INTERVIEW G16-SG5: PETER MCGRATH

Interviewer: Dr Jack Crangle
Interviewee: Peter McGrath
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Location: Virtual
Transcriber: Dr Fearghus Roulston

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, that's going there, so can I just get your verbal consent, in addition to the consent form you've already sent me, that you're okay for this recording to go ahead?

PM: Yes, I'm very happy for this recording to go ahead.

JC: Brilliant, thanks a lot, and then, can you also just tell me your name and today's date?

PM: Peter McGrath and it's Wednesday the twelfth of October, twelfth of November, beg your pardon.

JC: Eleventh of November is what I have here.

PM: Is it, is it the eleventh today, I beg your pardon, eleventh of November 2020.

JC: I had the advantage of having the date on my screen in front of me, so [laughs], great, so do you want to start off then by telling me when and where you were born?

PM: Yeah, born in, born on the fourteenth of September 1958, and born in, in Glasgow.

JC: Okay, and you grew up in Glasgow, did you?

PM: Grew, yeah, grew up in, in Glasgow, through primary school and secondary school and university, went to university in the hometown, Glasgow, and then spent, I did a postgraduate in University of Aston in, in Birmingham and then worked in, initially in Birmingham, then in Luton and then in Liverpool and came back to Scotland in 1987, so I was away for about seven, seven years, away from Scotland for about seven, seven years. I then sort of got married, had a family and worked, worked all over the UK at various times and a bit overseas, but main-, mainly in the, in the UK.

JC: Okay, cool, that's interesting, and what area of Glasgow did you grow up in, then, could you tell me a bit about that?

PM: Yeah, so, originally, in fact, until age, I think it was around age ten, nine or ten, we moved from Partick, so the first, the first ten years of my life was brought up in an area of Partick, an area of Glasgow in, called Partick, which is in the West End of Glasgow, and then from age ten till twenty, when I moved away to Birmingham, so the next ten years effectively, in Knightswood, Knightswood stroke Yoker was the area where I sort of spent the second ten years of my, my life which is further, further west, further west of Glasgow.

JC: Okay, and do you know why, why your family decided to move at that time?

PM: Well, yeah, I mean, we, we were a big, big family, though when we lived in Partick it was in a, in a tenement building, top floor, so probably certainly in those first ten years of my life we had, there would be five children and my mum and dad in a, I'm trying to remember now, were there two bedrooms, yeah, there must have been two bedrooms, but there were, there were more kids on the way and it was, you know, it wasn't, it wasn't big enough for a, for the growing family and there were new council houses being built, you know, outside Glasgow. Knightswood was one of the biggest areas where council houses were being built and we moved to a, a bigger house, although I was thinking about this the other day, there were, probably at that point when we moved in, which I think was 1967, from Partick to Knightswood, I think we moved to a, to a three-bedroom house, so it was still pretty tight, given there were, that I had another brother on the way, so there were probably seven or eight of us, so, and one of the children was my sister, so I think she had a room to herself, and mum and dad had a room, so I think all the boys, five or six of us, were in one, were in one room, but it was certainly bigger, I suspect there weren't any more than three-bedroom council houses available at that time.

JC: And what was, I'm thinking sort of in those early few years in Partick, what was that area like at the time?

PM: I mean, it was, I mean, it's interesting, Partick over the years, it, you know, if I compare it now where it's, it's quite a trendy part because it, well, it, it was then still very close to the university, but I think it was predominantly a sort of working-class area, very, very close to the Clyde, very close to the ship-building industries, which were still, still probably around in, in those days, whereas now it's, it's a trendier place, much, many more students living in the area, certainly I would have thought than in the sixties and, sixties and seventies, so, I mean, it wasn't, it wasn't, I don't recall it as a, as a down-at-heel part of the city at all. I suspect it was still a bit smarter than parts of the East End of Glasgow, but I, you know, I would say it was predominantly a, a working-class area with some bits of it further up the hill. It used to be in Partick that the further away you were from the Clyde the better quality of housing and we were, I think about halfway up the hill, so, but, but I think reasona-, you know, nice, notwithstanding it was in a tenement I think it was quite a nice. I recall it as quite a comfortable, probably quite cramped though, but quite comfortable sort of accommodation.

JC: Yeah, I was going to ask, like, how did you get on with that many people crammed into a small tenement?

PM: Yeah, I don't, it, well, it's interesting I don't, I don't recall it as being cramped, maybe just because that's just the way it was, we didn't know any, any different, that was the only place we'd lived in, I don't, I don't recall it as being particularly cramped, but in retrospect when you look at the numbers, or, you know, it was, it was a flat rather than a, than a house and the rooms wouldn't have been particularly big, but I have no memories really of it being particularly cramped in that way, but always seemed to be kids, kids around as there, as there were quite a few of us.

JC: And your mum and dad, tell me a bit about them, then, so they came over from Ireland?

PM: Yeah, so my, my father was from the North of Ireland, in, in County Fermanagh, and my mother came from County Cavan, so the other, the other side of the, of the border. I believe that my mother came over before my father, although they knew each other in Ireland and I think they were dating. My mother came over first, I think she came over either in 1944 or '45, it was at the end of the war and, and I remember, she's deceased now, but I remember her saying one of the, not long after she came over was V, Victory Japan, VJ Day, she remembers that as being a big party time, so if that was, I think that was 1945, that's when she, she came over and she would've been still very young, she would've been seventeen or eighteen, maybe not even eighteen, seventeen, and I think my father came over not long after that, I'm not entirely sure, but I guess it was within a couple of years of her coming over, she came over, her sister, in fact, at least one sister was in Glasgow working and I think that was probably the attraction and she had somewhere to stay and I think she had a job to go to as a, I think her initial job was looking after some young children whilst the, the mum and dad were at work, so I think that was her first sort of gainful employment when she first came over, and then I think when my father came over I think, I suppose the attraction was my mother was, was over, was over there, but I suspect too there was the, part of that movement of labour from Ireland to, you know, the Glasgows, the Londons, Birmingham, Manchester parts of the, of the UK, in terms of employment, so I think his first employment, I'm not entirely sure, but I think his first employment when he came over was on the, what was then the Corporation buses as a, as a bus driver. **[00:10:00]** I think, I think that's right, I think that was his first employment and he, and he was with the Corporation buses for, you know, a huge part of his working life, on and off, cos I think he spent over twenty-five years working with them, but in between, in fact, when Rootes car company opened up at Linwood in the, sure, tail-end of the sixties and into the seventies I know that he left the buses to go and work there because, you know, the pay was, was much better, but then had an injury there and went back to the, to the buses later on, but I'm not quite sure what year, what year that was.

JC: So he was with the buses for the majority of his career, then?

PM: Yeah, over, over, I'm not sure if it was over twenty-five years, but not far off twenty-five years of his working life was with the, the buses, initially as a bus, or as was, the tra-, there were trams there when he first came over, so he would've been a tram driver and then a bus driver when the trams were, were obsolete, bus driver and then, and then I remember the significance in the family when he was promoted to a bus inspector, that was a, when he got a, I remember him getting a sort of proper bus inspector's suit, so he was very, he was very pleased about that.

JC: And what about your mum, did she work, or was she busy keeping all the kids in check?

PM: Well, I think, I think before family came along I think she was very much working. I'm not sure how long she stayed with that family looking after kids, but she certainly did that, and I think then she worked principally in retail in various shops, I think mainly grocer shops, I remember her pointing out some, some grocers' shops in the Partick area, I don't think she would've travelled very far afield, I think, although having said that I recall at one point she did say that she worked over the Southside of Glasgow in a, in a restaurant, waitressing, so I think it was retail assistant-type jobs and waitressing jobs that she did principally until children came along, and then I'm not, I'm not en-, entirely sure whether, when she was work-, when, when then her first child came along, whether was she working at all, I sus-, I suspect not, I do-, I don't think that would've been the way of it, that she would've been a working mother, I'm not sure culturally that that would've been the thing to, to do. I think she was a, she was a wife and a mother and that was a full-time job at, job at home, and, and particularly given kids came along quite quickly, you know, it seemed to be every eighteen months or, eighteen months or two years that another child came along, so I suspect over time she wasn't working at all, but I'm not, I'm not entirely sure what year she would've, you know, finished up.

JC: Yeah, sure, and did your parents, would they have talked quite a lot about their lives in Ireland before they moved over?

PM: That's, I mean, that's interesting, I mean, I think latterly, when we as, you know, adults would ask them questions about, about it, they would, they would tell, but I, you know, I don't, I don't remember in, you know, the early part of my life that we would ask them any questions about that, I suppose because there was not that, you know, well-formed questions in our mind about, or, or interest in fact, so I think it was later on in life that we would have had more, more conversations, but that said we were, as you probably picked up from my brother James, I mean, we were regular visitors to, back to Ireland, back to my dad's family and my mum's family, so I suppose our understanding of their sort of life was, was sort of rooted in going back there and, and being around the areas that they grew up in, you know, dancehalls that they met up in, and people that they knew, I would've thought that's probably it, but, but sort of later on in life there were probably more, more analysis of, you know, what they, what they did and what jobs they did when they come over and, and why they come over and that sort of thing.

JC: Yeah, no, that's interesting. I suppose I'm just trying to get a sense of how big a part of your family the Irish connection was when you were growing up because I mean, you obviously visited a lot and–

JM: Yeah, I mean, it, it was, it, it was huge, but it, but it was, I mean, it's interesting in terms of identity and its, you know, identity almost by definition sort of develops over, over time. I mean, I wouldn't, I wouldn't be able to say that at that age nine or ten I had a strong sense of that, but I, but I, I'm sure I was aware of the fact that my mum and dad were both from Ireland and hadn't been born in, in Scotland and knew that they had large families back in the, back in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland that we saw every year for a

number of weeks, so we felt part of that whole Irish thing, but I, I couldn't say that I, I, from an identity point of view, had a strong sense of being, being Irish, you know. I think I had more of a sense of being Scottish, but having had a sense, strong sense that my parents were from Ireland and I had a strong connection with them and obviously with, with Ireland.

JC: And was there much extended family around in Glasgow? You, I mean, you mentioned your aunt had moved over as well I think.

PM: Yeah, the, I mean, I think the story is that at various times, certainly through the sixties and the seventies, my, siblings of my mum and siblings of my dad would have spent time in Ireland, in, in Glasgow, some of them longer than others, so my, my, my mum's eldest sister Mary was the one who was the, sort of the attraction cos she was based in Glasgow and, and my mum felt comfortable going over because she was reasonably settled. She had been working I think in munitions factories in Glasgow and, and elsewhere, but I think sometimes in Glasgow through the, through the war, so when the war was coming to an end I think it was, felt safter for my mum to, to come over and I think other sisters, other sisters and some of mum's brothers were in Glasgow at various times through the fifties and sixties, but not, I don't think any of them stayed, certainly none of them stayed on a permanent basis, the rest of them ended up in London, principally London, or United States, in California and in New York, so they had their own sort of diaspora if you like, and my brother, my father's brother, I can only recall that maybe one of his brothers stayed any time in, in Glasgow and he ended up going to Birmingham, again, I'm not sure which year that was, but it was predominantly on my mother's side, I think her, the McHugh side, my mother's maiden name was McHugh, that, that were, seemed to be more of a connection with, with Glasgow.

JC: And what about out-, outside of the family, was there a big Irish community in Glasgow that your parents were part of?

PM: I, that's a very good question, I, I don't really know the, I'm saying I don't know the answer to that question, let me think. Again, at the time I probably wouldn't have been aware of it, but I think later in life I, I know of some friends of my dad I think in particular, that he was connected with and had, had had a connection with from Fermanagh and, and those were his friends, so I'd say most, not all, but certainly in, whilst we were in, living in Partick I think most of his male friends would've been some connection with **[00:20:00]** him from when he was living and brought up in, in the North of Ireland. I think when we moved to, when we moved to Knightswood, I think probably he still had those connections, but he, through football, though, my, my father and certainly James and myself and our whole family are big Celtic football fans, so I think that his connection with people who lived locally to us who were also Celtic fans and they would go to the games together and take us to the games, so he had, you know, Scottish friends as well as his Irish, Irish friends, I'd, I'd say, I think, and I think that's probably true, thinking about it now, that I think some of the girlfriends of my mum would've been mainly women that she knew, and, and knew from her growing up in, in the Republic of Ireland, or they wouldn't necessarily all be from the Republic, but would be in Fermanagh too, you know, the two, the counties being pretty close to each, each other.

JC: And do you know what they would've done to, like, socialise, what their, their social lives would've looked like, or did they have much of a social life, you know?

PM: I, yeah, I, I don't recall, you know, my, my father was a teetotaller, he liked a cigarette, but he was a teetotaller, so he wasn't a guy who went to the pub at all. My mother is, wasn't a drinker at all, so they weren't, they weren't people who went out, well, that's not true, I'm, I'm sure they, they went out before the kids came along, but I, I think once kids came along I didn't get a strong sense of them being out much at all, other than with the family. I do recall, you know, big set-piece family occasions, that was principally at New Year, Hogmanay, New Year was a big, it still is in Scotland, but if I, if I, go back to the sixties and seventies it was a huge, much bigger than Christmas thing and that would be a big family event at my, my mum's sister's family, they were, they were Brownlows and that would be huge family event. I mean, there seemed to be hundreds of people, I'm sure there weren't hundreds of people, but it felt as if there were hundreds of people there and that would be on the first of January, so obviously that only comes round once, once a year, but I don't remember significant other set-piece family events other than christenings. There always seemed to christenings and Holy Communions and those sorts of things going on as part of the sort of Catholic, Catholic thing. I do recall, though, going back to something you said there Jack about, not so much socialising, but any sort of Irish things going on, I remember, and I must've been maybe eight or nine, my father taking us along to a Gaelic football match and I think it was an annual, it wasn't a regular weekly event, I think it was an annual event where a team from Scotland played a team from Ireland at Gaelic football and I remember going along to see that once or, once or twice, but that, probably at that point, other than football, and my father was a, every home game, he wasn't, I don't think he visited away games really, but every home game he would, once we got to a reasonable age we would be taken, I think I was at age eight or nine, we would be taken to Celtic Park to see, to see Celtic, so I think probably that would be the most significant social event really in the week for him because he, he wouldn't be going to the pub before or, or after that really, certainly as I say when, when the family started to grow in size.

JC: And you mentioned church there as well. Was that a big part of growing up?

PM: Yes, aye, absolutely, and we were, we were literally a stone's throw from the church. The big church, Catholic church in, in Partick was St Peter's and I can, I can recall my own First Communion there and, and some of my, my brothers', so yeah, that would've been a real focus. My, my mum and dad were very ready, you know, regular church-goers, and very much involved in the, in the church there, that would be their, their sort of mainstay, would've been going to, going to mass and, and whatever other support they could provide to, to the church, yeah, and I mean, I think that shaped our, you know, the, the children's views on, on religion and, and things like that, which I'm sure we'll come on to.

JC: Yeah, so, I'm just, so when you were growing up was, did you enjoy and embrace going to church, cos I know with some people it's more just a chore that they feel obliged to do, I'm wondering how you felt about going, whether you enjoyed it?

PM: Yeah, I, I don't recall at any point, certainly in the, in the early years or later years for that matter, feeling as if it was a chore or a bind, or that we were being forced into

something we didn't really want to, to do. It just seemed a natural part of growing up, you went to school, you went to church, and also we went to a Catholic school, so I suppose there was, from an education point of view, that was a reinforcement, but it, it never felt as if it was a, a hardship, or doing something that, you know, wasn't fun, I mean, I'm not, I can't recall saying it was a lot of fun, but, you know, probably could, probably could've said the same thing about school in that respect, but no, I don't recall it as being, certainly when I was eight, nine, or ten, or when, later in teenage years, that that was a, an issue at all, quite happy to do that and I'm, I'm a regular churchgoer now, so, so yeah, still, still involved in, in the church in one way or another.

JC: Right, okay, that's interesting, and was there much of an Irish presence at your church, do you know?

PM: I, I would have thought so, but I mean, going back to at least in St Peter's, it's difficult to, if I think about it, it would be difficult to quantify the numbers, but I mean, I, I got the impression, and it's probably because we, because my aunt, my aunt Mary lived nearby and, with her children and some of her family who were obviously going to church as well and some of them hailed from Ireland, so, I mean, there was a sense that it was a, a mixed, you know, a mixed congregation of people from, I think predominantly Scotland and, Scotland and Ireland, and, you know, given, given, you know, the history of the, the church and the church's growth in, in Scotland and Glasgow in particular was driven to a large extent by people coming from, from Ireland then, you know, it wouldn't have been a surprise that there would've been a big proportion of, of, of the congregation that came from, came from Ireland.

JC: And you went to school locally as well, did you?

PM: Yeah, so we, again, the school, if, if you could, if the church was a stone's throw with your left hand the, the boys' school would've been a stone's throw with your right hand. I mean, they were, they were, they were just so close to each other, and so up to the age of, up to the age of eight you went to the infants' school, which was mixed, mixed boys and girls, and then from age eight to twelve it was boys, it was a boys' school, so we went to, I went to St Peter's boys' school as my older brother Tony had done, I'm not sure anyone else after us, cos I think given we moved to Knightswood in 1967, so I don't think any of them, the others, would've gone to the boys' school, so I, I would've had a couple of years in St Peter's boys' school and then, as I say, age nine I think it was, yeah, I'd be age nine, 1967, when we moved to, to Knightswood, **[00:30:00]** then I went to a school called St Brendan's school in, in Yoker, which was a mixed boys' and girls' school.

JC: How did it feel changing over schools? It's quite a difficult age to move.

PM: That, that was interesting. In fact, I was talking to my children about that recently when, you know, moving to a completely different area, although it's, it's probably about five or six miles away, so, you know, looking back it's not a huge distance, but it, you know, moving from Partick to a new, a different part of the city was, was interesting, and I was saying to my kids the other day that when I went to the school, age nine or so, I think there was a bit of a discussion about what year I should go into and I remember going along to, or

I was told to go along and speak to the headmaster and he asked me various questions, some of them mathematical or arithmetical questions and some about some books, and I remember thinking wow, this is, this is quite a challenge, you know, sitting in front of the head-, headmaster and answering these questions, so much so that I think they, he put me up into a, another, another year, another level, which was quite good. I mean, it didn't matter a lot to me because I was just, it was all new anyway, so it probably didn't matter too much whether, which particular year I was in, but, but no, I, really happy cos it was, I think it was a good school, they loved football, I loved football, so, you know, that was a good, a good start and I had, I made some good friends there and was very happy there, and in fact, many, really, really, I remember at the time, age, in my final year of school, what was known as the qualifying year, there was a new Catholic school opening up and depending on where you lived you really had to, to go to the new one, whereas as I was getting to the final year of primary school I thought, well, I don't particularly want to move, given I hadn't been there that long anyway, a couple of years, and was very settled, and I remember there was a big issue going on. I remember mum and dad being, you know, going along to school meeting, meetings, so the church, so the church was involved in it, and trying to see if there could be some, some way that at least kids that are in their, are going into their final year could maybe stay where they were rather than move, but anyway it became, there seemed to be a lot of politics around it, but it became clear that literally if you were one side of one particular main road then that determined where you, where you would go, so I went to another pretty new s-, well, I think it was, it was, it was only open that year, I went to another school that I didn't, I had no connection with at all, probably in terms of distance it was equidistant to the school I'd gone to before, but this, this new school called Corpus Christi was brand new and, but most of the kids in the school had come from another Catholic school, but I think the, it was, the, the property itself was a bit old and dilapidated, so that's why they needed a new Catholic school, so it, it ma-, I remember that was a difficult year because they, the teacher knew kids, had taught kids through various years, and I do-, I don't recall her and I having a particularly strong relationship. I don't think she particularly liked me and I didn't particularly like, like her, whereas the teachers I had at St Brendan's, the school before, I really, I really enjoyed, and there was a, there was a male teacher there who was really good, a Mr, a Mr Lamont, who was really good, but I went to Corpus, I, I, and I think to some extent, she, I say she disliked me, but she gave lots of indications she didn't really like me, was, I think I was up there in the top two or three in the class, which I think she found that almost difficult to accept, given that she hadn't, she hadn't taught me through previous years, and it became, came to a bit of a head when in that final year, it was a qualifying year, we had the opportunity to go to a school called St Mungo's Academy, which was a well-known school for Catholic boys, for boys who were seen to be sort of bright, that couldn't afford to go, for their parents to put them to private education, probably the best well-known Catholic private school would've been St Aloysius College, but, you know, you needed money to do that and we wouldn't have been able to afford that, but there was a sort of equivalent school that was probably a grammar-type school if, if I sort of try to compare it with an English system, that was a state school, but had a great reputation aca-, academically, and what would happen was that the top one, two or in some times, in some cases three boys, it was a, it was a boys' school I should say, boys from the primary Catholic schools would be selected to go there, and when I was accepted to go there it meant that one or more of her charges, that she had really liked and had taught through the, through previous years missed out, and I, I remember at the time

she wasn't happy about that at all, so that was really the end of my, my primary school and, before I went on to spend six years at, at St Mungo's in the East End of Glasgow, so that was, that was different. This was a part of the city that was just unknown to me, well, unknown to me in the sense that other than going to see Celtic in the East End of Glasgow I'd, I'd not, you know, gone by car, or, so I didn't really know that part of city at all, so, you know, the older part of the city, I suppose, compared to where I'd been brought up in the west, the West End, and travelling on, on my own, although my, my brother, he predated me there, my brother Tony, so the two of us went, went there and, and I think both, well, I certainly loved, loved my, my school time, school time there.

JC: You got on well, yeah, as well, academically and stuff?

PM: Yeah, I, I was a good student and, and we were brought up to be good students, you know, from a, from an, you know, upbringing point of view, you know. Church was important, family was important, football was important, but, but, you know, doing, working hard, doing well was, was important too and my mum and dad were very supportive, great encouragers for all of us and, so there was a sense that we wouldn't ever want to let them, let them down, so yeah, worked, worked hard and, and did, well, did well, I'm sure I could've done better, but, you know, I worked hard and did, did well, played for the school football team, so yeah, I, I loved my, my time, those six years in secondary school, and then, you know, I'm just saying this to make out what I wanted to do, but I mean, there was a sort of inevitability about going to university, that's what our mum and dad would have wanted us to, to do, but not, notwithstanding my father died when I was in second year of, second year of, of secondary school, 1971, so I was what, twelve, but that, you know, the influence was still there and, and through my mother too, the sense that, you know, work hard at school and then, and take it from there.

JC: And what about outside of school, so you went, played football, went to Celtic, church obviously as well. Was there anything else you were involved with, or was that the main–?

PM: No, I think that was it really. It was, it was going to school, going to football, playing, playing football a lot, so playing for the school football team, then playing for the, the boys' guild football team, which was linked to the, to the church, so a lot of the Catholic churches would have a, a football team and they were called the boys' guild and they were part of a, **[00:40:00]** a league system in Dunbartonshire, so when we moved to Knightswood it would have been part of a Dunbartonshire league system there, so yeah, yeah, childhood was football, football-related, that's for, that's for sure.

JC: And I'm wondering then, sort of as you were growing up, you've got, in Glasgow you've got sort of the same, or a similar sort of Catholic and Protestant divide as you might find in Northern Ireland as well. I'm wondering to what extent you were sort of conscious of that and aware of that as you were growing up?

PM: I have thought about this quite a lot and I, I don't recall that as a particularly strong feature of growing up, certainly in the early years. I think as I became, I suppose, a bit more cognate of, of things and became a teenager and became a, just a bit more worldly-wise, and, and probably principally through football and the Celtic-Rangers thing, then, you know,

that, that as a proxy for Catholic-Protestants would, would become, you know, that, I would've been through my teenage years become more aware of that, but certainly not, not at primary school. I mean, I, I would've thought it's, as I say, got into teenage years, and to be perfectly honest, you know, if I think of my time in, when we moved to Knightswood, you know, kids were just playing football together locally and you would know, you would know probably if some guys were Catholic or Protestants because if they were Catholics they went to your school and if they weren't they went, you know, they were non-Catholics or Protestants, but it never seemed to get in the way of all of the day-to-day, you know, footballing life or world that you in-, inhabited, no, I, that wasn't and I certainly wouldn't have, until teenage years, got any sense that there was a connection with Ireland in any way. I don't think I would have made those linkages until, you know, as I went through thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen or that sort of, and that would've been through, through the seventies, which I suppose is, is in, in parallel with the Troubles in, in Northern Ireland anyway, so I suppose as those things began to, to pick up then I would've been more aware of that, particularly every year we were still going to, to Ireland. I think we had a little gap for a while after my father died, but we then started going, started going again, notwithstanding my father had, my father had passed on.

JC: But you would have had friends who were Protestants and things like that?

PM: Yeah, yeah, yeah, but, but principally through playing football, I think, and I'm trying to think, you know, the, the world today where kids go to each other's houses and, you know, they've got laptops and all sort of tablets and Xboxes, what have you, you know, growing up in the sixties there was none of that. It was, growing up was very much an outdoor world, so if, you know, at a weekend or even in a evening, other than, obviously when, winter months when it was darker, but spring and summer and weekends were all about football, there was really nothing else and it was outdoor, you know, playing and that, there was, you know, I, I don't recall having people come and visit the house really from a friends point of view, it was, it was all about football and it was playing outside and you'd play with Catholics and, and Protestants, it wouldn't have mattered what that, what religion they were. I mean, clearly there were, from the school football team, it was a Catholic school, so it was made up of boys who were Catholic and similarly in the boys' guild team, it's probably true to say that they were, but I'm, I'm, thinking back I'm not, I'm not sure if it was a pre-requisite that they had to be Catholic to play for the boys' guild team, I'm not, I'm not sure about that, but I suspect the vast majority of the boys would have been boys who had gone and were going to a Catholic school.

JC: And you mentioned the sort of the beginning of the Troubles there, and you would've been, what, about ten, eleven when they really started?

PM: Yes, so in, yeah, so in nineteen-, so as I said, when my father died in '71 I was twelve and I think that summer, 1971, we, we went, so my father died in March '71, I think we went in the summer of '71 and I do have a memory in, so it couldn't have been, I'm trying to remember when internment was, if internment was '73, was it, '72, '72, '73, when internment came in. I do have a memory of one, one fifteenth of August, in, in the area where my father was from, on the fifteenth of August there was a big festival in the area, and huge numbers of people, and it would be a, effectively a, there would be a sports day, it

was really a sports day, there would be football, there'd be Gaelic football, there'd be hurling, there'd be all sorts of other sports events and there would be a big dance in the evening, so a lot of people came to that particular area and I remember at one point there was a, a, and it, and it was a pretty nationalist town, Belcoo, in that, in that area and I remember at one point, and I'm not sure I was aware of why it was happening, but they were keen, they had a, a float, effectively a lorry dressed up with various things as a bit of a parade before the, before the sort of sports began, and I remember being sort of put into the back of the float and it was a sort of, a 'Men Behind the Wire' type, type thing going on but I, you know, at that age I'm not, I'm not sure I quite understood what was, what was going on, but there were, there were a number of us put in the back of this float and I think there was a photograph at one point from the, the newspaper, *Fermanagh Herald*, showing some people behind this, or particular float, so it was, it was certainly topical at the, at the time and, and through those years, as, as I say, given that we were going back every, every year, you were aware of the environment that you were going into, but it never, it never felt a particularly unsafe environment, although we were coming from Glasgow where, other than the Celtic football thing there weren't many, you know, there was, there was very little crossover from Ireland into Glasgow, and I suppose some of the, some of the other cities, you were, you were going on holiday to a less safe place, and there were soldiers in the streets, but I don't think I ever felt unsafe going back there, and I, fortunately in the times I went back I didn't, was never in any particular difficult situations, although if, if my, my brother Tony, who's a couple of years older than me, I think he had one or two close escapes when there were, the police, one of the, the house that my grandmother, my father's mother, moved to unfortunately was just behind the, the garrison of the police station and the IRA, who were firing rockets and bullets from the Republic into the, the sort of police station, sometimes, sometimes it missed, missed the garrison and hit some of the houses, so I think my, my brother was under, under the bed one, one or two nights when some rockets and bullets were, were coming in, but I, I suppose fortunately, I was never in, there were no, I had no close shaves in, in that time when I was over there.

JC: And would your mum and your dad, before he died, would, would they have talked about their views about the conflict in Northern Ireland, and the Troubles?

PM: I have thought about this **[00:50:00]** too. I [pauses], I'm sure they did, I'm sure they did, although again, given my father had died in '71, which was, well, I think, I suppose there were a few years before and I do, I do recall, so it must've been, certainly before he died, cos he was, he was driving us over, over to Ireland, over on the ferry, so it would've been '68, I think, maybe '67, '68, '69, when things were beginning to, I suppose you'd, yeah, define precisely when the Troubles began, but I think there were some issues in the tail-end of the sixties, I remember him making sort of comment that, the idea that there would be British soldiers on the streets of Ireland was, I think, anathema to him and I do recall at one point the i-, him saying the idea that he might be stopped by British soldiers and asked who he was and where he was from, notwithstanding that he was from that part of, that part of Ireland, I think he found that problematic, so, so I'm aware of that, but I, I, and I think my mother would have been part of that conversation too, but I, I think I'd be struggling to identify a particularly strong sense of, or, or him saying any, anything particularly strong politically, yeah, I, I have, I don't want to make things up. I, I don't have a strong sense certainly in my early years of him saying that, but, you know, sometimes it's only after, you

know, people have gone, and as you grow up yourself, that you, you get a sense of, you know, they would not, they would not have been happy with the idea of internment, for example, British soldiers being there, and I suspect their, their politics would have been one of, of, you know, nationalists and the supporters of a united Ireland, and I think his brothers and family would have been, you know, nationalists and as, as there were atrocities at the time, they would have been very acutely aware of some of the difficulties that were going on, you know, particularly in, in Belfast and Derry and elsewhere.

JC: And as you grew older and presumably got a sort of a more nuanced understanding of the situation in Northern Ireland, did you develop your own views on what was going on over there, or did you feel particularly strongly about it?

PM: I, I, yeah, I mean, I think as I went through my teens, but I think probably it was I'd say more at university rather than at school, so I would've gone to university at, what, age eighteen, and that would've been in 1976, yeah, I went to university in 1976, age eighteen. I would've then, not so much maybe in first year, but I think in second year, so that would've been '77, got a, a stronger sense of, of things, I'd, I think some of the, I mean, I think probably it's true to say that most students become certainly more politically aware of, of things, not necessarily just Ireland, but, you know, world politics, but clearly the Irish problem was, was to some extent on our, on our doorstep and had a sort of vested interest, given that my parents were from, from Ireland, and I remember second year, meeting some people who were certainly much more politically wise and involved than, than I would be, and I think a couple of them were in the, I remember at that time the Socialist Workers Party were quite strong then, not that I was, remotely understood what they stood for, but they, there was a couple of people I had, became sort of friends, they were involved in that and, and had a particular interest in Ireland and I think it was in '77 there was a, a Troops Out march, there was a Troops Out movement, and there was a Troops Out march which I, I went along to. I think it's the only march I ever went along to, or on, one, one day in, in support of the Troops Out movement, but I think that was probably, in terms of any active, or any level of engagement with what was going on in Ireland was, was principally through, through that, but as I say, it was attending one march and, and I think that was it, there might have been various discussions about the, what was going on in Ireland, but it never translated into anything more than attendance at one, at one march.

JC: But you would've broadly identified as a nationalist, then, I suppose, like, the rest of your family?

PM: Oh yeah, no, absolutely, yeah, ab-, absolutely.

JC: And what about Celtic because there's obviously a big, big Irish nationalist element there as well? Did, did, was that ever a part of your experience there, or was, was it more just football-related?

PM: Well, it was principally football-related, but I mean, you, you couldn't help be aware, certainly through the seventies and eighties, that the club was very much perceived, certainly football fans, or a big chunk of them, would've been very republican or very nationalist and would be supporters of, of, you know, the IRA, whereas, you know, given at

the time the IRA seemed to be involved in atrocities as, as well, you know, there was a thought, well, what, what's going on, who's right and who's wrong and how can it be that, acceptable that Protestants have been killed in the same way that Catholics have been killed, so I, I think I was probably a bit conflicted about that. I was, I never felt part of that and I'm not sure when at the football match it went beyond football chants, I think for a lot of the people who went along it was, there might have been a hardcore, but I think for a lot of the fans it was more, I'd say more, maybe more superficial than, than, you know, substantive in terms of people understanding what the, a real understanding of Irish politics and what was, what was going on.

JC: Yeah, that's interesting you say that because there is obviously a lot of engagement with the sort of Irish question in, like, the Old Firm more broadly and, and in, in Glasgow, but it's interesting that you say it was kind of a superficial engagement.

PM: I, I think it, I think for, I mean, if, if you'd been going along to Celtic Park in those days, you know, you're talking about big crowds, you know, forty, fifty thousand people, and there, there would be, used to be one particular part of Celtic Park, the jungle, is where the hardcore would, would go, and from memory that seemed to be gang-related principally and certain parts of Glasgow were well known for particular, you know, I'm thinking of Royston area, Roystonhill area of Glasgow where the Shamrock, the Shamrock gang came from, and they were part of that hardcore in what was known the jungle, but I think there were, there were a lot of other sort of teenage kids at the side who were, maybe longed to be part of that whole. I remember, you know, trying to get into the jungle was a feat in itself, but when you got in there you just got carried away with the whole, you know, the whole thing, and people would chant songs, chants, things, without, it was my sense they didn't quite know what they were chanting, but they got caught up in the, **[01:00:00]** the whole, the whole thing, but I'm sure there were some, some of them who were hardcore, well, hardcore football fans and hardcore in terms of their sort of nationalism or republicanism, but I, I think for, certainly for me and for others I went to the football, we, we probably had a reasonable understanding of it, but we, we weren't in any way, you know, strongly politically motivated, I would, I would say.

JC: I want to talk a little bit more about, we've, we've touched on it, your visits to Northern Ireland and, and the South of Ireland when you were growing up. Do you, do you remember how, how often you would've gone, was it once a year or was it more than that?

PM: Yeah, it was once a year. I, I don't recall going other than in the summer months, so it was when school finished, end of, end of June and, I mean, it felt as if the whole summer was spent over in Ireland each year, but I'm, I'm sure it probably wasn't the whole summer, cos that would have been eight or, eight or nine weeks given the Scottish school system, so I suspect it was anywhere between two and, two and four weeks every, every year. I mean, I know it wasn't every year of my life, but it felt as if it was every year of my life, certainly up, up until the age of eighteen. Then my, as I said earlier, there may have been one or two years after my father died that we didn't go there and I think we tended to go to visit my mum's sisters in the London area, I remember a couple of times we went there, but then we started going back to, back to Ireland, and maybe, you know, thinking about it aloud, maybe, maybe it felt through the early part of the seventies, '72 and '73, maybe it was felt

not to be as safe going over there, maybe my mum was more worried about taking a large family over, over there, through there, but I'm sure after '73, '74 we were, we were going back and spending, we used to try and be half the holiday spent at my father's family in the North of Ireland and half the time spent in the, on my mother's side in County Cavan, although as we, as we grew up as teenagers, more and more we wanted to spend time on my father's side because it was in a village and there were lots of other kids same age as us and made good friendships and played football, whereas my mother's family home seemed to be in the middle of nowhere and there were no other kids around and there wasn't an awful lot to do, so we would really do everything we could, particularly as we got to age, you know, fifteen, sixteen, when we wanted, you know, friendships became more and more important and there was football and there was dances and there were girls, whereas up in, up in where my mum was from it was, it was mainly cattle and sheep, well, not many sheep about, cattle, cattle mainly and far-, you know, it was farming and my mo-, my mother's brother, who had a farm there, he was a hard worker and he, he made us work pretty, pretty hard when he took us out to, to help him, so city boys, we, I think we, we desperately tried to find ways of getting down to the, you're talking about less than ten miles of distance between the, where my mum's family home was and where my father's family home was, but they seemed night and day in terms of what was, you know, what was, what was happening, there was a lot more happening in the North than there was where my mother's from in the South.

JC: It sounds like you did quite a lot of socialising and stuff when you were over there, like, yeah–

PM: Oh, oh absolutely, I mean, those were, through the seventies, up until the point I went to university, was fantastic. I mean, I, I don't speak to, speak for my brothers and sisters, but, you know, we had conversations and say, you know, those were really happy, happy times, and I think had we had the cha-, the chance or the choice to live there rather than live in Glasgow we would've, we would've bitten my mum's hand off, we were–

JC: Really?

PM: Well, there's a bit of a summer, you know, the summer holiday thing going on, but, you know, we loved it there. We loved the people, we made good friends, we were accepted, we were, you know, part of that whole community, we had family there clearly, we just, we just, I just, loved it and, you know, the early years it was more about playing football, but as we became older it was about, you know, being able to have a pint of Guinness in the, in the pubs, you know, much, many years before you were eighteen, and there were dances and there were, you know, people would go, take you various places for dances, it was a fantastic time, we really did feel part of that, that whole community, and as I say, it wouldn't have taken much to, to, to stay and, and live there, but our, our home was in, in Glasgow and my mother felt, notwithstanding she was brought up in Ireland, you know, she spent, I remember having a conversation with her about this, that she felt that Scotland in particular, but, you know, Britain was her home as well, notwithstanding she was from the Republic, she, she'd gone over there when she was seventeen and her, her life for the next, effectively seventy years was in Scotland and she felt very much at home in, in Scotland.

JC: And what about you, like, because you say obviously Glasgow was home and that's where you spent the majority of your time, but was Fermanagh a kind of a home as well, or, or was it more of a, yeah–

PM: Yes, it was, it was a home, I mean, as I say, you're only talking about once a year for a number of weeks, but it was, yeah, it, it, it felt like, like home and, you know, Irish people would say to us welcome, welcome home. I remember that as a very, very strong message from, not just from family, but from other people, they would associate you with themselves obviously through the fact that they would know who you were and, and your mother and father were from that area, so they would, they would say to you welcome, welcome home, literally they would say that, welcome home, so you felt very much at home when we went back to, to Ireland, very, very much so.

JC: It presumably reinforced your sort of sense of Irish identity, if you had one, as well.

PM: I, I think so and, you know, I think, and that, that's, you know, formative years shape you, so in terms of our identity now, well, speaking as myself I, I, I'm quite happy to consider myself as Scottish and, and British, but I have a very strong Irish sense of identity through my mother and father and their history and their tradition and their family and, and environment and that, that's grown in many respects over the years, I suppose manifesting itself through an interest in Irish history, so I, I would, I would say that my, and particularly since I've retired, so I've had more time, I've, I've sort of re-, reawakened a, an interest in the history of Ireland, but I mean, history in the sense of, I think I'm on volume one of the Cambridge University, I think it was four or five volumes on the history of Ireland going back to, I really wanted to get a sense of the history of Ireland in terms of where it, where it all began, so I think I, I think I'm up to the thirteenth century now.

JC: Got a while to go, then [laughs].

PM: I've got a bit to go and I'm sure I'll be particularly interested as it, as it gets to the sixties and seventies and eighties and, and beyond, so I think, you know, my sense of identity is manifested that way and then, you know, when we came to the, the whole Brexit thing I, I made sure I got my Irish passport, which I obviously was entitled to as the, as the son of Irish people, **[01:10:00]** and I suppose that was quite a symbolic gesture as much as, as anything else, but I, I remember conversations with my siblings about how important that, that was, and I think every one of them has now got their Irish passport and Irish citizens, I think it's only my, my wife who doesn't have access to an Irish passport, my children have if they pay the, pay the euro for them and put, sign the documentation, whereas my, my poor wife hasn't, but, but no, no immediate prospects of, of going to live in Ireland, but it was, it was, I think again, another, the passport was a bit of a manifestation of a sense of Irish identity, but also a bit pissed off with Brexit as well.

JC: Yeah, that's, that's understandable, and kind of going back again just briefly to, to the, when you went back with your family, you mentioned, thankfully, you weren't directly affected by the Troubles in any significant way, but I'm wondering if, you know, you were crossing the border a lot and you were staying near the border, I wonder if you noticed any,

any changes over time, if, if the area changed at all, and, and also contrasts between your Irish home and your Glasgow home as well?

PM: Yeah, I mean, through that period, late sixties, seventies, I mean, I remember being very aware, cos I, and I would've been told, either by my father or my mother or family members, about, because the, the area we used to go to, Belcoo, and there's a, there's another village, a sort of sister village effectively, separated, separated by a bridge, and the bridge is the border, but at various times, and more recently any notices or any signage that might indicate that you were moving from North to South have largely gone, but, you know, in the six-, tail-end of the sixties [coughs], excuse me, and the seventies, there, there were various bits of infrastructure that made it quite clear whether you were in the North of Ireland or the, the South of Ireland, I, I don't mean just signage and stuff on the republican side, on the Irish Republic, being in, in Gaelic as well as English, but there were customs. I remember when we went over every time, and we would travel between the two areas, between my father's home and mother's home quite a lot, and sometimes two or three times a day, and you could be stopped by the customs, customs people because you weren't allowed to bring certain produce in, but over time as they got to know you and who you were, then there wasn't a lot of stopping, you could've, you could've had a herd of cattle in the back of your, boot of your car and if they, if they knew your face then you'd be, you'd be absolutely fine, so you'd just be waved on through, whereas on the border through the si-, through the seventies you would have R, RUC just on, on the Northern Ireland side, increasingly through the seventies you would see police, soldiers, or, or not see them because more often than not I remember as a child they were, they were lying in the ditches, so the RUC were there, visible, and the British soldiers were lying, sometimes you'd stop and you'd look out and you'd see a, a British soldier just sort of lying in the ditch or in the grass there, so that was, that was interesting, and then you would go maybe fifty yards into the Republic and the, the Irish, I don't remember the Irish police so much, so the Garda, but the Irish Army being there, they had a barracks there, so no, you would, you would travel, not even, not even a quarter of a mile and you would see a lot of infrastructure and apparatus that was connected with two, two distinct jurisdictions and, and a military and police presence on, on both, both sides of it, so that was, those contrasts were big through the seventies, but then through, you know, after that, I started to go back to Ireland probably, there was a bit of a, when I was a student, certainly latter part in the eighties and then the nineties I wouldn't go to Ireland as often as I had, cos I was going into my twenties, I was working, I really didn't have the same opportunity to go to Ireland as I had done before, but some of my university colleagues when I'd gone to, to Birmingham, to Aston University, one or two of them had never, they were students from England, really didn't know anything about Ireland, and I would take them over to Ireland to introduce them to my, my family, so and as, at that time things had settled down very much in, in Ireland and that infrastructure and that apparatus was gradually sort of disa-, disappearing, so the sense of a border had all but gone really, into the, the nineties and the, yeah, certainly the late eighties and nineties I, I can't remember there being that sort of infrastructure at all.

JC: And how did you feel about things like the presence of troops in Northern Ireland? I mean, you mentioned your dad talked about it a bit and was, was not happy about it. As someone who went on to be involved with, with things like Troops Out, I'm wondering did you have a sense of, of how you felt about it then?

PM: I did, but I, I don't think it was particularly strong, so I suppose when I was younger, you know, if my, if my, and before even teenage years, if my father talked about it then that was taken as read and that was taken as the truth and probably reinforced by the family, by his family around it as a, as a reinforcement of that, that message, but I suppose when you're age eight, nine, ten, eleven, certainly you wouldn't be, any nuances of that, you just wouldn't be, well, I certainly wasn't at that age, tuned into it in any significant way, and it's only as you, as I say, went through teenage years and then university, became more, well, more informed and more aware of the sort of political di-, dimensions of that, yeah, but as I say, in the early years it would, any reinforcement of, of an issue or a political issue between, you know, republicanism and unionism would've been through that, but I, you know, I, I never, I mean, I haven't thought about this, I, I don't remember, certainly my early years, clearly up until my father died, him having particularly strong views and I, I don't ever recall hearing him say anything particularly strongly in terms of an anti-unionist, anti-, no, and I, I, no, I, and I mean, as I said, my mother and father were very strong in their faith, and so they wouldn't be people who would be, you know, happy about any bad things happening to Protestant people, not, not at all, that wouldn't have been in their, now that doesn't mean that they weren't supportive of a united Ireland or a nationalist position, but they, they, they were, they were Christian people, they would not be people who would condone bad things happening to anyone else, Protestants or anything like that, that's just not who they were at all.

JC: Kind of on that subject, are there any, like, events that happened during the Troubles, either that happened in Northern Ireland or that happened in mainland Britain, that sort of stick in your memory as things that you saw on the news **[01:20:00]** and sort of thought, wow?

PM: But I suppose through the seventies it seemed to be constant, I remember that, you know, it seemed to be constant, you know, one, one day or one night it was a Catholic bar being bombed and Catholics or nationalist people being killed, and then another night when, in Belfast or elsewhere, you know, a unionist, Protestant pub was bombed, you know, it seemed at times that it was, you know, there was a lot of tit for tat going on, yeah. I mean, I was aware of that, but, I, I'm not sure that, I don't know now whether that shaped my thinking in any way, but I remember that there seemed to be a lot of killing going on and both Catholics and Protestants were being, I don't know about equally affected, I mean, I think I'd a, still a sense of, that it's probably the Catholic population that's been disproportionately negatively impacted by what's going on in Ireland, but I was also aware that there were two communities at war and both, both were, both were suffering, but yeah, that was my sense through the, through the seventies and then in the eighties I, I mean, I lived in, in Birmingham for a while, so I was aware of, you know, the significant bombing on New, New Street, yeah, in, in Birmingham, so yeah, there were a couple of big things, you know, it's almost as if Troubles settled down, but there were still things happening in Birmingham or London and, and back in Ireland, but, you know, as there was the sort of campaign, the IRA campaign in, outside Northern Ireland, you know, I'd be aware of things happening in other cities, but fortunately, well, that was sad in itself, but nothing in terms, particularly in terms of Glasgow, there were one or two, one or two I think bombs had gone off in some places and there were some arrests, but it's just interesting Glasgow

was never significantly affected by that compared to, in terms of large-scale things, there would've been marches, I think, were probably going on, but, and there was animosity between Celtic and Rangers, but there was never really any carryover in any particular significant way of the Troubles to Glasgow, which is, I think it's an interesting thing in its-, in itself.

JC: It is yeah, cos I mean, from what I've read, there was a kind of a lot of worry at that time that things would spread over to Glasgow, but then it, it didn't and, and it was, it was cities like Birmingham, as you say, and London that had more sort of high profile incidents like the bombings and stuff.

PM: Yeah, yeah, I'm sure there's a few P, PhDs been written on, on why that, why there isn't, but I mean, I think there was sense from my parents and certainly my mum as, after my father had died, that the last thing we need is any carryover from, from Ireland to, to Glasgow, cos I think maybe there was a sense of, if it did really kick off it could kick off in a big significant way, given that it already, already had, it was a bit of a divided city from a, from a football point of view, but I suppose maybe that, that's why sometimes I think, you know, you could, you can maybe overplay the Celtic-Rangers thing as a, as a proxy for anything more significant, because you might argue if football is something more substantive then maybe that could've been a catalyst for, for something more significant in, in Glasgow, but it didn't, it didn't happen, for I'm sure lots of other, lots of other reasons.

JC: And so, to talk a bit more about university, you stayed in Glasgow for uni you said, is that right?

PM: Yeah, went to university there. I was pretty typical in that, I remember stats at the time, and certainly in the seventies that something like seventy per cent of the students in Glasgow University at that time lived within a thirty mile radius of, you know, the world's, the world's changed, but that, that's the way it was, so it was kind of, I don't think I applied to any universities other than Glasgow. I studied English lit and, and history, I loved, loved my time at, at university, and I think there was probably a bit of a draw cos my, my mother was obviously, still had four or five kids under, under me age-wise, and I think there was probably a bit of a sense of, maybe mum needs a bit more support, but I suspect that I wasn't much support at all cos I, I fully entered into the life of, of university, both academically and socially, so I don't recall, though I lived at home, I don't recall being at home that, that much over those, over those four, four years, and then I thought it was time in 1980, then I went to university in, in Birmingham.

JC: Was it in Birmingham or in Glasgow that you went to the Troops Out rally?

PM: In Glasgow, it was second, second year of, in Glasgow, so it would've been '77, so I went to Glasgow in first year '76, so it would've been round '77 or '78 that I was in, you know, went along to that, but as I say, I wasn't, although I knew some people that were more involved in the Socialist Workers Party and maybe other things I, I wasn't really involved, other than going along to that march that, that day and I think that was, that was about it in terms of my, any sort of political involvement. I'm sure I was involved in lots of conversations that would've been, you know, supportive of Troops Out movement and, and

a united Ireland, but, no, I think I was, I was much more into my, my sort of academic life and, you know, drinking and chasing, chasing women I think.

JC: Absolutely fair enough, I'm just, yeah, wondering at that, that rally that you did attend, what the atmosphere was like, was there any tension, or was it more–?

PM: Oh it was, no, it was horrible, it was, it was absolutely horrible. I remember it was a, I can't remember the numbers, but I think there was something, maybe five hundred or six hundred people on the march, but there was a counter-demonstration and that was, that was scary and there was a huge police presence, so it was a, I mean, I think it was all verbal stuff, but it was still pretty scary and at the end it, I think the only thing that probably saved it from turning into something more violent was, I remember at the end of the march the rain came down, it was dry during the march and then the heavens emptied at the end of the march and I think that sort of helped to scatter people, but it was, it was not a nice environment at all, it was, it was horrible. I think just the threat of, the threat of violence was, was acute that, that morning, yeah, that, it was, it was not a nice experience at all.

JC: Do you think that maybe dissuaded you from going back?

PM: Possibly. I'm not sure how many more marches there were. I'm sure, I'm sure there were some through the seventies or eighties, but then eighties I'd moved out of Glasgow, I really had no other sort of connection. It, it may, it may well have done, but I mean, I, but I mean, it was safe enough because there was a huge police presence I remember, on the day, but it was just not a, not a nice en-, environment, you wouldn't, no, I think you'd had to be pretty, you know, pretty engaged and pretty committed to, you know, going on marches. I don't think I'd ever been on a march before or after, **[01:30:00]** have I been on any marches, I don't think so, although I might have been, nah, as a student I think I was on an anti-Nazi, National Front march whilst I was still at university, to maybe my third or fourth year, cos I was aware that's going on [indecipherable] what have you, so I think I might have been on, in that march, but that, I don't think there was any counter-demonstrations that I can recall, but no, that Troops Out march was not a particularly pleasant experience.

JC: And then, so you moved to Birmingham in 1980, did you say?

PM: So went to university, started in September 1980, and it was just a, a year postgraduate diploma, really it was the point when, well, coming out of university with a degree in history and English lit was, the economy wasn't that great, so I really thought, well, I needed to maybe do a vocational qualification, so that's when I did a postgraduate diploma in industrial relations and as it was then personnel management, and that was, that was a smart move because, apart from the fact I really enjoyed the year, but I think when I came out of that year I had two or three job offers to go to, and the one I took up was with Lucas Aerospace. Lucas was a big employer in the Midlands, West Midlands, and I was happy to stay. I think I had a girlfriend at that point, so I was happy to stay in Birmingham and stayed there for another couple of years, so, and then 1983 got a promotion to, with the same employer in a bigger, a bigger sort of factory in Luton and then moved on a couple of years later to Liverpool, and had a couple of years there, loved Liverpool, but then I, so I'd been

away six or seven years and I thought I'd quite like to go back, back home and came back in '87.

JC: And how did you get on those years in England? I mean, were you homesick during that time, or not particularly [laughs]?

PM: No, no, not at all, and I think part of it was because, you know, a lot of kids, and I, my, my two kids, and I said really you should, I think it's a good idea to go to university outside your hometown, so, my, my son went to Manchester, he was at Manchester University, he graduated about five years ago, so he had four years in Manchester very happily, he's still, still in Manchester, and my daughter went to New York to study. My wife often says, well, you pushed them away, but I think it was good for them and I think probably I wish I'd maybe gone to university for my undergraduate degree to have gone away from home, but the circumstances as, as I explained were, were different, but I really enjoyed, I think that was the sort of making of me, going, from an independence point of view as much as anything, but, you know, going away in 1980 was, was good for me just in terms of growing up and looking after myself, and loved, loved my time, loved Birmingham, loved the people, hated Luton, loved my job, but, Luton was, was not a place I would encourage people to go and live [laughs].

JC: I've never been, but I've not heard great things about it.

PM: I, I mean, we're talking about forty years ago, so I'm sure, sure it's, it's transformed. The only good thing about Luton was it was so close to London and I would travel through to London quite a lot and had friends in London, but then went to Liverpool and loved Liverpool, loved the people, culturally very similar to Glasgow, people, their sense of humour, yeah, really, really liked my time in, in England, mainly in Liverpool and Birmingham, less, less so in Luton, but I was really focused on my career at that point, so I wasn't, I wasn't as wide.

JC: I think in Birmingham and Liverpool, and London as well, when you were able to get down there, are all cities with big Irish connections. Did you, did you come across a lot of people from Ireland in any of those place?

PM: No, not really, well, in, in Birmingham because I had an uncle, my bro-, my dad's brother had a pub in Sparkbrook, which is the real heart of Irish community there, so we would go over there from time to time. I didn't, you know, I was a student, so I didn't want to be over there bothering him all the time and I was sort of living on campus, but I would, you know, a couple of times would take my mates over to this interesting little pub that was full of Irish people in the, in the heart of Birmingham and we'd go over there a couple of times and I became a big supporter of Aston, Aston Villa in going to games and that was their championship-winning season, '80 to '81, and it had quite a big Irish support. My uncle was, he got me into it really, he was a big fan of, of Aston Villa, so, but there, there wasn't, I don't think there was any other connection with an Irish community at all really than, other than through my, through my, my uncle, it was really more university-based and, although that said I had, one of my best mates at the time was from, from Ireland, from Warrenpoint. I think it's, it's so long ago now, but I think we had shared views on Ireland in terms of what

was going on or what had happened before, but it was really, it was really focused on study and, you know, having a, having a good time, as much as anything else, and then Luton, again, I had an uncle on my mother's side in Luton, but I, you know, I think I saw them a few, a few times and they were very much involved in the Irish community through the, through the church, but I think because I'd, I'd left home not that long before I think I was keen to make sure that I didn't, you know, sometimes you can move away and if you've got relatives and family there you think, well, it's only, it's almost a bit too comfortable, it's a bit too home from home, and the whole point of me moving away was to sort of be myself and find my own way and identity, so although I, I, you know, did the right thing as my mother would say and go and visit and keep in contact, it, it wasn't a particularly significant contact during my time in Luton, and then Liverpool I didn't have any family members there at all really, so I'd, I'd no real connection with, an Irish sort of dimension or community whilst I was in Liverpool, really, at all.

JC: And were you still visiting Ireland during this time?

PM: Well, yes, not every year, but every couple of years I would go and, as I say, some of my friends who were, one friend in particular who was, who was an English guy, didn't really know Ireland, but took him over and introduced him to my sort of family in Ireland and he, he just, he just loved it, so we went over there a couple of times, and then really, contact, you know, relatives still alive there, you know, fewer now than, than before, so in the last, or so, in the last ten or fifteen years, visits to Ireland have been sometimes about holidays, but more often than not attending funerals really, weddings to some extent, but it seems to be funerals. It's that generation on my mother and father's side who are into their eighties and nineties now are, you know, are, are passing on, so they're, I think most of them are, the last couple years has been more about funerals. I think the last year before the lockdown I had three funerals in Ireland of uncles or aunts, so, but there's probably not many more of them to, to die now, so I suspect in the future it'll be more, although one, one funeral of an aunt, my, my father's sister, she died, just in the middle of the lockdown, so there was no, there was no funeral that we were able to be there and in person, so it was our first family Zoom funeral, **[01:40:00]** which was interesting, so, but we'll, we'll get together to have a sort of celebration of her life next year, all being, all being well.

JC: Yeah, that'd be good. I think we're all hoping to do a bit more travelling next year than we did this year, so.

PM: Yeah, absolutely, but, but, you know, would, would, if, if there was a year in which I wasn't in Ireland for whatever reason, whether it be a funeral or a wedding or just holiday, I would, I think I'd miss, miss it, so I will definitely be back in Ireland and I've still got, well, cousins of mine still who are sort of peers in terms of age, and their families are still around in various parts of, of Ireland, either where my father was brought up or where my mother was, probably less so where my mother was because a lot of people have moved to other parts of the Republic of Ireland, quite a few in Tipperary, so there's, there's lots of parts of Ireland for us to go and visit and holiday with and we're still very much in contact through Facebook and know what's going on, so although sometimes we're, we're not there physically, we've still got a lot of ways of finding out what's, what's going on really.

JC: Yeah, for sure, and so you moved back to Glasgow in, was it ’86?

PM: ’87.

JC: ’87.

PM: Yeah, ’87.

JC: And was that easy enough to find work at that stage?

PM: Yeah, well, before I left Liverpool I had fixed up, it was time, I had been with the same company for about seven years and I wanted to do something, well, not something different so much in terms of the work I was doing, cos it was in the field of industrial relations and human resource management, as it was being named, you know, went through the eighties and nineties, and I’d been in the aerospace design and manufacturing field and there was a lot of things happening in sort of retail side of businesses, so I moved into the retail side with a different company in, in Scotland and, you know, that was, I’d clearly made the decision I wanted to go back to Scotland and I’d, I’d sorted a job out without difficulty before I left Liverpool and before I left my, the job I was in, and was really happy in, in that, and then within well, well, within about two years of having gone back I was, I was married.

JC: Yeah, I was going to ask had you met your wife before you moved back, or you met her in Glasgow?

PM: No, no, it’s o-, no, it’s only when I moved back I, I think within about six months or so of, of moving back to, to Glasgow, when I moved back I moved back to my, to my mum’s place for maybe a couple of months and then bought a flat in the, in the West End of Glasgow, not that far away from where I had been brought up in Partick, but a smarter part of that area and then we got married, as I say, within a couple of years, then kids, got two kids, they came along not long after that, so.

JC: How did you meet your wife?

PM: Met her, I think through some other friends and there seemed to be a bit of a social thing going on. She’s, she’s a tennis player, I’m not, but she is a, she’s a good, a very good sort of county level player, and various tennis clubs had, on a Friday and a Saturday night, disco, disco things going on, and met her through one of, one of those.

JC: So she’s a Glasgow native, then, is she?

PM: She’s Glasgow, she’s not real Glasgow, she was born and bred in Kirkintilloch, as I tell her, she’s not real Glasgow, but she claims to be a Glaswegian, yes, and she, yeah, so we met and were married as I say within, within a, within a couple of years.

JC: Where, where did you get married?

PM: In, we got married in her, there was that interesting dimension going on, so we, I was Catholic, she was Church of, Church of Scotland, but we got married in the Catholic church in her home town, but we, our compromise was, it was co-celebrated by a Catholic priest and a Church of Scotland minister, so people were, I think, reasonably happy with that.

JC: Yeah, I was going to ask–

PM: With the compromise, yeah.

JC: What about your family in Northern Ireland, I mean, cos mi-, sort of mixed marriage as they're known was a lot less common in Northern Ireland back then?

PM: No, ab-, absolutely, well, I don't, I don't think I ever sought their permission for it [laughs]. I would, obviously my mother's view would be important, but she, I mean, I think it was important for her that I married in, in the Catholic church and with the priest, but she was, she was very respectful of other people's faiths and traditions, so she was happy that my mum, my wife's, you know, religious beliefs were, were respected as well and happy that, and that the priest was happy that the, the Church of Scotland minister from her church in her parish was involved in the, in the process as well, so.

JC: And her family were happy enough as well?

PM: Oh yeah, abs-, absolutely, yeah. They were, they were great, great people, they're, her mum and dad are both dead, as, as my parents are, but yeah, they're, they were, they were very happy and to be perfectly honest, I, I don't think there would've been an issue from family in Ire-, in Ireland, you know, as things were moving on. I'm not sure that would've been an issue really, but I, I never really asked them.

JC: Fair enough, yeah.

PM: They were invited and, and came to the wedding, so they, yeah.

JC: Well, that's good, yeah, and your kids were born quite soon after, you said?

PM: Yeah, they were born, eldest, Emma, was born in 1991 and my son Mark was born in 1993.

JC: Okay, and when, when you were bringing them up was it important to you for them to be aware of their Irish heritage and background, was that something you, well, it was a priority?

PM: Yes, yes, I mean, they, they weren't, they weren't brought up as, as Catholics, but they were brought up to be, as, as Christians, you know, respecting both, both traditions. I, neither of them have a particular interest in football unfortunately, although they're aware of Celtic, my commitment, but they're not particularly in-, interested really, vicariously through me, but really that's, that's it. I, I think as they've grown, so in early years, no, there probably would be little conversation about Ireland other than I think it was important that

they knew, you know, where their grandparents sort of came from. They wouldn't, they wouldn't have known their grandfather, my dad, cos he, he'd passed on, so I think it was important that I shared with them what I knew about my dad and their grandfather and where he had come from and, and my mum, their grandmother, but also in terms of from my mum's, from my wife's side, that they knew where their, their maternal grandparents had come from in terms of a very strong Scottish tradition, so I think they've been aware of, of that, both, both traditions, and I'd say I think they're both quite politically aware. I mean, I wouldn't, I wouldn't say they're steeped in a knowledge of Irish history, but they, they'd be, they'd be aware of the traditions that we came from and some of the difficulties that Irish people had when they came to, you know, Scotland, and the west of Scotland, and Glasgow, some of the issues that would've faced from, in terms of employment, so they'd be, they're aware of that sort of history and the fact that they've got family, you know, still in, in Ireland, and they've been to Ireland, you know, quite a few times them-, themselves, but I'd say probably, you know, it's not, it's not the same level of interest or engagement or experience really **[01:50:00]** that I would have had growing up through the, you know, sixties and seventies and eighties in Ireland.

JC: What did your wife and children make of Northern Ireland? I mean, presumably this was coming towards the end of the Troubles, so it wouldn't have been as it was in the seventies, but I'm, I'm just wondering what they thought of it?

PM: Yeah, I think, I think from the kids' point of view, they wouldn't have been in Ireland probably until they were, I'm trying to think of the first years in Ireland, but they would've been maybe seven, eight, nine or ten years of age, so, you know, you would've been going into the 1999, twenty-, so Ireland was very different to how it had been ten, fifteen, twenty years, thirty years earlier, just physically different and there was no, as I say no, seemed to be no distinction between North and South in, in a, you know, infrastructure sense and I suppose most of their, any holidays we had, probably more on the Republic side rather than the North of Ireland, I'd say, probably on balance, just because there were many parts of the Republic of Ireland that I hadn't been to myself. I hadn't been in Tipperary or Galway or places that I wanted to go, so I was probably saying, oh let's go and see parts of Ireland that I really hadn't ever been to. Then probably my, my wife, you know, she probably hadn't known a lot about Ireland, or she wouldn't have been a Celtic fan, she would've been a Partick Thistle fan, so she, she would've understood my allegiances and is now a good, a good Celtic fan.

JC: [laughs] You converted her.

PM: Yeah, converted her, her club's not doing so well, Partick, Partick Thistle, and, but I mean, she would, she would think of herself as Scottish and very much affiliated to, to Scotland rather than Ireland, but would understand very much where, you know, my background and, and family and, and the connections, connections there and gets on very well with family, family there in Ireland.

JC: That kind of brings me nicely to a couple of the final questions that I have, which are kind of more general things that I like to ask everyone if I get the chance, if that's alright, so I guess, first off, on that note that we just were talking about there, in terms of your identity,

would you see yourself as primarily Scottish or Irish or even Northern Irish or British, like, or, or all of those things, you know, to what extent–?

PM: Yeah, I think I'm a bit of a mongrel in the sense that I'm, I, I'm, I, I'm very aware of my Scottish, Scottishness, but I'm not an, I'm not an ardent Scottish nationalist person in that respect, you know. I think there's a debate to be had there, but, you know, my, most of my lifetime experience has been in, living in Scotland, but I'm equally, I think, yeah, I'd use the word equally aware of my Irish identity both from a North and South point of view because I'm, you know, a child of, of both, both the North and, and the South through my mum and my dad, mum and dad, and that, that, you know, that carries on, that's, that's been around before, but sort of continues, yeah, I think that's what I'm trying to say, it persists, that sense of identity. I think though the Scottish and the Irish senses, characteristics of identity would be stronger than a sense of being British. I mean, I, I don't deny that I am British at all and I don't, I'm not one of those people that, you know, if I'm ticking a box I would, I would feel it difficult to tick the box that's got British in it, but probably if there were boxes that said Scottish and Irish I would look for them first and tick those boxes before, then I would tick the box with British, but I wouldn't feel bad about ticking a box that had British in it, but I think I would probably look for a Scottish and Irish before British, if that, if that makes sense.

JC: Yeah, that's a really good sort of nuanced answer, and to put it in more sort of stark binary terms, in footballing terms, if Scotland were playing Ireland who would you be supporting?

PM: Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland?

JC: Well, either [laughs].

PM: [laughs] No, I, I, no, I'm pretty sure when, when Scotland play, no, when, I think when Scotland play Northern Ireland it would be unequivocal that I'd support Scotland. If Scotland play the Republic of Ireland, I, I wouldn't be unhappy if Scotland won and I wouldn't be that unhappy if the Republic of Ireland won. If it was a score draw I'd probably be quite, quite happy. I mean, that maybe sounds a bit of a political with a small 'p' answer, but I think that would, that would, that would be it. I, if Scotland beat the Republic of Ireland, great, and if the Republic of Ireland beat Scotland, great too, I wouldn't, I wouldn't be too unhappy either, either way.

JC: That's fair enough, and what about, I mean, we've talked a bit about sort of Northern Ireland in the, in the present day, have you followed the peace process and things like that fairly closely?

PM: Oh yeah, yeah, and I suppose thinking back to what you were talking about, you know, after university and it was growing up, you know, I would've been very much aware of the, the Good Friday Agreement and how important that was, and, and is, and sensitivity around that, particularly in light of Brexit and hard borders and soft borders, you know. I'd, I'd be very much, now, now I'm retired, I'm, I'm, I've a lot of spare time on my hands, so I'm just glad that the presidential election's over cos I had some really, really late nights, so, so I'm

very into politics and current affairs, cos I mean, I've got a fair amount of time to occupy my time that way, but I'm, I'm, you know, acutely aware of, not having been a fan of Brexit, and the implications of that for, for the UK, but for Scotland in particular and what the implications might be for the Good, the Good Friday Agreement, so I think I'm pretty interested in things that are current and what, what's going on with that, and if there is no deal then, with the EU, what that, what that means, and I think just going back to something you said, Jack, about, I mean, I'm, when you say that Scotland and England, Scotland and Ireland and, and British, I, I would add the European dimension and I think of myself as a, as a European as, as well, and, and I suppose that's to some extent shaped the reaction to, to the whole Brexit thing.

JC: Would you still be in favour of a united Ireland, given the choice?

PM: Yes, I, I think that would be the, the goal, and that would be the ambition. I, I think probably in time it will be realised, but it's, it's clearly very, very sensitive and the management of that in terms of people who have a, a unionist perspective, and, and particularly in the, in the North of Ireland, needs to be, you know, you know, front of, front of mind in terms of the whole management of, of that, of that process, but if there was to be whatever the appropriate point for a, a vote and it was for a united Ireland and it, you know, on a democratic, democratic basis then for the people of Ireland to decide, or whatever border, whatever is the arrangement for the, the, **[02:00:00]** the determination of that, then if it's, if it's done democratically and it's for a united Ireland, then I would, I'd support that and be sympathetic towards that.

JC: What about Scottish independence, cos I know a lot of people sort of equate the two, but they are obviously different as well?

PM: Yeah, they're, they're, so I suppose from a, if you were talking about Ireland, I think ideologically I'd be more supportive of that in terms of the Irish situation. In, in terms of Scotland I'm, I'm not ideologically opposed to independence for, for Scotland, but probably the pragmatist in me is still unsure economically if it's the right thing, so, and I think, I think that's where the future discussion and debate will be about, how successful or damaging could it be if Scotland wanted to go its, its own way. I mean, there's, I think there's no doubt that the Brexit has been a bit of a, well, not so much a catalyst, or, but has reinforced probably people who were un-, unsure about it. I think probably that has crystallised in some people's minds that, no, there's, the right way forward for Scotland is, is independence, but I think there's still some fundamental questions to be answered in, in, you know, in terms of the currency and the economics of the, of the whole thing, but I think I could, I could quite easily live with the idea of an independent Scotland.

JC: Yeah, I think it's a question that's not going away, so–

PM: No, definitely not, I mean, whether it'll be in my life time, who knows, but I, I would have thought in the next five to ten years that it's a, it's a distinct, a distinct possibility.

JC: And then finally then, we talked a bit earlier about home and what it means and stuff. Scotland's obviously home to you now cos you've lived there most of your life. Would you still see Ireland as a kind of home and, and in what way, or would you not anymore?

PM: Oh yeah, yeah, we talked a bit about this earlier when I was saying, you know, going, going home, it's, it's probably not as strong from a, how I can I put this, from a sort of, almost an emotional attachment, cos I, cos I, I think back to those, those holidays and how, such happy times they, they were and it, and the frequency, you know, it was a, I'm sure was just about every year, whereas I'm going back to see family and grandparents, but many of those people have, have gone, have died, and although they have got their children, I mean, there's, probably I've got cousins and second cousins in Ireland that I've never met and probably will, will never meet, so I suppose that almost physical emotional tie is, just diminishes over, over time, but, but that said, I, I still think of it as home. I look forward to going back to Ireland to stay and holiday there, and I still feel very much at home there and that, some of that's probably vicariously through, you know, my mum and dad because that's, that was their, literally their, their home, notwithstanding they lived in Scotland for many, many years, so that, you know, that never goes, that never goes away, and I, I think it will persist for the rest of my life in terms of wanting to go back, back to Ireland and really enjoying the, the time when I'm there.

JC: Great. Well, that's, that's pretty much the end of my list of questions. I don't know if there's anything else you wanted to add, or that we haven't covered that you think's important, or–?

PM: No, that's, Jack, that's pretty comprehensive. I think you've, you have, I've emptied just about everything I had in terms of thoughts and, and, on Ireland and, and sort of growing up, what have you, so I've en-, enjoyed it, hopefully I haven't been too long-winded, some of those answers.

JC: Absolutely not, no, we, we love the long-winded answers, so.

PM: So hopefully you got something from that, and, and really just a question of at what point I'll be able to access some of the materials from the, from the, the project.

INTERVIEW ENDS