

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Arlene Crampsie
Date of Interview	16 th March 2010
Location	Longford Slasher's Clubhouse, Co. Longford
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Noel Caslin
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1930 Home County: Longford
Education	N/A
Family	N/A
Club(s)	Longford Slashers
Occupation	Restaurant Proprietor
Parents' Occupation	N/A
Religion	N/A
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Martin Jennings
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1948 Home County: Longford
Education	N/A
Family	N/A
Club(s)	Longford Slashers
Occupation	General Manager
Parents' Occupation	N/A
Religion	N/A
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Hugh Brennan
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1940 Home County: Longford
Education	N/A
Family	N/A
Club(s)	Longford Slashers
Occupation	Market Researcher
Parents' Occupation	N/A
Religion	N/A
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Michael Gilleran
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1940 Home County: Longford
Education	N/A
Family	N/A
Club(s)	Longford Slashers
Occupation	Civil Servant
Parents' Occupation	N/A
Religion	N/A
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

Date of Report	12 th June 2012
Period Covered	1891 – 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Longford, Galway, Westmeath, Down, Tyrone, Cavan, Mayo, Roscommon, Dublin, Great Britain, England, Wales, Americas, Canada
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Education, Religion, Emigration, Involvement in GAA Abroad, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Identity, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Northern Ireland, The Troubles, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Opening of Croke Park, Relationship with the Association, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy/Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Members of Longford Slashers GAA Club reflect on their involvement in the club since its formation in 1954. They describe the amalgamation of two clubs, Longford Wanderers and Whiterock Slashers, to form Longford Slashers and detail the successes of the club since the 1950s. They discuss their respective playing and administrative roles in the club, and they explain how its urban setting has affected the club's identity and membership. They also describe the effects of emigration and migration on the club. In addition, they consider more general topics, including the lifting of the ban on foreign games, involvement in the GAA abroad, and the positive aspects of the organisation.</p> <p>00:40 Martin recalls his earliest GAA memory. Mostly hurling in his native Galway. Attending matches with parents in late 50s, early 60s. Lack of success. Playing hurling before college. Moving to England, returning to work in Longford in 70s. Getting involved with Longford Slashers in 1980, hurling still new. Mentions Tommy O'Brien who started hurling in the club in 1975. Initial success of hurling team in 80s. Outlines his career progress, involvement in administrative roles, including coach, selector, chairman, secretary.</p> <p>03:15 Mentions Paddy Prendergast, Donal Sheehan, Sean Stakelum. Only three hurling clubs in Longford, low standard, lack of competition, entering the Westmeath league. Outlines how hurling has progressed in Longford since 80s. French</p>

	<p>players on Longford team. Clonguish and Wolfe Tones in Edgeworthstown also involved in hurling.</p> <p>06:01 Reflects on history of hurling in the county. From 1917 or 1918, not prominent. Challenge of developing hurling in a football county. Good support from parents, initial concerns about injuries, compulsory helmets now.</p> <p>07:22 Underage structure: Under-12 and Under-14 teams competing in Westmeath league. Outlines their progress. His involvement in training teams. Previous training senior teams. Going to Féiles, beaten in final in Waterford. Lack of understanding about or interest in hurling in Longford.</p> <p>10:24: Mentions Gareth Ghee, Eoin Donnellan, Martin Coyle on shinty team. Mentions Christy Ring Cup and the Lory Meagher Cup. Nationwide appeal of hurling now.</p> <p>11:40 Noel recalls Connacht final between Galway and Mayo, mentions Mayo goalkeeper Burke in 1930s. Born in Roscommon. Recalls Roscommon winning All-Ireland finals of 1943 and 1944. Few radios, mentions Hanley family putting radio in sitting room window, people outside listening. Noel reflects on playing minor football in 1948 and 1949, county minor team, coming to Longford in 1949. Playing with junior clubs. Move to amalgamate Longford Wanderers and Whiterock Slashers, formation of Longford Slashers in 1954.</p> <p>14:29 Recalls first meeting, appointed selector. Mentions Tommy Devine. Winning five senior championships. Pride in his sons playing football. Club's debts in the 80s from building facilities. Mentions John Murphy of Bank of Ireland. Club involved in building theatre. Stronger soccer tradition in the town, army base. His current involvement as insurance officer and joint treasurer.</p> <p>18:55 Hugh reflects on his first excitement in football: 1944 All-Ireland Football Final, his father was a Roscommon garda. Recalls 1947 All-Ireland played in Polo Grounds in New York. Excitement of Cavan neighbours. Recalls Noel playing in 1952, Paddy Leech owning only car in terrace, going to match in Mullingar aged 12. Starting to play football, main pastime. Longford a garrison town, culture of sport, divided between soccer and gaelic. In 1955 captaining minor team. Impact of ban on foreign games: losing players who played soccer. His opposition to the ban.</p> <p>23:27 Describes excitement of Down team of 1959 - 1961. Red and black jerseys. His first All-Ireland in 1956. Mentions Kerry and Offaly's prominence at the time. Playing football,</p>
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	<p>enjoying camaraderie, friends made. GAA a topic of conversation. His administration roles, including secretary, chairman, selector, president. Good spirit of club. Raising money for club in 1980s, asking club members for money. Enjoyment of watching games in Pearse Park. Also rugby and soccer in Longford. Challenge of running club in town: lack of identity, other distractions in town.</p> <p>29:53 Michael recalls the excitement of listening to Micheal O'Hehir on the wireless. Playing football, mentions Tommy O'Brien. Winning juvenile championship in 1954. Mentions Willie Mulvihill from Longford, his role in development of Croke Park. Michael recollects playing soccer, first love GAA. Administration roles now. Discusses his agreement with ban being lifted. Mentions contribution of Padraic Gearty to removing ban. Recalls suspension of some players, EGM, club's response.</p> <p>31:52 Outlines development of club, opening in 1980. Mentions role of Noel Caslin. Building theatre, funded by Arts Council. Praises Tyrone, Kerry, Galway, Dublin, Longford. Longford's ill fortune. Also mentions Down team of 1960-61. His son playing with St. Colmcille's, Cardiff, another son in Canada playing with team in Toronto. Mentions Peter Canavan and Christy Cooney. Identity of the GAA.</p> <p>35:22 Noel outlines known history of Longford clubs from archives: 1891, Longford Shamrocks; 1904 and 1905 Longford Leo Casey's; 1922 Longford Wanderers. Success of Longford Slashers after amalgamation. Mentions players of 1960s: Paddy Carey, John Murphy, Sean Kilemade, Ollie Baxter. Success of underage teams in late 80s, early 90s.</p> <p>39:10 Discussion of development of Ladies Football in recent years. Hugh's initial opposition, his change of mind. Description of high standard of football in barracks. Mentions Fr Wall, president of Wanderers. Recounts incident in club in which former player nominated the pope. Strength of club at minor level. Contribution of parents. Challenge in towns of getting people involved in the GAA: more distractions, commitment required from players.</p> <p>44:28 No divide between GAA families and soccer families. Three GAA clubs in parish: Longford Slashers, Grattans, Shroid Slashers. Difficulty of getting parish identity. Mentions Longford footballer Dessie Barry, playing in Australia, also soccer player.</p> <p>47:38 Discussion about players going to third-level institutions nationwide, not coming home every weekend, losing interest</p>
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	<p>in club. Migration to Dublin for jobs, lack of employment in Longford to retain players. Sense of belonging with GAA, contributing to society.</p> <p>52:06 Description of understanding and good will between soccer, rugby, and GAA. Arranging fixtures that don't clash.</p> <p>53:03 Discussion about development of club. No grounds until late 1970s, farmer selling 20 acres to club. Currently further development going on. State of rented pitches. Mentions Michael Murray selling land at reasonable price.</p> <p>55:18 Outlines fundraising efforts to build facilities: carnivals, bingo, dances, draws, Joe Dolan playing at carnival, Big Tom and the Mainliners. Facilities in club: 3 pitches, floodlit, catering, squash.</p> <p>56:54 Opening function for facilities: Down team coming to play Offaly, several club games. Singsongs, hurling games, guest hurlers, Ollie Baker. Also mentions fundraising events: waltzing competitions, beauty competitions.</p> <p>58:39 Noel reflects on amalgamation of club. Winning championship that year. Playing Sean Connollys. Uniting to win title. Strong reputation. Playing various teams around country, going to Leeds and America too.</p> <p>01:00:29 Discussion about catering for football, hurling, ladies football. County team playing on their pitch currently. Progress of ladies football, camogie team starting. Lack of camogie in Longford.</p> <p>01:02:02 Description of club's relationship with county board. Unpopularity of urban clubs.</p> <p>01:03:28 Characters in club: Michael "Smiler" Fay, playing against New York. Recounting stories involving Fay.</p> <p>01:10:55 Reflection on GAA highlights: Noel recalls winning first county final in 1954, injured playing. Mentions Fr. Reynolds. Michael's pride in his children's involvement in the GAA.</p> <p>01:14:05 Discussion about GAA heroes: Kevin Heffernan, Paddy Doherty, Sean O'Neill, James McCartan, Sean Purcell, Dessie Barry, Sean Donnelly, Frankie Stockwell. Also mentions Tony Mannion.</p> <p>01:15:19 Lack of GAA low points, focussing on such positive achievements as the abolition of the ban, opening of Croke Park, recent success of Northern teams. Excitement of seeing</p>
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	<p>counties win that hadn't won before.</p> <p>01:17:55 Recalls in Down era travelling to Casement Park, Tralee, nationwide. Avoiding Northern Ireland during The Troubles.</p> <p>01:18:35 Discussion of passion for the GAA, their contributions to the organisation. Hopes for the club's future.</p> <p>01:19:55 Martin returns for some final reflections. His best memory was Joe Connolly's speech in Irish after Galway won the All-Ireland, 1980. His heroes include Seán Purcell, John Connolly, Nicky English, Henry Shefflin, and Joe Canning. Discusses his luck at being able to work for the GAA.</p>
Involvement in GAA	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input 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>
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	N/A
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	N/A
Format	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
Duration	Length of Interview: 01:22:38
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: _____Arlene Crampsie_____

Date: _____12/06/12_____