

## GAA Oral History Project

## Interview Report Form

<b>Name of Interviewer</b>	Cormac Kelly
<b>Date of Interview</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2011
<b>Location</b>	Interviewee's home, near Coolegreany, Co Wexford
<b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname)	Anthony Byrne
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1955 <b>Home County:</b> Wexford
<b>Education</b>	<b>Primary:</b> Scoil Íosagáin <b>Secondary:</b> Arklow CBS <b>Third Level:</b> St Patrick's College, Drumcondra
<b>Family</b>	<b>Siblings:</b> 1 sister <b>Current Family if Different:</b> Married
<b>Club(s)</b>	Castletown Liam Mellows GAA Club [Wexford]
<b>Occupation</b>	Primary School Principal and Teacher
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	N/A
<b>Religion</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	N/A
<b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>	N/A

REFERENCE NO. WX/1/38

<b>Date of Report</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> July 2012
<b>Period Covered</b>	1958 – 2011
<b>Counties/Countries Covered</b>	Wexford, Dublin, Kilkenny, Cork, Offaly, Tipperary
<b>Key Themes Covered</b>	Earliest Memory, Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Education, Religion, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Rivalries, Irish Language, All-Ireland, Club History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Challenges, Sacrifices, Opening of Croke Park, Socialising
<b>Interview Summary</b>	<p>Anthony Byrne talks initially about his early days listening to GAA matches on the radio and playing in school. He goes on to reminisce about transporting numerous children to matches and how today things are very different. He talks about his local GAA heroes growing up. He talks about his role in the Castletown Liam Mellows club. He then talks about the facilities, equipment and social aspects of the club. He describes local rivalries before discussing the role of women in the club. He then talks about the GAA in the community. This is followed by a discussion of the volunteering aspect of the GAA and the involvement of the clergy in the club. He then talks about the pride he felt at the Wexford 1996 All-Ireland win. He goes on to describe GAA supporters and what involvement means to an individual. Then he talks about the Irish language in the GAA before talking about his favourite players and memories of the GAA. Finally he tells what the GAA means to him and discusses the importance of Croke Park and opening it up to foreign games.</p> <p>00:25 Talks of his earliest Memory of the GAA. Mentions listening to Micheál O’Heir on the radio.</p> <p>00:50 Talks of his initial involvement in the GAA in school. Mention playing in the Rackard League in Wexford.</p> <p>01:37 Speaks about the difference between the GAA of his childhood than the GAA of today. Mentions transport from 7 or 8 in a car or on bicycles to parents bringing their children to matches, training and parental involvement.</p> <p>02:40 Recalls the name of the club, Castletown (Football) Liam Mellows (Hurling) GAA, Co.Wexford.</p> <p>03:00 Discusses Local GAA heroes when he was growing up,</p>

	<p>Oliver Cullen and Andy Merrigan (who the All-Ireland Club Championship Cup was named in honour of.)</p> <p>04:00 Tells of his father's interest in the GAA.</p> <p>04:30 Discusses the visible change in the GAA in terms of facilities and equipment from when he was younger. Mentions pitches in Coolrainey and Castletown.</p> <p>06:10 Talks of the noticeable difference between the facilities of clubs in Wexford and Dublin, such as Eoghan Ruadh GAA, when he first moved to Dublin at 17 years of age.</p> <p>06:37 Speaks of training teams and watching matches at Grangegorman Richmond Asylum as it was the closest pitch for use by the school he worked in, North Brunswick St. Mentions the Dickensian conditions of the inmates of the Grangegorman Asylum.</p> <p>08:06 Discusses how his role within Castletown Liam Mellows GAA has changed over the years, also how large numbers of players were brought by car to matches. Mentions fundraising for the pitch in Coolrainey.</p> <p>09:30 Discusses the social aspect of his club and the support at all levels. Mentions the very good support at times of bereavement.</p> <p>10:20 Discusses local rivalry with Kilanerin-Ballyfad GAA and how passionate the rivalry was in his youth. Tells of how Aidan Kavanagh started off with an U12 Rackard League team that he brought through to Senior level which dominated football in Wexford.</p> <p>11:25 Speaks about the role of women in Castletown Liam Mellows GAA and how it has changed over the years. Mentions their involvement in the administrative side of the club and camogie and ladies football.</p> <p>12:43 Discusses the Irish language in relation to the club and the club's involvement in Scór.</p> <p>13:40 Discusses the general advantages of being a member of the GAA and how vital it is to the parish.</p> <p>14:40 Discusses the sacrifices, in terms of time, of many people involved with the GAA and the effect it has on their lives.</p> <p>16:00 Discusses the obstacles towards women gaining positions of authority within the GAA in the past but how this</p>
--	--

	<p>is changing.</p> <p>17:30 Discusses the importance of the voluntary aspect of the GAA.</p> <p>18:00 Discusses how the ethos of the GAA with regard to volunteerism has changed over the years and how those who are involved with the GAA seem to have a loyalty to the community and volunteering within the community in general.</p> <p>18:48 Speaks of the involvement of the clergy in the club. Mentions Fr. Sean Kitt who founded the Castletown Liam Mellow Club, also how the clergy were honorary presidents of the club throughout the years such as Fr. Vincent Quilter. The difference between the involvement of clergy in the Dublin diocese and the Ferns diocese.</p> <p>20:15 Talks of the major role of the Christian Brothers' and lay teachers in the development of the GAA at juvenile level.</p> <p>21:22 Speaks of his experiences as a Wexford supporter and the rivalries with Kilkenny and Cork. Mentions Offaly and Tipperary.</p> <p>22:05 Tells of the pride he felt in County Wexford as a supporter, especially following Wexford's success in the 1996 All-Ireland Hurling Championship.</p> <p>23:10 Describes the atmosphere and camaraderie at GAA matches and comments on the lack of animosity that is found amongst fans in other sports apart from a few Dublin GAA supporters over the years, who were now usually followers of GAA. Similar animosity within Derry GAA supporters in the 1970s.</p> <p>25:00 Talks of how the GAA can shape someone's identity and can strengthen the locality and community as a whole.</p> <p>26:00 Speaks about the success of Castletown Liam Mellows GAA this year as they won the Wexford Senior Football Championship for the first time in nearly 30 years. Mentions the atmosphere in the area and beating Kilanerin-Ballyfad.</p> <p>26:30 Speaks about his background being nationalist and republican and how the GAA has not influenced these views.</p> <p>27:04 Talks about the role that the Irish language plays in the GAA.</p> <p>27:50 Explains how the prominence of the Irish language has changed little within the GAA.</p>
--	---

**REFERENCE NO. WX/1/38**

	<p>29:00 Talks of his favourite memory of the GAA being in the Hogan Stand when Wexford won the 1996 All-Ireland Hurling Championship.</p> <p>29:16 Talks of Tony Doran of Wexford as his GAA hero. Also mentions Mick Jacob of Wexford, DJ Carey, Henry Shefflin, Jimmy Barry Murphy and Denis Coughlan.</p> <p>31:35 Explains what his involvement in the GAA means to him and how involvement with the GAA is good for young people. Discusses what it is like to see a child's interest in GAA grow and see them go through all the levels up to senior success, such as Tomás Sheehy, Captain of Castletown Liam Mellows' senior football team. Also mentions Eamon Scallan who was a great footballer and hurler as a child and went on to win an All-Ireland Medal with Wexford in 1996.</p> <p>34:00 Speaks of how important the Gaelic Players Association is for the protection of players. Mentions rewarding players by non-monetary means such as holidays.</p> <p>35:25 Feels the GAA must remain an amateur sporting organisation.</p> <p>35:45 Discusses the significance of Croke Park, and the opening of Croke Park to foreign games to both the GAA and the country.</p>
<p><b>Involvement in GAA</b></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input checked="" 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>
<p><b>Record as a Player</b> (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Record as an Administrator</b> (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>N/A</p>

**REFERENCE NO. WX/1/38**

<b>Format</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
<b>Duration</b>	Length of Interview:00:36:58
<b>Language</b>	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:        Cormac Kelly

Date:            14<sup>th</sup> Jan 2011