

## GAA Oral History Project

## Interview Report Form

<b>Name of Interviewer</b>	Regina Fitzpatrick
<b>Date of Interview</b>	23 October 2008
<b>Location</b>	Institute of Irish Studies, University of Liverpool
<b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname)	Frank Shovlin
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1970 <b>Home County:</b> Donegal
<b>Education</b>	<b>Primary:</b> Arva National School, Co Cavan  <b>Secondary:</b> St Patrick's, Castlebar; St Gerald's, Castlebar, Co. Mayo  <b>Third Level:</b> UCG (BA, MA); Oxford (D Phil)
<b>Family</b>	<b>Siblings:</b> 3 brothers, 1 sister  <b>Current Family if Different:</b> wife
<b>Club(s)</b>	Oxford University Gaelic Football Club
<b>Occupation</b>	University Lecturer
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	Bank Manager; Housewife
<b>Religion</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	N/A

<b>Date of Report</b>	17 September 2009
<b>Period Covered</b>	1980s-2008
<b>Counties/Countries Covered</b>	Donegal, Mayo, Cavan, Great Britain, Americas
<b>Key Themes Covered</b>	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Playing, Training, Managing, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Education, Media; Emigration; Involvement in GAA abroad; Role of Teachers, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Identity, Rivalries, Irish Language, Culture, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Outsider's Perspectives, Politics, Northern Ireland, The Troubles, Professionalism
<b>Interview Summary</b>	<p>.10 Born in Limerick city. Son of a bank manager. Moved a lot growing up. Lived in Arva Co. Cavan. Lived for the longest time in Castlebar. Went to school at St. Gerald's. Father transferred to Donegal and parents still live there now.</p> <p>.50 First club he was involved with was Mitchel's in Castlebar. Lively club. Importance of GAA in Castlebar. Athletics his sport but always enjoyed hurling.</p> <p>1:20 Mainly football in Castlebar. Efforts of a Kilkenny man to start up hurling.</p> <p>1:30 Real involvement in the GAA only began when he moved to Oxford to study for a PhD</p> <p>1:40 Starting Oxford University Gaelic Football club – annual match with Cambridge. Make up of team – Irish, English and Australian. Reasons why they set up the club. He captained the team in 2000. Newspaper coverage and television coverage in Ireland. Reaction of other students. Aussie Rules players picked up skills very easily.</p> <p>4:42 Brendan McGurke played for them, from Derry. He also played soccer for Oxford. Enda Leany from Dublin had played for St Vincent's club - both were key players at the time. Great social thing.</p> <p>5:24 Playing a challenge match against Paris Gaelic in Paris in 2003. Some also played for Eire Óg's the local team in Oxford. Good relationship between both teams. Shared resources and players. Met them in 'The Black Swan' in Oxford where they would go to watch matches on Sundays.</p> <p>6:35 Irish players who played in Oxford had all played before,</p>

	<p>some at a high level.</p> <p>7:18 Martin Keown, the Arsenal soccer player started playing Gaelic with Éire Óg in Oxford – Irish parents, they were annoyed he didn't declare for Ireland.</p> <p>7.57 Challenge of scheduling training because team played so many sports. Strong Ulster contingent in Cambridge– many studied veterinary. Big part of their social life in college.</p> <p>9.35 Opportunity, through Éire Óg to meet people from Oxford outside of college life.</p> <p>9:55 Moved to Liverpool after university and stopped playing football.</p> <p>10:07 No hurling in Liverpool</p> <p>10:10 Three universities in Liverpool – University of Liverpool (no teams); John Moores (several mens and womens teams); Hope University (mens and womens teams) – strong Gaelic football scene in Liverpool – mainly Ulster contingent; Irish pubs full during championship season. Hope and John Moores recruit in Northern Ireland. Mainly PE and teacher training. Conor McFadden and Jim McGuinness of Donegal played university Gaelic football in Liverpool. All Irish students, serious players. Feed into local club – John Mitchels.</p> <p>13:05 Can see people wearing GAA jerseys all over town. Liverpool very pro-Irish city. Completely different to Oxford.</p> <p>14:30 GAA a way of expressing their Irishness in Liverpool, very vibrant – very successfully integrated into university sports life.</p> <p>16:12 1995 - A key year for the GAA in Frank's life – live television of games; Clare won the All-Ireland. Turned many people on to hurling. Attraction of the underdog; personality of Ger Loughnane; heroic stories.</p> <p>17:48 People now schedule their weekends around watching matches, at home or at the grounds. How television has benefitted the GAA.</p> <p>18:43 Watching games on TV in Liverpool.</p> <p>19:16 Sense of Irishness when you're living away from home – role of the GAA in this.</p> <p>19:55 Difference between being involved in GAA at home and</p>
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	<p>abroad – identity; quality of the games.</p> <p>20:38 Rivalry with Cambridge. Publican in Cambridge put up the cup for the Oxford v Cambridge annual match – The Moynihan Cup.</p> <p>21:20 Rivalry between Liverpool University teams – often the two best university teams in the UK</p> <p>21:50 Decline of GAA clubs in UK and USA in last 10-15 years. Teams in England became strong when the Irish economy was weak – 1950s to 1970s.</p> <p>22:30 Strong hurling team in Oxford at one stage – won a junior club All-Ireland against a Wicklow team – Cuddihys from Laois played with them. – Sense of decline in GAA in Oxford in the mid-1990s – children of emigrants playing – mostly English born. Good players – felt more pressure from soccer. Part of being Irish. National pride at stake – lots of Mayo, Laois and Connemara people.</p> <p>25:36 Martin Keown talking on BBC about the pronunciation of his name.</p> <p>25:54 Donegal winning 1992 All-Ireland – outstanding memory – at the game – one of the great moments of his life. Celebrations in Donegal. Nerves during the game. Watching the semi-final in a pub in Chicago and going home for game. The build-up to the game – driving to Dublin – Plan B – the speech.</p> <p>28:30 Captaining Oxford in 2002 to win against Cambridge – great memory -the spirit of the team – good mix of English, Australians and Irish.</p> <p>29:00 GAA provides some of the best moments in life and also terrible lows.</p> <p>29:28 Donegal being beaten by Galway in the 1983 semi final – one of the lowest lows.</p> <p>30:02 Donegal beaten by Armagh in semi-final in 2003 – another terrible low. Cinderella story.</p> <p>31:02 Keith Duggan's 'House of Pain' about Mayo football. The heartache of the disappointments, of being a Mayo fan. Story about 1993 semi-final when Mayo were beaten by twenty points by Cork. More lows than highs</p> <p>32:12 Mother remembers Mayo bring the cup home in 1951.</p> <p>32:37 What the GAA means to him – identity and local pride –</p>
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	<p>meeting players in their daily life.</p> <p>33:33 Comparison with soccer and soccer players in Liverpool.</p> <p>34:00 Amateurism is crucial – would lose interest in the GAA if it became professional. You have to play for the love of your county.</p> <p>35:11 Everton football club – its beginnings were local, local players; money took the life out of the sport.</p> <p>36:05 It will be a long time before GAA players get a wage to play – hopes it will never happen. There are enough players and administrators that know how disastrous this would be.</p> <p>37:00 Meeting Derry players in JFK waiting for a flight. Got to hold the Anderstown cup – they had defeated Donegal. Mayo dominant county in Chicago, huge numbers.</p> <p>38:40 The GAA as the most important part of his Irishness. Teaches literature in the university. Speaking to students about Douglas Hyde's 'The Necessity for the De-Anglicisation of Ireland' – revival of language, sport etc. The GAA is the great success story of the Gaelic Revival.</p> <p>39:55 More and more people recognising the GAA as an amateur voluntary organisation that does good in communities. Importance of amateurism in this.</p> <p>40:33 Connection with the Irish language. Different in Northern Ireland – more identity focussed – story about watching a game in pub in Liverpool and crowds cheering when the camera scanned across Gerry Adams. Part of the national struggle.</p> <p>41:50 Rise of Tyrone and Armagh – part of a community push, the identity; about who they are. Murals of GAA players in the North. Different thing to play GAA in the North.</p> <p>43:10 Sam Maguire – GAA activist in England, Michael Collins in London. Not nowadays, not in Liverpool. Still nationalist outlook because most of the students come from the six counties.</p>
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<b>Involvement in GAA</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" 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 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)	N/A
<b>Record as an Administrator</b> (Positions held; how long for)	Founding member of Oxford University Football club
<b>Format</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
<b>Duration</b>	Length of Interview: 44:25
<b>Language</b>	English

**To be filled in by Interviewer:**

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Signed: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 17 September 2009

