

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Thérèse McIntyre
Date of Interview	2 September 2010
Location	Interviewee's Home (Caroline and David Darcy-Kearns)
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Morgan Darcy (Father) Marguerite Darcy (Daughter) David Kearns (Caroline's Husband) Caroline (Darcy) Kearns (Daughter)
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male and Female
Born	<p>Morgan: Year Born: 1947 Home County: Galway</p> <p>Marguerite: Year Born: 1984 Home County: Galway</p> <p>David: Year Born: 1969 Home County: Galway</p> <p>Caroline: Year Born: 1971 Home County: Galway</p>
Education	<p>Morgan: Primary: Moycullen Secondary: Father Griffin Road</p>

	<p>Marguerite: Primary: Moycullen NS Secondary: Mercy Convent Third Level: GMIT (Galway-Mayo IT)</p> <p>David: Primary: St. James, Bushypark Secondary: St. Enda's, Salthill</p> <p>Caroline: Primary: Moycullen NS Secondary: Mercy Convent Third Level: GMIT (Galway-Mayo IT)</p>
Family	<p>Morgan: N/A</p> <p>Marguerite: Siblings: 3</p> <p>David: Siblings: 4 Current Family if Different: 2 Boys</p> <p>Caroline: Siblings: 3 Current Family if Different: Kearns (2 boys)</p>
Club(s)	<p>Darcy Family: Moycullen Hurling</p> <p>David: Ragoon Hurling Club</p>
Occupation	<p>Morgan: Retired DTE Marguerite: Clerical Officer, HSE David: Plumber Caroline: HSE Staff Officer</p>

Parents' Occupation	Morgan: N/A Marguerite: Retired [Father]; Retail Assistant [Mother] David: Retired [Father] Caroline: Retired [Father]; Retail Assistant [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Morgan: Moycullen Handball Marguerite: Moycullen Racketball/Handball Caroline: Moycullen Racquetball/Handball

Date of Report	12 November 2010
Period Covered	1960s - 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Galway
Key Themes Covered	Childhood, Earliest Memories, Facilities, Family Involvement, Role of the Club in the Community, Impact on Life, Socialising, Relationships, Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Fundraising, Emigration, Role of Women, Identity, Coaching, Media, Training, Refereeing, Administration, Challenges, Sacrifices, Opening of Croke Park, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Economy/ Economics
Interview Summary	<p>The Darcy family have been involved in the GAA in Moycullen for more than 50 years, primarily in hurling, camogie, and handball. David Kearns became involved in hurling (Rahoon-Newcastle, Galway) as a young child. The family participate in all aspects of the GAA from playing, coaching, managing, refereeing, and supporting and are a strong force in maintaining hurling/camogie in Moycullen (primarily a football stronghold). It is clear from their passion and strong sense of tradition that the GAA, at least at club level, will be passed on to future generations, as shown by the involvement of Caroline and David's two young sons.</p> <p>1:47 Earliest Memories (Morgan) – 50-55 years ago. Talks of the lack of free hurleys/sliotars in the early days. Talks of current involvement as officer in the juvenile club and as official umpire in hurling games.</p> <p>2:41 Earliest Memories (Caroline) – Talks of her memories of hurling and father Morgan's soaking of the hurleys before a match and group discusses the merits of this process.</p> <p>3:40 Earliest memories (Marguerite) – Talks of being 'dragged' up early for matches to watch the brother (Morgan) play/referee. Speaks of always being 'on the road' and how it was a part of the family's life.</p> <p>4:15 Talks of the son's (Morgan) career with Galway hurling (7-8 years) and his various medals (All-Ireland Under 21; National League; Oireachtas; Connacht – due to Roscommon involvement at the time.</p> <p>4:38 Ancestral involvement in the game (hurling).</p> <p>4:53 Morgan discusses refereeing career (Inter-county). Became umpire after retiring from refereeing. Talks of importance of being involved in the games and the types of people one meets. Recalls mother's involvement as</p>

	<p>spectator and 'post-mortems' in the house afterwards – particularly the language used. Recounts father's participation as a goalkeeper and how the tradition of this position has been handed on through most of the men in the family.</p> <p>7:14 Earliest Memories (David – the 'townie') – Talks of linking of home club (Rahoon) with Newcastle. Recalls attending the three All Ireland Finals in the 1980's when Galway won and the cup being brought to the National School by the late Niall McInerney and the cup being filled with sweets. Speaks of Paddy Joe Flaherty being one of the best hurlers in his club. Recounts how he started playing hurling 'late' (age 13) as football was the 'town' sport. Now manager of Rahoon-Newcastle with aim of winning a county title. Talks of differences in family involvement from those in the 'country'. His Uncle Owen was classed in the top three hurlers in Rahoon – discusses how the myth of 'Owen' grew over the years.</p> <p>10:44 Discussion of differences in role of club in town and in the country. Talks of disparity in attitude between prioritising 'senior' over 'junior' or 'intermediate' – particularly in scheduling matches and share of the 'limelight'. Describes role of club 'delegates' in remedying this issue.</p> <p>12:41 Morgan talks about his first All-Ireland (1956 – Galway/Cork) and the 'rush' back on the trains. Recalls beginning his involvement in handball some 55 years ago and talks of his 11 All-Irelands in handball and various medals from refereeing (All-Ireland, Oireachtas, County). Discusses touring worldwide to compete in handball (Texas, United States the most recent).</p> <p>15:39 Group discusses role of GAA and structure in attempting to redress imbalance between various club levels, particularly marginalisation of under-21 and minor levels. Marguerite speaks of kids 'losing heart' as they reach secondary school level; compares same situation to her experiences in camogie. David talks of Cork clubs (Glen Rovers; Blackrock) experiencing same difficulties, particularly because of competition from rugby and the need for more coaches at school level. Importance of 'catching' the cities to encourage involvement (i.e. more non-traditional sporting areas). Morgan discusses the importance of involving 'new' families moving into the area in the sporting scene (using Moycullen as an example). Caroline describes pitch as being 'a second home', prioritising younger children participating in the sport, and the necessity of interest, tradition, and passion</p>
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	<p>in 'sticking with it'. David talks of necessity of having a 'driven' individual in charge of a club and recalls his experiences at age 14 and his own sons' involvement in hurling. Also necessity of the discipline of sport in getting children involved in something – describes as a 'right path'.</p> <p>27:25 Group discusses changing attitudes/focus in GAA away from a 'win only' mentality and the setting up of Cúl Camps. Also how 'winning' is still a major part of the competitive ethos, particularly if silverware is involved.</p> <p>29:37 Marguerite talks of her involvement in coaching camogie (under 6s). Discusses how camogie fell apart in Moycullen over 2 years ago – re-emerged in 2009. Works with Louise O'Connor and Orla Clancy as coach. Concepta ? runs the organisation. Speaks of difficulties in keeping the 'numbers up' and the need for the presence of a camogie club alongside hurling and football. Caroline speaks of the importance of Galway camogie's wins/advertisements in promoting/encouraging local camogie.</p> <p>36:07 Morgan talks about changing role of women in sport. Recalls a strong camogie team in Moycullen when he was younger. Notes women's involvement in more varied sports (football, rugby, soccer). Discusses how hurling is actually a safer game than football. Recalls three Moycullen women who played for Galway county in camogie (Sheila Croke; Brenda Donnellen; McKieren? originally from Cork and hurled for the county, daughter played for Moycullen) – early 1960s. Discusses need of Moycullen camogie to get a 'new image' – i.e. getting rid of people who have been there too long. Change of rule of managing from 5 years down to 3 years. Also his involvement in teaching handball at various schools.</p> <p>41:27 Caroline/Maguerite talk about an increase in womens' involvement in GAA at higher levels (i.e. 'top table' at AGMs). Discusses how women are better organisers/multi-taskers and don't necessarily have to be excellent players to participate at this level.</p> <p>43:44 Morgan talks of wife's involvement (or lack) and importance of those supporting in the background but not necessarily playing. Caroline recalls how her mother 'didn't have a clue' about any of the games – discusses the washing of the jerseys. Stresses the importance of the women 'who married the men' in maintaining/setting up pre-match preparations (sandwiches; clubhouse; etc.). David talks of his own mother washing the jerseys as well and how members of the community took it in turns to wash them. Also importance of local business support (Larry O'Toole's) in providing kit for</p>
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	<p>local schools.</p> <p>49:13 Group talks about improvement in facilities over the years. Importance of fundraisers to see the achievement afterwards and the organisation in getting facilities built. Discusses whether or not kids recognise what they have in terms of facilities compared to other generations. Issues raise in terms of how little funding comes from Croke Park down to club level and the reliance on such things as local lottos to raise club funds. Also the need for Croke Park to make more of an investment at club level. Difficulties from competitions in other codes, i.e. the growing popularity of rugby. Over-reliance of GAA on the organisation as being 'voluntary' at lower levels only. Questions raised as to where money from ticket sales is dispersed, particularly with the increase in ticket prices. GAA as a business – some players charging thousands of Euros to present medals to a club while others will do it for nothing (Brian Cody/Henry Shefflin story). Difficulties in families being able to attend games due to rising costs. How hierarchy of GAA is beginning to go down a 'professional' road much to its detriment.</p> <p>65:30 Discussion of players eventually being paid to play. Changes in rules reflecting those in place in other codes – closing off of pitch; earpieces in referees' ears, etc. Pride of wearing county jerseys only carries so far in terms of sacrifice. Lack of financing for coaches in cities to train in evenings. Group talks about poor scheduling/promotion for families travelling (Under-21 Final in 2010 – Galway/Tipperary in Thurles at 7:00 on a Saturday evening). Morgan disagrees with players being played – fears 'bidding' for players will start to take place; believes they should at least get expenses. Talks of GPA and Dessie Farrell's aims. Recalls career of Sean Ó Domhnaill (Galway) and dedication of players to sport in terms of balancing work, home, and training. Also speaks of own son's experiences. Caroline talks of difficulties in making decision whether or not to pay players. Pride of 'county' vs. 'club' jersey. Need for commitment from all members of a family. Difficulties on families if a player is injured. Importance of having an employer who is sympathetic. Loss of players to emigration/immigration. Difficulties of passing on the tradition to the younger generation. Rising costs of insurance and issues of getting money from the GAA.</p> <p>77:50 Discussion of media coverage and ticket prices affecting attendance at matches. Increasing costs of a 'day out' for a family at a match. Talks of atmosphere at match vs. watching on television. Need for promotion to be done</p>
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	<p>through media (AIB ad; Shefflin and Lucozade ad). Morgan talks of promotion of matches in his day and listening to Micheal O'Hehir on the radio. Self-promotion of the sports – organising tournaments among themselves through word-of-mouth (1966-67). David talks of this being an 'innocent time' in the GAA. More discussion of cost of attending matches and disparity of prices between early and late stages of competition. Caroline talks of need for discount ticket price for those involved in clubs. Also the discrimination between referees in male codes and female camogie referees in terms of attending matches. Morgan speaks of marginalisation of ordinary people being able to attend matches as against the corporate elite.</p> <p>96:16 Morgan talks about refereeing career and involvement in the Referee's Association. Group discusses effect of media analysis on referees' performances post-match. Speaks of Mick O'Dwyer 'shooting from the hip' when dealing with the media. Need for referees to keep up with the physicality of a match (same level as players). Refereeing as a 'lonely place'. Discussion of changes in assessing referees and the politics of choosing referees for matches. Also role of assessor (Noel O'Donoghue) and use of technology in assessment (Dictaphone). Possibility of bringing assessor into media limelight (i.e. Sunday Game). David talks of referees at club level not being up to standard and the need for tougher assessment. Example of Louth losing Leinster championship because of poor decision. Bias of referees. Discusses Pat McEneaney's last match and poor decision by umpire (Kildare All-Ireland semi-final 2010). Need for television referee. Role of CCCC in after match decisions. David speaks of importance of form of 'punishment' (i.e. demotion) for poor referees. Caroline talks of benefits of television playback at games. Need of respect for referees.</p> <p>125:24 Final thoughts on GAA. Need for GAA to look after club level as well as Croke Park. Benefits to 'loyal' supporters. Caroline talks of brother Morgan playing in America and importance of promoting the sport abroad. David speaks of benefits of opening Croke Park to other codes. Difficulties of obtaining All-Ireland tickets and rewarding 'hardworkers'. Importance of social aspect in GAA involvement.</p>
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Involvement in GAA	<p>Morgan:</p> <p>✓ Supporter ✓ Player ✓ Manager ✓ Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer ✓ Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p>✓ Other (please specify): Umpire</p> <p>Marguerite:</p> <p>✓ Supporter ✓ Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager ✓ Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input 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):</p> <p>David:</p> <p>✓ Supporter ✓ Player ✓ Manager ✓ Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer ✓ Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): Selector</p> <p>Caroline:</p> <p>✓ Supporter ✓ Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager ✓ Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caterer ✓ Jersey Washer ✓ Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):</p>
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	N/A
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	N/A
Format	✓ Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 02:18:07
Language	English

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: Thérèse McIntyre

Date: 11 November 2011