

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Arlene Crampsie
Date of Interview	11 th April 2011
Location	Interviewee's home, near Castleisland, Co. Kerry
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Mick Fitzgerald
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1936 Home County: Galway
Education	Primary: Killimor NS, Co. Galway Secondary: Vocational School, Portumna, Co. Galway Third Level: Garda Training College, Phoenix Park
Family	Siblings: 1 brother & 2 sisters Current Family if Different: Married to Margaret McElligott with one son and one daughter
Club(s)	Castleisland Desmonds [Kerry]; Killimor [Galway]; Lixnaw [Kerry]; Ballyduff [Kerry]; Crotta [Kerry]; Listowel [Kerry]
Occupation	Garda
Parents' Occupation	Farmers
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Basketball; Boxing; Community Games

Date of Report	17 th August 2012
Period Covered	1960s – 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Kerry, Galway
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Material Culture, Education, Religion, Media, Emigration, Involvement in GAA Abroad, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Identity, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Outsider's Perspectives, Politics, Northern Ireland, Relationship with the Association, Retirement, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy/ Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Mick talks about his involvement with ladies games over the years and the strides that have been made in that time, often under adverse conditions. A native of Galway, he later moved to Kerry for work and was soon playing for teams in Ballyduff, Lixnaw and Castleisland. There was a significant difference in hurling standards between Kerry and Galway and he became involved in setting up a local camogie club in Castleisland. He was also a ladies football enthusiast and became involved with the Kerry team that won nine All-Ireland titles in-a-row. A capable administrator, he filled a number of roles and met many GAA figures from across the country along the way. The road was not always an easy one, and Mick describes in detail the struggle to get ample recognition for players and administrators whose dedication to their code and willingness to make sacrifices is no less impressive than that of their counterparts involved in men's Gaelic games.</p> <p>00:00 Introduction</p> <p>00:30 Born in Killimor, Galway. Hurling traditions there. Playing with the local club. Joining the Gardaí and being transferred to Listowel in Kerry before moving to Lixnaw. Involvement in sports there. Moving to Castleisland in 1967.</p> <p>01:45 Being approached in Castleisland about assisting the local camogie club. Success they enjoyed. Becoming chairman of the camogie board. Games played at carnivals.</p> <p>03:20 Playing a Listowel ladies football team in a friendly</p>

	<p>tournament. Former Kerry footballer and manager Mick O'Dwyer refereeing the game.</p> <p>03:55 Alex Rintoul and he asked to play Banteer in Cork at a carnival tournament. Mary Geaney their star player. Bridie Brosnan impressing for the Cork team. Former Cork great Denis Long refereeing.</p> <p>05:00 Asking Kerryman sports editor John Barry to publicise a meeting about starting a football county board, which was formed in 1974. County league. Losing to Offaly in a tournament.</p> <p>05:50 Idea to form an All-Ireland competition featuring Kerry, Cork, Waterford, Galway, Roscommon, Cavan and Tipperary. No underage structures at the time. Losing a Munster final in 1974.</p> <p>07:10 Role as a selector on the Kerry team. Paul Sullivan training the team. Playing Cavan in an All-Ireland semi-final in Breffni Park. Kathleen Leddy – later Kathy Durkin – playing for Cavan. Teams eating together. Playing Offaly in Littleton, Tipperary in the All-Ireland final. Celebrations.</p> <p>09:25 Winning nine All-Ireland finals in-a-row. Success not widely acknowledged.</p> <p>10:15 1986 first All-Ireland final to be played in Croke Park. 1990 the last of the nine All-Ireland wins. Reception in Tralee and how it compared to celebrations when men won.</p> <p>11:15 Dedication of players.</p> <p>11:45 Later success. Role as president of the county board. Number of teams in the county in 2011.</p> <p>12:25 Killimor winning an All-Ireland club camogie championship. Getting a DVD of the game. Disappointment when he received it.</p> <p>13:10 Hurling facilities in Galway when he was growing up. Going to New York for a referee's seminar in later years and seeing what their facilities were like. Admiring dedication of players.</p> <p>15:10 Struggling to secure facilities in Kerry in the 1970s. Changes over the years. Development that Castleisland Desmonds have done. More awareness of female players' needs. Getting meals at Croke Park.</p> <p>17:30 Wife and children big Kerry Supporters.</p>
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	<p>17:50 Getting an award from former GAA President Nickey Brennan.</p> <p>18:30 Love for sport and where it came from.</p> <p>19:32 Playing for Ballyduff and getting suspended. Later playing in Listowel and Castleisland. Playing a hurling game in Castleisland in north Kerry and some players ending up in hospital.</p> <p>20:30 Decline and resurgence of camogie in Kerry.</p> <p>20:55 Differences in hurling skills between Galway and Kerry. Admiration for skill of Kilkenny players such as DJ Carey.</p> <p>21:50 Where he got the hurls when he was growing up in Galway. People cutting down ash trees. Cycling to Ballinasloe to catch a train to Castlebar to watch a game in 1976. Hiring taxis to go to matches.</p> <p>23:35 Benefit of sport for young people. Making friends through the GAA.</p> <p>24:40 Going to a state dinner when Garret Fitzgerald was Taoiseach.</p> <p>25:25 Helen O'Rourke CEO of ladies football association. Work she has done.</p> <p>25:45 Ladies football popular all over the world. Going to Dubai on an All Star trip.</p> <p>26:30 Former GAA President Paddy Buggy presenting him with a scroll at a function at the Gresham Hotel in Dublin. Relationship with the GAA. Friendship with former GAA President Joe McDonagh. Meeting Micheál O'Hehir and Con Houlihan.</p> <p>27:55 Ladies football being organised on a national level. Meeting at Hayes Hotel in Thurles in 1974. Richard Williams and Paul Sullivan of Kerry attending. Mick Talbot from Offaly present and Jim Kennedy from Clonmel became their first president. Starting a national championship. No underage structures to organise at the time. How that has all changed. Membership levels in 2011.</p> <p>30:10 Role of teachers and third level colleges in organisation of games. Gaelic competitions for mothers.</p> <p>31:20 Counties setting up by themselves before national organisation was founded.</p>
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	<p>31:35 Different roles he has filled. Attending meetings around the country with Helen O'Rourke. Getting lost in Belfast. Man assisting them. Kilkenny the last county to be affiliated. Lancashire, Warwickshire, London, New York, Boston all involved. Expense involved for sides outside of Ireland.</p> <p>34:30 Initial reaction to ladies football in Kerry. People attending a game in Fossa 'for a laugh'. Establishing set rules for the game. 'Pick-up' rule. Changing rules as time goes by. Problems with parish rule when it comes to places like Corca Dhuibhne.</p> <p>37:40 County board forming first in Kerry, but some ladies football clubs already existed in an unofficial capacity. County board setting up competitions.</p> <p>38:55 Reaction of men's county board when they organised a county board of their own. County final in Ardfert and player claiming she had been told they could not play. What happened as a result.</p> <p>40:30 Huge gate at a game in Nenagh in 2010. Need for more support at camogie and ladies football games. Cathy Slattery sending him statistics relating to crowds at games. Lack of female support at games.</p> <p>42:55 Sue Ramsbottom from Laois working with Irish President Mary McAleese. Meeting President McAleese. Her daughter a ladies football payer. Reason daughter stopped playing.</p> <p>43:45 Fundraising and difficulties associated with that. Sponsorship from Bank of Ireland, AIB, Kerry Group. Frank Hayes of Kerry Group helpful. TG4 sponsors at national level, Paul Ó Gallachóir, Ronan Ó Costello helping. O'Neills Sports providing help and sponsorship.</p> <p>46:35 Injury fund they have and how that works.</p> <p>47:20 Gate receipts. Church gate collections. Bord Gáis sponsoring National League.</p> <p>48:00 Travelling to games by car in the past. Hiring buses. Mick Talbot of Offaly and Tom Dowd of Cavan characters who were involved.</p> <p>49:20 Talk about integrating with the GAA. Fears about that. Former GAA President Joe McDonagh a supporter of ladies Gaelic games. Strategic plans and pilot schemes. Men and women's sides co-operating in Castleisland, Austin Stacks Tralee and Dr Crokes Killarney. Reservations about</p>
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	<p>integration. Need to protect injury fund. Positive aspects of potential integration.</p> <p>53:45 First coverage of their All-Irelands in 1976. Kerryman sports journalist Des Cahill doing a report. Struggling for coverage over the years. Seán Óg Ó Ceallacháin not mentioning ladies football results on the radio.</p> <p>55:10 Impact of nine-in-a-row run on ladies football in Kerry. Dedication of players like Nora Foley, Dell McLoughlin. Mary Scanlon captain in the 1980s. Mystery over why she was not at training. Performance she put in 1988. Liam Forde refereeing that day. Article in Connacht Tribune about Helen Carney, who played for Galway against Kerry not long after marrying Frank Carney - the man who refereed that day.</p> <p>59:00 Work he did as a trainer with the minor team of 1980. Involvement with seniors throughout the decade. Success Kerry team enjoyed. Training they did.</p> <p>01:02:00 Trying to get former players back together for a function. Meeting in Ballygarry Hotel near Tralee about organising it. Meeting Frank Hayes of Kerry Group to enlist his help. Advice he gave. GAA broadcaster Micheál Ó Muircheartaigh MC at the function.</p> <p>01:04:30 Mary Jo Curran of Beaufort the greatest player of all time in his opinion. What she won through the years.</p> <p>01:05:20 Effects of marriage and family life on players' ability to remain involved with ladies football.</p> <p>01:07:00 What makes a good player. Former Kerry footballer and manager Páidí Ó Sé's ideas on this. Kerry footballer Darran O'Sullivan and how he has worked on his game. Changes in coaching methods over the years and what he thinks of that. Less frees taken off the ground. Valerie Mulcahy of Cork a talented free taker.</p> <p>01:10:40 Attributes a good trainer needs.</p> <p>01:11:40 Mick Collins of Fossa a character. Mick Talbot of Offaly another interesting character, as was Tom Dowd of Cavan.</p> <p>01:13:40 Being president of the national association from 1982-1985 and Agnes Gorman national secretary. Problem with contacting her – lack of phones.</p> <p>01:14:40 Changes in technology and impact on ladies football. Vetting coaches. Embracing change.</p>
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	<p>01:17:10 Role as president and what that involved. Geraldine Giles a former president and work she did. Pat Quill from Wexford president in 2011. Going to New York when he was president. All Stars game and sponsorship from TG4 and O'Neills. Trip to Dubai. Taking ill. Going to Singapore. Dislike of long-haul flights.</p> <p>01:21:25 Success of Cork and Dublin in All-Irelands over the years.</p> <p>01:22:10 Funding from Sports Council headed by John Treacy.</p> <p>01:22:40 Emigration impacting on ladies football.</p> <p>01:22:50 Controversy when Mayo withdrew their team from the championship. Player power. Trainer in Kerry dismissed due to player power. Why Mayo team was withdrawn. How matter was resolved.</p> <p>01:26:05 Central Council meetings and how they have changed. Convention at Strand Hotel in Limerick. Different committees. Fr Clark saying Mass.</p> <p>01:29:25 Dual players and problems that arose. Mary O'Connor of Cork a former dual player involved in administration in Dublin.</p> <p>01:31:00 Ladies football office moved out of Croke Park and reason for that. Paula Prunty having an office of her own in a new building.</p> <p>01:32:05 Standard of refereeing. Inconsistency. Tyrone men's football team manager Mickey Harte writing about inconsistency. Agnes Gorman refereeing first Junior All-Ireland final at Croke Park.</p> <p>01:34:00 Enjoying the different positions he held. Working as development officer and going to a rules seminar in Omagh. Owen McNally travelling with him in a car. Turnout at seminar in Omagh. Work as treasurer and going through reports. Marcus Carney working on them too. Transporting large sums of money.</p> <p>01:37:50 Impact of GAA involvement on family life.</p> <p>01:38:35 Not winning an All-Ireland and what was positive about that. Michael Ryan manager of All-Ireland champions Waterford. Playing a National League final replay in Dungarvan. How that worked out. Ladies football team winning All-Ireland club title. Mary Geaney a talented camogie</p>
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	<p>player who brought a lot to their team. Reaching a camogie Munster club final.</p> <p>01:41:15 Support for Castleisland Desmonds team locally. Receiving Hall of Fame awards.</p> <p>01:42:20 Admiration for former Kerry footballer Mikey Sheehy and how he chipped Dublin goalkeeper Paddy Cullen in an All-Ireland final. His son meeting Mikey Sheehy. Pat Spillane and Colm Cooper also talented players.</p> <p>01:43:55 Disappointments. Decline after winning nine-in-a-row.</p> <p>01:44:50 Impact of Gaelic games on his sense of identity.</p> <p>01:45:35 What his GAA involvement has meant to him.</p> <p>01:46:55 Involvement with Lixnaw hurling club when they were purchasing a field. Fr McCloskey and Diarmuid Ó Catháin approaching him about attending the auction. How that went.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p>✓ Supporter ✓ Player ✓ Manager ✓ Coach ✓ Steward</p> <p>✓ Chairperson ✓ Committee Member ✓ Grounds-person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer ✓ 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 from the age of 10 until his mid-30s. Won North Kerry Championships with Lixnaw.</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Has been involved in administration since the 1960s.</p> <p>Club: Lixnaw Secretary; Desmond's Chairman, Desmond's Camogie Chairman; Desmond's Ladies Chairman</p> <p>Camogie County: Chairman</p> <p>Ladies County: Chairman, Treasurer, President</p> <p>Connacht Ladies: President, Chairman</p> <p>Ladies Central: President (1982 – 1985), Treasurer (21 years), Development Officer (10 years), Registrar (10 years), Member of Management</p>

REFERENCE NO. GY/1/15

Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 01:49:06
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: _____Arlene Crampsie_____

Date: _____17/08/12_____