

## GAA Oral History Project

## Interview Report Form

<b>Name of Interviewer</b>	Arlene Crampsie
<b>Date of Interview</b>	29 <sup>th</sup> April 2010
<b>Location</b>	Na Fianna Clubhouse, Dublin
<b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname)	Aidan Collins
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1944 <b>Home County:</b> Dublin
<b>Education</b>	<b>Primary:</b> Coláiste Mhuire, Parnell Square, Dublin <b>Secondary:</b> Coláiste Mhuire, Parnell Square, Dublin
<b>Family</b>	<b>Siblings:</b> 1 brother (RIP) & 3 sisters <b>Current Family if Different:</b> Married
<b>Club(s)</b>	Na Fianna; Ballymun Gaels; Whitehall Gaels
<b>Occupation</b>	Accountant
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	Telephone Engineer [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
<b>Religion</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	N/A
<b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>	Charleville Tennis Club, Rugby, Golf Club, Soccer

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<b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname)	Paddy King (left before all the paperwork could be completed)
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1930 <b>Home County:</b> Dublin
<b>Education</b>	N/A
<b>Family</b>	N/A
<b>Club(s)</b>	Na Fianna
<b>Occupation</b>	N/A
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	N/A
<b>Religion</b>	N/A
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	N/A
<b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>	N/A

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<b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname)	Donal Hickey
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1937 <b>Home County:</b> Dublin
<b>Education</b>	<b>Primary:</b> St. Patrick's, Drumcondra, Dublin <b>Secondary:</b> St. Vincent's, Glasnevin, Dublin
<b>Family</b>	<b>Siblings:</b> 2 brothers & 1 sister <b>Current Family if Different:</b> Married
<b>Club(s)</b>	Na Fianna; CJ Kickhams
<b>Occupation</b>	First Games Development Officer with Dublin
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	Teacher [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
<b>Religion</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	N/A
<b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>	Church Collector; Youth Worker with Boys Club

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<b>Date of Report</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> August 2012
<b>Period Covered</b>	1930s – 2010
<b>Counties/Countries Covered</b>	Dublin
<b>Key Themes Covered</b>	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Fundraising, Education, Religion, 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, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Politics, Opening of Croke Park, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Economy / Economics
<b>Interview Summary</b>	<p>Donal, Paddy and Aidan talk about their involvement with the GAA - and Na Fianna club in Dublin in particular. They recall the events that led to the formation of the club, with a split emerging within the Kickhams club. They all played hurling and football and helped out in whatever way they could. Na Fianna had no ground of their own so they had to use other pitches around Dublin, but eventually they did secure one and this was a major breakthrough. Everyone worked hard to raise funds and the club soon expanded, sending out teams in football, hurling, camogie and ladies football. Donal, Paddy and Aidan also filled various administrative positions. They put a lot of sweat into making the club what it is today, and although they appreciate the trophies that Na Fianna sides have brought home, what matters most to them is having a ground to call your own and fellow clubmates who understand the value of sacrificing something of yourself for the benefit of the club, and for the Association as a whole.</p> <p>00:00 Introduction</p> <p>00:40 (Donal) Earliest memory is watching hurling with his father as a very young boy and when he started primary school he started playing.</p> <p>01:35 (Paddy) Earliest memory is being brought to Croke Park by his father for the big games.</p> <p>01:55 Paddy lived near the Phoenix Park and played there a lot.</p> <p>02:00 He went to secondary school in North Brunswick Street and joined the Owen Roe club and the Kickhams, which</p>

	<p>became Na Fianna.</p> <p>03:10 (Aidan) His grandfather and father brought him to Croke Park and his first memory is an Oireachtas Cup final and bands being on the pitch.</p> <p>03:40 (Aidan) He spent holidays in Belfast and went to a Wolfe Tones club where there were hurleys on the wall of the Nissan hut.</p> <p>04:20 Aidan's first involvement with a club was Ballymun Gaels sometime around 1955.</p> <p>04:35 He went to Vincent's school in Glasnevin and would have played in a streets league in 1957 which led to him becoming involved with Na Fianna.</p> <p>05:00 Donal played football and hurling and in primary schools the pupils organised games themselves.</p> <p>05:35 He played at Under-12 and Under-14 in primary school.</p> <p>05:30 He went to St Vincent's Secondary School and got involved in Na Fianna and at that time (1955) there was a split in the Kickhams club.</p> <p>06:10 Sean Clerkin and Johnny Quinn worked on a history of the time, as did Diarmuid McNulty.</p> <p>06:40 Donal played with Kickhams until 1954 and at that time there was only an Under-15 grade and upwards.</p> <p>07:20 Kickhams won a lot in the early 1950s.</p> <p>07:35 201 members went from Kickhams to Na Fianna.</p> <p>08:40 Kickhams was a drapers' club in the early 1950s and they only had adult teams.</p> <p>09:20 An underage section was formed and the Kickhams people feared their club would eventually be taken over and that led to a disagreement which was never sorted out.</p> <p>10:00 Brother O'Farrell suggested forming a club of their own because he could see no resolution in sight.</p> <p>11:00 (Paddy) The new club just felt like a change of jerseys, though it was unfortunate not to be wearing the green and red of Kickhams.</p> <p>11:40 Their first championship was in Croke Park and they beat the guards.</p>
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	<p>12:05 (Paddy) Na Fianna started with a white jersey but moved to saffron and blue - 'St Patrick's blue'.</p> <p>12:40 (Paddy) They had no fixed ground and played here and there.</p> <p>12:55 (Donal) Senior matches were played in enclosed grounds - Raheny, Islandbridge, Phoenix Park.</p> <p>13:15 Sunday mornings were busy in Phoenix Park and board members did a lot of business and talking shop there.</p> <p>14:05 (Aidan) Aidan was back there recently and was surprised to see that there was only three pitches there now.</p> <p>14:40 Aidan was too young for Kickhams and only knew of the split through his father.</p> <p>15:05 (Aidan) Paddy McNamee knew his father and they would talk about it.</p> <p>15:20 Aidan joined the club in 1957 at the age of 12 when it was all over.</p> <p>15:40 Aidan played when Ballymun Gaels were being formed and played hurling with the Under-15s.</p> <p>16:25 Brother Cahill organised an Under-13 streets league and that's how Aidan got involved with Na Fianna.</p> <p>16:40 (Aidan) In the league were Iona, Phibsborough, Cabra and Glasnevin. Tommy Norton also played.</p> <p>17:20 (Paddy) Eoghan Ruadh were based in Aughrim Street to Brunswick Street they went from Gabriels's School down to Brunner, a hurling school.</p> <p>17:50 (Paddy) Later they got players from O'Connell's. Jerry Lydon was a talented player.</p> <p>18:20 (Paddy) The hurling club was very strong and won a lot of competitions.</p> <p>18:40 (Paddy) Most people moved out of the area and the club died out so they amalgamated with Oliver Plunkett's in the Navan Road.</p> <p>19:20 (Paddy) Na Fianna revived hurling.</p> <p>19:45 (Paddy) Most clubs did not have their own grounds, except for O'Toole's in Seville place.</p> <p>19:55 (Aidan) There were pitches in St Anne's, Islandbridge,</p>
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	<p>Coolock, Ballydowd.</p> <p>20:20 Aidan's first game on a lined pitch was in Ballydowd in 1956 and there was a clash of colours that day.</p> <p>21:20 Saggart had a pitch.</p> <p>21:30 (Donal) They would cycle to games or go by bus; Ballydowd was the furthest they would have cycled.</p> <p>22:00 (Aidan) They travelled in Tom Fitz's Morris Minor van. They used to meet outside McBernie's to go to certain games.</p> <p>22:30 (Donal) There weren't many pitches in Dublin.</p> <p>23:00 (Donal) The club was always progressing and expanding.</p> <p>23:25 (Donal) Finding a ground was the biggest problem.</p> <p>23:40 (Donal) The first chairman was Tom Fitzpatrick from Kerry, the vice chairman was Tommy Norton from Kilkenny, the secretary was Tony Carr from Down.</p> <p>24:10 Sean O'Neill was involved as was Mary Duignan.</p> <p>24:20 (Paddy) Sean O'Neill had a big influence on younger players. Cathal O'Finnea and Eoin O'Neill were also involved.</p> <p>25:45 (Donal) They looked at a place on Moby Drive for a pitch but the ground they settled on had a big hill and Home Farm had the lease on it.</p> <p>26:45 (Donal) The board of works put it up for tender. Charlie Haughey was Minister for Finance and Donogh O'Malley was Minister for the Board of Works.</p> <p>27:40 (Donal) Charlie Haughey decided the issue and accepted their tender for a 21-year lease before they eventually got a 100-year lease.</p> <p>28:25 (Donal) The dressing room was a pigsty originally and you were either playing up a hill or down a hill.</p> <p>28:55 (Donal) They eventually levelled the ground.</p> <p>29:15 (Aidan) Within five years they did a deal with Guinness to knock down the cricket pavillion in the Iveagh Grounds and carry it over to the pitch.</p> <p>29:55 (Donal) But then it was vandalised.</p> <p>31:00(Donal) They delivered The Dublin Post around Raheny</p>
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	<p>and Clontarf on a Wednesday for many years.</p> <p>32:00 (Paddy) Money was scarce but they used to make some through holding a dance.</p> <p>32:25 (Donal) Noel Clerkin organised the paper run for them.</p> <p>32:55 (Donal) They had a famous person doing it who used to leave the papers in a bin.</p> <p>33:30 (Aidan) It was an aging area initially so their impact wasn't great.</p> <p>34:30 (Donal) Most of their players were from Vincent's Glasnevin, and some from O'Connells but they ended up starting their own club.</p> <p>35:10 (Aidan) Once you were in the club you were in and people fitted in smoothly.</p> <p>35:55 (Donal) It was mostly brothers in Vincent's - the only school in the area.</p> <p>36:15 (Paddy) A lot of the younger brothers played with them.</p> <p>36:30 Paddy recalls going to play St. Margaret's with eight Christian Brothers on the team.</p> <p>37:00 (Aidan) The brothers played a big role in the club.</p> <p>37:10 (Donal) They started off with 200 members so they had a lot of teams.</p> <p>37:30 (Donal) They had weekly meetings in Vincent's in the early years.</p> <p>38:20 (Donal) The priests in the area did not get involved.</p> <p>38:55 (Aidan) When the clubhouse was burned down it galvanised them.</p> <p>39:50 (Aidan) The Dominicans were given some land and their own land was in jeopardy.</p> <p>40:00 (Donal) Coláiste Mhuire and Scoil Caitriona of Eccles Street were going to amalgamate but that fell through and just Scoil Caitriona came up to their area and there was tension over land.</p> <p>41:00 (Aidan) The new place was opened in July 1972.</p> <p>41:55 (Donal) They were worried about finances and had to sit down and plan things out.</p>
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	<p>42:30 (Donal) They had bingo two nights a week, and dances and céilís to raise funds.</p> <p>43:05 (Donal) Camogie started in 1969 - it was an all-male club originally but they were one of the first club to have female full members.</p> <p>43:55 (Donal) They later had ladies football and ladies handball.</p> <p>44:20 (Donal) There was only one person against bringing females in.</p> <p>44:10 (Donal) They were one of the first clubs to have a lady officer.</p> <p>45:45 (Donal) Purchasing their grounds was their biggest success.</p> <p>47:00 (Aidan) If they had left the area, what followed would never have happened.</p> <p>47:35 Aidan feels the hurlers in the club could have achieved more over the years.</p> <p>48:20 (Donal) They were always in the top division at underage level - one team won three minor championships in three years.</p> <p>49:15 (Donal) In the early days the standard of football in Dublin was much higher.</p> <p>49:35 (Donal) They won camogie championships and five senior football championships.</p> <p>50:05 (Donal) They beat Vincent's for their first senior championship and that was sweet.</p> <p>50:25 (Aidan) They started ladies football in the late 1980s.</p> <p>51:00 (Aidan) They won a senior football championship in 2009, beating Ballyboden in the semi-final.</p> <p>51:20 (Donal) They won a lot of handball trophies, and one girl was especially good.</p> <p>52:45 (Aidan) Recalls losing a final to Kilmacud in 1998 but they had a good party nonetheless.</p> <p>53:45 (Donal) A lot of Na Fianna people played in county teams - Jimmy Gray on the Dublin team, Peadar Duignan with Cavan, Benny Murphy with Fermanagh.</p>
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	<p>54:25 (Donal) They supplied many officers to the county board - Donal Hickey, Sean O'Neill - but not as many now.</p> <p>55:00 (Donal) A few of their members 'carried Dublin handball for years'.</p> <p>55:25 (Donal) In the beginning there was a debate about whether to adopt the name 'Na Fianna'. Cathal O'Finnea came up with the name.</p> <p>55:55 (Paddy) Cathal was President of the Gaelic League.</p> <p>56:20 (Paddy) In the beginning they used to hold Irish classes in the club.</p> <p>56:45 (Paddy) They were the top club in Dublin for Scór for years and had great fun.</p> <p>57:40 (Donal) They are still competing in Scór but are not as strong.</p> <p>58:00 (Aidan) Parents are more involved in the club now than they were and this can have a detrimental effect.</p> <p>59:05 (Paddy) There is a lack of leadership from the top down in terms of national identity.</p> <p>59:50 Donal worked full-time with the GAA as a Development Officer on the Dublin County Board from 1971, Jim Kenny worked with him.</p> <p>01:01:00 Donal worked a lot on getting publicity because the national newspapers did not give Dublin clubs attention.</p> <p>01:01:45 He was also involved in developing the schools in games, and trying to get pitches for inner city areas.</p> <p>01:02:40 Before that Donal was working in cold storage.</p> <p>01:03:35 Aidan never worked at county level on committees.</p> <p>01:04:55 At club level he was involved in numerous committees - whatever needed to be done.</p> <p>01:04:25 Donal was chairman for about five years in the mid-1960s.</p> <p>01:04:45 Paddy was on the executive committee for a year or two and then had a job of maintaining the grounds for 25 years.</p> <p>01:05:45 (Aidan) Everything was done voluntarily and whatever you were asked to do, you did.</p>
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	<p>01:06:15 Volunteers are essential to the running of a club.</p> <p>01:07:10 Paddy looked after the camogie section of the club and they won a lot of titles.</p> <p>01:08:00 (Aidan) In the old days volunteers ran the club.</p> <p>01:08:20 (Aidan) Brendan Duignan kept the bingo going and without people like that the club would not have survived.</p> <p>01:09:15 Today there are certain people involved with the club and if you asked them to do something they would not do it so readily.</p> <p>01:10:00 (Paddy) The people who do the basic jobs are often forgotten.</p> <p>01:10:45 (Aidan) Nowadays children come in and the parents will stay involved with the club until the child is older and leaves; then the parents leave the club too.</p> <p>01:12:10 (Aidan) There are close to 2,000 members in the club and that is a lot to sustain.</p> <p>01:12:40 (Donal) There is not enough green space - they already use Scoil Caitriona, Vincent's school, Glasnevin, Johnstown Park, and still have to rent DCU. They also have to train in Century Starlights.</p> <p>01:13:15 (Donal) There was a minor county board in the old days and they met once a week; Donal was a delegate to this board and became secretary of the minor board until he became full-time with the county board.</p> <p>01:14:30 If they were stuck for a referee for a game they would ask for a volunteer at county board meetings.</p> <p>01:14:55 Donal is also involved with the Leinster Council and Jimmy Gray is Trustee of the Association.</p> <p>01:15:25 (Donal) Getting to go on trips down the country was great, and Donal also went on trips to the United States.</p> <p>01:16:35 (Donal) They were making financial decisions all the time and had to think everything through; the county board was different as they had more money to play with.</p> <p>01:17:35 (Donal) They got grants from the money from the opening of Croke Park.</p> <p>01:17:55 When Bertie Ahern was Taoiseach they got a lot of grant money.</p>
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	<p>01:18:45 (Donal) The GAA has been his life and that interest came through his family; many Dublin people got involved as their parents were from the country.</p> <p>01:19:30 (Donal) The school you attended made a big difference.</p> <p>01:20:10 (Donal) Teachers have less time to help out now.</p> <p>01:20:30 (Aidan) Best memory is being on the team that won the county championship in 1969.</p> <p>01:20:50 (Aidan) There are only some bad memories. Coming out of Croke Park as a teenager in 1961 after losing the All-Ireland hurling final was tough.</p> <p>01:21:30 (Aidan) He doesn't know where he would be if it wasn't for the GAA.</p> <p>01:21:55 Paddy gets a great feeling of belonging out of the GAA, making lots of friends and enjoying good results.</p> <p>01:23:20 (Paddy) With all the commercialism it makes him feel a little less nationalistic.</p> <p>01:24:00 (Donal) The GAA means an awful lot to the whole country.</p> <p>01:24:35 (Donal) Getting the ground was a great success.</p> <p>01:24:40 Donal was a selector on the Na Fianna team that won their first senior championship and he was involved with the Dublin football team of the 1970s.</p> <p>01:25:05 (Donal) Back in the early 1970s there weren't many going to see Dublin games but suddenly it all changed.</p>
<p><b>Involvement in GAA</b></p>	<p><b>Aidan:</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coach <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____</p> <p><b>Donal:</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coach <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p>

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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None  <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____
<b>Record as a Player</b> (Titles won; Length of time played)	<b>Aidan:</b> Played from 1957 – 1985. Won juvenile hurling, senior and junior football championships and senior and junior leagues. Played for the Over 50s.  <b>Donal:</b> Played up to the age of 22/23. Won Under 16, league hurling and football and schools titles.
<b>Record as an Administrator</b> (Positions held; how long for)	<b>Aidan:</b> Has been vice-chairman of club and on all committees.  <b>Donal:</b> Club: Chairman, Secretary, President, County Board Delegate  County: Secretary of Minor Board (10 / 12 years), 1 <sup>st</sup> Full time Development Officer of County Board, Leinster Council Delegate  Leinster: Secretary of Scór Committee.
<b>Format</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
<b>Duration</b>	Length of Interview: 01:26:05
<b>Language</b>	English

**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

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the right to use and make available to the public the content of this interview.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_Arlene Crampsie\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_17/08/12\_\_\_\_\_

The logo of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), featuring the letters 'GAA' in a stylized white font on a black background.