

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	26 th Aug 2010
Location	Bill's home, near Clonaslee, Co. Laois
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Bill Flynn
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1931 Home County: Laois
Education	Primary: Reary NS, Co. Laois Secondary: Clonaslee Vocational College
Family	Siblings: 2 brothers & 4 sisters Current Family if Different: Wife (Ann); 1 son & 4 daughters
Club(s)	Clonaslee GAA [Laois]
Occupation	Farmer
Parents' Occupation	Farmers
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Fianna Fáil
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Macra na Feirme; Co-Operative Committee

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Date of Report	12 th June 2012
Period Covered	1880s – 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Laois, Dublin, Waterford, Roscommon, Cavan, Galway, Carlow, Limerick, Kilkenny, Americas, USA
Key Themes Covered	Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Refereeing, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Education, Emigration, Role of Teachers, Role of the Club in the Community, Rivalries, Club History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Violence, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds
Interview Summary	<p>Bill talks about his family background in the Reary Valley in Laois and his father hurling for the local club Clonaslee. He tells of attending the 1938 All-Ireland as his father was involved in politics at the time. He speaks about playing hurling with family and friends in a local field as a boy. He goes on to talk about his GAA heroes at the time and of listening to the Cavan match played in the United States on a radio on the local estate. He talks about his early days playing and how the club developed. He speaks about the makeup of the team including the families and occupations. He then discusses the Ban and the vigilance committees. He then talks about cycling to games and training. After this he talks about his early hurls and equipment. He then talks about the social scene at the time, the dancehalls, bands as well as Macra na Ferime. He then talks about his playing career as well as his time as a selector and his thoughts on the GAA administration. He then talks about his proudest moment before discussing his disappointment with the GAA administration. He speaks about his optimism for the future of the GAA before finally talking about what his involvement in the GAA has meant to him over the years.</p> <p>00:28 Talks about his family background and association with Reary Valley, Laois.</p> <p>01:21 Speaks about his grandfather being herdsman on the estate. Mentions the small holdings in the area and Tullamore being the nearest big town.</p> <p>02:43 Talks about his father hurling for Clonaslee.</p> <p>03:03 Speaks of his earliest GAA memory attending the All-Ireland in 1938 when Waterford played Dublin. Mentions</p>

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	<p>John Keane wearing his cap backwards.</p> <p>03:45 Talks about his father being involved in the political scene at the time and attending a meeting on the Friday and going to Croke Park the next day.</p> <p>04:43 Speaks about his earliest days of playing hurling with his six siblings against three similar sized families.</p> <p>05:57 Talks of having no other pastimes other than hurling.</p> <p>06:31 Tells of his heroes of the time being the Galway team the Roscommon and Cavan teams.</p> <p>07:29 Speaks of the Cavan match broadcast for the United States and Michael O'Hare's commentary. Mentions it being a very physical game back then.</p> <p>08:34 Talks of not having a radio back then and going to the estate house to listen to the radio set up in the window by the English estate owner's son.</p> <p>10:40 Speaks of hurling being the only sport played in the area with the exception of some of another social circle who played hockey and cricket.</p> <p>11:28 Talks about three local players who were associated with the All-Ireland team of 1915.</p> <p>12:00 Talks of the Senior team in Clonaslee in the late 1800's. Mentions the area and the estate house.</p> <p>13:59 Speaks of there being no hurling in the school he went to as a young boy. Talks of playing in the local training field while at vocational school. Mentions first playing at minor level due to being unable to field a team because of lack of players in both primary and vocational schools.</p> <p>15:53 Talks of training under Dinny Ford a forester from Galway and the road training he gave them. Mentions training with the hurling club in a field called the racecourse on the Dunne Estate in Brittas.</p> <p>17:25 Speaks about renting fields from local farmers around the village. Mentions Fred Matthews, John Casey who was a team member in the 1930's and another.</p> <p>18:50 Talks of buying an old truck, missing a wheel, for use as a dressing room.</p> <p>19:18 Talks of his playing career and playing in a minor semi-final with players who went on to be Intermediate Champions</p>
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	<p>of 1955. Mentions the team being made up of three or four families with three Flynn's ultimately playing along with four Conroy's and two Culliton's.</p> <p>20:58 Talks of still playing on the 1962 team with six or seven of the same players from 1953. Mentions new players coming in and the club winning the 1967 Junior Championship, 1968 Intermediate Championship and contesting the final of the 1969 Senior Championship along with the next five before winning this in 1975.</p> <p>22:35 Talks of the team members with again three Flynn's, five Conroy's, three Bates' and three McCreddin's and two Fitzgeralds'. Mentions there being only two non-farmers on the team.</p> <p>23:21 Speaks about there being four teachers on the team in the 1970's. Mentions Moling Morrissey, Carlow and Matt Ryan, Limerick.</p> <p>24:09 Speaks about the impact of the ban on foreign games on the club in the 1950's. Mentions Gerry Culliton being suspended for playing rugby.</p> <p>26:10 Talks of the vigilance committee's role in the GAA.</p> <p>26:39 Speaks about the club's rivals in his day. Mentions Camrosss, Durrow 'The Harps'</p> <p>27:47 Recalls the Laois team of 1949 and their Leinster semi-final match against Kilkenny in Nolan Park And the final against Dublin. Mentions the All-Ireland semi-final against Galway and going to the All-Ireland. Also mentions Jimmy Mulvey.</p> <p>29:21 Talks about combining playing and farming during those early years. Mentions having a car but cycling to training and matches. Also mentions his father cycling to Dublin for All-Irelands.</p> <p>30:58 Speaks of large numbers of bicycles on the road to a match in the 1950's and 1960's.</p> <p>31:49 Talks of Dinny Ford and the training regime he put in place. Mentions the gear and equipment they had at the time.</p> <p>32:58 Speaks about where he got his first hurl handmade by a neighbour.</p> <p>33:53 Talks of his mother winning a raffle in the club and the</p>
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	<p>prize being three hurls.</p> <p>34:11 Recalls the social life around the GAA as a young man. Mentions dancehalls in Laois, Macra na Ferime run dances and driving a group to the dance.</p> <p>36:06 Talks of the bands at the time in the various ballrooms such as Brendan Boyer.</p> <p>36:38 Talks of Clonaslee being one of the earliest branches affiliated to Macra.</p> <p>36:52 Speaks of the people involved in Macra and their small overlap with the GAA.</p> <p>38:03 Talks of playing for about ten years including two years on the Laois county junior team. Mentions Paddy Bates, Philip Dillon and Tom Flynn, Bill's brother who played football and hurling including one year at senior level.</p> <p>39:25 Describes playing for Laois and the low expectations he had.</p> <p>39:50 Speaks about being a selector for both Cloniskey and Laois hurling teams. Mentions not being happy with the internal politics and stepping down after a year.</p> <p>41:29 – 41:50 Offer of coffee</p> <p>42:10 Relates a story about his youngest brother and of Bill being falsely accused of holding a place for him on the team.</p> <p>43:21 Talks about McKevitt and his administration and winning an appeal with Paddy Bates to the County Board. Mentions the importance of administration in the GAA to the detriment of the game.</p> <p>45:44 Talks about the future of Laois hurling and the players thought processes. Mentions the Rooney family including Darren.</p> <p>47:55 Talks about the main changes in the GAA since his day. Mentions the importance of discipline in the game which has led to a safer game. Also mentions the standard of refereeing and the idea of keeping the game flowing giving examples.</p> <p>52:10 Talks of being a linesman, umpire and steward. Mentions the importance of keeping an eye on the line and being sure of your calls.</p> <p>53:04 Speaks about the organisation of the linesmen and</p>
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	<p>umpires at games. Mentions the lack of training for these positions and how referees should train the linesmen and make more use of them.</p> <p>55:32 Tells of some of the rows that broke out over the years during matches. Mentions how some could be particularly vicious.</p> <p>56:30 Speaks about his proudest moment, winning the Championship in 1955. Talks of the celebrations after the win.</p> <p>58:32 Talks of his disappointment with the GAA over the Ban and how they lagged far behind in their thinking.</p> <p>01:00:00 Tells how rules can only be changed every four years and that this is not keeping pace with society. Mentions Presidents, Mickey Brennan, McDonagh and Pat Fanning.</p> <p>01:01:32 Talks of Liam O'Neill becoming president and how he would be great at doing things but hasn't got a great personality.</p> <p>01:02:08 Speaks about his optimism for the GAA both locally and nationally. Mentions how rugby has advanced a good deal but this would not cause the GAA a problem in the same way as soccer.</p> <p>01:04:58 Tells what the GAA has meant to him over the years.</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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input checked="" 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>1952 – 1963 – played Intermediate, Senior and Junior with Clonaslee hurling club, won Laois Intermediate Hurling Championship in 1955 and 1962; 1956 – 57 played on Laois Junior Hurling Team</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Selector for Clonaslee hurling teams; 1 year as a selector for Laois Senior Hurling team; Served for many years of Clonaslee GAA committee and also had the role of vice-chairman of the club.</p>

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Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 1:05:48
Language	English

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: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 12th June 2012