger.</p> <p>13:35 The team in Cavan was very strong and made up of a few clubs.</p> <p>14:25 There was a girl from Longford who came to play with them and she ended up winning medals.</p> <p>14:55 Before her club was set up Rathcline and Ballymore were prominent. Killoe and Clonguish are starting to grow.</p> <p>15:15 The club and county team has changed a lot. When Longford won the All-Ireland in 1997 most of their players came from Rathcline, Drumlish and Ballymore</p> <p>15:40 They lost to Tyrone in 1996.</p> <p>16:10 There is politics within the Ladies' Association -it's all about who you know.</p> <p>16:40 They have a good relationship with the men and pitches are always made available to them.</p> <p>17:50 All of their county finals are played in Pearse Park, from Under-12s up.</p> <p>18:50 Ladies football is more skilful and faster than men's but they don't get enough support.</p> <p>20:15 Compulsory buying of tickets for big games is important so that people show up on All-Ireland final day.</p> <p>21:40 It took a lot of work to get the underage structures going on their own.</p> <p>22:45 They went around to schools looking for players and if they won trophies they would visit schools.</p> <p>23:45 The kinds enjoyed playing when they got involved.</p> <p>25:00 Marie was secretary of her club from 1998 to 2008 and also registrar. With the county she was registrar from 1999 to</p>
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	<p>2000 and secretary from 2000 to 2008.</p> <p>25:40 Being secretary is quite demanding.</p> <p>27:05 Any problems that they had they never brought outside the county.</p> <p>27:30 Problems can arise over fixtures.</p> <p>28:45 If Longford get to the latter stages of the All-Ireland series then it affects fixtures and there are delays.</p> <p>30:40 She used to make sandwiches before games with another lady, wash jerseys, collect at the gates.</p> <p>32:55 The jerseys are sent to a dry cleaners now.</p> <p>32:30 She would go to meetings in Carlow and Portlaoise for provincial and national council meetings and might get home very late.</p> <p>34:05 Their biggest fundraiser is a church gate collection.</p> <p>34:40 Marie had an idea that each club pay to enter competitions.</p> <p>36:30 Their county sponsors are Kiernan Construction Company, Under-14s is Luigi's, minors is Reilly's Kitchens and Under-16s is Rhyne Rock.</p> <p>37:05 There are a lot of expenses at county level - transport, physios, presentations to player.</p> <p>38:00 When the ladies do well they have celebrations in the local hall. Sometimes they have a dinner dance or a disco for underage players.</p> <p>39:30 The men don't support women's functions as much as the women support the men.</p> <p>40:00 There would be homecoming celebrations if they do well at national level, often a champagne celebration.</p> <p>40:40 There are 12 clubs in Longford and ten of them have adult teams.</p> <p>41:10 They have tried to get more clubs established but often</p>
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	<p>it takes two parishes to make one team.</p> <p>41:30 Soccer is also popular with people.</p> <p>42:15 There are many schools in rural areas that don't cater for girls in terms of coaching.</p> <p>43:00 There are 25-30 schools in Longford but they can't reach all the girls.</p> <p>43:20 Some of the senior players are teachers.</p> <p>43:30 They have had trouble getting grants to help ladies football grow.</p> <p>44:40 Things are difficult at provincial and national level because the funding is not available to help develop structures.</p> <p>45:10 Marie thinks it would be a good idea in theory if ladies football went fully under the GAA umbrella but feels that money would remain a big problem.</p> <p>46:00 She has a daughter that plays GAA and a son that plays GAA and there is a huge difference in what benefits are available to each.</p> <p>46:30 There is also a disparity when it comes to scholarships.</p> <p>47:30 She doesn't believe in pay-for-play.</p> <p>49:20 Scór is strong in Longford and they have All-Ireland titles because traditional music is strong.</p> <p>49:25 Every club entered Scór in 2009 as it was the 125th anniversary of the Association.</p> <p>50:00 Dromard had a men's club and a women's club entered, and they combined the two associations in Scór.</p> <p>50:30 Marie trained underage in Scór and competed in singing competitions.</p> <p>51:00 Marie sees Scór continuing to develop in the future because traditional music is strong and because it's a family thing.</p> <p>51:45 Ladies football is getting more coverage in the media -</p>
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	<p>Shannonside radio is good to them, as are the newspapers.</p> <p>52:30 Marie finds the Internet far better.</p> <p>53:15 TG4 has made a difference, but the Irish language can be a barrier for people.</p> <p>54:20 The Underdogs on TG4 did great things and it was entertaining too.</p> <p>55:00 Marie would like a higher profile for ladies ' football and to have the use of the better pitches.</p> <p>55:20 Better support is needed and more coaching at schools level.</p> <p>55:50 Longford County Board has a good relationship with the GAA in Dublin.</p> <p>57:30 She has great admiration for Geraldine Giles and Nicky White. They both do huge work with the Association, Geraldine in Westmeath and Nicky in Wexford.</p> <p>58:20 Tom Ryan in Kildare does a lot of work too.</p> <p>58:45 Best memory is seeing her daughter wear a county jersey.</p> <p>59:35 She has sacrificed a lot for the GAA and it has brought much stress, but she enjoys it and she wouldn't do it if she didn't.</p> <p>01:00:35 Biggest disappointment is Longford losing to Clare in 2008 in the All-Ireland semi-final.</p> <p>01:00:45 Being involved in the GAA gives her something to call her own and that is important.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</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>Record as a Player (Titles won; Length</p>	<p>Marie played for four years at club level.</p>

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of time played)	
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	Club: Secretary (1997 – 2008); Registrar (1999 – 2000) County: Secretary (2000 – 2008); Registrar (2009+)
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 01:01:17
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: Arlene Crampsie

Date: 24/05/12