

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Ann-Marie Smith
Date of Interview	19 th Feb 2009
Location	Salthill, Galway
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Jimmy Hegarty
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1940 Home County: Galway
Education	N/A
Family	Siblings: None Current Family if Different: Married
Club(s)	Liam Mellows GAA [Galway]
Occupation	N/A
Parents' Occupation	N/A
Religion	N/A
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A

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Date of Report	14 th May 2009
Period Covered	1940s-2009
Counties/Countries Covered	Galway, Tipperary, Cork, Antrim, Westmeath, England, Great Britain
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Officials, Celebrations, Material Culture, Education, Religion, Emigration, Involvement in GAA abroad, Role of Clergy, Role of the Club in the Community, GAA Abroad, Identity, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Challenges, Sacrifices, Socialising, Relationships, Economy / Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Jimmy reflects on his life and on his 26 years playing hurling for club and county. An only child growing up in Galway city, hurling made him happy and gave him a sense of belonging. He played for the Liam Mellows club and later with the Galway minor and senior hurling teams as a goalkeeper. Jimmy recalls particular stories and characters of those days in great detail. He has tremendous respect for the people he played alongside and against. Jimmy has both good and bad memories, but he sees the humour in everything and this is reflected in his recollections of a lifetime spent between the posts.</p> <p>00:30 Jimmy was born in 1940 in Galway city, an only child. He didn't know his father. An early GAA memory is playing out on the streets in Wood Quay. He had nobody to look up to except for the legendary Duggan brothers, Seán and Jimmy. He was in awe of Seán. He was the only one on his street playing hurling, the others played football. He served meals at the Garda barracks nearby and they let him into their handball alley.</p> <p>04:10 He played with Castlegar but his main club was Liam Mellows. He played with the legendary Francis Loughnane and Tadhg O'Connor from Roscrea in 1968/1968 whilst working in the area. In 1958 he went to England and played for the Emerald club in London. He played minor and senior for Galway and won two Railway Cups with Connacht. He played with Joe Salmon, Tim Sweeney, Jimmy Duggan.</p>

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06:30 He played against Cork's Christy Ring in the 1962 Railway Cup in Ballinasloe and didn't sleep the whole week beforehand. He was worried about coming up against Philly Grimes, Seamus Power, Clare's Jimmy Smith, Jimmy Doyle, Tom Cheesty - all top class forwards. Liam Devaney was there too. When he is in Cork he visits Christy Ring's grave in Cloyne.

09:05 As a child he would watch Seán Doogan play and he thought that it was a very skilful game. They could play overhead hurling now - which required a lot of skill - but they don't play it that way anymore. Micky Elwood and two Hughes boys of Liam Mellows used to train near his house and he would go to watch them.

11:50 He eventually got a job with Irish Distillers. There were two Deeley hurls in a shop window in Galway. His mother procured it for him but it didn't last long.

13:30 He was extremely thin as a boy and would be last to get picked on teams in school. The first trophy he won was in Newcastle in a 7-a-side competition. He was coming home with the cup over Salmon Weir bridge and fell and dented the cup.

15:30 In 1960 he was too young to play as a goalkeeper with the Galway team because the goalkeepers had far less protection then - 'you had to be a lunatic'. He never got any bad injuries whilst playing.

17:20 At Liam Mellows he used to dodge training in Athenry but eventually was made to go. They would just play games.

18:25 They piled into cars to go to Croke Park in the 1960s. Canon O'Dea was over the Galway County Board and there was a Fr Lee as well, they sometimes travelled with them. If he needed to go to the bathroom he would be afraid to ask.

20:30 The facilities were minimal at their club. They trained in what is now a greyhound track on a side pitch and changed in a shed. Sometimes they had to borrow gear from others. In 1960 they won a county league. He did not drink until he was 27 so there were no great celebrations back then. They played the Tipperary team of 1961 - 1964 one time and he

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got a positive mention in the newspaper. John McKenna, John Doyle, Jimmy Doyle, Donie Nealan, the two Mologhney brothers, Liam Devaney, Theo English were all on that Tipperary team.

24:30 It was a great honour to put on the Galway jersey when he was picked for the minor team. He was the only person from the city on the team, apart from Gabriel Egan. When he came back from London he got on the senior team and has great memories. Mike McInerney from Ardrahan was on the 1953 team with him.

28:10 He played with the Emerald club in London in 1958 and there were a lot of Galway people there. He emigrated to get some work. .

32:00 He was back with the Galway senior team for the second half of 1960. He played Limerick in Waterford and he was called upon to play as a substitute in the second half

33:45 In 1961 he was the established goalkeeper. They didn't have huge success and in 1965 he was dropped and his replacement, Peter Cosgrove, did very well.

35:25 He tasted defeat often and it was hard to stay motivated.

36:15 In all, he was 26 years standing in goals between club and county A reporter named Tom Looney did a piece on him when he was 25 years playing

37:25 He played with his club until 1983 - a long time to be standing between two posts. Some thought it was a soft position to have but Jimmy disagrees

37:55 Players like Ollie Walsh, Tony Redmond, Seán Duggan, Pat Nolan, and Mick Hayes were great players but they are forgotten about now. He watched them all as a young boy.

38:10 In 1956 when Cork beat Wexford and Christy Ring was going for his ninth All-Ireland, Art Foley made a great save and Jimmy was watching it from the Canal End

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	<p>38:35 In 1959 he watched Waterford play Tipperary in a Munster final and Philly Grimes for Waterford took a free and Jimmy caught the ball and trouble followed</p> <p>39:40 On his last training session for Galway he took away a jersey for himself. The secretary of the county board noticed it was missing</p> <p>40:55 Talks about playing Waterford in Croke Park in 1963. Waterford had Frankie Walsh, Tom Cheesty, Philly Grimes, John Barron and Seamus Power - six great forwards. Jimmy did not want to play them.</p> <p>44:50 He had no regrets when he finished playing</p> <p>46:00 You have to go out to win and you your best and you will enjoy it</p> <p>47:05 One hurler he really admires is Seán Duggan</p> <p>48:00 He also admires Johnno McGrath from Westmeath and Paddy Molloy from Offaly. Joe Henry from Mayo was another - they were great players lining out for weak counties</p> <p>48:40 He finds it hard to compare the hurlers of today - like Joe Canning - to those of yesteryear</p> <p>49:55 He didn't have to sacrifice a lot because of his involvement with the GAA</p> <p>50:40 He believes in a fine line between players and management</p> <p>51:12 Recalls a trip to Casement Park to play Antrim in 1961. The car broke down in Athlone.</p> <p>52:55 He has no opinion on Galway playing in the Leinster championship</p> <p>53:15 Jimmy says he would be nothing without the GAA. He longs to be still out on the pitch</p> <p>58:55 Recalls having a bad day playing Tipperary in the</p>
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	1960s with Charlie Hughes and Patsie Hardiman
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 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)	
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 00:58:03
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: Ann-Marie Smith

Date: 14th May 2009