

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

<b>Name of Interviewer</b>	Regina Fitzpatrick
<b>Date of Interview</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2010
<b>Location</b>	Calry-St Joseph's Clubhouse, Sligo
<b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname)	Tom Haran
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1930 <b>Home County:</b> Sligo
<b>Education</b>	<b>Primary:</b> Grange NS, Co. Sligo <b>Secondary:</b> Sligo Vocational School, Sligo.
<b>Family</b>	<b>Siblings:</b> 2 brothers & 1 sister
<b>Club(s)</b>	St Molaise Gaels [Sligo]; Grange GAA [Sligo]
<b>Occupation</b>	Garage Storeman
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	Farmers
<b>Religion</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	Fine Gael
<b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>	Pioneers Total Abstinence Association, North Sligo Show Committee

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<b>Date of Report</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> June 2012
<b>Period Covered</b>	1884 - 2010
<b>Counties/Countries Covered</b>	Sligo, Roscommon, Galway, Mayo, Tipperary, Kerry
<b>Key Themes Covered</b>	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Coaching, Officials, Administration, Fundraising, Material Culture, Education, Emigration, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of the Club in the Community, Identity, Rivalries, Irish Language, Culture, Scór, All-Ireland, Club History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Purchase of Grounds
<b>Interview Summary</b>	<p>Tom talks about the local GAA scene in his native Grange in Sligo. When he was younger the GAA was not particularly strong in the area, but thanks to certain influential people - priests, teachers and locals - it gradually began to gain a foothold. Tom did not come from a GAA family but he himself had an interest and associated with others who did. They played in the local field, cycled to watch games, listened to big matches on the radio and collected at the gates at grounds all over Connacht. Soon the GAA was popular in the area and in the schools, and the coaching side became more organised and that made a big difference. Tom was also heavily involved in Scór, and he tells of how they got people involved originally. It was quite popular in the area and they enjoyed some success at All-Ireland level. For Tom Scór is a vital aspect of the GAA experience, which to him is all about enjoying and contributing to one's own native culture.</p> <p>00:20 Tom is from Grange in north Sligo, a rural area with a small village. There was a lot of farming in the area when he was young. There were GAA teams in the area going back to when the organisation was founded, but it was erratic and teams would be started up and then fizzle out again before another one was established. Sometimes a few parishes joined together to form a team, until the 1950s when it became more organised. It was usually junior teams, but eventually they fielded minor and other underage teams. His parents were not involved in the GAA when he was young, but neither were a lot of people.</p> <p>04:40 When Tom was young the pitch was near where he lived, on the Sligo-Bundoran road. He often went down to watch the games. 7-a-side tournaments were very popular. Fundraising was not very big; once they had a football, some jerseys and a place to play they were happy. In the 1950s</p>

they rented a pitch, and they used to get wood from the forest to make the goalposts. Facilities were very basic.

07:55 Grange's rivals included Drumcliff and Maghera. In Sligo town there was Craobh Rua and Calry. Some clubs came and went.

09:05 There was a lot of emigration during and after the war years, which had a big effect on local teams. Younger players had to be drafted into teams. There were fewer games played back then.

11:00 Sligo Technical did not enter competitions in the 1930s, but Grange Vocational did enter teams. Tom would play down the local field every Sunday. it wasn't very structured but people were interested and it was a place for people to go. Fishing was an alternative pastime but there wasn't much else. At night there was dancing.

13:55 The local club was founded in 1907, a Monseigneur Hines started the club and their grounds are named after him. He brought in structure and locals got involved in collecting funds to get things started. Frank Pew was a neighbour of Tom's and he was very involved at administrative level. Tom Kearns, Johnny Laden were players who were also interested in the organisational side of things. There was no soccer until years later, which was more popular at the other end of the parish in Cliffoney.

16:30 There was a headmaster at the local vocational school called Eamon Ford and he got a lot of boys into football, these players would then graduate on to the local club. From their exploits with the school they had experience of playing competitively. Some of these players went on to represent Sligo - players like Seamus Finney, Eugene Finney and Mattie Hoy. The headmaster also promoted camogie.

18:20 There were two very good hurlers in the area, John Joe Rooney and Noel Rooney, and they represented Sligo. Mattie Hoy, Joe Keaney and Seamus Fitzpatrick were good hurlers and played with Craobh Rua as the local clubs did not put out a hurling team. Camogie was big amongst the vocational schools.

19:20 Grange won a junior championship in 1959 and that was a breakthrough moment. They won junior and intermediate championships in the years after, and got to a Sligo senior championship final against Tourlestrane. The

	<p>1959 win brought in more interest and boosted general confidence levels.</p> <p>21:20 Tom was on a coaching committee for the county board. Coaching had been done on FÁS schemes. Coaches went around to schools and had sessions. There is a permanent coaching officer in Sligo now and have a link with Sligo IT. It has improved standards. Major national GAA figures like Mickey Moran, Colm O'Rourke and John Maughan of Mayo would sometimes take part in coaching sessions. Tom has been involved in coaching for over 20 years. A county officer named John Laden spearheaded the move. Mick Burke and Trevor Curry were involved too, as was Leo Boland. People appreciated the value of coaching.</p> <p>24:50 Tom feels that the 'catch and kick' style of the old days is not a prominent. There is more hand passing nowadays, it is faster and more of a running game. Players kept their positions back then, but now things are more interchangeable. There is less high fielding now. Mickey Kearns is a Sligo player who really stands out - he was a 'scoring machine' and could score from anywhere. Barney Oates played for Grange and was a top inter-county player. Mattie Hoy was a stylish forward, Seamus Finney was great for fielding the ball. Nationally you had Kerry's Mick O'Connell and Mick O'Dwyer, Kevin Heffernan for Dublin.</p> <p>29:45 St Mary's of Sligo is one of the best teams he has seen - they won numerous titles during the 1980s. Tubbercurry always produced good teams. Cloondara did well too.</p> <p>30:40 When he was younger Tom would go to matches on foot, by bicycle or on the back of a truck. In later years you piled as many people as you could into your car if you had one. He used to cycle to matches in Collooney which was over 15 miles each way. One man cycled to Boyle in Roscommon to see a match, a three-hour cycle.</p> <p>33:10 They often listened to Micheál O'Heiher on the radio. The battery-powered radios were charged up for the weekend's games. It was very important as there was less travel to distant venues back then. He didn't hear the 1947 final in New York but his brothers did, it was an evening game.</p> <p>35:10 He travelled to Tuam, Hyde Park in Roscommon , Carrick-on-Shannon, Castlebar to collect at the gates for games. There were no advance tickets issued for games.</p>
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Prices were modest back then. Venues improved over times and admission prices went up accordingly. For big games they would deposit the money collected at the local bank. At times they collected large amounts of money.

39:10 Tom got involved in Scór. It was popular during the winter and got well-established over the years. Scór was great for promoting the Irish culture - singing, dancing, recitations. Clubs would have their own competitions and successful entrants to progress to higher levels. People of all ages got involved. Senior Scór is more difficult now as adults are less interested in the competitive aspect of it all. St Michael's had an All-Ireland winner in the solo singing. Owenmore Gaels had a Scór na nÓg winner. Coolera and Calry has success too. Grange hosted competitions in the local hall. Scór is still popular in the area.

44:20 Clubs were asked to take part in Scór in the beginning and that is how Tom got involved. Many were willing to take part when approached and it was exciting to get so many people together. Grange had a question time team that made the All-Ireland final in Killarney in recent years. People involved in feiseanna were approached to get involved with Scór as they clearly had an interest in Irish cultural activities. People with stage experience got involved, as did Irish teachers. People who liked table quizzes took part in question time. Tom worked as chair of the county Scór committee and believes that standards have improved over the years. Traditional music is big in Sligo and that helps when it comes to Scór.

54:30 As chair of the county Scór committee Tom would get the message out to clubs to get involved. He had to seek out the people within a club who would be interested in Scór. At county board level some officers have more interest in Scór than others. Winning a singing competition in Killarney, and a Scór na nÓg singing competition in Thurles are memories that stand out for Tom.

1:00:45 Tom's best GAA memories are Sligo winning Connacht Championships in 2007 and 1975. He feels that having a GAA club in your locality is a good incentive for people to move to the area. It also gives him a sense of pride to have a local club. For Tom the GAA is an outlet for his enthusiasm and it gives him a lot of happy memories. He does not feel that the GAA has ever let him down as he trusts the people at the top to make the right decisions for the right reasons. Facilities are better now and players are looked after

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	properly and this is a good thing. The GAA is a good way to focus on one's Irishness, Tom feels. It is something to be preserved and encouraged.
<b>Involvement in GAA</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coach <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steward <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person <input 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)	N/A
<b>Record as an Administrator</b> (Positions held; how long for)	Chairperson of Sligo Scór (10-12 years) Secretary of Sligo Coaching Committee
<b>Format</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
<b>Duration</b>	Length of Interview: 01:06:57
<b>Language</b>	English

**To be filled in by Interviewer:**

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Signed: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2012