INTERVIEW G14-SG4: JAMES MCGRATH

Interviewer: Dr Jack Crangle
Interviewee: James McGrath
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Transcriber: Jack Crangle

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, James, so just in addition to the, the consent form that you sent me last night, would you just be able to confirm for the recording that you're okay with this recording going ahead and everything?

JM: Yeah, yeah, that's fine, yeah, I can confirm, yeah.

JC: Great stuff. Your picture just disappeared on me slightly.

JM: I know, I'm just change, it should be, yeah, is that better?

JC: Yeah, that's better, yeah.

JM: Yeah, I just changed my audio there, okay, yeah.

JC: All good, great, okay then, can you start then by telling me when and where you were born?

JM: Yeah, I was, I was born in Glasgow on the fifteenth of May 1964.

JC: Great, and you, did you grow up in Glasgow, then?

JM: I did yeah, yeah, I, I lived in Glasgow, well, up until the age of eighteen and then I left Glasgow when I went to university and then I returned, after a few years I returned back to Glasgow and lived in Glasgow and then in Edinburgh up until 1993, and then in 1993 I, I moved to, to Spain and I've been based in Barcelona ever since then, but I've made sort of quite frequent trips to, to, mainly Glasgow, but Edinburgh as well.

JC: Sure, and what area of Glasgow did you grow up in?

JM: Well, we, initially I lived in an area called Partick, which is in the centre of Glasgow, and then we moved out to an area called Yoker, which is on the, the sort of border between, yeah, it's on the we-, it's the west, west Glasgow, before you come to Clydebank.

JC: Were you quite young when you moved out to Yoker?

JM: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, I, yeah, I think I was, I was probably about three or four years old, so most of my years were born, sorry, most of my years were spent in, in what is Yoker in Glasgow.

JC: And what kind of area was that like, could you give me a sense of what it was like?

JM: Yeah, it was a pretty working-class area, yeah, the, initially where we lived in Partick is an area which is sort of dominated by tenement housing and I was from a large family and, you know, when I was born I think there were seven of us living in, like, two bedrooms. It was a very small tenement house, and so my parents had the opportunity of getting council housing because they, their, the, the flat they lived in, the tenement flat, they actually owned, and at the beginning my father was offered a flat outside of Glasgow in a, in a town called, well, Ferguslie in, in Paisley, and, and he refused it, which was a bit kind of unusual because, you know, getting council housing in the 1960s was, was really important, you know, but I think he, he sort of realised he didn't want to move right outside the city and had his doubts about it, so he, he kind of held out and then he was offered this house in, in, in Yoker, it's, it's on the fringes between and area called Yoker and Knightswood and, and that area was, like, a sort of post-Second World War, sort of, almost like a suburb, you know, so the house had a garden, it had a front garden, it had a back garden, it was a semi-detached house, so compared to, you know, living in, in sort of tenement conditions, it was night and day, but it was, it was generally, yeah, I would, you know, working-class, but it was, you, you know, in terms of that terminology, kind of good working-class, you know, it was, it was an area, I wouldn't regard it as being soc-, economically and socially deprived, although it was close to areas that were economically and socially deprived, but, but generally, it was close to the shipyards, so certainly in the 1960s and 1970s there was really sort of full, full employment in terms of the population and, you know, it was, you know, it was deemed in, in Glasgow terms as a nice area, you know. Glasgow post-war, there was a lot of large housing schemes that were built on the fringes of the city, places like Drumchapel, Castlemilk, Easterhouse, when there was a large displacement of the population from the inner-city area, and, and those areas quickly sort of had a reputation for vandalism, high unemployment, a lot of deprivation, so I would say that where we lived was, you know, if you like, a sort of step up from that.

JC: Right, okay, that's interesting.

JM: But yeah, you know, it was a, you know, it was an area where I think people took care of their environment, took care of their surroundings and, yeah, you know, and then in subsequent years, you know, in the 1980s in the UK with the introduction of Right to Buy, then it's an area where people have gone on and, you know, bought, bought their council houses, unlike other areas which perhaps people didn't have the financial resources to, to, you know, purchase, purchase their houses.

JC: And what did your mum and dad do for a job?

JM: Well, when my fa-, as I said to you, both my parents came from, from Ireland. If I talk about it chronologically, would that make more sense, if I talk to you–?

JC: Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

JM: Yes, so it's, my mother arrived first, so she's from County Cavan and she, she sort of arrived, her first, earliest memory would, I suppose have been, in Scotland, was VJ night in 1945, so that sort of dates it round about August 1945, and she came over because she had a sister who was already working and living in Glasgow, and consequently, you know, a lot of women had been working in munitions factories in Glasgow in, during the war, and her sister had a job working there, but when my mother came they sort of, you know, the war had, was, was finishing and she, she started off working in a place called Crossmyloof Ice Rink and she was sort of working there as a waitress and, and so she did sort of waitressing work until she got married, so she came in 1945, she got married in 1952, which was the year that my father came to Glasgow, and then she, I'm not sure if she stopped working immediately, but I think she stopped working fairly soon after they got married, and when my father came he started off working in the trams, he was a tramcar driver. At that time Glasgow had trams and he, he worked in, in the trams, then he got a job, he was offered a job working in a, in a factory, a car factory, there was a big American investment, a company called Chrysler invested in an area called Linwood in Glasgow and they built a, a, a car factory there and he worked there, but he absolutely hated it, he rea-, he really didn't like it at all. He came from a rural background in Ireland, he was used to being outdoors and I think he found it quite oppressive working in a factory, and so, and then he had an accident while he was working there and he left that job, and then, by the time, by then trams had been replaced by buses and he worked as a, as a bus driver and then he was promoted as the bus driver to an inspector, a bus inspector, and he subsequently died in 1971, so up until then he was, his, his role was a bus inspector and my mother was, yeah, worked at home, looked after the family, cos as the family grew with the arrival of more, more children.

JC: Sure, and you said your dad was from County Fermanagh, is that right?

JM: He was, that's right, yeah, yeah.

JC: Quite a, a rural background, you said.

JM: Yeah, yeah, yeah, he came from a town called Bel-, well, the nearest town was Belcoo, cos he was born in a, you might be aware of, like, a townlands out-, outside, quite close to another sort of small village called Letterbreen, so the nearest big town would be Enniskillen, so where he was born was about ten miles on the Sligo Road from Enniskillen heading to Belcoo, and yeah, he, his father had some farm, but was, that would be my grandfather, he worked in the sort of local creamery and he delivered milk in the area, so he kind of combined with working in the creamery and delivering milk, and when my father left school, **[00:10:00]** there was a, a local quarry in the area and he worked there for, for a number of years and he, he, in actual fact he, he moved to Scotland because he'd met my mother, so when my mother had, had moved to Glasgow she frequently went back to, to Ireland, back home and, as was the case then, when socialising, people socialised, there was a lot of going to dances and, and attending, you know, the dances run by sort of local parish

churches, and so she had met my fa-, my father there, I think probably the end of nineteen-, 1946-47 had met him, or sorry, no, she met him before she moved to Ireland, sorry, moved to Scotland, and then kind of lost contact, and then with going back to Ireland, she met him again and the relationship kind of developed from there, and as a result of that he moved to Glasgow.

JC: Right, okay, so he came over because of her then.

JM: Exactly.

JC: Yeah, that's interesting, and did your parents, would they have talked to you at all, or, or your siblings, about their life in Ireland before they moved over, did, did you get a sense of what life was like for them?

JM: Yeah, yeah, I mean, less so with my father because I was kind of seven or eight years old, well, I was just about to turn seven when he died, so not, not directly talking to him, but talking with his family and my aunts and uncles I had, I had a, yeah, I've got a fairly good idea, a much better sense, I suppose, of my mo-, of my mother's village, but these, these villages, you know, where she came from in County Cavan is very close to County Fermanagh, so they're, they're very similar in terms of, you know, like, when they went to school for example, there would be one class, the schoolmaster was invariably drunk, seemed to be the case. Education was pretty rudimentary, they, they, you know, a lot of emphasis was placed on handwriting, you know, so they, they would, you know, they'd be good at handwriting, but school would be very strict, particularly for boys, that would be, you know, it wasn't something that was very popular, very popular with the boys for attending school, you know, school was seen as something that you had to kind of get through and finish, which was ironic given that later on education was real priorities for my parents, both of them, their children doing well educationally was, was, was very important to them, but I think while they, while they were at school it was, it was, it was quite basic and, you know, they're the sort of people that, I wouldn't say that they were, they were ashamed of their education, but they were, they were very, very well-informed, always interested in, in, in current affairs and, and, you know, and I think, I think that created a, a little bit of, well, they understood that, you know, they didn't have the opportunities, but, but there was never any sense of resentment, it was the way things were, you know. I think there was a great deal of, they were kind of expected to do certain things in life, you know, they'd be, they both came from very sort of devout Catholic families, so I think they both had a real sort of sense of duty and that, and that, that, that was very sort of characteristic of, of, of their approach to life. On my father's side, I know that sport was important to him, so he enjoyed Gaelic games, he, he was also a boxer, he was an amateur boxer, so, you know, sport was important to him, you know, sense of the, the family and belonging to the family and the extended family was also extremely important, so I mean, I, I think that, that was, that was very important. My mother used to often say, you know, like, she felt that one of the reasons why she sort of lived longer was she said that everything, everything they ate, they grew, so they were, you know, they, they would, it was, like, you know, I suppose like an allotment, family allotment, vegetable patches that they had and, you know, and I knew that was a, that was the same for both my father and my mother because I remember my grandfather having, you know, a patch for growing veg-, growing potato-,

growing his own potatoes and vegetables and that would be the, you know, the, the basic, the diet and, you know, whenever we went there you, you know, you know, like, they bas-, the diet was generally meat when they could get it, although when they were younger my mother would say it was quite scarce to get meat, and in her family, her, her father actually made extra money by taming wild horses, people would bring horses to him in order to tame and he would, he would, he would earn a little bit of money and normally what would they, they would buy with that would be a pig, so most of the, the, the meat that would be available to people in that part of Bel-, in that part of Ireland, in Fermanagh and in Cavan would be, would be pork, you know, so bacon, you know, cabbage, these were, like, traditional meals that they would, that, that they would eat, yeah, yeah, yeah. I, you, you know, they would say that when it came to play they would, they would kind of, what we in Scotland would call dens, they would make little houses, you know, that, that's how, they would build their own little houses and they would kind of do their play acting, that's what they would, the sort of things that they would, they would, you know, do in order to play. They, a thing that was quite typical of that area as well, especially in the forties and fifties as well, was something called the mummers, who were, like, a group of, like, kind of travelling musicians who would do, like, small plays, they would sort of go round the town, go round towns and go to people's houses and, and that would be the entertainment, and so mummers was quite popular round about Fermanagh and Cavan and, and, and that, that would, that would be a kind of a, sort of an event for them. Christmas was an extremely important, Christmas was the time of year, they would say, when they would, they would have a little bit extra, so the mother, the grandmother would do, you know, additional bacon, you know, making boxty or, yeah, in other parts of Ireland I think they call it soda bread, but in that area it would be wheaten bread it would be, it would be called, it's the same as, as, as soda bread and, you know, they would make these cakes and I remember saying they put a candle in the window and, and then the other thing that they, sometimes they, yeah, mentioned would be the, the fairy, the fairy trees, you know [pauses]. Is that okay, yeah?

JC: Yeah, that's fine, yeah.

JM: Yeah, sorry, I think it was, I'm doing it on the iPad and I think Siri suddenly–

JC: Oh yeah, that's fine, no problem.

JM: Interrupted, sorry. I was mentioning there about the, the fairy tree, the fairy tree.

JC: Sure, yeah.

JM: A fairy tree outside the house, the fairy tree was sort of, had all these sort of magical significance for them and they would, they would sit outside and watch to see if, if they could ever spot any fairies, that of course never arrived, but it was still, you know, part of their, of, of, of growing up I think.

JC: It sounds like you, you grew up with quite a strong sense then of your sort of Irish heritage and, and culture, and quite a strong appreciation of that.

JM: Yeah, it was, it was, it was ve-, you know, my father used to say, you don't have to be a horse to be born in a stable, and I think what he meant by that was the sense of us as a family being Irish was, was pretty strong, you know, and, you know, and, and when, whenever we went back to Ireland as children, it was, it was, I was often struck because people would, would say how long are you home for, and in my mind, you know, home, well, where was home, home was Scotland, but then people would say, you know, well, how long are you home for, and you would say a couple of weeks and my parents would always talk about going home, you know, we'll be going home in the summer, or we'll be going, you know, going back home for a few weeks, so that kind of created a bit of a, well, where exactly is home, you know, because on the one side, you know, home **[00:20:00]** was the house and where I lived in Glasgow, but I think that contributed to this kind of very strong sense of, well, there is this other home and, and, and that was, you know, you know, where you, kind of, like, for instance, the other thing would be, you know, sometimes uncles would be saying to you oh, like, who do, you know, who do, who do you belong to and are you, are you a Scotsman or an Irishman, and they would al-, they'd kid in that sort of sense, you know, like, of, like, where, where does your true allegiance lie type, type of thing, you know, you'd have these kind of conversations with uncles, you know, did in a sort of joking way, but I think it kind of, say, kind of helped to reinforce that sense of, that connection really, so, you know, it was a strong connection, you know. In the house, the only records that we had really were, you know, Irish, it was Irish music, you know, that, that, those were the only kind of LPs that I remember that existed in the house when we were young and, and I, you know, and, and very much, I think, when, for, for, in terms of an Irish community in Glasgow, so much of it revolved around the church, you know, the, the parish, that's where people sort of met, you know, in Glasgow, it wasn't, it wasn't, like, really, you know, going to, like, Irish pubs, which you might've found in other parts, parts of the UK, or social clubs, you know, it, it was very much through, say, the parish and the identity with the parish and meeting other Irish people there and that's where they would, like, well, my granny used to send papers, you know, local papers and then, I think after a while, sometimes they would send them there, but you'd, you'd buy them at the, after mass, so after mass they'd be selling like the *Fermanagh Herald* which was the paper from, from Fermanagh that, that would be in the house and that's the newspaper I would remember my father reading, he'd read the *Fermanagh Herald* and yeah, so, so, you know, it was funny even, even at Christmas time, up until she died, well, first of all my granny used to send a goose for us at Christmas time, you know, with, health, you know, think of the health and safety standards nowadays, you know, like, sending animals through the post seems unthinkable, but she used to send a goose and then latterly it was a turkey and it was quite a big thing that we, we would have Christmas dinner with the turkey sent from, from Ireland, you know, so, so there was that, kind of a lot of these, I don't know how, how you'd describe, almost kind of incidental things which were, were part of growing up and I think created a, a, yeah, a sense of our Irish identity, you know.

JC: It sounds like you, both you and you parents were sort of caught, caught between the two places in a way, you were, you were, sort of had roots in both Scotland and Ireland.

JM: Certainly, I mean, certainly from my mother, but I think, and I think this came from a sense of duty, of going back home becau-, and, and, and dad as well, every summer it would go back and it would be going back to, to work, you know, so either it was gathering hay or

it was maybe collecting turf, but there was, there was, you know, that sense of going back and helping out at home, for both of them, was very important, and that's why all our holidays involved going back to Ireland, you know, but, but, you know, it's funny cos I remember later on asking my mum about that, you know, and, and she, her answer kind of surprised me a little bit because she said that she owed so much to Scotland, you know, Scotland gave her her life, you know, and, and, and I think given, you know, given the fact that her children were born there and she spent so much time there, I don't think she was ever sort of torn between the two, you know, there was never, there was never a sense of tension at all, or, or, or absolutely no resentment towards Scotland whatsoever, but as I say, I think it was almost that kind of expectation, you know, from where they came from in Ireland. Emigration was just, you know, it was the norm, what they did, it was what their, the generation before them did, they were kind of, probably lucky in the fact that their parents were the ones in the family that stayed in Ireland, because they both had lots of uncles and aunts who were in the States or in, not, or in England, and the reason why my mother went to Scotland was because she had an uncle in Scotland, so the uncle, cos she needed to, to be sponsored in order to get into Scotland and had to report to a police station every, every weekend.

JC: Was, was that only if you were from the South?

JM: Yes, I think so.

JC: Yeah, mm hmm, that's interesting, I didn't know that.

JM: Yeah, yeah, no, no, no, cos she was, it was then the sort of Free State, so she, yeah, she, she had to, to report. My father came, I mean, I'm not sure how long that actually lasted for as well because I say, she came in '45, my father came in '52, so maybe by then the regulations had changed, but, yeah, but the, the, you know, you know, it's difficult, as I say, because with my father I never really had those conversations, so it's more kind of second-hand if you like, rather than first-hand with him, but I mean, I know he'd a really, really strong attachment, his, to Ireland and, you know, had, he'd a few scrapes, shall we say, as a result of his Irish identity.

JC: In Scotland?

JM: In, yeah, in work.

JC: Right, okay, do you know anything about, about what would have happened?

JM: No, well, I know that there was, I mean, how I knew this actually was quite funny, because one of the first jobs I had was working in a, working in a bar, working in a pub and, you know, I kind of got that job because this was someone who had known my father, it was an Irish guy, you know, who had the pub. My brother had worked there before me and then when I was eighteen, before I was going to university, I got a job working in the pub and this pub was, was, was nearby the, the bus depot that my father worked out of and quite a lot of the, the workers from the bus depot would actually go to this pub, and so this was in 1982 and, you know, you'd get sort of talking to customers and you asked them what they would

do and I sort of mentioned oh my dad, he used to work in the, the bus department and then one of them knew my father, you know, and he told me a story about my father where he was getting a bit of, you know, Fenian this, Fenian that and in, in Glasgow, you know, the word Fenian is used as a term of abuse and, you know, when you're called a Fenian bastard or whatever then there's a real kind of sectarian meaning behind it and, and I think he, you know, at one time in the, in the, in the bus depot he had enough of it and he was, he was quite a big man, you know, his physicality was quite imposing and, as I said, he'd been a boxer and he had a fight about it, you know, and, and I, and I also know that, that he, he, he was involved in trade union activities while being there. He, he was, he's a delegate, and he was encouraged as well to go to training courses and stuff and, you know, and my mum used to tell some good stories where she'd remember where they would go to these dances or these events which were organised by the trade union, my dad would go, and my father, when he was younger, had an accident where he was in danger of losing a finger and, and because he was quite a devout Catholic he made, he made a promise to the Sacred Heart that if he, if he, if he didn't lose his finger then he would be a pioneer, that he, that he wouldn't drink, and he never drank, which was, well, you know, Ireland is a, there's a lot, especially amongst immigrants, you know, alcoholism and hard drinking was quite typical, but he, he never drank, he didn't drink, you know, and throughout his life and, you know, so his, his, his, again, you know, it sort of emphasised a little bit his, his sense of, of, of devoutness in doing that and, I've kind of lost a little bit of my train of thought while I was, I was telling that story cos I think I've gone off at a tangent there, but, yeah, sorry, one of the things about him being, the reason why I was telling that was that when he went to these sort of social events he quite often wanted money from my mum in **[00:30:00]** order to buy a drink, even though he didn't have a drink himself, but he still wanted to be seen to be able to buy, to buy drinks and, you know, yeah, so that, that, I mean, that was a kind of aspect in his life and he was involved in trade union activities and then they made him an inspector, so he got promoted to inspector, which meant he kind of stopped doing his trade union work and that was, that was the role that he had until he died.

JC: And it sounds like church was quite a big part of your life as well, growing up.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

JC: A lot, a lot of Irish people, you said, in your parish.

JM: Yeah, yeah, yeah, partic-, particularly the, the, well, particularly in the parish where they were married and where they lived initially, which was called St Peter's, in Partick, and that area of Glasgow had, had a quite a large Irish population, it's sort of known for how, you know, the west of Scotland, or Glasgow at any rate, of where a lot of Irish people, first-generation Irish settled there, you know, the main one, the main sort of area of Glasgow is the Southside, Gorbals, that's where the, you know, the, the bulk of people when they went there at the beginning, that's where they, where, where they went, so when my mother first arrived she lived in the Gorbals, but then she had a sister who then moved from the Gorbals and, and was, lived in Partick and she then moved to Partick and when they married, their first house was in, was in Partick and that was a, an area of, of quite, quite a significant Irish-born population and, and they always had a lot of links with that church, even though they moved to, sort of Scotstoun, we would, that church would, you know, we,

we were all sort of christened there and, and throughout our life we always had a lot of connection with it and in fact my mother was buried in that church, you know, or not buried there, but her, her requiem mass was there, but when we went to the, when we moved to, like, Yoker, Knightswood, it wasn't quite, there wasn't quite the same numbers of Irish people there, but, you know, the sort of families that you became friendly with would generally be sort of families, Irish, Irish, first-generation Irish and, and again, it would perhaps be people my father knew from the area of Fermanagh where he came from, so there were families that we knew that came from around Belcoo, a town called Garrison which was about twelve, ten miles or so, Belleek, an area from there, we would know people from that sort of area and those would be the people that were, that would be friends. An awful lot of the priests in Glasgow in the 1960s were Irish-born, so again, there was a connection with, you know, the, the church and, and yeah, you know, there was a, a, the church would organise parish dances and usually they would, you know, there might be some Irish music at it as well and that, that would be how they socialised, would be parish dances. As I said, my father didn't drink, so he wouldn't go to pubs, but they would go to events that were, that would be organised in the, in the parish, like the dances and, and, you know, they were, there were, like, parish associations like St Vincent de Paul, my father was a member of that, the Legion of Mary, my mother was a member of that, Union of Catholic Mothers, my mother was a member of that, makes me smile thinking about it, you know, they ticked, they ticked a lot of boxes when they came through, being, you know, involved in the church. When we were younger we were all, we were altar boys, so it was a, a kind of, you know, it was a real kind of focal point of the family, you know, and, and it was very much I think tied up, tied up with our Irish identity and culture because the families that they came from in Ireland were also very connected with the church too.

JC: And how did you feel about church, you and your siblings, how did you feel about sort of religion and being an altar boy and stuff?

JM: You know, it was a case of, well, you know, you, being younger you wanted to do it because your older brother did it and, and, and those were the da-, in those sort of days, like, a lot of, a lot of people would attend mass, so you didn't, you know, maybe once you got a little bit older, you know, you'd start seeing a real decline in, in, in the sort of attendances at mass, but, you know, when, we would go, we'd be a family of six or seven kids and in the pew behind there'd be another family of six or seven kids and they'd, you know, they, they might have ginger hair instead of us and we'd be fair, but, you know, it was kind of similar, so I suppose you kind of felt, well, you know, that, that's what you do and, and, you know, it's funny, we, we kind of, we all did it and, and I, and, and, and we all continue to attend mass, which is a bit unusual I think, you know, speaking with friends and, and knowing people, you know, but yeah, I think, you know, you know, I think, I mean, I remember, for example, with my, my elder brother, the oldest brother, in that he, he attended a school in Glasgow called St Mungo's Academy and in the nineteen-, well, sixties and seventies, you know, if, if you came from a, sort of an Irish Catholic background you weren't expected to go to university, you weren't expected to get a job in the professions, you know, it just, that, that was-, that wasn't mapped out for you, that wasn't for you, you know, and, you know, and, but as, as I said earlier, for my parents education was a priority and it, in the 1960s in, Scotland had, or Glasgow at any rate had a comprehensive system of education, so you went to your local school, but there was one thing unique to Glasgow and

that was, there was a secondary school called St Mungo's Academy and how it operated was it took, like, the top two or three pupils in every primary school and, and they were then educated at St Mungo's Academy and, you know, when you think of it as an incredibly strategic move of how to create a, a Catholic middle class in, in Glasgow, you, it meant creaming off the top and, and taking those kids who would be then the kids that would, you know, get a good enough education in order for them to go to university and it worked. I mean, if, if, if you, if you were to do any analysis of, you know, the people that became doctors, lawyers, not many of them became advocates, which is the sort of Scottish equivalent of barristers, cos that's still a sort of bastion of, of, of sort of Scottish Protestantism, but it's very interesting how many of them actually went to St Mungo's because the other sort of secondary schools didn't really have a reputation of sending people to university and, you know, the most common would be, common route would be to leave school at sixteen, if you were lucky, get an apprenticeship, if it was in the shipyards there would be some shipyards that you, you knew that if you were a Catholic you might get a job there, there were others that you knew that if you, you were, if you were a Catholic there was no point in applying, you kind, you knew these shipyards and you weren't going to get the job there, or certain of the larger engineering firms it was, you know, it was common knowledge you wouldn't get that job, but the sort of St Mungo's Academy, kind of, was the, was a way of, of creating a Spani-, a Catholic middle class and, cos aside from that the only other option would've been private school which was, like, you know, for, for most people who came from Irish Catholic backgrounds it was way out of their league, you know, to, to, it would be impossible on, on, on a, you know, a bus driver's wages, then there's family, it was impossible, but St Mungo's, so, you know, my, my brother talks about the incredible pressure he felt, being under in order to get into St Mungo's, cos the way St Mungo's worked was if the first one in the family got in then that opened the doors for the rest of them because (a) you had to be good academically, but (b) it was kind of important that you had, you know, it would help that you knew that you had someone else in the family who'd attended St Mungo's and, and him getting in was, like, a big, big thing because **[00:40:00]** that meant that he was on the path to go to university and because he kind of got there then my other brother, he then went to St Mungo's and he went to university, then in the sort of mid-1970s they changed it, St Mungo's was no longer allowed to kind of take, you know, the cream of primary education in Scotland, sorry in Scotland, in, in Glasgow, and so I then went to the sort of local comprehensive and one of my brothers, well, two other brothers went to the local comprehensive, you know, and that was the–

JC: Yeah, I was going to ask a bit about, about your school, I mean, and stuff, so did you go to primary school just locally, then?

JM: Yeah, went to the local, local primary school. Scotland has segregated education, which basically means the schools are funded. Catholic schools are paid for by the state, and so therefore, you know, you have the oppor-, you get the opportunity to choose, to send your, your children to either a Catholic school or a non-denominational school, so, you know, people that would be baptised as Catholics, not necessarily practising Catholics, but if they were baptised as Catholics, would send their children to the local Catholic primary school. I attended a school called Corpus Christi which was in an area called Scotstounhill, which is, and I went to, went to primary school from there and then I went to secondary school which was called St Thomas Aquinas comprehensive secondary school, which was one of the

largest. It was the only comprehensive, Catholic comprehensive school in the sort of west, like, well, I call it the west end, but sometimes when people speak about the West End in Glasgow they refer to a particular part of Glasgow, but, you know, the, the west side of the city.

JC: Sure, yeah, so would, would your friends have been pretty much exclusively Catholic, then?

JM: Yeah, well, yes, yes and no. My friends would be, but the people I played with, I've played with, like, you know, I played with Protestant neighbours as well, we would go and play football and, and we'd go to, like, a local area where you'd play football and when I'd, when I'd be playing it would be kind of, you know, we'd play Catholic and Protestants, but I, you know, and I mean, I suppose I, you know, growing up, certainly to the age of fifteen or sixteen, you know, you might not be sort of conscious of whether you'd Catholic friends or Protestant friends, you, but as, you know, a lot of the kids that I would play with would tend to be Catholics, you know, but that was because that particular area there was more Catholic kids, you know, once you started becoming more aware of the differences then you realised oof there are differences here, yeah, and a lot of it would revolve around football and the team you supported and, you know, that kind of common knowledge. If you were a Catholic you were more likely to be a Celtic supporter, you know, Rangers had a policy of not playing Catholics, so why would you support a club that, you know, excluded people because they were the same as you, as, you know, so you, you, for anyone Cath-, I knew one or two people that said they were Rangers supporters as Catholics, but I think they did it more out of, like, well, I mean, I can't explain for them why they did it, but I'm sure there was an element of winding people up and doing it, but yeah, I mean, I remember, it was quite funny because especially round about the age of sixteen I met this guy who was a, a Protestant and he, he played in an Orange band and, and I remember chatting to him and I was quite surprised because he, his, his grandparents were from Ireland and I hadn't appreciated the amount of Northern Irish Protestant immigration that there'd been to the west of Scotland because all the sort of immigrants that I knew were all kind of Catholic immigrants and, and so I remember when, you know, he was saying oh look it's great, he went back, he went to Belfast during the summer holidays and I was quite surprised that he went back to a Protestant area and that, you know, and, and that was something that later on, you know, I discovered more about, that there was a large, you know, a lot of the mi-, immigration to, to Glasgow, a lot or, you know, a substantial proportion was also Protestant and not, not just Catholic, but, you know, going back to your question on, you're talking about growing up, especially when you became more aware of who your friends were, then, you know, they became, they were, you know, drawn from, from school, and, and, so consequently they would've been, they would've been Catholic.

JC: And was there much sort of, you mentioned the stuff that happened to your dad, did you experience much sectarianism growing up?

JM: From neighbours sometimes, you know, like, if you would play, there was one neighbour in particular where, you know, we would get, I'll kick seven colours of Fenian shite out of you if you ever play in front of my garden, so yeah, I mean, you kind of knew, you kind of knew as well that, that there weren't a lot of Orangemen round where I lived

cos I think it was a, you know, it was pretty mixed, but you might, there might be one or two families that you might know that they were Orange and they would keep their distance, the rest of the people not so much. Whenever there was football you would be aware of it, you would sometimes get chased by, by other groups that you knew that came from a, there was a couple of surrounding streets that were predominantly Protestant and a lot of graffiti there would be about Northern Ireland paramilitary groups like the UDA and the UVF and there would be the classic FTP, so, you know, you kind of knew what area you were going into by, by looking at the graffiti and, and sometimes they would come and they would chase you and you would know that you were getting, you know, they were, they were going after you because they knew you were likely to be a Catholic group, even, and the ironic thing is you might be playing football with, with others who were Protestant, but you, you know, that, you know, there wasn't a great deal of rationale behind, well, the rationale was they assumed that we were Catholic, so they, they'd get, they'd chase. I remember one, one, at one point being quite indignant, I suppose, because 1980, was it 1980, no, it wasn't, it was 1982, when I was a sixth year at school there was a quite a famous by-election held in the constituency that my school was in, it was the Hillhead by-election and, and it became quite well known because Roy Jenkins, who had left the Labour Party and formed the SDP, had stood, I think, in a seat called Warrington in England, didn't win it, it was a stronghold Labour seat and then he then was kind of parachuted in to stand in Hillhead constituency in 1982 as the SDP candidate, and the Hillhead constituency covered areas like Partick, which was working-class, but it also covered areas like Downhill, Hyndland, Hillhead, Jordanhill, that were middle-class in Gla-, yeah, well, middle-class areas and that had been held by a Conservative MP, so when they were having the, the by-election, one of the candidates was a guy who was quite infamous around Glasgow at that time called Pastor Jack Glass. Pastor Jack Glass was kind of similar to Ian Paisley, Dr Ian Paisley, in Northern Ireland. He's been a sort of Presbyterian minister involved in politics and was, you know, had a very kind of, I would describe, anti-Catholic discourse and in 1982 at the time of this election the Pope was due to visit Scotland, which was a huge thing. The Pope's visit to, in 1982 was such a, you know, it was a really big thing for the, for the sort of Catholic Irish community in Scotland, so he stood on, in the by-election, on a 'No Pope Here' candidacy, and with the, the, the by-election, there was hustings being held, and local schools were invited to the hustings and we were able to go along there and ask questions to the candidates who were also attending, and the reason was, that I was quite indignant, was because Pastor Jack Glass and his, his entourage were protesting because they hadn't been invited, and, and because they were protesting we were the only Catholic school that had to go in through the back door, you know, to avoid the protest, and I kind of felt, you know, how come we have to go in through the back door, everyone else goes through the front door and we go in the back door and **[00:50:00]**, you know, and maybe I was extrapolating too much from that, but it felt another kind of indication of, you know, getting treated a bit differently and, and you, you know, you, I think that reflected a little bit of growing up feeling that, you know, you would be, you were treated differently, you know, there were certain jobs that you weren't expected to do, that there, there was a route or areas of living that, you know, seemed to be, you know, that's not for you, type of thing and, and, you know, sometimes the sectarianism would be blatant, particularly around football, that would be it, so as I said, I was attacked, I remember being punched one time going to a football game cos I wore a Celtic scarf, so, you know, it was, it was there, you know.

JC: You were a Celtic supporter growing up then, yeah?

JM: Yeah, yeah, I liked, you know, as I say, when my, when my, my dad was interested in Gaelic football and when we were young, there was a place over the Southside of Glasgow called Pearse Park and we used to play Gaelic games there on a Sunday morning and, and, and we would go there to watch the, the games being, the Gaelic, Gaelic football being played and then at some point, I'm not sure when, he, he became a football fan and he was a big Celtic fan, he, he was, big time Celtic fan and even my mum, before she met my dad, she, she was a Celtic fan, she used to go to Celtic games, until some Rangers fans told her, told her that they were going to cut off her hair if she was cheering, cheering on Celtic too loudly and, so she then decided to stop going to any football games after that cos she felt a wee bit threatened, but, so from a very young age my dad brought us to football and, and Celtic were the team that kind, you know, represented Irish Catholics, you know, Celtic were your team and Celtic were and, you know, supporting Celtic was an expression of your, your Irish identity and, and going to the games, you would see tricolours and it was the only place in Glasgow really you would see tricolours, you know, flying, flying a tricolour would be like a rag to a bull really, you know, it just, it, it wouldn't be seen, but, you know, people would, would show the tricolour at Celtic Park, they would sing the songs that would, that the fans would sing, we'd all, all, a lot of the songs were Irish songs. Sometimes we'd go on supporters' buses and you would, you know, they would put on cassettes and you would hear Irish music and you'd, you'd learn songs, that's where you'd learn a lot of Irish nationalist and republican songs and you would teach songs to your friends. They would ask, you know, do you know the words to the, 'The Boys of the Old Brigade' or 'Men Behind the Wire', tell, you know, they would ask you, like, to, to tell them the words to that song, so it, it would, you know, it was, it was very much, you know, part of, of who you were and, and, you know, the team was seen to be, as I say, sort of def-, defending and representing your, your community.

JC: And did you ever play Gaelic at all?

JM: When I went back to Ireland I would play Gaelic, yeah, not, not, not in Glasgow because by that time my father had died and we wouldn't play, and, and I'm not sure what happened as well, yeah, we kind, those sort of things, yeah, you know, we'd no, we'd no, what, you know, my mum was on her own bringing up a large family, there was really no one else to take, you know, to take us over there, she didn't drive, so that, that stopped, but when we go back to, to Ireland then, then I would, I played, cos when we would go back in the summer, sports days were really important round different villages, you know, they would have their, their sports day or festivals, Belcoo, fifteenth of August, Belcoo sports day, you know, we, we would arrive, but late back to school, because schools in Scotland would start on maybe the tenth or the eleventh of August, but we would stay in Belcoo for the sports day on the fifteenth of August cos it was such a big thing and, and, and, and other villages around, around that area in, in, you know, places like Kinawley or Belleek, they would all have their, their, their, sort of week-long festivals, generally harvest festivals and, and, and so you'd, sometimes friends would say ah, you know, why don't you play, so I played a wee bit.

JC: And how, how often then would you have gone back to Ireland?

JM: Certainly at least once a year.

JC: Yeah, for a few weeks at a time, would it have been?

JM: Yeah, yeah.

JC: Can you tell me a bit about what you would have done when you were over there?

JM: Helped with the hay, so going back, you know, depending on the weather, but normally, like, you know, hay would, the grass would get cut in, round about July sometime, late July, so you would be helping with cutting hay, then sticking the hay, making haystacks, raking the hay, helping out gathering it, gathering it up, so doing, doing that sort of stuff, or we would, maybe sometimes we had cattle and if my uncle had to take cattle from one land to another then you would help him, him doing that, spent lots of time being really bored, like, really bored because we were staying in an isolated farmhouse, so the nearest town was, like, two miles, so, you know, I remember one of my aunties would say, well, why don't you, you know, I would say I'm bored, she'd say, well, you're only bored because you think you're bored, you know, why don't you run round the house, so I would run round the house as a means of entertainment, cos there was no TV, there was maybe radio, so there was a, there was a, there was a, a lot of time of, you know, like, not really doing very much. Then in the evening came you would meet up with friends, play football, hang around outside a shop or the bar and chatting around and that was brilliant, you know, that was great, then I would, you had so many friends and espe-, so, you know, I would say when I was younger it would be playing football, but by the time I got to fifteen or sixteen and you began to, you know, people would be interested in alcohol, so you would try and find a bar that would serve you drink, you know. There was a town called Bundoran in County Donegal that was very popular for people from Belcoo to go to for dances or entertainment, as, as I say, normally when, when, when the festivals were on, at night there would be dances held in different villages and, you know, up, up until I think mid-eighties, nineties that was quite prevalent, so that would be great, you'd, you would do that, you know, and it was always a case of just relying on getting a lift, you know, like, you know, one of my friends used to say that, you know, don't worry, there's always someone going somewhere, so, you know, you would, you would, you'd go to a dance maybe thirty miles away, come out of it at one o'clock, two o'clock in the morning and just hitch a lift and, you know, you'd get the hitch back, and then if you were lucky enough to get stopped by a UDR patrol, then the night would be, you know, it would be a success.

JC: I was going to ask that, it's kind of pre-empted my next question there, cos obviously this was sort of the sixties and seventies we're talking, when, when the Troubles was going like–

JM: Yeah, well, with me it was more so seventies and eighties.

JC: Right, okay, yeah, sure.

JM: Yeah.

JC: I'm just wondering the extent to which you sort of noticed, like, to, to what extent the Troubles was part of your experience of, of Ireland, or–?

JM: Oh it was huge.

JC: Yeah.

JM: Yeah, I mean, it, it, in terms, you, you couldn't miss it, you know, Jack. I don't know how old you are, Jack, but, you know, physically how Northern Ireland looks today compared to how it looked in the seventies, and particularly in rural areas, world apart, you know, like, absolutely night and day. I mean, I'm sure some parts of Belfast, you know, you still have the sort of army fortifications, but in the, in the seventies and eighties you, you, you know, I, when you think of it now it, it was remarkable, you know. My earliest memory, I think, of, of thinking about the Troubles was, I remember we were driving back cos when we, when we used to go back and my dad would take the car, we'd get the car on the ferry and you, in those days the ferry would, like today I think, it still goes from Ardrossan, it'd go Ardrossan-Belfast and, and I remember, and this would be about, I'd say about 1970, '71 even, I can't remember when it was, **[01:00:00]** but we would have the case on, on the roof rack, you know, cos again, you know, health and safety, all the kids would be in the back of the car, there were no, you know, seatbelts in those days, so everyone would fit in and the luggage would be put on, on top of the car and it'd be sort of tied up, and I remember being stopped and in Belfast and the soldier sort of saying to my dad, doing a search and, you know, opening up the, the suitcase and, and he had to kind of take the things out of it and then the clothes were kind of left, sort of scattered, you know, like, on, on it, and they didn't say anything and then they told him to fill it again and he was furious with this and he, you know, he felt, you know, who were they in his country to, you know, I think he felt he was humiliated in front of his family, you know, that a sort of young soldier was treating him like that, so I mean, I do remember that. Then in the 1970s, in, in the town that we were in, that we went to in Belcoo, the police station was always called the barracks and, you know, this got, you know, increasingly fortified as you, as you went through the, the seventies and, you know, it just sprawled and got bigger and bigger and then in that part of Fermanagh the army stopped travelling in, or by road, they would use helicopters to get into the, the barracks, ostensibly it was an RUC police station, but it was populated by, by soldiers, whenever the RUC went out on patrol they were accompanied by soldiers, you know, on, on the corners of the barracks you would have sort of pill boxes where the soldiers would have slits and they would look out, these were, like, brick fortifications, barbed wire all the way round, lots of, like, almost, like, satellite dishes for communications. It got bigger in order to permit a helico-, I think the helicopter landed in, in the barracks, but I also remember it landing in fields and soldiers going towards the fields, outside, on the road outside they put speedbumps, you know, I remember when the speedbumps were put it really made the local people indignant because, you know, every time you were going past the, the barracks the, the speed bumps meant you had to slow down and, you know, there would be a lot of goods traffic and farmers, a lot of farmers would have land on both sides of the border, so they would have animals that they might be moving from one side, so that, that was all causing a lot of problems. In, in the mid-1970s, about '76 I think, I remember we were back and there was an IRA attack on some RU-, RUCs, I think three RUC soldiers were, were killed

and that was quite a big thing in the, in the town at that time and, I mean, and physically you would notice because there were, there were a lot of border roads that were closed, so you would, you would see roads that were, that had been closed that traditionally people would use to cross the border and, you know, and local people would show you, you know, those, they might kind of still use them, but, you know, invariably they would, they would put up something to sort of block the roads and then local people would take something down and then they would put it up, they'd take it down and there was this sort of continuous game going on, you know, and there was a railway bridge as well, cos in the 1950s and up until, like, I think the early sixties there was actually a railway connection, Belcoo had a railway station, and then with the sort of Beeching cuts in the 1950s then the railway system in, in Northern Ireland was decimated and, but there was a bridge and that was blown up, blown up, so you would always, you know, you'd see the blown-up bridge there, you know, it was, it was there all the time and, and in the 1980s, 1982, '83 as well there was a, there was a famous case because there was a, there was a, I think he was a, a judge, no, it was a TD, an Irish member of parliament, who was accused of doing something and it happened in a, this town called Dowra and a Fermanagh guy was the main witness against him and the day before he was, he was due to give evidence he was arrested by the RUC, and so he couldn't go over to the South in order to, to give, to give evidence in the court case against this TD and this became a, a, you know, a real sort of, a lot of publicity about it because there was lots of talk about collusion, you know, both sides of the border, but never really a great deal about, you know, the RUC arresting people in, in the North, so that they couldn't give evidence against politicians in the South and, and this got a lot of publicity and, and the, the TV cam-, you know, the main TV stations came to Belcoo and I remember them filming in the bar, the pub and, you know, and people became sort of TV stars overnight because they were being interviewed about this, this court case in nineteen-, that was 1983, '83, so yeah, you know, there, there was, like, the Troubles was, was, you know, cousins lived with it, you know, they, they, they worked either, worked either side of the border, or they were, they married people from other side of the border and, and the border dominated, you know, you know, that's why, you know, the whole Brexit issue and what implications that has for the border is, is incredible because, you know, speak to people from there and they'll say, you know, they might have their doubts about the peace process in general, but the, the one real tangible benefit was the removal of the physical border and that, the fear of that returning is, is, is very evident.

JC: And I'm wondering how that felt for you, like, as a kid going from to Glasgow to such a militarised place, like, was it scary or strange, or did you just get used to it?

JM: I think you got used to it, I mean, we'd, we'd go every year and, you know, we would, you know, at home whenever there was news about Ireland, you know, my mum always watched the news and listened to the news, she might not watch a lot of other television, but the new-, you know, yeah, I think that a lot of people in Ireland, or people of Irish extraction, you became a little bit addicted to the news, you were always expect-, you know, something to be in the news about, you know, what, what, what had happened. I don't think it was scary, I remember, you know, being really, it was really weird because quite often when they, if soldiers were out on patrol, they, they were always on a high state of alert, particularly round Belcoo and Fermanagh, or in, or if we were in Belfast, you know, so they would crouch down and they would point, and I think they were probably doing it

for the sighting, but they would point a rifle, they'd point the rifle at you and as you walked they would follow you with the rifle and that was a bit unnerving, that was very unnerving when you would, you know, you'd, you'd see in the corner of your eye that that rifle was being pointed at you and, you know, I remember that happening, feeling a bit, oh shit, you know, but you kind of, I think, got used to it, you know, and, and the sort of, if anything it produced a kind of a sense of resentment, you know, rather than, than fear, more a sort of, you know, like, kind of, you know, what are they doing there, and they're young boys, you could see they were nineteen, twenty years old, you know, and you thought and, you know, and people would probably have more sympathy for them, thinking, you know, God, you know, they probably don't want to be here, but they have to be here and they're not wanted and, you know, it's not as if they could go out for a drink, they had no social life, they would be stuck in barracks, maybe their tour, tour of duty would be, like, three months probably, no social life per se, you know, it was, it was, you know, you could, you could see why their aggression would come out, people knew that and, and their aggression would, you know, come out verbally, you know, when, when sometimes, as I say the barracks, it was, you, you, they would make comments as people were going past, particularly maybe against young women and stuff, they would make comments and, and they sort of knew that, you know, locally you couldn't engage with them, you know, that was just a no-no, there was no, even if you wanted to, and I don't think many people around Belcoo ever wanted to, but, you know, you wouldn't, if they said anything to you, you know, I remember my mum once saying, you know, a soldier was, **[01:10:00]** kind of asked, asked them to buy him some cigarettes and she felt sorry for him, because my mum wasn't, you know, politically minded, she felt sort of sorry for him, but, you know, there was no way she was going to buy him some cigarettes because, you know, that was just not, that was beyond the pale.

JC: And would your mum and dad have talked sort of in the family about the Troubles and about politics and the news and things like that?

JM: Nah, not a great deal. I think my mum would've wanted to avoid it and, and I think you could probably date that to when the Birmingham pub bombings went off and I, and I, you know, I think, and I mean, again, I'm, I'm probably, you know, my memory's not that great, I would've been nine or ten, but what, I mean, certainly, you know, after the pub, and there was the London bombings going on, there was a, you know, you don't talk about this and, and there was a real sense of keeping, keeping your head down and I, I had an uncle that lived in Birmingham and Irish people living in, so when we'd be back in Ireland and he would say, and he'd a pub in Birmingham as well and, you know, he would say, you know, you just, you wouldn't open your mouth because you would be scared that by their accent you would, you know, people would identify you. In Glasgow, I mean, my, my mum didn't say that, but, you know, it was, it was, in Glasgow you saw no sign of, there was no evidence of any kind of nationalist-type organisation, it just wasn't done, and, and I think it was, the sense was, like, Orangeism wouldn't [indecipherable], so your outlet for expressing Irish nationalism was, like, the football as we said earlier, that was where you could express your nationalism. There, there were no protest marches really until about 1980 in, in Glasgow, you know, given the size of its Irish population it's, it was quite strange cos I think there was a, a real sort of sense of people having to keep their head down. There, there was a kind of a fear element because of the publicity surrounding particularly the Guildford and the

Birmingham pub bombings, you know, made, made Irish people, I think, in Britain feel as if we, we, we have to, you know, we have to be quiet there and a little bit a sense of, you know, even though, you know, my mum felt this gratitude towards Scotland there was still this sense of, though she wasn't Scottish, she was still very [indecipherable], so no, and I suppose not wanting to make waves, you know.

JC: And I'm wondering how you felt about things like the Birmingham bombings and stuff as, like, a Scottish-born Irish person. Were you sort of developing your own political consciousness as you, as you grew a bit older?

JM: I, I think so yeah, I think so. I think, you know, the, the, the, I mean, I mean, I remember I would hear comments and I remember my granny when we would be back in Ireland, she used to say, you know, oh I don't agree with, you know, blowing them up, but I love, I love to see them throwing stones at them, you know, so that, that, and I think there was that kind of ambivalent, you know, because throwing stones is violent as well, but, there was always this sort of distinction where, you know, the, the violence of, say, 1916 and the War of Independence was violence that was justified. Violence in the nineteen-, in the Troubles wasn't quite, you know, as justi-, justified, even though the end result was the same, you know, the end result was people were dying, loss of life, injuries and stuff, so, so there was always a little bit of an, of an, it wasn't that all violence was wrong, it was, like, well, some violence was, is kind of okay and in fact, not only is it just okay, but it's violence that should be celebrated, because that was what led to the South at least becoming independent, so, so, and I, so I think I've probably shared that ambivalence, you know, on one level I felt that blowing up people and putting bombs in, in, you know, in pubs, you know, that's not right, you know, that's, and whatever and, you know, how, you know, how, morally, can you justify that, but then I suppose if you had nationalist leanings then, you know, you would have access to other opinions that would say, well, they gave a warning and they didn't act upon the warning, so, you know, well, you know, it wasn't the boys' fault, you know, the boys were doing what they, you know, they weren't kind of deliberately wanting to, you know, blow up all those people, but, you know, it's war, it's, and there are casualties in war, so it kind of was getting explained like that. Then, you know, if you came from an I-, you know, if you came from an I-, you know, if you came from an, like, a background like mine and you went to Ireland, particularly in the 1970s, you became aware of the issue with prisoners and, and how prisoners were being treated, so the H-Block protests, when that started in 1979, you know, it was something that if, if, if you wanted to, and I'd, you could find out about, and I was one of these people that wanted to, so, so I went looking to find out information about that and, you know, I read a lot about Irish history and I would ask my uncles when I was back in Ireland about Irish history and I would, I would hear stories about Irish history, so I, I kind of grew up with, I suppose, this sort of, you know, awareness of, of what was perceived as eight hundred years of oppression and that, and the, the idea that the sort of Six Counties had been sold out to a certain extent when partition was introduced and that, you know, Northern Ireland was a failed state and that when Irish people began to express their discontent and protest with the civil rights movement in the sixties it was met by violence from the state and, you know, that reasoning led to the viewpoint of where, where else could you go in order, you know, treated the same, you tried, you know, civil rights and it didn't work, you'd lived under what was, you know, in the

famous quote, a Protestant state for a Protestant people, so, you know, what was your alternative, and I, you know, and I guess I found those arguments convincing.

JC: And did you get involved in any kind of campaigns, or nationalist or republican activities in Scotland?

JM: Yeah, as a, I think the thing was, was there was, that it wasn't obvious how you could do it because, you know, I had known that my brother had attended, when he was at university, he had been to a couple of Troops Out things and bringing things from home, but since my mum wouldn't want us speaking about politics in the house, then you wouldn't tell her, you know, and then, so, so I knew that he'd done a little bit of, he'd been involved in that, but that, but then in about 1980 when I was sixteen he moved to England to finish university and he did a postgrad, so I didn't quite have the same link via him, the, you know, there were no kind of organisations that you could, you could join, but I had, at a Celtic football game I saw these guys who played in a republican flute band and they were wearing, you know, uniforms and, and you kind of knew that, well, it was, like, flute bands were the only real vehicle for any kind of public protest going on, so I kind of saw them and sort of thought, well, here's, here's an opportunity to find out a little bit, so I started speaking to a couple of them and they told me that they had band practice over in a, an area called Calton in Glasgow, which is a kind of strong Irish area, quite close to Parkhead, they were, that they had band practice every week and that they went over to Ireland and they took part in the internment marches and demonstrations in Derry and, for Bloody Sunday and, you know, and sort of said, well, why don't, why don't you, why don't you come along, so I, that's what I did. I started going to **[01:20:00]** the band practice and, and being with the band and got involved in that and again, this was at the time when maybe H-Block protests were taking place and Armagh, the H-Block Armagh protests were taking place, so initially there would be maybe, like, a small demonstration in, in a part of Glasgow which was very predominantly, sort of Irish Catholic, which would be, like, the sort of, the Garngad area, Royston area where, where you could have an Irish flute band, Irish republican flute band marching and it not being attacked by, by loyalists, because any time that, that a republican flute band had tried to have a public demonstration, you know, the loyalists outnumbered them ten to one because their whole line was Glasgow's an, an Orange, Glasgow's a Protestant city and they were, you know, you weren't going to have any republican demonstrations taking place in Glasgow, you know, it wasn't going to happen, it wasn't going to happen, so anything was done sort of locally like that and then, and I'm not sure quite how it happened, but they got permission for a demonstration to take place in the city centre and there hadn't been a city centre demonstration in Glasgow, as far as I can remember, all through the Troubles. There might've been one over in the Southside that got attacked by loyalists, but there certainly hadn't been anything, and for some reason it got permission, because usually any time an application was made for a republican demonstration the police would put an objection and then the local council would ban it and that's what would, so you had, you know, you had hundreds if not thousands of loyalists, and Orange parades taking place in Glasgow, you know, when the marching season was on, but you never had any, any nationalist or republican ones, until this one in, in, I think it would be about 1981 and the demonstration, it started in, in Royston Road in the Garngad, it was probably about two thousand strong and, and in that area, you know, it was accompanied by, by a lot of people that would, you know, who were

supportive and, and there wouldn't be that many and a lot of them would be left-wing groups, you know, like the Workers Revolutionary Party, the Revolutionary Communist Party, the Workers, whatever party, there was a whole load of these, you know, left-wing groups that were kind of, you know, involved in, with the Troops Out movement generally and, and that demonstration took place and it went from the Royston Road to the City Halls in the centre of Glasgow, and all the way through it, it was, I mean, it was the most terrifying thirty minutes I've spent because there were these loyalists, and they were baying and they were almost foaming at the mouth and they're pointing at you and they're saying I know where you live, I know where you are and throwing bricks and bottles and people were being hit and, and, and we had, there were stewards there either side to protect and there was lines of police and it was, it was a, you know, it was really volatile, it was really violent, there was a real atmosphere of aggression, of hatred, but the march finished, they didn't stop the march and it, it was in the Candle-, it was in Candleriggs in the City Hall in Glasgow and there were some speakers from Sinn Féin at the end of it and the sense of elation of the people at the end of the march was, oh I still remember it cos I [indecipherable], I've done it, you know, for years and years, you know, there was no way of being able to, in the, through the centre of Glasgow, to have a demonstration which was, you know, it wasn't republican, it was marching about, it was, it was on the H-Block prisoner, Armagh, because you knew there was no way they were going to allow a republican demonstration to take place, so I suppose maybe one of the ways why it was able to get permission was because it was deemed to be a, an issue about prisoners although, you know, it was, like, a, it was a kind of republican de-, well, I would say a republican demonstration and, and, and that, I think that felt a bit of a watershed.

JC: Yeah, I was going to ask, do you think, looking back on it, do you think that achieved anything, or was that a platform for anything?

JM: Yeah, be-, because really, I think it was, because after that the West of Scotland Republican Band Alliance was formed and at the time when I was involved with, it was known as the Kevin Barry Republican Flute Band, they were, I can only remember maybe in Glasgow there being three or four. There was a famous one called the James Connolly Republican Flute Band, which came from Govan and they, and they were known as, as being very kind of, more ideological shall we say, hence, you know, they were named after James Connolly, James Connolly's socialist background, whereas, and there was the Kevin Barry, which was in Parkhead, well, no, the Calton, sorry, then there was the Billy Reid Republican Flute Band which was in the East End, around Parkhead, the East End of Glasgow, and that was it, and there might've been another one out in Coatbridge or in Hamilton where there was also areas of, like, big Irish immigrant population, but in Glasgow that was it, but then after that, republican bands mushroomed and, and I think they formed the Band Alliance. The reason why they formed the Band Alliance was because, you know, they, they kind of realised that on their own they couldn't do anything and it was only sort of collectively, through having some sort of collective force they would have strength and it meant that they, they would have enough people, so that if the loyalists did attack the, the, the demonstrations, when they were given permission to demonstrate, then they were able to kind of defend themselves because there was no confidence in the police, you know, you would, you wouldn't expect the police to defend you from, you know, loyalist attacks cos, you know, another, yeah.

JC: So did, yeah, did you stay involved then and, and go on more demonstrations and stuff?

JM: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, then when the hunger strikes happened there was a, there was, there were more demonstrations as a result of the hunger strikes, again, I remember there being one over in Garngad. We tried to do a protest the night that Bobby Sands died, outside the Mitchell Library in the centre of Glasgow, but there was a big police presence and because, because when Bobby Sands, because it was, no, you know, it was on a hunger strike, so you couldn't, you, in Glasgow you'd have to apply for permission in order to have a demonstration and, so if you didn't have permission then any demonstrations would be illegal, so trying to do something ad hoc, you couldn't really because it would, we, we kind of tried to meet up, but there were, there were too many police, you couldn't, you couldn't do it, but a, a lot of the, a lot of the activity would be maybe fundraising events in, like, places like Govan Town Hall, there would be dances and there'd be fundraising for an organisation called Green Cross and Green Cross was the prisoners, raising money for prisoners and their families in Ireland, so you would attend those sort of events, dance events, and there would be, you know, Irish music, the republican band would play and then, you know, maybe a disco and, and maybe a couple of short speeches, so there was that. Then in 1982 I started university, I went to university in England and I'd, while at university there was an Irish Society there and, I don't know if this is relevant fully.

JC: It is, yeah, yeah, for sure. I was going to ask where you, I mean, first of all where did you go to university and what did you study?

JM: I went to Leicester University.

JC: What, what brought you to Leicester?

JM: You know, I, I wanted to leave Glasgow from an early age and, you know, maybe, maybe this goes back to, like, you know, that idea of not being sure where home was, but I, I, I was determined to get out of Glasgow. I really didn't want to stay and, and I sort of, you know, I always knew I was going to go to university even though, you know, maybe at sixteen I was kind of getting involved in, like, you know, nationalist demonstrations, maybe not spending as much time **[01:30:00]** studying as what I should've been, but I kind of knew that I, even though my results were slipping I was still going to do well enough to go to university and I, and I, and I wanted to leave Glasgow and I just sort of felt, I'm fed up with, you know, this kind of latent sectarianism, I think, that there was there and that, that sense of that, you just felt, I just, you know, I wanted to get out of it and I, I didn't like the sectarianism either, you know, I didn't like the, the sort of Catholic-Protestant thing and, and immediately when people would either find out from what school you went to, or asked what football team, you know, you know the way English people have this, as soon as you open your mouth they know, oh right I know what class you are, boom boom, you know, I've immediately got you clocked by your pronunciation and, you know, in Glasgow it would be the same when it came to, you know, you know, what school you went to or what, what, what team you supported, it was how you kind of, you know, okay now I know where I am with you and how we are with each other, I thought that's just a load of shit, you know, I didn't, I didn't really, yeah, yeah, so I, then I started looking at it, I kind of felt, you know, my mum

wouldn't have been, wouldn't have wanted me to go to Belfast, even though I kind of, Queen's was, like, you know, I was thinking of maybe going to Queen's, but even–

JC: That's interesting, so you did, you did feel drawn to Northern Ireland, then?

JM: Yeah.

JC: Even though the Troubles was going on.

JM: Oh yeah, yeah, but I kind of thought the combination of, I mean, cos she kind of knew that I was going to demonstrations and stuff, but I, I never had the conversation with her to say I was doing it and, you know, so I think, you know, and, and my family in Ireland knew that as well, or kind of knew I was, so I think me going there it was going to kind of create a wee bit too much [laughs], yeah, you know, yeah, I thought that, that would be pushing it. Trinity wasn't really an option because I didn't think I was, Trinity College Dublin wasn't an option cos, you know, I was reliant upon a grant and I, I, you know, I was lucky enough to go to university at a time when there was the window of, you know, you know, it was paid for.

JC: [laughs] Not envious at all.

JM: Unlike later, you know, God love yous, you know.

JC: Yeah [laughs].

JM: It's, it's a lot harder, but, you know, there's, there's a group of us, you know, ever so small, but we, you know, we could go to university where it wasn't such an issue, so I kind of knew that Trinity, I would've liked to have gone to Dublin, but kind of knew that Trinity wasn't really going to happen, and so I started looking at England. I wanted to study politics, I looked, Leicester seemed to be, well, middle of the country, I kind of liked its syllabus because it was kind of unusual, someone from the west of Scotland going to university outside of, of the west of Scotland.

JC: Yeah, cos you would've tended to stay at, like, Glasgow or Strathclyde and stuff, yeah.

JM: My two elder brothers, they went to Glasgow University.

JC: Yeah.

JM: And, and I kind of knew that and I sort of thought, well, you know, maybe, you know, maybe moving away from, I'd be away from, I mean, it wasn't that I wanted to get away from home, but there was a bit of that as well, I'd be away from home, so a sort of combination of that made me kind of think I'm going to apply to university. At school they were horrified, they were, like, well, what's wrong with Glasgow University, and I kind of, you know, at that time it was an UCAS form, or UCUS I think it was called then, it might even have been UCUS or UCCLES, and I had to fill it in and I showed it to them and they were, like, what are you giving me that for, you know, I'm not, I've never seen one of them, I don't know what you do with it, you know, apply to Glasgow, and even one teacher that

encouraged me to go to university said oh why don't you go to Edinburgh, why are you going to England. There was a kind of, you know, why, you know, but I kind of sort of thought, I didn't want to elsewhere in Scotland cos I thought it's going to be much of a muchness, so I got, I got some, went to the local library, got, I think got prospectuses, looked at Leicester, it talked about doing tutorials and seminars and I thought oh that, that's quite interesting, cos I kind of knew at Glasgow it was all sort of, it had been big lectures, my brothers always talked about lectures, there was a tutorial system there, I thought that, that seems quite good, you know, I, so I applied to two or three universities, went for an interview at York, but didn't get an offer, got an offer from Leicester, made the offer and thought, okay, off I go and–

JC: And you said you joined the Irish Society quite quickly when you got there?

JM: Yeah, yeah, yeah, you know, the first day when I was there, like, they had the fresher's fair and I sort of made a beeline for, like, anti-apartheid, I thought, right, I'm signing up for Anti-Apartheid Society and saw there was an Irish Society and at the beginning I thought, an Irish Society, God, I was a wee bit unsure because I thought, you know, an Irish Society, I'm interested in Ireland because of, you know, Troops Out and Ireland because of all these other things, I thought, I wonder if this is just kind of a cultural society, you know, but I thought, well, I'll go along anyway, and it was completely political, I mean, it was absolutely political, so yeah, I, I sort of signed up for that and became really involved in it and, you know, so at university we tried, you know, in the 1980s the issue of the prisoners and the Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four was increasingly, you know, priority for anyone involved in Irish, in those injustices, Judith Ward, the M62, there were a number, you know, the Guildford, the Maguire, there was a number of, of cases where you felt, you know, people are in, in, imprisoned for things that are wrong, so we tried at university to, you know, at the students' council, pass motions in support. We would go to demonstrations, Bloody Sunday, there was, there'd be a Bloody Sunday demonstration, usually in different parts of England and we would attend those demonstrations and quite often I'd meet up with friends from Glasgow because republican bands would come down from Glasgow and I'd see people there, Manchester Martyrs was a, was a, an important demonstration cos there was a lot of loyalist opposition there, some of them would come from Scotland, but quite a few would come through from Liverpool, not, I'm not too sure if there were some from Manchester itself, but, and the National Front, the National Front, they were popular in, in cities like Leicester, or in Birmingham and, and they were, like, kindred spirits of loyalists, so you would, you would have similar atmosphere, not quite as what you got in Glasgow, but, yeah, so, so that was the, the main kind of thing, yeah, activity that I would, I would take part in.

JC: And I'm wondering, like, at the Irish Society and in these demonstrations, was it predominantly people from Ireland or people like yourself who were, like, second, third generation and stuff?

JM: Yeah, yeah, I mean, there might be a few people, like, in, in, you know, the Irish Society I was at. There was one guy from Derry, I mean, we weren't many either, you know, it was, you know, being, being in, involved or being kind of obviously involved in Irish politics, you know, it was, it was, like, you're a terrorist, that, that was it, you know, no argument, you

know, the, the, the discourse in Britain, you know, anything to do with Ireland in the 1970s and the 1980s, on TV or in the media was negative. I mean, I, I remember being really struck by the Boomtown Rats in 1979 being on *Top of the Pops* and Bob Geldof who, I think went, now that was his high point, he sort of went down, but he sang a song called, was it, God, I've forgotten it now, Boomtown Rats, 'Rat Race' I think it was, and it got to number one and he, he wore an Irish badge on which had a tricolour and I remember him pointing that to, him putting the thumbs up and that was on *Top of the Pops*, and seeing, like, that was, oof, and I remember the day after talking about, you know, mates at school, God, did you see that on *Top of the Pops*, you know, that was something Irish that was positive because it just, there wasn't, you know, the only thing you might get on TV Val Doonican on a Saturday night, or *Panorama* or *World in Action*, which was always about, you know, there has been another, you know, explosion and it was all negative. There was absolutely nothing that reflected, if you were an Irish or you came from the Irish community, there was nothing in the media which was in any way, you know, positive or, or spoke to you in any way. Maybe, you know, when Dexys **[01:40:00]** Midnight Runners came along in the 1980s, that was different, they had a song which was about, you know, because even, even punk rock, punk, you know, the big explosion, anti-establishment, it didn't really touch Ireland, you know.

JC: Yeah, well, I suppose a bit later on you've got bands like the Pogues and stuff coming through which was–

JM: Yeah, that came later.

JC: Yeah, later, later on, yeah.

JM: That came later, that, and that's where the, you know, the Pogues thing, the great thing about the Pogues was the Pogues meant you could go to a concert, there'd be Irish music and you could do it, you know, you could do it and, and this was good stuff, you know, it wasn't diddly-eye, diddly-eye, diddly-eye-type thing, I mean, it was and it wasn't, if you know what I mean, cos people associated with it, they, you know, there was no sense of there being more towards, you know, Irish culture at all, it just, it wasn't, in the 1980s it just, it was not appreciated, it was very much, you know, kicked, it was, you know, away from the mainstream in, in these Irish clubs that are always pretty dingy and dark and associated, associated with heavy drinking, you know, it was all pretty, pretty miserable, you know.

JC: That's really interesting and you've given me such, like, a great picture of, like, your sort of identity and stuff growing up and at uni and things. I'm wondering if, if you could just tell me like a bit about what you've done since uni, like, you mentioned you moved back to Scotland for a while?

JM: Yeah, yeah, okay, so I kind of got, a little bit of what happened when I was in Glasgow, I got a bit fed up with being in Leicester, in, yeah, after I left, after I left uni I kind, I went, I went to France for a bit, came back, then I stayed in Leicester and I kind of overstayed my time in Leicester really and reached a point after a couple of years where I thought, you know, what am I doing here, so then I sort of, I, I kind of applied to, to do social work and also to do tea-, to do teaching and, and at that time I sort of felt, I think I'll go back to Scotland, because I kind of felt, didn't really feel, you know, as if I had much to keep me in

England. A lot of my friends had moved off to London or moved, you know, other parts of England, and so I didn't really, I mean, I still had a lot of friends in Leicester, but I sort of felt, didn't really feel as if it had anything more for me and I thought, right, okay, I'll go back to Scotland as a staging post, I'll, you know, I'll go back and study for a couple of years. I was torn between either doing social work or teaching, eventually decided to do teaching, qualified as a teacher, found it quite difficult to get full-time posts as a teacher in Scotland. In Glasgow, there were no teaching posts available and that's when I moved to the east coast and started teaching and then, in schools in Fife, absolutely loved it, loved teaching, great teaching with, Fifers were great and they liked the fact I was a Celtic fan and I came from the west of Scotland, it was great, I really enjoyed that and then I, so I was kind of happy, you know, working as a teacher and then what, who was to become my wife, she was on, she was stud-, she was teaching Spanish, so she was, like, a teaching assistant at a school and I kind of, and at the beginning I thought, I met her and I thought och, well, she's only going to be here for a while and then she'll go back to Spain and that'll be it, but, you know, I ended up, we started going out, she moved back to Spain, 1992, and I went over in the summer to see what Barcelona was like, it was the Barcelona Olympics in 1992, Barcelona was just fantastic, what a great city, so I kind, I kind of followed in my dad's footsteps in a way, so I decided then that, it would've been impossible for my wife to adapt to living in Scotland because of the climate, whereas for me to go living in Spain, you know, you know, where, where's the struggle in that.

JC: Choice between Glasgow and Barcelona [laughs].

JM: Yeah, exactly and I'd worked as a teacher and I thought I'd, you know, I can get a job as a, always get a job as a teacher, so I kind, I moved to Spain and, you know.

JC: And you've been there ever since?

JM: Been there ever since.

JC: Yeah, and you, you've found it okay, like, settling in, in and making friends and stuff. I suppose you've had your wife to, to help with that and everything.

JM: Yeah, yeah, and if you're a bloke and you like football and you get involved in football then, you know, you, you know, it's, yeah, yeah, and then, you know, and then later on you have the explosion of Irish bars in Barcelona and, you know, these places, you think of all the really good, and I remember these Irish bars in Birmingham, Manchester and London and they all got closed and these, you know, whole Irish bars are, you know, suddenly become the rage all over Spain, but I don't go.

JC: You don't go, no?

JM: Nah, nah I keep well away from them.

JC: I mean, they're a very stereotyped image of Irishness in there, so.

JM: Yeah, yeah, exactly, you know, so it's, but yeah, so, yeah, so I'm, I'm here.

JC: I'm cur-, I'm curious what your wife knew about Northern Ireland, or, like, if she, if she had any idea, or if Spanish people in general have any idea what the Northern Ireland conflict's all about?

JM: No, she had no idea, and then we went to Ireland, so, and this was pre the, the peace process and I took her to Belcoo and she saw the barracks in Belcoo and was, like, my God, you know, because, like, Spanish people, they had, they had a point of reference because of the Basque country, you know, it's not as if, well, what's going on in Northern Ireland is completely alien to them, you know, the, there was, there was, Barcelona had a, the ETA planted a bomb in a hypermarket in, in Barcelona in 1984, twenty people, I think, were killed, so, you know, like, they, they, their, there's, they understood it, you know, there had, they had a reference for it, but, I mean, she was like, woah, and she'd been to the Basque country and she said this is nothing like Northern Ireland, but this, the, you know, the, at the height of the Troubles, or, you know, there was probably, what, fifteen thousand soldiers based in, in, in Northern Ireland, you had how many thousand RUC, maybe the UDR had been disbanded, but they were replaced by another sort of, so and, you know, the sheer number, for a population of, what, about one point, I don't know, five million, you know, it, there, it was such a militarised zone that, you know, she was shocked by it, I think she was really, really shocked by it and when we came to Spain she would say, you know, you know, speak to friends and, and described what she'd seen and, you know, it was very, very different because the Basque country wasn't at all like that.

JC: Yeah, yeah, cos a lot of people often make that comparison, but it's interesting that once she actually went, it sort of realised the differences.

JM: Yeah, it was, you know, night and day really, you know, and, and she had no, I mean, she'd no interest in Irish politics really, not, cos she's not really a political animal, but, you know, I would explain to her when we went to Ireland, she met my family from there and, you know, I would try and get her to listen to Irish music without any success. I have to, I have to put the earphones on when I want to listen to, to, you know, any Irish or Scots music, but yeah, yeah, you know, I think she was, yeah, yeah, I think shocked would, would be the word and, you know, again, it'd be interesting having conversations with her because her point would be IRA equals ETA equals terrorism and I would sort of say, well, well, hang on a minute, there are these other things that I think maybe you haven't known about and might be relevant and, you know, yeah, and that was something that, you know, just wasn't, you know, hadn't, part of what she had been exposed to.

JC: And do you still get back over to Ireland at all these days? I mean, it's obviously–

JM: Sadly nowadays mainly for funerals, but I was, I was there last year, I had, I was hoping to go this year, but couldn't, but yeah, I would, I'd like to go at least once a year, I would, I brought my kids there, I'd like them to see it, you know, it's their, it's their heritage, it's their roots, you know, and unfortunately, you know, the surviving fam-, family now are, my uncles and aunts, the Irish-born ones, there's one in the States, one in England, but the ones in Ireland have died, but our cousins, we, I, well, I always had great relationship with our cousins and we've had family cousins, family reunion a few years ago, we might have

another one because, you know, when we went back to Ireland in the summer my cousins from Birmingham or from Bury, they went there as well, the ones, the ones from London, you know, so that's when you would, you would all meet, so that, that's our common connection, you know, **[01:50:00]** so yeah, you know, I try and, try and go back, if I–

JC: It must've changed a lot since visited when you were a kid.

JM: Well, I mean, the, the thing about, I mean, if, if you're, if you haven't had the chance to go and visit Fermanagh, if you're asked, I mean, you probably can't just now, but don't miss it, it is unbelievable.

JC: Sure, I will do, yeah.

JM: Cos, cos it is a hidden gem. Nobody would go there in the, when the Troubles were on, so it's off the beaten track, but, you know, I don't know what you're into, but if you enjoy hiking and you enjoy, I mean, you're obviously into history, go to Belcoo, visit Margaret Gallagher, who lives in a thatched cottage, she's a local historian and she lives in a thatched cottage with no electricity, lives in the traditional way of her family and, and, or look her up on YouTube, she's an amazing person, she loves having visitors, she just tells her story and you go there and she'll explain to you how, she does all her cooking through the hearth, so she's no electricity whatsoever in the house, she's a, she lives the way her father lived and her grandparents lived, a mine of information, explained to me how at my father's funeral, which was nineteen-, no, father's funeral, sorry my grandfather's funeral, 1964, there were two keeners, I don't know if you know keening, kee-, the keening would be traditionally in Irish culture, at funerals you would have keeners who would cry for the family and, and it kind of died out in the early sixties and the, the, I think my dad's funeral, my dad, my granddad's funeral would've been the last ones where there were keeners and you would pay them, they came from Donegal, there weren't many of them left and they were women and they would keen at the funerals and, you know, and if you ever listen to a recording of keening it's, it's really, it's quite something and, and I never realised that about my grandfather that the, the, he, that he, that there were two keeners at the funeral and, you know, Margaret Gallagher is an amazing woman and she–

JC: Sounds it, yeah.

JM: Oh unbelievable, and so she would tell us a history of, like, how people had during, at the time of the War of Independence there was a curfew, so they would, so with the curfew they would have to black up, blacken out the windows round that area and when people were going at night they would take, they would put a stick into the, the fire and a burning light, they'd have, like, a coal and that would be their torch to get them home because, and you know they'd have to be very, very careful, so, you know, so she's got loads of these stories, you know, and–

JC: That does sound really fascinating.

JM: Oh yeah, yeah, oh she's, and she's, you know, she's still going, God, you know, amazing woman, and she likes visitors going there and I'm sure if you were to say, you know, your, your, your connection with Irish history then–

JC: Yeah.

JM: Look her up on YouTube, Margaret Gallagher, Belcoo.

JC: I will do yeah, for sure. Before we go, I don't want to take up your entire evening, but I have a couple of just sort of summing up questions that I like to ask everyone if, if I can.

JM: Sure.

JC: So I suppose first of all is, as someone who was, you know, quite involved with the, the republican movement and stuff when you were younger, how have you felt about the peace process and, and the development over the past sort of twenty, twenty-five years, what, what your perspective is on things?

JM: You know, as I say, not seeing that border there, that's huge, you know, that, that, you know, in, in some ways maybe the peace process didn't deliver everything that it promised, you know, but, you know, that, that is a real visible and great achievement in that, in not having that border and being able to cross over, back, Belcoo, Blacklion ledge and not have the, the customs hut, not having soldiers asking questions and not having, you know, the, the policemen armed and all that type of thing and people being able to move around, you know, that, that, to me that's the main achievement and hence why Brexit is such a, a threat, you know, and such a worry and, and a real concern, apart from all the other things, you know, that, that aspect of Brexit for me is, is terrible, you know, it is great that people are not growing up and feeling that they're having to join the IRA or get involved in politics, or getting sentenced to long prison sentences, or dying on hunger strike, you know, all, all of this is so important it's, it's great, you know, it hasn't resulted in a, a, yet [laughs], yet, a thirty-two, you know, all-Ireland republic which is what, you know, I would like to see, but I think it's made nationalists more mature in their approach to loyalists and their concerns and, and taken into account their concerns, so it has had its, its difficulties, it has, has its limitations, but, you know, generally it's, it's, it's been a lot more resilient I think than I might have expected, you know, you know, thinking back to how, all that issue about decommissioning at the beginning and all the sort of, the, the kind of worry and anxiety that there was, you know. I think it's been, it's been much more of a success than maybe a lot of people, but I think it's fragile, you know, the ecosystem in Ireland is very fragile and you see that, you know, when they, when it comes to interfaces in Belfast, or you see that when the marching season happens and, and how, you know, it's a, it's, it's peaceful co-existence quite often, it's very delicate and that's why some, because of that fragility to it, to it, that's where you get the real worry with something like Brexit, you know.

JC: Sure.

JM: How much is that likely to tip things in the balance, because if a hard border comes back in places like Tyrone, south Armagh, Fermanagh then, you know, there'll be, there'll be

people there that'll say, you know, bugger it, you know, this is not what we signed up for and the temptation to resort back to, you know, the physical force tradition, I think, can be, can be very strong.

JC: We mentioned, you talked earlier about feeling sort of like you had multiple homes in a way, like, Scotland and Ireland and now, obviously, Spain's a home as well. I'm wondering if you still feel like, or if you have a sense of where your home is now?

JM: Yeah, it, it's great because I think I've discovered now, they're not mutually exclusive and, and, and it's, and if, and when I'm back in Scotland I feel Scottish, when I'm, I'm back in Ireland I feel Irish, when I'm here, I wouldn't say I feel Spanish, Catalan, but, you know, I, I, I'm from here, so, and I think that's been good, I've managed to reconcile that, you know, and, and that's what I say to my kids, you know, don't let people pigeonhole you, don't let people tell you how you feel, you know, like, it's, it's, it's how you feel and what you identify with and, and, you know, and I, you know, I think we can, you know, learn a lot maybe from Asian philosophy quite often, you know. I remember once being in India and talking to a guy and he had, you know, a photograph of, of a Hindu national god and a local god and John F. Kennedy and, you know, and Jesus and I thought, you know, is it not a contradiction, and he was saying no, I, he didn't see a contradiction, he sort of said these are all people I admire and I feel, you know, are worthy of worship and I thought God, yeah, that's, that's quite a, kind of a good attitude to have, you know, not, not to feel defined by other people, you know, and, and, and, you know, and I think, I think that's quite important that, you know, people should be allowed, you know, to define themselves, maybe not, you know, there might be a few caveats with that, but, but I certainly think, you know, in terms of your identity and how you feel it's good if you can be comfortable with dissonance, you know.

JC: Yeah, it's kind of a good resp-, riposte to that question that you said your uncle asked you when you were a kid, like, are you an Irishman or a Scotsman, it's like, you can be both.

JM: But I was too scared to give the wrong answer [laughs].

JC: [laughs] Yeah.

JM: You know.

JC: But you'd be com-, you'd be comfortable answering it now.

JM: Yeah, yeah, well, that, you know, my **[02:00:00]** experience is, is what it, what it does for you, but, yeah, yeah, you know, I, I think, I think that's, it's the danger of the popularisation of politics, you know, where, where you have to take a stance and you've got to be this and you've got to, you've got to be a hundred per cent that, you can't be, people don't, you know, and, well, I think we need to try and look at it in a, through a different prism really, you know.

JC: That's been great and we've covered, like, so much ground there, I'm really pleased with everything we've talked about. Is there anything else that you think's important that you wanted to discuss or mention?

JM: No, I mean, not, not, I was only going to say to you if you were interested in me passing on details to any, any other people, or you–

JC: Yeah, sure, that was actually what I was going to ask you after I finished the recording. I'll, I'll end the recording there.

INTERVIEW ENDS