

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	5 th May 2010
Location	Peter's home, near Knockarea, Co. Sligo
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Peter Cooney
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1932 Home County: Sligo
Education	Primary: Knockarea NS, Co. Sligo
Family	Siblings: 1 sister Current Family if Different:
Club(s)	Coolera-Strandhill GAA [Sligo]
Occupation	Farmer
Parents' Occupation	Farmers
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Coolera Community Games

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Date of Report	18 th June 2012
Period Covered	1916 – 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Sligo
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Education, Emigration, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish, History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Challenges, Politics, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy / Economics.
Interview Summary	<p>Peter talks about his GAA experiences in Sligo since 1932. His local club was Coolera and he played football with them when he was young. Athletics was also very popular at the time. When he was still in his twenties Peter got involved in administration, attending club meetings and acting as a delegate to the county board. He remembers the lifting of the Ban and talks about the impact that that debate had on the GAA in Sligo. Peter also coached underage teams and donated a field of his to be used by the local club. He acted as a selector and sometimes refereed games. Peter has seen many changes in the Association during his lifetime, and he offers his opinions on issues such as professionalism and the rise of the GPA. For Peter the GAA is an integral part of the community and the preservation of its amateur status is very important to him.</p> <p>00:20 Born in 1932 in Knocknaree, a rural area.</p> <p>00:45 Emigration in the late 1940s affected the football teams in the area.</p> <p>01:10 Father's interest in GAA. Father's time in the United States.</p> <p>01:50 Memories of Frank Hartinger being involved with early county boards in Sligo. Frank's nephew as secretary of the club and Peter taking over from him in the late 1950s.</p> <p>02:35 Frank forming a club in Maynooth and returning on holidays.</p>

	<p>03:35 Team in area in 1916 and lapsing until the 1930s.</p> <p>04:10 Playing football in Knocknaree school in late 1930s. Teacher trying to start soccer.</p> <p>04:45 Patrick Kilfeather a prominent GAA man, before Tom Kilcoyne's time.</p> <p>05:15 Athletics being popular. Vincent and Tommy Hardinger accomplished cross country runners.</p> <p>08:20 Playing football as a boy with friends.</p> <p>08:45 Being delegate to the county board and Tom Kilcoyne and his father working to promote football in the county. Padraig Kayne taking over from old Tom for a year until young Tom was ready. The Kilcoynes hailing from Conway.</p> <p>09:50 Struggle to keep the club going. Peter being talked into becoming involved in the club after giving a pitch in 1958. Attending county and divisional board meetings. Cycling to Collooney. Meetings going on until late in the night.</p> <p>11:45 Debates at meetings. Nature of disputes. Peter Laffery and Brendan McAuley as chairmen at different times.</p> <p>14:05 Big rule changes in GAA debated at Congress. Lifting of Ban. Involvement of County Antrim. Level of debate on Ban in Sligo. Enforcement of Ban in Sligo. Vigilance committees.</p> <p>16:20 Peter's club Coolera's rivals were Craobh Rua, who later became St Mary's. Doctors and guards coming to town and joining teams. Dr Foley from Wexford a good players. Christian Brothers playing.</p> <p>17:35 Circumstances surrounding amalgamation. Strandhill club went out on their own and joined Coolera again. Neilus O'Dowd involved. Garda McMahon trying to keep Strandhill out on their own. Some players staying with Coolera instead of joining Strandhill.</p> <p>20:25 Development of club through the years. Emigration taking players to places like London after World War II. Purchase of community field. Building dressing-rooms in the 1980s. Fr Devine, chairman of the club, doing fundraising to pay for them. Maintaining the field.</p>
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	<p>25:40 Peter volunteered to give his field. Recalls a team from Meath coming to play. People travelling on bicycles and in cars to watch games in his field.</p> <p>27:25 Occasional rows at games. People hiring lorries to transport teams to games. Peter hiring a bus. Going to the Seafield Hotel after a game and Pádraig O'Connell playing music.</p> <p>30:50 Peter's playing career. Becoming an officer in his twenties. Demands of the position. Bringing players back from England for games.</p> <p>32:10 Meath team visiting on an annual trip.</p> <p>32:35 Coolera's fortunes through the years. St Mary's dominating. Winning a junior championship in 1949. Celebrations in Strandhill.</p> <p>34:25 Hurling team in Dromard. Revival of hurling in Sligo. Tom Brennan from Carlow promoting hurling in Sligo. Challenges faced by hurling in Sligo.</p> <p>36:00 Peter coaching underage teams. Challenges involved. Brendan Carthy, Tom Gilligan and Mick Mulligan helping with coaching.</p> <p>38:20 Social events in Strandhill.</p> <p>38:40 Peter refereeing junior games. Getting abuse. Memorable game in Keish. Tommy Carthy in a row.</p> <p>41:35 Being a selector. Difficulties involved.</p> <p>42:30 Peter was secretary of the club for 40 years. Changes over that period. Selection committee system.</p> <p>44:15 Joining with Ballisodare to form a ladies football team. Ted Maloney, chairman of the ladies county board, working to promote the game.</p> <p>44:10 Women's involvement in the running of the club. Alice Lindsey was secretary for a period.</p> <p>46:40 Role of GAA in community over the years.</p> <p>47:15 Involvement in community games. Popularity of tag rugby. Martin Ruane role. Cross-country prospects.</p>
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	<p>Relationship between community games in GAA.</p> <p>50:20 Changes he has seen in the GAA over the years. Nature of meetings. Interest levels.</p> <p>51:10 The Kilcoynes stand out as a leaders. John Higgins was a good chairman.</p> <p>51:55 Role of teachers. Paraic Duffy.</p> <p>52:30 He admired GAA President Paddy Buggy. Mick Loftus too. And Christy Cooney.</p> <p>53:55 Volunteerism in the GAA. State of the GAA in 2010. Popularity of soccer, rugby and golf. Eddie Walters, David Lindsey, Brian Hart all footballers who play golf. Success of Rory McIlroy.</p> <p>57:45 Professionalism and the GAA. Opinion of GPA.</p> <p>58:30 Changes in the way football is played. Micheál Kierans a good player. Brendan McAuley of Strandhill too. And Neilus O'Dowd.</p> <p>01:00:30 Supporting Sligo through the years. Back-door system in Championship. Success of Sligo team of 1975.</p> <p>01:02:20 Nationally he has been impressed by Mayo in the 1950s. Cork in 2010 are strong.</p> <p>01:03:40 Importance of GAA to him. Memories of a visit of a Kerry team to the Showgrounds for a National League semi-final in the late 1940s.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manager <input checked="" 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): _____</p>
<p>Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p>Played football with Coolera-Strandhill for a few years</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how</p>	<p>Secretary of Coolera-Strandhill GAA for 40 years; club delegate to Sligo County Board since 1957/8.</p>

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Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 01:05:23
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 18th June 2012