GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of	Arlene Crampsie
Interviewer	
Date of Interview	4 th August 2010
Location	Cooley Kickhams Clubhouse, Co. Louth
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Jim Thornton
	Biographical Summary of Interviewee
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1945
	Home County: Louth
Education	Primary: Muchgrange NS, Co. Louth
	Secondary: St. Michael's, Omeath, Co. Louth
Family	Siblings: 7 brothers & 3 sisters
	Current Family if Different: Married with 4 sons and 4 daughters
Club(s)	Cooley Kickhams
Occupation	Department of Agriculture
Parents' Occupation	Farmer [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Fine Gael
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	IFA, Pioneers

REFERENCE NO. LH/1/8

Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Harry McCarthy
	Biographical Summary of Interviewee
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1945
	Home County: Louth
Education	Primary: Rathcor NS, Co. Louth
	Secondary: Bush Vocational School, Co. Louth
	Third Level: Kevin Street, DIT, Dublin; Dundalk; Jordanstown
Family	Siblings: 2 brothers & 3 sisters
	Current Family if Different: Married with 3 sons and 1 daughter
Club(s)	Cooley Kickhams
Occupation	Posts and Telegraph (PnT) / Telecom / Eircom Engineer
Parents' Occupation	Blacksmith [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Fine Gael / Labour
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Lough's Agency Advisory; Carlingford Tourism Association; Community and Volunteer Forum; County Council Advisory Board for Dundalk; Grange Resident's Association; Cooley Active Retirement

REFERENCE NO. LH/1/8

Name of Interviewee (Maiden	Michael Boyle
name / Nickname)	
	Biographical Summary of Interviewee
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1931
	Home County: Louth
Education	Primary: Monksland NS, Co. Louth
	Secondary: Bush Vocational School, Co. Louth
Family	Siblings: 2 sisters
	Current Family if Different: Single
Club(s)	Cooley Kickhams
Occupation	Wholesale Wine and Spirit Company
Parents'	Steam Engine Driver / Labourer [Father]; Dress Maker
Occupation	(and football togs maker) [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Fianna Fáil
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Grange and District Residents Association; Cooley Active Retirement

Data of Poport	27 th June 2012
Date of Report	
Period Covered	1750 – 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Louth
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Material Culture, Education, Religion, Media, Emigration, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Rivalries, Irish Language, Culture, Scór, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Alcohol, Violence, Politics, Northern Ireland, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Opening of Croke Park, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Retirement, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy/ Economics
Interview Summary	Michael, Harry and Jim discuss in detail the history of the Cooley Kickhams club and of the GAA in County Louth. They recall the early days of the club, when street leagues were popular and members of the clergy played a vital part in promoting the GAA in the area. All three played football at some stage in their lives and they discuss their own individual GAA careers and administrative involvement with the Association. They remember the area being prosperous in the 1940s, with a port, railway and different industries thriving locally. The Louth team was successful in the 1950s and they talk about their memories of that time and of trips to Croke Park to watch games. Soccer is a popular sport in Louth, and they discuss about how this affected the GAA and what role was played by the Ban when it was in effect. They also talk about what it was like to live close to the border with Northern Ireland and how they negotiated the various problems this created for them. All three are committed GAA men, and they also talk about what the Association has meant to them and about their hopes for the future. 00:45 (Michael) Earliest memory is a Cooley league in 1938 featuring teams like Grange Erins Hope, Carlingford St Michaels, Whitestown Emmets, Lordship Valley Rangers, Rathcor Garrowiers. Final in Whitestown in field known as 'the henhouse'.
	featuring teams like Grange Erins Hope, Carlingford St Michaels, Whitestown Emmets, Lordship Valley Rangers, Rathcor Garrowiers. Final in Whitestown in field known as 'th

02:30 (Michael) Being at school when the Cooley league was on. Rivalry between students.
02:45 (Michael) Grange colours and Whitestown colours.
03:15 (Jim) Cooley league started in 1915 and rivalries.
03:50 (Jim) Early 1950s and economic depression in the area. Emigration. GAA scene suffering.
04:15 (Jim) Parish divided. St Patrick's starting their own league and Cooley catchment area halved as a result.
04:35 (Harry) Going to games when he was young. Students from local Rosminians College playing.
05:50 (Harry) Lack of facilities.
05:00 (Harry) Fr McEvoy arriving and trying to revive the club. Success that followed.
05:20 (Harry) Fr McGrane head priest in Cooley and starting a drive to purchase a pitch in 1969.
05:30 (Harry) Successes they had in the 1960s and 1970s.
06:00 (Harry) Starting to play underage football. Crowds at games. Arguments.
06:15 (Harry) Evolution of club in the community. Social events.
06:50 (Harry) Second pitch purchased due to greater demand.
07:15 (Harry) Getting involved in administration.
07:30 (Jim) Location and size of Cooley Peninsula. Having their own port and railway. Alcohol factory in Riverstown in the 1940s.
08:30 (Jim) Sugar beet industry in the area in the past.
09:25 (Jim) Bush Technical School built in the 1940s. Professor Ruane teaching there. Lectures for farmers in the evenings.

10:00 (Jim) 1950 All-Ireland semi-final between Louth and Kerry. His uncle playing in goals. Louth losing the final to Mayo.
10:30 (Jim) Being at the 1957 All-Ireland semi-final. People travelling by bus.
10:50 (Jim) Rosminian College Omeath nearby. Cork hurler Fr Con Cottrell winning a medal with Cooley in 1939.
11:30 (Jim) Rosminian supplying the club with players.
11:45 (Jim) Minors once known as Naomh Mhuire. College's involvement ending in the 1960s. College closing in the 1980s.
12:10 (Jim) Sports commentator Jimmy Magee, Lieutenant General Seán McKeown, one-time Garda Commissioner Malone from the area.
13:10 (Jim) Players like Stephen White - named on the Team of the Century - from the area. Eddie Boyle also from the area.
14:00 (Jim) Playing underage football in the 1960s. Structures in place.
14:45 (Jim) Desire for the club to win another senior championship.
15:00 (Michael) Leagues in the 1930s and 1940s. Walking or cycling to games.
15:20 (Michael) Problems with referees.
15:30 (Michael) Different fields they had.
16:15 (Michael) Facilities basic. Some teams with no boots or togs.
17:00 (Michael) Greenore having a good team featuring Gene Burrells and Teddy Burrells.
17:20 (Jim) Railway closing in 1951 and impact of that. Club suffering.
18:10 (Jim) Raffle in Cooley and a mirror as a prize.

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	Argument breaking out.
	18:50 (Harry) Cooley team suffering due to success of the league.
	19:20 (Michael) Importance of club and of the more local teams.
	19:30 (Harry) Club's influence growing once they had their own facilities.
	19:45 (Jim) Club success in the 1930s and 1940s.
	20:05 (Jim) Club disorganised in the 1950s.
	20:20 (Jim) Club producing Leinster players in the 1940s. His uncle Leinster captain in 1944.
	21:05 (Harry) Football played in Louth in 1750.
	21:20 (Harry) Club formed in 1887.
	21:45 (Harry) Charles Kickham associated with many clubs. His life and times.
	22:20 (Jim) Póc fada on the peninsula. Fr Johnson starting it up.
	23:30 (Jim) Who runs the Poc fada. Ex-county secretary Pat Hamilton involved. Na Piarsaigh and Naomh Moninne involved.
	24:30 Damian Callan revitalising hurling in the area, with Nicholas Rafferty. Ann Callan working on camogie.
	25:20 (Michael) Hurling team in Greenore in the past. Jim Kennedy and Bill Lawlor from Killenaule, Tipperary and Jerry O'Riordan and a Murphy man from Cork playing.
	26:25 (Michael) Impact of World War Two. Army recruitment drive in 1940.
	26:50 (Michael) Eddie Boyle playing his last game and transferring to Seán McDermott's in Dublin. Being at the game.
	28:05 (Michael) Carlingford rumoured to be starting a schools league in 1945. Fr Keenan and Fr McNamee helping out with

a Cooley League. George Lowe the local schoolmaster involved. Packie McKevitt managing the team.
30:00 (Michael) Game taking place in Grange. Michael O'Rourke training Carlingford, who were better trained and kitted out.
30:50 (Michael) Getting gear from the local Erin's Hope club.
31:00 (Michael) Going to Jimmy Gregory for boots and a jersey.
32:00 (Michael) Playing in Whitestown.
32:30 (Jim) Mary Kate Rafferty and Lily Woods supporting their teams when they were young.
33:25 (Jim) Priest traditionally in charge of clubs. That trend changing in the 1960s. Less and less clergymen involved in the GAA over time.
34:50 (Jim) Need to be familiar with communications technology for administrative purposes in 2010.
35:20 (Michael) Army team Cooley played in 1940 comprising players from the Galway 1938 All-Ireland winning team.
35:40 (Michael) Playing with an oversized ball in the schools league. George Lowe going to Dundalk for a proper football. Package he returned with not what they expected.
36:30 (Michael) Grange playing Bothar and Frank McCartan from Carlingford refereeing. Patsy McGarry playing for Grange and Colin Hines for Bothar. Spat between the two. Referee taking action and spectators objecting. Jack Marks trying to resolve matters.
38:30 (Harry) Club playing in Grange until pitch opened in 1969. Parish Hall burned down around the same time and club donating a site to the parish.
39:20 (Harry) Building a games hall in 1987.
39:40 (Jim) Getting land from a local farmer, Paul Feehan. Fr McGrane brokering a deal. Paddy and John Sheelan working with Fr McGrane. Mick Callaghan and Jack Marks also involved.

	40:40 (Harry) Being on the committee at that time.
	40:55 (Jim) John Sheelan ploughing the ground. Pitch being levelled and then named after a Fr Brendan McEvoy who revitalised the club after arriving in the late 1950s. Fr McEvoy originally from Termonfeckin. His nephews Johnny and Michael McDonald still play for Termonfeckin and his grandnephew Andy plays for Louth.
	42:10 (Jim) Impact of Fr McEvoy before he died in 1965.
	42:20 (Jim) Impact of Fr McGrane.
	42:40 (Jim) Playing Tyrone in the opening game on their pitch in 1969. Tyrone team featuring Iggy Jones having lost to a Louth team featuring Stephen White in the 1957 All-Ireland semi-final.
	43:05 (Jim) Fr McEvoy having had links with Tyrone.
	43:20 (Harry) Fundraising over the years for facilities.
	43:50 (Jim) Fr Martin Kenny arriving in the 1970s and getting involved.
	44:35 (Harry) Ending up on the committee as a teenager.
	45:55 (Harry) Fundraising events they held. Selling tickets outside Croke Park. Willingness of Cooley public to help them.
	46:25 (Harry) Need for more funds in 2010.
	47:00 (Jim) Creche facility at the club.
	48:10 (Harry) Different groups in the community using their facilities. Functions held there.
	49:55 (Harry) Building signed over the community, making it eligible for grants.
	50:45 (Michael) Playing schoolboy football and then being a supporter and committee member.
	51:05 (Harry) Going to Rathcor school. Playing for Grange and winning titles.
	51:35 (Harry) Playing Under-15 with Cooley and then playing

for the Rosminian College.
52:20 (Harry) Playing with Cooley minors and with North Louth.
52:35 (Harry) Playing for Louth minors. Seamus Kirk on the team.
53:05 (Harry) Playing for the Louth junior team.
53:30 (Harry) Playing for Cooley in the 1960s and winning a junior championship. Subsequent successes.
54:05 (Harry) Captaining the Cooley senior team to a championship in 1971.
54:15 (Harry) Playing with the Louth senior team in the 1970s.
54:35 (Harry) Administrative involvement. Taking over as treasurer.
55:30 (Harry) What it was like to be selected for the county team.
55:55 (Harry) Versatility as a player.
56:45 (Jim) Working in Donegal and Tullamore in the 1960s and 1970s.
57:30 (Jim) Celebrating the 1916 Rising in 1966. Playing for a Donegal selection against Derry in Celtic Park. Cavan's Charlie Gallagher playing for Derry. Gallagher's talent.
58:15 (Jim) Top players like Seán O'Neill and Mick O'Connell and their ability. James McCartan, Jimmy Doyle from Tipperary, Paddy Keogh from Wexford, Christy Ring.
59:15 (Jim) Playing at different levels and successes he enjoyed.
01:00:05 (Jim) Losing to UCD and to Portlaoise in Leinster. Tom Prendergast playing against them.
01:00:40 (Jim) Taking a train to play Kerry in the National League and winning. Unusual sleeping arrangements.
01:02:05 (Jim) Following the team had.

01:02:15 (Harry) Families helping Cooley in terms of numbers. Brothers playing on teams. Smaller families in 2010.
01:03:25 (Harry) Coming back from college to play for Cooley. Asking the treasurer for money.
01:04:10 (Harry) Coming back to play for Louth minors and unsure if the club or county would pay his expenses.
01:05:00 (Jim) Men having big pockets at the time. Jack Marks had club money in his pocket.
01:05:45 (Jim) What petrol cost at the time.
01:06:00 (Jim) Informing Northern Ireland customs if he was going to be travelling early.
01:07:05 (Harry) Tournaments in the 1970s. Clubs from neighbouring counties playing. Competing against teams like Carbury from Kildare, Cavan Gaels, Scotstown.
01:08:10 (Michael) Seán Thornton, Seán Boyle, Tommy Clarke, Billy McKevitt, Mike Boyle, Fr Kevin Connolly, Mike Hardy, Hughie O'Rourke, John McGuire, Hugh Sheelan, Brendan McGrath, Billy McGrath, Joseph Marks, Eoin Sheelan, Brendan Rafferty, Gerry Rafferty, Eddie McGrath all good players with the club.
01:09:55 (Harry) Playing illegally in the 1970s and having to get reinstated. Effect on county career.
01:10:30 (Michael) Seeing Paddy Barry in a Donegal paper. Paddy playing for Cloughaneely in Donegal.
01:11:20 (Michael) Being at the 1957 All-Ireland final when Louth won. Taking the bus to Dublin and getting to Croke Park. Watching Kevin Beahan take one of the final kicks.
01:12:25 (Michael) Celebrations. Team visiting Cooley on a lorry. Seamie O'Donnell of Cooley on the team.
01:13:15 (Harry) Effect of playing illegally on his career.
01:14:00 Playing challenge games in Donegal and Tullamore.
01:14:55 (Jim) Offaly winning the All-Ireland in 1971 and Fr

Gilhooly and Alo Kelly training them. Jim training too.
01:15:25 (Jim) Going to Donegal in 1965 and no GAA there. Training on his own in Moville. His boss encouraging him to play soccer. Getting sent off in a soccer game.
01:16:30 (Harry) Mickey Kerins of Sligo and Tony McTague of Offaly the best players he has ever come up against.
01:17:10 (Harry) Soccer team in Carlingford. Some of the GAA players on the soccer panel.
01:17:50 (Jim) Soccer players as 'social footballers'.
01:18:40 (Jim) Irish rugby player Rob Kearney's grandfather and great grandfather involved with the club. Rob Kearney involved too.
01:19:15 (Jim) Brian Donnelly from Carlingford leaving for Australia and returning again.
01:19:45 (Michael) The Ban and players breaking it.
01:20:10 (Harry) Vigilante committees in Dundalk.
01:20:20 (Michael) Peter Corr playing for Louth in 1943.
01:20:35 (Jim) The Ban more an issue in towns than in rural areas.
01:21:00 (Jim) Living close to the border with Northern Ireland. Feeling isolated.
01:22:00 (Jim) Born in Newry in 1945.
01:22:35 (Harry) Having to deal with two provincial councils when organising tournaments. Brother sent off in a tournament and complications emerging from a disciplinary point of view.
01:23:20 (Harry) Having to leave early to play games in Northern Ireland due to roadblocks.
01:23:35 (Jim) Road to Newry blocked off in the 1960s.
01:24:20 (Jim) Travelling through Northern Ireland regularly. Recognising different groups by their accents.

01:25:55 (Harry) Murder of local farmer Tom Oliver. Tension within the club as a result.
01:26:45 (Jim) Protest organised on the football field shortly after the murder. That proving contentious.
01:28:45 (Harry) Relationship with the county board and the GAA. Feeling isolated due to being a peninsula. Not occupying many roles on the county boar.
01:29:35 (Jim) Being vice-chairman of the county board and being a delegate to the Leinster Council. What he tried to achieve.
01:30:55 (Jim) Kevin Smith, Michael Ferguson, Andy Quinn on the county board.
01:31:25 (Harry) Being invited to be a county Under 21 selector and his thoughts on that.
01:32:10 (Harry) Role of women within the club over the years.
01:32:50 (Harry) Growth of ladies football. Need for another pitch as a result.
01:34:00 (Harry) Women's involvement in the club centre.
01:34:20 (Harry) Pressure for space and how they manage it.
01:34:50 (Michael) Women's role when he was younger.
01:35:15 (Michael) Camogie in the 1940s.
01:35:30 (Harry) Women on club committees, like Ann Callan.
01:35:50 (Jim) How the club treated women in the past.
01:37:05 (Jim) Value of women to the club.
01:38:20 (Jim) Young people maturing at a younger age.
01:39:35 (Harry) Shift in how women were perceived by the club hierarchy.
01:40:00 (Jim) Parish priest Fr Eoin Sweeney as chairman of the club. Patsy Savage having grazing rights in the football field. Trees being damaged and this being discussed at a

meeting. Fr Sweeney saying nothing and reason for that. Mick Callaghan making allegations. Responses to that.
01:43:05 (Harry) Songs and poems about the club. James O'Hare a local poet.
01:44:00 (Jim) Club entering Scór but then stopping. Reason for that.
01:44:40 (Jim) Peter O'Hare from Carlingford a world tap dancing champion.
01:45:45 (Jim) Role of Irish language. Gaeltacht area Omeath once in the area. Need for more effort to promote the Irish language.
01:47:40 (Harry) Reads from a local song by John Elmore in the 1970s or early 1980s.
01:50:05 (Harry) Best memory. Playing career.
01:50:50 (Jim) Football club's schedule influencing how he organised his life.
01:51:55 (Jim) Little underage football when he was a teenager.
01:53:35 (Michael) Driving home distances to watch local games.
01:54:10 (Michael) Micheál O'Hehir broadcasting. First game he listened to, the 1938 All-Ireland final between Galway and Kerry. His uncle going to visit John Keenan in Carlingford.
01:5:39 (Michael) Listening to Louth games in the 1940s.
01:56:35 (Jim) Being busy working on the farm when he was young.
01:57:10 (Jim) Being called away to play an Under-16 game while he was working.
01:57:40 (Jim) Football a constant topic of conversation. Reading the newspapers on a Monday morning.
01:59:00 (Jim) Down winning the 1959 All-Ireland influencing him. Galway, Kerry and Dublin making an impression on him in subsequent years.

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02:00:05 (Michael) Father taking him to games. Men at the crossroads talking about games in the past and playing with a pig's bladder.
02:00:55 (Harry) Father talking about great Meath teams.
02:01:25 (Harry) Mick Callaghan training them when they were young.
02:02:15 (Harry) Jimmy and Tom Thornton, Paddy Kirk, Gerry Rafferty, Jack Marks and the Sheelan brothers influencing them.
02:02:45 (Jim) Admiration for Kerry's Mick O'Connell.
02:03:00 (Michael) Admiration for Louth's Stephen White and Seán Murphy of Kerry
02:03:20 (Harry) Admiration for Seán Purcell, Jim McKeever, Noel Tierney of Galway, Jack Quinn of Meath, Seán O'Neill of Down, Paddy Doherty, Mickey Kerins of Sligo.
02:04:15 (Michael) Watching Louth play Meath in Croke Park - his first time there - 1947. Paddy O'Brien and Victor Sherlock, Cristo Hand, Paddy Meegan, Peter McDermott, Frankie Byrne all playing.
02:04:45 (Michael) Impressions of Croke Park.
02:05:15 (Harry) Disappointments. Bad refereeing in a club game against Summerhill. Losing games they should have won.
02:05:55 (Jim) Increased number of paid officials in the GAA and his thoughts on that.
02:07:15 (Jim) Selling of alcohol at Croke Park and the 2010 Leinster final controversy at the end of the Louth-Meath game.
02:08:35 (Michael) Louth losing in 1950 a disappointment.
02:08:50 (Harry) GAA's handling of fallout from 2010 Leinster final.
02:09:35 (Michael) What the GAA has meant to him.

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	02:09:45 (Harry) What the GAA had meant to him. Being asked to go for a soccer trial.
	02:10:20 (Harry) Opening of Croke Park and his thoughts on that.
	02:11:15 (Jim) Influence of the GAA on his life.
	02:12:20 (Jim) Not knowing what a groin strain was when he was younger.
	02:11:10 (Jim) Simpler training when he was younger.
	02:13:20 (Michael) His hopes for a change to the rules.
	02:13:40 (Jim) Tackling in the modern game.
	02:14:30 (Michael) Michael's mother and Ann Hanlon making togs in the 1930s and 1940s.
	02:15:35 (Harry) Expecting his mother to clean his dirty clothes after playing.
Involvement in	Jim:
GAA	✓ Supporter ✓ Player ✓ Manager □ Coach ✓ Steward
	✓ Chairperson ✓ Committee Member ✓ Grounds-person
	□ Caterer □ Jersey Washer □ Referee □ None
	□ Other (please specify):
	Harry:
	✓ Supporter ✓ Player □ Manager ✓ Coach □ Steward
	□ Chairperson 🗸 Committee Member □ Grounds-person
	□ Caterer □ Jersey Washer □ Referee □ None
	□ Other (please specify):
	Michael:
	✓ Supporter ✓ Player □ Manager □ Coach ✓ Steward
	\Box Chairperson 🗸 Committee Member 🗸 Grounds-person

	□ Caterer □ Jersey Washer □ Referee □ None
	□ Other (please specify):
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	Jim: Played from age 14 to 34. He won 5 senior championships, 1 junior championship, 7 senior leagues, 7 sub leagues. He played at inter-county under 16 and minor level.
	Harry: Played from age 11 to 40. He won 5 senior championships, 1 junior championship, 8 senior leagues, 8 subs leagues, 1 Leinster Junior Championship. He played at inter-county under 16 and minor level.
	Michael: Played from age of 14 to 18.
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	Jim: Jim has been involved in administration since 1984. He started off as a committee member and became club chairman between 1987 and 1990. He is Honorary President of the club since 1997. He was a delegate to the county board and was a vice-chairman of the County Board. He was also a delegate to Leinster Council from 1997 – 2010.
	Harry: Harry gas been involved in administration since 1962. He was involved in the club between 1962 and 1990 during which time he acted as Assistant Secretary; Assistant Treasurer and Treasurer (for 11 years). In 2005 he was appointed Honorary President of the Club.
	Michael: Michael got involved in administration in 1963 or 1964 and was a committee member for around ten years.
Format	✓ Audio □ Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 02:16:14
Language	English

REFERENCE NO. LH/1/8

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: ____Arlene Crampsie_____

Date: _____27/06/12_____