

## GAA Oral History Project

**Interview Report Form**

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| <b>Name of Interviewer</b>                             | Regina Fitzpatrick   |
| <b>Date of Interview</b>                               | 31 October 2008  |
| <b>Location</b>  | Cork City  |
| <b>Name of Interviewee</b><br>(Maiden name / Nickname) | Micheál Mac an tSaoir  |
| <b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>      |  |
| <b>Gender</b>  | Male   |
| <b>Born</b>  | <b>Year Born:</b> 1946<br><b>Home County:</b> Limerick                                 |
| <b>Education</b>                                       | <b>Primary:</b> Aghalin National School<br><b>Secondary:</b> Knockaderry, Co. Limerick |
| <b>Family</b>  | <b>Siblings: 4 brothers and 2 sisters</b>  |
| <b>Club(s)</b>   | Newcastlewest  |
| <b>Occupation</b>                                      | Cable Jaunter  |
| <b>Parents' Occupation</b>                             | Oil Truck Driver [Father]; Housewife [Mother]  |
| <b>Religion</b>  | Catholic   |
| <b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>              | Sinn Féin  |

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| <b>Date of Report</b>             | 7th January 2009   |
| <b>Period Covered</b>             | 1940s-2008   |
| <b>Counties/Countries Covered</b> | Limerick, Kilkenny   |
| <b>Key Themes Covered</b>         | Travel, County history, Training, Playing, Childhood   |
| <b>Interview Summary</b>          | <p>0.22 from Knockaderry, West Limerick. Family background.</p> <p>1.00 Primary school in Aghalin and secondary school in Knockaderry. Walking to school in the 1950s.</p> <p>2.20 Hardships of life in 1950s</p> <p>2.38 main past-time was playing hurling, remembers seeing a sliotar and a hurley for the first time, playing with smachs, making smachs out of ash wood. Playing in the field after mass on Sundays.</p> <p>3.50 tight knit communities of the time, local skillsmen, staying within your own towns land, playing against other towns lands.</p> <p>5.15 Playing Ardagh in Bosses Field. Breaking another player's hurl.</p> <p>6.25 Running home from mass to be in time to play hurling in the field.</p> <p>6.55 Picking teams and the rows that followed. Family mattered before the team when the row started.</p> <p>7.35 James Hardy trying to encourage them to save money to buy a hurl. Buying a football after someone came home from America and gave them money.</p> <p>8.10 There were some great hurlers that never made parish teams, they were so plentiful and so good. Team in the early 50s in Ardagh was a particularly strong team, a lot of county hurlers on that team.</p> <p>9.08 Banóg- the eastern most parish in the west. Match between Ardagh and Banóg in the Bog Garden in Rathkeel.</p> <p>10.20 Electricity came in 1959, memories of following the men around putting the poles in.</p> |

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|  | <p>11.15 hiding his stick in case someone would take it</p> <p>11.20 sitting at the gable end of the shop, dancing sets outside the shop.</p> <p>12.24 The first time he saw Newcastlewest, father took them on 8<sup>th</sup> December, he was 8 years old, it was a big fair day, description of the scene and Christmas shopping. Christmas in the 50s, different foods cooked, baking breads and making Christmas cake. Cooking with a crane. Climbing the dresser in the kitchen for goodies.</p> <p>14:50 Describing the death of his friend in a road accident as a child, 58 years ago.</p> <p>15.40 Death of a community, the emptying of the countryside.</p> <p>16.35 Going to the creamery on Sunday mornings, on his road there were 50 suppliers in the 1950s and there's not even one now.</p> <p>18.26 Only one young lad in the district hurling now.</p> <p>19.20 The beauty of his own parish, the history associated with Ardagh, the birthplace of William Smith O'Brien, place where the Ardagh Chalice was found.</p> <p>20.22 People from Pallintine, on French-German border came to Ardagh about 100 years ago.</p> <p>20.55 Story that St Patrick visited Ardagh</p> <p>21.20 Left school before he was fourteen, great teachers he had when he was in school.</p> <p>22.00 Worked for a farmer about twelve miles away from home, then worked in a factory in Rathkeel.</p> <p>22.50 Went to Birmingham when he was sixteen. Conditions in Birmingham. Loneliness of being away from home. Returned to Ireland for his father's funeral in 1967.</p> <p>23.50 Started working for Telecom Éireann after that for thirty years.</p> <p>25.00 Matches between Ardagh and Knockaderry. Saw great hurlers from Newcastlewest, Ballingarry, they all had their heroes</p> <p>26.00 Travelling to matches, by bicycle and by ass and car.</p> <p>27.20 The GAA today has lost touch with grassroots. Disagrees with training boys at fourteen, it burns them out too</p> |
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|  | <p>young. Difference in fitness of players now, compared to when he was young, physical labour of the farm etc. Differences in style.</p> <p>30.00 Describing a sliotar whistling.</p> <p>31.31 Described the best shot he ever saw a hurler take, Eddie Keher Limerick v. Kilkenny. Describes meeting him in Dublin.</p> <p>33.20 Most of the great hurlers had great hands, a great advantage to hurlers and footballers.</p> <p>33.40 A lot of players when he was young were too quiet to get on the parish team.</p> <p>34.00 Differences in style of hurling today and also in the sliotar.</p> <p>35.57 You can teach someone to play football, with hurling you need to be a natural. Story about his French grandson playing hurling. Taught all of his grandchildren to hurl.</p> <p>37.00 Gorbechev describing it as a warrior's game.</p> <p>38.00 His sister's grandchild started primary school in Kilkenny and had to take a hurl the first day. Decline in hurling in local school in Ardagh.</p> <p>39.00 Importance of teaching children hurling when they're young. Hurling needs to be saved.</p> <p>40.00 The loneliness of the emptiness of the countryside now.</p> <p>43.00 What the GAA means to rural Ireland and means to him personally.</p> <p>44.47 What it was like going to matches, the sorrow of defeat.</p> <p>45.50 Kilkenny hurling, they leave nothing to chance.</p> <p>48.00 The best dual he ever saw was between Eddie Keher and John Doyle.</p> <p>48.48 Favourite GAA memory, the homecoming with a West Limerick Cup to Ardagh</p> <p>50.18 great players in Dublin.</p> <p>50.50 Rugby is the greatest challenge to the GAA now Rugby an easy game to play, hurling more complex.</p> <p>52.30 Sourcing Ash in Poland.</p> |
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|   | <p>52.46 Discouraging volunteering time to training young teams and parents using that as a babysitting service. Insurance is also an obstacle to training.</p> <p>54.30 Nowadays houses aren't designed for hurling, no place to put the hurl behind the door, not place over the fire to dry out your boots.</p> <p>56.01 The cost to volunteers of the time they spend volunteering with the GAA.</p> <p>56.60 How special hurling is to him, a game of warriors.</p>   |
| <b>Involvement in GAA</b>   | <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 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> |
| <b>Record as a Player</b><br>(Titles won; Length of time played)    | N/A  |
| <b>Record as an Administrator</b><br>(Positions held; how long for) | Trained underage teams   |
| <b>Format</b>   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual  |
| <b>Duration</b>   | Length of Interview: 57:37:04  |
| <b>Language</b>   | English  |

**To be filled in by Interviewer:**

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Signed: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> January 2009