

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Jimmy Smyth
Date of Interview	19/12/2011
Location	N/A
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Paul Kelly
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1960 Home County: Armagh
Education	Primary: Silverwood Primary School, Lurgan Secondary: St. Pat's College, Armagh Third Level: U.U.J. Belfast
Family	Siblings: 2 Sisters
Club(s)	Clan na Gael [Armagh]
Occupation	N/A
Parents' Occupation	Company director [Father]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Lurgan Golf Club

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Date of Report	29 th August 2012
Period Covered	1970-2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Armagh
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Officials, Administration, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Education, Religion, Media, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Professionalism, Relationships, Economy / Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Paul Kelly's GAA experience is wide-ranging, encompassing college, club and county; hurling and football; and county and national administration. The interview begins with Kelly recalling his early memories of Gaelic games in primary school and he charts the progression of his interest through secondary school at St. Patrick's Armagh in the 1970s, where there was a major emphasis on the pursuit of success in Rannafast and MacRory Cup competitions. Kelly reflects on his somewhat fraught involvement with the Armagh Minors and talks also about his subsequent involvement with the county under 21s. Kelly comments on the coaches/mentors who influenced him and stresses the importance of the sensitive treatment of underage players. His adult career, which includes the winning of senior county titles with Clan na Gael, is also covered.</p> <p>In addition to his involvement as a player, Kelly has been highly influential in the development of coaching structures in Armagh since the early 2000s and he discusses in detail his work as a Coaching Officer with the County Board, fleshing out the structures, methods and innovations that were introduced. The approach he brought to football he also attempted to bring to hurling in Armagh and he reflects on the steps taken to raise both the profile and standard of the game in an overwhelmingly football county. Towards the end of the interview addresses his experiences in fundraising for the GAA in Armagh, as well as his involvement with various national initiatives with Croke Park, in particular player welfare.</p> <p>00:00:00 Jimmy Smyth introduces Paul Kelly school,a man with a 'chequered career' in the GAA encompassing club, university, football and hurling coaching, club and county</p>

	<p>administration.</p> <p>00:00:30 First contact with the GAA at primary school at Silverwood Primary school, encouraged by Eddie McLoughlin, a famous Armagh and Railway Cup player. Contrasts the size of the Silverwood school with neighbouring schools.</p> <p>01:25 Progressing to St. Pat's Armagh and the influence of Noel McClurg from Fermanagh – 'the biggest influence I ever had'. Mentions the quality of players in St. Pat's at the time, which included a number from Derry and Tyrone.</p> <p>00:02:40 Focus on the major competitions Corn a nÓg, Rannafast and MacRory Cups. McClurg's drive to win a MacRory.</p> <p>00:03:00 Recalls running up large hills as a first year in 1971 in preparation for MacRory cup in 1978.</p> <p>00:03:35 Says that McClurg was first to introduce 'proper coaching' – emphasis on practicing skills, the punt kick, the tackle etc.</p> <p>00:04:20 Mentions the quality of basketball players among that GAA team in St. Pat's. Mentions the gap in 'esteem' between winning schools competitions in basketball and winning them in Gaelic football.</p> <p>00:05:05 Recalls the disappointment of being beaten in Rannafast and MacRory cup finals. Refers to advice from teacher after MacRory cup loss.</p> <p>00:06:30 Making the Armagh Minor team and having 'issues' with manager, Frank Hanna.</p> <p>00:08:20 Playing for Armagh Under 21's and the lack of seriousness with which they treated. Tells story of travelling to Dundalk for Under 21 challenge game and getting 'lost' to enable a bet to be placed on a horse.</p> <p>00:10:00 Attending Jordanstown for one year: recalls meeting Brian Canavan (future Armagh manager) on the day of registration for the GAA club and the competition for places. Describes university football as 'seriously dirty' and recalls games with QUB and St. Mary's in the All-Ireland freshers semi-final.</p> <p>00:12:15 Discusses the influence of Harry McGarry in Clan na Gael club, his presence, reliability and instilling discipline in younger players.</p>
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	<p>00:13:25 Refers also to influence of Paddy McKenna and others who provided him with a grounding in the GAA.</p> <p>00:14:00 Jimmy Smyth mentions Harry McGarry's pedigree as a selector on both the 1949 Armagh minor team and the 1953 Armagh senior team; Paul Kelly expresses surprise at this information.</p> <p>00:14:30 Kelly remembers looking forward to 'bottle of lemonade' that Harry McGarry would provide when he was playing underage with Clan na Gael; recalls the 'old huts' and playing cards as a child.</p> <p>00:15:10 Playing record with Clan na Gael at Under 16 and Minor. Recalls a hurtful remark made to him by a coach and reiterates a point about the need to be considerate to players feelings at underage levels.</p> <p>00:16:08 Making the senior team in Clan na Gael in 1978. Tells story of 'knock on the door' to go play his first match and coming on with ten minutes left. Recalls also playing St. Peter's to win league on New Year's Day.</p> <p>00:18:00 Playing in his first senior championship final in 1988: recalls old changing rooms, the big crowd, pre-match fears, walking behind band and losing by a point.</p> <p>00:18:55 Winning senior championship in 1980 in the Athletic Grounds. Recalls scoring a goal and winning game. Mentions also winning the 1981 championship.</p> <p>00:19:40 Discusses waning fortunes of the 'Clans' after 1981 and the loss of enjoyment. Mentions the need for teams to have realistic ambitions.</p> <p>00:21:15 Moves into coaching, 2001: talks about concern at the absence of a coaching structure in Armagh, the lack of underage success and being asked to run for Coaching Officer in Armagh, winning election in 2001 ahead of Kieran McGeeney and John Morrison.</p> <p>00:24:00 Comments on his work with the full-time coaching staff in Armagh and starting nursery clubs and development squads. Talks about working with Ulster Council and Eugene Young, the High Performance Director with the Ulster Council, to put in systems that all counties could follow.</p> <p>00:25:50 April 2002: recalls breaking Armagh into 3 sectors – north, mid and south - and bringing in players from each for development. Recalls bringing in development squad</p>
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	<p>mentors.</p> <p>00:27:04 Talks about the costs of Armagh development squads, the system of discipline that prevailed and the treatment they received. Refers to transition from white to orange jerseys as players developed.</p> <p>00:30:00 Talks about the friendships that developed among players and coaches.</p> <p>00:31:00 Armagh winning 2005 Ulster Minor title in Croke Park in front of 65,000. Recollections of that day, including the performance of Martin Clarke for Down, who he describes as 'awesome'.</p> <p>00:33:04 Progression of 2005 Armagh Ulster winning minor team to 2007 Under 21 Ulster winning team. Mentions that team 'should have won the All-Ireland' and recounts a near miss in the All-Ireland final against Cork.</p> <p>00:34:00 Discusses the innovative methods used in coaching the Armagh Minors – refers to the 'focus' programme, giving players DVD's of their own performance, the use of whiteboards, the projectors in the dressing-rooms at half-time. Talks of the response of players to these methods.</p> <p>00:38:32 Talks about working away from Ireland and his regrets about not doing more administrative work with Clan na Gael. Mentions brief role as Treasurer of club and the need for club's to be on sound financial footing.</p> <p>00:39:33 Reflects on the 'business approach' that he brought to coaching and games development in Armagh. Comments on the need for change in administrative positions.</p> <p>00:41:01 Mentions that 3 years tenure as Armagh Minor manager in 2007, the same year as he finished his 5 year tenure as Coaching Officer.</p> <p>00:41:17 Attitude of Armagh county board to hurling and being asked to 'take on hurling'. Mentions taking role on his terms and the creation of a hurling board.</p> <p>00:42:50 Tells story of first meeting with hurling representatives and his approach to addressing the problem of hurling development.</p> <p>00:44:11 Talks of the need for 'leadership', his lack of knowledge of hurling and the support he received.</p> <p>00:45:02 Refers to sitting on coaching committee in Croke Park and using Armagh as a 'pilot project'. Talks about using</p>
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	<p>relationship with Christy Cooney and pulling from the work of others like Pat Daly and Jimmy Darcy in Croke Park and others. Refers to tensions with Pat Daly, concerns over costs of Armagh programme and receiving financial support for a range of programmes.</p> <p>00:48:20 Implementation of Armagh programme and the success that has resulted – talks about the achievements at minor, Under 21 and senior level and the role of the clubs in building potential.</p> <p>[00:50:01 Sound quality is disrupted by mobile phone static]</p> <p>00:50:12 The role of Michael Johnson as Armagh senior hurling manager.</p> <p>00:50:34 Losing the 2007 Nicky Rackard final and the subsequent development of players.</p> <p>00:51:11 Refers to interest of Dinny Cahill in coming to Armagh.</p> <p>00:51:50 Reflects on a response he made to a journalist in the wake of a narrow Under 21 Ulster final defeat to Antrim.</p> <p>00:52:50 Sets out the various roles he held in 2011, his regrets about leaving hurling and subsequent dissolution of Armagh hurling board.</p> <p>00:54:48 Discusses the issues of finance at county board level, Chairing a finance committee and the launch of the 'My Armagh' fundraising initiative. Outlines how the system worked and how responsibility for different projects was devolved. Says that between May 2010 to May 2011, 8 different projects were run.</p> <p>00:57:35 Discusses the 'Seat for Life' campaign and plans to eradicate debt on the redevelopment of the Athletic Grounds.</p> <p>01:00:10 Requesting citations for</p> <p>[01:00:30 Interview temporarily interrupted to clean a spilled cup of coffee]</p> <p>01:01:15 Talks about the difference between the Seat for Life campaign and other fundraising initiatives. Refers to bringing in outside consultants, involving clubs, getting promotional literature etc.</p> <p>01:02:13 Talks about the ending of his relationship with 'My Armagh' and his disappointment at the way it finished.</p>
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	<p>01:02:55 Discusses his current involvement with Armagh senior football team – as operational manager - and the continuity of underage development.</p> <p>01:04:40 Talks about the importance of dealing with players and others involved in the GAA in a respectful manner.</p> <p>01:06:04 Mentions his involvement on Player Welfare Committee in Croke Park, the GPA and issues of insurance etc.</p> <p>01:07:02 Considers what the GAA means to him – emphasises the sense of importance of being involved with Armagh, sociability etc.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p><input 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 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>3 Armagh Senior Championships</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Format</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Length of Interview: 01:08:07</p>
<p>Language</p>	<p>English</p>

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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: _____Jimmy Smyth_____

Date: _____19/12/2011_____