

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Arlene Crampsie
Date of Interview	8 th Sept 2009
Location	Interviewee's home, near Crookstown, Co. Cork
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Michael Leahy (Mickie Leahy)
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1925 Home County: Clare
Education	Primary: Toonagh NS, Co. Clare Secondary: CBS Ennis, Co. Clare Third Level: School of Art, Cork [Teacher Training]
Family	Siblings: 4 brothers & 3 sisters Current Family if Different: Married to Ann with 5 sons and 2 daughters
Club(s)	Ruan [Clare]; Cloghduv [Cork]
Occupation	Teacher
Parents' Occupation	Small Farmers
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A

REFERENCE NO. CE/1/3

Date of Report	12 th June 2012
Period Covered	1930s – 2009
Counties/Countries Covered	Clare, Cork
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Material Culture, Education, Religion, Media, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Rivalries, Irish Language, Culture, Scór, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Alcohol, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy / Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Michael tells his life story through his GAA experiences, which started off as a boy in Clare playing with a hurley and ball that his uncle had made for him. He played for the local Ruan club and won a championship, before later moving to Limerick where he played alongside Mick Mackey. He spent some time in Kilkenny and played there before moving to Cork and settling down having found work as a teacher. He was involved in promoting GAA in the school in Macroom, and he also joined his local club, Cloghduv. He was soon helping out on the administrative side as a selector and then chairman of the club, which was expanding and redeveloping its facilities. Michael talks about the changes he has observed - good and bad - over the years, and recalls his encounters with greats of the game like Mick Mackey, Jimmy Barry Murphy and Christy Ring.</p> <p>00:00 Introduction</p> <p>00:55 Earliest GAA memories. Hurling as a child. Uncle making a hurley for him. Playing at school in Toonagh near Ennis. Mrs Henchy and Mr Gordon were teachers and when they took a break the boys would play. Scarcity of hurleys. Finding wood and paring down the sides to make a hurley, which they called 'spocks'. Talking to 1930s Cork hurler Jim Regan about spocks.</p> <p>05:45 Parents talking about parish-to-parish hurling. Story of a woman spectator cursing a famous hurler.</p> <p>07:45 Walking to games due to lack of bicycles. Going to Tulla on a pony and cart for a game.</p>

	<p>08:45 First game he saw. Uncle who made hurleys and balls for him brought him to a game between Kilkenny and Clare, who had contested the 1932 All-Ireland final the previous year. Lory Meagher playing. Martin White, Larry Blake and Tommy Daly playing.</p> <p>11:30 Uncle making balls to play hurling with. Raw materials used and how he used them. Making hurleys.</p> <p>15:55 Brothers playing for Ruan and winning championships. Jimmy Smith playing too. 7-a-side tournaments in the area. Fr Gunning getting involved. Playing in a field belonging to the Lynchs.</p> <p>18:30 Being a part of the club and what it was like playing for them. Facilities they had. Going to a game in Thurles and noticing what good fields they had.</p> <p>20:55 Kit was blue and gold. Getting his first pair of boots and what they were like.</p> <p>22:25 Role of club in the community.</p> <p>24:15 Playing in the county championship. Celebrations when the team won. Drinking and singing.</p> <p>25:45 Working in Limerick and playing with the mental hospital, and with Ahane alongside Mick Mackey. Going to Cork to train to be a vocational school teacher. Getting a job in Kilkenny. Moving to Cork. Experience of playing with a team in Limerick. Playing with Tullogher in Kilkenny. Prominence of football there.</p> <p>29:10 Meeting people in New Ross and being asked to play illegally for a Wexford team, Gusserane in a game against Faythe Harriers in Enniscorthy. Marking Paddy Keogh in an Oireachtas tournament in Dublin a few weeks later and he recognising him from the game in Wexford. Fake name was 'Jack Jackman'.</p> <p>33:15 Playing for Clare and training with Kilkenny. Travelling with Paddy Buggy, the Walshs and Dick Rock. Eating in Langton's after training. Jack Mulcahy training the team. Ollie Walsh, Billy Dwyer playing. Training on his own in the winter. Staying with the Roches. Trying to watch his weight.</p> <p>38:00 Travelling to Thurles, Dublin, Limerick, Galway, Belfast</p>
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	<p>for games. Playing Antrim in Casement Park in the 1950s. Impressions of the place. RUC officers walking around. Travelling by bus. Travelling by car to other games.</p> <p>40:25 Going to Munster finals. Watching Cork and Tipperary play.</p> <p>41:40 Getting involved in the GAA when he moved to Cork. Joining the Cloghduv club and Jimmy Barry Murphy a member. His uncle, Dinny Barry, a talented hurler in the 1920s and 1930s. Kilmurry and Canovee the local rivals.</p> <p>45:15 Getting involved in the administrative side of things. Being a selector and later chairman. Reluctance of others to take on administrative responsibility. Duties as chairman.</p> <p>47:00 Social activity around the club. Using the parish hall for céilís. No dances during lent. Improved facilities that they have in 2009.</p> <p>48:45 History of the club. Hurling tradition in the area. Club buying land in the 1960s and selling it when the economy was booming. Buying land elsewhere and developing it. Benefits of facilities to the community.</p> <p>52:45 Change in community over the years.</p> <p>53:20 Role of teachers in promoting Gaelic games. Contribution of Christian Brothers. Brother Irwin in Ennis doing a lot.</p> <p>55:40 Teaching in Skibbereen when he first went to Cork. Doing classes in Goleen and Skull. Getting a job in Macroom. GAA involvement in the school in Macroom. Training they did.</p> <p>59:20 Listening to games on the radio in the post office when he was young. Dan O'Brien's kitchen full of people listening to the game. Micheál Ó hÉithir commentating.</p> <p>01:01:30 Role of priests in the GAA locally. Fr Houlihan from Tipperary coming to the school and not liking a member of the team. Fr Leamy doing a lot for the Ruan club.</p> <p>01:05:00 Role of Irish language. Club involvement in Scór.</p> <p>01:06:25 Changing role of women in the GAA. Popularity of ladies football and camogie. Joan Callaghan, Briege Corkery, Una O'Donoghue and Aoife Murray all local players who are</p>
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	<p>on the Cork team.</p> <p>01:09:15 Club sponsor is a local pub. Beginnings of idea of club sponsorship.</p> <p>01:10:35 Never played Gaelic football, soccer or rugby. Enjoying watching rugby on television.</p> <p>01:11:40 Best GAA memory - beating Tipperary in the 1955 Munster semi-final. Clare winning the All-Ireland final in 1995.</p> <p>01:13:20 Disappointments - losing to Limerick in the 1955 Munster final.</p> <p>01:14:05 GAA heroes include many different players. Joe Canning of Galway. Comparing Mick Mackey and Christy Ring. Playing against Christy Ring in Limerick. Johnny Vaughan of Waterford refereeing and sending Michael off. Jimmy Barry Murphy and Christy Ring joining them in Saddler's pub in Limerick that night. Having an ice-cream with Christy Ring.</p> <p>01:20:05 Cork and Tipperary game in 2009 was a memorable game, also a Limerick-Galway All-Ireland semi-final. 2009 Under-21 game between Clare and Galway was the most dramatic game he ever saw.</p> <p>01:21:50 Changes he has seen in the game of hurling. Christy Ring's ground hurling abilities. Tipperary's Pat Stakelum a talented ground hurler.</p> <p>01:24:00 Importance of volunteers.</p> <p>01:25:25 Sense of identity as a Clare man. Ties to Cork. GAA helping him to settle in Cork.</p> <p>01:26:50 What the GAA has meant to him.</p> <p>01:28:05 His son teaching in St Brendan's College Killarney. His other son involved with the local club.</p> <p>01:29:45 Going to see Kerry play in an All-Ireland football final in the 1950s/1960s on a busy train. A Kerry man taking out a bag with food and milk.</p> <p>01:31:40 Watching the local team when he was young and a player refusing to feign injury.</p>
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	01:33:40 Cloghdub club songs - 'Hand me down my hurley'. 01:34:55 Lack of good fields in Clare. Ball straying into a woman's land and devising a strategy to get it back.
Involvement in GAA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person <input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	He played up to the age of 32. He won a senior title with Ruan (1950 / 1951); he played with Limerick Club, Ahane in 1948, but didn't play in the county final; he won a junior title with Tullogher in Kilkenny and a Mid-Cork Divisional title with Cloghdub.
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	Chairman of Cloghdub for 3 years. Selector for most of his time involved.
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 01:37:03
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: _____ Arlene Crampsie _____

Date: _____ 12/06/12 _____