

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Arlene Crampsie
Date of Interview	16 th April 2010
Location	Patsy's home, near Aghyaran, Co. Tyrone
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Patsy Connolly
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1945 Home County: Tyrone
Education	Primary: Carrycoughan NS, Co. Tyrone
Family	Siblings: 2 brothers
Club(s)	St. Davog's GAC, Aghyaran
Occupation	Farmer
Parents' Occupation	Farmers
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	None
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Ceoltas; Pioneers

REFERENCE NO. TY/1/17

Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Gerard Devine
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1947 Home County: Tyrone
Education	Primary: Carrycoughan NS, Co. Tyrone Secondary: Strabane Technical School, Co. Tyrone
Family	Siblings: 6 brothers & 3 sisters Current Family if Different: Married to Margaret with 3 sons and 2 daughters
Club(s)	St. Davog's GAC, Aghyaran
Occupation	Male Nurse
Parents' Occupation	Farmer & Breadman [Father]; Farmer [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	None
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Ceoltas; Pioneers

REFERENCE NO. TY/1/17

Date of Report	15 th June 2012
Period Covered	1920 – 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Tyrone
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, Challenges, Sacrifices, Alcohol, Violence, Politics, Northern Ireland, The Troubles, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Opening of Croke Park, Ban on Security Forces, Relationship with the Association, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy/ Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Gerard and Patsy discuss the trials and tribulations of being involved in the GAA in Tyrone. They recall their days growing up and setting up their local club, Aghyaran. It took a collective effort from members of the community to keep the club going whether that was through playing, fundraising, organising or offering financial support. Gerard and Patsy recall both good times and bad, with emigration having a big effect on the club at times, and the Troubles also presenting difficulties. They built up important relationships with members of the clergy which helped the club to flourish, with success coming on the field in the late 1960s / early 1970s. Scór was also important to the people in Aghyaran, as were the fortunes of the Tyrone senior football team. Through their stories, Gerard and Patsy highlight the extraordinary efforts made by local people in order to make the GAA in the community a success. They remember each step of the way and acknowledge the contribution of a wide range of individuals to the cause that is Aghyaran GAA.</p> <p>00:30 Earliest memory (Gerard) is 1956 and watching Aghyaran play against Castlederg in Patsy's mother's field.</p> <p>01:30 Most of the local players were self-taught and Fr Willie Sproule played that day and went back to St. Kieran's College to the seminary in Kilkenny the next day.</p> <p>02:00 First day Aghyaran played was the day that Wexford</p>

	<p>beat Cork in the hurling final in 1956.</p> <p>02:15 His brother was playing for Aghyaran too.</p> <p>02:25 Patsy remembers his uncle arranging a meeting to form a club.</p> <p>03:05 His uncle located a field and they got people together to put up goalposts. Paddy McLaughlin, Sean McHugh, Cathal Doogan, John Philip O'Donnell, Charles Hugh McGlynn, Charlie Kerr, James Patrick Collins, Michael Dolan, Sean Harvey, Edward Joe, Sean McGorlick, Liam McGlinchey, Charlie McGlinchey, the Devine boys, Brendan Gallagher, Mickey McSorley were all there.</p> <p>04:45 Paddy McLaughlin built the goalposts and they used his tractor and trailer.</p> <p>04:55 The goalposts came from Baronscourt plantation. Jimmy Owens and Fr Morris, the first chairman, was there.</p> <p>05:24 The crossbar was narrow and taken from a bush.</p> <p>05:55 Tyrone had never won an Ulster championship at that stage, though they beat Cavan to one later that year.</p> <p>06:15 Buses used to go to Croke Park in the 1940s when Tyrone got to two All-Ireland minor finals.</p> <p>06:35 A man named Sean McHugh used to say that what they were doing at the time was getting ready for a bishop to come.</p> <p>06:45 It was the time of the 'Border Campaign' and the IRA was active.</p> <p>06:55 Fr Morris was the curate and thought the boys starting the football club were planning on blowing something up.</p> <p>08:00 In the border area by Tieveclogher, Meenreagh, Leight over by Garvagh they played football and could help others who wanted to play.</p> <p>08:40 There was less emigration at the time.</p> <p>08:55 They played six years before winning a league match.</p> <p>09:10 Castlederg did not have a team at the time.</p> <p>09:25 On Easter Sunday 1920 Mick Collins and Tim Murphy had a team in Corgary and they played Stirne.</p> <p>10:05 They bought footballs but it died out because of</p>
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	<p>emigration.</p> <p>10:25 People in the 1950s were more educated after the free education act came in 1948 and people stayed around.</p> <p>10:45 Patsy's first county game was the Ulster final in 1956 in Clones. Mickey Kerr from Beragh was playing.</p> <p>11:40 One time they played Donemana in 1957 and the jerseys were green and white.</p> <p>12:40 Aghyaran were playing Trillick in a league game but the referee did not show up so Jimmy Owens, club secretary, acted as referee and became more and more biased and there was trouble, but Aghyaran had their first win.</p> <p>15:00 In 1965 they won an intermediate league and all the team were pioneers.</p> <p>15:30 They took the green and white colours from Celtic.</p> <p>15:55 The club was called St. Davog's because it was Fr Willie's idea and had connections to Lough Derg and he was supposed to have been a disciple of St. Patrick.</p> <p>16:30 In 1956 a second school opened up and was called St. Davog's and the Parish Priest was a Fr McGlinchey from Glenfinn.</p> <p>17:45 It was important to be on good terms with the priest because he would read out the club notes at Mass.</p> <p>17:15 They got the football from Castlederg and wore big brown boots.</p> <p>17:45 There was a well behind the goals in the field and that was a shower.</p> <p>18:00 Eddie Devine and Robbie Sproule were playing Urney and lost and were cross about a square ball decision.</p> <p>18:40 In 1956 they moved to the parochial field in December and stayed until 1978. The pitch had a slope and the GAA didn't like this, nor did their rivals Eglis.</p> <p>20:20 The first match was St Patrick's Day against Donemana and Aghyaran lost.</p> <p>20:45 Nobody coached the players outside of the summer time as people were in college. Michael Dolan, Sean McGoldrick, John Harvey, Edward Joe, Arthur Meehan, Mickey Brown, George Sproule, Eddie 'Farrah' Gallen from</p>
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	<p>Ballybofey came and played.</p> <p>21:55 It was just a West Tyrone league then so the farthest they would have to go would be Ballygawley or Omagh. There was no junior league so they often had to play senior teams.</p> <p>22:15 They played Creggan (near Carrickmore) and Jimmy Glass played, a great free taker. Jackie McGlinchey hurt his elbow. Creggan won.</p> <p>23:35 They travelled to games in cars.</p> <p>23:45 In 1963 Jimmy Owens had a car and he gave Sean Harvey the keys to the car and everyone piled in to go play Donemana and encountered a funeral.</p> <p>24:55 Jimmy had TB and was in hospital in Dungannon.</p> <p>25:55 People who had no interest in GAA still offered to help out with their cars.</p> <p>26:30 They played a team named Largie (near Ederney) and Francie McKenna and Tommy Corey were playing as was Josie McHugh and there was a bit of rough treatment.</p> <p>27:35 The club was very important in the community; there was nowhere else to go apart from the chapel.</p> <p>28:10 Claude Maguire of Fermanagh came to play and that was very exciting.</p> <p>28:40 There was another Claude Maguire later on.</p> <p>29:05 Patsy saw the Tyrone team in 1956.</p> <p>29:15 Michael O'Hehir was very important to them; he brought Croke Park to them and it was often better than the real thing.</p> <p>30:05 Derry almost won an All-Ireland in 1958 and Down won it in 1960 and 1961 – every northern county was behind them.</p> <p>31:00 Gerard had a radio in the house and after listening to games with Seamus Murphy and Mick O'Connell they went out to play in the street.</p> <p>31:30 Patsy remembers a day in Dromore when Gerard's father and Tommy Teague both thought they were linesmen at a game.</p> <p>32:10 Another day Gerard's brother Owen was an umpire and</p>
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	<p>he interfered with Kieran McElduff who was clean through.</p> <p>33:05 in 1963 Gerard's father was umpire in a game against Trillick and influenced the referee.</p> <p>35:00 They were always playing illegal players in those days; in 1956 Aghyaran went to play Clogher in the St Enda Cup and had players from Ballybofey including Jackie Reilly, a Donegal minor.</p> <p>35:40 Eddie Moss, a supporter, had to deny to people one time that the minors had overage players.</p> <p>36:10 Aghyaran and Urney met in a minor final in 1964 in Strabane. Aghyaran had Brendan Dolan who went on to play with Tyrone and was very good. Urney had Barney Langan and Liam Nelis and there was a melee. Pat Scully was the referee.</p> <p>37:20 1970 was the first time they beat Urney and they went to Pat Coyle's for ice-cream after and to Jeff's for minerals. Josie Harper tried to hit Michael Dolan during the game.</p> <p>38:10 Irish soccer goalkeeper Shay Given's father Seamus played for them.</p> <p>38:55 A lot of the people playing in 1964 were still there in 1970 so the rivalry was strong.</p> <p>39:25 The Dolan's – Brendan, Fr Andy, Michael, Thomas were very important and did a lot for the club.</p> <p>40:10 Michael Dolan was the main man on the team.</p> <p>40:40 Fr Brendan died in 1973 and had been playing with Tyrone. He had a Hogan Cup medal from 1965 with St Columb's and was in his prime when he died.</p> <p>41:25 Many priests played but didn't have to use assumed names - Fr Andy Dolan, Fr Eugene Dolan, Fr Willy Sproule, Fr Jack McGlinchey, Fr John McRory.</p> <p>42:50 In Trillick in 1966 Brendan could not play and confronted a rowdy local priest.</p> <p>43:45 They played against a Fr Boland from Strabane and Fr Andy Dolan would hit hard on the field.</p> <p>44:20 It didn't take much to keep a club going in those days as you didn't need as many resources.</p> <p>44:40 James Patrick Collins was treasurer and read out a</p>
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	<p>report at an AGM.</p> <p>45:10 In 1977 the Tyrone Fleadh was held in Aghyaran and Seán Reid came up from Clare to get it going. Jimmy Owens and Sean McHugh were greatly involved.</p> <p>46:35 Dinny McMenamin was involved too.</p> <p>46:50 The treasurer finished off with a ha'penny at the end of his report.</p> <p>47:10 They held dances to raise funds, or put on a play or a variety concert. The singer Nita Norry came to perform. They also held sports days and everyone pitched in.</p> <p>48:30 Jim Macken from Armagh ran the sports days and did everything by the book. Jackie Martin had an insurance business so that's where they went.</p> <p>49:35 Fr McLaughlin was curate in the 1960s and helped out with a bull he owned.</p> <p>51:05 In 1973 they had a sale of work which went well. Edward McHugh, a farmer, donated a calf.</p> <p>52:00 Willie Dolan tried to strike a deal as he was thrifty.</p> <p>53:00 Patsy went to the local pubs - Heaneys and Farrahs - in Ballybofey to raise money. They also went to Benny Browns and were given whisky.</p> <p>55:00 They approached the clergy about land and the people they knew in the clergy told them when the time was right.</p> <p>55:30 In 1974 Fr McCague agreed to sell the field. In 1978 the pitch opened.</p> <p>56:50 The county board were then satisfied when they had a decent pitch.</p> <p>57:20 The Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 helped them buy back the field as lots of unionists stayed away from council meetings and weren't there to object.</p> <p>58:40 In 1972 they got an estimate from Prunty for the pitch of £11,414; in 1995 it cost 55,000 pounds to do it up right.</p> <p>1:00:00 In 1962 Aghyaran won the west Tyrone junior league and were second to Trillick at intermediate level in 1963. In 1964 they were almost relegated from intermediate but in 1965 they won the Intermediate.</p> <p>1:01:10 Brendan Dolan played with Tyrone in 1968 and won</p>
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	<p>an All-Ireland junior title. Gerard's brother Martin Devine played with Tyrone Vocational Schools in 1970 and another local, Brian Moss played too. Many players were coming through.</p> <p>1:01:35 From 1965 to 2010 they never went back to junior.</p> <p>1:01:50 1967 was a bad year as many went to Scotland to work, in 1969 Aghyaran won the west Tyrone Intermediate league, in 1970 they were promoted from Division 1B to Division 1A and they were in the top league in Tyrone in 1971, 1972 and 1973.</p> <p>1:02:10 But in 1973 Brendan Dolan was killed.</p> <p>1:02:30 They won intermediate in 1977 and in 1981 they won their first Tyrone Intermediate Championship, beating Coalisland. Ciaran McGarvey was a star player, as was Paul Byrne.</p> <p>1:03:05 The Ederney tournament was a big event which they won in 1971. They played Coalisland during the day and went to the Ederney tournament and beat Donegal Town in the final and Brendan Dolan lifted the cup.</p> <p>1:04:30 East and west Tyrone coming together meant more travelling for matches.</p> <p>1:05:35 Emigration was very bad in the mid 1960s. They lost a lot of players. Emigration is still a problem today.</p> <p>1:06:10 You needed the support of priests to survive in a rural area because it gave you respectability in the eyes of local people. Fr Mick Collins was from the area, and Fr Andy and Fr Eugene supported them.</p> <p>1:07:10 The club kept young people focused on sport throughout the Troubles.</p> <p>1:07:40 As long as you didn't confront the authorities you were left alone.</p> <p>1:08:00 There were whole families in Castlederg who had to leave the area because of the Troubles.</p> <p>1:08:20 In 1973 girls would sell tickets as men would not ignore them as easily.</p> <p>1:09:10 After Brendan Dolan died Ciaran McGarvey came to play and he was really good.</p> <p>1:09:45 In 1973/1974 they had a Clarke man in goals and he</p>
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	<p>was a 'non-Catholic' from Castlederg. He was warned off from playing.</p> <p>1:10:20 Ulster Council Secretary Danny Murphy visited in 1996 and said that in his neck of the woods in Warrenpoint they would get a few RUC men joining as a result of the lifting of the ban, but in Aghyaran that would never happen as relations with the RUC were not good.</p> <p>1:11:05 There were notices in the newspaper about the hunger strikes. Some clubs were uncomfortable about it but they had support in Aghyaran.</p> <p>1:11:45 The Aghyaran GAA centre was firebombed in 1990 by the UFF and Patsy happened to be there that night. It cost 150,000 to do it up and they were closed for 18 months.</p> <p>1:13:05 If you didn't accept the compensation offer made to you, the case could go to arbitration for a few years.</p> <p>1:13:45 The club reacted positively; it was a challenge.</p> <p>1:14:55 The GAA centre is used for all kinds of indoor sports but outside it is just Gaelic football.</p> <p>1:15:30 There was hurling in 1984 and 1985 but at a very limited level. There was camogie in 1973 and 1974. The only clubs in Tyrone with hurling are Dungannon, Coalisland and Carrickmore.</p> <p>1:16:15 In 1968 they played Tattyreagh, having watched them the previous week, and beat them. Brendan Dolan came back from college in Belfast to play. Gerard had to mark their playmaker, Johnny McCarroll. The victory was a huge result for Aghyaran.</p> <p>1:17:50 Scór was big and started in 1972, the day of Bloody Sunday in Derry. Brendan Dolan and Patsy picked up Jimmy Owens and Tommy Keenan, stopping in Killeter, Jim Macken, Sally Kelly, Brendan Ronan. Declan O'Neill was the MC.</p> <p>1:20:30 A man arrived from Derry with news of what had happened that day.</p> <p>1:20:45 Sally won in her singing competition.</p> <p>1:21:35 Heroes include Peter Canavan for picking up Sam Maguire, Michael Dolan in Aghyaran for getting things done, Michael O'Hehir the broadcaster, the Down team of the 1960s with Sean O'Neill, Jim McKeever, James McCartan, Paddy Doherty. Donegal players like PJ Flynn, Brian McEniff. Tyrone's Frank McGuigan. Brendan Harkin, Joe Martin,</p>
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	<p>Jimmy Treacy, Pat Darcy were top officials.</p> <p>1:26:00 Bad memories are vivid, like the day Brendan Dolan was killed. Winning the championship in 1981, winning the Ederney tournament, Tyrone senior football All-Irelands were highlights.</p> <p>1:27:35 Losing the 1995 All-Ireland is one of the worst moments.</p> <p>1:27:55 Michael Dolan sacrificed a lot for the Aghyaran club.</p> <p>1:28:25 Disappointments include championship defeats and Aghyaran not winning a senior championship.</p> <p>1:29:15 The GAA has been a huge part of Gerard's life and his family are involved too. It's a community thing and it develops people.</p> <p>1:30:20 Gerard's son is a club rep, his son Anthony still plays, his daughter Mary is a big supporter and his daughter Dominique is involved with the club.</p> <p>1:31:00 The GAA has kept Patsy going all his life and he has made great friends.</p> <p>1:31:45 When Tyrone won the All-Ireland in 2003 it was great because they felt they had a jinx on them; A local man John Dolan was a sponsor of the team in 2003.</p> <p>1:32:40 Aghyaran have won numerous Scór titles in Tyrone and one All-Ireland title in 1986. They were runner up in the solo singing that year with Marie Carlin. Their instrumental music group had Charlie O'Donnell, Jim Connolly and Pat McHugh. The novelty team had Barney Byrne, Rosaleen Byrne, Eddie McSorley, Sydney McSorley, Michael McLoughlin, Ally McSorley, Tommy Moss and Pat Logue and Kathleen McSorley. Sean McHugh was also involved.</p> <p>1:34:00 Scór is still going strong and the standard is very high.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</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>Record as a Player</p>	<p>Patsy: Played from the age of 16 – 46. Won West Tyrone</p>

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(Titles won; Length of time played)	<p>Leagues in 1965; 1969; 1977 and an All County Division 3 League in 1977</p> <p>Gerard: Played from 1963 to 1986. He won an Ederney Tournament in 1971; Intermediate Championship, 1981; All County Division 2 League in 1983. He was also involved in Scór Quiz Teams.</p>
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	<p>Patsy: Club Treasurer in 1970s for 15 / 16 years and Social Centre Secretary, 1989 – 2004. He was Delegate to All County League Meetings and to the West Tyrone Board.</p> <p>Gerard: Club Secretary for 7 years in the 1970s and for 10 years in 2000's; Finance Committee Member from 1992 – 2004. He was delegate to All County League Meetings and to West Tyrone Meetings.</p>
Format	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
Duration	<p>Length of Interview: 01:34:36</p>
Language	<p>English</p>

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: _____ Arlene Crampsie _____

Date: _____ 15/06/12 _____