

## GAA Oral History Project

## Interview Report Form

<b>Name of Interviewer</b>	Regina Fitzpatrick
<b>Date of Interview</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2011
<b>Location</b>	Wicklow
<b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname)	Johnny Kenny
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1930 <b>Home County:</b> Wicklow
<b>Education</b>	<b>Primary:</b> Baltinglass NS, Co. Wicklow
<b>Family</b>	<b>Siblings:</b> 1 brother & 1 sister <b>Current Family if Different:</b> Wife (Margaret), 5 daughters & 4 sons
<b>Club(s)</b>	Baltinglass GAA [Wicklow]
<b>Occupation</b>	Panel Beater / Sprayer
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	Blacksmith [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
<b>Religion</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	Fine Gael
<b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>	N/A

<b>Date of Report</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> July 2012
<b>Period Covered</b>	1890s - 2011
<b>Counties/Countries Covered</b>	Wicklow, Roscommon, Dublin, Meath, Cavan, Galway, Offaly, Laois, Louth, Carlow, Wexford, Down, Kildare
<b>Key Themes Covered</b>	Travel, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Coaching, Refereeing, Celebrations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Emigration, Role of Clergy, Volunteers, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Career, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Retirement, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Economy/Economics
<b>Interview Summary</b>	<p>John recalls growing up in Baltinglass and the role that the GAA played in the town. He describes his introduction to Gaelic football and how his career progressed. He discusses the club's history, and also mentions his playing career with Wicklow. He compares the differences in football between his playing days and modern times. John recalls training methods when he was playing, and speaks about his career as a coach. He recalls Baltinglass' 1990 All-Ireland Club Final win and the celebrations that ensued. He discusses his heroes in the GAA, and mentions the venues that he has played in over the years. He also describes his time as a referee, and the friendships he has made from the GAA. He also discusses major changes in the GAA, and discusses The Ban. John recalls various tournaments that Baltinglass played in and the prizes that were on offer. He discusses his family's involvement in the GAA, and talks about the Hall of Fame award that he received.</p> <p>00:25 John recalls growing up in Clogh, Co Wicklow. Discusses family involvement in GAA. Mentions Baltinglass Shamrocks, Newcastle of Wicklow and a 1912 Wicklow Junior County Final that was played in Croke Park in 1913. Recalls crowd travelling to game.</p> <p>01:46 Discusses his father's background. Mentions World War One. Mentions blacksmith premises on Weaver's Square, Baltinglass. Recalls the making of horseshoes.</p> <p>04:03 Describes what Baltinglass was like when he was growing up. Mentions economic conditions and emigration.</p> <p>05:05 Recalls the history of GAA in Baltinglass. Mentions Wicklow County Board convention of 1886 and Matt Byrne of Baltinglass. Mentions his granddaughter, Mary Bryne.</p>

	<p>Mentions original name of GAA club in Baltinglass, Maurice Davins.</p> <p>06:03 Discusses the prevalence of Gaelic football and hurling in Baltinglass when he was growing up. Mentions Minor Championship win in 1940 and Junior Championship in 1943, before a Senior Championship win in 1958.</p> <p>06:41 Recalls the pastimes of people in the thirties and forties in Baltinglass. Mentions Bradley's Picture House and the football field.</p> <p>06:54 Recalls other sports played in the town. Mentions cricket. Recalls Wicklow Senior Hurling Championship win in 1937.</p> <p>07:40 Describes the fields that were used for GAA in Baltinglass. Mentions Jones' field and Dan Keogh's field being rented.</p> <p>08:28 Describes his earliest memories of the GAA. Mentions match between Leix (Laois) and Wicklow in Jones' field. Mentions playing Gaelic football for the first time, around 1946. Mentions reaction of his father. Recalls kicking pig's bladder around the garden.</p> <p>10:41 Discusses his playing career, beginning at underage level. Mentions secretary Jimmy Brophy. Recalls going to Rathdangan, Kiltegan, Stratford and The Big Stone to get players for Baltinglass minors. Mentions minor final against Blessington, Donard, Dunlavin. Recalls cycling to matches.</p> <p>12:37 Recalls club structures in his younger days. Mentions fundraising – dances, whist drives. Mentions William Mannering.</p> <p>13:55 Discusses trainers who took charge of Baltinglass teams. Mentions finals against Roundwood, Annacurra, St Patricks from Wicklow town. Mentions Gerry Fitzgerald from Saggart. Recalls final against Donard. Remembers Danny Douglas from Laois. Describes the training methods and facilities in the fifties. Recalls training on a golf links before a county final.</p> <p>15:52 Describes the build-up to the 1958 county final. Mentions Peter Timmons and the White Horse Inn. Mentions Aughrim. Recalls the county final - mentions Mrs Byrne providing tea at half-time. Recalls goal from George Deering. Mentions Rathvilly band leading them through the town. Mentions Quinns pub.</p>
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	<p>17:30 Mentions working in Loughman's in Athy. Recalls administrative role with the club. Recalls dinner dance in honour of 1958 county final win. Mentions Ned Timmons of The White Horse Inn in Drimnagh, also mentions Godfrey Timmons. Recalls note from Ned Timmons seeking players to be back in time from match to work in his pub.</p> <p>20:24 Recalls his GAA heroes when growing up. Mentions Gerry O'Malley of Roscommon, Jim Crowley of Dublin, Marcus Wilson. Recalls match against Meath in Aughrim, marked by Christo Hand. Describes how he heard he was picked for the county team. Mentions then county chairman Hugh Byrne. Recalls 1954 match against Meath – mentions Bill Delaney of Laois was the referee. Mentions Paddy O'Brien of Meath.</p> <p>23:01 Recalls training schedule when playing with Wicklow. Mentions training in Aughrim and Blessington, and matches against the Army and the Gardaí.</p> <p>23:54 Discusses the facilities and treatment for inter-county players during his playing days.</p> <p>24:26 Recalls Baltinglass players who have played on the Wicklow team. Mentions Chris Timmons who played before him.</p> <p>24:53 Describes playing against the Army. Mentions John Joe Reilly of Cavan.</p> <p>25:24 Recalls the venues he has played in around the country. Mentions Knockcroghery in Roscommon, Ballinasloe in Galway. Wicklow were in Division One with teams such as Roscommon, Galway, Dublin, Offaly Laois, Louth. Remembers travelling to matches in the county board chairman's car. Recalls going to former Roscommon All-Ireland winning captain Jimmy Murray's pub in Knockcroghery after a match against Roscommon.</p> <p>26:43 Recalls matches that stand out for him. Mentions match against Dublin in Enniscorthy in 1956 – beat Carlow in first round. Mentions Dublin's Jim Crowley and Marcus Wilson were up against him and Paddy Metcalfe in midfield.</p> <p>27:41 Discusses players he played against. Mentions Christo Hand of Meath, Jim Crowley of Dublin, Martin Molloy of Carlow, Sean Foran of Offaly.</p> <p>28:18 Discusses Wicklow's rivals in Gaelic football. Mentions Dublin. Mentions the threat also posed by Offaly and Laois – mentions Fintan Walsh of Laois. Remembers match in a</p>
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	<p>snowstorm against Laois in Aughrim.</p> <p>29:11 Describes what it was like to play for his county. Mentions father's reaction to his successes.</p> <p>30:13 Assesses impact that playing inter-county football had on his club career.</p> <p>30:37 Recalls the development of the club in Baltinglass through the sixties. Mentions finals they played in – won three consecutive county finals. Bought football field in fifties. Recalls fundraising for the field. Mentions draw winner as being a man from Luggacurren in Laois, who won a car. Recalls going to Punchestown to sell tickets for the draw.</p> <p>32:15 Describes development work on the new field that Baltinglass purchased. Mentions Ken Brown, chairman. Recalls debate regarding purchasing the land from Jim Hanly.</p> <p>33:52 Mentions role that local priest Fr PJ McDonnell played in the club.</p> <p>34:19 Remarks that the field doesn't have an official name. Mentions it is known as St Josephs. New stand recently built, named after Godfrey Timmons., opened by Seamus Howlin from Wexford.</p> <p>35:10 Recalls effect of emigration on Baltinglass in the fifties and sixties.</p> <p>35:37 Discusses the popularity of Gaelic games in the town during the fifties and sixties. Mentions soccer in latter years.</p> <p>35:50 Discusses hurling in Baltinglass. Mentions Kiltegan, Peter Keogh. Recalls breaking collarbone in hurling match against Aughrim.</p> <p>36:53 Talks about refereeing in his playing days. Recalls his own refereeing career. Mentions Dinny Kelly asking him to referee. Refereed a 1961 Wicklow County Final between St Patricks and Kilcoole. Played in a Down Cup match before it, against Kilmacanogue.</p> <p>38:18 Mentions wife Margaret from Donard and the banter that would ensue when playing against her brother.</p> <p>39:07 Mentions refereeing career, from 1958 to 1965.</p> <p>39:30 Describes proudest moment being Baltinglass winning 1990 All-Ireland Club Football Final. Had three sons on that team – Hugh, Billy and Paul. Beat Clann na nGael from Roscommon in the final. Discusses family culture of GAA</p>
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	<p>involvement.</p> <p>40:43 Discusses his own coaching career. Mentions his approach to coaching. Recalls visiting pubs after training to ensure that players weren't drinking. Mentions Tommy Murphy performing a similar task during All-Ireland winning campaign of 1990.</p> <p>42:42 Discusses differences between players in his playing days and modern times. Mentions playing gear and injuries.</p> <p>44:24 Describes his approach to training teams.</p> <p>45:35 Recalls the skills of Gaelic football in his playing days.</p> <p>46:06 Mentions Peter Keogh from Kiltegan playing for the minors and cycling to matches.</p> <p>46:32 Recalls going to matches in Croke Park. Mentions three matches between Louth and Meath in 1949. Describes mode of transport to matches and what the facilities in the stadium were like. Mentions Wicklow teams using Barry's Hotel when playing in Croke Park, walking to the stadium before the match. Mentions that 1958 Baltinglass team member Hugh Kelly's aunt, Mrs Farrington, owned Barry's Hotel.</p> <p>48:25 Discusses Baltinglass players who worked in Dublin.</p> <p>49:15 Discusses illegal players.</p> <p>49:39 Recalls tournaments that used to take place. Mentions the Cheshire Home tournament in Shillelagh. Teams from Wexford, Carlow and Wicklow would participate in it. Mentions Baltinglass tournament and a final win over Dunlavin, and Hyde Park tournament in St Patricks College. Also won Tinnock tournament, a tournament for churches, beating Tullow in the final. Recalls the prizes that were on offer. Mentions cup, Casey Cup, won in Bray, beat Kilcoole in final. Mentions Down All-Ireland medal winner Ciaran Denver playing with Baltinglass. Recalls physicality of Gaelic football in his playing days. Remembers gold watch tournament match against Dublin in Croke Park. Mentions playing for delph. Mentions match against Kilcoole. Mentions tournaments in Arklow, Ballymore Eustace, Tullow, Rathvilly, Clonmore.</p> <p>53:03 Discusses retiring from football. Recalls working in Athy.</p> <p>53:41 Talks about his children, mentions that following</p>
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	<p>retirement from playing and stepping down as secretary, he had more time to spend with them. Mentions twins, Hugh and Paul. Formed own garage in 1977. Discusses his wife's interest in Gaelic games.</p> <p>54:44 Discusses the development of the club from the seventies onwards. Mentions juvenile section, development of playing facilities, floodlights. Mentions Lottery funding and sponsor Liam Quinn.</p> <p>57:02 Discusses the main driving forces behind the club. Mentions Ken Brown, former chairman. Also mentions Tommy Murphy, trainer, as well as Tony Norton, another trainer.</p> <p>58:18 Discusses volunteerism in the club. Mentions daughter Breeda is PRO of the club, Ann Whelan is treasurer.</p> <p>58:51 Describes relationship between the club and county board. Mentions Mick O'Dwyer.</p> <p>59:42 Recalls strong football clubs in Wicklow. Mentions St Patricks, Rathnew, St Patricks in Wicklow town, Blessington.</p> <p>1:00:22 Recalls impact of 1990 All-Ireland victory on the club. Mentions celebrations in the square, and recalls Fr Jimmy Kelly singing "We are the Champions". Mentions support from outside counties at the time – Laois, Carlow, Kildare and Wexford.</p> <p>1:01:19 Discusses difficulties in keeping inter-county players motivated in a county such as Wicklow. Mentions impact that Mick O'Dwyer had on the county. Speaks of his hopes for the future of Gaelic football in Wicklow. Mentions match against Kildare.</p> <p>1:02:33 Discusses the impact of The Ban. Mentions suspension of Tom Scott, played rugby with Arklow. Mentions then county board chairman Pat Murphy.</p> <p>1:03:30 Recalls biggest changes in the GAA during his involvement with it. Mentions old teams toying out in Dan Keogh's field.</p> <p>1:05:50 Recollects the best Wicklow team he has ever seen – 1954 team that played Meath. Known as "The Long Count Team". Mentions 50 year anniversary of 1958 Baltinglass team at the Seven Oaks in Carlow. Mentions Wicklow team that played Louth in Croke Park in 1953.</p> <p>1:08:14 Recalls friendships made through the GAA. Mentions</p>
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**REFERENCE NO. WW/1/2**

	<p>Kevin Heffernan in Dublin, Billy Canavan in Carlow, Seamus Aldridge in Kildare.</p> <p>1:08:47 Mentions Meath as the county team he admired most outside of Wicklow, also mentions Sean Boylan.</p> <p>1:09:23 Discusses the best footballer he has ever seen – mentions Gerry O'Malley from Roscommon, Jim Rogers from Wicklow, Dublin's Kevin Heffernan, Brendan Hayden in Carlow, Mattie Forde in Wexford, "Iron Man" Paddy McCormack in Offaly.</p> <p>1:10:02 Discusses the role that the GAA played in his life.</p> <p>1:10:52 Discusses his children's involvement in the GAA. Mentions Paul and Hugh Kenny and injuries sustained. Mentions Billy sustaining a knee injury. Daughters Cathy and Mairead played. Mentions granddaughter Marie Keely in Grangecon playing with Baltinglass at a Féile na nGael.</p> <p>1:13:02 Discusses Hall of Fame award received in 2008. Mentions children's names – Hugh, Paul, Cathy, Marcella, Sean, Alice, Breeda and Billy.</p>
<b>Involvement in GAA</b>	<p>✓ Supporter ✓ Player ✓ Manager ✓ Coach ✓ Steward</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson ✓ Committee Member ✓ Grounds-person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer ✓ Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____</p>
<b>Record as a Player</b> (Titles won; Length of time played)	<p>1947-1970: played with Baltinglass GAA; won 5 Wicklow Senior Football Championships (1958, 63, 65, 66, 67); won Wicklow Junior Hurling Championship (1967)</p> <p>1948-1963: played minor/junior/senior football with Wicklow. Won Byrne Cup playing with Wicklow</p>
<b>Record as an Administrator</b> (Positions held; how long for)	<p>Baltinglass GAA; Secretary (1957-69); Vice-Chairman (Mid-1970s); Vice-President (Current); member of various club committees and selector for a number of teams throughout the years.</p> <p>Wicklow Hall of Fame Award (2008)</p>



**REFERENCE NO. WW/1/2**

<b>Format</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
<b>Duration</b>	Length of Interview: 1'16"33
<b>Language</b>	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:      20<sup>th</sup> July 2012