

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Arlene Crampsie
Date of Interview	11 th March 2010
Location	The Yacht Bar, Lanesborough, Co. Longford
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Seamus Flynn
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1939 Home County: Longford
Education	Primary: Cloonemorris NS, Co. Leitrim Secondary: Longford Vocational School
Family	Siblings: 4 brothers & 2 sisters Current Family if Different: Married to Mary Agnes with 4 sons and 2 daughters
Club(s)	Clonguish [Longford]; Rathcline [Longford]; Barnacoola [Leitrim]; St Barrys [Roscommon]; Harps and Shamrocks [Manchester]
Occupation	Bord na Móna employee
Parents' Occupation	Psychiatric Nurse [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

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Date of Report	28 th May 2012
Period Covered	1950s – 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Longford
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Emigration, Involvement in GAA abroad, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, GAA Abroad, Identity, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Alcohol, Politics, Socialising, Relationships
Interview Summary	<p>Seamus talks about his many achievements in a long GAA career. At club level he played with Longford side Clonguish, winning eight championships including an unprecedented four-in-a-row. He also played for the Longford county team during one of their most successful ever periods, claiming a National League title in 1966 and winning the Leinster title in 1968 before losing the All-Ireland semi-final to Kerry. Seamus talks about those teams and what made them so successful. He also recalls that the professional attitude they adopted towards training and their use of tactics in games was essential to their success. He also spent some time in England and won a championship over there, and he talks about how the GAA there was different to that in Ireland. As he got older Seamus got involved in training teams and he became a delegate to the Leinster Council. He also offers his views on modern-day management and the way in which the game is played today.</p> <p>00:20 Earliest memory is playing with Clooneen in a parish league at the age of 14 and getting a raw deal in the final.</p> <p>01:45 At 15 he won a junior league medal with Clonguish in Longford.</p> <p>01:55 In 1956/1957 he played minor with Longford.</p> <p>02:10 He was suspended in 1958 for playing illegally in Roscommon. Liam Hastings was chairman of the county board at the time.</p> <p>02:15 In 1959 he came back and won a junior championship and league, and then went to England until 1962.</p>

	<p>02:50 When he came back they won four-in-a-row.</p> <p>03:05 In 1957 he played his first senior game for Longford against Galway in Ballinasloe. Jack Mahon was marking him, Sean Purcell was full forward and Seamus had to go mark him.</p> <p>04:00 In 1960 they asked him to come back for a game against Dublin but he didn't.</p> <p>04:25 His first game back in 1962 was against Meath in Kells in the League.</p> <p>04:50 Things weren't organised back then. In 1964 they played Westmeath in Pearse Park in the Championship and had only started training 10 days previously. They lost.</p> <p>05:40 The players got together and decided to do something. Mick Higgins came in as trainer and Fr McGee - a brother of Eugene's - came in as manager.</p> <p>06:40 They went unbeaten in the League and made the 1965 Leinster final, losing to Dublin.</p> <p>07:00 In 1966 they won the League, beating Galway and New York.</p> <p>07:25 The referee had two brothers on the New York team so things were difficult.</p> <p>08:05 They then lost a Leinster final semi-final replay to Offaly, before winning Leinster in 1968.</p> <p>08:45 After a few more years Seamus left the panel but was still playing club final.</p> <p>09:05 Clonguish won more titles in 1968, 1969, 1972, 1973 - eight in 12 years.</p> <p>09:55 In 1968 they lost the All-Ireland semi-final to Kerry was two points. They were missing Jimmy Flynn and Sean Murray.</p> <p>10:25 Seamus' brother in law Peter Sheridan of Granard was on that team, as was 'Smiler' Fay, who played with Longford Slashers.</p> <p>11:10 Seamus is the only one with eight championships; Jimmy Flynn does too but he didn't start them all.</p> <p>11:25 In England he played with a Manchester club, Harps and Shamrocks and won a senior championship in 1961.</p>
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	<p>12:05 In wet weather the pitches were very bad but in the summer they were okay. Dressing rooms were not great.</p> <p>12:50 Recalls toting out in a CIE wagon in Pearse Park and under a big tree with Clonguish.</p> <p>13:55 There seems to be more injuries now. Seamus feels it was because they were more used to physical work back then.</p> <p>14:20 He injured an Achilles tendon in 1976 in a county final.</p> <p>15:10 He used to cycle eight miles to the Technical School in Longford and to games.</p> <p>16:20 Recalls being in O'Briens shop after a game and cycling home in the dark and having a narrow escape.</p> <p>17:50 At training some people were wearing boots.</p> <p>18:15 Training was running laps, press ups and some sprinting.</p> <p>19:15 Nowadays there are too many footballs used in training sessions.</p> <p>19:50 Mick Higgins changed things tactically and was very shrewd.</p> <p>21:15 Each player was given a specific task and the players accepted these methods.</p> <p>22:20 Football has changed a lot because of handpassing and Seamus does not like this.</p> <p>23:25 The GAA is a simple game that is being complicated by managers who feel that they have to impose their own style.</p> <p>25:00 County boards will not be able to afford what they are spending on physios and treating injuries forever.</p> <p>25:50 Because he came through as a county minor, being made a senior was not a huge deal; it was a gradual thing.</p> <p>26:20 He had three brothers already on the verge of county football already - at one stage there were three of them on the team together.</p> <p>26:40 One of his brothers played as a goalkeeper with the county for a while.</p> <p>26:55 His father was delighted because he had always encouraged his sons to play.</p>
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	<p>27:10 There was a field near their house when they were young and everyone used to come and play football in the evenings.</p> <p>27:55 Whilst doing farmwork he would bring a football with him.</p> <p>28:30 He has four brothers and Liam is the youngest.</p> <p>28:40 They lived beside Lough Fergus on the Shannon.</p> <p>29:20 His mother washed their gear all the time.</p> <p>29:45 His father was a psychiatric nurse in Sligo so he could afford to buy them football gear.</p> <p>30:25 Most people at the time in the area were living off the land.</p> <p>31:00 In 1919 Clonguish won a senior championship. They didn't win another until 1962.</p> <p>31:30 When they lost in 1966 and 1967 some people ridiculed them.</p> <p>32:05 He played for Rathcline in 1984 with a junior team and won a junior championship.</p> <p>33:20 A lot of the celebrations with Clonguish were in the pub. John Joe Reilly played on the team and had a pub. He was later registrar with the county board.</p> <p>34:00 They would then go to Newtownfergus and go to the pubs there.</p> <p>34:20 Today the club has a big centre but that was not there then.</p> <p>34:45 There would be bonfires and things would be painted in the club colours - green and white.</p> <p>36:00 A number of the Clonguish team played with the county team - and a lot of them were related. The Burkes, the Hopkins's and the Barnes's were all first cousins.</p> <p>36:25 Paddy Hanrahan, the captain, was originally a Kilashee man but he transferred to Clonguish.</p> <p>36:45 Bertie Allen organised everything and the pitch is named after him now; his wife would wash all the jerseys and his son Seán now lives in Dublin.</p> <p>37:45 He was out for a walk in Platt Fields in Manchester and</p>
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	<p>saw people playing football and Seamus joined in.</p> <p>38:45 When they won the championship in England they went 'absolutely mad' with the celebrations.</p> <p>39:25 In his first game in England he struggled with high balls as it was quite physical and the refereeing standards weren't great.</p> <p>40:05 He played for the county, for Lancashire, as well.</p> <p>40:15 The fitness levels weren't great but the crack was.</p> <p>40:35 The St Mary's club had a clubhouse and they would socialise there.</p> <p>41:10 He has four boys and two girls. The eldest boy is in Perth. His daughter Eithne is a civil servant in Edenderry. Gerard is into showjumping, was with the army and is now in Istanbul. Andrew is into fitted kitchens. Sharon is a hairdresser. Kevin is a garda.</p> <p>42:20 They all played GAA and Andrew is a selector with the local club. Gerard played county minor and Under-21.</p> <p>43:00 Losing to Westmeath in 1964 was a turning point for the county team.</p> <p>44:10 The players were the prime movers in making a change.</p> <p>44:25 After winning in 1966 there was big celebrations. Glennon's Sawmills donated a lorry to take them from Edgeworthstown to the Longford Arms.</p> <p>45:10 They tried to relax before the big game. Mick Higgins tried to keep the mood light.</p> <p>46:00 They had good characters on the panel.</p> <p>46:20 Offaly were playing a Division 2 hurling final that day and John Dowling - later to become GAA President - was involved with Offaly County Board and visited their changing room and encouraged them.</p> <p>47:55 It was a tight game against Galway.</p> <p>48:45 It's a pity they haven't won anything major since.</p> <p>49:20 They had a lot of injuries after the Leinster final in 1968.</p> <p>50:10 He doesn't think that the selectors got it right on the day against Kerry.</p>
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	<p>51:45 When teams are not used to playing at the top level, it can affect players and selectors.</p> <p>52:30 He got involved in management while still a player, training and managing Clonguish in 1968 and 1969. In 1968 he was captain and trainer.</p> <p>53:05 He trained a team in Kilmore, Co Roscommon.</p> <p>53:25 He was involved with Rathcline for several years.</p> <p>53:35 John Greene, a member of the county executive told him about a vacant position for a Leinster Council delegate after Tommy O'Brien died and Seamus went for that.</p> <p>54:20 He and Jimmy Fox were on the Leinster Council for ten years and made good friends.</p> <p>55:05 They tried to get hurling going in the county but it was difficult to go beyond a certain level when there is no tradition there.</p> <p>56:15 The Leinster Council-type jobs are for younger people who are more tech-savvy.</p> <p>57:00 He has been treasurer with Rathcline.</p> <p>57:10 He was a selector and a kitman for the county team.</p> <p>57:55 Best memory is putting on the county jersey.</p> <p>58:00 Another is winning a senior championship with Clonguish.</p> <p>58:20 Another is winning the National League in 1966 and the Leinster Championship in 1968.</p> <p>58:35 Longford won a junior All-Ireland in 1937, and some O'Byrne Cups, but nothing like what Seamus and his teammates did in the 1960s.</p> <p>59:35 Disappointments include losing in the first round of the Leinster Championship in 1969 to Wexford as reigning champions.</p> <p>01:00:00 After winning the National League the lost in the first round of the Leinster Championship to Louth.</p> <p>01:00:20 He captained Leinster once against Munster. They lost.</p> <p>01:00:50 He was working in Roscommon for a while and came under pressure to get involved with the club there.</p>
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	<p>01:01:30 He got away with it for three years until he was caught.</p> <p>01:02:20 GAA hero would be Sean Purcell of Galway, who Seamus marked in 1957.</p> <p>01:03:05 Mickey Kearns of Sligo and Packie McGarty of Leitrim were very good too.</p> <p>01:03:25 Sean O'Neill was another.</p> <p>01:03:50 Mickey McLoone for Donegal was another, and Kerry's Mick O'Dwyer.</p> <p>01:04:40 Mick O'Connell of Kerry was great and Seamus marked him in 1968.</p> <p>01:05:10 Playing on famous players was a challenge.</p> <p>01:05:50 For years the GAA almost came before his wife and family, but not quite.</p> <p>01:08:00 He made great friends through his GAA involvement.</p> <p>01:08:35 He played for at least 40 years and got his name taken by the referee twice in that time.</p> <p>01:09:10 He doesn't agree with negative play and doesn't like some of the tactics that have come into the game.</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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p> <p><input checked="" 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 from age 12 until he was 49. Seamus won 8 senior championship medals, 2 junior leagues and 1 junior championship with Clonguish; 1 junior championship with Rathcline; 1 senior championship with Harps and Shamrocks; a vocational schools title. At county level he was on the Longford team that won the League in 1966, a provincial championship in 1968 and a number of O'Byrne Cups.</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how)</p>	<p>Club: Rathcline Treasurer and Delegate to Longford County Board.</p> <p>Longford County Board Delegate to Leinster Council.</p>

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Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 01:20:57
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: _____Arlene Crampsie_____

Date: _____28/05/12_____