

## GAA Oral History Project

## Interview Report Form

<b>Name of Interviewer</b>	Regina Fitzpatrick
<b>Date of Interview</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> July 2009
<b>Location</b>	Jury's Inn, Jamaica Street, Glasgow
<b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname)	Gareth Doonan
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1976 <b>Home County:</b> Fermanagh
<b>Education</b>	<b>Primary:</b> St Paul's Irvinestown <b>Secondary:</b> St Mary's, Irvinestown; St Michaels, Enniskillen (A-levels) <b>Third Level:</b> Fermanagh College; Glasgow Caledonian University.
<b>Family</b>	<b>Siblings:</b> 5 brothers, 1 sister (he is 3 <sup>rd</sup> oldest) <b>Current Family if Different:</b> Anna (wife)
<b>Club(s)</b>	St Molaise, Irvinestown; Glasgow University GAA Club; Clan na nGael Santiago; Dunedin – Connelly's Edinburgh; Sands-McSweeney's Coatbridge; Glaschu Gaels
<b>Occupation</b>	Sales Manager
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	Teacher [Mother]; Driver [Father]
<b>Religion</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	N/A

<b>Date of Report</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2009
<b>Period Covered</b>	1976- 2009
<b>Counties/Countries Covered</b>	Fermanagh, Tyrone, Americas, Great Britain
<b>Key Themes Covered</b>	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training; Managing, Coaching, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Fundraising, Education, Media, Emigration, Involvement in GAA abroad, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Identity, Rivalries, Culture, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life; Challenges, Sacrifices, Outsider's Perspectives, Politics, Northern Ireland, The Troubles, Opening of Croke Park, Relationship with the Association
<b>Interview Summary</b>	<p>00:00 Introduction</p> <p>00:14 From Irvinestown, Fermanagh</p> <p>00:20 Earliest memory – Saturday morning training, underage teams; going to big games at the pitch in Irvinestown.</p> <p>00:55 Father involved with Ederney and watched games; mother ‘fanatical’ about the GAA, from Tyrone; Father played for Ederney</p> <p>1:35 Great pitch in Irvinestown – sport in the town split between soccer and Gaelic Football; great to be involved with the GAA there – great pitch, plenty of coaches; no ladies football until later at minor stage.</p> <p>2:17 Played hurling at underage first – successful hurling team at school; won a couple of Féile na nGaeils; travelled to Tipperary to play in Féile na nGael final; club was combination of Irvinestown and Ederney and very successful at underage level; won Fermanagh title; represented Fermanagh at under 16; no natural progressing in hurling then and so carried on with football; loves watching football; now some amalgamated hurling teams coming and going in Irvinestown; was no senior hurling team.</p> <p>4:07 Joe McGoldrick and Joe McGuire were two teachers who organised hurling in the area.</p> <p>4:48 Role of the GAA in his childhood years – played hurling, football, handball. Tom McQuaid, Aidan and Pat McGuigan; local teachers who promoted handball; also involved in</p>

	<p>soccer and scouting; coordinating nights for training.</p> <p>5:50 At underage no problems playing soccer and football as they got older more problematic; GAA taken more seriously in Irvinestown; problems with trying to maintain playing two sports; friction associated with playing both soccer and Gaelic football.</p> <p>7:00 Not a problem from a political point of view – soccer team was a mix of Catholics and Protestants and some protestants played Gaelic football.</p> <p>7:35 Irvinestown – small town, 3,500 population; traditional Irish town.</p> <p>8:05 Travelling around the county for matches – by car and coach; supporting the Fermanagh team; Fermanagh not very successful when he was young; excitement when Fermanagh won junior All-Irelands; being on the border with Tyrone; success developed in 2003 and 2004; brother-in-law Shane McDermott was captain of that team and still plays for Fermanagh; going to Croke Park following Fermanagh; excitement of going to an All-Ireland; journey down in the car; all family meeting there.</p> <p>10:24 First time in Croke Park – 1995 Leinster final Dublin v Meath; having the sandwiches out of the back of the car.</p> <p>11:20 Following a less successful team – annoying but great that his brother-in-law is on the team, a small county so feeling involved because you know the lads on the team; back-door system allowed them to do so well and build up belief; hunger for an Ulster Final; losing in the first round to Wicklow the previous night.</p> <p>13:13 Problems with running club football along side county football – struggles of fixtures, back-door system.</p> <p>14:48 GAA heroes when he was growing up – Bomber Liston; seeing Kerry play Fermanagh in Brewster Park, one of Bomber Liston’s last games; 1995 – Jason Sherlock, a lot from that Dublin team; Tyrone team today; great interest in the way Tyrone play, Mickey Harte’s involvement; tight unit, all work for each other; great club structure in Tyrone; a lot of people playing to a very high level; lots of talent.</p> <p>16:47 Fermanagh and Tyrone always had a rivalry – Irvinestown borders Tyrone; teased that their top goals are in Tyrone.; also rivalry with Cavan and Donegal depending on where you live in the county.</p>
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	<p>17:55 Rivalry – heated verbal slugging mainly, very vocal; club rivalries; depending on who you’re playing; Irvinestown rivals with Ederney; Ederney had never beaten them when he was young; always teams that you don’t allow to beat you.</p> <p>19:25 Any trouble travelling through the North – not at matches; lots of singing and slugging but rarely trouble. Never experienced trouble travelling through loyalist communities but heard stories about it; blocks on the road etc. No sectarian issues in their club.</p> <p>20:58 Mother a GAA fanatic – never involved in a club but loves watching the matches; goes to Fermanagh games with her daughter – loves going to the matches; had to wash a lot of jerseys, 5 boys in the family.</p> <p>22:04 Moving to Glasgow – going to University there; wanted to get involved in the GAA there; brother involved in Dunedin Connells in Edinburgh; he got involved with them; no university teams in Glasgow at the time but then got to play with Glasgow University; still has good friends from that; they went on to form Glaschu Gaels; lots have moved on but those remaining know each other from their time on the university team.</p> <p>23:53 Initially travelling from Glasgow to Edinburgh for training and matches; starting to play for Coatbridge; meeting Joe Bradley; playing there for a year or two; foundation of Galschu Gaels from an amalgamation between Glencovet Rovers and Paisley Gaels in 1999; joining Glaschu Gaels.</p> <p>25:37 Demographic of university football – players mainly from Ulster, one Chinese guy, some Scottish and English players; bringing friends along to join in; not realising the amount of skill you have until you see people who haven’t played before; often people find it difficult to pick up but enjoy the social element to it.</p> <p>27:50 Biggest attraction should be the sport; all of his close friends in Glasgow are GAA people; getting good honest people; the character of people involved in sport.</p> <p>28:46 Significant in terms of his identity – central to all of his beliefs; link between GAA and other Irish organisations in Glasgow; 1950s and 60s Glasgow had a huge Irish communities and many more GAA clubs; now down to five clubs; strong relationship between Glasgow and Donegal; ‘An Scéal’ newspaper for Irish communities.</p> <p>30:40 Affect of recent economic downturn on the GAA in</p>
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	<p>Glasgow; have a couple of new people this year; not all Irish people who move over are necessarily GAA players; some join because it's an Irish social thing; hoping the club will grow over the next few years; existing players getting older, getting married; the same flow not coming through from the universities; difficult to keep it going; about 30 members at the moment; can't afford to be as strict about turning up to training etc as you can at home; train in Paisley 12 miles away; takes a bit of an effort to be actively involved; difficult if you don't have a car; makes sure everyone has a lift to try and encourage them to stay involved.</p> <p>33:42 As a manager need to be careful in order to keep people involved.</p> <p>34:04 Comparing GAA in Irvinestown and in Glasgow; At home – you commit for the season; in Glasgow people tend not to be as fully committed go home frequently, go on holidays; don't have the same motivation to keep the summer free.</p> <p>34:56 Keeping motivated – pep talks, sitting down and talking things through; laying down some ground rules.</p> <p>35:40 Being a player and manager; operation on knee and so being manager was a way of staying involved; don't have a big community of players or supporters there and so by necessity needed to do it; no focal point in the city; but enjoys managing though ideally the manager shouldn't be playing at the same time; no community outside of the playing members.</p> <p>37:28 Perception of non-Irish of his involvement in the GAA; mostly assume that he's playing hurling; Setanta used to give it exposure; opening up of Croke Park to other sports have made people curious about the GAA; his work colleagues think it's a rough sport like rugby.</p> <p>39:00 Being Irish in Glasgow – well-liked in general; Glasgow is a mixed society, has a sectarian divide; he's never had a trouble; still a Rangers/Celtic divide.</p> <p>39:50 Keeping in touch with the GAA at home – watching Setanta having people over to your house; before that going to the pub to watch it with a big gang; listening to Radio 1; internet live streams; goes home often enough not for all matches; when he does go home tries to coordinate it with matches.</p> <p>41:49 Perception of his family to him playing in Glasgow –</p>
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	<p>have visited him and gone to the matches, some of his brothers have turned up to play for them; standard of play is very different; on a good day they could have challenged their team at home.</p> <p>42:55 Relationship between the club and the county board or Croke Park; have a Gaelic Pitch in Glasgow currently in disrepair; need for a focal point in Glasgow; proper grounds, a club house etc to motivate teams; county board in Scotland struggling; not tempted to get involved in upper level administration.</p> <p>44:40 Balancing family, work and training, tough at times; hard to keep motivated but always wants to be involved; difficult as you get older; county board always a bit political in Scotland; lots of arguments.</p> <p>45:50 What he gets out of the GAA – friendships, more friends from around Ireland than he would have playing in Fermanagh – a wider network of friends.</p> <p>46:41 Other benefits to being involved – trying to get the lads jobs in pubs and construction but not to the same extent as in the USA; his brother playing with Donegal in Boston; flights and accommodation taken care of.</p> <p>47:58 Went to San Diego to play – happened through a friend of his in Glasgow in the Summer term; not as advanced as Boston or New York but more developed than Scotland.</p> <p>48:55 GAA and disappointments – the county board with no money and no developed grounds; would hope that the GAA in Ireland would have gotten involved sooner; teams struggling there at the minute; need to get involved sooner rather than later; could lose Scotland as a GAA county; need to develop facilities.</p> <p>50:35 Club demographic – some non-Irish get involved through friends or because they are of Irish ancestry; some from a campaign they launched to recruit players or anyone to get involved. Only one Scot and an English guy this year, mainly people from Ulster.</p> <p>52:12 Ladies team with Glaschu Gaels – also a university team and there is a strong affiliation between both; have been struggling over the last year or two.</p> <p>52:57 Demographic of current players – a couple of students; mostly workers; getting older, more married men, less young single men.</p>
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**REFERENCE NO. FR/1/5**

	53:40 Happiest memory – winning championship in 2002 in Scotland; first time they had one it, the first year he joined it; was awarded best newcomer; played for Scotland in Ireland the next week in an international tournament in Portmarnock – defeated Europe, defeated by USA.
<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person <input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____
<b>Record as a Player</b> (Titles won; Length of time played)	Life player – South Californian title championship (1999); Scottish championship 2002 and 2006; Junior championship Irvinestown (Fermanagh) 1996/97; 3 Scottish league titles with Glaschu Gaels
<b>Record as an Administrator</b> (Positions held; how long for)	Club manager/player manager Glaschu Gaels (3 years)
<b>Format</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
<b>Duration</b>	Length of Interview: 55:18:30
<b>Language</b>	English

**REFERENCE NO. FR/1/5**

**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: 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2009