

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

<b>Name of Interviewer</b>	Regina Fitzpatrick
<b>Date of Interview</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> April 2011
<b>Location</b>	Jack's homer, near Kilcavan, Co. Laois
<b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname)	Jack O'Brien
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1927 <b>Home County:</b> Laois
<b>Education</b>	<b>Primary:</b> Clonaghdoon NS, Co. Laois
<b>Family</b>	<b>Siblings:</b> 2 brothers & 7 sisters <b>Current Family if Different:</b> Wife (Philomena), 2 sons & 5 daughters
<b>Club(s)</b>	Kilcavan GAA [Laois]
<b>Occupation</b>	Irish Sugar Employee
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	Farmers
<b>Religion</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	Fianna Fáil
<b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>	Irish Farmers Association

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Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Kevin Summers
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1938 <b>Home County:</b> Dublin
<b>Education</b>	N/A
<b>Family</b>	N/A
<b>Club(s)</b>	Kilcavan GAA [Laois]
<b>Occupation</b>	N/A
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	N/A
<b>Religion</b>	N/A
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	N/A
<b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>	N/A

**REFERENCE NO. LS/1/20**

<b>Date of Report</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2012
<b>Period Covered</b>	1930s - 2011
<b>Counties/Countries Covered</b>	Laois, Offaly, Donegal, Dublin, Clare, Cork, Wexford, Westmeath
<b>Key Themes Covered</b>	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Material Culture, Education, Religion, Media, Emigration, Role of Clergy, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Rivalries, Club History, Earliest Memories, Childhood, Impact on Life, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Relationship with the Association, Purchase of Grounds, Economy/ Economics
<b>Interview Summary</b>	<p>Jack and Kevin talk about their memories of the GAA. Jack describes being one of the founder members of the GAA club in Kilcavan, while Kevin speaks as someone who only moved to the area in the early 2000s. Jack discusses the formation of the club, playing in farmers' fields in the early days, and finally the purchase of their own pitch. Jack also describes the modes of transport to matches in his younger days. Kevin praises Jack throughout for his volunteer ethos and the work he has done for the club. Jack describes his love for the GAA, and mentions its importance to the community. Kevin speaks of the crucial link between schools and GAA clubs. Both men discuss the modern versions of Gaelic football and hurling, talking about what they see as changes in the way the games are played. Jack discusses his administrative roles in the GAA and recalls his highlights from his time in the Association.</p> <p>00:52 Jack describes what it was like growing up in Kilcavan. Mentions hard times and a man from Daingean telling him that he had to take money from his children's Holy Communion box to get food for them.</p> <p>01:42 Jack discusses the formation of the GAA club in 1946. Speaks of what other amenities were in Kilcavan Cross at the time. Describes what social conditions were like at the time.</p> <p>02:47 Jack describes dances that took place at Kilcavan hall.</p> <p>03:25 Jack talks about a team in Kilcavan in his younger days that wasn't affiliated to the GAA. Speaks of another team in Quarrymount. Speaks of the attire they wore while playing.</p> <p>04:13 Jack discusses the early days of the GAA club in Kilcavan. Mentions Quarrymount having a team in the Offaly championship. Picked players from both sides of the</p>

	<p>Offaly/Laois border. Mentions Johnny Hooper who played for Killeigh.</p> <p>04:52 Kilcavan right on the Laois/Offaly border – Jack discusses Kilcavan's relationship with Killeigh in the Offaly end of the parish. Mentions Bill Delaney.</p> <p>05:28 Kevin Somers interjects, asking Jack O'Brien if Bill Delaney was on the team of the century.</p> <p>06:40 Kevin Somers interjects, asking if Jack O'Brien really remembers a passage that Regina Fitzpatrick has read out to him regarding his younger days.</p> <p>06:43 Jack mentions his uncle Tom, a Guard in Ballinasloe. He would be on duty at Railway Cup matches. Jack mentions Geashill. Jack mentions Bill Mulhall, Andy McEvoy. Jack mentions the Delaneys who played football for Laois and mentions Offaly and Laois playing matches.</p> <p>07:35 Kevin Somers interjects, asking a question re Jack O'Brien's memory.</p> <p>08:20 Jack describes listening to matches on the radio in his house. Mentions a woman in Garrymore who had a radio, she was Church of Ireland. Locals would not go down to her house to listen to the match. Jack describes one St Patrick's Day listening to Railway Cup Finals in Croke Park.</p> <p>09:05 Kevin Somers interjects, asking Jack O'Brien what year a particular Railway Cup Final might have been.</p> <p>09:30 Jack discusses inter-county players in the 1930s/40s. Jack mentions Portlaoise and a Laois/Wicklow match. Mentions upcoming Laois/Donegal match, and Donegal forward Michael Murphy.</p> <p>10:33 Kevin Somers interjects, saying in jest that he takes exception to Jack O'Brien saying that Donegal's Michael Murphy is the best forward in the country.</p> <p>11:18 Jack discusses renting pitches from farmers.</p> <p>12:00 Jack discusses hurling in the Kilcavan area. Mentions Mountmellick and Rosenallis. Mentions his history of playing in finals.</p> <p>12:19 Jack asks Kevin does he agree with the fact that Kilcavan played in a lot of county finals that they lost.</p> <p>12:33 Jack discusses the formation of Kilcavan GAA club in 1946. Mentions the poverty that existed in the area after</p>
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	<p>World War Two. Describes using a tractor and trailer to travel to a match in Mountrath. Describes hearing German war planes flying over at night time. Mentions listening to Lord Haw Haw on the radio during World War Two.</p> <p>13:55 Kevin interjects regarding rationing in World War Two.</p> <p>14:42 Jack talks about people in rural areas producing their own food during World War Two.</p> <p>15:00 Kevin interjects, asking Jack if people during World War Two would have baked their own bread.</p> <p>15:05 Jack describes role of GAA club in giving Kilcavan a boost after World War Two.</p> <p>15:30 Kevin interjects, commenting re Kilcavan school teams.</p> <p>16:24 Kevin discusses coming to live in Kilcavan.</p> <p>16:57 Jack discusses the ban on foreign games. Mentions vigilantes for soccer matches.</p> <p>17:45 Kevin interjects, commenting on number of soccer clubs in Kilcavan area at the time.</p> <p>17:57 Jack discusses other sports in Kilcavan area. Mentions sports that were in the secondary school in Mountmellick.</p> <p>18:34 Jack describes raising funds to buy the GAA pitch in 1984.</p> <p>18:57 Regina reads extract re official opening of Kilcavan GAA pitch in 1992.</p> <p>19:17 Jack discusses the playing gear of the first Kilcavan GAA teams.</p> <p>19:28 Kevin interjects regarding the cost of jersies.</p> <p>19:30 Jack discusses the playing gear of the first Kilcavan GAA teams.</p> <p>19:45 Jack mentions the accident fund that existed for the welfare of players. Mentions the O'Byrne Cup.</p> <p>19:54 Kevin interjects, mentioning the Walsh Cup as a source of funding for players' welfare.</p> <p>20:29 Jack describes the community spirit engendered by the local GAA club in Kilcavan.</p> <p>21:05 Regina reads an extract from a copy of a letter from 1984 appealing for financial support for the new pitch in</p>
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	<p>Kilcavan.</p> <p>21:30 Jack discusses playing on local farmers' fields before the club acquired its own pitch. Mentions Mrs Watson, Gorrays, Byrnes in Rosgehan, Cox's field, Brian Abrahams.</p> <p>22:50 Jack discusses his playing days.</p> <p>22:54 Kevin interjects regarding Jack's playing days and his playing style. Mentions Hell's Kitchen and Thurles.</p> <p>23:28 Jack recalls a player from his playing days - "The Washer".</p> <p>23:50 Jack resumes reminiscing regarding "The Washer". Discusses winning county final in 1960. Mentions Fr Flood, played Timahoe in the final. Mentions Joe Whelan and "The Washer".</p> <p>25:13 Jack discusses Kilcavan's rivals. Mentions Mountmellick.</p> <p>25:48 Jack recalls Kilcavan's record in the early days. Mentions finals won and lost. Mentions St Fintans Hospital, Timahoe, Ballylinan, Courtwood, St Manmans.</p> <p>28:36 Kevin interjects re Ballylinan's meetings with Kilcavan.</p> <p>28:41 Jack compares regularity of Kilcavan and Ballylinan meetings with that of Meath and Dublin.</p> <p>28:47 Jack recalls tournaments that Kilcavan played in. Mentions seven-a-side tournaments.</p> <p>29:05 Jack recalls specific tournaments that Kilcavan played in. Mentions Abbeyleix, Mountmellick. Lists prizes that were on offer to winners of tournaments, including suit lengths, transistor radios and electric razors. Mentions Daingean.</p> <p>29:53 Kevin asks if all the tournaments were seven-a-sides.</p> <p>29:55 Jack recalls tournaments that Kilcavan played in.</p> <p>30:30 Kevin describes Jack's popularity in the GAA family.</p> <p>31:18 Jack discusses his playing career.</p> <p>31:36 Kevin mentions players playing until their later years with Kilcavan.</p> <p>31:52 Jack recalls his administrative roles with Kilcavan. Describes the planting of the idea that the club should buy its own pitch.</p>
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	<p>33:00 Kevin discusses the fact that some of the core members of Kilcavan went to school together. Compares rural clubs to urban clubs.</p> <p>34:30 Jack recalls the families who have played for Kilcavan. Mentions Hylands, Hunts, his nephews and sons, O'Connells.</p> <p>35:10 Kevin mentions the O'Connors who played for Kilcavan.</p> <p>35:15 Jack resumes discussing the families who played for Kilcavan. Explains that Kilcavan is a small area, the club has a small pool from which to pick. Mentions proximity to Offaly and what the catchment area is. Mentions the Barrow River as border.</p> <p>36:14 Jack discusses the influence that emigration has had on the area. Mentions Mountmellick, England, Bord na Móna.</p> <p>37:10 Jack discusses the landmark moments in Kilcavan's history. Mentions the purchase of the club's first pitch. Jack and Kevin explain that Kilcavan don't host any championship matches at their ground.</p> <p>38:00 Kevin discusses the facilities at the pitch. Mentions showers.</p> <p>38:50 Jack describes the place of the GAA in Kilcavan and the community in general. Mentions attendances at matches.</p> <p>39:50 Kevin discusses the involvement of school children with the club. Mentions Go Games. Discusses role of parents. Mentions rivalry with Mountmellick for the school children. Asserts the importance of clubs being dual clubs, as well as catering for Ladies football and camogie.</p> <p>41:53 Kevin discusses ladies GAA in Kilcavan. Mentions Grace Weston who has won an All-Ireland medal in Ladies football. Mentions Sarsfields in Mountmellick.</p> <p>43:17 Jack explains how Kevin became involved with Kilcavan GAA club.</p> <p>44:07 Kevin explains what motivated him to get involved with Kilcavan.</p> <p>45:47 Kevin discusses settling into the Kilcavan area due to the GAA.</p> <p>46:32 Jack discusses his involvement and commitment to the GAA. Mentions his love of matches. Emphasises the role of the GAA in maintaining law and order in society. Recalls the</p>
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	<p>role that the GAA played in his childhood.</p> <p>48:13 Kevin mentions media coverage of the GAA in his childhood, comparing it to modern times.</p> <p>48:24 Jack interjects re the media coverage of GAA in years gone by.</p> <p>48:32 Jack discusses transport in his younger days. Describes travelling to dances on a bike. Mentions Mountmellick. Describes going to matches in a lorry with Mick Poole.</p> <p>49:23 Kevin mentions a lack of health and safety regulations when it came to transport years ago.</p> <p>49:32 Jack describes travelling to matches in his younger days. Discusses Kilcavan players making it at inter-county level. Mentions Barry McEvoy, Mountrath, John Joe McEvoy. Recalls match that Barry played against Clare and was marked by Anthony Daly. Mentions Offaly and Martin Hanamy.</p> <p>51:10 Jack describes what it was like supporting Laois. Mentions modes of transport to matches in 1950s. Mentions Tullamore, Portlaoise, Mullingar, Longford, Meath, Dublin, Offaly. Describes cycling to Birr for a hurling match with his father and Tom Carroll from Clonaslee in 1949. Jack recalls cycling to matches in Newbridge, Athy and Carlow.</p> <p>53:32 Jack recalls fundraising for the club over the years.</p> <p>54:43 Kevin discusses the dynamics of the county draw that took place to raise funds. Mentions Jack O'Brien, Jack Dunne and the late Paul Hunt. Mentions improvements made to facilities as a result of finance raised.</p> <p>57:20 Jack discusses the current travel arrangements for Kilcavan teams going to matches.</p> <p>58:07 Jack discusses sponsorship/finance that Kilcavan received from companies over the years.</p> <p>58:20 Kevin recalls contributions from local companies to the club, such as jerseys. Mentions Geashill, Des Mahon Motors.</p> <p>58:53 Jack discusses what a company gets out of sponsoring a GAA team. Mentions Guinness.</p> <p>59:52 Kevin discusses companies sponsoring sports teams and events.</p>
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	<p>1:00:15 Jack debates influence of television coverage on fixtures with Kevin. Jack mentions TG4 and Setanta and what they are getting from the televising of games. Jack discusses media coverage of GAA in his younger days – mentions the Leinster Express, Irish Independent, Irish Press, the Herald.</p> <p>1:01:45 Kevin discusses modern media coverage of Gaelic games. Mentions Wembley, Dublin 4.</p> <p>1:03:02 Jack discusses the biggest changes that he has seen within the GAA in his lifetime. Mentions changes in Gaelic football, using example of a league match between Down and Dublin. Mentions Brian Mullins, Jim Crowley, the Brogans.</p> <p>1:03:47 Kevin discusses changes in Gaelic football and hurling. Mentions Pat Spillane and “Puke Football”.</p> <p>1:04:08 Jack discusses changes in the game of hurling.</p> <p>1:04:17 Kevin makes some more points regarding the game of hurling and its modern style. Mentions Ned Wheeler of Laois who played for Wexford. Mentions Art Foley, John Fenton of Cork.</p> <p>1:05:11 Jack discusses changes in the modern game of hurling.</p> <p>1:05:30 Kevin mentions Dublin, Kilkenny and Down. Compares the modern versions of hurling and Gaelic football. Discusses the modern GAA and its relationship with the roots of the organisation. Mentions Jones' Road.</p> <p>1:07:11 Jack mentions Offaly footballers playing Waterford and Offaly hurlers playing Waterford, on the same day but at different venues. Mentions Kilkenny and Portlaoise.</p> <p>1:08:32 Jack explains what kept him involved with Kilcavan GAA club over the years. Mentions club's relationship with Laois and Offaly. Mentions selling club tickets after the club's facilities were vandalised, the majority were sold in Offaly.</p> <p>1:10:40 Jack discusses his involvement with the Laois County Board. Mentions his role as selector on county teams.</p> <p>1:11:40 Jack discusses the effect of the recession on the GAA. Mentions Setanta and TG4. Mentions attendances and managers' salaries. Mentions Pat Delaney from Offaly who went to train Westmeath hurlers. Mentions Kinnity, Mullingar, Castlepollard. Discusses inter-county managers and their travelling expenses.</p> <p>1:15:32 Jack recalls his happiest memories in the GAA.</p>
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	Mentions the facilities in Kilcavan GAA club.
<b>Involvement in GAA</b>	<p><b>Jack:</b></p> <p>✓ Supporter ✓ Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p>✓ Chairperson ✓ Committee Member <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer ✓ Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):</p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>Kevin:</b></p> <p>✓ Supporter ✓ Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson ✓ 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>_____</p>
<b>Record as a Player</b> (Titles won; Length of time played)	<p><b>Jack:</b> Played football with Kilcavan GAA for 24 years. Won Laois Junior A football championship in 1960.</p> <p><b>Kevin:</b> Played football in London.</p>
<b>Record as an Administrator</b> (Positions held; how long for)	<p><b>Jack:</b> Has been a member of the Kilcavan GAA committee for 61 years, holding positions including Chairman and Secretary. Kilcavan delegate on Laois County Board; has been a selector for both minor and junior Laois teams</p> <p><b>Kevin:</b> Involved in coaching with Kilcavan; secretary of club in the 2000s.</p> <p>.</p>
<b>Format</b>	✓ Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
<b>Duration</b>	Length of Interview: 01:17:41
<b>Language</b>	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: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2012