

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Arlene Crampsie
Date of Interview	20 th Nov 2008
Location	Interviewee's Home, Belfast
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Seán McGettigan [John McGettigan]
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1916 Home County: Armagh
Education	Primary: St. Patrick's, Armagh Secondary: Christian Brother Armagh
Family	Siblings: 1 brother & 1 sister Current Family if Different: Was married to Lily, 3 daughters and 2 sons
Club	O'Donovan Rossa, Belfast
Occupation	Freelance Journalist, Worked with Insurance
Parents' Occupation	Bread Server, Seller [Father]; Houswife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A

REFERENCE NO. AR/1/1

Date of Report	6 th Nov 2009
Period Covered	1912 – 2008
Counties/Countries Covered	Antrim, Armagh, Tyrone, Dublin
Key Themes Covered	County History, Earliest Memories, Playing, Family Involvement, Administration, Grounds, Purchase of Grounds, Travel, All-Ireland, Facilities, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Celebrations, Northern Ireland, The Troubles, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Education, Religion, Role of Women, Irish Language, Culture, Scór, Impact on Life, Opening of Croke Park, Career, Alcohol
Interview Summary	<p>Seán's proper name is John, but he's been called Seán in GAA circles all his life. He was born in Armagh and played county football for Armagh at an early stage. He and his family then moved to Belfast where he joined O'Donovan Rossa football club and began to play inter-county with Antrim. Seán was the person who suggested the reconstruction of Corrigan Park and he was involved in the Corrigan Park Reconstruction Committee from its establishment. It was the work of this committee which led to the purchase and construction of Casement Park. Seán organised the first dinner O'Donovan Rossa club had and was heavily involved in the organisation of events from then on. He helped organise Indoor and Outdoor Weeks to raise funds and he thought up the idea of the Jockey Pools. He was instrumental in bringing Fr O'Flanagan from Boystown to Belfast. Seán was involved in Scór from its establishment in Antrim in 1970 up until a few years ago. He still sends match results to local papers. In addition to outlining the above events, Seán's provides detailed descriptions of Croke Park from the 1930s, travelling to matches, local grounds and facilities, the opening ceremony for Casement Park, the GAA during World War Two and during the Troubles.</p> <p>0.00 Introduction</p> <p>0.15 There was always GAA at school, but there was no primary school or juvenile competitions. There were secondary school competitions and he played with the CBS in Armagh, hurling and football, he was a bad hurler. He also played football with St Patrick's College.</p> <p>0.45 In 1934 they divided the MacRory Cup between themselves and Monaghan.</p> <p>1.00 He gained an inter-provincial and played in Dublin in</p>

	<p>Croke Park in 1935. Croke Park was very different from today 'round the pitch there was a wooden fence, there was first of all the Hogan Stand and the Long Stand and where the Cusack Stand is now, or that side of the field, it was just a bank.' The Hogan Stand held about 800.</p> <p>1.55 He left Armagh and came to Belfast to work and got involved with the O'Donovan Rossa football club through his father who knew Paddy Mulholland – a big shot in it.</p> <p>2.20 He became treasurer around 1940. 'You collected threepence a week off them, to make the thing go, and you ran the club on round about 18 quid a year and a set of jerseys cost £6 then, they were knitted by nuns in Dublin and they cost £6.'</p> <p>2.57 We won the championship in 1944. He organised the first dinner the club ran for a victory in the Imperial Cinema in 1945. There were no ladies or drink at it and it cost £5. It was over at 11 o'clock. It was a Sunday night, the trams were off and they walked up the road after it.</p> <p>3.40 In 1943 Antrim got into the All-Ireland Senior Hurling Championship. Through the influence of Paddy MacNamee, President, they got into the senior. First two matches were in Belfast – the quarter final against Galway, then Kilkenny. They beat them and got into the final with Cork on the 1st Sept.</p> <p>4.35 They thought we could win, but 'before we realised they were down the drain.'</p> <p>5.20 Seán was with a man who made movies that day. At that time under the Railway End there was a cement toilet with a flat roof so they climbed up there and he filmed for 15 minutes and then left.</p> <p>5.40 He and others thought there was something radically wrong with them doing so poorly. They put it down to Corrigan Park. The other two games had been played in Corrigan Park, but it was a bumpy place – full of holes. They decided that the flat Croke Park was too fast for them.</p> <p>6.18 Seán proposed at the County Convention in 1944 that they reconstruct Corrigan Park. Seán was playing for County Antrim at that time. His last game was against Cavan in 1945. They set up a committee, the first secretary was a fellow from Dublin called Dessie Quinlan. He left after a year or two and Seán was made chairman.</p> <p>7.25 They raised money through various things, running</p>
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bazaars and an outdoor week. John Coburn, a veteran who played for Antrim in 1912, was made treasurer of the committee. They started off running 'Indoor Weeks' – bazaars in St. Mary's. They organised stalls and got people to run them and got all the goods on them for nothing and they usually made about £1,800. 'It was some money in 1945'. They continued until 1952 / 1953.

8.50 Along with that they organised 'Outdoor Weeks' football and hurling, camogie and boxing tournaments in Corrigan Park. In those weeks they raised £2,400. They had Kerry up in 1946 and beat them, but Kerry beat them in the All-Ireland semi-finals.

9.25 'The Vintners (that's the Belfast Publicans) they came behind us and they collected over a £1000 for us so that gave us a good start. And the first donation apparently, according to John Coburn, the treasurer came from a blind man, he gave ten shillings.'

9.55 They kept organising events twice a year and the clubs organised collections around the door. Some clubs collected £14 some £20 and some £6 / £7.

10.25 During those years there was a committee called the Young Philanthropists and they collected money for the Belfast Mater Hospital and they got up about £90,000 a year. During those years, they ran a pool on soccer, but there was no soccer and Seán noticed the breach and set up the 'jockey pool'. 'You sold tickets to people for a shilling a week and you gave them a code A, B, C, D'. The number of letters ran to about 22 and when you coded them together you got about 200,000 combinations.

11.55 'We got collectors who collected the money from the various clients at a shilling a time and the collectors got 25% of whatever they collected and the first year that we ran this we made £9,000, which was quite good, the following years we collected £25,000 and it ended up anyway that we made about £120,000 on the pool and that paid for the development of what is now known as Casement Park.'

12.40 The story of Casement Park is simple. They decided that they'd have to move out of Corrigan Park, because the entrances were very bad and there were only two.

They looked for new ground and one day walking up the Falls Road they passed a hedge, with a sharp drop behind and in the centre a bit of flat ground. They put it to the committee and got an architect, Danny McGrandle (McRandle) to look at

	<p>it.</p> <p>13.50 'You wouldn't believe it, that from the road to the ground just as they passed the hedge there was a twenty foot drop – it didn't look good.' They decided to buy it and they paid £5,000 plus £160 in ground rent which they paid off later.</p> <p>14.25 They had enough money to start off with. 'We were lucky ... well we weren't lucky – it was the time after the Blitz, that was when Belfast was destroyed by the Germans and there was a lot of filling to be had and the Corporation were only too keen to get a place to put the fill so they filled the banks, made the banks round Casement Park and the banks are the same to day as they were whenever they put them in.'</p> <p>15.10 The Stand: 'There was aeroplane hangars or sea plane hangars outside Enniskillen and they were owned by the Americans and they were put up for sale and the Eastwoods, who were contractors, they decided that we should buy these and that we'd make a stand and the steel in the Casement Park standing at the present time, came from the American Hangars, we bought them for about 4,000 or so.'</p> <p>15.50 Lists people on the committee that was set up in 1944: Davey Ray, Gerry Smith, Paddy Connolly, Cornie Ennis, Gussie Eastwood, Dessie Quinlan.</p> <p>16.40 Quinlan left and went to Dublin and Eastwood took over as secretary and Ennis took over as secretary from Eastwood.</p> <p>17.00 Ennis was a Trojan worker 'he was here, there and everywhere'. He was a small house contractor. Seán believes he should be remembered by future generations.</p> <p>17.45 The pools were given out in books of 20,40, 50, 100 whatever a person wanted. They collected a shilling a week. 25% for the collectors wasn't too bad. They set up a pools room to run these things with a manager called Pat Kilfeather and they had girls employed producing the books and the codes. The money and books would be collected on a Saturday morning and Ennis would take it to the bank. Then they waited for results of Jockeys. They got 6 points for the winning jockey, 2 points for 2nd and 1 point for 3rd. You had a code of A, B, C, D that corresponded to jockeys. The code was the four highest jockey's points. They had ledgers of the possible codes and they'd take the winning code to the ledger, and see what person had bought the book with the correct code. 'It was a wonderful success'.</p>
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21.30 He stopped playing for Antrim that year, he stopped and they won the Ulster Football Championship that year (1946). He decided to stay on as chairman of the Corrigan Park Reconstruction Committee (CPR) and left football.

22.00 In 1946, he noticed that Fr Flanagan of Boys Town was coming to Ireland at the end of May, beginning of June and they decided to get him to open an Outdoor Week at Corrigan Park. He rang Fr Flanagan, in Nebraska from Seamus McFerren's home – he was the only one who had a telephone – and asked him would he come and he did.

23.15 'To make sure we got a hold of him a fella called Paddy Gibbons and myself took the train to Dublin on Friday evening and we flew down in 1946 to Shannon and we stayed in ... Limerick in a nice hotel in the centre of the town and the next morning along with Paddy Gibbons and myself and a reporter from the Irish News called Mick Cannon we went out to Shannon and there we met Fr Flanagan and we got a photograph taken and we ... stayed in Shannon, we got the plane back to Dublin and I was back in Belfast at 6 o'clock that evening. We had an agreement that Fr Flanagan would come.'

24.15 To make sure he'd come they sent Brian Moore, Vice-Chair of the Committee to collect him. They arrived in Belfast and stayed with Dr Harrington.

24.40 Maura Savage (later McKenna) was also on the committee.

24.55 They opened the park in 1953. Present were Cardinal Dalton, Bishop McGeehan, GAA General Secretary Paddy O'Keefe, Seamus McFerren and Seán.

25.15 The previous Saturday was a beautiful night, the clubs were up fixing the grounds, the Sunday it rained all day.

25.30 They decided to run an urn of soil from the field in Thurles up to Belfast. 'We got in touch with a well-known NACA man Billy McKee, that's a runner he won the 440 in 1939, All-Ireland 440 championship in 1939 and he organised through the various athletic clubs from Thurles to Dublin and from Dublin to Belfast.' John Hickey from the Independent got the Independent to present them with an urn.

26.30 They put the soil in the urn in Thurles where Brian Moore got a civic reception, the people from Antrim travelled in a mini-bus along the route. 'NACA clubs along the way, they carried the urn all the way to Dublin where they were met

	<p>by Paddy O'Keefe and the Lord Mayor of Dublin at 2 o'clock in the morning where they put more soil in it from Croke Park and they set off from Croke Park.'</p> <p>27.15 It arrived in Casement Park for the opening and they presented the urn to the Cardinal.</p> <p>27.45 'After 1953 I got browned off, after 8 or 9 years thinking, I'd run out of ideas, no more ideas, that was that, I chucked it'. Brian Moore took over as chairman of the Fun / CPR Committee, but it only lasted a year they'd done all we could do. Seán met a girl and got married.</p> <p>28.17 Then he started to write. They weren't getting much publicity in various places, especially on the BBC. He was asked to do a spot live on a Friday night after the top man Mr McMullan.</p> <p>29.20 When he went to talk to McMullan he knew he was a rugby man not a GAA man, so Seán turned the talk to McMullan's son and how great a writer he was. 'The next thing was he rang up for the producer of the Friday night sports programme and invited him down and he told him to give Seán an audition ... but anyway the following Friday week I was on the Friday night sports programme.'</p> <p>30.40 Outside of the GAA, Seán sold a programme to the BBC called 'Country Céilí'. He met a man afterwards who had heard the programme while he was sailing on the Yangtze River.</p> <p>31.45 When they were running the pools they were taken to court for running a lottery and they were fined 30 shillings. They made an appeal with their Barrister, McSparren. 'The judge ... tore the shit out of us, oh dear god, but he said seeing that it's all for charity and you're not getting any money I free youse and clear youse.'</p> <p>33.20 He started to write after he got married and wrote a column for the Sunday Press up to 1995. He supplied results to the Sunday Press, Independent and BBC.</p> <p>34.00 Scór started in 1970 and Brian Moore put him forward as chairman of that and he stayed as chairman for 30 years. Gave it up about five or six years ago. He became a delegate for Ulster Council for Scór and Secretary of the Ulster Council.</p> <p>34.48 'If you ever wanted to get into a row, one thing was, become chairman of the Antrim Scór Committee, because there was more bloody rows than enough. Everybody thinks</p>
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that they should have won, all winners no losers and the adjudicators would be tested all the time. So in the end after I would pay the adjudicators their expenses ... I had to tell the adjudicators, look take yourselves off as quick as you can, there's your travelling expenses get to hell out of the road.'

36.20 In 1945 Seán was elected vice-chairman of the County Board, their meetings were held in Ballymena. He lost it the next year.

36.35 There was a committee set up to build Casement Park, 6 from the fun committee (CPR committee) along with the Antrim Executive – Seamus McFerren, Chairman; Tom Cummins, Treasurer; Seán Stinson, Secretary; Billy Harvey; George McCann; Paddy MacNamee; and from the fun committee Seán; Corny Ennis; Sam Casey (publican and did a great job getting money from the vintners); and Gussie Eastwood. That was 1947 or 1948.

38.05 Seán's first memory was going to school in a trap from outside Armagh.

38.25 When he was a wee fella he used to buy the independent at a penny. This was 1926 / 1927 and he remembers reading about Armagh winning the junior All-Ireland in the Independent. He'd buy the paper and bring it home to his parents, but he would read it on the way home.

39.05 His parents had no interest in the GAA. His mother would wash his clothes and have them dry. Her brother Jimmy Creegan won the Armagh Championship in 1917 with the Young Irelands. There was a photo of the team on the wall in his Granny's house. Jim Cunningham was also on the team.

40.10 Seán never heard any stories from before he was born. 'Communication was nil.' The Armagh Gazette didn't carry GAA news. The Dungannon Observer was the first to bring GAA around.

40.35 'There was more or less a divide in Armagh in those years. Whenever you went over the hills to South Armagh it was another country, in the lowlands around Armagh and Lurgan they were in a different category. Crossmaglen was a far away place, you wouldn't get there in a month of Sundays.'

41.10 Played hurling and football at the CBS, but didn't play much hurling. There was no minor competitions at that stage.

	<p>41.45 They were well togged out.</p> <p>42.00 Armagh athletics ground was opened in 1924, there were very few grounds around at that time. There was a surge around 1949 – Coalisland (pitch was made of sand and soil, the greatest pitch in the world), Davitt Park (opened through influence and hard-work of Alf Murray).</p> <p>43.20 Seán remembers the opening of Davitt Park, 1949. There was a match that night ‘They codded me into refereeing it’. Seán said he’d referee it provided they got him back to the station in time to get the train home. It was the only match he ever refereed and he did it in his ordinary clothes.</p> <p>44.15 There was a surge of grounds in the 1940s and once Casement Park opened it was ‘the mecca’ for everything. His son Hugh said that Casement Park was the driving force for the others. They saw it could be done.</p> <p>45.00 In the 50s and 60s the GAA clubs were able to get enough money. Somebody would say we need a pitch, they’d approach somebody to buy some land and ‘anyway after a bit of coaxing probably they bought the ground, and then followed the re-development. It was spade and shovel, there was no such thing as a digger.’</p> <p>45.55 He went on holidays to his uncle in Strabane every summer when he was a young fella. He wasn’t a bad footballer and somebody asked him to play with the Strabane team. ‘Of course I played for them, rode the bicycle in bout 4 / 5 miles and togged out and played mid-field, got nothing, neither cup of tea nor damn all, got on the bike and rode home again, hadn’t tuppence in my pocket.’</p> <p>46.45 Playing for CBS he played against CBS Monaghan and Abbey in Newry. ‘Travel was very hard in those times, there was no cars, no buses even, you went by train. You were going from Armagh to go to Newry you took a train to Portadown and a train then from Portadown to Newry, it was quite different. Now you get into a car – or a helicopter.’</p> <p>47.30 Seán didn’t have a club in Armagh, the first club he joined was Rossa, there were no juvenile matches then. The last game he played was against St Johns in 1945. He came back from holidays in Bundoran on Saturday and played his last game on the Sunday.</p> <p>48.00 World War Two – 1941 was the blitz. There were 1,600 at a céilí on Easter Monday night in the Ulster Hall. Seán was</p>
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	<p>running another céilí at the Ard Scoil, Diver St. He heard the sirens at 11pm and decided to go home and walked up the road, it was the brightest night he ever saw. Protestants had come over from the Shankill to Clonard Monastery to hide in the vault. When he got home his 'mother and father were under the table and Charlie was in the cubby hole. The bombs were dropping around us.' Lists places that were hit: Ashmore Street, Springfield Road, the Brickworks. 'The shrapnel was bumping off the street.' It stopped about 4 or 5am.</p> <p>50.00 They moved out to the edge of the city until the end of August. 'Every night we just went up to the Falls Park and kicked football'.</p> <p>50.45 John McDonnell, Rossa, Antrim and Ulster player who played in the Tailteann Games was a great story teller and lived beside the Falls Park.</p> <p>51.20 Travelling to games during the war was done by train. Seán recalls playing Cavan in 1945 in Cavan and travelling up the night before and staying in the Farnham Hotel.</p> <p>52.00 1939 was his first All-Ireland. He remembers one match between Dublin and Galway. Beggs was originally from Dublin, but played for Galway, a few years later he was playing for Dublin.</p> <p>52.25 The train cost 4s 6d on a special. They went to the monument café off O'Connell St and got dinner for 2s 6d, 2s for your tea 'and you always made sure you bought a box of chocolates for your mother, it was a must'.</p> <p>53.20 He always bought chocolates for Lillian and sweets for the kids.</p> <p>53.35 He watched Cork win an All-Ireland when Jack Lynch was playing. It was a bit of shock to beat Cavan.</p> <p>54.10 Seán describes Croke Park. The Cusack was there at that stage. 'You were lucky if you got into the Cusack, but if it rained on this side here, the left side and you were sitting there, you had to make a beeline away out of the road or the rain would've skittled you.'</p> <p>54.50 John Coburn used to have the odd ticket and Seán would get a press ticket when he started to write.</p> <p>55.30 'There was very little social life'. He describes a typical week in the GAA, the highlight was a Saturday night when you might go to the céilí's. 'At that time if you done English</p>
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	<p>dancing you were a cowboy in the GAA, and the Ard Scoil was the centre of attraction where you went to most of the céilí's, so it was a simple life.'</p> <p>56.45 Talks about going to the cinema and getting the idea for the shape of Casement Park. He was in San Paulo and saw a ground where they had a moate full of water, that was where he got the idea for lifting up Casement Park.</p> <p>57.15 Plane to Shannon to meet Fr Flanagan, he remembers looking out at Lough Derg and seeing how broad it was.</p> <p>57.35 They ran a full week for the opening of Casement Park. They had a hurling match on Sunday, a top four gold medal tournament, the winners of various counties in competition.</p> <p>58.15 One of the people who got a gold medal lost it and wanted to get it replaced, he was told it would cost £300.</p> <p>58.45 Lists the events of the opening week – top 4 matches, camogie, local hurling. On Sunday there was football between Kerry and Antrim and hurling between Galway and Antrim and it rained all day.</p> <p>59.45 He played right half for the county, even though he was only ten stone.</p> <p>1.00.10 Antrim won a Lagan Cup while he was playing with them. They won a McKenna Cup too.</p> <p>1.00.40 Training was an unknown quantity. 'I never trained in me life, but I rode a bicycle and that trained me well enough.'</p> <p>1.01.00 When he stopped playing for the county, he stopped all playing. He couldn't keep up with it.</p> <p>1.01.40 He did 'bugger all' as vice-chairman of the county board. He had made a name for himself proposing the motion to re-develop Corrigan Park.</p> <p>1.02.15 The first time they appointed a PRO he was elected, that was 1992. He did as little as possible. 'If they wanted to send something to the Irish News, saying they have two matches on such a such a night, they'd ring me for me to ring the Irish News. I says, "ring the Irish News" ... if you were a mug it was hard work, so I cut it down.'</p> <p>1.03.25 No internal politics.</p> <p>1.03.35 Troubles – 'There was only one Sunday that games were put off ... I suppose it was the day that Bobby Sands died, it was only one Sunday in Antrim that the games were</p>
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	<p>put off, they weren't cancelled at all. They kept on going, you had to keep them going you know, if you didn't keep them going, they'd have gone down the drain very quick.'</p> <p>1.04.15 He lost his job as PRO after his two year term.</p> <p>1.04.40 The GAA existed very well, but there were horrors too. 'You couldn't let a youngster walk up the Falls Road with a hurl, cos it'd probably get taken off him by the soldiers and he would be harassed. You see you had to be terribly careful during the Troubles, where you saw a jeep you kept a hundred miles from it, because you never knew who it was going to have a poke at. You had to watch yourself, you know. How we got through it is hard to know, but we succeeded, but you had to watch the children, oh boy oh boy.'</p> <p>1.05.55 He kept far away from the Trouble and doesn't know if anyone else in the club was more involved.</p> <p>1.06.20 He doesn't remember if any member of the club did anything to mark the Hunger Strikes.</p> <p>1.06.45 Scór – there was twenty clubs taking part and he travelled all through the county during the Troubles, up to Cushendall etc.</p> <p>1.07.40 There were eight competitions, but you had to get them to fill out forms for the competitions they wanted to enter into.</p> <p>1.08.25 Biggest changes – building of grounds and clubhouses. How they succeeded in getting the money to build clubhouses has always surprised him. Competitions are easier run now also. 'There was a time that in the GAA where there were no clubhouses and people had to tog under the hedge, that wasn't so long ago, that was in the 30s and the beginning of the 40s, ... and you'd see fellas there in their good suits playing.'</p> <p>1.09.55 Development of the competitions, there's the senior club competitions, the intermediate club competitions and the junior club competitions all on an All-Ireland basis.</p> <p>1.10.25 CPR ran a four team competitions. When they stopped St. John's took it over, then Anthony McConnon, a member of St. John's proposed at Congress that it be extended to an All-Ireland basis. Now instead of one senior you have senior, intermediate and junior.</p> <p>1.11.50 Opening of Croke Park: 'They were mugs that they didn't do it long go ... it's only a lump of ground and there's no</p>
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	<p>good in fighting or killing yourself. Do you see, you look at these die-hards, and the same die-hards are going home and they're watching all these soccer matches.'</p> <p>1.12.30 The Ban 'was archaic'. There was a time it was needed but it should have been cleared away years earlier. Seán never played any other sports.</p> <p>1.13.30 Celebrations: He organised the first club dinner in the Imperial Hotel. He doesn't think the dinners came into a great focus until the 1970s. They knew they could make money on it.</p> <p>1.14.25 Seán thinks you couldn't do without the women in the GAA. 'You couldn't do without the women, that was my attitude ... The women would be at home there and they were saying the Rosary for the various teams that were playing. They were washing your shirts for you and they were washing your pants and trousers, you couldn't do without them, they're the backbone of the association.'</p> <p>1.14.50 He got a presentation from the Ulster Writer's Association at a dinner about three years ago. It was the first opportunity he had to acknowledge the role of women and he asked the gentlemen in the audience to toast the women of the GAA. He got a terrific reception for it.</p> <p>1.16.20 Media: The GAA, gets good coverage. It depends on how much news the club or county are giving to the media.</p> <p>1.16.55 Seán doesn't remember the first time he listened to a game on the radio or a match on the TV. 'In 1969, I proposed a motion at Congress that a commission be set up to look at the GAA and to restructure it. First year I asked congress to do it, it got kicked out.' It was passed in 1970. A few years later he was asked to do an interview on RTÉ about the work of the Commission. They had an old TV set at home and they could kind of get RTÉ, but his family told him he could hardly see them.</p> <p>1.18.45 The first motion he proposed at Congress was in 1950 to set up a referees board. He can remember proposing the motion that a commission be set up, but he wasn't put on the commission. Brian Moore was put on from Antrim and he was only asked to send a submission on paper.</p> <p>1.19.50 He wanted them to look at fixtures, how money was being spent, sponsorship etc.</p> <p>1.20.30 It hadn't a great effect, he thought. Later</p>
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	<p>developments did, but the GAA 'was young and ignorant'.</p> <p>1.21.10 They weren't getting any sponsorship and the commission looked at how they could get sponsorship. Sponsorship boards around Casement only came in the 1990s.</p> <p>1.21.50 Seán never had any GAA heroes. 'I suppose Alf Murray, former president, was one of the outstanding people that I knew. He was a Gaelic Leaguer, he was a footballer, he was an organiser, he was a President. I played on the same team with him for Armagh for a couple of years.'</p> <p>1.22.25 Seán played on the Armagh team for a couple of years before he came to Belfast. 'Cavan was the glorification of everything at that time.'</p> <p>1.23.20 His best GAA memory was the day that Casement Park was opened after eight years work. 'It cost 92,000 the day Casement Park was opened and along with that we bought 30 acres about a mile up the road at Shaws Road for ... 20,000 and we had £10,000 in the bank the day it was opened and that was all through my leadership and making money.'</p> <p>1.24.10 There was nothing that he wanted to do that he couldn't do. Work was primary, GAA was secondary. You had to have a tolerant mother and a tolerant wife.</p> <p>1.25.15 Seán's wife had no involvement, but his son Hugh played county for Antrim and now trains the teams in St. Mary's School. John is in Galway and he is a fanatic about hurling and has organised minor hurling in Galway and belongs to the Salthill Club. Kathleen played a bit of Camogie.</p> <p>1.25.55 Seán believes that teachers are very important to the GAA.</p> <p>1.26.15 Priests still have an influence in the GAA in the country, in the city teams are mostly created through families. The church still has an important part to play.</p> <p>1.27.25 Seán believes we should all be talking Irish but that we're all too lazy to learn. A bias has develops that says Irish is hard to learn. 'It's not the GAA's responsibility, the GAA helps them, but it's not their responsibility.'</p> <p>1.28.40 St. Johns were Seán's rivals in Antrim and he didn't play club football in Armagh so it didn't matter. At inter-county level every county is your rival.</p>
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	<p>1.29.20 Seán doesn't know any club songs.</p> <p>1.29.30 Seán has had no disappointments with the GAA. 'The GAA is a great organisation to me. It has wonderful people in it, wonderful organisers, great people, how they do things I don't know, it's amazing. You wouldn't believe it that within the boundaries of Belfast here we own, now this is important, we own 12 pitches, 12 grounds, we own them.'</p> <p>1.30.20 Biggest challenge for the GAA is to keep going. 'The GAA is a sport. It's not in winning championships, it's not in winning All-Ireland's, it's a sport to keep people occupied and going and giving them a bit of time and pastime, that's what it's for. It's not about winning competitions mainly, competitions are there to be won, but the main factor is – it is there for the sport and that's the fundamental principle of it.'</p> <p>1.31.25 Involvement of kids in sport is amazing. If they're studying it's a relief from it.</p> <p>1.31.55 He thinks the GAA can't afford pay for play, it's an impossibility.</p> <p>1.32.30 'Part of my life, it's part of it, it was the same as going to work, but as I said it was secondary, which is important.' It occupied the spare moments.</p> <p>1.33.30 Seán still sends results to the papers – to the Sunday Independent, Sunday Life and the BBC. The Sunday Tribune cut him off to save money.</p> <p>1.34.25 He sends colleges results, Antrim results, championships from the various counties (except Donegal, it's too far away and he has no contact there). He used to cycle round the various grounds to get the results and send them off, now he can just use the phone.</p> <p>1.35.15 He hasn't been at a match for the last year.</p> <p>1.35.40 'The GAA is a right good organisation, it's given me plenty enjoyment and I think I've given my bit of energy to it.'</p> <p>1.36.05 'You were working at a shilling a time, everything that you done was a shilling a time. To get into a match in Corrigan Park in the 40s and 50s, 2 shillings you know. £2 wouldn't look at it now.'</p> <p>1.36.45 People say to him that he couldn't do what he did now, but you could. There are big dinners now, and there's room for another pool at a pound a time.</p> <p>1.37.30 Seán believes he was gifted in being able to organise</p>
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	<p>and oversee, but he never took his coat off. 'There's a knack in being able to control.'</p> <p>1.38.30 'The pub was unknown, if a fella was drinking he would hardly get on the team.'</p> <p>1.39.00 He talks about drink in society today and how he feels drink has destroyed the country.</p>
Involvement in GAA	<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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____</p>
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	<p>Played county football for 6 years with Armagh and Antrim; Played with O'Donovan Rossa for 5 years.</p>
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	<p>County Board – Vice-Chairman; PRO; Delegate to Congress from 1945 – 1990s; Chairman of Scór for 30 years; Chairman of Corrigan Park Reconstruction Committee.</p>
Format	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
Duration	<p>Length of Interview: 1hr 40min 19sec</p>
Language	<p>English</p>

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To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: _____ Arlene Crampsie _____

Date: _____ 06/11/09 _____

The GAA logo, consisting of the letters 'GAA' in a stylized, white, serif font, is positioned on a black, trapezoidal background in the bottom right corner of the page.