

GAA Oral History Project
Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Thérèse McIntyre
Date of Interview	31 August 2010
Location	Interviewee's home
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Catherine Feeney (née Sweeney)
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Female
Born	Year Born: 1950 Home County: Galway
Education	Primary: Moycullen NS Secondary: Mercy Convent, Carna
Family	Siblings: 3 (2 brothers; 1 sister)
Club(s)	St. Michael's
Occupation	Administrative Assistant
Parents' Occupation	Garda [father]
Religion	Christian
Political Affiliation / Membership	None
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	None
Date of Report	23 September 2010
Period Covered	1950s - Today
Counties/Countries Covered	Galway
Key Themes	Childhood, Earliest Memories, Facilities, Family Involvement,

<p>Covered</p>	<p>Role of the Club in the Community, Impact on Life, Socialising, Relationships, Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Fundraising, Emigration, Role of Women, Identity, Irish Language, Coaching, Media, Training</p>
<p>Interview Summary</p>	<p>Catherine talks about her earliest memories of the GAA and her father's involvement in several clubs in Connemara (Co. Galway). Although there were no opportunities for her to participate in GAA sports as a child, Catherine supported her brothers' commitment to sport from a very early age. It was through her family's taking part that Catherine developed a longstanding interest in and love of the GAA; one that she has passed on to her own children. Although her children's association has lessened somewhat, Catherine remains a strong supporter of the GAA and believes that the organisation will continue to play a vital role in Irish society.</p> <p>00:44 Earliest memories. Father was Garda and family transferred to various places in Connemara.</p> <p>1:08 Moving to England as adult (1971-1978).</p> <p>1:19 Earliest memories of GAA. Father's involvement with Gaelic football in Carna. Condition of pitch/facilities.</p> <p>2:09 Father's and Catherine's younger brothers' involvement with Gaelic football in Carraroe. Condition of pitch/facilities. Fundraising. Improvement of facilities in later years.</p> <p>2:43 Father's involvement as a child. Importance of Gaelic football in Catherine's brothers' lives after death of mother. Development of interest/friendships for both brothers and father.</p> <p>3:25 Watching brothers play in matches during their early years.</p> <p>4:03 Inability to travel to county matches. Listening to matches on radio.</p> <p>4:31 Married life and own children's involvement in Gaelic football (positions played. John Wynne training children at the Dangan pitches. Importance of sport in children's lives. Playing in 'soggy field' near home and 'making own goals'.</p> <p>5:47 Sons' involvement in soccer. Winning 'Community Games – Under 12' (Soccer) out in Mosney (Co. Meath). Sons' playing of dual codes and playing with school. Importance of 'gear bag' over 'school bag'. Significance of sons' being 'picked' for the team as well as playing/training.</p>

	<p>7:00 Micheál (son) attending GMIT and playing Gaelic football for them. FBD final against NUIG in Pearse Stadium (Co. Galway). Excitement and tension of match that ended in a draw after double extra time. Both teams awarded trip to New York (2006?).</p> <p>9:09 Micheál (son) being chosen for Galway Under-21 county team. Catherine talks of attending all of the matches and how it 'tested my heart beyond what it needed'. The team beat Down in Under-21 final (2006). Micheál received an All-Ireland medal.</p> <p>9:56 Catherine talks about absence of opportunities for herself to be involved as a player when she was a girl. Also discusses a lack of mixed-teams and sport in schools. Talks of the changes in involvement of girls/women in sports today. Claire Molloy (St. Michael's) was only girl on the team when Catherine's sons were growing up. Increased skill level of girls in both football and hurling (camogie).</p> <p>11:40 Importance of sport for children.</p> <p>12:14 Current involvement of Catherine's sons in sport. Sons' travel to Australia and subsequent return. Micheál's dilemma between job in Perth and playing for Galway team and his return for the final. Discusses final held in Croke Park between another St. Michael's (Kerry). Importance to sons of experience playing in Croke Park.</p> <p>14:27 Significance of no 'post-mortem' after match and the influence of the trainers on the players' mind-set towards winning and losing.</p> <p>15:17 Catherine's time in England (London and Oxfordshire) and lack of connection with Irish in England. Re-connection with GAA upon return to Ireland and her children's involvement.</p> <p>17:07 Discusses St. Michael's supporters club and formation of lifelong friendships. Role of GAA in community today. Impact of emigration on the GAA. Improvement of facilities. Dedication of coaches/trainers – John Wynne and John Kenny in particular and her children's respect for them. Willingness of more people to get involved.</p> <p>21:58 Importance of more clubs playing in Croke Park. Catherine's first time in Croke Park. Daughters' respective roles as supporters. Husband's current involvement.</p> <p>24:26 Catherine's enjoyment of listening to Micheál Ó</p>
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	<p>Muircheartaigh's radio broadcasts.</p> <p>24:53 Husband's involvement as a child in GAA. Lack of facilities in outlying areas in the past. Couple's attendance at matches.</p> <p>26:16 Importance of recognition by GAA of women's sports and women's involvement in the GAA.</p> <p>28:00 Transportation to matches. Lack of teams in the early days particularly in rural areas.</p> <p>28:57 Facilities in the early days. Poor state of pitches, goals, uniforms, etc. Improvement of 'kits' by sponsors today, pitches/clubhouses/physiotherapists, etc.</p> <p>32:01 Comparison of crowds at matches today compared to attendance in the past.</p> <p>32:47 Use of Irish language in GAA in rural areas.</p> <p>33:54 Catherine's regret at not being able to participate in sports as a young girl and lack of 'structured' sports in schools in the past.</p> <p>35:20 Atmosphere at matches and Catherine's current attendance. Cost prohibitive-ness of attending matches today.</p> <p>36:37 'Blocking' off of the 'Hill' in Croke Park. Player/referee safety. Controversy of Kildare/Down match (2010). Importance of 'neutral' officials. Sacrifices made by those playing as well as those training as officials.</p> <p>39:40 GAA's role in Irish life in the future. Discusses how to improve role of GAA particularly in relation to more 'popular' sports such as rugby, soccer, etc. Amateur v. professional sports.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input checked="" 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>N/A</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator</p>	<p>N/A</p>

REFERENCE NO. GY/1/9

(Positions held; how long for)	
Duration	Length of Interview: 00:43:20
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: Thérèse McIntyre

Date: 11 November 2011