

## GAA Oral History Project

## Interview Report Form

<b>Name of Interviewer</b>	Regina Fitzpatrick
<b>Date of Interview</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> Aug 2011
<b>Location</b>	Mary's home, near Ennisnag, Co. Kilkenny
<b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname)	Mary E Fennelly
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1948 <b>Home County:</b> Kilkenny
<b>Education</b>	<b>Primary:</b> St Brendan's NS, Stoneyford, Co. Kilkenny. <b>Secondary:</b> Presentation Convent, Kilkenny City. <b>Third Level:</b> Secretarial Course in Dublin
<b>Family</b>	<b>Siblings:</b> 2 sisters & 2 brothers
<b>Club(s)</b>	Celtic Camogie Club [Dublin]; St Paul's Camogie Club [Kilkenny]; Carrickshock Camogie Club [Kilkenny]
<b>Occupation</b>	Staff Officer in Kilkenny County Council
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	Farmers
<b>Religion</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	N/A
<b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>	Kilkenny Golf Club

<b>Date of Report</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> July 2012
<b>Period Covered</b>	1948 – 2011
<b>Counties/Countries Covered</b>	Kilkenny
<b>Key Themes Covered</b>	Playing, Administration, Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Celebrations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Education, Media, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA abroad, Identity, Culture
<b>Interview Summary</b>	<p>Mary talks about her days playing camogie in Kilkenny and Dublin, where she played on both club and county teams. She discusses helping to establish camogie within primary schools in Kilkenny and her later years in roles of administration within the GAA, including her terms on the Kilkenny County Board and as President of the Camogie Association where she was influential in changing camogie to a 15-a-side game. Mary describes the positive influence that her involvement in GAA has had on her life, particularly the friends she has made. Mary talks about her All-Ireland wins with Kilkenny and the celebrations that ensued. She recalls camogie players she admired throughout her career and the camaraderie among the girls.</p> <p>00:30 Discusses her upbringing in Ennisnag, Kilkenny. Describes her earliest memories of playing hurling and cricket.</p> <p>02:00 Talks about her father and his keen interest in GAA and sport in general. Mentions her father winning a county final in the 1940s with St. Brendans in Stoneyford.</p> <p>02:58 Recalls her father teaching them the skills involved in hurling. Discusses his involvement in camogie in Kilkenny and his role as Chairman on the County Board in 1974 when Kilkenny won their first All-Ireland Camogie Championship.</p> <p>03:55 Mentions Jimmy Kelly, a family friend, who was involved with the local club. Discusses the absence of underage teams at the time. Recalls having to wait until the age of about 17 to join the local club.</p> <p>06:00 Recalls playing hurling at primary school in the school yard. Mentions Frank Cummins.</p> <p>07:20 Mentions the lack of involvement of teachers in camogie in the primary school.</p>

	<p>07:48 Recalls playing hurling in the local bog in the evenings. Describes making their own goal posts. Mentions the late Noel Murphy, a local man with great hurling skill.</p> <p>09:30 Discusses the prominence of cricket in Stoneyford at the time. Recalls her father playing. Tells a story of her father being reported for playing cricket and receiving a ban from the GAA for a time.</p> <p>10:35 Discusses her father's involvement in camogie.</p> <p>11:14 Discusses the establishment of the camogie team in the Presentation School in Kilkenny. Mentions Liz Tobin, Jimmy Cashin, Jim Morrisson, Sister Monica.</p> <p>12:55 Recalls paying 10 shillings to the Leinster Council in order for the Presentation School to participate in the championship.</p> <p>13:42 Recalls reaching the Leinster camogie final against Oldcastle in Phoenix Park in 1966. Mentions Carmel O'Shea and Peggy Mackin.</p> <p>15:25 Describes the uniform worn while playing with Presentation.</p> <p>16:05 Recalls the change from gym slip to short skirt and jersey in the 1970s. Mentions Beatrice Treacy as being influential.</p> <p>17:18 Recalls her days in the Presentation School in Kilkenny.</p> <p>18:30 Discusses the difference in training methods from her playing days with Presentation compared to nowadays.</p> <p>18:58 Recalls moving to Dublin and becoming involved with Celtic Camogie Club in Dublin. Mentions the team coach Nell McCarthy. Recalls Nell being "before her time" in terms of her approach to coaching.</p> <p>20:55 Mentions Fr. Maher, a former hurling coach in Kilkenny who had an influential role in camogie in the area.</p> <p>21:42 Recalls the friendships forged in Celtic Camogie Club. Discusses the importance of GAA in building friendships and preparing children for life.</p> <p>22:56 Describes the training routine involved in Celtic Camogie Club. Recalls meeting under Clery's clock on O'Connell Street every Saturday morning and travelling to St Anne's Park in Raheny to train. Mentions playing alongside</p>
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	<p>Una O'Connor.</p> <p>24:30 Recalls rivalry with other Dublin clubs - Austin Stacks and Owen Roe. Mentions Orla Ní Shúilleabháin, a centre field player with Austin Stacks. Mentions Margaret O'Leary.</p> <p>26:45 Recalls playing camogie alongside Eileen Duffy-O'Mahony.</p> <p>27:47 Talks about the small support at matches.</p> <p>28:44 Recalls winning a Dublin County Final in Croke Park. Mentions Orla O'Síochain.</p> <p>29:48 Talks about her 8 year old nephew and his newfound interest in hurling.</p> <p>30:34 Discusses the social life that was attached to the camogie in Dublin.</p> <p>32:15 Discusses becoming involved in administration in the GAA in 1972 upon her return to Kilkenny.</p> <p>32:59 Describes her own style of play with Celtic Camogie Club. Recalls her position at left wing centre field. Describes the type of hurl she liked to play with.</p> <p>35:10 Discusses inspirational camogie players. Mentions Una O'Connor. Recalls pictures of camogie players inside sweet cigarette boxes. Recalls</p> <p>36:05 Recalls attending her first All-Ireland camogie final in 1963 – Antrim defeating Dublin. Talks of her being appreciative of the people who helped develop her camogie career. Mentions Benny Carroll.</p> <p>38:04 Discusses playing county football briefly with Dublin in 1972. Recalls playing against Kilkenny.</p> <p>39:28 Discusses returning to Kilkenny and becoming heavily involved in the administration side of camogie. Recalls establishing camogie within primary schools in Kilkenny. Mentions Stapleton Engineering sponsoring the primary school teams.</p> <p>41:30 Describes the steps involved in setting up camogie within primary schools.</p> <p>42:15 Discusses training for St Pauls Club and Kilkenny. Describes the facilities and training grounds.</p> <p>43:31 Recalls the dominant camogie teams in Kilkenny at the time. Mentions an amalgamation of clubs to form teams.</p>
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	<p>Talks about Peggy Carey and Mary Canavan.</p> <p>45:54 Recalls Kilkenny hosting Féile na nGael in 1978 and 1979. Discusses the positive impact this had on the development of camogie in Kilkenny.</p> <p>46:33 Talks about the Féile na nGael committee. Mentions Paul Kinsella and Tommy O'Brien. Discusses the importance of committee members.</p> <p>48:00 Discusses the successes of Kilkenny camogie in the mid-seventies. Talks about Kilkenny's 1974 All-Ireland win over Cork. Mentions Paddy Grace.</p> <p>50:12 Talks about the celebrations after winning their first All-Ireland. Recalls singing on the back of a truck from Dublin back to Kilkenny.</p> <p>50:58 Recalls captaining the team to All-Ireland victory in 1978.</p> <p>51:32 Describes a match in 1981 against Cork. Mentions Carmel Doyle and Liz Neary.</p> <p>53:24 Talks about her team mates on the Kilkenny team. Mentions Peggy Carey and Helena O'Neill. Recalls the camaraderie among the girls.</p> <p>54:29 Discusses travelling to the matches. Recalls Carmel Doyle entertaining the girls on the journey. Describes making long journeys to matches and returning on the same day.</p> <p>57:53 Recalls travelling to New York with the Kilkenny and Cork team. Talks about the fundraising efforts involved. Mentions Annette Stapleton.</p> <p>1:01:30 Discusses her role as County Secretary on the Camogie Board alongside playing with the Kilkenny team.</p> <p>1:02:05 Talks about friends outside of camogie.</p> <p>1:04:15 Discusses her time on the County Board. Recalls Kilkenny being used as a base to introduce 15-a-side into camogie. Discusses the changes that this brought to the game.</p> <p>1:07:49 Recalls the support given by Kilkenny County Board to camogie. Didn't meet with any resistance.</p> <p>1:08:11 Discusses the Centenary of the GAA. Recalls lifting the flag with the County Secretary.</p> <p>1:10:00 Recalls addressing the GAA Congress in Queens</p>
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	<p>University Belfast in 1984. Mentions Sean O'Síocháin and Sheila McAnulty.</p> <p>1:12:27 Talks about the busy year of the 1984 Centenary year . Mentions Paddy Buggy.</p> <p>1:13:20 Discusses her interest in golf. Recalls herself and Liz Neary playing in the Aer Lingus outing in New Jersey while they were in New York.</p> <p>1:15:54 Discusses her busy schedule in her role in administration within the GAA. Recalls being on the road all the time.</p> <p>1:18:15 Recalls entering into her role as President of the Camogie Association in 1982. Mentions being influenced by Sheila McAnulty and Mrs. Purcell, a journalist with the Irish Press.</p> <p>1:21:00 Recalls her role as President being time-consuming and her new-found interest in golf at the time. Discusses the friendships she forged through both camogie and golf.</p> <p>1:23:00 Discusses the issues that arose in her role as President. Recalls having to hand out a suspension to a girl and finding it hard to do.</p> <p>1:24:25 Discusses the importance of a support system in administration and her belief that it takes a group of people to get things done.</p> <p>1:26:24 Recalls finishing her term as President of the Camogie Association. Discusses moving back into an administrative role within the Kilkenny County Board for a short time before stepping down.</p> <p>1:29:06 Talks about her contribution to GAA.</p> <p>1:30:37 Discusses voluntary work within the GAA. Mentions Nell McCarthy.</p> <p>1:31:30 Key developments in camogie over the years – 15-a-side, the rise in recognition for camogie.</p> <p>1:33:03 Tells a story about Mary Moran, a National camogie coach from Cork.</p> <p>1:34:40 Recalls inspirational camogie players – Angela Downey, Bridie McGarry, Liz Neary.</p> <p>1:35:32 Discusses the Downey sisters. Talks about Anne Downey's role as a coach in later years. Mentions Angela's</p>
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	<p>success in golf.</p> <p>1:37:52 Discusses the importance of coaches within camogie. Mentions Tom Ryan, Pearse Malone.</p> <p>1:39:11 Discusses family involvement in GAA. 4 cousins played with the Kilkenny hurling team.</p> <p>1:41:15 Talks of her admiration for people who take on roles within GAA nowadays. Discusses her belief that GAA may be losing key administration people to golf.</p> <p>1:42:45 Details the impact of the development of Ladies Football on camogie. Talks about the importance of playing sport. Mentions Mary O'Connor.</p> <p>1:45:00 Talks about her optimism about the future of camogie. Mentions Sinead O'Connor and her contribution to the development of the sport.</p> <p>1:46:36 Discusses her interest in camogie today.</p> <p>1:47:30 Discusses family interest in GAA. Mentions her sister playing hockey.</p> <p>1:49:37 Discusses the centenary of the Camogie Association in 2004. Recalls organising a camogie-golf tournament. Mentions receiving funding.</p> <p>1:52:40 Discusses what her involvement in camogie has meant to her.</p> <p>1:53:40 Talks about Con Murphy and his contribution to camogie.</p> <p>1:54:43 Recalls the song "The Rose of Mooncoin" and its place in the memories of the girls that won the 1974 All-Ireland. Mentions Paddy Purcell from Mooncoin. Talks about Mrs Purcell who looked after the girls.</p> <p>1:57:50 Discusses the importance of GAA in forging friendships throughout her life.</p>
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**REFERENCE NO. KK/1/21**

<b>Involvement in GAA</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coach <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steward <input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person <input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): President of Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael, 1982-85
<b>Record as a Player</b> (Titles won; Length of time played)	<p>Played camogie with Celtic Camogie club in Dublin in the late 1960s &amp; early 1970s, won 1 Dublin Senior Camogie Championship with them; Played on Dublin Senior Camogie team in 1972-3. Won 3 camogie club All-Irelands with St Paul's camogie club in the mid-1970s and many Kilkenny senior camogie championships and Leinster titles. Played for Kilkenny senior camogie team in the 1970s and won many Leinster championships and the 1974, 76 &amp; 77 All-Irelands. The 1976 team was captained by Mary.</p>
<b>Record as an Administrator</b> (Positions held; how long for)	<p>Mary has held many positions in club, county, provincial and national camogie administration including: Kilkenny county secretary; Leinster secretary; member of camogie central council; national camogie management committee and President of Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael, 1982-85</p>
<b>Format</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
<b>Duration</b>	<p>Length of Interview: 01:59:28</p>
<b>Language</b>	<p>English</p>



**REFERENCE NO. KK/1/21**

**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: 10<sup>th</sup> July 2012