

GAA Oral History Project
Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Arlene Crampsie
Date of Interview	16 th March 2011
Location	Constituency Office, Athy, Co. Kildare
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Jack Wall
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1945 Home County: Kildare
Education	Primary: Castledermot NS, Co. Kildare Secondary: Castledermot Vocational School, Co. Kildare Third Level: Kevin Street College, Dublin
Family	Siblings: 2 brothers Current Family if Different: Married to Anne with 2 sons and 2 daughters
Club(s)	Castledermot; Castlemitchell GFC; Athy Hurling; St. Dermot's Hurling Club
Occupation	Electrician, Politician
Parents' Occupation	Farm Labourer [Father]; Housewife, Farm Worker [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Labour TD
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Community Hall Chairman, Graveyard Committee, Golf

Date of Report	9 th August 2012
Period Covered	1927 – 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Kildare, Wexford, Great Britain, England, Europe, Spain, South Africa
Key Themes Covered	Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Travel, Supporting, Facilities, Playing, Training, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Education, Religion, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, All-Ireland, Club History, Politics, Northern Ireland, The Troubles, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Relationship with the Association, Purchase of Grounds
Interview Summary	<p>Jack Wall talks about his early involvement in the GAA through the street leagues in Castledermot. He also discusses the players from the local team that went on to play for the county. He discusses his move to administration and the positions he held before talking about his career in politics and how it has fit in with his GAA career. He then tells of switching clubs due to family circumstances and how well it worked out. He talks of the ups and downs of Kildare football and hurling and what his involvement has meant to him and what he thinks of those involved at all levels.</p> <p>00:00 Introduction</p> <p>00:21 Talks of his earliest memory being street leagues in his home town of Castledermot. Mentions Fr. Brady and the juvenile and adult street leagues also. Also mentions St. John's, Barnhill, Johnstown, Abbeylands and William Pearse Terrace.</p> <p>01:12 Speaks of the success of the Castledermot club winning Junior B in 1956 and Junior A in 1957 and Intermediate in 1963. Mentions Kildare winning the Leinster final in 1956 and how this also generated interest in the GAA locally.</p> <p>02:29 Tells of an outbreak of polio at the time and children not being allowed to go to the All-Ireland semi-final against Cork.</p> <p>03:29 Speaks of there being no facilities and only a field and cows. Mentions railway carriages being used as dressing rooms.</p> <p>04:20 Talks about the rise and fall of success for the club.</p>

	<p>Mentions a number of re-gradings for the club and of hurling taking off in St. Dermot's. Also mentions his brothers Matt and Mick along with his cousin and Dermot McKenna, Jack Hanlon, Martin Duffy and Pat Byrne.</p> <p>06:24 Speaks of the amalgamated team with Grangenovlin.</p> <p>06:55 Recalls that the underage team that were very good. Tells of two of the team Pat Ward and himself playing with Kildare Under 14 afterwards and beating Laois and going on to beat Dublin. Mentions that most of that club's underage team went on to play for Kildare at different levels.</p> <p>08:47 Tells of travelling to matches in various cars and a van with groups of other children. Sometimes he would go with his father on a bike to watch a match in Athy. Mentions the bike man at the matches who looked after the bikes, and there could be hundreds of them. Also mentions that there were a lot of trains used to go to Croke Park.</p> <p>13:29 Speaks of his first trip to Croke Park in 1954 for Kildare minors playing Louth.</p> <p>14:25 Talks of stopping off along the way at a restaurant near Kingsbridge on the way to Croke Park.</p> <p>15:56 Talks of his father being involved in the GAA and his mother washing the kit. Mentions Matt playing hurling for Kildare and Mick and himself playing football and hurling for Kildare.</p> <p>16:40 Speaks of his father playing football but there being very few matches. Mentions the problems in organisation at the time.</p> <p>17:58 Talks of 1932 and Castledermot winning an intermediate championship and being trained by the local Garda sergeant. Mentions Paddy Byrne and Paddy Martin two of the team playing for Kildare with Paddy Martin playing on the winning All-Ireland teams of 1927-28. He won numerous Railway Cup medals and played in the Tailteann Games of 1932.</p> <p>18:50 Tells of the team training at six o'clock in the morning before work. Mentions the lean times after this and how things run in cycles.</p> <p>20:09 Speaks of training during his time playing football with the club. Mentions the hurling training being somewhat different. Also mentions the colours of the club being blue and</p>
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	<p>white but the hurlers being blue and gold.</p> <p>22:13 Tells of an amalgamation with the club in Moone and the colours changing.</p> <p>23:01 Speaks of fundraising events with 'the Black Cat' draw and outdoor bingo with a £1,000 prize. Mentions John Savage, Donal Murphy, Eamonn Kane, Pat Byrne (the Barber) and Fr. Paddy Stanley.</p> <p>25:01 Talks of being chairman of the county board and having to pick up the jerseys after a bad match as there was no one to help. Tells of the strength of the GAA being that there is still always someone to pick up the jerseys on a bad day.</p> <p>25:57 Talks of his involvement in inter-county hurling and football and being suspended from football for a year after fielding a player who should not have been on.</p> <p>27:20 Speaks of playing Galway in the 1974 quarter final of the All-Ireland but lost and failed to make the breakthrough.</p> <p>28:09 Talks of the special All-Ireland medal for the 50th anniversary of the Easter Rising. They beat Warwickshire in the All-Ireland final. Mentions winning the intermediate the following year against Cork and talks about the Oireachtas Cup when Clare played Wexford and Nicky Rackard being over Wexford at the time.</p> <p>30:04 Talks of moving clubs to make it easier for his son to play and winning together. Mentions his involvement in various factory leagues (winning All-Irelands), street leagues and tournaments both football and hurling.</p> <p>31:35 Speaks of training school teams and his movement into politics with the Labour Party first locally and then the Senate and as a TD.</p> <p>32:24 Talks of how he became secretary of the Castledermot club at sixteen as no one else was willing to step in to do it.</p> <p>33:19 Tells of the role of the secretary at the time, cycling to players to inform them of fixtures and where they would meet.</p> <p>34:20 Talks of there being little else in Castledermot other than a cinema which also ran dances. Mentions that during Lent the dances were very popular as the cinema was in the Dublin diocese and was not bound by the same church law as the country areas.</p> <p>35:08 Speaks of the ban on foreign dances and Irish music having to be played at any GAA presentations where county</p>
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	<p>board officials were in attendance. Mentions how the ban was enforced within Kildare.</p> <p>37:30 Talks of the structure being based on the parish and how this has stood the test of time.</p> <p>38:14 Speaks of changing club and how this was taken by the old club. Mentions the goodwill of those in Castledermot to his move to Athy to ensure his family involvement in the GAA.</p> <p>40:35 Talks of the easy move to Castlemitchell in Athy as he had involvement in the area for almost ten years before his move. Mentions coaching the school teams and their success. Also mentions Dave Fennin, Tadhg Fennin, Ger Donnelly, Paul Donnelly, Thomas Donnelly, who went on to play with the county team.</p> <p>42:24 Speaks of organising hurling in Castlemitchell but how it fell away after a player was seriously hurt in a game.</p> <p>43:02 Talks of the importance of the juvenile structure to the GAA to bring young people together.</p> <p>44:16 Speaks about the club grounds and facilities in Castlemitchell now as compared with when he first arrived and they were playing in ten different fields owned by different farmers, John Fennin, Brian Finn and Coles.</p> <p>46:05 Talks about the next stage of development. Mentions the buying of the pitch and the difficulties involved in the transaction.</p> <p>49:02 Tells of it being a football club as hurling is not very strong in the area. Mentions the possibility of hurling not surviving at all.</p> <p>50:08 Speaks of why the interest in hurling is gone in South Kildare. Mentions it not being the first choice of those involved as Kildare is a football county. Also mentions the people pushing hurling being from outside the county.</p> <p>53:01 Talks of the need to address the lack of hurling at a national level with the grass roots. Mentions the role of the teachers in keeping the interest.</p> <p>55:11 Speaks of attending a county convention. Mentions Bord na nÓg and Féile na Gael. Also mentions his election to County chairman.</p> <p>58:50 Tells of Peter Delaney's resignation and a special convention being called to elect a new county secretary.</p>
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	<p>Padraig Ó Caoimh arrived and the situation was resolved.</p> <p>01:00:43 Tells of the county board meetings being held in Newbridge. Mentions Liam Geraghty being chairman when Jack first attended. Also mentions Gerard Grehan, Hugh Campion, Pat Dunney, Andrew O'Sullivan, Syl Merrins, and Pádraig Ashe.</p> <p>01:02:14 Talks of the five year rule and how it can damage the GAA.</p> <p>01:03:10 Speaks of the issues dominating county board meetings being the formation of the supporters club when Kildare football was not doing very well. Mentions a challenge match being organised in Tralee and two trains of supporters attending. Also mentions Dermot Earley and his input.</p> <p>01:05:19 Talks of the period from 1990 to 2000 and the efforts of the team and Mick O'Dwyer. Mentions the insult of not appointing him to the position of manager of the international series team.</p> <p>01:07:11 Recalls his role as Chairman being a full time job involving so many aspects of the GAA. Mentions the worry of becoming stale and not moving forward.</p> <p>01:09:09 Talks of the GAA keeping communities together. Mentions meeting the officers of the clubs and the people working in the clubs.</p> <p>01:11:20 Speaks of the importance of the Oral History Project and recording those involved in the GAA.</p> <p>01:12:20 Talks of having no sacrifice to make regarding family life as all the family were involved in the GAA. Mentions it being a very fulfilling life although there may not have been anything else. Also mentions Ann and the Castlemitchell Junior B team and how they eventually won the Championship and Seamus Kelly the manager.</p> <p>01:14:24 Talks of all the friends he has made over the years.</p> <p>01:15:40 Speaks of his most difficult case as chairman being the amalgamation of two clubs that went to the high court. Mentions how this should never be the case and the courts should not be used to solve these disputes.</p> <p>01:18:42 Tells of how this escalation of a GAA decision to the Courts can happen.</p> <p>01:20:02 Speaks of how the Courts can bring natural justice</p>
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	<p>to bear on the GAA decision.</p> <p>01:20:54 Talks of the increase in the power of managers in the GAA being a serious problem. Mentions the financial implications. Also mentions that control of fixtures should stay with the County Board and not be in the hands of the County Managers.</p> <p>01:22:49 Talks of the issue of managers and players being paid. Mentions recognising the fact that there are times when some players and managers are giving up income to take part but doubts that managers who are not local can really pick the best team.</p> <p>01:24:38 Speaks of the divisional boards only being used at juvenile levels as they are not big enough to need it at other levels.</p> <p>01:25:08 Talks of north and south Kildare and not thinking there is a difference in quality of players from the two areas as has been suggested in the past.</p> <p>01:26:04 Speaks of having no interest in attending Leinster or Central Council meetings. Mentions being on the finance committee for a short period having been asked by Jack Boothman and not returning after seeing the workings.</p> <p>01:27:28 Talks of there being no link between politics and the GAA.</p> <p>01:28:33 Tells of being a Labour supporter for a long time and being chairman of the local branch for sometime but not for several years before getting involved directly. Mentions Kildare being changed into a six seat constituency and winning the new vacant seat.</p> <p>01:31:51 Speaks of the tendency for political parties looking to the GAA to find people to stand. Mentions it being because the GAA is parish orientated.</p> <p>01:33:59 Talks of travelling to the North for GAA matches during the Troubles, to Omagh, Belfast, Celtic Park in Derry , Newry, Armagh and other locations. Mentions Anthony Rainbow suffering from hyperthermia.</p> <p>01:35:35 Speaks of the links with Irishness being used to its fullest in the North to show strength. Mentions the four All-Ireland wins by Ulster teams being a focus for all of Northern Ireland.</p> <p>01:38:29 Tells of moving from chairman to treasurer of the</p>
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	<p>supporters club for a number of years and being on the development committee with Dermot Earley.</p> <p>01:40:15 Talks of his best memory being the win in the Leinster Senior Football Championship in 1998 after forty-two years. Mentions grown men crying.</p> <p>01:41:54 Speaks of getting 250 phone calls looking for tickets to the All-Ireland.</p> <p>01:42:51 Talks of winning Leinster championships at every grade while he was chairman.</p> <p>01:43:26 Tells of his GAA hero being Mick O'Dwyer. Mentions there being people in every club that are worthy of praise. Also mentions Mick O'Dwyer going to Monasterevin to give out medals.</p> <p>01:47:20 Speaks of watching hurling games when on holiday in Spain and people trying to explain the game to others in the bar.</p> <p>01:49:05 Talks of travelling to South Africa and elsewhere with the Kildare team. Mentions educating people and removing the lure of drugs for young people.</p> <p>01:50:00 Speaks of being disappointed when losing matches but it is temporary and does not take from the enjoyment. Talks about ladies football and their success and the role of women within the Association. Mentions camogie too.</p> <p>01:52:59 Talks about what his involvement in the GAA has meant to him including the friends he made and how he has seen so many getting enjoyment from it. Mentions how the GAA can help in the current climate.</p> <p>01:54:18 Thanks everyone that is and was involved in the clubs Rosanna Curran, Jimmy Curran, Ollie Byrne, Dinny Murphy, John Savage, Mickey Byrne, Mick Fennin, Liam Kelly, Ger McDonough and Mick Brazil.</p> <p>01:55:13 In one of the factory leagues and bringing players from outside. Mentions Street leagues in Castledermot and Freddie Smith standing in and doing nothing and when a ball finally arrived to him he had to ask which way to kick it.</p> <p>01:56:45 Speaks of stewarding in Croke Park helping the GAA.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p>✓ Supporter ✓ Player ✓ Manager ✓ Coach ✓ Steward</p>

	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person <input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	<p>Played for about 43 years. Won 1 junior and intermediate football with Castledermot; 1 junior and intermediate hurling with Castledermot; a championship and league with Castlemitchell; an Under 14 Leinster; 3 All-Ireland's junior, intermediate and senior B; 3 All-Ireland Factories with Cosets, Factory Leagues with Cosets and also with Irish Board Mills.</p>
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	<p>Has been involved in administration since 1961.</p> <p>Club: Castledermot Secretary, Chairman, Treasurer and Delegate to County Board; Castlemitchell Chairman, Vice-chairman and President; Athy Vice-chairman and President</p> <p>County: Secretary Bord na nÓg, Vice-chairman, Chairman; Supporters Club Treasurer; Newbridge Development Committee.</p> <p>Leinster: Factory Leagues Secretary and Treasurer</p> <p>Central: Finance Sub-Committee Member.</p>
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	<p>Length of Interview: 01:57:27</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

REFERENCE NO. KE/1/15

the right to use and make available to the public the content of this interview.

Signed: _____Arlene Crampsie_____

Date: _____09/08/12_____

The GAA logo, consisting of the letters 'GAA' in a stylized white font, is positioned on a black rectangular background in the bottom right corner of the page.