## **GAA Oral History Project**

# **Interview Report Form**

Name of Interviewer	Arlene Crampsie			
Date of Interview	13 <sup>th</sup> April 2010			
Date of interview	13 April 2010			
Location	Kelly's Inn, Co. Tyrone			
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Mickey Harte			
Biographical Summary of Interviewee				
Gender	Male			
Born	Year Born: 1954			
	Home County: Tyrone			
Education	Primary: St Malachy's, Glencull, Co. Tyrone			
	Secondary: Omagh CBS, Co. Tyrone			
	Third Level: St Joseph's Training College, Belfast			
Family	Siblings: 3 sisters & 6 brothers			
	Current Family if Different: Married to Marian – 3 sons (Mark, Michael, Matthew) & 1 daughter (Michaela)			
Club(s)	Errigal Ciaran; St Ciaran's; St Malachy's, Glencull			
Occupation	Teacher; Leadership Coach			
Parents' Occupation	Labourer [Father]; Housewife [Mother]			
Religion	Roman Catholic			
Political Affiliation / Membership	None			
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Rugby: Omagh Academicals; Indoor Bowls			

Date of Report	15 <sup>th</sup> June 2012		
Period Covered	1950s – 2010		
Counties/Countries Covered	Tyrone, Dublin, Cork, Kerry, Armagh, Down		
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Material Culture, Education, Religion, Media, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Identity, Rivalries, Culture, Scór, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Outsider's Perspectives, Alcohol, Politics, Northern Ireland, The Troubles, Opening of Croke Park, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Retirement, Socialising, Relationships, Economy/ Economics		
Interview Summary	Mickey talks about a life spent immersed in the GAA. He describes growing up in Tyrone as a fan and developing as a football player. He lived in a tightly-knit community and the GAA was very important to those who were interested. Mickey went on to play for Tyrone and endured a number of painful defeats. In 1982 his club opted out of the Association for eight years; Mickey discusses the situation and the great things that were to come from it years later - phenomenal club success followed by groundbreaking victories as manager of the Tyrone minor, Under-21 and senior teams. Mickey observed and absorbed what was going on around him all his life, and this informed his management style which was built on principles of recognition, responsibility and respect. He provides insights into the dynamics of the GAA experience in Northern Ireland and what it meant to win an All-Ireland senior football title for the first time. Tyrone football has not been untouched by tragedy, and Mickey talks about young players who lost their lives prematurely. He is also forthright in his opinions on what can be done to improve the association. Mickey's enthusiasm is boundless and the GAA has left an indelible stamp on his entire life experience.  00:00 Introduction  00:25 Earliest GAA memory is late 1950s / early 1960s and his father looking after the club's jerseys. Mickey and his friends kicked around whatever they could find.		

from the surrounding areas. Sometimes they filled buses and cars with people going to the tournaments.

01:45 They would have tea and buns afterwards. The socialising was important.

02:05 The players played all the time. There was no burnout or warm downs like there is now.

02:50 Mickey has two sisters and six brothers. Pete, the second oldest, was a good footballer. He went to Queens University and played for Tyrone. Mickey looked up to him.

03:40 County players really stood out in those days - it's not as stark today.

04:20 The GAA was huge in Mickey's household. Sundays were for football. Neighbours called to the house to talk football.

05:05 They listened to games on the radio, to Micheál O'Hehir. They felt like they were at the games.

05:45 Someone in the area got a television and they would go there to watch big games. McRory's had a television, as did Mrs Kelly, who owned the local shop.

06:25 For the minor matches the television commentary would be in Irish - which they couldn't understand - so they turned down the volume and listened the radio commentary whilst watching the game on the television.

06:45 The adults always got the good seats near the television, the children got an egg box or the floor.

07:20 There was no organised football in primary school they just played amongst themselves.

07:45 After watching a game they would all go out and play out on the 'haggard' - a small field. They pretended to be their heroes from counties like Galway, Kerry, Meath and Dublin - men like Cyril Dunne, John Donnellan, Mattie McDonagh, Jack Quinn.

08:55 When Mickey was young the GAA was not as integral a part of the community as it is now. There were footballing families and non-footballing families. Scór was limited.

10:20 Errigal Ciaran won the championship and the Ulster title in the early 1990s and that got people - and sponsors – interested.

- 11:05 Ladies football became popular and then it was one big family affair.
- 11:40 Today the GAA is the community. Everyone wants to play and there are strong structures in place.
- 12:25 Kelly's Inn in the locality was where people socialised and it became important.
- 13:00 Mickey's mother was at home and looked after them all and their football gear. His sisters played camogie.
- 14:10 Hurling was never played in the area, despite the best efforts of some people. Football was king.
- 15:30 Mickey's club was Ballygawley St. Ciaran's until 1990.
- 15:45 There were four areas in his parish Altamuskin, Ballygawley, Garvaghy and Glencull.
- 16:10 In 1982 they had an internal parish league. Mickey tells of how there was a fallout from that and he and the Glencull people ended up withdrawing their services. They formed a new club, St. Malachy's, Glencull and were refused affiliation for eight years.
- 18:25 Errigal Ciaran was formed out of this eventually and they enjoyed huge success, which helped to heal old wounds.
- 19:25 Although the fallout was not pleasant Mickey feels that some good has come of it.
- 19:40 During the eight years of the fallout, when people met on the street they were very careful in what they talked about in order to avoid discussing such a sensitive issue.
- 20:40 Tells the story of forming Errigal Ciaran. The people of Glencull kept their autonomy as 'Errigal Ciaran 2'.
- 21:40 The were soon promoted from junior to intermediate and soon the club became united the Glencull people stopped being separate.
- 22:20 The club is now flourishing, with many different teams to represent them at various levels.
- 22:45 The dispute dragged non-GAA people into the GAA, so now there are more people in the parish associated with the GAA.
- 22:30 In 1990 they won a junior league, lost to Carrickmore in the championship in 1992 and then won it in 1993 by beating

Moortown - their first championship since 1931.

24:15 Errigal went on to win an Ulster title and they also had Peter Canavan, who had led Tyrone Under-21s into All-Ireland finals in 1990, 1991 and 1992, and was quickly developing a national profile.

25:20 They have had huge success since at all levels - Errigal and Carrickmore have shared 12 championships.

26:00 At St. Ciaran's, they got to a county championship semi-final and Mickey was 9. John McClean was a character who drove people to matches. Seán Canavan - Peter's father - was involved in helping the team. Paddy Joe McClean was the coach of the team and a teacher by profession.

27:35 Training was very simple. One football was used.

27:50 On reflection they were quite advanced - Paddy Joe instructed players on strategy using a blackboard in the changing rooms. He had all kinds of moves planned out in great detail.

29:30 The moves did not always work out on the field of play during a match.

30:10 Teams were methodical in those days; players rarely left their assigned zones on the pitch.

30:40 Patsy McCann was another character, a teacher at St. Ciaran's, Ballygawley. He was reclusive and read a lot of books, but when he spoke on GAA matters everyone listened.

32:45 Seán Canavan was a sharp player in his day, quite robust.

33:35 Frankie McLean, Paddy's brother, was a witty character.

34:00 Mickey was in the middle of all these people but was only a young boy. He absorbed everything.

34:25 In the run-up to the championship in 1963 Seán Canavan was adamant that people took great care of their boots and Mickey noted this. They lost the semi-final to Omagh, but beat them later that year in the McKenna Cup.

35:40 There was a lot of slagging between the players and Mickey observed that sometimes this can go too far.

36:25 Mickey played for the Under-16s at 11 years of age.

37:20 When he went to the Brothers school at Omagh there

was organised football and they all looked forward to P.E.

- 38:25 He played for the Under-15s. His brother Martin played too and they won all their games. Mickey loved winning.
- 39:05 As a prize they got taken to the Ulster final between Cavan and Down in 1967.
- 39:35 The following year they were Under-16s and thought they would coast to victory again. They didn't and Mickey learned a lesson.
- 40:15 He played an adult 7-a-side tournament in Clogher in 1969 and won the final.
- 41:05 In 1972 he had trials for the Tyrone minors. Art McRory selected him. They lost the All-Ireland final to a Cork team with Jimmy Barry Murphy and Bob Wilmot.
- 42:00 Mickey was a part of something great but did not realise it at the time, he just played with abandon.
- 42:30 Soon after he was made captain of the MacRory Cup team at Omagh CBS. They made the final and lost.
- 43:30 25 years later his son Mark played in the same final and lost.
- 43:50 From 1973 1975 he was on the Tyrone Under-21s and they got to three Ulster finals. They won in 1973 but lost to Mayo. In 1974 and 1975 they lost to Antrim, who had the famous soccer player Gerry Armstrong.
- 44:30 From 1972 Jody O'Neill invited him into the Tyrone senior team and Mickey played alongside Brendan Dolan who after died in a car accident in 1973.
- 45:10 Tyrone made the Ulster final but Mickey was still at school so he opted out. Tyrone won the Ulster final but then they got hammered by Cork in the semi-final.
- 45:35 He played with Tyrone from 1972 until 1982 and clubs fallout previously mentioned. He won two McKenna Cup medals (1978, beat Fermanagh, and 1982). He lost the 1982 Ulster final to Armagh and that was very painful.
- 46:50 He left in 1982 as Glencull appeared. Tyrone won an Ulster title in 1984 and made the All-Ireland final in 1986 but Mickey was 'in exile'.
- 47:20 He concentrated on Glencull from 1982 1990, playing lots of challenge matches until 1990 when Errigal Ciaran

emerged and he ended up as chairman.

47:50 He won a few reserve championship medals after that, and was part of the senior squad that won an Ulster club championship. He stopped playing at 41/42.

48:15 In 1991 he was offered the Tyrone minors coaching job and he stayed with them until 1998 when they won the All-Ireland and he took on the Under-21s then until 1992 with the same crop of players, winning All-Irelands in 2001 and 2002.

48:50 He applied for the senior's management job in 2003 and got it. He sees his time spent with that group of footballers as a privilege

49:20 His three sons, Mark, Michael and Matthew, play football - both at club and county level.

49:40 His daughter Michaela is a big GAA fan and has never missed a championship match where Mickey has been in charge of the team.

50:15 He was a teacher and that is similar to coaching to Mickey.

50:30 In 1982 he got a job teaching at St. Ciaran's in the parish; before that he had been at Kircubbin in County Down. He coached school teams during all that time.

50:45 He feels that perhaps the county board saw him as persistent and that helped his case.

51:20 He also coached at every level in his club, winning titles along the way.

52:25 Mickey's philosophy on coaching is ever-evolving. He wants players to be comfortable on the ball and to have the right attitude, which must be instilled.

53:25 It was just Mickey and Fr Gerard and the squad in the early days so everything was hands-on.

53:35 Mickey's wife washed all the gear and he and the children folded them, before the players were told to have respect for the gear that others had prepared for them.

54:35 They brought in dress codes for the players.

55:00 They wanted to encourage players to think about what they were doing and why it was important.

55:35 Connecting with each other was important too, through

things like music and communication.

- 56:11 Respecting yourself and the contributions of those around you is important.
- 56:20 Mickey recognises that there is always more to learn; he sees himself as a facilitator.
- 57:35 If the players are on a restricted diet then the coaching staff will eat the same food; the package is everything.
- 58:50 The biggest danger for Mickey in terms of management is for somebody to think that they have everything figured out.
- 59:35 Integrating new players is a challenge as the bulk of the group was well-established and together a long time.
- 1:00:00 As the teams get older Mickey tries to speak to them in a different way, in accordance with their maturity levels and life situation as time goes by.
- 1:01:30 Disciplinary issues arise around responsibility. Players must take it for themselves; it cannot be imposed. When that doesn't happen there's trouble.
- 1:03:25 There are more media demands as you move to senior level; it is easier to slip up and you are in a much more public arena and it all lasts for longer in terms of time.
- 1:04:40 Public criticism does not bother Mickey but it is important that the squad learn to deal with it.
- 1:06:10 Mickey uses videos all the time for analysing and devising strategies. There is no switching off at senior level.
- 1:07:10 Preparation is everything and there is a lot of discussion in groups and forward planning.
- 1:07:50 A good back-up staff is crucial and you need positive relationships within the coaching circle.
- 1:09:00 Mickey Moynihan looks after gear, footballs and water and is invaluable.
- 1:11:10 He worked with Fr Gerard McAleer and used to go to All-Irelands with him in Dublin in the 1970s. Mickey's brother Pete was chairman of the Ulster Council and he would be there too.
- 1:12:25 Mickey believes that in the 1970s, Dublin's Kevin Heffernan represented the start of players not staying within the confines of their own designated positions on the field. Bobby Doyle could often be seen roving around the pitch.

Tony Hanahoe also liked to drift and this caused problems for the opposition.

- 1:13:15 When Mickey got the minor job, Fr Hegarty was supposed to join him on the coaching team, but he was too busy so Fr Gerard came aboard and got things done.
- 1:14:00 They discussed things but there was never any conflict between them.
- 1:14:40 Fr Gerard was a teacher in Armagh and Dungannon in the early days, but then he got the parish in Donaghmore and could not fulfil his football duties any longer.
- 1:15:40 There are less clergy around now. There was a time when priests would play football like Fr Seery who played alongside Mickey in 1969 but not any more. Their role has diminished as their age profile has moved on.
- 1:16:40 It's important to have a priest who recognises the benefits of the GAA. It matter to players and management a great deal.
- 1:17:35 The GAA and Catholicism are synonymous. Protestants playing GAA was rare.
- 1:18:20 The opening of Croke Park was important for Protestants to see that it is not a threatening place and that is a good thing. It is important to reach out.
- 1:19:30 It's important to dismantle the barriers that prevent non-Catholics from getting involved.
- 1:20:20 The Troubles mean that the northern GAA experience is different. In certain areas it was once dangerous to be part of the GAA. Suspicion was rife and that led to deadly consequences; the people in the Republic would have been oblivious to that aspect as it would have been foreign to them.
- 1:21:45 There was an absence of success in Northern Ireland at senior level from 1968 to 1991 and the Troubles were a contributing factor.
- 1:22:10 If you were stopped going through a Loyalist area on the way to a game and you had a GAA bag in your boot it could cause delays and possibly even spats.
- 1:23:50 Each All-Ireland you win is unique and the 1998 minor All-Ireland was very special Mickey always had a desire to win it because he lost it as a player in 1972 and

Tyrone lost in 1987 too.

- 1:24:35 Mickey had announced his retirement after the 1997 All-Ireland but Stephen O'Neill and Brian McGuigan went and spoke to his wife and he changed his mind.
- 1:25:10 Paul McGirr died on the pitch in Omagh in 1997 and that was a motivating factor.
- 1:26:05 In 1999 they were in the Under-21s and lost in the first round to Derry, the same day that Fr Gerard's mother was buried.
- 1:26:50 They won the Under-21s All-Ireland in 2000 and Mickey's son Mark was on that team.
- 1:27:40 They had some close games in 2001 beat Down by a point, had a man sent off against Monaghan.
- 1:28:30 Foot and mouth was going on too and there was talk of kicking Tyrone out of the competition as a precaution. Mickey went on a media drive to counteract any such moves.
- 1:30:00 Frank Murphy in Cork supported them in their efforts to delay the games. They beat Cork and then beat Mayo in Markievicz Park Mayo had beaten Tyrone in the Hastings Cup not long previously. Cormac McAnallen was outstanding, as were Owen Mulligan and Kevin Hughes.
- 1:32:20 That brought them to the 2003 senior title. They were full of confidence and were joined by older players like Peter Canavan, Chris Lawn, Brian Dooher, Colin Holmes and Gerard Cavlan.
- 1:33:10 They won the League in 2002 and 2003 but drew with Derry in the first round of the Championship.
- 1:33:45 They had a tight game against Down in the Ulster final and were nine points down with 25 minutes left but Peter Canavan and Brian McGuigan helped pull it out of the fire and get a draw before going on to win the replay comfortable.
- 1:35:15 Peter Canavan was captain that year, his father had just died and then he won the Ulster title. It was emotional. Peter said he had been inspired by Frank McGuigan's performance for Tyrone in the 1984 Ulster final.
- 1:36:15 They beat Fermanagh in the quarter-final and then Kerry in the semi-final, a major triumph, before beating Armagh in the first All-Ireland final to feature two teams from the same province.

- 1:37:05 Armagh had beaten Tyrone on their way to the 2002 All-Ireland title so Tyrone felt that they had to win and Mickey feels they should have won by more.
- 1:37:50 Difficult to describe what the win meant to them.
- 1:38:15 The homecoming was special 60,000 people on the streets in Omagh to welcome them.
- 1:39:40 They lost the 2005 Ulster title to Armagh in 2005 and felt hard done by. They beat Dublin after two matches in the semi-final and Mickey sees these games as All-Irelands in themselves because beating Dublin is special. They beat Kerry in the final again which was great.
- 1:40:40 When they won in 2005 it was important to remember Cormac McAnallen, who would have been captain had he been alive. It took them ten games to win the All-Ireland, which hadn't been done before and that was special.
- 1:41:45 It was satisfying to know that the team was not a one-team wonder.
- 1:42:00 Peter Canavan retired and Brian McGuigan was injured in 2006 while they lost to Meath in 2007.
- 1:42:40 In 2008 they felt ready. They drew with Down and looked down and out in the replay but brought it to extra-time and lost. Nevertheless, they felt like they had the necessary fight to go on after playing that game.
- 1:44:00 They resolved to work hard and go after the All-Ireland. They played Louth, Westmeath, Mayo and then Dublin again in the quarter-final.
- 1:44:35 Tyrone were underestimated going into the Dublin game but they put in a great performance.
- 1:45:20 Wexford in the semi-final was difficult to approach but they got through it and made the final against Kerry.
- 1:46:10 It was the dream final for everybody and there was a crucial time where it looked like Kerry were about to take control, but Tyrone seized the initiative and brought it home 'an awesome feeling'. It was nice to stop Kerry from winning the three-in-a-row and to be able to do it without Peter Canavan.
- 1:48:15 Mickey has not taken the time to sit down and watch their All-Ireland wins in sequence.
- 1:48:55 Club Tyrone brought out a 'Ten steps to success'

- DVD in 2005, and a 'Total faith' video in 2003.
- 1:50:45 Everything is organised the morning of an All-Ireland breakfast, mass, relaxation. Meetings are held on the Saturday night.
- 1:51:45 At half-time in an All-Ireland final you must transmit information. Ranting is no good. You have to be rational and try to be constructive.
- 1:54:00 When they won in 2003, Mickey felt that it was something that ought to have happened. Conor Gormley made a crucial block before the end of the final and little things like that had a big bearing on the bigger picture.
- 1:56:10 The 2003 homecoming was euphoric, beyond what they could have imagined. Passing through Monaghan they got great support. The McEnaneys in Monaghan gave them lots of beer.
- 1:57:15 They had an open-top bus and stewards in Aughnacloy in Tyrone. Huge crowds. Adrian Logan from UTV was waiting for them.
- 1:58:00 They went on to Ballygawley and Kelly's Inn before heading to Omagh.
- 1:59:12 That homecoming will never be bettered, Mickey feels. It was great to see people's faces and what it meant to them. It gave them a new status.
- 2:00:15 Mickey does not drink alcohol and thinks that its acceptability in Irish society is dangerous. The GAA needs to recognise this.
- 2:02:40 You need to ask people to choose to do things sensibly and this is especially when it comes to alcohol consumption.
- 2:04:30 Mickey thinks that the International Rules series is not what the GAA is about. It fails to bring gaelic games to the world stage; a world series for gaelic games would be much better.
- 2:06:20 The world is aware of Croke Park and people need to embrace what gaelic games has to offer. Junior club champions could represent Ireland at the world series initially.
- 2:07:40 International Rules is diminishing this possibility; it is just window dressing and is all about the trip to Australia.
- 2:08:20 2010 manager Anthony Tohill knows it's easier to get

players to go to Australia than play at home because the players all want to get a trip to Australia out of it and it's less glamorous at home.

- 2:09:20 The GAA could do more for GAA clubs overseas, Mickey feels. What they are trying to do ought to be recognised.
- 2:10:55 Conflicts between players and managers in other counties is an issue that should have been addressed sooner.
- 2:12:00 The best way to deal with confrontation is to avoid it in advance by taking the necessary steps.
- 2:12:40 Professionalism in the GAA is about more than payfor-play; it's about an approach to the game.
- 2:13:10 Players give a lot to the GAA and work needs to be done on career-enhancement opportunities for them.
- 2:15:25 Mickey was initially unsure about the opening of Croke Park and felt it was unfair to blame the GAA for the prospect of soccer and rugby having to go to Croke Park.
- 2:16:10 There needs to be more respect for the opinions of people who don't agree with the majority.
- 2:17:15 Many clubs and schools were refused entry to, or not encouraged to, go to Croke Park but when it was opened up all that changed and more finals were played there, which is a good thing.
- 2:18:20 When Mickey was young one of the big thrills of getting to an Ulster final was the chance to play at Clones.
- 2:19:10 Mickey hopes to stay involved in coaching in the future, but refereeing inconsistencies are a big problem for the association he feels.
- 2:20:00 There needs to be more openness about how decisions are made at the top level.
- 2:21:00 There are inconsistencies in how cards are issued and there is too much focus on new rules when they are being trialled in the National Leagues.
- 2:22:40 After management Mickey is not sure f he would like to take up other roles within the GAA, although the association is in his blood so he will be involved in some capacity.
- 2:24:00 He keeps an open mind when it comes to the idea of

	managing other counties.			
	2:24:40 He does not feel that he has made sacrifices for the GAA because it has given him more than he has lost.			
	2:25:40 His wife has had to make sacrifices.			
	2:27:35 His GAA hero would be his brother Pete, a major influence within the household. He became chairman of the Ulster Council.			
	2:28:30 He loved the Galway teams of 1964-1966. The Kerry and Dublin teams of the 1970s brought something new to football.			
	2:29:00 The GAA was a great outlet for him as a child when there was nothing else to do.			
	2:29:50 He still can't believe that he has been in an All-Ireland final with a team, after having spent so many years watching them from the stands.			
	2:31:10 Memorable games include a schools match at Under- 16 level in an Ulster final. It went to extra-time and their opponents scored two goals and a point. They turned it around and that was very satisfying for Mickey.			
	2:33:00 Greatest memories include winning the first Tom Markham Cup, the first All-Ireland, the 2005 All-Ireland after Cormac McAnallen's death.			
	2:34:40 Disappointments include losing the 1997 minor final and, off the field, the phone call to hear that Cormac McAnallen had died on March 2nd 2004.			
	2:36:25 For Mickey the GAA has taken his life on a special course. He has learned so much and brought meaning to his life. He cannot separate the GAA from what his life is.			
Involvement in GAA	✓ Supporter ✓ Player ✓ Manager ✓ Coach □ Steward			
	✓ Chairperson ✓ Committee Member □ Grounds-person			
	☐ Caterer ✓ Jersey Washer ✓ Referee ☐ None			
	☐ Other (please specify):			
Record as a Player	Mickey played from the age of 9/10 up to 42. He won a Club			
(Titles won; Length	Senior Championship and an Ulster Club in 1993. At county			
of time played)	level he won an Ulster Minor title in 1972; an U-21 title in			

	1973 and at adult level 2 McKenna Cups in 1978 and 1982.
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	Mickey has been involved in administration since the mid- 1970s.  Club: Chairman, Committee Member  He has managed teams at every age level in club, he has managed a range of school teams from 1 <sup>st</sup> years to U-18s, and at county level he has managed minor, U-21 and now the senior team.
Format	✓ Audio ☐ Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 02:37:30
Language	English

### To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed:	Arlene Crampsie	
Date:	15/06/12_	