

GAA Oral History Project
Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	28 th April 2011
Location	Clarenbridge GAA Club
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Michael Carr
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1947 Home County: Galway
Education	Primary: Clarenbridge Boys School Secondary: Gort Vocational School
Family	Siblings: 1 sister & 1 brother Current Family if Different: 1 son & 1 daughter
Club(s)	Clarenbridge GAA
Occupation	Company Director (Tool-Making Company)
Parents' Occupation	Labourer [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	None
Political Affiliation / Membership	Fianna Fáil
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Gort Golf Club

REFERENCE NO. GY/1/18

Date of Report	24 th May 2012
Period Covered	Late 1880s-2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Galway, Limerick, Great Britain, England
Key Themes Covered	Childhood, Economy/Economics, Emigration, Administration, County History, Training, Role of the Teachers, Coaching, Celebrations, Commiserations, Family Involvement, All-Ireland, Facilities, GAA Abroad, Involvement in GAA Abroad, Socialising, Role of the Club in the Community, Fundraising, Refereeing, Playing, Role of the Clergy, Rivalries, Club History, Relationship with the Association
Interview Summary	<p>00:29 Michael talks about his background and where he was/family was from. Mentions Clarenbridge and that his father's side of the family resided in this townland since before the famine.</p> <p>01:28 Discusses what Clarenbridge was like growing up. Notes girls went to school in the convent and the boys went to the local boys' school. Mentions a group of 16-17 of them played informal hurling.</p> <p>02:20 Says that nobody had money and recalls there were only about 4 cars in his village when he was around 7/8 but things changed quickly. Notes by the time he was a young man nearly everybody had one.</p> <p>03:17 Talks about how emigration effected the hurling team he was on. Recalls his first memories of emigration were from about 1954/55/56. He emigrated in 1971. Notes teams in Clarenbridge were always short in number. Mentions Micheál Forde, Joe Sherry and Joe Grealy.</p> <p>04:17 Notes he himself became secretary of Clarenbridge GAA Club and that the young players were trying to run the team as well. Talks about how they were not organised properly.</p> <p>04:47 Talks about hurling being the prominent sport in the area. Mentions Clarenbridge Club was established in 1889 and prior to that in 1884 there was an informal match which attracted 7000 played in the Hill Park. Notes the band marched from Gort to play.</p> <p>05:54 Recalls being 11 or 12 and reading about soccer and not knowing what it was.</p> <p>06:24 Talks about his family's background in GAA sport. Talks about his father only playing a small bit. Notes there</p>

	<p>was friction about who should play with what club due to where they were from. Recalls going to games and county finals with his father.</p> <p>07:20 Discusses training at school. Notes there was not really anybody to train them. Mentions Jim Kelly. Notes teachers had no big interest in training them.</p> <p>08:06 Notes they started to get off the ground in the early 1980s. Mentions a teacher Michael Brown came to Killeeneen School. Notes Brown's contribution to hurling including he got Clarenbridge back to what they were like in the 1920s and 1930s.</p> <p>09:03 Mentions Martin Kearns, Steven and PJ Cohen also made a contribution to hurling in the area. Also mentions Micheal Brown wrote a book about Clarenbridge hurling in the early 1980s and is still coaching.</p> <p>10:07 Notes a new teacher in the Clarenbridge school and a number of other male teachers have an interest in hurling which has helped. Mentions the interest is needed and that there was a long period where there was none.</p> <p>10:58 Talks about matches and teams gone by. Talks about Clarenbridge GAA Club and their success before any county final. Notes there was a lull until the mid-1920s. Mentions Joe Grealy's version-Oranmore won the West Board Championship in the mid-1920s. They were the rivals of Clarenbridge. Said Clarenbridge went on in the following years to win the Championship and also beat another rival Craughwell.</p> <p>12:32 Mentions Jim Byrnes and the White/Whyte brothers (Joe and Tom).</p> <p>12:48 Talks about the White/Whyte brothers. Notes they were on the 1929 team that lost the County Final and the 1928 team which lost the Semi-Final. They emigrated England and disappeared despite their hurling success.</p> <p>14:02 Mentions Joe Grealy lost his eye playing illegally in a match against Turloughmore and his 2 brothers played on the 1939 team.</p> <p>14:43 Talks about Martin Burke. Influential on the Clarenbridge team throughout the 1930s. Notes he could not play in the 1929 final because he lived in the Oranmore parish. Was a Star-player in 1939 when Clarenbridge lost to Cashel. Talks about the match. Notes the Clarenbridge team broke up shortly after this and stopped playing Senior in the</p>
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	<p>early 1940s.</p> <p>17:02 Notes the team got to an Intermediate Final in 1951 but lost. Believes the losses over the years affected how the club turned out.</p> <p>17:31 Talks about a Mick Mackey interview he saw on TV. Was interviewed by Mícheál Ó hEithir(Michael O'Hehir) in the late 1960s. Mackey noted who he thought were the best players who had marked him-said John Kane from Waterford and Matty Burke from Clarenbridge.</p> <p>18:31 Talks about the club going downhill. Notes it was gradual at first going from Senior to Intermediate and then to Junior in the 1950s. Mentions from 1955/56 to 1981 the club began to struggle to get a Junior team together. Notes in 1982 the juvenile club was formed and put together 2 junior teams. Numbers began to go up.</p> <p>19:30 Talks about how the population affected the club. In the 1970s people stopped going to England and America. Emigration started to slow down. Had more players available to them. Mentions Portumna beat them in the Junior A in 1982.</p> <p>20:15 Talks about the clubs turning point. Points to the 1982 Club Social. Mentions Tom Callanan the Chairman of the Galway Hurling Board. Notes he asked a few officers and few others such as himself, Joe Sherry, Tom Conlan and Fergus Gleeson(Chairman) would they go up to Intermediate since they had two Junior Teams. They won the 1983 Intermediate Championship. Mentions it was emotional as even in the good years they did not win the important matches. Notes they beat Oran in the final.</p> <p>22:02 Mentions they went up to Senior and emigration in the 1980s affected the club again. Lost Senior players to retirement but mainly to emigration. Went down to Intermediate again in the late 1980s.</p> <p>22:52 Notes the underage policy was beginning to pay off and in 1989 with Michael Brown, Martin Kearns, Steven Cohen won an under-12 A and under-14 A Championship. Also took part in the Féile na nGael for the first time. The two teams went on to win between them two under-16 As, a minor A and an under-21 A. Formed a young Intermediate team in 1994 and Senior in 1995-got to the quarter final, 1996 got to the semi-final. Lost against Athenry.</p> <p>24:08 Mentions they lost the final in 1997 to Sarsfield and that</p>
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	<p>the club has been a bit unlucky since 1994. Won the Senior Championship in 2001 but lost the All-Ireland Club Final to Burgh. Notes that in that era Galway had 3 great club teams- Sarsfield, Athenry and Portumna. Have lost to Portumna in 4 or 5 County Finals in a 7 year period.</p> <p>25:14 2010 put a management team together. Mentions Mícháel Donoghue, Tom Helebert, Donal Welsh, Tom O'Flynn and Conor Lawless got the club team going and won the Cup again. Also won against De la Salle and O'Loughlin Gaels.</p> <p>26:02 Decided with the class of hurler they had deserved more than 1 county cup. Athenry have won 3 All-Ireland Club Finals as had Portumna. Sarsfield had won 2.</p> <p>26:31 Talks about the All-Ireland and the league itself. Thought they were going to lose the Semi-Final. Played O'Loughlin Gaels in the Final and talks about the match.</p> <p>28:41 Mentions the club won the under-14 Féile. Says the club have been strong for the past 15 years or so. Have won other under-14s and under-16s in the Féile as well.</p> <p>29:24 Talks about the club strengthening. Notes many newcomers in the parish, especially during the boom. Now have football in the club but it has been causing tension. Says that it is a traditional parish and many are traditionalists.</p> <p>30:28 Says that with the bigger numbers now there is under-8 hurling, under-10 hurling, under-12 hurling. Thinks there are around 60 playing under-8, another 60 playing under-10. They also have under-14, under-16, Minor, under-21, Junior C, Junior B, Intermediate and Senior for hurling.</p> <p>30:58 For football the club has under-8, under-10, under-12 and under-14. Just started under-16. Says with such big numbers now it's difficult logistically. There is one full pitch, one juvenile and a leased field.</p> <p>31:34 Notes trying to get training slots for everybody. Hurling and football think they should have preference. Says the only thing that came out of it was a review committee being put together and a committee for the club to go forward in coming years.</p> <p>32:32 Notes that there was around 120 at the AGM and 90-100 at the juvenile AGM. Mentions on one occasion in the 1970s there was only 5.</p> <p>33:30 Talks about the main economy in Clarenbridge and</p>
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	<p>what people worked as. In the 1960s, out of 15 players, 3-4 were farmers, 3 tradesmen, Joe Sherry was a publican, some worked for the ESB and one for a government department. Says others who were older than him were nearly all farmers. Those his age were the first to emigrate or find work locally.</p> <p>34:46 Industry had just started coming to Galway. Michael took an apprenticeship with a French manufacturer, Potez. They went out of business and Thermo-King took over the factory. Says industry meant that a small number of them did not have to emigrate.</p> <p>35:20 Mentions Tom Connolly, Eamonn Lenihan and Tom Canon played county Under-21 for Galway but had to emigrate. Notes Clarenbridge won the South Board.</p> <p>36:28 Talks about himself emigrating. Did not go for economic reasons. Wanted to get tool making experience.</p> <p>37:42 Says it probably was not hard to leave then because there was a poor team in Clarenbridge.</p> <p>38:00 Talks about playing hurling in England. Played for St. Gabriel's and for a team in Hertfordshire. Says playing in England meant nothing to him. Notes that most emigrants became involved in the building industry whereas he became involved with factories and tool rooms.</p> <p>39:30 Talks about socialising. Mentions he socialised with those he worked with. He would only bump into those who played GAA.</p> <p>40:37 Talks about becoming involved with Clarenbridge after returning from England. Became a nightshift supervisor in a factory in Galway. Due to the job he did not become involved with hurling again for a number of years.</p> <p>41:22 Talks about his involvement with the GAA at an administrative level. Acted as Treasurer for a few months and then became assistant Treasurer. When the Chairman retired he went forward for it.</p> <p>42:45 Talks about the place of the GAA club in Clarenbridge. Says it would mean nothing to a minority.</p> <p>44:05 Mentions the involvement of parents nowadays and how they drop off their children. Says in the 1980s they all cycled apart from the odd exception.</p> <p>44:57 Discusses travelling to matches. Says parents bring their children whereas when his son was growing up he brought</p>
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	<p>around 9 in his car.</p> <p>46:07 Tells a story about playing a match in Ardrahan and were short on bikes. Made a deal with Pat Burke to be carried up and he would carry Pat back down.</p> <p>46:53 Notes that it was not until the young men in Clarenbridge were 19-20 that they got cars.</p> <p>47:13 Mentions the Juvenile team got going in 1983 and they did not have a club house at that point or dressing rooms. They only opened in 1990 something which younger players do not notice.</p> <p>48:40 Talks about the building of the club house. A committee got together in the late 1980s. Mentions winning a Juvenile competition in 1982, Intermediate in 1983, a few other Juvenile competitions and then when Michael Brown, Steven Cohen and Michael Kearns took over Juvenile they began to win more serious competitions. This led to a committee being put together and money was raised to do up the pitch, put a Juvenile pitch in and build a dressing room.</p> <p>49:34 Mentions Waltie Martin, PJ Cohen, John Morrissey, Gerry Murphy, Billy Kenneally, John Byrnes, John Diskin, Mícháel Forde, Mike O'Donoghue, Noel Quinn, John Moran, Martin Green, Tom Conlan, John Sherry, James Heaney, Mike O'Kennedy as being among the main men who raised money. Mentions Andy Murphy and Joe Sherry.</p> <p>50:33 Talks about how the money was raised for the club house. Mentions raffles, mayor of Clarenbridge competition and dances. Mentions it was before the Lotto came in and that it is now a basic to funding clubs. For Clarenbridge it raises around €50,000 a year. It is becoming more important due to the economic downturn.</p> <p>51:45 Discusses voluntary efforts. Says some younger people have become involved.</p> <p>52:29 Discusses other sports in the parish while he was growing up. Notes there was no organised sport other than hurling.</p> <p>53:04 Discusses other sports now in the parish. Soccer is well organised. Has a large club called Colga. Tells a story about asking his father what soccer is like. Basketball was organised for a number of years in the 1970s and 1980s. A basketball hall was built and a Clarenbridge team was put together.</p>
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	<p>56:09 Notes some of the hurling players now player soccer as well.</p> <p>56:55 Discusses Camogie in Clarenbridge. Tells a story about Joe Sherry organising Camogie in the 1970s. Notes some of the players had won All-Ireland medals with Oranmore school. Was asked to bring some of them to a match in Ardrahan against Ardrahan. He also ended up refereeing the matching. Formed a Camogie club. Won an Intermediate in 2001, the Galway Féile in 1997 and Junior A in 1997. Were Connacht Junior Champions in 1992.</p> <p>59:58 Notes the Camogie team uses the same pitch as hurling and football. There is also Ladies Football which uses the same pitches.</p> <p>01:00:03 Talks about the pitches at the club and the times different teams use them to train.</p> <p>01:03:22 Talks about the County Board using the pitches. Notes they need club pitches to play their championship matches on.</p> <p>01:04:10 Discusses the organisational changes in the GAA and his relationship with the County Board. Notes that there is more of a relationship with the Hurling Board and going to the Connacht Council for help due to lack of support from the County Board.</p> <p>01:05:56 Recalls being the Secretary in the 1960s. Those on the County Boards were older and unknown to him apart from the parish priest Father O'Dea.</p> <p>01:07:17 Talks about the history of Clarenbridge. Notes going back 200 years to the time of the Famine that most of the land was owned by the Redington family. Were Catholic landlords and donated land to the people of Clarenbridge to play Gaelic games. Mentions that when the State was formed the land was reverted to the Department of Lands.</p> <p>01:09:13 Mentions the Redingtons also invested money to bring the Sisters of Charity to the area to start the schools back in the late 1880s. Goes on to note that the Club land is not owned by the GAA but is entrusted by 5 trustees.</p> <p>01:10:43 Discusses Clarenbridge in County hurling. Notes back in the 1920s Jim Byrnes, Tomaisín Niland, Matty Burke and John Commons played for Galway. Mentions Pete Kennelly. Talks about the lull and that apart from the 1960s with players such as Tom Connolly, John Cannon and Eamonn Lenihan there were very few top players and if there</p>
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	<p>were they were forgotten. Notes there was a change in the 1970s with Gerry Muprhy who got onto Galway Minor Teams. Mentions Noel Lane's father and two uncles played for Clarenbridge in the 1939 Final.</p> <p>01:12:19 Notes that in the past 20 years many Clarenbridge players have won the Minor Under-21 All-Irelands with Galway and others have represented Galway on Senior teams. Mentions the Kearns, David Forde Eoin Forde and Barry Daly.</p> <p>01:12:40 Talks about having players on the County team. Mentions that in his day they had heroes such as Matty Burke, Jim Byrnes and Tomaisín Niland and would have never seen them play. Mentions Barry Daly.</p> <p>01:14:02 Discusses what the GAA has meant to him. Mentions Martin Kearns.</p> <p>01:17:03 Talks about the time put into the GAA.</p> <p>01:18:13 Notes there has been a big change since his time. Mentions Mícháel Forde, Joe Sherry, John Sherry, Tommy Feaheny and Tom Condon.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</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 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>Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p>Played age 11-24 and age 34-39</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Clarenbridge GAA: Committee member for many years; Secretary in the mid-1960s. Secretary of the Juvenile Club 1982-84; Assistant and acting Treasurer 2009; Chairman 2010-2011.</p>
<p>Format</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Length of Interview: 01:19:09</p>
<p>Language</p>	<p>English</p>

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 24th May 2012