

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	12 th March 2011
Location	Ballygalget GAC Clubhouse, Co. Down
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	William Johnson
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1931 Home County: Down
Education	Primary: Ballgalget PS, Co. Down
Family	Siblings: 1 sister and 2 half sisters Current Family if Different: 2 sons and 1 daughter
Club(s)	Ballygalget GAC [Down]
Occupation	Farmer
Parents' Occupation	N/A
Religion	N/A
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

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Date of Report	12 th July 2012
Period Covered	1880s – 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Down, Kerry, Cavan, Dublin, Great Britain, England
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Playing, Fundraising, Role of Women, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Career, Northern Ireland, The Troubles, Purchase of Grounds
Interview Summary	<p>William gives a brief history of hurling on the Ards Peninsula and in Ballygalget specifically. He gives an account of how the club was formed, gives insight into its rivalries with other Down hurling clubs and talks through notable successes the club has had in both hurling and camogie. He discusses his own playing career during the 1950s and 1960s and also highlights the other ways in which he has been involved in the GAA at both club and county level. He recalls what it was like supporting the Down football team during the 1960s, telling of trips to Croke Park, and the excitement of All-Ireland victories in 1960 and 1961. Finally, Regina recites a poem written by William, entitled 'The Green Men of the Ards 2005'.</p> <p>00.35 William talks about what Ballygalget was like when he was a boy. Recalls the beginning of a hurling team in the area. Mentions Newcastle. Mentions Andy Palmer.</p> <p>03.10 Remembers the field where he used to play. Mentions Liam McGrath.</p> <p>04.20 Remembers the meeting at which the first club committee was elected. Refers to early club teams. Talks about one player in particular. Mentions Jimmy Billy, John Sisk and Tommy O'Flynn. Mentions Dublin, Cavan, Portaferry, Mayo, Newport and Enniscorthy.</p> <p>07.35 Discusses the early clubs established in Down. Refers to his mother going to games. Mentions Leitrim GAA, Ballyvarley GAA, Newry GAA and Portaferry GAA.</p> <p>09.24 Tells of an incident in 1939 that shaped the GAA on the Ards peninsula. Refers to travelling by bicycle. Mentions John Denny and Eamon Eamonson. Mentions the Ards League. Mentions Ballygalget, Portaferry and Ballycran.</p> <p>10.50 Talks about the influence of a Kilkenny hurler in the area. Mentions travelling by train.</p>

	<p>11.53 Discusses his own club, Ballygalget GAA. Mentions McKenna. Refers to the Ards League. Talks about various games and incidents in the late 1930s and 1940s. Mentions Tommy Gilmore.</p> <p>15.05 Refers to the rivalry between Ballygalget GAA and Ballycran GAA. Tells of a game in 1958 between the two. Mentions Pa Watson and Gerry Smith.</p> <p>16.50 Remembers the games during his schooldays. Talks about the sports days. Refers to his teachers. Mentions James Bradley and Mickey Lennon.</p> <p>18.50 Talks about leaving school and what he did afterwards. Mentions farming. Recalls becoming treasurer. Mentions Eddie McLoughlin.</p> <p>21.15 Recalls how the club purchased a field from an Orangeman, Tom O'Donnell. Refers to playing in the Antrim League. Mentions Joe Downes, Mrs Watson, Pa Watson and Liam Harvey.</p> <p>24.05 Describes how the field was developed. Talks about fundraising. Mentions Ian Logan.</p> <p>25.54 Recalls what happened to Tom O'Donnell after selling the field to them. Mentions the Orange Lodge. Mentions the tricolour.</p> <p>27.24 Talks about the formation of a camogie team in 1968. Recalls the early successes of the team. Talks about the players. Mentions Geraldine McKenna, Liam Doory, Jeff Palmer and Breda Hynes.</p> <p>29.55 Tells a story of a hurling match he saw in Navan involving players linked to Ballygalget. Mentions Brendan Crawford.</p> <p>31.30 Talks about club successes in the 1950s and 1960s. Mentions Junior Championship 1953, 1968 and Senior Championship 1959.</p> <p>33.00 Discusses his role with the county team. Recalls travelling to play against Kerry in 1953. Also discusses games against Armagh and Donegal. Mentions being kit man and treasurer. Refers travelling by bus and taxi. Mentions Moss Hayes, Michael Collins, Pat McGrath, Martin Nerney, Bernard Donnelly, Eddie Donnelly.</p> <p>37.23 Refers to training. Describes the hurling in Down at the time. Mentions Ballela, Newry and Kilclief. Mentions Brian</p>
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	<p>Denver and Kevin Armstrong.</p> <p>38.40 Remembers going to the All-Ireland Final in 1947 between Cork and Kilkenny and again in 1948. Remembers staying with his aunt. Mentions Christy Ring, Davey Johnson, Andy Palmer. Mentions travelling by bus and train. Mentions Nelson's Pillar, Moore Street.</p> <p>41.23 Tells of his interest in football. Remembers an incident after Down won the All-Ireland in the 1960s. Refers to the 1947 All-Ireland Final. Mentions Cavan and Kerry. Talks about the influence of Mícheál Ó hEithir.</p> <p>43.20 Talks about the hurling county board through the years. Mentions Aidan O'Neill. Refers to his own involvement in administration. Explains his reasons for retiring from playing in 1963.</p> <p>45.07 Recalls the All-Ireland Junior Championship campaign in 1964. Remembers travelling to London. Mentions Croke Park. Mentions Roscommon.</p> <p>46.00 Tells of incidents during his time with the county team. Refers to playing against Kerry in Tralee. Remembers being stopped at checkpoints by the police. Mentions travelling by bus and by taxi.</p> <p>50.09 Discusses the attitude of the county board towards hurling. Describes the football management that led to success in the 1960s. Remembers the homecoming celebrations. Mentions Moss Hayes, Brian Denver, Barney Keher, Paddy Doherty. Mentions the St Bernard Cup.</p> <p>53.52 Talks about the football that was played in the area.</p> <p>54.20 Tells of his enjoyment playing for the senior team. Mentions Junior Championship 1968. Remembers refereeing an intermediate final. Mentions John Malone.</p> <p>55.30 Shows Regina a poem, called 'The Green Men of the Ards 2005'. She recites it. Refers to other poems he wrote.</p>
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<p>Involvement in GAA</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 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>Played with Ballygalget for many years; played on Down Senior Hurling team 1953-64; played on Ulster Senior Hurling team, 1955.</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Co. Down hurling treasurer for 35 years; member of CO. Down Finance Committee; Treasurer of Ballygalget GAC for 35 years.</p>
<p>Format</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Length of Interview: 00:57:15</p>
<p>Language</p>	<p>English</p>

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 12th July 2012