

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

<b>Name of Interviewer</b>	Regina Fitzpatrick
<b>Date of Interview</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> June 2010
<b>Location</b>	Terry's home, near Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
<b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname)	Terry O'Dowd
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1944 <b>Home County:</b> Westmeath
<b>Education</b>	<b>Primary:</b> CBS Mullingar, Co. Westmeath. <b>Secondary:</b> Vocational School Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.
<b>Family</b>	<b>Siblings:</b> 3 brothers & 6 sisters <b>Current Family if Different:</b> Wife (Annette), 3 sons & 2 daughters
<b>Club(s)</b>	Mullingar Shamrocks [Westmeath]; Springfield HC [Westmeath]; Clonkill HC [Westmeath]; Cullion HC [Westmeath]; Oliver Plunketts GAA [Westmeath]
<b>Occupation</b>	N/A
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	N/A
<b>Religion</b>	N/A
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	N/A
<b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>	N/A

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<b>Date of Report</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> June 2012
<b>Period Covered</b>	1944 - 2010
<b>Counties/Countries Covered</b>	Westmeath
<b>Key Themes Covered</b>	Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Education, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy / Economics
<b>Interview Summary</b>	<p>Terry tells of his involvement with the GAA through the years. He grew up in Mullingar, playing hurling and football locally and participating in street leagues. He later started coaching different teams and developing his own skills as a coach through learning from others. He coached underage teams at all levels, ladies football teams and camogie teams, and was involved in the development of the Mullingar Shamrocks club. He talks about what is required of a coach and the difficulties he encountered. Terry also became involved in refereeing and recalls his experiences of that. He gives his opinions on the seemingly increasing number of rules in the GAA, and the dangers he associates with professionalism and player power. Terry dedicates most of his spare time to the GAA but does so enthusiastically and with the support of a family that understands his passion for the Association.</p> <p>00:20 Born in 1944 and a member of Mullingar Shamrocks Football Club. Born in Carndonagh, Donegal. Father was stationed at Malin Head with the army. Moved to Mullingar after a year.</p> <p>00:45 Father worked in post office and Terry did too.</p> <p>01:15 Family involvement in GAA. Father playing cricket in Mullingar.</p> <p>01:50 Earliest GAA memories. Playing GAA after school. Living in Ginnell Terrace and playing football there in the evenings. Parents wanting them to play hurling with Pearse's. Joe McAuley deciding to form a team, Springfield. Players from Gainstown - Frank McHugh and two Ryans - joining</p>

them. Success they had. Training facilities. Involvement of Christian Brothers. Different estates in Mullingar. O'Keefe, Fearon, O'Brien, McAuley, Lennox, Hughes and Landon brothers playing. People working in the military barracks moving to town. Playing in St Loman's Hospital grounds.

08:45 Springfield club ending and playing for Pearse's before that club folded and hurling declined. Carey, Nolan, Cunnihan, O'Dowd families stopped producing players. Club later emerged as a junior club, St Oliver Plunkett's. Playing with Clonkill and Cullion winning a junior championship.

10:25 Training Cullion in the late 1970s when he was in his thirties. Players getting sent off regularly. Success they had. Type of training they did and the facilities they had. Absence of tactics.

13:40 How he got involved in coaching. Getting involved with Mick Reynolds, Jimmy Bennett and Davy Nolan and learning from them. Doing courses. Working on player discipline due to sendings off.

17:20 Number of underage players at Mullingar Shamrocks in 2010 compared to when Terry started coaching. Working long days and going out to GAA games in the evenings. Leaving a function to make sure a team went to a game. His mother washing jerseys.

20:30 Getting involved with ladies football - Luke Dempsey called it 'facilitating' - and what that was like. His wife washing the jerseys. Coaching with Kevin Hope at underage level.

22:15 Development of Mullingar Shamrocks over the years. Buying land in the 1960s. Local councillor Jimmy Bennett helping out. Using a CIE wagon as a dressing room. Shed going on fire.

24:40 His uncle Tom Donoghue taking him to Croke Park for All-Ireland hurling finals and later helping to build a clubhouse. Brendan Kirwan, a farmer, getting a man from Kinnegad to help with drainage. Jack Seary of the Department of Agriculture giving advice on the soil. Dressing rooms being burned down. The Fagans and Mick Gay also involved. Getting planning permission to rebuild. Building a clubroom without planning permission and putting in a bar upstairs. Future development plans.

28:45 Rev Father Heaney starting up street leagues. Senior

team winning four championships in-a-row in the 1980s. Terry's brother, a teacher at St Orla's, helping out with a school team. Ballinea coming in and joining Under-12s. Popularity of streets leagues. Controversies that arose. Town expansion and other estates getting involved. Milmount, Ginnell, Patrick St and St Brigid's the main areas for the street leagues, which were the springboard for the development of the underage game in the area.

36:30 Co-operating with the national school to get boys playing football. Jimmy Nolan presenting a trophy. Jimmy Bennett doing a lot of work with Mick Reynolds at Shamrocks, formerly known as Mullingar Commercials. When the games were played and commitment required from Terry.

39:15 Starting out as a referee aged 27. Ned O'Brien going off injured in a game and Terry taking over. Difficulties associated with refereeing. Dislike of yellow/red card system. Increased cynicism of players. Being protected by the county board as a referee. Sending a player off and then going to a function in that player's area. Making mistakes. Jimmy Henry commenting to him about his prospect of refereeing county finals.

44:00 Learning the ropes of refereeing. Reading books and doing courses. Refereeing inter-county games around the country and in London. Satisfaction he got from that. Playing in an over 40s provincial competition in 1978 with the national referees. Going to the United States with referees in 1979, organised by Clem Foley from Croke Park and Seamus Duggan from Galway. Playing in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Playing, coaching and refereeing at the same time. Marking pitches.

46:45 Where he gets his motivation from.

48:50 Problems he encounters when training teams. Players not turning up for games. Benefits of GAA involvement to young players. GAA as a social organisation. Clubs looking out for their players.

52:35 Importance of volunteerism. Trying to get a breakdown of expenses involved in running teams and being unsuccessful. Money being spent on coaches, managers, players and physios. Future of volunteerism. Player power in Cork, Waterford and Limerick at inter-county level. Sense of entitlement among players. Interpretation of Limerick, Cork and Waterford hurling disputes and how they were

	<p>handled by Croke Park. 1970s Dublin Football team featuring Brian Mullins and Maurice O'Callaghan. Bobby Doyle visiting the club to make a presentation and refusing to accept expenses. Matt O'Connor and DJ Carey visiting and not asking for anything in return.</p> <p>58:30 Sacrificing family time for his community commitments. Not looking for expenses. No payment for referees when he started. Going on holiday with the family and driving home during it to referee a final.</p> <p>01:01:40 What his GAA involvement has meant to him. Doing lotto for the club and coaching an Oliver Plunkett's camogie team and what that entails. Patience required for coaching and how his approach has changed over the years.</p> <p>01:05:45 Impact of success on the club. Sense of identity strengthening. Increased number of coaches at the club after starting out with three teams and three coaches - Terry, Tommy Lennon and Tommy Gilhooly. Keeping up with coaching trends. Going to Dingle on holidays and attending matches and observing. Importance of the basics of football. Training sons of people that he once trained. His own children's interest in GAA. His grandchildren's GAA involvement. He and his brother playing with the county. His brother Dan on a minor team that lost an All-Ireland final to Kerry in the 1960s. His younger brother failing to realise his potential.</p> <p>01:15:05 Other sports in the town - soccer and rugby. Young players going to English clubs for trials.</p> <p>01:18:40 Why the GAA has endured for so long.</p> <p>01:20:00 Changes he has observed in the GAA. Directives coming from the top down.</p> <p>01:21:25 Refereeing a Ringtown game against Brownstown and Katie McKeogh making a comment to Terry.</p> <p>01:22:40 Enjoying success with teams when nobody had expected it. Certain teams suffering from overconfidence.</p> <p>01:25:55 Club players not electing to play with the county team when the county team in not playing well.</p> <p>01:27:00 Terry and Tom Welsh buying socks for a team because money was tight. Players today getting a lot of free</p>
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	clothing and equipment. Nature of sponsorship changing.
<b>Involvement in GAA</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manager <input checked="" 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)	Won Westmeath U17 Hurling Championship playing with Springfield; won junior hurling championship playing with Oliver Plunketts; Won senior hurling with the Pearses in 1966. Played all of his underage football with Mullingar Shamrocks.
<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: 01:29:48
<b>Language</b>	English

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**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: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> June 2012