

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Arlene Crampsie
Date of Interview	31 st Aug 2010
Location	Interviewee's home, near Killinkere, Co. Cavan
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	John Sheridan (wife Rene is also present at times during the interview)
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1928 Home County: Cavan
Education	Primary: Killinkere NS, Co. Cavan Secondary: Oldcastle Vocational School / Gilsenan Endowed School, Co. Cavan
Family	Siblings: 4 brothers & 4 sisters Current Family if Different: Married to Rene with 2 sons and 1 daughter
Club(s)	Killinkere [Cavan]; Kickhams [Dublin]
Occupation	McCairns Motors Assembly Worker
Parents' Occupation	Farmer, Shopkeeper, Postmaster [Father]; Housewife, Dressmaker [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Fine Gael
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Cavan VEC, Cuspoir

REFERENCE NO. CN/1/13

Date of Report	5 th July 2012
Period Covered	1920s – 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Cavan, Dublin, Wicklow, Americas, USA, Great Britain, England
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Fundraising, Material Culture, Education, Religion, Emigration, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Identity, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Outsider's Perspectives, Alcohol, Violence, Bribery, Politics, Northern Ireland, The Troubles, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Retirement, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy / Economics
Interview Summary	<p>John discusses his involvement in the GAA over the years. He describes what it was like growing up in Killinkere and the role of the GAA in the area. He talks about the local facilities for football and playing for Bailieborough because of low numbers in Killinkere. John discusses the purchasing of the club's pitch in the 1970s and describes the type of characters in the club during that time. He recalls moving to Dublin to work when he was a teenager and what that was like. He talks about playing for Kickhams and Dublin, winning a junior All-Ireland for the latter. John discusses moving back to Cavan to play football and winning an All-Ireland with them in 1952. He recalls various stories about the people he played with and what Cavan football was like during that period. He discusses various issues in regards to the GAA such as the Troubles, the Second world War, politics and the ban. John talks about his career as a referee, recalling various stories such as how he never used a notebook to mark scores. John discusses the history of his club and the importance of the GAA in the community. Towards the end of the interview John reflects over his time in the GAA, citing the importance of people like Hughie Reilly and Mick Higgins.</p> <p>00:00 Introduction</p> <p>00:16 John talks about his early life and school days. 9 brothers and sisters in the family. Mentions Ms Galligan and</p>

	<p>Andrew Clarke.</p> <p>01:22 Discusses the role of the GAA in school. Playing in a meadow during lunch. No training in that time.</p> <p>02:56 Talks about the facilities in the area, travelled everywhere on bicycles.</p> <p>03:57 Travelling to matches on bicycles. Starting football at minor age. Playing with Bailieborough, not enough players in the Killinkere club.</p> <p>05:10 Talks about playing on Martin Comey's field. Moving to John Clarke's field.</p> <p>06:10 Describes the crowds who went to the matches. People tormented at mass for not going to the matches. Talks about how there was no pub in Killinkere.</p> <p>07:20 Talks about the local postman when he was younger.</p> <p>08:25 Recalls going to school in Oldcastle, two hours away, and meeting other cyclists on the way. Making a deal with the postman about keeping letters from school from his father.</p> <p>10:23 Discusses his family's involvement. Father was involved in the club. Holding meetings in a shop. Recalls a story about letting cows escape from John Clarke's field. Mentions Lal Brady, Brendan Ryan</p> <p>12:11 Talks about playing football when he was 14. Winning the county final in 1956.</p> <p>12:55 Discusses the club buying land from the Protestant church and a story behind this. Mentions the Protestant minister McAllister, Patsy Reilly, Father Byrnes, Gareth O'Reilly.</p> <p>20:20 Talks about how the club raised the money to purchase the field. Selling tickets. Mentions his brother Edward Sheridan, Aidan Cullen, Patsy McDermott, Brian Carty.</p> <p>23:00 Describes the type of characters in the club when he was young. Mentions Brendan Ryan, Frank McBrearty, Aidan Cullen.</p> <p>23:41 Talks about his father.</p> <p>25:34 Recalls his playing career. Playing with Bailieborough minors when he was fifteen and then with Killinkere.</p> <p>25:59 Talks about leaving school when he was 13 and moving to Dublin. Collecting rabbits in Wicklow. Stopping in</p>
--	--

	<p>Rathdrum and going to Glendalough.</p> <p>27:19 Discusses playing football with the Kickhams club when he was working in Dublin. Talks about his Aunt. Going to Guiney's on Gardiner Street. Mentions Jimmy Hannon, Anne Cleary</p> <p>30:00 Describes how Kickhams organised a competition and Dennis Guiney put up the cup and organised his four shops to play each other. Being picked out of a hat to choose what team you were on. Playing in Croke Park.</p> <p>34:00 Recalls going to Croke Park with his uncle. Mentions Lady Sexton and a man called Donovan who lived in Mountjoy Square. Children playing on the pitch.</p> <p>35:25 Talks about playing with Kickhams until they changed to Na Fianna. Explains why he stopped playing for them.</p> <p>37:23 Discusses winning a junior All-Ireland with Dublin. Travelling to Ballina in Mayo by bus. Talks about the day. Mentions Charlie Smith.</p> <p>39:24 Talks about playing with Cavan and Hughie Reilly, the county secretary. Mentions Jim McDonnell.</p> <p>41:34 Recalls being told that Hughie had transferred him from Dublin to Cavan.</p> <p>43:16 Describes the differences between playing for Dublin and Cavan. Mentions Dessie 'Snitchy' Ferguson.</p> <p>44:00 Discusses who played for Cavan with him. Mentions Jim McCabe, Phil 'The Gunner' Brady, Seamus Morris, Liam and Dessie Maguire, Hardy, Pat Carlin, Higgins, Donohoe, Stafford, Johnny Cusack, Tony Tighe, Wilson.</p> <p>45:35 Recalls a story about John Joe O'Reilly and Tyrone's Iggy Jones.</p> <p>46:25 Talks about winning the All-Ireland for Cavan in 1952. Tells a story about Mick Higgins. Mentions Doctor Carroll.</p> <p>49:38 Recalls having to give a bottle of medicine to Mick Higgins during the All-Ireland final. Mentions Hughie Reilly and Deignan taking his jersey.</p> <p>53:34 Talks about this brother Terry playing in the 1947 All-Ireland final in the Polo Grounds in New York. Dillon from Kerry. Mentions Mick Higgins, Phil 'The Gunner' Brady, Peter Donohoe.</p>
--	---

	<p>55:00 Discusses playing with John Joe O'Reilly. Talks about the Cavan team during this period.</p> <p>57:07 Recalls collective training with Cavan.</p> <p>57:40 Talks about the differences in football when he was playing. Mentions Iggy Jones, Seamus Morris.</p> <p>58:37 Recalls the players he marked. Mentions Mick Flanagan.</p> <p>59:07 Talks about the celebrations after the 1952 final. Stopping in Barry's hotel.</p> <p>59:40 ***Rene Sheridan joins the interview***</p> <p>59:40 (Rene and John) Talks about the club purchasing the pitch in the 1970s.</p> <p>01:00:22 (Rene) Recalls when John played for Dublin in the late 1940s and 1950s. Mentions a man from Knocknagoshel who owned Guiney's. Kickhams were divided between the four shops.</p> <p>01:05:10 Rene and John talk amongst themselves</p> <p>01:05:59 (John) Tells a story about Doctor Carroll and Mick Higgins. Being in Barry's Hotel. Bringing the Sam Maguire into the dressing room after it was left on the pitch.</p> <p>01:10:44 Talks about the places they stopped on the journey home, Whitegate, Bailieborough, Virginia, Cavan town.</p> <p>01:11:38 Recalls how the medals were presented. Playing Offaly in the league in Tullamore. Mentions Paddy Reilly.</p> <p>01:13:00 Talks about going to play a match in England. Cavan people coming to watch. Having a dance that night.</p> <p>01:15:03 Retiring from the Cavan team. Mentions Paddy Carroll, Charlie and Brain Gallagher, Liam and Dessie Maguire, Liam Hetheron, Brian Reilly, Jim McCabe, Seamus Morris.</p> <p>01:16:20 Talks about John Joe Reilly retiring. Visiting him in the hospital before he died Mentions 'Big Tom' Reilly.</p> <p>01:19:43 Talks about PJ Duke and how he died young. Mentions Charlie Gallagher. Driving his car.</p>
--	---

	<p>01:22:30 Discusses the workers at McCairns Motors.</p> <p>01:23:36 Describes being the driver for the team and how he didn't drink. No training at that time.</p> <p>01:26:12 Talks about the different places they travelled with the Cavan team, Armagh, Down, Donegal, Derry.</p> <p>01:26:56 Describes the excitement in finals.</p> <p>01:27:25 Recalls a story about Mick Higgins, Paul Fitzsimons and Tony Tighe waking them up at 2am one morning 10 days before the All-Ireland. Keeping him in the room for two days trying to sober him up.</p> <p>01:32:30 Describes how he was the only one on the Cavan team who didn't drink. Mentions Hughie Reilly.</p> <p>01:34:00 Discusses the issue of politics in the GAA, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael.</p> <p>01:35:05 Talks about receiving money for collective training.</p> <p>01:35:46 Returning to work after winning the All-Ireland in 1952.</p> <p>01:36:26 Talks about playing for the club after finishing with Cavan. Recalls a match in Stradone. Mentions a Father Paddy. Finishing playing, having to rent a car every weekend.</p> <p>01:38:08 Discusses how he started refereeing. Being asked before the start of a match. Refereeing matches in the following years. Becoming known as 'leave it down'.</p> <p>01:42:53 Recalls refereeing a match between Castlerahan and Virginia and a fight between two players.</p> <p>01:44:28 Talks about refereeing his own brother Mickey. No abuse against referees.</p> <p>01:45:28 Recalls people trying to change the score after the match. Never took scores down on paper, all in his head.</p> <p>01:48:23 Talks about his involvement in the county board. Meetings held in the courthouse. Between 45 and 55 people attended on average. Mentions Frank Reilly cycling.</p> <p>01:50:13 Recalls a story about a match he was linesman for. Mentions Mick Higgins. Talks about Bailieborough playing against Cavan Slashers. Talks about the row after the match</p> <p>01:54:54 Notes how many players played illegally when he was younger. Talks about a match between Shercock and</p>
--	---

	<p>Killinkere in Bailieborough. A postman bringing players in his car to play. Mentions Jimmy Smith.</p> <p>01:57:10 Discusses the ban on foreign games. Mostly impacted in the North.</p> <p>02:00:27 Talks about the impact of the Second World War on the GAA in Cavan. Mentions Sinn Fein.</p> <p>02:02:36 Discusses some bitterness between people from the North and South.</p> <p>02:02:54 Talks about travelling to matches during the Second World War. Having to take a special bus.</p> <p>02:03:45 Describes the type of development of the club's grounds after the purchase in the 1970s. Holding card games for fundraising. Selling tickets in Virginia and Bailieborough. Mentions the Treasurer, his brother Edward.</p> <p>02:05:02 Discusses the opening of the pitch. Talks about the house on the land.</p> <p>02:06:53 Describes the amount of people that helped the club.</p> <p>02:07:35 Gives his opinion on hurling.</p> <p>02:08:06 Talks about the club before he was born and the type of men then. Mentions his father, Lal Brady, Pat Kelly, Jim Smith who was the first man to win an All-Ireland final.</p> <p>02:09:45 Describes his best memories of the GAA. Playing football and winning the All-Ireland.</p> <p>02:10:18 Chooses the Cavan team of the late 1940s as his GAA heroes with players like Pat Clarke, Jimmy and Terry Roe, John Cooney.</p> <p>02:11:09 Talks about the club's colours and jerseys. Green and gold now but it was red before.</p> <p>02:12:11 Describes the strangest place he played or refereed a match. Recalls the time he paid into Breffni Park and being asked by Hughie Reilly to referee.</p> <p>02:13:08 Discusses his biggest disappointment in the GAA. Believes it has been taken over by managers.</p> <p>02:13:48 Describes the type of changes in the GAA over the years. The improvements in Hill 16. Mentions Peter Quinn, Phil Brady.</p>
--	--

REFERENCE NO. CN/1/13

	<p>02:14:30 Talks about the importance of Hughie Reilly for the GAA and the respect he has for him. Mentions Tom Reilly.</p> <p>02:16:22 Gives his opinion on the term volunteer. Talks about the people who used to own the grounds. Opinion on politics/</p> <p>02:18:29 Discusses the role of the GAA in his life and buying the pitch for the club. Mentions Father Byrnes.</p> <p>02:20:30 Talks about buying Killinkere's GAA grounds. Issues with the VEC school and local Protestants in Arvagh. Mentions Church of Ireland Minister, Ted Paxton, Gareth Reilly from Ballyconnell, Dancey, Clark and Bower.</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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" 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>Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p>Played from age of 16 to around 34. Won 1 All-Ireland 1952, one Leinster junior championship with Dublin (pre-1952); a few Ulster titles and 1 junior championship with the club in 1956.</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>John was involved in administration from 1955 to 1970 during which time he was a delegate to the county board, club chairman and ticket seller.</p>
<p>Format</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Length of Interview: 02:24:23</p>
<p>Language</p>	<p>English</p>

REFERENCE NO. CN/1/13

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: _____Arlene Crampsie_____

Date: _____05/07/12_____