

GAA Oral History Project
Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	23 rd Mar 2010
Location	Roganstown House Hotel
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Andy Kettle
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1946 Home County: Dublin
Education	Primary: Swords NS; St Canice's NCR Dublin Secondary: O'Connells, North Richmond St.
Family	Siblings: 1 brother & 1 sister Current Family if Different: Wife and 6 children
Club(s)	Fingal Ravens
Occupation	Sales Manager in Newspaper Advertising [Retired]
Parents' Occupation	County Council Official [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	None
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Rush Golf Club

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Date of Report	22 nd May 2012
Period Covered	1946 - 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Dublin, Offaly, Cavan, Meath
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Education, Emigration, Role of Teachers, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Rivalries, Irish Language, Culture, Scór, Club History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Challenges, Sacrifices, Ban on Foreign Games, Professionalism, Retirement, Economy / Economics
Interview Summary	<p>00:30 Describes the Swords area - a rural town at the time - where he spent the first 13 years of his life.</p> <p>01:45 Recalls his earliest GAA memories and the Fingallians club in Swords which achieved much in the 1950s, progressing from a junior to a senior team.</p> <p>02:30 Talks about the first senior game Fingallians played at Lawless Park against St Vincent's team who had many Dublin players in their ranks - the Foleys, Kevin Heffernan, Mick Moylan, Jim Lavin, Ollie Freely.</p> <p>03:10 Describes going to Croke Park to see his heroes play major inter-county games - what time they would go, how they would get there, where they would sit and how many of them attended together.</p> <p>05:10 Mentions his father, a founding member of Fingal Ravens. Andy had a degree of involvement in the club but was always going to play with Fingallians.</p> <p>05:45 Talks about street leagues that they used to have in Swords, his first competitive involvement in GAA. He got to strip out for Fingallians at the time but did not get to play, which was a blow to him.</p> <p>06:55 Mentions local rivals. The leagues were local and the only time they played city teams was in the county championship. Mentions St Margaret's, Garretstown, Clann Mhuire, Balbriggan, O' Dwyers, Round Towers Lusk, St Pat's Donabate, Fingal Ravens, Ballybochal, Skerry Harps, St Brendan's, Man-O-War, Fingalians, Colmcilles, St Sylvesters in Malahide, Starlights.</p> <p>08:57 Mentions training and cycling to training with the boots over the handlebars. If they had to travel further for a game cars would be organised.</p> <p>09:40 First game for Fingal Ravens was against Fingalians at Under-14 level in Swords and he was marking his cousin.</p> <p>10:20 His father, Patrick, and a group of others - the Griffins, Jim Crinnigan, Nugent, Paddy Dunne - set up Fingal Ravens.</p>

	<p>His father was first secretary of the club and picked the name for the club. The jerseys came from two local lads who brought some jerseys back from boarding school in Roscrea, where they played rugby. The black on the jersey and the raven went hand in hand.</p> <p>11:45 His family was in Dublin for generations and most of the people in the 'rural Fingal' area were Dubliners too. Fingal was divided by the Belfast Road and there were six villages on the western side. And sometimes the different teams amalgamated - Oldtown's Wild Geese team and Roverstown, Roverstown and Ballybochan - the latter two played a 7-a-side match to see what name they would play under. This often happened because of dwindling numbers caused by emigration.</p> <p>13:20 Ravens was formed in the 1950s and they started playing at juvenile level. Went up through the ages as the group got older. His uncle, Malachy Griffin, managed them and they played in his field. The city boys, when they arrived to play a game, did not like playing in these farmers' fields. He sees the GAA as family based - his brothers, son and daughter played, his son is now secretary of the club.</p> <p>15:55 Now 50 per cent of the Fingal Ravens senior team is first generation, and this must be acknowledged so that newcomers are made to feel welcome. There is a big link between the club and the local school and they have a mutually beneficial relationship, which is very important to them. Joe O' Toole, who was headmaster of Roverstown before joining the INTO, was helpful, as was his successor Tom Kelleher, and Karl O'Flaherty who was originally from Dingle and Joe Lally who was a Galway man.</p> <p>18:05 Male teachers were very important to the growth of the GAA. Now clubs have to provide Games Promotions Officers and put them into schools, which is a fact of life.</p> <p>19:00 The club is thriving now, ever since they won a junior championship in 1999, having beaten St Finian's Swords in Lusk. They went to Intermediate then and in 2006 they won the Dublin Intermediate Championship, went into the All-Ireland series and were beaten by Duleek the first time around and by Tubber from Offaly the second time around. They had a great time in Tubber that day.</p> <p>21:05 They met Donaghmore Ashbourne from Meath - the adjoining parish - in a Leinster final the following year in Parnell Park and beat them. It was 'a tremendous day'. They then played Ballyneal from Cavan in Páirc Tailteann in Navan. They beat them but suffered costly injuries, which told in the final at Croke Park when they lost to Moycullen from Galway. The whole experience had been an amazing journey for the people of the parish, as there is no soccer club, rugby</p>
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	<p>club, or scouts in the parish and everybody is involved in the GAA club. They celebrated long and hard in Kettle's pub down the road. It lasted a week.</p> <p>25:10 Players are responsible and are keenly aware that they are representing the jersey and that this is of great importance. People are immensely proud of their local club. Ballyboughal won a junior championship last year, they are a neighbouring club and although they are rivals on the pitch, it was good to see someone you knew doing well.</p> <p>27:00 Rivalries are hugely important. And it's good to bump into old rivals around the county and reminisce. It's what the GAA is all about and there's a place for everybody.</p> <p>Amateurism and volunteerism is vital and pay-for-play would jeopardise everything. Expenses are part and parcel of things. The club has 3 adult teams, minors, Under-21s, 7 juvenile teams and a ladies team, and it would take over 100,000 a year to keep the club ticking over. If there were more expenses involved, then more time and energy would have to be spent on raising funds.</p> <p>31:30 In Dublin they are proactive and have panels and officers to meet and work on expenses, and everything is organised. These people can pick up on potential problems and sort them out before they develop. County team expenses, payments to managers and player-power issues will be looked at in 2010. The GPA are now inside the tent and must take responsibility, and their chief Dessie Farrell has a good team around him. They are pragmatic as a unit and it is a good development.</p> <p>35:20 There have been major changes over the years and facilities is a big one. They have improved immensely, from Croke Park down to the smallest clubs. But it's expected nowadays, and you are competing with other sports for the youth. This is especially true when it comes to rugby. Transport for teams has also improved dramatically. These things are expected and they are given, and that is a positive thing.</p> <p>37:45 Juvenile structures have also changed. When he started Under-14s was the youngest, now there are Under-8s and at that level the focus is not so much on winning at all costs; you want to involve everyone and develop people's skills.</p> <p>39:25 Negatives include the style of football - there is not so much high fielding any more. Many would blame Dublin for a handpassing style of football that was used in the 70s, and aped by other teams. The blanket style defence football of the current era is not so attractive. Clubs have got themselves into financial trouble from the boom era and that is putting a strain on clubs.</p>
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	<p>41:15 Funds are generated by holding poker classics, duck races, family days, sponsored cycles and club lottos. Membership on its own would only bring in one tenth of what is needed. In rural areas volunteering is not a problem and people are happy to help.</p> <p>43:00 Some of their first generation players today are children of locals who have moved elsewhere, or they are children of people who have moved into the area. Little involvement from the 'new Irish' as there aren't many in the area.</p> <p>45:10 He became involved in the administrative side of things naturally. He will try out anything and slot in where necessary. He is in favour of a revolving system in terms of different positions within the club. As Vice Chairman of Dublin County Board he is a member of the county Executive Committee, attending monthly meetings and spending time with the county teams. He would like to be chairman at some stage. There is a lot of time involved in what he does, which might be problematic for a younger person. You are travelling a lot and attending various meetings but you get to meet all kinds of people.</p> <p>51:20 As a part of the GAA you learn many things which help to form you as a character. There are disappointments when things don't work out or a player does not fulfil his potential but that is the way it goes. The club have had some junior players on the county panel and have one player on the 2010 senior panel. St Margaret's can look to, Mick Kennedy and Paddy Reilly are two recent long-serving inter-county players, Ballyboughal could look at Leo Hickey, Swords could look at Ciarán Duff, Patsy Marken, Seán Foley. Sylvesters had Niall Guiden, John Leonard....other clubs have had better success than they have had.</p> <p>55:00 The season is busy so they don't get to go visit other clubs, but on juvenile level they do more.</p> <p>56:00 He has missed out on a lot of dinners due to his GAA involvement, so it has had an impact on his family life. He often brings his family along with him and that helps with continuity down through the generations. It means a lot to him that his children are involved, and has brought him to tears at times. He can't imagine life without his GAA involvement. It is part of his sense of Irishness.</p> <p>58:45 He played other games, even when the ban was in force - rugby and soccer - but the GAA was his first love. Because of the ban he would stay out of team photographs so that he wouldn't get caught. He sees the lifting of the ban as a positive thing.</p> <p>1:00:20 The GAA could support the cultural end of things a little bit more because the emphasis is mainly on playing. The games are very important but you have to learn to get over</p>
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	<p>your losses, and teams ought to socialise more together after matches.</p> <p>1:02:40 The role of women in clubs has been hugely positive, and they now occupy all sorts of roles.</p>
Involvement in GAA	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coach <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" 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>
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	<p>U14-U16 hurling in Fingal (1960-64/65)</p> <p>Played football with Fingal Ravens 1956-85</p> <p>1969 – Won Junior Championship.</p>
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	<p>Fingal Ravens: Treasurer (1970s); Chairperson (2004-2009, 1980).</p> <p>Dublin County Board: Current Vice-Chairperson; Member of Competitions Control Committee; Member of Fixtures Committee; Assistant Secretary (2008-2009)</p>
Format	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
Duration	<p>Length of Interview: 1:04:02</p>
Language	<p>English</p>

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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: 22nd May 2012

The GAA logo, consisting of the letters 'GAA' in a stylized, white, serif font, is positioned on a black, trapezoidal background in the bottom right corner of the page.