

GAA Oral History Project

**Interview Report Form**

<b>Name of Interviewer</b>	Con Mahon
<b>Date of Interview</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> May 2010
<b>Location</b>	Gerard's home, near Kilcormac, Co. Offaly.
<b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname)	Gerard Mahon
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1960 <b>Home County:</b> Offaly
<b>Education</b>	N/A
<b>Family</b>	<b>Siblings:</b> 4 brothers & 2 sisters <b>Current Family if Different:</b> Wife and 2 children
<b>Club(s)</b>	Kilcormac – Killoughey GAA [Offaly]
<b>Occupation</b>	Farmer
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	Farmers
<b>Religion</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	N/A
<b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>	N/A

REFERENCE NO. OY/1/5

<b>Date of Report</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> August 2012
<b>Period Covered</b>	1968 -2010
<b>Counties/Countries Covered</b>	Offaly
<b>Key Themes Covered</b>	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Officials, Administration, Education, Religion, Media, Emigration, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, All-Ireland, Club History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life
<b>Interview Summary</b>	Gerard talks about his experiences of the GAA throughout his life. See script below.
<b>Involvement in GAA</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward <input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input 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"/> Other (please specify): _____
<b>Record as a Player</b> (Titles won; Length of time played)	N/A
<b>Record as an Administrator</b> (Positions held; how long for)	N/A
<b>Format</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
<b>Duration</b>	Length of Interview: 00:09:57
<b>Language</b>	English

REFERENCE NO. OY/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: \_\_\_\_\_ Con Mahon \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 24/04/2010 \_\_\_\_\_

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**Q1: Describe your earliest GAA memory and how you became involved in the GAA?**

I was eight year old. My whole family as well as most of the families in my townland, Coolfin, went to watch an All-Ireland hurling final in our neighbour's house because he was the only one with a television.

All my close relatives, i.e. father, uncles etc played hurling for their clubs so I became interested.

**Q2: Did your family have a tradition or history of GAA involvement?**

My father won five (5) Offaly County hurling medals for Drumcullen.

My older brothers played GAA.

My brother Séan play for the Offaly minor team before he emigrated to Australia And while in Australia he continued to play hurling.

**Q3: Did your relatives discuss their GAA experiences with you? What were they?**

My father would talk about his experiences when he played for Drumcullen club and the rivalry between his club Drumcullen and Coolderry club.

**Q4: Tell me how GAA affected your family life?**

After any big match we would spend the next few days discussing the match and how each player had played, it brought the family together.

**Q5: Tell me what it was like to support your club/county when you were young and down through the years (travelling to games, prices of tickets, food, grounds visited, clothes worn, match-day traditions, local celebrations and traditions).**

We all used to pack into the crowded family car and travel to the matches in Croke Park and other pitches.

We used to follow our club and county all over the country to games, covered in green, white and gold.

Whenever we went to the matches in Croke Park we would all go to my uncle Gerard's house in Dublin for dinner after the match.

**Q6: If you had to choose just one game from all you've experienced, which would you choose? Why?**

It would definitely be the 1982 All Ireland Football final between Offaly and Kerry, Kerry was going for the five (5) in a row but a goal in the final minute by Seamus Darby won the match for Offaly, we all threw up our hats and umbrellas in the air and I lost my coat in the excitement and rushed on to the pitch in celebration.

The memory of that match will stay with me forever.

**Q7: What impact has the GAA had on your life?**

Socially, it has always been a good conversational topic, whether I'd be at home, in the local pub or anywhere else, even with strangers.

**Q8: What place and role does your club have in your community?**

Most of our community events are centred around the club and the GAA in general.

**Q9: What role did the GAA play as part of your school and/or college life?**

I myself didn't play GAA for my school but I used to enjoy watching and supporting my school in their games.

**Q10: Who do you admire most in the GAA and why?**

Dermot Early, Roscommon Footballer.

Although he never won an All-Ireland with Roscommon, I always thought that he was a brilliant footballer, one of the best I've ever seen.

**Q11: In your experience what have been the biggest changes in the GAA?**

Both, football and hurling has become a lot more professional.

The training regimes have become more intense, and both sports have become a lot faster.

**Q12: Have changes in your community affected your club and how?**

My club Kilcormac have joined together with Kiloughey club and now they are the one club, Kilcormac/Kiloughey, since I was young this is due to the lack of progress on the field.



**Q13: Do you think the role of women in the GAA has changed over the years and how?**

The role of women in the GAA has not changed substantially.  
Some women have become more involved in the minor roles in the GAA but there is still very few involved in a major role.

**Q14: Describe the role of the churches and clergy in your club and how it has changed over the years?**

In the past the clergy and churches were very involved in training and playing, but in recent years that has become very rare – maybe one of the reasons for this could be in the shortages of clergy.

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**Q15: Was there a connection between politics and the GAA for you, if so what?**

No not in my opinion or experiences.

**Q16: What have been the main disappointments you have had with the GAA?**

Bad Referee's have always disappointed me especially when Offaly lost the Leinster final in 1983.

I find even to this day the Referee's part in games could be improved.

**Q17: Did the GAA shape your own identity in any way?**

No I cannot say the GAA has shaped my identity, I never played much GAA myself.

**Q18: What role has Irish language and culture had in your club and on your personal involvement with the GAA?**

The Irish language and culture established who we are as a nation and country. The culture within the GAA has developed my interest in sport.

**Q19: How important are rivalries within the GAA and what are yours?**

Rivalries are very important, it strengthens the organisation.

Kilcormac/Kiloughey have always been big rivalries of Birr and Coolderry Clubs

**Q20: Comment on the role of volunteers within the GAA?**

Volunteers are vital to the success of the GAA and always were.

If there was no volunteers there would be no underage developed in the GAA and many clubs would not have survived over the years.

**Q21: Describe your experience with teams as a player, manager, committee member or supporter.**

It is part of the GAA games for supporters to feel and react to the excitement of the game being played, most supporters including myself shout encouraging remarks to the players on the pitch – this adds to the enjoyment of the sport for myself as a supporter and also watching other supporters for each of the two teams playing.

**Q22: Describe your experiences, if any, with the GAA outside Ireland.**

I don't have any personal experience in the GAA outside Ireland, but my brother has played GAA in Australia.

**Q23: Describe how media coverage of GAA in your lifetime has changed.**

In the past only the major matches were covered by the Media especially nationally, but all the semi finals and finals are covered and even highlights of the smaller less important matches are covered by the media, through television and newspapers, local and nationally. You can keep in touch with practically every match's results through the media nowadays.

**Q24: What in your opinion are the biggest challenges facing the GAA in the future?**

To retain volunteers in the local clubs as other sports are becoming very popular  
And also to keep players interested, in view of the competition of other sports.

Also I think keeping the interest of young players in their teens from social pressures.

**Q25: What does the GAA mean to you?**

I think the GAA have done a lot for the Irish people, including myself, as having the GAA club in my community has been a means for myself and now my own son to take part in the great games of football and hurling.

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**Q26: Do you have any pictures, documents, video etc. that you could share with us? Please provide a brief description.**

**Do you know any songs or poems about the GAA in your local area that you can send us or write in here?**

**Can you think of anyone else in your locality or in your family circle who we should contact for this project? Who are they and why?**

No

**Q27: Is there anything else you would like to say about the GAA?**

No I think we have covered everything.

**Q28: How did you hear about this project?**

My son brought home the Questionnaire from his school.