

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	11 th Aug 2011
Location	Seán's home, near Galmoy, Co. Kilkenny
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Seán Doherty
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1944 Home County: Kilkenny
Education	Primary: Galmoy NS Secondary: Rathdowney Technical School
Family	Siblings: 2 brothers & 6 sisters Current Family if Different: Wife (Noreen), 6 sons & 1 daughter
Club(s)	Galmoy GAA [Kilkenny]
Occupation	Electrician
Parents' Occupation	Farmers
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

REFERENCE NO. KK/1/25

Date of Report	11 th June 2012
Period Covered	1930s - 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Kilkenny, Laois, Dublin, Tipperary, Roscommon, England, Australia
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Material Culture, Education, Religion, Media, Emigration, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Rivalries, Irish Language, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Alcohol, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Retirement, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy/ Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Seán reflects on his lifelong involvement in Galmoy GAA Club and Kilkenny GAA. He recalls his father bringing him to matches in Laois and Seán's own passion for hurling. He describes his first trip to Croke Park aged 16 and life in the village in the 40s and 50s when he was growing up. In addition, he discusses his playing days and his various administration roles both at club and county level, for example, club secretary, MC at matches, coach, selector. Seán outlines the history of the club and the part he played in it. He ponders his support for the parish rule and mentions the key figures in the club. He also describes various fundraising efforts involved in refurbishing the club facilities in 1984. Finally, Seán reflects on his pride in his children's involvement in Kilkenny hurling and camogie, and the significance of the GAA club in rural communities.</p> <p>00:29 Seán describes his upbringing in Levally, on the Laois side of Galmoy. His father from Kilkenny. Attending school in Galmoy, Kilkenny. Identifying as a Kilkenny man.</p> <p>02:05 Discusses growing up in Levally in the 40s and 50s. Big families, hurling. Some families with Laois loyalties. Mentions Dillons, Jim Dillon. Mentions John Lopeman. Also mentions Houlihans, Phelans, John Joe Bergen. Seán's family small farmers. Recalls working on the farm. Beet, turnips, potatoes. Mentions Ger Campion.</p> <p>05:25 His parents' interest in Gaelic games. Local priest and teacher training juveniles in his time. Recalls his father</p>

	<p>attending games in Laois. Mentions Cullohill, Borris-in-Ossory, Rathdowney, Clonad. His father taking him on crossbar of bicycle.</p> <p>07:10 Outlines stronghold of hurling in Laois. Discusses hurling and football clubs in Laois. Reflects on playing hurling as a child. The only passtime. No knowledge of hurling stars at the time. Mentions Christy Ring. Making their own hurls. No gear: boots or togs etc. Compares the hurls they made to shinty or hockey sticks. Ash. Explanation of how hurls were made. Dominance of ground hurling in his time. Mentions Lory Meagher. Describes ball used: sponge or leather. Mentions his brother Charlie stitching sliotars.</p> <p>12:06 Discusses the fields they played in around Levally. Hurling between masses on Sunday and in afternoon and evening. Mentions Bergens' bog, Dillons' lawn, Nicky Henderson's field. Mentions Gannons and Michael Phelan. Also John Joe Bergen.</p> <p>14:18 No organised hurling in school. His teacher Danny Dunne's opposition to hurling. Also mentions Fr. Kerwick. Strictness of that era. Little travelling to matches, no way of transport. Recalls listening to Kilkenny playing Waterford in 1959 All-Ireland Senior Hurling Final in Jack Phelan's house. Mentions Eddie Kehir. Recalls going to All-Ireland final in 1960 with James "The Topper" Phelan. Travelling by train. Mentions Tom Hayden.</p> <p>17:27 Describes first trip to Croke Park aged 16. Mentions Micheal O'Hehir. Difficulty concentrating on game. Recalls eating in Dublin. Recalls his mother baking bread, no sliced pan. Getting train from Ballybrophy. Hill 16 or standing under Cusack Stand. Working on farms for money, electrician apprenticeship in his teens. Electricity coming to the area in 1958. Mentions the Harts going to Croke Park in their father's car. Mick Hart driving juvenile teams to games. Mentions Fr. Guinan. Difficulties of driving in those days.</p> <p>25:08 Recalls getting a Mini and driving to Croke Park. Traffic jams. Frequency of breakdowns. Recalls cycling to Kilkenny, 22 miles away.</p> <p>26:49 Describes walking to school in Galmoy, three and a half miles away. Races and hurling games en route. Eating blackberries, plums, apples, raw turnips, wheat, raw peas. Mentions Paddy Lowry. Mentions Dohertys, Dillons, Houlihans, Meanys walking together.</p> <p>30:27 Reflects on the school in Galmoy in the 40s and 50s.</p>
--	---

	<p>School built in 1939. Two-teacher school: Danny and Jane Dunne. Corporal punishment. Recalls writing competitions. Mentions his brother, Joe Doherty. Huge amount of time spent teaching religion.</p> <p>36:50 Location of school beside hurling fields. Outlines acquisition of grounds. Building pavilion in 1984, Canon Purcell selling the site. Mentions Pat Vaughan. History of field. Mentions Bob Sheehy. Mentions auctioneers Harringtons in Urlingford. Mentions Kitty Gannon's pub.</p> <p>39:37 Discusses existence of club in Galmoy from 1930. Inability to form team in those days. Talented players playing for Tullaroan. Shortage of strong senior teams in Kilkenny: Tullaroan, Mooncoin, Éire Óg, Carrickshock. Discusses implementation of parish rule in 1954. Mentions loss of Galmoy players Billy Costigan and Will O'Gannon to other teams. Mentions Galmoy, Johnstown, Urlingford. Illegal players, objections, suspensions. St. Kieran's, Johnstown. Recalls county board passing parish rule. Explains how it improved hurling.</p> <p>44:00 Discusses Galmoy winning county final in 1949. No fuss about it. Also winning in 1966. Mentions Johnnsie Harte. Outside players on team. Mentions Spencers, Billy Drennan, Mick Henderson, Dave Henderson, Rody O'Neill. Also Jack Stapleton selector. Also mentions Martin Skehan. Also mentions Mick Fitzpatrick. Considers the issue of bringing in players from outside the parish. His support of the parish rule. Mentions Renehans bus from Urlingford. Mentions Martin Whelan singing on the bus to match in Harrison's field, Freshford. Also Mick Fitzpatrick Snr. Players drinking after the match. Mentions meat teas and plain teas in Hot Doyles, ice cream in Delaneys of Freshford. Junior All-Ireland played in London in 1956.</p> <p>52:08 Reflects on his childhood hurling heroes: Billy Costigan, Dick Cormack, Rody O'Neill, Sean Clohessy. Christy Ring. Mentions neighbour Johnny Lopeman. Recalls seeing Christy Ring playing in Thurles. Also watching Joe Salmon and Frankie Walsh play. Also mentions seeing Jimmy Smyth.</p> <p>53:55 Ponders lack of newspapers, television, radio. Mentions schoolmate Andy Fletcher buying the <i>Irish Independent</i>. Mentions Jack Carey, DJ Carey's grandfather. Buying secondhand bicycle. Reading sports pages of paper with Fletcher.</p> <p>55:48 Describes Galmoy during his childhood. Crowd playing handball against Judy Cahill's shed. Also playing pitch and</p>
--	--

	<p>toss, gambling on it. Mentions pubs and shops run by Mrs Hart, Fennellys, Hennessys, Miss Ryan, Sheila Dunphy, Judy Cahill, Mrs Costigan, Gannons. Also mentions Johnsie Hart's corn business. Weekly pig market in Hennessys' yard. Mentions Jimmy Hennessy.</p> <p>59:38 Mentions arrival of Fr. Moran to Galmoy. Fr. Moran's interest in football and filming matches. Starting a football team. Winning minor football title in 1955. Seán's current possession of those film reels. Also mentions Fr. Dunne. Fr. Moran showing films, for example <i>The Quiet Man</i>. Before arrival of electricity, Seán operating generator. Sweets and minerals sold. Pubs busy. Culture of drinking at matches. First Sunday of month for Confraternity, drinking afterwards. Drinking on fair day in Rathdowney. Fr. Moran taking boys around Ireland: Galway, Mayo, Portlaoise, Tullamore to matches in his Hillman car. Filming matches, threshings, cutting of corn and hay, local events. Mentions Joe and Sean Phelan.</p> <p>01:10:07 Recalls in Fr. Moran's films, poorly dressed kids swopping clothes with better-dressed kids.</p> <p>01:11:13 Discusses his playing days. Playing in 1961. Mentions Lottie Hart. On team in 1963, his brothers Charlie and Joe playing. Also the Harts, Phelans, Delaneys, Dohertys, Charlie Brennan, Phil Bowe. Winning county final in 1963, playing against Eddie Kehir. Mentions Mick Brophy. Also mentions Jim Grace and Fr. Tom Murphy. Also reaching county final in 1965 against Knocktopher Shamrocks. Mentions Knocktopher's Denis Heaslip and Pat Carroll. Winning junior final in 1966.</p> <p>01:14:15 Progressing to senior level. Mentions Nicky Ryan. Team reaching senior county final in 1975, Seán injured and not on team. Club secretary at the time. Beating the Fenians of Johnstown. Discusses rivalry between Galmoy and Johnstown. Mentions players from 1954 hurling team: Murt Ryan, Johnny Carr, Paddy Carr, Bernie Delaney, Bunty Costigan, Michael Hennessy. Mentions Johnny O'Rourke of Johnstown. Song written by Mick Lannan and Delia Grace about that final. [Sings song.]</p> <p>01:21:23 Mentions local intercounty players Roddy Neil, Mick Hennessy, Billy Costigan. Also mentions Pat Henderson, Pat Delaney. Mentions mentor Johnsie Hart, selector Piery Larkin. Also mentions Mick "Pansy" Ryan, his sons Murt, Micky, Nicholas Ryan.</p> <p>01:26:00 Reflects on his involvement with the administration</p>
--	---

	<p>side of the GAA. Pucking with Billy Costigan in evenings. Driving around with his Mini giving players details of matches. Mentions Kilkenny selectors and county board administrators Jim Barry, Paddy Grace, Mick O'Neill. Recalls in 1967 driving Johnsie Hart into selectors' meetings in Kilkenny. Mentions Jack Phelan acting as secretary, then Seán being chosen.</p> <p>01:29:36 Playing while secretary. Starting hurling team, Factory League in meat plant in Rathdowney where he worked. Refereeing. No official trainers then. His brother Joe training in Galmoy. Training: sprinting, running, playing hurling. Rubbing wintergreen into legs. Mentions Mick Lannon. Drinking whiskey before match and at half-time. Smoking at half-time. Mentions Charlie Doherty. Mentions Brian Cody.</p> <p>01:32:13 Describes Johnsie's regime. Strict. Respect for him. Club meetings in hall until pavilion opened in 1984. Fundraising efforts for pavilion: lord mayor competitions, weekend festival (Irish music night, Billy Costigan playing fiddle, disco, field day, wheel of fortune, donkey derby, races, rifle range, Twink, Donncha O'Dulaing, Dublin footballer Paddy Cullen making appearances.) Mentions Molly Costigan, Sidney Fogarty, Dan Daly. Discusses building of pavilion. Mentions Bill McEvoy responsible for engineering. Also foreman Ned Glennon. Describes facilities built, including handball alley, squash court, tennis court, showers, dressing rooms, meeting room.</p> <p>01:39:34 Mentions his son Noel beating his other son Niall in handball competition. No history of handball. His son Niall winning handball county final. Recalls bringing juvenile teams to matches in his van. Mentions Brother Declan. Doing coaching courses, first aid courses, training and driving teams. His love of the GAA. Bringing juveniles on train to Croke Park in 80s. Going to Hennessys' Sunset pub.</p> <p>01:44:36 Describes his role as Under-21 selector for Kilkenny, then minor selector. Involved in centenary minor All-Ireland hurling final in Thurles. Mentions Jerry Drennan on that team. Difficulty of combining selector duties with family obligations. His sons' All-Ireland medals.</p> <p>01:46:58 Outlines progress of 1966 team. Success until 1984. Mentions Joe Doherty, Billy Hart, Lottie Hart, Stephen Delaney. Also mentions Pat McCormack and Michael John Ryan from Johnstown. Objection from Johnstown over illegal players in 1984. Discusses matches between Johnstown and Galmoy. Mentions trainer Paddy Kenny. Seán secretary. Mentions investigators Ted Carroll, John Healy, Barry Henry.</p>
--	---

	<p>Mentions Fr. Purcell. Mentions chairman Mick O'Neill. Explains how Galmoy won the appeal in the Leinster Council against the objection. Mentions Pat Henderson.</p> <p>01:53:00 Considers role of the Irish language in the GAA. Winning appeal due to English name written on objection. His views on the Irish language in the GAA. As secretary, registering players in Irish, placenames in Irish. Mentions Faughs in Dublin. Decline of team: migration, injuries. Mentions new team coming through in the 90s: Declan Fitzpatrick, Stephen Delaney's sons, Charlie Brennan's sons, Seán's sons, the Lonergans, Cathal Doherty, Alan Gray (grandnephew of Harry Gray). Potential of that team. Winning minor county league title. Beaten in 5 consecutive northern finals before 2004. Mentions trainers Cha Duggan, Jimmy Ruth, Michael Walsh, Michael Doyle (son of Tipperary's John Doyle), Joe Tynan. Seán's views on the incorrect approach to training. Also mentions 2004 trainers Cha Duggan, Pat Glendon, Jimmy Ruth. Success of team, winning Leinster final. Players emigrating to Australia. Mentions sponsor Bill McEvoy. Playing Oran GAA Club, Roscommon in All-Ireland final in Semple Stadium, Thurles. Excitement of winning All-Ireland. Celebrations: singing, dancing. Mentions current trainer Georgie Leahy, in northern final now.</p> <p>02:05:21 Discusses his attendance at county board meetings. Getting county board member when club became senior. Mentions Jimmy Walsh of Windgap. Management committee now. Mentions chairman Nickey Brennan. His views on the 5-year rule. Mentions other chairmen Mick O'Neil, Tommy Murphy, John Healy, Ned Quinn, Paul Kinsella. Describes their contributions to the GAA. Also mentions secretary Pat Dunphy. Comparison with running of county today. Responsibilities: fixtures, finances. Mentions county secretary Ned Quinn and Kilkenny senior hurling manager Brian Cody. Harmonious relations between county board and team management contributing to Kilkenny's successes.</p> <p>02:16:34 Describes changes of day of round of Kilkenny championships at Cody's request. Mentions treasurer Barry Hickey. Explains process of appointment to various county board committees. Mentions Pat Dunphy. Complexity of organising fixtures. Assumption of reaching All-Ireland finals. Rules of getting postponements. Club members trained for stewarding, voluntary. Recalls being MC at various GAA events. Mentions new MC Conor Deniffe. Recalls MC-ing county final, introducing past Tullaroan team. Mentions Brian Carty and Micheál Ó Muircheartaigh. Describes process of commentating. Details of organising match behind the</p>
--	--

	<p>scenes: organising commentators, local and national media, teams.</p> <p>02:29:33 His daughter Catherine playing camogie for Kilkenny in All-Ireland semi-final. Challenge of accommodating camogie board. Mentions players Declan Fitzpatrick and Alan Gray. Explains difficulty for commentators of keeping up with the game. Mentions Ger Loughnane. Importance of timing in MCing. Mentions Henry Shefflin. Mentions Ger Canning. Also mentions Kieran McNeill. Tension of match day. Mentions John Healy in charge of security, Seamus Reade in charge of stewarding. Challenge of planning for two homecomings from All-Ireland final: winning and losing. Advantages of sending group texts.</p> <p>02:37:05 Reflects on his family's GAA achievements. Four children representing their county. His son Niall playing county minor and intermediate hurling, dislocating shoulder. Mentions Mick Fennelly. Noel and Niall playing on Kilkenny team together. His daughter Catherine on senior camogie team, her ability to score. Mentions hurler Tony Brown. Also mentions camogie manager Ann Downey. Mentions Catherine's teammates Jacqui Frisby, Lizzie Lyng. Catherine's successes representing her county, province, and country. Mentions Tommy Walsh's father, Michael Walsh.</p> <p>02:48:44 Mentions Niall and Martin Phelan. Mentions James Stephens GAA Club. Outlines change of selection system under Nickey Brennan. Mentions Ollie Walsh, Dermot Healy, Kevin Fennelly. His views on injustices regarding subs in the past. Lack of club bias of Brian Cody, Martin Fogarty, and Michael Dempsey. Different way of picking selectors now, independent of club. Issue of nepotism. Ollie Walshe, Brian Cody picking their sons, Nickey Brennan picking his brother Canice Brennan. Mentions Richie Hogan.</p> <p>02:56:57 Ponders the significance of the GAA. Importance of the organisation in rural areas. Mentions Paul Gannon. Mentions Fr. Purcell, Fr. O'Hanlon, Canon Guinan, their appreciation of the GAA. Reflects on bringing his family to matches around Ireland. Declan Fitzpatrick bringing sweets. Singsong in car. The GAA a conversation topic, camaraderie with his sons.</p> <p>03:02:10 Ponders his passion for the GAA. Mentions Johnsie Hart and Peery Larkin. His brother Joe Doherty playing senior hurling for Kilkenny. Mentions Hendersons, Delaneys. JJ and PJ Ryan, Michael Kavanagh, PJ Delaney. Few players from North Kilkenny on county team. Recalls Kilkenny playing game in Wembley, watching on television, Micheál O'Hehir</p>
--	---

REFERENCE NO. KK/1/25

	mentioning his brother Joe. Seán's loyalty to Kilkenny, rapport with Laois players. Training Cullohill, Harps in Durrow, Clough Ballacolla.
Involvement in GAA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward <input 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)	Played hurling with Galmoy from childhood until he was in his 30s
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	1973-74 – Secretary of Galmoy Hurling Club; Member of Bord na nÓg in the 1970s; Galmoy Representative on Kilkenny County Board for 27 years.
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 03:05:52
Language	English

REFERENCE NO. KK/1/25

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: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 11th June 2012