INTERVIEW G03: ELLEN WILSON

Interviewer: Dr Jack Crangle
Interviewee: Ellen Wilson [pseudonym]
Interview date: 11th June 2020
Location: Virtual
Transcriber: Naomi Wells

Textual Note: Annotations and observations appear in square brackets (e.g. [pauses], [laughs]). Partial, interrupted or unfinished utterances are denoted by a dash. False starts, filler words and non-lexical utterances (e.g. 'um', 'hmm') are not generally transcribed. Time codes appear at ten-minute intervals in square brackets in bold type.

JC: Yeah, that's recording there now, so what I want to just ask you quickly before we start is, in addition to the consent form that you signed, just to get your verbal consent that you're, you're okay for this recording to go ahead, Ellen.

EW: Certainly, yes.

JC: Great, okay, and could you also state your name and today's date, please?

EW: Yeah, so I'm Ellen Wilson and today's date is the eleventh of June 2020.

JC: Great, and could you start then by just telling me when and where you were born?

EW: I was born in 1973 in Altnagelvin Hospital in Londonderry, Northern Ireland.

JC: Right, okay, and what area of the city did you grow up in, did you live in?

EW: So we lived initially in a place called Prehen and then we moved to Eglinton when I was ten, and I travelled to school, I kept going to, I went to New Buildings Primary School and I travelled from Eglinton to New Buildings for my last few years in primary school, so that was quite a long way at that time, I didn't go to the local primary school, I kept travelling, so, anyway.

JC: And what were those areas like when you were growing up?

EW: So, Prehen was, oh we, we lived in a, you know, semi-detached kind of bog standard house, it was near some woods which were beautiful, so that was lovely. In terms of growing up my dad was in the police, I don't know if that puts me in a different box from your interviewees, but, so I feel that I had a, a slightly different experience, not, like, just maybe a typically Protestant or typical Catholic experience, so I felt that no one was on our side in particular, there was a lot of secrets, there was a lot of kind of secrecy about what I could say and what I couldn't say about my dad and my dad's job and, and I know that we moved from Prehen because it was becoming more and more Catholic and I think now if

you'd go it might be even painted, the, the kerbs might be painted, green, white and gold and that was becoming, I was aware as a kid, I was aware it was becoming unsafe for my dad to live there and I remember one incident when we had a snowball thrown at the window and we were playing, like, an Atari computer game, something like that, you know, tennis or whatever it was on, and the, the computer which was obviously connected up to the TV and, and the, the snowball hit the window and I remember my dad swearing, he said something like, oh I should go after them, and then he went fuck me, I will go after them and he leapt over the sofa and ran out down the street and, and found somebody who was part of the wee gang who'd thrown a snowball with a rock in it at the, at the window, so a real shake, you know, a real shudder and shake and I think we moved shortly after that, I wouldn't be certain how quickly that happened, but I remember, then we moved to Eglinton which was more, it's, like, a village further out of town and I suppose, it, it certainly is, parts of it are painted red, white and blue, so kind of a very different type of community although not, not our street, we moved into a bungalow there with a really big garden which daddy, kept daddy happy, so, is that what you were wanting to?

JC: Yeah, yeah, that, that's all really interesting just, so, in that, in that first area you were conscious from quite a young age of, of a bit of a tension, a bit of hostility then towards your family?

EW: Not with our neighbours, you know, we had a neighbour that I still would have called auntie Anna who was, and her children who we grew up with, who, she was Catholic and we got on incredibly well with her, and my mum and dad would have kept in touch with her for a long time and the children next door, played with them, not a problem at all, but it felt, like, in the wider community, yes, it was, it was different, you know, you'd walk about in your, your school uniform identified you as well, you know, obviously people knew your face cos when, you know, cos you lived there, but I felt that your school uniform identified you if you were walking back from scho-, from the bus, that type of thing, and our neighbours, I remember getting on really well with them and playing with them and they went to a different primary school and there was no issues, like, personally or families, mum and dad had no issues with us playing with them or whatever and, but I just think that it became, you know, whenever you don't know people that well, then there was, when you have that distant between people there was a, you were the wrong, you're the wrong, you're in the wrong school, type of thing.

JC: So you think that was, that was partly because of your religious background and partly because of your dad's job as well?

EW: Yes, yes.

JC: And had, your dad, he'd been a policeman since before you were born was that, or–?

EW: Yeah, since he was, he, since he was eighteen, he joined the police at eighteen and he retired in fact when he was forty-eight, which was in 1988, so he retired very, very young, he did thirty years, got his long service medal and then retired and in fact he went back to university and got a degree and stuff like that, so.

JC: Oh okay, and what did your mum do?

EW: She was a nurse.

JC: Okay, at the, at Altnagelvin?

EW: Yes, I think, in fact she'd tell you she worked at all the hospitals in Derry, Londonderry, so she did, she went, I remember her then retraining to become, to work in the special needs hospital as well, so.

JC: Okay, and did you have any siblings?

EW: Yes, I have an older sister and a younger brother.

JC: Right, okay, so you're the middle one, then?

EW: Yes.

JC: And then how–?

EW: [indecipherable].

JC: Yeah [laughs], so how old did you say you were when you moved out to Eglinton?

EW: Ten.

JC: Ten, right, okay, so you, how was that experience for you? You talked a little bit there about the sort of, the contrast between the two areas. Did you, how did you find your new surroundings, did you, did you like it?

EW: Well, I didn't go to the local primary school, so I had no friends there, so I went to, I travelled, so Prehen is on one side of, say, I can't remember now, where are we at [indecipherable] so Prehen would be, like, kind of south-west of Derry, Londonderry and Eglinton would be to the, to the east, so it was about fifteen miles maybe to, from my new home to my school and I, so I didn't have friends who lived locally, so my brother there got on really well when he, when he went to the primary school and my sister was already at secondary school, so she didn't have much of a change, but the new, the new place was, was lovely, I think in terms of neighbours and things like that, we lived next door to, he's still there in fact, another policeman, with no kids, on one side and then, ah, both were policemen, gosh and the other side was a policeman as well, with one kid, and they went to school, so Eglinton would be between Londonderry and Limavady, so you would have gone to school either, in either city, you could have chosen, and we went to Foyle, I went to Foyle and Londonderry College, and our neighbour went to Limavady, so again nobody at our school there.

JC: And you felt in Eglinton it was a bit more, I don't know if safe is the right word, but you felt that there was less, a bit less tension in the area?

EW: It was a very much nicer house, so we went from being in an estate to being on this little cul-de-sac with seven bungalows on it and, and they all had massive gardens, just randomly they all had massive gardens, whatever way they were designed and built, so it was a totally different environment, a totally different kind of street.

JC: And then primary school then, what did you say the name of your, your primary was?

EW: New Buildings, New Buildings Primary School.

JC: Okay, and that was in Derry itself was it, or–?

EW: It was in, well a wee village called New Buildings, further out.

JC: Oh, oh okay, right, right, and did you enjoy school at the time, yeah?

EW: Yeah.

JC: And you–

EW: We used to get a bus and I think you got, I can't, I think you got a bus–

JC: Sorry, go ahead.

EW: I couldn't tell you, I couldn't tell you if the bus was mixed or not, there was, obviously there was Catholic schools and there was non-Catholic schools and New Buildings primary would have been a non-Catholic school which meant I think anybody could have gone to it and I have a feeling we got the same bus there cos there was a Catholic school nearby and then coming home it might have been separate buses just because of logistics I presume, but I do remember one day there was a bomb scare and we had to all get on the same bus, I don't think you'd be allowed to do it now because they crammed everybody in, like, about three people per seat and everybody, you know, standing as well, they put both schools in, in the same bus and we had to go the back roads home which made it quite exciting and there was no ten-, there was no particular tension that day, I think whenever you're in situation where there's a bomb scare people don't actually, certainly kids didn't, they didn't not let you sit down, you know, that type of thing, it was, you're all in it together, I think, that's what it felt like to me.

JC: And you said, you said your friends were mainly from school rather than the local area. Did you do much, what did you outside of school, did you go to any clubs or have any outside interests or anything like that?

EW: Yeah, yeah, I did loads of stuff which is a bit silly really now looking back on it all, but I was in the Guides, so Brownies and Guides and young leaders, did that for a long time, I played the clarinet, I played in a band, and that was really good.

JC: Right, so tell me a bit more about your experience of the Guides, what sort of things did you do, **[00:00:10]** do there?

EW: I can hardly remember really, we met in a church hall on the, the Waterside and my mum was a guide leader, and so was another lady who I called auntie Eva, she only died just last year there, and so mostly I just remember it being a right laugh, that they just enjoyed themselves and we did, we did, went on some Guide camps up to Belfast, to Lorne I think it was called, and I don't remember, I suppose we did the memor-, memorial, you know, on Remembrance Sunday, that type of thing. I don't remember much else truthfully.

JC: Sure, and you went to, you said you went to Foyle College, what was your experience there, like, were you, were you, like, quite an academic student, or, you know, did you enjoy particular subjects or anything like that?

EW: Yeah, I was quite academic and I did quite well and it was, Foyle is obviously on the city side and, and again our school blazers, so we, coming from Eglinton, we had to get a bus from the village into the bus depot and then change buses and wait for a connection up to school, and so every day we would have to, you know, cross the river, so obviously Derry is a, is a divided city with a river down the middle and one side is predominantly Catholic and one side is, is predominantly Protestant and, and our blazers were distinctive, I mean, it doesn't matter what colour they are, but, you know, school uniform is really distinctive, so you felt like you were, when you mingled a bit at the bus depot, again, you know, with the people on the bus, you got on a public bus with people from Thornhill, people from St Colin's, the, the Catholic grammar schools as well and, and that was no issue, I don't remember there being any issues on the buses when we all knew each other, but as soon as you stepped off the bus and you're in the, the depot where it was other people, you know, it started to become more, like, I wouldn't speak to you, you're not, I wouldn't, you know, you wouldn't strike up a conversation with someone in their different kind of uniform and there was a couple of times, I do remember twice getting stuck on the wrong side of the river when there was bomb scares on both bridges and couldn't get home, couldn't get across, so we were, I was there maybe as a twelve, thirteen-year-old in my Foyle blazer in the city side at the depot not able to get home and I remember that being really scary and I tell you what, I've never been out without money since, cos I had no money to phone home.

JC: Yeah, that must have been quite, quite scary for you at the time.

EW: And it was what, 1989, something like that maybe.

JC: And did you ever experience any, like, actual hostility or, or violence or anything like that during the Troubles, or was it more just sort of this, this feeling of tension in the air?

EW: Did I experience anything, I remember babysitting one night when I heard a bomb go off, it was miles away, it was quite scary and in my, not, not personally, I didn't, I didn't see anything, nothing personal and nothing happened to my dad, my next-door neighbour did get shot, Bill got, he was, he got shot through his hand, he was quite, he was lucky in the end that it, that that's what happened to him, I remember that being quite scary, a friend of my dad's, I remember, another guy Billy who ended up leaving Northern Ireland

immediately, he did a, like, a moonlight flit immediately afterwards, he got shot and they went, they moved to England, so I don't remember anything directly personal to me, but I know that, like, locally to us it was a very, I don't if you've heard about the, there was a dreadful shooting at a pub which was in Greysteel which was just a few miles away and it would have been, like, a more Catholic area and this home-, not homeless man cos he lived in Eglinton, just someone who we always knew, a bit of a drunk, but absolutely harmless and just someone who would always, you'd always say hello to and he'd always say something nice back and he was absolutely harmless drunk and he ended up in the pub that night in Greysteel and he got shot whenever they shouted trick or treat and I just remember that being quite, just holy fuck, like, what on earth was, you know, where's the sense, what's the sense in that, he was, you know, harmless, just a lovely, lovely man and he was harmless, and in the wrong place, literally just the wrong place at the wrong time and it just felt really, really senseless.

JC: And did you, did you worry about your dad as well on a day-to-day basis given his profession?

EW: No, I think, I get my kids now to talk to grandad about, to get some stories out because I think as a kid you don't, you're not overly interested in your parents are you, I think my mum would have hid a lot of it, she would have hid a lot of the stress and worry, and I remember going on holidays to France, we would drive down through Ireland and get on the boat and go to France and daddy would disappear, you'd get to the campsite and daddy would disappear and, and it was so, it's only more recently that I've realised that what he was doing was going about and looking for Northern Ireland reg cars on the campsite and I don't know if he phoned back or radioed them back or something like that to check who was there, but that was a, that's what happened on our holidays and I think daddy would relax on holiday which is, you know, a really fond memory for me of him being in France, but I remember the drive through, it just felt a bit tense, you know, it just all felt a bit tense getting down through Ireland.

JC: But then, then when you got there I suppose, it was, like, as you say it was a bit, it was kind of like a weight off your shoulders, in that you didn't have to worry as much maybe.

EW: Yeah, maybe that's what it was, maybe daddy was less worried and that's what rubbed off on us, that we could sense that in him.

JC: That's interesting, and, and what about church, were, did your family go to church regularly, was that an important part of your life?

EW: We did, we were made to go to Sunday school and we went to, oh what was it called, Clooney, All Saints Clooney, which would have been part of Church of Ireland.

JC: And was that, was that near where you lived?

EW: That was in, it was in, it was probably the closest church to Prehen, yes, it was in Derry, it was on the Waterside and there was, the minister there was called Archdeacon Willoughby, and he was a lovely man, someone you could listen to, just, oh I don't know, he

just had a lovely voice and it was always quite nice to listen to him and whenever we moved to Eglinton, my dad didn't like the new church at all, so he stopped going to church and we, I think we were made to keep going, I know certainly I was confirmed, I had to go through my confirmation, that was about age fourteen and then I think came to the conclusion that I didn't actually believe in God and this was all a bit nonsense and it was causing, you know, ridiculous, I thought it was religion that was causing the, the problems in Northern Ireland and, and it was a nonsense, so I stopped going as well, and my mum, my mum has gone back to church recently, she's gone back to it and I don't, I think daddy goes with her just because he has to drive her, so.

JC: And was there much of a social life around the church, like, did you, did you get to know the others kids and, and stuff like that?

EW: I don't remember getting much of a social life, but we did, I did Sunday school, I didn't mind Sunday school, that was, that was fine, God we had to go to the good news club as well when we lived in Prehen which was, you had to go to, like, it was a neighbour's house, it's a bit evangelical and, but you'd sing songs and, that must have been just Protestants, I can't remember, there was other kids there, I must ask myself, I can't remember if that was, it might, I can't, I can't think it would be, no, it wouldn't have been mixed, there was lots of other kids there and we were singing, like, these songs which were, just stay with you don't they.

JC: And, what was I going to ask, I had, oh yeah, so, so you, you said you stopped going at around the age of fourteen and that was just because you decided that it wasn't something that you believed in or wanted to follow?

EW: Yes, and mum and dad certainly wouldn't have made me go.

JC: So they, yeah, they were quite relaxed about it then?

EW: Yeah.

JC: And do you, did you or your family have any involvement with the, the Twelfth celebrations or, or anything around the marching season or that time, time of year, did you participate in any of the festivities around that?

EW: I don't remember ever going, I remember being inconvenienced by it, that, you know, that it was there, I think I remember my granny coming up for it one year, so I would say that mum and dad are the most liberal of their siblings and, so when I say my family weren't involved in it that's my direct family whereas I have aunts and uncles who would, my auntie still sends me pictures of her bunting on the Twelfth of July, that type of thing, and she doesn't even live in Northern Ireland anymore, she's in England, so I think my, both my grandads would have been in the Orange Order **[00:00:20]**, but that was absolutely not something that my dad was interested and, nor my mum, so.

JC: Right, and do you, do you think they, they weren't interested because they just, it, it wasn't for them, or do you think they actively thought it was, it was something that they actively disliked and, and–?

EW: I think they saw it as creating hassle and my daddy would just be, like, why would you want that, why would you want any form of hassle, he just wouldn't be bothered with stuff that would cause him any problems at all and, and I suppose maybe he would have been working through quite a lot of them. I think in fact he was, yeah, he would have been working through all, you know, every Twelfth of July and, no, we certainly didn't, I didn't go out as a child, but I know my cousins would have gone and they would have gone with flags and bunting and, you know, brought a picnic and all that kind of thing.

JC: And did you, did you have much to do with your extended family, did they live locally?

EW: Yeah, they did, yeah, they, we were really close to them actually, still are, they lived in Eglinton the whole time and then, so whenever we moved to Eglinton that would have been maybe why it was appealing to mum and dad that they had, you know, family already there, and we went on holidays with them to France, and we would always, like, meet up for one of our weeks away, they would do something else and then we would do something and then we'd meet up for one week maybe on a campsite together, so we were very close to them, and it was, och it was funny to watch, you know, sometimes Uncle Reid would get very drunk, not sometimes, often he would get very drunk and when he would you'd just remember some raucous nights where maybe he'd pretend to be playing, you know, marching, the Twelfth of July-type music and in the kitchen and it would all have been very, very funny, but we didn't as a, personally as a family we didn't celebrate it, we certainly wouldn't have put up a flag, whereas I think Uncle Reid might have done, and it would have been–

JC: Sorry, go ahead.

EW: No, no, that was it go on.

JC: Okay, yeah, no, I was just going to ask if, if your family, either your direct family or your extended family, were involved with politics at all or anything like that, or if they, if politics was a subject of discussion when you were growing up?

EW: No, I don't, I don't remember politics being discussed at all, I couldn't tell you how my parents voted, I don't know.

JC: So it's just something that they didn't really talk about then.

EW: Yeah, they didn't really talk about, certainly I remember dad would have voted and I remember going with him to vote the first time I could, but I don't, we didn't discuss, it wasn't, it wasn't discussed, yeah.

JC: And did you develop your own personal interest in politics or, or anything growing up?

EW: More recently yes, I think it's probably an age thing, but I would talk to my children about politics now and just, well, the news and I would make sure they knew what I thought, which is maybe the kind of parenting I was brought up with you, you know, they wouldn't have influenced me. I remember, it's a bit, wee bit off topic, but at school I was part of a group called the cross community group, so at my school it was predominantly Protestant, but you could have been any religion to be there and there was this group, I had some best friends at school were Catholic and I met them through this cross community group and we would go away for weekends, we'd meet once a week after school and we'd go away sometimes to, what was it called, on the west coast, I can't remember the name and, and have, like, an, you know, a long, a long weekend away and I remember at one of these after-school sessions I came back and told dad about what had happened, I think we were in a police station, or we were hearing from somebody who'd been arrested and been treated badly, I came back and told dad that story and he got a bit annoyed saying, and then what did you say, and of course I didn't have any, cos dad wouldn't have talked about these things with me, I didn't have any background knowledge or any context for, you know, it was a Catholic guy who was talking to us about his treatment by the police and daddy was a bit annoyed to hear this story and a bit annoyed to hear that I hadn't spoken up, but I didn't have any context to the story, so I didn't, you know, question it or defend it, I just took it as read, in front of me, that's probably the closest to political discussions that we got.

JC: That's interesting cos I was going to ask if you, if you had any Catholic friends growing up and it sounds like, you know, you did get to know quite a few people through this, this group, you said it was, it was called cross community?

EW: Yeah.

JC: Yeah, and that was presumably specifically designed to, to build bridges between both sides.

EW: But we were all from the same school, we were all from the same school.

JC: Right, okay.

EW: But it was, I don't know, I don't, I can't remember now where the guys came from, there were two guys who led it and they came from, they weren't teachers, they came in to lead it and, and we all, we all had a, you know, we had a absolutely lovely time, it was great, that weekend away was one of the best weekends ever, it's the only time I've ever stayed up all night, absolutely all night and saw through till, had to stay up till the next day about seven o'clock.

JC: And were you conscious at the time of any, any sort of differences between yourself and your family and, and Catholic families, or, or were you, were they just, you know, your friends that you just hung around with?

EW: No, I was very conscious of it, I had one really good friend who still lives in Derry and she came to stay with us for a little bit because she'd fallen out with her mum and dad and there was a difference in terms of, I suppose economics, so her mum was on her own, their

parents had separated, so she was Catholic, parents had separated and I think, her dad was a taxi driver, and I think it was really difficult for this girl to come and stay in my house with my dad and it was difficult for my dad to have this girl in my house for that little bit cos I think her dad wouldn't, he'd, he was not a member of anything explicitly, but he was a supporter or a sympathiser, and she told me that he as a taxi driver would have done stuff unquestioningly, yeah, so just, you know, pick up this person and take them to here and then drive away, you know, that type of thing, so not, not involved in anything, you know, no actual, just did the driving, like, maybe take this bag, or, you know, that type of thing from A to B and I remember, me and her got on so, so well and there was literally no difference between us and then as soon as you go out and look at the difference between her mum and her family, her mum's issue wasn't so much that I was Protestant, it was that I was, she, you know, kind of accused me of being middle class and that was her mum's issue, that Fiona had a middle-class friend rather than a Protestant friend.

JC: Oh that's interesting, cos you don't, you don't often think about the class divide as much when, when you talk about Northern Ireland.

EW: No, not at all, not at all.

JC: As much as the sort of religious divide, but that's interesting, and yeah, growing up, you mentioned holidays to France and stuff, did you ever visit mainland UK or, or the Republic of Ireland or, or anywhere?

EW: I remember stopping off in Dublin to pick up a passport, so we, we all travelled on Irish passports and there must have been a renewal issue and we had to go into Dublin, that's the only time I remember being in Dublin, we wouldn't have crossed the border, wouldn't have gone to Donegal, so even living in Derry just now you know, you go back as a tourist and you wouldn't visit that part of the world without going to Donegal, you know, and I don't remember going that, that way at all, we would have, we went to the north coast, we wouldn't have gone across the border. We did go to England, my dad's sister lived in England for a time, I remember there was one holiday there and they came across to Scotland once for the weekend, but no, not, we didn't do much of that, certainly, even living in Derry mum and dad never took me to Belfast, like, we, Belfast was a, you know, foreign land, so we didn't do much of that, so.

JC: And you, you mentioned, so you had family who lived in, in England and stuff. Do you know why they decided to leave Northern Ireland?

EW: I don't remember for auntie Mary, I presume she got married and uncle John was, oh he was [pauses], from South Africa and they ended up living in near in Windsor I think, my auntie Carol moved to Scotland a long, long time ago, she still lives here and I don't know if that was jobs related, I'm not sure.

JC: And were there, were there many people, like, sort of from your area leaving Northern Ireland at the time, cos I'm sort of, just sort of thinking the Troubles was, was still going on at this time, do you think that–?

EW: I don't remember that many people of my parents' generation, I think people, it felt like people stayed, so there was still, so I've named those two aunties, but that is, that's it, everyone else stayed and they're both from quite big families, mum and dad, so.

JC: And then when did you first start to consider the option of leaving Northern Ireland, when did that–?

EW: Well, I suppose my sister was three years older and she left and went to Liverpool University and, and that seemed wildly exciting and whenever it was my turn to look at universities I, what did I do, **[00:00:30]** I don't think I went to any open days across in Sc-, I ended up going to Edinburgh University, I don't think I went to any open days there, I went to an open day at Queen's in Belfast and decided there that it was definitely physics I wanted to study and then my options were to either go to, well, Manchester, I'd applied to Manchester, Queen's and Edinburgh, and I think by the time it came to deciding where I wanted to go, I picked Edinburgh because that was the only one that I'd applied for straight physics for, I'd applied for different courses at the other universities, so I think that I definitely, I remember, oh there was Magee University, I don't know what they did in Derry, it wasn't a very big university, I think it's part of the University of Ulster now, and it was, it was never an option, it was right beside my school for, for one, so, and I felt a desperate need to get away from that, you know, from Derry at least, gosh, and then when I went to Belfast I felt that if I wanted to have a proper experience I would have to leave cos I'd just come home every weekend if I didn't, so that was a bit more of a personal, you know, because of the character that I am or that I was then certainly, I probably wouldn't have stayed and met people at the weekends, I would have come home, so I decided to force myself to go away and the school, a lot of people from my school went to Edinburgh, there was quite a few.

JC: Okay, yeah, that's interesting, and I suppose the sort of student culture is a bit different over there as well in terms of, as you say, people in Northern Ireland still even tend to go home at the weekend and things, so you kind of went looking for a bit of a different experience and I guess a bit more independence as well?

EW: Yes, uh huh, yeah.

JC: How did your family feel about moving to, about you moving to Scotland?

EW: I don't remember anybody being anyhow, even any comments about it, oh gosh, we didn't talk about very much truthfully, which is becoming clear. I remember at the time a boyfriend's parents came down as we were, you know, like, as a kind of goodbye, came down to our house and I remember Hilary asking me what was I worried about or what was I looking forward to, and as I answered her I just heard my mum, my mum's face, she kind of jaw dropping, going Jesus, I didn't know Ellen thought about these things, you know, I don't remember what I said, I do just remember my mum's face being a bit shocked that I'd actually got worries and hopes for my time at university, but no, they were, mum and dad were incredibly supportive and incredibly, like, it's, I feel quite lucky in that they were fairly liberal, they didn't, you know, inflict their beliefs on me. In fact, like I say I couldn't tell you how my dad or my mum has ever voted, which I think is unusual, I think it, it's much more

hammered in, it feels like, in Northern Ireland, and they would be a hundred per cent supportive, I mean, very lucky like that, like, really there was nothing I could do that would've, I don't know what I would've had to have done to upset them, so I feel very lucky.

JC: And you said you were going out with someone at the time that you moved to uni. Was that, that was someone local, was it?

EW: Yes.

JC: And how did you, or what year exactly did you leave Northern Ireland?

EW: I left in '92, '92.

JC: '92, and yeah, how did you feel about leaving? You sort of, you said that you wanted to go, you know, for a bit of, bit of a different experience and adventure, but, you know, did you feel excited or anxious, you know, to leave, leave people behind, leave your friends, boyfriend?

EW: No, I was just excited, I was just excited. He actually went to Edinburgh as well, but I was just excited to get away to, to be somewhere different, I couldn't wait to live in a big city, and to, I don't know, I could just imagine coffee shops and things like that and just, yeah, I was so excited, and Edinburgh worked out really, really well, it was beautiful.

JC: And did you, it's probably, it might not have been something you thought about, but did you have a sense at the time that you were leaving Northern Ireland for good, or did you plan on returning after uni?

EW: So that's, it's really interesting, I've had to, to process that myself just a few years ago, cos obviously mum and dad are now twenty years older as well and that puts life in a different, cont- no, I don't make a conscious decision to leave Northern Ireland forever, I think I thought I was going to go away to uni and I was going to get, like, you know, learn great stuff and become a more exciting person and, and I think I always thought I'd come back, but I never, never said that out loud and then life happened and I haven't gone back and, and now mum is dementing and she's seventy-five, dad's almost eighty and I, certainly five years ago I had a real emotional wrangle with myself to say, you didn't mean to leave them at this stage in their life, you know, you didn't mean to leave all this care down to your brother, so my brother still lives at home, my sister lives in York, so now he looks after mum and dad, well, mum, dad's fine, and, and I didn't ever articulate that decision that when I was leaving in '92, I didn't think I would never be back. If you'd asked me to imagine the future of whenever mum was seventy-five and unwell, I'd have been living, you know, nearby, such that I could pop in and yeah, so.

JC: Yeah, but you, you don't think about those sort of things when you're eighteen, do you?

EW: No, not at all, it was not a conscious decision age eighteen to abandon them whenever they were getting old, and they wouldn't have wanted me to, they would not have wanted

me to, to make a decision based on them, like, they would have been adamant that I should do the right thing for me and the right thing definitely was to get away.

JC: Yeah, I know and yeah, as you say it's just sort of the way life pans out sometimes, you don't make those decisions at a stage and then think that everything's, you know, going to go a certain way.

EW: Well, five years ago I suggested to my kids, I said look there's a job in Coleraine, I could go back, be, you know, head of physics and, and be near granny, twenty minutes from granny, and the kids went but mum, when will we see you, and I said no, no, no, you'd come with me, and they just looked at me as if to say, you're nuts, there's not a chance they would go to Northern Ireland, they absolutely would not go back, they would not go back to Northern Ireland at all.

JC: That's interesting, and I was, I was going to ask you a bit more about, about your kids and their relationship with Northern Ireland a bit later on, so that's, that's definitely something I'd like to come onto. Just, just to go back to when you first went to uni, were you, were you staying in the university halls?

EW: I got into university accommodation but it wasn't halls, I was in a shared flat, there were four of us, in Sciennes in Edinburgh and, so I didn't have the halls experience which is a bit of a shame and I presume I didn't get halls because my school would have said she is independent and totally capable and, and I am, but I think I would have preferred, I would have had a better experience in halls, I would have met more people and might have been nicer, so the four girls that were there, can I remember them, one was called Tammy, she was from a very po-, or she felt very posh, private school in England and then there was a girl who was really young, a Scottish girl who was only sixteen because you can go to uni at that age in Scotland and, and then there was another English girl called Amanda who was deeply unhappy and she would try to kill herself on occasions, it was really horrible, so my second year I moved into private accommodation, you know, with some friends, so that was much nicer.

JC: And what were your first impressions of, of Scotland and Scottish people and, and things like that? How did, how did you find Edinburgh as a place?

EW: I just fell in love with Edinburgh, completely and, and I loved Arthur's S-, I could, you know, run Arthur's Seat and live near the meadows and I just thought it was absolutely fantastic, the delis, couldn't believe the food that I'd never eaten, cheeses and, oh wine and yeah, I thought Edinburgh was just absolutely fantastic and I suppose student-wise I had those girls that I lived with in first year and then in my second year I lived with a friend from school actually who was there, and one of, and another girl who was doing geology, and a guy who Cathy knew, so and that was, that was, that was really nice, I really liked second year, that was lovely. I thought the Scottish people were lovely, I loved the Scottish accent, I loved the whole Hogmanay thing, that was, so from when I went to Edinburgh I think I spent every New Year in Edinburgh, you know, I'd go home for Christmas and then come back for Hogmanay and it's still, you know, happy times whenever, Hogmanay in Edinburgh was raucous [laughs].

JC: Yeah, sounds fun.

EW: Unticketed, it was a wee bit breathtaking, but it was fine, we all survived, so.

JC: And how did, how did people in Edinburgh react to you as a Northern Irish person? Did you get any, any comments about your accent, or, or anything like that?

EW: I would've been really conscious of my accent, it would have been much stronger than it is just now and I do remember one time being in a lecture, I did meteorology as well in one of, it was one of my, so we were on the top floor of the James Clerk Maxwell building and there was somebody out on the roof, they were trying to get in and the lecture was happening and I was distracted by this person out on the roof cos I could see them trying to get in and the lecturer kind of looked at me as if to say what are you looking at and I went oh there's, **[00:00:40]** there's a wee man on the roof [laughs], and I just remember saying, there's a wee man, it was such a, such a Northern Irish, you know, put it in my, you know, magnify my accent times ten as well and then I just remember being mortified that I'd said there was a wee man, like, there's nothing small about the man, it was just what you, the casual expression you would have used to describe a man, I remember being really embarrassed about that, I do remember, obviously when you go somewhere, you're not asked where you're from when you live in Northern Ireland, when you're in Northern Ireland nobody asks you where you're from because you're, you're there, but when you're accent's wrong and you go to Scotland and then you're asked continually where you're from, and I found it, I still find it, I was asked on Friday where I was from and I still find it really difficult what to say, I have developed, I'd say something like, oh near Donegal, or I'd say Eglinton which means nothing cos it's too small, or if I have to say I'd be like, Derry, Londonderry, whatever, so I still have an issue with saying, I wouldn't, I couldn't, I couldn't say Derry or Londonderry, I'd have to say both, cos I don't want, I don't want to cause a fight, I don't want–

JC: Would you ever–?

EW: Cause anybody any harm offence.

JC: Would you ever say you were from Northern Ireland?

EW: I wouldn't have to I think with my accent, or just as a vague thing, I'm from Northern Irish, you know, the girl, the girl on Friday was also from Northern Ireland and she wanted to know where my accent was from.

JC: Oh where specifically in Northern Ireland?

EW: Yes, where specifically in Northern Ireland I was from.

JC: And I'm just wondering as well, cos obviously when you moved, early nineties, it's kind of towards the end of the Troubles, but the Troubles were, were still going on. Did, did people in Scotland, like, ask you about what Northern Ireland was like, or did they have any sort of

preconceptions or stereotypes about, about what Northern Ireland was like, and what, what Northern Irish people were like?

EW: I don't remember students being, you know, asking at all, I remember any of my flatmates or anything asking, what it was like, I do remember one time in that flat in second year and the telly was on and the wee kind of snug bit off the kitchen and I remember seeing Shipquay Street in Derry on the telly and, and I said to everybody, oh shush, shush, shush, this is where I'm from, this is my hometown, and of course it was on the news cos it was a flipping killing had happened, and I just remember wanting to, the floor to, just being mortified, just going, Jesus Christ that is my hometown, that's why we make the news, because someone shot a policeman in the head on a busy shopping street and walked off through the crowd of people and no one, no one stopped them, so I would put that as being '92, '93, so '93 or '94 when that incident happened and I remember, you know, getting all excited saying, oh look at this, this is my hometown, and, you know, as if, you know, full of pride and then the story was, I think still one of the most shocking things I've seen in the news, that no one stopped the gunman.

JC: Do you remember what, what the incident was, it was s-, it was sa–

EW: A masked man shot a policeman in the head on Shipquay street, on a busy shopping street.

JC: Right.

EW: Just shot, shot him in the head, and walked off through the crowds, that's what I remember about it.

JC: And you say, you say you didn't really talk about it much. Did you get a sense that people in Scotland generally or the student population or whoever had, had much of an idea about the Troubles, about, about what it was all about it, or not?

EW: I don't, I don't, I don't remember thinking much about, or even, and of course I was there to escape it, so I wouldn't have brought it up, you know, I know occasionally you would meet someone from, also from Northern Ireland and I remember it being important to me to establish and for a long time it was important for me to establish if you were Protestant or Catholic, and it wasn't important to me in that I wouldn't change the way I spoke to you or acted with you or whatever, I didn't, I didn't mind, I didn't, you know, have any preference either way, but it was important just to establish what are you, you know, before, and I remember that feeling then fading probably over, it took me, I'd say ten years actually.

JC: So do you think that was something that was kind of ingrained in you from living in Northern Ireland, that–?

EW: It was just about a safety thing, wanting to feel, wanting to feel certain, wanting to feel, you know, what am I going to be allowed to tell you or what are we, where are we at, what,

you know, what, or maybe as well what's your experience because I suppose I think that the Protestant and the Catholic experience would have been different.

JC: And how did you find out? Did you, like, ask outright, or I know a lot of people from Northern Ireland do the kind of, sort of cryptic working out by things, like, what school they went to and yeah?

EW: What school did you go to, yeah, well, my name, having an Irish name as well is not, it doesn't make my story so, so obvious, so usually with someone's name you would kind of, I don't remember how you established, you'd ask about school, yes, ask about school.

JC: Yeah, that's always one of the markers, isn't it.

EW: Yeah, yeah.

JC: And I'm just wondering as well if you were aware, I mean, this, this probably was maybe slightly more relevant to, to Glasgow and the surrounding areas, but were you aware of, of any kind of Scottish sectarianism that existed when you, when you lived there, you know, there's obviously the, the Catholic-Protestant thing is a feature of Scottish society as well?

EW: Yes, I think and in Edinburgh obviously there's, there's a Hearts and Hibs version, isn't there, I still don't know which way round is which, but, so that's not very helpful in, when someone's trying to assess whether you are, but I think yes, I think yes, it's quite heightened in Scotland depending on who you speak to, I think even, certainly then it was and it comes out nowadays as football doesn't it, but it's still quite, I remember even whenever, gosh Erin was little, so it was about fifteen, sixteen or more years ago and I was at someone's house and the mum was from Northern Ireland and the dad was from Scotland and, and he had said oh where are you from, and I said oh mum and dad live in Eglinton, I said it's right next to City of Derry Airport and I was being a bit bolshy cos he'd said city of Derry, and I said yes, that's what it's called, like, you know, that's what it's called, City of Derry Airport, well, it was at the time, I think maybe it is Londonderry now, LDY when you book a flight, but I, and I just thought, why would you be challenging me on what an airport's called, like, you know, you're not from there or whatever, it just felt, och it just felt silly, it just felt, so I can't be bothered, I really can't be bothered with that, I can't be bothered from a Scottish point of view and I certainly can't be bothered with it from a, from a Scottish person taking issue with a Northern Ireland issue, do you know what I mean, and I'm just not, not bothered.

JC: Yeah, it must have been strange, like, having such, like, when you're from Northern Ireland having someone from outside sort of comment on it.

EW: Yeah, feeling stronger about it than I did, you know, whenever I come from there, you know, it felt like, yeah, I wouldn't, I wouldn't argue with anyone over what is it called, I was being a bit bolshy, maybe I was a bit drunk that night as well and I just refused to back down on the fact that it was called City of Derry Airport, it's not called City of Londonderry Airport, it was called City of Derry Airport, anyway.

JC: Could you talk me a little bit more through, through student life then, both academically and, and sort of socially, you know, how did, what sort of things did you, did you get involved in when you were a student?

EW: So when I was a student I, I met, well, my future husband in third year and we were part of a group who had dinner parties which is absolutely not how I grew up and, but we would cook or be cooked for on a Friday and a Saturday night, different groups of people and, and we enjoyed exploring wine and, you know, food and creating recipes and that's absolutely not how I was brought up and I loved that side of things, I thought it was, I felt very cosmopolitan to, and grown up and sophisticated and all that kind of stuff, and that's what I did, I'd, I'd never been part of big groups, I have lots of friends, I have lots of friends, I just don't, I'm not part of a big group of friends, and, and at uni it was, it was the same, I had kind of, well, I met him, what else did I do, gosh, I didn't join any clubs particularly, I tried to join the, well, with my clarinet I tried to join the, the orchestra, but realised very quickly I was absolutely rubbish compared to loads of people, that I'd been, you know, played first clarinet in this band in, in, at home, and then when you took that to Edinburgh, you know, you're back to playing fourth clarinet or something like that and realise, oh shit I'm not, I'm not any good at this, and the same with athletics, I used to be a, quite a good runner at home and I, I went to the athletics club, but I didn't, I didn't join in, I don't know why, I don't think it's a particular, I think it's more a character issue than a background issue as to why I was like that [pauses], I did, I really liked, I really liked student life, I really liked Edinburgh, I loved the botanic gardens, I would walk there quite often just to walk around, and I loved going out for coffee, I thought that was the most grown up, sophisticated thing you could do and in Edinburgh it was possible, in, in, there was just not the same type of businesses, they just weren't, and there was certainly no exciting food in, in Derry growing up at all, and there is now, it's absolutely amazing now, **[00:00:50]** there's some brilliant restaurants and, totally different.

JC: So you felt like you kind of had more freedom socially in Edinburgh than you would have done in, in, at home?

EW: Yeah, yeah.

JC: Oh that's interesting, yeah, cos I suppose as you say, like, there might not have been, been the range of sort of cultural options.

EW: There was nothing, there was nothing cultural, I go back now, I went back recently for the, what do they host, they had the Turner Prize there and, and they had that festival of, they were City of Culture weren't they, and they had this festival of lights we went back for one November, it was unbelievable, just unrecognisable, you walk around the walls now and there's, there's this really cool little theatre, you know, doing independent cinema and cool theatre stuff and there's, like, a street, Vietnamese street food restaurant up in the foyer of it that is fantastic, like, absolutely brilliant, and absolutely none of that was there, certainly, no, I'd say it wasn't there, certainly it wasn't, wasn't a part of town that I would ever have explored with the walls being closed for most of the time I lived there, they, they weren't, you couldn't walk round the walls, and this is just a wee thing now, like, the culture just

wasn't there, back in the, back when I lived there at all, and now it has completely changed, like, it's, it's absolutely beautiful.

JC: Yeah, no, I've, I've visited a couple of times and it is a really nice city.

EW: Oh the whole, the brewery bit and that the whole, Ebrington, that was all, you know, closed off for the army barracks and, you know, totally no go, no-go area and now I think it just feels like it's a totally different city, it's lovely.

JC: And so you met your, your future husband in, in third year. Was that, was he from your, the same course?

EW: No, he wasn't, he was an engineer, so same campus, but not the same course.

JC: And it was, it was just through mutual friends you met?

EW: Yes.

JC: And did you, did you start going out quickly and–?

EW: No, I think I met him in third year, we didn't start going out until probably the summer of third year, when we went travelling together, so.

JC: Right, okay, and how long was your course then, was it, was it a four-year–?

EW: Four years.

JC: Four years, yeah.

EW: Yes, it was.

JC: So you would have finished in '96, yeah?

EW: Yeah.

JC: And did you have much of a sense of what you wanted to do when you fi-, when you finished uni?

EW: I think that, well, I became a teacher and I was quite happy with that, I did a lot of the milk round interviews for, you know, Anderson consulting and companies like that back in the day and that was all grand, I quite liked getting dressed up for that, but it really wasn't my cup of tea, I had an interview with the met office which I was disappointed not to get, I would have quite liked that, but I really, really, stupid question, stupid answer to a simple question, remains, still haunts me, so I didn't, that was an, that was an option and I would have liked that, but it didn't happen so I ended up going to York to do a PGCE which I was very, very happy to do, yeah.

JC: How long were you in York for?

EW: Just one year.

JC: One year, was it, did you enjoy, enjoy York?

EW: I loved that, yeah, so we did, we had two teacher placements and I was in a big house, so there was ten of us in a three- or four-storeyed house, was a part of a wee campus of, the student accommodation there is lovely in Heslington and it was, it was a really nice, a really nice year.

JC: And then when, when you got your qualification, where did you end up working?

EW: So I ended up then, I went to, so I was looking for physics jobs and I, I was living in Chester, so Douglas who I'd met at uni had gone to Chester to work for ICI, he was working in Runcorn, and so I was looking for jobs around there and there was a job came up at Chester grammar school and I went for the interview and I didn't get it and I was gutted because the guy gave me feedback saying, you know, you were stitched up, there was nothing you could have done today, that guy was always going to get it and whatever, so I felt really disappointed cos that would have been lovely and then my second interview which was a school in Manchester and I got that, but it was a Catholic school, so I remember going to the interview thinking right, you know, if there's crucifixes everywhere and, you know, they make you say Hail Mar-, the Hail Mary or whatever. I can't, I can't do that, you know, again with my background, but of course I didn't lie about where I was from, I didn't lie about my background or my faith or whatever and, and I wore a trouser suit to the interview and they gave me the job and then they told me it was such an old-fashioned school, it was a really old-fashioned private school and I was told as a woman you had to wear a skirt and I don't know why I'm telling you that, it's not, not relevant at all, we campaigned anyway, we changed that for the next year, but yeah, I remember then, when I went for the interview and walked around the school I didn't notice any crucifixes and when I then got the job and I paid due attention to places, there's a crucifix in every single classroom, and it's, it was just, that was amusing to me, you look at every, yeah, you know, halfway up the stairs that type of thing, but it was a lovely place to be, it was called St Bede's College in Manchester and it was, it was a beautiful, beautiful building and it gave me just a wonderful opportunity to teach kids, to teach my-, to get really good at my subject because the kids were just glorious, they were just lovely and the support staff were, were brilliant too, so most of the staff were Catholic, but it wasn't a condition cos obviously I, I got in, if you were Catholic you weren't allowed to be, you weren't allowed to get divorced, this lady got sacked because she got divorced and, and so she lost her job which I remember being really shocked at and had it happened to me I wouldn't have been sacked cos I wasn't Catholic, but it happened to her. Anyway it was, it was really good, I remember my professor at York who was from Northern Ireland, Robin Millar, and, and he said to me as I accepted the job, he went Ellen, but it's a, it's a Catholic school, and he just kind of had a wee nervous tic of his head going, it's a Catholic school, I was like, well, I'm fine with that Robin and they let me in, so I think it was a bit surprising to, to him and for me it felt like, I don't know, I was, mum and dad were happy, nobody, I'm not sure my grandparents would

have been that happy, no, they would have been fine I think, yeah, I would have some uncles who didn't like it, but, you know, that's fine, whatever.

JC: Yeah, I'm just thinking there can't be many or too many Northern Irish people from a Protestant background who end up teaching in a Catholic school, but as you say, it worked out for you and it sounds like you had a good experience there.

EW: It was lovely, there was a little chapel there and there was a monsignor who was in charge of that, but, and he was a lovely, lovely man and John Byrne the headteacher was brilliant and we were close to, obviously being in Manchester they had links to Manchester United and I got to hear, Alex Ferguson came one day to assembly to present some of my boys from my form with a medal for winning a football tournament. I will never forget hearing him speak and I walked past him in the corridor, he was lovely, and I remember the, one of the guys who also taught physics with me was a semi-professional footballer and he ran the football, he was head of football at the school, and he said to me Ellen, oh come down to the training ground this afternoon, I've got this young player coming down, and I said alright who is it, and he went David Beckham and I said oh I've never heard of him [laughs], I was so, he was, why don't you come down, he's quite good and I said oh right, okay, so I'm driving, this must have been, when it was, '97, '98, maybe '99, before, just bef-, just before he was famous and I remember lining myself up to go, cos I was driving from Manchester, I lived in Chester, and as I was going to approach the, to get onto that, the motorway home I just got myself in the wrong lane and I couldn't go to the football ground, so I didn't go and, and literally, the *Sunday Times* that weekend was David Beckham on the cover for the first time, I couldn't believe it, anyway.

JC: Oh and how did Manchester compare to Edinburgh then as a city, did you, did you notice any difference between the two places?

EW: I didn't spend a lot of time in Manchester cos I lived in Chester, so that was, and, and I thought Chester was, was beautiful, Chester was lovely, I had a brilliant, brilliant time there, it was, yeah, we had a house with, always with, you know, people renting rooms out and stuff like that, so it was always busy, and everyone was just a bit more grown up than students and, and it was a really, really good time.

JC: And what about in, in Chester and indeed other places in England, what about their reaction to you again, like, your accent and things like that? I mean, was, was there any talk about the Troubles or anything then?

EW: No, I don't think so, I think it was less in England than it would have been in Scotland, and I think maybe just as well that I was older then, I was, what was that, five years, six years on from leaving Northern Ireland, I was less, I had less of the concern about, are you Protestant or Catholic before I spoke to people, so that was probably a good thing, and in fact Simon, one of the brilliant friends we made there who, I'm still friends with him and also I couldn't tell you if he was Protestant or Catholic, he's English, he's from London, like, I couldn't tell you, so, that's probably a good thing.

JC: And how long were you in Manchester for, or working in Manchester for?

EW: Three, three years and then I got a promoted post in London.

JC: Okay, so you went down to London, was that by yourself, or did your, your husband go with you?

EW: No, he came with me as well, yeah.

JC: Right, okay, whereabouts in London did you live?

EW: So I lived in Stratford and I was teaching in Gants Hill.

JC: Okay, **[00:01:00]** right, yeah, I'm actually, I'm from London myself, but I don't, don't know that area too well, and–

EW: So I was, I lived, I lived more centrally and drove out of London to school, so.

JC: Right, okay, and what did you, what did you think of London, it's obviously a much, a much bigger city.

EW: Well, just much bigger, in terms of, like, I came from obviously smallish town in Northern Ireland, there was coloured girl at our school in my entire time there and suddenly in London it was just multi-coloured and I think eighty per cent of the kids that I taught didn't have English as a first language, then they went home and spoke to their parents in a, in a, in a different language and that's where our school was absolutely brilliant at, teaching science to refugee kids who'd just landed and that type of thing, it was that type of community, so as a white person in that school I was in the minority, maybe not in the staff, I can't quite remember, but certainly the pupils were, were a very, very mixed bag and it was, I thought it was brilliant, I thought it was a brilliant place altogether, so I had my daughter in London and I was looking through some pictures recently, actually I'd taken them off an old computer and, and she, we moved when she was one week old and in fact, gosh, it would have been eighteen year, no, not eighteen, she's eighteen on Sunday, but she, I've got all these pictures of her being handled by my colleagues and honestly they are of every colour conceivable and that's the only time in my life that that's been available to me, you know, I'm back now in Scotland here and again I don't know anyone of colour, not out of, for any reason, but just, there just, the community that's here is very, very different and I thought London was brilliant for it.

JC: Yeah, it's really interesting you say that cos I, when I went to uni I, I moved in the opposite direction, I moved from Tottenham in north London which was the same, you know, very diverse, multicultural, to Belfast which was, which was less so and, and it, it is striking, isn't it.

EW: Yeah, very, yeah.

JC: Yeah, and a few people for this project have sort of noticed, noticed that as well, you know, just the difference between a global city like, like London and Northern Ireland where, as you say, the vast majority of people are, are white.

EW: Yeah, yeah.

JC: And you were in London for, for how long was it?

EW: About three years.

JC: Three years, yeah, and, so after that you, you moved back up to Scotland, was it?

EW: Yeah, we moved back to Scotland cos we had our daughter, so that was in 2002 we moved back, so I quit teaching then and we moved back up to Scotland to, back to Douglas's hometown was Stirling, and so I still live in a wee village near Stirling.

JC: And you, you went back because of your daughter being born, you wanted to be close to your husband's family, was, was that–?

EW: Yeah, I don't think I wanted to have the baby grow up in London, as much as I loved it for my twenty-something experience, I don't think, I think London, what am I trying to say, here I live in a lovely house with a really nice garden and in London I wouldn't have ever been able to afford that, so I think we moved back to have a nice house with children in it, you know, rather than being all squashed in.

JC: Yeah, no, no, that ma-, that makes absolute sense. So you moved back around, yeah, early 2000s?

EW: 2002, yeah.

JC: You said you quit, you quit teaching?

EW: Yes, I did, uh huh.

JC: What did you go on to do?

EW: What did we do, so whenever Douglas was in London he got made redundant and, and he decided to try and never be employed again, so we, he did various things with properties which was a bit easier then, to buy and do up properties, and then we set up a wine business, so we set up a local independent wine shop and then a wholesale business developed as well as that, so.

JC: Right, okay.

EW: So totally different, totally different, but [indecipherable] fall in love with my student, you know, student passion.

JC: Yeah, I was going, I was going to say, there's kind of a link there to what you said you did during your student days of wine-tasting and things like that, so, so it's a wine retailer is it, or?

EW: Yeah, so it's a company called WoodWinters and we have three shops now.

JC: Right, okay, and that's all, is that all in, in and around Stirling?

EW: There's one in Bridge of Allan, Inverness and Edinburgh.

JC: Right, okay, and yeah, just wondering, you know, what, what it was like when you, when you moved back to Scotland, was it, was it easy to settle back in there?

EW: I think it was and I think actually teaching in London with the kids who had English as their second language really tamed my accent, so I had to slow down, and I had to pronounce things differently, so that changed the way I speak quite a bit and yeah, and then obviously that's a new, it, it was a new stage of life for, for us with a, with a wee baby and, and that was great for meeting people, so.

JC: Yeah, sure, there must've been loads, load of opportunities to socialise.

EW: Yeah, loads of opportunities, yeah.

JC: I forgot to ask in, in the sort of context of all this, when did you and your husband actually get married?

EW: We got married in 2002.

JC: Okay, and did you have the wedding in, in Scotland or in Northern Ireland?

EW: We had the wedding in Scotland, yes.

JC: And did both families go, was it, was it a kind of big wedding?

EW: Yes, and they all, my family embraced the kilt situation, so my dad and my brother and my uncle all wore kilts for it, which was really nice.

JC: And, and I mean, how did your family feel about you marrying a Scottish person, there wasn't ever any, any problem with, with that at all?

EW: No, not at all, no, no, they were always quite happy.

JC: And did he go over to Northern Ireland with you much?

EW: He did go over to Northern Ireland, he didn't like it, but he did go over, what didn't he like about it, maybe that you couldn't, there still wasn't very many nice restaurants back in 2002, that type of thing, it hadn't really changed that much, and he found it, he found it very

strange, I think he found the painted streets very, very strange, that you can just drive and be in a red, white and blue painted kerbstone area and then, you know, keep driving, you'll come across a green, white and gold one, he found that just very, very strange, and for me when I go back to Northern Ireland I like to spend my time in Castlerock and that north coast, those beaches, which are obviously all very kind of painted towns, so.

JC: And did your husband, did he have much knowledge about Northern Ireland before he met you, do you know?

EW: I don't think so.

JC: So it's kind of, like, his only connection with society in Northern Ireland is kind of through–

EW: Yes, yes.

JC: Through meeting you and going to visit with you?

EW: Uh huh.

JC: And what about your kids, then, so you had your, your daughter in 2002 and then, you have other children as well, yeah?

EW: I've got two boys as well, yeah, they're both born in Scotland.

JC: Great, when were they born?

EW: So, Felix was 2005 and Bertie was 2002, or no, not, that's the wrong way, eight, 2008.

JC: Okay, and so they, they all, all your kids went to school in Scotland presumably?

EW: Yes.

JC: Have they ever, have any of your kids shown an interest in, in sort of your background, or, or in Northern Ireland, or, or anything like that, do they have any connections to that, their sort of Northern Irish heritage?

EW: No, they feel very, to me they feel very Scottish, so they live quite close to their Scottish granny and, and they see my parents, they, mum and dad would come over about once a year, we'd go back maybe twice a year, so we see them, you know for those intense periods whenever they, they go over, but my kids feel very, very Scottish, so like I say whenever, my husband and I split up eight years ago now and whenever, like I say, I had this crisis five years ago, thinking I've left my mum and dad to get old on their own, this is terrible, kids come back with me, they were absolutely, absolutely no way would they have left Scotland, they are a bit bemused by the whole, we spent a summer, or a couple of weeks one summer in Castlerock, and, and we happened to be there over the Twelfth of July, it was my fault, I hadn't anticipated that it would be an issue, but where we were it was crazy, the, the bands

would march, they'd practise for a few days beforehand and they'd come round and they'd knock on the houses and ask for money, so they were, we found, they found that amusing and then whenever they built the bonfire they built such a big bonfire near power cables that it, our village, our part of town had a blackout cos they destroyed the power cables with their, with their bonfire and they just couldn't get their head around what that meant, so I tell you what, recently, when we were over recently and we, I love Portstewart beach and Harry's Shack restaurant there and that's what I would do with the kids when we go and, and this time round they asked me for the first time, they asked me and I wear this as a badge of honour, that they didn't know what religion I was until they asked me this summer just past, as we were driving through, cos if you go that road to Portstewart I think you go through multicoloured towns and they were saying, what does this mean, what does this mean, what does this one mean, and they said which one are you mummy, and they didn't know, and I felt that was, I felt that was cathartic to, to think that I wasn't passing this on.

JC: Yeah, yeah, no, that's fascinating, so, yeah, so they–

EW: I don't want to pass it on, I think lots of people have passed it on and it's gone on, people are unthinkingly questioning politics and decisions **[00:01:10]** and I absolutely didn't want to pass it on, so.

JC: And in a more sort of general sense, have you, have you ever felt the need to sort of, sort of connect them with their sort of Irish or Northern Irish heritage, or is that again part of you, you not wanting them to, to sort of be part of that?

EW: Well, I would encourage them to ask their grandad stories and that's been really interesting to overhear because I think as a kid you're not very interested in your own parents I don't think and then when you get older everything else becomes more interesting and I regret now not having asked daddy more questions about his work when it was happening, but it's nice to be able to overhear grandad telling his grandkids some stories that he will, he'll not share everything, but he'll share some things with them and that is, that is quite nice. I mean, I definitely, I was adamant we were going to go back for the Turner Prize whenever all that was happening in Derry and we go back, like I say, every summer we go back for a bit of time, this was lovely this summer just passed they, cos my daughter's older now, she was able to fly back with the boys, so I drove over and spent a week with mum and dad and then they flew over and I met them at the airport, so that worked out really, really well and they were happy to come back, but they don't really want to, they don't really, like, they have no particular connection to, to, to granny's, to granny's house, what we did, one summer we tried to get tickets for George Ezra and I couldn't get a ticket in Scotland at all, at all, sold out so quickly, but when I was looking there was tickets for Belfast, so I'd said right, Erin, that's great, we're going to go to Belfast, so we built our summer holiday around this George Ezra concert in Belfast, which was fantastic, but she flew in in the morning and we'd all day to wait then in Belfast, Belfast isn't a place that I know very, very well, but we went to this gorgeous place for lunch, some, was it called, the Onion something or other.

JC: Dirty Onion?

EW: Yeah, Dirty, was it Dirty Onion, yeah, and we went there for lunch which was famous and it was, it was brilliant and then for the afternoon we decided to get on the bus tour of Belfast. Have you ever done it, the open-top bus tour?

JC: I have done it, once yeah, yeah. What did, what did you think of it?

EW: So we, I half thought we would look at Belfast and she'd go and see Queen's University and think that was lovely and maybe Erin would go to Queen's University when she was, you know, deciding on universities coming up and I thought that might be quite nice for her to then have granny and grandad she could go and see, and I'd no expectation that she was going to do it particularly, but I thought that she might just fall in love with Belfast, anyway on the tour, oh dear God, I mean, it starts off really nice doesn't it because the centre of Belfast is all very modern and very optimistic and then you go down to the, you know, the Harland and Woolf and the, the docks and everything, and then, oh my goodness, Erin just could not believe the m-, I'd never seen the murals either, she could not believe the, the murals and for me, the lady was just, the speaker, I mean, it was brilliant, but she would just tell you all these, point out all these things, these streets, you know, and that's where the youngest victim of the Troubles was over there and, and this is where, there was a street and depending what newspaper you carried, depending on what side of the ro-, oh dear god, Erin and I just ended up going, you know, get me out of here, this is awful, we just ended up thinking Belfast was horrendous, because the, the tour referenced lots of terrible things in the Troubles which I know that's what it was, that's what it was about as well, cos it is part of the heritage of Belfast, but I, I felt like, moved to tears at part of it, was it Divis Street, Divis Street Flats or something like that.

JC: Yeah.

EW: Oh dear, no, it didn't, it didn't have the effect that I was thinking it might have.

JC: That's really interesting, and I suppose then for your daughter as well that was kind of maybe her becoming a bit more conscious of where you grew up, I mean, obviously you didn't grow up in Belfast, but–

EW: No, uh huh.

JC: There would have been similar, similar things going on in Derry as well.

EW: Yes, uh huh.

JC: That's interesting, so no plans for her to, to go to Queen's, then, you don't think [laughs]?

EW: Definitely not [laughs].

JC: I wanted to ask a bit more, we didn't, we kind of touched on this a little bit when you mentioned the incident that happened at uni, that you saw on TV of, of, of the shooting that happened and you sort of mentioned feeling, feeling ashamed at the time. Do you have any

other memories of sort of the major incidents of the Troubles that happened when you were living in, in Britain, so I'm thinking things like, maybe like the Docklands bombings or the Warrington bomb or anything like that, do, do, do you have any memories of finding out about those when they occurred, or, or–?

EW: Not really when they occurred, but I tell you what, watching *Derry Girls*, and the last episode of the first series, chilled me to the bone, that felt very real to me that, you know, there they were dancing on stage at school and, and I don't know, was it Omagh maybe the bomb that they were referencing there, it was just dr-, and that, that felt, you know, I ended up crying loads at that, that felt really, really real, and I think as well with *Derry Girls* as well, sorry a wee bit of a digression, but whenever they, the way they speak to each other, the cousin, the way they speak to the cousin at the end of the second series, I think she's saying, she basically wants to say I love you James and, you know, you're special to me or whatever, but what she ends up saying to him is something like oh fuck up, James and, and that for me is very much how we speak to each other and I've spent twenty-odd years trying not to speak to my loved ones like that, because actually that's not the way most people, most people don't respond well to that, it's not a language that is universally translated as love, but is very much how, I think there's a harshness about the way they speak to, Northern Irish people speak to each other, that I've tried to, I have tried to get rid of cos it's not, it's not nice.

JC: That's interesting, I was a-, I was going to ask you about *Derry Girls* actually and, like, do you think it's changed and just sort of the visibility a bit more of Northern Ireland in, in British culture, do you think it's, it's changed how people see Northern Ireland at all?

EW: Yeah, I, I think it's been, I, I think it's been a really, it's been a really good thing and I think one of the best bits was where the Protestants and the Catholic school kids go away and they try to find out what's, you know, what, what do they have in common or what's different and it's, I thought it was hilarious, you know, was it, Protestants don't like Abba or whatever, you know, nonsense they said, you know, it was just, it was, and that's what it felt like to me, eventually growing up that's what it felt like, that I didn't see, I didn't see that there was a significant difference between people and I thought, I just saw all this terror and, you know, real inconvenience of, you know, the, you couldn't drive down Strand Road, you had to, cos they'd blocked it off cos the police station wasn't safe and like I say there was bomb scares on the bridges and all this inconvenience, that constant kind of worry of, well, for my dad, maybe of checking under a car that there was no bomb under a car, just all that stuff that was for nothing, I just couldn't see any point to it at all, I think it turned me off history, I think that I didn't actually ever find out context about, you know, what it was like to be a Catholic person growing up in Northern Ireland or what the Catholic story is, or I didn't ever find out any details cos all I could see was that that in the present day this is awful, I don't want to be part of this and nothing that anyone is doing is in my name, this is not, I don't like any of this.

JC: And did you ever, did you ever receive any kind of, like, discrimination because of being from Northern Ireland, did you ever get, like, sort of pigeonholed as, you know, you're this, or were you ever associated by anyone, just because of your accent, with the violence that was going on?

EW: I don't remember anything, no, I don't, I don't, I don't think so.

JC: Yeah, no, cos–

EW: But, I mean, now, now I work with a guy from Omagh actually, my boss is from Northern Ireland and, and we get teased quite often about, you know, cos we're, but it wouldn't be, that it would be in a gentle way, it would be in a humorous way, it really wouldn't be in a serious thing.

JC: Yeah, no, I'm, I'm just kind of asking cos, you know, some people we've talked to have said that, you know, when they spoke they were automatically sort of pigeonholed as, oh IRA sympathiser or things like that, but it sounds, it sounds as if that perhaps wasn't your experience.

EW: No, no.

JC: And eventually you talked to your, your kids about politics and stuff a bit, have you ever been involved with politics over here, or any, any movements at all?

EW: I joined a political party last year, which was surprised me as well, that I'd taken a huge interest in politics. I joined the Green Party, that would be my political interest, and in terms of, I mean, it's, there are so, I don't know if it's just kids are more interested in the news, or maybe it's that the news is more prevalent, cos it's easily accessed for them, they've got it on their phones if they want to all the time, but they are, my guys are quite, are very, I think very politically aware and [pauses], yeah, but I, I joined the Green Party recently and I would make my children aware that that's, that that's what I think is the most important issue, but none of it, all the rest of it's going to be history, **[00:01:20]** isn't it, but the planet might not still be here, so.

JC: Yeah, no, I, totally, and how do you feel about the peace process now in Northern Ireland, like, what, or what were your thoughts when, you know, sort of the Good Friday Agreement happened and things like that, did you, did you follow that very closely on the news?

EW: I didn't follow it very closely at the time, again I'd left, so I wasn't there and I do remember watching, I was going to say Dermot O'Leary, it's not Dermot, it's Patrick Kielty, was it Patrick Kielty did a documentary on the Troubles cos his father had been murdered.

JC: Yes.

EW: And in it he spoke to, oh was it, it was a, it was a twenty-five years, was it, anniversary of the peace process, of the Good Friday Agreement, something like that, and he, I learnt a lot more about that, about it from watching that just relatively recently, I hadn't realised everybody had voted on it, I don't remember that at all, don't remember mum and dad discussing it, I don't remember which way they voted or anything like that cos I wasn't there at the time, so I didn't vote, I didn't get that vote cos I didn't live there, I presume if I had

lived there I would have been interested, but I think, I think that at the time I'd gone and I was just, I was glad to be, I was glad to be away, so I learnt a wee bit about it with Patrick Kielty recently and I think there's a series of programmes on BBC recently that my auntie Linda who's the bunting lady, she made me watch, made me watch, she, she watched one of them with me when I went down to see her in Leeds and, and it was about, it was about a journalist who's been following the story for, you know, thirty years, so you see footage of him asking questions thirty years ago and he's still asking, you know, questions and it was his take on how it had all changed, that was, yeah, I think I'm more interested in it now looking back, I think at the time I wasn't, I, I wasn't very interested in it because all I could see was horror stories in the news that made me embarrassed to be where I'm from, I still think that's there a little tiny bit, but I am not proud of that period of time at all, I suppose I am proud of the, the peace process and whatever, that's what it was on the, on the bus tour, God they, they said that there was a vote between the two sides of this wall as to whether they would lower the wall, and the vote was like, massively in favour of keeping the wall as high as it was, that the two communities felt, did you get that same experience on the bus tour, do you know the bit I mean?

JC: Yeah, I think, was that, yeah, was that in, near the Falls and Shankill was that, or–?

EW: I think it must be, so between the two estates, and the, the residents were, were asked what they wanted to do and their preference was to keep the wall, they wanted it to be as high as it was because, well, presumably they felt safer, or they didn't trust the other side still, but I think that's a fair way to handle it, to, that they'd get to decide, that it's not, you know, someone else who gets to decide.

JC: And do, are you following kind of the whole, the whole Brexit situation and particularly the impact that that might have on, on Northern Ireland, is that something that interests you as well?

EW: Absolutely and it was from the, from the start I felt the Northern Ireland issue wasn't given any, wasn't given enough consideration, I'm not sure it was mentioned until we'd voted for Brexit and then people are going, oh what about the, what about the border, but it, it feels to me that it was the right thing to say, that the Good Friday agreement was the right thing to say, my understanding is that there'll be another vote and people of Northern Ireland will get to decide and the compromise of, you know, pick your passport and, and that it's all free trade and all the rest of it just seemed like such a sensible, you know, not compromise particularly for either side, it just felt really, really sensible, and the fact that then if they're going to create a united Ireland it would be because the people of Northern Ireland had a vote on it again and, and it feels like Brexit is going, is just pushing the agenda, that's not what was intended by the Good Friday Agreement I don't think, I think the intention was that it would be the people of Northern Ireland would decide and with Brexit and the trade boundary being maybe in, making Ireland a united Ireland or whatever they decide to do, just feels like it might set, set things back a bit. I think that the Troubles haven't gone away, in a sense that, if you stayed in Northern Ireland I suspect there were some families and generations who are still ingrained in this, you know, still being told the same stories, and so they'll feel as strongly as they ever did even though, like, I couldn't believe when the, the journalist got murdered, just last year was it, or two years ago now.

JC: Yeah, last year I think, yeah.

EW: And, and that was in Derry and, gosh my dad had been to a dentist there, cos he has to go to a specialist dentist there, just I think the week before or something like that, in that square, and it just felt, like, these boys who maybe did it, I think that I don't know for sure if they've caught anybody for it yet, but the, my understanding is that they were young guys who had done it and I don't think for a second they intended to do it, but, you know, you can't be running about with a gun and not accept the consequences of, of that. I've just felt chilled that that's a generation who've grown up in peace, you know, if it was a young boy, you know, what was it eighteen, nineteen, twenty, then that's been peace, their whole life has been peace.

JC: Yeah, totally.

EW: And yet they still had a gun and were, you know, prepared to do what they did, so it feels like it's not really gone away, it's just a bit underneath the surface.

JC: So I've got a few more kind of, like, rounding up questions now, if, if that's okay.

EW: Uh huh, uh huh.

JC: So I guess the first thing I wanted to ask, and we've kind of touched on this already, but if you, if you could tell me if and, and how you think Derry and al-, and also Northern Ireland more generally has changed since you left in, in '92, the, the different ways in which it's changed?

EW: Well, I think that one of the main ways has to be that culturally it's really interesting now, that there's loads of stuff that's going on and that festival of lights thing that happens, honestly that, the burning, all the burning stuff in St Columb's Park was just, it was out of this world, it was, it felt like an international city and I don't think it ever felt like that growing up at all, at all, at all. How's it changed, I think that for a long time, whenever I went back I still was quite wary of going over, you know, going over to town even, you know, across the water and actually mum and dad got used to the new situation much more quickly than I did because I suppose I, they lived, well, they were there the whole time weren't they, and so whenever I went over, and not, it doesn't still happen, but yeah, maybe ten years ago if I went back to visit mum and dad and dad suggested we go over town to maybe, you know, was it Marks and Spencer for a coffee or something like that, I would be questioning, is that alright daddy, are you allowed to go over, you know, across the river and, and he was totally fine with it, so it took me, it took me longer to be fine with it, to accept the changes I suppose, how's it changed, now Derry is a, I would wholeheartedly recommend anybody go visit it as a tourist, because I think it's a marvellous city, and I think it's beautiful and I think there's loads of really interesting stuff going on, and it is not the town I grew up in at all.

JC: And do you think your relationship with Northern Ireland and your sort of identity more, more generally has, has changed or evolved as a result of living in Scotland and England?

EW: I think that I am happier now to say that I'm from Northern Ireland, that perhaps I don't feel, I suppose I have a slight fear of what might happen if the, if the Troubles will come back, or in some form or other with whatever happens as a result of Brexit, that is definitely a slight, a slight fear, sorry what did you ask me, Jack?

JC: I just asked, yeah, about, has your identity as a person or your, or your relationship with home changed as a result of, of living in England and Scotland?

EW: Well, I think, it's, well, it's hard to, as you get older you become I think, well, I've become much happier in myself, so I would be, I certainly, well, I've never tried to hide my accent or anything like that, but I certainly wouldn't be, I'd be happy to, for people to know that I'm from Northern Ireland, sometimes kids in school, I teach in Stirling now and I've gone back to teaching and sometimes the kids don't know that I'm from Northern Ireland which I find really hard to believe because I think I sound like it altogether, but, and I wouldn't be unhappy with that, I certainly, if sometimes kids would ask me about football teams and who do I support and that type of thing and I would absolutely not enter into those conversations with them and I would encourage them not to either, sounds a bit bad, I've got, there was one boy last year in third year and he would whistle, like, a tune and I couldn't be certain what, what it was he was whistling, but it felt like it was like a football chant and I was wondering if he was doing it to goad me **[00:01:30]** into responding, but I didn't, I was ignorant of the, of the, the tune that he was singing, but I and I did call him back and say I don't know what you were doing, but I think it was about this, and I'm not interested in that, I'm not, I don't want that in my classroom, so wind it in.

JC: So do you think there's still, where you're living now and in Scotland more generally, do you think there's still that kind of undercurrent of, of sectarianism?

EW: Yes, yes, yes.

JC: And do you, do you experience that?

EW: In Scotland definitely, not, not when I've experienced it, I don't think it was in Manchester so much and I don't think it was in London at all, but in Scotland it is, sorry what was the last bit?

JC: I was just wo-, you know, asking, like, how, and how you experienced that, I mean, you mentioned the example there of the child you were teaching. Are there any other examples you could give me of, of how that, that sort of undercurrent of sectarianism, like, manifests, or, or where you would see it?

EW: I remember in a classroom from a male physics teacher who apparently, so in physics we use electricity, electricity, experiments with electricity, we have cables in the classroom and he wouldn't accept any green cables, he, he's a Scottish guy, he wouldn't have green cables in his classroom and I can't believe that level of nonsense, maybe I just can't be arsed with it, you know, maybe I should be more arsed about these things, but I couldn't believe

that was an actual thing that a grown man said, that's, that was his, you know, persuasion that he, yeah, so I think it exists in Scotland still, definitely, and–

JC: And that must feel a bit strange for you, like, having, having left Northern Ireland sort of that, that issue still being an issue, if you know what I mean.

EW: Absolutely, it's very strange, I don't understand it at all, especially when they're not even from Northern Ireland themselves, so, but I, I think that maybe what I should do is educate myself on the, the history of the both sides, so that I have some form of persuasive argument to put forward.

JC: And then, the final couple of questions then. You can choose to answer this or not, but how would you describe your, your nationality in terms of your identity, would you say British, Irish, Scottish or something completely different? Northern Irish maybe, I'm, I'm just, just curious.

EW: I think I would say Northern Irish. I travelled on an Irish passport until very recently and then I simply, I changed to a British passport, so that my, cos my Irish passport was in my maiden name, and so when it ran out I changed to a British passport just to be the same as my kids and now ironically I think we might all go back to being on an Irish passport, certainly for Brexit concerns, but I had an Irish passport all my life up until, you know, I don't know, how long do passports last, is it twenty years, was it twenty, don't know when I changed it, anyway I, I, in the last ten years I got a British passport, so if you ask me where I was from I wouldn't say British, that's, that would feel weird, so I wouldn't say Scottish cos that would be a lie, so I think I would say Northern Irish, and I sometimes say, if someone says, are you Irish, I would say I'm not that kind of Irish, or something like that, but, cos I presume Irish means Catholic.

JC: That's interesting.

EW: So there you go, yeah.

JC: So if people, if people say Irish, like, are you Irish would you, you kind of assume that sort of meant from the South and–?

EW: Yes.

JC: Yeah, and Catholic as well, hmm.

EW: Yes, and the same with *Derry Girls*, cos quite a few of my friends would say, you know, after the programme came out would say oh but Ellen, you're a Derry girl and I'm like, yeah, well, I'm, I wasn't that kind of Derry girl, but yes, I am, you know, my uniform was a different colour, so to speak.

JC: Did you ever come across many people from the, the South of Ireland either in Scotland or in England?

EW: I have got a friend in the village who's Irish, he's from Cork, I don't, I don't know many people from down south at all.

JC: And, and kind of one of the questions we've been asking a lot of people is, do you, do you feel like an emigrant, cos obviously the, in the title of this project is migration, but it's interesting, do you get a sense having moved from Derry to Scotland that you, you are a migrant?

EW: No, but I'm aware that I am and I was talking to my kids about this, saying that, and sometimes I do say that, you know, I am an immigrant, and point out to them when we're talking about immigration, when it comes on the news etcetera, although I always felt that it was my absolute right to move wherever I wanted to, I didn't feel, I didn't feel like a migrant, no.

JC: And finally then, we talked about your sort of internal debate that you had with yourself a few years ago about potentially moving back.

EW: Yeah.

JC: Do you think that would ever be a cons-, something you'd consider again, maybe moving back to Northern Ireland?

EW: I think that my, my youngest is twelve, and so I've got five more years here before he finishes school, and sadly in five more years mum and dad'll be in a very different position, if they're even still around, so I think my window for moving back to Northern Ireland, I think I would only move back if mum and dad were still there, and I can see, I can see myself doing that, I could see myself moving back, once my kids get a bit older, but they, they wouldn't let me move back until then, so my window is in five years' time I might, and that would be the right, I wouldn't be, I wouldn't be against it cos I feel like now, oh I don't know, I feel like it's, it's not quite caught up with the rest of Britain has it, it's still a wee bit behind in some ways, but I feel like I could cope with it and there's lots of good things about it, you know, the whole, oh the beaches and the coast and all that kind of stuff is, is lovely.

JC: What, what type of ways would you say it's behind the rest of Britain?

EW: [pauses] Oh I should have thought about that more, I think, I remember thinking a while ago, like, the telly's the same and all that kind of stuff, so you're, but yet the way, maybe I'm just basing it on my cousins and their life and what it's like, but I think I could go back and live this kind of life in Northern Ireland now and I don't think I could've before and that means that I, well, I'm, God I'm probably just a raging snob about food and nice things like that, I, I think my eyes were opened to that lovely culture in Belfast and that venue and, and the Dirty Onion and all those kind of places, that that just, I feel that wasn't there before and I was quite glad to explore that now.

JC: But no, I certainly get what you mean, like, politics is still very different in Northern Ireland than it is in, in Scotland or England, for sure, and there's just a sort of different, yeah, different climate of debate maybe.

EW: It's not the same, there's [pauses], no, it is, it is backward with the abortion and stuff like that and the, and the, you know, the, the, Arlene and her views and the, the fact that they, oh I don't know, they've only just gone back to sit in parliament haven't they, I mean, what kind of a nonsense was that, that felt a little bit backward. That fair enough?

JC: Yeah, yeah, absolutely, and then final question, where would you consider home to be now, is it, is it still Northern Ireland, or would you say home is in Scotland, or, or somewhere else?

EW: I think I would talk about going home meaning Northern Ireland, but I feel very much at home here in Scotland, I think I found, yeah, no, I think I probably feel very at home here in Scotland, but I would still refer to Northern Ireland as home.

JC: Yeah, you can have more than one home. I'd, I would, I'd be the same I think, yeah, so I mean, that's pretty much got to, to the end of the question list that I had. Is there anyth-, is there anything else that you would like to talk about, or that we haven't discussed, or, or anything that you think's important that you want to mention?

EW: I don't think so, no, I don't think so, I'm fine with what we've, with what we've said. So you're, you're looking for, you were looking for people who lived in, was it Manchester, London or Glasgow, is that right, or–?

JC: Yeah, that's right, we kind of, you know, relaxed the criteria a little bit, you know, if someone's got, you know, experience of, like yourself, of living in, in different, different parts of Scotland and England, we're, we're fine with that, but yeah, no, it's, we, we concentrated the, the case studies on those three cities to try and get, like, a, a diverse picture of people who've moved away from Northern Ireland and what their differing experiences were and we're particularly interested, that's kind of why I was asking you about the, the sectarianism in Scotland in the context, we're kind of interested in the, like, how people from Northern Ireland have, have experienced Scotland maybe differently to they would have experienced England and things like that, so, I mean, that's, that's something obviously that you have experience of as well.

EW: Yeah, yeah.

JC: Well, if that's everything then, I'll, I'll stop the recording there now if that's okay, yeah.

INTERVIEW ENDS