

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Noel Byrne
Date of Interview	16 th Dec 2010
Location	CRC FM Castlebar
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Pat Stanton
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1944 Home County: Mayo
Education	Primary: UK Primary Secondary: UK Secondary Third Level: St Mary's College, Strawberry Hill UK & NUIG.
Family	Siblings: 2 Brothers
Club(s)	Four Provinces GAA Coventry [England] Ballintubber GAA [Mayo]
Occupation	Retired Adult Education Officer
Parents' Occupation	Motor Mechanic [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

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Date of Report	16 th Dec 2010
Period Covered	1950 – 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Great Britain, Mayo, Antrim, Kerry, Galway, Sligo, Roscommon
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Education, Media, Emigration, Involvement in GAA abroad, Role of Teachers, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Identity, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Relationships
Interview Summary	<p>Pat Stanton grew up in England in the 1950s and 60s, the son of Mayo parents. His introduction to the GAA came through the radio commentaries of Michael O’Hehir and listening to the exploits of players such as Tom Langan. He talks about the Irish influence in the school he attended and the beginning of his involvement with the GAA in his late teens. He offers insights into the role of Irish clubs in Britain, their links to the GAA and the social role that both played in bringing members of the Irish community together. Stanton reflects on the standard of Gaelic football played in Coventry, where he was based, and how the gulf between the game in Ireland and England would be exposed by young inter-county players who would come over to play. Issues of Irish identity, assimilation and</p> <p>Stanton furthered his education at Strawberry Hill, qualifying as a physical education teacher just before the influx of prominent GAA players arrived from Ireland at the same college. He came to live in Mayo in 1970 and soon became involved in training the Mayo Vocational Schools team- they would the All-Ireland in 1971. Stanton discusses his efforts to promote new training methods and tells of the impact of the All-Ireland success on his efforts to win support among school principals for a new approach to, and appreciation of, physical education. From the Vocational schools set-up, Stanton moved into a coaching/training role with Mayo senior and under 21 teams and discusses at length the methods he deployed in team preparation, the players involved and fortunes of the teams. He outlines his philosophy of making training interesting and relevant to the</p>

	<p>match situations.</p> <p>As well as the county, Stanton became involved with the Ballintubber club with whom he played and coached juvenile football. He reflects on the place of the GAA within the local community and its contribution to the development of facilities – social and sporting – prior to local authorities or others becoming similarly engaged. In addition to the influence the GAA exerts within society, Stanton also acknowledges the role the GAA has played in his life, in particular the manner in which it has opened up opportunities for him in his work.</p> <p>00:00:22 Earliest memories of the GAA: Talks about growing in the UK in the 1950s and 60s, the son of Mayo parents, and listening to Michael O’Hehir commentaries. Remarks on the ‘pictures’ that O’Hehir would paint and the names of the players he recalls, like Tom Langan and Paddy Prendergast. Describes Lanagan soaring into the air.</p> <p>00:01:20 Attending school in the UK, the Irish influence in the school and the lack of GAA promotion. Remarks on early efforts to establish GAA clubs. Says it wasn’t until he was 17 or 18 that he begun to get involved.</p> <p>00:01:58 Starting out with the Four Provinces club, inter-county minor players coming over from Ireland.</p> <p>00:2:40 Talks about his general interest in sport and physical education, his intention to become a PE teacher. Refers also to large Irish contingent at St Mary’s College in Strawberry Hill and their involvement in local GAA clubs.</p> <p>00:3:20 Qualifying as a teacher, returning to Coventry and becoming involved with Four Provinces.</p> <p>00:03:42 Remarks on the ‘varied’ standard of the players and their age profile.</p> <p>00:03.58 Comments on perception of the GAA in UK, the Irish interest in it, the role of radio in providing contact with home.</p> <p>00:04:41 Remarks on the successful Mayo team of the 50s and how famous and well known some of the players were in the UK.</p>
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	<p>00:05:05 Importance receiving radio broadcast on a Sunday.</p> <p>00:05:13 Recalls first time to see Gaelic Football, trips to Ireland and Uncle bringing him to McHale Park.</p> <p>00:06:00 Discusses the Gaelic players going to Strawberry Hill, though notes that he was there ahead of many of the well known players and before the Department of Education decision to send students in larger groups. Refers to Mickey 'Ned' O'Sullivan, John Geraghty and Liam Sammon who travelled to Strawberry Hill for postgraduate study, late 1960s, early 1970s.</p> <p>00:06:54 Tells of meeting Johnny Geraghty and Liam Salmon when he later became involved with Mayo team.</p> <p>00:07:30 Talks about GAA in Coventry as centred around Irish clubs, where players met before matches on Sundays</p> <p>00:07:54 Refers to the poor quality of facilities available to the GAA. Says pitches were hurriedly fashioned out of some park.</p> <p>00:08:12 Discusses the standard of football in Coventry and the contrast with Ireland. Talks about seeing the gulf when inter-county minor players would play. Remarks on a trip to Ruislip and the higher standard in London.</p> <p>00:09:20 Considers the social scene around the GAA and describes the GAA as a sporting 'adjunct' to the Irish clubs. Says GAA clubs were there for football and hurling and were 'a centre for people coming together'.</p> <p>00:10: 25 Talks about Irish identity, the desire to be with their own people as reasons for joining GAA. Comments on 'ghetto mentality', the role of Irish clubs and issues of immersion in culture of host community.</p> <p>00:11:40 Mentions training for games, its lack of organisations. Says trainers were 'well intentioned' but lacked awareness of 'training methods'. Training involved running around pitch and a game.</p> <p>00:12:00 Says there was a shortage of selectors, but comments on the absence of 'scientific' basis for training. Refers to becoming involved himself in training and coaching</p>
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	<p>side of matters.</p> <p>00:12:50 Returns to the skill levels of players and the gaps in ability between young players from Ireland and others.</p> <p>00:13:43 Talks about his interest in Tom Langan from O’Hehir’s descriptions and remarks on never seeing him play.</p> <p>00:14:20 Talks about coming to live in Ireland in 1970. Taking up job teaching PE with Mayo VEC, who had a county VEC team. Tells of being asked to do some fitness training with county VEC team, as well as his involvement as a player with Ballintubber.</p> <p>00:15:20 Discusses training Mayo VEC, the enthusiasm of the players (future TD Michael Ring among them) and winning the 1971 All Ireland.</p> <p>00:16:08 Remarks that Seamie Daly was training Mayo team at that time and tells story of being approached by Fr Leo Morahan to get involved with Mayo when Seamie Daly left.</p> <p>00:17:00 Playing with Ballintubber in lower divisions. Recalls being beaten by Clare Island in Louisburgh.</p> <p>00:17:20 Beating Antrim in Vocational schools final, the strength of schools from Northern Ireland. Comments on the number of teachers involved with Mayo team.</p> <p>00:18:00 General comments on levels of fitness of young people in early 1970s, the absence of a ‘vision’ for physical education, perceptions of his role, lack of awareness of role of PE to the child’s development, efforts to introduce gymnastics etc.</p> <p>00:19:00 Comments on the attitudinal change following the winning Vocational schools All Ireland, ‘new awakening’ of interest in physical education, the greater welcome from school principals. Says the All-Ireland victory made a ‘big difference’ to him and his work.</p> <p>00:20:18 Acceptance among players for new training methods and the need to keep it interesting.</p> <p>00:20:44 Stresses the need to replicate what happens on pitch in training sessions and to use the ball on conditioned</p>
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	<p>games.</p> <p>00:21:30 Says he trying to look at training scientifically, playing to individual players strengths etc. Considers the weakness of 'drills' and creating match situations in training.</p> <p>00:22:30 Talks about the quality of the Mayo Vocational schools team and the strength of opposition teams in Galway and the North. Remarks on the poor quality of Dublin team.</p> <p>00:23:17 Discusses bringing in new training methods to Mayo Senior team, doing statistical match analysis on players work rate and the response from players.</p> <p>00:24:96 Talks about Joe Corcoran, match winner, who disliked training and the emphasis on running.</p> <p>00:24:40 Mentions reading Joe Lennon's methods and applying these and other ideas.</p> <p>00:25:10 Remarks on the ease of getting top class players to do a set play.</p> <p>00:25:50 Remarks that that particular Mayo team was 'on the way out' and tells story of storming finish to beat Offaly in a National League semi-final, remarks on the fitness of players and losing to Kerry in the final.</p> <p>00:27:09 Contrasts his experience of being involved with Ballintubber and the county team.</p> <p>00:27:16 Mentions being involved with under 16 team and refers to the development developing facilities and the quality of people involved with club.</p> <p>00:27:50 Recalls Ray Prendergast as club manager when he was trainer. Refers to Gerry Feeney, who was 'bordering' the county. Team. Describes them at the time as average club side.</p> <p>00:28:43 Selects a standout Balintubber GAA moment: talks about getting to the 2010 County final and the 'spirit' that was shown. Refers to the years of work that went into that county final appearance.</p> <p>00:30:00 Refers to the size of the Ballintubber and the</p>
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	<p>numbers of players.</p> <p>00:30:17 Describes the geography of Ballintubber and the importance of GAA to a parish like Ballintubber in the 1970s. Refers to local presence of soccer in Ballyglass and to the facilities the GAA - sports hall and development of grounds - has provided for community. Says there would be 'an allegiance in nearly every house' to Ballintubber.</p> <p>00:31:50 Recalls again the game he played against Clare Island in Louisburgh.</p> <p>00:32:39 Talks about the characters met when travelling with Mayo. Refers to an individual called, Bluett always appear at games. Mentions also Paddy Moclair and being given couple of salmon, Paddy Muldoon is also mentioned. Refers also to the 'great gathering of Mayo people' whenever the county was involved in a match in Croke Park.</p> <p>00:34:06 Recalls again the National league semi-final versus Offaly. Recalls also playing Sligo when Mickey Kearns 'beat us almost on his own...We had no answer to him'.</p> <p>00:35:20 Talks also about Dermot Early. Describes as 'class' and a 'fantastic player'.</p> <p>00:35:51 Says Mayo were unable to produce players of the Early or Kearins calibre, though Joe Corcoran 'came closest'. Describes Corcoran, 'jinkin Joe', as 'magic' at times and explains why.</p> <p>00:36:45 Reflects on the 'depression' in Mayo dressing room after defeats, to Fr Leo Morahan attempts to whip up intensity in the dressing-room, and to post-mortems to consider 'where did it go wrong'.</p> <p>00:37:24 Comments critically on how average players training for league but for Championship stars would arrive without all the heavy training. Refers to some players 'disappearing' after the league.</p> <p>00:38:30 Tells story about doing physical tests in the military Barracks Castlebar, with Ray Prendergast, a smoker and reluctant trainer, coming out best. Soon after JD Hickey wrote an article about the scientific training they were doing and more press interest followed.</p>
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	<p>00:39:54 Contrasts football today with what went before: considers it faster and more scientific and remarks on the overuse of hand pass. Remarks on the work of Pat Daly in Croke Park, improvements in coaching and the need for more tactical awareness. Compares and contrasts GAA with soccer and rugby.</p> <p>00:42:35 Mentions the need for retention of amateur status to be backed b y professional core support</p> <p>00:42:50 Considers the importance of the GAA to society, to the personal advantage of being involved, to the work of the GAA in developing facilities ahead of local authorities and others.</p> <p>00:44:10 Talks about the interest of young people in the GAA and the 'lift' to the county when Mayo are going well.</p> <p>00:44:20 Describes the GAA as 'something special'.</p> <p>00:44:40 Mentions that in 'latter year' his involvement was on the periphery.</p> <p>00:45:08 Talks about meeting 'great people' in the GAA and the friendships he had.</p> <p>00:45:31 Recalls becoming involved with Mayo under 21 team in 1973 and the individuals on it - John O Mahony, Ted Webb, Gerry Feeney, Seamus Reilly. Says they were 'a good team'.</p> <p>00:46:21 Mentions playing Kerry in All Ireland final in Ennis and losing – notes that many of the Kerry players went on to win numerous All-Ireland while many of the Mayo players 'disappeared'.</p> <p>00:46:55 Talks about returning to Under 21 All-Ireland final in 1974 and defeating Antrim. Recalls Ted Webb and his ability to run with the ball.</p> <p>00:47:48 Opines on the under 21 competition, its competitiveness and importance. Considers it a 'mistake' to rush so many Under 21s on to senior team</p> <p>00:48:25 Talks about talking to Fr Morahan to get RTE film of match and doing film analysis of match performance and how it informed performance.</p>
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	<p>00:49:50 Discusses communicating with under 21 players and contrasts it with communicating to Senior players – suggests that some senior players reacted against new training.</p> <p>00:50:09 Final comments: talks about the satisfaction he got from GAA and how, coming from the UK, the GAA opened opportunities for him in his work.</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 type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input 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>
<p>Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p>Played two years for Ballintubber</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Coaching Mayo VEC, Ballintubbber and Mayo Senior and U21 teams</p>
<p>Format</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Length of Interview: 00:51:38</p>
<p>Language</p>	<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: Noel Byrne

Date: 16th Dec 2010

