

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

<b>Name of Interviewer</b>	Regina Fitzpatrick
<b>Date of Interview</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2010
<b>Location</b>	Carrick-on-Bannow, Co. Wexford
<b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname)	Bill Treacy
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1925 <b>Home County:</b> Wexford
<b>Education</b>	<b>Primary:</b> Clongeen NS, Co. Wexford
<b>Family</b>	<b>Siblings:</b> 1 brother
<b>Club(s)</b>	Clongeen GAA [Wexford]; Brian Boru's GAA, London [Great Britain]; Robert Emmett's GAA, London [Great Britain]; Fr Murphy's GAA, London [Great Britain]; Tomás McCurtain's GAA, London [Great Britain]
<b>Occupation</b>	Member of the Irish Army, Engineer.
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	N/A
<b>Religion</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	N/A
<b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>	London Wexford Men's Association

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<b>Date of Report</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> July 2012
<b>Period Covered</b>	1930s – 2010
<b>Counties/Countries Covered</b>	Wexford, Great Britain, England, Cork, South Africa, Congo, Australia, New Zealand, Australasia, Americas, USA, Canada, Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Kerry, Donegal, Mayo, Galway
<b>Key Themes Covered</b>	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Training, Administration, Celebrations, Emigration, Involvement in GAA Abroad, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Identity, Culture, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Alcohol, Violence, Northern Ireland, The Troubles, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Socialising, Relationships, Economy/ Economics
<b>Interview Summary</b>	<p>Bill describes where he grew up in Wexford, before discussing the history of Gaelic games in the area. He then recalls his family's involvement in Gaelic games. Bill recalls stories he has heard regarding The Troubles in the area during the 1920s, before talking about the GAA in his school days. He remembers his GAA heroes of the past from Wexford teams. He describes travelling to matches in his younger days, and also lists the venues he played in during his playing career. Bill talks about what makes the GAA special, explaining what the Association means to him. He also discusses what drives teams in the North of Ireland on. He recalls his time in the Army and some of the places he played. He describes the regime of Army life and the influence it had on him. Bill discusses emigrating to London. He recalls his introduction to the GAA in London. He discusses the clubs he joined, the roles he undertook and the influence and role that the GAA plays in the lives of the Irish abroad. He concludes by saying what his proudest moment in the GAA is, and reveals how he would like to be remembered by the London GAA community.</p> <p>00:25 Bill discusses where he was born and brought up, in the parish of Clongeen. Recalls what life was like growing up there.</p> <p>01:35 Discusses the history of Gaelic games in Clongeen. Mentions winning first Senior County Football Championship. Mentions schoolteacher Ben Byrne who was also chairman of</p>

	<p>the county board.</p> <p>02:34 Recalls family involvement in Gaelic games. Recalls the making of hurleys. Mentions incident during the Troubles involving two of his uncles carrying hurleys and being raided by the Black and Tans. Mentions an uncle who was an adjutant in the Old IRA.</p> <p>04:19 Recalls stories he heard regarding The Troubles in the 1920s. Mentions uncle, Peter Wall, who was in the Old IRA, and a raid by the Black and Tans. Mentions Bob Lambert. Discusses family involvement in Gaelic games. Mentions the RIC.</p> <p>05:56 Refers to facilities in the GAA in the 1920s.</p> <p>06:18 Recalls his earliest memories of the GAA. Mentions John Cullinan and underage games.</p> <p>07:51 Discusses Gaelic games in his school days. Mentions Ballymitty and Trinity.</p> <p>08:11 Speaks about underage coaching structures in Wexford in modern times, makes a comparison with Kilkenny.</p> <p>09:02 Recalls his GAA heroes when growing up. Mentions Wexford team that won Leinster Senior Football Championship in 1945 and Sean Eustace. Recalls the medal presentation ceremony at the Technical School in Wexford. Mentions the Siege of Ennis and Nicky Rackard.</p> <p>10:55 Recalls travelling to matches in his younger days. Mentions travelling by bicycle or horse-and-car. Mentions fights that would occur at the matches, mentions Clongeen.</p> <p>11:53 Speaks about the loyalty of players who played for Clongeen without winning anything, comparing it with modern times. Refers to the uniqueness of the GAA. Mentions South Africa, Australia and New York. Speaks about the uniqueness of hurling.</p> <p>13:20 Describes where he played matches over the years. Mentions joining the Army and playing in Tralee, Limerick, Cork, UCC, The Athletic Grounds and New Ross. Also mentions West Cork and Rosscarberry.</p> <p>13:56 Recalls playing in the Army. Mentions rugby, The Ban, soccer.</p> <p>14:41 Discusses the GAA in general terms and what makes it special. Mentions being in Croke Park, speaking to the Rattler Byrne from Tipperary. Mentions the funerals of Bobby and</p>
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	<p>Nicky Rackard, as well as Christy Ring. Mentions 1956 All-Ireland Hurling Final, Bobby Rackard and Nick O'Donnell chairing Christy Ring after Wexford beat Cork. Refers to Ring's funeral.</p> <p>17:46 Discusses Michael Cusack founding the GAA in Hayes' Hotel in 1884 and the importance of the Association. Mentions the GAA welcoming all creeds – refers to Jack Boothman, former president of the GAA, who was Protestant.</p> <p>19:00 Refers to teams in the North of Ireland and what drives them on – mentions Crossmaglen.</p> <p>20:06 Discusses what the GAA means to him. Refers to Wexford's 1955 All-Ireland Hurling Final victory.</p> <p>20:57 Discusses the first time that he saw Wexford play. 1941/2, against Carlow. Mentions a football team in Wexford called The Volunteers, and a dispute with the county team. Mentions Enniscorthy Emmets. Also mentions Wexford winning 1945 Leinster Football Championship. Refers to Kilkenny All-Ireland Hurling Final defeat to Tipperary in 2010.</p> <p>22:30 Describes travelling to matches in his younger days. Mentions Wexford Park and New Ross. Refers to joining the Army and playing matches in Cork. Talks about the emotion of watching Wexford play in Croke Park.</p> <p>23:08 Recalls how he joined the Army. Mentions England, The Curragh, Cork, Christy Ring, Little Island. Recalls the Barrack League that was organised. Refers to Collins' Barracks' success in the Cork county championship.</p> <p>25:51 Recalls his routine in the Army. Mentions Kilworth Camp.</p> <p>28:30 Recalls his strict upbringing.</p> <p>29:04 Recalls the guilds – mentions St Josephs, St Patricks and St Aidan's guilds.</p> <p>30:22 Discusses the routine of the Army and its influence on him.</p> <p>31:08 Discusses the role of Gaelic games in Army life. Mentions Eamon Young and Ned Roche of Kerry, Paddy Kehoe from Wexford, The Porter Foley, Tommy Doyle, Ger Kavanagh, Moroney from Galway. Mentions Guards as well, such as Jimmy Murphy from Kerry, Paddy Driscoll from Cork, Con McGrath from Galway and The Gunner Brady from Cavan. Recalls meeting Eamon Young at bus stop in Cork,</p>
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	<p>heading to Ballincollig. Mentions parade regarding Bobby Sands, Oliver Plunkett Street, Grand Parade and Tom Barry.</p> <p>35:30 Describes leaving the Army. Mentions Fr O'Neill and mentions Congo and Cyprus.</p> <p>39:02 Recalls emigrating to England. Went with Mossy Riordan from Killarney, a Cavan man called O'Donoghue and Spider Kelly from Enniscorthy. Went to Forest Gate in East London. Mentions the Irish jobs network in England. Mentions Jimmy Kevins and Michael Hayes. Describes working conditions in the fifties. Mentions the drink culture.</p> <p>45:29 Recalls his experience of the GAA in London. Mentions Cricklewood and The Cricklewood Tavern (now Moran's Hotel). Mentions Kilburn and West London. He recalls signing a form for the MacCurtains club. Mentions Spider Kelly and Fr White. Also mentions Fr Whelan from Wexford. Recalls joining the Robert Emmets club. Mentions Jimmy Long. Mentions the White Harp pub. Refers to his successes training the club. Mentions Kerry, Fintan Lawlor and John Conneally from Galway.</p> <p>54:40 Recalls some of the players who played for Robert Emmets in London. Murphys from Cork, Jim Gilligan, Fintan Lawlor and Christy Gilligan from Laois, Christy Roche, Mattie Maher, Doyles from Galway – Joe Doyle, Murray, Joe McNamara from Cork. Mentions photo taken at training session in Wanstead.</p> <p>56:18 Describes where Robert Emmets trained in London. Mentions Wanstead Flats in East London. Also mentions Epping Forest and Forest Gate. Recalls the other GAA clubs that were in the area – St Finbarrs, Emeralds, MacCurtains, Robert Emmets and Fr Mahers.</p> <p>58:24 Describes the employment that most of the players had on the Robert Emmets team. Discusses the recruitment of players. Mentions Dan Purcell and the Cú Chulainns club.</p> <p>59:25 Recalls club finals in London. Mentions Ruislip, New Elton and the crowds that attended finals.</p> <p>01:00:10 Recalls where he lived in London - Forest Green. Also mentions Kilburn and Cricklewood. Mentions Fintan Lawlor and John Maguire.</p> <p>1:02:28 Discusses why he became involved with Robert Emmets in London. Recalls the training methods he used with the club.</p>
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	<p>1:04:02 Recalls how the Irish were treated when he first moved to London. Mentions Camden Town. Recalls the GAA club's relationship with the police. Discusses the pitches that the GAA teams used. Mentions New Elton, Dagenham, Croydon, Hayes and Hackney. Recalls mode of transport to get to matches.</p> <p>1:06:20 Discusses the difficulties faced in running a GAA club in London. Mentions economic difficulties. Also mentions Tomas MacCurtains. Talks about the sense of achievement that came with being involved in a GAA club.</p> <p>1:07:58 Recalls the advantages of being involved in the GAA when in London.</p> <p>1:09:02 Discusses his career in the GAA. Mentions joining Brian Borus in London. Had an administrative role with the club as a delegate. Recalls the chairman of the club – mentions speech the chairman gave to London team before match in Croke Park in 1971 regarding the Pearses and Brian Borus clubs. Mentions London's All-Ireland campaign of 1973 when Limerick beat them. Mentions when Paddy Ryan died, funerals of Brian Borus and St Gabriels members.</p> <p>1:12:08 Recalls leaving Brian Borus to return to Robert Emmets in 1977. Mentions Jimmy Long. Recalls defeats and successes. Describes his relationship with London GAA. Mentions moving to Fr Murphys, a Wexford team in London, in 1982.</p> <p>1:14:34 Describes the logistics of training a GAA team in London. Mentions travel involved - Shell Haven, East Ham, East Acton, The Shrubs and Ruislip.</p> <p>1:15:02 Recalls successes with Fr Murphys.</p> <p>1:15:25 Discusses his relationship with the clubs he was involved in. Mentions Liam O'Neill and Cú Chulainn Gaels, as well as Pat Murphy.</p> <p>1:16:04 Mentions The Kingdom team in London, An Ríocht. Beat Robert Emmets in 1965. Bill's nephew Bobby was the first non-Kerry man who was an officer of the club. Mentions Donegal.</p> <p>1:16:55 Discusses turnover of players in London GAA clubs.</p> <p>1:17:44 Recalls the social aspect to London GAA. Mentions New Cross, Elephant and Castle, Dagenham, Forest Gate. Recalls incidents that took place – mentions the police. Also makes reference to West of Ireland men and Kiltimagh.</p>
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	<p>Describes the Irish drinking in London.</p> <p>1:19:32 Describes changes he has seen in London GAA clubs over the years. Mentions Australia, New Zealand and New York.</p> <p>1:21:09 Discusses the importance of the GAA in London in assisting Irish people. Mentions Cricklewood Town. Mentions Tommy Dorgan, from Tipperary, of the Clann na nGael club. Recalls the sense of community engendered by the GAA in London.</p> <p>1:24:23 Discusses his involvement in GAA administration in London. Mentions Liam McCarthy, Michael Collins, Sam Maguire and the history of the London County Board.</p> <p>1:25:40 Recalls London GAA's relationship with Croke Park. Mentions Gerry Moriarty and Paddy Ryan.</p> <p>1:27:48 Discusses the importance of having GAA clubs outside of Ireland. Mentions New York, Australia, North America and Canada. Mentions amateurism.</p> <p>1:28:45 Discusses the importance of amateurism and volunteerism in the GAA.</p> <p>1:30:26 Recalls teams from Ireland visiting London and vice-versa over the years. Refers to the camaraderie involved.</p> <p>1:31:17 Recalls being at Wembley Stadium for GAA events. Mentions the All Stars.</p> <p>1:32:03 Explains what it meant to London GAA when teams came over from Ireland. Mentions the Railway Cup.</p> <p>1:33:05 Discusses awards that he received for his involvement in the GAA. Mentions the London Masters. Mentions the Sean Ghael award as well as the Independent Newspapers award. Also received Supporters Club award. Describes his emotion when winning the awards.</p> <p>1:36:07 Recalls his proudest moment in the GAA - becoming involved in the GAA in London. Explains the importance of the GAA to the Irish in London. Mentions Paddy Ryan and the positive influence of the GAA. Recalls organising a match between Doon and Murroe-Boher for a member in East London, Sean Quirke, who died. Mentions Michael Maher.</p> <p>1:41:14 States how he would like to be remembered in London GAA.</p>
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<p><b>Involvement in GAA</b></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 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><b>Record as a Player</b> (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p>Played junior football and hurling with Clongeen; Played football and hurling with Southern Command of Irish Army; Played with Tomás McCurtain's GAA, London.</p>
<p><b>Record as an Administrator</b> (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Vice Chairman of Brian Boru's GAA, 1971 – 79; Manager and selector with Robert Emmets and Fr Murphy's GAA in London; President of London County Board; Recipient of Sean Ghael Award (1996); Won Hall of Fame Award of Independent Newspapers, 1996 and of the London Supporters Club.</p>
<p><b>Format</b></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
<p><b>Duration</b></p>	<p>Length of Interview: 1:41:56</p>
<p><b>Language</b></p>	<p>English</p>



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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: 25<sup>th</sup> July 2012