

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	15 th June 2010
Location	George's home, near Baylin, Co. Westmeath
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	George Hatton
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1937 Home County: Westmeath
Education	Primary: Baylin NS
Family	Siblings: 4 brothers & 1 sister Current Family if Different: Wife (Agnes), 2 sons & 1 daughter
Club(s)	Caulry GAA [Westmeath]; Ballinamore GAA [Leitrim]; Craobh Rua GAA [Sligo]
Occupation	Regional Manager at Unilever Best Foods International
Parents' Occupation	Blacksmith [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Vintage Club of Ireland

REFERENCE NO. WH/1/13

Date of Report	25 th June 2012
Period Covered	1928 - 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Westmeath, Sligo, Leitrim
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Coaching, Officials, Administration, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Material Culture, Education, Media, Role of Teachers, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Rivalries, Culture, Scór, All-Ireland, Club History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Alcohol, Violence, Politics, Northern Ireland, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Professionalism, Socialising, Relationships, Economy / Economics
Interview Summary	<p>George reflects on his involvement with the GAA over time. Originally from Caulry in Westmeath, he played football at school and joined the club team when he was old enough. Later he went to Ballinamore in Leitrim and played there for a while, before moving to Sligo. There he joined the Craobh Rua club and he eventually made the Sligo junior, and then senior, football panels. He reached a Leinster final with Sligo but in the end moved back to Westmeath. He participated in the Jimmy Magee All Stars and began coaching various local teams in Westmeath, and also the county minor team for a period. He also became heavily involved in Scór in Westmeath. George has a great passion for the Association and is proud of its amateur status and its willingness to embrace traditional Irish culture - something he feels it is important that we do not allow to slip from our grasp.</p> <p>00:15 Born in 1937. Originally from Baylin, Westmeath. Father a blacksmith and was Church of Ireland so didn't watch games on a Sunday.</p> <p>01:15 Earliest GAA memory is at 6 or 7 and listening to Roscommon playing on the radio. Micheál Ó hÉithir talking about the captain Jamesie Murray. Villagers calling to listen to games on the radio. Being friendly with Jamesie Murray in later years.</p> <p>02:30 Local club was Caulry. Mike Cunningham involved with the club and telling stories about Mike Nugent's battles with Terry Finneran of Tubberclair and Caulry winning the McCrahan Cup in the 1930s. Eamon Griffin and the goals he scored. Seven Nugents playing for the club.</p>

	<p>03:20 GAA not prominent in his end of the parish. Neighbours Patsy Meara and Tommy 'the star' Hickey interested in GAA. Uncle a republican. Recalls a McCrahan Cup game in Athlone in Daly's field and John Joe Sheehy with George's uncle at the game.</p> <p>04:30 Prominence of GAA at school. Playing with a paper ball, often made by Christy Connell. Making a rag ball. Ms Naughton, a teacher in Spittle asking Frank Fitzgerald to buy a football in 1951/1952. Frank Fitzgerald, president of the club, arriving with the ball. Frank's son and grandson involved with Caulry. Frank's cousin playing for Caulry. His uncle Bernie Kelly playing GAA.</p> <p>06:40 Westmeath in a Leinster final in 1949. Kicking a ball around in Moydrum. Peter Woods and Johnny Walls playing for Westmeath.</p> <p>07:15 Nationalist dimension to GAA participation at the time. Importance of Irish culture. John Cowley's GAA recitation. Danger of greed to the Association. Watching players train. What training consisted of. Playing in Mount Temple and Phil Clarke from Meath encouraging them. No underage competitions below Under-16 level. Playing Tubber in a challenge match.</p> <p>08:15 Playing football for the first time.</p> <p>09:50 Playing some league games for Caulry before moving to Ballinamore, Going to Sligo and playing with Craobh Rua seniors. Playing in a county final and a league final. Members of Craobh Rua team. Prominence of soccer in Sligo.</p> <p>11:15 Being selected on the Sligo junior team in 1958. Meeting Galway in the Connacht final. Playing for the Sligo seniors and playing Longford in the League. Marking Frankie Stockwell in the Championship and what that experience was like. Breaking his leg in a club game in Ballymoate against Curry. Replacing Ray Tully on the Sligo team in Roscommon in 1961. Making the Connacht final in 1965. Playing against Leitrim in Carrick-on-Shannon. Playing in a Gaelic Weekly tournament in Croke Park in 1965 against Longford, who had Brendan Barden and Pat Barden. Being asked if he played with Micheál Kierans Playing with Neilas O'Dowd.</p> <p>14:00 Playing a League game against Meath in Navan. Jimmy Killuran exchanging words with Pádraig Kane.</p>
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	<p>14:50 Getting involved in GAA in Sligo. Being approached by St Columba's and later by Cormac McGill and Brother Benedict of Craobh Rua, which is known as St Mary's in 2010. Playing in tournaments in Northern Ireland. Playing Ballybay of Monaghan and a man coming into the dressing-room praising Charlie Gallagher of Ballybay and Kenneth Lamb having words with him. Micheál Kerins and Brendan McAuley playing well.</p> <p>16:35 Popularity of soccer in Sligo. Facilities at GAA training. Togging out behind a bush. May Carey commenting on them.</p> <p>17:25 Ban in force. Only céilí dances allowed. Being at a meeting about dances in Collooney. County secretary Tom Kilcoyne asking Mickey Regan a question about a motion he had proposed.</p> <p>18:25 Returning to Athlone in 1965. Working for Musgrave Tea Company. Playing with the Jimmy Magee All Stars, Frankie Byrne of Meath and Stevie Duggan of Cavan. How Jimmy Magee All Stars worked. Show band personalities like Dermot O'Brien and Fr Michael Cleary involved. Paddy McCormack of Offaly, Stevie Duggan, Peter Sheridan from Longford and Greg Hughes taking part. Frankie Byrne of RTÉ had won an All-Ireland with Meath in 1949 and 1954. Money raised for charity. Playing against teams like the Mayo team of 1950/1951. Competitive aspect.</p> <p>21:15 Training a team in 1966. Getting to a county junior final. Disagreement with a player and the club getting involved in the dispute between the two. Making friendships through the GAA. Reasons for becoming a trainer. Peter Laffey of Mayo training them at Sligo and shouting at George and Pdraig Keane. Army officer Tommy Ryan training them in 1965. Commitment involved in training teams in 2010. Philosophy of training.</p> <p>25:25 Frank Seary playing for Caulry and shouting at a player nicknamed 'Guggins'.</p> <p>26:10 Emphasis on tactics in training during the 1960s. Getting players to concentrate. Training a team in Roscommon and asking Jamesie Murray for advice. Training regime in the 1960s. Training with Kevin Heffernan of Dublin when he was in Sligo in the late 1950s. Importance of patience. Making training competitive. Increased use of hand-pass in Gaelic football over the years. Taking a team to</p>
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Killarney for a training session with former Kerry player Pat Spillane. Páidí Ó Sé training the Westmeath senior footballers. Dermot Earley training the players at the club. Earley donating money he had been given to a fund for former Offaly player Michael Ryan.

33:15 Importance of amateur ethos in the GAA. Playing with Westmeath when he got back from Sligo. Playing Dublin in Parnell Park and going to play in Baltinglass, Wicklow the following week. Waiting in Moate for a lift and then playing with his club instead. Playing for the county junior team and making a Leinster final. Playing junior hurling with Sligo and making the Connacht final. Roscommon footballer Gerry O'Malley winning an All-Ireland junior hurling medal with Roscommon.

35:25 Getting involved in hurling. His skill levels and how that affected his game. Playing hurling with Craobh Rua in Sligo, and with local club Drumraney. Being involved with Southern Gaels, an amalgamation of teams. His sons playing hurling. Son David winning an Under-16 All-Ireland hurling medal in Croke Park with Westmeath.

37:55 Going to Northern Ireland to play. Tricolours on show. Taking a wrong turn on the way to Pettigo in Donegal. Kenneth Lamb in the car with them. Encountering a roadblock and security. Going to play Armagh in Lurgan with Westmeath. Westmeath bringing jerseys for internees. Tension. Staying the night in Dundalk and then travelling to Lurgan with Seamus Conroy and Brody Corcoran. Anticipating being stopped by the RUC. Crossing the border at Newry and encountering a road check.

41:10 Training and playing simultaneously with Caulry. Respect he got having played county football. Fr Cremin coaching a successful Carmelite team. Motivating players. Pdraig Malone being captain of Caulry and playing for Westmeath in the 1960s. Packie Allen playing. Physical aspect of games. Story of two heavy playings shouldering each other. His son David playing for Caulry. Going to the Féile in Cavan in 1984. Playing Sarsfields of Belfast in an All-Ireland final.

47:35 History of Caulry club. First big win in 1933 in the McCrahan Cup. Players included the Nugents, Ned Griffin. How he felt about the Caulry team and playing at Cusack Park. Spirit in Caulry club. Joe Rourke as secretary, Ger O'Kelly Lynch from Waterford involved, Donie Malone as

	<p>chairman. Underage aspect of club. Commitment involved.</p> <p>50:25 Coaching Kilbride in the 1970s. Problems he encountered. Captain arriving late for an important game. Trying to change the situation. Coaching Kiltoom and meeting Clan na nGael. Playing Kilmore in a county final.</p> <p>53:30 Opportunities that an inter-county player comes across. Being in a shop in Charlestown, Mayo trying to get business. Peter Laffey advising him on how to approach businesses in Mayo. Going into a shop in Ballisodare in Sligo.</p> <p>56:30 Problems between county boards and players at inter-county level. Problems getting All-Ireland tickets. Going to the Comeragh Mountains to pick up a ticket.</p> <p>57:55 Problems trying to impose one's style as a trainer. Opposition to change.</p> <p>59:10 Going to a convention in 1995 and resolving to train the team and win the championship. Beating Garrycastle in a quarter-final. Winning a junior championship in 2002. Aidan Dunney winning a championship training the team. Brendan Clarke training them in 2010.</p> <p>01:01:30 PJ Fullon chairman of Westmeath County Board and asking him to train the minors. Losing to Dublin in a quarter-final. Impact of GAA involvement on family life. Coping with defeat.</p> <p>01:03:45 Involvement with Scór. Preparing a sketch for the All-Ireland final in the National Stadium. Camraderie. Priscilla Brown, a mother of some of the boys, being involved. Local musician John Shortland playing for them and struggling to get the tune right. Patricia Brown and Susan Conlon winning an All-Ireland in junior Scór.</p> <p>01:06:35 Involvement with the hurling team and doing Scór with Southern Gaels. Getting to Leinster finals. History of Scór in Caulry. Benefits of Scór. Participation in the county. Paul Doolin, Mary Hughes and Jamie McNamee involved in Mullingar Shamrocks Scór. Katie McCarthy of Mullingar winning junior Scór. People being brought into clubs because of Scór. Sporting nature of Scór. Clubs like Ballinagore and St Joseph's taking part for the enjoyment of it. Contribution of Scór to Irish culture.</p>
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REFERENCE NO. WH/1/13

	<p>01:12:30 Recitation by John Cowley of Ballinagore, composed for the GAA Centenary Year 1984. Chris O'Duffy of Bonrusna has produced many recitations. A man from Cornafaen in Cavan is a well-known composer. Castletown Gheoghegan produce their own sketches and compositions.</p> <p>01:17:35 Problems with adjudicators. Being at the annual Scór meeting at Croke Park. John Scanlon, from an All-Ireland-winning ballad group from Clara, in a debate. How to improve Scór. Changes in standard of performance over the years. Being county chairman of Westmeath. Proposed by Des Maguire's club. What Scór means to people. Admission fees to Scór county final. How GAA could acknowledge Scór more than it does and need for Scór to push GAA. Songs being sung by county supporters in Croke Park. Importance of local radio playing music from the area.</p> <p>01:29:40 Highlights of his GAA career. Disappointments. Treatment of former Cork player and senior hurling manager Gerald McCarthy.</p> <p>01:31:05 Aspects of the GAA that make him feel proud. Fears over rule changes within the Association. Importance of physicality in the game. Row breaking out at a game in Easkey in Sligo. Club chairman Jim McCann telling Jeff Weir from Easkey to calm the situation. Pat Keelan, a detective sergeant, confronting the Easkey players.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____</p>
<p>Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p>Played with Ballinamore, Leitrim (1965); Craobh Rua, Sligo; Played Connolly Cup football with St Columba's in Sligo; played with Letterkenny in Donegal. Played from 16yrs to 45 yrs; won Westmeath Intermediate Football Championship in 1969 and leagues in 67, 68 & 69. Played Senior Football for Sligo 1958 – 65; Played Junior Hurling and football for Sligo in the 1960s; Played Junior and Senior Football for Westmeath; Played with the Jimmy Magee All-Stars; Played on a Connaught football selection in 1963.</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator</p>	<p>Managed a number of club and county teams; Chairman of</p>

REFERENCE NO. WH/1/13

(Positions held; how long for)	Caulry GAA; Chairman of Westmeath Scór Committee
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 01:36:24
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 25th June 2012