

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Aoife Doherty
Date of Interview	27 th July 2010
Location	Crossmaglen
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	John F Fearon
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1947 Home County: Armagh
Education	N/A
Family	Siblings: 8
Club(s)	Whitecross GAA Club [Armagh]; Crossmaglen Rangers GAC [Armagh]
Occupation	Retired
Parents' Occupation	Labourer [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

Date of Report	13 th July 2012
Period Covered	1950s – 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Armagh, Tyrone, Kerry
Key Themes Covered	Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Education, Media, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Irish Language, Culture, Scór, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Politics, Northern Ireland, The Troubles, Relationships
Interview Summary	<p>John Fearon opens the interview with references to his family background and his introduction to the GAA through school and club. Issues of politics and identity lie at the core of the interview. Fearon refers to the impact of the GAA on his sense of Irishness or ‘anti-Britishness’, as well as the impact of the Troubles, in particular the activities of the British army in places like Crossmaglen. Fearon discusses his pride in being from Crossmaglen, the playing record of the club from the 1960s onwards and the influence of individuals like Joe Kernan and Jim McConville. Comments are made on the development of facilities and on the Irish language within the club. In addition, Fearon reflects on highlights in the club and county’s recent history, his admiration for the Kerry team of the 1970s and 80s and the reactions to the success of Armagh and Tyrone in the early 2000s.</p> <p>00:00:30 Refers to his introduction to the GAA in school and his involvement in underage football in his club.</p> <p>00:00:44 Mentions his family background in the GAA – his grandfather played football, his father didn’t.</p> <p>00:00:55 Contrasts the quality of GAA facilities in the past and present. Talks of togg off at the back of hedges.</p> <p>00:01:30 Says that involvement in the GAA in north probably gave rise to a greater sense of Irishness or ‘anti-Britishness’.</p> <p>00:01:44 Acknowledges the role that the GAA played in shaping his life and identity – talks about self-discipline and the idea of Irishness.</p> <p>00:02:22 Talks about the reaction of the club and community to political events like the hunger strikes. The club didn’t respond, but individuals did.</p> <p>00:02:55 Discusses the impact of the British occupation of</p>

	<p>Crossmaglen grounds on the club. Mentions also that he personally suffered only minor disruption and harassment.</p> <p>00:03:40 Discusses the broader experience of British army harassment by in the Crossmaglen community.</p> <p>00:04:10 Offers an opinion on why the British army targeted the Crossmaglen club – the belief that most young nationalists were involved with the IRA and most young nationalists played football.</p> <p>00:04:25 Recognises the impact of the British army's actions in Crossmaglen on local republican recruitment.</p> <p>00:04:50 Discusses the Crossmaglen club's competitive record from the 1960s onwards. Speculates that the army presence may have had something to do with the relative paucity of success in the 1980s.</p> <p>00:05:40 Mentions the pride of being involvement in Crossmaglen.</p> <p>00:06:03 Mentions the support the club received from other clubs and at GAA Congress in relation to its struggles with the British army.</p> <p>00:06:50 Refers to the influence of players like Joe Kernan, Jim McConville.</p> <p>00:07:14 Acknowledges, with regret, the lack of Irish language use in the club and accept the club didn't really foster it.</p> <p>00:07:38 Offers support for the GAA aim to promote the Irish language, while noting that the pre-occupation is with football and hurling.</p> <p>00:08:02 Selects as highlights of his GAA involvement Crossmaglen's first All-Ireland club success in 1997 and Armagh's All-Ireland title victory in 2002.</p> <p>00:09:30 Mentions his admiration for the Kerry team of the 1970s and 80s and explains what attracted him to them.</p> <p>00:10:05 Comments on the implicit criticism of Armagh and Tyrone football by the Kerry Chairman, Sean Walsh, in the aftermath of Kerry's All-Ireland triumph in 2004.</p> <p>00:10:40 Reflects on the positive contribution the GAA has made to young people.</p>
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REFERENCE NO. AR/1/17

Involvement in GAA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" 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): _____
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	N/A
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	N/A
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 00:11:24
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: Aoife Doherty

Date: 27th July 2010