

Seán Keating

Male

File 1 0:00:00 – 0:08:22

EARLY LIFE AND THE IRISH LANGUAGE –

Seán speaks about Sonny Hederman who was his teacher in Cross. Speaks about the impact of National School education and states that they got a great grounding in Irish in school. Says that it is one of his biggest regrets that he didn't keep it up. Speaks generally about Irish speakers in his local community. His father spoke Irish but Seán only realised this when he saw him conversing with an old neighbour while they were out saving hay.

Talks about Departmental efforts to support Irish in Seán's community. Some homes received a grant to speak Irish within the home.

Refers to 'the old master' who was Patrick Keating. He was a teacher who tried to preserve the Irish language. He also kept diaries and records of the area. States that an inspector who may have been 'An tseabhac' took the records and never returned them.

0:08:23 – 0:22:14

INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL FARMING ISSUES –

Seán speaks about his involvement in local farming issues and the formation of a Young Farmer's Club which was the precursor to Macra na Feirme. Seán was the secretary of the Cross club at the age of eighteen.

Speaks generally about the IFA (Irish Farmer's Association). Speaks about farming in the aftermath of the Economic War and World War II.

Names John Troy, Paddy Foley (Cross), Denis Liddane (involved later) as some of

those involved in the early days. They would meet in the local pub and the old school.

Speaks about his involvement in setting up marts, collecting shares. Recalls the reaction of local people to the transition from fairs to the mart. The older generation were reluctant to change according to Séan. Sean speaks about Fr. Pat Loughnane who was a brother of Dr. Bill Loughnane (TD from Feakle). Speaks about the controversies associated with the setting up of the first mart. Recalls travelling to meeting with Dr. Loughnane and tells a story about going to a particular meeting in Kilrush. After the meeting, Séan fell asleep in the wrong car and missed his lift back with Fr. Loughnane. Recalls calling to Peter Keogh who was doing books at 3.00am in the morning and was offered his couch. He later got a lift with Pádraig Haugh (poet from Bansha) who was his cousin.

Seán recalls going to a match with Fr. Pat Loughnane and meeting Dr. Bill Loughnane in Thurles.

0:22:15 - 0:23:36

HURLING -

Seán recalls the first hurling match that he ever saw which was in Kilkee between Bodyke and Clooney. He describes seeing it advertised to be played in Kilkee GAA field, which was then at the back of the Atlantic Hotel and part of the current golf course.

Note: Interview is interrupted by a phone call.

File 2 0:00:00 - 0:07:53

HURLING IN KILKEE -

Sean speaks about the first hurling match he saw in Kilkee (c.1950). Séan feels this may have been connected to An TÁ³stal. He recalls travelling in 'the long car' which was pulled by two horses and a long axel. A number of them would travel

on this together to matches. The owner was Danny Lynch from Raha.

Recalls falling off the long car on the way home from the match.

Recalls the hurling match briefly. Speaks about his interest in hurling and remembers going to see Clare play a junior All Ireland Final in Ennis against London. He travelled on the West Clare Railway. Remembers seeing Jimmy Smyth who was only starting hurling for Clare at that stage.

0:07:54 - 0:11:41

PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY -

Seán speaks about his motivation and involvement in community voluntary organisations and in particular farming affairs. Speaks about how the period of his young life had seen the change from the 'comhar' and 'cuaird' to a more modern society and that change

0:11:42 - 0:27:42

IFA INVOLVEMENT -

Seán speaks about political divides within the local community briefly. States that the IFA brought people together who normally in a political context, were divided. Farming was a unifying force according to Seán.

Seán speaks about the Farmer's rights campaign of the 1960s. Recalls his own active involvement in this campaign which culminated in his own imprisonment. Speaks about the national reaction from Charlie Haughey. Speaks about the blocking of the roads in Limerick and the walk to Dublin (mentions Tom Cahill who was a key member of the Clare IFA at this time) and the sit in in front of the Dáil for twenty-one days. Speaks about his own involvement in blocking the roads in Limerick in 1966. States that Jimmy Flynn his brother in law was one of the men who blocked the roads with him. The men were jailed for two weeks but Seán was released after three days in Limerick jail. Speaks about the reaction locally to

his activities. Seán states that the prison officers of Limerick jail were supportive of the men. Seán reflects on the 1960s campaign and its success.

Speaks about other Minister's for Agriculture and names James Dillon as a man who stood out. Mentions how he helped to identify the treatment of fluke in cattle. States that the man who made most difference was Ray McSharry. He also mentions Paddy Lane who was the President of the IFA. Refers also to Declan Costelloe

0:27:43 – 0:38:37

POLITICAL LIFE –

Speaks about his introduction to politics. Gerard Burns who had been a Fianna Fáil councillor west of Kilkee retired and created a vacancy. Speaks about Johnsie Cusack in Cross who completed one term as a Clann na Taláirne councillor. Seán had been in Fianna Fáil for a number of years at this point and decided to run for the seat when Gerard Burns retired. Speaks about his election campaign in 1974. Frank Taylor headed the poll with over 1,000 votes and Seán got 1,000 votes finishing second. States that Brody Lillis who had been an independent county councillor gave him a lot of advice. He had been a Clann na Phoblachta member and then joined Fine Gael.

Speaks about his experience in his first term as a councillor. States that the 1970s and 1980s was a hard time to be a councillor. Speaks about his second term and how Martin Cahill had resigned leaving his chair available. Speaks about the policy of how the Chair of Clare County Council was decided. Mentions Seán "Brádaigh" (Séan Brady from Tuamgraney). States that himself and a number of others decided that the Chair should rotate, which led to a change in this policy.

Note: Interview is interrupted

File 3 0:00:00 – 0:21:36

POLITICAL LIFE –

Seán speaks about the decision to rotate the Chair from electoral area to electoral area. Mentions Johnny Moloney from Scariff who was the Chairman before Seán. There was a contest for the chair between Seán and PJ Kelly. This was in 1986. Speaks about his own feelings on being elected Chairman of Clare County Council. Seán speaks about his feelings towards becoming a TD. He states that during his political career, West Clare was well represented by Brendan Daly.

Recalls the pressure on funds within the County Council. Speaks about a meeting of Clare County Council when decisions were being made to turn off public lights in various electoral areas. The ESB were brought into the meeting and Seán recalls Jack Lynch of Kilfenora making a humorous speech to the ESB.

Speaks about the establishment of a twinning with Clare, Australia. Refers to Paddy Hillery, President of Ireland who visited the Clare Valley in Australia during a state visit. Mentions a Pat Gleeson from East Clare who established the area. Speaks about a trip which was arranged to Australia from Clare County Council and refers to Naoise Cleary from Corofin who accompanied them as a historian. Names the other councillors and outlines the various meetings they held over there. Speaks about an incident where they were using an operator in Australia to ring home and it transpired that the operator was from East Clare.

Speaks about visiting Freemantle in South Australia.

Seán speaks about his departure from politics in 1991 when he lost the election by thirteen votes to Patrick Keane.

Seán reflects on his life in community activism and politics.