INTERVIEW G15: JOAN GILLESPIE

Interviewer: Dr Jack Crangle
Interviewee: Joan Gillespie [pseudonym]
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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: Okay, so that's started now, thanks, you already sent me the consent form through, which is great, can I just for the purpose of the recording get your verbal consent that you're okay for the recording to happen?

JG: Yeah, yeah, yeah, sure, sure.

JC: Great, brilliant, and then do you want to start then by telling me your name and today's date?

JG: Right, my name is Joan Gillespie Sunday name is Bridget, I'm known as Joan, today's date is the fifth of November 2020.

JC: Yeah, great, and will you tell me then when and where you were born?

JG: I was born in, just outside a village in south Derry, village called Swatragh, I lived in the countryside. I was one of a large family living on, with my siblings and mother and father and at one point my granny, on a small holding, my father ran a small farm, grew crops, had some animals, and that's where I grew up.

JC: Right, okay, so presumably it was quite a small village, like, a small country village, you grew up in, yeah?

JG: It was, yeah.

JC: And what, can you tell me a bit about what the village was like when you were young, like, what was there, what the community was like and things?

JG: Well, I went to school in the village and we were about a mile out of the school, we walked into school, the village had, oh not many facilities, the school building was old, it actually closed the year I left the primary school, which was when I was eleven. In the village we had a couple of shops, a couple of pubs, post office, we didn't have any medical facilities, we had to go to another town further away for that. As I say, I went to school there, it was

quite a small school, it was quite, I enjoyed my, my primary schooling, I think it was probably quite a good school, but as I said, I left primary school at eleven. All my brothers and sisters went to that school as well, and we diverged only when it was time to go to secondary school, which we had to travel to by bus from this village to another town, which is what we did, well, most of us would have, we went to various secondary schools, not in the village cos that wasn't available, but outside the village.

JC: And, and how many brothers and sisters did you have, then? You said it was a large family.

JG: Yeah, I'm the oldest of twelve.

JC: Wow.

JG: Yeah [laughs], I have seven sisters and four brothers, and I've still got seven sisters and four brothers, they're all younger than me, they're all still back in Northern Ireland.

JC: Oh right, so you're the only one who, who moved away?

JG: Yeah, I'm the only one who, who left the, the province. I'm still very close to them all, I go back, oh, up until the travel restrictions this year, I would go back a lot to see them. Now, at the moment we rely on Zoom meeting, Zoom quizzes and things just to see everyone cos I've not seen them for so long and I do miss that, I do miss that, you know, so.

JC: What, what was it like growing up in such a big household?

JG: It was a pretty happy childhood, it wasn't, we weren't very well off, and I know my parents struggled to bring us all up, but they did their very best, but I know that at times it was pretty difficult, pretty difficult. This was obviously pre any of the, the Troubles starting, so while I was growing up that wasn't a factor, but we always had enough to eat and, as I say, going to school we were always pretty well clothed and I've really got no complaints about that. My mum and dad are obviously, have obviously passed on now, they've gone, but the original site, the site of the original house where I was brought up is still there, my brother lives there and I, I do go back there, or close by actually to another house where my sister lives, that's, when I do go back, when I did get the opportunity to go back, that's where I'd go back to. The village was almost, well, I'd say ninety-five, ninety-eight per cent Catholic, so it was a Catholic primary school, although there was, there was and still is in the village a Presbyterian church and a Church of Ireland meeting place and that's still there.

JC: Okay.

JG: So I did, I didn't have a lot of contact with other religions while I was at primary school, to be honest, and probably not even when I went to secondary school, which was in a town called Magherafelt, it was a convent school I went to. There were other schools in the village, in the, in that town, so I probably met folk from the other schools in passing, just didn't have any social interaction with them at all, so in that sense it was pretty narrow, you know, a pretty narrow upbringing that I had, until I decided to, to leave.

JC: And would you and, and your siblings and mother and stuff have helped on, on the farm and stuff growing up?

JG: Yeah, oh definitely.

JC: Yeah, yeah.

JG: Yeah, yeah, yeah, a lot, I did, yeah. I was quite happy to do that, I sometimes quite enjoyed it, unlike some of the rest of my family who absolutely hated it, I didn't, I didn't, I, I was okay with that, it was mostly harvesting and planting and that kind of thing, not so much to do with the animals, my father and my brothers probably did most of that. We had originally on the farm the mode of transport, or the, we didn't have any mechanisation, we had two horses, I remember, who, you know, operated, well, they did the ploughing and just with my father walking behind them, that kind of thing, and I do remember the day that my father bought his first tractor, and it arrived on the farm and that, that was a red letter day, we were just, I was just talking about that to my brother the other day, that original tractor has lain in a, in a shed all these years since about, I don't know, early sixties it would be, maybe about six-, 1960, and it was totally derelict and in lockdown my brother, maybe two of my brothers, have totally refurbished it and it's brand new, it's, it's really quite something to see at the moment, you know, so, but the horses then left when the, well, I think they were maybe there for a wee while, when the, when the tractor arrived to help with the crops.

JC: That's amazing that the tractor's still there and, and they've, they've managed to refurbish it.

JG: Yeah, I know, it is.

JC: You must be looking forward to seeing it when you're, when you're able to go back over.

JG: Yeah, I certainly would, yeah, I do remember it, yeah, yeah.

JC: Yeah, and, and so school then, it sounds like it was sort of quite a traditional old-fashioned primary school, would that be right?

JG: Yeah.

JC: Yeah.

JG: Yeah, it was–

JC: How big were the classes and stuff?

JG: Well, the classes were, I think there was, I think there was maybe just four classrooms, so infants were in one room and primary one and two probably, probably primary three and four in another one and I don't remember exactly the, the demarcation, but I remember the

school, the, the last year at school, I would be in primary seven and I'm sure there was primary sixes in that classroom as well, so it was quite a small school, yeah, and quite traditional, there were at one, only three or four teachers, there was a headmaster who taught the older ones, six and seven, so that, that's what I remember best of all was obviously the last year, or the last couple of years in that, in that class.

JC: Yeah, and you said you quite enjoyed primary school.

JG: Yes I did, yeah, yeah, **[00:10:00]** I did quite enjoy it. I probably did okay at primary school, I was quite good at primary school and I coped with it quite well and enjoyed the lessons and everything.

JC: And what a-, what about outside of school, aside from, you know, helping out on, with, with the farm and stuff, did you, did you have much sort of playtime as it were?

JG: No, not a lot, well, in the countryside we were, it was, it was pretty safe, we, we roamed, I suppose, the surrounding area quite a lot and, you know, met up with other families, you know, not, not immediately next door or anything, maybe a mile or two away and played with them, just traditional games. We didn't have many toys or anything like that and obviously, and then in fact when I was pretty young we didn't have television, I remember listening, listening to the radio a lot, both for news and current affairs and music and it was the radio and I do remember, that was another red letter day, when we got our first television.

JC: Right, when would that have been, do you remember?

JG: Sorry?

JC: Do you, do you remember when that would have been, when you got your first TV?

JG: Probably, I was born 1950, so it might have been about 1960 maybe, as well, yeah, it was black and white, I remember, yeah, yeah, that was obviously a big attraction for, for all of us really.

JC: Yeah, it's sort of like a window to the outside world I guess, when you're–

JG: Yeah, uh huh, yeah, although we did have the radio and I, I remember my mother especially listening to the radio a lot when she was in the house and obviously I did as well, yeah.

JC: So would you have been quite en-, you and your family have been quite engaged with, with current affairs and, and politics and things like that?

JG: Yeah, yeah, we were, even, as I say, even before it all kicked off in Northern Ireland, we always listened to the news, you know, like, the national news, international news, we were, my mother especially was very interested in what was going on in the rest of the

world, you know, and bought a newspaper as well, or just local Irish newspapers, to be honest, but they were read every day, you know, so.

JC: And did she talk to you and your siblings about it, or did you get a sense of what her sort of views were on current affairs and politics and stuff?

JG: Yes, I guess so, I couldn't actually tell you what her, can't remember what her views were on many things. I remember she was quite, with the Irish Catholic background she was quite interested in America, American politics and also my granny who lived with us until she died, she had lived in America for quite a long time, so that kind of fostered an interest in American politics, and was, oh they were highly taken when Kennedy, he came to Ireland to visit and of course Kennedy had an Irish, he was Irish Catholic background as well, so that was quite something that the President of the United States with Irish background was coming to visit the country, you know, I remember great excitement about that. Oh I can't remember much else that we listened or, or, she did, I know she did, she was interested in other things going on all over the world, I think there was an uprising in the Congo I think that she was, I remember her talking about and knowing all the characters' names and things, yeah.

JC: And what about more sort of local issues, like, local politics, was there any interest in that?

JG: Well, there was, there was, obviously it was a nationalist area, the republican element didn't raise its head until a bit later although it was always there, it was always simmering, and so my folks were, well, they were nationalists all their, all their lives really and when the Troubles started they were, I guess they were looking for a non-violent outcome to, to the Troubles in Northern Ireland, so did not support the IRA for that reason, supported the SDLP and still would, well, all my family, well, most of them that I know about and that I know what their politics are at the moment, I probably don't know all of them, that has continued to this day, although they were in the minority, had a lot of grievances, were discriminated against in housing and jobs, they didn't, were not interested in, in the republican, IRA politics at all. Any of, of the Protestant side that we came across in, my father obviously did in, with the farming and had, we had neighbours who were, who were Protestants, we always got on really well with them, there was absolutely no friction or anything when I was, when I was growing up with them at all, really, that I can remember, so my mother died just a few years ago and, and until her dying day she was really interested in Irish politics and Good Friday Agreement, all that kind of thing, she took an enormous interest in it, as we all did, even from here I did, obviously my siblings who were still living there had a lot more insight and took, were a lot more interested in it than I was, but extremely relieved that when that was, when that was finally sorted shall we say, it meant, sorry.

JC: No, no, go ahead, sorry.

JG: It meant they could live their life a lot more peaceably. I left, as I say, when I was twelve to come to study in, in Edinburgh and that was when all the, everything was really kicking off then and I obviously didn't experience it to anything like the same extent that, that, my, my siblings did growing up with the military arriving, the security forces all around, pretty

dangerous at times to go out with all the bombs and everything that were going on, we never went to Belfast or anything like that and they never did either, they went, they did have a social life, just locally in the surrounding towns and things that they would go out, but always risked, and happened a lot, they would be stopped, as cars would be, they were always travelling in cars, there was no public transport really, it was always cars, but the cars would be stopped and, you know, it was pretty big infringement on their lives, you know, which I didn't experience much of, although even in those days after I, when I graduated in Edinburgh and then I came to Glasgow area because I'd got married at that stage, but, and I had those children, and in those times when the children were growing up we would still go across very regular, you know, so I did see some of that, but obviously to a much limited extent than, than my family who were there, were.

JC: It sounds like you, yeah, you were sort of raised in quite a sort of engaged family in terms of keeping track of, of the news and stuff. I'm wondering, like, did you, would you have shared the same views as your, as your parents and your family, yeah?

JG: Yeah, yeah, pretty much, yeah, indeed, yeah, still do, yeah, I would agree with them, yeah, and I still take an interest in, in, in their elections, when their elections are going on, what's happening in, in the various provin-, in the various parts of the, of the North, because my family are living in various areas of the North, they're not all, they've not all stayed roundabout where we were brought up, they've married and had their own families and brought their own families up, in other parts of the, of the province, yeah.

JC: And you were obviously from a Catholic family, I'm wondering how big a part of your life church was when you were growing up?

JG: Oh a lot, yes, a lot, there was no choice basically [laughs], we didn't have a choice, so, yes, it was a lot and if I were still living there it probably still would be. I'm not, not engaged to the extent, same extent now, but they all are still, I would say, yeah, yeah.

JC: Right, and, and which , which church did you go to, was it just one in the local village?
[00:20:00]

JG: Yes, in the village, it was St John's, St John's parish church, yes.

JC: Right.

JG: Yeah, yeah, which we most of the time walked to on a Sunday. We walked most of the time to school as well in the village, which was about maybe a mile and a half.

JC: Right, okay.

JG: Each, yeah, each way, yeah.

JC: And did you en-, did you enjoy church growing up, or was it, you say you didn't really have a choice, was it something that you sort of just went out of duty, or did you, did you enjoy it?

JG: Yeah, yeah, yeah, I can't say I enjoyed it, no, I can't say, if I'm truthful, no. It wasn't a choice, it was a, it was a duty, really, yeah, yeah, can't say I got a lot from it either, you know, although that would probably be sacrilege to admit that [laughs].

JC: [laughs] Was there much of a social life around the church and, with, for your parents?

JG: Yeah, there was, yeah, there was, there was functions organised, mostly fundraising things, they had, the village had a small hall, there was functions organised by the church and, and by some of the local groups as well I think, although I can't remember. There was quite a strong Gaelic football club in the village who would organise things and, and still do, although, well, I wasn't obviously a member of the football club, they had what's called a camogie section and they still do, and I took a small part in that when I was still at primary school, or, or maybe secondary school as well, I don't remember.

JC: So it sounds like things like the Gaelic club and, and the church were really, like, the focal points of the community I guess.

JG: Aye, yes, I would say so, yeah, yeah.

JC: And you men-, you mentioned there were a couple of Protestant churches in, in the village as well. I'm wondering if there was any sort of, I don't know, rivalry or, or, or if you know, if you could explain sort of how Protestants were viewed, because you obviously didn't know that many, like, well?

JG: No, we didn't know that many at all, and, and there was no, there was no problem with, that I can remember about, around the Protestants attending their churches, no, there was nothing, there was no problem and they didn't cause any problems with us. Obviously our congregation was enormous compared to the number that would be attending their churches, and I remember, well, maybe that was later, I can't remember, being invited to a carol service in the one of the, at Christmas, in one of the other churches and they coming to our church for a Christmas service as well, so, there wa-, there was no, no, there was no rivalry at all, I would say.

JC: So it's not the typical picture of sort of really sharp division then, I'm, I'm getting that sense.

JG: Not, not when I was living there, no, not, not while I was living there, no, that, that and even, I think when the Troubles started and there was a few incidents in the village, but I think that was, like, imported, you know, people would arrive from other places and, and cause trouble, I think, that's how I would describe it, things that happened, there was, I can remember a, a shooting incident where a car just drove through the village and shot out the window, indiscriminately, and folk were injured, I don't remember if anybody was killed, but that, that was quite shocking at the time, yeah.

JC: Yeah, I'm wondering would events, like, such as the Twelfth have had any presence in the area?

JG: Not, not in the village, but locally, yes, I can remember actually going in the next town, going to watch Twelfth of July parades just cos we were attracted by the spectacle of the bands and stuff, but, I mean, we did, I did remember going to watch in a, are you familiar with the names of towns in, in the North, no?

JC: I'm, County Derry is, is probably not the area I'm most familiar with, so if you, but if you want to, if you want to tell me the towns.

JG: Yeah, about a town called Maghera where I think I had a Saturday job.

JC: Oh yeah, I do know that town actually.

JG: Yeah, yeah, okay, I had a Saturday job when I was at school, my secondary school it would be, and I remember there being a big Twelfth of July parade, that was a mixed town, much more mixed than the village I'm from, had a big Twelfth of July parade there, I remember watching it and there wasn't, I don't think there was any Twelfth of July parades in, in Swatragh, I'm a bit hazy about that, my, my brothers and sisters and would be able to tell me more about that, but Twelfth of July, yes, roundabout, in the towns roundabout there would be, there would be parades, yeah.

JC: And you said, you said you kind of went just more for the spectacle. Did you, did you have any sense of what the meaning behind the spectacle was, or was it just you liked seeing the bands and stuff?

JG: I probably, probably didn't really think about it at that stage, although I probably knew that it wasn't our culture, you know, it was another culture, you know, that were, that were doing that, there was the occasional, you know, there'd be societies like the Ancient Order of Hibernians which is a, which was a Catholic society, still is, and they would have, like, maybe smaller parades in our village, but they would be, probably didn't amount to much and I don't remember being any problems with that either, growing up, I don't think so.

JC: Were your family involved with the Ancient Order of Hibernians at all?

JG: Yeah, some of them were, yeah, some of them were, yeah.

JC: Do you know what sort of things they did when they would have gone down to, would it, would it have mainly been parades and stuff?

JG: [indecipherable], I don't know, actually. I know my brother was involved and, and possibly still is, one of my brothers, he, he helped to run it. I think they ran just functions as well and they were, I think they were probably more a charitable organisation, you know, a charity that raised funds for, for causes in the community. A lot of things have changed in the village, you know, they've got a lot more facilities now and it's all down, down to the people who live there, who worked to get them, you know, they had access, got access to more funding and things, which they didn't have when, when I was younger, you know, I guess that was probably part of the discrimination that we had then.

JC: So were you aware of discrimination growing up?

JG: Not immediately close to me, but in the wider province, yes, yeah, read about it all the time, the housing, the jobs, especially in the cities, Derry and, and Belfast and that kind of thing, and there was a lot of stuff in the news and the speeches and in the papers, you know, about the, the rivalry between the two sides basically which sometimes became quite violent and spilled out into other parts of society which probably wouldn't or didn't want to be involved, not with that kind of thing anyway, so.

JC: And so you went to secondary school in Magherafelt, you said?

JG: Yeah, yeah, do you know that, you know that town?

JC: I, I know of it, I've never been personally, but yeah, what was, what was secondary school like?

JG: It was pretty strict, again it was a convent school run by nuns which was pretty strict, but again a pretty good school. I mean, I did well as, then as well, it was run quite strictly, we had, I think it was all Catholic teachers that I can remember, but there was male teachers and female teachers as well as the nuns, the nuns didn't teach very much, they ran the school basically and managed, you know, employed the teachers and interviewed the teachers and appointed them and did pretty well, you know, yeah, again I enjoyed **[00:30:00]** the school. Sometimes it was a bit, you know, with the corporal punishment and stuff there was, it was a wee bit scary, but I coped, and did okay, that was a bus ride to there and back every day, every day, yeah.

JC: Was it an organised school bus you would have got?

JG: No, I think it was a service bus.

JC: Oh okay.

JG: One of the very few service buses that we had from the village, or, well, I had to walk into the village to get the bus obviously, and then travel to Magherafelt and back again, yeah, I'm sure it was just a service bus, yeah.

JC: And was Magherafelt a mixed town, or was that–?

JG: Yes.

JC: Yeah, that was, so you might have come across Protestants a bit more when you went there, perhaps?

JG: Yeah, probably on the buses more than anything, yeah, not, the schools didn't have any intermingling or socialising at all that I was aware of, that I can remember, no, they didn't, you know, they kept pretty much to themselves, yeah.

JC: And was there ever any, any tension or anything?

JG: I can't remember, no, I don't think so, no, I don't, I don't remember that at all, I could be wrong, but I don't remember.

JC: And how old were you, how old were you when you left school, then?

JG: I left school in 1969, so I was eighteen.

JC: Right, okay.

JG: Yeah, yeah, and, nineteen maybe, nineteen I think because I did in those days O-levels and, crikey, O-levels and A-levels then, I did A-levels to enable me to go to university in Edinburgh, which was what I did, yeah.

JC: And you said you had a Saturday job as, as well, what, what was that?

JG: I was in a paper shop in, in, in Maghera, yeah, for I think it was probably just for a short time and then I left anyway, yeah.

JC: Would you have sort of gone into the t-, to Maghera and, or, or even Derry and stuff for, for, like, leisure or anything, or–?

JG: No, not Derry, not Derry, that was, no, probably too far away. Maghera, yeah, Maghera, and Kilrea was another one, that we would go, that was another big town that we would go, just, you know, they were the two, not big towns, small towns, closest to us, yeah, very occasionally we might go to Magherafelt at the weekend for a dance or something like that, yeah.

JC: So would that have been the main form of social life, then, dances and, and things?

JG: Yes, at the weekend, yeah, yeah, yeah, dances, yeah.

JC: And were they mixed, or–?

JG: No, they would be, they would be all Catholic, yeah, yeah, yeah, they would be all Catholic, oh that's my phone.

JC: No problem [ringtone].

JG: [pauses] Sarah, Sarah, hi, can I, can I call you back, Sarah, okay, I'm, I'm on a Zoom meeting with somebody at the moment, okay, call you back, okay, cheers. That was actually one of my sisters [laughs].

JC: Oh really, wow.

JG: Yeah, that was phoning from Northern Ireland, yeah.

JC: You can tell her what you've been talking about.

JG: Yeah, I will, I will.

JC: Yeah.

JG: When I get a chance I'll call her back, yeah, yeah. Yeah, so where were we?

JC: Yeah, no, I suppose I'm wondering, so you obviously, you took A-levels in preparation for going to uni. Were you, were you the first person in your family who would have gone to university?

JG: Well, I was the oldest, so in my immediate family, yes, but I think I remember a cousin going to university, yeah, he, he was older than me and he went to St Columb's College in Derry, I remember, and then he went to Queen's in Belfast to do engineering. I think that was the only other one ahead of me that went to university, I think I'd, maybe some older cousins as well went to teacher training college and that was in Belfast, but by the time I came to go to university I was probably, well, and my family, my mother and father were probably influenced by the fact that the war's beginning to kick off in 1969 and there had been some trouble in Belfast and Derry and they weren't very keen on me going to either, to Belfast to Queen's, so as it so happened I had an auntie who lived in Edinburgh, so after a lot of discussion and making decisions it was decided that I would go to Edinburgh because I had the contact of my aunt and she would help, she did help a lot with accommodation and, and that kind of thing, at the time, so that was part of the reason certainly, I was, I was doing, I wanted to do pharmacy, and there was certainly a pharmacy course at Queen's, but I went to Ed-, to Heriot-Watt in Edinburgh and did pharmacy.

JC: That's interesting that your parents were actually sort of quite keen for you to move away in, in a sense, not, not to get rid of you, but, you know, but–

JG: Yeah, well, they weren't, no, yeah, well, you know, I guess that was pretty open-minded of them, yes, yeah, they did, yeah, they certainly didn't discourage me, no, yeah, and I came home quite a lot, end of terms and stuff, so I was back and forth quite a lot, yeah.

JC: And did you, did you get a sense personally around the time when you went to Edinburgh that, that things were changing in Northern Ireland, that, that things were getting, deteriorating?

JG: Yeah, yeah, definitely, they definitely were and I could see that and I, and I did follow it to a certain extent, on television and things I remember and also being in contact with obviously the folks back home as well, yeah.

JC: What was it do you think that was changing at that time around the village and stuff?

JG: Well, I think the, the minority Catholic community, you know, realised that they had, needed to do something to get a fair shot at jobs, employment, housing, which they weren't getting, they weren't getting, and they, I remember the civil rights movement being formed and I did, when I was at home, I did take part in some demos and marches and things in support of that as, as we all did at the time, yeah, so and, well, as you know quite a lot of them ended in violence and ended in deaths as well which was, which was incredibly unfortunate, well, more than unfortunate, it was dreadful, you know, as I say, we weren't, we weren't driven down the republican route at all, to join IRA or anything like that, it was solely civil rights movement, the SDLP Party, which they joined in an effort to right the wrongs as, as they saw it, you know, which I think was, were perfectly justified.

JC: Could you tell me a bit more about those demos that you did go on, like, what was the atmosphere like, and what motivated you to, to take part?

JG: Yeah, well, just the, the fight for civil rights basically. I only, I remember, one sticks in my mind, that was, it was a march from Belfast to Derry, a long drawn-out thing over days and it may even, even have been the infamous incident at Burntollet Bridge in, in, outside Derry as they were approaching Derry when the, the marching crowd, peaceable crowd were attacked by security forces for no reason, as far as we could see. I didn't, I wasn't there at that stage, but I did take part in a section of the march that went through Maghera, which was the nearest town to us, and it was perfectly peaceful and, you know, not light-hearted, but, you know, I think the feeling was that we were fighting for something, we were actually doing something about it and hoping to get a result, which didn't happen for a long time, obviously.

JC: And do you think, **[00:40:00]** well, would your family and, and the village more broa-, people in the village more broadly, would, would a lot of people have been involved with those marches?

JG: Yes, yeah, uh huh, yeah. Some of them would have been involved with the IRA as well, I do know that, in fact some of my family, not, cousins I think, went down that route as well, and it didn't end well, basically.

JC: So you went to Edinburgh in '69. How did you, how did you feel about leaving?

JG: Mixed feelings, obviously, a bit anxious about what, and how I would adapt and everything, but I adapted pretty well and, as I say, I was still very much in, in touch with everybody back home and close to them and came home a lot, but moving to a strange place when I'd had no, really, experience of moving anywhere or doing very much, I hadn't even gone on holiday abroad or anything at that stage, anywhere, I think I did, I had had a previous maybe couple of holidays in Scotland strangely enough with family friends, but to go away and, and live there permanently, it was certainly a complete new experience for me, yeah, and I guess I settled in quite quickly and made friends and enjoyed again my time there, yeah.

JC: You said you had an, was it an aunt that was already living there?

JG: Yeah, yeah, yeah, so that was–

JC: That must have helped a bit.

JG: That was certainly a very helpful contact, yeah, yeah.

JC: Did you, would you have seen much of her?

JG: Yeah, quite a lot, yeah, I'd, I would go and visit her at least once a week and I, at that stage I was a practis-, still going to church on Sundays, yeah, and I would see her there, so she would be, that kind of fell away a bit later on in my, while I was living there, or maybe it did–

JC: How did, how, oh right, yeah, no, I was just going to ask how, how church in Edinburgh compared to church in Northern Ireland, were there any differences that you noticed?

JG: Not really, not really, pretty similar, pretty similar I would say, yeah, well, I was, I was practising all the time I was in Edinburgh, I had a bit of conflict towards, well, after I graduated and was getting married, my husband was not Catholic, [indecipherable] so that caused quite a lot of conflict both with that auntie in Edinburgh and my family back home, so, so that was a bit of a problem for a while, but, but the family eventually came round, [indecipherable], you know, it didn't last all that long. I guess they were just worried about what would happen and everything, you know, it's, it was probably easier for me to marry somebody outside the faith living in Scotland than it would have been had I been still living in, in Northern Ireland at the time.

JC: Yeah, I think, I suppose it was more common in Scotland at that time.

JG: Yeah, yeah, it was, certainly, yeah, it, it was not something remarkable at all at that stage, so, so, but we're still, we're still married after all these years [laughs].

JC: Well, that's a good indication I think.

JG: Yeah, yeah.

JC: What were your first impressions of Edinburgh and what was the university experience like?

JG: Good, yeah, good overall, Edinburgh is a lovely place, I probably didn't appreciate it as I should have. I mean, obviously it's not far to go and visit, we still go to Edinburgh sometimes for various reasons, and it's a lovely place to grow up and to live and to meet a lot of good friends, so all in all it was, it was a pretty positive experience.

JC: Where did you live when you were there?

JG: I lived first of all in digs that the aunt, my auntie Helen had sussed out for me. I shared a room with another first year, well, I went, because I had A-levels I went straight into second

year of my course, you know, the, the people I was sharing digs with were probably a year younger than me and, in first year, but that was, my friend, the initial friends that I made and I'm still in touch with some of them, so from that digs, and then I moved out and shared a flat with a couple of those people and I think moved to another flat and shared that flat as well, so that's, that's where we lived in, in flats that we, I got full grant, full university grant which paid for and, and paid for my living and my rent and anything else that I needed, so that was, that was a freedom, certainly, that was good, that I probably didn't have at home, you know, that I could go and go places where I wanted to with whoever I wanted, at any stage, you know, so.

JC: So what was your social life like at that time? What sort of things were you doing that you might not have been able to do back in Northern Ireland?

JG: Well, going to parties, going to the pubs, it was a pretty strict family in that respect, growing up there, there wasn't the opportunity to go an socialise to that extent and certainly not in pubs. My family were pretty anti-alcohol, my mum and dad didn't drink and they frowned upon, you know, socialising in pubs, that has all totally relaxed now, you know, I speak to the younger members of my family and say that, you know, you had good, you, you had your, got your social life where you lived, whereas I wasn't, I couldn't do any of that. It was partly I suppose to do with the inherent danger in being in, in anywhere in a crowded place at that time, when they were growing up, although this, they did, well, that's probably relatively recently, within the last twenty years rather than within the last forty years, that they've been able to do that. I certainly wasn't able to do it before I left, but in Edinburgh I could and did and again that was, it was pretty good social life, yeah.

JC: Were your friends all from Scotland?

JG: Majority of them were, some English, some English as well, yeah, yeah.

JC: Were there any Irish people that you came across?

JG: Not, not my close friends, no, although obviously I did meet some Irish people who had come out, over in the same circumstance as me, but no, I wasn't very friendly with any of them, I didn't strike up a relationship with any of them, no.

JC: And what did you make of sort of Scottish people more generally, like, did, how did they sort of react to you and, and your accent and stuff?

JG: Okay, fine, I didn't have a problem with that, I didn't, I didn't expect a problem, maybe because I'd not come across people outside my own close circle at home, so I didn't expect to be a problem and there wasn't, you know, yeah.

JC: And you said you visited Northern Ireland quite regularly during university.

JG: Yeah, yeah, I did, yeah, and even since then, since I've had, since I've had my family and everything, yeah, still go back, or even all through the Troubles we did, we did, we didn't have any problems travelling, although there was always the sort of underlying anxiety

about being out and about and, well, we didn't ever go to Belfast, so we weren't in any of the big cities, I don't even remember going to Derry much, even when we came back, at that, you know, we had, well, when I came back with my young children, who'd be young, we did sort of normal things I suppose, going out and about and visiting and take my children to swimming pools and, and cinemas and that kind of **[00:50:00]** things, which was probably a loosening of, of the restrictions that I'd grown up under and, and there were more facilities, you know, there was more attractions and more things to do and, and places to go there, so yeah.

JC: Did, did you follow the news from Northern Ireland when you were away?

JG: Yeah, yeah, oh yeah, definitely, definitely and, you know, if anything happened I would phone, although my parents to begin with didn't have a phone in the house either, and of course it was long before mobiles. I used to phone my auntie's house on a Sunday after mass time cos I knew my mum and dad would call into my auntie's on the way back from mass in the village, it was in the village, and I used to phone there and speak to them and, you know, discuss what had been going on the previous week and the political scene in general and how it was panning out and everything, you know.

JC: So you, yeah, it sounds like you were still quite engaged, then.

JG: Yeah, yeah, oh definitely, yeah, and still am, you know, you know, with, obviously I follow the political scene here in Scotland quite closely, but also I follow it, the Northern Irish scene as well when they have elections and the personalities involved and who they are and what they're doing and what they think about them, you know.

JC: And how did you get on with your course at university, was that all fairly straightforward?

JG: Yeah.

JC: Not straightforward, but you got on okay, I presume?

JG: Yes, I got on okay, I graduated three years later, again I made a lot of friends there which I, quite a lot of them I'm still in touch with, and in fact, every five years since, since we left we have a reunion, which I take a lot, a lot to do in organising and always have done, before every, every five years. Our last one was in nineteen-, nineteen-, no, two thousand-, no, not nineteen-, 2018 I think it was, yeah, that, yeah, cos we graduated, no, '17, cos we graduated in '72, so that would be thirty-five years, is that right, oh whatever, whatever, but every five years, yeah, and we'll probably still do that, I can't think when the next one's due, yeah, so, I'm still in touch with them a lot and, well, I'm not, I'm not in touch with them, the majority of them, apart from a five-yearly reunion, but there's a couple of them who live quite close to me here in the west of Scotland that I see a lot, still, a couple of the girls who are Scottish.

JC: Yeah, they do say university's the time when you make your friends for life, if you, if there's a word, yeah.

JG: Yeah, very true, very true and also when I had children, when I had, when I had my children here people just in, in the village where I live now, which is Old Kilpatrick, I made friends there with people who had, just solely because they had children the same age, you know, and grew up together and went to various things together, to do with the children, so, yeah.

JC: So you graduated in, would it have been ’72, ’73?

JG: ’72.

JC: ’72, yeah, and did you have, did you have a sense of what you wanted to do next?

JG: Yeah, by that time I had met by husband-to-be, although I didn’t know he was going to be my husband at that stage, and I had planned to go back to Northern Ireland.

JC: Oh really, yeah.

JG: Yeah, I had planned that, because once I graduated I had to do a year postgraduate pre-registration year in a pharm-, either a community pharmacy or a hospital pharmacy or a research place, and I, when I had been going back in the summers while I was still studying I had worked in a local pharmacy in, in the town of Kilrea and they had offered, they had offered me a post after I graduated, to come back and do my pre-registration there, although there was a bit of a problem because Northern Irish pharmacy law was slightly different to Scottish law, pharmacy, so I, it would have entailed me doing an extra legal exam, I seem to remember. Anyway it didn’t come to that because I changed my mind and stayed in Scotland where my husband was, well, [indecipherable], we got married in ’73 and that was when I moved. I had started working in Edinburgh, got married and moved through to Glasgow area after we got married, so, what was the question here, what, what was I–?

JC: Well, yeah, I suppose, we were talking about you’d, you’d obviously, you’d planned to go back to Northern Ireland, but then changed your mind, so was that because you’d started going out with your husband?

JG: Yes, yeah, yeah, yeah.

JC: How, how did you meet your husband?

JG: At a party.

JC: Okay, yeah.

JG: In Edinburgh, as I say, we got married in ’73 and we, we’ve stayed in the west of Scotland ever since, we did, we, in the early days we did talk about going back to live in Edinburgh, but we didn’t, I guess maybe the opportunity didn’t crop up. My husband, you know, worked here, he did work here and lived here and I, I worked here as well, although I, obviously I was working at pharmacy, I did a lot of locum work in this area, probably, no, I

didn't ever work full-time I don't think, certainly not when the children came along, I worked part-time up until I retired, which was a, a few years ago now, yeah.

JC: Where was your husband from, or where, where is your husband from?

JG: He's from Dundee, he's from Dundee.

JC: Okay, and he was working in Edinburgh you said.

JG: Yeah, he was actually studying, doing a postgraduate in Edinburgh when, when I first met him and he graduated, did he graduate the same year as me, I can't remember, think he did, I think he did, and then we weren't married at that stage, he got a job in the west of Scotland and moved through here on his own, so we saw each other just at weekends cos I, by that time I was working in Edinburgh and just travelled back and forth between Edinburgh and Glasgow up until we got married and then found accommodation here, stayed here.

JC: And he's from a Protestant background?

JG: Yes, yes, yeah.

JC: And you said that that caused a bit of problems within your family?

JG: Yeah, it did, yeah, it did, he, they, some of them were totally against it and gave me a lot of grief because of it and it was, that was, that was hard to take at the time, but it all worked out in the end. I guess it was because it was totally unknown for anyone in my family to marry outside, you know, the Catholic church, I probably was, yeah, I was, I was the first one in my family and any of my extended family to do that, yeah, so, but they recognise now that, that it was, that it's all worked out well, you know, so, so far.

JC: Would it have been your parents who were opposed to it, or, or the whole family?

JG: Probably my parents init-, yeah, probably my, my parents, yeah, and yeah, probably all of the rest of the family as well, yeah, yeah, yeah.

JC: So did you, I'm wondering where then, where you got married, what church you got married in?

JG: We got, we got married in a Catholic church in Edinburgh, some of my family came, at that stage it wasn't quite so easy to travel, for anybody to travel, and obviously there was a cost involved. My father didn't come to my wedding, my mother did be-, when she, and obviously my auntie who was my mum's sister, she was at my wedding, and two of my sisters came and a cousin came, yeah, but that was all that came, yeah, so.

JC: And do you know how your husband's family felt about you, about, about him marrying a Catholic, was, was that a problem?

JG: No, there was, no, no, there wasn't, there was no problem there at all, no, yeah, they were, they all **[01:00:00]** came to the wedding, yeah, yeah, so.

JC: It's interesting how, how the Scottish reaction was sort of different to the Northern Irish reaction.

JG: Yeah, yeah, it is actually, yeah. In fact, now, if I'd been doing that in Northern Ireland I think there would have been equal, equally strong reaction from both sides, I think, well, I actually know that because a younger sister, my, my very youngest sister many years later married somebody from the Protestant community back in Northern Ireland and basically they both, both side, well, more his side actually objected. My family by that time were probably not quite as strong in their opinions, or, you know, they accepted it, they, my family accepted that more than they had accepted my position. However, that didn't work out, so, maybe they were, maybe they were right, I don't know, anyway.

JC: I suppose you'd paved the way already and maybe made it a bit easier for your sister, yeah.

JG: Yeah, for her, yeah, that, yeah, that's probably right, yeah, yeah.

JC: And then, so you moved to Glasgow straight after you got married, was it?

JG: Yes.

JC: Or soon after, yeah.

JG: Yeah.

JC: Whereabouts in Glasgow did you move to?

JG: We moved, not, not the city, we moved originally to Erskine, which was a new town on, on the south of the river. My husband got work with the local authority, he was a planner, town planner, and he got work with Renfrew district council as a planner and at that stage they provided accommodation for incoming workers, so we had a flat over in Erskine for a while, and then, many years later, maybe three, four years later, we moved to this village actually, a different house from where we are now. I had a child by then, who was about three, maybe, my daughter, so we moved to another, we were renting the flat in Erskine, we bought our first house in this village, you know, Kilpatrick, that would be about 1976, seven maybe, and then a number of years later we bought this house, which is at the other end of the village and we're still here, and in the meantime I also had a son who, they're both grown up and, and gone now, so.

JC: And what, what did you do for work when you moved?

JG: I, I worked as a pharmacist, part-time, locum work in, in community pharmacies in the surrounding area, doing relief work for the pharmacist who, who normally worked there, to, for, have a day, to have a day off, to have a holiday, to have a week off, or a couple of weeks

off, that's when I would, you know, would step in and do that, and I did that all the time up until I retired, yeah.

JC: Did you enjoy that work, then? You must, must have done if you'd have stayed at it.

JG: It was alright. Latterly I can't say I enjoyed it much cos it changed a lot, just like every, every profession, everything that goes on changes, and you're expected to take more and more responsibility for very little reward, basically, I think that was probably, you know, and, and by reward I suppose I mean financial reward, but also in a satisfaction way, you didn't, it wasn't what I wanted to do, you know, latterly, anyway, so I was quite glad to leave, to be honest, and I wouldn't like to be, I wouldn't like to be doing it now.

JC: That's fair enough, absolutely. I'm wondering, obviously the Glasgow area and, and the west of Scotland generally has, has its own problems with sectarianism and, and a divide between Catholics and Protestants, I'm wondering the extent to which you were aware of that before you moved there, and whether you, you came across, whether you came across those divisions at all?

JG: I guess from when I first moved to Scotland I was aware of that. It didn't happen so much in Edinburgh, but I, I was aware of it and I did know of it in the west of Scotland and obviously my husband knew of it as well, although it didn't happen when he was growing up in Dundee. It didn't have any bearing, or, or we didn't worry about it, moving here, and I've had no, no problems with it, nothing has ever happened to me that I can think of, that would have been problematic, no, there wasn't really, we didn't come across, you know, it does happen especially in the, in the football scenario. What, what did happen was we had, we had decided, both my husband and I, that any children would not go to a Catholic school and they didn't, they went to the, a local non-denominational school here in the village and they both went there, and when we first did that my family were not happy with that, certainly, and with the result that they, I did, at that stage I was probably still going to church and at the beginning I did, I, I took them with me and tried to teach them myself because I was still doing it basically, but that, that didn't happen and neither of them have been, oh my daughter was baptised in a Catholic church, my son wasn't, he's not baptised at all and that caused some friction with my family, but as, as for day-to-day living, the sectarian problem didn't impinge much, no, at all, no.

JC: So would, I suppose it would have mainly been through, as you say, football and then maybe around certain Orange marches and stuff that maybe there were problems?

JG: Yes, uh huh, yeah, if I, if I'd lived in the city that might have had more of a bearing. My daughter, my daughter actually married, she married a Catholic in Glasgow, so that was the, that was the divide coming together again, I guess, and they live in the city and they sometimes have problems with Orange marches, or at least just because of the disruption, not, they were never involved in any violence or had any, anything to do with it, but just the disruption that it causes in, in the part of the city where they were, that, that was all really. It's still a very big thing here, the Orange marches and I'm not very keen on them, to be honest, neither is my husband, nobody I know is particularly keen on them here.

JC: I think they have a bit of a different character in Scotland to maybe even how they do in, in parts of Northern Ireland, there may be different, I don't know, well, yeah.

JG: I don't know about that actually. I think probably the, it's still the same feeling, it's still the same, I think anyway, bitter feelings, you know, between the two communities, still, and, and it's probably as bad here in that respect and at those times as it is in Northern Ireland, yeah.

JC: What, what did your husband know about Northern, Northern Ireland when you met him? Did he, did he have much knowledge about the situation there?

JG: He did, he knew about the political stuff and, and was absolutely horrified at times about what was going on and, you know, the, the army being drafted in and the army on the streets, and when we would go back we would be stopped by security forces and the, and the car searched and things like that, it was all very alien to him and, and things did happ-, you know, when things happened, you know, horrific murders and bombs and loss of life, you know, that was totally alien to him, and to me, I mean, I was shocked by that as well, although, well, probably because it hadn't got to that extent before I left and I was absolutely amazed and horrified at what it had grown to, yeah.

JC: Yeah, so was it, I suppose it was the militarisation of everything that, that was the biggest change from when you'd left.

JG: Yeah, yeah, that's true, it was, certainly, yeah, and the restrictions on movement and things like that, yeah, and the political situation, you know, was, was very, very complex and at times it didn't seem there was **[01:10:00]** any way out of it, and it took a long time, yeah, to, to get sorted, but it did in the end and it's, it's better, it's probably not a hundred per cent, there's still underlying simmering tensions going on there still, I would say, so.

JC: Can you tell me a bit, a bit more about your daughter and son, when were they both born?

JG: My daughter was born in nineteen-, although oh it's, it, yeah, the, my daughter was born in 1973, the same year as I was married, I was pregnant when I, when I got married and of course that didn't help the situation with my family, they, they were not, you know, they were taken aback by that and were not happy about it. However, as I say, everything has worked out well, so my daughter, yeah, she was born in 1973, yeah, when we were in Erskine, yes, and then we moved here, my son was born in 1981 and they are both still living in Glasgow, as well.

JC: And did they take an interest in, in the sort of, the Irish side of your life, or your life before you moved to Scotland, yeah?

JG: Yeah, yes, yes, very much so, they were, they took a lot of interest in it, still do, and they still go back and visit my family out in, in Northern Ireland and keep in touch with them, my, you know, they've obviously got a lot of, being from a big family they've got a lot of cousins

and they go to, been across there for numerous weddings and things like that, so, yes, they do take a lot of interest, and in the political situation in Northern Ireland as well.

JC: Really, yeah?

JG: Though there's not as much going on now, apart from Brexit, as there was when I was growing up, yeah.

JC: Would, would you have talked to them about the political situation and, and the Troubles and things, yeah?

JG: Yeah, yeah, oh yeah, yeah, definitely, they probably, I'm probably not as au fait with it as, as I would have been at one stage, but, yeah, definitely, yeah [doorbell rings]. That's my doorbell.

JC: Yeah, do, give it, you can go and get that if you need to, for sure.

JG: I don't know where my husband is.

JC: No, that's fine. [interview paused while JG speaks to a caller at the door]

JG: Hi, that was my neighbour.

JC: Oh that's okay, yeah.

JG: Yeah.

JC: No, yeah, I suppose we were just talking about your, your kids and stuff and presumably you would have, you still went back to visit with them regularly, I'm just wondering what, what they made of Northern Ireland and if–?

JG: Yeah, they probably didn't understand a lot of it at that stage, but they, you know, they appreciated that it was something that we had to fight for and eventually get, but at the same time they probably were quite, found the situation quite scary, you know, and the violence and everything that was going down it was not something they were acquainted with obviously and, well, as we all did, found it quite terrifying.

JC: Did, was it important for you to bring them up with a sense of their Irishness?

JG: Yeah, yes, yeah, I would say so, yeah, and so far they've, yeah, they have really clung onto that and are quite, yeah, they do like, you know, the whole Irish culture thing and music and they're all into that and they do, and my daughter, as I say, who'd married a Catholic, they got married in a Catholic church because his family are quite strong Catholics. He obviously takes a lot of interest in this Irish situation as well, from the point of view of a Scottish Catholic, yeah.

JC: And how did you try and instil that, I suppose, did they do anything, like, I don't know, Irish dancing or anything like that, or, or were you–?

JG: No, they didn't actually.

JC: Were you a member of any Irish organisations or anything?

JG: No, not here, no.

JC: Okay.

JG: No, I wasn't and my daughter didn't do, funnily enough my daughter's two children, my granddaughters, they have got into the Irish culture probably, yeah, more than my daughter did, or, or I did here, cos they play Gaelic football, the two girls, yeah, so that, that is another quite strong link with my upbringing, yeah.

JC: I'm wondering if you have any, cos you've obviously been away from Northern Ireland far longer than you've, you've lived there now, like, are there any specific events that happened during the period of the Troubles that really stuck with you whilst you were away?

JG: Bloody Sunday, that was, that was dreadful, absolutely dreadful. It still ranks as one of the, the worst I think, happenings in all of the atrocities and everything that happened there. It was just the injustice of it all and how long it took for these unarmed folk to get justice, that, that was a big, big thing, yeah.

JC: And how did you feel about the sort of, the, the IRA bombing campaigns and, and, in England and things, like, I'm thinking the Birmingham bombings and stuff?

JG: Oh yeah, that was, like, we totally disagreed with those as well, and were upset about them, as we were upset about any of the bombings. I mean, we, we as a family and myself did not approve of anything that the IRA did, to be honest, and obviously their successors now, Sinn Féin, although they're not, don't resort to violence, but I find it quite sad the way the politics have now polarised completely with the loyalists on one side and Sinn Féin on the other, so there doesn't seem to be any room for the more moderate parties and the more moderate, more moderate voices over there, so I feel that my family living there now are not, they're not getting their representation the way they should, yeah, because, well, they are, they're, it's democratic now they get their votes and, and there's not the following for the moderate parties that, that there once was I think, so I find that quite sad.

JC: Yeah, and do you, do you think those incidents like the IRA bombs, do you think they, they affected how Irish people were perceived in, in the UK?

JG: Yes, yes, yeah, yes, probably, there probably was some of that going on, yeah, not ind-, not directly. I didn't come across any animosity towards me because of that, but I probably was aware of a lot of ill-feeling towards Irish folk or folk of Irish extraction, yeah.

JC: Would that have been sort of remarks and, that people would have made and stuff?

JG: Yeah, yeah, that kind of thing, certainly, nothing, nothing major, but, yeah, yeah, probably–

JC: I think Irish jokes and stereotypes and stuff were probably quite–

JG: Irish jokes, yeah, uh huh, yeah, and, yeah, probably, not, yeah, sectarian remarks and, and things like that and probably a bit of discrimination as well, but probably that worked both ways here, you know, you know, there are towns here which are well known as Catholic towns and towns which are well known as Protestant towns and sort of never the twain, two shall meet kind of thing, that kind of thing, they're not, it's not violent, but it's certainly underlying and it's the way some people still think.

JC: And, and you said you take an interest in Scottish politics as well. How do you feel about things like Scottish independence and the SNP?

JG: Yeah, I'm, I'm pro-, I'm pro-independence, yeah, and I'm not, I'm not an active campaigner or anything, I'm not a member of a political party, I'm not a member of the SNP or anything, but, yeah, and I think that's growing, you know, the feeling, especially with recent events. I think the leadership that has been shown here has persuaded a lot of people that we could, well, Scotland, not we, Scotland could run their own affairs, **[01:20:00]** yeah.

JC: So I just have a sort of few more, like, rounding up questions that I, I like to try and ask everyone who I talk to, if that's okay.

JG: Okay.

JC: Yeah, so I suppose we talked a little bit about the peace process and things and, and you presumably followed that very closely.

JG: Yeah.

JC: Yeah, I suppose, yeah, you were just saying about, it's interesting because on the one hand you've got the lessening of violence which is obviously a very positive development, but they you, you say the political polarisation is always, is also taking off, and, and getting worse in some ways, so I'm wondering how you feel about the state of politics in Northern Ireland at the minute, and I'll throw Brexit into that equation as well and how you think that might complicate things?

JG: I, I probably don't know. Brexit's going to complicate things, there was a problem of the hard, of the border coming back, I, I don't think that's been resolved yet, I don't know what's going to happen about it and, and that would be a, certainly a backwards step if that happened, a hard border again in Northern Ireland, because, you know, the island now operates as an island, there's, there's free flow of traffic across the border all the time, which there wasn't when I was growing up, that was a positive development, but to go back

to that, I realise it would be a border for a different reason, you know, it's economic reasons, Brexit reasons, but I still would not be happy with it at all.

JC: And do you think that that is a, a real possibility, that the border will go back to how it was?

JG: I don't know, I don't, I wouldn't like to say, it's so much up in the air, I don't think anyone knows at the moment.

JC: That's, that's very true actually [laughs], and you still, when you're able to, go back to Northern Ireland quite a bit. I wonder how, the extent to which you think the area you've grown up in has, has changed since you left?

JG: Yeah, it has changed, it has improved a lot, there's a lot more facilities for young people, for children, for everybody really and it's a much more relaxed and open-minded place now, since the, since the Good Friday Agreement I guess. There's, there's not, not the, the demarcation of borders, of, of people as there used to be, there's some integrated schools now, which would never have happened in my day, although there's still the, the Catholic schools and the Protestant schools thing, but that might improve, there might be more integrated, integrated education, I don't know, even for, like, things like further education, there's so much more scope as well and more scope and much easier to go to Northern Irish universities and colleges and things, it's much better, yeah.

JC: And do you think leaving and, and living in Scotland for all these years has changed you as a person?

JG: Probably, yeah, probably. I'm probably not, I don't know what, how to put this, I'm probably more open-minded as well, you know, there's, there was always the thing back in Northern Ireland when I was growing up, you know, you, probably the first thing you wanted to know about someone was what their religion was. I mean, that doesn't mean anything to me, that has changed in Northern Ireland to be fair as well, now, yeah, so yeah, I'm a bit, a lot more relaxed about that and everything, yeah.

JC: But you'd still identify as a nationalist?

JG: Yes, yeah, I would, yeah.

JC: And, and what about your national identity, would you primarily see yourself as Irish or Northern Irish or maybe even Scottish?

JG: I think I would probably see myself still as Northern Irish, but with a very [pauses], but I'm very fond of the Scottish element of, of my character which has grown as well, you know, I'm pretty in tune with that as well, but probably if I'm asked where I'm from, I'll say Northern Ireland, yeah.

JC: So you wouldn't have British or Irish as, as one of your identities that you would use to define yourself?

JG: Well, probably Irish, I would still say Irish, although it's, it's Northern Ireland, yeah.

JC: Yeah.

JG: Probably British doesn't mean a lot to me, no, no.

JC: Okay, yeah, that's interesting, and then finally, I suppose, where would you define as home now?

JG: Here, Scotland, Scot-, home, yeah, if I'm going home I'm going home to Scotland, although it's just a saying. If I'm travelling to Northern Ireland I will say I'm going home for the weekend, but it doesn't mean ho-, doesn't mean home in the sense, in the same way as it means my home here, in Scotland.

JC: So, so what do you think makes Scotland your home as opposed to Northern Ireland?

JG: My family that I have here, my, my son, my daughter, my granddaughters basically, yeah.

JC: Yeah.

JG: Although I've got close family in Northern Ireland as well, as I say, all my, all my siblings are still alive and I'm close to them as well, yeah, but I live here, this is my home, yeah.

JC: One thing that, that we've been talking about in the project quite a lot is, I mean, the name of the project is Conflict, Memory and Migration, I'm wondering the extent to which you feel like an emigrant or whether you just feel like you've sort of moved, moved regions in the UK?

JG: Yeah, no, I feel I've just moved regions in the UK, yeah, I don't feel I'm a migrant, no, an emigrant, no, no.

JC: That's interesting.

JG: Yeah, I don't know why, but I do.

JC: Yeah, cos I know there's this sort of sense of, of Irish people in, in Britain being sort of part of an Irish diaspora if you like, but that maybe isn't something perhaps that you–?

JG: No, probably not, I, that plays a big part in my life, no, no, here I'm, I wouldn't say I'm part of an Irish culture club here or anything, no, no, no.

JC: That's interesting. Well, I think I've, I've got to the end of my list of questions and I really appreciate you taking the time to talk to me. Is, is there anything else at all that we haven't covered that you think's important, or, or that you wanted to add to the conversation?

JG: I, I don't think so, no, I can't think of anything at the moment, have you, have you had quite a good response?

JC: Yeah, that, that's been really interesting and it's, yeah, it's just good to get everyone's, everyone's story and perspective. I'll end the recording now.

INTERVIEW ENDS