

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

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| Name of Interviewer | Padraic O'Connor |
| Date of Interview | 20 th Oct 2010 |
| Location | Cooley Kickham's GAA complex |
| Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname) | John Woods |
| <u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u> | |
| Gender | Male |
| Born | Year Born: 1940 Home County: Louth |
| Education | N/A |
| Family | Siblings: 3 brothers; 2 sisters |
| Club(s) | Cooley Kickham's GFC [Louth] |
| Occupation | Solicitor |
| Parents' Occupation | Solicitor |
| Religion | Roman Catholic |
| Political Affiliation / Membership | N/A |
| Other Club/Society Membership(s) | N/A |

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| Date of Report | 16 th July 2012 |
| Period Covered | 1950 – 1990 |
| Counties/Countries Covered | Louth, Cavan, Meath, Dublin |
| Key Themes Covered | Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Playing, Training, Administration, Religion, Media, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Rivalries, Irish Language, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Opening of Croke Park, Professionalism |
| Interview Summary | <p>The interviewee speaks about his introduction to Gaelic football and evokes a time when Louth were among the dominant teams in Leinster and the country at large. The influence of family and local clergy elicits comment as does the role of School Leagues. Woods charts the story of his playing days with Cooley and offers perspectives on issues such as the changing role of women in the club, the place of the club in the community and wider developments within the GAA, including the relaxation of the bans on foreign games and the playing of rival sports in Croke Park.</p> <p>00:00:20 Earliest memory of receiving a pair of football boots from Santa Claus and wearing them to mass on Christmas morning.</p> <p>00:00:35 Discusses family background in the GAA and been taken by his Aunt into the Louth dressing-room on Croke Park in 1948 when the county was defeated by Cavan in the All-Ireland semi-final. Recalls the smell of embrocation</p> <p>00:01:10 Childhood memories were of summers where Louth were one of the top teams</p> <p>00:01:30 Mentions his Aunt's fanaticism and that she suggested the wearing of the St. Brigid's cross on the Louth jersey in a letter to the <i>Democrat</i>.</p> <p>00:01:45 Discusses his father's involvement with Cooley Kickhams and county board.</p> <p>00:02:18 Mentions his Uncle Ambrose, a member of the Louth minor team in the mid 1930s, who subsequently entered the seminary.</p> <p>00:02:35 Introduction to football: refers the influence of</p> |

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| | <p>Fr.Keelan, the curate in Carlingford and a member of Clann Mhuire, and the role of the Schools Leagues.</p> <p>00:03:00 Has no memory of playing minor for Cooley as he was away in school in Gormanstown. Was selected for the Louth minors because they came to Gormanstown to play against the college.</p> <p>00:03:30 First memory of playing for Cooley was with the second division team after he left school c. 1958</p> <p>00:03:48 Discusses the GAA heroes of his youth: Stephen White, Jack Regan, Sean Boyle, Jack Bell.</p> <p>00:04:15 Remarks on the 'all absorbing' nature of his involvement with Cooley Kickhams when he was playing. Recalls marking Kevin Beahan in a game against Ardee in 1960. That Cooley team included players from the St. Michael's College.</p> <p>00:05:30 Discusses the decline of Cooley after the loss of St. Michael's players and the decision to re-grade back to junior status c. 1962. Fortunes improved again and club returned to senior in 1964.</p> <p>00:06:15 The place of the GAA in community life and its development over 20 years. Reference is made to the shift in focus from the church to the club.</p> <p>00:07:10 Reference to levels of activity in club, including women's football, and pressure on pitches.</p> <p>00:07:45 Discussion on the changing role of women within the club and past perceptions of women's involvement in sport. Reference is also made to the place of women in the administration of the club.</p> <p>00:08:30 The importance of voluntarism and criticism of the alleged payment of managers. Says clubs should look to themselves and speculates on the possible impact of the recession in this regard.</p> <p>00:09:20 Discusses the influence of the clergy on the Cooley club.</p> <p>00:09:40 Mentions Dublin and Meath as Louth's main rivals.</p> <p>00:09:50 Selects as a personal GAA highlight the captaining of the Cooley team in 1964 and the start of the club's renaissance. Discusses club's subsequent fortunes.</p> <p>00:10:55 Discusses the influence of media and television in</p> |
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| | <p>bringing games to a wider audience. Speaks of changing nature of sporting allegiances.</p> <p>00:11:40 Discusses the significance of removing the ban on foreign games and opening up of Croke Park.</p> <p>00:12:30 Comments on growth in public interest in the Irish language and his involvement in social groups that meet to converse in Irish. Contrasts this willing engagement with the language with the compulsory methods of old.</p> |
| Involvement in GAA | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" 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 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) | Cooley Kickham's 1950-1971; Louth Seniors, 1960-1968; UCD, 1960-1963 |
| Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for) | N/A |
| Format | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual |
| Duration | Length of Interview: 00:15:00 |
| Language | English |

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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: Padraic O'Connor

Date: 21st Oct 2010