

GAA Oral History Project

**Interview Report Form**

<b>Name of Interviewer</b>	Arlene Crampsie
<b>Date of Interview</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2010
<b>Location</b>	Interviewee's home, near Ballycroy, Co. Mayo
<b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname)	Pat Gallagher
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1940 <b>Home County:</b> Mayo
<b>Education</b>	<b>Primary:</b> Shranamonragh NS, Ballycroy, Co. Mayo
<b>Family</b>	<b>Siblings:</b> 2 brothers & 6 sisters <b>Current Family if Different:</b> Married to Mary with 2 sons and 2 daughters
<b>Club(s)</b>	St. Kieran's; Ballycroy; Burrishoole; Bangor St. Patrick's
<b>Occupation</b>	Farmer
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	Farmers
<b>Religion</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	Fianna Fáil
<b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>	Pioneer Association; Ballycroy Community Council; Pastoral Council; Ballycroy Straw Boys

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<b>Date of Report</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> July 2012
<b>Period Covered</b>	1889 – 2010
<b>Counties/Countries Covered</b>	Mayo, Galway, Kerry, Donegal, Dublin, Great Britain, Scotland, England
<b>Key Themes Covered</b>	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Emigration, Role of the Club in the Community, Club History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Impact on Life, Alcohol
<b>Interview Summary</b>	<p>Pat talks about his time playing with Ballycroy in County Mayo and his pride at winning their first trophy the 1956 Erris Cup. He discusses early memories and the great players he watched over the years. He recalls his love of sport and how football was the sport that he stuck with playing for Ballycroy for over 20 years. He also talks of the role he played in the administrative side of the game as the longest serving chairman of the Ballycroy club.</p> <p>00:00 Introduction</p> <p>00:30 Earliest GAA memory – watching his first match in Castlebar, Galway versus Mayo in the 1954 Connacht Championship. Describes his excitement at the crowd and seeing the Mayo players such as Sean Flanagan, Tom Lyons and John Forde. Sean Purcell and Frank Stockwell of the Galway team are also mentioned.</p> <p>01:52 With little family involvement in GAA due to emigration none of his siblings played, but Pat did get the opportunity.</p> <p>02:51 Describes the boots he originally used to play in. He goes on to talk about getting his first pair of actual football boots, a Christmas present from his sisters in England.</p> <p>03:30 Describes the boots and the care he took of them.</p> <p>04:02 He talks about playing for Ballycroy at 16 years of age with his friend Sean O’Sullivan and how their places were secured as emigration had depleted the available players.</p> <p>04:22 Describes their first game in 1956 in Achill in the Scanlon Cup, in memory of two brothers that had died. The team were beaten by a point.</p> <p>05:03 Describes how he and Sean O’Sullivan were the leading organisers in the 1950s and 60s and how they</p>

	<p>entered the Erris League but lost badly to Bangor in 1963.</p> <p>05:20 Tells of pride at captaining the winning Ballycroy team that brought home the 1965 Erris Cup. The first trophy to come to Ballycroy.</p> <p>05:32 Speaks with pride of the team and mentions Seamus Cafferkey the goalkeeper that day.</p> <p>05:50 Talks of joining Bangor now Kiltane, to play in the Junior North Mayo Championship as Ballycroy had no team in the Mayo Championship at the time.</p> <p>06:00 In 1967 they went into West Mayo as a Ballycroy team. Came back to North Mayo in 1970 and won the Junior North Mayo Championship thanks to the experience in West Mayo.</p> <p>06:30 Tells how this win led to Intermediate level but did not win so returned to juniors in 1972 and were beaten in final by Kiltane.</p> <p>07:01 Played from 1965 until 1987 when Ballycroy won the Championship again.</p> <p>07:15 He talks of the pride he felt playing on the same team as his two sons, Michael and Patrick.</p> <p>07:28 Relates a story of playing in a past and present teams in Belmullet Convent school and tackling the son of a player he had played against when with Ballycroy.</p> <p>09:02 Talks about Sean O'Sullivan and his uncle Billy Myers who played for Kerry and won a number of All Irelands.</p> <p>09:30 He tells of a collection in the parish of £17 10s just the right amount to order jerseys and a football from Gerald Courell, a Mayo footballer with a store in Ballina.</p> <p>10:15 Describes the journey by bus and bicycle to collect the football and how he played with it that night.</p> <p>10:55 Talks of the care he took of the football and his huge interest in all things to do with the game.</p> <p>12:07 He describes rushing by bicycle from Mass to a game to make sure they would not go without him. This is not the case with some of the young players today.</p> <p>12:30 He talks of hurling and how he would have loved to play. Cycling also featured strongly in his sporting life.</p> <p>14:10 John Murray from Leitrim used to stay at Pat's house and played handball with him. This led to an interest in</p>
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	<p>rounders and hurling.</p> <p>14:40 Describes making a hurley to use.</p> <p>15:02 Never saw an All Ireland Hurling final. Only recently saw a curtain raiser with Waterford playing.</p> <p>15:40 Tells of his love of all sports including boxing, but no club existed in the area. Mentions famous boxers including Rocky Marciano and Jack Johnson. First female boxing national title holder was from Ballycroy.</p> <p>16:27 Pat says that he would tog out for Ballycroy today if they would let him.</p> <p>16:30 Describes playing football and rounders in school against the girls and their teacher Michael O'Sullivan, from Kerry.</p> <p>17:15 Rounders was played for fun as opposed to some other areas in Mayo where it is a more serious game.</p> <p>18:37 Talks about travelling to matches with Jack Daly in a Ford Anglia with about 8 in the car.</p> <p>19:20 Talks of repairing Tony Sweeney's car on the way to a match.</p> <p>19:50 Describes the social life associated with the games, including dances.</p> <p>20:45 Describes why he became a pioneer.</p> <p>23:05 Goes to the local national school weekly to help with the games.</p> <p>23:40 Discusses the history of the club in the area from 1889 with the formation of the club and how the game was played. Mentions emigration from the area.</p> <p>25:10 Discusses the field where they played, which was owned by a local publican.</p> <p>25:40 He tells of an inspection by the county board after the 1970 junior North Mayo championship win to assess the field. Home games had to played out of the parish as the field was found to be too short for intermediate football. Players travelling from Dublin to play with the team.</p> <p>26:25 Eric gave the loan of a field for about 17 years.</p> <p>27:00 He tells of felling trees and floating them down river to construct goal posts and the use of rope crossbars. This led</p>
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	<p>to disputes.</p> <p>27:41 Relates a story of a dispute at a game in Newport when Norman McMahon burst the ball while kicking a goal.</p> <p>28:20 He talks about the cost of a football and how much care was needed to keep them in good order.</p> <p>28:45 He describes making handballs from the hair of the cows.</p> <p>29:00 Describes being a youngster at the killing of a pig and getting the bladder to make a makeshift football.</p> <p>30:16 Talks of travelling to All Irelands, first in 1959 Galway versus Kerry, Mick O'Dwyer, Mick O'Connell, Sean Purcell, Frank Stockwell. Recalls Roscommon playing too and Gerry O'Malley.</p> <p>30:45 Travelled by car or train and described the fun and friendship between all supporters. Playing cards. Jim Moran and him getting back to Westport at 11pm or 11:30pm and getting lifts from various people back to Ballycroy.</p> <p>33:53 Talks of his first trip to Croke Park, being under the old Cusack Stand in 1963 Galway vs Dublin. John Donnellan and Pat Donnellan (Captain) both played that day and Pat talks about their father passing away in the Hogan Stand that day.</p> <p>35:00 Talks about the Down supporters and how they took over with their colours.</p> <p>35:30 Talks about the early days and how Ballycroy were allowed to play in both the West and North Mayo Championships.</p> <p>36:10 Talks of some of the team playing for Burrishoole the next parish to Ballycroy and this led to Ballycroy going into West Mayo before North Mayo.</p> <p>36:50 Discusses the rivalry on the field and the friendship off the field.</p> <p>37:40 Talks of life in London in the mid-sixties, going from September until Christmas. Mentions the year of the Foot and Mouth Disease which delayed his return. Although he never played football there he followed the clubs in the papers. He goes on to discuss the dancehalls and clubs where the Irish would meet, including the Galtymore and how some pubs are keeping this tradition going, such as Seamus Moore's pub.</p> <p>40:45 Tells how the GAA in England is benefiting now from</p>
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	<p>the emigration as it did in his youth when many families saw their children leave home, sometimes forever.</p> <p>42:30 He talks of the clergy and school teachers' involvement in the GAA.</p> <p>43:55 Some teachers had more interest in hurling. While some had no interest in sport at all.</p> <p>45:20 Talks of the 1936, 1950 and 1951 Mayo All-Ireland football wins and the supposed 'curse'. He feels rather than any curse that it is down to the men on the field.</p> <p>46:38 He goes on to describe a particularly hard knock he took before one match and how it affected him.</p> <p>47:53 Talks briefly of James Horan the Mayo football manager.</p> <p>48:05 Pat tells of his time in club administration as chairman of the local club for 12 years.</p> <p>49:21 He mentions several characters on the county boards including Luke Fitzmaurice, Billy Hetherington and Dr Mickey Loftus. Also, some of the ladies involved were mentioned including Ina Conway and Majella Gallagher, Pat's Daughter.</p> <p>50:25 Talks about refereeing and how he handled disputes on the field. As well as his dealings with other referees.</p> <p>52:30 Speaks of his admiration for ladies football, commenting on the Donegal Intermediate win.</p> <p>53:00 Discusses North Mayo board meetings.</p> <p>53:32 He talks about putting on weight while working in London and how he had to work to reduce his weight before returning to the game.</p> <p>54:16 Talks about the team's successes from the 1965 Erris Cup and the 1970 North Mayo Championship. However they were beaten in the County Championship semi final. Then they won the 1972 Erris League and in 1973 a North B Championship and the North Mayo Championship again in 1987 and were beaten in the county semi-final.</p> <p>55:12 Talks of the players that went on to represent Mayo on the Under 21 and senior level.</p> <p>55:37 Talks of the role played by politics in the GAA in Mayo and gives his views on the matter.</p> <p>56:05 He talks about the role played by the club in the</p>
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	<p>community locally. As well as community support for the team. Mentions the new National Park.</p> <p>57:30 The type of fundraisers organised by and for the team are discussed, including walks, the Dublin Marathon, dinner dances, card games and trips away. These included trips to Fr. Eamon Sweeney in Scotland. Describes trip including going to see a soccer game, Celtic v Dundee United. Going on a trip to Martin McHugh in Donegal.</p> <p>01:00:20 He talks of the song that the team made while in Scotland.</p> <p>01:02:37 Speaks of the facilities available to the club. They have very good facilities but not many players which is the opposite to the way it was years ago.</p> <p>01:04:14 He talks of his cousin writing to tell of the games on television although his family never had one. They had a wet battery radio which had to be sent away to be charged. They would listen to boxing on the radio but they only had electricity in the house later.</p> <p>01:06:55 Tells of his best memory of his involvement in the GAA, Dr Michael Loftus presenting him with the first cup won by Ballycroy in 1965.</p> <p>01:08:08 He talks of Dr Michael Loftus' role in the GAA.</p> <p>01:08:27 Tells of his GAA heroes including Mick O'Connell, Kerry, Pat Spillane and Pádraic Joyce, Galway, as well as Purcell, Stockwell, Sean O'Neill and James McCartan. Although Pat Spillane would be his number one choice.</p> <p>01:09:39 Scotland was the furthest Pat went to play a match.</p> <p>01:10:39 Talks of how he would be disappointed if the GAA turned professional.</p> <p>01:11:37 He finds some of the changes in rules are not for the good and discusses them here.</p> <p>01:13:20 Tells of his feelings at the opening of Croke Park.</p> <p>01:14:07 He finishes by telling of the impact of the GAA in his life to date and how it has helped make him who he is. Also speaks of his interest in set dancing and the Strawboys.</p>
<p><b>Involvement in GAA</b></p>	<p>✓ Supporter ✓ Player ✓ Manager ✓ Coach ✓ Steward</p> <p>✓ Chairperson ✓ Committee Member ✓ Grounds-person</p>

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	<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): _____
<b>Record as a Player</b> (Titles won; Length of time played)	Played from the age of 16 to 47 and one or two after that. With St. Patrick's he won a North Mayo and Erris League in 1965; with Ballycroy he won a North Mayo in 1970, an Erris League in 1972 and another North Mayo in 1987.
<b>Record as an Administrator</b> (Positions held; how long for)	Got involved in administration when he was 21 years old. He has been club secretary, chairman (for 12 years), a delegate to the North Mayo Board and a delegate to the County Board.
<b>Format</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
<b>Duration</b>	Length of Interview: 01:16:10
<b>Language</b>	English

**To be filled in by Interviewer:**

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Signed:      \_\_\_\_\_ Arlene Crampsie \_\_\_\_\_

Date:                \_\_\_\_\_ 11/07/12 \_\_\_\_\_