

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Arlene Crampsie
Date of Interview	22 nd Jan 2009
Location	Horse and Hound, Ballinabolla
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Bobby Goff (Robert)
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1956 Home County: Wexford
Education	Primary: Glynn NS Secondary: Wexford CBS
Family	Siblings: N/A Current Family if Different: Married to Suzanne
Club	Glynn Barntown [Wexford]
Occupation	Animal Pregnancy Scanning Technician
Parents' Occupation	Farmers
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Was Fine Gael, now Fianna Fáil

REFERENCE NO. WX/1/2

Date of Report	8 th Oct 2009
Period Covered	Late 1920's – 2009
Counties/Countries Covered	Wexford, Dublin
Key Themes Covered	Religion, Volunteers, Role of the Club in the Community, Fundraising, Grounds, Facilities, Club History, Family Involvement, Material Culture, Emigration, Recession, The Ban, Role of Women, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Administration, Officials, Coaching, Professionalism, Opening of Croke Park, Sacrifices, Impact on Life
Interview Summary	<p>Bobby is the chairman of Glynn Barntown club. He was involved with the local club from his youth up until the 80s when he had to give his full attention to his work. The club had historically strong links with the Church of Ireland community, and Bobby's father (who was also Church of Ireland) won three county medals with the club. The club is currently thriving with opportunities for children as young as 6 to get involved and there is a strong camogie club. The club has two main claims to fame the former president Michael Kehoe is from the club, and Nicky Rackard won his first medal with the club. Bobby's interview focuses on the church of Ireland community's involvement in Wexford GAA, the development of club facilities through a portion of land purchased from the land commission and novel fundraising ideas, the role of teachers, the clergy, emigration, recession, the roles and dedication of volunteers, the present state of the club and the increasing role of women.</p> <p>0.00 Introduction</p> <p>0.22 Glynn Barntown Club</p> <p>0.29 Earliest memory: Being at a district junior hurling championship with his father, 'Glynn hadn't won a match for about 10 years ... and they won the game and the club would have been very badly decimated by emigration at the time and would have found it even hard to field fifteen. I remember well being at that match and coming out of that match and there was a big celebration I think it was maybe '64 ... everyone clapping each other on the back, I was only 8 now at the time.'</p> <p>1.24 '1965 would be the first All-Ireland I can remember ... I watched it on TV I think at a neighbours I think we didn't even have a TV at the time.'</p>

	<p>1.40 1976 was the first All-Ireland he travelled to, they got a bus from the club and he was up on the back wall of Hill 16.</p> <p>2.00 Only goes to All-Ireland if Wexford are playing as he feels that it's so hard for people from the participating counties to get tickets.</p> <p>2.20 My father played hurling from a young age, from the late 20's up until sometime in the late 30's with Glynn Barntown ... he won three county medals one junior hurling in 1930, one intermediate in 1931 and intermediate in 1934... there were four church of Ireland players played including my father, that is something I would like to see documented because there was a fairly large working class church of Ireland population around, working class and farming population around... and that would have been very unique I would have imagined in the GAA in the 1930s, especially in 1930 - you're only talking about eight years after the civil war.'</p> <p>3.45 'The very famous Randle family hurley-makers in the parish, they're church of Ireland to this day ... John Randle would have been very much involved in the Wexford team in the 1950s, he used go to the games with a spoke ref in his pocket, and if he thought the hurl was too heavy or badly balanced for a player he would be out in Croke Park doing something with the hurl.</p> <p>4.15 His Grand-nephew Albert is county minor hurling selector.</p> <p>4.45 The Church of Ireland community is decimated through mix-marriage. They married into Catholics and became Catholic families.</p> <p>5.15 There is one underage Church of Ireland player, playing with the club.</p> <p>5.35 No tensions or discrimination because of religion.</p> <p>6.00 'We'd be one of the oldest clubs in Wexford, going back to 1885.' We were a 'Sleeping minnow' until 1928/29 until Micheal Kehoe (President of GAA in 1949) came to Glynn school as a teacher. Revived the club and brought them to three championships, 'Nicky Rackard won his first medal with the Glynn Barntown at that stage.'</p> <p>6.50 'Emigration would have really hit the club very hard because it's so close to Rosslare, it was very easy [to] get on the boat and go across. When I was a child in the '60s I thought that everybody when they reached the age of 16 or 18 that emigration said you had to do it.' On his road all of a</p>
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	<p>family of 5 emigrated and 9/10 of family of 12 emigrated.</p> <p>7.35 'The club was just barely able to field a team at that stage. I can remember actually playing on a team with men in their 50s just to make up the number at that stage.'</p> <p>8.05 More impact from our own people not going away than many new nationalities coming in. There are a few polish lads playing tennis at the club. At under age level now there are funny names.</p> <p>9.00 'The Church of Ireland lads that were playing at that stage were every bit as narrow minded as the Roman Catholics, you're talking about rural Ireland you know. I think, I'd like to think anyway that we would be very welcoming to outsiders, and I think we are, because our biggest ethnic minority in our club at the moment are the Dubs.'</p> <p>9.40 All the Dubs are very much involved in the club.</p> <p>10.15 Two schools in parish, Kehoe had major influence in the beginning, but he would have left club behind. Other school Eugene Curran would have been very much involved. Kehoe, taught him [Bobby] for two years. In 1966, the school won a Rackard League, U-14 Hurling competition, which was the launch pad for the club's success from the 1970s up to the present day.</p> <p>11.35 A few more teachers in the two schools were also important – Tony O'Brien in Barntown and Joe Ryan in Glynn.</p> <p>12.00 A lot of teachers living in the parish but teaching in other schools would also have had major impact on the club.</p> <p>12.25 Nicky Rackard played because Kehoe got him to play as an isolated player at the time.</p> <p>12.50 Also had Polish man at same time, who also played with Laois and worked on rural electrification with the ESB.</p> <p>13.10 'It's a nice bit of bragging rights there's only been two presidents of the GAA from Wexford and one of them came from our club and I suppose you'd always be bragging that Nicky Rackard won his first medal with Glynn-Barntown.</p> <p>13.35 Some priest had more of a role than others. Current parish priest 'Fr Paddy Stafford has been very hands on, did a lot of work on the grounds of the club, stepped back a bit now he was on the previous development committee ... has done a lot of work in the club, I mean work that can be seen ... physical work.'</p>
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	<p>14.30 Priest in Barntown has also always been available for the club.</p> <p>14.45 He's chairman of the club, this is his fourth year.</p> <p>15.05 He was treasurer in 1975 and 1976 as a very young fella, not even 19/20, he was vice-chairman in 1981, chairman in 1982 – 84, secretary in 1985, registrar at some point and involved in various sub-committees. In 1986 he had just got married, interest rates were high and as a small farmer he decided to focus on that and took a back seat until 2000.</p> <p>16.15 He became chairman again in 2006, it's his favourite role: 'I enjoy being chairman. I think I'm more of a leader than a follower, and most of my friends now would say that anyway.' He was involved with various teams, his playing career was short as he had a knee injury 'but to be honest about it, I was never very good anyway.' He was selector on the junior football team that won the county championship in 2008.</p> <p>17.35 'I enjoy going into the pitch and seeing so many boys and girls, playing, and not only playing, but just being around the place, seeing the place as the social centre for the parish.'</p> <p>18.00 Club plays a very important role in community. 'GAA club always ends up being the backbone of the rural area.'</p> <p>18.50 Volunteers: 'It couldn't function without it ... if you ask anybody in any GAA club in Ireland during the season how much does their mobile phone bill rise? I don't think you need go any further than that ... we did a bit of a survey on how many people were actually doing voluntary work in the club in 2007 and we found 90 in various roles from marking the pitch ... we have a bar now in our club and that's staffed voluntarily.'</p> <p>19.40 Talks about work involved in keeping the bar running.</p> <p>20.05 'We got out first pitch in 1975 and there was a small clubhouse built in the late 70s or early 80s, but our current clubhouse was opened in 2004 ... that incorporates two dressing rooms, a gym, a function room, a bar, a store and an office, referees changing facilities, we're doing a bit of work on that now, we're putting in a new gym at the moment into the old clubhouse ... we haven't made our mind up yet what we are going to do with the gym, but it's possibly going to be used as a dressing room for the Camogie club ... we also have a tennis club.'</p>
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	<p>21.30 Before they bought the field they played in various places around the parish including in Pat Lacy's field.</p> <p>22.00 'The Wilson estate was taken over by the land commission and there was ground available at the time that was in the early 70s and there was a level field and that's how I suppose somebody had the idea.'</p> <p>22.30 'It was by land commission annuity, so because it was for the GAA and the community they would have been getting it at a subsidised price from the land commission anyway, but then money was scarce and even then we fell behind on payments and that ... we ran a mayoral election in 1982 ... I was involved with one of the people on one of the campaigns ... we did everything, you name it to make money and we made at the time around £8000.'</p> <p>23.25 Cut loads of fire wood and raffled them in Enniscorthy and Wexford. Him and his friend Tom Rossiter – 'he wasn't long married at the time and he had got a wedding present of bone china and we used to bring it round to the pubs at the weekend and we used to raffle the bone china ... and we used to bring somebody with us anyway who always won the raffle so we got on fine with this anyway until we happened to be in a pub one night and we had the same bone china and there was somebody in the pub that had been in a pub that we had been in the previous weekend so we kinda had to exit very fast at that stage.'</p> <p>24.15 Load of blocks used to get stolen on them. They started putting hay under the blocks to make the load look bigger.</p> <p>24.45 Major funding is county development draw through Wexford county board. 'Every club ... must sell 100 tickets. The tickets are €60 each.' The county board gets €50 out of the first 100 tickets, after that club gets €50. We ran a 200 club for the last few years, done with the lotto. Made c. €40,000 a year out of that, they also have functions in the club house and nights at the races etc.</p> <p>25.55 Not difficult for him to make transition from player to manager, even when there were only 16 he was always 16. Pat Lacy asked him to become treasurer.</p> <p>26.35 'The camaraderie, the social scene.' Himself, secretary, treasurer, development chairman and their wives go for dinner once a month. 'Important part of building up morale in a club.'</p> <p>27.20 Try not to be too exclusively GAA, they have over 100</p>
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	<p>people playing tennis.</p> <p>27.55 Play hurling and football. They have academy which caters for kids from 6 – 10 in both sports and camogie. They field teams in U-12's, U-14's, U-16, U-18, U-21, junior and intermediate in football and junior and senior in hurling. Camogie is very strong fielding from U-12's to intermediates. Apart from U-12's who were defeated in final, they won either league or championship at every other level. There is one girl who has won eight medals.</p> <p>29.55 Popularity of Camogie: 'The best thing that ever happened, because the girl that's playing camogie today is the Mammy that'll be bringing the kids to the field in fifteen years time.' Hopefully she will have realised the importance of it. Also men will get more lee-way when they're bringing the kids to the field. 'Where you have young girls in the field playing Camogie, you will have young guys.'</p> <p>31.00 'If they're all in the field they couldn't be in a better place.'</p> <p>31.20 Female treasurer, secretary of Coiste na nÓg, the chairperson of the camogie club is also on the GAA club, development club chairperson and delegate are all female.</p> <p>32.00 His wife wouldn't have had any interest in GAA, except when Cork are playing. 'After being married for 20 years she decided if you can't beat me, join me.'</p> <p>32.40 The first woman to be involved in administration was Rita Doyle who was treasurer in 1977.</p> <p>33.00 Internal politics: 'What club doesn't'. National politics doesn't either unless it's a question of which politician was best to approach for lotto money or grant from the council. 'Then there is no better organisation than the GAA to push every door.'</p> <p>34.05 He was chairman in 1982, when the club won the first ever adult football title, proudest moment. Also being involved in mayoral election that paid off the debt of the club. Believes he is good at keeping the various factions pushing together. Also his mind was broadened due to his father being Church of Ireland, because he saw both sides, which was more than others who are sometimes afraid to look in either's man yard.</p> <p>36.10 Club had been poor at Scór until this year. They have a teacher now who's very good – he had to find out what the CV of the Irish officer involved before he took the job.</p>
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	<p>37.40 Doesn't see the Irish language having much relevance to people in modern Ireland 'with the recession as well, people have more to worry about.' 'They were speaking English here in 1798.' TG4 and Gaelscoil's are playing a big role.</p> <p>38.50 Emigration will be big effect of recession. 'There's only so many people who can go to Australia.' England and the States are no better than Ireland now. 'We're going through with a development at the moment ... spending about €300,000.' Discusses recession of the 80s and feels that this recession may last as long.</p> <p>41.00 'It will probably be easier to get youngsters to play football and hurling because it's a cheap sport, whereas ... parents won't have money to do more expensive things like sending little Johnnie off for his piano lessons, his tennis lessons, his swimming.'</p> <p>'In Wexford the GAA was strongest in the 50s when there wasn't a shilling.'</p> <p>42.20 Land adjoins the Slaney and his family all fished on the river. 'I'd a boat bought when I became chairman in 06 and I cancelled it because I just know there'd be no point.' 'The GAA just takes over ... she'd never see me if she didn't do things like that.'</p> <p>44.05 'There's so many lifer's there ... we have a man in the club and he goes down and opens the gate every morning at 8am, he closes it every night at 10pm or thereabouts. When training is on ... he's down there, and if training is on at 7 he has the balls and the equipment out at 7, he has ice-baths filled for the players after training, he takes care of tokens for the lights, he does so much work it's unbelievable ... this man works 7 days and 7 nights a week in the club.'</p> <p>45.50 Biggest change: The modernisation of the whole association. The old fogies are gone, they kept the show on the road. The ban was a bit like the divorce referendum – 'when the ban was lifted, this would be the end of the GAA.' 'To me the biggest thing, when the GAA walked into the real world in the 21st century was when Croke Park was opened.'</p> <p>48.10 Disappointments are the publicity cock-ups – the boys in the loo at the congress after Bertie promised the funding. They don't sell themselves well enough, suspensions etc. are over-publicised.</p> <p>49.15 'I don't think that people that are not involved in the</p>
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	<p>GAA realise how much voluntary work is being done in the GAA.'</p> <p>49.50 Rugby supporter visited him and said he didn't believe that there weren't fights in the terraces at GAA matches.</p> <p>51.05 Before the top people in the GAA hadn't confidence enough in their own ability. Now they need to look for positive publicity.</p> <p>52.10 Pay for Play: Our club manager plans to have 54 training sessions over 61 days, that kind of effort should be rewarded. On the other hand almost every League of Ireland club is in financial trouble except Wexford Youths, run by Mick Wallace. They're run on the lines of a GAA club and they talk about pride in the jersey. Boys get money for training and expenses but it's amateur.</p> <p>54.30 'Players are well looked after ... one area which has to be examined is the medical issue, not that there's not enough money being spent, it's just that it's being spent the wrong way.'</p> <p>54.45 Issues over the qualifications of physio's and players becoming too fond of physio sessions.</p> <p>56.20 Players that reach a good standard get opportunities for jobs from it. 'It's the junior player, in the junior club, for the pride of the jersey and the little parish like, in fairness, its tough going enough on them.'</p> <p>57.10 Pride in identity is increased without a doubt by being involved in GAA. Idea of setting up the GAA on a parish basis 'That was the best PR stunt that a man could ever think of, because you have the tribalism of the GAA.' Local rivals are rivals at club level, but at county level people from rival clubs support one another. It's parish then county.</p> <p>58.55 'That's probably where soccer especially in a place like Ireland with a smallish populations falls down, because you take the like of Drogheda ... there's probably two players from Drogheda on the team so you don't of a wet evening, you don't go because your neighbours playing you go to the GAA matches because its your neighbours playing, its the guy you went to school with ... the lad you were talking to in the shop yesterday, I think that's been a massive strength for the GAA.'</p> <p>59.32 Best memory Wexford winning the 1996 All-Ireland.</p> <p>59.45 'It's meant great friendships, its meant great friendships with fellas that I have abused and have abused me, but the</p>
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	<p>amazing thing about it is it makes great lasting friendships, it spans ... party politics, you can see anybody from the unemployed or the unemployable on the team to the doctor, to the politician, to the highflyer ... there's no snobbishness in the GAA, or very little anyway, it covers all spectrums from the rich to the poor.'</p> <p>1.01.15 'I have some of the best friends anyone could have in the club, we have been very successful over the years ... maybe not as successful as we might as regards winning ... but ... my ambition would be ... It'd be good to win a senior hurling championship in this my last year.'</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manager <input 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): _Selector_____</p>
<p>Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Club Treasurer (1975 – 76); Vice-chairman (1981); Chairman (1982 – 1984; 2006+); Secretary (1985)</p>
<p>Format</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Length of Interview: 1hr 2min 10sec</p>
<p>Language</p>	<p>English</p>

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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: ___8/10/09_____