

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

<b>Name of Interviewer</b>	Regina Fitzpatrick
<b>Date of Interview</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2011
<b>Location</b>	Peter's home, Kiltegan, Co. Wicklow.
<b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname)	Peter Keogh
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1929 <b>Home County:</b> Wicklow
<b>Education</b>	<b>Primary:</b> Talbotstown NS, Co. Wicklow
<b>Family</b>	<b>Siblings:</b> 1 brother & 1 sister <b>Current Family if Different:</b> Wife (Mary), 2 daughters
<b>Club(s)</b>	Kiltegan GAA [Wicklow]; Baltinglass GAA [Wicklow]; Rathangan GAA [Wicklow]
<b>Occupation</b>	Lorry Driver
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	Blacksmith [Father]
<b>Religion</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	None
<b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>	Various Parish Committees

REFERENCE NO. WW/1/3

<b>Date of Report</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> June 2012
<b>Period Covered</b>	1840s – 2011
<b>Counties/Countries Covered</b>	Wicklow, Carlow, Kilkenny, Kildare, Wexford, Dublin, Great Britain, England, Scotland, Americas, USA
<b>Key Themes Covered</b>	Family Involvement, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Playing, All-Ireland, Administration, Childhood, Economy/ Economics, Emigration, Training, Ban on Foreign Games and Dancing, Administration, Grounds, Alcohol, Career, Irish History, Supporting, Facilities, Officials, Celebrations, Commiserations, Media, GAA Abroad, Irish Language
<b>Interview Summary</b>	<p>Peter begins by discussing the history of the GAA in Kiltegan, the surrounding areas and Wicklow, in particular West Wicklow. He also talks about the general history of Kiltegan and, for example, talks about how the Economic War and Second World War affected the area. The history of the local club, St.Tegans, and its various formations as well as the successes and failures of the clubs are accounted for. Peter also recalls events linked to Gaelic sport such as getting the first football in Kiltegan and listening to one of the first matches he heard on the radio. As well as talking about his own role in the GAA and other figures, Peter also touches on and discusses topics such as emigration, transport throughout the years, the Parnell Split, fundraising, objections, centenary year, Feile na nGael and his journalistic career. The interview ends with Peter talking about what keeps him motivated, what the GAA means to him and what his hopes for the Wicklow football and hurling teams are.</p> <p>00:40 Talks about family involvement with the GAA and the history of the GAA in Kiltegan. Notes in the past people supported more than played and that the first club called Kiltegan was set up in 1929.</p> <p>01:36 Discusses the GAA in the area and the history of activity. Notes that it arrived in Wicklow in 1886 and part of the reason was due to Wicklow man Jack Byrne who was part of Michael Cusack's academy. Hurling was up and running by 1887 the same year the National Championship started.</p> <p>02:47 Talks about Kiltegan. Notes it is on the border of Carlow and that the first club he was in, the clubhouse was</p>

	<p>actually in Carlow. Mentions that this caused tension as the borders used to be sacrosanct. Attempts were made to split the areas but it could not be done.</p> <p>04:22 Hurling arrived late in west Wicklow and never took off. Mentions Martin Gleeson and his attempt to bring in hurling in the 1930s. Had more success with Camogie. Notes that hurling was only looked to when football was going badly but Kiltegan has now become a reasonably good hurling club.</p> <p>06:19 Discusses what Kiltegan was like when he was growing up. Notes that like other rural communities it was ruined by the Economic War and in later years, World War II. Talks about the Economic War and how it affected farmers.</p> <p>09:38 Mentions in a community like Kiltegan there was only 2 or 3 independent incomes-the Garda Sergeant and school teachers.</p> <p>10:11 Says that keeping football going was difficult in such a rural area but a good football club was not put together in the first place.</p> <p>10:35 Talks about the formation of the club in 1929. It took off well and won the West Junior Championship but the club ran into problems. Peter notes his involvement with the formation of a club in 1949 but that club did not last either. It was the club formed in 1964/66 which took off well and is the club which exists today.</p> <p>11:45 Talks about history. Mentions the Balladerry Volunteers and the 1887 Championship. Notes they played the Maurice Davins from Baltinglass in the first round of the Championship. Notes other teams in the area and in 1888 when Carlow was setting up its County Board 4 Clubs from the area were present-Rathvilly, Hacketstown, Tinock and Clonmore.</p> <p>14:02 Discusses why the interest in the GAA did not last long. Notes having to cross the mountains for matches as an issue. Administration is also on the far side of the county. Horses and carts were the only way over. Notes West Wicklow Board was set up in 1910.</p> <p>15:23 Recalls while they were not part of the Wicklow football scene, they played against teams in Carlow, Kildare, Wexford and Dublin. Once the Board was established Championships were set up. Mentions Matt Byrne. Blessington, Ballymount and Baltinglass won Junior Championships. Baltinglass also won Senior Championship in 1915.</p>
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	<p>16:33 Notes once being able to play football in their own area against local teams, football took off. Mentions Billy Byrnes. Mentions the Parnell Split which affected activity-says there was either no County Board or 2. West Wicklow then had no activity until 1910.</p> <p>17:57 Talks about the Parnell Split affecting activity. Impacted the GAA in general but since he was a Wicklowman it had a huge impact in the county.</p> <p>18:51 Talks about an 1886 programme of matches. Tournament was run on the Parnell Estate. 6 teams from Wicklow played 6 teams from Wexford. Notes thousands arrived down by train.</p> <p>19:34 Says losing Parnell and the split would have caused would have affected Wicklow more than anything else.</p> <p>20:09 Talks about the development of Kiltegan. Notes the clubs correct name is now St. Tegan's. Talks about Rathdangan and how they had an active GAA club in the 1920s and 1930s. Won their first Junior Championship in 1924 and Senior in 1930. Won another Senior in 1936 but World War II destroyed the club.</p> <p>22:31 Recalls the first football in the area. Since there was no club and teachers were not interested either, there was no football. Made a plan to get one in Talbotstown school. Mentions Fry's Cocoa. The company had a catalogue out which listed a number of items to get if enough coupons were collected, one being a football. Talks about getting a group together to take cocoa coupons from a locals rubbish.</p> <p>26:11 Notes his first introduction to hurling. Notes he did not see a hurling match until 1947. Saw the All-Ireland Final.</p> <p>26:50 Talks about St. Patrick's renting Humewood Castle for an overflow of students. Recalls seeing some of the seminary students playing hurling.</p> <p>27:49 Recalls thinking if they could get hurls they could play hurling as all there was to replace a football was a pigs bladder or a rag-ball. The timber industry was big and ash was available to make the hurls. Was easy to make a sliotar and recalls what was needed to make one. However, when one of them got injured the hurls were burned.</p> <p>31:11 Talks about becoming acquainted with hurling in 1947. Recalls saving up for a bike and going to the All-Ireland. Mentions Canon Hamilton taking the All-Ireland Football to</p>
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	<p>New York that year so they went to the Hurling Final instead.</p> <p>33:40 Talks about the All-Ireland Hurling Final, Kilkenny vs. Cork. Mentions Jack Lynch being prevented from getting 7 All-Ireland medals in a row. Became a hurling fanatic. Mentions Terry Leahy and Jim Langton.</p> <p>36:45 Mentions listening Mícheál Ó hEithir(Michael O'Hehir) and how radios were scarce at the time. Talks about Mícheál Ó hEithir. Mentions Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh.</p> <p>39:13 Recalls one of the first matches he listened to. Recalls it was 1944 when Carlow won the Leinster Championship. Listened to the radio of one of the neighbours who was a big Kerry fan. Was a Carlow vs. Kerry match. Mícheál Ó hEithir commentated. When Kerry scored neighbour hit the table which disconnected the radio.</p> <p>42:15 Peter talks about his playing career. Notes that there was nothing until after World War II and there was no club in Kiltegan. Kiltegan and Rathdagan had amalgamated. Up until 1949 Peter had played with Rathdagan and won a West Junior Championship. Emigration brought an end to the team. 1949 began in Kiltegan again but the club broke up and reformed numerous times in the 1950s.</p> <p>44:17 Football was not going anywhere. Good players were with Baltinglass and Clonmore.</p> <p>44:48 Formed a club again. Mention Brian Graham, a Kerryman. Brian attempted to form a club but there were no players. Instead formed a Juvenile Club. Mentions Hugh Byrne. In 1966 the Junior team got going again but numbers were problematic. The best players were still with Baltinglass and Clonmore.</p> <p>46:45 Martin took over and trained the hurling team. In 1973 they won championship.</p> <p>47:17 Talks about Martin. Rented the old school on Baltinglass Hill to start his own clothing business.</p> <p>48:52 Mentions John Timmins, Seán Keogh and others brought the Cup around the schools. Demand for hurlers rose. Peter notes he got involved at the Juvenile end with John Timmins and built it up from the ground.</p> <p>49:36 Talks about his book "Gateway to Glory" which is the history of St. Tegans GAA Club. Notes growing up the word Juvenile was not used and they did not involve themselves</p>
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	<p>with organised sport and games.</p> <p>51:05 Mentions boot makers. Their name was the pet name for the song “Hobnail Boot of the Day”.</p> <p>51:55 Talks about funds and fundraising. All they did in his early days was run a sweep on the Grand National. Rose around £6, £7, £8 but in later years that went up to £12. Talks about the affiliation fees and the change from 1929 to 1997. Notes they also ran Céilí dancing in St. Tegan’s Hall with St. Tegan’s Céilí Band and the ban on other forms of dancing. Mentions the importance of the Lotto for fundraising nowadays.</p> <p>53:33 Notes other dances were run but under different name. Some rules were antiquated.</p> <p>54:55 Talks about objections. In his opinion, they nearly brought the association into disrepute. Notes one of the GAA’s first rules was supporting the Irish language and industry as well as matches only being played on Sundays. Recalls only having one Championship match a year and if it was lost that was the team’s only match. Led to objections. Notes the importance of Irish watermarked paper and that they had to be accompanied by an Irish £1 note.</p> <p>58:42 Talks about Noel Crowley, a Clareman. Notes Crowley won a Railway Cup Medal in 1948. Mentions Tom Cunningham. Peter notes when Crowley came to Kiltegan there was not really a team to train. Peter mentions the local pub, The Congo, and how Crowley would mention to the locals the youth with him(from Dublin) were good at football. He would purposely bring them to play, if the locals wanted.</p> <p>01:03:14 Talks about an unnamed Inter-County hurling player. Was from Clare but player for Clann na nGael in Dublin. Had won a Dublin Senior Championship with the club. Notes when the Dublin championships were over, players from Clann na nGael would play elsewhere. Notes a Kiltegan match was switched to Blessington and the unnamed player arrived that day.</p> <p>01:05:09 Kiltegan won and the opposition lodged an objection. Objection was held in Kiltegan Hall. Crowley fought the objection. Discovered the other team had not registered properly. Mentions Jack Boothman and his efforts to promote the GAA in areas such as West Wicklow.</p> <p>01:06:24 Talks about the objection in Kiltegan Hall and mentions the red book of Irish-English names provided by</p>
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	<p>Croke Park.</p> <p>01:07:58 Notes Crowley's activity in the club began in 1969 to 1971.</p> <p>01:08:30 Talks about a Kiltegan man, Martin Molloy. Was in Dublin when the 1916 Rising took place and later joined the Irish Volunteers. He was also fought in the War of Independence and was part of the Mountjoy Hunger Strike.</p> <p>01:09:08 The week after the 1916 Rising, when Molloy was heading to work, he passed Elverys and when it was being cleared out, got a football. Went down to the Phoenix park the following Sunday and got a group together. Was a founding member of the Seán McDermott's Team.</p> <p>01:11:07 Talks about Kevin Barry. Was in Mountjoy and was hanged. He played hurling but probably better known as a rugby player. With hurling, he played on the Colleges Team.</p> <p>01:12:54 Talks about transport and how it changed down through the years. Notes it was the first big problem the GAA encountered when the first County Board was set up. Notes the first County Convention was held in Wicklow Town Hall in 1886. Notes horse and trap.</p> <p>01:13:52 Recalls a story about Hacketstown in a County Minor Football Final. Was played in Wicklow and that the team travelled on a horse and dray. On the way home the horse is said to have got tired and the team had to walk the rest of the way home.</p> <p>01:14:37 In 1944 Rathdagan got to a Junior Final and the bicycle was the mode of transport at the time. Notes during the war tyres were hard to come by and a lot of black-marketing went on. Goes on to talk about Rathdagan match and how they borrowed as many bikes as they could to get to Aghrim. They had 1 bike for every 3 players and would swap every 2-3 miles.</p> <p>01:17:29 Talks about a lorry going to Blessington. Notes after the war years the cattle lorry was still used and talks about the Gardaí chasing it at match against Rathdagan in Aghrim around 1949. Had to find a new mode of transport as the Gardaí no longer tolerated it.</p> <p>01:22:17 Talks about Féile na nGael. Started in the early 1970s with Séamus Ó Riain. Did a lot for hurling in the early days. Mentions Father Liam Dunne Chairman of Bord na nÓg and Féile na nGael. Recalls Dunne would have them down to Kilkenny to help build up hurling. The Senior Team has since</p>
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	<p>won 8 Championships.</p> <p>01:23:56 Notes Kilkenny decided to play a mock Féile the year before they really won. Kiltegan were invited to take part in the mock. Says it won the boys hearts and took them away from football. Kiltegan went on to win the Féile in Wicklow.</p> <p>01:25:00 Notes the first time they took part in the Féile in Kilkenny they stayed in Callan but before then they had been in Castlecomber among other places. In 1978 they stayed in Tom Walsh's club. Third time they were beaten in their own Féile in Wicklow. Notes you had to have 33 teams for the Féile. Kiltegan also got invited to a mini-Féile in Kilkenny.</p> <p>01:26:25 Peter discusses his involvement in the administrative side of the GAA. Talks about Jack Boothman. Notes the difficulty of finding a Secretary so he went for it. Mentions when the District Board got involved at the County Level Peter became PRO. New jobs were available. Peter was the first County Hurling officer and eventually became County Chairman. Also Chairman of the Activities Committee as well as Secretary. Worked in fixtures.</p> <p>01:29:43 Mentions the centenary year and the work that had to be done. Notes the things that were not done in 1984 were done in 1985. For example, a congress was held in Cork. Says being Chairman at this time was one of the highlights for him. Became President soon after that.</p> <p>01:31:11 Talks about his goals, targets and what he wanted to achieve. One of the first things decided was to produce a county history. Mentions Jimmy Dunne, Tommy Coleman and Jim Brophy(wrote the book). Got McNamee Awards. Another objective/goal was to get the county grounds in Aughrim in shape. Had to build a stand.</p> <p>01:33:14 Talks about the time he put into the GAA and the time certain positions would take.</p> <p>01:34:18 Discusses the aspects of the job he did not like. Notes the tough one for the Chairman was imposing discipline.</p> <p>01:36:48 Talks about the challenges and what it is like being in administration in what are regarded as the weaker counties. Notes one of the problems with the weaker counties is that training is the same as in strong counties but there is no reward for it. Notes it's expensive and the lowest figure he saw was €500,000. Notes the cost factor is big. Mentions Mick O'Dwyer and Jack O'Connor.</p>
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**REFERENCE NO. WW/1/3**

	<p>01:40:07 Discusses Mick O'Dwyer and his influence on Wicklow GAA.</p> <p>01:42:00 Mentions Camogie also took off in Kiltegan. Won their first Senior Championship in 1975. They now have 10 or 11 of them. Notes 2 year previous they had a great year.</p> <p>01:42:48 Recalls the BBC being in Kiltegan for a programme. Through them discovered the population of Kiltegan was 75. In 2008 there were 70 football players.</p> <p>01:44:22 Discusses what influence Jack Boothman's GAA presidency had on Wicklow. Notes Jack did not become Chairman of the Wicklow County Board and believes it was a big mistake.</p> <p>01:44:15 Talks about writing about the GAA nowadays. Has a page in the Wicklow People every week as well as a bit in The Leader and The Nationalist.</p> <p>01:46:49 Notes when he was growing up there was only GAA in rural Ireland but now there are a other sport footholds all over the country.</p> <p>01:48:07 Talks about what keeps him motivated.</p> <p>01:49:08 Peter talks about what the GAA means to him. Notes learning some Irish to fill out team sheets.</p> <p>01:51:17 Talks about how he would like to live to see the day Wicklow win something like the Leinster Championship. Says for the time being he would be happy for the hurlers to win the Christy Ring Cup and a Leinster Championship in football or promotion to Division 4.</p>
<p><b>Involvement in GAA</b></p>	<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 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><b>Record as a Player</b> (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p>Played for 10 years with Kiltegan; played minor football with Baltinglass and also played with Rathangan GAA</p>
<p><b>Record as an Administrator</b> (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Kiltegan GAA: Held various positions club committees throughout the years.</p> <p>West Wicklow: Secretary (1970-1980)</p>

**REFERENCE NO. WW/1/3**

	Wicklow: 1 <sup>st</sup> Hurling Officer of Wicklow County Board (1970s); 1 <sup>st</sup> PRO of Wicklow County Board (1983); Chairman of County Board (1983); President of Wicklow County Board (Current)
<b>Format</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
<b>Duration</b>	Length of Interview: 01:52:19
<b>Language</b>	English

**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:              28<sup>th</sup> June 2012