

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Eddie Nangle
Date of Interview	19th Dec 2011
Location	Interviewee's home, near Enniscorthy
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Tom Breen
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: N/A Home County: Wexford
Education	N/A
Family	N/A
Club(s)	N/A
Occupation	N/A
Parents' Occupation	N/A
Religion	N/A
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

REFERENCE NO. WX/1/54

Date of Report	24 th August 2012
Period Covered	1950s - 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Wexford, Kilkenny, Dublin, Kerry
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Education, Religion, Emigration, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Alcohol, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Retirement, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy/ Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Tom Breen discusses growing up with the GAA at time when the social opportunities available to young people in Monageer were limited. He provides background information on Gaelic games in Monageer and charts the beginning of his involvement in school, with the club and on holidays with family in Dublin. Breen is frank in his account of the highs and lows of his hurling career with Monageer, with UCD and, for a brief spell, with the Wexford senior team. He charts the gradual slide into retirement as his priorities shifted from hurling to work and he began drinking. Breen moved from being a player to a club mentor and administrator and sheds light on issues that affect all clubs, including grounds development and initiatives that were undertaken to finance it, and the management of underage teams. In addition, Breen reveals his attitude to volunteering, to the coexistence of Gaelic games with other sports and the demands currently placed on the GAA's top players. He concludes by selecting his best and worst moments in the GAA as well as his most admired club and county teams.</p> <p>00:00:10 Interviewee is introduced as a former chairman of Monageer GAA club.</p> <p>00:00:30 Born in Monageer in 1956 and has lived there since.</p> <p>00:01:00 Family background: mentions that his family come from farming background. Mother died when he was a baby and father spent most of his time on building sites in England. Says that he was reared by his sister.</p> <p>00:01:30 Says that he is the youngest of 9 children, born of two relationships.</p> <p>00:01:40 Grew up on farm in Monageer. Hurlled with Monageer which joined with Ferns when numbers were low.</p>

<p>00:02:00 Mentioned that he attended UCD to study agriculture, eventually setting up a company in 1983.</p> <p>00:02:20 Earliest GAA memories: recalls attending 1968 All-Ireland final with an Uncle from Tipperary and 'seeing all the scores.' Mentions having vague recollections of the 1960 All-Ireland final.</p> <p>00:03:15 Beginning of involvement with the GAA: comments on the lack of alternative distractions in Monageer. Says Monageer had a Ceomhaltas branch and a GAA club and that he was involved in both.</p> <p>00:03:30 Talks about starting to hurl in Nicky Rackard leagues and the influence of Waterford hurler, John Hearne, who was married to a cousin with whom he would spend his summers in Dublin.</p> <p>00:04:30 Mentions that he actually 'hurled' on John Hearne when he was living in Dublin.</p> <p>00:04:48 Mentions that his father played football with Monageer and says that the area was a predominantly football focussed. Recalls hearing stories about football teams with humorous names in Wexford. [laughter]</p> <p>00:05:48 Says that hurling and football was played in the field in which his house is now sits.</p> <p>00:06:20 Talks about Fr. Murphy taking teams to play in Nicky Rackard league.</p> <p>[Very brief interruption to interview as door is opened on room]</p> <p>00:06:49 Mentions other family members who would have played Rackard league and that his sisters, who attended school in Tullow, played camogie.</p> <p>00:07:07 Recalls having to 'wear out' 4 pairs of camogie boots when sisters gave up the game.</p> <p>00:07:30 Talks about his social life growing revolving around sport and music.</p> <p>00:07:55 Mentions playing county minor, while club had a junior team. Talks about influence of Jimmy Stafford in bringing players together at about 16 years of age. Mentions winning junior championship, c. 1974</p> <p>00:10:15 Importance of club to local community and players sense of ownership of club.</p> <p>00:11:05 Mention club progressing to win Intermediate championship, c. 1976</p>

	<p>00:11:55 Comments on the failure of club to make grade and senior.</p> <p>00:12:20 Gives the full-title of club as Monageer-Boolavogue.</p> <p>00:12:34 Refers to disputes with Buffers Alley over use of Boulavogue in club name.</p> <p>00:12:55 Interviewer remarks on the number of double-barrelled club names in Wexford.</p> <p>00:13:15 Describes the club as now primarily a hurling club, adding that the relations between the two codes are often a cause of internal friction.</p> <p>00:14:10 Mentions that camogie and ladies football are also played by club, while racquetball and gym facilities are also available. Refers to an old handball in the area that was used by locals.</p> <p>00:14:40 Comments on the success of the club as gauged by the facilities and the level of activity. Remarks on the contribution of members, the existence of a manageable debt and the club as a 'force for good in community'.</p> <p>00:15:40 Admits to having only partial understanding of club history and earliest recollection is a team from the 1960s which broke up and a county senior final where the two teams were captained by Monageer men. Remarks that hurling was weak but kept alive by a number of individuals.</p> <p>00:17:58 Remarks that Monageer was mainly a football club and in his father's team and was probably known by another name. Recalls what he believes might be a piece of folklore. [laughter]</p> <p>00:18:35 Mentions a number of Monageer individuals who hurled with St. Aidan's. Refers also to quality hurlers who came from the Boolavogue end, but who hurled elsewhere, mostly Buffers Alley. Mentions the Dorans and reasons why Monageer went elsewhere to hurl.</p> <p>00:20:22 Discusses his playing career within club, with UCD and with county minor team and, briefly, with county senior team in late 1970s.</p> <p>00:22:30 Reflects on being on the committee for 25 years and various administrative roles he held. Recalls stepping away from the club and the fact it kept going.</p> <p>00:23:30 Discusses the development of grounds and facilities in the club and how it was funded – refers to selling a heifer, to a festival, to a FAS scheme and a car draw.</p>
--	--

	<p>00:24:40 Joe McDonagh, a college friend of the interviewee, opened the fields as President of the GAA.</p> <p>00:25:00 Refers to running a Santa village in Fr. Murphy Centre.</p> <p>00:25:08 Comments on the contribution of 'quiet people' in the club.</p> <p>00:25:25 Outlines his attitude towards volunteering in the club and his dislike of the man who 'does everything' – talks about the importance of replacing people.</p> <p>00:27:10 Mentions the difficulty in getting people to manage weak teams and tells a story of his experience with a weak minor team.</p> <p>00:28:30 Discusses sponsorship in the club. Mentions the absence of a big sponsor and the contribution of local business people, himself included.</p> <p>00:29:25 Talks about various other voluntary organisations in the area and the influence that Macra na Feirme had on him in his youth. Remarks also on the decline of the local Macra club and the reasons for it.</p> <p>00:30:35 Refers also to a Macra na Tuaithe club in his youth and to the Comhaltas and to his involvement in various committees.</p> <p>00:31:05 Refers to soccer club in Boulavogue and to increased participation in rugby. Comments on the involvement of GAA players in both and his attitude to it.</p> <p>00:31:58 Reflection on the influx of new people into Monageer and the extent of their involvement with the club.</p> <p>00:32:54 Discusses impact of economic recession and emigration on club and refers to the lifestyle choices of some young players.</p> <p>00:33:50 Remarks on other areas which have been hard hit by emigration – Bunclody.</p> <p>00:34:00 Discusses the role of women within the club. Comments on the union of camogie and GAA clubs and the relationship with Ladies football. Refers to the involvement of women in raising finance and the contribution of two female club treasurers. 'There's equality in Monageer anyway', he says. Refers to the quality of women's organisation.</p> <p>00:36:02 Reflects on clerical involvement in the GAA, recalling his childhood when Fr. Murphy in the school drove them to games. Mentions also the GAA involvement of the late Fr. Francie Stafford from Boulavogue.</p>
--	--

	<p>00:37:13 Comments on the impact of having a GAA-interested priest on the participation levels in the schools.</p> <p>00:37:44 Comments on the nature of the ongoing clerical links with club, including the absence of direct involvement.</p> <p>00:38:10 Discusses players who had an influence on him when growing up. Rrefers to Ned Brien from Monageer, winner of an All-Ireland intermediate with Wexford; John Stamp; Simon Rath, who 'minded' the interviewee when he started playing adult hurling; Jim Murphy, Martin Redmond.</p> <p>00:40:00 Reflects on his hurling life in the CBS in Enniscorthy. Mentions on the absence of strong memories and the emphasis on football at the time.</p> <p>00:40:53 Describes his daunting experience entering UCD and the role of the GAA in easing his transition, meeting people from similar background who 'thought' like him. Talks about the enjoyment he got from UCD, the teams he played on and the success they enjoyed. Includes reference to playing for Combined Universities in Croke Park.</p> <p>00:42:50 Talks about the players he played alongside at UCD: Andy Doyle from Ramsgrange in Wexford; John Callinan, Clare; Denis Byrnes of Cork; Pat White from Kildare; Jack Ryan Tipperary; Eugene Ryan.</p> <p>00:43:15 Mentions the players he played against with UCD: Iggy Clarke; Sean Silke; Sean Stack; Niall McInervey.</p> <p>00:44:40 Talks about finished college in 1978 and being a member of Wexford panel that year. Recalls 'nightmare' performance in Leinster final and the effect it had on him.</p> <p>00:45:45 Comments critically on the Wexford management's handling of players.</p> <p>00:46:43 Discusses beginning to work in 1980 and the choices he made about sport/work balance. Mentions the priority he gave to work over hurling; mentions also beginning to drink. Admits to having some regrets over choices made.</p> <p>00:48:30 Comments on the professionalism of modern players and the 'unsustainability' of it.</p> <p>00:49:30 Recalls his years hurling with Monageer and the game leaving him 'behind'. Comments on hurling into his mid 30s and the unsatisfactory conclusion to his playing career. 'I was no great advertisement for myself', he remarks frankly.</p> <p>00:51:26 Discusses his move into management, getting to county finals and taking a 'principled stand' on a selection before a big game.</p>
--	---

REFERENCE NO. WX/1/54

	<p>00:52:25 Talks about having a family, becoming involved in Bord na nOg and the quality of underage set-up in club.</p> <p>00:53:10 Mentions a number of the players that emerged from those teams, including Dermot Pender, who is recalled as the best club hurler in Monageer.</p> <p>00:54:20 Discusses the problems of maintaining player interest after 16 or 17 and the distractions that are available to them. Refers the importance of making players 'like' the game and putting the work in at underage level.</p> <p>00:55:30 Importance of proper club management, having the right people with a positive attitude. Comments on the dangers of cynicism and negativity in a club.</p> <p>00:56:05 Comments on the appeal of the Gaelic games relative to soccer and rugby and the time it takes to become a 'good hurler'. Need to make people 'want' to play it.</p> <p>00:57:45 Comments on the talent of players in Wexford and the failure to properly 'nurture' it. Contrasts Wexford with Kilkenny.</p> <p>00:58:35 Best Memory of the GAA: mentions the first junior medal won with Monageer as a teenager.</p> <p>59:56 Best club team: Considers existing Oulart team to be the best Wexford team he has seen and explains why.</p> <p>01:00:45 Best county team: comments on the qualities of the existing Kilkenny team and their management.</p> <p>01:01:25 Discusses the Kerry team of the 1970s and the beginning of professionalism. Refers to 'middling' players being mixed with great ones.</p> <p>01:02:20 Talks again about the existing Kilkenny team.</p> <p>01:02:48 GAA hero: mentions the Doran brothers, Tony and Colm, and 'unsung heroes'.</p> <p>01:04:00 Discusses potential future involvement in the GAA.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p><input 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 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>N/A</p>
<p>Record as an</p>	

REFERENCE NO. WX/1/54

Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	N/A
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 01:04:42
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: Eddie Nangle

Date: 24th August 2012