

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Laura Kelly
Date of Interview	27 th March 2009
Location	Interviewee's home
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Greg Kelly
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1952 Home County: Fermanagh
Education (Optional)	Primary: St Michael's Primary School Secondary: St Michael's Grammar School Third Level: Queens University Belfast
Family	N/A
Club(s)	St. Paul's, Andersontown, Belfast [Antrim]; Enniskillen Gaels [Fermanagh]
Occupation	Retired teacher
Parents' Occupation	N/A
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Nationalist

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Date of Report	29 th August 2012
Period Covered	1952- present
Counties/Countries Covered	Fermanagh, Antrim
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Club History, Northern Ireland, The Troubles
Interview Summary	<p>00:00 Introduction to interview</p> <p>00:46 Background information. Born in Enniskillen in 1952 after parents moved in from countryside</p> <p>01:20 Parents background- came from town lands surrounding Enniskillen. Father- solicitor's clerk and mother- housewife</p> <p>02:05 Position in family –eldest child with 3 younger sisters</p> <p>02:19 Lived in Belfast as an adult attending Queens University 1971- 1985 working in Royal Victoria hospital for a number of years. Left Belfast in 1985 to return to Enniskillen</p> <p>03:10 earliest memories of the GAA. Father deeply involved at club and county level – took him to matches on the old Gaelic field on Sligo Road, Enniskillen</p> <p>03:47 Father took him to Croke Park in 1960 and 1961 to the All Ireland Semi-Final Two years that Down became the first six county team to win the All Ireland.</p> <p>04:19 Sligo Road Enniskillen Gaels Club pitch – ‘a pitch in inverted commas’ River Erne used to come up onto the pitch in winter- ‘it was kind of like water polo at times, but we persevered’</p> <p>04:45 Street leagues- earliest memory of playing</p> <p>05:00 First attempts to play the game- didn't play with club until 14 years old. First match playing Ederney at U16 level as corner forward</p> <p>05:39 At school, played at primary school level in school yard.</p> <p>05:47 father had encouraged and coached him before there</p>

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	<p>was coaching in school</p> <p>06:09 Fathers involvement – County secretary from 1939-1949 while still playing football with home club Cavanacross</p> <p>06:39 Father came into town in 1951 and became an administrator for Enniskillen Gaels – held a number of positions</p> <p>07:23 difference in GAA of childhood to today</p> <p>Youth- most children had to learn football as they went along as no official coaching like today</p> <p>08:10 One man- Jim Dooris coached youth.</p> <p>08:27 Coaching in youth Jim Dooris who took underage teams ‘Jim will do it, we’ll not have to bother’ when it came to youth structure</p> <p>09.22 facilities have changed ‘No such thing as standing on muddy grassy banks’</p> <p>09:57 Heroes. John Vessy who came from Achill Island to teach, joined club in 1960 and rose to become president of association in Ulster after spending time as county and club chairman etc. Great leader led by example</p> <p>09:40 clubs associated with – Enniskillen Gaels and St Paul’s, Belfast. After getting married he couldn’t travel home to play for Gaels so transferred to St Paul’s. Played in St Paul’s for eight years Good social outlet</p> <p>10:12 Club notable successes or disappointments. Underage level in home town – had success at U16 minor level. 1976 Club won its first Senior Championship for 46 years- team managed by John Vessy and Michael Brewster which stand is named after- good break through for club. Good achievement in a town were soccer dominated</p> <p>11:23 A priest who had brought team together and club went on to win championships later.</p> <p>12:55 How did your role change in the club? Maintained an association with home club while in Belfast. On returning to Enniskillen in 1985 became youth officer – for ten years</p> <p>13:48 appointed club secretary for ten years until 1994</p> <p>14:19 challenges whilst secretary. Particularly as Enniskillen running a county ground.</p> <p>15:00 Relationships with other sports in locality quite good</p>
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	<p>with a lot of dual players. Previously may not have been good due to the ban on foreign sports, but since has been good. Some accommodation between youth so they don't have to choose between sports.</p> <p>17:00 higher profile of GAA has made GAA more attractive to youth.</p> <p>17:30 Low level of Irish language in local club. Some attempts to promote language, but not a major tradition.</p> <p>18:20 Social benefits of being apart of club. Particularly during troubles. People helping club members out with work.</p> <p>20:24 Sacrifices to be made. Time consuming in terms of family.</p> <p>21:24 Woman's roles changing- used to be washing jerseys and making tea. Mrs Henderson became president of club. Present secretary Finnloa Donegan and seems to becoming quite common among county clubs. Women's football.</p> <p>22:54 GAA as a voluntary organisation. Should continue to be the core of the organisation, however in modern life it may be necessary to have some full time officials. Team managers may have to be legitimised, but there it has to stop. The day we pay players, pay people to clean out dressing rooms is the day that we will die.</p> <p>23:26 County level. Fermanagh supporter. 1959 All Ireland junior success- mother brought him to see home coming as father was sick</p> <p>23.54 2004 Reached All Ireland semi final</p> <p>24:20 Wife's from county Tyrone</p> <p>24:55 Antrim while living in Belfast.</p> <p>25:10 Phone interruption</p> <p>25:42 Introduction</p> <p>26:20 Railway Cup did not particularly affect feeling towards other provincial counties- would have always supported Ulster teams. Mentions players: Tommy Durnan in 1940's, PT Tracy, Michael Brewster, Paul and Tom Brewster</p> <p>27:27 Media coverage of the GAA – double edged sword- whilst we need coverage, the media has their own agenda to follow- tend to try and get controversy .</p>
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	<p>28:30 Own identity – 32 county organisation, nationalist ideals</p> <p>29:50 experience of politics evident in club. In Belfast during Troubles, affairs intertwined. Club raids by British army. Had car high jacked during a club meeting.</p> <p>32:18 more recent roles in GAA. Secretary of Club and Youth Secretary- anxious to get involved when no longer a player.</p> <p>34:50 appointed county secretary in 2005</p> <p>35:35 Success at getting to Ulster Final.</p> <p>37:25 Feelings on changes in GAA. Removal of the ban on foreign games. Playing other sports</p> <p>38:44 Rule 21</p> <p>39:25 Rule 42</p> <p>40:36 Difference in GAA in South/North- Troubles may have heightened spirit of teams.</p> <p>41:00 Tackling sectarianism within sport – isolated incident</p> <p>42:50 Role of GAA as a teacher – girl’s school- took some time to take off.</p> <p>43:10 Department of Educations role in GAA in schools. Recent development- funding coaches</p> <p>44:30 Memorable match. 1976 Enniskillen won Championship for first time in 46 years. Playing junior football- 1989- a game were everything went right for him, but sustained an injury in process.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input checked="" 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>Enniskillen Gaels Secretary Enniskillen Gaels Cultural Officer Fermanagh Assistant secretary</p>

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	Fermanagh Secretary Enniskillen Ladies Secretary 2008- on-going
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 00:45:27
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: Laura Kelly

Date: 30.04.09