

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Padraic O'Connor
Date of Interview	6 th Oct 2010
Location	St. Patrick's Clubhouse, Lordship, Co. Louth
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	George Hughes [Seoirse Ó hAodha]
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1942 Home County: Louth
Education	Primary: Dulargy NS Secondary: CBS Dún Dealgan Third Level: UCD
Family	Siblings: 2 brothers & 7 sisters Current Family if Different: Married, 2 sons and 2 daughters
Club(s)	St Patrick's GFC; Valley Rangers
Occupation	Retired Director of Finance, HSE
Parents' Occupation	Company Sales Rep [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Fianna Fáil
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

Date of Report	22 nd May 2012
Period Covered	1950s – 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Louth, Meath, Down, Kerry, Dublin, Cavan
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Celebrations, Fundraising, Material Culture, Education, Media, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Violence, Politics, Professionalism
Interview Summary	<p>George begins the interview by recounting his earliest memories of the GAA in Louth – following the North Louth Schools Leagues, transport to, and attendance at, local club games and the 1957 All-Ireland final. He recalls the landmark moments in the club and county's sporting history, and the players he admires within and without of Louth. Local rivalries are discussed as are the sweeping changes that have taken place within the GAA over the course of his lifetime. Now living in Meath, some 40 miles away, George discusses the enduring importance of the club to him and the sense of identity he still draws from it.</p> <p>00:00:00 Introduces George Hughes</p> <p>00:00:12 His earliest memories centre on school. Even before he could play himself he would be taken by his father on the bar of the bicycle to see schools' games in Tommy Ross's field. Refers to the chants and war cries of some of the school teams and to the crowds that would attend.</p> <p>00:01:20 Suggests that the coverage given by the <i>Dundalk Democrat</i> to the North Louth Schools League was a factor in its popularity.</p> <p>00:01:30 Recalls a Sunday morning when Paddy Jordan and Sean and Gerry McIntyre arrived on bicycles collecting money for a football club that Fr. Hardy was starting up. It was 1953 and he was 11 at the time.</p> <p>00:02:05 Refers to St. Pat's reaching a North Louth minor final and playing a 'fantastic' game against the Clans in Bower's field.</p> <p>00:02:48 Mentions lack of direct involvement of family in GAA, but notes that a second cousin of his father (also Jim Byrne), living in Dublin, was a referee. When he came to stay,</p>

	<p>the room set aside for him was known as the 'ref's room'. He ended as a chief steward in Croke Park and mentions that the family managed to secure two tickets from him in 1957 for Louth's All-Ireland final appearance.</p> <p>00:03:34 Recollects an early game he attended between Mount Pleasant Plunketts and Roche Emmets.</p> <p>[Other club members join conversation around the location of the pitch]</p> <p>00:04:12 Refers to an Uncle, Liam Nelson, who was secretary of the Valley Rangers.</p> <p>[Another club member notes that Nelson ran the Valley Rangers for 15 shillings].</p> <p>00:04:30 Discusses supporting club and county teams and securing lifts to games.</p> <p>00:04:40 Discusses transport to games and recalls the story of a game against Roche Emmets when the club secretary declared that they would have to go on bikes. Remembers thinking how vast the distance was.</p> <p>00:05:28 Remembers the 2003 Louth senior final, when St. Pat's won their first senior title in their 50th anniversary year.</p> <p>00:06:22 Recalls standout moments of his GAA involvement: attending the 1957 All-Ireland final, aged 15, when he missed out on the post-match celebrations; and the 2003 and 2004 Louth senior finals.</p> <p>00:07:05 Discusses the impact of the GAA on his life: mentions that he lives 40 miles away but when he drives back for games 'you feel the blood going up in your head'. Says that the GAA means more now that he isn't living in the vicinity of the club and refers to the joy of meeting up with people. Refers to sense of 'family'.</p> <p>00:08:08 Discusses supporting county team and the sense of identity it brings. Recalls the fortunes of Louth teams since 1957 and believes they should have won more. Reference is made to the team of the 1990s.</p> <p>00:08:55 Recalls the events of the 2010 Leinster final. Says it may have been just as well they didn't win – 'I might have died he says' [laughter]. Describes the build up to the 2010 Leinster final and travelling up from Meath with Louth colours on the car.</p> <p>00:09:55 Refers to the involvement of St. Pat's players on the</p>
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	<p>2010 Louth team, the Finnegan's and Paddy Keenan. Describes Keenan as a 'wonderful ambassador'.</p> <p>00:10:26 Discusses the role of St. Pat's in local community and the physical developments that have taken place. Believes the club's facilities to be as good as any other in the country.</p> <p>00:11:11 Mentions Stephen White as the big local hero and recalls being brought into town by his mother on the eve of the 1950 final for the 'buzz'. Refers to meeting an aunt wearing a paper rosette with a photo of Stephen White on it.</p> <p>00:12:05 Mentions also his admiration of Mick O'Connell of Kerry and Sean O'Neill of Down and Christy Ring.</p> <p>00:12:55 Recounts a story about Vinny Bell from Dublin who would come to Louth on holiday in the 1950s and would have everyone hurling'. Fellas would be making hurls 'out of bits of aul sticks.'</p> <p>00:13:50 Discusses the changes in the GAA over the years: the growing professionalism, the work put in by volunteers, the organisation of children's games, the quality of facilities. Mentions how games used to be played only on a Sunday and were now played every night of the week.</p> <p>00:15:00 Refers to 'undertones' of politics in the GAA. Suggest s the GAA made people more proud to be Irish and mentions how helping communities and people may have encouraged people to become involved in politics. Refers to Des Foley, John Donnellan and Jack Lynch who were invited to become involved. Says that such progression from playing gaelic games to politics is no longer as prevalent.</p> <p>00:16:32 Discusses St. Pat's rivalries with Cooley Kickhams and Roche Emmets. Recalls the McArdle Cup in the 1960s which involved Pat's, Cooley and Roche and remarks on the intensity of those games. Another rivalry recalled was that with Fort Rangers with whom there was 'always a row'.</p> <p>00:18:12 Refers to Meath's big inter-county rivalries being with Dublin and Cavan.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input 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>

REFERENCE NO. LH/1/16

	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	N/A
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	N/A
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 00:18:40
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: _____Padraic O'Connor_____

Date: _____22/05/09_____