

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	12 th Aug 2011
Location	Interviewee's home, near Kilkenny City
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Seán Brennan
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1947 Home County: Kilkenny
Education	Primary: Presentation Convent, James's Street, Kilkenny; CBS Primary School, Kilkenny. Secondary: Kilkenny Vocational School
Family	Siblings: 2 brothers & 2 sisters Current Family if Different: Wife (Mary-Ann); 2 daughters & 1 son
Club(s)	Muckalee GAA [Kilkenny]; James Stephen's GAA [Kilkenny]; Talbots Inch Handball Club [Kilkenny]
Occupation	Carpenter/Joiner
Parents' Occupation	Builder
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Kilkenny Basketball Club

Date of Report	12 th June 2012
Period Covered	1939 - 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Kilkenny, Tipperary, Cork, Dublin, Americas
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Material Culture, Education, Religion, Media, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of the Club in the Community, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Retirement, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy/ Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Seán discusses his many roles within the GAA, both at club and county level in Kilkenny. He describes his career playing both hurling and football for James Stephens, Muckalee, and St. Canice's GAA clubs and outlines his wins at different levels. He reflects on his disappointment at missing out on playing on the winning James Stephens hurling team during the 1976 All-Ireland club hurling final. Seán also outlines his involvement with the GAA in such roles as coach, selector, and referee, and he describes his contribution to underage hurling in Kilkenny. Finally, he considers his passion for the GAA and sport in general.</p> <p>00:19 Describes being born on Dean Street in 1947 in Kilkenny City, his parents from Castlecomer. Moving to new house in Fatima Place on hay buggy. Floods on Dean Street in 1947, people travelling in boats. Mentions Jameson Murray's coalyard, Fr. McGrath's basketball court.</p> <p>03:38 Discusses Fatima Place. New housing, people moving in from rural areas. Mentions Jackie Dowling, building contractor who built houses. Playing area where he hurled with other children. Recalls watching films as treat in Savoy cinema. Also playing soccer, rugby, tennis. First house to have a phone in Fatima Place. Mentions hurler Ollie Walsh in local area, hurled with him at St. Canice's. Describes games they used to play: hopscotch, bows and arrows, racing wheels, cards, street fights.</p> <p>09:45 Discusses his father's rural upbringing. Mentions the Mealys and the Lawlors. Mentions Kieran, The Bun, and Martin Mealy, Railyard GFC footballers. Recalls playing football with James Stephens GAA Club in The Village,</p>

	<p>winning county final in 1976. His mother's upbringing in Coon. Mentions chairman of county board, Paul Kinsella. His mother's family's passion for hurling, listening to All-Ireland finals in Nashes'. His cousins Dermot and Aidan Lawlor playing for Kilkenny.</p> <p>12:45 Reflects on his earliest memory of Gaelic games. Mentions Mick Neary buying him hurley and hurling boots. Describes boots. Street leagues in Fatima Place. Mentions mentor Cabbage Hogan. Attending CBS primary school, dominance of hurling there. Recalls winning street leagues competition, playing in goal. Mentions Galty Murphy. Also mentions Tony Wall's coaching in school. Wall's explanation of the dropshot. Mentions marking Pat Henderson while playing for Kilkenny years later.</p> <p>16:07 Mentions Kilkenny hurler Eamon Morrissey. Seán's regret at not winning an All-Ireland hurling medal. Winning an Oireachtas medal in 1969 with Kilkenny. Playing on Leinster team in 1970, coming on as a sub for his uncle Mick Lawlor. First man in Croke Park to wear hurling glove for thumb injury. Mentions captaining Kilkenny in Grounds Tournaments in 1969–70. Mentions Paddy Moran. Playing against Clare, Wexford. Mentions Paddy Grace. Sub against Cork in Oireachtas competition in 1969. Playing Under-21 and senior for Kilkenny. Recalls eating chicken and chips after match in Waterford.</p> <p>19:46 Mentions mentor Billy Burke, Tommy Phelan, John "Belsey" Shortle on St. Canice's committee, mentoring them from Under-16 to minor level. Hurling and football. Prize a trip to Jacob's Biscuit Factory in Dublin. Mentions minor mentor Mick Lukeman. Also mentions John "Foggy" Kehoe.</p> <p>22:32 Explanation of formation of St. Canice's GAA Club. Disintegration of Dicksboro. No hurling field. James Stephens used parish field for hurling, pucking in ball alley. Playing football in Nowlan Park for James Stephens. Winning junior football. Playing hurling with St. Canice's. Recalls an incident in which he was sent off.</p> <p>24:48 Joining Muckalee football team in 1966. Winning junior championship with them. Mentions Larry Morrissey, Martin Morrissey, Niall and Eamon Morrissey. Mentions Fr. Martin. Winning senior football championship in 1968 with Muckalee. Mentions Florrie McCarthy playing for James Stephens, his skill in pitch and putt.</p> <p>26:39 Recalls being a dual player. Popularity of football.</p>
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	<p>Playing against Dublin team of 1970s.</p> <p>28:05 Describes his sporting career. Playing handball for Talbot's Inch, judo, basketball for Green Dodgers with Fr. McGrath, indoor basketball in St. Canice's Hospital, cycling. His brother Tom hurling, his brother Liam interested in soccer, his sister Rita playing basketball for McGuinness's supermarket team. Playing basketball in the Water Barracks.</p> <p>30:02 Mentions his childhood idols: Jim Langton, Ollie Walsh, Eddie Kehir, Jim Treacy, Liam and Seamus Cleere, Johnny McGovern, Paddy Buggy, Sean Clohessy. Recalls watching Christy Ring and Jim Langton hurl. Describes Jim Langton's style of play. Also mentions John Doyle of Tipperary. Playing with James Stephens in 1969 championship. Mentions Seán Buckley, Georgie Leahy. Also mentions James Stephens teammates Fan Larkin, Michael Taylor, Paddy Larkin, Joe Dwyer, Neddie Byrne, the Morrisseys, Mick Crotty. Trainer Denis Twomey's fitness training. Explains knock-out nature of competitions in the 1960s.</p> <p>34:22 Recounts incident in 1969, drawn against Johnstown in county final. Final delayed, James Stephens' team's superior fitness. Mentions Pat Delaney, Pat Henderson, John Henderson. Recalls being beaten by Bennettsbridge in 1971. Mentions Bobby Madigan. Describes losing out on final in 1971 due to an injury. Mentions Jim Treacy. Outlines successes and failures of James Stephens in 70s. Mentions Mickey Ryan of Galmoy, also mentions Billy Harte. Also mentions Joe Doherty. Winning club All-Ireland in 1976, missing final due to illness.</p> <p>39:27 Recalls events surrounding All-Ireland victory. Training at back of The Village Inn. Mentions Brian Cody. Intense fitness training, fierce competition to get on team. Breakdown of bus on way to match in Thurles, players thumbing lifts. Mentions Mick Taylor. Singsong in Seamus Delaney's pub after match. Mentions Frank Cummins on opposing Blackrock team. Mentions Joe Hennessy, Jimmy O'Brien. Describes game. Also mentions Dinny McCormack, Tom McCormack, Brian Cody. Seán unable to play. Mentions Michael Leahy, Mike Neary.</p> <p>44:33 Explains set-up of James Stephens GAA Club. Mentions chairman Bill Cody. Also mentions Philly Larkin, Fan Larkin. Known as The Village. Meetings in Kennys' pub. Also mentions Christy Leahy who wrote history of club. Importance of objections in the 60s and 70s. No facilities. His father, Bill Brennan, involved in building dressing rooms, function room, bar. Voluntary work. After fire, building concrete facilities with</p>
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	<p>insurance money. Later building squash alley and refurbishing facilities, new dressing rooms. Mentions Paddy Buggy opening new facilities. Mentions Michael Moore. Buying juvenile field and building facilities on Nuncio Road. Buying land on Kells Road, developing four hurling fields. Large debt. Fundraising with draws and silver circles and funding from Croke Park.</p> <p>50:50 Describes fundraising efforts. Mentions Lou McCarthy's ideas. Forming committees, flag days in pubs. Mentions Billy Leahy, then treasurer of club. Cost of field. Impact of ban on foreign games and dances: some individuals' objections to not being allowed to play soccer. Issue of players losing Kilkenny jersey over attending dances.</p> <p>54:06 Discusses Féile na Gael. Success of juvenile hurling teams. Street leagues. Strength of hurling in schools. Mentions role of teachers Matt Ruth, Brian Cody, Mr Glynn, Mr Moran.</p> <p>55:28 Reflects on playing for Kilkenny. Minors trial. Mentions Paddy Keane. Breaking hurls during game. Playing minor football with Kilkenny, playing against Wexford in Wexford Park. Mentions teammates Brendan O'Sullivan, Ned Byrne, Michael Powers, Niall Morrissey. Progressing to junior football, league matches. Mentions Bernard Brogan. Also mentions Fr. Tommy Murphy training Kilkenny Under-21 hurling team in Nowlan Park. Seán's Leinster medal, playing in All-Ireland final in Waterford in 1968. Mentions his uncle Mick Lawlor. Kilkenny trip to America. Mentions Paddy Grace, Chew Leahy. Missing out on All-Ireland medal. Mentions Nicky Purcell involved in Kilkenny team.</p> <p>01:00:19 Explains how players were notified they were picked: card in post. Recalls reaching Leinster final in 1970, not being picked for team. Mentions Mick Crotty. Also mentions Michael Lawlor. Describes how he got on the team. Making his gloves out of leather. End of his hurling career, injuries. Playing football after that with county. Mentions Phil Brennan, involved in basketball. Mentions Kilkenny hurler Noel Skehan. Confusion over players wearing same number.</p> <p>01:05:31 Playing for James Stephens into his 40s. Outlines progress of club from 1976. Winning championship in 1981, winning club All-Ireland, Seán a sub. Winning junior championship in 1986. Outlines his various wins with different clubs in both hurling and football.</p> <p>01:08:29 Ponders his wins, his passion for hurling. His training discipline, no drinking or smoking. Loyalty to his club.</p>
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	<p>His role in starting underage hurling in Kilkenny in 1990. Mentions then county chairman Joe Pike. Explains how he decided to start coaching underage hurling. Starting a Little League, naming teams after counties. Mentions involvement of Sean O'Keeffe and Michael Slattery. Recalls making wooden trophies. Playing national anthem at final. Mentions Eoin Larkin. His wife making buns, orange and biscuits after final. Mentions involvement of Matt Ruth. Also minor selector. Forfeiting intercounty secretary to stay with club. Coaching teams. Mentions Christy Leahy writing. Published in <i>Kilkenny Standard</i>, <i>Kilkenny People</i>. Mentions John Knox of <i>Kilkenny People</i>. Mentions GAA president Mickey Brennan coming on board in early 90s, subsequent involvement of Croke Park.</p> <p>01:16:30 Describes his love of coaching. His current involvement with Under-14 development squads. Mentions Ned Quinn. Also mentions Aidan Fogarty and Billy Harte. Travelling to Offaly, mentions Jim Troy. Winning blitz. Mentions then Under-16 players Richie Power, Cha Fitzpatrick, Donnacha Cody. Also mentions fellow selectors Liam Fennelly and Paddy Prendergast. Also mentions player Bill Beckett. Also mentions John Tennyson, Darren O'Neill, hurler and boxer. Recounts story of being a selector.</p> <p>01:22:18 Discusses the ability to recognise the talent of young players. Importance of good communication between players and selectors. Seán's wins as a selector. Mentions Michael Fennelly. His tactics for motivating players. Assessing each player individually, encouraging them to improve. His views on people management skills.</p> <p>01:26:13 Ponders the modesty of the senior Kilkenny team. Working with Brian Cody as a selector. Seán's work as a referee, doing a refereeing course in 2000. Helping players as a referee. Kilkenny winning four All-Irelands in a row.</p> <p>01:28:54 Reflects on his pride in his contribution to Kilkenny hurling. Explains how his passion for jigsaws transfers to his refereeing. His perfectionism.</p> <p>01:30:53 Discusses his love of refereeing. Refereeing camogie, ladies football. Outlines his approach: preparation, gear to hand, fairness to players, concern for safety of players.</p> <p>01:33:43 Describes playing as his biggest satisfaction. His flexibility to different positions. Positive attitude.</p> <p>01:34:58 Considers his other interests. His children's sporting</p>
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	<p>prowess: athletics, basketball.</p> <p>01:36:07 Mentions his proudest moment: winning the 1969 senior county final.</p> <p>01:37:08 Recalls going to Nowlan Park, ice cream for sale. His skill as a high jumper, interest in athletics. Ponders the changes he's witnessed in Nowlan Park. Also the changes in the GAA in general: Croke Park, advent of computers. His hopes for young people. Concerns about burn-out. Encouraging his grandchildren to hurl.</p> <p>01:39:10 Discusses playing for Kilkenny. Mentions Fr. Tommy Maher's hurling advice. Seán passing on this same advice. Training: long pucks, short pucks, no cones involved. Recalls tactics of Jim Langton, Liam Fennelly. Recounts story from Jim Langton about the 1939 All-Ireland Senior Hurling Final between Cork and Kilkenny. Thunderstorm during match, dye running from jerseys. Mentions Terry Leahy. Tactics of teams. Mentions Cork's Jack Lynch, Kilkenny's Jimmy Kelly.</p> <p>01:44:31 Reflects on his hopes for Kilkenny's hurling chances this year. Strength of Tipperary. Mentions Kilkenny's Tommy Walsh, Henry Shefflin.</p>
Involvement in GAA	<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>
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	<p>Played in school street leagues with Fatima Place; played U16 hurling and Football with St Canice's GAA, Kilkenny City; played hurling with James Stephens. Played on Kilkenny U21 hurling team and won Leinster Championship in 1968 & 1969; Played on Kilkenny Senior hurling team and won an Oireachtas medal in 1969 and Leinster Final Medal in 1970. Played with the Muckalee Gaelic Football team in the 1960s and 70s; Played on the Minor and Junior Kilkenny Gaelic Football team in the 1960s and 1970s. Won 1969, 1975 1976 1981 Kilkenny Senior Hurling Championship; 1975, 1976, 81 Senior Club All Ireland playing with James Stephens. 1986 won Kilkenny special junior hurling championship. Played Handball in Talbots Inch Handball Club. Played until he was in his 40s.</p>

REFERENCE NO. KK/1/28

Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 01:46:29
Language	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: 12th June 2012