

**GAA Oral History Project**  
**Interview Report Form**

<b>Name of Interviewer</b>	Ann-Marie Smith
<b>Date of Interview</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2009
<b>Location</b>	Wicklow Town
<b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname)	Eamon Murray
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1933  <b>Home County:</b> Wicklow
<b>Education</b>	<b>Primary:</b> Killmacoo National School
<b>Family</b>	<b>Siblings:</b> Only child  <b>Current Family if Different:</b> Married, 2 boys 2 girls
<b>Club(s)</b>	Killmacoo GAA, Avoca GAA [Wicklow]; Brothers Pearses GAA London [Grest Britain]
<b>Occupation</b>	Builder, Printing Firm
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	Farmers
<b>Religion</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	Fianna Fáil
<b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>	Active retirement, bowls club

**REFERENCE NO. WW/1/1**

<b>Date of Report</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2010
<b>Period Covered</b>	1940s – 2010
<b>Counties/Countries Covered</b>	Wicklow, London
<b>Key Themes Covered</b>	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Material Culture, Education, Emigration, Involvement in GAA abroad, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Identity, Rivalries, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Politics, Opening of Croke Park, Relationship with the Association, Economy/Economics
<b>Interview summary</b>	<p>In this interview, Eamon talks about his childhood and earliest memories of playing football in school in Co. Wicklow. He talks about the fate of local clubs starting up and disbanding. He talks about playing for Wicklow before he emigrated to London in the 1950s, where he played with the Brothers Pearse Club. He had a long and successful career playing Gaelic games, in his lifetime, Eamon won five All-Ireland's with London and one All-Ireland with Wicklow, this is one of his all time greatest moments. Another one of his proudest moments is getting into the Hall of Fame in Wicklow. He can't recall any low-lights in his career with the G.A.A. He concludes the interview by reflecting on the organisation today and in the future.</p> <p>0.00 Introduction</p> <p>0.50 Eamon's mother was the lady who got him interested in Hurling as she had played Camogie.</p> <p>When he was young he would go to the Killmacoo training grounds and puck the balls out from behind the goals.</p> <p>2.50 His first experience of Gaelic was in school in football, Taidg O'Sullivan, a Kerry man. However the local team was hurling. In the '40's they used to play hurling at lunch time at</p>

	<p>school. Killmacoo's first minors team allowed Eamon to play in Goals as keeper. Pat Lennon used to bring him on the crossbar of a bike in the early '40 to matches so that he could be a sub on the Killmacoo team. In 1947, Killmacoo moved up to Senior level. Eamon recalls playing in goals at a senior championship match aged just 14 against Arklow is South Wicklow.</p> <p>6.00 After Killmacoo disbanded, Eamon went to play with Avoca. In 1948, he had to stand down because of his senior involvement the previous year. However, in 1949, he was able to play junior with Avoca, the following year they won the Junior Championship. He was seventeen and played in goals for the junior final.</p> <p>7.00 Eamon trained in Pat Lennon's field, a couple of times a week with Killmacoo.</p> <p>8.30 The Avoca team went senior in 1951 and eventually won the 1953 senior championship. He can't recall any celebrations, even for the senior final win.</p> <p>9.10 In 1951, Eamon also played minors for Wicklow but only played one match as centre field in a replay match against Carlow. Ten years later he played against Walshes again, when he played for London. When he was nineteen he came on as a sub in 1952 for the Leinster Junior Championship.</p> <p>11.00 He remembers only one days training for Wicklow in the final in 1954. London was very similar in this regard, there were never coached.</p> <p>12.15 The 1953 final win on the senior team stands out in his mind. He remembers making several good saves and talking to the Glenealy man who played against him.</p> <p>13.15 In 1955 he moved to London because of the G.A.A.,</p>
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	<p>and played G.A.A. up until then and when he moved. He gave up a job in Ireland to move to London to further his skills and hopefully win an All-Ireland. He told Séan Farrelly and Billy Lawless a week before he left, they tried to persuade him to stay and offered him a job in Guinness. Eamon flew over to London in 1955 and got a job in a paper mill in Kent. At the time it was mainly people who had emigrated that played. The Brother Pierces club was a great club at the time, they won the championship in 1957 and Eamon was Captain in 1958. He had played half-back for Wicklow, however the first day of training for Brother Pierces he was put centre-field.</p> <p>20.00 Séan Farrell had won an All-Ireland n 1938. Eamon played for Brother na Pierceaigh for forty years. The last year before he returned to Ireland he played in the O'Connell cup, went on as a sub a scored a point after being fouled. Eamon also went on as a sub for Avoca at age 69 and also scored a point.</p> <p>21.27 The main changes he saw in the Brother na Pierceaigh club was that when players stopped playing they didn't get involved again.</p> <p>23.35 In 1959, he won an All-Ireland medal with London, they played teams that had won out in the home finals.</p> <p>24.55 Eamon talks about his experience of playing in Croke park as centre-field for London. He remembers his first score from a side line cut and Billy Duffy on the day. The few training sessions he remembers were under Kerry 'football-man', Johnny Moriarty.</p> <p>26.20 The following year they were allowed back into the junior league and won against Carlow after a draw in London.</p> <p>27.30 Eamon can't recall much excitement about winning All-</p>
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	<p>Ireland medals in 1959, 1960 and 1963. Aged 38, still living in London but dropped by the Brother Pierces club, he played for Wicklow, winning the 1971 Leinster and All-Ireland titles. Playing Kildare, in his first return to the Wicklow team he scored a goal and two points and wore a Wicklow jersey for the first time in seventeen years. He recalls playing Hertfordshire three times, once drawing in Aughrim, the second time in Hertfordshire and a draw again the county board objected, returning to Croke Park for the final and sweetest victory. He had decided to give each of his four children an All-Ireland medal each so he was delighted when he finally won the fourth medal.</p> <p>32.45 Thankfully, Eamon does not remember any negativity towards him during the troubled times even though he was so heavily involved with the G.A.A.</p> <p>33.25 When Eamon went over in 1955, he went to see Christy Byrne who played for Wicklow. He wanted to ask Christy for help getting into the brother pierces club. At the time Christy was staying with his sister, who had also played Camogie for Barndarrig. Now wife Jean, originally from Wales was staying in the same digs, Eamon counts the G.A.A. heavily for some great things in his life, especially Jean who has been very supportive of his G.A.A. involvement ever since their marriage in 1956.</p> <p>34.55 Eamon enjoyed his various roles as selector, treasurer and vice chairman, he was also a delegate on the county board over the years.</p> <p>36.25 Eamon returned to Ireland at the age of sixty two and retired. He and his family were planning it for several years, he used to get the <i>Wicklow People</i> every week to keep up to date with goings on. He had hoped to buy in Arklow where he</p>
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	<p>had spent a lot of time as a child. A son of a local, Paddy Smullen, informed them of a bungalow that wasn't advertised. He didn't mind leaving London too much as he knew he was coming back to G.A.A., although he keeps in touch with a lot of people from his G.A.A. life in London.</p> <p>40.35 In 1995, aged sixty two, Eamon was asked to go on for Avoca in a semi-final and scored ten points, six of these from play and the four others from frees. He had promised his wife that if they won the final he would retire. This happened and Eamon was forced to keep his word in 1995.</p> <p>43.25 The Saturday he married Jean was not followed by a honeymoon, but instead by a Junior All-Ireland on Sunday, scoring a goal and five points in the match. This was the same year that Nicky Rackard and Christy Ring had scored a goal and five points in All-Irelands.</p> <p>44.50 Eamon also refereed matches, even since before he left Ireland for London and up until the age of seventy five years. He refereed in Wembley, he has three Wembley medals for refereeing and one for playing for London against Wicklow in 1968 which was strange for him.</p> <p>48.00 He refereed a London senior Football final and a London senior Hurling final, both in the same year.</p> <p>49.00 Jean has always been very supportive, sometimes Eamon remembers working seven days a week and going to training on the way back from work, Jean was a 'rock' and raised their four children. Although none of them became involved in the G.A.A., they did understand the importance of the G.A.A. to their father and their culture.</p> <p>50.30 Eamon received a G.A.A. Hall of Fame place in Wicklow. It was very surprising for him, as his children came</p>
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	<p>over, the organisers surprised him with the Hall of Fame and his children were brought out, a truly great moment for him.</p> <p>51.45 He has played along side his grandson, his grandson played corner forward and Eamon played full forward during an intermediate football game with Brother Pierces. A very proud moment.</p> <p>52.35 Miraculously, he has never broken a bone in his whole hurling career, although he had a collar bone broken while playing football.</p> <p>54.15 Eamon has no regrets about sacrificing anything for the G.A.A.</p> <p>55.00 In his lifetime, Eamon won five All-Ireland's with London and one All-Ireland with Wicklow, this is one of his all time greatest moments. Another one of his proudest moments is getting into the Hall of Fame in Wicklow. He can't recall any low-lights in his career with the G.A.A.</p> <p>55.45 Eamon thinks that the G.A.A. should remain as an amateur organisation and pay more attention to the great contribution volunteers make. He thinks the volunteers are the life line of the G.A.A.</p> <p>56.45 Eamon believes that if the money made from Croke parks opening up to other sports is channelled in the correct way that it should be accessible to all.</p> <p>57.20 Eamon says the G.A.A. has been a great satisfaction to him and is adamant he won't turn his back on it.</p> <p>58.45 Eamon wanted to add that his wife Jean is and has been great all through their lives.</p>
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<b>Involvement in GAA</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward  <input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person  <input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b> (please specify): ____ Selector (London & Wicklow) ____
<b>Record as a Player</b> (Titles won; Length of time played)	6 All Ireland titles (4 Junior , 2 Intermediate), +60 years as player
<b>Record as an Administrator</b> (Positions held; how long for)	Vice Chairman & Treasurer at Brother Pearse's Club, London (10 years)  President, Avoca GAA Club, Co. Wicklow (3 years)
<b>Format</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
<b>Duration</b>	Length of Interview: 00:59:00
<b>Language</b>	English

**To be filled in by Interviewer:**

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Signed: Ann Marie Smith

Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2010