

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Eddie Nangle
Date of Interview	15 th Nov 2011
Location	Joe's home, near Castletown, Co. Wexford
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Joe O'Shaughnessy
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1943 Home County: Wexford
Education	Primary: Castletown NS, Co. Wexford Secondary: Gorey CBS, Co. Wexford
Family	Siblings: 2 sisters & 6 brothers Current Family if Different: Wife (Ann-Marie), 3 sons and 5 daughters
Club(s)	Castletown GFC [Wexford]; Liam Mellows Hurling Club [Wexford]
Occupation	Farmer
Parents' Occupation	Farmers
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Fine Gael
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Courtown Golf Club; Wexford IFA

REFERENCE NO. WX/1/21(2)

Date of Report	23 rd Aug 2012
Period Covered	1940 - 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Wexford, Wicklow, Dublin, Down, Kilkenny, Australasia, Australia, Americas, USA, Europe
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Material Culture, Education, Religion, Emigration, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Outsiders' Perspectives, Alcohol, Violence, Northern Ireland, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Opening of Croke Park, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Retirement, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy/ Economics
Interview Summary	Joe O'Shaughnessy discusses his lifetime's engagement with the GAA through his involvement with his club, Castletown, the Wexford County Board and various committees at national level. O'Shaughnessy earliest memories of the GAA centre around the informality of games with his brothers and journeys to games alongside his father, including local travels by pony and trap. He sheds light on the influence of a local cleric on the development of underage football in the area in the 1950s and the subsequent successes enjoyed by the club in the 1960s. O'Shaughnessy highlights the sometimes complex relationship between hurling and football and the challenges the club faced in sourcing suitable places to play their games. As well as documenting landmark developments in the club's history, O'Shaughnessy discusses his move into administration at county board level, the intrusion it made into his working life and pre-eminence of concerns around finance. Ongoing issues around funding are also discussed and he touches in the funding streams for a future Centre of Excellence in Ferns and the increased pressures to provide for the escalating costs of running teams. In addition, O'Shaughnessy talks about the enjoyment he has derived from his involvement with various committees in Croke Park, including Handball Central Council. Reference is also made to the highlights of his GAA involvement, his favourite teams, the importance of the Association to emigrant communities

	<p>and reasons for pride in its achievements at home.</p> <p>00:00:37 Born in Castletown, near Gorey in Co. Wexford, 1943. Mentions that Castletown was part of the parish of Arklow and the Dublin diocese.</p> <p>00:01:13 Parents occupational background in farming.</p> <p>00:01:25 Mentions that he is the youngest of eleven children, with six brothers and four sisters.</p> <p>00:01:45 Mentions that he still resident in the Castletown parish.</p> <p>00:02:00 Earliest memories of the GAA: watching the local club team train and the commencement of sports days in the 1950s after the arrival of Fr. Sean Kitt to area. Mentions influence of Fr. Kitt on the schools.</p> <p>00:03:00 Reflects on the absence of underage teams in his youth.</p> <p>00:03:22 Discusses his family's GAA background – recalls travelling with his father by pony and trap to the showgrounds in Gorey. Tells story of going to county semi-final in 1949 and an injury sustained by one of the players, a cousin of the interviewee. Reference to the doctor arriving in a motor car.</p> <p>00:04:45 Tells story about an Uncle who died from pneumonia aged 36.</p> <p>00:05:52 Influence of the GAA on family life when growing up: kicking football around the yard, conversations about football. Mentions some of the players who were on Wexford's 1945 Leinster winning team, becoming friends and speaking at their funerals.</p> <p>00:07:40 Mentions that Fr. Dermot Clancy, midfielder on the 1945 team, was a family friend.</p> <p>00:08:10 Discusses involvement of older brothers with the GAA, including two who played with the county. Alludes to absence of other recreational opportunities.</p> <p>00:09:11 Tells story of standing in goal, aged 6 or 7, and stopping a forceful shot from Mick Murray.</p> <p>00:09:45 Impact of GAA participation on working life; refers to the routine of milking cows and of Gaelic football as a 'pastime'.</p> <p>00:10:28 Experience of hurling growing up, playing after</p>
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	<p>school with friends. Mentions that his first visit to Croke Park was for the 1955 All-Ireland semi-final.</p> <p>00:11:07 Travelling to 1954 junior county final to watch Castletown play on the back of a pick-up truck. Refers to a bus being hired by club and the scarcity of cars available.</p> <p>00:12:30 Beginning to play on team: says that he played with Gorey because of the absence of underage teams in Castletown.</p> <p>00:12:57 Reaching an under 21 final with Castletown in 1964.</p> <p>00:13:13 Discusses role of the club in the community and the influence of Fr. Kitt who arrived in parish in 1953 and spent five years.</p> <p>00:13:40 Discusses the club winning championship the 1960 junior championship and the celebrations that followed – team being paraded by candle-light, bonfires etc. Refers to a 50th anniversary reception for the team and to the presentation of a special book to the players.</p> <p>00:15:25 Discussion around the establishment of a hurling club called Liam Mellows in 1961 and the successes that followed, including the winning of a junior championship in 1964, an Intermediate championship in 1967.</p> <p>00:16:00 Mentions Castletown winning senior football championship for the first time in 1965.</p> <p>00:16:25 Outlines the relationship between Castletown and Liam Mellows and the amalgamation of two committees into one.</p> <p>00:17:05 Mentions the club's interest in underage activity following the Under 21 success of the team O'Shaughnessy was a member of.</p> <p>00:17:30 Discusses the impact of development in the wider community on club – emigration in the 1950s.</p> <p>00:18:30 Reflects on the influx of new people into locality during the 'Celtic Tiger' and their integration into the club. Highlights differences in sporting outlook of new settlers and more established Castletown families.</p> <p>00:19:30 Discusses the various fields used by the club over the years – Ned Purcell's field, Young's field, John Murphy's field – until Liam Mellows bought a field in Coolgreany. Castletown's purchase of a field in 1984 and the subsequent</p>
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	<p>development of facilities.</p> <p>00:20:35 Reflects on fundraising, renting out of facilities and the impact of economic recession.</p> <p>00:21:15 Considers the challenges facing the club, including the difficulty of encouraging former players to become involved. Refers to the attraction of golf to former players.</p> <p>00:22:26 Mentions work underway at underage levels and remarks on the success of the club in holding onto players after they emerged from underage.</p> <p>00:24:00 Discusses the club's greatest rivals – Ballyhogue, Gusserane and Starlights - and the winning of nine county football finals between 1965 and 1981. Mentions also the strength of Rathnure in football in the mid 1970s.</p> <p>00:25:50 Playing for the county at under 21 level in 1964 and then with senior county team from 1964 until 1970. Refers to some of the players he played with – including Andy Merrigan, Joe and Willie Foley, the Berry's. Mentions that Andy Merrigan had died in a farm accident in 1973 and the club put up a trophy in his honour for the All-Ireland club championship.</p> <p>00:27:53 Celebrations for victorious teams – refers to food and drink and the central place of the pub.</p> <p>00:28:33 Impact of GAA involvement on his personal and working life.</p> <p>00:29:20 Mentions playing up until the age of 45 and stopping on becoming chairman of the county board.</p> <p>00:30:30 Discusses becoming County Chairman and how it came about in 1989. Held role for five years.</p> <p>00:31:30 Discusses the demands of the county chairman role and refers to the appointment of Mick Kinsella as full-time secretary.</p> <p>00:32:30 Discusses the funding of the full-time secretary's position.</p> <p>00:33:00 Reflects on the demands of funding and finance the county board and refers to being provided with a free office by Murphy Flood hotels.</p> <p>00:34:10 Considers the escalating costs of maintaining teams – meals and expenses for players – and difficulty in sourcing finance in the post-Celtic tiger age. Talks about ways the</p>
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	<p>county board is trying to curb expenses. Talks also about the other financial considerations facing county boards and provincial councils.</p> <p>00:36:22 Mentions the sources of funding for Wexford's centre of excellence in Ferns – Croke Park grant, lotto funding and Leinster council grants.</p> <p>00:37:30 Movement from County board to national level. Appointed chairman of stadium committee by Joe McDonagh, Wexford representative on central council. Talks about the enjoyment of being on centre of decision-making and the various other committees he served upon, including the Handball Central Council.</p> <p>00:39:00 Involvement with handball and moves to develop the game worldwide.</p> <p>00:40:15 Comments on the national profile of the GAA and its influence among emigrant communities. Refers to his daughter in Canada and touches on its importance in Australia, America and across Europe and Asia.</p> <p>00:42:10 Outstanding GAA memories: recalls championship finals won and lost with club.</p> <p>00:43:10 Mentions the quality of the Duffry Rovers team which came to prominence in the 1980s.</p> <p>00:44:40 Admiration for Down team of the early 1960s; the Galway 3 in a row team of the 1960s; and the Dublin team of the 1970s.</p> <p>00:45:50 Reasons for pride in the GAA – focus on parish and identity.</p> <p>00:46:20 Refers to the GAA's impact on his life.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p>✓ Supporter ✓ Player ✓ Manager ✓ Coach ✓ Steward</p> <p>✓ Chairperson ✓ Committee Member ✓ 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>Played football for Castletown and for Wexford. Played underage with Gorey Young Emmets and won minor and juvenile county championships with them; Won 9 Wexford Senior Football Championships; won Wexford junior and intermediate championships with Liam Mellows. Played on</p>

REFERENCE NO. WX/1/21(2)

	Wexford U21 Football team and on Wexford Senior Football team.
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	Club: Member of Castletown Committee since 1961; Chairman on two occasions (1982 – 86; 2005 – 2008); Treasurer for many years from 1961. Wexford County Board: Vice Chairman; Chairman (1989 – 93); Development Officer. Leinster: Member of Leinster Council Management Committee. National: Wexford Representative on Central Council (2003 – 2010); Member of Croke Park Management Committee.
Material Promised	
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 00:47:24 No. of Tapes / No. of Files: 1 File
Restricted Information	None
Language	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: Eddie Nangle

Date: 23rd July 2012