## GAA Oral History Project

## **Interview Report Form**

Name of Interviewer	Arlene Crampsie
Date of Interview	20 <sup>th</sup> Aug 2009
Location	Interviewee's home, near Banbridge, Co Down
Name of	Paddy MacFlynn
Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	
	Biographical Summary of Interviewee
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1918
	Home County: Derry
Education	Primary: St Joseph's, Magherafelt, Co. Derry
	Secondary: The Rainey Endowed, Magherafelt, Co. Derry
	Third Level: St Mary's, Strawberry Hill; University of Surrey
Family	Siblings: 2 brothers & 1 sister
	Current Family if Different: Married to Kathleen
Club(s)	Tullylish GAC [Down]; O'Donovan Rossa GAC Magherafelt [Derry]
Occupation	Teacher
Parents'	Publicans – owned MacFlynns Pub (now the Terrace Hotel) in
Occupation	Magherafelt
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Apolitical

## **REFERENCE NO. DY/1/8**

Date of Report	12 <sup>th</sup> June 2012
Period Covered	1920 – 2009
Counties/Countries Covered	Derry, Down
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Material Culture, Education, Religion, Media, Emigration, Involvement in GAA abroad, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Identity, Rivalries, Irish Language, Culture, Scór, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Outsider's Perspectives, Violence, Politics, Northern Ireland, The Troubles, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Opening of Croke Park, Ban on Security Forces, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Retirement, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy/ Economics
Interview Summary	Paddy talks about a lifetime's involvement with the GAA. He grew up as the GAA was reorganising in County Derry, and helped to set up and played with the Magherafelt club, O'Donovan Rossa's and had success with them, before witnessing the formation of the Derry team and playing for that side. He became involved in administration at an early age and got involved with his club and county, and also with Down as his teaching work took him there. He immersed himself in Irish culture and enjoyed speaking the language whenever he got the opportunity. Later he was on the Ulster Council and the Central Council before becoming President of the GAA at a difficult time in Northern Ireland. He discusses this period which was dominated by the Hunger Strikes, and recalls working in tandem with the Gardaí and the Irish government. Paddy lived through - and was often involved in - many seminal moments in GAA history, such as the 1947 All-Ireland final in New York, tours abroad in the 1960s, the lifting of various bans and the modernisation of the Association. He talks at length about these and many other issues. He has witnessed more than most but remains the same as he ever was - a man driven by his passion for all aspects of Irish culture and Gaelic games.

in Tyrone then. Getting involved in Cavan in 1933. Cavan playing Kerry in Breffni Park that year. Going to the game in a bus. McGee, Smallhorn, Jim Smith playing for Cavan. Going to the final in Croke Park to see Cavan play Galway.
02:10 Magherafelt minor team starting in 1934 and being involved in that. Minor league in south Derry starting. Derry's first minor team in Ulster Championship in 1936. Team named O'Donovan Rossas. Reason for that. 75th anniversary of establishment of the club in 2009. GAA President Christy Cooney in attendance.
03:55 Winning senior championships in the 1940s. Going to teacher training in Strawberry Hill in England. Fr Michael Collins of Ballinascreen asking him to be county secretary. Paddy Larkin became county chairman. Going to Ulster and Central Council meetings. Make-up of councils. Getting to know secretary general Pádraig O'Keefe.
05:55 Becoming treasurer of Ulster Council and then President in the 1960s. Using the Irish language. Working with Alf Murray. Con Murphy from Cork preceding him.
07:15 His presidency of the GAA being traumatic because of the Hunger Strike. Marcus de Burca saying it was a time when the Association could have split. Propaganda war going on at the time. Trying to keep out of it. Parents of teenage boys not wanting the GAA to get involved. Liam Mulvihill assisting him. Being threatened by both sides. Being asked to fly black flags at Croke Park. GAA sticking together.
12:00 Having to issue statements. People taking over Casement Park to display artillery. Antrim County Board chairman Hugh McPoland ringing him for advice. Feeling intimidated. Trying to avoid a split in the Association. Two people being murdered and Gardaí accused of being ambivalent.
14:20 Being president of his local club and of the Down County Board in 2009. Attending games. Giving match tickets to club members. Enjoying his GAA involvement and seeing the work being done around the country. Improving facilities at his club. Importance of voluntary work.
17:30 Family interest in the GAA. Father's interest in cock fighting. Brother's GAA involvement. Playing with his brother.
19:15 Pitches when he was young. Facilities. Playing in a

county final being refereed by county chairman Paddy Larkin. Being sent off for rough play.
21:10 Strength of GAA in south Derry. Local clubs included O'Donovan Rossas, Magherafelt, O'Leary's in Banbridge, St Teresa's in Ballymaguigan, St Malachy's in Castledawson. Going to céilís.
22:15 Establishing an Irish language course in Rosguill in 1959 with Alf Murray and secretary of the Armagh County Board Gerry Fagan. Troubles disrupting it. Seamus De Faoite from Donegal starting it up again. Activities they did together.
24:15 Getting interested in the Irish language. Speaking Irish weekly with Alf Murray.
25:25 Derry winning a junior Ulster title in hurling in 1903. Inishowen joining Derry and hurling leagues taking place. GAA dying out in the 1920s and being revived in 1932. First Derry minor team playing Tyrone in the Christian Brothers pitch in Omagh in 1936. St Colman's College students playing.
27:25 Travelling to games in a bus. Playing a Lagan cup game in Ardara. Going to the Nesbitt Arms Hotel to eat. Marking John O'Donnell, a talented footballer. Level of support they got.
29:15 Purchase of Celtic Park. Eddie McAteer was chairman of the Derry City Board and was involved in the purchase.
30:00 Involvement with club before county board. Sean MacDiarmada was the chairman. Playing games against Newbridge. Physicality of games. Playing kit they wore. Monsignor John Canon Ward from Carrickmore helped them collect money for kits. Weight of leather ball that they played with and how leather ball and bladder was laced.
34.25 Getting staves from the leather ball on the tips of his fingers and knuckles.
35:05 Stopping games because of an argument breaking out. Investigations following.
36:35 Living in Ballinahinch in 1948 and becoming chairman of the east Down board. Moving to Guilford in 1953 and becoming chairman of the south Down board. Conducting investigations into misbehaviour on the pitch.

37:30 Starting up the club in Magherafelt. Doing up posters. Holding annual sports meetings. Bertie Christy printing posters. Issuing a pamphlet about the club. Becoming secretary of the club. Needing to get equipment and facilities. Buying a pitch and raising the money for it.
43:35 Clubs needing two pitches in 2009. Lá na gClub in 2009. Having football and Scór competitions. Need for money to run a club efficiently.
45:10 Idea of a county team developing in Derry. Rivalry between Derry and Tyrone and strength of the GAA in South Derry and East Tyrone. Clubs around the border with Tyrone – Dungannon, Coalisland, Ardboe, Derrytresk, Drummullan, The Loop, Newbridge, Ballamaguigan, Moneymore, Bellaghy, Ballinderry. Magherafelt biggest rivals were Newbridge.
48:35 Going to The Rainey Endowed School in Magherafelt. Meeting people from different backgrounds. Church of Ireland minister from Castledawson visiting the parish. Travelling from Strawberry Hill to Magherafelt for two pounds. Playing rugby in the college in England. Absence of a teacher training college for Catholics in Northern Ireland. Playing football at home on his holidays. Doing subbing work in Crossmaglen and Coalisland in the early 1940s.
52:40 Effect of war on GAA in Northern Ireland. Ulster secretary Gerry Arthurs from Keady keeping things going. He succeeded General Eoin O'Duffy.
54:00 Decision to buy Celtic Park. Playing in Brandywell before that. Refereeing a game between Antrim and Donegal in Brandywell. Popularity of soccer in Derry. Sean Dolan of Steelstown, secretary of the Derry County Board, being interned and Paddy taking over in 1939.
56:00 Improvement in clubs in North Derry like Dungiven, Banagher and Glenullin.
56:20 Highlight of his player career was winning a championship in 1939 with O'Donovan Roses. Club winning again in 1980. Training they used to do. The Pig Robertson training them. Drinking from milk kegs as they trained on roads. Going to a function for the Clonduff club paying tribute to Patsy O'Hagan and Kevin Mussen. Barney Carr commenting on the modern media and the cult of the manager. Selecting the team themselves when Paddy was

ļ F	playing. Tough games against Newbridge.
i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i	58:50 Playing for the county in the 1940s and being secretary at the same time. Playing a game in Ardara. Changing in the Nesbitt Arms and somebody stealing his boots.
n	01:00:50 Funeral of first Catholic Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland in Ballinascreen in 1947. Teaching in Ballinascreen and Dean McGlinchey there.
5	01:03:20 Playing in a tournament in Dungannon in 1939 and starting a new job in Cookstown the following morning. Pat McLaren, father of Dean Francis, was the conductor.
l f	01:06:50 People from the south of Ireland's understanding of Northern Ireland and what it was like to live there. Difficulties faced by GAA teams in Northern Ireland. Calling a meeting of the nine Ulster county boards during the Troubles.
t	01:09:10 Effect of rationing during World War II. Equipment being smuggled in. Getting red and white jerseys in Cleary's in Dublin. Colours Derry used to play in.
	01:11:25 Prominence of soccer in Derry. Organisational capabilities of the GAA. Vigilance committees. Player injury scheme. Opinion of soccer as a game.
(	01:14:32 Support for the Ban.
ι	01:16:15 Democracy in the GAA. Removal of the Ban and Ulster counties' position on that. People making a Ban-related appeal and Paddy sitting on committee hearing appeals.
t N r	01:19:50 Role of the clergy in the GAA. Eugene McGee's brother, Fr McGee, Fr Leo Morahan, Canon Punch, Monsignor Canon Hamilton involved at all levels. Decline in number of clergy members involved. Fr Gardiner of Munster and Fr McNamara in Clare still involved in 2009.
l c v f	01:22:30 Fr Collins' involvement in Derry and with the Ulster Council. Fr Gallogly of Cavan being chairman of Ulster, as was Fr Joe Petit. Fr Michael Collins' involvement. Fr Devlin from Donaghmore bringing Irish into the Ulster Council. Priests playing for their local clubs, like Fr Carragher.
5 V	01:25:15 Role of teachers within the GAA. Coaches visiting schools. Cumann na mBunscoil. Playing in a Lurgan league with a school team. Playing in a Down league.

01:28:40 Refereeing games. His watch stopping during a game. Referees going on strike and county chairman Tony Williams looking for replacements. Competition between referees for games. Being chairman of the Games Administration Committee and members being canvassed by members wanting to referee the All-Ireland final.
01:32:55 Being able to push things through as chairman. Changing nature of the GAA. Increase in amount of money involved and the grants that are given out by the Association.
01:34:30 Being elected onto the Ulster Council.
01:35:30 Training Dan and James McCartan at the school he worked at. John Purdy on the 1968 All-Ireland team.
01:36:10 Refereeing games that the students played in. Playing at Derrymacash and Peter Murray there. A Monaghan man refereeing the game. Teachers arguing.
01:37:30 School rivalries. Lurgan schools. Derrymacash, Derrytrasna, St Peter's, and Alf Murray's school all had teams. Travelling by bus to games.
01:38:40 Playing for Derry and being proud. Losing his desire to play. Playing in Down when he moved there. Playing for Tullylish - formerly known as Lordstown, but wanted to get the Guilford people involved.
01:40:30 Social life around the GAA. Scór. Clubs coming together for quizzes. Céilís. Raffles. O'Donovan Rossas asking members to pay a fee each month by direct debit. Raising funds for a new pitch.
01:42:50 Role of the GAA in the community. Work done by volunteers with young players. Trainer noticing thee was something wrong with a young player and informing his parents.
01:46:00 Role of O'Donovan Rossas in the community when he was young.
01:46:55 First experience of the Ulster Council. Meetings being held in the Pier Hotel, Portadown. People travelling there by train. Down County Board not ratified in the late 1930s.
01:48:05 Eddie McAteer going to meetings with him.

Admiration for people on the Ulster Council - Seán
Carmichael from Belfast, Liam Harvey, George McCann, George McKeown, Gerry O'Donoghue from Down, Michael Ward from Ardara and Seán Kennedy from Dungloe in Donegal, John McElhom and Tom Fee from Fermanagh, TP O'Reilly from Cavan, Sergeant Jim from Tipperary, but working in Monaghan, Paddy McLaughlin from Ballybay who was later became Garda Commissioner. Gerry Arthurs was secretary and told lots of stories. Peter Coleman from West Tyrone and Frank O'Neill from Coalisland were other characters.
01:52:05 Roles on the Ulster Council and demands of that. Tom Daly from Ballyshannon is current Ulster Council Chairman. Duties as treasurer. Helping to collect money at gates. Having to be careful that nobody stole money. Special Branch accompanying men with bags of money at Croke Park. Man in Belfast carrying out a raid at Casement Park in the 1970s.
01:57:55 First trip to Croke Park in 1933. Going to Clones and having a meal in a hotel. Being in Ballinascreen in 1933 when Lavey played Ballinderry. Tension between supporters.
01:59:30 Travelling with Independent Buses to Croke Park. Atmosphere in the stadium. Going on trips with the Armagh Historical Society. Picking the team of the millennium and talking about Jim McCullogh of Armagh and Jim Smith from Cavan. Gerald McGowan saying he was related to Jim Smith. Missing the final meeting to select the team.
02:02:25 Liam Mulvihill treating past presidents well.
02:03:01 Getting onto Central Council in 1941/1942. Make-up of Central Council. Going to Clonliffe Road looking for the meeting place. Paddy O'Keefe living in Croke House and meeting there. Bríd Moriarty working there. Make-up of Central Council changing. Leaving in 1949. Con Murphy appointing him chairman of Games Administration Council in 1976. Duties involved. Being elected president designate in 1978. Assuming office as President in 1979. Developing a working relationship with Liam Mulvihill.
02:07:25 Starting out as President. Staying in a hotel in Eccles St, Dublin - Clerkin's Hotel. First meeting and what that experience was like. Tom Reilly up on a charge over an incident in a match. Personal politics then and now. Seamus Gardiner and Paddy McNamee as President. Admiration for

Con Murphy as a Provident Serving under Dr. Keenen
Con Murphy as a President. Serving under Dr Keenan.
02:11:20 What makes a good President.
02:12:50 Big decisions made during his early years in Central Council.
02:13:15 Taking the 1947 All-Ireland final to the United States. Monsignor Canon Hamilton pushing the idea. Tom Kilcoyne and Padraig O'Keefe looking into the idea. Discussing the idea at a meeting. President Dan O'Rourke's son playing for Roscommon at the time and being due to play Cavan in the All-Ireland semi-final. Vote being taken and Dan O'Rourke ordering a recount. Martin O'Neill, secretary of the Ulster Council, refereeing the final in the end. Other Ulster officials travelling to the game. Attitude to travelling in an airplane at the time. Not travelling to the United States until 1962 with the Down team. Playing in Philadelphia, Cleveland, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles. People telling the same joke in every city they went to. Representing Paddy O'Keefe on the trip. Working with Hugh Byrne.
02:20:00 People blaming Down's loss to Cavan in 1962 on the trip overseas. Down team that won the All-Ireland in 1961. Paddy O'Hagan and Kevin Mussen on the team. Talking to Liam Murphy, Tony Hadden and Eddie McKay at a function in their honour years later. Pat Rice and Brian Morgan deceased.
02:21:35 Games that were played on the trip to the United States. George Tinnelly chairman of the Down Committee giving a speech praising Charlie Curran and another man.
02:23:00 Realising that holding the final in New York in 1947 would be possible. Getting the Polo Grounds for the game. Sam Maguire presented in New York. Dónal McAnallen later casting doubt on that fact and maintaining that the cup was not in New York.
02:25:35 Celebrations at home when Cavan won the 1947 All-Ireland. Strength of the Cavan team and other Ulster sides unable to compete with them.
02:26:20 All-Ireland hurling final going to Thurles in 1984 and President Paddy Buggy involved in that decision. Staying with former referee George Ryan before the All-Ireland. How he felt about the decision to hold the final in Thurles.

02:28:30 Effect of the Troubles on the GAA in Northern Ireland. Hunger strikes causing splits in clubs. Difficulty in controlling it. Players like Kevin Lynch from areas that supported the prisoners. Fans being stopped and searched. Dealing with Humphrey Atkins. Gene Larkin from Crossmaglen speaking on behalf of the community. Low- flying helicopters overhead when matches were being played. Croke Park's reaction to grounds being taken over. Meeting with Irish Foreign Minister Brian Lenihan. Pressure on GAA people of Crossmaglen. Reasons for that. British government's attitude to events.
02:38:50 Discussing Hunger Strikes in Congress. Trying to be positive and lead from the front.
02:42:15 IRA influence on the GAA in Northern Ireland. Interest of Sinn Féin in soccer and Glasgow Celtic. Pressure on GAA to allow hunger strike demonstrations at grounds. Danger of GAA splitting. Chairman of their club, Benny Crawford, not interested in the political side of things. Clubs renaming themselves and grounds after hunger strikers that died and other nationalists e.g. Casement Park. Unionists reacting to that.
02:47:30 GAA clubs in areas surrounded by Unionist communities and problems they faced.
02:48:10 Dealing with the Irish government as President of the GAA. Getting confidential information from the Gardaí. Gaels Against The Block group forming and Hugh McPoland keeping him informed of their activities including a visit to Paddy's house to put pressure on him.
02:50:40 Going with Alf Murray and Con Murphy to secret meetings in Dublin with Fr Pearse O'Toole, Robert Murray, Bernadette McAllister and representatives of the H-Block prisoners. Gardaí John Morley and Henry Byrne being murdered and the Gardaí accusing the GAA of being ambivalent. Going to John Morley's funeral in Knock.
02:54:20 Being invited to functions at different clubs and being appreciated by the people. Going to a dinner in Armagh and 640 people in attendance.
02:55:10 Dealing with Sylvia Barrett and a Barry man from Cork who was an Environment Minister about rates on GAA grounds. Paying rates in Northern Ireland. Bars in GAA clubs.

02:58:10 Relationship between the GAA and the Irish government. Finance Bill of 1922 exempting the GAA from income tax. A Walsh man from Cork being sympathetic to the GAA. Politicians relying on GAA people for votes and to act as political candidates, like former Taoiseach Jack Lynch, John O'Mahony in Mayo and Dessie Foley.
03:00:00 Changing role of women in the GAA. Female secretaries in clubs. Popularity of ladies football. TG4 showing games.
03:01:30 Setting up an Irish course with Seamus De Faoite. Writing letters and minutes of Irish in meetings. Developing technical terminology for meetings in Irish. Going to Irish cultural events.
03:06:00 Tony Williamson in Down and a Cork man setting up Scór. Beginning as just a quiz and then developing. South Down chairman William James Smith insisting he attend all Scór events in the area. Adjudication problems.
03:09:05 Women's role in Magherafelt when he was younger and how that has changed. Need for more pitches due to more teams and increased emphasis on coaching. Eugene Young in charge of coaching at the Ulster Council.
03:11:25 Role of media in promoting the GAA. Mick Dunne in The Irish Press doing a lot. Tom Humphries in The Irish Times a GAA man. The Irish News featuring a lot of coverage. Working with RTÉ. Having meetings with Paddy Moriarty. BBC and UTV neglecting the Association. Problems in receiving RTÉ on televisions in Northern Ireland.
03:15:05 Changes in how the GAA is governed. Different make-up of Central Council. Presence of GPA. Impact of McNamee Commission.
03:18:40 Biggest change he has witnessed in the GAA. Idealism in the Association. Importance of Irish language.
03:20:45 His biggest achievement in the GAA.
03:21:50 Moving aside for somebody else to be President. Billy Byrne driving him around. Driving from Mayo to Cork and back for a funeral.
03:23:35 St Patrick's College Armagh against St Jarlath's of Tuam in 1946 - the best game he has ever watched. Larry

Higgins playing for St Patrick's. Derry against Down in Celtic Park in 1994.
03:26:15 Admiration for players like Jim Smith of Cavan and Jim McCullogh of Armagh. Down team of the 1960s with players like Sean O'Neill, Joe Lennon, Tony Hadden, Liam Murphy and the McCartans.
03:27:30 Watching games overseas. Opinion on teams going on foreign trips. Players being made to train more. Change in way the game is played and the amount of ground players are expected to cover. Hand-passing. Skill of high fielding dying out.
03:30:15 Sacrifices he made for the GAA.
03:31:05 Best memory
03:31:45 Pay-for-play and the implications of that if it became a reality.
03:37:10 Important rule changes in the GAA.
03:30:00 Lifting of ban on security forces. Ban on going to foreign dances and its enforcement.
03:40:45 Introduction of sponsorship and his thought on that. Alcohol and betting companies sponsoring the GAA.
03:42:40 Being disappointed with the GAA.
03:43:25 Treatment of past presidents by current presidents. Liam Mulvihill and Páraic Duffy treating them well. Meeting other past presidents. Visiting Pat Fanning.
03:45:15 Working with Paddy O'Keefe.
03:47:10 The GAA's biggest advantage. Certain people not getting enough credit for their efforts.
03:49:50 Challenges facing the Association. Need to address issues properly.
03:51:10 What the GAA has meant to him.
03:51:35 Future development of GAA in Northern Ireland. Work being done in schools.

	03:54:45 Down winning the All-Ireland for the first time.
	03:55:25 Trying to promote hurling in Ulster. Strength of hurling in the Ards Peninsula and Ballyvarney. The creation of Down Theas hurling team.
	03:58:00 Celebrations in Down after winning the first All- Ireland.
	03:58:50 Involvement with Féile na nGael – Under 14 hurling from all over Ireland. Séamus Ó Riain starting it up originally. Pat Gowdy running it.
	04:01:50 Reading he does at an annual Mass for deceased members. Letters and documents he has. Tribute to Gerry Fagan. Oration he gave for Art Murray. Letter from the poet Seamus Heaney.
	04:07:50 100-year celebrations. John Veasey was chairman of the celebrations committee. Banquet in Newry. Events on around Ulster. Tyrone running the Peil na nÓg. Tom Connell producing an up-to-date history. Games Administration Committee arranging fixtures.
Involvement in GAA	✓ Supporter ✓ Player ✓ Manager □ Coach □ Steward
	✓ Chairperson ✓ Committee Member ✓ Grounds-person
	🗆 Caterer 🗆 Jersey Washer 🗸 Referee 🗆 None
	✓ Other (please specify): _President of the GAA
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	Paddy played for around 15 years and won 2 Derry County Championships and played with the Derry county team for 2 years.
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how	Club: Secretary of Magherafelt, 1934; Chairman of Ballinahinch in 1949 for 5 years; Chairman of Tullylish for 3 different periods, the last from 1989 – 1993.
long for)	County: Secretary of South Derry Divisional Board, 1935 – 1937; Secretary of Derry County Committee, 1939 – 1946; Chairman of East Down Division, 1951; Chairman of South Down Division, 1962 – 1965; Down County Treasurer 1955 – 1973.
	Ulster: Derry Representative to Ulster Council, 1939 – 1948; Down Representative to Ulster Council, 1949 – 1958; Vice- Chairman of Ulster Council, 1958 – 1961; Chairman of Ulster

	Council, 1961 – 1963. National: Derry Representative to Central Council, 1939 – 1948; Down Representative to Central Council, 1964 – 1972; Chairman of the Games Administration Committee, 1976 – 1979; President Elect, 1978; President, 1979 – 1982. Paddy was also a member of Coiste na gClub and Féile na nGael.
Format	✓ Audio □ Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 04:16:42
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: \_\_\_\_\_Arlene Crampsie\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_12/06/12\_\_\_\_\_