

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Arlene Crampsie	
Date of Interview	23 rd Nov 2010	✓ Photograph of Interviewee
Location	Interviewee's home, near Ballyforan, Co. Roscommon	
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Phonsie Tully	
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>		
Gender	Male	
Born	Year Born: 1934 Home County: Roscommon	
Education	Primary: Ardrahan NS, Co. Galway; Ballyforan NS, Co. Roscommon Secondary: Garbally College, Co. Galway Third Level: St. Pat's, Drumcondra	
Family	Siblings: 1 brother & 3 sisters Current Family if Different: Married to Eithne with 2 sons	
Club(s)	St. Aidan's [Roscommon]; Four Roads [Roscommon]; Erin's Hope [Dublin]	
Occupation	Teacher	
Parents' Occupation	Garda Sergeant [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	12 th July 2012
Period Covered	1930s – 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Roscommon, 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 the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Identity, Rivalries, Irish Language, Scór, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Violence, 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
Interview Summary	<p>Phonsie shares some of his many memories of the GAA down through the years. He spent his early years in Galway when the GAA was temporarily weakened due to restrictions associated with World War Two. Later he moved to Roscommon and got heavily involved with the Four Roads club, his efforts eventually earning him a place on the county team. Phonsie also did much work behind the scenes, becoming very active at an administrative level. He moved from club administration to the county board to the provincial council to Central Council and Croke Park's Management Committee. One of the subcommittees he was on was a disciplinary one and he offers some insights into what that was like. Phonsie also reveals that it was he who coined the term 'Scór' as a group of them sought to give the competitions some impetus. Vastly experienced and a passionate hurling man, Phonsie sheds light on many aspects of the GAA's recent history.</p> <p>00:00 Introduction</p> <p>00:25 Grew up in Ardahan Galway. Played hurling. No club games because of World War II. Michael McInerney, Ned Quinn, Tommy Cunningham revered inter-county players. Limerick hurler Jackie Power working in the area.</p> <p>01:45 Moved to Ballyforan in 1946. Johnny Mee promoting hurling at the Four Roads club. Parish leagues.</p>

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	<p>02:25 Playing club and county minor hurling.</p> <p>02:50 Facilities in Galway when he was playing there. Roscommon facilities.</p> <p>03:25 Mike Donoghue levelling off the pitch. Later development.</p> <p>04:05 First hurl and where he got it. Also got one from Jim Pat O’Gara and from a local carpenter. Went to college in Ballinasloe.</p> <p>04:50 Parents from Cavan. Father’s GAA involvement. Sister married a Galway hurler, Pádraig Keane.</p> <p>05:50 GAA President Alf Murray starting a hurling revival in the 1950s. Becoming secretary of Coiste Iomana Rocomáin.</p> <p>06:15 First impressions of playing football.</p> <p>06:30 GAA when he was at school. Attending Garbally College and playing other colleges like Roscrea and De La Salle. Ban on foreign games affecting certain teams.</p> <p>07:40 Attending rugby games in Lansdowne Road, Dublin.</p> <p>08:30 Hurling at St. Pat’s College in Dublin when he was training to become a teacher. Tipperary player Donie Nealon there. Playing in Dublin Intermediate League against teams like St Vincent’s.</p> <p>10:00 Involvement in provincial council, Central Council, management committee at Croke Park.</p> <p>10:20 Scór involvement, nominated by Dr Keenan. Club success. Proposing the name ‘scór’ for the competitions. Jim Ryan wanting to change the old name.</p> <p>11:40 Derry Gowan from Cork and Tony Williamson from Down initiating Scór concept as the ‘Winter Competitions’. Committee formed featuring Gerry Davey, Michael Sheridan, Anne Dolan. Coming up with competition ideas. Setting it up at the beginning. Atmosphere at early competitions. Decisions questioned. Adjudicating unexpectedly at Galway County Finals in Loughrea. Reason for that. How it went. Adjudicating at an All-Ireland in Dublin.</p> <p>17:45 Competing as part of a local ballad group. Instrument they used. County final in Boyle. Going to Connacht final in Roscommon. Big crowds.</p> <p>21:05 Winning a junior championship in 1966.</p>
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	<p>21:40 Football club, St Aidan's, an amalgamation of Ballyforan and Kevin Barry's.</p> <p>22:20 Hurling at Four Roads. Maith Go Leor's a team in the past. Hurling at Four Rods declining before Johnny Mee revived it again. Roscommon footballer Gerry O'Malley in a championship winning team in the 1940s. Success since the 1950s. His son Adrian winning many championships and eventually managing teams.</p> <p>23:40 Football in the parish and in Dysart.</p> <p>25:15 Differences between GAA in Roscommon and Galway. Travelling to games in Galway. How they went. 1942 county final between Liam Mellows and Ardrahan. Ardrahan objecting to the match being played. Replay in Loughrea. Huge arguments. Repercussions.</p> <p>27:30 Other means of travelling to games.</p> <p>28:00 Travelling to Four Roads games. Colours the team wore.</p> <p>29:40 Role of teachers in the GAA when he was young. Matt Heavey an involved teacher, as was Sonny Kenny. Returning to the area to teach. Mentions Jim McMahon.</p> <p>30:45 Standard of hurling at St Pat's. Paying against college from Dalgan. How they travelled. Going to a dance on the way back from a match.</p> <p>32:55 Brother joining the priesthood and going to college in Carlow. GAA in Carlow.</p> <p>33:50 1953 county final with Four Roads.</p> <p>34:30 Being selected for the county team. How he fared with that side. Success they had. Playing Leitrim in Mohill. Mysterious man arriving on a motorbike.</p> <p>36:05 Playing for the first time with the county in Birr against Offaly. How that went. County training at the time. Reaction at home when he was selected.</p> <p>37:50 Playing for Roscommon minors and drawing with Galway at St. Coman's Park. Replay in Ballinasloe. Father attending.</p> <p>38:35 Son Adrian getting to play in Croke Park.</p> <p>39:10 Playing in Charlestown, Carrick-On-Shannon, Tuam with the minors. Playing a final in Tuam and cheering for</p>
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	<p>Galway in a game that followed his one.</p> <p>40:00 Celebrations in the area when the club did well. What players drank.</p> <p>40:45 Peadar Earley from Gorthaganny ringing him about a vacancy on the Connacht Council. Being vice-chairman of the county board and later county chairman. Central Council and Management Committee. Positions filled at club level.</p> <p>43:45 Ownership of club grounds. Fundraisers.</p> <p>45:55 Switch from club to county administration.</p> <p>46:20 Putting hurleys in every club in Roscommon. Conditions of use. Seven hurling clubs in Roscommon. Why hurling is a struggle in Roscommon.</p> <p>48:05 Coiste Iomana work. Roscommon winning Under-16 and minor All-Irelands in 1969. Beating Kildare both times, the Under-16 game in Mullingar and the minor one at Parnell Park on the morning of the senior final. Getting All-Ireland tickets from GAA President Seán Ó Síocháin.</p> <p>50:10 His style as a trainer/selector.</p> <p>51:00 Matt Heavey a good hurler. Gerry O'Malley, Paddy Dolan, Benny Tansey, Frank Carthy, Brian Mitchell playing with Connacht in Railway Cup. Benny Connaughton, Michael Finneran, Br Dwyer, Br Maher, Ollie Hanley good club players.</p> <p>52:00 Four Roads winning a Connacht club championship.</p> <p>52:55 Missing a big game in Ballyforan because of a league game. Man going to game in Ballyforan and to a pub in Abbeyknockmoy in Galway afterwards. Players returning from game in Ballyforan and complaining.</p> <p>53:45 Support for Four Roads team. Game in Wexford Park after winning provincial title.</p> <p>54:40 Big decisions at county board level. Struggling for finances. Looking for sponsorship. Fundraising.</p> <p>56:35 Administrative structures in Roscommon. Divisional boards and how they evolved. Hurling fixtures haphazard. Finding solutions.</p> <p>59:50 Hurling failing to progress on a national level. Reason some counties are stronger than others.</p> <p>01:01:40 Four Roads football players' interest in how the</p>
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	<p>hurlers were faring.</p> <p>01:02:30 Involvement with the county team when he was county board chairman. Duties he had to fulfil.</p> <p>01:04:35 County grounds in Roscommon. Need for redevelopment. History of Hyde Park. What it cost to buy.</p> <p>01:06:05 Ladies football in the county. Camogie club in Four Roads and their success. Final against Corofin of Clare.</p> <p>01:07:00 Son, Gerard, involved in Leinster Council and living in Kildare.</p> <p>01:08:35 Connacht Council and what that was like. Meetings held in Ballyhaunis and Castlerea. Galwayman Seán Purcell's can-do attitude. Appointing referees and difficulties with that.</p> <p>01:11:25 Refereeing a Connacht junior hurling final between Roscommon and Sligo. Reason for that. Worrying about being seen to be impartial.</p> <p>01:13:05 Level of training provided for GAA referees.</p> <p>01:14:00 Working on Central Council. Balance of power. Management Committee. Way Connacht people selected Central Council delegates. Working on development of Croke Park. Work of Liam Mulvihill.</p> <p>01:17:50 Discussions on redevelopment of Croke Park.</p> <p>01:18:50 Opening of Croke Park and controversy surrounding that. His own stance.</p> <p>01:20:05 Involvement on subcommittees. Sean McCague nominating him for a bye-laws committee.</p> <p>01:23:20 Working with Dr Donal Keenan. His attributes.</p> <p>01:24:30 Stand-out GAA presidents. Working on a Scór committee with Jim Ryan (Seamus O'Riain). His Irish speaking abilities. Jack Boothman, Seán Kelly, Sean McCague, Nickey Brennan. Brennan inviting him onto disciplinary committees. Player appearing before them and coming across as arrogant. Comment a committee member made. Player verbally abusing them after sentence being passed.</p> <p>01:28:35 Travelling back and forth to meetings in Croke Park. Going all over Ireland on GAA business.</p> <p>01:30:05 Changes in administrative roles in the GAA. Talking to former GAA President Dr Keenan about demands of the</p>
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	<p>role. Travelling around to schools with former GAA President Joe McDonagh. His impressions of him.</p> <p>01:32:55 Changes in technology and their impact on the conducting of GAA affairs.</p> <p>01:34:10 Role of media in the GAA. Pros and cons.</p> <p>01:35:00 Listening to games on the radio in Ardrahan on a Sunday. Micheál O'Hehir on the radio. Dry and wet batteries.</p> <p>01:36:10 Trips to Croke Park over the years. Being there on the day of a record crowd while studying at St Pat's. Watching a game from the sideline. Expansion of the stadium over the years.</p> <p>01:38:20 Lifting of the Ban and Pat Fanning's handling of it.</p> <p>01:39:15 Travelling to Belfast, Northern Ireland during the Troubles. Rumours Roscommon were not going to travel. Apprehension. Congress in Belfast. Being questioned by soldiers. Taking underage teams to the Ards Peninsula in Down.</p> <p>01:42:20 Being in Dundalk on the night of the Enniskillen bombing.</p> <p>01:43:35 Best GAA memories. Successes in 1969. Scór success. Beating Kerry in an All-Ireland minor final replay in Ennis. What that day was like. Making friends.</p> <p>01:44:45 Cavan playing Kerry in 1997 on the 50th anniversary of the Polo Grounds final. Travelling over. Being in New York when Roscommon played a Connacht championship match there in 2006. Travelling to London.</p> <p>01:46:00 Most unusual pitch he was at.</p> <p>01:46:20 Admiration for former Roscommon players Gerry O'Malley and Dermot Earley. Speaking to army people about Dermot Earley. Meeting Gerry O'Malley at a game in Kiltoom.</p> <p>01:47:55 Disappointments in relation to hurling. Problems with the hand-pass in football.</p> <p>01:49:25 What he would change about the GAA.</p> <p>01:50:15 Importance of volunteers.</p> <p>01:51:40 Professionalism in the GAA.</p> <p>01:53:20 What the GAA has meant to him.</p>
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	<p>01:54:50 GAA and his sense of county identity.</p> <p>01:55:35 Admiration for people involved in GAA abroad. Travelling to the USA and Asia.</p>
Involvement in GAA	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____</p>
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	<p>Played for 14 years. Won 1 Minor, 1 Junior, 4 County Senior Championships and 4 Connacht Junior Hurling Championships.</p>
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	<p>Got involved in administration in 1956 and since then has held a range of roles:</p> <p>Club: Assistant Secretary, Secretary, PRO, Treasurer, Vice-Chairman and Chairman</p> <p>County: Vice-Chairman and Chairman</p> <p>Connacht: Delegate from County</p> <p>Central: Delegate from Connacht, Management Committee member, Bye-Law Committee member.</p>
Format	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
Duration	<p>Length of Interview: 01:58:41</p>
Language	<p>English</p>

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: _____Arlene Crampsie_____

Date: _____12/07/12_____