

L09 TANYA BOYD INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Interviewee: Tanya Boyd
Interviewer: Dr Fearghus Roulston
Interview summarisers: Dr Jack Crangle and Prof Liam Harte
The interview was recorded as a single audio file with no section breaks

L09 Tanya Boyd	Start time: 00:00:00	Finish time: 01:36:36	Duration: 01:36:36	Brief summary of content:
00:00–09:59	Born in Belfast in 1965. One of five children, she recalls a 'lovely' upbringing in Holywood, Co. Down. Describes how her mother joined the Church of Ireland after 'a big falling out' with her local Presbyterian church. Recalls her youthful frustration at her mother's conservative mindset, which meant that she and her siblings 'weren't really allowed to question things, everything was shut down'. Explains that she was not expected to pass the eleven-plus because of her gender and that her ability to achieve at school was hampered by her left-handedness.			
10:00–19:59	Describes her time as a boarder at grammar school in Belfast as 'the most awful experience' because it included 'horrible low-level bullying', poor food and strict discipline by teachers who were inexperienced in caring for children. She was relieved to switch to being a day girl in her early teens. Recalls the heightened tensions and anxieties provoked by the death of Bobby Sands and other conflict-related events of the early 1980s. Reflects that 'there was so much trauma going on that just was buried'.			
20:00–29:59	Notes her mother's reluctance to discuss the Troubles with her when she was young. Attributes her own hypervigilance as an adult to her experience of growing up during the conflict. Describes how the Troubles affected her father who, as a linen factory manager in Belfast, was targeted by the IRA and received death threats in 1977. Her family moved to Leicester in 1982 when the factory closed, by which time her father was 'sick and tired of Ireland'. She says that moving to England was 'a real shock because it was like a foreign country', and that her return visits to NI to see family and friends made it harder to settle.			
30:00–39:59	Characterises her parents as passively unionist and says they were 'delighted' when she married an English Catholic with Irish roots. After her A-levels she did a humanities degree at Bristol Polytechnic, which she greatly enjoyed and felt that this was where she 'first really started questioning stuff'. Remembers Bristol as 'a really cool city' and more racially integrated than Leicester. Comments on how she developed an English accent after working with 'lots of very polite girls from Surrey'. Explains that her parents moved to Kent while she was at university. Suggests that her mother never fully got over her sadness at leaving NI.			
40:00–49:59	Explains that she met her husband at a student party in Bristol and they travelled in Asia and Australia before settling in London in 1989. When they got married in Holywood in 1994 some of his family and friends were too fearful to attend the wedding. Reflects on her love of the outdoor life in Australia, but notes her husband's antipathy to the misogyny and racism he detected there. Describes adjusting to working in the PR industry in London, wanting to have a family there and enjoying holidays in west Cork, where they have a holiday home. Recalls her sadness at IRA bombs in England in the early 1990s and how the police once called to their Leicester home because they owned a car with a NI number plate.			
50:00–59:59	Mentions reactions to NI accents in England, including an incident where a friend was questioned by police after a fight in a Camden pub. Claims 'English people			

	aren't really interested' in NI. She spent several years doing 'travel PR', which took her to many countries, before becoming a full-time mother in London. She later bought, renovated and resold houses in London while her husband set up his own business. She then did an MA in historical research at the University of Roehampton and now volunteers as an art therapist at a dementia charity.
01:00:00–01:09:59	Discusses her current attitude to religion, revealing that her children were baptised and that she attends church more in NI than in London. States that she is not opposed to religious schools in principle, but was not keen on them for her children. Says her view of the peace process in the 1990s was naively optimistic until her relatives back in NI gave her a 'reality check' about the tensions and problems that remained. Discusses gender politics in NI and sharing her pro-choice stance with her children, who were 'completely horrified' by the abortion debate in NI. Believes the ROI is 'so much more progressive, so much more outward-looking' than NI and states that she 'cannot bear listening to the DUP'.
01:10:00–01:19:59	Says that it is 'always lovely' to visit NI because 'nothing really changes' there. Discusses the relative merits of the school systems in England, NI and the ROI in relation to the choices she made about her children's education. Voices her support for Irish reunification and her concerns about the impact of Brexit in Ireland. Admires the resilience and stoicism of the 'ordinary people' in NI who uncomplainingly endured the Troubles and who deserve more credit and recognition. The fact that she knew few Catholics growing up has influenced her support for integrated education. She identifies as Northern Irish and says she will pragmatically 'travel on a British passport, Irish passport, I don't really care'.
01:20:00–01:29:59	She becomes emotional when discussing the recent mental illness and suicide of a close friend whom she helped to look after and who was, she feels, let down by the 'shockingly lax' mental health services in England. Discusses her daughters learning about NI history at university, explaining that 'they're endlessly curious about it' and now know more about the Troubles than she does. Her daughters also share her views on Irish unity. She expresses 'huge gratitude' for having lived in NI, but feels bitter about the inadequate medical treatment of her mother's Troubles-related trauma and associated 'chronic drinking problem'.
01:30:00–01:36:36	Recalls the death of a grammar school friend and how her fellow students were offered no support at the time. Looks back at some formative life events, including her wedding day, her confirmation day and participating in a Duke of Edinburgh scheme. She ends by expressing her hope that post-Brexit NI will remain calm and politically stable, but is dubious about the Conservative government's ability to understand and prioritise the importance of peace there.