

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	10 th Aug 2011
Location	Joe's home, near Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Joe Dunphy
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1938 Home County: Kilkenny
Education	Primary: Thomastown NS, Co. Kilkenny Secondary: De la Salle, Waterford Third Level: St Patrick's College, Drumcondra
Family	Siblings: N/A Current Family if Different: 3 daughters & 2 sons
Club(s)	Thomastown GAA [Kilkenny]; Erins Hopes [Dublin]; St Patrick's GAA Club [Kilkenny]; Ballyhale Shamrocks [Kilkenny]
Occupation	National School Principal
Parents' Occupation	Game Keeper in Mount Juliet and Flour Mill worker in Thomastown [Father]; Priest's Housekeeper/Cook [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Labour Party
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Thomastown Anglers Club; Muintir na Tíre; Thomastown Community River Trust; Table-tennis club, Thomastown and Knocktopher.

REFERENCE NO. KK/1/24

Date of Report	21 st Aug 2012
Period Covered	1700 - 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Kilkenny
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Material Culture, Education, Religion, Media, Emigration, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Identity, Rivalries, Irish Language, Culture, Scór, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Alcohol, Politics, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Retirement, Food and Drink, Socialising, Relationships, Economy/ Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Joe remembers the many years he spent contributing to the betterment of Kilkenny hurling through his deep involvement with the GAA. Originally from Thomastown, he played hurling with the local club growing up and later attended De La Salle school in Waterford as a boarder. He maintained his interest in hurling there, as he did at St Pat's teacher training college in Drumcondra, Dublin. After returning to Kilkenny he began teaching in Ballyhale, and was soon coaching the school hurling team. Many of the inter-county stars of the future came under Joe's tutelage, and in later years he was coaching the same players as they enjoyed unprecedented success with Ballyhale Shamrocks. He also worked in different administrative positions - notably as an Irish officer - and composed books of poetry in which he found expression for the grá that he and many others felt for Gaelic games. With his extensive knowledge of names, familial connections, dates and places, Joe is a fountain of knowledge when it comes to Kilkenny GAA. And through his years of coaching work he left an indelible mark on some of the greatest and most successful inter-county hurlers that Ireland has ever witnessed.</p> <p>00:15 Born in 1938 in Thomastown. Father's family in Thomastown since 1700s. Mother's family from Bennisbridge. Spent some time at teacher training college in Drumcondra, Dublin and two years teaching in Ballyriley. Moved to Ballyhale, teaching at Knocktopher school and then in</p>

	<p>Ballyhale village. Remained living in Thomastown.</p> <p>01:35 Thomastown a market town when he was growing up. Main industries the creamery, McCalmounts and Pilsfers flour mills. Father worked at the mills. Also worked as a gamekeeper in Mount Juliet. Playing in Grennan hurling field. Pod Fanning a friend of his. Drinking alcohol frequently not common at the time. Getting to know senior players when he was a boy. People cycling to games. Being paid to mind people's bicycles during games.</p> <p>05:05 Thomastown winning a senior championship in 1946. Peter Prendergast on the team. Dan Kennedy captain. Pat Norton training them near his house. Kids running after them. Running out of breath. Jimmy Kelly of Carrickshock a hero of his. Jim Langton, Paddy Grace others he admired.</p> <p>06:30 Cricket a popular sport in his family. His uncle Neddy a hurling goalkeeper with Stoneyford. His cricket involvement hampering chances with Kilkenny team due to the Ban. Father encouraging him to hurl. Taking his father to Croke Park. Peadar Laffan, a principal in Thomastown, instilling a love of hurling in him. Playing on school team in Cumann na mBunscol. Ollie Walsh their captain in 1951. Winning championships. Winning seven-in-a-row. Mr Laffan dying. Playing hurling at school. Going to training.</p> <p>09:55 Trying to emulate Mr Laffan when he became a teacher. What Mr Laffan was like.</p> <p>10:45 Going to boarding school in De La Salle, Waterford.</p> <p>11:00 Brendan O'Sullivan promoting hurling in Thomastown.</p> <p>11:30 What De La Salle was like. Hurling and football traditions. Mount Sion, Thurles CBS - who featured Jimmy Doyle - rivals of theirs. No All-Ireland schools hurling championship at the time. Provincial and inter-provincial competitions. St Kieran's College strong. County secretary Ned Quinn playing.</p> <p>13:30 Mostly Kilkenny players on De La Salle team. Martin Corrigan of Clara a talented player. Winning the Hackett Cup final. Senator Mick Lannigan playing. Flynn's from Ferrybank on team. Fr Paul Fitzgerald also playing. Billy Moroney from Tipperary on the team.</p> <p>14:35 Daily routine at the boarding school. Feeling homesick. Food they got. Attending St Pat's of Drumcondra and what that was like. Strict rules. Hurling there. Frank Custey of Ennis in charge of the team. Willie O'Grady a year ahead of</p>
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	<p>him. Mattie McDonagh of Galway studied there. Jack Davin another Kilkenny man in his year. Sean Lawlor, Jim Cullinane, Bob Walsh, Joe Devoy past students. Playing with Seán Buckley, Nicky Bowe and Nicky Grace.</p> <p>19:00 Few opportunities to visit home when at De La Salle. Less games held. Not so much emphasis on fitness.</p> <p>20:05 Old men at Grennagh talking about hamstring injuries to modern players. Heaslip's shop mentioned.</p> <p>20:50 Br Raymond from Cork involved in coaching De La Salle team. What he learned from him. Methodology. Brother Sylvester training Hackett Cup team. Paul Fitzgerald involved. Joe Walsh training their minor team. Success they had.</p> <p>22:35 Absorbing training methods learned in De La Salle. Taking Ballyragget school to a county final. Going to Knocktopher school in 1962 and getting involved with the team. Michael Hoyne the captain. Reaching finals. Coming up against Ballyragget in a final. Michael, Ger and Kevin Fennelly playing, as was Richie Reid. Their descendants going on to represent Kilkenny.</p> <p>24:45 Training Thomastown Under-16s in 1963. Winning finals. Player's cigarette company offering prizes. Tommy Hayes the trainer and he the manager. Going to Croke Park. Brendan O'Sullivan on that Under-16 team.</p> <p>26:05 Playing for Thomastown. Ollie Walsh their captain. His talent. What he was like as a person. Cha Whelan and Joe Prendergast former Kilkenny players who died within a short time of each other. Disappointment when Ollie Walsh retired from playing. Playing against Eddie Kerr in games. Marking Davey Dwyer. Inistioge having a talented school.</p> <p>31:20 Ger Fennelly breaking into the Kilkenny team from the school team. Liam Fennelly, Henry Shefflin, Cha Fitzpatrick and Michael Fennelly all past pupils who picked up Liam MacCarthy.</p> <p>33:00 Henry Shefflin's hurling abilities.</p> <p>33:40 Playing with people from different counties at St Pat's Drumcondra. Kilkenny players having their own style. Physicality. Wexford team of 1950s also physical.</p> <p>35:20 His development as a coach. Putting children in for scholarships. Sense of duty when it came to coaching. All-Ireland winning Ballyhale Shamrocks players crediting him for his influence on their hurling careers. How that made him feel.</p>
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	<p>Some of them captaining Kilkenny. Frank Houlihan and Seán Fennelly lifting league cups. Ger and Kevin Fennelly. winning Under-21 All-Irelands. Richie Reid winning a host of All-Ireland medals and later playing for Dublin. Fennelly's father, Kevin, helping him with coaching.</p> <p>39:45 Training Ballyhale Shamrocks seniors with Seán Fennelly and Paul Phelan when he retired. Respect between himself and the players. Aidan Cummins winning All-Irelands in 2000 and 2002. Shamrocks relegated to intermediate and then getting promoted. Celebrating with the players. Talking to Aidan Cummins and Henry Shefflin.</p> <p>41:25 Enjoying playing hurling. Skills he had.</p> <p>42:10 Being Irish officer with the county board. Work he did there. Tommy Waldron his predecessor. Seán Breathnach his successor. Nickey Brennan chairman of county board. Working with him. Involvement with Scór. Resigning from the post. Cumann na mBunscol involvement and how he enjoyed that. Involved with Paul and Brendan O'Sullivan and John Knox. Not meeting them as much as he got older.</p> <p>44:50 Tom Duggan of Carrickshock and playing against his school side. Healthy rivalry. Podge Butler refereeing a game between the teams. Banter with Duggan on the sideline. Similarities between the two. Work Tom Duggan does within the GAA.</p> <p>46:40 Son, Dermot, chairman of Cumann na mBunscol. Peadar O'Neill of Ballyhale also chairman. His son Páraic a principal at St John's school in Kilkenny and also filling that role. Son, Dermot going to school in Ballyhale.</p> <p>47:50 Féile na nGael in Kilkenny in 1978 , 1979 and 2006. Involvement in that. Micheál Ó Muircheartaigh visiting. Taking him to PILTOWN to interview John T Power, a Kilkenny goalkeeper in 1909. Schools in Carlow competing. Future GAA President Liam O'Neill involved. Visiting Clara school with Willie O'Connor and John Power. Mickey Ling donating vehicles for travelling around. Ó Muircheartaigh interacting with the children.</p> <p>51:30 His approach to coaching. Denis Heaslip, the Goreys and David Rice playing for Knocktopher during a game. Tommy Hyne cheering from the sidelines. Getting through to the children in a different way to in the classroom. Coaching philosophy. Henry Shefflin's attributes. Cha Fitzpatrick's skills. Jim Blanchfield marvelling at some of their skills. Shefflin's modesty. Winning the Lisdowney Sevens six times.</p>
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	<p>Beating Ballingarry of Tipperary and how Shefflin played. Beating Dicksboro on the way and Tommy O'Brien cheering from the sidelines. A very young TJ Reid and his grandfather Paddy arriving in the dressing-room. TJ's mother bringing him into junior infants. What TJ had said to his mother.</p> <p>58:30 Showing Cha Fitzpatrick how to take frees. What his father Ned told him afterwards.</p> <p>59:15 Strength of Ballyhale Shamrocks teams through the years. Kevin Fennelly and Paddy Reid's involvement. Houlihans, Phelans, Elwards, Costellos, Morans, Walshs, Fitzpatricks, Masons all involved.</p> <p>01:00:50 Having a panel of over 30. Paul Kinsella not having enough medals when they won. Why he believed in large panels.</p> <p>01:01:50 Ballyhale and Knocktopher coming together in 1972. Possible reason for that. School teams enjoying success in those years. Ollie Harrington a goalkeeper with Ballyhale. Maurice Mason a centre-back who was harshly sent away from the school team. Michael Ger and Kevin Fennelly, Richard Reid, Lee Melward, Tommy Hoyne, Seán Treacy, Pat Dwyer, the Murphys of Lukeswell, Seán and Tomás Reid all involved.</p> <p>01:04:25 1969/1970 double-winning team. Frank Houlihan, Michael Kelly, Liam Fennelly, Seán Fennelly, Wattie Whelan playing. Wattie Whelan an unsung hero. His father Jack a Carrickshock player.</p> <p>01:05:15 Role of women. Support they gave. May Shefflin assisting with fundraising. Her sons Tommy and Henry playing at senior level. Her son John and Paul playing with Kilkenny at underage level. Four Fennellys in one All-Ireland final - Ger, Kevin, Liam and Seán. Other brother Michael playing for Ballyhale Shamrocks. Eoin and TJ Reid, Mark Aylward, Keith Nolan all playing. Cha Fitzpatrick shining in Lisdowney Sevens, as did Eamon Walsh. Cha winning a skills competition at Féile.</p> <p>01:08:35 How hurling helps build character. Henry Shefflin as a role model. Michael Fennelly's modesty after winning a man of the match award. Willie O'Connor and John Power visiting schools. DJ Carey attending a kids camp in Inistioge. His obliging nature. Players giving something back to the Association. Henry Shefflin's influence on Ballyhale Shamrocks team. Shefflin's brother Tommy involved with Glenmore. Other brother John involved with Ballyhale with</p>
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	<p>Maurice Elward. Seán Reid involved in various guises. Michael Hyne working as treasurer.</p> <p>01:14:10 Dick Moran, Liam Fennelly, Kevin Fennelly, Frank Houlihan, Michael all on school teams in their day.</p> <p>01:15:30 Boys and girls playing together at school. Maureen Elward, Emily Darmody playing on a team with the boys. Titles Emily won. Frances Houlihan playing in a county final with Ethel-Anne Maloney. Frances substituted for a future inter-county star. Imelda Maloney training the girls. His son, Dermot, training camogie team in Urlingford.</p> <p>01:17:45 Getting involved again after heart surgery in 1990. Success he enjoyed with a special crop of players. What the players were like in the classroom. Being stopped by a Garda for speeding. What the players said after they had read about it in the paper.</p> <p>01:20:30 Ballyhale Golf Society and playing with them. Ger and Fennelly also playing. Mick Fennelly a valued club member and versatile hurler. Mick marking his cousin and future Kilkenny manager Brian Cody in a game. How they are related.</p> <p>01:22:15 Amalgamation of the clubs coming at the right time. Impact that it had. Passing out Bennettsbridge in honours list. Chasing Tullaroan. Sense of satisfaction that brings. Watching players triumph in Croke Park for club and county.</p> <p>01:24:55 Writing poetry books. DJ Carey and Henry Shefflin launching them. Willie O'Connor commenting on that.</p> <p>01:25:35 Being in Mullinavat for a camp. Willie O'Dwyer one of the young players. Bobby Jackman commenting on one of the Power children. Willie O'Connor with his son Dermot's group of children. Child talking to Willie O'Connor and what he said back to him.</p> <p>01:27:20 Ballyhale playing Carrickshock in a final. Eight of the players starting in an All-Ireland final for Kilkenny in 2010 - Henry Shefflin, Mick Fennelly, Cha Fitzpatrick, TJ Reid, Richie Power, John Tennyson, John Dalton and Michael Rice. Rivalry with Carrickshock. Tom Duggan talking to an old man after Carrickshock beat Ballyhale. What was said.</p> <p>01:29:10 Hurling involvement assisting with integration into the community. Meeting parents in a social context. Sons playing with Thomastown. Being well-known in Ballyhale.</p> <p>01:31:40 Players emigrating and playing in Australia and the</p>
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	<p>United States. Trying to help players academically.</p> <p>01:34:35 Cumann na mBunscol set up in Kilkenny in 1939. Compiling a book on its history in time for 1989. Work that that involved. Brendan O’Sullivan, John Knox and Paul Kinsella also working on the project. Working out of Kilkenny People offices. Waiting for first batch of books to be delivered and what that was like. Mick Moore, Fred Randle contributing to the book. Writing a book about Fred. Memories of him.</p> <p>01:38:25 Changes in Cumann na mBunscol over the years. Paul Kinsella secretary. Making sure schools got to participate in enough games. Changing structures.</p> <p>01:40:45 People accusing them of being traitors because they were in favour of abolishing the Ban to facilitate school players. Response to those accusations. Watching soccer matches in Waterford but not allowed wear school ties or badges to them. Reason for that. Divisive nature of issue of abolishing the Ban. Tommy O’Brien persuading him to return after walking out of a meeting. Jim Fennelly Cumann na mBunscol secretary. Tomás O’Dowd chairman.</p> <p>01:44:05 School final between Ballyhale and Thomastown in 2010. Talent on show. His son John cheering for Thomastown. Being a Thomastown school player in his early days. Ballyhale people not trusting him initially as a result.</p> <p>01:45:30 Development squads and the benefits of them. Not getting involved and reason for that. Meeting Fr Liam Barron at a development squad match. Cuman na mBunscol set-up giving them an advantage over other counties. Good players sometimes not included in development squads. Consequences of that. Getting a trial for Kilkenny minors and how that worked out. Terry Driscoll picked instead of him. Scoring goals on Pa Dillon in the trial.</p> <p>01:51:00 Work as Oifgeach na Gaeilge. Sending children on scholarships to Ring. Feeling more comfortable talking in Irish rather than English. Folly in forcing Irish on people in schools. Teaching on cursaí samhraidh in Ring. His children’s grá for Irish. Cha Fitzpatrick training children as Gaeilge. His academic talents. Cha opting for teaching as a career, as did many players. Going to Glenmore school and encountering Liam Grant and his sister, both teachers. Emily Dermody and Geraldine Walsh teachers, as is Eleanor Walsh. Willie Coogan and John Darmody teaching in Dublin and training the Dublin minors that once beat Kilkenny. Willie and John also training a Dublin school team.</p>
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	<p>01:58:30 What he did with the money from his poetry books. Amount of money earned. Poems he wrote. Teaching Irish poetry in Ring. Man challenging him to write a poem about Tipperary hurler Eoin Kelly. How it worked out. Reads poem.</p> <p>02:03:15 Éilis Hayes from Waterford a hurling enthusiast who was in the poetry group. Éilis passing away. Memories of her.</p> <p>02:04:10 Congress held in Kilkenny. Barry Hickey the county board treasurer asking him to write a poem for the banquet menu. Reads poem. Local businesses helping him publish poetry books.</p> <p>02:08:20 Reads a poem about Kilkenny hurler Tommy Walsh.</p> <p>02:08:40 Tom Walsh who lost his eye in the 1967 final. Hurling with him and Ollie.</p> <p>02:09:15 People asking him his opinions on all things hurling. Doing interviews with Seán Bán Breathnach of TG4 ahead of All-Ireland finals. Hurling with his wife Bríd in Ring.</p> <p>02:11:05 Kilkenny's modern-day success. 12 of 14 All-Ireland finals. Inevitability of decline. Watching Kilkenny win the three-in-a-row and thinking of Fred Randle.</p> <p>02:13:10 Reasons he likes hurling. Following Manchester United since 1948 when Jackie Carey was captain. How hurling compares with soccer. Non-segregation of GAA fans at games. Meeting people at games. Dedication of players.</p> <p>02:16:35 His son's friend starting a club in St Louis in the United States.</p> <p>02:17:10 Missing his involvement with the school teams after retirement. Keeping his distance and reason for that.</p> <p>02:21:30 Faith in 2011 Kilkenny hurlers. Henry Shefflin sorely missed in 2010 final against Tipperary. Shefflin's potential as a manager.</p> <p>02:23:10 Ballyhale playing Toomevara in Portlaoise. Talking to Henry Shefflin after the game about a particular play he had made.</p> <p>02:24:40 Gratitude he owes to the players and their families. Working with Thomastown Under-16s and minors. Mass held for him in Ballyhale when he retired. Feeling emotional. Passion for teaching.</p> <p>02:29:00 Things he dislikes about the GAA. Poor refereeing standards. How they could be improved. Technology.</p>
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	Unglamorous work put in by inter-county players. Optimism for the future.
Involvement in GAA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" 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): _____
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	Played hurling with Thomastown from U12 level up until he was 24 yrs old. Played Munster colleges hurling and football with De la Salle and won two Roinn A schools competitions in 1951 & 52. Played junior hurling with Erins Hopes in Dublin.
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	Member of Thomastown GAA committee for many years. Served as Irish Language officer on Kilkenny County Board, 1988-2000; Member of Ballyhale Shamrocks GAA committee at various stages; selector with Ballyhale Shamrocks, 2001-2003; Chairman of Cumann na mBunscoil 5 times.
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 02:32:35
Language	English

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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: 21st August 2012