

GAA Oral History Project
Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Tommy McCann
Date of Interview	3 rd Nov 2010
Location	N/A
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	James Kierans
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1940 Home County: Louth
Education	Primary: Kilsaran National School, Castle Bellingham, CO. Louth
Family	Siblings: 3 brothers Current Family if Different: 1 son; 1 daughter
Club(s)	O'Connell's GFC, Castle Bellingham [Louth]
Occupation	Retired Commercial Traveller
Parents' Occupation	Housewife [Mother]; Railway worker [Father]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Fine Gael
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

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Date of Report	13 th July 2012
Period Covered	1940s – 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Louth, Dublin, Kerry
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Facilities, Playing, Administration, Involvement in GAA abroad, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, GAA Abroad, Identity, All-Ireland, Club History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Career, Northern Ireland, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Relationship with the Association, Economy/ Economics
Interview Summary	<p>The interviewee discusses his early life and his introduction to the GAA through his aunt's family, with whom he lived after his mother died and his father returned to Monaghan. Mentions his heroes growing up and his playing days with Louth juniors, winning and All-Ireland with them in 1961 and losing interest in game after not getting a medal. He discusses the impact his family and working circumstances have had on his involvement with his home club and offers a critical appraisal of how that club was administered over many years. Opinions are offered on the role of women in the GAA and different characteristics of the GAA in Northern Ireland and overseas as against the GAA in Republic.</p> <p>00:00:05 Interviewee introduces himself as a member of O'Connell's GFC in Castlebellingham.</p> <p>00:00:29 Remembers starting to play juvenile football with O'Connell's in 1950 as a 10 year old. Says introduction came through the schools.</p> <p>00:01:14 Mentions being raised by his aunt. His father, a Monaghan man, had to return to home county in 1944 after the interviewees mother died from TB. Says he effectively lived his life with his aunt's family, the McGroary's, in Castlebellingham. They were steeped in the GAA. Recalls George McGroary, who had emigrated to England, returning home for the 50th anniversary of O'Connell's winning the Junior 2 championship in 1949. Mentions the involvement of other members of the McGroary family, as well as his brother, who played with another club.</p> <p>00:03:10 GAA as a focus of conversation in household. Mentions the 'great sense of being' from his involvement with the GAA club.</p>

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	<p>00:03:30 Mentions that Stephen White was his hero and the short term he had as trainer with the O'Connell's club.</p> <p>00:04:40 Refers to his favourite players from outside Louth – Frank Stockwell and Sean Purcell from Galway. Recalls a game Louth played against Galway in Tuam.</p> <p>00:05:19 Mentions the excitement of playing Johnny Jones's Fane Rangers in Channonrock. Always produced some incident.</p> <p>00:06:30 Mentions being a member of Louth Junior All-Ireland panel in 1961. Talks about coming onto the panel for the Leinster final against Dublin in Navan – says he played well. Talks of playing Kerry in Drogheda in semi-final before a big crowd, and then against Galway in Croke Park 'home final'.</p> <p>00:08:45 Mentions that final proper was against Warwickshire in final proper in Leeds and that he didn't get the call. Was so annoyed that he gave up playing for O'Connell's. Played soccer instead and got suspended for 6 months.</p> <p>00:09:26 Discusses the ban and comments on how many Louth players were going to Oriel Park (soccer ground) at the time.</p> <p>00:10:00 Mentions winning the All-Ireland junior in 1961 as a highlight of career. Recalls disgust at not getting on field for final in Warwickshire. Instead a Blues man was put to get a medal. At the time he got only a plaque. Lost interest at that point.</p> <p>00:11:14 Mentions the commemorations/celebrations held in honour of that team. Recalls telling a story to ex-players of not getting medal and their reaction – pressed the county to have new medal presented to Jimmy Kierans.</p> <p>00:12:05 Discusses the history of O'Connell's – lack of success has not prevented club from serving community...promoting games, developing facilities.</p> <p>00:13:00 Discusses how changing life and work circumstances affected involvement with club – he lived in Dublin for a number of years.</p> <p>00:13:50 Mentions the winning of Junior championship, possibly 1983, as the biggest achievement in the club's history. Notes that he had no involvement in that success.</p> <p>00:14:15 Comments on his disappointment at lack of ambition in the club in the past – reluctance of past committees to take</p>
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	<p>on any projects. Says that it was only since Seamus Cairns came to club that 'any real work was done'. Suggests that Cairns is still perceived as an 'outsider' within the club.</p> <p>00:16:15 Refers to the fact that he had been Secretary of St. Michael's and credits Terry Doherty, a teacher, for much of the underage development within the club. Describes him as a 'wonderful motivator'. Mentions players who came through St. Michael's. Refers to fact that St. Michael's amalgamated with Strabannon at underage level...says that success negated issues between the two and refers to winning an Under 14 title.</p> <p>00:19:00 Discusses the role of women in the GAA. Argues for their greater involvement and outlines the benefits they would bring.</p> <p>00:20:25 Refers to the massive influx of new inhabitant to the Castlebellingham area and mentions the need to get them involved.</p> <p>00:21:09 Discusses the character of the GAA abroad and compares to Northern Ireland. Believes GAA members are more committed than in south.</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 type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input 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>Played 17 years; won All-Ireland Junior medal in 1971</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Chairman and Secretary in 1950s of club; Chairman of juvenile club, St Michael's</p>

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Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 00:22:00
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: Tommy McCann

Date: 3rd Nov 2010