

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Arlene Crampsie
Date of Interview	4 th May 2010
Location	Interviewee's home, near Hackballscross, Co. Louth
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Willie Treacy
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1929 Home County: Louth
Education	Primary: Ballinful NS, Co. Louth Secondary: St. Mary's / Marist, Dundalk and Dundalk Tech
Family	Siblings: 1 sister Current Family if Different: Married to Patricia with 3 sons and 3 daughters
Club(s)	Roche Emmet's; Kilkerry Emmet's
Occupation	Farmer
Parents' Occupation	Farmers
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Fine Gael
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	IFA

REFERENCE NO. LH/1/5

Date of Report	15 th June 2012
Period Covered	1946 – 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Louth
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Material Culture, Media, Emigration, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Rivalries, Scór, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Childhood, Impact on Life, Challenges, Politics, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Opening of Croke Park, Professionalism, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy/ Economics
Interview Summary	<p>William recalls starting up his local GAA club in Louth, Roche Emmets. A group of locals used to play football together but they knew nothing about the rules or how to organise themselves. Eventually some experienced people came in and helped them start the club. They soon secured a field to play on and some goalposts, and they were on their way. William played for some years but an injury meant that he had to stop playing. He remained involved and helped to raise funds, contributed in an administrative capacity, and compiled a history of the club with two others. He recounts stories of his youth detailing the fun that they had, the trouble they got into and the great games that they witnessed</p> <p>00:00 Introduction</p> <p>00:30 He is turning 81 in 2010.</p> <p>00:50 They used to play in a field called the Castle Meadow and work on the farm at home. They would hear the thud of the ball and be eager to join the fun.</p> <p>01:25 The Roche Emmets team hadn't begun yet but they had battles in the meadow, It was 1946.</p> <p>02:00 People would be at the cross gambling and they bought a ball eventually.</p> <p>02:30 They went to Patrick Quigley's field at the foot of Roche Castle and played there. It was quite brutal as they were awkward.</p> <p>03:00 They set up a challenge match between the two ends</p>

	<p>of the parish. It went well but they then had another one and it was fierce.</p> <p>04:00 They used big stones for goalposts. Some people were injured and had to go to the doctor. They wondered if it was more trouble than it was worth,</p> <p>04:15 Then people who knew about football got it going again.</p> <p>05:15 The Roche team were affiliated in 1947. They have been entering competitions ever since.</p> <p>06:10 They togged out in the hedge.</p> <p>06:40 When people fell out it was along Fine Gael / Fianna Fáil lines. They wouldn't co-operate with each other.</p> <p>07:45 They used real footballs. They were heavy and not like the modern football. There was a tube in the football that you pumped up with a bicycle pump.</p> <p>09:05 Some players could kick the ball over the bar from 50 yards despite the fact that it was so heavy.</p> <p>09:35 Jack Treanor, Packie Grant, Packie Devlin and Dick Callaghan were big characters at the time.</p> <p>10:05 The club was founded by a group which included Oweny Kirk, Jim McCarroll, Wee Tom Treanor and Jamesie Flynn.</p> <p>10:40 They played a little bit at school but didn't have a lot of space. The ball often went into another man's field and he didn't like this. Sam Treanor would run to get the ball back. One time the man got the ball first and got the knife to it.</p> <p>12:10 Recalls a day when the school teacher was interrogating them after a ball was kicked through a window.</p> <p>13:20 In 1952 a priest named Fr McEvoy came from Dundalk and was interested in football. He had been involved with Dundalk Young Irelands and refereed games.</p> <p>14:15 One evening Fr McEvoy made a decision that the men on the sideline didn't like so they shouted 'Give the ref a jersey'. Fr McEvoy confronted the man who said it and they had words.</p>
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15:40 One evening after playing in Castle Meadow a few people decided to start a team. They put a notice in the local paper, The Democrat, which they paid for themselves after raising two shillings between them. In the end it cost one and six pence. They gave the money left over to Jamesie Flynn as he liked to go to the cinema.

19:20 They has a meeting in the Castle Meadow and Packie Devlin chaired it. Someone suggested calling the club 'Castle Emmets' and that was agreed but later county chairman Paddy Duffy said that there had already been a Castle Emmets, so they changed it to 'Roche Emmets'. Paddy misheard it as 'Rock Emmets' and that led to confusion.

22:55 There was confusion over the venue for their first game. Tommy Burns had given a big field and Tom Treanor purchased goalposts in the scrapyard in town. Oweny Kirk collected them and cleaned them up.

23:55 There was no crossbar so they used their imagination.

24:40 Packie Grant and Jack Treanor and Dick knew the rules of the game so there was nothing illegal going on at the club.

25:30 William only played club football and in 1955 he got injured with cartilage trouble. He went to a therapist in Dundalk and got treatment, and went to a surgeon in Drogheda. He ignored his advice and went back playing in a Louth junior final against Darver Volunteers. He didn't last long in that game and never played football again.

27:55 Usually someone had a car to travel to games in. Sometimes they cycled or walked.

28:30 Some people he knew once cycled to Bridgeacrin for Mass and then to Croke Park to see Louth in an All-Ireland semi-final.

29:25 Jamesie Flynn was a fitness fanatic and the others couldn't keep up with him cycling home from Croke Park. At Drogheda he somehow passed the bus coming home from Croke Park and got home in time to go to the cinema.

30:50 William's uncle took him to Croke Park to see Roscommon play Kerry. He couldn't see a lot because of the crowd. He remembers Phelim Murray playing.

	<p>32:05 William's cousin Paddy Meegan was a great footballer. Jim Quigley was another top player and William used to think he was the best in Ireland.</p> <p>33:30 Recalls learning about the Red Branch Knights at school.</p> <p>34:30 When Louth won the All-Ireland there were big celebrations.</p> <p>34:50 The Louth team is not so good today because of too much drinking and because of television leading people astray.</p> <p>36:35 Increased media coverage of the GAA is good.</p> <p>37:40 He finds soccer boring to watch but Gaelic football is much better.</p> <p>39:00 He is happy that the penalty kick has been brought forward under the rules in 2010.</p> <p>39:45 He didn't like the Ban on foreign games. They used to have vigilante committees in the clubs and people seen at soccer games were reported.</p> <p>40:55 Opening Croke Park was a good idea. People have to move with the times.</p> <p>42:10 The club played in Tommy Byrne's field first, then Muckien's field, then Jack Treanor's field. They purchased new grounds after that.</p> <p>43:20 There was a hill in Jack Treanor's field and home and away supporters would go on different sides of the hill. They used to call it 'Hill 16'.</p> <p>43:50 They bought facilities from Paddy McKeown. Castletown River flooded on the proposed area for the pitch and the location was deemed unsuitable for a football pitch. They were refunded the money they paid and bought land elsewhere for £50,000.</p> <p>45:10 They raised funds by running lottos and getting interest-free loans from certain people. The field was levelled, ploughed, re-seeded and they soon had fine pitches. The pitch was opened in the 1980s.</p>
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	<p>47:35 The priests were at the opening of the field. They blessed the ground and Armagh played Louth.</p> <p>49:30 Women were always involved with the club, often helping to organise and cook for functions in the local dance hall.</p> <p>50:10 There is ladies football in the club and there was camogie for a time.</p> <p>50:45 They also participate in Scór and they have won competitions for poetry recitations.</p> <p>52:00 Reads a poem by Jack Sands, a follower of Roche Emmets, called 'Roche v Gers'.</p> <p>56:15 He was on committees but never acted as a chairman, secretary or treasurer. He wasn't too involved but helped out if he was needed.</p> <p>57:20 Recalls playing in Castle Meadow before the club was formed. They couldn't get a referee and Jack Treanor asked him to fill in. He did so but Packie Devlin took the whistle off him and acted as referee. The players ignored him.</p> <p>59:35 He was involved in putting together the club history and Niall Craven and Brendan McCarroll (brother of Jimmy who played for Louth) joined him. They often argued but his wife, Patricia, always encouraged him to get the project done.</p> <p>01:01:30 The club paid for the publishing of the book. Willie discuss the contract price. There is a piece in it about Cardinal Ó Fiaich and William wanted a colour photo of the cardinal, which meant that costs went up.</p> <p>01:03:10 Jack Treanor and some of the others used to joke that the book would never happen.</p> <p>01:04:35 Players should not be paid although they ought to be recognised in other ways. There would be no Association without volunteers.</p> <p>01:05:00 Volunteers help them do great things at the club, like organise blitzes for underage players.</p> <p>01:05:40 The economic downturn that started in 2008 is not too apparent in the club. There is not a huge amount of</p>
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REFERENCE NO. LH/1/5

	<p>emigration - in the 1950s it was bad.</p> <p>01:06:40 Jim Quigley of Young Irelands is his GAA hero. Another would be his cousin Paddy Meegan of Meath. He could handle the biggest of the Kerry men. He played in the middle of the field for Leinster one time and did very well. He had a good turn of speed.</p> <p>01:08:00 Best memories include being captain of the Roche Emmets second division team when the club had their first major success. Writing the book on the club is another highlight.</p> <p>01:08:55 Biggest disappointment is not being able to play when the club won their first senior championship because of injury.</p> <p>01:09:20 He has made a lot of friends because of his GAA involvement. He enjoyed it a lot and has some great memories.</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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): <u>Author of Club History</u></p>
<p>Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p>Played between the ages of 24 and 27 and won 1 second division championship.</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Willie was involved on club committee for two or three terms.</p>
<p>Format</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Length of Interview: 01:09:55</p>
<p>Language</p>	<p>English</p>

REFERENCE NO. LH/1/5

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: ___Arlene Crampsie_____

Date: ___15/06/12_____