

## GAA Oral History Project

## Interview Report Form

<b>Name of Interviewer</b>	Regina Fitzpatrick
<b>Date of Interview</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2010
<b>Location</b>	John's home near Midleton, Co Cork
<b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname)	John Fenton
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1955 <b>Home County:</b> Cork
<b>Education</b>	<b>Primary:</b> Midleton CBS, Co. Cork <b>Secondary:</b> Midleton CBS, Co. Cork <b>Third Level:</b> University College Cork
<b>Family</b>	<b>Siblings:</b> 2 brothers & 1 sister <b>Current Family if Different:</b> Wife (Christine); 1 son & 2 daughters
<b>Club(s)</b>	Midleton GAA Club, Co. Cork
<b>Occupation</b>	Sales Manager
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	Plant operator [Father]; Office Administrator and Housewife [Mother]
<b>Religion</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	None
<b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>	Plays golf as a pastime

<b>Date of Report</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> May 2012
<b>Period Covered</b>	1890-2010
<b>Counties/Countries Covered</b>	Cork
<b>Key Themes Covered</b>	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Media, Emigration, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Professionalism, Retirement, Socialising, Relationships
<b>Interview Summary</b>	<p>00:15 Born in St Finbarr's Hospital Cork. Home town is Midleton. Father from Carrigtouhill and played junior hurling with Cork. Mother from Midleton and her family were tailors. Her uncles, the O'Keefes from Carrigtouhill, were involved in hurling. Father hurling with Willie John Daly and Matty Fouhy</p> <p>01:45 Going to Christian Brothers school. Grandmother telling him stories of Carrigtouhill teams. Playing hurling in local field.</p> <p>03:05 Christian Brothers encouraging hurling. Winning competitions. Playing with club teams.</p> <p>03:50 Playing in road leagues for The Sons of Rest against the Forkhams the Mill Road, St Mary's Road. Informal competition. Numbers of players on each side. Venues for games. Playing in Foley's field. Rules of engagement. Learning to play and benefits of that. Absence of coaches and referees. Equipment used. Rivalry.</p> <p>07:10 Playing in club-organised street leagues. Intensity of rivalries. Involvement of parents.</p> <p>08:25 Midleton when he was growing up. Emigration. Population of 3,000 in the 1950s and 1960s. Growth in population since. Irish Distillers as industrial base. Arrival of Woolcombers in 1960s. Meat plant arriving. Proximity to Cork City.</p> <p>10:10 Role of Gaelic games at school. P.E. class. Hurling games at school and ages catered for. Travelling by bus to play games in Youghal, Mitchelstown, Fermoy, Cork City. Lack of organised training. Role of Brother Moran from Kerry. Prominence of other sports.</p>

	<p>13:15 First game for Midleton against Cloyne at 14 years of age. Playing for the Under-16s and minors. Playing in a cork minor hurling final against Glen Rovers in Cork in 1972.</p> <p>15:00 Playing for Cork minor hurling team and Midleton intermediate hurling team. Playing for the senior Midleton team.</p> <p>15:40 Realising he had talent in an Under-14 game against Youghal in Castlemartyr. Being encouraged by others. Enthusiasm for all sports. Sporting tradition in Midleton.</p> <p>17:40 Watching All-Irelands, rugby home internationals and the Agha Khan. Mícheál O'Heir on the radio and pretending to be Eddie Keher, Christy Ring, Jimmy Doyle, Theo English or Donie Nealon afterwards.</p> <p>18:40 Tipperary the dominant team in the late 1950s. Joe Coastly giving out about Tipperary hurlers. Cork beating Kilkenny to win the 1966 All-Ireland hurling final and Midleton's Paddy Fitzgerald on the Cork team. The night the winning team returned. Bonfires. Team visiting school. Making fences with hurleys for showjumping the day after the final. Asking Paddy Fitzgerald for a sliotar. Lack of rugby balls and footballs.</p> <p>21:30 Equipment they had at school. Red and white jerseys. First pair of boots and how he felt about them.</p> <p>23:10 Role of GAA club in Midleton. Presence of rugby club. History of Midleton GAA club. Winning the first hurling All-Ireland in 1890. Club's shortcomings in the past. Impact of club on the town. State of club in 2010.</p> <p>26:00 Effects of population increase on club. Adequacy of club facilities.</p> <p>27:50 Playing with the intermediate team in 1973. Playing against Blackrock in Páirc Uí Chaoimh. Playing in Carrigtouhill. What hurling meant to him.</p> <p>29:15 Being selected for the Cork minors. How his birth date affected his eligibility for teams. Visualising playing for Cork when he was a child. Missing out on 1972 minor team. Losing to Tipperary in 1973.</p> <p>31:10 Making the Cork Under-21 team whilst playing for</p>
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	<p>Imokilly. Paddy Cooney from Youghal, father of 2010 GAA President Christy Cooney, acting as a Cork Under-21 selector and giving John advice.</p> <p>32:00 Making the senior panel at 19 and his feelings on that. Playing with boyhood heroes like Ger McCarthy and Ray Cummins. Playing against senior players at club level in 1979 and learning from that. Dealing with nerves. Being prepared for games.</p> <p>35:35 Training regime whilst playing with Cork. Running on Christmas Eve. Effort required of inter-county players. Emphasis on skills. Use of gyms.</p> <p>39:55 Noel Collins being the first coach with qualifications to come in and helping Cork to a three-in-a-row from 1976-1978. Johnny Clifford, Canon Bertie Troy, Canon Michael O'Brien, Justin McCarthy, Gerald McCarthy bringing experience and a winning mentality to coaching. Difference between coaching then and in 2010.</p> <p>42:00 Team philosophy. Seanie O'Leary, Ray Cummins and Charlie McCarthy in the full forward line. Emphasis on speed.</p> <p>43:15 First game in Croke Park, a National League game against Dublin. What that experience was like. Being with the team in Croke Park in 1976 as an emergency extra panel member. What playing in Croke Park meant to the team.</p> <p>45:40 Going to 1973 All-Ireland football final between Cork and Kerry with his friend David O'Keefe on the train, his first time going. Watching the game from Hill 16. Length of time spent there. Jimmy Bary Murphy, Ray Cummins, Declan Barron, Billy Morgan and Denis Conlon playing. Description of Croke Park at the time.</p> <p>48:20 Captaining Cork team to the All-Ireland in 1984. Midleton joining Kickems in record books. Centenary year. Winning the Cork senior hurling championship in 1983 with Midleton and being captain. Becoming Cork captain as a result. Five other Midleton players on Cork panel and Joe Desmond on selection committee. Impact of All-Ireland win on Cork hurling. Playing the final in Thurles after losing the final in 1982 and 1983 to Kilkenny. 1984 opponents Offaly. Starting the year with a League game against Limerick. Determination of team to succeed. Bringing the Liam MacCarthy home. Parade in Midleton after winning county championship in 1983. Atmosphere after All-Ireland win.</p>
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	<p>55:10 Compares winning a county final to winning an All-Ireland. Winning an intermediate championship in 1978 with a young team. Losing to St Finbarr's four years in-a-row in the county semi-final. Difference between what All-Ireland and county wins meant to Cork and Midleton. Rivalry with St Finbarr's. Blackrock, St Finbarr's and Glen Rovers dominating Cork hurling. UCC, Youghal, Avondhu, Imokilly sometimes prominent. Self-belief of Midleton team.</p> <p>01:00:35 Commitment of Midleton players. Career-span of those players. Impact of hurling involvement on family life. Working professionally with opponents from the GAA field. Talking to people about games. Impact of GAA career on professional life. Famous goal he scored against Limerick in Thurles in 1987. Friendship with Tommy McQuaid. Tomás Mulcahy , Kevin Hennessy and John Fitzgibbon in the full forward line when he scored his goal.</p> <p>01:10:05 Goal featuring in an advertisement some time later. Wexford's Tony Doran featuring in an advertisement shortly before that. Going to Wicklow with Tommy Seaward and Damien Irwin from Killeagh, and Colman Quirke from Midleton to make the ad. Actor Joe Lynch almost involved in making the ad. Colman having an injured shoulder on the day of shooting.</p> <p>01:13:05 Camaraderie on teams. Stopping playing in 1991. How that felt. Tom Cashman, Kevin Hennessey, Dr Con Murphy, John Kilcronin in the dressing-room. Separation of club and county role. Travelling by car to games. Getting cars from Eddie Roche in Carrigtouhill. Pre-match rituals. John Kilcronin of Glen Rovers as a masseur. Bumping into former opponents like Gary Kirby, Nicky English, Eamonn Cregan, Frank Cummins, Joe Hennessy.</p> <p>01:20:10 Reasons for retiring. Winning an All-Ireland club championship in 1988. Playing the semi-final in Cushendall, Antrim. Playing since 1975. Reflections on career.</p> <p>01:23:40 Administrative involvement. Being a selector with the club from a young age. Fundraising. Time commitment involved.</p> <p>01:25:55 Changes he has seen in the GAA over the years. Business side of the Association. Skill levels in games in 2010. Niall Cahillane's comments on state of football. Gym work in hurling.</p>
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	<p>01:29:05 Challenges facing the GAA. Attitude of senior inter-county players.</p> <p>01:30:30 Importance of amateurism. Sport as a job.</p> <p>01:31:45 What the GAA has meant to him.</p>
<b>Involvement in GAA</b>	<p>✓ Supporter ✓ Player ✓ Manager ✓ Coach ✓ Steward</p> <p>✓ Chairperson ✓ Committee Member ✓ Grounds-person</p> <p>✓ Caterer ✓ Jersey Washer ✓ Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____</p>
<b>Record as a Player</b> (Titles won; Length of time played)	<p>Played hurling with Midleton at various levels 1967-1991 – Club achievements:</p> <p>Cork County Senior Hurling Championship: 1983, 86, 87, 91.</p> <p>Munster Senior Club Hurling Championship: 1983 and 1987.</p> <p>All-Ireland Senior Club Hurling Championship: 1988.</p> <p>Played Minor Hurling with Cork 1973</p> <p>Played Under-21 Hurling with Cork 1975-76</p> <p>Played Senior Hurling with Cork 1975-1987, won two All-Ireland Senior Hurling Championships 1978 and 1984, was captain in 1984.</p> <p>Won National League titles with Cork in 1981 and 1982.</p> <p>Won 5 All-Stars</p> <p>Won Texaco Hurler of the Year in 1986.</p>
<b>Record as an Administrator</b> (Positions held; how long for)	<p>Midleton: Secretary, Treasurer and Chairperson at various times between 1990 and 2002</p> <p>Established Development Committee in Midleton.</p>

<b>Format</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
<b>Duration</b>	Length of Interview: 01:32:45
<b>Language</b>	English

**To be filled in by Interviewer:**

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Signed:      Regina Fitzpatrick

Date:      18<sup>th</sup> May 2012