

GAA Oral History Project

**Interview Report Form**

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| <b>Name of Interviewer</b>                          | Arlene Crampsie  |
| <b>Date of Interview</b>                            | 23 <sup>rd</sup> Sept 2009   |
| <b>Location</b>                                     | Deel Medical Centre, Crossmolina, Co. Mayo   |
| <b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname) | Dr Michael Loftus  |
| <b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>   |  |
| <b>Gender</b>                                       | Male   |
| <b>Born</b>   | <b>Year Born:</b> 1929<br><b>Home County:</b> Mayo   |
| <b>Education</b>                                    | <b>Primary:</b> Elphin NS, Co. Roscommon; Crossmolina Boys NS, Co. Mayo<br><b>Secondary:</b> St Muredach's College, Ballina<br><b>Third Level:</b> UCG |
| <b>Family</b>                                       | <b>Siblings:</b> 5 brothers & 1 sister<br><b>Current Family if Different:</b> Married to Edie, 1 daughter and 3 sons                                   |
| <b>Club(s)</b>                                      | Deel Rovers, Crossmolina   |
| <b>Occupation</b>                                   | GP   |
| <b>Parents' Occupation</b>                          | Garda [Father]; Housewife [Mother]   |
| <b>Religion</b>                                     | Roman Catholic   |
| <b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>           | Fianna Fáil  |

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| <b>Date of Report</b>             | 23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2012   |
| <b>Period Covered</b>             | 1930s – 2009  |
| <b>Counties/Countries Covered</b> | Mayo  |
| <b>Key Themes Covered</b>         | Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Education, Religion, Media, 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, Irish Language, Culture, Scór, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Alcohol, Politics, Northern Ireland, The Troubles, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Opening of Croke Park, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Retirement, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy/ Economics   |
| <b>Interview Summary</b>          | <p>Dr Mick reflects on his illustrious GAA career. He recalls playing for his local club Crossmolina in Mayo, and then with his school before making the Mayo minor team and achieving success with them. He then went to UCG where he was a member of their Sigerson Cup team. Injuries affected his effectiveness as a player but he found other ways to contribute and was soon refereeing games, eventually officiating at All-Ireland finals. He became involved with the Connacht Council and in 1984 was elected President of the GAA, after which he maintained his involvement through working with various committees. Dr Mick talks about all aspects of his GAA experiences - conflict in Northern Ireland, redeveloping stadia, the GAA's Centenary Year, trips abroad. A dedicated and principled man, he talks about the importance of the club to the GAA, his active stance against the promotion of alcohol within the Association and the health benefits of going on a daily jog at 80 years of age.</p> <p>00:30 Earliest memories. Playing at national school in the late 1930s.</p> <p>01:20 World War II affecting competitions.</p> <p>01:50 Playing in a club championship in 1947 at 18 years old. Winning a county championship with Seán Clancy, who</p> |

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|  | <p>played for Sligo, as captain.</p> <p>02:35 Being selected for the Mayo minor team and playing Tyrone in the All-Ireland final in 1947. Senior final took place in New York that year.</p> <p>03:15 Playing Meath the following year. Man driving him to Dublin for the game. Being stopped trying to climb over a wall of Croke Park to get in. Meeting Fr Eddie O'Hara and Pat Brown TD in Barry's Hotel. Getting a ticket.</p> <p>05:05 Being in the old Cusack stand.</p> <p>05:25 Successful Mayo side in the 1950s. Winning the junior All-Ireland in 1950. Stan Millett was captain.</p> <p>05:55 Seniors winning the All-Ireland the same year. Seán Flanagan captain.</p> <p>06:10 Being a substitute on the 1951 team.</p> <p>06:20 Being in UCG and winning Sigerson Cup medals. Billy Kenny captain. Players included Christy Garvey and Bill McQuillan of Roscommon, Mick O'Malley and Gussey O'Malley of Mayo, Donie O'Sullivan and John Trant from Kerry, Mick Costello of Galway, Peadar Kerins from Roscommon.</p> <p>07:10 Friendships they developed.</p> <p>07:20 Competing teams were Queen's, Dublin, Galway and Cork. Trinity came in later.</p> <p>07:45 Eoin McKenna was chairman of the club. How he helped them.</p> <p>08:05 Christy Tomley and Pádraig O Loughlin also involved.</p> <p>08:20 Weekend students doing their BA. Seán Purcell was one of them and they tried to get him to play on the team.</p> <p>09:05 Crossmolina winning their first senior championship in 1949.</p> <p>09:25 Being captain of the 1959 junior Mayo team and going to Birmingham. Playing Warwickshire.</p> <p>10:05 Playing in a 7-a-side and tearing his cruciate ligament.</p> |
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|  | <p>Injury hindering his effectiveness as a player.</p> <p>10:50 Setting up his practice and how that started.</p> <p>11:45 Getting married. His wife from a GAA family.</p> <p>12:05 Becoming chairman of the club.</p> <p>12:10 Buying a pitch. Raising funds through organising a festival.</p> <p>12:50 Developing facilities at the pitch gradually.</p> <p>13:40 Being in Ballina for a game and being asked to referee.</p> <p>14:05 Refereeing senior All-Irelands in 1965 and 1968. Other games he refereed.</p> <p>14:40 His experience of being a referee.</p> <p>14:55 Being busy at work.</p> <p>15:10 Secretary of Mayo County Board Johnny Mulvey asking him to go on the Connacht Council to replace TDs Sean Flanagan and Henry Kennedy.</p> <p>16:20 Becoming chairman of the Connacht Council and vice president of the Association.</p> <p>16:35 Running for President in 1981 against Paddy Buggy.</p> <p>16:50 Running again in 1984 and being elected in Belfast.</p> <p>17:10 Being chairman of the Centenary Committee.</p> <p>17:30 Trying to develop and improve the club scene. Working on clubs overseas.</p> <p>18:00 Going to Canada and being there for the foundation of the Association there.</p> <p>18:20 Going to Australia with the Irish team under Kevin Heffernan. Memories of that. PJ McGrath refereeing. Jack O'Shea of Kerry captain.</p> <p>19:25 Going on All Star tours to the United States.</p> <p>19:50 Redevelopment of Croke Park. Work done by Liam</p> |
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|  | <p>Mulvihill. Jesuits owning a pitch at the back of the Cusack Stand and trying to secure that. John Dowling involved.</p> <p>21:05 Mr Dargan was the architect they used. Travelling to New York to examine the stadiums – Meadowlands, Yankee Stadium and getting ideas from that.</p> <p>21:40 Idea developing in Peter Quinn's time.</p> <p>22:30 Climbing Croagh Patrick the year he was elected President.</p> <p>23:30 Hurling final played in Thurles in 1984.</p> <p>23:45 Being part of different committees after his presidency was over.</p> <p>24:10 Being president of the Connacht Council.</p> <p>24:30 Being involved with the club and acting as a medical officer.</p> <p>24:50 His wife playing camogie. Sons' GAA involvement.</p> <p>24:40 Work done by volunteers.</p> <p>26:05 Facilities and equipment when he first played. No doctors at games.</p> <p>27:05 Born in Kiltoom in Roscommon. Moving to Elphin and going to school. Former President Donal Keenan in Elfin.</p> <p>27:45 Mother dying when he was six and moving back to Kiltoom.</p> <p>28:20 Collecting money to buy a football.</p> <p>28:50 Scarcity of football boots.</p> <p>29:45 Winners of games getting sweets from Mr Corcoran.</p> <p>30:00 Club colours. Changing the club colours.</p> <p>30:45 Pitch they had and getting it drained.</p> <p>31:40 History of the club in the area.</p> <p>31:55 Steve Fleming, Josie Munnelly and Captain Munnelly</p> |
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|  | <p>on team that won Mayo's first All-Ireland.</p> <p>33:00 Family talking about a man called Cruiser McGuinness being a good player.</p> <p>33:25 Grandfather being involved in athletics.</p> <p>34:00 Playing in St Muredach's College but they were not in the Connacht championship. Reasons for their absence.</p> <p>34:45 Stan Hart and other talented players playing for them.</p> <p>35:00 Jarlath's being the team to beat. Purcell and McHales playing for Jarlath's.</p> <p>35:30 Cycling to training for the minor team. Fr Davis, chairman of the county board, driving him to training in Castlebar.</p> <p>35:50 Some players having a car in the 1950s.</p> <p>36:15 Training in Ballina under Gerald Courell and Jackie Carney, who were on the 1936 All-Ireland winning team.</p> <p>36:35 Training in Stephen's Park. Exercises they did. Running on the beach in Inniscrone.</p> <p>37:00 Training in UCG in Fahy's field.</p> <p>37:45 Experience of reaching the All-Ireland. Crowds at the games.</p> <p>38:05 Man from Killala driving them to the final. Stopping the car at Maynooth to look at an airplane overhead.</p> <p>38:40 Staying at The Spa in Lucan.</p> <p>39:00 Dressing room at Croke Park. Taking photographs.</p> <p>39:45 Roar of the crowd.</p> <p>40:00 Micheál Ó Hehir and the Artane Boys Band there.</p> <p>40:25 Seeing people listen to their radio in the country when he was young.</p> <p>41:30 Going to Blackrock the night before the final for a walk. Going to the Phoenix Park. Tension.</p> |
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|  | <p>42:00 Beaten 1948 team being on the back of their minds.</p> <p>42:25 Homecoming celebrations. Going to Castlebar. Bands playing. Arriving in Ballaghaderreen first.</p> <p>43:20 Winning championships with the club.</p> <p>43:40 Importance of the club to the GAA.</p> <p>44:05 Reason for the club getting their own ground.</p> <p>45:05 Sigerson Cup memories. Beating UCD in Belfast. Cavan's PJ Duke playing. Pádraig Carney playing for Dublin.</p> <p>45:30 Billy Kenny training UCG.</p> <p>45:45 What it meant to him to be involved.</p> <p>46:10 Reason for being a referee.</p> <p>47:00 Refereeing the 1968 All-Ireland final that was won by Down.</p> <p>47:05 Going to New York for a World Cup final. Crowds in Gaelic Park. Sending off a New York player and getting abuse. Hot weather.</p> <p>47:45 John Kerry O'Donnell not liking his decision and talking to him after the game.</p> <p>48:30 Training to referee All-Irelands.</p> <p>49:00 Refereeing All-Irelands featuring Kerry.</p> <p>49:20 Gardaí escorting him off Croke Park. Getting abuse and dealing with that.</p> <p>50:05 Opinion of people who shout at referees.</p> <p>50:35 Difference in how the game was played when he was refereeing.</p> <p>50:55 Being chairman of the north county board. Non-interest in the county board.</p> <p>51:45 Experience of first county convention. Looking up to the officers.</p> |
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|  | <p>52:45 His reluctance to stand up and speak.</p> <p>54:15 Involvement with the Medical Committee and what they did.</p> <p>55:55 Establishment of the committee.</p> <p>56:15 Biggest things to come out of the committee.</p> <p>56:55 His opposition to alcohol in the GAA.</p> <p>57:10 Number of pioneers on 1951 Mayo All-Ireland winning team.</p> <p>51:45 Losing the 1947 minor All-Ireland and going to an ice-cream parlour to listen to the senior final in New York.</p> <p>57:45 Being appointed coroner in Mayo and seeing the damage done by alcohol.</p> <p>58:00 Seeing the damage done to families as a result of alcohol.</p> <p>58:25 Stopping attending All-Irelands due to involvement of Guinness through sponsorship. How he feels about that.</p> <p>59:20 What can be done about the issue of alcohol. Advertising and sponsorship issues.</p> <p>01:00:50 Cigarette sponsorship when he was President and how he felt about that.</p> <p>01:01:45 Writing letters to The Irish Times about alcohol. Raising the issue in other arenas.</p> <p>01:02:15 Mayo campaign against alcohol.</p> <p>01:02:40 What he would do in relation to alcohol if he were in charge.</p> <p>01:03:20 Going for the presidency in 1981 and reason for that. Got beaten by Paddy Buggy.</p> <p>01:03:50 Running in 1984. Election process. Brendan Vaughan, Aidan McGowan, John Dowling and a man from England also running.</p> |
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|  | <p>01:04:35 Election taking place in Belfast.</p> <p>01:04:55 Being President in the Centenary Year and his involvement in events for that year.</p> <p>01:05:35 Centenary Year compared to 125th anniversary.</p> <p>01:05:55 Lá na gClub.</p> <p>01:06:30 Motivation for running for President.</p> <p>01:07:55 Being President and working at the same time. Getting support from others.</p> <p>01:08:45 Meeting dignitaries overseas.</p> <p>01:09:25 Involvement in Central Council before he was President. His impressions of that.</p> <p>01:10:55 Big decisions made by Central Council when he was there. Improving stadia.</p> <p>01:11:45 Troubles in Northern Ireland. Shooting of Aidan McAnespie and travelling to the funeral.</p> <p>01:12:15 GAA players coming under pressure.</p> <p>01:12:25 GAA standing their ground in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>01:12:35 Ground being taken over in Crossmaglen and Tom Murphy having to deal with it.</p> <p>01:13:20 Challenges he faced as President.</p> <p>01:13:45 Working with governments.</p> <p>01:14:05 Issue of DIRT tax on grounds and VAT on hurleys. How they approached the issue.</p> <p>01:14:40 Doing work in schools.</p> <p>01:15:00 Successes as President.</p> <p>01:15:45 Daily routine as President. Travelling involved.</p> <p>01:16:35 Going to New York because John O'Donnell's wife had died.</p> |
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|  | <p>01:17:10 Being invited to numerous functions and his reflections on that.</p> <p>01:17:25 Going to a function in the military barracks in Renmore in Galway and then going to Shrule in Mayo where there was a bonfire. Going to Ballinrobe, Castlebar, Crossmolina.</p> <p>01:18:25 Going jogging regularly.</p> <p>01:19:00 Preparing speeches. Pat Quigley helping him occasionally.</p> <p>01:20:00 Qualities a good President needs.</p> <p>01:20:45 Meeting dignitaries.</p> <p>01:21:20 Relationship with Director General Liam Mulvihill.</p> <p>01:22:50 Tough periods of his presidency.</p> <p>01:23:15 Ending his term of office. Handing over to John Dowling.</p> <p>01:24:15 Life after the presidency. Connacht Council.</p> <p>01:24:20 Involvement with Green and Red Trust. Working with Mayo manager Seamie Daly on that.</p> <p>01:25:20 Central Development Benevolent Fund and his involvement with that.</p> <p>01:26:00 Green and Red golf society, named after former Mayo footballer Joe Langan.</p> <p>01:26:40 When the fund was set up.</p> <p>01:26:45 Masters football and purpose of that. How it operates. Coming up with the idea.</p> <p>01:28:30 Involvement in athletics. Running marathons.</p> <p>01:28:55 Being on the National Council for the Elderly.</p> <p>01:29:05 Going to the World Games in Utah.</p> <p>01:30:55 Family's GAA involvement.</p> |
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|  | <p>01:31:20 Visiting his son's club in Baltimore.</p> <p>01:31:55 Best game he ever saw - All-Ireland hurling final 2009.</p> <p>01:32:35 Kerry beating Galway in the 1980s.</p> <p>01:33:15 Admiration for Purcell as a player. Tom Langan of Mayo was a good player in the 1950s.</p> <p>01:33:45 Fr Davis motivating the young people in the 1940s.</p> <p>01:34:15 Johnny Mulvey being a good man to work with.</p> <p>01:34:35 Pdraig O'Keefe a capable man.</p> <p>01:35:10 Watching a game up a tree in Sligo.</p> <p>01:35:30 Being up a pole and a wall at the same time watching a game in Galway.</p> <p>01:36:10 Watching a game on the Cusack Stand wall.</p> <p>01:36:35 Role of teachers and clergy.</p> <p>01:37:25 Role of Irish language and culture. Scór.</p> <p>01:38:25 Club's involvement in Scór. Successes they enjoyed.</p> <p>01:39:15 Importance volunteers to the GAA.</p> <p>01:39:55 Challenges facing the GAA.</p> <p>01:40:45 Ban on foreign games and his feelings on that.</p> <p>01:42:00 Hand-passing in Gaelic football. Other changes in how the games are played.</p> <p>01:42:40 National politics having an input into the GAA.</p> <p>01:43:45 Best and worst memories.</p> <p>01:44:20 What the GAA means to him</p> |
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| <p><b>Involvement in GAA</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<br/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson    <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member    <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> Caterer    <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer    <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referee    <input type="checkbox"/> None<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _President of the GAA_____         </p> |
| <p><b>Record as a Player</b><br/>(Titles won; Length of time played)</p>    | <p>Played on Mayo Minor Team in 1947; won a Junior All-Ireland 1950, 1951; Sub on Senior Team in 1951. Played junior with Crossmolina in 1947 and Senior in 1949. Played for 21/22 years into the 1970s.</p>  |
| <p><b>Record as an Administrator</b><br/>(Positions held; how long for)</p> | <p>Got involved in Crossmolina Club in 1960s. He was chairman of club for 15 years. Joined Connacht Council in 1965, he was there for 14 years and was chairman for 3 years. Got involved in central council from 1978 and was elected GAA President in 1984 for the term 1985 – 1987. He became a Patron of Connacht Council and the Club after his Presidency. He was a member of various committees: Finance, Medical, Benevolent Fund (CDA), Overseas, Referees, Centenary Committee (which he chaired). He has also been involved in the Masters Competitions and the Green and Red Trust.</p>   |
| <p><b>Format</b></p>  | <p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio        <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual         </p>   |
| <p><b>Duration</b></p>  | <p>Length of Interview: 01:45:04</p>  |
| <p><b>Language</b></p>  | <p>English</p>  |

**To be filled in by Interviewer:**

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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: \_\_\_\_\_Arlene Crampsie\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_23/05/12\_\_\_\_\_