INTERVIEW L23: ANNE ORD

Interviewer: Dr Fearghus Roulston
Interviewee: Anne Ord
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Location: Virtual
Transcriber: Naomi Wells

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

FR: Okay, and so I know that I've sent you through a consent form and if you could just confirm that you're, that you know that this is being recorded and that you're okay with that.

AO: Yeah, that's fine, yeah.

FR: Thank you very much, just for the, just for the tape [laughs].

AO: Ah ha, do you want it posted to you?

FR: The, the consent form, it's up to you, whatever's easier, you can print it out and fill it in and post it and I'll, I'll give you an address, or you can fill it in just on your computer and email it to me, whichever you prefer.

AO: Yeah, I've got, I've got the address anyway on your email I think.

FR: Oh right, okay, aye, so, well, that's fine in that case, we'll just do it that way, sure.

AO: So where are you from?

FR: [laughs] Aye, we should start with that really shouldn't we, shouldn't we, I'm from, I'm from–

AO: Who's doing the interview here?

FR: [laughs] I'm from Ballymena, in north Antrim there, you know, just outside of Belfast.

AO: I know, yes, I know, I know Ballymena.

FR: Where, where are you from yourself?

AO: Belfast, I was born, born in Belfast and grew up in Holywood, County Down and, yeah, lived there for, till I was fifteen and then moved to Carryduff, to a village that was like a new village then, back in nineteen, oh gosh, '68 and, yeah, it's quite, it's expanded quite a bit since then and, yeah, so I was there, there in Carryduff, until I left home.

FR: So from, from Holywood to Carryduff.

AO: From Holywood, to Holy-, to Carryduff and then from Carryduff to Hertfordshire and then [laughs] from Hertfordshire back to Belfast for three years, and then after the three years back to Cambridgeshire, a village called Gamlingay, and then from there, oh I've moved round so much you won't be able to keep up, so then moved to Welwyn Garden City, from Gamlingay back to there, and I now live in a village in Bedfordshire called Langford.

FR: Wow, that's–

AO: So, yes, I mean, I could fill in loads of details, but [laughs] that's the gist of it [laughs].

FR: That's, that's quite a lot of moving around, like you say.

AO: It is, yes, so moved from Northern Ireland twice, when my two, well, I've got three children, but when the two boys, Matthew and Paul, were tiny, Paul was born in Belfast, we moved back to, to England for, I'm sure the reasons'll come up in the interview [laughs].

FR: [laughs] Yeah, well, we'll, we'll get into it hopefully, but just before we start, so I was going to say, first of all, if you need to take a break at any point just let me know and we can pause the recording if you want to have a, have a pause, that's no problem, just let me know, and then just in terms of what the interview's going to be like, it's kind of like a life history interview, so in theory it's going to be chronological, so we'll start with where you were born and then we'll kind of move, move forwards, of course no one ever really talks like that, and we'll probably move back and forth, do you know, but, but in theory it's [laughs], it's chronological, so I guess–

AO: That's okay.

FR: We'll, we'll start with, start with Holywood then.

AO: Fine, right.

FR: So, so is this, is that the Holywood–

AO: That was my childhood.

FR: Is that the Holywood that's just outside of Belfast, am I thinking of the right place?

AO: That's the, that's the Holywood, yes, of, of Rory McIlroy fame now.

FR: Of course [laughs], yeah, and a lovely, a lovely town or it's a lovely sort of town now.

AO: Yeah, yeah, oh it is, yes, I mean, I went back, not last year, the year before and had a, a little drive down memory lane, as it were, we were staying in Belfast and did the usual touristy bit in Belfast which of course did not exist [laughs] in my day, and then we had a little trip to Hollywood, it's changed quite a bit, yeah.

FR: So what, what sort of a place was it–

AO: So yeah, so–

FR: Go ahead.

AO: When I was, when I was growing up it was just very small, you know, a little town. We lived in a, on the outskirts of a small sort of like, housing development, and do you want to know a bit about the family, you know, like, my mother and father–?

FR: Yeah, abso-, abso-, please–

AO: Yeah, cos my parents were Raymond and Mary, I had two brothers, Anthony and Raymond, my mother was born a Catholic, my father, this is, may be relevant as the time goes on rather than sort of like, going down the religion route straight away, but it all, it all fades in, you know, so my mother was born a Catholic and my father converted to marry her, which–

FR: Oh okay.

AO: Did not go down, which, which did not go down well [laughs] with his family or indeed his workplace, which was at that time in the Northern Ireland civil service in the town of Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, which was where they, they were both born and grew up, so they had to relocate after their marriage on the advice of their supervisors in the office, cos it was a, very different times back then. I was, yeah, so I was born in Belfast and then brought up as a Catholic with regular mass and convent schools and all the usual like, family rosary every night, communion, confirmation, confession, but never really embraced it and I used to hate going to church [laughs], apart from, apart from in my teenage years when there was a boy I fancied in the congregation, you know, but that was another story, you know, so we, we lived in a small enclave of about ten houses, and we were the only, which we'll come to later, we were the only Catholics in the, in the road, which again had an impact, and my, my sort of, wonder why I ask, Irish people always talk about religion, but it, it does impact obviously, but there were basically two religions when I was growing up, you were either Catholic or non-Catholic, which is quite derogatory really to anybody who has another religion [laughs], and, and the, the whole idea was, you know, you were Catholic, which I later then found out there was a word called Protestant, you know, which, which was pronounced Prodison, P-r-o-d-i-s-o-n [laughs], and the, the Catholics went to heaven and the Protestants didn't unless, this was my experience of convent school education [laughs], so they, they did not go to heaven unless they converted, you know, so, but there was conflict even in my family because my, my father's mother obviously was, was not, she

was Protestant and she used to have, she used to really enjoy winding up my mother about religion, and she used to come out with all sorts of stuff about, you know, when you die there's nothing, whereas my mother was a very devout Catholic, so that didn't go down well with her–

FR: I can, I can imagine.

AO: But my granny was actually [laughs], my granny was actually English as well, she was brought to Northern Ireland by her father after her parents' divorce, which was very unusual back in the twenties–

FR: Absolutely.

AO: When they got divorced and, or actually it probably would have been in the war years, First World War years. She married an Ulsterman from a very small provincial town, so yeah, so there was that very, very early awareness of the difference between the two, two religions, which does impact on how you feel about things, you know–

FR: That's, that's so interesting.

AO: And then there's, yeah, and then there was the second awareness of differences growing up, which was as the only family in our little close we played really happily with all the children and we only had sporadic conversations about different religions, you know, where they used to say oh you only have to go to church once a week for mass, we have to go, you know, and we used to say yeah, we're lucky, we get it over with, you know, just, and then they had to go to Sunday school and we used to say oh no, we can go to the park, but yeah [laughs], but yeah, you could go to the park, but they'd tied up the swings, so you couldn't actually go on the swings on a Sunday.

FR: Ah yeah, of course.

AO: That wasn't allowed, you weren't allowed, you know, you probably know this from your, you know, your family and so on.

FR: Well, from Ballymena, yeah.

AO: But, oh absolutely, yeah, but, I mean, everything changed about two weeks, our relationship with the children in the, in our little street, road, changed on the two weeks before the Twelfth of July every year, which as you know, all about the Twelfth, so we would be ignored and not played with, we'd be shunned as they built their bonfire on the green and they prepared to celebrate the Twelfth in style, you know, so, and I always remember our next door neighbour playing 'The Sash My Father Wore' and it was almost like she would, she would put it on repeat [laughs], and she used to, she used to invite the children in the street, not us, not us obviously, you know, to sing it and because they were so close to us we could, there was no getting away from it, you know, this could be, and we'd be off school in the summer holidays, so it would be, we'd, we'd finish at the end of June, so we'd be listening to this day in day out, you know, and my mother **[00:10:00]** used to say that

whenever she'd go out to the washing line she was sure that she used to crank up the volume, you know, so that to make sure, make sure she heard every word [laughs], but, you know, as a child at the time I thought it all a great fun and, and I wanted to join in and I used to like watching the bands go past, but, but felt it, it felt a little bit weird as well, it was a wee bit sinister as I, as I got a bit older when I sort of learned more about the history and it's a wee bit, I suppose a wee bit how I feel now about fifth of November celebrations, you know, that people like, love the iconic burning of effigies and people and popes and whatever, you know, but once I, once I got to, so that was Holywood really, it was just, a cavern, you know, I went to a local convent school, my brothers went to a local primary school, so we were, you know, very, very well-versed in the, in the Catholic religion to *ad infinitum*, you know.

FR: It's, it's really interesting and I was, I was just going to ask about, so, about your dad, so your dad kind of had to convert to Catholicism as people had to in those days, right, to marry?

AO: Yeah.

FR: Yeah.

AO: Yes, well, he could, he could have married her, but she, but my mother wouldn't because she, her beliefs, her Catholic religion meant a great deal to her, so there was no way she would have married him.

FR: It was a–

AO: Unless he had.

FR: There was a specific church edict, right, which said that the children of mixed marriages had to be raised Catholic and all of that.

AO: Oh yes, oh that's right, yes, indeed and I came across it myself in later years.

FR: That, that's interesting.

AO: Because I, I enter, yes, so my, my husband, you know, Paul's dad, I've remarried, my, David Ord, who I married first, we went out together as teenagers, he was, he was not Catholic, my parents were incensed and, you know, it feeds on [laughs].

FR: That's, that's so interesting.

AO: But, yeah, we'll come to that as well, you know, but–

FR: I was going to ask I suppose was your dad a kind of a, was, did he bec-, was he then an observant Catholic or was he kind of a reluctant Catholic, if you see what I mean?

AO: No, no, he seemed to, he, he went along with it, because of his love for my mother really, he immersed himself in it, he, we were brought up, as I said, as, as Catholics, it was only in later years, many, many years later, when he, I think, after my mother died, and, and really talking more recent years, he just, he let it go, he really let it go and he, I remember him getting very, very angry about the, the Catholic priests and the child abuse and all of that sort of thing and it, he, he did get very angry about it and he sort of, he kept the religion going a bit after she died, but then it, it just completely lapsed, cos he spent the last few years of his life living with me and I, I never went and he didn't go and he never said oh should we go, it just, it, it just disappeared.

FR: Okay, but dur-, but during your childhood you, the whole family was quite observant, yeah.

AO: He was very, absolutely, yeah, mass every Sunday, obviously they, all of the festivals during the year, and with Catholic schools in Northern Ireland you had days off school on saints' days, like St Patrick's Day and all the others, those other days, you know, but, yes, he, but my, his parents were not, were not obviously Catholic and they were not, and their families were quite against it, quite bigoted and would have supported, I mean, I was, I was aware very much so that my, my grandfather on my father's side, they, you know, they, he supported, say, somebody like, there was, you know, different political organisations, way back in the day, you know, when they were young and of course this would have been around about the time of the Easter Rising and, you know, back early in the cen-, the twentieth century, because I had my, on my mo-, on my mother's side I had one grandfather who was, sort of supported Sinn Féin, but it wasn't the Sinn Féin as we know it today–

FR: No, yeah.

AO: And then there was, the other one would have been a supporter and he was actually a member of the UVF–

FR: Wow.

AO: Which was, yeah, I know, but, I mean, not a practising member.

FR: No, sure, sure.

AO: But, however, you know, my Sinn Féin grandad, he used to, he would, he used to tell us stories that in Fermanagh, in the days of the, the Black and Tans, there would be raids on the Catholic houses, and how he, he did a rifle, but how he got a tip off and he buried it in his field, one day [laughs], and my other, my other grandfather had a, I remember his UDA badge, but he, he also had a shotgun, but as far as I know he didn't shoot anybody with it [laughs], he used, he used to keep it in his cupboard. I remember when he, when he died and my father, he sort of had the gun and my mother was so against him having the gun in the house, she was, you know, but because of course times have changed then and, yeah, you probably could have been arrested then for having a gun, but yeah, so yes, there were lots of different stuff going on in the family, you know, and when my actual, when my father and mother decided to get married, I mean, they had my granny on my father's side, she

actually had letters from relatives in the states, who'd, who'd moved years ago, calling her all sorts of names, what sort of a mother was she that she'd raised a son who would marry a Catholic–

FR: Wow.

AO: And who, really very vindictive letters, so, yes, there's quite strong feeling.

FR: It's kind of, you've got an amazing mix of Northern Irish history just in, just in your family history, it's amazing.

AO: Yeah, that's true, and then of course when I, when my husband and I got married in 1977, I mean, his parents weren't over the moon, mine accepted it, but his parents were not happy about the fact that perhaps our children would be baptised, but, however, they actually never went to church, so we said well, what, we actually at the time wanted them to just have a like, a christening in a church to give them options, as they were older or whatever. There was very strong feeling on their side of the family that they didn't, that the fact that their grandchildren might possibly grow up as Catholics was horrendous [laughs], but, however, they, eventually they, they accepted it all and loved them and whatever, you know.

FR: But you sort of think how strange is that when they don't even go to church really.

AO: Absolutely, that was my argument and that was my husband's argument, he says well, you don't, you never go near a church from one end of the year to the other, what difference will it make to you, you know, but that was the way it was, you know.

FR: Yeah, it's not just about church in Northern Ireland I suppose.

AO: Oh no, no, it's, obviously it goes, it's only, that's why when people say oh they talk about religion all the time, but it's, that's not really what it's, it's so ingrained into everything, you know, but yeah, so Carryduff was, sort of coincided in a way, moving there in 1968 was sort of just a year before the Troubles, well, it would have been when the civil rights movement started, and the civil rights marches and so on, but, you know, my, am I, am I rattling on?

FR: No, no, keep, keep, keep going, I mean, I, I was going to ask you first of all just why, why did yous move to Carryduff?

AO: Well, my parents, I think they wanted out of the little close that we were in because there was, as the time went on there was more ill-feeling and with being, I think they wanted to move to somewhere a bit more anonymous, and it also coin-, they were renting their house there and they also wanted to buy a house, so it was the first time they bought a house, was in August 1968 and that, that's when we moved, maybe they could sense changes, but they, we thought maybe it's not nice to be the only Catholics in this little, little road, because people were, there was more ill-feeling, if you know what I mean.

FR: Yeah, yeah, I know.

AO: So, so we moved to more of an anonymous little new village, which was just, you know, houses were being built for ownership, so we moved there and it was a bit of a, a wrench for me, who'd grown up in a little town, to move to what I thought was the middle of nowhere, you know, we still got the Ulsterbus from Oxford Street, but it was, it was going in the wro-, in the other direction, and I was used to being by the sea as well, so it was a wee bit, felt just, I felt very lonely, shall I say, you know, for a while, although still I was at the same school, I went to St Dominic's school by then, on the Falls Road, which was another **[00:20:00]** hilarious experience, you know, getting to and from school during the Troubles.

FR: It must've been.

AO: But, yeah, so in the, yeah, so in '69 then when I was on holiday, we went on a family holiday to my dad's sister in Lewes in Sussex and–

FR: Oh wow, that's very close to me, I'm in, I'm in Brighton.

AO: Yes, I know, yeah, cos, yeah, cos Paul lives there too, you know.

FR: Of course, yeah, of course.

AO: And, yeah, and we, we watched the Troubles kick off in, in Belfast and–

FR: While you were on, while you were on holiday?

AO: While we were on holiday, cos that's when it started and we were a bit worried about what it would be like when we got home, you know, getting off the boat in, in Belfast cos we, we travelled from Liverpool to Belfast, we were a bit, I think my parents were a bit apprehensive about what it would be like, you know.

FR: Yeah, absolutely.

AO: But, yeah, so it was, it was a bit, you know, a bit strange going back to school in the September at the very beginning of it all and so, so from then on really over the next couple of years my, you know, my friends and I would, would witness the, you know, or hear the riots, we'd try and avoid them, but I used to often, we'd get the bus going straight up the Falls Road from the bottom of Castle Street in Belfast, and sometimes the bus wouldn't run because there would be something kicking off on the Falls Road and, and then you could sometimes get the bus up the Grosvenor Road instead, so we would, when we'd come out of school in the afternoon we used to walk towards the, the junction with the Falls and Grosvenor and think where's the racket coming from today [laughs], and sometimes we used to just walk down the Grosvenor Road, you know, to avoid it because I had to walk down the Grosvenor Road and then to the end of Chichester Street to get to Oxford Street bus station to get home, but yeah, so and we would sometimes, we'd hear the riots and the shout and the bottles breaking and, especially once the British Army arrived to here, to keep the peace because then they would be the butt of the petrol bombs and stuff, you know,

and then there would be buses'd be burned and turned over, so there wouldn't be a case of getting a bus at all, but all the time, you know, I was sixteen, just, you just want to be like a normal teenager and go out and go to music venues, but it, Belfast just became very unsafe and, you know, people didn't, people didn't go, you went home, you stayed at home, it was like lockdown, with hardly any bands, it was a bit, you know, because you, nobody, you didn't go to pubs because you thought what's going to happen if I go to a pub, I've had a nail bomb come through a window once in a pub in a, in one of the little country villages, you know, a few years later, but all the time, you know, Belfast just became a wee bit, just more of a ghost town, it was deserted at night, you know, no bands came, nobody did, we were so grateful to the ones that came and they, and they thought they were being, they thought they were being very brave and deserved medals to come, but, you know, eventually the bands didn't even come very often, it just became, oh I don't know, just really deserted.

FR: Rory Gallagher is the one that people always tell me.

AO: Oh I love him, yeah.

FR: He, he used to come, I hear.

AO: Yes, yes, I went to see Rory Gallagher a few times actually, when he was with Taste and then when he was just with Rory Gallagher Band, and yes, but he was great, so I enjoyed going to see him, and the, the Fairport Convention came.

FR: Oh wow, did they?

AO: A couple of times.

FR: Yeah.

AO: But really not very many people, they just, sometimes they'd go to Queen's, Queen's University, we used to go there sometimes to the union, when I was a bit older to see, there'd be a few brave people'd come there, but generally, generally nobody wanted to know us, no [laughs].

FR: [laughs] But you, but you were, you were into music, it sounds like.

AO: Oh yeah, very m-, well, teenagers are, you know, I used to, used to love it and yes, it was wherever there was an opportunity to, to see live music you used to, used to go, yeah, but, yeah.

FR: It's a strange–

AO: Obviously as you grew older, sorry.

FR: It's a strange time to be a, a teenager I suppose.

AO: Well, you felt like you didn't really have a proper experience of being a teenager because your parents were worried about you going out, it was, if you did go out there wasn't really anywhere to go and there was always that little undercurrent of maybe a bit of anxiety about what might happen and then would you be able to get home because maybe the buses wouldn't be running or, and your parents or your father wouldn't necessarily want to drive the car into Belfast at night to pick you up and so on, so there used to be more socialising, certainly with, when, cos I met David Ord, well, met him, I'd known him for a long time on the school bus and stuff, but we started going out, we started going out together when we were eighteen, but we used to just stay local, we used to, you know, stay, go round to his house and listen to music and whatever because there was nowhere to go, you know, and if you went into a pub they were deserted and it felt a bit weird and a bit sinister, so yeah, you didn't really want to go.

FR: No, that, that–

AO: Maybe on a, on a, sorry, maybe go in an afternoon, you know, like, a Saturday afternoon you'd go in in daytime, but, and then the pubs used to be absolutely packed, but it's very strange, but in the evenings people just seemed to stay in, the ones in my experience anyway.

FR: Yeah, well, no, like you say I guess–

AO: And of course–

FR: If it's hard to, if it's hard to get home, it's hard to get a lift, it's, the buses might not run, you can understand.

AO: Absolutely, yeah, and of course, you, they, as, as the years went on, you know, like, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, you think, this is isn't a life, you know, and I used to think right, well, we went out together for about a year and a half and then we split up for a while, he went to England, and we met up again after another year and then we were together and I moved to England to go to college, which was such, oh I can't believe, couldn't believe what, how freeing that was and amazing it was to, to actually arrive in England in, in 1975 and see, you're going into a pub and there were people laughing and having a nice time [laughs] and it was, and it was the south of England and the sun was shining [laughs], it wasn't bucketing rain everyday, it was just a, yeah, like, completely different atmosphere, you know, so, but yeah, but I also have, you know, I worked before I went there I worked in Belfast, so I also have a, you know, like, a work, a working life in Belfast before I moved and before I decided to, to go to college, cos I left school and went into the Ulster Bank, and worked in the Shaftesbury Square branch first of all and then worked in Waring Street, so I used to have a few interesting experiences of the Troubles working in Belfast because I was there during Black Friday, for example, and an experience of that, yeah, I mean, the, the working life again, working in, in the Ulster Bank, there was a certain amount of work prejudice too, you know, the way people, you often had, I'm sure people tried to find out what religion you were, you know, by asking you what school you went to and things like that, so because I was my, my maiden name was Clarke, they had to ask me because there's an, there's an enigma like, where is she from, what, what is she and

it's the first thing that, you just wonder, now I wonder who's going to be the first to ask the question because you knew it was coming wherever you, wherever you went or wherever you met somebody, you know, you probably know this yourself, but, because if they couldn't work out from your name that was it, they had, they had to ask the question or, so it was the only way was to find out what school you went to and that labelled you then.

FR: It's interesting you're, that thing about how if you're slightly ambiguous, if your name's slightly ambiguous you get it more, cos I get the same thing, I'm, I'm a Protestant actually, but I've got this kind of Irish-looking first name, so I get, I get the kin-, well, not in England, but in Ireland, I get the kind of what school did you go to, all of that, yeah.

AO: Yes, yeah, and of course you, cos you couldn't always tell with Fearghus, because that could be Scottish, you know, you could be a good Scottish Protestant, you know [laughs], name like Fearghus, whereas, you know, with a name like Anne Clarke, that was it, and of course my, my, my parents, my father wasn't Catholic, you know, and his father wasn't and so on, so what school did you go to, oh, oh I went to St Dominic's on the Falls Road, oh, oh right, oh I know what you are and [laughs], **[00:30:00]** but sometimes there would just be, you know, I'm not saying it would be like, out and out, it, it wasn't really, but it was, there would be, you wouldn't be treated exactly the same by some people, not everybody, not everybody, but it would tend to be perhaps the older people, but, however, that's the way it was, you know.

FR: And kind of, kind of subtle, you're saying, it's kind of–

AO: It was very subtle, yeah, very subtle, and I had one girl start at the same time as me, she was a bit more savvy than me, she had been, she had been, she went to a Catholic school in Larne, her father was actually Catholic and her mother wasn't and he, and they'd never converted, never, but whenever she was asked she said oh I went to Larne High School, but she didn't, but she just said Larne High School, she lied basically, and it was the difference between the way the two of us were treated and started at the same, I know it sounds very strange, but it was just, it was very subtle anyway.

FR: No, I can, I can–

AO: And we just got on with it, you know.

FR: How did you, how did you get the job?

AO: Oh that's a, yeah, I don't know, just applied.

FR: [laughs] Just applied.

AO: Yes, just applied and obviously they must've, they must've decided they wanted they wanted me, yeah.

FR: What did your, what did your parents do for work?

AO: My father was an inspector of taxes in the Inland Revenue and, yes, not very popular [laughs], and my mother, she worked in the tax office as well.

FR: Oh right, okay.

AO: They both, they met in the tax office in Enniskillen and then, as I said, after their marriage they moved to Belfast, to the tax office in Fountain Street, and my mother, she stayed at home for a long, long time, it was only when we were older that she went back as a tax officer in there and she, she worked on and off, she used to do little like, supply jobs and she'd take three weeks at a time, but in later life then she worked full-time, so that's what they did, but yeah, cos I used to work as a–

FR: Go ahead.

AO: No, I was just going to say about experiences in Belfast, working.

FR: Yeah, yeah, please.

AO: And when I, when I started working in Shaftesbury Square I was a junior, as they said then, I was like, eighteen and I used to be sent on a, on a walk everyday with the, the bank letters, it was very, there was no technology then Fearghus [laughs], used to be sent, there was no emails, you'd be sent with the post in a little bag down to the head office in Waring Street in Belfast and it was the junior's job to do that, but I used to think it was great because it gave me a nice little walk, I used to take my time, wandering through, but, however, Belfast then, this would have been in 1971 and–

FR: Wow, okay, so really, really the height of the Troubles or, or close to.

AO: Oh absolutely, oh it was, yeah, it was quite serious then, yeah, so they, all of the streets, as you walked through there would be a, a checkpoint and you would, and there would be soldiers or the RUC and they would be checking people, so you'd have your bag searched, sometimes be, you'd get frisked or whatever, but I think that was a bit later on, I don't remember that right at the beginning, but you'd get your bag searched going through and then, so it used to be a hold-up sometimes, it was a real pain if you were trying to get to the shops or anything, but, however, first, first thing in the morning it was, it wasn't too busy cos people would just be going to work and so on, but there was one, one morning whenever I was, I was walking through this particular area, a short cut, it was an area called Cornmarket in Belfast.

FR: Oh yeah, I know it, I know, I know Cornmarket, yeah.

AO: And, yeah, so there was a checkpoint as you went through to Cornmarket just off Donegall, Donegall Place, yeah–

FR: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

AO: Donegall Place, where, where Marks and Spencer's is, so there's a side street down there, so I used to, there was a, a checkpoint set up there, and I thought when I got there one morning, oh there's nobody there, I thought oh this is a bit strange, absolutely nobody there, so I just, and everywhere seemed a bit quiet, so I just walked on through and I thought this is a bit, bit weird and I just was gone past the British Home Stores when there was a massive explosion, and I just grabbed hold of a lamp post–

FR: Wow.

AO: And I thought oh that's a bit, oh gosh, that shook me up a bit, and then I walked to the exit checkpoint where, it was past Boots and Woolworths, that were there then, and there was a huge crowd and there were soldiers and policemen and people and they were all sitting looking at me, and this soldier said where do you come from [laughs], how could you get through, and they'd forgotten, and I said well, there's nobody on, I said, and they went what, there was, I said there's actually nobody on the checkpoint and they said, so they of course had to deal with that, but yeah, they'd forgotten to man the entrance after the bomb alert, so they didn't realise that, there could have been loads more people had gone through, but actually I was the only one that had, that had actually walked through, so that was a bit, a bit weird, but, you know, you just, oh dear, oh well [laughs], you sort of, you sort of took it in your stride and then I just went back to, back to work, I went to the, drop the stuff off and then walked back, and then one morning on my way back to Shaftesbury Square there was a car bomb went off just as I'd walked past it, and I sort of leapt in through a door out of the way, and then when I got back into, when I got into the bank everyone's saying oh are you alright, are you okay, and I said yeah, yeah, I'm alright, I'm fine, it was just one of those things, it just kept happening, but it was, I suppose the worst for me, the worst day, and for everybody, was July in 1972 cos I'll never remember it, or sorry, I'll never forget.

FR: This is Black, Black Friday?

AO: Because that was Black Friday, yeah, and it was such a, oh like, there was about twenty bombs went off in about an hour and a half or something like that.

FR: Something like that, yeah.

AO: And, yeah, and the whole atmosphere in Belfast was sort of charged, it was so weird, so yeah, one bo-, one bomb after another and we were saying, we were in the bank in Waring Street at the time, I was working there then, and the bank manager was, sort of nobody knew what to do because all we could hear were the explosions, one after the other, and then he took us down to the safe at one stage, and then it went about, I think after there'd been quite a few gone off he decided he'd send us all home, so, and I thought oh gosh, you didn't know what you were going out into.

FR: Absolutely, yeah.

AO: And of course, it was like, days before mobile phones, you know, how do you contact anybody. My parents worked in the tax office in Fountain Street in Belfast at the time, so I

thought oh I'll walk round to Fountain Street, because I used to get a lift in with them everyday, so went round to Fountain Street to tax office and discovered that they'd left [laughs] and here was I, I wasn't very happy with them about that. I discovered that they'd actually gone, they'd, they'd driven out up the Antrim Road to pick my brothers up from school and went home, and it was, I thought, what [laughs]. Only later, it's only later I, maybe even years later I thought why did they leave me [laughs], every now and again I still think about it, you know, but I, I sort of, I thought right, well, they're not there, so I thought I better walk down, nobody, I mean, at that time nobody knew where the bombs had been or anything, so I of course in my ignorance I walked on down to Oxford Street bus station and they'd only just finished clearing up after the bombing, and there were people killed at Oxford Street that day and, I mean, we, when I got home later I, on the news, it was horrendous and I thought, I'm, I'm actually glad I didn't, I didn't see too much because it would have been abso-, would've stayed with you forever, you know.

FR: Yeah, no, I mean, I've–

AO: Yeah, I mean, there were, yeah, so fortunately I didn't see very much, I mean, there were people still clearing up, but obviously there was no bus station, I couldn't go into a bus station, but in Townhall Street, which is just round the corner, there was a bus sitting there with Downpatrick written on it and I thought oh good, so I got, I thought that's going past Carryduff, so I got on that, I was so lucky I thought to get on that bus, so, so that got me, got me out to Carryduff, to the village, but yeah, and then we found out later like, there was about six people died and forty injured, all over the place, you know.

FR: No, I've seen, I've seen some pictures from, from Bloody Friday, really horrible.

AO: Yeah, oh it was absolutely awful, but do you know what, it was the, as I was walking from Waring Street down **[00:40:00]** towards there it was such a strange atmosphere, you know, like the feeling before a thunderstorm in the air, you know, where you can feel there's a charge in the air because there'd been so much terror, you know, probably of the people and everybody was, you just didn't know what was, where there was going to be a bomb next.

FR: No, absolutely.

AO: You know, where, where it was going happen, but, however, I got home and, I mean, I was going out with David Ord at the time and he was working in Stormont, in the, in the offices there, he had a job there and I remember calling his parents and said is he, oh is he home yet, this is about six o'clock in the evening, and they said oh no, we haven't heard from him, he's not home.

FR: Scary.

AO: I don't know how, I can't even remember now how he managed to get home, but he didn't get home till about nine o'clock that night because I suppose by then there were, you know, the security people were closing off roads and everything, you know, but yeah, if you wanted a social life later on, you know, in later years, once David and I had split up for a

little while and I started going to, we'd maybe go to Dublin for a weekend, you'd, you'd just drive down to Dublin for a weekend, so that you could have a normal, a normal time.

FR: And the atmosphere was different in Dublin, I suppose it felt different in Dublin?

AO: Absolutely, yes, but we used to go, sometimes there'd be music venues in Dublin and it was quite hilarious because there would be sort of like, pretend folk music and stuff, and my friend and I used to, we'd go to this place and they would, the people there would be writing these songs and when something would happen in Northern Ireland, somebody would have written a song about it.

FR: Right, right.

AO: They'd have written, they'd like, they'd do a funny take on it and it used to be quite hilarious, and it was a bit of, bit of light relief anyway [laughs], but, yeah.

FR: Although kind of strange for you I'm sure, coming down from Northern Ireland and then hearing people in Ireland singing about it.

AO: Yeah, yeah, yes, but of course in Southern Ireland, as you can probably imagine, there would have been more support for the republican nationalists, so if they got one over on the armed forces or anything, or somebody, I remember, it was, I can't remember all the details, but there was somebody had rescued somebody in a helicopter from a prison.

FR: Aye, I think I know, I think I know–

AO: Do you remember?

FR: I think I know what you mean, it's like, a sort of an escape.

AO Do you remember?

FR: Yeah.

AO: Yeah, there was an escape and it involved a helicopter and they, it had happened that day or the day before and the, the pub or the club that we went to in Dublin, they had the song written and it was called 'Up, Up and Away' [laughs], and, and it was hilarious, well, it was, we thought it was funny, but, however [laughs], yeah.

FR: Well, I was going to ask –

AO: So my, my–

FR: What about, what about politics then, so would your parents have been political at all?

AO: Not, not really, I mean, as a child I was basically just, there was unionism really, there was just unionism.

FR: Yeah, I mean, that's really the only, the only–

AO: And, yeah, though there, there was, later, as things became a bit fraught, I mean, there were, I was aware of other parties, for example, there was a fam-, I remember the Alliance Party, cos I remember my, my husband, David Ord, his uncle, he had an uncle Matt and he was very pro-Alliance, which is a very liberal attitude, but his, but his parents, David's parents, would be very, very unionist, so they used to have arguments, especially when the Troubles started, they would, they were just complete unionist, which was quite interesting considering David's father was actually English, came from the north of England.

FR: That's, that's strange, that's interesting.

AO: Yeah, yeah, but his, his mother was born and bred in a place called Saintfield in County Down, but yeah, so yeah. the, the uncle was very, very forward-thinking and supported the Alliance Party and I remember, was it Gerry Fitt, being around in those days [laughs].

FR: Aye, aye, Gerry Fitt, I know, yeah.

AO: And, yeah, and of course David's mother hated Gerry Fitt, oh no, oh gosh, absolutely hated him, whereas we [laughs], we, I don't know, whoever wasn't a supporter of, I mean, I, I can't say at all that I was particularly political, but I would have been liberal and would have wanted, obviously thought the idea of power-sharing, well, what the hell's wrong with that, that's a really good idea, you know, most liberal-minded people would, would think that, but I used to hear maybe conversations going on growing up about, well, you know, if you're, it's not as easy to get a job if you've been to a Catholic school and it's not as easy to get into certain positions and so on, which, you know, maybe would have been denied by people who were unionist, I don't know, but it seemed to be that that's what the, that's what Catholics thought and, and probably what maybe my parents would have thought, but they were, they were quite liberal as well, I mean, coming from where my, although my mother was, her religion, it was different from her politics, you know, and my father would have been the same, he was more liberal, even though he became a Catholic to marry my mother, it didn't, didn't suddenly turn him into a republican, you know.

FR: I see [laughs], sure.

AO: Very, which is often what people think, you know, I mean, it's so ridiculous like, I mean, my husband hadn't, was brought up, he would, was a Presbyterian, he'd, his grandfather was staunch Presbyterian, used to take him to the church on a Sunday and Sunday school and all of that, but yeah, I remember when we were going out together as teenagers and he would say well, I like the idea of a united Ireland, I think that would be great, I like, he, he liked Irish music, he, it wasn't, he used to think, he couldn't understand it, you know, so we had, we had more liberal attitudes, compared with perhaps, you know, his parents and my grandparents and so on.

FR: It's really interesting.

AO: But yes, it was, I suppose it's seeing it, being, growing up and seeing it from both sides, I think that was a big, big advantage and then not understanding how, the same bigotry at first hand, which was, and, and through members of your family, and seeing it from both sides in members of your family, and then just making your own mind up, yeah, very, very strange, you know, I mean, he, as a child, he would have been brought to marches.

FR: Like, Orange, Orange marches?

AO: Yeah, oh the Orange marches and they used to have the big gatherings in the fields and his, his grandfather used to wear the sash.

FR: Right, okay, yeah.

AO: And they'd have, and he used to think it was great, you could get buns and lemonade, and that was, that was as far as it affected him and, you know, so then as he grew up obviously he learned more and, but yeah, he used to love winding his mother up about it [laughs], so yeah, but he took it, took it not too seriously, yeah.

FR: I think you started telling me this, but, but how did you and David meet?

AO: Well, we, it was when I moved to Carryduff and we used to get the, we used to be at the same bus stop, he had moved to Carryduff just before me and he went to Inst. in Belfast, and then of course I went to St Dominic's on the Falls, and we'd be at the same bus stop and just noticed each other and, you know, eventually started to chat a little bit, but we never went out together until we both, both left school. We used to just talk about music and stuff, that was all, cos, you know, in the days when it was cool to carry round a vinyl LP and you sort of, you had a, a label, you know, you labelled yourself as oh I love this dead cool music, you know, so I'm going carry my LP under my arm, you know, all this sort of stuff and then [laughs]–

FR: [laughs] That's really, that's really interesting, that you carried the LP, I like that.

AO: Oh yes, you had to carry the LP, so the first time I set eyes on him he was standing at the bus stop in Oxford Street and he had a Blind Faith LP in his hand and [laughs], but we, we discovered that we, we liked the same music, we used to listen to John Peel, we used to listen to Mike Raven Blues, you know, that sort of stuff and, yeah, in those days there would have been prog rock I suppose, we, we had that in common and, you know, later years like, **[00:50:00]** David Bowie and like, way back, so yeah, so that was how, how we met and then we started to go out together in August 1971, so yeah, suppose I was, I was eighteen then, we were both eighteen.

FR: Both eighteen.

AO: And, yeah.

FR: And then he, he moved initially to England, so before, before you.

AO: He moved to We-, yeah, he moved to Welwyn Garden, and we went out for I suppose a couple of years and then he moved to Welwyn Garden, I, I stayed on and worked, did my stint in the bank, as it were, and then decided I've had it, I've had enough, I've just had enough and I thought, I'll, I'll do some study at home and I decided that I would do a couple of A-levels, I didn't get great grades when I did them at school and thought I'm just, cos I was terrible at school, just it, was not interested, and I thought right, I'll just do a couple of A-levels and see if I can get into college, and I want to go to England, I've had enough of it, so I did two A-levels over six months [laughs] and decided, got, got what I wanted and went to, went over to the university in Hat-, it wasn't a university then, it was called a polytechnic, Hatfield Polytechnic, so I went there and we started, you know, we were obviously going out together, he lived in Welwyn, I lived in St Albans, so there used to be a bit of travelling backwards and forwards, and then we, we got married in '77 and we were married for three years and then Matthew was born. I think you might be talking to Matthew soon.

FR: I believe that I'm going to talk to Matthew next week.

AO: Is it next week, yeah, he said something about, yeah, talking to you, so Matthew was born in 1980 and then David got a job, some moment of madness, it's probably hormones, God knows, I, we though, oh well, we'll maybe go back to, I think it, cos sometimes when you have child you sort of want that sense of belonging again or family or–

FR: Fam-, family, yeah.

AO: Something, I think it's a family thing, and decided to go back and so we were there from 1980 till about eighty-, early 1985.

FR: Wow, okay, so quite a long time.

AO: Yeah, from about five, yeah, so during that time, it might've been '84 actually, end of '84, during that time then, as I said, Matthew was born, Paul was born '82 and then things were starting to get a bit tricky again with the Troubles, it was in a different phase then, I mean, we lived in a place called Glengormley.

FR: Ah yeah, I know it, yeah, yeah, yeah.

AO: Just outside Belfast, yeah, and things were getting a bit tricky there, not in, not in there, but there were starting to be sectarian murders and–

FR: Glengormley would be quite a Protestant suburb, is that right?

AO: It was quite, it was, yes, I suppose it would be, it was Antrim, so, but then, I mean, that doesn't mean anything really, but yes, I think it was, but we'd re-, during, where we lived it was fine, there was no, we had friends across the road who were Catholic, I had a friend next door, Protestant, you know.

FR: Mixed.

AO: It was nothing, yeah, very mixed, and we got together, you know, coffees and things like that, there was nothing, no ill-feeling, it was just, we were all like, young mothers together, as it were really, it was, it was fine, but in certain areas in, in Belfast and other places there were people who were actually like, mix-, you know what they call mixed marriages, who were being, there were a couple of murders and it was, it got a bit, well, we are, actually, so, and I, and then I thought well, as the boys get older, do we really want them to, to grow up in this place and we decided that we didn't, so that's when we decided to, to move back, for our, for the family's sake really.

FR: It's quite difficult I guess to have made the decision to move once and then made the decision to move back and then to have to make the decision again, it's quite a difficult, it must have been quite difficult.

AO: Yes, it was, but, I mean, work, there was also the, tra-, the work situation in Northern Ireland was not great either and with having two very, very young children at the time I thought, you know, this is, be tricky me trying to go out to work again now, and then with, with David's job, then what settled it was he, his company weren't doing very well and he got made redundant just two weeks before Paul was born–

FR Wow, God.

AO: 1982, two, I know, lovely, it was perfect timing really, so we thought right, we're going to have to do something, so what he, what we did, he, well, obviously he was out of work for a while and then he decided, or we both decided, the best thing to do, and it wasn't an easy decision, was that he actually came over to England and did contract work, and he was only able to come home at weekends, so he would have to stay somewhere over here and I was at home with the boys and they were very tiny, you know, like, not even toddlers, Paul was very, very, he was a baby.

FR: That's hard.

AO: It, yeah, it was very, very hard, and then we thought we'll, we'll just try and make the move, so it, while he was still contracting he had, used to have regular contracts coming in, which was very good, so we, on the, on the strength of that then we bought a house in Gamlingay in Cambridgeshire, in the village, yeah, it's seventeen miles from Cambridge, nice little, nice, nice little village.

FR: Lovely name.

AO: Yeah, oh lovely name, yeah, it's just literally over the border from, in fact, I live very close to it here, where I am, so yeah, so we moved there and we were happy there and it was, you know, it was, you felt safe and the kids went to, Paul was, by the time we went there Paul would've been two and Matthew had, was school age, but, or playsc-, you know, he was at playschool, so yeah, we were happy there and I think relieved to be there and that the boys would be, would be okay.

FR: Yeah, no, absolutely, it makes sense, I was just, I was going ask on the kind of mixed marriage thing, obviously for yourself and, and David it doesn't seem to have been any issue, the Protestant-Catholic thing, but what, in terms of getting married and stuff, did it cause any, any friction between your families or–?

AO: Well, yes, once again it came down to, right, well, what church is this going to be in.

FR: [laughs] Sure, sure, that's the big question.

AO: And they, needless to say, it did end up being in a Catholic church because, I mean, my, his parents didn't go near a church from one end of the week to the other. If I had my time over again I probably would have been, probably would have been braver and said oh let's just go to a registry office, but, but way back then it was–

FR: Big deal, it's a big–

AO: It was very hard–

FR: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AO: When you've got, when you've got a very strong devout Catholic mother, who would actually probably have had a nervous breakdown and goodness knows, brought, brought the Pope over to sort you out, I would, it was just oh let's just do it, let's just go with the flow, so yeah, so we did, needless to say. I mean, his parents came and his uncles and aunts came, but they weren't happy, they don't look very happy in the photographs [laughs] and, yeah, there's one of his mother looking very stern in the church [laughs], but, however, that's the way, that's what we did and it was, it was a means to an end and that was it. It was, I mean, it meant, it meant next to nothing to me, I sort of resented having to do it in a way, but I thought at that stage in my life that because of the influence of the parents it seemed, it was probably the coward's way out, but that's the way I opted to do it, and in, in later years of course it was, you know, you, you get braver I think as, as the years go on, but that's what we did, so one side of the family, I suppose neither side were particularly happy because, you know, we were a mixed, a mixed marriage, but my parents embraced him complete-, completely, you know, they, my mother thought he was great despite, when we went out together first as teenagers she used to do her utmost to persuade me, she, it was like, she'd try and wear me down to stop, to stop going out with him–

FR: Wow.

AO: I used to, I mean, absolutely, it was a barrage, it wore me out completely, she was just, oh you're going out with him again and it would be **[01:00:00]** every time, I would feel really bad.

FR: Do you, do you think that, do you think that was, is that because he was a Protestant or just a kind of a general–?

AO: Oh absolutely, oh no, that was, that was it, that was purely it, and I think maybe more, I would like to think from a safety point of view as well, you know, the fact that we were different religions because we were going out in the height of it all.

FR: Absolutely, yeah.

AO: But also because of the religious side of things, you know, and because she had said in her experience that she would not marry my father unless he converted, so she thought that as her daughter that I shouldn't even been considering going out with someone who wasn't Catholic.

FR: Well, that's the thing I suppose, she had a sense of how it could be difficult and how it could cause problems I suppose, yeah.

AO: Yes, yes, yeah, although as a, as a teenager I didn't think about her thinking of my well-being, I just thought she wanted to ruin my life [laughs].

FR: [laughs] No, of course.

AO: Which is what most teenagers think you want to do, you know.

FR: Yeah, no, absolutely, it's really interesting. I was also interested, you described sort of moving to England for the first time and the kind of relief of that.

AO: Oh yes, that's right, yeah, I mean, it was, yeah, it, it was, I couldn't quite get over how wonderful it was to, to be in England, you know, and away from, away from it all and I just sort of, I suppose I just put it all to the back of my mind then, although I used to get, I used to get a little bit homesick sometimes.

FR: Well, this is before phones really, before mobile phones and before email and all of that.

AO: Well, yeah, that's right, I mean, I was obviously at college and then of course we could, you know, David and I would, would see each other as much as we wanted, but yeah, it was, there was that feeling sometimes of, yeah, I do feel a little bit, a little bit homesick.

FR: Where did you?

AO: But it, yes–

FR: Where did you live, did you live in a flat?

AO: Initially, no, initially I was in the halls, halls of residence, so I would, I was there like, for the full term like, September 1975, I went, so I was a bit older going to university because, as I said, it was a decision I made after I'd worked for three, two or three years, so yes, I just really, really enjoyed the freedom and, yeah, apart from, went home at Christmas, again, it seemed very strange going back to, by then my parents had moved from Carryduff back to Enniskillen.

FR: Oh really, okay, so you, you went to Enniskillen?

AO: Yeah, cos, I went back to, to Enniskillen at Christmas cos they had, they had to decided to move and what decided them to move again was, in a way they migrated from Belfast [laughs] because there was a lot, where we lived in Carryduff at the time it was, it was quite a little stronghold of the, the Ulster workers and during, it was round about the, you know, before Sunningdale, it was round about, the Sunningdale Agreement–

FR: Yeah, and the strike, the Ulster workers' strike.

AO: They wanted, the Ulster, yeah, so we were actually in, in Carryduff in May, that was round about May '74, May, June, and there was, it was dreadful living in, in Carryduff then cos, I mean, I was going in and out to work before I moved to En-, back, moved to England and there would be, they, they basically took control, you know, the Ulster workers, and they controlled people's movements, they set up roadblocks, they, they just didn't want the Sunningdale Agreement, they were not for it at all, so they, they brought down the assembly in the end, but–

FR: That's right, that's right.

AO: Which ended with the direct rule coming back, but we, I remember feeling very threatened by them and you used to have to, to get, I, I drove a little car by then and I remember to, to drive anywhere, to get, you had to go to a village hall or somewhere like that in, in Carryduff and actually ask these people could we have a coupon to buy petrol–

FR: Wow, that's wild.

AO: So I could drive into work. They loved the power, they absolutely loved the power over people, and that was, my parents, that for them that was the most instrumental in their decision to, to leave Carryduff again and go to, again, again, Enniskillen seemed safer and they actually had a house built then, just outside Enniskillen, they decided to leave and it was also instrumental completely in me saying what, thinking to myself once and for all I'm out, I'm getting out of here, you know, so to go to, to uni.

FR: That's so, that's so interesting, I mean, I've read a little bit about the Ulster workers' strike and the roadblocks and the kind of intimidation tactics, but it sounds, it sounds like it was really intense in Carryduff.

AO: It, it was, yeah, and, I mean, I had to, I had people that I worked with in the bank, there was a couple of them lived in Carryduff as well, and they were like, they were not, they were Protestant, I mean, they were sort of colleagues more than actual friends, because they always held back, you know, you knew what religion you were, there was this holding back–

FR: Kind of reserve.

AO: Which was ridic-, absolutely ridiculous, you know, but they were, you know, we were friendly enough with them and one of them would say to me oh I'll come with you to the hall to get your coupon, you know–

FR: That's crazy.

AO: To get petrol, yeah, it was, it was mad and, I mean, then they were friendly enough to give it to you, you'd say oh I need to get to the, you know, I work in a bank, it was oh it's essential workers only, you know, it was this, this and the other, and I thought well, am I an essential worker, well, you are if, if you're not Catholic [laughs], I mean, it's, it's ridiculous, it was mad, that I ever said my–

FR: But that degree of control, that degree of control–

AO: Yeah, oh that's right, yeah, I know, so there was no way they want, they were going to give an inch, I mean, you've heard the expression, not an inch.

FR: Not an inch, yeah.

AO: Not an inch, so there was no way they would agree with the Sunningdale and so that all fell apart, and I think my parents were glad to be back in Enniskillen, I was glad to be away, and my other brother moved to Liverpool round about that time and went to university there, so yes, it was a wee bit strange going back and obviously I was enjoying life here, going to the pub, going to music venues and thinking oh this is all, this is all my new life, you know, going down to visit my, my cousins in Bri-, in Lewes and oh yeah, it was wonderful.

FR: Oh so you had family, you had family in Lewes?

AO: Yeah, my father's sister, she, she only recently died actually last year, but she had three sons, so I've got three cousins, one of the, David, who's six months older than me, and Jonathan and Stephen. David lives in Lewes with his wife Josie, and you know we, we visit each, well, when we can, you know, visit loads, our kids grew up together and, yeah, so, and then the other one was in Dorset and the other one was in Hong Kong, so you know [laughs], yeah, well, my cousin David, he's actually the director of the whole of the Welsh museums–

FR: Wow.

AO: In, in, in Cardiff.

FR: That's an interesting job.

AO: Yeah, very much, so yeah, he used to, used to be in Brighton, he used to be head of the, the education office down in Brighton, for the museum, then, then up in the V&A, and final, final, then when he was in the V&A, then he got the job in Cardiff as head of the museums, so yeah, he's done well, yeah, so I've family, family there.

FR: Okay, and so then, I'm just trying to get the, the chronology of moves [laughs].

AO: Okay, oh yeah, well.

FR: So you were in Hertfordshire, yourself and David were in Hertfordshire with children at that stage?

AO: Yes, our first, well, our first experience after we got married in '77 was Welwyn Garden City.

FR: Right, yeah, yeah.

AO: And we were there until 1980, then we moved to Glengormley.

FR: Back to Glengormley.

AO: And we were there, we there till the end of '84 and–

FR: Right, so what did, sorry, what did you make of Welwyn Garden City? Cos I've never been, but it seems like quite an interesting town, it's like a new, a new town, yeah.

AO: Yeah, I suppose people can be a bit disparaging about it sometimes, but, you know, a garden city, it was very, it was very pleasant, there was not a lot going on there, but, you know, in those days when there was just the two of us it was just, you'd go to work, you'd go, you know, go out, we had quite a quiet life really, we'd go out to little country pubs, it was, it was such, it was quite a joy really to, to lead that sort of life after what I'd come from.

FR: So, so different, so different from Belfast I suppose.

AO: So different and, yeah, we could go **[01:10:00]** into London and see things, we could, yeah, it was quite a nice little, nice little life really.

FR: Did you ever experience any kind of anti-Irish stuff?

AO: Very, very occasionally you'd get somebody would make a, a little dig sometimes.

FR: Yeah, like, again, kind of–

AO: I remember somebody–

FR: Subtle.

AO: Very, it was like, stereotyping stuff, you know, where they'd oh is your husband a typical Irishman, I thought well, what do you mean, what do you mean by a typical Irishman, that used to make me cross, so I'd snap back, cos he wasn't anyway [laughs], there was, yeah, I mean, I, yeah, things like that really.

FR: Is a typical Irishman to do with drink, is that what they mean?

AO: Exact-, that's how they would stereotype, yeah.

FR: Right, yeah, yeah, yeah.

AO: Oh does he drink a lot, does he this, that, yeah, oh for goodness sake, what a stupid question [laughs], yeah.

FR: But never anything about Northern Ireland cos I suppose the Troubles, I'm thinking the Troubles is kind of happening in England at this stage as well, I mean, there are some bombings in England.

AO: That's right, well, yeah, that's right, Harrods, Harrods bombing, and things like that, but no, I, fortunately, I, and I, I suppose it is fortunately I can say that nobody ever said anything to me, not, not in my, the circles that I moved in.

FR: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AO: I have no ex-, no experience at all of any anti-Irish feeling, I suppose I'm lucky.

FR: No, I mean, I–

AO: Very lucky in that, maybe, maybe there was with some people, but I didn't experience it.

FR: I think we've got a whole range of different responses across the interviews, some people, yes and some people like yourself, not at all.

AO: Really?

FR: Aye, I just, I suppose it just depends where you are and who you, who you meet and all kinds of things really.

AO: Yeah, that's true, I wonder why, yeah, whereabouts would that be?

FR: Hmm, just–

AO: You know, what sort of experiences cos yeah, as I said, nobody, nobody ever.

FR: And then I'm int-, I'm interested in going back to Glengormley, so, like you said, you had this kind of this sense of like, maybe wanting to be around family a wee bit more, but at the same time it must've been quite strange to move back to Northern Ireland having had this, what sounds like a really positive experience of moving to England.

AO: Yes, yes, I know, it was a wee bit weird, I could only, yeah, it was probably like, a moment of madness or whatever, but we, when we got back, I mean, we, we were quite content, you know, quite happy because with having two very young children then there was always a limit on what you could do and what, with them, so, well, we did as, we did as much as we could with them, but we used to enjoy going round to my parents in Enniskillen and exploring the, you know, the countryside there and just getting out and about and it was beautiful. We'd, we'd visit my husband's parents as well, they, they still lived in Carryduff.

FR: Right, right, right.

AO: In fact, my mother-in-law lived there till she died a few years back, she never moved and, yeah, so the experience of Glengormley was just as a, as a very young family and I'd picked up with a few old friends that I had, that I'd had a relationship before and made new friends because after, you know, having children you make friends locally and so on, but very much tied up with the boys, you know, with, you know, a family life really and, yeah, just jogged along quite nicely, but then became, as I said, started to become aware of what was happening politically again and, you know, it had started to be on the news a bit more, I'd started to get a bit worried, but yeah.

FR: There's sort of another, another kind of peak in the mid-eighties I think in terms of violence and, and things like that, yeah.

AO: Yes it, yes, it did, and it just bothered me and we felt, and then I think the trigger, like I said, was my husband leaving his job because really we, we weren't there for very long–

FR: Three or four years.

AO: Overall, it was about, yeah, so Matthew was born July 1980, Paul born in May '82 and then really when Paul was only two we moved, so they wouldn't have, they'd have some experience of being there, but they were very tiny, but very, very, very strong accents [laughs] in that period of time, you know, but Paul used, we used to laugh at Paul because he used to have a very strong what you'd call like, it was almost like a Scottish tinge to his voice and we used to, yeah, instead of saying no, I'm not, he would go no, I'm naught, he, he [indecipherable] a very, a very strong Scottish connotation.

FR: It's funny how, it's funny how the accent can sort of shift around. I always, I always get Scottish over here, people always think that I'm Scottish.

AO: Yes, well, yes it, they ca-, it does, yeah, I mean, I, I'm ashamed to say there was, when I, cos I'm, I've retired from teaching now, but I was a teacher for years, and there was one of the lunch ladies and every time I heard her speak I thought she's, she's from Scotland, she wasn't, she was from Derry [laughs]. I felt so embarrassed, I thought oh dear, how could I get that wrong, you know. You find, you find as you talk to people from Belfast or from Northern Ireland, you become more Irish don't you, when you're talking to them.

FR: Absolutely, absolutely yeah [laughs].

AO: [laughs] Yeah, so be careful who you speak to now for the rest of the day [laughs].

FR: [laughs] I find that my accent has changed so much, I've been living in England for almost ten years now and my accent has changed quite a lot I think.

AO: Well, it sounds very, very Irish to me.

FR: Aye well, there you go [laughs], there you go.

AO: [laughs] Yeah, you're, yeah, on that, I mean, do you have a strong sense of being Irish or not really?

FR: It's a, that's a good que-, it's a good question, I mean, I call myself Irish, I have an Irish passport. I d-, I wouldn't, I would never call myself English or British, so I suppose I'm Irish, but–

AO: Well, there you go, yeah.

FR: What about, what about you?

AO: Well, I always say oh I'm from Ireland, I'm Irish, but growing up it still felt, it still, growing up in Northern Ireland you felt quite separate, so you felt separate from the Republic or as my maternal grandparents and family would have called the Free State.

FR: The Free, the Free State, sure.

AO: The Free State, and then they'd, my parents maybe would, would have referred more to it as, as the Republic, but their parents would have said Free State and, I mean, as I said before, I've a lot of family on my mother's side in and around Enniskillen and cousins and so on, and Enniskillen's quite near the border, we spent lots of holidays there and it was very different from where I lived near Belfast, and it seemed then sort of more connected with the Republic, so, and to visit Donegal beaches for family picnics, you know, when we were little, we'd, we'd have to cross the border, and he used to get stopped, I mean, this is as children, you'd get stopped at the, the border points, but of course they were in a way more of a, a formality and they sometimes, as the years went on they weren't even manned some days, and it was actually inst-, again when the Troubles came back, but my mother used to, when, when her and my father were, were going out together back in the, I suppose it would have been postwar–

FR: Fifties, yeah.

AO: They were married in '52, yeah, they, they used to, my dad had a motorbike and they used to cross over to get my grandfather tobacco from the Republic [laughs], cos you used to get it cheaper there and sometimes butter and, you know, they used to, you know, they used to joke, you know, she used to smuggle the tobacco back [laughs] across the border.

FR: My, my granny used, my granny used to talk about–

AO: Did she?

FR: Butter, in her coat [laughs] as well, yeah.

AO: Yes, yes, I know [laughs], so that used to make me laugh, you know, that they, on the motorbike, this good Catholic woman, you know, is a smuggler [laughs].

FR: [laughs] Everyone, everyone did it by all accounts.

AO: That's right, I remember the butter as well, yeah, he used to like the block, the block tomato, the block tobacco for his pipe.

FR: Ah of course.

AO: Yeah, so yeah, but we were, you know, growing up there, you know, with maybe the influence of an English granny and the complete Irishness of the maternal granny, you know, there was, **[01:20:00]** there was conflict within and, you know, people, people in the Republic and this feeling that, well, they're proper Irish, and, but that we were neither Irish nor British–

FR: Well, I do, I do know–

AO: And, yeah, and, yeah, that was, yeah.

FR: I do know what you mean, I mean, I lived in Dublin, I did my undergraduate degree in Dublin, and although I would say that I'm Irish, people in, people in Ireland would, you know, you're not exactly Irish [laughs].

AO: Yes, I know, and it's very unfair and quite hurtful, isn't it, cos I remember being introduced, I had a friend that I worked with and his, him and his wife, and we, we became friends, we used to visit, have evenings with them and I remember this other, this woman came along one evening and he introduced me to her and she, he said oh Anne's Irish, Anne's from Ireland, and she went oh what part of Ireland, I said Belfast, and she went huh that's not Irish, I was, I thought how rude is that, that's not, that's not Ireland, I thought what a rude woman, it was really, it was, I found it so hurtful as well that somebody would say that after just being introduced to you, would be so horrible to you [laughs], to say, I mean, she, and she meant it, you know, she meant it, and this was in Welwyn Garden City, this wasn't even in [laughs], so yeah.

FR: It doesn't, it doesn't go away.

AO: So that, I know, so, and there's already that feeling inside you, deep inside, oh maybe I'm not proper Irish, but there you go, you know, my father had, you know, he had a deep love of Ulster, he had obviously grown up there, he had lots of lovely carefree, childhood memories, but yeah, and I think I suppose like, feeling a sense of belonging or identity, but I

suppose, you know, the teenage years that I talked about and the prohibited life, which was not unlike lockdown, you know, it does colour the sense of you are and where you want to be and, and also it fed into my, you know, strong need to escape, and the first, you know, the very first visit I ever made to England was in, after the Troubles, was in 1975 and, and I said before about the sun shining and people, it felt, it felt magic, you know, but pre-Troubles it's, it felt magic to go to a little village, in fact, my aunt, when we went in '69, just before the Troubles kicked off, I mentioned earlier, they actually lived in Kingston, the little village near Lewes.

FR: Kingston, yeah, yeah, yeah.

AO: Kingston near Lewes, and I thought, this is, this is like paradise, this is beautiful, this lovely little English village and I sort of, deep, from that, I was sixteen then and that sort of deep hankering after that, to go to somewhere like that, of course it helped that there was a heatwave for two weeks and, you know, it, it was wonderful, it was such a difference and to go to seaside everyday and it wasn't cold, whereas growing up we'd be, we'd go to Ballywalter [laughs] and we'd, we'd go to, go to Newcastle, Ballycastle, you know, and you'd be frozen, you know, but you had to go, you know, you had to go in for your swim before you could have your picnic and that's the end of it.

FR: [laughs] No, I know, I know exactly what you mean because I live on the south coast now and it, it's, compared to the sort of west coast of Ireland or whatever, the summer days are, it's a whole different, a whole different feeling.

AO: Yeah, yeah, I mean, no wonder they refer to it as the sou-, soft south, you know.

FR: [laughs] The soft south, yeah.

AO: [laughs] We, we were, we were sturdy stock, you know, coming from, coming from up there, you know, so, completely different place, yeah.

FR: Absolutely, and so when yous came back to England from Glengormley you settled in Cambridgeshire and then back in Welwyn Garden City, is that right?

AO: That's right, yeah, that's right, again, that was an education thing for the kids, you know, the boys because, and in fact I had my daughter in Addenbrooke's in Cambridgeshire and she was, Katie, she's '87, so yeah, we moved when she about a year old, we moved down to like, 1988 we moved back to, to Welwyn and again I think I wanted the, the kids to have a wider education than that of a village school and a, and a very, and a very small town in Bedfordshire, which would have been the nearest school, so there were more choices for them, yeah.

FR: And just thinking about, thinking about kids I guess and, and you mentioned them still having kind of the, the vestiges of a Northern Irish accent after they moved, did they–

AO: Yes, I think, yeah.

FR: Would they have had a sense of themselves do you think as, as Irish or Northern Irish or would they have a sense of their parents as, as not being English I suppose like, do you think it had any influence on them?

AO: I think they're very, very much I think, would, would call themselves Irish.

FR: Yeah.

AO: Yeah, I mean, they've both got Irish passports and I think obviously triggered by yet another happening shall we say with Brexit.

FR: [laughs] Yes, yeah, yeah.

AO: But, yeah, I mean, I'm in the process of getting one myself, I mean, I did have an Irish passport and then, you know, over the years I've had an English one, but it's due for, a British one, but it's due for renewal and I'll go for an Irish one, but, you know, all sorts of, all sorts of life experiences can change your sense of identity and belonging and, I mean, thinking recently of, of, the whole Brexit thing brought a force of a stronger connection in a way of being Irish and European, and I felt disconnected and disappointed with what to me was a step backwards for the UK, but, I mean, I've lived happily many years, you know, as, as British or British-Irish and I've had a passport, but like, you know, like many others there's a, I just feel the need to be, align myself more as a European.

FR: Yeah, no, I, I know exactly, I know exactly what you mean, and it's strange I suppose to have lived here for so long and, and quite happily and kind of happily with that sort of hybrid British-Irish-European identity and then suddenly that's not really possible anymore, or not in the same way.

AO: Yeah, it's interesting that it, yeah, you, you make that choice, you know, having been presented with, with Brexit, as it were, that just influences you to an extent where you think that it's the only wee bit, it's the only wee bit of protest you can do really [laughs].

FR: [laughs] Yeah, sure.

AO: There's nothing else you can do, you're stuck with it, so there's nothing we can do, but I can be, I can put myself down as Irish and call myself European if I want and nobody can stop me.

FR: Absolutely, absolutely, no, so, just sort of moving on to my last bit of questions then, I was going to ask about the peace, the peace process–

AO: Oh yeah.

FR: And whether or not you have any kind of memories of that happening, so into the kind of mid-nineties we're thinking now.

AO: The nineties, yeah, boys are teenagers then, yeah, I mean, the pe-, obviously very welcomed, but yes, thank goodness that something happened, you know, despite, yeah, I mean, I do, I know there were so, so many of the organisations, the organisations of the nationalists for it and, the DUP, very, very against, and I have to, I have to say one of my pet hates is Ian Paisley [laughs], I can't help myself there I'm afraid, cos I have to think of him as a, I know he's long gone now, but, you know, I sort of, you look back on him and you look at Trump and you think, you know, there was, could see back then and I've watched, you know, programmes about it and *Spotlight* and, you know, this, the influence and the strength of the influence and the incitement to violence and so on, so it's, it's hard to, hard to think of him in any way fondly [laughs], but yeah.

FR: It's one of the strangest, one of the strangest things of the peace process and actually, not even the peace process, but the, the sort of 2000s in Northern Ireland are those pictures of Paisley and McGuinness laughing together, very strange.

AO: Oh I know, very hard, very, very strange indeed, you know, I don't think fondly of him either, you know, always tried to be, you know, see them as they were, what they, what they both did, what they were both capable of, what they're both guilty of, it's very, it's very, very hard actually to, yeah, not a fan of McGuinness or Paisley.

FR: But it, it sounds like you would still have been fairly kind of connected with what was happening in Northern Ireland in that period.

AO: Well, sort, sort of, but, you know, by the nineties I think there was a lot going on **[01:30:00]** in our lives here and, I mean, that was, was that '98?

FR: '98 it was signed, yeah, yeah.

AO: Yeah, so the Good Friday, I mean, I was glad that it was, but to be honest, there was so much going on in, in our lives at that time that I sort of didn't really pay a lot of heed.

FR: No, it's, I can un-, I can understand that. Okay, so I think I've just got some kind of I suppose reflective questions, I mean, I think we've covered a bit of that already, but I suppose I'm interested in ho-, do you think, do you think moving to England has, has like, changed you as a person, or how do you think it's changed your, your life?

AO: Don't really [pauses], it's been such a long time, you know, I'm sixty-seven now, I've been here since I was twenty-two, apart from three, yeah, from 1980 to 1984, where I actually went back to, to live there, so I've been here such a long time, so yeah, I mean, very immersed in life over here, but still feel Irish and still, I still could live there.

FR: Well, I was going to–

AO: I would, you know, if I could go back and live there.

FR: I was going to ask about that, so, so would you ever have thought about moving back?

AO: Yes, indeed I would. I've always felt like the sort of person who could give anywhere a go [laughs], I'd be, be quite, quite happy to go and live anywhere for a while and see how I got on, yeah, but I would actually, but you see yous end up with, with different ties, don't you, I mean, I was, yeah, married to David for quite, quite a long time and, you know, we, we did end up divorcing, and then I was on my own for a very long time and then had my father move over from Ireland–

FR: Oh yeah, you mentioned, yeah.

AO: To live with me, he came over from Enniskillen and then I met my husband, now, Alan, and we've been married for nearly six years and he's got two daughters, he's got a daughter in Brighton and, well, obviously I've got Paul in Brighton, and then he's got another daughter who lives not far away from us, and I've got my daughter who's actually working in, she's teaching in Portugal this year, and then I've got Matthew who lives up, he's a lecturer up in Newcastle University and he's quite far away, so we have got, we've got different ties and it would be difficult to just say right, I'm off to Belfast [laughs].

FR: [laughs] No, sure.

AO: Although with travel the way it is, you know, see, you have to consider another person, you have to consider, you know, what, what it would be, would be like, I mean, we live here in this village, which is quite a nice little village in Bedfordshire just, not that far away, about six miles from Gamlingay, but, you know, we do talk about, well, we, we, maybe we'll sell up. I miss the sea and often, you know, oh maybe we'll go and live in Suffolk or somewhere like that, definitely, definitely not Brighton, no, no offence [laughs], I mean–

FR: [laughs] None taken.

AO: Even though Paul lives there, I do not want to live in Brighton, you know.

FR: It's a bit, bit hectic.

AO: It is a bit mad, yeah, so, and I think Paul is, quite often, he thinks of moving, he thinks even of moving to Scotland, he's talked about it, him and his girlfriend, so yeah, I would like to, to be closer to my kids, I've, obviously proximity-wise, until recently Katie lived just up the road, you know, not far away, and, you know, would still talk to her everyday, but see her very, very regularly, with Paul, regular visits to Brighton or him coming up here, with Matthew a bit further afield, so not as, not as many as I would like, and of course you have to fit in with their different jobs and so on, so yes, where, where would, where would you go, and then as you get older you think oh well, if I move there then, although travel's easy enough I suppose, but, yeah, I think any, with any encouragement I'd move [laughs], I would, I'd be, I'd be happy enough to, to, to live in Belfast or anywhere else, yeah.

FR: Do you still have any kind of family connections in Northern Ireland?

AO: I have a cousin, my cousin Carmel, she lives in, in Belfast, Windsor Avenue, and I have got probably only, they're all sort of all over the place now, you know, cousins who've

dispersed to different like, one is a lecturer in Cork University, a couple still, a couple still live in Enniskillen, sort of lost, lost contact with them, aunts and uncles who've now passed on, you know, who would have been close to at one stage, so thinking of Enniskillen, there, there isn't really anybody there anymore, but my cousin Carmel, you know, I saw her when we went over the June before this and it was great, you know, catch up on old times and she, she was my, her dad was my mother's brother, so yeah, on that side of the family.

FR: And so you went back to–

AO: She, but she loves it there, she, it's so strange because she grew up in Croydon.

FR: Oh right, okay.

AO: Went, went to school in Croydon, cos her family, my, my uncle Jim and auntie Bridie, they moved to Croydon when they got married, you know, like, back in the late forties, and she grew up there, that was her life, went to school there, but then when she, and trained to be a teacher, and then she moved to Northern Ireland.

FR: Wow, okay, so–

AO: She had, she felt a sense of belonging to, to come back, and her parents eventually moved back as well, so strange.

FR: That is, that is strange.

AO: Yeah, so, I mean, I grew up here and I said, are you mad [laughs], you're mad coming back, so I said I'll do you a swap, you know, but she was, yeah, she wanted to come back and I wanted to be out, but she, she has stayed there and had a teaching career in Belfast and, yeah, so she's been in, we, we literally did a swap, if you know what I mean.

FR: Yeah, absolutely.

AO: That's, yeah, completely different lives, and so she–

FR: How, how did you find Belfast when you went back, did you find it had changed?

AO: Oh yes, I did find it changed in, but not in essentials, you know, it was still the same, still the same places that I wanted to have a little walk around and a little look at and so on, and I remember I took Alan into, into Kelly's Cellars in Belfast.

FR: Ah yes, I know it well, yeah.

AO: And that was, that was the first place, so when I was about seventeen, it was the first place I ever had a drink and my, my friend and I decided to go into, we went into Belfast one evening, I mean, it was, as you can imagine it was not busy and, when I was seventeen, and we thought oh right we'll go into, but what will we order if we go into this pub, we had no idea, I was so nai-, so ignorant, so naive, so we went into Kelly's Cellars and we'd seen an

advert on TV for Carlsberg Specials, so we thought, it was the only drink we could think of, so we ordered two Carlsberg Specials and sat in Kelly's Cellars and it was disgusting [laughs], I said, and I said well, wait till his back's turned and we'll have to leave because I can't drink this stuff, it's too, this is vile, you know, and that was, that was my first experience of Kelly's Cellars, and then later on, a couple of years later, or a year or so later when I was, started going out with David and we went into Kelly's Cellars, cos we both signed up to do evening classes for some godforsaken reason, you know, and after work I'd go to an evening class and he'd go too and then we'd go for a drink afterwards and we went to Kelly's Cellars and I said oh I don't know, I just didn't drink really, so he got me started on vodka and lime and I never looked back, you know [laughs], now having said that I don't drink it now, well, I drink wine, but yeah, I thought oh this is quite nice.

FR: It's better than a, better than a Carlsberg Special.

AO: Yeah, it does what it says on the tin and it's totally painless, you know, so I thought yeah, I'll stick with this [laughs].

FR: Kelly's Cellars is a nice, is a nice pub now actually, I would still get into Kelly's Cellars when I'm over, yeah.

AO: Oh yeah, it was, it was **[01:40:00]** quite, yeah, it was, it was so busy and, yeah, I mean, that was obviously, yeah, before lockdown and we went to, we had a look, I wanted to show Alan like, the Crown and Robinson's, you know, the usual, yeah, you've got to go in there and, and I said oh there's the Europa, that used to be blown up every week [laughs], Europa hotel, that, that was a regular, a regular bombing went off there, but yeah, I can't remember what the question was.

FR: I can't remember either, it doesn't matter, I was just asking you if you'd found Belfast, you know, different, yeah.

AO: Yeah, yeah, I suppose.

FR: So different, but still the same, it sounds like.

AO: Different, but yes, I mean, it changed, in essence it was, everything was still there, you know, M&S is in the same place, Boots is in the same places, where you used to queue up to get searched to go in, you know, all of these places are still, they're still in the same place, but, but walking round of course is very, very different to what it used to, what it was, but it has changed gradually and then of course after the, with the peace process and everything, you know, you saw the hanging baskets coming out and the, instead of the, the barricades, and that made such a big difference, you know.

FR: Absolutely.

AO: It just, it felt like a really nice, nice atmosphere, nice to be there, and exploring up the coast road as well and of course going to the, to the Titanic exhibition [indecipherable], past the, past the peace wall and things like that, you know, it was, it was, it was interesting, I

must say, after going back, cos we did the, we couldn't resist it, we did the Belfast bus tour thing, which was, which was great to do, you know, so took me round all the old places that I remembered very well, you know.

FR: Absolutely.

AO: Yeah.

FR: No, it's really, it's really interesting Anne, thank you, I think that that's probably–

AO: It's nice talking to you.

FR: Yeah, really nice to talk to you. I was just going to ask is there anything we haven't talked about or anything that you, that you thought we might have talked about, that we haven't talked about?

AO: I don't think so, I did jot a few things down, but I think we've covered most of them really, yeah, I think we've covered, yeah, quite a, quite a bit. I mean, I looked at what your main objectives were and, you know, the main areas that we were going to cover, yeah, they mentioned generational differences, about, between experiences and memories and identities of Northern Ireland people, but you'd know more about that because that's what you're, you're doing, you've just got my take or my, cos the generation that I was, you know, but I suppose it was like, a generation of doing it when I was young and then the generation of doing it like, eleven years on, or ten years on, so it's not really a generational thing I suppose.

FR: No, but I think it's so interesting the way that you kind of went, went back and forth, cos you had different, different experiences of like, different periods of the conflict, for example, yeah.

AO: Well, that's right, yes, indeed, yeah, yeah, that's true because, yeah, the first time round it was still very like, bombs going off and the second time it was a bit, you know, a bit subtle, a bit more subtle.

FR: But, but you were anxious you said about the kind of mixed marriage and about a couple of people in mixed marriages having been threatened or even, even maybe killed I think.

AO: Well, that was it, oh they were, yes, I mean, that was, that was quite, quite scary, it didn't keep me awake at night, I must say, cos you're, you're old-, you're younger and you don't worry so much, I probably would worry more about it now.

FR: Aye, aye.

AO: Yes, being younger I thought, oh you still think oh that'll not happen to me, but, however, I'm not taking any chances.

FR: No, sure.

AO: And, and also because we lived in a fairly anonymous place, I mean Glengormley, and surrounded by mixed people really, and nobody wanted to bring trouble to their own doorstep probably either.

FR: No, sure, but–

AO: That's the other thing.

FR: But still an, still an anxiety I suppose.

AO: Oh it was, I mean, it was, we were obviously anxious enough to, to, you know, to want to, to move, you know.

FR: Yeah, yeah.

AO: You think so many people, I mean, there were like, three and a half thousand people killed over the conflict and, yeah, like, fifty thousand or so injured and, yeah, not, not a great place to be really.

FR: No, I, I actually just wanted to ask very quickly if you don't mind, you mentioned that your, your dad moved over to live with you for a wee while.

AO: Yes, yeah, and I think it was–

FR: Thinking about generational differences or whatever I suppose, I wondered what he made of living in England for that period.

AO: Well, I think he, he was older, I think it was, his decision was rash, I think he regretted it because he, first of all he came to live with my brother, who lives in Liverpool, he's a lecturer now, but–

FR: Right, yeah, oh you mentioned, you mentioned that, yeah.

AO: Yeah, so he, he moved in with them into, they had a like, a little, they converted a little bit, their garage, and the back, built on a little bit and they had a little like, almost like a little bedsit, but it had a kitchen and bathroom and he, he was there for two or three years, but I think he wasn't really happy there and he wanted to, I think he always felt that he should live with me because I was his daughter.

FR: Right, right, sure.

AO: Anyway, anyway, he did end up living with me for quite a few ti-, I think it was about eight years in the end, it was quite a long time.

FR: Quite, quite a long time, yeah, absolutely.

AO: It was quite a long time and then he, he died in 2016, in January, so it's about–

FR: Sorry to hear that.

AO: Yeah, about five years ago now, yeah, and, but yes, I think he always, oh I should, I should have stayed, I wish I'd stayed, cos he loved, he was very, very much a lover of Ireland and Ulster and, and all things belonging to it.

FR: Yeah, yeah.

AO: And I think, I think what it, it wasn't that he thought I don't want to live with you, it was that oh I wish I'd just stayed, I should have just stayed.

FR: It's hard.

AO: It didn't seem to be, yeah, I think my brother persuaded him to move perhaps when he wasn't quite ready, because he did have health, health issues and he'd had, well, he'd had his first heart attack in 1988, but, I mean, he lived for many years after that, but he'd have little episodes where he would maybe have another one or I suppose he was living with heart failure, but he was on a lot of medication that was helping him. I mean, he managed, he made it to the age of like, eighty-nine, so he wasn't doing too badly really.

FR: It's one of the, it's one of the, I mean, speaking for myself I suppose it's one of the harder things about having moved away from Ireland is, as your parents get older, thinking oh should I, do I, am I going to move back or are my siblings going to move back, you know, what are we going to do, it's a, it's a hard thing.

AO: Do your family still live in, in Ballymena?

FR: My, both my parents still live just outside of Ballymena, my sister lives in Newcastle actually, same as Matt, and my wee, my brother, my younger brother still lives there, he's actually just bought a house in Ballymena for such a small amount of money that I can barely believe it [laughs].

AO: Oh I know, that's where it gets you isn't it, that's where you think oh look at what you get for your money [laughs].

FR: It's unbelievable, unbelievable.

AO: You could buy a mansion [laughs], I know, I know, so yeah, there's–

FR: But he still lives there, yeah, so.

AO: So would you ever go back?

FR: I don't know, I don't know, I don't think I would ever go back to Ballymena just because I don't, I couldn't, there's no uni-, I don't, I couldn't do the job that I do in Ballymena and I think I also just couldn't kind of live the same sort of life, if you know what I mean.

AO: No.

FR: I do think about Dublin. I loved, I love Dublin, I loved living in Dublin.

AO: Oh yeah.

FR: Maybe that would be a sort of a–

AO: You were, you were there through uni, were you?

FR: Yeah, that's right, for, for four years, for uni, yeah.

AO: Wow, that's, be quite a strong influence there.

FR: That's right, first city I lived in.

AO: Four years in Dublin.

FR: Yeah, so maybe, maybe Dublin, but my partner is French, so she talks about going back to France and I talk about going back to Ireland and it's, you, hard, it's hard to make a plan, isn't it [laughs].

AO: Yeah, so you're not learning French then [laughs]?

FR: I'm work-, I'm working on it, I'm working on it [laughs].

AO: [laughs] Yeah, no, Matthew's girl-, Matthew's, well, wife now, I should say, I mean, they got, they got married last year, even during lockdown, but they, she's from Finland.

FR: Oh right, okay.

AO: Yeah, and then of course Paul's Agnieszka, she's from Poland.

FR: Poland, yeah.

AO: So yeah, he, he tries to learn Polish, they, they try and have a day a week where they speak Polish to each other, which is brilliant, and I think Matthew's had a go at Finnish.

FR: Finnish, **[01:50:00]** Finnish must be, Finnish must be quite hard I think [laughs].

AO: Yeah, well, I, I downloaded Duolingo and I was getting on really well with it, Finnish [laughs], and then I don't know what happened, it just went, it just went, so I need to–

FR: Well, good, good on you for, for trying.

AO: Maybe keep it up, yeah. I know it's a bit, it's something different, isn't it.

FR: Absolutely. Well, I mean, I think that's all of my questions Anne, unless you've got anything else that you'd like to talk about.

AO: I don't, yeah, I don't think so, not at the moment, I don't think of anything, yeah.

FR: Well, I'll, I'll stay in touch, sure, and I'll let you know how, what's happening with the project and everything.

AO: Oh good, yeah, oh that would be, yeah, be really interesting. I was telling my cousin Josie, and she's actually from Dunbarton–

FR: Oh yeah.

AO: And she married my cousin, she married my cousin David, and so she has a, she has her experiences of being a, a Catholic growing up in Dunbarton [laughs] and all the differences, you know, some places in Scotland were not too different.

FR: No, there's the, there's the kind of sectarian thing in Scotland as well, isn't there.

AO: Yeah, such a shame, isn't it, never mind, yeah, I don't think so Fearghus, I think I've, I did jot a few things down, so I think I said everything that I meant to say and hopefully answered a few of your questions–

FR: No, it was, it was so interesting.

AO: Without rabbiting on too much.

FR: [laughs] No, not at all, it was really, really interesting, I really enjoyed it.

AO: Good, well, it's been nice talking to you.

FR: Nice talking to you as well, thank you so much for, for taking the time and enjoy the rest of your day I guess.

AO: No problem, yeah, and you too.

FR: Okay, bye Anne, thank you, cheers.

AO: Bye bye now, thank you, bye.

INTERVIEW ENDS