

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Arlene Crampsie
Date of Interview	16 th March 2011
Location	St. Laurence's Clubhouse, Co. Kildare
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	John Joe Walsh
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1940 Home County: Mayo
Education	Primary: Brackloon, Swinford, Co. Mayo Secondary: St. Nathy's, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Mayo
Family	Siblings: 5 brothers & 1 sister Current Family if Different: Married with 3 daughters and 1 son
Club(s)	St. Laurence's [Kildare]; St. Mary's Rochfortbridge [Westmeath]
Occupation	Roadstone, Bord na Móna
Parents' Occupation	Worked for McAlpine in England [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Fianna Fáil
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Leinster Factory Leagues Secretary; Inter-Firms League; Tidy Towns; School Board of Management

Date of Report	10 th August 2012
Period Covered	1948 – 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Mayo, Kildare, Westmeath
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Fundraising, Education, Religion, Media, Emigration, Involvement in GAA Abroad, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Rivalries, Culture, Scór, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Alcohol, Relationship with the Association, Retirement, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy/ Economics
Interview Summary	<p>John Joe talks about his GAA playing days in Mayo, Kildare and Westmeath and his role as PRO for the Leinster Council. He grew up in a rural part of Mayo, between Swinford and Kiltimagh and went to school in St. Nathy's in Ballaghaderreen where he was a boarder. John Joe's family were moved to Kildare to a Land Commission area in 1956 and he began playing for St. Laurence's. During his playing career he played at inter-county level for Kildare, Mayo and Westmeath. He discusses the early development of St. Laurence's as a club and his involvement in the administration side of the game, beginning with his work for Bord na Móna. John Joe discusses the nature of county board meetings in the early 1960s and recalls the types of issues that arose during this period. He reflects on how he became involved with the Leinster Council and outlines the important function that it serves in the development of the GAA. John Joe talks about the development of St. Laurence's in modern times and discusses how the game has changed over the years.</p> <p>00:00 Introduction</p> <p>00:20 His earliest GAA memory is the 1948 All-Ireland Football Final between Mayo and Cavan. Mick Higgins scored a controversial point. John Joe lived in a rural part of Mayo. Mayo won the All-Ireland in 1950 and 1951. Describes the various types of balls he played with.</p> <p>01:16 Discusses the lack of football fields in Mayo. Having to go out to the bog to play.</p> <p>01:39 Padraig Carney, 'The Flying Doctor', from the Swinford</p>

	<p>area.</p> <p>01:50 Listening to the All-Ireland on the only wet battery radio in the village as a boy. Micheal O'Hehir and Campbell, a broadcaster from Swinford.</p> <p>02:24 Describes the difficulties in travelling from Mayo to Dublin in the 1950s.</p> <p>02:37 Two local GAA clubs, Swinford and Kiltimagh. Discusses the differences between people from rural areas and those from the towns. No structure to the game.</p> <p>03:37 Recalls the emigration from rural areas in Mayo to England.</p> <p>04:02 GAA in school life in St Nathy's College, Ballaghaderreen. Playing in an All-Ireland final in Croke Park 1959 against St. Josephs. They had a lot of the Dublin team, including Des Foley. Mentions Mick Kissane.</p> <p>05:22 Description of the journey to Dublin and the socialising in the city the night before the match. Staying in the Hollybrook Hotel in Clontarf, going to the Savoy cinema, and how some of the lads went out for the night.</p> <p>06:30 Describes his first experience of Croke Park and meeting Seán Ó Síocháin.</p> <p>07:09 Discusses the importance of GAA in St. Nathy's. He describes the food and the role of the GAA in their life. The school won the All-Ireland in 1957. There were a lot of Sligo and Galway players and the team captain was from Sligo. Recalls Fr Lynch and the games against St Jarlath's of Tuam – players like the Donnellans, Seamus Lyne and Enda Colleran.</p> <p>08:18 Training they did in school.</p> <p>08:50 Recalls the sense of community the GAA instilled in its members. Preferential treatment in school of those who played football. The importance of GAA to the teachers in the school and getting them to read the papers.</p> <p>09:50 Moved to Kildare in 1956. Land Commission emigration from his village in Mayo to Kildare due to lack of land. Recalls the sadness among the people leaving their homes and the people left behind. Remembers lorries taking the cattle. Describes the Land Commission area that they were moved to and how it was developed.</p> <p>11:40 Congested area in Mayo. Had previously planned to</p>
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	<p>move to Wilkinstown, outside Navan. Describes the trouble with land in Mayo and the state of his local area. Discusses the movement of people from Kerry, Clare, Galway, Mayo and Sligo to Meath, Kildare and Westmeath.</p> <p>13:01 Describes his first experiences of GAA in Kildare. There were two clubs in his area, Narraghmore and Ballitore. Remembers going to Calverstown to play against Blackhall. Drinking minerals from glass bottles.</p> <p>14:05 Being viewed as different because he was from somewhere other than Kildare.</p> <p>14:40 First getting involved in GAA in Kildare. Playing junior for St. Laurence's.</p> <p>15:25 Discusses the origins and development of St. Laurence's GAA Club. Formed by a priest from Leitrim, Father Kelly. Amalgamation of Narraghmore and Ballitore. Lost county final in 1982 against a Sarsfield team featuring Dermot Earley and John Courtney. Lost another final against Clane in 1992. Winning the Kildare Senior Football Championship in 2009.</p> <p>17:40 Describes the original training facilities of the club and how the game has changed. One of the club's first pitches was at Mullamast, owned by Bill Henley. Putting clothes down rabbit holes. Players used to borrow boots and wear odd ones. His experiences with former Kildare manager Mick O'Dwyer and Dermot Earley.</p> <p>21:00 St. Laurence's getting their first plot of land in 1974 and the development of the club.</p> <p>22:17 Recalls his own playing career after leaving St. Nathy's. Played for Kildare in 1960 and 1961 and won a Connacht medal with Mayo in 1963.</p> <p>23:35 Describes the difficulties in travelling between Kildare and Mayo.</p> <p>24:55 Discusses moving and playing in Westmeath in 1964 and then returning to Kildare, where he played for Kildare juniors. Winning the Home All-Ireland.</p> <p>25:31 Recalls the differences in playing GAA in Kildare, Mayo and Westmeath.</p> <p>26:40 Discusses the difficulties in giving the game up.</p> <p>27:26 Discusses playing with St Mary's of Rochfortbridge in</p>
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	<p>1967 with Albert Fallon, ex-Chairman of the Leinster Council.</p> <p>28:01 Similar attitudes and passion within the GAA in each of the different counties.</p> <p>28:52 His father was more into handball than football.</p> <p>29:16 Going to the celebrations in Mayo in his early days and the celebrations in Kildare in 1998 after the Leinster Football Championship.</p> <p>29:51 Impact on him as a boy of seeing the All-Ireland winning Mayo teams. Having to walk to Swinford to the nearest newsagents to buy the Irish Press, the Independent or the Western People to check results.</p> <p>30:53 Mentions Paddy Prendergast, full back for Mayo.</p> <p>31:24 The expansion of football's fan base in Kildare because of Mick O'Dwyer. People coming up to Croke Park with picnics.</p> <p>32:18 Going to see Mayo train in Swinford and play in Tuam and Castlebar as a boy growing up. Describes travelling to matches by train, by bus and by car.</p> <p>33:18 Describes how he first got involved in administration through organising games in Bord na Móna. Promoting the GAA in Westmeath. Moved to Roadstone in 1970 and became secretary of the factory league for Leinster Inter-Firms. Then became involved in administration for St. Laurence's.</p> <p>34:26 Discusses the nature of club meetings. Took place in a school in Crookstown and then in an old bank in Ballitore.</p> <p>34:51 Team selections in the pub, mentions Pascal and Danno Mackey. Team lists displayed in pub window.</p> <p>36:18 Describes his first county board meeting in Naas town hall. Old members ruling with an iron first. Was asked to leave a county board meeting in Newbridge.</p> <p>39:39 Discusses the types of issues that arose during county board meetings e.g. parish boundaries, illegal players.</p> <p>43:56 Recent county board issues.</p> <p>45:20 Describes how he became involved with the Leinster Council. Lost contest to Andrew O'Sullivan to become Kildare County Board Chairman in 2000.</p> <p>46.50 Recalls becoming PRO of Leinster Council and</p>
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	<p>describes what the role involves, the problems encountered and the interaction with the media.</p> <p>50:35 Discusses club and county allegiances.</p> <p>51:49 Discusses the important function of Leinster Council. Mentions financial issues and the importance of committees. Mentions Michael Delaney.</p> <p>55:31 Discusses the different characters of St Laurence's. Charlie Keegan who died while playing a match. Mentions the various families associated with the club, Danno and James Mackey, Corcoran, Noel McLaughlin, Michael Fahy, Dowlings.</p> <p>57:38 Recalls the club's financial difficulties in the mid-1960s.</p> <p>58:00 The relationship between alcohol and the GAA. Mentions Vinny Harvey.</p> <p>01:00:06 Discusses the small impact of emigration on the club.</p> <p>01:00:30 Discusses the development of hurling, camogie and ladies football in St Laurence's.</p> <p>01:01:58 Discusses the various types of fundraising for the club.</p> <p>01:02:46 Discusses St Laurence's involvement in the Scór competition. Mentions Joan O'Connor's involvement.</p> <p>01:04:00 Gives his opinion on the role of Irish language and culture in the GAA.</p> <p>01:05:45 Discusses the rule changes in the GAA and the opening up of Croke Park for rugby and soccer.</p> <p>01:08:40 The importance of radio and television for the GAA.</p> <p>01:10:36 Discusses the impact of technology on the role of PRO.</p> <p>01:11:08 Describes his best memory of his involvement in the GAA, Kildare winning the Leinster Final in 2000. Winning the junior B championship in 1975. The role of the club in his life.</p> <p>01:12:21 Discusses his various GAA heros. Mentions Micheál Ó Muircheartaigh, Mick O'Dwyer, Dermot Earley, Sean Kelly, Michael Delaney, Seán Purcell, Padraig Carney, Tom Langan, Mick O'Connell, Jim McKeever.</p> <p>01:14:28 Talks about watching GAA matches in various parts</p>
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	<p>of the world including Thailand and Boston.</p> <p>01:15:36 Describes his biggest disappointment as Kildare and Mayo not winning the All-Ireland in recent times.</p> <p>01:16:03 Spreading the GAA in the larger areas of Dublin like Tallaght. Big clubs dominate over the smaller clubs in many areas.</p> <p>01:17:16 Discusses what his involvement in the GAA has meant to him. Making friends, travelling, sacrifices made.</p> <p>01:18:40 Songs about St Laurence's GAA Club. Rivalry with Grangenvolvin GFC, matches in Athy.</p>
Involvement in GAA	<p>✓ Supporter ✓ Player ✓ Manager ✓ Coach ✓ Steward</p> <p>✓ Chairperson ✓ Committee Member ✓ Grounds-person</p> <p>✓ Caterer ✓ Jersey Washer ✓ Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____</p>
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	<p>Played from the age of 14 to 58. Won College's in 1959, Mayo junior in 1963, Kildare junior in 1970 and Junior B and Intermediate with St. Laurence's.</p>
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	<p>Has been involved in administration since 1970.</p> <p>Club: Secretary, Chairman, Delegate to County Board and President</p> <p>County: Delegate to Leinster Council</p> <p>Leinster: Leinster PRO.</p>
Format	<p>✓ Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
Duration	<p>Length of Interview: 01:19:41</p>
Language	<p>English</p>

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: _____Arlene Crampsie_____

Date: _____10/08/12_____