

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

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| Name of Interviewer | Arlene Crampsie |
| Date of Interview | 6 th Jan 2011 |
| Location | Belfast Harlequins Clubhouse, Belfast, Co. Antrim |
| Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname) | Paul Campbell |
| <u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u> | |
| Gender | Male |
| Born | Year Born: 1960 Home County: Tyrone |
| Education | Primary: St. Patrick's, Dungannon, Co. Tyrone Secondary: St. Patrick's Academy, Dungannon, Co. Tyrone Third Level: Queen's University Belfast |
| Family | Siblings: 2 brothers & 2 sisters Current Family if Different: Married with one son and one daughter |
| Club(s) | St. Brigid's [Antrim]; Thomas Clarke's GFC, Dungannon [Tyrone] |
| Occupation | Lecturer |
| Parents' Occupation | Teacher [Father]; Housewife [Mother] |
| Religion | Roman Catholic |
| Political Affiliation / Membership | N/A |
| Other Club/Society Membership(s) | Golf Club; Shooting; Fishing; Soccer |

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| Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname) | Conor MacSherry |
| <u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u> | |
| Gender | Male |
| Born | Year Born: 1964 Home County: Tyrone |
| Education | Primary: Primate Dixon, Coalisland, Co. Tyrone Secondary: Omagh CBS, Co. Tyrone Third Level: Ulster Polytechnic / University of Ulster, Jordanstown |
| Family | Siblings: 3 brothers & 4 sisters Current Family if Different: 1 son and 3 daughters |
| Club(s) | St. Brigid's [Antrim]; Coalisland Na Fianna [Tyrone] |
| Occupation | Insurance Broker |
| Parents' Occupation | Quantity Surveyor [Father]; Housewife [Mother] |
| Religion | Roman Catholic |
| Political Affiliation / Membership | Nationalist |
| Other Club/Society Membership(s) | Rugby |

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| Date of Report | 18 th July 2012 |
| Period Covered | 1940s – 2011 |
| Counties/Countries Covered | Antrim, Tyrone, Armagh, Down, Dublin, Great Britain, Scotland, Americas, USA |
| Key Themes Covered | Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Material Culture, Education, Religion, Media, Emigration, Involvement in GAA Abroad, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Identity, Rivalries, Irish Language, Culture, Scór, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Outsider’s Perspectives, Violence, Politics, Northern Ireland, The Troubles, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Opening of Croke Park, Ban on Security Forces, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy/ Economics |
| Interview Summary | <p>Conor and Paul discuss their involvement in the GAA over the years. Paul talks about growing up in Dungannon in Tyrone and his family’s involvement in the GAA there. Conor recalls growing up in Coalisland in Tyrone and what the GAA was like in that area. They talk about their school days and the role of the GAA in their respective schools. Paul talks about going to university in Queen’s in Belfast during the Troubles and how the conflict impacted the GAA. He discusses moving to Aberdeen and getting involved in soccer coaching before returning to Belfast. Conor talks about living in Belfast and playing rugby before helping to set up the St. Brigid’s club. He talks about the formation of the club and how it developed over the years. They discuss the issue of grounds and their relationship with the Harlequins rugby team. They talk about the issue of politics and religion and how this has impacted on the club. They discuss the development of the club over the years and how strong the club is today. They highlight the impact of emigration on the club and give their hopes for future. Towards the end of the interview they give their opinion on the various rule changes within the GAA, such as the ban on security forces, and talk about the important role the GAA has played in their lives.</p> <p>00:00 Introduction</p> |

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| | <p>00:28 (Paul) Talks about his earliest memories of the GAA. Originally from Dungannon in Tyrone. His father's (Liam Campbell) involvement in the GAA. Mentions Iggy Jones.</p> <p>01:14 Discusses his father's All-Ireland minor win with Tyrone in 1947. Recalls his father telling him stories about the win and the team at the time. Travelling to Dublin.</p> <p>02:55 Recalls what Dungannon Clarke's were like when he was growing up. The influence of Iggy Jones on the club. Strength of Coalisland.</p> <p>03:37 (Conor) Recalls his earliest GAA memories, growing up in Coalisland. Being at the 1979 Tyrone county final between Coalisland and Carrickmore. Going to Croke Park with his father.</p> <p>04:53 Talks about the facilities at Coalisland. Compare it to those at Gortin.</p> <p>05:30 (Paul) Describes the facilities at Dungannon. Cutting the pitch on his tractor.</p> <p>06:22 (All) They talk about the places they had to travel to with their respective clubs – from the Lough Shore to Aghyaran.</p> <p>06:55 (Paul) Discusses Dungannon's successes and going to St. Patrick's school. Playing at MacRory Cup level. Talks about the role of the GAA in the school.</p> <p>08:26 (Conor) Talks about Coalisland's successes. Winning the Tyrone championship in 1989 and 1990. Players leaving for New York and Philadelphia. Mentions Damien O'Hagan.</p> <p>09:08 Recalls the impact of the victories on the local GAA community in Coalisland. The club winning the county title (O'Neill Cup) again in 2010. Talks about the celebrations after the win. Losing the three in a row in 1991.</p> <p>10:54 (Paul) Talks about the celebrations after Sigerson Cup wins with Queen's University in Belfast. Talks about Art McRory in Dungannon. Mentions Kevin McCabe.</p> <p>12:00 Discusses the role of the GAA in Belfast when he started in Queen's during the Troubles.</p> <p>12:37 (Conor) Talks about the GAA in the university in Jordanstown in the 1980s.</p> <p>13:22 (All) Discuss the differences in the eras they were in</p> |
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| | <p>college and how the GAA was involved.</p> <p>14:35 (Paul) Talks about the GAA in Belfast during the Troubles. The role of the Sigerson Cup and the 'ranch' in St. Joseph's College. Travelling to Dublin for Sigerson Cup matches. Winning it in 1981 with Greg Blaney.</p> <p>17:50 (All) They talk about hurling in Antrim.</p> <p>19:00 They discuss the role of the GAA in university. The social side of the GAA.</p> <p>21:02 (Paul) Talks about living in Aberdeen for 17 years after college. Qualifying as a soccer coach. Working with Aberdeen Football Club. Flying home to watch games in Croke Park – changes in the stadium, reaction of Scottish people to the crowds at GAA matches. Two GAA clubs in Dundee. Mentions Peter Mossey.</p> <p>24:47 (Conor) Talks about his involvement in the GAA after college. Playing with Coalisland and with Tyrone. Playing rugby in Belfast.</p> <p>26:22 Discusses playing football at county level. Changes over the years. Mentions Frank McGuigan, Kevin McCabe and Eugene McKenna.</p> <p>27:42 Talks about leaving Coalisland. Playing for a different club in Antrim.</p> <p>29:28 Discusses the formation of St. Brigid's. Describes how many people who moved into the area and didn't have anywhere locally to play. Started an underage team. Organising a fun day to attract children. Becoming chairman. Winning championships at adult level. Ladies team formed in the club.</p> <p>32:47 Describes setting up the club. The help given by Gerry McClory. How they picked the club's colours. Competition in the three local schools.</p> <p>35:20 (Paul) Talks about the development of the grounds. Having no pitch in the beginning. Getting a pitch through Belfast City Council. Fundraising for the pitch. Using Belfast Harlequins rugby pitch. The relationship with the Protestant community.</p> <p>38:32 Discusses how he became involved with the GAA upon his return from Aberdeen. Mentions Dermot Dowling. The role of 'Fun Sunday'.</p> <p>40:28 (Conor) Talks about the reaction of other clubs in the</p> |
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| | <p>area. The issue surrounding Malone Road. Bringing children to clubs in surrounding counties for challenge matches. Mentions Crossmaglen, Silverbridge, Coalisland, Dungannon, Warrenpoint The development and growth of the club. Success of the ladies' team.</p> <p>43:52 Discusses the issue of cross community relations and having Protestants in the club. Having rugby players in the club.</p> <p>45:05 Recalls issues with putting flags around the club.</p> <p>46:13 Talks about the type of people who are members of the club. The make-up of the community.</p> <p>49:00 (All) They describe the reaction of the rugby players to Gaelic football. The interaction between the clubs.</p> <p>51:00 (Conor) Recalls a match against Cardinal O'Donnell's, White Rock Road and St. Brigid's interaction with the rugby club.</p> <p>52:13 Talks about the setup of the senior team. Mentions John Mackell, Hugh Marty McGuirk.</p> <p>53:43 (Paul) Describes the relationship between the south Antrim board and the county board.</p> <p>55:13 (All) They talk about the type of fundraising done and getting sponsorship.</p> <p>57:45 (Paul) Discusses the finances of the club and the people involved. The need for younger members to get involved in administration and committees.</p> <p>01:00:15 (All) They talk about the characters of the club. Mentions Joseph Brolly, the Bradys, Joe Mackell, Tom Walsh and Paddy Flanagan who played for Derry City.</p> <p>01:02:25 They talk about the role of the Irish language and culture in the club. The role of Scór and céilís.</p> <p>01:04:08 They discuss the role of hurling in the club and the challenges it faced. Mention Gerry Mulholland. Amalgamating with St Agnes's at Under 16 level.</p> <p>01:06:45 They talk about the club's rivalries. Beating St. Gall's.</p> <p>01:08:17 They discuss their hopes for the future of the club. Conor discusses the need for the integration with the rugby club.</p> |
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| | <p>01:10:20 They talk about the role of the club in the development of football in the local schools.</p> <p>01:11:43 The role of the clergy in the club. Mention Monsignor McCaulay.</p> <p>01:12:03 (Conor) Recalls proposing a non-Catholic co-President for the club, Canon Walter Lewis.</p> <p>01:12:55 (All) They describe the type of celebrations in the clubs after victories. Running a tournament at underage level.</p> <p>01:14:14 (Paul) Discusses the girls Under 14 team winning the Antrim Féile. The team training with the senior team. Mentions James Loughrey and Rory O'Neill.</p> <p>01:14:53 (Conor) Talks about the ladies team and integration with the rugby club.</p> <p>01:15:25 (All) They describe the impact that emigration has had on the club and also travel to university. Mention Cargin club. Talks about how some players stayed. Mentions James Loughrey, Rory O'Neill, Mark Sweeney, Declan O'Hagan.</p> <p>01:17:10 They discuss the role of the media in the club. Members from BBC, UTV and newspapers. The media controversy surrounding the match between St. Brigid's and the PSNI. Mentions Joe Brolly.</p> <p>01:19:05 (Conor) Talks about the match against the PSNI.</p> <p>01:21:22 Discusses the death of Cormac McAnallen. Having a minutes silence at training and the rugby players joining them. Same following the death of John McCall. Mentions Andre Bester.</p> <p>01:22:37 (All) They give their opinions on the rule changes in the GAA, the ban on security forces and the opening of Croke Park.</p> <p>01:23:30 (All) They talk about the impact of the Troubles on the GAA in Belfast. Paul recalls a story about a member of the PSNI.</p> <p>01:24:55 (Paul) Discusses the role of women in the club. The strength of ladies' football in the club.</p> <p>01:26:00 Recalls his favourite memory from the GAA. Coaching an Under 14 team and winning a final. Mentions John Daly.</p> <p>01:27:50 (Conor) Talks about his favourite memories in the</p> |
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| | <p>GAA. Playing with his cup and captaining his school. Winning O'Neill Cup medals. Managing St. Brigid's.</p> <p>01:28:50 (Paul) Chooses Peter Canavan as his GAA hero.</p> <p>01:29:20 (Conor) Chooses Frank McGuigan as his GAA hero. Mentions Damien O'Hagan, Gerry McElhinney, Greg Blaney.</p> <p>01:30:00 (All) Talk about the strangest or furthest places they played football in. Paul talks about playing an American side in New York. Conor recalls playing in Dubai and in France.</p> <p>01:31:26 (Conor) Discusses his biggest disappointments in the GAA.</p> <p>01:32:23 (Paul) Talks about his disappointments in the GAA. Conor talks about the issue of corporatism and sponsorship and his dislike of the fence in Croke Park.</p> <p>01:33:26 (All) They talk about what the GAA has meant to them.</p> |
| <p>Involvement in GAA</p> | <p>Paul:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____</p> <p>Conor:</p> <p><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</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input checked="" 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>Paul: Played from the age of 9 to 21.</p> <p>Conor: Played from the age of 5 to 32. With Coalisland won 2 O'Neill Cups, 2 leagues, an Under 21 County Trench Cup. Also won an All-Ireland Freshers competition with Ulster Polytechnic.</p> |
| <p>Record as an Administrator</p> | <p>Paul: Has been involved in administration since 2002. He has been</p> |

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| (Positions held; how long for) | Club Assistant Secretary, Secretary and Chairman. Conor: Has been involved in administration since 1982 when he got involved with the Jordanstown Club. He was Treasurer and Secretary. In 1988 he became a committee member of Coalisland. In 1999 he was Chairman of St. Brigid's and has been the club's liaison officer with Harlequins. |
| Format | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual |
| Duration | Length of Interview: 01:34:17 |
| 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: _____18/07/12_____