

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	26 th April 2011
Location	Loughrea, Co. Galway.
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Paul O'Donnell
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1955 Home County: Galway
Education	Primary: Mullagh NS, Co. Galway Secondary: St Brigid's Vocational School, Loughrea, Co. Galway. Third Level: NUI Maynooth
Family	Siblings: 1 brother & 1 sister Current Family if Different: Monica (wife)
Club(s)	Mullagh GAA [Galway]
Occupation	Local Tour Guide
Parents' Occupation	Farmers
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Macra na Feirme; Loughrea Chamber of Commerce; Mullagh Youth Club; Ireland Reaching Out Project; Mullagh Camogie Club; Western Family History Association; Galway Tour Guides Association.

REFERENCE NO. GY/1/16

Date of Report	10 th July 2012
Period Covered	1955 – 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Galway
Key Themes Covered	Playing, Administration, Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Refereeing, Celebrations, Fundraising, Education, Religion, Media, Emigration, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Rivalries, Culture
Interview Summary (LOG)	<p>Paul talks about his hometown of Mullagh in East Galway. He discusses his book “The History of the GAA in Mullagh” and talks about Mullagh’s early involvement in GAA in the 1880s through to the present day. Paul recalls his playing days with Mullagh and discusses moving into an administrative role at both club and county level. Paul discusses the successes of the Galway hurling team in the 1980s and his memories of the All-Ireland victories. He discusses his later involvement with the Mullagh camogie team. Paul highlights the role of the GAA in society and gives his opinion on its importance over the years.</p> <p>00:25 Describes the parish of Mullagh in East Galway where he was born and raised.</p> <p>01:16 Discusses family interest in GAA. Mentions his uncle Pake O’Donnell playing with Galway and reaching an All-Ireland final in 1925.</p> <p>02:47 Talks about his book “The History of the GAA in Mullagh”. Mentions that Mullagh did not immediately join the GAA organisation in the 1880s as they felt that the game that Michael Cusack was developing was too effeminate.</p> <p>04:15 Discusses the Killimor Rules. Mentions that Mullagh would have played according to the Killimor Rules before joining the GAA association.</p> <p>04:59 Discusses Mullagh affiliating with the GAA in 1886/1887. Discusses the dominance of hurling in the area.</p> <p>05:41 Describes a football match between Mullagh and the parish of Leitrim in 1886.</p> <p>06:44 Talks about the landmark moments for Mullagh in the early GAA days. Mentions Mullagh winning a county final in 1906.</p>

REFERENCE NO. GY/1/16

	<p>07:16 Discusses the years around 1910 and Republican activity in the area diminishing activity on the playing field.</p> <p>08:26 Discusses the revival of GAA in Mullagh in the 1920s.</p> <p>08:45 Mentions that Mullagh didn't have a team in the championship in 1936 and 1937 as they felt they were not getting fair play from the County Board with regard to decisions being made on the field.</p> <p>09:20 Discusses the Blue Shirts Movement and its effect on GAA in Mullagh.</p> <p>10:43 Mentions the dominance of hurling in Mullagh in the early days. Discusses farming in the area.</p> <p>11:41 Recalls the prominence of GAA his early days growing up in Mullagh.</p> <p>13:04 Earliest memories of GAA – Mullagh reaching the 1966 Senior County Hurling Final in Athenry.</p> <p>14:16 Recalls the lack of hurling in Mullagh primary school in the 1960s while he attended. Mentions Sean Glynn, a teacher who made a contribution to hurling in the school and parish in the 1970s.</p> <p>15:39 Discusses playing hurling as a young boy. Recalls cycling to neighbouring parishes to watch Mullagh matches.</p> <p>16:41 Discusses the undeveloped field used for hurling in Mullagh in the 1960s.</p> <p>17:57 Recalls his early days playing with Mullagh. Recalls winning the East Board final with the U-16 hurling team but being deemed "illegal" as some of the players were overage.</p> <p>20:03 Talks about Tom Clarke, a local man who overseen the juvenile hurling teams in Mullagh. Recalls travelling to matches in his car. Mentions Pdraig Donohue, the current senior team manager.</p> <p>21:21 Discusses the dominant teams in Galway at the time. Mentions Loughrea as being particularly strong as they had a Christian Brothers school in the area and the Brothers were proactive in coaching hurling. Mentions Ballinasloe, Kiltormer and Portumna.</p> <p>22:22 Recalls the lack of training and structure in hurling in Mullagh.</p> <p>23:00 Discusses attending secondary school in St Brigids</p>
--	---

	<p>Vocational School in Loughrea. Mentions the broad spectrum of sports – hurling, camogie, athletics, volleyball, basketball.</p> <p>23:36 Describes playing with Loughrea. Mentions Michael Bond, a teacher in Loughrea who trained the senior hurling team and brought them to county championship victory in 1973. Recalls the structure he brought to the training sessions.</p> <p>25:13 Recalls classroom sessions at lunchtime in St Brigids. Mentions staying after school to train and “thumbing” a lift home afterwards.</p> <p>26:48 Discusses the rival hurling schools. Mentions Moneenageisha, Ballinasloe, Athenry, Portumna. Recalls Moneenageisha as being particularly strong.</p> <p>28:00 Describes the advantages and disadvantages of playing hurling in school.</p> <p>29:10 Recalls hurling players he admired at both club and county level. Mentions Iggy Clarke, Seamus Gohery. Recalls playing hurling in the school yard with Iggy Clarke.</p> <p>31:12 Discusses the importance of Galway’s U-21 All-Ireland victory in 1972. Recalls a higher level of interest in attending Galway matches.</p> <p>32:09 Recalls attending his first All-Ireland hurling final in 1975 where Kilkenny defeated Galway. Discusses the change in attitude towards hurling among the general public in Galway.</p> <p>34:30 Discusses travelling to Galway matches. Recalls travelling to Pairc Ui Chaoimh in 1976 for the All-Ireland semi final between Galway and Wexford.</p> <p>35:54 Discusses the success of the Galway hurling team in the 1980s. Discusses his role as Hurling Board Delegate at the time. Recalls the atmosphere in the county. Mentions the significance of the media.</p> <p>37:57 Describes the atmosphere in Croke Park after All-Ireland final victory. Recalls the reception in the Clare Manor Hotel in Malahide. Talks about the homecoming in Galway.</p> <p>41:52 Mentions Joe Connolly’s homecoming speech, spoken in Irish.</p> <p>41:31 Discusses the significance of the victory in 1980.</p> <p>44:00 Recalls the 1980 match. Mentions PJ Molloy’s goal,</p>
--	---

	<p>Michael Kenneally.</p> <p>44:28 Describes the impact of the 1980 victory on hurling in clubs around Galway. Recalls Féile na nGael being held in Galway in 1980.</p> <p>45:22 Discusses his move into an administrative role within GAA. Recalls attending Kilrickle National School for one year during renovations to Mullagh National School and being influential in affiliating a team. Recalls playing against Jimmy Cooney.</p> <p>48:15 Talks about his role as Chairman of the Minor section of Mullagh club in 1975.</p> <p>48:50 Describes what his role as hurling board delegate involved.</p> <p>50:05 Recalls becoming Assistant Hurling Board Secretary in 1982 and moving on to the role of Secretary of Galway Juvenile Hurling Committee.</p> <p>50:50 Discusses key issues that were addressed while he was in administration – debates on the position of managers and selectors for the Senior team, the distribution of funds.</p> <p>52:20 Discusses being involved with the County Development Committee, mainly building on facilities within existing clubs. Recalls achieving very little in this role as money was limited and Croke Park gave no funding.</p> <p>54:13 Discusses the allocation of funding from the County Board. Recalls an “equal share of very little” being distributed between hurling and football.</p> <p>55:03 Discusses emigration in Galway in the 1980s. Recalls very little emigration in Mullagh.</p> <p>56:56 Recalls the enjoyable and challenging aspects of his role in administration. Talks about Cois na hÁbhna, the schools juvenile hurling league. Mentions postponements and refixtures.</p> <p>59:00 Discusses how time-consuming his role in administration was. Mentions the issues that prevented him from pursuing a more prominent role in administration.</p> <p>1:01:04 Discusses people in administrative roles that he has admired over the years. Mentions Norman Farragher.</p> <p>1:02:28 Discusses camogie in Mullagh. Recalls the U-14 camogie team winning the County Féile competition in 1984.</p>
--	---

	<p>Recalls travelling to matches.</p> <p>1:03:59 Discusses becoming involved with camogie at an administrative level as PRO in 1991. Mentions Joe Canning.</p> <p>1:04:44 Describes travelling with Mullagh Senior Camogie Team to London to participate in the London Irish Festival in 1991. Recalls referring a match without a whistle.</p> <p>1:06:20 Recalls the Mullagh Senior Camogie team winning the All-Ireland club championship in 1991. Talks about a speech he gave to the girls on the bus home from London which has gone down in Galway folklore as helping them to win the All-Ireland that year.</p> <p>1:08:50 Discusses Mullagh's matches leading to the All-Ireland Camogie Championship final in 1991. Recalls beating a Roscommon team in the Connaught final and overcoming Glen Rovers in the semi final. Mentions Linda Melerick and Mary Ring.</p> <p>1:10:28 Recalls the victory over Eglis from Tyrone in the Final. Talks about the celebrations.</p> <p>1:11:33 Discusses representation of the Mullagh camogie players on the Galway County camogie team. Mentions Imelda Hobbins, Sinead Cahalan and Sarah Dervan.</p> <p>1:12:21 Discusses the similarities and differences at being involved in administration in hurling and camogie. Describes camogie as being at a lesser level in terms of organisation. Talks about the struggle to get funding and to get people involved in administrative roles.</p> <p>1:13:48 Discusses the lack of attendance at camogie matches.</p> <p>1:14:18 Discusses the benefits of camogie from a health perspective.</p> <p>1:15:20 Discusses the relationship between the hurling and camogie team in Mullagh. Mentions the benefit of the second pitch and more dressing rooms in Mullagh.</p> <p>1:16:32 Talks about hurling players attending camogie matches. Notes that 3 of the hurlers train the senior camogie team in Mullagh.</p> <p>1:17:00 Discusses the significance of voluntary effort and fundraising in Mullagh in the 1980s. Recalls the opening of the Community Centre in 1984. Mentions being involved in an</p>
--	--

REFERENCE NO. GY/1/16

	<p>administration level on this front.</p> <p>1:19:12 Describes voluntary efforts in the club today.</p> <p>1:19:50 Talks about Tony Redden, a former Tipperary hurler who was born in Mullagh. Recalls Tony's successes in hurling.</p> <p>1:21:45 Discusses the dedication of the second pitch in Mullagh to Brian Donohue, a local hurler who died tragically.</p> <p>1:23:12 Discusses the role of the club in times of tragedy and the impact of Brian Donohue's death on his team mates and contemporaries.</p> <p>1:25:45 Describes the GAA involvement as being a uniting force in the search effort for Brian Donohue.</p> <p>1:27:45 Discusses what the GAA means to him.</p> <p>1:29:22 Discusses the decline of the Catholic Church and the greater importance of the GAA in knitting a community together.</p> <p>1:30:18 Discusses the players in Mullagh that he has admired through the years. Notes that the club has 11 All-Stars. Mentions Iggy Clarke, Pete Finnerty, Seamus Coen, Derek Hardiman.</p> <p>1:31:54 Mentions Mullagh's connection with Billy Morgan, the former Cork manager. Talks about Billy's father being captain of the Mullagh senior hurling team that won the county senior hurling championship in 1932.</p>
<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 checked="" 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 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>Played with underage and junior teams in school and in Mullagh.</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Mullagh GAA: PRO (1976); Secretary (1977); Chairman of Mullagh Minor Committee (1980s); Secretary of MULLagh Development Committee (1982).</p> <p>Mullagh Camogie Club: PRO (1991-92; 2009-11).</p> <p>Galway GAA: Mullagh delegate to Galway Hurling Board (1976-77; 1980-81); Secretary of Galway Hurling Board</p>

REFERENCE NO. GY/1/16

	(1982-84); Secretary of Galway Development Committee (1982-83); Member of Galway Disciplinary Committee (1982-83).
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 1:32:56
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: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 10th July 2012