

GAA Oral History Project
Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Patrick Murray
Date of Interview	14 th Jan 2011
Location	Peter's home, near Forkhill
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Peter Shields
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1934 Home County: Louth
Education	Primary: Ballinful (or Roche) N.S. Secondary: Marist College, Dundalk
Family	N/A
Club(s)	Roche Emmets GAA [Louth] in the 1950s Forkhill Peadar Ó Doirín's GAA [Armagh] 1961 onwards
Occupation	N/A
Parents' Occupation	N/A
Religion	N/A
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

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Date of Report	14 th July 2012
Period Covered	1940s - 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Armagh, Louth, Dublin
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Education, Media, Emigration, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Career, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Professionalism
Interview Summary	<p>Peter Shields discusses his school days in Louth, as well as the origins and early development of the 'Roche' GAA club. Shields remarks on the quality of club football in Louth in the 1950s and on the experience of following the fortunes of the county's team during that decade, including the famous 1957 All-Ireland final. During this time, Shields played with Roche and he describes the attitude to training, the paucity of money and the quality of facilities during this time.</p> <p>Peter Shields transferred his GAA allegiances to Forkhill in Armagh, where he was then married and resident, in 1961. He talks about the problems faced by the small club and points up the contribution of a number of 'outstanding' clubmen to the club. He talks about his own involvement as a player and mentor and his approach to coaching and training. Shields reflects on the highlights of his experience following Armagh county teams from the 1950s to 2002 and he speaks of his admiration for a number of players who lined out for the Orchard county, including Bill McCorry and Joe Kernan.</p> <p>A GAA-man throughout his life, Shields was also interested in soccer and he speaks of his opposition to the rule which banned participation in, or attendance at, soccer game. Other GAA rules are also discussed, including those around the handpass, the pick-up and time-keeping. Shields reflects also on the role of women and the media in the GAA and concludes by dispensing advice to younger members of the GAA on the importance of 'dedication' to their teams and clubs.</p> <p>00:00:30 Peter Shields is described as having been 'heavily involved' in the GAA, firstly with a club called Roche in Co. Louth and later with Forkhill in Co. Armagh, where he served as a player, manager and officer of the club.</p>

	<p>00:01:27 School days: recalls attending Ballinful (or Roche) National School and lack of organised activity. Mentions informal games, using makeshift ball, including pig's stomach.</p> <p>00:02:40 Playing on his own, kicking ball against gable wall.</p> <p>00:02:55 Parent's attitude to football: mentions their encouragement, as well as their lack of interest.</p> <p>00:03:00 Secondary school at Marist College, Dundalk and the place of Gaelic football in the life of the school. Playing on under 14 and under 15 teams.</p> <p>00:03:20 Foundation of Roche Emmets club and attending his first game between two sections of the same parish.</p> <p>00:03:52 Reference to playing for Roche 'at all levels' and the curtailment of his participation due to work with the Irish Merchant Navy.</p> <p>00:04:10 Remarks on the high quality of football in Louth at the time, ca. Late 1950s.</p> <p>00:04:25 Talks about supporting Louth and his heroes on county team: Eddie Boyle, Sean Boyle, Stephen White, Jimmy McDonnell, Tom Conlon, Jim Tuft.</p> <p>00:05:17 Discusses family's GAA tradition: refers to an Uncle who played football with a team in Kilcurry, a forerunner of the Roche club. Mentions also Uncle owning van and taking group to games.</p> <p>00:05:50 Considers the cost of entry to Croke Park in the late 1950s, as well as the price of a mineral.</p> <p>00:06:20 Mentions eating sandwiches after games rather than attending restaurants.</p> <p>00:06:40 Talks about attending Louth V Cavan in All-Ireland semi-final at Croke Park. Refers to the stars of the Cavan team, including John Joe O'Reilly and PJ Duke.</p> <p>00:07:55 Discusses attending the 1957 All-Ireland final, when Louth defeated Cork.</p> <p>00:08:28 Recalls the Louth team's homecoming after the 1957 final and the impact that victory had on the standard of club football.</p> <p>00:09:10 Discusses absence of facilities when he started playing for Roche and makes general observations on grounds and facilities across the county and beyond. 'You</p>
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	<p>simply togged out behind a hedge....’</p> <p>00:10:15 Tells story of training on Christmas Day in Roche football field, 1953-54. Says they washed in bog at bottom of field afterwards.</p> <p>00:10:50 Talks of love of the game and the enjoyment of playing over managing etc.</p> <p>00:11:25 Talks about playing for Roche in the 1950s, the absence of money, the quantity of talented footballers – refers to being ‘unbeaten’ on the Roche pitch for 8 years during this decade.</p> <p>00:12:50 Describes the idiosyncrasies of the Roche pitch – ‘it wasn’t...a level pitch...’</p> <p>00:13:20 Discusses atmosphere in the Roche club.</p> <p>00:14:00 Discusses his move to Forkhill, getting married in 1959 and continuing to play with Roche until 1961, when he transferred to Forkhill.</p> <p>00:14:32 Talks about football in Forkhill, a junior team, in the 1960s. Refers to impact of emigration, competition from other clubs and the difficulty in fielding teams.</p> <p>00:15:29 Talks about Forkhill reaching – and losing - Armagh junior final in 1963 and 1965.</p> <p>00:15:44 Tells story about playing in junior final in Crossmaglen against Derrynoose – describes a serious injury sustained by Derrynoose player and how it was handled. ‘Facilities and first-aid were unheard of...’</p> <p>00:16:55 Reflects on the major changes in the GAA in Forkhill – improvements to pitch, the quality of club management.</p> <p>00:18:09 General observations on ‘outstanding’ clubmen – talks about the contributions of Peter, Francie, John and Eamon Murphy; also John Cunningham and Tom Smith.</p> <p>00:19:15 Talks about his wife washing the club jerseys for 10 years and remarks on the unmentioned heroism of the women and wives.</p> <p>00:20:00 Mentions that son Denis travelled from Mullingar to play for Forkhill.</p> <p>00:20:15 Becoming involved in management of club in 1962. As team manager and club chairman. Explains absence of management experience and the essential features of his</p>
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	<p>management style.</p> <p>00:22:00 Discusses his management approach to training and skill development.</p> <p>00:23:27 Tells story about reading a old book by a footballer and how he worked on his kicking and accuracy.</p> <p>00:24:50 Remarks on his lack of qualification to comment on modern training etc.</p> <p>00:25:10 Discusses the changes in women's role in the GAA: mentions the standard of women's football on television, the levels of female participation and the enjoyment they derive from it.</p> <p>00:26:50 Discusses the organisation of Forkhill club: refers to the poor record keeping until Peter McKeown became secretary; efforts to fundraise, including draws and the staging of a play.</p> <p>00:29:00 Comments on absence of dances during Lent and the role of stage plays in filling the social void.</p> <p>00:30:05 Discusses the physicality, the roughness and the associated with Gaelic football in the past and wonders why there weren't more injuries. 'Overall it remained fairly civilised.'</p> <p>00:31:45 References to influence of the GAA in keeping community together and preventing young players from getting into trouble.</p> <p>00:32:25 Recalls attending Armagh V Down in Casement Park, ca.1951. Describes it as 'a standout game'.</p> <p>00:33:15 Talks about Armagh's All-Ireland final appearance versus Kerry in 1953. Refers to the size of the crowd, the gates breaking down and the misfortune of Bill McCorry's missed penalty.</p> <p>00:34:15 Refers to Armagh playing Dublin in an All-Ireland junior final and replay.</p> <p>00:34:34 Mentions attending Armagh versus Dublin in 1977 All-Ireland final.</p> <p>00:35:00 Refers to 2002 All-Ireland final.</p> <p>00:35:10 Talks further about Bill McCorry and also about Joe Kernan.</p> <p>00:36:16 Comments on various players he admired on</p>
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	<p>Armagh's 1953 team and panel: Jack Bratton, Pat Murphy from Silverbridge, Bill McCorry; Malachy McEvoy; Peter McCreesh; Gene Morgan; Frank Kernan; Sean Quinn.</p> <p>00:38:35 Reflects on major rule changes in the GAA: talks about his opposition to the ban, to attending soccer matches in Dundalk and the activities of the Vigilante Committees.</p> <p>00:40:03 Talks about rule changes: the changing definitions of the hand-pass over the years and arguments over the pick-up.</p> <p>00:41:35 Discusses referees, umpires and controversial decisions – considers issues around the use of technology and independent time-keeping.</p> <p>00:43:07 Returns to the hand-pass and the confusion over what is and isn't legal.</p> <p>00:44:00 Discusses the GAA's amateur status and anticipates a 'semi-professional' future.</p> <p>00:45:30 Reflects on the existing state of Gaelic football and compares it to the situation that prevailed fifty years ago. Talks about tactical innovations and quotes Kevin Heffernan.</p> <p>00:49:00 Comments on the media coverage of Gaelic football in Armagh – mentions the importance of, for the purposes of encouragement, naming players in articles.</p> <p>00:52:15 Provides advice to young player and mentions the importance of 'dedication' to club.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</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 checked="" 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>Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p>Played football in the 1950s and 60s, first for Roche Emmets (Louth) and later Forkhill Peadar O Doinin's (Armagh)</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Club Treasurer, Club Chairman (Forkhill, Co. Armagh)</p>

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Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 00:54:49
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: Patrick Murray

Date: 14th Jan 2011