

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Arlene Crampsie
Date of Interview	3 rd Nov 2011
Location	Noel Byrne's home, near Castlebar, Co. Mayo
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Jerry Henry
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: N/A Home County: Sligo
Education (Optional)	Primary: Riverstown NS, Co. Sligo Secondary: Coláiste Mhuire, Ballymote, Co. Sligo Third Level: Garda Training College, Templemore
Family	Siblings: 7 brothers & 3 sisters Current Family if Different: Married with 4 sons and 1 daughters
Club(s)	Knockalassa [Sligo]; Parnells [London]; Castlebar Mitchel's; Ballintubber [Mayo]
Occupation	Garda
Parents' Occupation	Farmers
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

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Date of Report	19 th July 2012
Period Covered	1840s – 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Sligo, Mayo, Waterford, Tipperary, Kerry, Limerick, Galway, Fermanagh, Cavan, Great Britain, England, Americas, USA, Australasia, Australia
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Fundraising, Education, Religion, Media, Emigration, Involvement in GAA Abroad, Role of Clergy, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Identity, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Relationship with the Association, Socialising, Relationships, Economy/Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Jerry reflects on his lengthy involvement with the GAA in his native Sligo and in Mayo and London. He recalls playing football on the junior team in Knockalassa GAA Club in Sligo and on the county minor team before emigrating to London, where he played with Parnells GAA Club. He describes returning to Ireland and joining An Garda Síochána and Castlebar Mitchels GAA Club, Mayo. Jerry discusses his many administrative roles within Mitchels and in the county, including club secretary and chairman, chairman of the West Mayo Board, and Mayo Central Council delegate to Croke Park. He also reflects on his involvement in the establishment of Bord na nÓg in the club and the importance of getting young people involved in sports. Furthermore, Jerry outlines the history of Mitchels and considers the difference between clubs in rural areas and towns. Finally, he reflects on the advantages of garda involvement in local organisations.</p> <p>00:00 Introduction</p> <p>00:28 Jerry recalls his earliest GAA memory: playing football in national school in Sligo where he grew up. Playing with junior club, playing county minor football with Sligo. Emigrating to London, playing football with Parnells GAA Club.</p> <p>01:11 Returning home, joining An Garda Síochána, playing with Knockalassa GAA Club, Sligo. Playing junior football with Sligo. Shoulder injury. Joining Castlebar Mitchels GAA Club. Town leagues. Secretary of subcommittee. Playing junior and senior games with club. Involved in club administration:</p>

	<p>secretary, chairman, representing Mitchel's at divisional and county board level. Also chairman of West Mayo Board in 90s, vice-chairman of county board. Mayo Central Council delegate to Croke Park. Also writing history of Castlebar Mitchels for centenary year.</p> <p>03:58 Discusses his time as history officer for Mayo County Board in the 80s. Researching the board's history for the centenary. Description of project: involvement of Fás, Jerry supervising, retrieving information from <i>Mayo News</i>, <i>The Connaught Telegraph</i>, <i>The Western People</i>. Hopes for publication, files stored in secretary's office in McHale Park. Current involvement with Bord na nÓg in Mitchels, also involved in updating history of club for 125 years' celebration.</p> <p>07:00 Reflects on his home club, Knockalassa, in Riverstown, Sligo. Loyalty to club. Recalls contesting two junior county finals. Describes facilities when he was growing up: no facilities, just football field. Toggling out at the side of a ditch. Toggling out in Tommy McDermott's pub on wet days.</p> <p>09:09 Considers his reasons for getting involved with the GAA. His father's passion for football, playing with club in Ballymote. Lack of other pastimes when Jerry was growing up. No organised training. Pride in home parish. Reasons for changing club. Friends made through the GAA.</p> <p>11:06 Recalls getting involved in 1970, looking after McHale Park and the club. Separate committee for McHale Park. Voluntary work. Describes involvement of Christian Brothers, De La Salle brothers. Mentions teacher Tim McDonagh's contribution to the GAA.</p> <p>13:22 Mentions individuals involved in Mitchels: Gerry McDonald's contribution to development of McHale Park and the club. Also mentions Dick Martin, Martin McManamon.</p> <p>15:43 Describes fundraising efforts for club: Bingo, Confined Draws. Mentions Brian McDonnell, caretakers George Bartley and Mick Flynn. Voluntary work upgrading dressing rooms.</p> <p>17:16 Explains confined draws: £1 a month, limited to certain amount of people. Novelty of confined draws at the time. Mentions An Sportlann, difficulties with banks. Recounts financially challenging time in the 80s. Mentions five club trustees: Sean Ó Síocháin, Johnny Mulvey, Gerry McDonald, Martin McManamon, and Jerry Henry. In arrears, meeting bank manager, onus on trustees to clear debt, personal guarantees. Profits from big draw. Mentions Seamus Devaney. Resolving financial issues. Club's lack of success</p>
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	<p>during this time.</p> <p>22:08 Discusses current status of club. Strong underage structure. Senior team contesting county final this year.</p> <p>22:36 Outlines history of club. Formation in 1885. Oldest club in Mayo. No organised underage football for a long time. Clubs representing county in All-Irelands. Recounts Mitchels' successful eras. Mitchels players on Mayo team that won the 1936 All-Ireland Senior Football Final. Strength of club in 30s, 40s, 50s. Mentions Enda Kenny's father, Henry Kenny, who played for Mitchels and Mayo. Also mentions Paddy Quinn, father of Monsignor Quinn. Popularity of street leagues in the past. Players from psychiatric hospital in Castlebar.</p> <p>26:10 Reflects on the formation of the Ladies Committee around 1970. Fundraising carnivals. In 1960, Mitchels the first club to go to America, major fundraisers for that trip. Describes another trip to America in the early 70s with John Mitchels GAA Club, Tralee. Visiting Chicago. Players wearing county jerseys. Rivalry.</p> <p>27:41 Considers the origin of the name of the club. Mentions John Mitchel, Young Ireland leader in the 1840s. Mitchel's banishment to Van Diemens Land. Also Mitchels clubs in England.</p> <p>29:18 Discusses history of hurling in the club. Relying on hurlers working in the post office, garda síochána, army from counties such as Waterford and Tipperary. Recent efforts to boost hurling, strong hurling committee, juvenile success. No strong tradition of local hurling, team comprising players from Waterford, Tipperary, Limerick, Galway. Underage success: beating Tooreen in county final. Issue of dual football/hurling players, also playing soccer, losing players to other sports.</p> <p>31:40 Comparison between rural club in Sligo and town club in Mayo. Widespread participation in rural club, priest mentioning GAA at mass. Town club: bigger panel, sometimes lacking commitment. More loyalty and support in rural club, stronger identity. Commitment to staying with rural club.</p> <p>35:53 Describes playing in England. Travelling by boat after Leaving Cert, living in Kilburn. Joining Parnells GAA Club. Difficulty of travelling to training sessions, expense. Comparisons with Ireland: training with players from other counties. More robust style of football.</p> <p>39:00 Discusses garda GAA competitions. Benefits of garda involvement in local sports, locals getting to know him,</p>
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	<p>confiding in him. The GAA as a leveller in the community. Importance of gardaí getting involved in local organisations, for example soccer, rugby, tennis. His disappointment with young people leaving the GAA and getting into trouble as teenagers.</p> <p>42:17 Describes his preference for playing football over his administration roles. His favourite administrative role: club chairman from 1976 to 1980. Leaving in 1980, promotion to sergeant, moving to the border. Chairman during development of sports complex, carpark. Mentions attendance of then GAA president Con Murphy and Minister for the Gaeltacht Denis Gallagher at opening of An Sportlann in 1978. Winning county senior championship that year. Satisfaction in witnessing success.</p> <p>45:24 Reflects on his enjoyment of his involvement with the youth in Bord na nÓg as chairman.</p> <p>47:20 Discusses his GAA highlight: his involvement in the formation of Bord na nÓg. Its benefits to the community. Worst memory: tragic deaths of club members. Mentions Gerry McDonald.</p> <p>50:03 Ponders what involvement in the GAA has meant to him. Making friends, travelling around clubs meeting volunteers. Significance of volunteers in running the organisation. Voluntary spirit strongest in small rural clubs.</p> <p>53:14 Reflects on his recent and current roles. Representing Mayo on the Connacht Council for a decade. On Central Council now.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p>✓ Supporter ✓ Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager ✓ Coach ✓ Steward</p> <p>✓ Chairperson ✓ Committee Member ✓ Grounds-person</p> <p>✓ Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer ✓ 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 from the age of 9 / 10 until he was 30. Won junior football titles with Knockalassa.</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Has been involved in administration since 1972.</p> <p>Club: Castlebar Mitchel's Secretary, Chairman and County Board Delegate</p>

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	West Mayo: Chairman County Board: Representative to Connacht Council and Delegate to Central Council.
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 00:54:10
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: _____Arlene Crampsie_____

Date: _____19/07/12_____