

**GAA Oral History Project**  
**Interview Report Form**

<b>Name of Interviewer</b>	Ann-Marie Smith
<b>Date of Interview</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> May 2009
<b>Location</b>	Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath
<b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname)	Brendan Murray
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1924 <b>Home County:</b> Meath
<b>Education</b>	<b>Primary:</b> Dunshaughlin National School, Christian Brother's National School, Navan <b>Secondary:</b> Technical School, Navan
<b>Family</b>	<b>Siblings:</b> 4 brothers, 4 sisters <b>Current Family if Different:</b> Married, 1 daughter
<b>Club(s)</b>	Dunshaughlin GAA [Meath]
<b>Occupation</b>	Country pub and hardware/drapery
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	Publicans
<b>Religion</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	Fianna Fáil
<b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>	Golf Club, Boxing Club

**REFERENCE NO. MH/1/2**

<b>Date of Report</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2010
<b>Period Covered</b>	1899 - 2010
<b>Counties/Countries Covered</b>	Dublin, Meath, Kilkenny, Tipperary
<b>Key Themes Covered</b>	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Training, Celebrations, Media, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Irish Language, Culture, All-Ireland, Club History, Irish, History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Politics, The Troubles, Opening of Croke Park, Purchase of Grounds
<b>Interview Summary</b>	<p>Brendan talks about the GAA in Dunshaughlin where his family has had a pub for decades. When he was growing up things were simple and their facilities were basic. He remembers cycling to games and also supporting his brother who played on the Meath team for a while. Brendan preferred to take part in cross-country running but he loved the excitement of the GAA, which he feels is much better to watch than rugby or soccer. His father was very much involved in the Gaelic League and Brendan has photographs, slides, diaries, poems, race cards and medals dating back to the late 1800s/early 1900s which provide him with a rare glimpse into such a crucial period for the development of the GAA.</p> <p>00:35 Brendan was born in a house beside Dunshaughlin in 1924. His father had a pub. They had no electricity until 1950, no water until 1956 and no sewage until the early 1980s. His father was from Garretstown and his mother from Milltown County Dublin. Her family name was Hackett. He had four brothers and four sisters and was the third youngest. He worked wherever he could get it - on farms, cutting timber.</p> <p>06:10 His brother was once on the Meath team. The first game he remembers is watching his brother in 1936. They were beaten by Mayo in the League final in Croke Park. He was with the Meath team that evening in Barry's Hotel when they were eating their dinner. There was a school teacher named Keegan on the team, as well as Tony and Paddy Donnelly on the team. They went down to the Teachers' Club in Parnell Square. Next day Brendan went to school and had no homework done.</p>

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10:05 He played football in primary school and came up against the legendary Brian Smith in a game against Garretstown one day. He was too good for them. Frankie Burren was a forward for Meath in 1949 and was very good at taking frees. Edmund Lyons was a very good Dunshaughlin player back then too. One time they were playing Drumree and Drumree objected to Lyons being on the Dunshaughlin team as he had played for a Dublin club the year before. He didn't play for Meath again.

15:15 Facilities were basic when they played football as youngsters. There was very little training they would just get together and play football. Brendan was more into cross-country running than playing football. To get to a game they hopped on a horse and trap. Some people had cars but most of the time they cycled. They would cycle to Mullingar and Croke Park for games. If some of the junior team players had not arrived on time for a game, younger boys like Brendan would be drafted into the team to play in their place.

20:00 Dunshaughlin won a junior hurling title in the 1950s. Not long after they won a junior football title. They beat Duleek in Duleek on one occasion and that was a major victory. A Fr Tully wanted Brendan's brother to play for the junior team but he refused as he was already on the senior team and Brendan feels that this incident worked against his brother in the long run.

22:00 Brendan thinks it was a good idea to open up Croke Park. Brendan was only ever at one soccer game, in 1950 between the League of Ireland and the Irish League. It was very monotonous to him. Some of his friends would be afraid to be seen going into the soccer game. Back then you weren't allowed. Clubs weren't allowed to have dances either - they could only have a céili and that was it. Carnivals started up in 1950 and they were a success.

25:50 The club in Dunshaughlin is very important. People got great enjoyment out of following the club. They won three senior championships in-a-row one time. Denis Kealey was marking Trevor Giles in a game against Skryne which they lost, and Giles did not get a score in the first half of the game. But Giles was 'very cute' and you couldn't keep him down for long.

28:55 Rugby is a threat to the GAA now, because ordinary people can play it now - not just people from a certain class. A man named Alfie Toon in Dunshaughlin who had a great shot at clay pigeon shooting in the 1940s and there was a rugby player who was equally good. One time the two of them went drinking the night before a competition and they weren't allowed shoot the next day. Brendan prefers not to have the soccer crowd in his pub, as they can be troublesome. In the summertime the soccer crowd would travel with the Dublin GAA fans to games and that changed the whole group dynamic. In the wintertime if Dublin came to play only regular GAA fans came and they weren't a problem. Soccer fans boo their teams too much according to Brendan.

33:05 Brendan's father founded the first Gaelic League club in Meath with a man named Murphy. He has a diary from 1900 that tells all about it. His father got Irish lessons in Dublin from people named McGuinness, Burke and a young Connolly. Seán Boylan's father wrote to Brendan's father about refereeing a game and Brendan has that letter.

37:30 Some of the best games Brendan has seen include two provincial finals played in Croke Park on St Patrick's Day in the mid-1940s. He also once saw a great game between Tipperary and Kilkenny in hurling.

38:30 Brendan thinks the stronger emphasis that is on training nowadays is for the better.

39:20 Volunteerism is vital to the GAA. If they start paying players it would be a very bad development.

40:10 Brendan loves the excitement of the GAA games. Rugby is too brutal in his eyes. Gaelic games are very skilful.

40:45 Brendan has a 1908 junior hurling medal that belonged to a man named Jack Clark who worked with his father.

42:40 Brendan doesn't travel too far to games anymore. If he goes to Croke Park there is too much walking involved from where you park to the stadium. In previous years it was possible to park much closer to Croke Park.

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	<p>44:35 Brendan used to listen to Micheál OHeiher and spoke to him once in relation to a book he was working on. Brendan had old race cards from Baldoyle, the Phoenix Park and other places dating back to 1903. He also has old photographs and slides that his father took, including a photo from the Hill of Tara in 1899. His father developed the photographs himself and wrote prose and poetry too - in Irish and in English. Brendan has photos of an obelisk monument to the Battle of the Boyne that was later blown up by the IRA.</p> <p>51:30 Brendan thinks the GAA is good for the youth. The GAA started a pitch and putt club in the area. John O'Dwyer and Patsy McLoughlin helped start that. They got the field for 19,500 pounds at the time. It is worth multiples of that now.</p>
<p><b>Involvement in GAA</b></p>	<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 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>No titles won</p> <p>Played for 3-4 to Junior level</p>
<p><b>Record as an Administrator</b> (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Chairman Pitch and Putt started by GAA players</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: 00:53:00</p>
<p><b>Language</b></p>	<p>English</p>

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**To be filled in by Interviewer:**

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Signed:      Ann-Marie Smith

Date:          2<sup>nd</sup> June 2010