

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	20 th March 2010
Location	Clary-St Joseph's GAA, Sligo
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Brian McGaughran
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1938 Home County: Sligo
Education	Primary: Calry NS, Sligo Secondary: Sligo Technical School
Family	Siblings: 2 brothers & 2 sisters Current Family if Different: Wife (Josephine), 2 sons & 2 daughters
Club(s)	Drumcliff-Rosses Point GAA [Sligo]; Craobh Rua GAA [Sligo]; Calry-St Joseph's GAA [Sligo]
Occupation	Veterinary Lab Assistant, Department of Agriculture
Parents' Occupation	Farmers
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Fine Gael
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Calry Rowing Club 'The Gold Wrappers'

Date of Report	18 th June 2012
Period Covered	1938 - 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Sligo, Galway, Carlow, Dublin
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Emigration, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Rivalries, Culture, Scór, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Challenges, Alcohol, Violence, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Professionalism, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships
Interview Summary	<p>Brian talks about his involvement with the GAA in rural Sligo. Gaelic games were never widely popular in his part of the county but he took great interest in them, playing for the nearby Drumcliff team before eventually helping to set up a club in his native Calry with friends. Although he did not play football until the age of 18, he made it onto the Sligo senior team. When his playing days were over he became involved in other ways - as an umpire, and later a steward. He is now a member of the Markievicz Park Development Committee. He was also very involved in Scór events, which he sees as being very important to the GAA, and to Irish culture. Although the GAA was never hugely popular in his own area, he took great enjoyment from seeing more and more people getting involved over the years - whether it be parents cheering on their children at games, local people young and old taking part in Scór events, or his own children developing a huge interest in all things GAA.</p> <p>Born in Cloughmore in Sligo, a rural townland. Gaelic games had been prominent there in the early 1900s but it died down until the Seán McDermotts team was resurrected in the 1950s. The Drumcliff club were ten miles away and Brian played for them. In 1958 they won a county junior championship and in 1959 he played for a Sligo county team.</p> <p>02:55 He spent ten years playing senior football for another nearby club, Craobh Rua, and they got to a few finals. After that he joined a newly-formed club called Calry in the early 1970s. He formed it with Seán Sexton and Christy Heraghty. They won a junior championship and an over 30s competition.</p>

	<p>04:05 Brian then stopped playing and formed a club with mentors like Paschal McGowan and the late Hugh McLarknan. The club developed and they had teams from Under-12 upwards. At this time Brian was also officiating at senior inter-county matches with referees as an umpire, assisting people like John Leahy, Pádraig Gorman and Francie Finan. They officiated at a Railway Cup final in Croke Park, which was very satisfying.</p> <p>05:55 Brian is a member of the Markievicz Park Committee and does a lot of stewarding. He still follows football and travels to a lot of games.</p> <p>06:40 His father did not have a big interest in the game but he himself got very involved in it and formed some great friendships. He met a person at Brewster Park in Fermanagh from Riverstown called Tommy Beglin, and they had been involved in a match many years before in Sooeey. Tommy had been on the opposing team but helped Brian out in that game when things had started to get too physical.</p> <p>09:05 When Brian was at national school there was not a lot of Gaelic Games, though he did play some handball. He did not kick a football until he was 18. The first game he played was a minor championship game. Schools football was not very prominent back then. Handball was popular on the other side of the county, in Ballymoate, but not so much so in Brian's area, although there were some handball alleys in Sligo town. He won a competition once in his local school and won a penknife. He was involved in a lot of school sports doing running and jumping.</p> <p>11:45 When he was young a lot of games were played in the south side of the county and he had no way of travelling to them. One time they were playing a county junior semi-final in Collooney and they took a car to the game but it broke down just outside Sligo. They were desperately trying to find another way of getting to the game.</p> <p>13:10 Naoise O'Dowd was a big hero of his growing up, and Mickey Kearns later on. He was a tough man to mark.</p> <p>14:00 He played senior football with Craobh Rua and enjoyed it there. They were a Sligo Town team and they depended on people coming in and working in the town, so if the work dried up the players were lost. They produced some good footballers like Georgie Hatton, Georgie Shatton, and Tony Haydon who played for Leitrim.</p>
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	<p>15:35 When he felt too old to play he got involved with his native Calry club. When he did play the training was basic and was not done very often. At junior level their rivals included Ballisodare, Kate, Tubbercurry and Iniscrónan. At senior level the rivals were Sooeey, Tubbercurry, Curry, Tourastrane. You needed to be fit for the senior games, but toughness was vital. Brian recalls a tussle when he ended up with a bloody nose.</p> <p>19:00 Brian feels that standards have improved over the years, and protection for players is better than it was. Goalkeepers have better protection now. The pitch markings were not so clear in the past and officials at matches are completely independent - before they were not, and there would be 'war' as a result.</p> <p>21:10 Clubs often held tournaments, and invited other clubs to come along and take part. The home club often won the tournaments due to dubious officiating. That was the culture of the time.</p> <p>21:45 Brian found that being an umpire was sometimes a dangerous job, and there were occasions when he got hit. When he officiated at Croke Park in the early 1980s he drove in his Mercedes and along with him were John Devaney, John Lee, Seamus Kearns and Francie Finan. Being an umpire was more about experience than training for the role. The referee had faith in the team of officials around him. There was no such thing as escorting the referee from the field in those days.</p> <p>26:10 When he played for Sligo it was a little intimidating due to his lack of experience but it was enjoyable. Building a team and keeping it together was a problem. Putting the jersey on was a great honour although in his native Calry many would not have known he was playing as football was not very popular. They did not have a proper trainer or physio. The treasurer, secretary and chairman would run team affairs. Whoever was on the divisional board would recommend players for the county team.</p> <p>28:50 In his teens Brian played soccer but he did not excel at it. Soccer was more attractive than football to many people in his area. Despite the foreign ban. Many played both games - and rugby too. Brendan O'Hart played with Brian for Drumcliff and he also played rugby for London Irish. They played a junior semi-final in Kilooney and there were people playing alongside him who were not from the area, but had been drafted in from outside to plug a gap in the team and were given fake names. One such man was Eamon McSweeney</p>
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	<p>from Kerry, who was playing under the name 'Waters'. It happened in every club in the county. After that game they went into the river to wash themselves and they saw someone who was playing for the Kaysh team and was recognised by Brian's teammate from college in Galway. Tom Kilcoyne, a county secretary, once said that there was not an honest club in north Sligo. After that game there were protestations to the provincial council over the issue of players representing the club when they had no right to, and the final was delayed.</p> <p>33:25 The Calry club was set up in the Calry bar. Seán Sexton was involved. They got 15 players together from the area and started winning. Many had experience of playing football before. Calry was a big parish so they felt that the pace ought to have a club. After a few years they got Scór competitions going and that was great for getting the community involved.</p> <p>36:50 Hugh McLoughlan was contracted to do the local pitch and he did a fantastic job. He was originally from Dromkeeran but married a local girl. They raised money to buy land from the Land Commission. Jack Bootman, former GAA President, was at the official opening. The underage teams were going strong and that got the parents out.</p> <p>39:20 Scór started out in the early 1980s. Ann Cummins was secretary for many years. They had good talent in the area. Paddy Cummin, Paddy Devaney and Ann Cummins got to an All-Ireland final in the quiz. Brian's family got to Connacht finals. It was great entertainment and helped bring more people into clubs. Brian, his wife and a man named Tommy Fowley created a set dance as a novelty. Tommy Fowley cleaned the dressing rooms and was a great character. There were big Scór rivalries. Scór was not taken seriously enough by the club, at senior level if people didn't think they were going to win they would get up on stage, whereas juniors were more open to it. Brian has seen a decline in Scór - not just in Sligo but in Carlow and Galway too.</p> <p>45:55 There was plenty of controversy when it came to the judging, as opinions on the merits of various acts differed. Some parents get upset when their children don't win. For Brian, Scór is very important to the GAA and to traditional Irish culture.</p> <p>49:35 As a movement, the GAA is changing but it is not dying, according to Brian. He worries about players getting too much power. Volunteerism is very important.</p>
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	<p>52:00 As a member of the Markievicz Park Development Committee Brian is involved with a group in trying to raise funds for things like a new stand and new terraces. They hold fundraising events and seek out grants. They now have a pitch and grounds that they are proud of, and are not in too much debt. The area is a bit enclosed but they have negotiated the planning issues and get along well with local residents.</p> <p>55:00 It is expensive to maintain the pitch. The groundsman Tom Callaghan does a great job. There is an average of 150 games played there all year - everyone wants to play there and that can lead to arguments. Brian remembers when it was first bought in the 1950s and he was watched it develop over the years.</p> <p>57:50 Clubs have suffered over the years because of emigration.</p> <p>59:00 Winning the county championship with Drumcliff is a great memory for Brian. A disappointing thing is seeing the GAA being sponsored by drinks companies. Going to Croke Park makes him feel proud. He gets great enjoyment out of the GAA and likes to be a part of it. His children are very much into the GAA and he likes to see that.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward <input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person <input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____ </p>
<p>Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p>Played for 20 years in total. Won 1958 Sligo Junior Football Championship with Drumcliff. Won over-30s competition with Calry-St Joseph's.</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Vice-Chairman of Markievicz Park Committee</p>

REFERENCE NO. SO/1/1

Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 01:05:25
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 18th June 2010