

## GAA Oral History Project

## Interview Report Form

<b>Name of Interviewer</b>	Regina Fitzpatrick
<b>Date of Interview</b>	5 December 2008
<b>Location</b>	Clonmel
<b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname)	Benny O'Connell and Con Hogan (also present Nuala O'Connell and Catherine Ann O'Connell)
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<p><b>Benny:</b>  <b>Year Born:</b> 1934  <b>Home County:</b> Limerick</p> <p><b>Con:</b>  <b>Year Born:</b> 1949  <b>Home County:</b> Tipperary</p>
<b>Education</b>	<p><b>Benny:</b>  <b>Primary:</b> De La Salle, Hospital, Co. Limerick  <b>Secondary:</b> De La Salle, Hospital, Co. Limerick  <b>Third Level:</b> Pallaskenry Agricultural College, Limerick</p> <p><b>Con:</b>  <b>Primary:</b> CBS Tipperary  <b>Secondary:</b> CBS Doon  <b>Third Level:</b> University of Limerick</p>
<b>Family</b>	<p><b>Benny:</b>  <b>Siblings:</b> four brothers and four sisters  <b>Current Family if Different:</b> Nuala (wife) – 3 daughters, 1 sons</p>

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	<b>Con:</b> <b>Siblings:</b> Five siblings
<b>Club(s)</b>	Marfield GAA club
<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Benny:</b> Retired Civil Servant <b>Con:</b> Retired Human Resources Manager
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	<b>Benny:</b> Farmers <b>Con:</b> Farmers
<b>Religion</b>	<b>Both:</b> Roman Catholic
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	<b>Con:</b> Fianna Fáil

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<b>Date of Report</b>	6 October 2009
<b>Period Covered</b>	1930s-2009
<b>Counties/Countries Covered</b>	Limerick, Tipperary, Cork
<b>Key Themes Covered</b>	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Material Culture, Education, Religion, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Rivalries, Irish Language, Culture, Scór, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges
<b>Interview Summary</b>	<p>0:00 Introduction of Benny O’Connell, Con Hogan and Nuala O’Connell (Benny’s wife)</p> <p>0:28 How their house got its name.</p> <p>0:37 Native of Hospital, Co. Limerick – worked for Department of Transport; moved to Clonmel when his job was transferred there in 1965.</p> <p>0:47 Cycling to matches growing up; going to some soccer matches; nine in family and nine next door; three families of neighbours would meet every Sunday to play hurling; Larry Murphy, who had played senior hurling for Limerick (pre-1940); story about helping him to save the hay in exchange for being taken to see Limerick and Cork play in Thurles in 1948/49; his first time at a match in Thurles.</p> <p>3:24 The O’Connells, the McGraths and Maloneys playing hurling together at the gate.</p> <p>4:02 Four boys in his family; surrounded by big families; twelve boys between the three families; girls would hurl too or play football; jumpers as goalposts; dividing up into teams.</p> <p>5:39 Spochs as hurleys – a type of stick from the ditch; hurleys were too expensive; made their own hurling balls.</p> <p>6:30 Knowing how to pick wood for a hurling stick; usually ash; story about getting his first hurley in Pallaskenry; saved for six months.</p> <p>7:20 Parents had no interest in hurling.</p> <p>7:39 Playing as a team with neighbours – going to play for Hospital when the championship was on; never trained with the Hospital team; doing all the hurling at home; physical</p>

	<p>fitness; Jim McGrath his neighbour playing inter-county for Limerick and Tipperary; Dixie McGrath played for Tipperary.</p> <p>8:45 [Con Hogan speaking] – from Cappawhite; Jim McGrath going to Tipperary to work in the creamary.</p> <p>9:28 [Benny O’Connell] Story about the McGraths getting players from Cappawhite to play for Kiltilly.</p> <p>9:37 [Con Hogan] Story about Dilly McGrath and an All-Ireland in Dublin in the 1960s; seven staying in the same room the night before the All-Ireland.</p> <p>11:05 [Benny O’Connell] – Second time going to a match in Thurles; cycled thirty miles from Hospital; twenty cycling off together; going to dances on the way home; an outdoor dance in Clonoulty; dancing on a platform; dancing until 4am ; all céilí dancing; cycling home afterwards and getting up to milk the cows the following morning.</p> <p>12:20 All bicycles on the roads going to matches, no cars; stopping in Tipperary to get a sandwich; stopping at Tony Brennan’s pub in Clonoulty because they remembered him playing hurling; the toilet in the pub.</p> <p>13:11 Didn’t wear county colours to matches; eventually the paper caps came in; the dye running down your face if it rained; cycling off to matches after mass; Johnny Ryan from Tipperary town used to cycle to Dublin to see Tipperary play in Croke Park.</p> <p>14:06 Hurling heroes - Mick Mackey; the ‘Mick Mackey solo run’; Christy Ring; 1940 Limerick team; looked up to them; John McGrath played for Tipperary so they would follow Tipperary; admired Tipperary; didn’t like Cork ‘Cork bet and the hay saved’.</p> <p>15:51 Description of Semple Stadium when he went first; the development of the stadium.</p> <p>16:39 Going to see Tipperary v Cork in the Munster Final in Gaelic Park in Limerick in 1949, a famous match, it was a hot day, a draw at full-time; Tipperary winning in extra time and going on to win three in a row. His cousin Austin McDonnell from Thurles played on the minor team that day; description of the crowd in Limerick that day; Con Hogan’s mother was there that day also, she was pregnant with Con at the time; First year John Doyle hurled for Tipperary; members of that Tipperary team.</p> <p>19:05 Playing soccer and going to soccer matches; looking</p>
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	<p>around for the vigilance people from the GAA; ban strictly enforced.</p> <p>19:45 Hurling at the De La Salle in Hospital; trained by the Christian Brothers; central part of life in school.</p> <p>20:23 Great story about the Baby Ford; sold three bicycles to buy it; rationing of petrol; driving to Thurles to a match; mending punctures along the way; going to a match in Tipperary town on the way home; going on to another dance in Doon after that.</p> <p>22:03 Dermot O'Brien, Jackie Lowe, Matt Hayes and Mick Delahunty were all big bands of the time.</p> <p>22:30 Story about an incident with a Garda in Doon after a match.</p> <p>23:09 1954 – Year of 'An Tostal' Jim Keating his friend wrote a poem about one of those famous journeys. Recited by Benny O'Connell.</p> <p>26:48 Running out of petrol on the way home from a dance.</p> <p>27:18 Céilí dancing – a lot of people knew the dances; lots of house dances; going to the neighbours houses at night time; dance in O'Connell's house on Christmas night; mother did recitations; dancing to the gramophone; recites part of the recitation his mother used to perform; recites part of 'St Peter stood at the Golden Gates' with help from his wife Nuala.</p> <p>30:55 Everyone had a party piece – new shop in Clonmel; Tangled Yarn.</p> <p>31:44 Came to Clonmel in 1965 – buying the site for their house and building the house; getting married; getting Land Commission permission for the house.</p> <p>33:51 Getting involved in the local GAA; son, Lawrence born in 1967; Con Hogan, his neighbour instrumental with getting him involved with the local team when Lawrence was playing under 12 around 1980; involved in juvenile team; no grounds at the time; involvement in Scór.</p> <p>34:44 1984 – 1<sup>st</sup> Scór na nÓg for Marlfield GAA; writing sketches; 'The Elves and the Shoemaker'; set dancing; ballad groups; recitations.</p> <p>35:54 How the Scór competition– going around to local halls to compete; listening to the same recitations over and over again; trying to get the boys to dance sets.</p>
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	<p>37:25 Writing the sketches for Scór; making the props; went on to County Finals; transience – parents only involved as long as their children were – brought people into the club.</p> <p>38:50 [Con Hogan] History of Marfield Club; older club disbanded in the time of the Blueshirts; new club formed in the 1940s; use of a field on the Bagwell Estate.</p> <p>40:32 Moving to Clonmel in 1976 – starting juvenile club in 1978; mid-1980s had a minor football and hurling team comprised of children from one road; story of the selling of the Bagwell Estate and purchasing of grounds for Marfield GAA club; description of the pitch; decline of the club; closure of the local school.</p> <p>43:40 Affects of social change on the team; Clonmel a prosperous town, not much emigration; Marfield not a village; their rivals were St Mary’s club; likelihood of St Mary’s and Marfield merging.</p> <p>45:42 [Benny O’Connell] Role of the GAA in the community; GAA integrating people, not class- conscious.</p> <p>46:33 [Nuala O’Connell] Bond formed amongst ‘GAA people’</p> <p>46:48 [Con Hogan and Nuala O’Connell] Their children identifying with other GAA people when they went to college; his son going to Waterford IT and all the students in their club and county jerseys; social bond between them same as with the music; sons thumbing and taking hurls so that they would get a lift ; GAA community, it opens doors getting jobs.</p> <p>48:22 Irish language and the GAA – writing the names in Irish ‘An Sloinnteoir’; difficulty of translating the addresses in to Irish, particularly with the ‘newcomers’; immigration in the area.</p> <p>50:08 History and meaning of place name ‘Marfield’; story about the local monastery and convent; old St Patrick’s well in Marfield; local traditions; cure in the well; tradition of hurlers going to the well for a cure for their injuries; funny story about the waters of the well; people still bathe injuries in the well and bring waters from the well.</p> <p>53:00 Benny and Nuala’s daughter Catherine-Ann arrives.</p> <p>53:17 Catherine-Ann recites ‘Maloney Remembers the Resurrection of Kate Finnucan’</p> <p>56:06 Other recitations that were preformed at Scór – ‘The Old Woman and the Road’; ‘The Old Priest and Peter Gilligan’</p>
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	<p>56:25 Scór Sinsear – hosting their own Scór; Mathún O’Keefe went on to win All-Irelands in Scór.</p> <p>57:03 Con Hogan recites ‘The Two Travellers’</p> <p>1:00:14 ‘My Clonmel Scrapbook’ – a collection of poems and ballads about Clonmel by Boland; an uncle of Frederick H. Boland who chaired the United Nations; broke his stick trying to silence Kruschev; Seán Mac Reamonn used to recite ‘The Two Travellers’ on the radio.</p> <p>1:01:02 Learning and finding recitations – practicing for Scór</p> <p>1:01:30 Rivalry in Scór – people becoming too serious about Scór Sinsear; making costumes; boys and dancing; Newcastle were always very good set dancers; Marlfield were good at the novelty act and the ballad singing but weak on dancing.</p> <p>1:03:03 Links between Irish culture and the GAA – role of Scór in maintaining Irish culture; GAA preserving a uniqueness about Irish; immersed young children in Irish culture without them realising it; getting children on the stage; Shane O’Donoghue (RTÉ sports commentator) came from their club.</p> <p>1:05:05 Not a strong Irish speaking area – there is a Cumann Gaelach and Irish music; only a couple of families involved in music in Clonmel until the Fleadh came in 1992; started a revival in Irish music in the area; Powerstown, a neighbouring parish had Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann – all of Benny and Nuala’s children became musicians after that; Jack Ryan an influential character in the tradition music scene and also Tom Barrett; Fleadh was all about young people – now a strong traditional music scene in Clonmel; primary and secondary Gaelscoileanna opened in the town.</p> <p>1:07:27 Performing in Bulmers television advertisement</p> <p>1:09:36 Con Hogan sings ‘Kilcash’</p> <p>1:11:39 Benny O’Connel plays ‘Kilcash’ and ‘Sliabh na mBan’ and a Dunphy’s hornpipe, Cappmore polka and Maloe polka on the melodeon.</p> <p>1:19:05 All sing ‘Sliabh na mBan’</p> <p>1:23:03 Recording ends</p> <p>1:23:03 Recording restarts – Con Hogan sings part of the old version of ‘Sliabh na mBan’</p>
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	<p>1:23:25 Con Hogan sings ‘She Lived Beside the Anner’ by Charles Kickham – local song – recording ends</p> <p>1:26:31 Recording re-starts. [Con Hogan] – playing his first match in the Glen of Aherlow; story about travelling to the match; accident on the way; pushing the car – 1958.</p> <p>1:28:05 The street league in 1962 organised by the Christian Brothers in Tipperary town</p>
<p><b>Involvement in GAA</b></p>	<p><b>Benny:</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input checked="" 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><b>Con:</b></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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input checked="" 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><b>Record as a Player</b> (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p><b>Benny:</b></p> <p>Minor Hurling with Hospital GAA Club, Limerick for two years – no victories.</p> <p><b>Con:</b></p> <p>Junior Hurling – South Tipperary 1983; Juvenile also</p>
<p><b>Record as an Administrator</b> (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p><b>Benny:</b></p> <p>Secretary of Marfield Juvenile club for about eight years.</p> <p><b>Con:</b></p> <p>County Chairman of Tipperary 2000-2003; Central Council Delegate 2003-present</p>



**REFERENCE NO. TP/1/2**

<b>Format</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
<b>Duration</b>	Length of Interview: 1:28:52
<b>Language</b>	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:            6 October 2009