

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	14 th April 2012
Location	Digan's Pub, Tullamore, Co. Offaly
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Noel Clancy
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1936 Home County: Offaly
Education	Primary: CBS Tullamore, Co. Offaly. Secondary: CBS Tullamore, Co. Offaly.
Family	Siblings: 7 siblings
Club(s)	Tullamore GAA [Offaly]
Occupation	N/A
Parents' Occupation	N/A
Religion	N/A
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Tullamore Golf Club

REFERENCE NO. OY/1/15

Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Alo Kelly
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1932 Home County: Offaly
Education	Primary: St Columba's College, Tullamore, Co. Offaly. Secondary: St Columba's College, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.
Family	Siblings: 11 siblings
Club(s)	Tullamore GAA [Offaly]
Occupation	N/A
Parents' Occupation	Chef
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Fianna Fáil
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

REFERENCE NO. OY/1/15

Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Martin Fitzpatrick
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1931 Home County: Offaly
Education	Primary: Daingean NS, Co. Offaly.
Family	Siblings: 3 brothers & 2 sisters Current Family if Different: 4 children
Club(s)	Daingean GAA [Offaly]; Tullamore GAA [Offaly]
Occupation	Painter Contractor
Parents' Occupation	Painter Contractor
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Fine Gael
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

REFERENCE NO. OY/1/15

Date of Report	19 th July 2012
Period Covered	1949-2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Offaly
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, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Alcohol, Violence, Politics, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Relationship with the Association, Retirement, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy / Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Alo and Noel describe growing up in Offaly with an enthusiasm for GAA. Although they didn't have the best equipment they spent all their time immersed in playing games, as there was little else to do. Martin moved to the area and quickly became involved with the Tullamore club, enjoying some success with the team. Alo played with the county team and was part of the panel that contested the 1961 All-Ireland final. He also managed a number of clubs, spending some time in England in later years. Between them they played, coached and worked hard to bring administrative projects to fruition, such as the centre that the club opened in 1972. The three recall a time when rural life was simpler, the games were less defensive and the Association less structured. And as supporters they recall the unbridled joy that swept the county off its feet in the wake of a succession of unexpected All-Ireland triumphs in both hurling and football over a relatively short space of time.</p> <p>00:50 (Alo) Family involvement. Brother played for Tullamore at minor level. Became professional rugby player.</p> <p>01:30 (Noel) Family involvement. Father from Clare. Playing with brothers. Number of siblings he had.</p> <p>02:15 (Alo) Number of siblings he had.</p> <p>02:45 (Alo) Prominence of GAA when he was young. Small field on Clogher Road called Ballyduff before O'Connor Park</p>

	<p>was built.</p> <p>03:15 (Noel) Different sports in Tullamore.</p> <p>03:40 (Alo) Cricket team in the area in the 1940s. Where they played. Soccer club land originally called 'the showgrounds'. Some Blrr people playing cricket.</p> <p>04:50 (Noel) Men's hockey team in the area. Friend playing it.</p> <p>05:25 (Alo) What Tullamore was like growing up. Williams, Egan's, Salts factory and Malting big employers.</p> <p>06:05 (Noel) Less money around when they were young. Playing sports to pass the time.</p> <p>06:35 (Alo) Playing sports constantly.</p> <p>07:10 (Alo) Playing in national school. Scarcity of hurleys and footballs outside of school.</p> <p>*****man enters*****</p> <p>07:40 (Noel) Winning the Midland League with the CBS school in the 1950s. What that league was about.</p> <p>08:50 (Noel) National schools they went to. What local primary school was like. Dinny Walsh principal.</p> <p>09:55 (Martin) National school he went to in Daingean. Playing against Tullamore in 1944 in the Offaly championship.</p> <p>11:10 (Noel) GAA at CBS school. Brother Murphy from Kerry involved. Role he played in Offaly winning their first minor title in 1960. Martin Furlong and Liam Duffy on team.</p> <p>11:55 (Alo) O'Hare and Brother Monaghan also involved.</p> <p>12:20 (Noel) Sergeant from Curragh visiting for a drill session.</p> <p>14:40 (Noel) No hurling in CBS schools.</p> <p>15:05 (Martin) Daingean playing Tullamore in an Under-14 game.</p> <p>17:00 (Martin) Playing handball in alleys in the school. Tom Shearin playing Tom Sullivan.</p> <p>18:45 (Alo) The Ban and its implications.</p> <p>18:55 (Noel) Serving a suspension. Why he was punished.</p> <p>19:40 (Alo) Going to a game in Dalymount Park, Dublin with Kevin Heffernan and Ollie Freeney. Travelling by train. Roly</p>
--	---

REFERENCE NO. OY/1/15

	<p>Brien telling him was suspended. Others not suspended.</p> <p>21:10 (Noel) Limerick playing a game and hurler Mick Mackey caught at a hurling match. Action that was taken by county board.</p> <p>22:25 (Noel) Removal of Ban discussed at club meeting. Chairman conducting meeting and how he handled it.</p> <p>23:55 (Alo) John Clarke in favour of maintaining Ban. How others felt. Reflections on Ban.</p> <p>24:55 (Noel) Club acquiring land. Decision to build a social centre in 1970s. Centre busy on a Sunday but closed in 1999.</p> <p>26:55 (Martin) Joe Bracken chairman of club when he arrived in 1970s. Constant talk about a social centre. Being proposed to work on its development.</p> <p>28:20 (Alo) Plan for centre at O'Connor Park.</p> <p>29:00 (Alo) Raising money for the centre. Grants and fundraising. 'A pound a block'.</p> <p>29:55 (Martin) Secretary of county board John Dowling on committee. Gerry Conway, Steve Donovan also involved. Andy Gallagher chairman of club.</p> <p>32:00 (Martin) Opening of centre in 1972. Facilities there.</p> <p>34:15 (Noel) Downside of centre. Many volunteers needed.</p> <p>34:55 (Alo) Economic factors.</p> <p>35:30 (Noel) Dances held in early days of centre. Beauty contest. Model Yvonne Costello as judge. Argument over winner.</p> <p>37:15 (Martin) Moving to the area in 1957. Winning a title in 1963.</p> <p>37:35 (Alo) Split within the club in 1949. Some players going to Durrow. What dispute was about. Effect of that on him as a young player. What became of the players that left for Durrow. Ferbane and Welsh Island successful teams. Ballycumber also competitive.</p> <p>41:30 (Martin) Social centre blamed by some for lack of success.</p> <p>42:30 (Alo) Joe Cassidy, Harry Burke in charge of team in late 1950s. Trainers not so important at that time. Prominence</p>
--	--

	<p>of selectors.</p> <p>43:25 (Alo) Training they did in the 1950s.</p> <p>44:30 (Martin) Playing against Edenderry and later in Mullingar. Harry Burke in charge.</p> <p>45:10 (Alo) What training was like. Serious training did not start until the 1960s. Peter O'Reilly a manager in the 1950s. Giving pills to the team.</p> <p>47:35 (Alo) Started playing for the county in 1950. Phil O'Reilly, Dickie Conroy, Eamon Fox, Joe McFadden playing in later years. County set-up at the time. Mickey Furlong, Mick Casey, Paddy Casey, Archie McLoughlin, Archie Keenahan, Christy Carroll all good players.</p> <p>49:00 (Noel) 1954 Offaly team very talented. Mickey Brady, Peter Nolan, Kevin Scally, Paddy Fenlon all playing.</p> <p>49:20 (Alo) Complications of selector system.</p> <p>50:00 (Martin) Offaly team in early 1960s very talented. 1960 All-Ireland semi-final against Down.</p> <p>50:40 (Alo) Refereeing decisions costing Offaly teams of the 1960s.</p> <p>51:00 (Noel) Offaly inter-county success since then in football and hurling.</p> <p>51:35 (Alo) Offaly winning a hurling Tailteann Games and the team going to the USA in the early 1940s. Few returning.</p> <p>52:25 (Alo) Offaly hurling success. Beating teams from every province in All-Ireland hurling finals.</p> <p>53:05 (Noel) Huge attendance at 1961 All-Ireland final against Down. What that was like.</p> <p>53:45 (Alo) Being a substitute on that team due to injury. Brought home to play a league game in 1959. Peter Nolan and Paddy Casey in the USA but not brought back for final. Need to mark Down's James McCartan. Possible reason they were not brought back. Conor Vaughan chairman at the time.</p> <p>56:15 (Noel) Living in Dublin at time of All-Ireland final. Accommodating people night before the match. Dan Fox cooking breakfast in the kitchen.</p> <p>57:15 (Alo) People cycling to Dublin to watch Offaly playing. His brother doing so.</p>
--	---

<p>57:45 (Noel) Joy they got out of Offaly All-Ireland wins. Billy Fitzpatrick a talented Kilkenny hurler.</p> <p>59:20 (Noel) Ollie Bracken Mickey White, Barney Cromney, Niall O'Dea talented club players in 1970s. Tullamore winning minor, Under-21 and senior titles in one year. What followed that.</p> <p>01:00:25 (Alo) Membership levels at that time.</p> <p>01:01:50 (Alo) Tournaments in Mullingar and Athlone. Dicksboro visiting from Kilkenny.</p> <p>01:02:30 (Martin) Very little happening in villages. 7-a-sides in Edenderry.</p> <p>01:03:40 (Martin) Being at a dance when Tullamore were playing Edenderry in a 7-a-side. Talk about game and Oliver Byrne. Match called off.</p> <p>01:04:55 (Alo) Street leagues in Tullamore and popularity of them. Who organised the leagues.</p> <p>01:06:15 (Noel) Factory league. Williams, Egan's, Salts playing. Billy Dwyer playing for Kilkenny Council against Egan's. How the game went. Jim Fox and Dermot O'Brien going for a drink with him afterwards. Moving on to a dance. John Reynolds a local detective. Meeting him. Consequences.</p> <p>01:08:10 (Alo) Going for walks after training.</p> <p>01:08:45 (Alo) People listening to games on the radio. Westmeath-Offaly Independent a local paper. Tribune taking over. Why that was better.</p> <p>01:09:45 (Alo) Ending his inter-county career in early 1960s. Training Round Towers in London. Training a Leinster Railway Cup team.</p> <p>01:10:50 (Alo) GAA experiences in London. High levels of physicality. Possible reasons for that. Dermot O'Brien chairman of county board in London. Being asked to train Round Towers.</p> <p>01:12:50 (Alo) Training Welsh Island, Ferbane, Tullamore, Clogheen in 1970s. Approach to training. 1971 team and what they were like. Fr Gilhooley manager. Martin Furlong a stalwart of the team. Furlong and John Smith dropped by former Offaly manager Eugene McGee. McGee asking Noel if Furlong would return to Offaly. What happened. Mickey and</p>
--

	<p>Tom Furlong also good players.</p> <p>01:17:15 (Alo) Celebrations after 1971 victory. Sam Maguire going missing. Players being offered a drink any time they walked into a pub.</p> <p>01:19:00 (Alo) Realising that the team was capable of winning an All-Ireland. Scraping past Laois and Carlow before winning Leinster title. Playing Galway in the final. John Smith playing well.</p> <p>01:20:35 (Alo) Winning four All-Ireland hurling titles soon after. Impact of those wins on GAA scene in Offaly. County winning All Star awards in every position.</p> <p>01:22:05 (Alo) Tour to San Francisco and New York. Touring around Ireland.</p> <p>01:22:35 (Martin) Problems with how underage structures are organised.</p> <p>01:23:55 (Noel) Problems with closed season. Danger of losing players to rival sports.</p> <p>01:24:45 (Alo) Change in footballing style over the year. Defensive nature of modern game.</p> <p>01:25:45 (Noel) Decline in popularity of Railway Cup. Problem with that.</p> <p>01:26:55 (Noel) Going to Croke Park on St Patrick's Day for the Railway Cup as a child. Watching Cork hurling legend Christy Ring.</p> <p>01:27:30 (Alo) Club All-Ireland finals on St Patrick's Day. Possibility of having Railway Cup on same day.</p> <p>01:28:45 (Martin) Offaly's Mick Casey on a Leinster team. Paddy Molloy from Drumcullen a talented hurler who a football cup medal with Tullamore.</p> <p>01:30:00 (Alo) Relationship with county board. Andrew Gallagher and John Dowling of Tullamore on county board.</p> <p>01:30:50 (Noel) Downside of strong Tullamore representation on county board.</p> <p>01:33:50 (Noel) John Dowling second GAA President after Séamus Ó Riain. Five-year rule and its manipulation.</p> <p>01:34:25 (Martin) Dermot Healy developing hurling in Offaly. Healy a full-time GAA officer in Dublin. Work he did.</p>
--	---

REFERENCE NO. OY/1/15

	<p>01:35:30 (Martin) Skill of modern-day Kilkenny players like Tommy Walsh.</p> <p>01:36:40 (Alo) Defensive tactics creeping into hurling. Frequency of rucks in modern game. How that can be changed.</p> <p>01:38:30 (Alo) Three of them attending matches together. Match-day routine. Driving around the country together.</p> <p>01:40:50 (Ao) Tullamore relationship with non-Offaly clubs like Mullingar, Kilcock, Athlone.</p> <p>01:42:20 (Alo) Other sporting interests.</p> <p>01:43:00 (Alo) What sustains his GAA interest.</p> <p>01:43:15 (Noel) Importance of knowing the players that you watch on the field.</p> <p>01:44:15 (Alo) Irish people following English Premier League teams. League Of Ireland neglected.</p> <p>01:46:25 (Alo) Future prospects of the GAA.</p> <p>01:47:10 (Martin) Lack of interest in club league games.</p> <p>01:48:40 (Alo) Watching ladies football games. Usefulness of some of their rules. Use of 'the mark' in Australian Rules.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p>Noel:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____</p> <p>Alo:</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>

REFERENCE NO. OY/1/15

	<p>Martin:</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 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 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>Noel: Played for 16 years – Minor Hurling; Senior Hurling; Minor Football</p> <p>Alo: Played hurling and football with Tullamore for many years won 3 Offaly Senior Football Championships; won 2 Senior Hurling Championships</p> <p>Martin: Played for Daingean and Tullamore</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Noel: Tullamore: Committee member for many years. Offaly: Chairperson of Minor Board; Tullamore Delegate to County Board.</p> <p>Alo: Tullamore: Club Chairman; Offaly: Chairman of County Board; Leinster Council Member; managed Offaly Senior Football team. Manager of Leinster Football Railway Cup team; Managed London Football team and Round Towers London.</p> <p>Martin: Chairman of Tullamore GAA (1971-72; 1988-89)</p>
<p>Format</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Length of Interview: 01:51:38</p>
<p>Language</p>	<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 the right to use and make available to the public the content of this interview.

Signed: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 19th July 2012