

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Seamus Donnelly
Date of Interview	13 th Dec 2011
Location	Nishy's home, near Clonoe
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Nishy Taggart
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1953 Home County: Tyrone
Education	N/A
Family	Siblings: 3 brothers & 1 sister Current Family if Different: 4 sons & 1 daughter
Club(s)	Derrylaughan GAA [Tyrone]
Occupation	Joiner
Parents' Occupation	Farmer [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

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Date of Report	25 th July 2012
Period Covered	1950s - 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Tyrone, Down
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Material Culture, Education, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Alcohol, Politics, Northern Ireland, The Troubles, Retirement
Interview Summary	<p>Nishy Taggart opens the interview by recalling the fortunes of his club, Derrylaughan, in the 1960s, in particular their losses in three consecutive county finals in Tyrone. The interview covers Taggart’s family background and his introduction to Gaelic football in primary school and paucity of organised sport at underage level. He made his debut on the club senior team aged 16 and continued to play until he was in his mid 30s in 1986. The highlight of playing career came near the end – in 1981 - when the club won only its second Tyrone championship. That victory, he notes, occurred against the backdrop of the Hunger Strikes. Taggart recalls the impact of the Troubles at that time and the experience of harassment that GAA players, himself included, endured. He reflects on the intensity of inter-club rivalries and the players he played against, among them Frank McGuigan. On ending his playing career, Taggart coached underage teams and refereed games across the county, quitting the role to take up another one as Secretary of his club. Taggart discusses his own children’s relationship with the GAA, as well as the highs and lows of his experience. In addition, he reflects on a lifetime support Tyrone team and the big game defeats that preceded the historic All-Ireland success of 2003. The GAA, Taggart confesses at the end, has been a ‘second religion’ to him.</p> <p>00:00:20 Interview takes place in Nishy Taggart’s home.</p> <p>00:00:30 Ignatius Joseph Taggart</p> <p>00:00:35 Born 1953, Dungannon.</p> <p>00:00:50 Talks about childhood in Derrylaughan.</p> <p>00:01:06 Earliest memories of the GAA: recalls the early 1960s when Derrylaughan were beaten in three county finals</p>

	<p>in a row, before winning their first title in 1967.</p> <p>00:01:30 Recalls disappointment of losing to Clonoe, near neighbours in 1964 and 1965. Mentions the big fight in the 1965 final – says it was one of the main ‘talking points’.</p> <p>00:02:03 Refers to the celebrations in the month following the 1967 success.</p> <p>00:02:14 Family involvement: mentions that father played for Washinbay Shamrocks, a team before Derrylaughan. Remarks that he won a championship medal in 1934. Refers also to brothers, John Frank and Gerry, who would have played with Derrylaughan. Gerry played with Tyrone also.</p> <p>00:02:50 Attending school at Kingsisland primary school and going to play football in Derrytresk football field. Main appeal was the getting out of class, he remarks.</p> <p>00:03:25 Talks about walking to the field, a half mile from the school.</p> <p>00:03:40 Talks about the absence of youth teams in Derrylaughan, save for a ‘parish juvenile team’. Played with them for a couple of years and reached an Under 16 semi-final against an Augher team with Ray McKenna and Eugene McKenna.</p> <p>00:04:30 Remarks on the paucity of facilities: refers to changing rooms without showers.</p> <p>00:05:05 Describes the field in Derrylaughan and says it was considered one of the better fields in Tyrone at the time.</p> <p>00:05:40 Mentions his football boots and how they lasted as long as possible.</p> <p>00:06:15 Mentions playing on Derrylaughan senior team at 16 and continued until he was 34 or 35, from 1969 to 1986.</p> <p>00:06:50 Talks about getting out to play on a Sunday and the ambition to play senior football. Says Derrylaughan didn’t play intermediate until the late 1980s. Prior to that, they had a senior team and a reserve team.</p> <p>00:07:20 Discusses his record as player with the club: the big success was the winning of the county championship in 1981, only the club’s second time.</p> <p>00:07:50 Discusses the 1981 season. Mentions the big squad and makes reference to the Troubles and the Hunger Strikes at the same time. First match against Ballygawley was</p>
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	<p>postponed due to hunger strikes he says.</p> <p>00:08:40 Refers to playing in defence in the first round and marking Mickey Harte, who was then playing with the county.</p> <p>00:09:12 Believes they won by four or five points.</p> <p>00:09:26 Playing Ardboe in quarter final, winning by 2 points. Remarks that Ardboe was 'always tough'.</p> <p>00:09:40 Recalls getting injured at training a fortnight before final and the disappointment at missing county final.</p> <p>00:10:20 Refers to playing alongside brothers in the 1970s and knowing 'you were going to be looked after.' Says football was much harder then.</p> <p>00:11:05 Impact of hunger strikes on 1981 season: remarks that football was 'still played' but there was difficulty getting to matches. As teams were getting stopped on way to games, a period of grace was allowed to allow matches start late.</p> <p>00:11:57 Recalls cars being stopped and players being held.</p> <p>00:12:20 'Overall, maybe it wasn't too bad', he remarks.</p> <p>00:12:25 Tells of going to a match on Donoughmore on a Sunday with a couple of players and being held for an hour. '...Once they learned you were going to a GAA match, they just held you back...'</p> <p>00:13:10 Stand-out games in his career: recalls parish derby games against Clonoe – 'it was one you had to win'.</p> <p>00:14:04 Considers the commitment of players and suggests they had a greater commitment than latter day players. Comments on differences in facilities and the absence of big physio fees.</p> <p>00:14:50 Mentions rivalries with Coalisland and Carrickmore.</p> <p>00:15:25 Reflects on marking Seán Coyle from Ardboe and marking Frank McGuigan.</p> <p>00:16:05 Discusses administrative role within club: mentions being on committee and secretary from 1996-2006. Refers also to coaching youth teams and refereeing for 8 or 9 years.</p> <p>00:16:55 Comments on wanting to give something back to his club.</p> <p>00:17:35 Remarks on his enjoyment of the role of secretary and comments on the demand for tickets when Tyrone</p>
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	<p>reached All-Ireland finals.</p> <p>00:18:45 Involvement with Under 12s and Under 14s and the enjoyment he got out of it.</p> <p>00:19:25 Talks about the games he has refereed, including senior league matches. Says refereeing was 'like playing' and explains why.</p> <p>00:20:12 Talks about length of time he refereed and quitting refereeing when he took on secretary's role – mentions no longer having time.</p> <p>00:21:05 Reflects on refereeing Clonoe and Coalisland and having 'to be on your toes'. Mentions also refereeing minor and junior championship matches. Remarks also that refereeing kept him in shape.</p> <p>00:22:05 Contrasts being a referee and a player and attitude to game.</p> <p>00:22:50 Mentions his brother John Frank was a Treasurer of club and his other brother, Gerry, was a committee member and managed the senior team.</p> <p>00:23:00 Discusses own children's involvement: Sons John and Dominick still play with the club; son Martin played until he underwent surgery. His daughter plays camogie with the club.</p> <p>00:24:05 Talks about club success at Intermediate level in 2010 to return senior. Mentions his son John was involved. Refers to himself as a supporter.</p> <p>00:25:10 Lowpoints: recalls the club dropping from senior to intermediate and deaths within the club.</p> <p>00:25:55 Reflects on attendance at Tyrone games with his father in Dungannon and Omagh.</p> <p>00:26:22 GAA heroes growing up in the 1960s: makes reference to Jodie O'Neill. Mentions also the Down team of the 1960s – Joe Lennon, Paddy Doherty and James McCartan –and the appeal they had.</p> <p>00:27:20 Comments on attending the 1968 All-Ireland final when Down defeated Kerry. It was his first All-Ireland.</p> <p>00:27:40 Recalls people gathering in house to listen to radio or watch games in Television. Mentions that Down and Cavan were the big Ulster teams.</p>
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	<p>00:28:20 Highlights of supporting county team: recalls Tyrone winning Ulster championship in 1973, when his brother Gerry played right half back. Says an Ulster title was a 'big thing'. Talks also about 2003 and its impact on support levels in the county.</p> <p>00:29:20 Describes atmosphere at 2003 final as 'electric' and mentions that there was enough tickets for everybody in advance of final.</p> <p>00:30:05 Refers to his feeling at the end of the 2003 final and witnessing history: 'Indescribable'.</p> <p>00:30:25 Low points supporting Tyrone: Refers to Cork's defeat of Tyrone in 1973 All-Ireland semi-final and losing in the 1986 All-Ireland final. 1995 was also a 'hard one to take'.</p> <p>00:31:30 Describes the GAA as a 'second religion'.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input checked="" 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>1 Tyrone Senior Football Championship (1981)</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Secretary of club (1996-2006)</p>
<p>Format</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Length of Interview: 00:31:34</p>
<p>Language</p>	<p>English</p>

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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: Seamus Donnelly

Date: _____25th July 2012_____