

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	23 rd Oct 2008
Location	St Michael's Irish Centre, Liverpool
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Tommy Walsh, Chris Johnston, Joe England, Fr Seán O'Brien and Seán Floyd. Also club members Gerry, Pat and Mossie, as well as daughter of the late Eddie O'Reilly.
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male and Female
Born	N/A
Education	N/A
Family	N/A
Club(s)	John Mitchel's GFC [Great Britain]
Occupation	N/A
Parents' Occupation	N/A
Religion	N/A
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

Date of Report	21 st August 2012
Period Covered	Late 1960s – Early 2000s
Counties/Countries Covered	Great Britain, England, Scotland, Wales, Waterford, Wexford, Americas, Canada, USA, Australasia, Australia, Asia, India, Galway, Tipperary, Dublin, Cork, Kerry, Louth, Fermanagh
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Media, Emigration, Involvement in GAA Abroad, Role of Clergy, Role of the Club in the Community, GAA Abroad, Identity, Culture, All-Ireland, Club History, Irish History, Challenges, Outsider's Perspectives, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy/Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Tommy provides a general history of the GAA and its influence on Irish culture. He discusses the influence that Ireland has had on various sports around the world and seeks to describe the GAA in a cultural and historical context. Joined by other contributors from the John Mitchels' club in Liverpool, Tommy details the history of the GAA in Britain, particularly Liverpool. They recall past members, and discuss matches and opponents. Influential members such as Fr Paddy Spain, Seán McNerney and Michael Redmond are discussed. They discuss the role the GAA plays in their lives, and speak of the importance of their culture. They conclude by discussing the cultural mix of the city of Liverpool and how they believe the GAA can make a contribution to that city's culture.</p> <p>00:01 Tommy Walsh discusses the history of the GAA, mentioning sports around the world that have been influenced by Ireland. Mentions Archbishop Croke. Recalls the founding of the GAA. Mentions Michael Cusack, John Wyse Power, John McKay, John Bracken, PJ Ryan and George McCarthy of the RIC. Refers to description from John Dunton of hurling in 1699. Mentions Nicky, Bobby and Billy Rackard of Wexford, and Dan, Pat, John and Martin Quigley, also of Wexford. Also mentions Des Foley of Dublin. Discusses Croke Park and mentions Bloody Sunday, referring to Michael Hogan. Mentions the opening of Croke Park to other sports.</p> <p>17:25 Tommy discusses landlords "sponsoring" GAA teams and "importing" players.</p>

	<p>18:33 Tommy discusses Wexford and nickname "The Yellabellies".</p> <p>19:01 Tommy talks about Tipperary v Dublin match on Bloody Sunday in 1921.</p> <p>19:59 Discussion with some members re landlords and their involvement in the GAA.</p> <p>21:28 Tommy discusses the GAA in Liverpool. Mentions Seán McInerney. Also mentions Greenwich Park in Aintree. Discusses the Fenian movement. Mentions All-Ireland Hurling semi-final between Lancashire and Kilkenny in 1912. Also mentions Éire Óg. Talks about the GAA in Liverpool during World War Two. Mentions Fr Paddy Spain in Widnes, explains how St Patricks hurling club was formed. Mentions the formation of John Mitchels in 1947 and also mentions Peter Delaney. Recalls amalgamation with St Patricks in 1948. Recalls Junior All-Ireland championships in Glasgow and Cork. Mentions Seán Floyd, Chris Johnston and Joe McCabe. Also mentions the Shamrock hurling club and Joe England, St Werburghs, Clan na Gael and Seán McDermotts.</p> <p>28:13 Joe England discusses the Shamrocks club. Refers to Tipperary County Final between Toomevara and Thurles Sarsfields.</p> <p>29:24 Tommy discusses the roles of Fr Paddy Spain, Seán McInerney and Michael Redmond in the GAA in Liverpool.</p> <p>30:50 Tommy mentions that only two people born in England have been the President of the GAA in Britain, Seán McInerney and he himself, Tommy Walsh.</p> <p>31:21 Tommy discusses Michael Redmond. Recalls hurleys banded and sliotars stitched.</p> <p>32:24 Tommy discusses Chris Johnston and his role in the club.</p> <p>33:44 Tommy recalls the club's various grounds, mentions St Edwards. Recalls letter banning games on Sundays at the ground. Also mentions Yew Tree, recalls that Michael and Tom Redmond are buried in Yew Tree Cemetery. Also mentions Sefton Rugby Ground as a venue. Other venues mentioned are Whetstone Hey and Ellesmere Port.</p> <p>36:02 Club member Gerry recalls preparing pitch at Whetstone Hey for matches.</p> <p>36:55 Tommy mentions other venues - Buckley Hill and</p>
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	<p>Newsham Park. They mention Cormac Lally. Chris recalls preparing the pitch for matches.</p> <p>39:08 They discuss the importance of having a pitch.</p> <p>40:17 Tommy recalls failing to field a team for a number of years. Mentions Barry Morris and Danny McDonagh's roles in forming a new GAA team in Liverpool, also calling it John Mitchels. Mentions new venue of Greenbank Park. Recalls successes of the club. Also mentions John Mitchels ladies football team.</p> <p>43:35 Tommy discusses the circumstances in which the current generation John Mitchels players came to Liverpool.</p> <p>44:35 Tommy discusses the administrative process of the GAA in Britain. Mentions dispute between Round Towers and Eastern Gaels.</p> <p>46:30 Tommy discusses Eddie O'Reilly and his role in the GAA in Liverpool. He talks about the social aspect of the GAA in Liverpool.</p> <p>47:58 They discuss Eddie O'Reilly's Gaelic football medals that were won in 1932 and 1941. Mention Killorglin, Lancashire and Warwickshire.</p> <p>49:18 Chris Johnston discusses roles of Barry Morris and Danny McDonagh in the club. Also mentions Mark Morris.</p> <p>50:31 Chris recalls match at which Fr Seán O'Brien played before racing to the cathedral in Liverpool. Fr Seán mentions Bootle Stadium. They discuss Shamrocks and St Pats. Mention camogie teams in Walton, Sefton and Wiston. Mention Mount Pleasant. Also mention camogie player Carmel Cooney from Offaly.</p> <p>52:24 They discuss the GAA's role in their lives. Recall club member Gerry requesting his leg amputation to be scheduled so that he could make All-Ireland Hurling Final.</p> <p>54:22 Chris discusses the social aspect of the GAA and friendships made. Mentions Jim Sherry from Cavan.</p> <p>55:15 Tommy discusses O'Neills footballs. Recalls story regarding Chris Johnston and Seán Floyd.</p> <p>56:04 They discuss their membership of the club in terms of longevity.</p> <p>56:55 Gerry recalls story concerning Tom Semple of</p>
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	<p>Tipperary.</p> <p>57:59 Eddie O'Reilly's daughter recalls how important the GAA was to him.</p> <p>58:15 Tommy recalls training in the dance hall at the Shamrock Club. Mentions Jim Terry.</p> <p>58:51 Tommy recalls training on the Chester racecourse, the "Roodee". Recalls attempt to begin GAA club in Chester, mentions Seán Floyd.</p> <p>1:00:40 Tommy mentions John Harrington and his brothers Tadgh, Brendan, Redmond, Aidan and Gene. They are all brothers of former Cork footballer Paddy Harrington, and uncles of golfer Pdraig Harrington. Mentions Ellesmere Port and Chester.</p> <p>1:02:05 They talk about Kilmacthomas in Waterford and Gaelic football. Mention Pat Kirwan.</p> <p>1:02:55 Pat talks about his involvement in the GAA. Mentions Croke Park. Club member Mossie talks about his involvement in the GAA. They also mention Tommy Ryan and mention incident after match between Lancashire and London in Birmingham.</p> <p>1:05:20 Tommy discusses Joe McCabe from Meath. Recalls story concerning Joe, mentions Senator Jack Fitzgerald from Meath. Recalls incident involving Fr Tom Lynch from Roscommon. Another incident involving match with Oisíns is recalled. Tommy recalls Mrs Redmond's wake.</p> <p>1:12:18 They discuss Joe Cahill, mention matches between Oisíns and John Mitchels. They discuss the physical nature of the game at the time. Match recalled between St Patricks and Manchester, mention Fr Fitzgerald.</p> <p>1:14:37 Tommy discusses Tim O'Keefe and his role in the GAA in Liverpool.</p> <p>1:16:15 Seán discusses contributions of Chris Johnston and Tommy Walsh to the John Mitchels club. Tommy talks about Chris' contribution to the club. Mentions St Marys Ardee, and Dermot O'Brien of 1957 Louth All-Ireland winning team. They recall story concerning Dermot O'Brien on day of 1957 All-Ireland final.</p> <p>1:19:25 They discuss playing in tournament in Cork. Tommy Walsh mentions his son Colm. Recalls the support that John Mitchels had at tournament.</p>
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	<p>1:21:22 Story recalled concerning player picked up at Ellesmere Port. Mention Michael Redmond and Noel Hayes.</p> <p>1:23:17 They discuss Fr Paddy Spain, Fr Jack Bergin and Fr Denis Ryan who all played with St Patricks and Lancashire. Tommy mentions their role in Kirby. They recall Fr Spain at funeral of Seán McInerney. Also mention Seán McNamara.</p> <p>1:25:26 Tommy recalls story concerning Fr Spain. Recalls chartering plane for his funeral and describes the funeral service. They mention Fr Spain's role in the Irish community in Liverpool.</p> <p>1:32:54 They discuss Fr Seán O'Brien and his role in the Irish community in Liverpool.</p> <p>1:33:42 They discuss the involvement of Irish priests in the GAA in Liverpool. They mention Canon Michael O'Connor from Rathmore, Co Kerry.</p> <p>1:35:22 Tommy and Chris discuss showing GAA matches in the club. They describe the scene when the Irish national anthem is played - they explain what it means to them when they hear Amhrán na bhFiann played. Tommy mentions the uniqueness of the city of Liverpool and talks about the GAA culture contributing to the culture of the city.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input 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>Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	

Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 1:39:29
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 21st August 2012