INTERVIEW L12: ANNA MACCAFFERTY

Interviewer: Dr Fearghus Roulston
Interviewee: Anna MacCafferty
Interview date: 22nd 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. The interview was recorded across two audio files that were spliced together to create a single audio file.

FR: Okay, so that's recording now. Thanks very much for agreeing to do this.

AM: You're very welcome.

FR: And if you could just start by saying your name and today's date.

AM: My name is Anna MacCafferty and today is the twenty-second of January 1920, 2020.

FR: [laughs] 2020.

AM: Sorry about that, 2020.

FR: 2020, okay, thank you. So we're sort of going to start with childhood, early life, so first of all where were you born?

AM: I was born in Derry in Northern Ireland in 1953, the fourth of what eventually turned out to be six children. Unfortunately I was the fourth girl in a row and my older sister said not another old girl because they all wanted a so-, they all wanted a brother, who arrived number six.

FR: Ah, wow.

AM: Sadly my mother died when I was nine and my, we were kind of, how does one describe it, we were brought up in effect by the woman who used to help my mother in the house, Susie Bonner, and she became *in loco parentis*, though she had a home and family of her own, she was only there during the week, so the weekends were deserts of anarchy and complete chaos. We had absolutely no supervision, my father was kind of fond of a drink after my mother died, and we were appallingly badly behaved. My aunt used to come round and worry about, well, are the children going to mass, are the children well dressed, are they dressed at all, and stuff like that, and we, most of the time we weren't any of those

things. We thought it was great, but they all worried terribly, anyway, enough about that nonsense.

FR: No, it's really interesting [laughs], it's really interesting, so would you say that it was, you were happy?

AM: No, terrible miserable, because when Susie left on Friday, on, she used to come Saturday mornings, when she left at twelve o'clock on Saturday we had to feed and look after ourselves all weekend, and the eldest of us was seventeen and then she went to university, she went to Trinity in Dublin, and then the next one down was fourteen, Ellen, so, you know, the four of us were just kind of left adrift all weekend [laughs], but never mind, we got through it, lots of people lose their parents, you know, and my mother made, had made my father promise to keep us together when she died because her mother died young and they were all split up and put in with different aunts and uncles and that didn't work at all well, so he promised. But the way she died was she put us to bed one night and then she had a massive heart attack and we never saw her again, and we never went to the funeral, it wasn't considered the thing for youngsters, so the three youngest, of whom I was the eldest, we were taken away to an aunt's for a couple of weeks, we missed it all, which actually was not good psychology, but they didn't understand that in those days.

FR: And your father you said was, was not around all that much.

AM: Well, he was a pharmacist, a very successful pharmacist and he was working all the time, but unfortunately after my mother died, she was only forty-two, and the shock and the horror, he went straight on the drink, as Irish men are, begging your pardon [laughs], were in those days. How does one, we used to say alcoholism doesn't run in our family, it positively gallops, most Irish families could say that unfortunately and, oh he did give it up though, eventually he did dry out and that's all, luckily we all got past that, but when we were small that wasn't easy because he wasn't there.

FR: And you had aunts and uncles who would sometimes call.

AM: Call round, but none of them lived in Derry, oh no, that's not true, one of them lived in Derry, she took us on a shopping trip once, but then they had children of their own and their own things to do, though of course none of the wives were at work in those days and husbands all worked, but, I don't know, we got through it [laughs], it wasn't as bad as it sounds, it sounds dreadful. We lived in a nice house, there was plenty to eat, you know, we weren't exactly starving in a garret and that could have been a lot worse.

FR: And Susie, Susie Bonner.

AM: Susie Bonner was, she, well, she used to live in Springtown in Derry, which was an old Irish Army, an old American Army camp.

FR: Aye, I know where it–

AM: And she lived there, she was one of those poor people living there with her husband and son when she came to work with us first, eventually my father helped her buy a house, but, oh and then she went to Creggan and then she had to buy a house because she couldn't live in Creggan any longer, but she was wonderful, absolutely wonderful, I don't know what we'd have done without her. She was the one who washed us, kept our clothes washed, though we, we didn't look after ourselves at all, you know, the youngsters don't, they don't know anything about it, and she saved our lives, she was like a mother to all of us and all of our friends, and I owe her an eternal debt of gratitude. Sadly she's long gone now, she got Alzheimer's and died, actually her son went to the University of Manchester, became a teacher.

FR: There you go.

AM: He had terr-, terrible bad asthma and they sent him, the doctor said he should go to Manchester, the air's much cleaner there, because they lived near the gasworks in Derry, coal gas in the old days, and it was killing him, and Manchester was cleaner [laughs].

FR: That's quite something, you'd think that Manchester's cleaner.

AM: So I don't know what else to tell you about them, a large family connection, the MacCaffertys, lots of, oh I had aunts and uncles on my father's side, but they were all, none of them were married, one of them lived in Manchester actually, he was married, but the daughters lived in, mostly in Spain and France for decent temperatures and stuff.

FR: Oh that's interesting.

AM: Very, aye, they were pioneers of their day I think and, but then my grandmother got ill and one of them came back to look after her. My grandmother was very ancient by that stage, she was nearly a hundred when she died in '74, though when they took her to the hospital, she said to my fella is this what we're brought to Des, you've brought me to the workhouse at last, because you know the way old workhouses were made into hospitals, well, she thought he was taking her to the workhouse and they also said so what age are you madam, for the form, and she said sixty, and she was at least ninety-five [laughs], and she dyed her hair to the end, terribly, terribly grand, my grandmother, but then her, then the daughter, after he, after she died the daughter went back out to Spain with her sister and married a Spanish orange farmer, lived up behind Benidorm for many years on the farm.

FR: That can't have happened that often back then, Northern Irish people going to Spain, France.

AM: I suppose not, but my first, the eldest sister, Vi, she married real money, she married a guy called Ernie Lowther and he owned a laundry in Derry, but it was a very successful laundry, anyway, there was lots of family money, but he, he drank it all and then died and left her, but when she was young they were always on trips to Paris and cruises here and cruises there [coughs], excuse me, much grander than anyone else. The most fancy thing my parents did that I remembered was my mother and father went to Paris to see daddy's

sisters and they also got the, what was called the Scotch boat, which was a boat that ran from Derry to Glasgow every night, and they got that one and went away to see her uncles in Glasgow, but no, we didn't go away much in those days, true enough. Poor Vi, after her life of grandeur went stone deaf and ended up as, serving in a canteen in a school in Belfast and living in one of those wee tiny two-up, two-down with her two sons, which was sad after, you know, because he drank the money, aye, after being so rich, it must've been a shock. She lived in Troy Park, which is a huge house in Derry, I mean, you know, a stately home [laughs], wow, never mind–

FR: So a big change.

AM: They're all, they're all gone now of course, all of them, all the aunts and uncles on both sides. I went to Thornhill College, I went–

FR: I was just going to ask, yeah, go on.

AM: My mother threw me out of the house when I was coming up to four. St Eugene's which was the school we all went to, they wouldn't have me, they said she has to be four before the first of January and I wasn't four until the fourth of January, so my mother had a friend down the street who was a teacher in the Waterside and she took me to the Waterside at the tender age of just four. They took me away at eight in the morning and I didn't come back till six in the evening, because she went to see a pal for tea afterwards and I had to play with her daughter and her daughter's pal who, two bullies, the two of them, but never mind, they were, they were a good laugh [laughs]. I got to know them when I got older, you know, they were bored too, I was their entertainment [laughs], I was the youngest, the normal sort of course of things with children, and then I went to, eventually came back to St Eugene's because **[00:10:00]** I was older and they let me in and because I had started early, I don't know how it happened, but I jumped about two years. Usually you jump a year in St Eugene's, unless you're not of the brightest, you go in and there's, you go, there's a second class, which was ridiculous, you're already segregated at that early age, five or six, but I didn't have to do that, but there was something about my age. I know this because when I got to St Eugene's I was at least a year and in some cases two years younger than everybody else in the class, there was nobody my age, so then I was in St Eugene's and that's where I was when my mother died. Luckily I had a very helpful kind woman who was a nun teaching me at the time, that's a rare commodity, a kind nun, the one before her was a sadist, and then that's what I mean, I did, I started to do my eleven-plus when I was nine.

FR: Yeah, that's really young.

AM: And I don't understand how that happened, if you, I don't remember, you know, and there's no one to tell me now, so then I went to Thornhill College at ten, which was where, the grammar school where all Catholic girls went in Derry.

FR: But, but you were quite young to go.

AM: I was probably quite young, aye, I was just ten, ten and a bit.

FR: And did you, did you feel young, did you–?

AM: No, no, because I was used to it and I was used to having four older sisters, or three older sisters, so it didn't even, I didn't even notice, but with hindsight, I've heard other people talk about that difference in age between them and the rest of class for various reasons, and they found it really hard and difficult, and I don't, I don't know, it didn't even occur to me, though sometimes being the youngest wasn't the most pleasant, but then, you know, there was always the youngest, the fattest, the one with the glasses, the, you know what it was like in school, it's carnage. I think children growing up is learning to be kind to other people [laughs], because most of the time they're awful cruel to each other, I don't know if you agree Fearghus, but that's what–

FR: No, I know what you mean [laughs].

AM: [laughs] And I ran children's groups for years as an adult and I think that's probably right, anyway, let me get to a more–

FR: So Thornhill, what was your, what are your memories of Thornhill?

AM: Actually, looking back now as an adult I know that Thornhill must've been a very good school, but at the time they were always, oh you're ladies, not girls, we're turning out little, we're turning out ladies here, and my father used to complain, is this a hothouse for the nunnery or are you going to educate them at all, and stuff like that, and we spent an awful lot of time in the convent church, it was outside Derry, they wouldn't let us have a building in Derry, the unionist council, they all banded up, banded up against us and we bought Thornhill College, they bought Thornhill College, I couldn't tell you when, but before my time. My aunts had been to Thornhill, though not that building, my aunts had been at it, my two elder sisters were still there when I was there, though the very eldest sister went to Loreto in Coleraine to board, she, they fell out with Thornhill over her, I don't really know why, and anyway, it's not the objective of this discussion, but after one of us boarded that was enough, she was miserable and she was always separate from us because she, we'd never been at home when she was at home, she went away at eleven and never came back, in effect. Anyway, Thornhill, however, gave me a much better education than I gave it credit for, I have learned, it sounds really rude, but I've met other people and they, they never got the desire to learn, they never got the desire to read, they never, they hardly, I beg your pardon, this sounds terrible, I used to be, when I worked in 3i, which was the bank, bank I worked for, I was the proof-reader for practically the whole company, my boss used to send things to me to proof-read because I could speak the language, I don't mean that, that sounds so snotty, but he, I couldn't believe that, how many people couldn't speak the language, and he, his boss was very pedantic, his boss used to send round memos saying the difference between effect and affect is something you should all read about, I don't want any more misspelled memos, so he was terrified of the boss, so he would give it to me, though he was a well-educated man, but anyway, never mind, moving on [laughs].

FR: So a good, a good basis.

AM: A very good basis, yes, which I totally hated at the time, oh it was so boring, so boring, the physics class you used to sit, remember those games where you'd sit and see how long you could hold your breath–

FR: [laughs] Yes.

AM: Before you pass out, and so on and so forth, and to be fair there was very little, little supervision at home, as a matter of fact none, nobody knew if we'd done our homework, nobody knew if we'd been to school, there was an awful lot of not going to school amongst the younger children, don't go there.

FR: But you, but you went to school yourself?

AM: No, I was one of the younger children [laughs].

FR: [laughs] How would yous–?

AM: There was a divide in our house, the three elder ones, my, the third one was only twelve when my mother died, but there was something about the fact they were older and in secondary school, the three younger ones, nine, seven and five, we were brought up under Susie's influence much more than my mother's, and also we weren't as well looked after, a twelve-year-old looking after three, she didn't know how to look after us, mostly she was a wee bit, what did my father used to call it, heavy-handed, but that was because she hadn't got a clue and we weren't doing anything she said. She went through a holy phase, wanting us all to go to mass and go to devotions and all this stuff, and we just, we locked ourselves in the room, in the drawing room, we said we're going nowhere, you can keep that sort of nonsense, which was quite shocking in the sixties for a Catholic family. Oh priests used to come round worried that we weren't going to mass, but by the time I was twelve, when they got rid of the Latin, by that stage I knew it was over between me and God, well, maybe not God, certainly me and the Catholic church, watching nuns and stuff.

FR: By the age of twelve?

AM: Aye, definitely by then, I remember the realisation in my head, though I think I believed in a God for a long time after, that till one friend said to me in my twenties you know we're just upmarket apes, don't you, and I said oh wow, it was like a revelation, of course we are [laughs], but it was when they changed the Latin to the English, that was the last straw.

FR: Why was that?

AM: I didn't like, I don't know why.

FR: That's interesting.

AM: I thought they've done away with all the mystery and the magic, what's the point.

FR: I know what you mean.

AM: It used to be you could go anywhere in the world and listen to the mass, when I go to my, when I went to my aunts' funerals in Spain we didn't know where the hell we were becau-, well, we hadn't been for years, but because if it had been in Latin, I could still recite that mass in Latin.

FR: And it's the same everywhere I suppose, which is–

AM: It's the same, same the world over. I apologise if you're religious, but everyone knows my views here, even my religious friends, they know me of old.

FR: And was Thornhill also, it was a Catholic school, was it also run by nuns?

AM: Oh very much, run, totally run by nuns, bit like Colditz, they were, you, we weren't allowed to talk to anybody when we were wearing our school uniforms on the way to or from school, especially the devil incarnate, boys [laughs], the worst thing of all. We weren't allowed to roll up our sleeves when there were workmen in the grounds in case we drove them mad with desire. We weren't allowed to, wait a minute, what was the other thing, oh yes, in sixth form we, well, I'll tell you about that in a minute, we weren't, we had to wear berets, you had to wear your beret on the bus, you had to wear your beret in the street, so one bright morning Ellen, Anna and Mary, that's my sister, me and my younger sister, who was now at Thornhill, we all got expelled for not wearing our berets on the bus by the prefect, which, so the head nun sent us all home and she thought daddy would be furious, but daddy just laughed and said oh great girls, you've a whole Friday off to yourselves, because he knew it was a silly rule, getting expelled for not wearing your beret. I expect they still have rules like that, I don't know, do they?

FR: I believe it's still quite strict.

AM: [sighs] Oh the madness. However, this is sad but true, now I got on grand and then, you know, we went out dancing far too young, we were only fifteen, we were sneaking out of the house, daddy used to say to Susie I think there might be some people staying up there tonight, as in pals, but that was wrong, the pals would come, we'd sneak out the back, because the house had a mews and a back, out to the back lane, out the back, away to a disco, all over the country I have to say, back home, and all of us all sleeping in my, in our beds, and they would've told the mammies that they were staying with us, so, you know, but nobody knew that we were going in and going out because there was nobody keeping an eye on us, it was great fun I must say. However, it was all bound to end in tears, this is kind of embarrassing, so we had a sixth form class at Thornhill, the headteacher for some reason decided that there needed to be some words spoken to the **[00:20:00]** older girls. You had to be sixteen to be allowed into the room at all, she held an assembly for everybody over sixteen, no one under sixteen was allowed within a quarter mile of this room. We thought what's she going talk about, and we all said it's going to be, you know, sex, it's going to be about sex, and so she stood at the front of the class and she said girls, I have to tell you this, it's a very serious thing that you need to understand here, you're now getting older. If you're ever called upon to be in a situation where you have to kiss a boy, I want you all to know you should kiss him like he's a doorknob [pauses], and then she

walked off the stage. That was the sex education, and we had to be sixteen. They used to have health and efficiency classes, but we didn't know what they were talking about, it was all so, so ethereal and up here. However, for me it was too late cos I was pregnant, I was pregnant by a much older man, he was six years older than me and Protestant, though not, not Orange, thank, well, he wasn't then, he became Orange, but that's a different story, and oh my life was over in effect. Eventually I ended up in a mother and baby home in Belfast and Des was adopted. I was seventeen when he was born and, and I know now that if I'd had a mother or a father who looked after me, this man wouldn't have got within a hundred, thousand yards of me. He wasn't a bad fella, he was just, oh never mind, too late now, so of course I got expelled from Thornhill [laughs], and so then I came back from the mother and baby home, and nobody understands the damage when you lose your child, they, they thought it was all over, they had no idea of what was going on in my head, it was terrible. However, I went to work with my father in the shop for a while and he got me into, Belfast Tech it must've been in those days, to finish my A-levels, oh I did, I got very good O-levels, I mean, I was always top stream, though I say it myself, I'm not stupid, though the nuns were always saying oh Anna, your sister did so much better than you, and your sister, every other sister, and Mary got the same about me, poor Mary, luckily my brother went to the college, St Columb's, he had no one to comp-, be compared with [laughs], lucky fella, though we bullied him relentlessly all his life, poor man, poor boy, we didn't know that, we thought strict cane, rod discipline was what you did, that's what my mother did, you know, Susie was always breaking the cane rod and hiding it out the back and my mother would bring it in and lay into us all, but that was common in those days too in some families, most families actually. I mean, we were slapped in primary school, we weren't slapped in secondary school, we got black marks which meant nothing.

FR: But no, no cane or anything?

AM: No, no corporal punishment, the corporal punishment continued in the boys' school, even in St Columb's, but not in the girls' school, and my friend went to the Christian Brothers and he said I don't want to talk about that, they were so violent, mind you though, St Columb's has it's, my, the stories my father, my brother could tell you, but never mind, we're not here for that. Anyway, so then I went, and then I went to Belfast Tech, but I was too late, it was too late for me at that stage, I just–

FR: It must've been hard.

AM: Aye, I couldn't deal with anything and I was lodging with a friend of my father's, lovely, kind woman, great fun, Annie Gallagher, I think she'd her eye on my da, but Maura got in before her actually. Maura was a woman my father met, my sister, see, he, she might've been a friend before mammy died, but I don't know if I believe that, but she and Annie were in a battle for who was going to get my daddy, he was a good catch.

FR: I was going to say, a good catch.

AM: A good catch, apart from the children, good house and, you know, respectable, a well-known name in Derry.

FR: Good job and–

AM: Aye, oh aye, he'd two shops at this stage and when, there was a problem with the prescriptions when I was working in the shop, I mean, a national problem, where the book, the pharmacapedia book that they send out, you know, they have to code all the prescriptions and send it into the National Health and get the money for the drugs, something had gone wrong with, not the pharmacapedia, but the coding book, so they were all coded wrong and they had to send them all back and they told my father that, apart from Boots, he had the most prescriptions of any other chemist, of any chemist in the British Isles apart from Boots, but that was apparently cos he lived in Derry. The Troubles had started by then, CS gas and what do you call that stuff, Librium and Valium, they went out in, and what was the other one, Benylin for the CS gas, they went out in such quantities that when the shop was quiet, and it wasn't very quiet, we did about a thousand prescriptions a week, but when we got in early in the morning before the doctors opened, we would be making up the tablets in boxes of thirty and sixty, all piled up ready for the rush later on, and they went, I didn't realise what they were actually at that stage, I was kind of too young, they went out like smarties, day and night, it was terrible, and after CS gas, when there'd been riots, we'd have queues of people saying Des is there anything you can give me, my eye, you know what happened, no, you were probably too young, you've never been in a CS gas–

FR: No.

AM: Attack, oh it's, you don't have to, Derry's like this.

FR: It's kind of a basin.

AM: It's a basin, and they'd be down the Bog, down the bottom or down the Strand, and we were down the Strand anyway, and they would fire the CS gas and it would float down the town and then it would rise up all over the town, and half the population was being, being CS gassed, maybe not as badly as if you were there, but it affected most of the population and we were half-way up the hill and we got the CS gas, it was horrible.

FR: And what's the feeling?

AM: Streaming, pain in your eyes, streaming, itchy, sore face, you can't breathe, it's horrible, it's like, it's like too much smoke in a–

FR: From a fire.

AM: A fire or something, you know, only at least that doesn't make your eyes stream with pain, and the cough, I don't know why, I remember the Benylin, but I don't know what else he gave them, there was nothing you could give, just eye ba-, eye wash, get it washed out. Anyway, sorry, I, that's an, so then I went and [indecipherable] Belfast and I stayed there, and Raymond came back, he was my boyfriend from, that was the father of the baby, and there was a, there was stupid connection because he was the father of my child, I should've had nothing to do with him, but it's ridiculous, when I was in the mother and baby home he did, daddy used to come and see me, and first of all I wasn't allowed to see Raymond at all

and then he tried to make it up with my father, my father wanted him arrested and he was right. I mean, I was overage, but I didn't, I was like a twelve-year-old, in Ireland in the sixties, what did I know, I didn't even know how you got pregnant and that's the truth of it. Anyway, the two of them were always drunk when they turned up cos they couldn't bear to go through with it, whole business, and I'm sitting there, even at seventeen going oh aye.

FR: Not much help.

AM: Goodness, it must be tough for you two, my heart bleeds for you both. By the time I came out of that mother and baby home and watched all those other women going through all that crap I was a total rampant feminist. Whatever I was before I went in I don't know, I was too young, but when I came out of there I was a total feminist. I knew exactly what I wanted to be and do and stuff, there was nothing going to stop me doing what I wanted. I was fed up being beholden to men, and I beg your pardon, I don't mean, I don't think like that now, though my daughter says I'm like it a bit sometimes.

FR: Well, I can understand it I think.

AM: Aye, but it was a long time ago, but anyway. So then I tried to run away with the baby, that didn't work, they caught me and I never even got to him, brought me back, cos Raymond told and that was probably, with hindsight, a good thing that he told. God knows what would have happened to me in London, prostitution, who knows, you know, I was a lunatic by that stage with grief, and freaked out about the whole experience, so then I came home and then I got to eighteen and once I was eighteen I was out of there, there was no way I was staying, I wanted to go to London and have fun. My sister took me in 1970 for the summer, she was supposed to be looking after me, me and Raymond were seeing each other on the sly, I went off to festivals and oh all sorts, had great fun actually and, and I wanted to go back to London, I knew it was for me, I went to the Isle of Wight and all this and I knew this was the place for me, at least I thought so when I was young.

FR: So I'm just trying to get a chronology.

AM: Can I go to the ladies?

FR: Oh of course you can, course you can, I'll pause it. **[00:29:50]** [The two interview audio files were spliced together here].

FR: We're rolling again. Okay [laughs], so we were just saying before I turned the tape off, you left the mother and baby home–

AM: In Fe-, March 1970.

FR: And then were in Belfast for a year?

AM: Yes, I worked till the September for my father, all summer, and then I went to, it must've been the Belfast Technical College, for a year to do A-levels, and I didn't sit the exams in the end. I just was a mess.

FR: Och it must've been, well, I imagine it was very difficult.

AM: Aye, but the thing is when you're young you don't even know it's difficult, looking back now I think, I was a young child and all these things happened and, and of course the Troubles had also started and I've jumped away from that and I should've said I was, I remember, my father and mother were very politically involved with Eddie McAteer, who was a good friend. They were rampant nationalists and I remember them doing the election work in the, in our house before my mother died, they must, there was an election the day she died, she died on the thirty-first of May '62 and just before she died I remember my mother and father sitting round the table, I don't know what you do for elections, but something to do with the voting papers or who was going to vote nationalist and one thing and another. The gerrymandering in Derry had already been a problem, we'd already had a march to Stormont about losing the univ-, about not getting the university, which was blatant discrimination, no two ways about it, it was ridiculous to give it to Coleraine, the back of beyond, begging your pardon if you're from Coleraine, but, you know, who the wants to live in Coleraine, they could be in Derry, and we had Magee already, which was at that stage tied directly to Trinity.

FR: Yes.

AM: So when my mother died, for instance, my sister was down to go to Trinity and my father hassled her to go to Magee and then Trinity, because he needed her, somebody at home, the eldest one wouldn't come home again, she was in London already and she wouldn't come back, she'd been to Queen's and lived in London, wouldn't come back, so, and then she got, okay, so anyway. So all that had gone on and I remember the first march, the fourth of October 1968. Everybody always says oh it started here, it started there, that was the first day, I know it was because I was there, except that I was working, I was, had a part-time job, which we passed down through the sisters, working in Burton's the tailors, to make tea for the lady customers while their husbands were measured for suits. Made-to-measure cheap suits were the trendiest thing you could have in those days, it wasn't old men, it was young men, and actually that's where I met Raymond, he came in to measure, get measured for a suit, but I was along the march, and all my pals were on the march, and even the good pal I still have here in London he was there, and Raymond was on the march to be fair, and Ivan Cooper was on it–

FR: Ah yes.

AM: And Kevin Agnew, who was my uncle, and everybody you know, I mean, I could, John Hume I think was on it, who was a young man then, Eamonn McCann was probably on it, and Derry's small, we knew all these people and they wouldn't, I don't know if you know, of course you know the history, they wouldn't allow it and they banned it and then they got out a water cannon and the town was full of stories of a woman and her pram washed off the bridge and all, and that was the beginning of it, though at the time we thought it was a good thing, we thought there's going to be a change here, because the TV cameras turned up and we were delighted. First of all, we couldn't believe we were on the TV, it was, wow, look, look, there's the Diamond, wow, look, we're on the TV, oh is that so-and-so, there's

Vinnie Jones, who was a famous character during the Troubles, there are loads of photos of him even if you don't know him, and we were delighted and covering the, looking at all the press coverage and thought things have to change now, and the press all put themselves in the City hotel, where we used to go drinking, and it was just the excitement in the air, we thought this is, things are going to get better now, but of course as you know they didn't, and I remember there, it went on all through the winter, not much, there was, oh Burntollet–

FR: Burntollet, yeah.

AM: Burntollet bridge, my poor cousin was beaten to a pulp at Burntollet, he marched from Dungiven and he ended up in our house in Derry bleeding all over profusely, he said I didn't know where else to go, Anna, I said you walked past the hospital [laughs], and your father's a doctor, did you not think to give him a ring, oh I just, my father mightn't have approved, anyway, so on and so forth, he came to our house, it was my birthday, Burntollet, fourth of January, I remember that, and then the rioting went on and on and it got very, very nasty. I remember VP RUC, where the police broke into a pub one night and drank everything in it, and that's why they were called VP RUC as in, you've never heard of it, VP is cheap, cheap, was, it's gone actually, the factory used to be here in Kingston, cheap, cheap wine. A friend of mine once said I came back to Derry and I wanted to buy a bottle of wine and I went into the off-licence and I said could I have a bottle of wine, and he said do you want VP, Mondays or Fridays, he said I knew I was back in Derry, cos they didn't, wine wasn't on the agenda in those days normally.

FR: VP?

AM: VP, and the factory used to be literally ten minutes' walk from here, I saw it when I moved here years ago, but it burnt down and a good thing too, it was the alkies' choice. Anyway, they drank themselves senseless and then they went down the Bog and beat everybody they met senseless, and I mean everybody, it was totally indiscriminate, and that was I think on the Saturday, and they ran riot round us on the Sunday too, that mightn't have been the next, the next thing was burning the house down, but this, anyway, they ran riot round us on the Sunday and then I remember going to the Flats, being in, there was the big flats in Derry.

FR: Divis.

AM: And we were opposite them.

FR: Rossville.

AM: Rossville Flats, aye, no, I was thinking Divis, but then that's Belfast.

FR: Divis is Belfast, sorry.

AM: They were in, they were, and we were on one block and they were on the other, I don't know if I was in the, I must've been in the Flats, we went up to try and see what the hell was

going on and there was this poor young woman and she got trapped on the steps and the police above her and police below her and we were going go in the house, we were shouting, get in a house, get in a flat, because you don't know what, they'll beat you up, it was terrifying and, mind you, we were young and it was exciting even so, and I remember that poor man, they broke into his house on Great James Street and beat him to death, can't remember his name, there's no doubt they beat him to death, it's not us, not Catholics just saying it, I mean, it was a matter of public record, I don't know what he'd done wrong. There was also, there was a night that there was another big riot, it must've been the middle of the summer and people, houses started to burn and I remember standing looking at the houses and thinking this is going to get very serious now, this is not good, this is no longer a civil rights thing, this is, well, I'm a pacifist, the idea of the violence, I knew it wasn't good, even at only whatever I was, fourteen, fifteen, I was afraid of it, but there were funny moments too. I remember getting stuck in a pub in William Street and the boys running in saying hurry up with those bottles, hurry up with those bottles, because they wanted to fill them up with petrol and throw them at the police, and we couldn't get out of the pub, you were often caught in a pub and you couldn't get out. But I also know friends of mine that got beaten to a pulp just because they were on the street, and to be fair they didn't ask whether you were a Catholic or a Protestant, they just beat you anyway, they really did run riot and when the army came in I remember my father saying, there's a good invasion, but we all thought at the time it's going to be alright, the English people aren't like the RUC or the unionists, they don't hate us.

FR: Well, that's what people–

AM: Believed, aye.

FR: Say about, about Derry when the army first arrived, that people were happy enough because they thought at least they're not the police, at least they're not the Protestants.

AM: Yes, they were brought in to protect us from the police. I watched another demonstration that came up, I don't know where it came into, but it came into the Diamond and I was at that and I watched, though being young and small I got out of the way quick, but I watched the policemen tear off all their numbers, as if it mattered, and then just beat everybody around them. They thought they had absolute power, nobody could stop them, and they used to turn their back on the Protestant march whenever or, you know, because they knew they'd throw things the other way and so on and so on, and I know this may sound very biased to you, and I'm sure if you spoke to someone who was a Protestant then, though I knew, I had lots of pals who were Protestants. We were the only Catholics in our street, we lived in Crawford Square, which, we were the only Catholics in the street, and they, Ivan Cooper lived up the street from us, you know, they had a, they were not Orange in any way, they were appalled at what was happening, they didn't approve of gerrymandering **[00:39:50]** and 'one man, one vote' was a big thing before the Troubles, that's why the Troubles broke out, 'one man, one vote', and whatever they say in Belfast, they definitely started in Derry, I don't care what they say, they took it from us, took that, the candle, but we started it, and there were more Catholics in Derry you see, so the fact that there were, I don't know, two thirds Catholic major-, Catholic population, and two

Catholic councillors on a, something like that, twenty, something like that, that was, you know, it just went on and on.

FR: Obviously, obviously unfair.

AM: Aye, it had to be, something had to be done, though the mayor lived up our street and he was very friendly. Middle-class Protestants weren't as hard, weren't as hard Orange as, as, it seems to me anyway looking back. So then the Troubles, then the army came in to protect us from the police, where are we now, this is '70–

FR: This is '70, aye.

AM: '70.

FR: Would, and would, would you–

AM: '69, no, it's '69.

FR: '69 yeah.

AM: '69, was '70 Motorman, och anyway, it's too long ago, but then they started, then we had Free Derry, oh it was great, the *fleadh* and all, it was great craic.

FR: And the barricades.

AM: Aye and all the barricades, it was a bit of fun as far as we were concerned, until they came in and destroyed the whole thing and had Operation Motorman and they arrested every young man under twenty practically, under forty. We were away in Dublin at the time on our holidays and, and it was appalling to read it in the papers, everybody you knew, because we were young, so they were our contemporaries, they were all being, oh loads of them being arrested, some of them were definitely get-, being recruited by the IRA, but–

FR: But lots of them weren't as well.

AM: But lots of them weren't, lots of them were just young fellas having a good time, they didn't, they may have thrown stones and like, though I was never actually, I never actually threw stones, though I did knock a policeman's helmet off, but that was in England, not in Ireland.

FR: [laughs] Well, we must talk about that when we get to England.

AM: Oh aye, we will. So, so that's, so that was going on and then, and then I left soon after that, they came in and took over and, and by that time, although with all my other things going on–

FR: Well, sure, yeah.

AM: You know, this was all going on at the same time, I [pauses], Free Derry must've been summer 1970, in July, June, July, and they must've come in in August.

FR: I think that's, that's about right, as I can–

AM: Aye, it might've been '69, but anyway, round about then. So then I came to London and slept on somebody's floor for, met Raymond of course, slept on somebody's floor, did all sorts of different jobs, some good, some bad.

FR: So Raymond who's, who was–

AM: Des's father.

FR: Des's father, you stayed in touch with him all this time.

AM: Aye, more fool me.

FR: And you were saying that both him and your father would've visited you in the mother and baby home.

AM: Home, aye, separately, separately, oh aye.

FR: And did they reconcile or–?

AM: No, well, he, my father for my sake didn't want to, stopped wanting to kill him, though he should have killed him, though he should have been, he was responsible too, my father understood it wasn't all his f-, well, it was all, well, you know what I mean. So anyway, yes, he let him, he didn't speak to him or had nothing to do with him, and actually they tried, when we got, when I got out they tried to split us up, but it didn't work. Do you know what, if you ever have chil-, well, maybe you do have children, but not old enough to be, if you ever have children and they go out with somebody that you absolutely hate, don't say a word, because what happens is everybody hates me and him, so guess what, I'm sticking with him, and you never looked after me anyway didn't help either, but it makes them cling to each other, never oppose, unless they're doing something illegal.

FR: I know what you mean.

AM: Cos they just get worse. Anyway, I came to London with him.

FR: And he came to London as well?

AM: Aye, we both came to London together, he wasn't going to be doing much, he was a fitter in an, in a f-, in an engineering firm, I don't know what fitters do but something to do with–

FR: Small parts, isn't it.

AM: Aye, making wee tiny small parts for cigarette machines, it was called Mullan's in Derry, that's who he worked for, Mullan's, I forgot that. Anyway, we came, oh where did we live, we lived first of all in Stoke Newington, we, what was his name, Hugh, and his brother was a policeman, then we went to [pauses] Gaskin Street I think, aye, Raymond found a room in a house in Islington, which wasn't fancy in those days, not at all fancy, Islington wasn't in those days, it was just starting to be gentrified and there were estate agents and we used to have demos outside them about, because they bullied old people out of their, out of their homes in order to be, sell them on, because they had the, very strong Rent Acts and Tenant Acts in those days and you couldn't throw someone out, once they were in as a sitting tenant, they could stay there till they died.

FR: Of course, yeah.

AM: So they bullied them out of their houses. Anyway–

FR: And you used to–

AM: We used to do dem-, we, I used to be in some of the demos, they were just, you know, people standing outside with placards and stuff, because they just started that cut-throat estate agent stuff, and the house was completely mad. We were downstairs in the front room and it was a lovely wee Victorian house, and the back room there's a guy called Joe, Caribbean, I think Jamaica, he used to run poker schools all weekend, he had a, we didn't have a wall between him and us, we had one of those wooden doors, you know, like in a wood-, I don't know how we ever got any sleep, he ran poker schools all weekend, he used to make us curry sometimes, and he had a machete under his bed just in case any trouble broke out. There was no bathroom in the house, there wasn't even a loo, there was a loo outside in the back garden. Up at the very top, the next one up, there were three very, to me, amazing characters, one of them was, worked for the, one of them, no his girlf-, he worked for the *Guardian*, the other one, the other two just, one of them sat and got stoned and tripping all day and did embroidery, and the third one, he was a bit of a wide boy, but he ended up managing cinemas, you know, Everyman, that kind of a cinema.

FR: Ah yeah.

AM: But they were [pauses], down in the basement there lived a man who had been in Auschwitz and his sister owned the house and she used to come round in a Rolls Royce in furs to collect our rent, and he just lived down there like a tramp, but maybe that was what he wanted, and as I say, no bathroom, you had to go to the public baths, and anyway, the reason I'm telling you this story is the landlady came to try and put meters in and put up the rent, because we had the electric on day and night, the heater on, because it was freezing and damp and horrible room, for all of us, and we had the heating on all the time and, anyway, she came round and tried to put in a meter in all the rooms and we said you're not allowed, this is, and went immediately to the housing association and found out what your rules were, Citizens Advice I mean, so she took us all to court to put the rent up and talked about un-, sinful acts amongst the young men upstairs, which is nonsense cos they were all heterosexual, but anything to blacken our names, and the court, instead of letting her put up the rent condemned the house as unfit for human habitation, we all had to move out

[laughs], so although we didn't get the rent put up, we were all made homeless, which wasn't very good either, though it was a kip. It's still there, the house in Gaskin Street, it's right opposite the King's Head, a very trendy pub.

FR: Aye, I think I know where you are.

AM: Aye, well, we used to, that's where we used to go, the three-day week was on then and we used to go up to the pub because they had fires and gas lights, and you could buy a pint and three straws, you know, and sit, or six straws, and sit all night.

FR: And it was warm.

AM: It was warm and it was, there was light and warmth, it was great, cos it was only the electric was turned off, nobody thought about turning off the gas, there wasn't much gas about it, anyway, and it was cheap and the guy didn't have decimalisation, he would only take pounds, shillings and pence, might still do, so where are we now, so then I went, I worked for Sun Life Insurance Company Canada, it was my first real job, worked for different people, worked for a wonderful literary agency, wrote cheques to Tennessee Williams, isn't that great.

FR: Wow, wow.

AM: Met, I can't remember, Nelson Mandela's pal's daughter, cos he wrote a book about apartheid.

FR: How interesting.

AM: Aye, it was all good fun, worked for a clothing firm, where are we now, oh God, Bloody Sunday, I forgot about that, when I was working in Sun Life, Des, my pal Des Gallagher who was also living in London, we had other pals in London, I had, aye, who had come here. George came to do his architecture degree at Kingston, what was then Kingston Poly, very good school of architecture it had, so he came here and, though we weren't living round here, but he was, and Des Gallagher just came over for the craic, and Michael Kerrigan, he just came over for the craic, same as me, I just came over for the craic, and anyway, Des comes round to the office at Sun Life, **[00:49:50]** it's in Trafalgar Square, it used to be behind Canada House, and I said what's, he said Anna, you've got to come out and talk to me, and I said oh I can't, anyway, out I came, he said Big Jim, I said what happened to Big Jim, he's dead Anna, he was shot dead by the army yesterday, and I said you're kidding me, how could that be. He was our good pal who also came over for the craic, Jim Wray, he went home for the weekend to see his mother, he got involved, he went on the march on Bloody Sunday and he got shot dead. He was only home for the bloody weekend, excuse my language, if he hadn't gone home that weekend he'd be here to this day probably. That was a terrible shock. My father nearly got shot, he said he remembers the bullets whistling past his head, everybody was on the civil rights march.

FR: He was on the march, your father, as well?

AM: Oh they were and my br-, my sister was there with her boyfriend, and my sister had a nervous breakdown afterwards because they were standing, they're hiding behind a wall, terrified of their lives and somebody got shot in front of them, and I think it might have been Jim because you hear about who, what happened to whom, so she wouldn't have known Jim Wray. Anyway, he's lying there crying, he's not dead yet, and there was an old man with Mary, well, he mightn't have been old, but to her he was old, and he said we can't let that young fella lie there screaming, we have to go out and get him and bring him in, and Mary said don't go out there, don't go out there, and Paul's going don't go out there, don't go out there, he said I'll wave a white hanky and it'll be grand, they'll let me pick him up and take him home or take him somewhere, so he went out waving the white, and they shot him dead, and my sister never got over that, and that night they, whatever people tell you, what happened that night was that there were queues round the block to join the IRA, and Mary's boyfriend Paul went up to join and they said Paul, we really appreciate that you want to join and it's, it's, you know, thank you very much, we know that you're very upset about what happened today, he said, but I'm afraid you can't join, you're not eligible, and he said why am I not eligible, and they said I don't know how to put it Paul, because first of all you're English, second of all you're a Protestant, and thirdly your father has a CBE for military stuff, it doesn't really work [laughs].

FR: [laughs] Sorry, I don't mean to laugh.

AM: But it's ridiculous. That's, he didn't care about all that, he didn't, he was so outraged about what had happened in Derry, and then you know all about the whitewash and that made it even worse, and I think the Troubles in Derry had an awful, the fact that they went on and on had an awful lot to do with Bloody Sunday and the way they handled it, which was disastrous. They treated us like, oh, and, I mean, we, we all, Derry's small, it's like Ballymena, bigger, but you would know who was in and who wasn't, and who was in the IRA and who wasn't, and there was nobody, well, there may have been, but nobody I knew was on the march and nobody, none of the witnesses said anything except what we believed happened, and Ivan Cooper, poor Ivan Cooper who organised the march against the advice of John Hume, he went off his head, he was never the same after it, he was never the same man, he died last year, the year before, poor Ivan. But what people don't remember is the week before they'd set up an internment camp at Magilligan, outside Derry, the week before, in front of cameras, there'd been a demonstration down from Derry, led by John Hume, to complain about the fact that there were men kept in there, young fellas, who were nothing to do with the IRA, and it was, the paratroopers came down onto the beach as a regiment to stop them, and I don't remember the words, because I only saw it once or twice, the film, what John Hume said to them, but he humiliated them.

FR: I've, I've seen the video I think.

AM: So he humiliated them and after that I think, this is only my view, but it seems to me a terrible coincidence that a week later the paratroopers go into Derry and find a reason to start to shoot civilians. I may be completely, but it just seems [pauses], there was no real reason for it and we all know that now, I'm glad they gave us an apology, it was too bloody late, anyway, moving on, that's Bloody Sunday for you, although I wasn't there, I was very closely involved with it.

FR: It must've been difficult to be so close, but also not there at the same time.

AM: I know, I know, and being here.

FR: And to be in England as well.

AM: To be in England, where they had a whole different view of it, and by that stage I knew to keep my mouth shut, already. That wasn't the worst thing. Anyway, I would say I worked here, I worked there, Raymond was terrible, being unfaithful, being violent [sighs].

FR: But yous were living together mostly?

AM: Still, aye, most of the time. He was terrifying, he wouldn't let me, he said if I left him he'd kill me, he was ridiculous, when I think back, how I let himself, myself be bullied by such a silly wee man, but anyway I was young and silly and he was a lot older than me, which makes a difference, so I was always working and he had it always drunk by Sunday, so I never ate, it was very hard, we never had any money, we couldn't pay the rent, we never had any money, mostly cos he drank it. No wonder I got even more and more feminist, then I was a victim [laughs], you know, went through my victim stage, what an idiot I was, so moving on, where are we now, we're '71, that went on for two or three years, total mess, and then I met, then my life changed overnight almost. We were squatting up in, where were we squatting, St John's Wood, I came, I went to London, to home, for my sister's wedding in '74, I came back and I couldn't get anywhere to live and Raymond again was squatting up there with a whole lot of pals. It was very difficult to get a flat in those days because of the Rent Acts, ironically, they were meant to help us, but they–

FR: Do you mean that tenants would stay in flats, so there wouldn't be a–?

AM: Aye, so they didn't want to, they wouldn't rent them out to us, and so there was an awful lot of squatting, so we, they were, we were squatting up in St John's Wood and we had a mutual friend, John Scott, me and Dave, and Dave came round to visit him and we all went to the pub together and I remember, and Dave said I have a flat, my girlfriend's moved out, I'm looking for somebody to share it, and I jumped at the chance and so then I moved in with, not moved in, I became his tenant, he was my landlord.

FR: I follow you.

AM: Aye totally, we were pals, well, we weren't, we were total strangers. That was ridiculous, I mean, he could've been Jack the Ripper for all I knew, but never mind, he had a lovely flat in, in Holland Park, because his ex-girlfriend had been a, worked for an estate agent's, so she got this place sublet from some, some American, and the same month I went to work for 3i, which was the company I worked with for the next thirty years.

FR: Is that three and then the letter i?

AM: Letter i, aye, it used to be called Finance for Industry. I started off in there, yet again as a clerk typist, very lowly job, but it was a job. I never wanted to be a secretary and I couldn't really type, but it got you in the door. I remember when I went to work for the literary agency as a clerk typist and I said oh yes, I've typing experience, which was true, my father had an old manual typewriter that I had used, talk about elastic with the truth, so he gave me an electric typewriter and it took me an hour to find out how to turn the bleeping thing on, and then I didn't know how to lay out a letter, so I got it out of the files and copied it, God knows how long that took, and the cheek of me like, the cheek of me, after a week he turned round to me and he said you're getting the hang of that now, aren't you Anna [laughs]. What a nice man, I was lucky there, though I was good at the accounts, I'd done my father's accounts and I knew how to do that, so that was, that was probably why he didn't mind, I couldn't type, but I could keep accounts, and anyway, I worked in 3i and I, it, I don't mean this, but my daughter said to me how did you get on in 3i, and I know when it happened. I was typing this thing for a man one day, one of the guys, I worked in the treasury department, was it called the cashier's then, it might've been, and I had never heard of such a thing, but they did the dealing for the banks, for the bank, it wasn't a bank then actually, and I'd never heard of such a thing, it didn't, it was way outside normal consciousness in those days, it was something obscure they did in the City, but I watched these guys all day and I thought they're playing Monopoly, there were only two of them on a very small scale, I thought that's like playing Monopoly and you get paid, that's, I like this, this is my kind of job. So one day I'm typing for this guy and I gave him the, and he, a whole load of figures, and he gave it back to me and I said I don't mean to be rude, John, but I think the total's wrong, I hope you don't mind, I was that bored, I was adding it up to pass the time while I typed it, and he looked at me like, she can, it can talk, no, like, you know, she can think, and he worked it out and he, and he was very, very nice about it and he went to the boss and said, he must've said something, but I know he went to the boss and talked to him about me and he must've said she's, can do more than you think. Anyway, one thing led to another and I got promoted and promoted and I ended up first of all running the dealing desk and then I moved on up from that to assistant treasurer, **[00:59:50]** putting in systems and running the department partly and stuff, you know, I did very well out of 3i. They were great employers, great employers, they gave you free lunches, season ticket loans, free health insurance, a totally free pension, a free pension, you didn't put anything into the pension, what else did they give us, eventually I got a company car, cheap mortgages like, it was, it was like you landed in heaven. However, I got bored with it and every time I, I did my banking exams, then I took my degree, I went and did my banking exams, I had to start away at the beginning and do ONC and HNC and then a banking degree part-time, but at least I did it and they, och they really looked after us, but the thing was, we were still squatting and squatting and squatting.

FR: So you, are you squatting, you were staying with–?

AM: No, no, Dave and I had the house, sorry, I forgot, we were living in Holland Park and that was great, and then one day the American turned up and said I'm sorry, I'm going back to America, you're going to, you can take the furniture if you want, but I have to give up the apartment. So there we were the same as everybody else, where are we going to live, all our pals were squatting, so we took as much furniture as we could get in a pal's van and went up to the squat, and that was in, was that St John's Wood then, no, no, it wasn't, it

was [pauses], God I can't remember the first place, might've been, it was a big house somewhere, but we didn't stay there long cos the electric wasn't very safe, I remember poor, a pal of mine, Brian, up a ladder trying to get the electric in from the street, and you know in the comics when your hair all stands up on end and you've got such a bad shock, and it threw him off a ladder, we thought he was dead, so we didn't stay there long, and then we got a licensed squat in Agamemnon Road in Hampstead, and a licensed squat was where the council had an empty building and they said keep it, cos you're keeping it up better than anybody else, and it was a, it was just a terraced house, but it was quite big, but you had to put up an umbrella in the loo because the rain came in, but there must've been one, two, there were quite a few of us living in there, five or, me and Dave, John, Dave, that other guy John, they were all called John and Dave, about six or seven of us anyway, and we lived there for a year, and Dave had a stall in Camden Market and I had a, cos they all did leather and jewellery work, Dave, and another pal, Dave and John, and I was in 3i, and I didn't tell them I'd moved house because I was embarrassed about squatting, you know, I was young, I didn't tell them I was a, oh by that time Dave and I were an item, after about, I don't know, six months, so on, I always, you know, chatted my sister up first, but she said she was married, just got married, we went to a Jake Thackray concert, I know he was after her, not me, however, aye, we became an item, inevitably I suppose, but he was, oh but I never told you why we became an item or, no, what happened.

FR: Yes.

AM: So we did start to become an item, but I wasn't sure and I said, I thought I don't know you, I don't know much about you and stuff, but one night Raymond rang up and Dave had a pal staying with his girlfriend, and anyway, Raymond rang up and I ran and hid in the wardrobe, Raymond said I'm calling round to see you, and I hadn't seen Raymond since I'd left the squat and he, anyway, I hid in the wardrobe, and Dave came in and said what the hell's the matter with you, I said that man's going to kill me, he told me he'd kill me, if he finds out I'm sleeping with you he's going to kill me, and Dave said no, he's not, he's not going to do anything to you while I'm here, don't be ridiculous, and I said you don't know what he's like and all this, he's quite violent and all. Anyway, he did come round, he was probably very drunk and he said I want to talk to Anna, and Dave said right, you two can go in that room and talk to her and if I hear anything wrong you're out of here. Anyway, we went in and he started talking and then he looked round and he said there are four people in this flat, there's only two bedrooms, what's going on here, and then he started to shout and get violent, and Dave burst in the door and gave him a smack and said I warned you not to touch her and that's it, out you go, and him and the pal threw him out of the flat and got him a taxi and sent him home. Hooray, I was rescued, I was rescued, you can't imagine the relief, it's like women who hide in refuges, somebody rescued me, and then I became, we did, then, when he realised what I'd been through, anyway, never mind, on we go. So I told him all the truth about Des and all that, I never lied to him about the past, there's no point, I don't believe in that. So where are we now, then 3i, 3i, 3i, aye, and then after a year of, so I'm working in 3i, this is '74 I met Dave, this is the spring of '74, it must've been, maybe, maybe the spring of '75, but that time they were starting to blow people up in London, the IRA, and the boss, this is boss, who at that time actually was somebody quite famous now, the head of the department, his name was David Cobbold, he owned Knebworth House.

FR: Yes.

AM: We went to a couple of the, we went to a couple of the festivals because they, my, there was an older woman there and she bullied him into giving us free tickets, he wasn't going to, he was going to sell them to us, anyway, David Cobbold, he was very intelligent, plausibly nice man, he [pauses], the police came round to see him one day at work and apparently someone had stolen his watch, and I thought no more about it, it's only in later years I look back. So I'm living, we, in the meantime we had lost our licenced squat, we went to move somewhere else down in West Hampstead, we moved in on one morn-, one evening, the next morning when I got up to go to work I had to go out the back because the bailiffs were at the front door, because whoever had been there before us, the bailiffs had gotten organised to get them out and they'd just left, but we didn't know that, so that night I come back from work with nowhere to go and neither did Dave, and neither did anybody else, so Dave said we're going to have to go home to my mum's, there's nothing else for it, and I couldn't, I thought no, you don't go home to parents, but what could we do, it's not as if we couldn't have afforded to rent somewhere, there was nowhere to rent, and anyway, not in one night, so we went to his mother's and we were li-, and she lived in a council flat in Fulham, her and her horrible husband, and, and me and Dave moved in, and she was a lovely, charming, sweet, good woman, you couldn't fault her, a very kind, and we ended up living there for a whole year because, but I'll explain that in a minute. So here am I living in Dave's mother's and I was, I should've give them, 3i, the new address, but I never got round to it and one thing and another, and one day, luckily Dave's mother was out, one Saturday morning I opened the door of the flat and these two big men are standing there and one of them says to me are you Anna McCarthy, and I said no, I'm Anna MacCafferty, ah you're the one then, and I said what do you want, and they said we want to talk to you, we're from the police, and they took me, I said Chri-, I shoved them in the bedroom, I wasn't going to take them in the front room. They had a file on me this thick.

FR: Really?

AM: I was shocked and stunned, and they asked me all sorts of questions about my stepmother Maura and about what I'd studied at school, they said you did physics and chemistry didn't you, I said yes, I did physics and chemistry and geography, I was going to be a geologist at Nottingham University, I wasn't trying to do bombs. They were Special Branch, they had my entire life in that folder, and they sat there for what seemed like days, it was probably only an hour or so, and two things, first of all I'm thinking, they're going to arrest me and I'm going to lose my entire life, and (b) Dave's mother's going to come home, because the week before a man had been arrested by Special Branch and then thrown out again because he wasn't in any way connected with anything to do with the IRA, but he lost his job and he lost his home and everything else because there's no smoke without fire. Anyway, after what seemed like, it must've been a couple of hours, they talked to me about every aspect of my life, where I went to school, who my friends were, they said there is nothing here, you're obviously an innocent person, and they left, and Dave had been down, he's an old car manage-, he'd been down the stairs working on his old car, even then he had an old car on the go, and I shouted across the balcony could any, come up, I was like, ready to faint with horror and what'd, so then I went back to work the next, on Monday, and somebody, I knew it had to be somebody in my work, someone had rung up and asked me

my address, they said we're just doing it for national insurance purposes, and I innocently gave them my address, and the other thing was that they knew where I was working, they knew stuff about me that they could only have known if I'd been at work, you know, from someone at work, so I'm sitting there with all this department going one of you thinks I'm a murderer, one of you not only thinks it, you **[01:09:50]** really believe it, that you told Special Branch that you thought I was a murderer, and it was horrific, but there was nothing I could do about it because you couldn't ask, you couldn't ask, I had my suspicions who it was, but I had no idea. Years later I found out it was bloody David Cobbold, he told me himself, he said, you were off work, which I had been, off sick, just at the time a big bomb went off somewhere, and he put two and two together and got a hundred, and especially since I hadn't given him my address, he thought it was suspicious, but talk about discrimination, just because I was Irish. I went down his throat, I told him, you know, if I'd have been Greek he wouldn't have done that, and it was pure racism and, and one thing and another, and he said yes, Anna, but I had to be careful and look after the country and all this nonsense.

FR: And he told you afterwards that he had done it.

AM: Yes, because years later I got to know him a lot better. He was the boss for quite a few years and I got promoted and promoted, and one day we were talking and I said I know you won't believe this, but away back in '74, this was about nineteen eighty-something, somebody told the Special Branch that I was in the IRA and how could they have done such a thing, I think it was Margaret I said to him, he said no, it wasn't Margaret, it was me [sighs], the b-, anyway, at least I got eating the face of him.

FR: At least you found out, at least, at least you know.

AM: At least I know, but what a thing to do, and how would if I'd been arrested, anyway that was, that was, so that's–

FR: And people, people did get arrested because–

AM: Yes, they did, even–

FR: There was the kind of internment thing in England as well.

AM: Absolutely.

FR: The Prevention of Terrorism Act, people did get arrested.

AM: Yes, and that was the point, a man had been arrested just the week before and even though they let him out, he was, his life was destroyed because nobody believed that he would've been arrested for nothing, and if Dave's mother had seen Special Branch at our house, well, God knows what she would've believed.

FR: It would've been difficult.

AM: It would've been, of course she would've believed it, don't you when you see, oh aye, there's no smoke without fire, how often have you said it yourself, you know, but there was nothing, I'm glad to say, I'm totally innocent, I'm a total pacifist and always have been. Anyway, that's where we are, and the good news is Des came back, my son came back, aye.

FR: Oh so how, how did that come about?

AM: Because he was very silly, he, och he, boys are like that, I know, I've loads of friends who've adopted children, and the boys always want to know who their parents are, the girls aren't so fussed in general, in general, and Des got in touch with Social Services and they do all this stuff, you know, they try to find where you were and all this, but of course in Derry I hadn't, well, there was Crawford Square where we had been brought, brought up, but my father had died by then, he died in '83, which was sad, we were only, I was only thirty when he died, and anyway, Des was supposed to wait for Social Services, but, now I can't imagine where he got this sort of an attitude from, he wouldn't wait, he was doing it himself [laughs], I can't imagine where he got that from, anyway he, he looked up his birth certificate and found my address, looked up the phone book and rang the house, and they said oh the MacCaffertys don't live here anymore, they've, the father, you know, Mr MacCafferty's dead, but his brother, or her brother still has a shop down the Strand, because my brother took over the, eventually, the chemist, it was blown up a few times, oh I never told you about that, but anyway.

FR: Well, we'll maybe come back to that, but go on.

AM: Aye, you could try, try there, because, you know, everybody knows everybody, so he rings the chemist and my brother answers the phone, my youngest brother, Johnny, youngest one in the house, and Des says are you, do you know Anna MacCafferty, and Johnny says, Johnny repeated this to me word for word, Johnny said yes, I do, she's my sister, would you happen to know where she's living, well, she's living in London, well, do you think I could have her address, excuse me, I don't mean to be unhelpful, but in what capacity are you trying to get in contact with my sister, well, I think I might be her son, and Johnny didn't know [laughs], and Johnny's all what [laughs], ah well, give me your name and number and I'll have to think about this and I'll ring you back, he says, and he put the phone down and just fell over practically with shock. So then he had a big conflab, all the rest of the sisters, they would, didn't want to tell me, they weren't going to tell me and then they thought well, we have to tell her, well, I was going to Canada on holidays and they thought, they, we'll wait till she comes back, they weren't sure how I'd take it, they didn't know if I'd told Dave, they didn't know anything, how would they know anything about it. Anyway, I was ecstatic, ecstatic, they rang up and told me and I was ecstatic, and I remember going to work the next day, and my good pal Maureen that worked for me and she looked at me and she said something really big's happened to you Anna, what is it, and I, I told her and she, I said Des has come back, and she said I knew, she said you were like, radiating as you walked across the room [laughs], I could see something good was going on in your life, so anyway, we arranged, the social worker got in touch again and ate the face off Des and we had to write to each other, aye, and, but luckily everything was alright, Dave didn't mind, more than that, Dave was awful good to him, anyway, I went to Belfast to meet him and that was grand, we got on grand.

FR: What age would he have been?

AM: He was twenty-one, he was at Queen's at the time, or maybe just finished Queen's, I think he'd just done his degree, twenty-one, '94, no, he wasn't twenty-one, no not ninety, let me see, Des always gets annoyed cos I forget, it must've been '94, what age was Nell then, six [pauses], I thought it was '92, might've been '92, but anyway, it was early nineties, aye, he was in his early twenties. I remember waiting till he was eighteen and when I didn't hear anything after that I thought he's not coming back, believe it or not, you see, it never goes away in your life.

FR: No, I can, I can–

AM: Even though we got married and we had a daughter, which did help lay the ghost, but not, it was still there, but of course when we went to Bel-, when I went to Belfast, can't remember the hotel I stayed in, very nice place, not the Europa, couldn't get into it all night for a bomb scare, the hotel [laughs], and we spent our whole night first of all sitting up in the cloisters at Queen's because there was nowhere el-, it wasn't raining, but it was cold, there was nowhere else to go, and then Des, Des said oh there's a twenty-four-hour McDonald's down in the town, we can go down and sit in there for a few hours, because we couldn't do anything else, and anyway, that was grand and then after a while I invited him over here and Dave was so good to him. This big hulking stranger comes into his home and he's the closest relation to the daughter that he idolises above all else in the world, and he accepted it, I knew I'd married the right man then.

FR: Oh yeah.

AM: He accepted him and he was so good to him and kind to him and always has been, so that was the one thing, aye, we got blown up a lot in Derry because unf-, from the very beginning, because my father's shop was right across the street from the army recruiting office, so the first time that got blown up we got all our windows broken and stuff, second time was much bigger, it was a big car bomb, wrecked the shop, we were up to our ankles in medicine and there was a piece of the chrome bumper of the car got wedged in the shop, in the wood, and daddy kept it there, daddy just left it there and said there you go, there's a, a, you know–

FR: A memento.

AM: Aye, that's [laughs], you, well, you're not going to pull it out, we didn't live above the shop luckily, we lived up Crawford Square, but it could've been bad if we'd lived there, he was blown up, so the tenants up the stairs, I don't know who they were, but they didn't do. First they were always very bad, they were always leaving hot cinders under the stairs, we got four fires before the bombs, but the fires were accidents, this is before the Troubles. We always said my father would go to the fireman's ball every year because he was such good friends with firemen, you would've thought it was an insurance scam, but it wasn't. But then we got blown up, the third time was, was because of the people upstairs and I can't remember what that was about, maybe one of them was an informer or something, maybe

daddy didn't, maybe daddy just told us that story, maybe he wouldn't pay the protection money, I really don't know. I remember poor Davy McDaid's getting blown up, the pub, and the men coming round, saying och Davy, why don't you just pay us and keep the pub, and Davy sweeping that up and saying nah, boys, I can't be paying you, it just isn't right, so maybe daddy made up that story about the people up the stairs. However, the fourth time it was a huge bomb, it destroyed the whole building, so maybe it was the people upstairs, I don't know who they were, they were in offices upstairs.

FR: And you said your dad would've been a nationalist before.

AM: Oh very much so, oh aye.

FR: But not necessarily then someone who would've supported the IRA.

AM: [sighs] He would've supported them in a, in a, how does one describe it, in a mental way, he would never have had anything to do with, but his family were IRA in the old days, the old IRA, I'm sure loads of families have, had old IRA, and his friends in Greencastle, his family were from Inishowen over the border, and his friends in Greencastle like, there's a famous story where, when Charlie Haughey became prime minister, he came **[01:19:50]** to Greencastle to visit John McCormack, who was my godfather, who was a fisherman and an elder, kind of town, village elder in Greencastle and he was my grandfather's best friend, and Charlie Haughey came to visit him because he was of a certain age and John turned round to Charlie and put his hand out and says I'm still owed the money from your father, he still owes me a pound, and everybody said what was that about, and that was because John had helped Charlie's father with gun-running in the thirties, or whenever they were doing it, twenties maybe, I mean, John was ancient and this was in the eighties, when was Charlie Haughey prime minister–

FR: Charlie Haughey was eighties.

AM: Eighties, aye, so, you know, it was, the old IRA, my fa–

FR: All the connections.

AM: Aye, they were all the, you know, lots of people were in the old IRA as you probably are aware, not necessarily even all Catholic, it was much, it was a different thing then, but, and my uncle, my great-uncle Eddie wasn't allowed to live in Derry, he had to live in, they said if you live in Derry you have to come to the police station every week, so he had to move over the border to Fahan and live there the rest of his life. He was supposed to have shot a policeman away back, way back in the twenties, you know, he was my great-uncle, he was born in the 1870s or something, you know. I don't know how much of this is true, but some of it might be true, some of it, definitely John McCormack's story about his–

FR: About Haughey.

AM: Charlie Haughey's father was definitely true and, so, yes, he was no way neutral, definitely not neutral [laughs].

FR: [laughs] I understand, and I wondered, I think you mentioned to me before we were recording, you've got that thing with the police coming to Dave's mother's flat.

AM: Aye, plain clothes of course.

FR: Plain clothes, but still quite frightening, I imagine.

AM: Terrifying.

FR: But were there other times that being Northern Irish or Irish in London caused problems, or did you–?

AM: Small problems, not as big as that, that was the most terrified, but I remember Dave and I walking past Piccadilly, through Piccadilly one day, and I don't know what was happening, can't remember, there was some bomb scare and Dave turned round to me and said whatever you do now, just don't open your mouth, and we walked away, and I remember being abused on a train. I'm standing talking to Maureen and a man turned round, next to me, turned round and shouted full in my face how dare you come in here in a carriage with human beings, you ought to be in a cattle truck like all the rest of them, because he thought, you know, you're Irish, you're IRA or UVF or whatever, though we were all identified with IRA no matter who we were, which must've been quite annoying for poor Orangemen, I'm being facetious, I don't mean that, but sure you would've gone I'm not even a Catholic, it's like a poor Arabian person saying actually I'm a Hindu, I'm not even a Muslim, I've pals who have to put up with this, you know, so, I don't, there wasn't an awful lot more, I got used to the casual racism, but that's not because of the Troubles, that's just normal. You must come across it even now, people making Irish jokes and stuff and, and the City, oh it's a hotbed of misogynistic, narrow-minded barrow boys if you ask me, and I'm lucky, I was al-, our department was mostly women, I had the first all-female dealing desk in the City of London, that was why I wanted 3i, they were cutting edge and it was all women. Some of the men wouldn't even speak to us because they thought they couldn't swear, from Derry and they thought I couldn't take swearing, and I had to learn not to swear when I came here actually, and they thought, they could, we couldn't do anything, they thought we were morons. There was a guy used to ring up, I've got, want to talk to Steve, I want to talk to Steve, who at that time was the boss, and we'd always say hang on, he'd only talk to Steve, he'd only, and then Steve went on three weeks' holidays, funny he was Irish, went back home to Rosslare, Roscommon, and Jim rings up and says I want to speak to Steve, and we said hang on, and we let him hang on for three weeks, and that was the end of that. But anyway, I was pleased about that, but the men we put up with, God Almighty, and in that respect casual racism was just the norm, you know, you didn't even notice it in between the, the sexism [laughs] and everything else that was going on there, and the right-wingism and all, and the racial, oh never mind, there was racism against everybody that wasn't white, Aryan and Oxbridge, we were none of those things. Not everybody I hasten to add, there were some very civilised people.

FR: But the sort of general culture in the City.

AM: The general culture's awful, barrow boys, and I don't mean that, I'm sure barrow boys are nicer, but it's very easy to buy and sell, you don't need a lot of intelligence, and literally barrow boys, though that's not totally fair, some parts of the City require financial acumen, it's not all barrow boys, but we had to deal with a lot of them, anyway, it was fine.

FR: People would say it was quite a macho kind of culture.

AM: Oh it's terrible macho, and they hated us because we had an all-female dealing desk [laughs], they really didn't like it. Some of them, some of them were delighted for us.

FR: It's so interesting.

AM: The intelligent ones.

FR: That's such an interesting job, it's really interesting.

AM: Oh it was fascinating, I loved it, I really did love it. Sometimes I thought I didn't do the world much good, but 3i was set up by the British government after the Second World War, but they didn't want to own it, didn't want it to be nationalised, so they bullied all the clearing banks and the Bank of England into putting in the money for it, it was called Invest-, ICF, Investment, you want to–

FR: No, no, sorry, I'm just moving.

AM: ICFC, anyway.

FR: Investment, insurance or investment–

AM: No, Investment Corporation and Finan-, anyway, it was meant to rebuild British industry after the war, that was the point of it, and that's what it was doing when I joined it and it was quite nice to work, so we didn't necessarily, what we did in the treasury was we had to find the money to help and people wanted to borrow, and we were the only people in the country that would do share investment and long-term loans, banks would only give overdrafts in those days, they wouldn't give any long-term loans to anybody, so we filled that gap and so we were doing something, helping small companies start up and all this kind of thing and, and then they spread into Europe, but they're not like that now, they're an investment trust now. But then the Banking Acts came in and we had two banks and it was great, we were on the treasury for two banks, in one small group of people, most of whom were women, it was great, it was great, and all, league of nations, that was the other thing, Austrian, Ghanaian, where was, can't remember, think he was West Indian, German, you know, it would've been, South African, English of course, Irish, all over the place, it was great.

FR: So kind of an international–

AM: Aye, we loved it, oh Japan, Japanese, forgot Sadao, and it was great, anyway, never mind, we're still friends a lot of us, we meet up, and I've been retired for fif-, sixteen years

now and we still meet up, because we were family, it was, we all worked there together for years, you don't leave a company that looks after you that way, and all had our children together, ba, ba, ba, you know, it goes on and on, anyway, I've bored you enough with that.

FR: Well, I was going to ask then, just to go back to your life, so you and Dave got married, did you get married in England or–?

AM: Oh aye, we got married here in '85, actually we got married out of this house, we bought the flat first in '76, they, oh I asked them for a mortgage because we couldn't squat anymore and they just, when they'd stopped laughing, because I was twenty-one, single woman, you just, they didn't give mortgages to twenty-one-year-old single, they probably hardly do it now, and he said to me you go away and get a mortgage and we'll think about giving you a mortgage, so I went to a mortgage broker, I didn't know what else to do and he, I imagine it was completely crooked, but he did get me a mortgage, so then I went back to him and said look, there's my mortgage offer and they said fine, okay, because they were worried they couldn't sack me because I couldn't get another mortgage, you know, once you got a mortgage it's hard to get you out, it was three per cent, it was great, and rates went up to seventeen and eighteen, we were still paying three per cent, talk about spoilt, and they looked after everybody and they, when we were eventually floated, the Bank of England wanted rid of us, the clearing banks had to sit down, they fought for ten years about it and then they had to sit down, they hate each other, they did in those days, and sell us off, and 3i handed out free shares to everybody in the company, and every year after it they handed out free shares to everybody in the company as a Christmas bonus, and then they gave a bonus, but you couldn't get the bonus if you earned above a certain level, they would only give the bonuses to people earning less, I mean–

FR: I tell you what, that's–

AM: That's civilised, it's not, sadly not like that now.

FR: Not like the City now, no.

AM: No, no, we got free breakfast and free lunch, some of the youngsters didn't eat anything else all day, they took, they stole the sandwiches out of the can-, took the sandwiches out of the canteen and took them home for dinner, you know, fried breakfast and a three-course lunch, you don't need much for dinner. Anyway, what was the other thing about, I've lost it, yes, then we had the flat, then we bought a house in Caterham and actually that, there was bombing going on in Caterham, but people were very nice to me there for reasons I don't understand. **[01:29:50]**

FR: There was no suspicion or hostility or anything.

AM: No, no, there wasn't, and I was worried about it when we went there, but it, there wasn't, I was, the marked absence of it was lovely, but the best thing was when I came, when we bought this place which was a total wreck at the time, it was like Miss Havisham's, it's a total wreck now, but never mind.

FR: [laughs] No, it's not.

AM: We, and we got married out of here in '85, just for a laugh, we got married because they were offering free champagne on the last cheap trip to Venice one March, so, and you know what, it was Asti, it wasn't even bleeping champagne when we got there, who wants Asti Spumante, bloody cheek, though we did, and we also got married for, to se–, his mother kept calling me Mrs King, we'd lived together for twelve years, you know, it didn't matter whether we were married, we hated being married, but it didn't matter, we still loved each other, but then I met Nell, then Nell was born I mean, and then I joined the Woodcraft Folk when she was six, have you ever heard of the Woodcraft Folk?

FR: I have heard of the Woodcraft Folk.

AM: And the Woodcraft Folk was another thing that has had a huge effect on my life.

FR: Well, tell me a wee bit about that then.

AM: Well, Nell was six and I wanted her to join something, she was doing other wee bits, but she would, you know, she needed, you want your wee 'uns to be, so I looked at, I looked at, I was reading about the Girl Guides, they don't have that in Northern Ireland for Catholics, so I knew nothing about it, but I saw ironing badge and I thought ironing badge, my daughter's getting no ironing badge, this is not the role model I want for my daughter, forget that. So then there was a notice up about the Woodcraft Folk and we went along and Nell was just six and I said to them do you mind if I stay, I'm working all day and I don't see her much, cos Dave stayed at home and looked after Nell, which was very fortunate for us.

FR: He worked, he had a stall or–?

AM: Oh no, that was years before, then he worked as a van driver, he worked restoring, Dave can turn his hand to anything, he worked restoring stately homes, doing the fine stuff like the, the upholstery and the curtains and that kind of thing like, he did leather work as well, he worked making, doing it all, he can, Dave can turn his hand to anything, at, and then we, I said to him you're not earning, I'm earning a fortune, I'll look after the house and you do it up, and then Nell was born and I said well, you can do it up and we'll get someone in two days a week, and so on and so forth, so, now I've lost the thread.

FR: You were talking about the Woodcraft.

AM: Aye, I said can I stay, and then I made the mistake of saying that, and then I made the mistake of washing the dishes after they had their drinks, and then, then I went along and stayed the next week, that was the third mistake, and then the fourth mistake was when they said we're going camping this weekend, do you want to come, and I said to Nell as we drove down in bucketing rain, I said they won't camp in this, nobody camps in this, I hadn't camped, actually I don't think I'd ever really camped in my life, spent one night in a tent as a small child, but they, I didn't know the Woodcraft then, of course they were camping in spite of the fact the rain never stopped all weekend, and I had to change Nell's clothes until she was wearing mine, so wet, we were in duckboards in the kitchen tent and stuff, anyway,

after all those mistakes I couldn't get out, so here am I still in the Woodcraft Folk after twenty-five years. I'm district treasurer for Tolworth and Kingston, I've done every single job for the Woodcraft, all the leaders, all, KP, kitchen person and all this.

FR: Yes.

AM: You know something about the Woodcraft then if you know what KP means, and I'm also treasurer of the London region, I've been doing that for years too.

FR: Well, so KP I thought, I used to be a KP like, a kitchen porter in a restaurant.

AM: Oh no, KP in this context means Keeper of the Provender.

FR: Oh right, no.

AM: Provender, or as some might call it, the kitchen person [laughs], so I'm in charge of feeding all these people. I'm standing in a field in a tent with sixty children, no, no, children and adults mixed, I have to cook on an, we did get a stove in the end, it was better than the open fire and the grills, so I have like, ten vegans, ten vegetarians, three glucose intolerant, four lactose intolerant and a few, we have to call them omnivores, we're not allowed to say normal, that's terrible way to be, and I have to keep it all separate because if one thing touches that they might just drop down dead and all this, oh but it was great fun in a masochistic way, and then another day I'm making jelly and the children walked through and one of them looks at me and says I hope that's vegetarian jelly, vege-, what's vege-, what, the jelly [laughs], what is she talking about, and I had a panic, I had, I didn't know there was such a thing as beef gelatine in jelly, I didn't know that, so I learned to read the labels. But it's been wonderful for my life, and all those children, we don't brainwash them to be lefties, we brainwash them to be thinkers, brainwash is the wrong word.

FR: Encourage.

AM: Encourage is an, is, yes, and the trouble is it's built on a circle, equality, which is very difficult cos you can't say stand up, sit down, do as you're told, you can't do that, that's not what it's about, it's quite difficult to run a, especially pioneers were ten to thirteen-year-old, they're all hormones and attitude. But it was fun, I got them to write their own rules because I brought, I brought in an older child and I said this is what you're going to do, and I did it again with an adult which was even more, so they came in and they sat there, while I, we sit in a circle talking, I'm bored, this is boring, they're all, goodness me, and then they got out the phone and start playing on the phone, and then they got up and walked round the room, and then they kept interrupting and then they, they said I've had enough of this, I'm getting out of here, and I'm going you're barred, you're barred, I don't care if I'm barred, I'm bleeped off with this, though they didn't swear badly, you know, they were only children, you know, enough to shock them, and walked out the room, and I said right guys, I just wanted to ask you something here about this, what did he just do that you didn't like and you thought was bad behaviour, and I had a thing on the wall, a pen, pens, they went up there and this and this and this, and I said oh, so you think this is bad, and so on, and we all signed an agreement. I conned them [laughs].

FR: [laughs] So they've made the rules then.

AM: They'd made their own rules and they had to make their own rules, it wasn't about me it was about them making the rules, but when they don't, oh I'm bored and I want to go home, and you're thinking alright, just [laughs] give you a good, however.

FR: But that's not–

AM: But one of the wonderful, best things, I was the joke, I was the ethnic minority in the Woodcraft Folk, cos it was terribly white middle-class when I joined, it's not so much now I'm glad to say, but I was on a camp and one callous little child, callous is the wrong word, thoughtless, made some sort of an Irish joke and one of the ladies round the fire stood, English guy, he stood up, Bob, and he said guys, do you know why Irish jokes are so stupid, and they all looked up, no, why, he said so that English people can understand them, and they were all how can you say that, and he said now you understand, you should not do that again, that was very offensive to Anna, and we had a whole thing about ra-, we didn't have a big talk about racism, we did later on, it was a campfire time, but they got the message. I had never been defended, except by Dave, by someone totally, I wasn't expecting to be offended, I was just here we go ag-, you know, even here. The Woodcraft really means it, they teach children to care, and the best thing is when they come in at six and they're hiding in a corner and they're terrified and they don't want to come near, and after six months they're banging on the table saying I don't agree, I want this done this way, and I'm going well, we need to have a consensus, or at least a vote, I think I'm, you know, while I'm having, just back down here, and I think, yes, we've done it.

FR: You can, you've got–

AM: We've given them confidence, they know how to do it, they can–

FR: It's such a great, it's really interesting.

AM: It's not always easy.

FR: No, I'm sure.

AM: If you have children you sh-, well, I don't know what your politics are, but I, Woodcraft Folk's great, and they're mixed.

FR: It's mixed boys and girls.

AM: Oh aye.

FR: Aye, for a second there I thought mixed Protestant and Catholic [laughs].

AM: Oh no, well, that too, they should have, they did try the Woodcraft Folk in Northern Ireland, but I don't think it stayed open, it was in Belfast, it was a shame cos they need it

more than anybody else I think, they need integrated schooling in Northern Ireland, that's the only thing's going to work.

FR: Well, that's actually, I was going to ask some questions about Northern Ireland, although that's so interesting about the Woodcraft Folk, thank you for telling me about that.

AM: Oh it's a great organisation.

FR: There's a woman that I work with at the University of Brighton who's written a book about the Woodcraft Folk, and that's the only place where I knew about it from.

AM: Who is she? I'll know her.

FR: I've been trying to remember her name.

AM: What's the name of the book?

FR: Ah, do you know–

AM: I've got all the books, I'll know it.

FR: Ah you must know it.

AM: But I don't remember the names, aye.

FR: I'll send you an email because I can't remember her name.

AM: I'll know her.

FR: She's got a, she's got a strange first name, anyway, anyway, this isn't [laughs], I'll send you it, I'll send you an email.

AM: Aye do, do.

FR: I'll just make a wee note [laughs].

AM: Did you know Jeremy Corbyn was in the Woodcraft Folk?

FR: I did, I've heard it.

AM: Aye, you did know it, well, maybe you don't appreciate, like him either, but anyway.

FR: **[01:39:50]** It makes sense doesn't it, you can see how his–

AM: Where he comes from.

FR: Attitudes or whatever, or his way of doing things connects into that.

AM: Is from the Woodcraft, aye, of course I recognise it in him because I'm there too.

FR: That's a great, it's a really interesting thing, but I was going to say, do you remember the peace process happening?

AM: Oh I couldn't believe it, it was unbelievable, I was, I was really sad my father wasn't there to see it, but even so, I, I was so pleased about it, I went out and bought a peace lily when they signed the Good Friday Agreement, and sadly, do you know what the terrible thing, since Brexit it's been very ill and it, it died late last year, which has freaked me out big time I can tell you, it lasted, what, twenty years nearly, my peace lily, I rushed out and bought another one, but it doesn't auger well, and I'm afraid Dave doesn't agree at all, Dave says Anna, the peace process is temporary, there's no point in you believing this is the end of the Troubles because they still all hate each other, and unfortunately I think he might be right. I hope not, I hope Brexit isn't the beginning of the Troubles again, but they need to be integrated, but I love the peace process, it changed everybody's life. Every single member of my family's been affected by the Troubles and every single, probably every family, actually definitely every family in Northern Ireland, it's very small, they may not have been killed, but they'll know somebody who was killed, or they'll have been blown, been involved in a bomb, or they've been handsed-up, or they will, I mean, my family, my father was blown, the shop was blown up four times, my brother got handsed-up, my sister had a nervous breakdown, my friend got killed, you know, it, we've all got these scars. The younger generation doesn't know, but we do and it was wonderful it was over, Derry's like a new place, but that business where your woman got shot dead, that, you see, that is the beginning again, and all those youngsters, they weren't alive in the Troubles, they have no idea. I remember us being in our front room in Crawford Square and the army firing at the IRA up our street, and we lived in a very nice middle-class suburb of Derry, you know what I mean, very, not Creggan or anywhere like that, and they put an army post at the bottom of our street, cos my father was always at war with them, they put an army post right at the bottom of our street for badness and they put another one outside the shop, because he started up, my father was, he knew a lot about the law and he started up about, you can't block the road to the sea, it's illegal, and he would go over and see the man in the, in Fort George and have an argument with him and say I hope you realise that this is breaking common law and that you better move it or I'm going to have you, we're going to have to do something about it, I mean, he was forever at that.

FR: Fair play, fair play to him.

AM: And there'd be a row and he'd have to stop and they'd say we're going to keep you here on the bridge, something about, I don't know, why they stopped, and my father said grand, I live here, I weren't in no hurry to go anywhere, and he'd just stand there, he was, he wasn't, he was an agitator, that's what he was, an agitator, he never did anybody any harm, I promise you that, but he liked being an agitator, it made him, och the inconvenience of being, all that bloody searching and stuff and, and getting blown up, remember Robbie the, no, you don't know Robbie the Robot. Robbie the Robot, the army got the new Robbie the Robot, and Robbie–

FR: Is this the bomb disposal?

AM: The bomb disposal, and Robbie, we call, called him Robbie the Robot, and Robbie the Robot, there's, the first time they use him, there's a bomb down the town and the whole town gathers to see Robbie, and Robbie goes up and down doing this and kind of almost bowing at the audience and we moved up towards the bomb and it, create one thing and another and this, that, and suddenly Robbie and the bomb, the bomb goes up and Robbie gets blew to bits [laughs], which isn't funny, but it was, the whole population of Derry's rolling about in this streets, that was the end of poor Robbie, premature, so they, but the next one, they didn't make so much noise about the time that they, when they got him out again, and I remember the army all round the Guildhall, how they got in, apparently they took a bomb in a pram. The rumour was they got, they had a cordon round the Guildhall and it blew up behind them, it's, it was, it was, I, you know, we didn't support the IRA, ever, they were murderers and thugs and thieves, but we had sympathy for the fact that at least they were on our side. That sounds terrible, but do you understand what I mean, I mean, at least, but they weren't, but by the same token, as they murdered and murdered their own, and more and more people, that certainly for me went away, and actually the whole of Derry, I saw it happen through my family over there and the peace process was the result of the fact that it wasn't, that they had low, I think that they were losing the support of the population big time, I would say that's why they went for the peace process. I don't know about the UVF, I don't know enough about them, but they were never considered a bad thing by the BBC news most of the time, don't go there, it just makes me cross. But anyway, I was delighted with the peace process, but I don't think it's, it's not finished, they need to integrate the schooling and get rid of the religious crap that goes on in Northern Ireland, not all, it's not all about religion, but you know what I mean. I'm talking you to death, sorry Declan. I'm calling you Declan now, sorry Fearghus, where did I get Declan.

FR: No, it's really interesting, it's really interesting, and have you still got family in–?

AM: Yes, my brother is still in Derry and lots of cousins and stuff, aye, my brother's there with his wife and her family of course, who we got to know well.

FR: And would you have gone back through all this period, the seventies, eighties?

AM: Oh I've been going back all the time, taking Dave as well, and his mother didn't like that at all.

FR: What was that like going back, so would you get the bus? The boat [laughs], sorry.

AM: Probably got the boat, took the car a lot, went to Donegal, Dave loved Ireland, the first time I took him was '76, he fell in love immediately and has been ever since. So sometimes we'd fly over like, we'd fly over for Christmas, though actually no, nobody flew in those days now that I think about it, we did get the boat cos the flying was expensive then and we were young, we'd never have dreamt of flying probably until, well, I definitely flew over to his funeral, but that was the eighties then, early eighties and I wouldn't as, my cousin says it doesn't matter if it's a thousand pounds a flight [laughs] you have to be back for the funeral no matter who it is, no matter what's happening. So yes, we got the boat and took the car

and Dave got the hell, it was difficult for Dave because on one occasion he was treated to a tirade by one of my cousins, anti-English tirade, which was very unpleasant for all involved, and somebody, I remember somebody else saying to him, actually a friend of mine said to him in England, friend of mine from Derry said you're not bad for an English person, so it works both ways, but he was, when he, he got stopped by the army and then they'd want to look at the car cos we'd have old cars, even if they were wrecks they were old, and a friendly, a face from home, or an accent from home and a friendly face, you know, and I'm going get us out of here, we're always at, when you're in a checkpoint you're a target, as you may not know, you're a, get me out of here, I want out of here now, get me out, and he'd yap, yap, yap, oh my ears [indecipherable].

FR: Having a kind of an English–

AM: Aye, they're having a card, and get me out of here, but Dave fell out with a policeman one day because he said he, he, oh I don't know, the policeman insisted on opening the boots and going under this and opening that and everything else and Dave lost his temper and I said don't lose your temper, you can't do that here, but he doesn't, he's much more, he's probably much more republican than I am.

FR: Really?

AM: Republican's the wrong word, but definitely always thought that the idea of Northern Ireland being separate from the South of Ireland was kind of a madness, kind of an accident of history, he said it's quite young and new, these things change, it seems silly to me, though that's his own, you know, he doesn't, he just thinks that's the way it is, but [sighs] my brother, my brother-in-law Paul, well, he's not anymore sadly, poor man, he went off his head, he was great into the unions and I remember that, we were stupid, we were like, we were walking up the road on Christmas Eve and there's all these soldiers lying across the street with guns, you know, and we just took it for granted, and Paul's, and there's a poor one of them standing in an alleyway with his rifle and Paul says do you know here isn't Chris-, Paul turned round and said to him in a Derry accent, even though his father was English, half the family have English and half of them Irish accents, he said here we are on Christmas Eve and we've been to a pub and now we're going home to have even more fun, he said you should join a union, you shouldn't be putting up with this on a Christmas Eve night in the cold and the rain, but the trouble is that guy was young and frightened and how did he know what was going to, what Paul, Paul meant it, you should be joining a union, but we could've got shot, the things we did, didn't think they were dangerous, they were, and my, a bloody armoured car flattened my father's car when my sister was driving it one day, flattened the whole front of it.

FR: Just crashed into it or drove into it?

AM: Aye, it was coming down the hill and they were, they're in a country road, Mary and the pals borrowed the car, didn't tell daddy, borrowed the car, a wee run, and they're going oh, ah, **[01:49:50]** ahhh, because there was nowhere to go [laughs], bloody Saracens. I love Frankie, Frank, Frankie Howerd's, not Frankie Howerd, who was the guy that was, it's the way I tell them, he made, he was made famous in Derry for the pantos and he sa–

FR: Aye, I know who you mean now.

AM: Aye, and he says, I got a new job, rear gunner on a milk float, and that sounds corny, but that was what it was like, you were, you, you couldn't, it wasn't safe. Anyway, there were places I couldn't take Dave when I took him to Ireland.

FR: Because of the English accent?

AM: Aye, and because I was worried. When I took him in '76 out to Spiddal where they all speak Irish, in the Gaeltacht, and we went in there, they were absolutely charming. The first thing they did was they all spoke English out of politeness to Dave as a guest, I heard them change, and then they played snooker with him at their pool in this, a room about the size of this table, they'd shortened cues, it was mad, but we went back there during the hunger strikes in the eighties, was that–

FR: '87, '88?

AM: No, no, no.

FR: Oh earlier.

AM: Bobby Sands, '80, '81.

FR: Aye earlier, sorry, '82, aye.

AM: Before my father died, that must've been, and we went to Spiddal and I went, they were all sitting, I had Dave and his pal and a Swiss pal of ours, three of them, and I went up to the counter and went to order a drink and the boy turns round to me and says don't you worry, we'll be up there, you'll be free enough soon, and I said thank you very much. It wasn't the same pub, but it was Spiddal, and I went straight back down again and turned round and said we're leaving [laughs] to the three of them, out, because Dave knew enough to know it was dangerous, could be dangerous anyway, though they never hardly hurt anybody English, they only hurt their own. But Graham thought it was funny, he didn't get it, he didn't understand, he didn't, that's the difference between my husband and most English people, he didn't understand what the Troubles are, same as they didn't understand about Brexit and the border, they don't have any conception. I have very few English friends who understand, even the Woodcraft Folk at the early days, they said oh you must be a great supporter of the IRA, and I'm thinking what, they thought it was left wing and they didn't get it, they didn't understand it at all, probably some of them still don't, but some of them do and it's very nice to be able to talk to them, Dave does, but Graham thought the hunger strikes were funny, he didn't see the, that seriously, I don't know [pauses]. Anyway, I've talked you to death, haven't I.

FR: No, it's very interesting.

AM: Och, you always, you've been saying it's very interesting so long, stop, you're like a stuck record. More tea?

FR: [laughs] I'm alright for tea, sure we'll finish up then, do you want to take a break or–?

AM: No, no, I'm grand.

FR: Well, just a couple more things really. So I think we've kind of talked about this already, but [pauses] how do you feel about Ireland now?

AM: I'm worried, really worried, really, really worried, either way I don't think it's going to, if, if they try to do, I mean, this crap about the border down the Irish Sea, well, for some of the population in Northern Ireland that's anathema to them, and if it moves towards one country, which in, apparently the British press thinks it's inevitable, people have been talking to me about it and saying aren't you pleased and stuff, and I'm thinking no, because it's not that simple, they're not going to let go without a row, some of them, and if the border comes in nobody's going to let go without a row, if there's no deal and the border comes back, well, both sides, and that was what happened in Derry in the spring, that was about Brexit, and the UVF are probably at it too, though not being reported since, but they may be all waiting to see is there going to be, what way is it going to be, no deal or a deal. But either way, even if the Troubles don't start up it's, in my view Brexit is total disaster for, for, well, for all, everybody, to be honest [laughs], but certainly for Northern Ireland, unless they come to, but there is no deal you can do over Northern Ireland, it's a nightmare I think. I love it, I love going home.

FR: Would you ever have thought of, did yous ever think of moving back?

AM: I've flirted with it, even thought of buying a wee house there when they were cheap, those days are gone now, but I've friends there, but, you know, I have lived, I lived in Ireland for eighteen years, I went back for periods, but mostly that was it, so I've lived here for what, what am I now, sixty-seven, forty years, forty years nearly, thirty-nine years, I'm a Londoner, whether I want to be or not I'm a Londoner, and I do know that when I go home to Derry it's lovely to meet my pals, I've a few pals who went back and stuff, but it's still kind of small and, you know, I'm used to being in London's doorstep, I can go uptown and do, think of, the world's spread out before me here, and I've got a community round here, the local community, the Woodcraft community, the people, the different things I work with, you know.

FR: Yeah, no, it makes sense.

AM: I doubt it, I doubt it, I don't know, I'd never say no, but I doubt it.

FR: Yeah, and that's probably it, that's probably us, to be honest. I was going to ask a little bit about Eleanor, or Nell.

AM: Ahh.

FR: So would you, did she used to go back to Ireland, would you have talked to her about Ireland?

AM: Oh she went a lot, oh she, by a coincidence of circumstances Nell has an Irish passport, but it's not for political reasons, it's because we were invited to go to Spain to stay in somebody's, somebody had a wee flat out there and, and I went to get Nell a passport, she was eighteen months old, and the passport office was on strike, so couldn't get her a passport, so then I said I'll get her a visitor's passport, which you may have, it might've gone before your time–

FR: I don't know that.

AM: A British visitor's passport, you could get it, it was kind of a short-term passport, I don't know what was the reason for it.

FR: You can still get short-term passports like, in emergencies and stuff, you can still get a sort of a short-term–

AM: Oh well, well, this wasn't, this wasn't an emergency, this was, you just went to the post office and asked for it, the only trouble was you couldn't have it if you were under twelve, so then I said to Dave well, that's it, we can't go, and then I thought, wait a minute, I can get her one, I can get her an Irish passport if they're not on strike and we can always change it afterwards, but she has chosen not to change it, she's only changed it once, oh no, it must be, aye, once, that's her choice, I have not brainwashed her in any way. She's very proud of being English, but she loves her Irish extraction, she loves her Irish roots like, she supports Ireland in the rugby and stuff like that, and maybe that is to do with me, but I didn't mean her, that to happen. My sisters all live abroad and none of their children, Anna's keen on her Armenian roots, but that's from her father, they're not as [pauses], they don't seem to think in the same, they don't seem to be as interested in their roots, though maybe that's not true, maybe I don't see them enough, and one of them's Irish anyway, he was born in Dublin, George. But she's married, she just got married in '18, 2018, to a lovely fella.

FR: An English fella?

AM: Aye.

FR: Aye, and she lives in Gateshead.

AM: Aye, works in Newcastle, you know, it's, well, she works all over the country now, but they, Gateshead's cheaper than Newcastle.

FR: My little sister lives in Darlington.

AM: Oh aye, yeah, that's only down the road.

FR: Not too far.

AM: I love the north, friendly, isn't it, civilised.

FR: Diff-, you think different from London?

AM: Oh totally different. I know what the attraction is, you can get the tube to the beach for a start, but it's too cold, and it's so friendly, but it's too wee as well for me, I'm surprised she likes the smallness of it.

FR: You're used to London.

AM: Aye, but so is she [laughs], it's funny, when she comes home she says when I get, when I come into King's Cross mum and I get the bus to Waterloo and I see the London Eye I know I'm home, so she's a Londoner, at the moment, she's been away what, ten years I suppose, no, no, that's too long, oh aye, thirteen years, 2006. Time flies.

FR: Time flies.

AM: No, this is '20, fourteen years, oh my God.

FR: And then I was just going to ask as well about Des, so yous got back in touch?

AM: Oh aye, and he's actually living in Tooting now, we see a lot of each other. He's fifty in, next month and Nell's coming down for the birthday and James, her husband, and we're all going out for a nice meal together, but Des doesn't know yet, it's a surprise, Nell's coming down.

FR: What an amazing thing.

AM: Oh it's great, and I am lucky because his mother was adopted, and so she understands and she has no problem, she, I've never met her because she lives in Newry, but I've talked to her on the phone about things over the time, over time, and it's very nice for me, I'm really lucky, I know I'm really lucky, and he says he's really lucky, because we could've just said, it happens, rejection, or his mother might have said I'm not having this or bap, bap, bap, but his mother didn't mind, his father minded a bit. He even went back to see Raymond before Raymond died, Raymond died a couple of years ago, even went back to see him. **[01:59:50]**

FR: Raymond was in Northern Ireland, was back in–?

AM: Aye, he stayed and he came, he went back, he went back, and sadly went the wrong way, got very Orange, but the reason he got very Orange, to be fair, was because he, he went, he had to move, they lived in Creggan and because of the Troubles he had to move across to Waterside, he couldn't stay in Creggan, not Protestants anymore, that's how integrated it was in the old days, anyway, he, he had to, he was told either you come and help the boys raid a bank for some money, or a post office was it, or your family will be sorry, you have to prove your loyalty, you, living with those Taigs and all that crap, so he did and he got caught and he was in prison, he was in jail for a while, God it was terrible, and I

met him once since, a couple of years ago before he died, he came, Des brought him, he came over here to see Des, and Des said can you get all the old gang together to see him and we did, so all those, all those, what do you call those, all those ghosts are laid to rest, which is quite nice. I've been very fortunate, I know, it sounds like mad, but it worked out all in the end, didn't it [laughs].

FR: Absolutely [laughs].

AM: It's like a Hollywood movie [laughs], I'm kidding, I'm kidding.

FR: [laughs] Although I'm sure, I'm sure it was hard at the time, but yeah, it's, no, it's, I think that's an amazing, it's an amazing story really.

AM: [laughs] It's not amazing, no, every life is amazing.

FR: Absolutely, absolutely.

AM: Think of it, I bet yours is amazing in its own way.

FR: [laughs] I don't know, it's, aye, so I suppose I, just, well, there's two things. So the first thing is to ask is there anything that we haven't talked about that you wanted to talk about, or that you thought we might talk about?

AM: No, I don't think, you talked about far more than I expected, I have to be honest, which was very nice, and I've talked you to death for two hours.

FR: Och no, it's great, it's great.

AM: But I, no, I don't think so.

FR: Okay, and then the other thing that we've been asking everyone is sort of looking back over that whole period that we've just talked about, so from sort of growing up in Derry, leaving Derry, moving here, are there any sort of moments that stand out as particularly important, particularly–?

AM: [pauses] Jim getting shot dead on Bloody Sunday, that stuck out I must say.

FR: [sighs] Aye.

AM: [sighs] That was a shock, it shocked me, there he was on Friday and then he wasn't here on the Monday.

FR: Must've been–

AM: But a, aye, it was, especially for his poor girlfriend.

FR: How did you feel after the second inquiry there, not that long ago, where–?

AM: About bloody well time was more or less our view [laughs], about bloody well time.

FR: And the apology and everything.

AM: Aye, about time, and it was too little too late, but it was something cos most of the people that were involved with it, well, certainly the parents of the youngsters that were shot, they were all dead, they missed it, if you know what I mean, the apology, they went to their graves thinking my children are tarred for life, but probably that in terms of the Troubles, I can't think of anything else. I suppose when the first time I saw the fires I knew it was bad.

FR: Aye, you said that, the first time you saw the houses.

AM: Burning, I knew this was going to get worse, more serious, but we'd no idea, did we, how bad it would get.

FR: How bad it would be.

AM: You're too young, or do you mind me asking you, do you remem-, are you too–?

FR: I was, I was born in '88.

AM: Oh same as Nell, you're the same age as my daughter, she was born in '88.

FR: So I was, I was what, seven really when the peace process was happening, and Ballymena, for all that it's very loyalist and all that, was relatively quiet really.

AM: So you didn't–

FR: I remember, you know, marches, police blocks and road blocks, couple of bomb scares in the town centre when I was growing up, but nothing–

AM: Nothing that serious.

FR: And like, sectarianism, but not, you know–

AM: Aye, well, the sectarianism goes on, Johnny says, my brother says to me you want to see ethnic cleansing, come to Derry. We used to live all together, hugger-mugger, as I said, we were the only Catholics in our street. What the Troubles have done is that all the Catholics live on one side and all the Protestants live on the other, and one of my good friends married a, a Protestant guy and she lives on the Waterside and her cousin, her daughter's cousins live on the Derry side, the Dohertys, and she, or, she got them all together and she realised talking to her, her nieces and nephews that they have never met any Protestants, whereas her daughter has met everybody, but these people are more isolated from people, everything else, than we were when we were children and that's not a

good thing and that worries me about Northern Ireland, they need integrated, I'm sorry, I've said it the whole way through, how do you get that.

FR: Well, no, and you think the difference from you growing up and you knew Protestants.

AM: Oh I knew loads of them, I've still got loads of good pals who are Pro-, I mean, I say Prod in an affectionate way, you know, like, they call me Taigs and we call them Prods because that was the way it went when the Troubles started, but there was no, aye, I still have loads of pals and it's terrible how it's turned out.

FR: And to think it's got worse since then is wild.

AM: Aye, it's terrible.

FR: Okay.

AM: That's enough, I've talked you to death.

FR: Well, listen, thank you, thank you so much, it was, I know I've said this [laughs], I know I've been repeating myself, but it was so interesting really.

AM: Oh I hope so.

FR: Thank you so much.

AM: Other people's lives aren't as interesting as your own, so you've probably said that to everybody, I know you have [laughs].

INTERVIEW ENDS