Matt Talty

Male

0:00:00 – 0:04:32
MATT'S YOUTH IN IRELAND/FAMILY/THE FARM –

Matt left Kilnamona, his family, friends, farm, hurling & cross-country teams in 1947 – saddest time in his life; he talks about his school days, work as a farmer's boy from age 15 in Kilnamona & Ruan, his family & neighbours, music & musicians in Kilnamona; his father Mickey played the concertina; Matt soaked up the music; he recalls dances in his house & other activities in his youth; he describes being back in his native home on the night prior to this recording; he says the house & farm passed onto his nephew John; he enjoyed returning after many years & seeing the view from Talty's hill; he talks about his brother Jimmy who married & stayed on the farm.

0:04:32 – 0:16:49
MUSIC/HIS CONCERTINA / PLAYS SOME TUNES –

Matt recalls how he soaked up the music & plays the air Inisfree' & a jig. He describes how he remembered the tunes though he didn't know their names; he says he gave up the concertina for 70 years until his son bought him a concertina in 2004 & then he took it up again; he tells how he saw a coffin at Ennis Cathedral on the previous day, said a prayer & then found out that the deceased person was from Kilnamona (a relation of Geraldine's); he continues to play a reel. He now plays sessions twice a week in New York and attends musical events in New York, the Catskills music week & Boston where he saw up to 100 people playing concertinas; his family drive him to and from sessions; his wife passed away some months ago; he jokes that he â€œmight be better than Noel Hill if he continued to play but mightn't have a roof over his headâ€; he tells how people were surprised to know he played & he laughs that he didn't know it himself; he

names musicians in Kilnamona in his young days, he can remember his father playing the concertina but has no recording of him; he remembers Frank Greene (Geraldine's grand-uncle) & Tom Hegarty (Kilfenora Ceili Band who worked on farms in Kilnamona) playing the fiddle; he says the concertina and fiddle were most popular; he says Kilnamona & Taltys were great for musical events; he plays a tune he credits to Chris Droney.

0:16:49 – 0:21:54
SPORTS/ RUNNING IN KILNAMONA & AMERICA –

He talks about his brothers Jimmy & Peter who were great cross-country runners; Matt organised running events; he recalls runners & sportsmen from Kilnamona & events they won; he didn't continue running when he emigrated to England; he said the team brought him back to compete but â€œthe steam had gone out of himâ€; he recites names of 16 in his family; he was the smallest in his family but played his part; he talks about the biography his son wrote about him and his life; he praises Kilnamona as a great place to live with little scandals; the talks about working in America & his energy; he recalls cycling & lifting things up 20 storeys in construction trade & how fit he was then; in America, he prioritised family life & work over training & running; he knew of Mike McTigue, the Kilnamona boxer (won world title in 1932) in America Matt, didn't meet him but attended his funeral; he recalls horse & trap to sports events & running in Kilnamona; he recalls the Kilnamona team's challenge to the Miltown Malbay team in the All-Ireland; he recalls runners from Kilnamona, especially John Rynne; he recalls being in school with John O'Donoghue (also recorded for Cuimhneamh an Chlair).

0:21:54 – 0:22:33
FILM –

Matt recalls the 1949 film made in Kilnamona when Henry Greene's wife Mary (Geraldine's grandmother) & Matt posed for photos.

0:22:33 – 0:22:58
SCHOOLING IN ENNIS & WORK LIFE/BUSINESS IN USA –

He attended the technical school in Ennis and learned carpentry; he speaks about his plastering skills & business; he was renowned & in demand for his renovation work in bars; he owned 6 bars in New York.

0:22:58 – 0:23:26
CUAIRD –

He recalls going on cuaird to O'Donoghue man in Ruan & refers to society's view of the man who lived in the â€œcottageâ€.

0:23:26 – 0:27:10
MORE ABOUT MUSIC & CONCERTINA MUSICIANS –

Matt speaks about Chris Droney & Paddy Murphy, concertina players from Clare – he met them at the Catskills Irish festival, upstate New York; he heard Paddy Murphy, Steam McTigue & local musicians in Inagh; people danced local Caledonian set; he recalls all his family danced; 1 set fitted in their kitchen – dancers took turns; Matt only one of siblings to play; his father Mickey played concertina; he mentions some musicians did not have the price of instruments; he mentions Gerdie Commane, Kilnamona concertina player who played in Taltys' house; Gerdie also did shot putt; he speaks about the acquisition & cost of concertinas; he refers to musicians playing for hunting the wren, house dances, sports days & in pubs; he mentions musicians, Peter O' Loughlin, Kilmaley & Hegartys, Kilfenora who were farm hands in Kilnamona.

0:27:10 – 0:28:17
CHANGES –

Matt will be 88 on his next birthday & has spent many years away from Ireland; he names some changes – big houses now V small house & big families in his

youth; he laments that many houses empty & let go to ruin.

0:28:17 – 0:28:51
MEMORIES OF INTERVIEWEE'S FAMILY –

Matt recalls his neighbour & interviewer's grandfather James Mescall getting married & his wife moving from Ballyea, Inagh to Kilnamona. Matt also recall's James's mother Honor giving sweets to him & his family.

0:29:18 – 0:31:24
HIS FAMILY/EMIGRATION –

Matt says he had no choice but to emigrate; he moved from England to America by boat & stayed with his sister Bridie initially; he names & gives information about other siblings who emigrated; he never saw his third eldest brother Josie; he speaks of the Irish & US connection; recalls tea being got in Ireland from USA.

0:31:24 – 0:34:43
FARMING/WORKING FOR FARMERS –

He recalls keeping the sow & her bonhams in the Talty kitchen – necessary to save each bonham to get the price of each & earn some money; he recalls working for farmers in Kilnamona; he also worked for farmers in Ruan & stayed in their homes; he worked as a farm boy & recalls always eating at the family's table unlike a Kerry man in US who had to sleep & eat in the stable of the family he worked for; generally 1 farm boy per family; he worked for Henry Greene & his brother Frank Greene (interviewer's grandfather & granduncle) – maybe half his time with each; he recalls women working hard both on the farm & in the house; he specifically names interviewee's grandmother Mary Greene; he mentions food – local man often ate 5 or 6 eggs when hungry; he recalls his first wages when he worked for Henry Greene – Â£2.10 ; maybe Â£20 a year & says that he managed to save money; he mentions Talty's Hill & jokes about the title of Drumbane House.

0:34:43 – 0:37:44
MATT LILTS SOME TUNES –

Matt lilts a few tunes – he hadn't done that for 70 years (his daughter Belinda had never heard him lilt before); second tune is one of Chris Droney's; he lilted & interviewer accompanied him on a jig on the tin-whistle; when interviewee tells him of the popularity of lilting & its inclusion in the Fleadh competitions, he jokes he could enter it if he had more practice; he continues to lilt another tunes, something he hadn't done for 70 years much to the delight of Belinda.

0:37:44 – 0:38:38
TALTY FAMILY INFORMATION –

Matt speaks about his mother, a great dressmaker making their clothes; she was a dressmaker in town before her marriage; his grandfather died at age 40 & Matt never knew or heard much about him; his mother was Finucane from Kilnamona.

0:38:38 – 0:38:53
WEST CLARE RAILWAY

Matt recalls being on the West Clare Railway, maybe from Lahinch or Miltown Malbay.

0:38:53 – 0:39:48
NEW YORK RECORDING

Belinda speaks about Matt being recorded by a Memories project in New York – 2 hour interview & he played music; he jokes about being â€œfamousâ€ but wonders why he wasn't heard of when working as farm boy in Clare!

0:39:48 – 0:40:31
EMIGRATION BY SHIP TO AMERICA –

Matt emigrated to America from Southampton by ship – recalls doing exercises on

the deck to prevent getting stiff; he tells how they ate & slept on board.

0:40:31 – 0:41:08
WHAT'S LIFE ALL ABOUT –

Matt wonders what's life all about; he worked hard & tried to do his best; he talks about greed & prestige; he & his family were poor when they were young but wanted to do well.

0:41:08 – 0:42:12
BOXING IN KILNAMONA/MIKE MCTIGUE –

Matt recalls Mike McTigue and the Rynne family from Kilnamona who boxed in the US & USA; he regrets not seeing McTigue fight in the USA or visiting him; McTigue's daughter was born in 1923, same year as Matt & the year McTigue won his world title; Matt thinks he may have met his daughter at McTigue's wake.

0:42:12 – 0:42:22
IRISH WORDS OF GREETINGS –

Matt recalls a few Irish words of greetings.

0:42:22 – 0:43:18
TRADE

Matt talks about learning his trade & his success as a plasterer, his imitation stone & brick work; he learned his trade in the UK; he was â€œhandy in his youthâ€; he recalls making hurleys.

0:43:18 – 0:43:59
MEMORIES & INFORMATION

Matt doesn't recall going to the creamery with his father – maybe his older brothers went; he speaks about their tandem bike; he left school at 14 or 15 to

work for farmers; he speaks about the conditions that families lived in when he was young; he recalls his own family, their sleeping arrangements & providing seats at house-dances; his brother, Hughie was a blacksmith; he recites the names of the 16 in his family. He mentions two females from Kilnamona who emigrated to America.

0:43:59 – 0:50:15
RETIREMENT & MUSIC –

Matt retired about about 5 or 6 years ago (aged 82); he had some pubs; he recalls bringing the Tulla CéilÃ Band & the young Wolfe Tones over to his pubs; he met Mary MacNamara, concertina player though he had little interest in it then; he recalls his son getting him his concertina when he retired & mentions a workshop with 100 concertinas at the Catskills Irish festival – he has a photo of that; now age 87, he plays music in local pubs in New York a few nights a week; he mentions those local sessions; he refers to tapes of music he bought from a Clare musician & also about another Clare musician now living in the America; he refers to changes between city life & rural life; hhe wasn't aware of scenic Kilnamona as he grew up; he didn't miss the country life as he was busy with work & family life.

0:50:15 – 0:50:40
POLITICS –

Matt has little interest in politics & is not involved in any political group; he recalls closing his pub as a mark of respect when Bobby Sands died after being on hunger-strike.

0:50:40 – 0:53:37
AIR 'INISFREE' –

Matt plays the air 'Inisfree' at the anniversary mass for Sonny Murray (West Clare concertina player who lived in Ennis) in Ennis Cathedral to great applause.