GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Arlene Crampsie
Date of Interview	6 th Jan 2011
Location	McQuillan's GAC Clubhouse, Ballycastle, Co. Antrim
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Dessie Donnelly
	Biographical Summary of Interviewee
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1959
	Home County: Antrim
Education	Primary: St. Patrick's and St. Brigid's, Ballycastle, Co. Antrim
	Secondary: Cross and Passion College, Ballycastle, Co. Antrim
Family	Siblings: 3 brothers & 2 sisters
	Current Family if Different: Married with 2 sons and 1 daughter
Club(s)	McQuillan GAC, Ballycastle
Occupation	Architectural Technician
Parents' Occupation	Farmer [Father]; Hairdresser [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

Name of	Brian McShane
Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	
	Biographical Summary of Interviewee
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1933
	Home County: Antrim
Education	Primary: Ballintoy, Co. Antrim
	Secondary: St. Malachy's College, Belfast, Co. Antrim
Family	Siblings: 4 sisters & 3 brothers
	Current Family if Different: 2 sons and 2 daughters
Club(s)	McQuillan GAC, Ballycastle
Occupation	Electrical Contractor
Parents' Occupation	Farmer
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Sinn Féin
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Robbie Elliott
	Biographical Summary of Interviewee
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1931
	Home County: Antrim
Education	Primary: St. Patrick's, Co. Antrim
Family	Siblings: 1 sister & 4 brothers
	Current Family if Different: Married with 2 daughters
Club(s)	McQuillan GAC, Ballycastle
Occupation	Joiner
Parents' Occupation	Brick Layer [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Colm Lynn
	Biographical Summary of Interviewee
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1930
	Home County: Antrim
Education	Primary: St. Patrick's, Co. Antrim
	Secondary: St. Malachy's College, Belfast, Co. Antrim
Family	Siblings: 3 brothers & 2 sisters
	Current Family if Different: 2 sons and 3 daughters
Club(s)	McQuillan GAC, Ballycastle
Occupation	Motor Business
Parents' Occupation	Engineer [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	None
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Eddie Donnelly
	Biographical Summary of Interviewee
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1947
	Home County: Antrim
Education	Primary: St. Patrick's and St. Brigid's, Ballycastle, Co. Antrim
	Secondary: St. MacNissis, Garron Tower, Co. Antrim
Family	Siblings: 3 brothers & 3 sisters
	Current Family if Different: Married with 2 daughters and 1 son
Club(s)	McQuillan GAC, Ballycastle
Occupation	Retired Bank Manager
Parents' Occupation	Farmers
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	None
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Desmond Elliot
	Biographical Summary of Interviewee
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1938
	Home County: Antrim
Education	Primary: St. Patrick's and St. Brigid's, Ballycastle, Co. Antrim
Family	Siblings: 4 brothers & 1 sister
	Current Family if Different: Married with 2 sons and 1 daughter
Club(s)	McQuillan GAC, Ballycastle
Occupation	Production Manager with Michelin Tyre Company
Parents' Occupation	Clerk of Works [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	John Harkin
	Biographical Summary of Interviewee
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1938
	Home County: Antrim
Education	Primary: St. Patrick's and St. Brigid's, Ballycastle, Co. Antrim
Family	Siblings: 1 sister & 4 brothers
	Current Family if Different: Married with 2 daughters
Club(s)	McQuillan GAC, Ballycastle
Occupation	Michelin Tyre Factory Worker
Parents' Occupation	Army [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

Name of	Paddy McShane
Interviewee (Maiden	
name / Nickname)	
	Biographical Summary of Interviewee
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1937
	Home County: Antrim
Education	Primary: Ballintoy PS, Co. Antrim
	Secondary: Ballycastle Secondary School, Co. Antrim
Family	Siblings: 4 sisters & 3 brothers
	Current Family if Different: Married with 2 sons
Club(s)	McQuillan GAC, Ballycastle
Occupation	Farmer
Parents' Occupation	Farmers
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	SDLP
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

Date of Report	17 th July 2012
Period Covered	1740 – 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Antrim, Down, Wexford, Dublin, Derry, Toronto, Scotland
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Fundraising, Material Culture, Religion, Involvement in GAA Abroad, Role of Clergy, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Outsiders' Perspectives, Alcohol, Violence, Politics, Northern Ireland, The Troubles, Relationship with the Association, Retirement, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy/Economics
Interview Summary	Members of McQuillan GAC, Ballycastle, Co. Antrim, discuss their hurling involvement at club, county, provincial, and national level. They reflect on the history of the club since its 1907 inception, its successes and failures, and their respective roles within the club. They explain how The Troubles affected the sport and describe the involvement of Protestant players and supporters. In addition, they describe the success of camogie in McQuillan GAC. Finally, they discuss their GAA highlights and biggest disappointments and the impact of hurling on their lives.
	00:00 Introduction
	01:24 Recollection of earliest GAA memories. Dessie remembers training for the 1970 Antrim All-Ireland. Mentions Justin McCarthy. Brian recalls cycling in 1949 from Ballintoy to see matches in the old Leyland Park.
	02:40 Robbie reflects on street leagues. Colm remembers Ballycastle winning the 1940 minor hurling final. Mentions Eddie's father and Dessie's father playing. Becoming member of McQuillan GAC in 1944. Mentions Seamus Clarke, hurling mentor.
	04:20 Eddie recalls hurling teams congregating in The Diamond before away matches. Dessie recollects summers during schooldays playing matches among themselves, no organised juvenile competitions. Street leagues. Glentaisie Drive, hurling pitch.
	06:50 John remembers watching 1948 county final in

Corrigan Park aged 10. Paddy recalls in the 1930s listening to match commentary in his cousins' house. Mentions Mick Mackey and Dick Stokes of Limerick. Also mentions Michael O'Hehir.

09:10 Discussion about early matches they listened to on the radio. Antrim vs Cork match in 1943, mentions John Butler, John McNeill, and Donal Boylan on the squad.

10:10 No RTÉ in Ballycastle, so couldn't watch All-Irelands on television. BBC showing games, but they weren't live. No hurling showed on BBC today. In late 80s, early 90s, when Northern football teams flourished, BBC started showing football. Getting RTE now through Sky.

12:39 Description of club involvement. Eddie's grandfather Edward Joseph Donnelly a founding member, his uncles Brendan, Paddy, Dermie playing hurling. Brendan making a stick for him. Recalls his disappointment when the club lost 1955 final at Casement Park. Discussion of club's successes and failures in the 1950s, winning three in a row.

15:23 Playing in county final. Mentions Stout McDonnell, marked by the Bear.

16:08 Discussion about the camaraderie of the GAA. Welcome for members nationwide. No political or sectarian connections. No animosity off the pitch between players. Family-based rural clubs: mention the Elliott, Harkin, McShane and Donnelly families. Tradition. Story involving Johnny Norton and Paul Crilley in 1940s recounted. Also Mattie Kane, Dessie Cormack of Mitchel's club. No helmets in the past.

21:09 Brian mentions John Doyle and Robbie being selected on the Combined University Team. Robbie describes playing with Doyle on that team in 1954. Mentions James Clarke of Ballycastle. They mention Ned Wheeler, Christy Ring, one of the Rackards. Travelling to Croke Park by car. Mention Paddy Duffy or Alex Hamilton, taxi men.

24:20 Discussion of facilities in Ballycastle in the 1950s. One set of jerseys, no numbers. Senior, junior and minor teams. Tin hut. Mentions John Donnelly. Lack of money then. Recollection of winning the championship in 1964. Second division.

29:20 Description of Ballycastle's teams in the 1950s. Collecting jam jars for money to go to matches in Casement Park. Mentions Willie McKenney of Castle Street.

Recollection of watching Nicky Rackard and Christy Ring play in Croke Park, the crowds. Different All-Ireland finals. Eating in the Green Rooster on O'Connell Street.

32:23 Discussion about club's significant wins. Mention treasurer Jimmy Harkin's decision to buy pitch at Billiard Room in the McAllister Hall. James Gunn, the agent of the Fullerton Estate in Ballycastle, putting limitations on use of ground. Mention Dessie Donnelly, Brendan Donnelly, Jimmy Harkin buying land from Dan McQuaid. Called Benmore Park. Cost of pitch.

35:15 Voluntary work involved in building facilities at new pitch in late 60s. Mention Jimmy McKiernan. New pitch in 2007. Committee members mentioned, including Dessie and Paddy Donnelly.

36:56 Dessie outlines development of pitch in 1967. Cost of levelling and draining pitch. Mentions Hugh Duncan. Realisation of need for more pitches in 2000 to accommodate football, hurling, camogie teams. Purchase of latest grounds at Whitepark Road in 2003. Centenary year in 2007, GAA president Nickey Brennan opening pitch. Ground for third pitch purchased. Financial stability of club.

40:04 Discussion of origin of club name. Clan of McQuillans from Wales originally. Motto: Death before Dishonour.

40:53 Recounting stories of club founding in 1907. Eddie's great grandfather. Winning championships. First meeting in John O'Brien's barber shop. Players representing different clubs, for example, Glenarm players playing for Loughgiel Shamrocks and Robert Emmet's Cushendun until the late 40s.

42:12 Rivals: Loughgiel Shamrocks; Carey Faughs, Ballyvoy. Discussion about jealousy of McQuillans' success, 17 county championships. Loughgiel's ascent, its All-Ireland club success. McQuillan's 1980 All-Ireland defeat by Castlegar.

45:31 Description of travelling to club matches. Mentions Brian Donnelly, Peter and Stephen Boyle, Terence and Seamus Donnelly travelling to a league match in Laois in a hired car. No coaches, local milkman Jimmy Gallagher driving them to Down to match, sitting on milk crates. No motorways.

48:38 Purchasing bus in early 70s, travelling to match in Belfast. Witnessing Provisional IRA with guns. Playing in Casement Park, gunfire in background. Protest stopping another match.

51:36 Local travel restrictions during war. Challenges faced during Troubles. Comparison with ease of playing today: doctors, physiotherapists, buses. More focus on training today. Difference in attitude. New hurls.

53:58 Buying hurls in Nolans, Kilkenny, Randalls of Wexford. Smuggling hurls over the border. Mentions Gerry Donnelly's grandson. Robbie explains how he made his own hurls.

55:41 Discussion of hurling before the formation of the GAA. Disorganised. Parish against parish. Outline of various parishes playing. Gentry playing cricket. Bushmills team. Difference in hurls in the past. Discuss the camán Paddy had brought from the McNaughton Estate.

01:00:00 Hurling match played on frozen Lough Neagh in 1740. In 1835 in Ballintoy.

01:00:33 Impact of the Second World War on hurling. Mention historian Seamus Clarke. Decision to abandon hurling till after the war, young players carrying on the GAA through the war. Difficulty travelling, couldn't go to Belfast. North Antrim.

01:01:55 Discussion about club colours: black and amber. A shamrock on jerseys temporarily. History of club colours. Original jerseys were fishermen's jerseys.

01:04:35 Description of Protestant hurlers, including Davy Patton, Sidney Kane, Billy McHenry. Sunday games an issue for them. Involvement of Pattons throughout The Troubles. Consistent support at matches from Protestants. Dessie mentions the 1990 All Star tour in Toronto, interviewed by UTV's Adrian Logan. Unity of Protestant and Catholics abroad, attendance of Protestants at matches abroad.

01:08:19 Impact of The Troubles on the club. Pavilion bombed. Effect on teams travelling. Challenge for Co. Down teams to travel through Belfast. Outline of various shootings and bombings in the town. Success of club during the 70s and 80s. Bomb outside church in the early 1970s.

01:11:21 Description of McQuillan's participation in political activities. Attending 1966 commemoration of 1916 in Belfast, march after Bloody Sunday in Derry, protest about the occupation of Crossmaglen pitch.

01:12:42 Paddy reflects on his playing career from Under 16 through minor and senior hurling. Sheep and cows on pitch then, improvement of pitches. Winning two championships, on Antrim team when it won All-Ireland in 1970. Playing in Railway Cup in 1966. Story about swapping jerseys. Also

involved in training juveniles in club.

01:15:45 John recalls winning county medals along with his five brothers. Playing on minor team in Croke Park in 1956. Also involved in training juveniles in club.

01:16:49 Desmond describes hurling as sole entertainment in the area. Winning first championship in 1964. Playing for Ulster against Leinster in Croke Park. Mentions Willie Rackard, Ollie Walsh, Big Bartley. Chairman of club, training juveniles. Outlines successes of juveniles in 70s. Mentions Brian Donnelly, Boyles.

01:19:59 Eddie reflects on his family tradition of hurling. Winning first championship medal in 1964. Outlines his various successes, playing in 14 county finals. Losing an All-Ireland final in 1980 his biggest disappointment. Playing shinty for Ireland. All-Star tours. Treasurer of club for ten years. Mentions John Doyle, shinty manager. Playing in Scotland in 1976. Mentions Vinnie Holden on shinty team. Flying from Dublin, getting boat back to Northern Ireland. Socialising, drinking.

01:24:22 Colm reflects on starting in 1944, winning minor championship in 1948. Playing on county team, against Christy Ring and Pat Stakelum. Roles of club secretary and trustee. Also playing golf and badminton.

01:26:30 Robbie recalls playing senior hurling for Antrim, Ulster, and Ireland. Mentions Christy Ring. Winning an All-Ireland in 1959.

01:28:39 Brian reflects on his club membership since 1958 and his administration roles: secretary, treasurer, chairman and trustee.

01:29:51 Dessie recollects his participation in the first Féile na nGael in 1971. Winning several championships, All-Ireland B championship medals with his brothers. Playing for Ulster. Winning the first Railway Shield in Clare against Munster – losers round of Railway Cup. Mentions Nicky English, Pat Fox. Playing All-Ireland final in 1989 with Paul McKillen, his brother Brian Donnelly, Terence Donnelly. Getting an All-Star. Secretary of club.

01:35:02 Discussion of history of football in North Antrim. Mentions Glenravel, Loughgiel, Cushendall, Carnlough and Aghagallon. Mentions Big Kevin, Paddy Donnelly and the Bear Donnelly. Violence. Explanation of how football in club ended. North Antrim minor championship in 1948. Southwest

	Antrim's involvement in juvenile football.
	01:37:51 Success of camogie teams in McQuillans. Camogie team reaching senior championship semi-final. Winning Féile na nGael three consecutive years.
	01:38:54: Description of their highlights, worst moments, and what the GAA means to them. Desmond's disappointment he didn't win more championship medals. Highlight: taking Under-14s to Féile na nGael final. Also played basketball and table tennis.
	01:42:20 John reflects on disappointment of losing county finals and All-Ireland club final in Navan. Highlight: winning county championship in 1964.
	01:43:16 Paddy discusses the challenge of fundraising in the club.
	01:44:26 Dessie names his biggest disappointment as being beaten in All-Ireland club final in 1980. Highlight: getting an All Star.
	01:45:09 Brian describes losing the All-Ireland final as his biggest disappointment. Brendan Donnelly and Jimmy Harkin's contributions to the club.
	01:46:04 Robbie's highlight: winning his last championship aged 44. Getting picked for Ireland. Camaraderie of the GAA.
	01:47:47 Colm mentions the defeat in the 1980 All-Ireland final. Mentions Austin Black.
Involvement in	Dessie:
GAA	✓ Supporter ✓ Player ✓ Manager ✓ Coach ✓ Steward
	☐ Chairperson ✓ Committee Member ✓ Grounds-person
	☐ Caterer ✓ Jersey Washer ☐ Referee ☐ None
	☐ Other (please specify):
	Brian:
	✓ Supporter ✓ Player ✓ Manager ✓ Coach ✓ Steward
	✓ Chairperson ✓ Committee Member ✓ Grounds-person
	□ Caterer □ Jersey Washer □ Referee □ None

☐ Other (please specify):
Robbie:
✓ Supporter ✓ Player □ Manager □ Coach ✓ Steward
☐ Chairperson ✓ Committee Member ✓ Grounds-person
☐ Caterer ✓ Jersey Washer ✓ Referee ☐ None
□ Other (please specify):
Colm:
✓ Supporter ✓ Player □ Manager ✓ Coach ✓ Steward
☐ Chairperson ✓ Committee Member ✓ Grounds-person
□ Caterer □ Jersey Washer ✓ Referee □ None
☐ Other (please specify):
Eddie:
✓ Supporter ✓ Player ✓ Manager □ Coach ✓ Steward
☐ Chairperson ✓ Committee Member ✓ Grounds-person
☐ Caterer ☐ Jersey Washer ☐ Referee ☐ None
☐ Other (please specify):
Desmond:
✓ Supporter ✓ Player □ Manager ✓ Coach ✓ Steward
✓ Chairperson ✓ Committee Member ✓ Grounds-person
□ Caterer □ Jersey Washer ✓ Referee □ None
☐ Other (please specify):
John:
✓ Supporter ✓ Player □ Manager ✓ Coach □ Steward
☐ Chairperson ✓ Committee Member ✓ Grounds-person
□ Caterer □ Jersey Washer □ Referee □ None

	☐ Other (please specify):
	Paddy:
	✓ Supporter ✓ Player ✓ Manager ✓ Coach ✓ Steward
	☐ Chairperson ✓ Committee Member ✓ Grounds-person
	□ Caterer □ Jersey Washer ✔ Referee □ None
	☐ Other (please specify):
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	Dessie: Played from 1975 – 2001. Won 7 championships medals, 6 Ulster medals, 3 All-Ireland B Medals, 1 All-Star.
	Brian: N/A
	Robbie: Won 7 club championships, an Ulster title and a Select Ireland 1952.
	Colm: Played from 1944 – 1965.
	Eddie: Played from 1964 to 1990. Won 8 county Senior hurling titles.
	Desmond: Played from 1954 – 1973. Won one championship.
	John: Played for 30 years. Won a county championship.
	Paddy: Won 2 championships and 1 All-Ireland.
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	Dessie: Has been involved in administration since 1995. He has been club committee member and secretary (2000+).
	Brian: Club Secretary (3 years), Treasurer (2 years), Chairman (2 years), Committee member (9/10 years).
	Robbie: N/A
	Colm: Club Secretary and Trustee.

	Eddie: Committee Member, Treasurer for 10 years, Trustee since 2000. Desmond: Club chairman. John: Committee Member. Paddy: Trainer for 10 years, referee for 10 years.
Format	✓ Audio □ Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 01:49:03
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:	Arlene Crampsie	
Date:	17/07/12	