

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	9 th Nov 2010
Location	Joe's home, near Castletown, Co. Wexford
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Joe O'Shaughnessy
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1943 Home County: Wexford
Education	Primary: Castletown NS, Co. Wexford Secondary: Gorey CBS, Co. Wexford
Family	Siblings: 2 sisters & 6 brothers Current Family if Different: Wife (Ann-Marie), 3 sons and 5 daughters
Club(s)	Castletown GFC [Wexford]; Liam Mellows Hurling Club [Wexford]
Occupation	Farmer
Parents' Occupation	Farmers
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Fine Gael
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Courtown Golf Club; Wexford IFA

Date of Report	27 th June 2012
Period Covered	18802 - 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Wexford, Wicklow, Dublin, Down, Kilkenny
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Material Culture, Education, Religion, Emigration, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Outsiders' Perspectives, Alcohol, Violence, Northern Ireland, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Opening of Croke Park, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Retirement, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy/ Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Joe discusses his involvement with Castletown GAA Club in his native Wexford and his various administration roles at club and county level. He explains how the location of Castletown on the border with Wicklow has affected the club and describes the long tradition of football in the area. He reflects on playing underage for Young Emmets in Gorey and discusses the development of his career in Castletown. Specifically, Joe describes his joy at winning a senior club title in 1965 and the celebrations that followed. He also recalls his pride at representing his county in football. In addition, Joe discusses the challenges and responsibilities involved in being chairman of the county board and the club. Finally, he considers the benefits of the opening of Croke Park and reflects on the future of the GAA in Ireland.</p> <p>00:19 Joe describes being born in 1943. Recalls his upbringing near Castletown, Wexford. His parents from the locality.</p> <p>01:12 Discusses his father's passion for supporting GAA, going to matches. His uncles playing football for Castletown. Explains that this is a football area.</p> <p>02:17 Outlines history of Castletown. Mentions John Lee's shop. Club re-formed in 1930s by John Lee, originally formed in 1886. Football game played in 1884 between Castletown and Arklow.</p>

	<p>03:33 Explains Castletown's location on border with Wicklow. In Dublin diocese. Links with Arklow parish. Convention decision in 40s to allow Castletown to select players from Gorey parish. Describes parish boundaries. Difference between ecclesiastical parish and GAA parish.</p> <p>05:14 Discusses history of club. Called The Blues and Whites years ago. Father Kitt starting underage football in schools in early 50s, starting Rackard League. Hurling and football. Mentions Nicky Rackard. Father Kitt changing colours of jerseys. Organising seven-a-sides in club.</p> <p>07:10 Attending Castletown National School. Mentions principal Frank Murphy playing football in school.</p> <p>07:55 Early memories of playing football after dinner in the yard as a child with his brothers. No other sports in area. Cousins playing cards. Conversations about football and Wexford teams. Excitement about Wexford team then. Mentions Dermot Clancy. When Joe was chairman of Wexford County Board, getting to know such childhood heroes as Billy Goodison, Jackie Culleton.</p> <p>09:59 Mentions Wexford hurlers of the 1950s as his heroes. Strength of county football team in 50s too. Mentions the Rackards.</p> <p>11:47 Recalls his earliest memories. Going to the showgrounds in Gorey with his father in pony and trap to see Castletown play. Joe's cousins, the Murrays playing. Cycling to matches, and to school in Gorey. Sharing bicycles. No official training, kicking around.</p> <p>13:31 No underage structure so played with Young Emmets in Gorey. Mentions Andy Merrigan, Tom Lawlor, John Kinsella. Explains origin of the Andy Merrigan Cup. Andy Merrigan's nephew on team now.</p> <p>15:51 Describes how Castletown won senior football titles most years from 1965 to 1981, but many players moving to Dublin to work.</p> <p>16:49 Going to school in Gorey, training and playing with Young Emmets, winning juvenile and minor with them. Castletown starting underage in 1984.</p> <p>17:32 Recalls attending CBS in Gorey: hurling and football. Brothers' passion for Gaelic Games. In first year, picked for senior team. Mentions Ger McKenna, teacher, chairman of Kerry County Board. Making friends with teammates.</p>
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	<p>20:28 Mentions Father Kitt's arrival in 50s.</p> <p>20:54 Discussion of the development of his career. Castletown winning junior football in 1960. Mentions Taghmon. Castletown playing at senior level for first time in 1961, their first year in senior. Joe recalls playing senior for Castletown for the first time in 1963.</p> <p>22:54 Winning county final in 1965. Celebrations. Brought by lorry to the Golden Anchor for reception. Bonfires, speeches outside school in Castletown. First team from Gorey district to win senior championship.</p> <p>24:22 Explains club covers Castletown and Culraney. Mentions Liam Mellows, shot during Civil War, buried in Castletown. Hurling club started in 1961, called Liam Mellows. Success of hurling club.</p> <p>25:52 His involvement in hurling. The club's football success, in 1965, hurling success the previous year. Outlines further successes. Popular tournament in Cheshire homes, Shillelagh. Castletown's wins. Parish fundraisers. Guinness sponsoring seven-a-side in Enniscorthy. Reaching Kilmacud Crokes All-Ireland Sevens Final in 1970s. Mentions Mick O'Dwyer. Contentious result, disappointment.</p> <p>29:38 Kilmacud final the day before the All-Ireland. Staying in someone's house before All-Ireland.</p> <p>30:52 Only one set of jerseys in club. Socks for county final. Camaraderie.</p> <p>31:45 Teammates working in Dublin: post office, electricians. Mentions the Molloy's in the 50s, the Murrays, Kavanaghs, Byrnes. Joe's brother Larry on team. Also mentions the Carthys. Players travelling home for training, some from Shetland Abbey, forestry college. Larry Shaughnessy transporting players in his vegetable van.</p> <p>34:08 Castletown using Culraney's community field. Building of pitch in Castletown in the 80s, one of the first sand-based pitch in Ireland. Levelling pitch themselves with tractors and trailers, arguments with County Council about taking sand from beach. Mentions Christy Cooney opening indoor pitch this year. Waiting for planning permission and bank sanctions. Expensive. Astro-turf. Hurling walls.</p> <p>37:19 History of the grounds. Playing in Purcells' field in 50s, later Murphys' field and Hughes' field. Hughes family were Church of Ireland. Mentions another Church of Ireland family involved in the GAA: the Sunderlands. George Sunderland</p>
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	<p>playing. Mentions Michael Carty, captained UCD.</p> <p>40:07 Outlines the progression of his own career. Various positions on field. Picked for Under-21 Wexford team, trials for senior team. Pride in wearing Wexford jersey. Lack of county training. Mentions Sean Turner, Wexford manager in 1969, increasing training levels. No drills, no diet, no tactics at county level. Fr Vincent Quimper's tactical advice at club level.</p> <p>42:54 Joe's approach to game when playing for county. Mentions marking Meath's Pat Reynolds. Mentions heroes: Down team of the 1960s, James McCartan. His joy at meeting them at Congress. James's cousin Dan on Central Council. Mentions President Mary McAleese at Congress.</p> <p>46:11 Mentions Denis Aspel of Ballyhogue. Also mentions Pat Lacey. Rivalry with Ballyhogue and Gusserane. Violence at matches, compared to today. Castletown's ill fortune in 1973.</p> <p>48:24 Reflects on the GAA's role at funerals. Guard of honour for former players. Role of GAA in parish. Recent start of camogie and ladies football, thriving. New membership. Success of astro-turf pitch.</p> <p>50:01 Discussion of impact of emigration of club in 1950s. Strength of current Under-21 team. Fears about the negative impact of the recession on the GAA. Benefits of involvement in GAA on job prospects.</p> <p>51:53 Recalls how he got involved in the GAA. Making cold tea for players aged 10. Treasurer of club in 1961. Mentions Mick Byrne, secretary. Running dances for club. Recalls his first county board meeting in 1960. Mentions Mick Murray and Sean Sheridan.</p> <p>54:04 Explains why he got involved in the administration side of the organisation. Mentions Simon Kennedy asking him to become chairman of the fixtures committee. Becoming vice chairman of county board, then taking over from Pat Hall, chairman. Also mentions Sean Ormonde, secretary.</p> <p>57:48 Reflects on the amount of time being county chairman took up. Young family, farmwork. Mentions John Kinsella. No expenses. Amount of phone calls involved.</p> <p>59:34 Responsibilities of county chairman role. The first county to have sponsorship. Highlights of his term: starting coaching in schools and a supporters' club. Mentions Seamus Howlin's role in getting sponsorship. Also mentions John Doyle, Matt Browne. Also mentions Matt Kinsella, full-time</p>
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	<p>coach and secretary in 90s.</p> <p>01:01:38 Describes discussions around making secretary role full-time. Golf classics fundraisers. Mentions Matt Browne, Pat Quigley.</p> <p>01:03:10 Discusses resentment of having high-profile people in Supporters Club. Purpose of club: to raise funds for Wexford GAA.</p> <p>01:05:02 His lack of preparation for role of county chairman. Developing objectives. Challenge of lack of male teachers in national schools, less GAA in schools.</p> <p>01:06:56 First county to have sponsorship on jersey. Kaliber beer. Mentions Michael Foley, sponsor.</p> <p>01:08:04 Compares playing to managing. Managing senior football team. Also selector. Considers how clubs' disinterest in county board is a weakness in structure of the GAA.</p> <p>01:09:56 Discussion about his other administration roles. Development officer in county. Mentions Fergie Duff. Refurbishing Wexford Park. Mentions Pat Neville, Mick Kinsella, Seamus Howlin. Describes drainage problems. Mentions Bord na nÓg.</p> <p>01:12:05 Discusses fundraising for Wexford Park: grants, Lotto funding, borrowing. Buying land in Ferns for training facilities for county teams. Developing that land, negotiations with Croke Park. Currently no borrowing.</p> <p>01:13:40 Importance of Lottery funding to the GAA.</p> <p>01:14:28 Describes challenges of making tough decisions in various administration roles. Importance of fair treatment. No favouritism any more.</p> <p>01:16:13 Discussion of recent rules in the GAA. Controversy about hand-pass, the closed season, lots of teams training during it. Role of counties in introducing these rules.</p> <p>01:17:50 Reflects on key changes he's witnessed: taking kicks from the hand, sideline kicks, hand pass. His views on excessive hand passing.</p> <p>01:18:47 Ponders his agreement with the decision to open Croke Park. Financial benefits. Rugby fans' views of Croke Park. Other benefits in terms of attitude to the GAA. On Central Council then.</p> <p>01:21:09 Discusses the intense debates about the decision.</p>
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	<p>Northern counties against the opening of Croke Park. Reasons for opposition: treatment of the GAA in the North. Recounts some stories of how GAA fans in the North were treated. Cars searched, stopped by authorities.</p> <p>01:23:30 Ponders the differences between the GAA he joined and the organisation today: more professional now, rise in number of coaches</p> <p>01:24:47 His hope that the GPA will become part of the GAA. His views against professionalism. Career opportunities for players, glory. His son's club playing career at present. Joe's current chairing of evaluation committee in Croke Park.</p> <p>01:28:18 His doubts that the voluntary nature of administration work will continue. Commitment of Tommy Masterson and Gabriel Maxwell at working at club astro-turf pitch. Problem of parents wanting their children to play.</p> <p>01:30:09 Considers the contribution of the GAA to the parish and the country. The social aspect. Uniting parish.</p> <p>01:31:33 Discusses the change in the role of women in the organisation. No women when he joined. Mothers making tea and sandwiches for teams after final. Mentions Kathleen O'Neill, a county secretary. His doubts that women will fill more prominent roles.</p> <p>01:33:30 His views on the organisational structure of the GAA. Importance of strong clubs to keep organisation strong. Disappointment in Wexford over lack of hurling success.</p> <p>01:34:37 Wexford winning All-Ireland Senior Hurling Final in 1996. Joy. Disappointment in 1993 at losing replay to Kilkenny. Mentions manager Liam Griffin.</p> <p>01:35:48 Highlight: winning championship with club. Also winning county final this year, his son playing.</p> <p>01:36:33 Describes playing for county. Playing alongside club rivals.</p> <p>01:37:26. Discusses his disappointment in the GAA: refereeing decisions, not winning chair of county board. Democratic nature of the organisation.</p> <p>01:38:22 Reflects on the impact of his involvement in the GAA on his family. Rushing from children's communion and confirmation days to matches. His son Michael just returned. His son Jody on panel for county team and playing for club.</p> <p>01:40:08 His joy that the sport is being passed down to next</p>
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	<p>generation.</p> <p>01:40:37 Describes his optimism for the future of the GAA, despite challenges faced in the recession. Importance of having the sport as an outlet in difficult times. Negative impact of Celtic Tiger on GAA: young people drinking more, challenge of dealing with them. Importance of fun.</p> <p>01:42:40 Significance of GAA in rural areas. Banter among players. Tea after matches. Recounts a story involving cooking stew and pasta for players.</p> <p>01:43:53 Reflects on the significance of the GAA in his life. Success of Castletown. His current involvement. Mentions Paddy Stamp.</p>
Involvement in GAA	<p>✓ Supporter ✓ Player ✓ Manager ✓ Coach ✓ Steward</p> <p>✓ Chairperson ✓ Committee Member ✓ 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>
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	<p>Played football for Castletown and for Wexford. Played underage with Gorey Young Emmets and won minor and juvenile county championships with them; Won 9 Wexford Senior Football Championships; won Wexford junior and intermediate championships with Liam Mellows. Played on Wexford U21 Football team and on Wexford Senior Football team.</p>
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	<p>Club: Member of Castletown Committee since 1961; Chairman on two occasions (1982 – 86; 2005 – 2008); Treasurer for many years from 1961.</p> <p>Wexford County Board: Vice Chairman; Chairman (1989 – 93); Development Officer.</p> <p>Leinster: Member of Leinster Council Management Committee.</p> <p>National: Wexford Representative on Central Council (2003 – 2010); Member of Croke Park Management Committee</p>

REFERENCE NO. WX/1/21

Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 01:46:07
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 27th June 2012