

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Eileen McCallion
Date of Interview	21 st May 2011
Location	Interviewees Home, near Kildress, Co Tyrone
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Patrick (Patsy) McGurk
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1930 Home County: Tyrone
Education	Primary: Gortreagh Primary School, Co. Tyrone
Family	Siblings: 2 Brothers Current Family if Different: Married; 1 daughter; 1 son
Club(s)	Kildress Wolfe Tones GAC [Tyrone]
Occupation	Farmer
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	13 th July 2012
Period Covered	1946 – 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Tyrone, Down
Key Themes Covered	Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Religion, Emigration, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Rivalries, Club History, County History, Professionalism, Purchase of Grounds, Economy/ Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Patsy talks about his lifetime involvement in the club and in Tyrone GAA. He talks passionately about his club, and his involvement as a player and across the administrative ranks. He explains how he helped the club purchase its first grounds and also about training regimes he employed when managing the club. He mentions his attitude towards players drinking and also his involvement in the politics of the time. He speaks of his pride as a Tyrone man and their success in the 2000s.</p> <p>00:00:40 Recalls Kildress Wolfe Tones been established in 1951 and how previously the club was known as Kildress St Mary's during the war time.</p> <p>00:01:15 Recalls two brothers going to County matches and how his brother Arthur played for Kildress Wolfe Tones.</p> <p>00:02:02 Recalls two teams one in Dunamore and one in Murnells coming together and forming the Kildress Wolfe Tones in 1951. Recalls the Nugent brothers from Murnells all playing in the one team (Paddy, Frank, James, John, Joe, Felix).</p> <p>00:03:33 Recalls Peter Monaghan, John Mallon and Mickey Loughran playing for St Mary's team.</p> <p>00:04:33 Recals pat Tracey, Mickey Begley and Mickey Loughran, Frank Brady started the Kildress team.</p> <p>00:05.25 Recalls how he was always interested in GAA and listened to matches on radio and was invited to a meeting and has been going ever since. Recalls Mickey Begley first chairman. Mickey Loughran involved.</p> <p>00:05.36 While he trained with the club he never actually</p>

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	<p>made the team but quickly became involved in managing the team.</p> <p>00:07.30 Recalls how in 1956 he held the post of chairman of the club and Manager of the team.</p> <p>00:08.02 Recalls how he made a speech in 1956 saying how his objectives were for the club to win the junior championship and to buy a buy a field at Dennys crossroads.</p> <p>00:08.43 recalls in his first year in management the team Lost first 7 teams in league, and drawing with a team from the loughshore in the first game of the championship and how he and Sean McCullagh threatened to resign if the team didn't pull their weight. Won game. Windy Sat in Coalisland and when he arrived with the jerseys to discover that Sean McCullaghs his best player had got his nose broken at work in McAleers quarry and wasn't able to play.</p> <p>00:10.40 Recalls how at half time they were 6 points down and how he told them do or die. Won the game and then won junior.</p> <p>00:11.40 Recalls the excitement after winning and says one of the best days of his life.</p> <p>00:11.46 Most of the team were pioneers and while they had a céilí in the hall there was no drink. GAA only ran Irish dances in those days.</p> <p>00:12.38 Recalls meeting Joe Small and establishing that a field was for sale.(previous field was at Gortaclady crossroads and had a hill and went in a point. How Joe thought he was mad considering buying it because the club had no money.</p> <p>00:14.31 Patrick McNally League running and rivalry between Dunamore and Kildress boys. Becauset £1000, no money in club. Bargained to 900. 10 acres. Plus field had to be made. Trustee wouldn't approach bank for loan. How bank wouldn't give him loan because he was too young.</p> <p>00:16.15 Mother went into bank and put the farm as guarantee big undertaking as she was a widow and after months got the loan. Joe and Patsy collected in Cookstown and got £1200 which was a lot of money at that time. How protestants wouldn't contribute because of the</p>
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	<p>name Wolfe Tones. Able to make pitch.</p> <p>00:17.55 Recalls the virtues of the great man that Joe Small was.</p> <p>00:18.25 Explains how the team was restricted for a couple of years because some emigrated to England and America.</p> <p>00:19.00 Started to build more teams with youth and minors. Had to buy a new field and only purchased half an acre and had to pay £26 thousand.</p> <p>00:20.00 Made a second pitch. Now has 3 pitches. New pitch made sand made pitch, never gets wet. Best pitch in Ulster. Not successful other team but feels that was because the wrong decisions were made on the line and other team Dromore won by 2 points.</p> <p>00:22.20 Explained How sub Jock Mulgrew should have player and following week he scored a goal and 6 points but then give up football because he was sickened.</p> <p>00:23.00 Talks about how he managed the team from 1956 – 1970's but had to give up because of internment and somebody else had to take over while he wasn't available.</p> <p>00:23.47 Explains that while he was managing if a man took a drink he wouldn't get playing different nowadays different, boys drinking after training. Training consisted of running maybe 5 miles. Recalls a dedicated Dessie McGurk man would run from Moveagh to Gortacladdy.</p> <p>00:25.00 Explains that in the early days you couldn't go to foreign dances or watch a soccer match even on TV and how he backed that decision at the time. Feels the Club would have won the O'Neill cup several times if it wasn't for drink.</p> <p>00:27:35 Recalls degraded this year for first in ten years. Hopes to be back in senior soon. 6 young players under 20 currently in team this year. Beat Loughmacrory and hope to beat Stewartstown. New manager appointed.</p> <p>00:29.00 Compares the training methods these days to training years ago when working hard men played and didn't need to train. Pulling flax and men in offices didn't normally play. Now its different, work isn't as hard. Drive to training now whereas used to run to it or ride a bike to training</p>
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	<p>that was training in itself.</p> <p>00:30:00 Compares the money lifted at games now in relation to the money lifted years ago and how little money it took to run a club in days gone by.</p> <p>00:32:00 Recalls winning the junior league a couple of times in 50's and how one of their players Dessie McGurk got suspended for 12 months for hitting the referee and therefore unable to play in final.</p> <p>00:34.00 Explains how Paddy Cullen county chairman, wrote out an appeal for Dessie McGurk and how it was handed into County Board at midnight the night before the match and how Appeal was won and Dessie was able to play the match which Kildress won.</p> <p>00:36:00 Recalls the other team Mountjoy waiting for them after Tea and how he led the team out and no one touched them. Cup couldn't be awarded due to the tension and they had to go back another night to get the cup.</p> <p>00:38.00 Explains how he thinks the football was harder in those days.</p> <p>00:39:00 Feels there very few injuries years ago in comparison with today.</p> <p>00:40:00 Explains how he thinks Kildress is one of the best clubs in country and how a development Draw this year made 150 thousand to pay for new field and how they obtained the good support of parish and neighbouring parishes.</p> <p>00:41.00 Compares big clubs who only have one pitch and how Kildress has 3 pitches. 10 teams now within the club.</p> <p>00:42.00 Talks about how years ago most would have walked to matches, bikes/tractors five or six mile. He would go to meeting every week now every 4 weeks.</p> <p>00:43.00 Explains how when he was managing teams how he never told committee or players who would be playing until just before the match. How players would have got changed in the ditch and buy their own shoes. Set of jerseys did a long time. How he carried the jerseys tied together with a jersey in a bundle to matches and how his Mother would have washed all the jerseys.</p>
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	<p>00:44.00 Recalls the decision made not to buy new jerseys for the County final but to wear the ones that their blood was spilt on.</p> <p>00:46.30. Recalls how the Clubs football field was initially built and then they ran functions and draws for small dressing room.</p> <p>00:47.40 Recalls how one of the Kildress players Frank McGurk got on County Team and while he didn't win anything he got to travel to America. Recalls how another player Paddy Nugent now living in Belfast, didn't get his place in county team and moved to Belfast and Antrim selected him for their team. Antrim played against Tyrone at midfield. Kildress were cheering for Antrim. Antrim won because of Paddy.</p> <p>00:49.25 Reflects how he followed Down in 60's and travelled to Croke Park with his brother by train.</p> <p>00:51.10 Reflects on greatest day in his life when Tyrone's success in the All Ireland and how he was released from the Mater Hospital in Belfast the day before the semi final but how it broke his heart that the Doctors wouldn't let him go to match and kept asking if he would be home in time.</p> <p>00:55.00 Reflects how Michaela Hartes death knocked the heart out of everyone.</p> <p>00:56.20 Explains his Great respect for Mickey Harte, Peter Cananvan and all the lads who played in Tyrone All Ireland achievements.</p> <p>00:57 00 He is now 81 years old and been involved from early 50's, now president and trustee of club. How Sean Rafferty, Mark Conway and himself signed for the money for the new pitch with bank and the confidence he has in the club.</p> <p>00:58.00 Reflects on how the Club still means everything to him, still attends all matches.</p> <p>00:60.00 Girls involved in club now, how in the past his wife was involved in making teas for sports days etc. in a hut at the side of the field.</p> <p>01:00:00 Explains how he argues his point at a club meeting</p>
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	<p>about how the players need and deserve some expenses.</p> <p>01:06:00 States that Best Players for Kildress were Paddy Nugent and Mickey McKenna.</p> <p>01:06:00 Reflects on winning league final and how during the game Mickey McKenna broke his leg in two places and was never able to play football again and how he had to tell his wife about the injury. Reflects on how Mickey collected his medal at a céilí some time later on crutches.</p> <p>01:07:15 Best club memory would be winning Junior championship and best County memory would be Tyrone winning the All Ireland for the first time in 2003.</p> <p>01:15:00 Worst memory would be Mickey McKenna breaking his leg</p> <p>01:20:00 Reflects on the awards he received: award for winning junior championship; award for 30 years service presented at céilí; award for 50 years. Remembers the secrecy as the club organised this award; award for Best club man of year in 2006; award for opening new pitch presented at Gala in Toome in 2010.</p> <p>01:21:00 Reflects on how he accepted two roles chairman and running team and how some thought he was too young to run team but he got the luck and won junior cup.</p> <p>01:22:00 Reflects on how he heard that his father player with the Gaelic team in his townland Gortreagh possibly in late 20's – His father Vincent (died when he was 4) Other members of the team included Mickey McNamee, Charlie Devlin and Packie Devlin</p> <p>01:23:10 The Gortreagh team played in Mickey Donnelly field, Cavoneill, run horse racing to get money for the team funds. Overheard</p> <p>01:25:30 Reflects on how when he was 8 in 1940, he had a serious op to remove part of lung in the Mater and how he was put under beds because of bombs attacking Belfast</p> <p>01:26:40 Talks about being in movement when young but glad of peace now.</p>
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	01:27:10 Reflects on original St Mary's Kildress team in 1932 and players such as Packie and Joe McCallion, Johnnie Nugent, Sean Grimes but how the war came along and they couldn't get to matches and had to break up.
Involvement in GAA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person <input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	N/A
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	Kildress GAA: Committee member (1950 – 1955); Vice Chairman (1955 – 1965); Chairman (1966 – 1976); Manager (1966 – 1976); President (1977 – Date)
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 1:28:59
Language	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: Eileen McCallion

Date: 3rd December 2011

