

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Carmel Gilbride
Date of Interview	20 th Oct 2009
Location	Interviewer's home, near Donnybrook, Dublin
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Laurence Malone "Lar"
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1976 Home County: Dublin
Education	Primary: St Helens Portmarnock, Co. Dublin Secondary: Malahide Community School, Co. Dublin Third Level: UCD
Family	Siblings: 1 Current Family if Different: 3 Children
Club(s)	Naomh Mearnóg GAA Club [Dublin]
Occupation	CEO
Parents' Occupation	Credit Controller/ Domestic Engineer
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A

REFERENCE NO. DB/1/8

Date of Report	12 th July 2012
Period Covered	1983 – 2009
Counties/Countries Covered	Dublin
Key Themes Covered	Supporting, Training, Celebrations, Role of women, Role of the club in the community, Identity, Rivalries, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Impact on life, Opening of Croke Park
Interview Summary	<p>Laurence talks about growing up in Dublin and his early involvement with the GAA in the area around Malahide. He talks about the differences between the GAA in Dublin and the rest of the country, and explains why he feels that sometimes the GAA is moving too slowly as a sporting organisation. He remembers the reconstruction and modernisation of Croke Park. He talks about the advent of women players in the club, and hopes his daughters will follow. He explains his views of the professionalism debate and contrasts the future of the GAA with that of rugby.</p> <p>00:00:00 Laurence’s earliest memory of the GAA was, at age 7, being taken to the ‘kids nursery’ at the community school pitch in Portmarnock by his Dad. The family had recently moved to this north Dublin coastal commuter suburb.</p> <p>00:00:13. Both his grandmothers played for the same camogie team, St Margaret’s. For his paternal grandmother this involved a lengthy cycle from her home in Artane to St Margaret’s. The going to and from the match, constituted a whole day’s outing.</p> <p>00:01:19. Contrast this with nowadays, when you can travel from Dublin to Cork in two hours.</p> <p>00:02:08 His grandfather played hurling for Erin’s Isle. He was a detective guard and considered to be a tough man. Later, his sons would learn to fear his response to their on field prowess. If you didn’t perform, you would hear about it. If you performed well, you were showing off, so they learned to play down any achievement.</p> <p>00:02:50 His uncles would come to watch when he was playing at senior level. Compliments and slagging were all</p>

	<p>part of the scene.</p> <p>00:03:11 In Laurence's own experience, the GAA calendar keeps his extended family connected and forms a social circle. The further Dublin progresses in the championships the more he sees of his extended family.</p> <p>Going to Croke Park to watch Dublin play was a regular part of his growing up.</p> <p>00:04:00 He remembers being lifted over the stiles as a child and sat on knee. He remembers clearly the last time Dublin won the minor All Ireland in 1988, two guys from his club, Naomh Mearnóg, were on the team. He later got to play with these one of these footballers.</p> <p>He has witnessed, at first hand, the redevelopment at Croke Park.</p> <p>00:04:12 Croke Park was the venue for his professional accountancy exams,. The wrecking ball was literally knocking down the Hogan stand.</p> <p>00:05:19 He went to school in neighbouring, Malahide, and during his time playing , the team were quite successful.</p> <p>00:05:34 Although it wasn't a 'hurling school' they managed to beat Good Counsel. This was unusual and the win was savoured.</p> <p>00:05:42 'It's always good to beat the country fellas, particularly in hurling'.</p> <p>In the club context, (00:05:54), the garda network was used to set up matches. The team manager was a guard and used his contacts down the country to arrange a friendly match.</p> <p>00:06:00 Both adult teams in the club would travel by bus down the country, have a few beers, return home, on to Tamangoes [local nightclub] ... a fantastic day, all the positive team stuff.</p> <p>00:06:32 Laurence's favourite match was when they won the Junior B championship. They were the second team in the club, the under 21s, playing in the top league. Despite being promoted for the previous 4/5 years, they had never won anything.</p>
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REFERENCE NO. DB/1/8

	<p>00:06:56 'We won quite well in the end'</p> <p>All the lads had trained together on the beach at Portmarnock.</p> <p>00:07:04 This was in the days when you could run up and down the sand dunes, without some 'eco warriors' complain about damaging the environment. Sand dunes were everyone's amenity, not just to be looked at.</p> <p>Training Tuesday and Thursdays , - 'sit ups in the rain' - played a match on Sunday, meant no drinking on a Saturday night. If you did go out drinking, you looked out for each other. 7.32 It was all about the camaraderie, the whole team thing, it had the feel of a mini family.</p> <p>00:07:56. GAA has had an impact on all stages of his life. As a child, it was a way to get to know people. Laurence did not go to school in his own parish (of Portmarnock) but the neighbouring one of Malahide. Portmarnock were perceived to be inferior to St Sylvesters.</p> <p>00:08:15 'It has broadened my circle of friends'.</p> <p>00:08:19. It is useful in business.... It opens conversations, be it about making someone redundant, ending or awarding a contract. It is all embracing.</p> <p>00:08:48 Turning to the discuss his club, Naomh Mearnog, (hereafter NM) it has gone from having no facilities, to having the best in the country. 'They have done a great job'</p> <p>It has a fantastic number of under age teams.</p> <p>00:08:58 ' NM was one of the first to adopt women's football...</p> <p>00:09:05 Three or four NM players are on the county team, they have nearly been county champions.</p> <p>00:09:10 IT has really been a success story. The development of Portmarnock, dates from the mid 1970s onwards. and the club has grown with the community.</p> <p>00:09:31 Clubhouse the focal point of Portmarnock community. Children will hang around to watch a game – any game, rugby or soccer.</p>
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REFERENCE NO. DB/1/8

	<p>00:09:50 GAA has evolved slowly – too slowly – It has been too slow to modernise.</p> <p>When you think that 30 guys can fill Croke Park – 82,000 and they get nothing for that.</p> <p>00:09:55 Still has a way to go in terms of how GAA treats its players.</p> <p>00:10:20 Portmarnock is a commuter town, admittedly beside a beautiful beach.</p> <p>00:10:30 Only one in his class was on the team and there were four streams of each year.</p> <p>00:11:07. It was a status symbol to get on the team in junior school. You were given the kit Pride in the jersey esp the country teachers.</p> <p>00:11:40 Participation at secondary level ensured you had legitimate time off.</p> <p>00:11:44 Participating was a way of integrating. The craic on the bus</p> <p>00:12:00 GAA didn't feature at college. Dubs a rarity at UCD, a country clique.</p> <p>00:12:33 In response to the question who does he admire, wouldn't name a personality. He admires the volunteers in the community.</p> <p>00:12:40 Expressed the hope that his daughters will play camogie or football. May volunteer /be involved in the future.</p> <p>00:12:59 The biggest change has been getting rid of the ban on foreign sports. Use Croke Park for everything . We are a small country. Let's use stadium for everything. Croke Park is superior to Lansdowne.</p> <p>00:12:54 Northern Ireland.</p> <p>00:13:10 GAA has moved too slowly They need to focus on player welfare.</p> <p>00:13:45 People have had to move away from Portmarnock for economic reasons, Changes in economy inflated house prices during Celtic Tiger. Made buying a home prohibitive.</p>
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REFERENCE NO. DB/1/8

	<p>00:13:57 Newly qualified guards wanted to be stationed outside Dublin so they could have a home.</p> <p>00:14:06 . Guys who built up the club moved away for economic reasons But they kept coming back to Portmarnock, they missed the craic your team/your club;/your buddies You would go to war together if you have to</p> <p>00:14:49 Camogie has 15 players now aside on a full pitch</p> <p>00:15:06 Not playing between 2 21 lines 13 girls degrading and demoralising.</p> <p>00:15:14 What's true for women in society has finally come through for women in the GAA. Copperfastens observation that the rate of change in GAA slow, very tradition, rural people backward, old fashioned.</p> <p>00:15:31 They were able to move with the times with ticket prices in Croke Park.</p> <p>00:15:41 Politics is everywhere he realizes as he gets older. Organisations are political</p> <p>00:15:59 GAA had party political affiliation with SF and FF because of NI and republican movement. That's a historical thing.</p> <p>00:16:09 GAA is multicultural A couple of black guys have made it through minor panels</p> <p>00:16:13 Jason Sherlock did not go down well with Sinn Feiners</p> <p>00:16:28 Whilst GAA's structures are political it has died down</p> <p>00:16:41 Player welfare is the biggest disappointment. Although he hasn't much time for Dessie Farrell he has a point.</p> <p>00:16:47 In rugby a player is compensated. Tells of the incident where a mechanic with Dublin Bus inured his hand and was immediately compensated by rugby club</p> <p>00:17:06 A labourer broke his collarbone while playing senior GAA midfield. Maybe the are not as community focused as</p>
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REFERENCE NO. DB/1/8

<p>they believe</p> <p>00:17:32 There is a way to go in terms of mind set.</p> <p>00:17:39 Sees his identify synonymous with the Dubs</p> <p>00:17:46 Olehausen staff uniform is jeans, Dubs's shirt and a beer belly.</p> <p>00:17:55 Even soccer supporters are Dubs at the end of the day.</p> <p>00:18:31 Local club push Scor and do well, You have to be and do the whole Gaelic thing but he's not bothered.</p> <p>00:18:48 Rivalries in GAA are huge and distinctive and different to those in rugby. This is a source of disappointment.</p> <p>00:19:02. GAA has let itself down. Parish and local rivalry boil over in sport. You never wanted to be beaten by Malahide.</p> <p>00:19:45 Role of volunteers . Quiet, reliable guys working in the background play a big part, would not succeed without this.</p> <p>00:19:50 Community referees , abuse, hassle.</p> <p>00:20:10 RTE coverage has come along well. Graphics good but maybe overanalysed.</p> <p>00:20:21 Washed up grumpy men Spillane O Rourke – full of their own self importance.</p> <p>00:20:35 Skill has been taken out of the game. Physical rugby league defence type wrong</p> <p>00:20:40 The one fabulous thing about taking someone to the GAA game was the skill on display. How can you run, use your hands /solo at the same time.</p> <p>00:21:00 Biggest challenge/key competitor for GAA comes from rugby. It's not just for the upper classes now. Places like Ratoath Swords Balbriggan and factories like Unidare in Finglas have a rugby team.</p> <p>00:21:37 Soccer overhyped, lots of coverage</p> <p>00:21:43 At a certain age kids choose one sport. GAA need</p>

REFERENCE NO. DB/1/8

	<p>to mark the game. Risk is from being marginalised, sent too much as a country game, rural versus urban.</p> <p>00:22:12 L has enjoyed the team camaraderie and what kept him going as a child.</p> <p>00:22:20 People give back in their later years because they got so much from it.</p> <p>00:22:45 Built on community that's its foundation, the seeds of its success.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input 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 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>N/A</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Format</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Length of Interview: 00:22:45</p>
<p>Language</p>	<p>English</p>

REFERENCE NO. DB/1/8

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: Carmel Gilbride

Date: 20th Oct 2009

