

## GAA Oral History Project

## Interview Report Form

<b>Name of Interviewer</b>	Regina Fitzpatrick
<b>Date of Interview</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2010
<b>Location</b>	Castlebridge Community Centre, Co. Wexford
<b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname)	Brian Murphy
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1937 <b>Home County:</b> Wexford
<b>Education</b>	<b>Primary:</b> Castlebridge NS, Co. Wexford
<b>Family</b>	<b>Siblings:</b> 7 siblings
<b>Club(s)</b>	Castlebridge Handball Club [Wexford]
<b>Occupation</b>	Gardener; Malt Stores Worker for the Guinness Estate
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	Foreman of Nunn's Maltings [Father]
<b>Religion</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	N/A
<b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>	Castlebridge Community Centre Committee

**REFERENCE NO. WX/1/18**

<b>Date of Report</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> June 2012
<b>Period Covered</b>	1890 - 2010
<b>Counties/Countries Covered</b>	Wexford, Dublin, Kilkenny, Canada, Americas
<b>Key Themes Covered</b>	Travel, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Coaching, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Media, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, GAA Abroad, All-Ireland, Club History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Alcohol, Violence, Relationship with the Association, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds
<b>Interview Summary</b>	<p>Brian reflects on his involvement in handball in Castlebridge, Wexford. He recalls the role of the Nunn family in providing local employment and his own time working there. He describes the development of handball in the parish, including the construction of a handball alley and the success of the handball teams of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Brian also discusses his coaching of juvenile handball teams, his views on the best way to coach juveniles, and the challenges of dealing with administrators. Finally, he reflects on the changing role of women in the GAA and the relationship of handball with the GAA.</p> <p>01:00 Discusses his family history: his father's ancestry in Castlebridge, Wexford, his mother from Ballymurn. Recounts history of Castlebridge. Recent building of estates. No thatched houses any more. More pupils in school now. Separation of males and females in school and church in the past.</p> <p>02:29 Description of the employment provided for locals in malt houses and kiln run by the Nunn family, agents for Guinness. Explains process of malting barley. Mentions his role in the process. Dust, no masks, poor health of some workers. Employing many people in the corn season. Also providing jobs on Nunnns' farm which employed people. High wages.</p> <p>07:48 Provides details of Nunn family, local gentry. People shooting on the land. Several women working as cook and maids in the house. Explains how corn and malt transported by gabbards on river to Guinness. By lorry from the 1940s.</p> <p>10:27 Describes prosperity of Castlebridge. Mentions Staffords in Wexford, major corn company. Nunns' corn mills,</p>

	<p>also wheat and oats. Most work in in Nunns' in winter. Explains how kiln used to dry clothes, bake bread, cook potatoes. Recalls workers stealing potatoes from local farms, playing cards.</p> <p>12:51 Recounts history of Nunn family. Mentions Hunt family. Nunns buying property from Breens in mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Protestant gentry. Mrs Nunn donating flowers to Protestant and Catholic churches. Attractive girls working as maids. The maids sneaking in window late after dances.</p> <p>16:12 Compares Nunns's house to television programme <i>Upstairs Downstairs</i>. Recalls working in the garden there. Also helping with moving stores of corn.</p> <p>17:18 Describes shoots on Nunns' land in 1951. Mentions those present: Major O'Rourke, Colonel Parks, Lord Kildare, Hugh Beaver, managing director of Guinness. Explains how The Guinness Book of Records was conceived in Nunns' house after a shoot in early 1950s. Mentions Castelbridge's successful attempt at handball record for The Guinness Book of Records in 1986. Celebrations after mass. His participation. Lack of sleep. Music and singing. Women providing food.</p> <p>24:24 Discussion of Shelmaliers/Castlebridge's hurling successes. Beating a Limerick team in the 1910 All-Ireland Hurling Final. Recent commemorative match in Hollymount against Limerick club. Commemorative mass every year. Complex built in the team's honour. In 1890, Castlebridge playing a 22-a-side against a Cork club. Violent match, referee ending it early.</p> <p>26:59 Recounts his family involvement in GAA. His two grandfathers on 1890 hurling team, Header Murphy and Tom Devereux. Violence of matches then.</p> <p>29:00 His father on local club team, the Sally Beachers, now Shelmaliers. Recalls working in Nunns' garden when his father died nearby in the 1950s. Mentions an injury to hand when working in garden.</p> <p>31:11 Describes his own involvement in hurling. Recalls walking barefoot into town aged 14 with Denny Kinsella, Michael Flood, Willie Leary to meet Brother Perkins to arrange match against Christian Brothers team. Older boys taking over the team. Arranging another match in Joe Redmond's field. Mentions Mick Neville, captain of 1910 team, refereeing match.</p> <p>34:13 Mentions Paddy Breen teacher, GAA president from</p>
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	<p>1924 to 1926, giving letters asking Jack Cullitin and Cullens of the Slob to bring boys to hurling matches in Belfield or Wexford Park. Packed into Commer vans. Compares the independence children had in his time with the lack of it today. Describes pastimes of his day: robbing orchards, organising matches, playing Cowboys and Indians.</p> <p>36:36 Regrets the lack of encouragement for juveniles to make decisions on hurling or football field. Considers reasons for lack of hurling success in Wexford today. Too much involvement from sidelines. Importance of teaching children to think for themselves, inspiration in handball coaching. Discussion of coaching in boxing, hurling, football.</p> <p>39:29 Recounts games of hurling and a mix of soccer and rugby in open-air handball alley when he was growing up. Description of Paddy Breen, his participation as chairman. Auction at agricultural show, Paddy Breen's involvement.</p> <p>42:13 Discusses prominence of GAA in the parish. Biggest membership. Fundraising to pay for expensive new facilities. Competition between GAA and handball in attracting juveniles. Putting roof on handball alley and upgrading facilities in mid-1970s. Mentions success of several players in handball in All-Ireland. Also winning Division One Féile na nGael several times.</p> <p>45:17 Explains importance of starting early to train children to play hurling. Mentions Dean Corrigan.</p> <p>46:44 Recalls his own handball playing career. Winning Over-60s All-Ireland handball competition in Ballina. His comparative fitness. Parish missioners playing handball with young people in the past.</p> <p>49:43 Popularity of handball in Castlebridge. Handball alley built on Clancy's malthouse in 1929. No planning permission. Low cost of building of it. Delaney's Yard. Cavity block wall. Mentions Mossy Murphy the mason. His son Michael Murphy playing with John Ryan, who won 18 senior All-Ireland handball titles.</p> <p>52:47 Reflects on changing nature of sporting records in different eras.</p> <p>53:38 Recalls handball being played for money, before it was brought under GAA banner. Mentions Paddy Breen as a key figure in bringing it under GAA banner in 1924. Handball players socialising years ago. Discussion of amount of pubs in Castlebridge in early 20<sup>th</sup> century.</p>
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	<p>55:31 Popularity of ball alley. Queuing for game. Watching games up a tree.</p> <p>57:34 Hurling the main sport in parish. Mentions a glass case in the Reading Rooms, which houses the 1910 hurling ball and the hurl of Eoin Daly, of the 1890 team. Explains rules about goals and points in that era.</p> <p>59:14 Reflects on the role of women in the GAA. No camogie when he was growing up. Mentions Bessie Kehoe playing camogie. Wexford's current strength in camogie. Shelmaliers and Castlebridge united in camogie. Mentions Kate Kelly hairdresser who does hair of camogie players. Winning All-Ireland against Cork recently.</p> <p>01:00:24 Girls playing handball when he was growing up, but not in competitions. Mentions a girl beating boys in the Rackard League final in handball.</p> <p>01:01:34 His involvement in the juvenile handball and men's handball. Difficulty of finding coach who will allow juveniles freedom. Importance of fun, socialising, buying crisps etc. His views on coaching. Problem of weaker hurling counties such as Carlow, Louth, Meath, Wicklow, weaker counties becoming too involved in juvenile teams.</p> <p>01:03:59 Explains reasons for Castlebridge's strength. Inspiration. Explains how poverty in Brazil in the 1970s strengthened team. Basing his own juvenile handball coaching on books about soccer in Real Madrid and Brazil. Lack of regulation, importance of imagination.</p> <p>01:08:22 Discusses his lack of formal coaching training. Mentions Jimmy King, national director of coaching. Mentions Castlebridge's successful juveniles Dean Corrigan, Jason and Corey Murphy. Reasons for their success.</p> <p>01:13:15 Challenges of dealing with administrators. His own role as chairman of the juvenile board. Mentions Tony Breen.</p> <p>01:15:24 Discusses major issues in handball today. Inadequate administration. Mentions Black Pat in Na Fianna in Dublin doing great work. Challenges facing handball in Dublin.</p> <p>01:17:08 Reflects on relationship between handball and other games in the GAA. The success of handball in Wexford in comparison with hurling. Winning three in Féiles a row, team getting lift back to Castlebridge in Charlie Haughey's helicopter. Recalls bringing Dean Corrigan back from Lanzarote to play final, expense of flights. Dunnes Stores</p>
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	<p>sponsoring trip. Describes packing bags in Tesco to raise funds for international tours. Orlando Also Portland.</p> <p>01:22:09 Discusses the tours. Portland: exclusive raquetball club. Also Edmonton for World Championships in Canada. Mentions Pat Brennan of Castlebridge, chairman and treasurer of World Handball Council in Edmonton. Travelling to Chicago for World Championships, exhibition hurling matches there.</p> <p>01:26:17 Reflects on lack of media coverage about handball. Negotiations with <i>The Wexford People</i>. Inviting journalists from <i>The Wexford People</i> and <i>Wexford Echo</i> to go to Chicago. Mentions Michael Carthy of the <i>Wexford Echo</i>. Describes their efforts to get coverage in newspapers.</p> <p>01:27:48 Explains Bridgetown and Castlebridge the only teams in Wexford that play juvenile handball. Mentions Tony Reid and Jim Codd. His belief that other Wexford clubs should ask him for advice on juvenile handball. Mentions the success of Shefflin's hurling club in Kilkenny, despite lack of facilities.</p> <p>01:33:58 Going to Dublin every fortnight. Buying handballs in Croke Park, getting free bus to Dublin and taxi to Croke Park. Mentions Buggy's local sports shop. Expense of shop rents.</p> <p>01:36:29 Reflects on the significance of handball in his lifetime. Reading soccer books for inspiration on hurling and handball.</p> <p>01:38:14 Ponders why he stays involved in the sport. Explains World Championship age groupings. Lack of injuries in the sport. Freedom to play and express oneself. Experts' role in restricting young people. Importance of letting young players have freedom. Mentions various soccer players who didn't get much encouragement.</p> <p>01:40:33 Describes his favourite memory: as a teenager, watching John Ryan playing in Croke Park in All-Ireland hardball final. Length of game. Wexford winning 4 games to 3. Ball with goatskin cover. Skill involved in game. Mentions Duxie Walsh's skill. DJ Carey's views on handball's effect on hurling and football. Also mentions Robbie McCarthy of Westmeath.</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 type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input 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>
<p><b>Record as a Player</b> (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p>Has played handball from underage up until present; Won the Over-60s Handball All-Ireland, 1995; has won many tournaments.</p>
<p><b>Record as an Administrator</b> (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Secretary of Wexford Juvenile Handball Club; Chairman of Wexford Juvenile Handball Board; Castlebridge handball club committee member for many years.</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: 01:43:56</p>
<p><b>Language</b></p>	<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: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 27<sup>th</sup> June 2012