

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	29 th April 2011
Location	Canning's Pub, Gorteeny, Woodford, Co. Galway
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Frank Canning (Portumna GAA)
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1949 Home County: Galway
Education	Primary: Gortanumera NS, Co. Galway Secondary: Portumna, Co. Galway
Family	Siblings: 2 siblings
Club(s)	Tommy Larkins GAA [Galway]
Occupation	Publican
Parents' Occupation	N/A
Religion	N/A
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

REFERENCE NO. GY/1/24

Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Jack Gill
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1933 Home County: Galway
Education	N/A
Family	Siblings: 5 siblings
Club(s)	Turloughmore GAA [Galway]
Occupation	Board of Works
Parents' Occupation	N/A
Religion	N/A
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

REFERENCE NO. GY/1/24

Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	John Joe Conwell
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1955 Home County: Mayo
Education	Primary: Meelick NS, Swinford, Co. Mayo Secondary: St Patrick's College, Swinford, Co. Mayo Third Level: University College Galway; NUI Maynooth
Family	N/A
Club(s)	Swinford GAA [Mayo]; Portumna GAA [Galway]
Occupation	School Teacher
Parents' Occupation	N/A
Religion	N/A
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

REFERENCE NO. GY/1/24

Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Seán Canning
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1945 Home County: Galway
Education	Primary: Gortanumera NS, Co. Galway
Family	Siblings: 1 brother and 3 sisters Current Family if Different: Wife (Josephine), 6 sons and 3 daughters
Club(s)	Portumna GAA [Galway]
Occupation	Farmer
Parents' Occupation	Farmers
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

REFERENCE NO. GY/1/24

Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Josephine Canning
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Female
Born	Year Born: 1947 Home County: Galway
Education	Primary: Kiltomer NS, Co. Galway Secondary: Eyrecourt, Co. Galway. Third Level: UCG
Family	Siblings: 3 brothers and 3 sisters Current Family if Different: Husband (Seán), 6 sons and 3 daughters
Club(s)	N/A
Occupation	Nurse
Parents' Occupation	Farmers
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

REFERENCE NO. GY/1/24

Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Tony Burke
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1948 Home County: Galway
Education	Primary: Kileen NS, Co. Galway
Family	N/A
Club(s)	Portumna GAA [Galway]; St Gabriel's GAA, London [Great Britain]
Occupation	N/A
Parents' Occupation	N/A
Religion	N/A
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

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Date of Report	24 th July 2012
Period Covered	1859-2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Galway
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Material Culture, Education, Religion, Media, Emigration, Involvement in GAA abroad, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Identity, Rivalries, Irish Language, Culture, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Outsider's Perspectives, Alcohol, Politics, Northern Ireland, The Troubles, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Relationship with the Association, Retirement, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy / Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Members of the Portumna club trace the history of hurling in the area, stretching back to well before the establishment of the GAA. They talk about growing up in an area where the population was small and resources scarce. Many were forced to emigrate during numerous historical periods, which in turn had an effect on the GAA in the area. Frank and Jack both went to London and played with the St Gabriels' club there, before returning home after many years. They talk about their GAA experiences in London and provide an insight into the workings of the Irish community abroad. Galway's famous All-Ireland hurling victory of 1980 is discussed, as is Joe Connolly's speech and the impact it has in Galway and beyond. In later years Portumna enjoyed much success on the national stage, and the members describe how a club that once struggled just to stay in existence went on to become champions of all of Ireland.</p> <p>01:00 (John Joe) History of the club. Surprise nature of Portumna All-Ireland wins. Earl of Clonrickard disapproved of hurling. Killimor wrote set of rules for game in 1859.</p> <p>01:50 (John Joe) Portumna strong at underage but weaker at senior level. Representation on county senior teams. Winning All-Ireland club title in 2006. Celtic Tiger assisting them. Turloch Mór, Liam Mellowes, Castlegar better able to keep</p>

	<p>players.</p> <p>04:00 (Frank) What Portumna was like when he was growing up.</p> <p>04:35 (Seán) Farming in the area. Parish area small. Hurling dominated by rural people when he was young. Emigration. Representation on Galway minor panel of 1966 and what happened to them. No Portumna team in 1969 or 1973. Work scarce.</p> <p>06:05 (Jack) Role of Board of Works in providing employment. Emigration returning.</p> <p>06:30 (Seán) No senior team until 1993. Intermediate success in 1992. County final win in 1995.</p> <p>07:20 (Seán) Tina Mines. Outsiders coming in to work.</p> <p>08:10 (Jack) Seán Smith's three sons playing with the team.</p> <p>08:40 (Seán) Playing with neighbouring parish in 1969. Reason for that. John Smith moving in from Clones, Monaghan. Aidan O'Donnell's father from Tommy Larkins. Juvenile success in late 1980s.</p> <p>09:35 (John Joe) Success at underage level.</p> <p>10:30 (Seán) Emigration kicked in hard in late 1960s. Minors lost to Cork in a final. Many left Portumna after.</p> <p>11:00 (Frank) Moving to London. Tony following him over. Chain reaction. Playing hurling in London.</p> <p>11:45 (Tony) Accident in London curtailing his career.</p> <p>13:40 (Jack) Hurling and his parents' generation.</p> <p>13:30 (Seán) Cycling to Woodford for his first juvenile game. How far that was. Fr Walsh very involved in hurling and later county hurling board chairman. He and Mr Farrelly driving them to games. Older generation had little interest. Parents never had a car.</p> <p>15:50 (John Joe) Fr Porter and Larkin from Ballymakill involved in county title winning team of 1930. Eviction of Sanders Fort. Tommy McLaughlin barricading himself in. People sent to jail in Galway. Tommy Larkin sent to jail in Kilkenny. How he died. His funeral. Charged atmosphere in the area. People dodging RIC. Camogie game in Ballinasloe pre-Independence. Priests leading people. Bishop Duggan pro-tenant. Gaelic revival. Work he did. Dr Healy in Portumna</p>
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	<p>taking opposite view. Pro-GAA priests appointed in Portumna. Difference they made. Fr Sola chairman of county board. Clergy's influence waning over the years.</p> <p>19:55 (John Joe) He and his brothers David, Lenny and Ger playing for the county in the 1960s.</p> <p>20:10 (Seán) Denny Burke captain of Portumna in the 1970s. Winning an East Galway Junior Championship. Extent of their progress. Modern-day hurlers different. Less games in the 1970s. Knockout system.</p> <p>21:45 (Frank) Sets of brothers playing GAA. Treacys, Hayes, Smiths, Cannings, Daulphins, Lynchs, Colemans.</p> <p>23:15 (John Joe) Keith Hayes killed in 1999. A talented hurler and Galway minor.</p> <p>24:20 (Seán) Mr Frawley a teacher interested in the GAA. Downey teaching Tony in Killian.</p> <p>25:00 (Seán) Listening to a Galway-Cork game on the radio in 1956 in the Mitchells house. Game played in October. Max Dopher scoring 2-05 from play.</p> <p>27:00 (Jack) Playing hurling when he was young. Modern-day standards different. Playing for Turloch Mór. What that was like. Position he played in. Playing for Galway in early 1950s. Frank Toner and Jack Whale organising the team. Jack Gill nicknamed 'The Shadow'. Why that was. Jack moving to Portumna.</p> <p>30:45 (Jack) Moved to Portumna in 1963. Playing with Turloch Mór at the time. Success they had. Six titles in-a-row. Packie Burke, Paddy Langan, Paddy Fahey, Frank Fahey, Frank Coffey, PJ Cuatra, Frank Forde, Johnny Burke, James Murphy, Paddy Caulfield, Mickey Cullen, Mike Cullen, Jimmy Rabbit, Robbie Madden on the team. Mick Brennan training them. Payment he received. Training they did. Castlegar the top team in Galway at the time. Their success in the 1930s. Son, Mike, playing with Portumna. Success he had. Kilkenny's Tommy Dunne playing against Portumna.</p> <p>36:25 (John Joe) Frank's success in London. Making the Galway senior panel when he returned in the 1980s.</p> <p>36:55 (Frank) Playing minor hurling with Tony.</p> <p>(37:15) Minor team involvement. Gerry Flaherty also on the 1966 minor team. Frank's nephews Joe and Ollie following in his footsteps.</p>
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	<p>38:20 (Frank) Meeting John Connolly years later. Talking to him about games in the past. John Joe Rourke driving them to games. Asking John why he used to walk around the dressing-room nude. Minor team playing in Munster back them. Losing some teeth in a game against Cork. Playing on four different county teams in 1967.</p> <p>40:45 (Frank) Staying with his sister in London. Hurling in London. Tony's accident. Benefit dance held for him. Playing in an All-Ireland semi-final with Tony's brother Lenny against Limerick in 1973. Tony listening on the radio.</p> <p>42:20 (Frank) Hurling scene in London. Beating Ardrahan in 1978. Losing to Ballyhale Shamrocks. Andy Doherty playing. Big Tom too. St Gabriel's their club in London. Who played with them. Training near Scrubs prison. Prisoners shouting over the walls at them.</p> <p>44:10 (Frank) Working at Pinewood Studios on a Sherlock Holmes film. Sydney James, Kenneth Williams and Barbara Windsor watching them play hurling. Tommy Lennane working with them. Titles they won with Gabriel's. John Joe Rourke playing with them. Peter Crehan, Packie Grealish, Finbarr Gantley organising the games. How he became involved with the club. Tony's brother, Lenny, playing with Brother Pearse's in London.</p> <p>46:50 (Jack) Work that hurlers did while in London. Playing in Wembley. How long he and Tony spent in London.</p> <p>47:35 (Jack) Gabriel's reunion in London.</p> <p>47:55 (Jack) Deciding what colour jerseys to wear. Tipperary man objecting. What was decided.</p> <p>48:25 (Jack) St Gabriel's, Brian Boru's, Brother Pearse's, Thomas McCurtain's, Robert Emmet's, Fr Murphy's, Cuchulainn's all strong in London. Returning to Ireland to play.</p> <p>49:35 (Seán) London beating Galway in 1973 and going on to play Limerick.</p> <p>45:55 (Seán) Playing illegally in London in 1971 with St Mel's. Money he was promised. Playing an intermediate final against St Mary's. How he got his money.</p> <p>51:10 (Jack) Becoming a publican. Collecting money to help new arrivals. Seán staying in the bed with he and his wife. Seán eating breakfast. Ambrose bringing him to the airport.</p>
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<p>52:20 (Jack) Playing in Belfast in 1978 against St John's. Going down the Falls Road afterwards. Enjoying his time in London. Everybody helping each other.</p> <p>53:45 (Seán) St Mary's players from Tipperary and Laois. Wives and girlfriends going to the game and dressed differently to Irish women.</p> <p>54:30 (Jack) Irish people's reputation for drinking in London.</p> <p>55:50 (Seán) Tom Carthy, Mossy Walsh and John-Joe Rourke among those who left in 1968. No team in 1969. Some playing with Tynagh that year. Playing with Killimor alongside Donie Moran and John Mangan.</p> <p>57:25 (Seán) Starting up the club again. No money or jerseys. Hurling board secretary Jack Whelan helping them.</p> <p>58:05 (Seán) No team in 1973. Playing with Killimor. Meeting about forming a junior club with Portumna.</p> <p>58:40 (Seán) Success in 1974. What junior hurling was like compared to senior.</p> <p>59:25 (John Joe) Céilí held in 1975. Admission fee.</p> <p>59:40 (Seán) Going to céilís when he was young. Willie McCarthy, Lon Mahan, Billy Keenahan running the club. Money they made. No dances during Lent.</p> <p>01:01:00 (Seán) Winning back-to-back Under-12 titles in 1985 and how that kick-started the club. Less emigration. Tommy McClennen involved with those teams. Frank Quinlan also involved. Tony a selector. John Joe Rourke manager.</p> <p>01:04:00 (Seán) Minor and Under-21 titles won by Portumna in the 1990s.</p> <p>01:04:40 (Seán) More families moving to the area.</p> <p>01:04:50 (John Joe) Impact of free education and schools and colleges hurling.</p> <p>01:05:50 (Frank) Playing from Galway when he returned to Ireland. Losing an All-Ireland final to Offaly. Training he did with Galway team.</p> <p>01:06:55 (Seán) Galway's National League win in 1975. Going to All-Ireland final in 1980. Meeting John Connolly.</p> <p>01:07:45 (John Joe) Fr Jack Sloan ensuring there were hurleys and sliotars in every school. Galway hurler Conor Hayes later acknowledging this. Impact of Joe Connolly's All-</p>

	<p>Ireland winning speech in 1980. Cultural emotion. Joe a natural Irish speaker. Losing later finals.</p> <p>01:10:15 (Seán) Connolly speech important for the west of Ireland. People getting a lift out of it. Castlegar winning an All-Ireland club championship the same year. Josephine from Conor Hayes' club, Kiltormer.</p> <p>01:11:35 (Josephine) Watching hurling in Tully's field every week. Her father's passion for hurling.</p> <p>01:13:15 (Josephine) Less hurling in schools. Increased number of female teachers possible reason for that.</p> <p>01:14:45 (Seán) Training in schools. Winning county 7-a-sides. Playing against Frank Forde.</p> <p>01:17:15 (John Joe) John Connolly, Joe Cooney, Joe Canning all big names in Galway hurling. Three of them happy to put the required effort into hurling. Strong characters.</p> <p>01:20:00 (John Joe) Disbelief at Portumna's All-Ireland club victories. Seán Treacy putting steel into the team. Dinny Cahill providing finesse. Team arriving on the scene in 1995 and criticism they shipped.</p> <p>01:22:45 (John Joe) Talking to Kilkenny reporters like Adrian Ronan and Charlie Carter about the Portumna players. Respect they had for them. People travelling to colleges games to watch Joe Canning.</p> <p>01:24:15 (John Joe) Killimor's camogie success.</p> <p>01:24:50 (Seán) Joy that Portumna team has brought them. Beating James Stephen's in 2006. Young people inspired by success. Juvenile teams impressing. Under-12 team playing 9-a-side in Croke Park. Minor team coached by Eugene McEntee and Adrian Flaherty. McEntee a recent retiree from senior team. Why that is a good thing.</p> <p>01:28:10 (John Joe) Seeing Joe Canning play rugby when he was a schoolboy. How he fared.</p> <p>01:29:00 (Frank) Hurling as a religion in the area.</p> <p>01:29:15 (John Joe) Pub they are in is on Clare border. Busy spot on match days.</p> <p>01:30:20 (Seán) Enjoying watching their senior team since 1993.</p>
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	<p>01:31:05 (Seán) Daughter's camogie involvement.</p> <p>01:31:25 (Seán) His son, Ivan, making hurls.</p> <p>01:32:15 (Seán) Being chairman of the club in 1973. Frank Treacy vice-chairman. Resources scarce. Martin Hanrahan helping them root ash trees in order to make hurls. Jack Mulhare and Michael Flaherty also helping. Problem with trees. Overcoming those problems. Getting some work done at the vocational school in secret. Damaging a gate and trying to rectify that. Caretaker Tommy Moran helping them. Number of hurls they made.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p>Frank Canning:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____</p> <p>Jack Gill:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input 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>John Joe Conwell:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input 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>Seán Canning:</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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____</p> <p>Josephine Canning:</p>

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	<p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____ </p> <p>Tony Burke:</p> <p> <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): _____ </p>
<p>Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p>Frank Canning: Played for about 30 years and won 6 county titles playing for London.</p> <p>Jack Gill: 7 Senior and 1 Junior Galway Hurling Championship</p> <p>John Joe Conwell: N/A</p> <p>Seán Canning: 2 Galway Junior Hurling Championships; Runners-up in Galway Intermediate Hurling Championship, 1971; 2 East Galway Hurling Championships; 2 Galway Junior Hurling League medals.</p> <p>Josephine Canning: N/A</p> <p>Tony Burke: Played minor hurling for Galway (1966); Played in London (1973)</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Frank Canning: N/A</p> <p>Jack Gill: N/A</p> <p>John Joe Conwell: Portumna Club Historian</p> <p>Seán Canning: N/A</p> <p>Josephine Canning: N/A</p> <p>Tony Burke: N/A</p>

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Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 01:36:14
Language	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: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 24th July 2012