

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Seán Kearns
Date of Interview	8 Sep 2009
Location	Interviewee's Home in Queen's New York.
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Treasa Goodwin-Smyth
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Female
Born	Year Born: 1960 Home County: Cork
Education (Optional)	Primary: St Mary's NS, Cobh Secondary: Cobh Technical School Third Level: Gurteen Agricultural College; Queensboro Community College
Family	Siblings: One twin sister, five other sisters and 4 brothers. Middle of family Current Family if Different: One daughter and one son
Club(s)	Cobh; Imokilly; New York Young Irelanders Camogie Club; Monaghan Ladies Football in New York
Occupation	Nurse and Broadcaster
Parents' Occupation	Farmers
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation /	N/A

Date of Report	25 May 2010
Period Covered	Late 1960s – 2009
Counties/Countries Covered	Cork, New York, Americas
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Administration, Fundraising, Material Culture, Education, Emigration, Involvement in GAA abroad, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, GAA Abroad
Interview Summary	<p>Treasa Goodwin-Smyth is originally from Cork and was born in 1960. Her family were not particularly active in the GAA but she became interested in Camogie and played for local club Cobh, Imokilly and Cork. The interview gives an insight into Camogie in Cork in the 1970s, including style and tactics of play, injuries, equipment and training, role of teachers, trainers and priests, parental disapproval, and the role of women in the GAA at that time. She emigrated to New York in the mid 1980s and the interview deals with the GAA in New York at that time and the role of Gaelic Park as a social centre. She also discusses Camogie in New York and North America from the 1980s onwards as a player and club organiser and later in her role as President of the New York Camogie Board, and the decline of camogie in New York, due to emigration. The interview also deals with her role as a broadcaster of GAA programming on New York radio</p> <p>0:00:20 Describes earliest GAA memory as being six and going to watch a game with her father, walking across fields to watch their uncle's TV. All the men would go inside to watch and she would sneak in under the table to watch. She loved the sound of Micheal O'Hehir's voice.</p> <p>0:01:45 Describes how GAA was a man's world then with few of the women in the family interested. Sports seen as not for women. She's not sure if her father realised she was sneaking in to watch the matches. She loved the idea of Croke Park.</p> <p>0:03:00 Describes Cobh as mainly focussed on hurling with Christy Ring a hero.</p> <p>0:03:00 Describes playing hurling as a child after watching the All-Ireland on television with a board and any kind of ball she could find. Banging ball off wall for hours. Sneaking her older brother's hurley to play or trying to get ball of him with</p>

	<p>her board.</p> <p>0:04:25 Describes not being encouraged to play sports; she played Camogie in school around aged 14 when a teacher, Miss Crowley, formed a team. Trying to get uniforms together and fundraising.</p> <p>0:05:30 Nobody took them seriously but they played other teams who did have support and that encouraged them</p> <p>0:06:20 They learned to play by picking it up as they went long. Not much training. Learned the hard way.</p> <p>0:07:00 Their teacher, Miss Crowley inspired them as she was a former player with stories about that. That was important as they weren't allowed to go see games.</p> <p>0:07:40 Describes growth of their local Camogie team and gaining experience and getting better coaching from Seanie Butler, a local hurler.</p> <p>0:08:00 Describes sneaking out bedroom window to go to training as her mother didn't approve. Her mother found out for sure when she got a serious injury in the trials for Cork team. Her mother wouldn't speak to her about it.</p> <p>0:09:20 Describes strength of local girls in supporting each other, thumbing down to regional training with Imokilly. Not used to serious training like they did there.</p> <p>0:10:30 Describes pride in being picked for the Imokilly regional team when she was 17. Fr Hennessy, a local priest who took a big interest in sport, may have suggested her for that team. He was friendly and open and a big supporter of Camogie, not like the other priests who were a bit above.</p> <p>0:11:50 The GAA club was a big centre for the community although her family weren't really involved. Her twin sister did play but wasn't encouraged enough. Her father dies early so brothers didn't have time to play.</p> <p>0:13:40 Describes why she loved hurling so much and social aspect of GAA and staying out of politics.</p> <p>0:14:20 Describes rivalry of Cobh with different Cork clubs and toughness of games, like Finbarrs in Cork. The other teams were so well-organised and had great equipment so beating them was a big deal.</p> <p>0:16:25 Describes picking potatoes to raise money to buy equipment and hurleys, which was hard to come by. She never had a helmet or shin guards until she came to New</p>
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	<p>York. You wrote your name on your hurl.</p> <p>0:17:20 Hurleys were locally made in Cork.</p> <p>0:17:40 Describes playing as centre half back and corner back. Describes how impressed they were with Cork County Camogie players when they went up to train with the County. The senior players could be tough. Describes trying to get ball off Mary O'Leary of the County team and other County players.</p> <p>0:20:20 Describes tactics for playing her position – get to the ball first and play it fast and different ways markers would try to distract you.</p> <p>0:21:00 Describes changing style of playing Camogie, they had the Cloyne Christy Ring style – two hands on the hurley. Not much catching in hand.</p> <p>0:22:00 Describes being able to steal ball with her hurl before other player could hit it.</p> <p>0:23:50 Describes short stint playing for Cork County Camogie side in late 1970s. She got a scholarship to Gurteen College and that cut her time short. Going was a hard decision, but going to college was a huge opportunity although it was very hard to give up the chance to play for Cork more.</p> <p>0:26:00 Describes bringing Cork and Kilkenny camogie teams over to New York and the game they had in Gaelic Park, with their big name players.</p> <p>0:28:25 Describes thrill of putting on Cork jersey for the first time but the sadness that her mother wouldn't really talk to her about it, hurling wasn't for women in her eyes.</p> <p>0:30:00 Talks about role of GAA with women, it was an outlet for her, but the GAA as an organisation didn't have a high view of women, but individual coaches and mentors were very encouraging.</p> <p>0:31:00 Talks about role of women in GAA and role of Mary Moran who was a great woman in coaching in Cork camogie – formal training and skills development. Also Ms Callaghan and Sheila Golden. They dedicated their lives to Camogie – “They were my suffragettes.”</p> <p>0:32:30 Training in them days was more done by playing at first, later they had some skills training and occasionally with</p>
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	<p>Cork they were brought to play the men.</p> <p>0:33:00 Argues that Camogie is even more skilful than hurling, so you could play men because you had skills.</p> <p>0:34:00 Describes physical aspect of Camogie but never got a serious injury in Ireland. One serious injury when a girl pulled on her ankle on purpose at the Cork trials.</p> <p>0:35:00 Talks about serious injury she received when playing Camogie in New York. Somebody pulled across her face and she got a serious cut and had to be dragged off. It was the only time she lost her temper.</p> <p>0:36:40 Describes how she met her husband, Tommy Smyth, after that game because he came up to the hospital to see if she was alright.</p> <p>0:37:30 Describes how you paid for you own injury medical bills – GAA didn't do anything. You wouldn't dare approach the GAA about it.</p> <p>0:38:50 Describes never getting to see the Cork team unless they were on television because they weren't encouraged.</p> <p>0:39:30 Describes how involvement in GAA seemed to be good for people in getting along in life.</p> <p>0:39:45 Describes Christy Ring as a childhood hero, but the Camogie girls were her real heroes, Kathleen and Maria Costigan, Betty Landers, Betty Joyce, Mary O'Leary.</p> <p>0:40:00 Describes playing against Mona Quigley of Tipperary and Angela Downey and her sisters from Kilkenny. Mary Moran from Cork was her biggest hero, she fought for camogie.</p> <p>0:41:30 Describes going back to Ireland for Camogie Centenary as liaison for the North American team and meeting all those players, who dedicated their lives to camogie</p> <p>0:42:00 Describes coming to America after working as a farm manager in Ireland. Still played a little bit in Ireland when she was travelling around managing farm units.</p> <p>0:43:30 Describes different styles of camogie in different parts of Ireland and playing for different teams. Cork have their own brand which is best!</p> <p>0:45:30 Describes getting involved with GAA in New York</p>
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	<p>after she arrived. New York Young Irelands was the club.</p> <p>0:46:20 Describes standard of Camogie in 1986 when she arrived and structure of the club. Lots of emigration so high standard.</p> <p>0:47:00 Describes structures of North American camogie and playing Boston – going up to Boston on bus on Sundays with the team. Listening to radio on bus if there was a game on from Radio Fordham.</p> <p>0:49:00 Describes training in Central Park and meeting Rosie O'Reilly, who became a great friend, even though she was the player who hit her in the head. Also trained in van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx. Heat was tough to deal with. Also trained in Flushing meadows in Queens.</p> <p>0:51:00 Describes trying to explain to Americans what they were doing and enrolling some Irish American girls.</p> <p>0:51:30 Jackie Sammon was President of GAA and he got them a spot to play when they had a match in Gaelic Park, but they went on in the morning before the crowd arrived.</p> <p>0:52:30 Describes Gaelic Park in the 1980s – poor field and facilities were run down. Field made playing camogie different.</p> <p>0:53:30 Estimates there were about forty players playing camogie in 1980s and this dwindled in 1990s when she was President because of less emigration.</p> <p>0:54:30 Describes keeping contact with camogie people back home to get players who were coming over and trying to get players to come out and problems with this.</p> <p>0:55:50 Describes picking players up to bring them to Gaelic park and all the phone calls of running a team.</p> <p>0:56:10 Describes setting up international seven a side competition in New York to promote idea of camogie in North America, which helped them to attract players.</p> <p>0:57:00 Describes importing hurleys from Tipperary and elsewhere when people went home on holidays.</p> <p>0:58:10 Describes challenges of keeping a camogie team going – getting girls to training etc.</p> <p>0:59:00 Describes why camogie failed in New York despite all the work of a lot of women. Not enough fresh blood from</p>
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	<p>Ireland.</p> <p>1:00:00 Describes how Irish emigrants in recent years were more ambitious.</p> <p>1:01:00 Talks about impact of Ladies Football on camogie and playing football with Monaghan ladies in New York. Describes camogie as a different sport and it's hard to play both.</p> <p>1:02:20 Describes amount of time she put in to GAA as President of Camogie in New York and dedication of other committee members. She still did all the menial stuff – getting oranges and washing jerseys. Lot of administration as well.</p> <p>1:03:40 Describes good relationship with New York Board and Seamus Dooley marking the field for them but they were still women, not equal partners.</p> <p>1:04:20 Talks about GAA attitude to women being different in different places and how to deal with men in the GAA.</p> <p>1:05:00 Describes how in early days the camogie women hid their hurls under their skirts, now getting close to equality.</p> <p>1:05:40 Describes keeping in touch with GAA back home in Cork through papers and later computer, but focus on New York. Describes change in atmosphere at Gaelic Park between 1980s and 2009 with better attitude to woman players. Describes different honours she received to demonstrate this.</p> <p>1:08:00 Describes changes in crowds at Gaelic Park since 1980s. It was like being at home and packed out. You could get news from home and meet all your friends. Describes meeting her husband there. Not the same vibe now due to lack of emigration.</p> <p>1:09:30 Thinks GAA should do something to help those emigrants out. Terrible for players who can't go home to Ireland because they're illegal. You give up your chance of playing in Croke Park if you emigrate illegally.</p> <p>1:11:30 Describes threats to GAA in New York, but it might be saved by the economy going bad in Ireland, if people start to emigrate again, but again there are big problems for the illegals.</p> <p>1:12:30 Describes crowds in Gaelic Park and bar packed with people afterwards. Not as crowded now.</p> <p>1:12:55 Describes becoming involved with radio coverage of</p>
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	<p>GAA through her husband Tommy Smyth, taking over when he joined ESPN in 1990s. He trained her in and she had to fill the s3:30 describes relaying All-Ireland matches from RTE via Fordham University radio, but having to fill over RTE's advertisements with commentary and analysis because Fordham was non-commercial.</p> <p>1:14:00 The Irish community in New York depended on the radio to get the All-Ireland and there are difficulties in doing the broadcast. Describes a typical day doing the broadcast and challenges of doing it.</p> <p>1:18:50 Describes Micheal O'Muircheartaigh as a commentator and need to know the teams to follow what he's saying and difficulty in tracking the score.</p> <p>1:19:50 Describes how internet has made job of following the game easier. Still getting the score exactly right for your listeners was key.</p> <p>1:21:00 Describes sponsorship of the programme by the GAA in New York and Setanta Sports allowing them the rights.</p> <p>1:22:00 Talks about Tommy Smyth.</p> <p>1:22:45 Describes the 2009 Hurling Final.</p> <p>1:23:40 Describes getting information about GAA line ups by getting newspapers from Ireland from a friend in Aer Lingus.</p> <p>1:25:00 Describes favourite GAA memory as the one she got second-hand from her husband – the 1957 All-Ireland.</p> <p>1:25:40 Describes a bad memory as when she broke her ankle on Cork trials and marking Val Fitzpatrick in a seven side when she lost concentration and she scored.</p> <p>1:27:00 Describes her game of a lifetime as playing Boston in camogie and winning the North American championship.</p> <p>1:28:00 The greatest team she's known was the New York Young Ireland's Camogie team. They were so dedicated and gave up their time to promote the game.</p> <p>1:29:00 Her all-time heroes would be Christy Ring, Mary Moran, Marie Costigan, Betty Joyce. Joe Holden, she was a great player and good attitude.</p> <p>1:30:00 Describes how GAA gave her a good attitude to life – to get out and do things right and have no regrets.</p> <p>1:30:50 Her main disappointment with GAA is the gap</p>
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	<p>between GAA back home and the New York GAA. The New York people had to work very hard for the GAA but the people at home had it at their back door.</p> <p>1:31:30 The Camogie Association did appreciate how hard it was in New York when they came to visit New York. She remembers encouraging her GAA girls to go to college to get on in life.</p> <p>1:33:00 Describes what the GAA means to her as big a part of her as being a Catholic. Being surrounded by the GAA philosophy was a big part of her upbringing – living the right way – take a loss and get on with it. It teaches you, and kept her kids out of trouble. It's a way of life and a wonderful organisation. The bonds go all around the world, not just Ireland, and she hopes people realise that.</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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): Broadcaster of GAA and Irish programming</p>
<p>Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p>Played Senior Camogie for Cork briefly</p> <p>Won several North American Camogie Championships with New York Young Ireland's Camogie Club</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>President New York Camogie Association; PRO Celtics Minor Board</p>
<p>Format</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Length of Interview: 1:35:17</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: Seán Kearns

Date: 1 July 2010