

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Ronan Halpenny
Date of Interview	31 st Jan 2011
Location	Michael Treanor's house, Forkhill
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Michael Treanor & Eamon Larkin
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Males
Born	Year Born: N/A Home County: Armagh
Education	N/A
Family	N/A
Club(s)	Forkhill Peadar O'Doirnin GAA [Armagh]
Occupation	Construction worker (Michael Treanor) Farmer (Eamon Larkin)
Parents' Occupation	N/A
Religion	N/A
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

Date of Report	15 th July 2012
Period Covered	1940s - 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Armagh, Monaghan, Down, Cavan, Kerry
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Education, Religion, Media, Emigration, 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, Challenges, Politics, Northern Ireland, The Troubles, Professionalism, Economy / Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Michael Treanor and Eamon Larkin, both members of Peadar O Doirnin GAA club in Forkhill, begin the interview by recalling their family backgrounds in the GAA and discussing the historic development of their club through to the 1950s and 60s. In doing so, they touch upon a number of themes, including emigration, the role of women and transport to and from games. Highlights in the club and county experience are recalled, as are Scór and the GAA's role in the promotion of the Irish language.</p> <p>The impact of the Troubles in club life – and the GAA in general – are considered in some detail, with stories told of the harassment and murder of GAA members. The interview concludes with the two men assessing the challenges facing the GAA and reflecting on the reasons for pride in the GAA.</p> <p>The sports featured are Gaelic football and soccer.</p> <p>00:00:50 Michael Treanor refers to be known also by a nickname 'Ike' Treanor.</p> <p>00:01:37 (EL) Earliest memory: recalls radio broadcast of the 1947 All-Ireland final from the Polo Grounds in New York.</p> <p>00:02:01 (MT) Earliest memory: neighbours coming into family home to listen to radio commentaries.</p> <p>00:02:32 (EL) Mentions a grand uncle telling stories about old players in the village from the 19th century. Tells also of his father talking about a team in Jonesborough called the Jonesborough Mountaineers. Talks also of local newspapers carrying details of local matches in the 1890s.</p>

	<p>00:04:02 (EL) Comments that men from Dromintee played for teams in Dundalk.</p> <p>00:05:00 (MT) Remarks how 'in those times' it was possible to play simultaneously for different teams in different counties. Says his own father played in goal in Crossmaglen as a 'ringer'.</p> <p>00:05:25 (EL) Talks about how emigration could impact on parishes and townlands and their ability to field teams.</p> <p>00:05:45 (EL) Discusses the changes in club facilities in Forkhill, contrasting past and present. Outlines the amenities available in most clubs.</p> <p>00:06:48 (MT) Refers to 'child protection'.</p> <p>00:07:08 (EL and MT) Discuss Forkhill players involved – including a Kildare native and butcher in Forkhill, Jim Maguire – with Armagh's All-Ireland junior winning team of 1926. The discussion broadens to include other Forkhill players, among them Jim Murphy, to play with Armagh up to the late 1950s.</p> <p>00:10:55 (EL) Club history: mentions the disappointment of losing county junior final in 1963 and talks about events leading up to the game and during the game.</p> <p>00:13:15 (MT) Club history: selects as club highlights the winning of the Armagh junior championship in 1981 (??) and the success of the 'school team', under Master Kevin Campbell.</p> <p>00:14:04 (EL) Talks about emigration in the 1950s and the exodus of players forcing underage players to play adult football.</p> <p>00:15:04 (MT and EL) Mention women's role in washing jerseys, on social occasions and their absence from committees.</p> <p>00:16:16 (MT) Welcomes rise of Women's football and argues that they be brought under the GAA umbrella.</p> <p>00:16:55 (MT and EL) Mention the absence of other sports in the area in the past and the range of sports currently on offer, especially soccer.</p> <p>00:17:53 (EL) Remarks on the absence of politics from the Forkhill GAA club.</p> <p>00:18:03 (MT) Remarks as a former chairman on the absence</p>
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	<p>of politics in the club.</p> <p>00:18:15 (MT) Comments on the lack of clerical influence within the club, save for the attendance of a parish priest at dinner dances.</p> <p>00:18:50 (EL) Talks about Gaelic games in Wembley (Wembley Tournament) in the 1960s.</p> <p>00:20:07 (EL) Talks about Armagh's inter-county rivalry with Cavan. Refers to awe with which Cavan were viewed and mentions the names of some of their leading players, among them John Joe O'Reilly. Talks about attending to watch Armagh in the minor and senior Ulster finals in 1954. Tells story about recent meeting with Noel Rice of Jonesborough, a Minor player in 1954, and his connection with Mick O'Dwyer.</p> <p>00:23:29 (MT) Talks about the breakthrough of Down in the 1960s and the impact it had on Armagh.</p> <p>00:24:02 (MT) Remarks on absence of cars and the difficulty in getting to games as a child.</p> <p>00:24:20 (EL) Talks about the holding of Ulster finals in Clones and the trains that ran from Dundalk. Talks about the 'memorable' Ulster final of 1956 when Cavan met Tyrone. Refers to Eileen Donaghy singing on day when her husband, Paddy, was playing for Tyrone. Reference also to Jim Devlin, Tyrone full back, being murdered by UVF.</p> <p>00:26:00 (EL and MT) Discuss changes in Gaelic football since the 1950s, including the loss of the good place-kicker and the taking of long range points.</p> <p>00:27:45 (MT) Mentions playing multiple games in a day or a weekend.</p> <p>00:28:05 (EL) Comments on the links with farming and the natural fitness that derived from work on the land.</p> <p>00:28:40 (EL) Considers the atmosphere at GAA games, including the absence of segregation etc.</p> <p>00:29:40 (MT) Considers the GAA's role in promotion of Irish language. MT argues for teaching of the Irish language to be 'compulsory' and touches on its association with Irishness.</p> <p>00:30:25 (EL) On the Irish language, he recalls his schooldays and the 'dark days' of the Stormont administration. Says the GAA should 'do as much as they could' and remarks, with regret, on the link between the</p>
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	<p>language and politics.</p> <p>00:31:20 (EL) Remarks about the importance of Scór as an outlet for non-players.</p> <p>00:31:50 (MT and EL) Discuss the role of the GAA throughout the Troubles or, as they refer to it, the 'War'.</p> <p>00:33:40 Impact of the Troubles on Forkhill: stories are told of the disruption to GAA members in nationalist areas. Reference to suspicions of British army and their linkage of the GAA membership with IRA membership. EL draws parallels with an earlier period in Irish history.</p> <p>00:34:35 (MT) Comments on travelling through Loyalist areas going to games.</p> <p>00:35:00 (EL) Tells story of travelling to first senior game in 1958 and being pulled out of cars by 'B' Specials. Mentions that one of the 'Specials' had previously made a delivery to his house.</p> <p>00:36:10 (TM) Mentions coming up to the 12th July and avoiding 'Market Hill'. Says also that things have changed for the better, but you 'still have to be cautious'.</p> <p>00:36:40 (TM) Greatest memory –being handed the Sam Maguire cup on the bridge in Forkhill by Joe Kernan.</p> <p>00:37:02 (EL) Recalls final whistle being blown in 2002 and watching Kieran McGeeney. 'It was great to live to see that...' Talks about men who passed away without witnessing the All-Ireland victory.</p> <p>00:38:40 (EL) Talks about bad memories of Armagh teams being defeated.</p> <p>00:39:40 (EL) Refers to the shooting of Sean Brown from Bellaghy. Mentions also St. Enda's/Glemgormley where a plaque stands to 10 people shot for being GAA members.</p> <p>00:40:01 (TM) Allusion to atrocities committed on the other side.</p> <p>00:40:27 (EL) Reasons for pride in the GAA: refers to Croke park and small fundraisers.</p> <p>00:41:00 (TM and EL) Emphasises the importance of maintaining volunteerism and local, community roots.</p> <p>00:41:50 (EL) Importance of working on rules.</p> <p>00:42:15 (TM) Talks about using the experience of former</p>
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	<p>county players being put into clubs.</p> <p>00:42:50 (EL) Talks about lack of recognition of losing All-Ireland final teams.</p> <p>00:43:35 (TM) GAA hero: talks about Michael O Muircheartaigh and his attendance at Peadar O Dornin GAA club functions.</p> <p>00:44:00 (EL) Mentions a tributes paid by Michael O Muircheartaigh and Mick O'Dwyer to Mal McEvoy from Killeavy.</p> <p>00:44:45 (EL) Mentions the importance of volunteers in Forkhill, including Ned Devlin in Jonesborough who offered his lorry to carry players to games.</p> <p>00:46:10 (TM and EL) Talks about the importance of the Millenium night, the development of the club rooms and fundraising across south Armagh.</p> <p>00:47:35 (TM and EL) Remarks on drop in volunteerism, impact of Celtic Tiger and availability of other attractions.</p> <p>00:48:52 (EL) Mentions that interviewer's grand-uncle was a former President of the GAA.</p>
Involvement in GAA	<p>Both:</p> <p>✓ Supporter ✓ Player ✓ Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach ✓ Steward</p> <p>✓ Chairperson ✓ Committee Member <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p> <p>✓ Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____</p>
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	N/A
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	Michael Treanor is a former Chairman of the Forkhill club

REFERENCE NO. AR/1/28

Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 00:49:24
Language	English

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: Ronan Halpenny

Date: 31st Jan 2011