INTERVIEW L11: JULIE MARCHMONT

Interviewer: Dr Fearghus Roulston
Interviewee: Julie Marchmont [pseudonym]
Interview date: 20th January 2020
Location: London
Transcriber: Dr Jack Crangle

Textual Note: Annotations and observations appear in square brackets (e.g. [pauses], [laughs]). Partial, interrupted or unfinished utterances are denoted by a dash. False starts, filler words and non-lexical utterances (e.g. 'um', 'hmm') are not generally transcribed. Time codes appear at ten-minute intervals in square brackets in bold type. This transcript has been lightly edited by the interviewee at her request. The interview was recorded across two audio files that were spliced together to create a single audio file.

FR: Okay, we're recording now. So thanks very much for agreeing to take part first of all, and if you could just start by saying your name and today's date.

JM: Yeah, my name is Julie Marchmont and today's date is twentieth of January 2020.

FR: Thank you. So as I said we're gonna broadly cover those three stages in a kind of a roughly chronological order [laughs]. So the first question is where were you born?

JM: I was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, I think it was a nursing home there. I was the first of four girls.

FR: And where did you live in Belfast?

JM: We, actually we lived in a place called Finaghy.

FR: Ah yeah, I know it.

JM: And then we, when I was four we moved to, to Lisburn, outside Lisburn actually, it was quite rural, which was a bit of a blow because there were more children to play with in Finaghy I recall [laughs].

FR: So you have some memories of Finaghy?

JM: Oh yes, yes, when I was four, two, two very distinctive memories of Finaghy, one is that, one was that there was a mountain I could see from the street and I can remember thinking I'm going to climb that mountain one day, I want to climb that mountain, and I remember saying to my mother some years later, you know, why didn't we ever, and she said oh we never, we never went, went over, that was Black Mountain, we never went over that way, when we went to the end of the cul-de-sac we turned right, we never turned left, so I sort of, kind of, they took me back there to show me, so it actually validated that memory, and I

have memories of going to the end of the little garden we had and waving to the trains, cos we had a train line that ran along the back of the garden and I would love to go down there and I, I don't know if the train driver waved back, but I, in my child's memory he did.

FR: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

JM: So those are two very strong memories.

FR: And then you moved to Lisburn–

JM: Lisburn, yeah.

FR: When you were four.

JM: Four, thereabouts I think, yeah.

FR: And how was, how was that?

JM: Well, it was fairly undeveloped the road I lived in, a lot of fields and building on the fields, so, we basically, my parents' house was built on a field. My parents were very keen gardeners, so they did a lot of work on it, and we spent most of our childhoods outside, you wouldn't believe that in Northern Ireland, but we, my memories are outside quite a lot, playing and chase. We played cowboys and Indians and Germans and English, with appropriate, you know, guns or sticks or whatever [laughs].

FR: And you played with your siblings or with other children from around?

JM: Oh we ganged up, there were other children around. Unfortunately I was the eldest and I kind of organised some of them I think. We'd go across the fields, climb trees, I'd tell them stories, I remember, my father taught us to play cricket and tennis and, yeah, indoors it was more music and books.

FR: And what did your parents do?

JM: My father was in the civil service and my mother was a teacher [pauses]. My father's job was, he managed the local magistrates' courts, which was tough for him in the seventies.

FR: Yeah, and I find it interesting that your memories of Lisburn are quite rural because Lisburn now is not rural at all.

JM: No, they're not, it's not, well, Lisburn itself wasn't necessarily rural, but we lived between Lisburn and Lambeg and there was, across the road from us there was a farm, and I think he owned all the land round there, it was all farmland I think, and he was selling it off by degrees, so the fields along there, well, we've been back and it's quite built up all around that area, but certainly then it was just a lot of fields that had been built on, I think, my memory is of, of that, certainly our house was in a field and the house, houses to the right of us had originally been a field.

FR: And what about school?

JM: Well, we used to walk to primary school in Lisburn, sometimes we'd get a lift, frequently we walked along. I was remembering this the other day, we would walk from, it was about a mile I think from school home, and we'd walk past a park, a large park on the way home, and my, my memories of, apart from walking home with the children, my memories of that are having been told by our parents that we weren't ever to take a lift, that on quite a few occasions the cars that drove along there would stop and go hello love, would you like a lift, to which we would go absolutely not, no, no, no, we wouldn't. In fact, even one day my father's friend came along and offered us a lift and we refused to even look at him, so in these days of, you know, discussions about rather unfortunate things that can happen to small children we were obviously quite blasé about it, that's that. School was a Protestant school, I have a, my very earliest memory of there being anything different about us and other children is when I walked to school with the, the boys from the farm up the road who were a bit older and we walked up the avenue to the school and there were some children coming down the other, little girls coming down the other side, and they were going to what we considered would be the poor end of town, and Christopher who was one of the boys shouted out, now what did he say, he said [pauses] I can't remember now, oh I think dirty Taigs or dirty something at that, and we all joined in, you know, it was a game, dirty Taigs, and then I think the day later or a couple of days later we were all hauled into the headteacher's office and, you know, admonished severely for what, somebody had heard obviously or seen, complained, and that's the first time I thought oh right enough, that wasn't very nice of me to do that was it, and it was a very good lesson learned, but I was only about nine I think at the time, but that was the first time ever I had any idea that there were people who were different.

FR: And would you have understand the, what Taig signified, as a slur or as a–?

JM: Not, I probably went home and asked my mother I would say and she would've, I don't know, you didn't really discuss those things with your mother, in our day we didn't discuss those things with our mother, so, and I was a relatively reflective child, so I probably went away and thought hmm, what was going on there. I mean, in the playground there was quite a lot of that sort of language, but not relig-, you know, there was no, it was just you dirty so-and-so, you rotten bugger or you, you know, children's playground language, to us it was playground language, and then somewhere along the line it penetrated that that really wasn't what it was about, there was something else that Christopher was, yeah, aware of that we weren't, or maybe not.

FR: Maybe not, maybe it's just –

JM: It was passed, yeah.

FR: A kind, a slur that he also doesn't really entirely understand.

JM: Yeah, yeah, yeah, he would've been, if he was going up to school with us, and he must've been eleven, I would've been eight then I think, if he was walking up with us, cos he was three years older.

FR: And would you have, was it a religious household?

JM: Well, you see the word, my mother refuses to call herself religious. We were, she had been Church of Ireland, we were Presbyterian, but we were [pauses] dissenters, that's what you'd call us nowadays, we were very middle of the road in terms of religious beliefs. I mean, my father didn't like us, didn't like the boys down the road playing football on Sundays, but, and my aunts, my great-aunts once said we weren't allowed to play cards on Sundays, but generally speaking **[00:10:00]** I don't recall there being, it being anything other than a normal middle-of-the-road religious childhood really I think, yeah.

FR: So churchgoing.

JM: Yeah, we went to chu-, went to Sunday school, we went to church, we, we were part of the church community, which was lovely, we had Sunday school, when I was fifteen I became a Sunday school teacher, that was fun, and then there was youth fellowship and youth fellowship was very interesting. We had quite a, we had a young min-, two young ministers one after the other and they held these sessions where we would discuss, now by the time youth fellowship came along we were very aware that there was this religious division, and we would challenge and discuss, and it was also, by the time I got to that age we had new families who had moved in, one of my best friends was Roman Catholic, I had several Roman Catholic friends, so there, it was probably the beginning I think now of the sixties liberalism impacting on my generation, where we went hang on a minute, that's not right or this isn't right or that can't be right, and my friend who was a couple of years younger, she went to the local convent and so did her friends, and I think my father was a bit wary of my friendship, but they would never, never have stopped it, and at the age of, so we were talking about these things, but I was very aware that my Catholic friends were very scared of the priest and had to do quite extraordinary things I thought in their religious beliefs, and then one day I was sitting on the wall, it was a bit like, you know those cartoons, what do you call them, you know those cartoons, ah I can't remember the name [pauses], Snoopy cartoons.

FR: Yes, yes.

JM: We were sitting there on the wall and we were having these conversations, and this day she said is, the nuns have told us that we're not to play with Protestant children, oh I said, well, she said, but, you know, she said, what she, what the nuns said, the nun said, one nun I don't think it was all the nuns, the nun said that Protestant children go to hell and Catholic children go to heaven, but I don't think that can be right. I don't know, do you think that Protestant children go to heaven and Catholic children go to hell [pauses], and I don't remember, I think we, we discussed that for some time.

FR: Yeah, yeah.

JM: But there was a joke that my father told, which we used to laugh at, which was, reminded me of that where he, or is it, I think it, Peter went up to the pearly gates and he said to, I can't, Peter, said to St Peter at the pearly gates–

FR: Ah ha.

JM: Do you want to turn that down now? [laughs]

FR: No, no, no, it's quite alright.

JM: He said [pauses] St Peter welcomed him and said come in, right, you've been a good man, you've done everything right, you've paid God's loss, he said you could come into heaven, but be quiet as you go down that path there, and he said oh thank you St Peter, but why have I got to be quiet, he says because you see that wall there, he said the Catholics are behind that, they think they're the only ones here. So those were sort of little, little light jokes that were going around at that time, I probably haven't told it very well, he may well have said what's that wall, and St Peter said that's, you know, so, so there was very, very light, there was nothing vindictive about that sort of thing.

FR: But part of the beginning of an awareness of this kind of difference or this kind of–

JM: There was, but you see it wasn't just the beginning because then when I started mixing with Catholic children my mother got a bit wary as I got older, especially when I started bringing Roman Catholic boyfriends home, and again, they wouldn't interfere because she had grown up in Armagh and she had friends next door, Roman Catholic friends, and she recognised and told me stories of the effect that the priests had where there was a mixed marriage. Now having done my DNA research I can tell you so many of my family, other families, left as soon as they had a, was a mixed marriage. I mean, she was telling me that, and this is, this is quite a horrifying story, that if a girl married, if a Protestant girl married a Catholic or vice versa and anything happened, there was an accident or a still birth, that the priest would come and say that God was punishing them for marrying out of their religion, and she used to say be very careful, because she had come across experience like that, including when she lived in, in Lurgan, there was a, in Armagh, there was a family next door who were renting, I think they rented in those, renting, and this was a young man, young Protestant girl and her Catholic boyfriend, and they told her they were terrified that the priests were going to come along and split them up or tell them they were going to go to hell, and mum said that the priest did come one night and she said they had, they had got out and gone out over the roof to get away from the priest. So I was being, I wouldn't say I was being fed these stories because on the other hand my, some of my Catholic friends were saying the same thing, you know, by telling, one, one nun telling my friend that all Protestants were going to hell, that doesn't exactly help unification, but on the other hand my mother, who was a teacher, also worked in a youth club in our home town, Lisburn, and she ran the youth club with the principal of the convent, so you see the, there was this bizarre intermingling of, and, you know, she, there were [sighs], it was a very, very mixed up society, but most of us were trying to just get on with our lives. I have, I have, yeah, I've got stories of, one of the girls in the local area, who got raped at fifteen by one of the boys, I heard this via the network, and she was terrified to go to confession, she was telling this

was a, you know, she's scared, she can't go to confession, why can't she go to confession, can't go to confession because what'll the priest say, because she didn't even know she was being raped because she didn't know the facts of life, and that was the other thing, we had no knowledge of the facts of life, that was a great big mystery until you were about fourteen or fifteen or maybe later I think, it wasn't something that you talked about, so there were girls in my generation who, now you might think it's crazy that they got, that they got raped without knowing, but these sort of, you know, obviously.

FR: I suppose in the total absence of–

JM: Total absence of sex education, they, or maybe it was too late by the time it happened, but I heard that happened to a couple of girls.

FR: I can, I can understand that. Why would the girl in the story not want to go to confession? Because she–

JM: She felt she was, she had, she felt that she had done something terribly wrong.

FR: I understand.

JM: And she hadn't got the words to say to him, they hadn't got the language to say. I think probably afterwards it was such a terrifying experience when she, I mean, I don't know, I can remember the conversations going back and forward, but then another, another friend, a bit later when I was in a, in a music society, again, we, there were about, I don't know how it worked in terms of numbers, but we did come across Catholic friends, this was another Roman Catholic friend of mine, and she would, she was a bit older, she was about twenty, she gave me a lift back and forward from, from the club, and this particular night she was sitting in tears saying to me oh I've got to, I've got to confession, I've got to go to confession, and I would say what's, what's wrong, and she says I've been having an affair with one of the men in the, married men in the club, and she said I haven't been to confession for, I think she said six weeks or twelve weeks, for, if you hadn't been **[00:20:00]** to confession, and she was terrified of going to confession because she felt she had to tell him, so, so this was what it was like post-World War Two really I suppose. So we felt great compassion for our Catholic friends because not only were they very, you know, very tied to the church, I went to a Roman Catholic service once, I thought there were too many bells, my friend said let's go, you know, I'll go to your church, you come to mine, a lot of bells, a lot of bell ringing, you know.

FR: But would you have not, did you not feel also part of this kind of moral universe broadly–

JM: Oh yes.

FR: In terms of restrictions on–?

JM: Oh, oh yes, I thought God would punish me, but, I mean, it wasn't, it was more God was watching me, mummy used to say God's watching you, God's watching you and, and if I

went and pinched a biscuit I'd think God's watching me, but it wasn't [pauses], and the minister would stand up in church and he would, to talk about hell and things, but not, nothing like I think it is now, to be honest, it wasn't evangelical in any way. It was Sunday school, song, hymns, prizes for learning your catechism, Ten Commandments and, but that doesn't ever go, because when I came to England I was then put into a real moral dilemma or two because quite clearly it was a more liberal society and that was very hard to adjust to, to start off with, yeah.

FR: It's interesting, even before you moved to England the kind of, the collision between what you've described as this kind of sixties liberalism and then still this kind of, must've been complicated.

JM: I think [pauses], my best friend, my best Roman Catholic friend, we read a lot and we loved music and we loved fashion. I can remember going over to England and I felt that I was actually more, more modern in my dress than my English friends.

FR: That's interesting.

JM: But then I do think retrospectively that, cos I've done a lot of thinking retrospectively, that first of all we dressed up for church, definitely, you had your best, and I think the, this is a generalisation, my Irish friends were generally speaking more aesthetically orientated, maybe it was just my, my crowd, so we were interested in art, music, fashion from about, well, from when Twiggy came on the scene really [laughs], so I suppose, but yeah, difficult, it was, but we did a lot of thinking and analysing and we, we made a lot of sense of it and, and the tragic thing was that I have a very strong belief that the Troubles, if we'd been able to avoid the Troubles that Northern Ireland would have been well out of this mire by now, because one thing which is not necessarily replicated in anything I've read is that after the 1944 Education Act I think it was, when there was the introduction of grammar schools, so my generation was one of the first generations to go to grammar school.

FR: Yeah, that makes sense.

JM: And that meant that the social divide wasn't as strong, I mean, you got to a grammar school you met people from different backgrounds, but also the schools are very good. Now my mother was very heavily involved in education, she said that the Roman Catholic schools were very good, now my mother was on an education committee and on the education committee they had representatives from all the schools in the area, Catholic and Protestant, and they got on fine, you know, that's what I'm saying, there was probably the odd nun that was coming up with this poisonous stuff, but they, my mother spent a lot of time, she'd be an interesting person to interview, she knows a lot and she said, what she said was that they would, they would discuss all these educational issues and she knew who the good schools were, so then what happened when it got to the sixth form and we started, I mean, I suppose there was a bit of both, there was the liberalism coming in with the sixties that coincided with my generation going to college and university, and well-educated Roman Catholic boys and girls, well-educated Protestant girls and boys met at Queen's, after doing their, so there was a huge mix at Queen's University, so as I say, I'd go along to the gigs with my long black hair and blue eyes, cos I said why is it always the

Catholic boys that pick me up, she said you look Irish, my mother said you look Irish, but I had no problem because they were lovely, well-educated, charming, grammar-educated young men and [pauses], I mean [sighs], I'm leaving childhood behind a bit for a moment, but what I'm saying is that that was a huge opportunity, the sixties and the religious middle class getting together and having these conversations, saying that's absolutely rubbish and I [indecipherable] my mother, my mother says I'm not wearing a crucifix, she has enough crosses to bear without, you know, so it was beginning to permeate and I thou-, but on the other hand that was a danger sign to both extremes as well I think, to be absolutely honest. So anything else about the childhood [laughs] or have you got a general picture? We sa-, oh I'll tell you another one, we sang, family sing-songs.

FR: That's interesting.

JM: Irish tunes, Irish songs, not necessarily rebel ones, but we felt we were Irish because we loved the Irish countryside, my, my family painted Irish cottages, we, we sang and listened to Irish music, Irish poetry, my father was born at the bottom of the mountains of Mourne, mountains of Mourne and [pauses] we were Northern Irish I suppose, we felt very strongly Irish, Northern Irish, and my father was Irish, he was born prior to 1920.

FR: Of course, yeah.

JM: Yes, got, Celtic really.

FR: And you would have sung as a family.

JM: Oh yeah, we sang. My father played the piano, my father, he could play anything on the piano, so my parents' generation would sing hymns, but they'd also sing, I'm just trying to think, going back a little bit there [pauses]. I've got a tape of my aunt singing 'Delaney's Donkey', [hums] do-do-dolu-do-do-do-dolu, so we were a blended, a blended family, we were blended, I like that, that's a new term, isn't it, we were blended Irish, we loved Ireland and, I mean, you don't know this, but we went to the South of Ireland for our holidays and my father went down to watch the rugby, my mother got engaged in Dublin, it wasn't a f-, it wasn't, we, we lived with what it was and we were wary of the extremes on both sides, but we didn't, you know, it's difficult to describe to people today, they don't understand. In fact, English people used to think I had grown up from the age of one in the Troubles, it didn't dawn on them when I went to England that it was only–

FR: Well, it's a really interesting period I think in Northern Ireland–

JM: I know, it's a very interesting period.

FR: Because it's, it is actually quite hard I think to describe or to talk about because of what happens afterwards.

JM: I've started, I've started writing, whether I'll ever finish it I don't know, trying to write it because [pauses] I think [pauses], is there anything else you want to ask about the childhood period?

FR: Well, I was going to just ask about going to a grammar school, **[00:30:00]** or going to the school you went to after your primary school. So how did that work, is it a transfer test in those days?

JM: I, I was [pauses], it's a whole, that story is a whole new ball game [pauses]. It was a [pauses] I don't know, for the relevance of your research it was, again, it was a, it was a, a lot of the private, there were private schools in Northern Ireland like there were everywhere, small private schools, probably, I don't know, I haven't looked into it that much, but small private schools, and what happened after the grammar schools came in and you could get a scholarship, they began to lose their private-paying pupils because even the parents who could afford to pay privately weren't going to turn down a grammar school.

FR: Sure.

JM: So that was a time of change as well because we were going to, to the, we were going to grammar school and this school I think retrospectively it had qualifiers, it had to take qualifiers, it hadn't got a choice, it needed the money because they were losing pupils from other sources, so it was very mixed, but it was, obviously it was Protestant and there were boarders, starving boarders, there were [pauses] children of, of local politicians and business-people, there was myself and another friend who came from the countryside, parents in sort of middle-range occupations, and there were children from downtown Belfast, it was, and it was not a very good school, although it was supposed to be a, it was called a school for young ladies basically, it wasn't a great school, I didn't thrive in it at all, and what I would do, I would take my homework home and I'd get out a musical instrument or write poetry or basically read books I wanted to read and joined clubs, ran a youth club, did a lot of social things and thus did not do terribly well when it came to my A-levels. So within the school, one memory I have in the school is that at this point in time Reverend Ian, irreverent, we never thought of him as a Reverend, he wasn't a true Presbyterian as far as we were concerned, Reverend Paisley was making noises and two things stand out, because again, I was quite young and not very worldly, one is that my cousin who was a few years older had written a letter to the *Telegraph* I think condemning Paisley and his, you know, religious ranting, also at the same time our religious instruction teacher went to one of his meetings and she came back, so I'd have been thirteen, fourteen, and she said to us well, I've been, I want to tell you I've been along to one of Paisley's meetings, and she said, and she, the main message was she said well, I don't agree with what he says, I am totally against what he says, but I have to tell you he's one heck of a speaker, he has those people in the palm of his hands, and so he was beginning to emerge as a controversial character, and by the time I left school we were, well, like Hitler really we were laughing at him, stupid man, you know, we had no idea about how influential he would become, at that point.

FR: But it's interesting that you were aware of him relatively early on.

JM: Yeah, but only because, well, we got, my parents were saying oh not, oh that's right, again, I don't remember exactly, I do know that who, well, went off, she went to Edinburgh University I think, or Trinity, one or t'other, she, she had written a letter and Paisley had written back I think and blasted her, so the general conversation, now this is, I would need

to check this back, the general conversation with the adults was how dare he, how dare he, she made a good case, how dare he, and she's only, what, sixteen, so those were my impressions, early impressions of Paisley, that he was a controversial character, obviously a great orator, but I had no idea that there was this, it's a social thing, I was in a social envelope, a social [sighs], I was protected really because we were outside of Belfast, because our parents were liberal. I do remember going on holiday once, very young, going on holiday to the seaside and there was a little girl a bit younger than me and we were playing and she sort, turned around to me and said are you Protestant or Catholic, and I went I'm Protestant, and she went, shot off, and I said to my mother what, why, why, why did she do that, and mum must've got me something, oh well, her parents have told her they're not to play with Protestant children, you hear that, so lots of little cameos like that. But I also remember, this may have been before or after the Troubles, when you used to watch the news, seen around six or some, some news programme and I didn't understand what they were talking about [laughs], but I remember seeing the two Northern Irish chaps sitting there and a reporter in the middle, and if they didn't agree the one on the right would go [shouts] now, let me tell you, get up and shout, and I thought hmm, didn't see that in England [laughs], so I do, just little cameos of growing up and I'm sure there's hundreds more, but trying to just choose the most relevant really.

FR: And what about the kind of social world of school, so you were saying you were in some clubs.

JM: Oh social, again, I, school, social, well, I, we didn't you see, it was in Belfast and I wasn't allowed to go to Belfast, I only socialised in Lisburn and, and again, again, a bit of a, my friends, my Roman Catholic friends and I we went, we joined a club, we joined a girls' venture corps, ATC, Air Training Corps, I think nowadays it's army cadets, no, it was RAF Cadets, that's right, it was called something different, so we joined the RAF Cadets and mostly you join the RAF Cadets because there are boy RAF Cadets, so our social life was going up, going up there quite a lot. There was church, there was the operatic society, I joined the operatic society, that's where my, my friend who was having an affair told me she couldn't go to the priest, operatic society, I did a lot actually rather than go to school, I had piano lessons, church socials, which were very clean fun, and quite often we had two young men in white Aran jumpers with guitars singing Irish songs, there was a lot of Irish songs shared between, I met somebody, I met a second-generation Irish chap [laughs] in London some years ago and he said, oh he said my father, and he was a Catholic father, but he was English, you know, he said oh my father's favourite song he said is 'Mountains of Mourne', I said oh that's one of my father's favourite song is 'Mountains of Mourne', he said it couldn't be, I, it is, he said it couldn't be because you're Protestant [laughs], no, no, 'Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea' and 'Danny Boy'.

FR: Of course.

JM: 'Danny Boy', you know, sort of this, and I can tell you and I can see that you are nodding, but English, not English, yeah, English people probably can't see that there's ever been a time when the cultures blended in such a way.

FR: Well, it's the kind of overwhelming image of the Troubles that makes it harder to imagine those.

JM: Very hard, I mean, just last week my mother phoned up and said have you got the TV on, have you got the TV on, she said there's the most wonderful documentary **[00:40:00]** about Seamus Heaney, you know, wow, he's one of us, he speaks the same way my father does [laughs], but yeah, poet, so I do think that music, music was pulling a lot of people together, but of course it stretches on. I left home after having lousy A-level results and moved to a flat in Belfast, which was considered by my father to be the worst thing, because I was leaving home and living independently, women didn't do that unless they were slightly suspect, you know, but my mother encouraged it.

FR: That's really interesting, so you did your A-levels and the results were disappointing.

JM: Mediocre.

FR: Mediocre, and you decided to move to Belfast?

JM: Well, actually I've left a whole thing out, a whole thing out there, I told you it's very complex, one of my best friends, an English girl came over and joined our school and I got very, very friendly with her. I didn't know she was Roman Catholic, she didn't tell anybody, but we did have another Roman Catholic girl who came in the sixth form, probably from England, and we went oh she's Roman Catholic, that was it, she's Roman Catholic, is she, oh fancy that, that's what we got, so I was very friendly with her and it was through her [pauses], we both went for the interview I think at Stranmillis and we came, after that we went to Queen's, she'd got a boyfriend at Queen's, and again, I didn't know, didn't know she was Catholic, her boyfriend was Catholic, so yeah, no big deal for me, I had Catholic friends in Lisburn, so we went to Queen's University and I met my first Roman Catholic boyfriend there and she met hers. In fact, I had a choice at that time, which was quite interesting. Why did I leave home, I left, a very simple reason I left home, I had three younger sisters. I got a job, my father got me a job, well, you know, he knew somebody, I got an interview in the bank, was even worse than school, and I'd come home from the bank in the evening and I'd get home at seven o'clock sometimes and my sisters were, everything was, TV was turned off, do your homework, do your homework, do your homework, your dinner's in the oven, oh for f- [laughs], so I was coming home to a house with children really and I didn't feel, and it was a long journey to work, so I went and decided, I was reading the *Petticoat* magazine and there was a whole thing in there about people living in flats in London, so I thought oh I can do that and off I went and got a flat in Wellesley Avenue and my most distinct memory [laughs] of that was, distinct memory of that, which might interest you, it might not to the research anyway, is Eugene and his flatmate lived underneath and they were very well behaved, Eugene and his flatmate, until one night there was this tremendous noise and racketing and I can remember somebody climbing on the roof, and the next day we said what was going on down there, and it was, when you get to my age you forget names, very famous Irish actor who's died now, very famous, oh God, I'll have to look it up and let you know, known for his drinking and–

FR: Not Peter O'Toole?

JM: No, it wasn't Peter O'Toole, it might come back to me, known for his rollicking, but of that ilk, had called and they'd all got completely drunk, and I don't know why they were on the roof, but the woman next door phoned up the police and the next thing we lights in the window, oh it was fun, it was fun, flat living, but the other funny, now I don't know if you can print this, but maybe you can, I, I, I [laughs], I went around several flats and I came Wellesley Avenue and I stayed in, I met this girl who was wanting to share the flat, beautiful little flat I thought, it had a real fire, it had a turquoise bathroom and you could see tennis courts outside the window, and I had a whole social network there of Catholic and Protestant friends, cos we mixed within that area, and a couple of times the guys would come in that they'd say oh nice flat, and they'd go oh cosy, cosy, very cosy, and I thought what do they mean, it was a double bed, and we shared the double bed.

FR: You and your flatmate?

JM: Yes, she had a big family, I had a big family, we were used to sharing beds, it never entered our heads that this might be seen as something suspect. We both had boyfriends at the time, but, you know, very cosy [laughs], so that's how innocent we were. We got another flat with two bedrooms eventually, but, and, and, I mean, that's, as I said, you can see there's material there for, I think.

FR: And your father was annoyed, did you say?

JM: Well, my father, no, he wasn't, my parents were very, are you too warm?

FR: No, no, I'm, I'm honestly, I'm alright, are you–

JM: You're enjoying it.

FR: I am enjoying it, are you okay?

JM: Yes, I'm fine, my fa-, my parents were, my fa-, they would never stop me. So none of this ever comes up, none of this ever comes up in any of the discussions, and it's oral history, it is oral history, you know, like, the friend, her mother said I'm not to wear a crucifix, she's got enough damn crosses, and showing me around her house and saying oh and this is the box room, and oh that's the statue of the Virgin Mary my mother-in-law gave me and I'm just leaving it there out of sight, so there was, I can't describe it really, so, but on the other hand there were magistrates that worked with my father, lawyers worked with my father, so there's, there's Catholic and Protestant society had all kinds **[00:50:00]**, had all kinds [pauses], so, but then by, by the time I left home and lived in my flat the other thing which came up was folk music, the folk music era and there was, it's still there I think, there was a restaurant just along from the university and this wonderful guy called Diarmuid decided he'd set it up as a folk music restaurant, it was called the Hobbit.

FR: Ah do you know, this is more of a personal interest than for the tape, but the poet Ciarán Carson, I don't if you–

JM: Maybe came across him.

FR: He, I, I, he died relatively recently, but I, but as a result of that I re-read his book about folk music–

JM: Oh did you?

FR: And it mentions the Hobbit by name.

JM: Of course, and did he mention the Ferryboat Inn?

FR: Yes, he did, yes. A whole scene.

JM: A whole scene, we had Americans there, we had two American boys who'd come over, parents sent them to university, because, to get them away from Vietnam. I remember them having a discussion about drugs one day and one saying to the other one well, they don't do drugs in Belfast, which wasn't strictly true but, and that was a melting pot, it really was, in fact, we didn't even know, to this day I don't, unless you had the name, Peter, Peter, Michael, well, I knew they were Roman Catholic, but there were others I don't think I ever knew if they were Roman Catholic or Protestant.

FR: It wouldn't have been a–

JM: It wasn't an issue, although I do remember husband, when the Troubles had started, saying well, the only way we're going to keep this club going he says is by calling it, what did he say, jazz and folk or something, something that would not distinguish it as being one religion or the other, and [pauses], and then the *pièce de résistance* really is the same time I was going out with a chap called, who I think is probably retired, but might still be working in Manchester and he became, he was, they, he was a medical student and the medical students were the ones I seemed to go out with more, and had a sports car that was, the relationship didn't last with very long, I think I was beginning to develop a relationship with, friendship, I mean, they were very innocent relationships, with, I mean, and one day in '69 he said to me, what are you doing tomorrow, I was probably working, he said only there's a civil rights meeting in, a civil rights meeting in the Queen's hall, do you want to come along, and I said oh I didn't know what it was really, oh I said I don't know [pauses], anyway I didn't go and he came along, I'm telling you my whole story here, this is my whole book, maybe you'll write it for me, yeah, so I said how did the meeting go, he said well, it was very strange he said, it was very strange, he said we all met in the hall and there was this chap called, forgotten his name, and he was looking for one of us to, I'm not going to tell you the whole–

FR: No.

JM: Punchline of this one, it's my secret, he said, and, and he said, asked one of us to be, stand as an MP, and he said and you know this funny wee girl in our year stood up and said she would do it, well, I said yeah, Bernadette Devlin.

FR: There you go.

JM: There you go, I was there. So it was, they went into it quite innocently, most of the young people, they didn't quite know, but not long after that the civil rights march, I don't know which one it was, I don't, I was very much on the fringes, but very much in the middle at the same time, and I've got, you know, chapters, chapter and verse really, I'm telling you probably more, I mean, I'll probably never get round to writing this down.

FR: Well, you don't have to, you reveal as much as [laughs], as you want to, but it's kind of interesting in that you [pauses], the image that you've presented of your kind of school years at least is of you, you said a social envelope or a bubble.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

FR: Which seemed to have been quite isolated from politics.

JM: Yes, yes.

FR: And then the kind of folk scene, which also seems to have been kind of an oasis in some ways.

JM: It was, that's a very good word for it, yes.

FR: But now we're talking about civil rights, '69, the beginning of the Troubles.

JM: Yes, that's right, that's right.

FR: So it must've been a shock, a change.

JM: Do you know, it was my twentieth birthday [pauses] and I remember thinking I'd escaped school, which I had hated, I had left home, my parents, although they were very liberal were also pretty strict, I was free, and I was sitting there with bombs going off thinking how dare you, you have ruined my life, you have ruined my life [pauses], and it had, and to this day, although leaving because I couldn't stand the religious bigotry and all the things associated with it, I still feel that in many ways it, it did, because I came to England thinking I was British and found out very, very quickly I might be British, but I sure as heck was not English [pauses], so, and those feelings run deeper as you get older and you feel that you've been cheated of your, don't know, maybe I'd have left anyway, but at that particular point, very young, thinking I'd got everything sorted at last, and they were [pauses] threatening my father, threatening my friends and, yeah, it was heartbreaking. I knew, I must've known I guess, knew deep down that this wasn't going to be a year or two, I just knew that was just, this is the end, this is the end of Northern Ireland, and you know what, it has been, culture, culturally, economically [pauses] destroyed. In trying to prove a point and trying to reclaim the past and trying to bully their way through the situation the, oh both sides eventually, because of course there was no U-, there wasn't really any evidence of the UDA until two years later, but they did, they destroyed, **[01:00:00]** destroyed a country.

FR: And especially destroyed what you've been describing, which is this kind of different possibilities.

JM: We were coming together, we were coming together, we were coming together, and liberal Catholics and liberal Protestants.

FR: And did you feel that stop?

JM: No, not immediately, it didn't stop for me because I went to college and I came back and met up with friends when I came back, and met Catholic friends over here, but what struck me was how it affected my two younger sisters, because my sister went to art college and she was four years younger than me, so she would've been about sixteen, and my other sister was thirteen, so my youngest sister really never knew much different and my in-between sister who was sixteen, seventeen, got to art college and, which is in the middle of Belfast, they bombed the art college, when they bombed the art college they destroyed all her submissions and her files, they bombed it twice I think, she was caught up in several bomb scares, she went home and said I'm not living here anymore, but she told me a long time later, she told me a long time later that she had Roman Catholic friends at the art college, but she would never date a Roman Catholic boy because of our father, because there was sort of some, what was happening then was that innocent citizens were being killed and, and actually [laughs] being a rebel I actually went to my, my friend's wedding and, and, in, basically that's how we felt, it was wedding.

FR: Oh yes, the, the same friend.

JM: And my mother said I don't want you to go to her wedding, this was when I came back from college, so it would've been early seventies, '72 maybe, I don't want you to go to her wedding, and I said well, I'm going, she's my best friend, and she said I'm not happy with you going because of your father, I said I'm going, you know, I got there, I went and [laughs] came back, where's the wedding, and she was dressed in this hippie outfit, beautiful hippie outfit and hair and plaits and he had a, he had a multicoloured velvet jacket, and the next day, no, Monday, my father said oh I was telling, in the office, this Catholic, I was telling her that you went to the first hippie wedding in Lisburn, he, it was, yeah, but by the time it got to my second sister down she, she, she wouldn't mix because she was scared then, and I think from there on, from there on there was [pauses], you, you know, people were being, being shot for, for, in a certain sector of the community, for mixing with the enemy.

FR: And tarred and feathered and all the rest of it.

JM: Yeah, mostly the, mostly the IRA tarred and feathered their own, and mostly the IRA tarred and feathered girls who went out with, you know, so, I mean, history, three hundred years down the line you don't have mixed marriages, if you've mixed marriages you get out of here fast, whether it's over the roof or whether you take a boat to America.

FR: [pauses] And your family were personally affected insofar as your dad was a magistrate.

JM: He was, oh yes, he had Gerry Adams up in court a couple of times for membership of the IRA. I dare say the notes are there somewhere, I don't remember the outcome, we just assumed, we didn't think there was any doubt about it and [pauses], threatened, and frustrating for him, sometimes it was chaps he'd had up in court for stealing or cars or for beating their wives or for, and they'd come up and they'd go we know who you are, we know who you are, we'll be after you, Second World War veteran, you know, being threatened by these crooks, a load of crooks jumped on the paramilitary bandwagon, yeah.

FR: It must've been frightening for all of you.

JM: Yeah, un-, checking under the car for bombs. I said to my sister recently, I said oh I know that dad checked under the car every night for, and I said, she said yeah, I checked in the morning [pauses], but, I mean, mild experience compared to a lot of people, I mean, there are other stories, not such good stories, stories about the army which, you know, but again, I went out with [laughs] one of them, yeah, I wasn't going to settle down [laughs], so I was terrible, I did go out with a gorgeous, absolutely gorgeous army captain, when he walked into–

FR: [laughs] Oh wow.

JM: Our house, he was about six foot something in his uniform, my mother nearly fainted on the spot, so did I, he was gorgeous, but I discovered he was married, so that ended very quickly.

FR: From civil rights meetings to an army captain to, it's incredible.

JM: I know, I'm terrible, and that's only, that's only a little bit of it, I'm not telling you too much because it's not relevant.

FR: No, no.

JM: A lot of the, a lot of the stuff isn't relevant, but I would, I, I want to tell you, I want to speak to people because [pauses] I think that I lived in, do you know I can't even remember to this day, is it the Falls Road, Falls Road, that's right, and while we knew about the Shankill and the Falls, but we didn't really know much about the Shankill and the Falls, but he said oh I lived in the Falls Road when they came in and, you know, we got, there was clearly [pauses], there was clearly class, I mean, it's all very well for the middle classes, they escaped all this, but no, they didn't, because there were middle-class doctors in hospitals sewing people back together, there were lawyers, there were the police, I mean, some of the police were, became pretty brutal, but others had families, you know, it affected everybody to some degree. In fact, my cousin, one of my cousins said, who stayed in Northern Ireland, we could never drive the car into town because if we drove a car into town the chances of it being smashed when you'd come out of the cinema, you know, it was, I missed [pauses], I can only give you cameos, I mean, the, the UDA and the gun thing just came out with the blue as well, that was [pauses], that was, I, I was going to see that, my friend I mentioned, I was going to see her, she wasn't married at this point, I was going over to see her, it was evening, it was dark, I'd just had a spat with my mother actually

because she was nagging me to finish my assignment, I did all my assignments for college I was very, very, very, very, very hard-working at the English college I went to, and she, so we, off she said, I said I'm going out and walked out the front gate and across the road to the step and I got half way across and I thought, corner of my eye I saw something and I turned and what it was was the UDA, I knew, in pitch dark, eight men on all fours beneath the neighbour's wall, with guns, creeping up towards our front gate and I went oh [pauses] what are they doing, who are they after, and then, and then I saw the uniforms and I went oh it's soldiers, that's okay, and I thought why are the soldiers at my gate with their guns ready, and then I, the chap at the back saw me freeze and he, he turned [laughs] himself and he turned to look at me, stupid man, and I **[01:10:00]** just froze, completely froze to the spot, and then the guy at the front said you alright love, I thought, and I went into complete shock, my whole body went into some sort of, and I shook and he came over, brought, and my God, he got a mouthful from my father, and it was terrible, I sta-, I developed a stammer for the next week, I couldn't, I couldn't, I was like that, completely like that. The fear was more for my family really, my God, why are they there, are they going to, are they going to, is there somebody at my, is, have I, is it, you know, all that, and that tiny little cameo of what everybody else was feeling all the time, how on earth can anybody expect that people can forget that when they have reminders all the time, you know, so that was growing up. College was different, England was different.

FR: So you were working in Belfast initially?

JM: I was.

FR: In a bank?

JM: A bank, that's right.

FR: Yeah, and then the Troubles start.

JM: The Troubles, yeah, I, I, woo, I was, well, they started on my birthday in 1969 and, and then two days later I was holed up in my boyfriend's house, I couldn't go home, that was an interesting occasion because we weren't allowed to–

FR: You couldn't travel.

JM: Well, they didn't, two nights later I was trying to get a bus into Belfast and the bus driver took us so far and then he stopped and threw everybody off the bus and said I'm not going any further because they're burning buses, and you, it's kind of surreal, so I'm, I'm like, walking down the street with, wearing a mini-skirt I'd borrowed from my flatmate, which was too short, thinking God, I didn't want to have to walk in a mini-skirt [laughs], you know, it's all sort of, sort of into, inter, interplaying and then guns, guns, guns, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, over the fields, and what do you call those ones, da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da, just, just walked into, just woken up basically in a war zone and lived through it that year.

FR: And did you live in Belfast or did you–?

JM: I lived in Belfast in this, in a second flat, I lived in the Lisburn Road. We would have, I was working, but the gang would come round, late in the evening we would strum guitars, tell stupid jokes, nobody complained, which was amazing cos it was quite late. I was on the top floor in this flat and my other girl, my other flatmate wasn't there very much, she was at her boyfriend's, so they'd come in, knock the door downstairs, I was on the third floor, and I'd throw the keys down, chung, and they'd let themselves in and [pauses] it was, oh one of them, one of them was a chap called, he does the folk clubs up north and he releases a couple of CDs and I remember dancing, of course the pubs all closed at half ten, and we would go to the, it was the Ferryboat we went to, the Ferryboat, and after the Ferryboat we'd go to this coffee bar.

FR: Oh yeah, that's the sixties.

JM: Half past ten, upstairs, above a pub they had a coffee bar where they sold [laughs] coffee and cakes, because the guy there was very camp and he'd go coffee and cakes, coffee and cakes, they had a piano up there and sometimes would play the piano or we'd be, young, we danced down the streets and swing on lampposts and things like that and, and he went to college, teacher, well, we were kind of a gang of people who hadn't quite got the grades for university because really we were much more interested in music and art, so a couple of them were at art college, a load of us went to teacher training, a lot of them are still singing around the place, so we were an arty-farty bunch really I suppose, but through the arts, and I think it must be demonstrated in many, many situations of conflict, where people reach out through music, art, architect-, I don't know, sort of creativity [pauses] and, yeah, I've got several of them on my Facebook now. I've been back for reunions, we had a reunion concert in 2005 where the, but it was the Belfast folk, there were two sides to the Belfast folk crowd, there was the traditional, you know, flute and banjo etcetera bunch and then there was the contemporary, Leonard Cohen, Joni Mitchell, Pentangle, all that sort of stuff, wrote our own stuff as well [pauses]. Do you think I've got enough for a–?

FR: I would love to read something about the Belfast folk scene, yeah.

JM: Yeah, but the tragedy was that it just got, well, we left, as I said, we left, many, many of us left, hundreds of us, in fact, I remember going to a, three years at college going to a dance in Belfast and going into, you know they go to the ladies, hello, I'll go to the ladies, will you come with me, we'll go to the ladies together folks, and it was full of people in this gap or before the concert, whenever it was going oh I'm Tokyo now, are you in Tokyo, I'm in Canada, where are you now, I'm in Edinburgh, where, and thinking God, we've just, the mass migration, and coming back one holiday and there were, there was a thing in the paper saying migrants or the migrants return, and then [laughs], I think I'd just qualified, it said no English-qualified teachers can apply for this job, they were advertising it for, and I was just looking at it out of interest, advertising teaching jobs, nobody from an English college should apply for, to this school, I thought oh God, no change there.

FR: [laughs] We talked about it before the tape was running, but you were saying that you'd been told that the English training schools were bad.

JM: No, you don't go to English training schools, the English education system's not as good as it is in Northern Ireland, which had an element of truth in it, and you don't go to English colleges because they're no good, they're just basically no good, and everybody knows somebody who was the thickest girl in the class who went to this English college or this Welsh college or this, you know, so you don't go, you don't even think of applying, and as I said, poor old frie-, Roman Catholic friends of mine being told if they went to, I don't know what they were told, if they went to an English college they wouldn't be given a reference, even if it was a Catholic college, so, so that's the way it was.

FR: So do you remember deciding to leave?

JM: Yeah, cos I went over to see Peter, yeah, cos Peter had gone, decided he was going to leave Northern Ireland.

FR: So Peter was your, your boyfriend.

JM: Peter was the boyfriend at the time. He went to a Leeds teacher training college and invited me over for his birthday, and I went over for the weekend [laughs] on the boat, fabulous, fabulous experience sailing out of, sailing out of Belfast, the sky, the sea, the waves, fantastic experience, anyway, and we, we shared ba-, we shared, we shared cabins in those days, so there was a lady in the top bunk and I was in the bottom bunk, yes and you, there were sleeper, there were sleeper trains then as well where you'd get a top or bottom bunk, and went over and I just fell in love with his college, beautiful, new, apparently liberal, fun, the, he was doing arts and media, I went to an arts and media session that was ah, phoned home, I'm going, I'm leaving, I'm leaving cos of the **[01:20:00**] Troubles, I'm leaving because of the sectarianism, but I'm leaving because my boyfriend's here, but mostly I'm leaving cos I, this is what I want to do, and my parents supported me completely until they realised that he'd gone to a Roman Catholic college, and it wasn't to do with bigotry, it was, and sure, they were right, you won't get a job in a Protestant school, well, actually I might have got a job in a Protestant school, but they'd have looked at me sideways, and I might not have done, they'd think I was odd, and I wouldn't have got a job in a Catholic school.

FR: Because you were Protestant.

JM: Cos I was Protestant and therefore it wasn't a good idea [pauses]. But at the same time I thought that's a, that is a, I can tell that's a good college, I can tell from speaking to the students, I can tell from looking at the resources, I can tell that that is a good college and I am going to find one somewhere in England that's as good as that, and it so happened to be the same decision that my friend Christine had made, and when I look back now an awful lot of those young people I mixed with, if they didn't go to England to college they did, they did degrees, FE degrees, I mean, really it says a lot about the education system not meeting the needs of the more arty, and in fact, it was very narrow, there was nothing at my school, there was a drama club I think, you had, I had music lessons, piano lessons, but it was [sighs] full of sad, sad women who had been spinsters left over from the Second World War and who saw us coming in with short skirts, you know, and with all the life that they weren't going to have I think, and there was a sort of a, another culture clash there really, so it's, I

think the convents, it was like a convent basically, only it wasn't, that was fifties stroke sixties, and of course in Ireland we were about ten years behind in England in everything, and England was ten years behind America and whatever, so and then I got to England and that's when I realised I was Irish, not just Northern Irish, damn it, I was Irish.

FR: So how did that happen?

JM: You don't want a break, wouldn't you like a break?

FR: We can take a break, absolutely.

JM: No, it's up to you.

FR: I'm fine. I might turn this down slightly now actually cos I'm– [laughs]

JM: You turn it down. Can you manage it? There's a technique to it.

FR: Is it this here?

JM: Yeah, it's getting hot, pull that out, I might do it myself, pull that away.

FR: Yes, I can see the–

JM: Yeah, just fiddle with that, which way does it go, I do it automatically, oh you turned it down.

FR: I think so.

JM: You can turn it off altogether on the other side.

FR: Ah no, it's grand, leave it on just–

JM: That's grand, that's a word, that's an Irish word.

FR: It is [laughs], it is, I find that when I use that in emails with colleagues they're sometimes like, what do you mean, grand.

JM: Throughother, what do you mean throughother, oh yeah, that was the first thing, the first challenge in England, oh no, the first challenge was the interview [laughs]. I went over to the interview, again, Alice in Wonderland hairstyle [pauses], big eyes, my Sunday best coat, which was actually a mini-coat in mint green I think, with a scarf and matching gloves, white scarf, matching white gloves, I must've looked like Alice in Wonderland, and I was interviewed by the dance tutor, and he said to me [pauses] do you think you'll manage in an English college coming from Northern Ireland, why, well, your accent, we had a guy last year and he had to have elocution lessons, and he said also we're a much more liberal society, do you think you'll be able to manage living in a liberal atmosphere, and I thought of walking through Belfast at night with guns, you know, sitting up all night playing your guitar, I said

no, no, I think I'll be alright [laughs], I thought probably got more experience of life than, and that was, that was the first thing, you might need to change your accent and you might need to be aware it's very liberal. I probably looked like I'd walked out of Sunday school, you know, I prob-, and, I mean, I look back now [laughs], here you look at images of, you know, I don't know, nineteenth-century images, probably thought I looked as if I'd walked out of, and I had walked out of Sunday school, but it was quite a liberal Sunday school and then, yeah, then it was [pauses], it was [pauses], did you, did you row the boat over, English accent, did you row, row the boat over, no, do you have pigs in the kitchen, do you really have pigs in the kitchen, nooo. On the gentler side, oh, I don't know what you're saying, but I like the sound of it, and then mm-hmm, ah-ha, mm-hmm, ah-ha, and, and probably the biggest insult amongst a fair few was oh you must be really clever to get into an English college, are you going to go back and, and teach the Irish what you've learned here, phew. You're getting a reputation because you talk to the guys, yeah, well, when you come out of a lecture don't you talk, no, you don't approach men, they speak to you first, if you go and speak to a man he'll think you're chatting him up, what, okay.

FR: So much for the liberal society.

JM: Well, they were reserved, and I wasn't reserved, and you find it, you know, everybody says you go to Ireland and people are very friendly, it's true we are, even to this day, actually to this day, actually to this day I have kept, I have to keep that little maxim, if you see a man you've met or you've known or you've worked with briefly, don't go over and speak to him, he has to speak to you first, to this day, and sometimes I forget and open up, you know, unless he's Northern Irish or Southern Irish, and we'll both go hi, what do you think of, what do you [laughs], chooing, doesn't matter, north or south, we have that in common.

FR: So this kind of English reserve on the one hand and then all of these kind of preconceptions about Ireland or Northern Ireland on the other hand.

JM: No, yeah, yeah, somebody once said to me Dublin's the capital of it, and I said no, it's Belfast, they said Belfast, no, no concept, I'll give them credit, the first Christmas some of the girls said to me my mother says you can come home and stay with us for Christmas if you can't go home to Ireland, and I went thank you, that's very, thank your mother very much, but I will be going back, so that was in '71, '72, things were pretty tough.

FR: Do you remember going back in that period, was that difficult?

JM: Yeah, I did, I went well, the first, the first time I went back I met up with the old crowd and I was very homesick then because I walked into this, hi everybody, friends, you know, and although I was making friends at college, I, I just felt different, it didn't feel as [pauses] welcoming I suppose. I think, you know, and it stayed and although I was Northern Irish, it was just easier to say I was Irish, but even by saying I was Irish meant they didn't know, and I went up to London a couple of times and saw a couple of those signs in, in, **[01:30:00**] you know, no blacks, no dogs, no Irish, and there were quite a lot of, I mean, little tiny incidental. Now that might not have been everybody's experience I have to say. What I would say is that one of the other things that got me into trouble, not big trouble, was the

Irish humour. Northern Irish, very, very dry, quite, I learned very quickly you don't use Irish humour because they think you're being rude, they think you're, that you're being, you know, and even, over the years I had to be very careful I didn't slide into that lovely, slightly sarcastic Ulster way of speaking.

FR: [laughs] I know what you mean.

JM: You know that one, you know that one, yes, and I think a lot of people you, that's, whenever I met anybody from Northern Ireland we'd say have you noticed, you've got to be very careful how you put things.

FR: [laughs] Sure.

JM: So there's a whole discourse that people aren't even aware of. Walking along from London to my train with a bag and a briefcase and a newspaper or two, I dropped, the newspaper fell with a clunk behind me, and the guy behind me, walking to the train, picked it up and he said ah you just missed me, and I thought no Englishman would ever pick up your newspaper and say you just missed me [laughs].

FR: [laughs] It's true.

JM: It's true, it is true [pauses]. So over the years you try to conform, you, me and Meghan Markle, and you realise that actually one day you think I'm never going to be English [pauses], and then you have to accept that really, so I've always said I'm Irish, just to get me out of trouble really [laughs].

FR: And so your teacher training college, was in, was it in London? Yeah.

JM: That's right, and then–

FR: And did you think that you would go back to Northern Ireland to teach or–?

JM: Not at that point. I mean, I qualified '74 and, I mean, there was blood on the streets really. My memories of going back were, nice Christmas and then New Year's Eve the bombs would start, cos they'd have a ceasefire over Christmas and then when you got to celebrating New Year's Eve at midnight a bomb would go off somewhere, and–

FR: And you've still got sisters, your whole family, your father.

JM: My whole family was there, my whole family, my father's family, my mother's family, the whole extended family and, were there.

FR: So that must have been hard.

JM: And there was a murder of one of the boys in the group, shot dead on the doorstep, and another one I was friendly with got involved with the IRA and was, I don't know, in a bomb or something, in a car, I don't know what happened but he ended up with a stroke, and so

there was always those sorts of stories. My father would be upset because one of his colleagues had been murdered [pauses], but I, I would, no, I wouldn't have gone back, I'd decided I'd go to London and that was the best move I made really because in London it's a melting pot, it was many, many years later before I was questioned on my cultural background again.

FR: So, so London felt different from–

JM: London was different–

FR: Exeter.

JM: Well, Exeter, I mean, they were very young these students, you know, they were very young and it was okay, I mean, I was very happy–

FR: No, sure, yeah.

JM: There, I did well, reasonably well. It was a, it was very sad when it was over, all, you know, I made many friends, I'm still in touch with some of them, it was a very, very good college, academically it was very good, I couldn't fault it really at all, but I had a bit of a difficult first year because, the culture shock, there was a definite culture shock because they knew nothing. I think there was one other Northern Irish girl, girl there, but she was terribly, terribly quiet, incredibly quiet, I was more lively, probably got more attention that way, and then I joined a few folk clubs [laughs], bought a new guitar, bought a Yamaha 150 and continued writing songs and poetry.

FR: So there's kind of a continuity there then with the folk thing, yeah.

JM: Yeah, and went up to Newcastle to see a friend from Belfast at some point and thought oh it's like Belfast, Newcastle's like Belfast, there was a folk scene there and, you know [pauses], yeah, did a little bit in London as well, not a lot, recently joined a folk club up here.

FR: Oh really?

JM: [laughs] There you go, so there, that was, as I say, our belief was the music would've, we were pulled together through, well, mutual interests for heaven's sake, you know. Never called myself a loyalist in my life, never called myself a unionist.

FR: And not a–

JM: Never voted.

FR: Not an overtly political family even–

JM: Oh my mother was political.

FR: Oh really?

JM: But she was, she fought, no, she was on unions and all sorts of thi-, oh yeah, she's very political, very political my mother, but not political in a sort of religious political, you know, women's rights, women's rights, see, and was on all these committees [pauses], and still is political in a, in a small p, you know, but there wasn't any, it wasn't politics it was religion, but also it was class, and this is what, again, it was, it's not actually said, and if you read *Mrs Thatcher's Spy* you'll see that what he talks about there is how the IRA were moving away from republicanism and more to social justice and that marked a big turn, and of course there was a great need of it because there was a lot of poverty in Northern Ireland and it was predominantly the Roman Catholic, Roman Catholics, but not everybody, a lot of middle-class Catholics and [pauses], you know, they had big families and they were told that they weren't allowed to use birth control and they weren't allowed to use anything other than the rhythm method of conception, of protection, and the more children they had the more likely we were to get back to [laughs] even-stevens in terms of numbers, and we were aware of that, but it didn't [pauses], so that was a long time ago.

FR: And do you remember your first job in London?

JM: First job in London, well, no, I worked, actually I went to Sussex first.

FR: Oh really?

JM: I worked in, yeah, well, I left college and then I, my first job was in a little village school in Sussex and then–

FR: What, where in Sussex? Just because I live in Sussex. **[01:40:00]**

JM: I taught there for a year and a half and then, it was a bit rural, so I went to London, got a job in, yeah, well, there is a story there, went to this interview and at the interview there were four of us, one, two, three, four. There was a Welsh girl, Irish girl, English girl and, yeah, that's right, four of us. We were each interviewed and I came out and said I've just messed that interview up, deliberately I said, I don't want to work for that headteacher [laughs], I don't want to work for that headteacher, and [pauses] there was an Irish Catholic girl there and a Welsh girl, so we sat there and we shook cos we didn't want this job, and then this very sort of wimpish looking English girl, she, she got it, and we went great, let's go to the pub [laughs]. We shot off to the pub and the Welsh girl said to me well, I'm teaching at a school not very far away from here and we're looking for new staff, why don't you come along, if you come along I'll stay cos, you know, we got on very well, and the, so we said our goodbyes to the Roman Catholic Irish girl and off we went to meet her headteacher in one of the toughest schools in west London [laughs], that put some, yeah, but, and there I stayed for ten years, but the interesting thing about that was that I got a bus one day and bumped into the Roman Catholic Irish girl and she said I'm having a party, would you like to come along. So I went along to the party and I met two of the teachers at her school and one of their friends, one of the teachers, two of them were Northern Irish Catholics, one of them I know, we reckoned we'd met at a Queen's hop because he was friends with one of my boyfriends and we became a little, a group and went around together for quite a long time really, good friends, and it was the oh I must've seen you at Queen's, I must've seen

you at Queen's, oh fancy, you know, again, immediate contact and, you know, so even coming over here we, we almost sought each other out to a certain extent as a subculture I suppose, and one of the interesting things about that is that one of the young men, well, I saw quite a lot, you know, again it was a mixed crowd, I saw quite a lot of them and one day he must've been round my place or I was round his place and the news came on, comes on, radio is on, the news came on, it comes on every hour, and we were talking, and when the news came on we both went [pauses] and continued talking, and then we realised that wherever we were in the seventies when the news came on we stopped, we both realised we both did the same thing, wherever you were when the news came on you listened to it, of course Northern Ireland was on the news a lot, but you were listening out for friends and family, and that went on for a long time.

FR: Yeah [pauses], I'm trying to–

JM: Do you want to have a break now? I'll make you a cup of tea, cos I think–

FR: Yeah, go on, yeah, yeah, we'll have a pause.

JM: Nobody ever listens to me talking that long.

FR: No, it's really interesting. **[01:44:25]** [The two interview audio files were spliced together here].

JM: Have you had anybody as loquacious as I am?

FR: Ah yeah, they can go on for quite a long time, absolutely.

JM: Good, good, good, good.

FR: So that's rolling again. I was going to ask you about working in London, so what did you teach?

JM: I started off teaching primary school children in a really tough school where we, fabulous job because, well, partly, I felt the kids, I had like, it was a middle school, so we took them to thirteen, fourteen and some of the thirteen, fourteen-year-olds, especially from the West Indian community, were massive and they had like, biblical names and biblical passions.

FR: Massive in the sense of being physically large?

JM: Physically, physically, to [laughs] go out in the playground and blow the whistle and they go oh fuck off, miss, I'd go oh God, that's what they were like, and fortunately the local authority had brought in a new headteacher who was the complete opposite, he was about five foot four with a squeaky voice, so we had our hands, work cut out and, but we also had the first generation, first-generation Asian immigrants bussed in from Southall–

FR: Okay, yeah, yeah, yeah.

JM: In London, so you had a huge, it was very, this school, just at the sort of apex really.

FR: And this is in the seventies?

JM: It was just on, it was just on the border of Shepherd's Bush and so it was inner London, just about five hundred yards out of inner London really, maybe a mile out of London, so we didn't get the inner London money cos a lot of schools got inner London, you know, deprivation money, I taught there and, and it evolved over time, we, we sorted it out. Now the children in that school [laughs], they went on to a secondary school just down the road, and that secondary school the BBC came into and did, you know, did a, a live, well, they filmed the school, one of the very, very first camera on the wall, I remember that one, went into the girls' toilets and interviewed the girls in the girls' toilets, anyway, it really, really upset people because at that point in time in the seventies, schools in London, I can't generalise, had a reputation let's just say for being wild, which of course was repli-, I don't think it, I think it kind of, I don't know how long it went on for, if it was a passing phase, I think the previous generation of teachers in England, maybe, were not as well qualified, I think the ones, fifties, I don't quite know about that in some ways, but that's only a feeling rather than anything else, and of course it was post-sixties, post-seventies and a lot of discipline in the schools had gone, so we had to work really, really, really hard to get that school back on its, and we did, we did manage, we had a new headteacher came in, the first headteacher had done his best, new headteacher came in, he was Welsh and old-fashioned and we, we sorted it out, we sorted the school out and the children started to thrive, really thrive. I taught music, I taught drama, I did a lot of work on drama and I ended up lecturing in the local authority on drama, it was interesting. There was one occasion when we took a little boy in, he was eleven, for a short-term placement because he was playing Oliver in, in London and he was the only child that ever challenged me on my race, and he said you're Irish, you're Irish, I've got an Irish teacher, whoops, but generally speaking the children didn't notice, the only thing they noticed was I had the same, no, I won't say that [pauses], fab-, fabulous, I worked, we all worked terribly hard and we did a lot of school productions and musicals, I wrote a musical at one point, including two hundred children and I've got that somewhere, maybe one day, never mind, and so, and it was a good school cos we all worked together, we all worked very closely together and supported each other, sports, just a very good school, very good school. I was there for ten, eleven years and cycled, cycled to it every day in, cycled, when I first started cycling to school, you know, Fearghus, occasionally a car would go through a puddle and splash me and I'd go damn you, damn you, damn you man, damn you men, damn you men, and then one day I was cycling and I got cut up by a red car and I went damn you and it was a woman, I went what, so I, not, you know, I thought oh women are changing, they're getting a bit more aggressive and that's absolutely true, that was, that was, she was a younger generation, she was the next generation down and she wasn't going to make way and I stopped, stopped waving my fists after that, thinking oh the world is changing, women are getting aggressive.

FR: That's an interesting marker.

JM: Yeah, a little moment, so what else can I say, my Irishness was not an issue.

FR: Your Irishness wasn't an issue and lots of West Indian, second-generation maybe, children–

JM: Although I did notice the school was, that, I don't like using the term class, but I will in this context, mostly, mostly it was a working-class community, but it was mixed as well because there were, yeah, London quite often is, you've got strong working-class communities, and this salt of the earth working-class community this was, and there were diplomats' children, sort of a right mix, what I did notice was walking down the streets, hear the culture, and I'd see people walking down the streets talking, and then the West Indians would come along, African-Caribbean and they'd go hi, whoa, joya, did you hear, vola-, the volatility there and then the Irish, probably southern, and they're, you know, talking with their hands, and again, I thought gosh, that's interesting that the Afro-Caribbeans and the Irish are meeting and marrying and getting on because culturally they are more outgoing, more outspoken, more, you know, and I learnt a lot about that community while I was working there, but it did remind me [laughs] of, my parents, God love them, saved up for a school holiday for each of us and mine was to go on an international cruise. We flew from Belfast in 1966 to Southampton, they'd a disco that night for us, all the Northern Irish children that were going, we got to Southampton and they marched the children, English children, on, I think they marched the Canadians on as well, I don't know if they marched the Germans on, but we had German, we had French, we had Canadian, we had English, right. The first Canadian I met said oh hi, I was just walking down, I was just walking down the stairs there and I just said hi to this English kid and they ignored me, you see, so we grouped, the Canadians palled up with the Northern Irish, the English palled up with the Germans and the French stuck to themselves, now that's terribly stereotypical, but again, it's, it's the Irish abroad, it's the Irish out of the Irish situation and, and thinking oh yeah, we're pretty sharp, but we're different from English, different from German, I'll never forget that, and again that's oral history, that's [laughs], I even was doing A-level French and I'd say pass me the salt in French and they'd say *je ne comprends pas*. Fuck you, fuck you [laughs].

FR: [laughs] No, I go to France quite a lot, my partner's French, so I know what you are talking about [laughs].

JM: [laughs] Yeah, I've got a French cousin as well, but anyway, so, so that was, little, just little– **[01:54:25]**

FR: Well, again, this sense of confusing British, Irish kind of–

JM: Yeah, yes, and all the blinking blogs, that blog I was telling you about, unionist, nationalist, unionist, nationalist, union-, no hang on a minute, hang on a minute, and more recently, wait a minute, I am, are you saying I'm not Irish, but I am Irish, but you see my youngest sister would say she comes from Ulster.

FR: Which is another way of doing it.

JM: A way of doing it because she doesn't want to be, maybe she doesn't want to be mixed up, I don't know, we don't, we just talk about our sense of humour, having to watch what we say, and when my, I found my DNA cousins and my DNA cousins came over to see us, we

had an afternoon, and when they went, they left, we all went ah wasn't that wonderful, they're so Northern Irish, you know, so it's a sort of, yeah, anyway.

FR: So did your, I think you said to me earlier that your sisters also left.

JM: They all, we all left, but they all had s-, almost, if you think about, I was [sighs] eight years older than my youngest sister, so I was twenty, she was twelve, so her life was much more impacted, her growing up life, my growing up life was perfectly okay, and my next sister down, until the Troubles hit and then, although we didn't leave Northern Ireland, we could've kept coming home, I was awa-, I had escaped so to speak, but I had a full throttle of it for, between '69 and coming back, forward, '69, '72, I lived through it and, you know, because of the radio and the television and, and always, oh there's been a bomb, where, you know, where's there been a bomb, turn on the television, sorry, sorry, sorry, we're talking, I'll just hear what that was, so it follows you, it follows you and, and then quite a lot of people said oh you're Irish, I said yeah, then they said, sometimes they said Catholic or Protestant and sometimes they just assumed I was Catholic if I said I was Irish, so I think that's possibly why my younger sisters may have stopped using that terminology, maybe [pauses]. I did go to a party with, a Jewish friend had a party and a friend of hers was there and he was Welsh and he, we were talking about this cultural thing and my friend came back and said oh you two are getting on, I said yes, we're chatting, what are you chatting about, well, things we've got in common, she said well, what have you got in common, what have you got in common then, and he looked at me and I looked at him and we went well, we're, we're not English, ah we both laughed and we thought yeah, we're not English, and so [laughs] there's another nomen-, nomenclature for you. I love the, I've got great English friends, I like England, I like living here, they are a tremendously tolerant nation, I am very fond of them, but I, I never can feel whatever it is and, to be honest, I'm quite sure, I could be completely wrong and I know it's an aside, but this poor, maybe she's not poor, this American trying to marry into an even stuffier royal family, yes, and there's these discussions about race I think no, it's not her colour, she'll be American, she'll be saying the wrong things, she'll be touching people when she shouldn't, she'll be making little cracks which are not accep-, you know, she's got, she's come in and she's American, she's not English and, and I guess I can understand that, I could be wrong, but I think that's probably the hardest thing.

FR: And that, this sense of cultural difference, let's call it, was something that you felt, that you felt since you moved?

JM: Well, I came over thinking, in fact, when I came over I remember thinking I've come from the little part of the British Isles, I'm the daughter, I am the child of, you know, and I'll, I'll, they'll look after me, it was growing up with this feeling that England would look after you, that the British Isles, that the Empire would care, or whatever it was, the fee-, growing up and feeling you were going to be taken care of, and if I was going to England it wasn't conscious, it was a sort of sensation that I'd feel safe over there because they'll take care of us. I think that, difficult to, it's a feeling I couldn't exactly describe what it was, and then realising actually they're not going to take care of me, I've got to find my own way and I've got to find my own identity and there's parts of my identity I've got to repress and [pauses] that's going to be hard work, and actually there's parts of your identity you can never,

never, never repress, they're so much a part of you, and what I was saying to you before is that that could just be my personality and other, I do have other Irish friends who don't feel it strongly, or it only comes up from time to time, and I think probably I'm feeling it more now because, retired, I have to go out now and make new contacts and I've got to go through that whole process again of trying to explain well, I come from Northern Ireland, cos people ask you what's your accent, oh one, one part of England, lecturing, talking [pauses], where are you from, where are you from, that accent, that accent, I'm from Ireland, Northern Ireland, really, subtext, Irish coming over here to teach us how to teach, well, yes, maybe. It wasn't universal, it was just one particular, or of course, going back to teenage years, hitchhiking around Europe, which a lot of us did then, getting a train, meeting a young man on the train from, same carriage, twenty-four, I'm twenty-four, I'm from, I don't know, I can't remember now, Pennsylvania, I don't know, from America, where am I from, probably deep south I think, oh yeah, yeah, I'm studying, I'm doing my PhD, I'll have to live with my parents, my folks because, you know, I can't afford it myself, pay for a PhD, what do you do, I said I can't remember what he asked first, what do you do, oh I'm a teacher, ah you're a teacher, where are you from, what's that accent, I'm Irish, you can't be, what do you mean I can't be, you can't be a teacher if you're Irish, why, well, because, you know, the Irish, they're not too bright are they [pauses], PhD, yeah.

FR: [laughs; pauses] So I'm thinking there's, first of all to hear a little bit about what happens after you finish teaching in this school. So you, you have, eventually become someone who teaches teachers, as it were.

JM: Yeah, I taught, I then became an advisory teacher, and then I got a job working on the national curriculum and I had to implement national initiatives, and I did that for a while, then, this would identify me if–

FR: Okay, do we want to skip over this then?

JM: Well, I don't know how to skip, yeah, let me think, national initiatives, and then [pauses] I moved from there into **[02:04:25]** teacher training and I taught in teacher training round about the time [sighs] when the curriculum was changing again, and when there was a lot of fuss about standards in schools, and apart from one other job in between I continued doing that until I retired.

FR: Living in London this, that whole time?

JM: Yeah, living most of that time in west, south-west London, yeah.

FR: Do you remember the IRA bombings of the early nineties in London?

JM: Yeah, good point, and Birmingham, I've friends in Birmingham, yes, I did, I watched them on television [pauses; sighs], I thi-, and Guildford, what did I think, what did I think or what did I feel?

FR: What did you think or what did you feel, or even aside from those, just following Northern Ireland, as you say you do, you–

JM: Well, up until the peace process, up until, well, what did I think, I'll tell you what I did think, each time a certain person came on the television, and to this day I will turn it off, and that's emotional, any representatives of what was the IRA and then became Sinn Féin or, yeah, I just turn them off, I couldn't bear to listen, I couldn't bear to see them, no control, you see, over it. I have friends who became a little, there were times when people got antagonistic, not, I mean, most of my friends are pretty well educated and the rest of it, but they would tackle me on it and you, I'd one friend who said oh what are they, those stupid people, what are they up to, what are they playing at, what on earth sort of people are they and I'm going well, hang on, it's not as simple as that, so there was a period when the London bombs went, when people would, would challenge what was happening, ask me for my views or ask, or even wrap me up with, associate me with, with that side of the fighting [pauses], and I, I went back, 2005 I went back and, cos it was, it was this concert I was going to, and one of the old crowd, they gave me a lift, and I looked around and thought what has happened, what has happened to this country, it's rougher, it's, they were saying you don't walk around the streets at night here, you don't walk around the streets at night, what, what's going on [pauses]. I don't know, it kind of all blends into one, you know, it blends into one. I suppose I'm sentimentally thinking back more to before or even politically thinking about the future, but that bit in between, it's gone slightly to the back of my memory, but I would say, oh I've got a few, a few examples, I mean, of the antagonism, teaching practice, second or third year teaching practice, staffroom, male teacher walks in after a bomb, oh he said, knowing where I came from, at the top of his voice, I really think they ought to take Northern Ireland and sink it to the bottom of the Irish Sea, so I got some of that sort of comment. A teacher I worked with said to me you see this ring I'm wearing, what's that, and he said it's my cousin's ring, he was in the army, he was killed by the IRA, kind of, you're lucky I'm actually speaking to you. Another occasion, headteacher called me in, he said we've got a new supply teacher and I said yes, I've met her, he said she's from the South of Ireland, I said yes, I know, he said I don't want any trouble, I don't want any trouble, I said well, there's not going to be any trouble, I said we've got more in common, I've got more in common with her than I have with you, which didn't go down too well, and we met up in the ladies and went oh for heaven's sake, so, so you were in this uncomfortable place where people didn't exactly blame you, but they looked at you sometimes as if you'd got two heads, you know, what's, what's going on. It didn't happen that often, but it was enough, there was a few occasions, because they couldn't understand why a part of the British Isles contained people who were killing each other. I did say well, you've lasted very, you've, you know, since the Second World War you've been very fortunate you haven't had any other, and then of course there was 9/11, wasn't there, and a lot of us thought okay, that's it, the Americans won't be funding any more terrorism now, now they know what it's like, I'm pretty sure that's had a, well, from what I've read it was the last straw really for the IRA. But I, and in my travels over the years I would meet, from time to time, a second-generation Catholic Irish chap and some of them were bitter and they told me, you know, what are you doing in, what are your family doing in our country sort of thing, very second-generation, again, they didn't quite understand it either, but they had this sort of resentment which had seeped in from somewhere [pauses], so it's, I suppose it's just always there if you meet somebody new [pauses]. Babysitting one time when I was quite a young teacher, at a house in Chiswick, their friends came to meet them, they were upper, well, upper middle-class, chap comes in and sits down and says oh hello,

are you the babysitter, I said yes, yes, I'm the babysitter, oooh, oooh, live round here, and I went yeah, excuse me, he says, a very strange accent, it's a, I said it's, very strange acc-, it's a mixture of two or three different accents, isn't it, well, I said oh yes, I'm from Northern Ireland, got a where's that look on his face, you know, so, and of course I was walking round the shops with my friends at college trying to find a pair of new boots and then giggling behind me because the shop assistant would say sorry, what is it you want, a pair of boots, sorry, what did you, boo, boo, boo, boo, can't say it, boots.

FR: So accent always a, always a–

JM: The vowels [pauses]. My sister, coming to England, coming out with some friends, going to get a drink, I said ah, ah, ah, when you go to the bar it's not half a lager, it's half a largah, largah, largah, they put r's into everything here, or they have an r and they leave the r out, so these little, I suppose they just come up and in the end you get used to them, you get used to them, but in the back of your mind you just wish they'd stop fighting, I wish they'd stop, and then you go home and you meet your family, you know, you wonder how they, you meet your cousins and all their children are off somewhere else, I don't know, I don't suppose it ever leaves you really.

FR: No, well, I guess that, maybe some questions to move towards an end, and we've kind of talked about this with the tape off a little bit, but I suppose I'm interested in how you feel about Northern Ireland now [pauses]. Do you feel–?

JM: [pauses] Well, it's more to do with my personality **[02:14:25]** than anything, every job I've taken has, has, I don't take easy jobs, I take a job for the challenge, ah there's a good challenge, there's a great, where's my next challenge, I sit down and think where's my next challenge, and unfortunately I think I just love to go over and do something to help and then I think you can't, it's too ingrained, I understand it better, I understand why it's happening, I understand I can't change it, where that chap said take Northern Ireland and drop it in the, I think no, what we ought to do is take Northern Ireland and attach it, attach it to England at least, so people mix with others, they mix with, they're not mixing, they're, they're little tribes, they're tribes and the tribes are staying, and my father did say to me in the eighties, no, seventies, he said we're not getting the calibre of young people into the civil service, all the best and brightest are going to England [pauses]. Yeah, I wish I could do something to help but it's a foolish waste of time, isn't it really.

FR: Would you have felt optimistic around the time of the peace process, sort of '95, '98?

JM: No, I, I didn't think so, I was relieved, but I didn't trust, there was no trust really, and it started off very well and I remember going to Ireland, asking one of the teacher friends, how could you shake hands with, and, you know, he's very reasonable, you know, just get on, just get them to get on with it really and, and I've been to the South of Ireland lots, they, when I was doing that research I was telling you about earlier I spoke to some Irish historians, that's where I discovered something interesting about my past, anyway, and they said no one will work with Sinn Féin, no one wants to work with Sinn Féin, but then Sinn Féin knew the populist, it's got a populist group in the South, hasn't it [pauses], mixed, I don't actually feel like going over there with a gun myself, though there have been times, I

can understand that, because your emotions and your passions rise so high at times and you, you wouldn't do it, but you'd like somebody else to do it, you know, that's a feeling [laughs], oh why isn't, get rid of that, probably a lot of people feel it about Trump now, oh somebody get rid, you know, I'm not asking for him to be, but, you know, remove, it's sort of a get rid of that person, that person is, is [pauses], is the cause of all the trouble, but, you know, it's really not as, as simple, it's not a simple solution and now I'm even more worried than ever, now I'm discovering that there are these schools, what are they called, church schools?

FR: Church schools, yeah.

JM: There's six or seven now that don't want to teach, they only want to teach to the gospel.

FR: Don't want to teach evolution, for instance.

JM: Sorry?

FR: That don't want to teach evolution, for instance.

JM: They don't want to teach evolution, the flat Earth stuff, all that sort of, we've had a few over here with the curriculum, who wrote in and complained and said, you know, why aren't you, and we'd say yeah, you can teach what you want, it's a much more liberal, you know, you can, we've not put it in, but we've put in a sentence which says, you know, you can look, discuss round it if you want to, but of course these are the people that don't want to be told that the option is there, they want to say everybody should be, you know, we are, we are, you know, and I'll tell you I watched a programme last week about Jonesville in America, abso-, it was a cult, have you heard about Jones?

FR: Yeah, it rings a bell.

JM: Bill Jones started off with one church, spread, spread his message, spread his message, became a cult, a thousand people all died, nine hundred died, and as I was watching it I thought oh my God, it reminds me of Northern Ireland, it reminds me of Northern Ireland, there are people over there, like the one I told you about this week, telling the children you will go to hell unless you, you know, all this go to hell stuff, I mean, that was what the extreme Roman Catholics were talking about in the sixties and now we've got blinking evangelists going around, I mean, I remember meeting somebody in the high street who was a, hang on a minute, Plymouth Brethren, telling me oh, oh, you know, you're gonna go to hell, you know, I'm not fifteen, you know they're wrong, but you think my, you know, and, and then you think well, they're, they're everywhere these Bill Joneses, aren't they, mini Bill Jones creating a community after their own very, very narrow, and a lot of the discussions now about equal marriage, yeah, well, okay, we were all, a lot of us were against, didn't understand how important civil partnerships and marriage was to gay, we didn't understand how important, and I was against it until I saw the, the, how much it meant to gay, and I thought well, I understand. We were only a few years ahead of Northern Ireland and there's Sinn Féin saying oh equal opportunities, how backward are you, well, of

course there is a back-, a lot of backward people in, in the DUP, I mean, you know, hell, hellfire and such, but [sighs], you know, and then you discover that all round Ireland that there are groups of people that are going to be fighting this initiative, it's just the whole polarisation of society, it's just so damn polarised, how on earth, so I've just got the time now I suppose to, to reflect and wish there was something I could do, and I have ideas, but with such strong religious, fundamentalist religious people, I don't know. I mean, I'm interested in what other people think, I mean, I think I've got a couple who go back but say oh well, let them get on with it, you know, they don't have the same, so I'm saying it could just be my personality that I like to go and fix problems, I've got a problem that I want to go and fix.

FR: But it's difficult.

JM: Have I missed any area that you feel–?

FR: No, well, that's usually how I would finish laughs], so to ask if there's anything that you think that we haven't talked about, anything that you wanted to talk about?

JM: Oh I'm sure there's lots of little bits and pieces, but I was thinking last night, oh I really should mention this and mention that, but, I mean, you're talking about a fifty-year history, my fifty year, you know, Beatles were twist and shouting more than fifty years ago now, it's a long lifetime to live and a long lifetime to look back.

FR: Absolutely, absolutely, and, I mean, three hours or whatever is only ever a tiny window.

JM: Yeah, I mean, you, you were born after it, you grew up–

FR: I was born in '88.

JM: You grew up, yeah, just before the peace process really.

FR: Yeah, I mean, I was a, seven, I was a child.

JM: Oh I'll tell you something else though, drop this in, Northern Ireland, '70, '71, '72 [pauses], media, the media in Lisburn, the media, the media, television, BBC, BBC, oh BBC, BBC, BBC, feedback afterwards, oh the photographers said to the children will you go and throw some stones for us, so we can photograph you, will you go and get us some stones, **[02:24:25]** and I used to watch on the television, oh it was always on the television, always on the television, and it was children, they were children throwing stones, I never forgot that, you know, the media going in and saying we want some photographs and everyone going yeah, we'll show you, you know, so I suppose it's completely knit into my, I think, and I do think you will get, I think now because I'm going into the DNA and Irish history and I'm, you know, I'm more, probably more attuned to it than a lot of people who've got other things to do with their lives, but–

FR: Well, it's, the DNA thing is interesting and the kind of heritage thing is interesting.

JM: Do you know what, I just wish they could do that with the children, I wish the children who could look at their own histories, could look at the history of, of their family or their or their branch, their, you know, their name and find out about migration into Ireland and where their family came from, what they did, we've, we've, you know, my niece, she did her DNA first and she's, or her father was from Tasmania, she's got, she said oh I'm fifty per cent Irish, she said, and I'm twenty per cent Latvian, and I said oh that's, and then she said yes, she said and my, my friend, she did hers and she said I'm a hundred per cent English, how boring, and she had another friend who said I'm a hundred per cent Asian, how boring, yours was much more interesting and, and, yeah, they haven't actually managed to distinguish between Scottish and Irish particularly well, cos we, and Welsh, cos we all went back and forward, back and forward, that's the sort of history I think they ought to teach, that's what I'd like, that's really if I had the, I think if the opportunity came, sometimes opportunities have landed in my lap, if someone phoned up and said we need you, can you come and sort this out, and I go [indecipherable], if someone said we need you to do , I would say yeah, okay, what I want to do is let's go to get, together, a history that makes the Northern Irish feel valued for what they are instead of what they are not, because basically over the last twen-, thirty years it's been you are not English, you are not Irish, you are a funny little group of people that don't fit in anywhere, let's look at how you, how you can, cos I, I've managed to do it, okay, I've got German as well, but I've managed to do it and it's made me feel ten times better, and I'm seeing Irish history through, through my families which have lived here for five hundred years and seeing what that is, and I don't know if there's, I know there's some work going on in Northern Ireland on it, I know there's some work going on, but it needs to be a heck of a lot more for people to be proud of the fact that, although yeah, the English did a terrible thing in Ireland, but actually some of the migrants who came in contributed a good deal as well and, yeah, that's it really.

FR: So a kind of a, yeah, I mean, it's a [laughs], it sounds, it sounds, it sounds lovely, it sounds lovely.

JM: Yeah, that sounds lovely, but it's all talk isn't it really, we're good at that, talking.

FR: Well, any, it's a step in the right direction anyway, any, any kind of–

JM: Yeah, well, I'll see how this goes really, haven't got much time, though my mother's ninety-four and she's still–

FR: Is she still living in Northern Ireland?

JM: No, she, she lives, is this still on?

FR: I can turn it off. Thank you very much [laughs].

JM: Thank you.

INTERVIEW ENDS