

GAA Oral History Project
Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Arlene Crampsie
Date of Interview	10 th March 2011
Location	Interviewee's home, near Naas, Co. Kildare
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Seamus Aldridge
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1935 Home County: Kildare
Education	Primary: De La Salle, Kildare Town, Co. Kildare Secondary: St. Joseph's Academy, Kildare Town, Co. Kildare
Family	Siblings: 1 sister Current Family if Different: Married to Leila with 4 daughters
Club(s)	Round Towers, Kildare; Athy GFC; Naas
Occupation	Engineering Executive Eircom (Department of Posts and Telegraphs, PnT)
Parents' Occupation	Printer [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Fine Gael
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Secretary Athy Golf Club, Athy Rugby Club

Date of Report	8 th August 2012
Period Covered	1920s – 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Kildare, Kerry, Dublin, Americas, USA, Asia, United Arab Emirates, Australasia, Australia
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Material Culture, Education, Media, Emigration, Involvement in GAA Abroad, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Identity, Rivalries, Irish Language, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Alcohol, Violence, Opening of Croke Park, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Retirement, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy / Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Seamus Aldridge talks about his involvement in the GAA over the years. He discusses his family’s interest in the GAA and how his uncle played on the All-Ireland winning Kildare teams of the 1920s. He talks about his involvement in the Round Towers club and playing with Kildare minors. He describes what the GAA was like in Kildare when he was growing up and the impact that the local army barracks in the Curragh had on Gaelic games in the area. He talks about his involvement in administration over the years, from being secretary of the Kildare county board to chairman of the Leinster Council. Seamus describes the type of issues he faced in these roles and gives his opinion on the various rule changes in the GAA and the issue of expenses in the Association. He recalls his refereeing career and talks about being in charge of the 1978 All-Ireland football final between Dublin and Kerry. Towards the end of the interview Seamus talks about the memorable moments during his time with the GAA and discusses the important role that the Association has played in his life.</p> <p>00:00 Introduction</p> <p>00:26 Seamus talks about his earliest GAA memories. Talks about his uncle Tom Keogh who won All-Irelands with Kildare in 1927 and 1928 and then played for Laois. Discusses his father’s involvement in the GAA. Talks about the relationship between Kildare and Kerry and players stopping in his</p>

	<p>grandmother's restaurant. Describes what Kildare was like when he was growing up and the role of Bob Byrnes Barbershop window. Mentions Hopkins taxis.</p> <p>03:16 Discusses playing with the Round Towers club at underage level and the success they had. Talks about the famous Kildare players like William Squires Gannon, John Hayes, Albert O'Neill, Tom Keogh. Discusses Round Towers changing their name and an issue with money in the bank.</p> <p>06:30 Talks about Kildare winning the All-Ireland in the 1920s and the stories he heard. Discusses player expenses in the past and the county board paying for things. Tells a story about William Squires Gannon. Talks about a watch that was presented to the Kildare team that won two All-Irelands.</p> <p>10:38 Describes how he knew Squires Gannon and the work that he did. Mentions his role in the St. Brigid's Pipe Band. Talks about the Kildare teams in the past. Mentions Mick and Niall Buckley.</p> <p>12:30 Talks about setting up a juvenile team in Round Towers.</p> <p>13:15 Discusses the role of the De La Salle Brothers in Kildare town. Talks about the lack of success in Kildare from the 1950s to the 1990s.</p> <p>14:36 Talks about his family's involvement in the GAA. Discusses his father's involvement.</p> <p>16:04 Describes what St. Brigid's Park in Kildare was like.</p> <p>17:15 Recalls the Kildare minor team playing in the Leinster final. Talks about the facilities at that time and what life was like. Discusses how his father moved to England for work.</p> <p>19:50 Talks about the impact of the Second World War in Kildare. Describes how army men based in the Curragh camp and men brought in to work in the bogs brought hurling to the county.</p> <p>22:00 Describes what his first pair of boots were like. Gives his opinion on the modern type of boots and the style of training. Talks about Dublin and the urban-rural relationship. Discusses his refereeing career and the differences between now and during his time.</p> <p>25:50 Talks about living in Naas and becoming county secretary. Mentions Liam McManus. Discusses his administrative career and working with the Leinster Council.</p>
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	<p>Talks about running for president of the GAA and being runner up to Sean Kelly.</p> <p>28:24 Describes the type of facilities for Gaelic games when he was growing up. Talks about the differences in training between his time and now.</p> <p>33:05 Talks about the type of balls they played with. Discusses how there was a bone setter in Carlow called O'Neill of Myshall. Describes the type of injuries they got. Recalls the pig's bladder ball.</p> <p>37:00 Recalls playing in a minor hurling match with Kildare. Describes the dominance of football in Kildare. Talks about soccer and rugby in the area. Discusses being suspended for playing hurling. Tells a story about Peter Pringle being dropped before the 1927 All-Ireland final because he attended an English dance. Mentions Tim Clarke and Joe Curtis.</p> <p>40:00 Talks about Kerry and the Civil War.</p> <p>40:55 Discusses his career with the Kildare team. Recalls how he was notified that he was selected.</p> <p>42:10 Talks about training with the county team. Describes playing with the Kildare minor team. Discusses the differences between playing county and club football. Notes how there were six players from the club on the county team. Talks about staying in hotels.</p> <p>45:56 Discusses the 1956 Leinster final. Recalls how most people travelled by train to matches. Meeting people in Barry's hotel. Talks about celebrations after victories. Mentions Michael Osborne. Discusses setting up a fund for the Kildare team and appointing Mick O'Dwyer as manager before Dermot Earley became manager. Reappointing Mick O'Dwyer in 1997.</p> <p>50:40 Talks about Kildare's championship run in 1998. Winning the Leinster final. Talks about the people involved in the backing of Kildare. Discusses the issue of alleged payments to Mick O'Dwyer. Talks about the role of the Kildare Supporters' Club. Talks about the 5 year rule in administration.</p> <p>58:40 Gives his opinion on the Gaelic Players Association. Talks about the financial state of the Kildare county board and the differences between his time and now.</p> <p>01:03:00 Discusses the issue of payments to managers.</p>
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	<p>Talks about the relationship between the county and the club.</p> <p>01:05:00 Talks about the issue of people playing illegally.</p> <p>01:07:03 Discusses his involvement in refereeing. Talks about his first match in 1958. Recalls a match in Kildare in 1963.</p> <p>01:11:00 Recalls refereeing the 1978 All-Ireland football final between Dublin and Kerry. Notes the important matches he has refereed in. Talks about receiving death threats after the 1978 final. Discusses the issue of the goal line and the Leinster final between Louth and Meath. Highlights the respect referees get in rugby.</p> <p>01:17:00 Talks about playing and refereeing in Croke Park.</p> <p>01:18:15 Discusses his involvement in administration. Getting involved in the referee's committee and becoming county secretary. Describes how the role changed over the years. Talks about the issue of finance and the relationship between volunteers and Croke Park. Mentions Liam Mulvihill.</p> <p>01:25:45 Tells a story about Nickey Brennan. Gives his opinion on Croke Park's telephone system. Talks about the differences from his time.</p> <p>01:30:05 Talks about his role as county secretary. Describes what 1998 was like. Explains his way of sending the minutes. Recalls an incident about sending county board minutes out by post.</p> <p>01:36:08 Describes using the Gestetner machine. Talks about the introduction of computers into administration. Becoming chairman of the Leinster Council.</p> <p>01:39:22 Talks about his role as chairman of the Leinster Council. Describes what the role involved. Discusses the role of President of the GAA.</p> <p>01:44:10 Gives his opinion on having no elections for the post of president. Mentions Tom Loftus and Liam O'Neill. Talks about losing the race for president. Discusses the work of Sean Kelly and Peter Quinn and other GAA presidents.</p> <p>01:49:20 Talks about what he would have done as President. Highlights the need for an overhaul in Gaelic football and refereeing.</p> <p>01:54:52 Discusses the type of issues that arose when he was on the management committee. Mentions Sean McCague and his introduction of measures to deal with child</p>
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	<p>abuse. Talks about what type of qualities people in administration need in the GAA.</p> <p>01:58:50 Talks about the resignation of the Kildare county chairman. Describes the relationship between volunteers and Croke Park.</p> <p>02:00:25 Describes the main changes in the GAA in Kildare over the years.</p> <p>02:04:12 Talks about Kildare's county ground in Newbridge. Discusses the issues around finance and county grounds.</p> <p>02:07:42 Discusses his involvement in setting up a centre of excellence for GAA in Kildare. Mentions Jack Wall.</p> <p>02:10:40 Talks about his involvement in the GAA after he finished his term on the management committee. Describes life outside the GAA. Being president of the county board.</p> <p>02:14:06 Describes the impact of the GAA on his family life. Talks about their involvement in Gaelic games. Gives his opinion on football in its current state.</p> <p>02:18:49 Talks about ladies football in the county and the role of women in administration.</p> <p>02:20:25 Recalls his best memory from his time in the GAA. Becoming Leinster chairman, refereeing the All-Ireland final in 1978.</p> <p>02:21:59 Talks about his GAA heroes. Mentions Glenn Ryan, Tommy Murphy, Packie McGarty, Mick O'Connell, Mick O'Dwyer.</p> <p>02:25:02 Discusses refereeing matches in America. Talks about the places he has travelled to with the GAA like the United Arab Emirates, Dubai, Australia.</p> <p>02:26:32 Talks about refereeing in America at the America Finals in Pittsburgh. Refereeing a hurling match. Mentions Jimmy Deenihan.</p> <p>02:29:35 Discusses Kildare losing the All-Ireland football final in 1998.</p> <p>02:30:53 Talks about the role of the GAA in his life.</p> <p>02:33:55 Recalls introducing former president Mary McAleese to the players at an All-Ireland final.</p> <p>02:34:25 Tells a story about Bertie Ahern.</p>
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<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steward <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): ____President of County____ </p>
<p>Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p>Played from the age of 13 to 29. With Round Towers won 2 Under 14, 2 Under 16, 3 County minor, 1 intermediate and 3 senior championships. With Kildare won a Leinster championship in 1956.</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Has been involved in administration since 1952.</p> <p>Club: Delegate to County Board</p> <p>County: Secretary and Chairman of Referees Committee, County Secretary (1975 – 2000), Treasurer (1976 – 2000), Delegate to Leinster Council (20 years), President of County</p> <p>Leinster Council: Vice-chairman (1996 – 1999), Chairman (1999 – 2001)</p> <p>Central Council: GAA Management (1999 – 2001), Vice-President.</p>
<p>Format</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Length of Interview: 02:37:44</p>
<p>Language</p>	<p>English</p>

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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the right to use and make available to the public the content of this interview.

Signed: _____Arlene Crampsie_____

Date: _____08/08/12_____

The logo of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), featuring the letters 'GAA' in a stylized, white, serif font on a black background.