INTERVIEW M17: IRIS STEVENS

Interviewer: Dr Barry Hazley
Interviewee: Iris Stevens [pseudonym]
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Transcriber: Naomi Wells

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

BH: Okay, that's us off now. Hold on, I have a bit of a problem there with these earphones, I think it's okay. Okay Iris, so we're here on the twenty-third of October 2020. I'm with Iris Stevens, who's very kindly agreed to do an interview for our project Conflict, Memory and Migration. I just want to say again Iris, thanks very much for agreeing to do this.

IS: It's fine.

BH: As I've already said, a Friday afternoon's not always the best time for these things, but things are busy at the moment, so we've managed to carve out a space.

IS: Yes.

BH: So I'll just begin by asking a bit about your memories of growing up in Northern Ireland. So when and where were you born?

IS: So I was born in March 1962. My family lived in Bangor in County Down at that point, although I was famously born in Newtownards Hospital cos I was six weeks premature. We lived in Bangor, my parents had been from, my mother had been from Bangor, my father had been from Derry, and my parents had lived there for ten years before I was born, and we moved from, my dad was in the drapery trade, and we moved from Bangor to Strabane in 1966, for his job. I'm the, by the way I'm the youngest of three, I have two older brothers, so we all went to school in Strabane, only for two years, he was managing director of a department store, Wright's in Strabane, and then '68 we moved, which was definitely a good move, from Strabane to Portrush, where he was managing director of the White House in Portrush and we, myself and my brothers, then continued our education at the local Portrush primary school and my elder brother had started at Coleraine Inst. at that point, and things were absolutely lovely, great childhood, great place to grow up, yards to the beach, I would say we had a pretty idyllic childhood actually, but things did start to change around 1969 in Northern Ireland [laughs], you know, there were, yeah, that's when things started happening. Now to be fair there wasn't an awful lot going on around the north coast on the whole, but there were incidences, there were bomb attacks, there were

issues that went on, there were tensions, but nothing like you would get in Derry or in Belfast or at the border, things like that, but there were things that went on. One of my memories is from when my dad later on into the seventies left the White House, managing the White House and Moore's in Coleraine and set up, had his own shop in Coleraine, and we had that thing that people in England can never quite believe, that if you're watching the television in the evening and there'd be a news flash come on the screen and say would all keyholders in the, whatever, Coleraine area go and check their premises and off all the keyholders would toddle to check through all their stock and make sure there's no incendiary devices lurking in a denim jacket pocket on the shelves, so that's, you know, that's quite a unique thing, you don't get that, or didn't get in England growing up in the sixties and seventies I'm sure.

BH: What did your mum do?

RW: Mum was what they'd call now a stay-at-home mum, a housewife, brought the three of us up, yeah, she didn't, wasn't in paid work, but worked hard looking after us.

BH: That's quite an unusual kind of move to move from Bangor to Strabane, as in like, Bangor is sort of a relatively affluent place, Strabane probably wasn't at that time, probably isn't even now. What motivated that move?

IS: I think it was just, it was, dad had been, remember my dad had started when he was fourteen as sort of a shop boy in, oh I can't remember, some big department store that's now closed in Derry, it was very, very, it was like *Are You Being Served?* and he started off on the bottom rung of it and I think he'd been working in the shop in Bangor as a sort of a department manager, but the, it was a promotion basically, it was a good move, he was going to be manager of this reasonably, I think, I think, I don't really remember, reasonably well-thought-of department store, but I do think that, I think, I think part of the reason for the move after two years, late '68 was, to Portrush, was I think, I don't know and I need to ask my father this, he's eighty-eight and he can't remember yesterday, but he can remember fifty years ago, what the reasons were for, well, the reason was for a better job, but I suspect the thought of us growing up in a nice big house yards from the beach in Portrush as well as a decent job, a better job for him, were probably a bit of a goer, so I think maybe he was not, naïve, maybe he didn't realise what it would be like in Strabane. I do remember it was, even though I was quite young it was, it wasn't great, it wasn't great there, but having said that we were, we lived in a new estate of bungalows and what I do remember is that it was a very mixed area, it certainly, you know, we had all sorts of, well, all sorts, all two sorts of communities, you know, on the road, and there was certainly no, there weren't issues then, but I suspect a few years later there might have been issues, and I don't know whether dad moved us because he could see issues coming or it might have been just a straight job thing, that he wasn't particularly happy where he was.

BH: I remember seeing news footage actually of Strabane, maybe slightly later than that, and it was of kind of like, burnt-out shops and things like that, it clearly became a bit of a flashpoint later on.

IS: Yeah, I think so. Well, to my dad, because my dad grew up in Derry, you see that's more over towards that side where he, well, some of our relatives were, so maybe that was a sort of, that was part of the thought as well, going that way.

BH: So I take it from that then your dad done quite well in business then, and you had a reasonably affluent childhood.

IS: Yeah, we did, we were very fortunate, we lived in a big Edwardian house which was practically derelict when we bought it. My mother always said it was the most ridiculous thing they'd ever done, but dad worked very, very hard, my dad, as he used to say, could sell snow to Eskimos, he would still try selling anything and he worked really, really hard, but we, yeah, we got the benefits from it, we had a very nice house, yeah, we were, we were, I wouldn't say, we certainly weren't rich, but we were com-, very comfortable, yeah.

BH: Yeah, and what about school then? You mentioned one of your brothers went to Coleraine Inst. Where did you go to school?

IS: So I was at Portrush primary and then I went to Coleraine High School.

BH: And did you like school?

IS: I did, loved school actually, I loved school, loved the social side of school. I mean, it was strict, it was an all-girls' grammar school, it was strict and we used to rebel against all the rules, but I did, I did really enjoy school, I probably didn't work as hard as I should have in sixth form, but no, school was, school was, primary school and secondary school were good, a good experience for me. As I say, both my brothers went to Coleraine Inst. and I think one enjoyed it more than the other I think, yeah, yeah, no, I enjoyed, I did enjoy the high school, ironically I've ended up working in an all-girls' school which is quite like it, so [laughs].

BH: What about then growing up in Portrush? I mean, you've already said, you know, seaside town, it's a place that people like to come to on their holidays. What was it like growing up there?

IS: It was lovely, it was great, we had, I mean, I suppose what I have to remember is that the freedoms that children had in the sixties and early seventies, we were luc-, we just went out the door in the morning and mum would say right, I'll see you, you know, get back here for one o'clock and then we'd disappear off again and we were just on the beach, on the rocks, down at the harbour, swimming, you know, we just, we had the freedoms that children just don't have now, so it wasn't to do just with growing up in Northern Ireland, I think it's just of the time, yeah, we were, my dad expected us all to have, when we were the age, to, expected us all to have Saturday jobs which we did, so it wasn't we were just sitting about and it was all handed to us, dad had that work ethic and, you know, we had to show that we would **[00:10:00]** put in a little bit of work as well, but no, it was a, it was a great place to grow up, it was a great place as a teenager to be with all the various clubs and pubs and the nightlife round Portrush and Portstewart, it was, you know, it was good, but we were, you know, we were aware of what was going on in the background, you know, you had, you'd, they would make announcements at the Strand hotel in Portstewart on a Friday night, you

know, oh there's a roadblock on such, the Ballywillan Road, you know, a police roadblock and it was basically, it was people'd say don't go home that way cos somebody's probably had a drink when they were driving cos, another era altogether, isn't it, but yeah, it was, it was around, you know, the Troubles did affect us in Portrush and I do remember, I think it was about 1976, there were three big bombs went off in the main street in Portrush and I, cos where we lived across the bay from the town we could, we just saw it all go up, and it was just, it was horrifying and we sort of thought oh it's come to us now. **[00:11:11]** [The two interview audio files were spliced together here].

BH: Okay, that's recording again. Okay, so what we were talking about was you'd done your A-levels.

IS: Yeah.

BH: You'd mentioned that you hadn't done as well as you would like to have done because you were interested in things outside of school.

IS: Yeah [laughs].

BH: In any case, you had studied English literature, which you really enjoyed, and wanted to do library and information studies.

IS: Yeah.

BH: You wanted to go to Belfast, but couldn't go there, so you had decided instead to go to Manchester, in part because your brother had been there to do a PGCE.

IS: Yeah.

BH: And it sounded like it was a fun place to be.

IS: Yeah.

BH: So I think that's where we're up to.

IS: Okay, okay.

BH: So tell me a bit more about that decision to move to Manchester then? How did you feel about that at the time?

IS: Well, it was all a bit, it was all quite fast cos I suspect my results were in the August and then because the polys always started earlier than universities I think by four weeks later I was in England, with a holiday in Benidorm with some friends in between [laughs], oh God [laughs], so yeah, so it all happened, yeah, it all happened quite fast, and I did have a long-term boyfriend as well, of four years, and I was leaving him to go to Manchester as well, so he wasn't very happy about it, but I don't know, I don't know whether I sort of thought oh this is in a way a bit of penance for not really doing what I should have done in sixth form,

and I've got a chance to get on a good course here, so and I sort of, I think maybe I thought when you've been with somebody from when you were fourteen to eighteen maybe you sort of think maybe it's going to run its course anyway, but, it all, it all, I do seem to remember how it all happened very quickly, yeah, yeah, and in fact, in fact, the school, the school were interested, they wanted me to come back and resit upper sixth, which there was no way I was doing, and it was actually the careers, the job centre in Coleraine had a careers office and they were the ones that said right, you need to go through, I suppose it would be called through clearing now, and see where you can get in and it was them that actually helped, helped me get that move to Manchester.

BH: And did you have no sense of apprehensiveness about, cos obviously it's quite a big move away.

IS: It was a big move. I think it was helped by the fact that my elder brother, he came with me the weekend that I moved over and I'd got into halls of residence that he had been in, so he sort of, and he knew some people there as well, wardens and stuff and, yeah, I was nervous, I think I was a bit naïve, I just thought oh I'll just go and it'll be fine, I wasn't, I don't remember being, having, thinking oh I'm not going to do this, I just, this is, this is what I'm going to do and I just looked forward and did it [laughs].

BH: And were there any other girls from your school or any friends from Portrush who were also going to Manchester?

IS: No, no [laughs], there weren't. I subsequently discovered there was a girl that'd been in the year above me at school was in my halls of residence, but I didn't know that at the time, no, I just took off [laughs].

BH: And how did your boyfriend feel about this then?

IS: He wasn't very happy [laughs]. I think he thought it would all keep going and, you know, when I think about it we didn't have the communication tools that we do now, it was literally a phone box with ten pees and it did, it did fizzle out by the Christmas, when I went back home it had fizzled out basically. But subsequently the one I feel really sorry for was my mum cos I now know that she used to, she would go and cry in the bathroom every night for several months when I had gone, whereas I was sort of having a great time, you know, and I think it's only when you become a parent you sort of think ooh that mustn't have been very good of me to do that, though I did ring her religiously, you know, and write and send postcards with pictures Manchester on and things, but, but maybe I was quite, I don't know, I think I was quite naïve about what I was coming to and I think I was probably quite self-centred, well, this is what I want to do, I'm going to do it.

BH: And with your brothers, did they go to university in Northern Ireland or did they go England, Scotland?

IS: My elder brother, Peter, he went to the Ulster, well, it was the, called Ulster, Belfast College of Art, it was, but it was the Ulster Poly, and did 3D design and then ended up teaching informally cos they were desperate at Coleraine Inst., but then they said they

wouldn't keep him on unless he got a PGCE, so he came over to Manchester to do his PGCE and then went back into teaching in Northern Ireland. My other brother who's five years older than me, Mark, he started his business degree at the Ulster Poly [laughs], but ended up being asked to leave after, was it after a year or two years, cos he had spent too much time being the university DJ and enjoyed that much more [laughs], but the laugh is now he has been mega-successful in the business world, as my dad goes well, he might have got thrown out of university, but he's done the best out of all of you [laughs], so, you know, but he actually moved, he moved from Northern Ireland to England for work in the eighties as well, and in fact both my brothers are over here as well, we're all over here.

BH: Right, what year did you go to Manchester?

IS: 1980.

BH: 1980, so what else was happening in Northern Ireland at that time? Do you recall, for example, anything, did the Troubles play any role in your decision to leave?

IS: Not consciously. I've been thinking about this actually since I've, you know, decided I was going to do this discussion with you, not consciously, I don't know if maybe it did have an effect, I wasn't aware of it at the time, it was basically where I could get to do my course, cos I did, a lot of my friends were going to Queen's or going to the Ulster Poly and I did think oh I'm going to miss out a bit here, cos I knew, I had enough friends in Belfast I knew, you know, we could have a good time as a student in Belfast as well, so I don't think it had, I don't think it was a conscious decision. I don't know, I can't remember what was going on, there was obviously a lot of horrendous stuff going on, did it affect my world so much or did we just get used, I think we just got used to things, I'll te-, a little anecdote when I came to Manchester, I did get pally in the halls of residence with a girl from Dungannon, Rosie, and she and I went into Manchester. Do you know Manchester reasonably well?

BH: I live in Manchester, yeah.

IS: Oh right, okay, okay, so we went into Manchester and we went into the big Marks, we started to go into the big Marks and Spencer's on Market Street and stopped at the doors, and we both looked at each other and where's the security man, cos we were just so, you know, you just got your bag searched when you went into a shop, and we couldn't believe that there was nobody there to search our bags, and then we thought every shop we went into, where's the security man, we thought there's something really wrong here, cos that's how we, so we were conditioned, we, you don't think about it, but we were conditioned growing up to that's, that's what you did.

BH: Yeah, but from the point of view then even of like, your family, your parents or your wider family, none of them presumably were, you know, you know, powerfully affected by any of the Troubles.

IS: Well, my, my uncle, my mother's brother-in-law, yeah, he was a prison warden at the Maze, no, Crumlin Road Prison, so he was, his daily routine was, well, his work was probably enhanced by the Troubles with the number of people from any side he had to look after, but

he had to, you know, check under his car for bombs everyday and that was just part of his routine. None of, yeah, well, none of the, no, I wouldn't say, none of the rest of my family were in jobs that were particularly affected, as I say, my father's job was affected in that he did have to go up and search his premises on a regular basis and he had friends who had shops in Dungannon and Portadown and Armagh and their shops were regularly bombed, and my dad used to say, used to go well, there's another Saturday go by, my shop's not been bombed, I'm really lucky, so it, it was, the more I think about it, yes, it was there, **[00:21:11]** it was all around, you know, and we had, we had bomb, yeah, it's all sort of coming back, we did have bomb scares at school, my brother, you know, claims he got ungraded in his French O-level cos they'd a big bomb scare and had to go out, but it was because he couldn't speak French basically and he always blames that, you know, but we did, we did have bomb scares on a regular basis, you know, other schools had fire drills and fire alarms, but we had bomb scares, so, but again, I don't feel I can make a big deal of it because certainly where we lived, yes, it did affect us and it did go on and, but nothing like lots of people had to put up with, you know, and we, if, when I got older we'd, you know, sometimes go on the train up to Belfast on a Saturday for a bit of a shop and it was an inconvenience if there was a bomb scare and, you know, and I always laugh at the bit in *Derry Girls* where the girl, the woman's cross she can't go across the bridge, you know, to do her shopping on the Saturday cos there's a bomb scare, cos my aunties lived in Derry and they used regularly be cross cos they couldn't get over, over the bridge, over the town to get their hair done cos it was a bomb scare, but people just became, that was just the norm, you know, it really was, and people, and I say that, I have told some of this to A-level history students at school when they've done sort of conflict zones around the world, and they just can't believe that I grew up in, on the edges, sometimes completely in sort of a conflict zone, but I suppose you just get blasé, you think oh that's what I grew up with, it was what I knew, I didn't know any different.

BH: Sure, yeah, it sounds then as well that you personally, you weren't particularly interested or involved in politics in Northern Ireland, as in you weren't a member of a party or an activist, is that right?

IS: No, I have become more political as I've got older, yeah, and I had friends who went off to university and became quite political and I really wasn't until probably my thirties really, yeah, no, to my slight shame no, I wasn't. I could, I could see things from, I could see from var-, from both sides, to be honest. I had, there was a girl I went to school with whose father ended up in prison for having guns in his attic, and at the time a lot of people were very, you know, very disparaging, but I can always remember her saying my daddy had no choice cos we were, it was told, you know, your family will die if you don't do this, so there was, you know, people, it's never, things are never black and white there and that was certainly something that was under duress, and I do, I do remember feeling the injustice of, that people's lives were being disrupted, because that was, you know, that was sort of nearly a mantra from, I would say from terrorism on both sides, to create chaos and mayhem and disruption, and I do remember thinking, you know, just let us get on with our lives, but people have reasons for doing what they do, so.

BH: Yeah, were you, I mean, you grew up in Portrush, but you must know Susan, in some, Susan–?

IS: Yeah, well, she was in the year above me at school, that's how I know her.

BH: Oh really?

IS: Yeah, yeah, she was in the year above me at Coleraine High School, but she didn't come to the high school for about, I don't know, fourth form, but I also knew her because with her being a year older, and that makes a big difference when you're thirteen or fourteen, her friends were friendly with my, one of my older brothers as well, yeah.

BH: Right, I mean, she talked about becoming involved in, I think first was it the Rotary Club and then Corrymeela.

IS: Right, right.

BH: Was that something you, were you involved in any of those kind of things?

IS: No, I wasn't, I wasn't.

BH: So really then when you went to university it was kind of a last minute kind of decision, is that right?

IS: Yes, yeah.

BH: Yeah, and you mentioned your mum was quite upset by it. What about your dad?

IS: I think, yeah, he's always been more pragmatic, he was upset, but he just wouldn't have shown it as much.

BH: Yeah.

IS Yeah, yeah, they're just personalities, it's not that he didn't care, but I think sort of he got on, just got on with things, I don't think his life changed as much [laughs].

BH: And did your parents have ambitions for you in terms of career or what you were going to do or was that kind of left up to you?

IS: No, that was left up to me actually. I sometimes think now maybe if they'd given me a kick up the backside at A-level I might have done better [laughs], but they didn't, they didn't and again, I'm quite surprised, but I think, you know, now parents are into school for parents evenings and in complaining about this and sort of, you know, on people's backs a lot more and I just, I don't even remember my mum coming into school at all at secondary school.

BH: Yeah, so what was it, what were your first impressions then of Manchester whenever you moved, back in 1980?

IS: Very busy. I do remember getting the bus, cos I was in halls of residence in Didsbury, so I'd get the bus into town, and I can remember telling my mother that I was amazed that you could go for four miles and not see a field [laughs], so I really was quite, you know, quite naïve. It was very busy and I was, it was very busy, but it was also, no, Manchester in 1980 was a bit of a dump actually, it wasn't great, it was, you know, it hadn't had the money put into it it's had since then, but it was a great place to be a student, I really enjoyed my course, but actually the social life of it was very good as well, it was a great, because it's got such a big university, big student population, there was always lots going on, lots to do, so yeah, it was, it was a completely different atmosphere and I didn't, I couldn't get to sleep at night for ages, not just cos I'd been out having a good time, but because I couldn't hear the sea, I finally realised.

BH: Really?

IS: Yeah, cos the house I grew up in was yards from the sea, so yeah.

BH: Who, when you first went over, did you go over with your parents or did you just travel over yourself?

IS: Well, actually my father was meant to come with me, but was ill, and so my elder brother, the one that had been in Manchester, he took me over, he brought me over instead, which was much better cos he showed me all the good places to go and introduced me to the barman in the student union bar on Oxford Road and I got a job there.

BH: Wow, and did you go over by plane or did, was it a boat?

IS: The first journey was by plane and then it was a mixture of plane and boat for the next three years at, you know, the various times I came home. I always tried not to go on the boat cos it was always so rough, but yeah, sometimes, if I had loads and loads of stuff or if I couldn't afford a plane I would do the boat.

BH: And you mentioned there that you couldn't get to sleep for the first while because you eventually realised it was the absence of the sound of the sea.

IS: Yes.

BH: Was that a sign of homesickness or just, just something that happened?

IS: I think it was just something that happened. I think I occasionally got a bit homesickness, but, to be honest, I was just too busy, you know, I was just, I was saying this to my partner the other day, I mean, I, I had virtually a full timetable apart from Wednesday afternoons, there was none of this, you know, eight hours a week contact time, so I was really, I was really busy and I was playing, I was playing squash and I was working two nights a week in the bar and I was nearly too busy to be homesick, to be honest. There were, there were, there were odd times I thought oh yeah, but, but no, I just kept, yeah, I just threw myself into life really, yeah.

BH: And was it easy to make friends?

IS: Oh yeah, very easy. I mean, that first, that first week in halls of residence you make friends with absolutely anybody and anybody that'll talk to you cos you just don't want to not have a friend, but then you realise four weeks later you're actually in with a different crowd and everybody finds, settles to people who are like them and, you know, have the same interests and whatever, yeah, and so, no, it was, my student, I loved being a student, loved being a student.

BH: The people that you made friends with, were these other English people or were there Irish or Northern Irish people?

IS: Probably, well, just **[00:31:11]** cos of the demographic, probably mostly English, but there were, I'm trying to think now, yeah, there were, there were, there was this girl, Rosie, I think I mentioned to you from Dungannon, and there was a fella, Niall, and, Niall and Gerard who were, all she knew from Dungannon was while we were in the same halls, so I knew them, but I think, I think that's probably, yeah, I think everybody else was English or Welsh actually.

BH: Right, okay, and did you, was it, was it difficult to interact or make yourself understood with English students or was that not even an issue?

IS: Oh there was the odd issue about with people, you'd talk to somebody and they'd go yes, and you'd think they haven't understood a word I've said [laughs]. However, it worked both ways as well because when I came over here I famously thought there were two sorts of English accents, how the Queen spoke and how the Wurzels spoke, and it was a big shock to me that there were lots of other accents, so, we had a, oh yeah, I had a lecturer who was from Rochdale and in my first tutorial with him I'd had to do some work and I had to do a presentation in front of about six other people and at the end of it he said I'm going to give you a B for that, I'm not even going to try and do his Rochdale accent, I'm going to give you a B for that, but would you like to know why you've not got an A, and I said well, yeah, feedback's always useful and he said well, it's because of your accent, you're never going to make anything of yourself speaking like that, and that point I thought I'm going home, I've had enough, I'm not listening to this [laughs], which, we just, he wouldn't get away with that now, but, and I can remember actually the other people on the course, in the tutorial, saying you can't say that to her, you know [laughs].

BH: Really, right, and were there any incidents kind of like that more generally? Were there occasions when your difference was pointed out or something was made of it?

IS: I do, not very many, but I do remember in the, I was doing some work in the library one day and I got talking to somebody and he said something about your, oh it must have been my final year, and I was talking to this bloke about, I was trying to get a job before I graduate, if I get a job set up before I graduated, and he said something about oh you Paddies are all coming over here taking our jobs, and I said I don't think so, and I actually, you know, I was, I was, I wouldn't even say it now, but at the time I remember saying to him I'm not a Paddy, I'm as British as you are, whoo hu, and I'm not taking your job, are you

going to get a job as a librarian, and I was absolutely outraged and I suddenly thought, and I remember thinking ooh people do think of me a bit differently here, and I think I hadn't really had any of that before, so, and people would take, people would take the mickey out of you, I remember, I do remember wanting to go to join the fresher's, what do you call it, the, not ball, not fresher's ball, the fresher's–

BH: [indecipherable]

IS: No, like, the fair with–

BH: Oh like, the floats and things like that?

IS: The, no, the, no, the, the activities fair, clubs fair, there's a name for it, you know, where you join up for the debating society or the–

BH: Oh I know what you mean, yeah.

IS: Can't remember, anyway, I wanted to join the film, the filum society, and people are going film, film, I'm go fi-, they're going film, well, I'm going well, I say filum, you know, movie, film, get over it sort of thing, and there are still things that people will pick me up on thirty-odd years on, inclu-, you know, my daughter occasionally says to me what's that little animal in the garden mum, is it a squirrul, yes, it's a squirrul, get over it, you're half Northern Irish, you know [laughs], but yeah, it's the accent that people would, so, and I, I don't know, maybe I did, I suppose I did have a, I had a strong north Antrim accent, yeah, but as you can hear I've never, I've not lost it, when I go home people say oh you've got a bit of an English accent, and the kids at school all think I'm Scottish, but I've never tried to keep nor lose my accent, it's just how it is. When I lived in, when I lived and worked in London I did have to tone it down cos ironically all the, you know, all the staff I worked with, all hard-nosed East End Londoners couldn't understand me [laughs], so then I did have to tone it down, but generally I've not, you know, people just, people have had to tune in and understand what I'm saying, so they do, you know.

BH: Just to go back to that particular incident in the library, when the guy referred to you as a Paddy, Paddies coming over here and taking our jobs, and your instinctive reaction was to say I'm as British as you are.

IS: I know, which I'm really embarrassed about now actually [laughs].

BH: Well–

IS: But that's, yeah.

BH: Well, two things about that. That suggests that at the time, certainly when you came to Manchester, you thought of yourself basically as British.

IS: Yeah, and to be honest, I d-, yeah, to be honest, I still do, but I don't, that's just, that's just how I've been brought up, I think if, no, actually I think of myself more as Northern Irish

actually than British, but I've a British passport, that, yeah, that's how I think, I don't have any truck with anybody who feels any differently at all, God no, but yeah, at the t-, but I am embarrassed that that was my reaction to him, it wasn't a very intelligent reaction, but in my defence I was quite young and, you know, and I was, I was mortified about being attacked in any way by somebody that I didn't know anyway, I think.

BH: Yeah, why is it retrospectively embarrassing?

IS: Well, because I don't think my first defence would've, I should've just, you know, my first defence was well, don't be so racist in a way towards anybody who you don't see as an English person, not oh well, I'm British as well, so why are you saying that to me.

BH: Yeah, I see what you mean, yeah, yeah. Do you still, you mentioned there you would say now you're Northern Irish or British or Irish, which?

IS: I don't, I wouldn't refer to myself as Irish, although I will always cheer for Ireland in the rugby.

BH: Yeah.

IS: When people say where are you from I'll say I'm from Northern Ireland. If I have to tick a box I would tick a box saying British, yeah.

BH: Yeah, those other people that you met from Dungannon, was it Rosemary or Rose?

IS: Rosie, yeah.

BH: Rosie, and there's somebody else as well, a guy.

IS: There was Niall and Gerard Quinn, yeah.

BH: Were they from a Protestant background or Catholic background?

IS: Rosie was from a Protestant, well, Rosie was from a Quaker background, that's a whole new kettle of fish, Quakers in Northern Ireland, dry wedding, that was interesting, and Niall and Gerard were from a Catholic family, yeah.

BH: And what was it like meeting them in the context of Manchester?

IS: What do you mean?

BH: I'm just wondering are there differences between, for example, when you meet a Protestant or a Catholic in Northern Ireland, when you meet them maybe in England or somewhere different, does that change of context make you interact with each other in a different way?

IS: I think when you meet anybody from Northern Ireland, and my God it's happened all over the world, it's, you very quickly get down to like, who do you know, and scarily quite often you do know somebody [laughs], there is that sort of, there is something, and I don't care what side you're from, there is something, there's just, it's, it's a different, a slightly different culture, and I know the Protestant culture and the Catholic culture can be seen as different nuances as well, but there is something, there is something different, you just get it about, you know, things like, you know, calling, well into your fifties you can call somebody your mummy and daddy, you know, don't tend to do, unless you're very posh in England you don't do that, you know, there's a, there, yeah, there are things like that, but you also, I mean, I, yeah, I had friends from both sides so to speak, but you'd also learn, you learn stuff as well, I mean, that I do remember Niall and Gerard Quinn, their **[00:41:11]** father owned some pub in Dungannon, but he was also the undertaker and I'd never heard of wakes and, you know, cos you don't do that in the Protestant tradition, do you, you don't, you just don't do that, and I was fascinated by all of that and there was stuff that, you know, I would tell them about various things that they'd be interested in as well, so we did, we did have differences, but there was still a lot in common.

BH: What about things like politics? Because obviously whenever you moved there in 1980, 1981 was the hunger strikes.

IS: Yes.

BH: And presumably, just as Ireland, in a city like Manchester there would have been groups of Irish people who were I suppose very motivated by that event.

IS: Yeah.

BH: And I wonder did you, do you have memories of events like that and if it affected you in any way?

IS: Well, it's funny you should mention that, again, I was thinking about, you know, what I might be talking to you about, and I do remember going into the student's union, yeah, around, must have been in second year, yeah, '81, and there was a like, a trestle table out and somebody had a bucket and they were collecting for Bobby Sands and I do remember getting into a discussion with the girl, who actually I knew, she was a friend of a friend of mine, a discussion about it, and we did have different opinions on it, but we didn't, we didn't have a big row about it or anything, we just actually accepted each other's views on it, well, I was like, yeah, I get it, it was a very, very difficult time.

BH: Yeah, that kind of suggests that although you weren't kind of politically active in Northern Ireland, when you seen that, you know, somebody from the Troops Out movement collecting for the hunger strikes it, it, it elicited a response from you, in other words you must have identified that there was something at odds there.

IS: Yeah, I'll be honest, yeah, it was, oh God, I don't know how to say it, I don't, would have I have been out there collecting with her, no, but I could see from her point of view, and the point of view of lots and lots and lots and lots of people, why they would support that, yeah.

BH: Okay, did these events, were you inquisitive about, about things like the republican movement when you came to England?

IS: I wouldn't say I was inquisitive, I was glad to get away I suppose, I suppose maybe that's why I didn't show much interest when I came to England cos I just thought I've had enough of this and move away and, you know, from my point of view, was I particularly sympathetic to that, no, because I could see my dad risking his life to go and look for incendiary bombs and I could see, you know, my uncle being worried about getting blown up and I could see my dad's friends and friends of our family's businesses and livelihoods and employment of others in ruins because of what I saw as republican actions, but I wasn't, I suppose I was a bit, I was probably a bit, I also was probably quite passive about it actually, but supportive, no.

BH: Yeah, how do you think within English society more generally Northern Ireland was looked at? So you've one example there of, you know, you know, like, that, a student activist group who clearly support, you know, the republican movement. How do you think English people more generally thought about Northern Ireland?

IS: I think they didn't, they tried not to [laughs], I think generally, I think interesting, people who had been over there in the past would take an interest and I mean, I always, nearly every holiday when I would go back over home I'd usually take somebody with me and they'd, you know, they'd go oh we're going to get shot or, you know, I'm going no, you're going to have a really good time, I'll take you to the Harbour bar in Portrush, that's what matters, you know, so, and I think, but people only saw what they saw on the TV, you know, so they had a very narrow view and a view that was very real as well, but they never, so, but they never saw people just trying to get on with their lives as well, but I think generally, well, I think generally the attitude was just let's, you know, people wouldn't, wouldn't even think about it. I mean, I got married there in nineteen, when did I get married, 1990, in Bushmills and I had about a hundred and fifty at the wedding, about seventy came over from England and some, but not very many, had been over and they were all, I think they all thought they were being very, very brave, but [laughs] there was one, my ex-husband has one lot of his f-, a couple in his family wouldn't come cos they thought they'd get shot, and then discovered later they'd missed out on the best weekend, you know, but, but you can't blame people if that's, you know, it'd be like saying to me, you know, where you off to, have a, you know, in the seventies, you going to go to Beirut for a holiday, possibly not, you know, so you can't really blame people for not, for only seeing what they see in the media, and why go to Portrush for holidays when you can go to south Wales, you know, to the beaches there, but luckily that has changed, you know.

BH: That kind of tendency to kind of to not think about Northern Ireland and to kind of brush it under the carpet to some extent, was that a good thing from your point of view, as in it, it could be helpful or did you find it problematic?

IS: [pauses] Only cos I'd have to keep saying over and over, you know, but you had people who'll say where are you from, and they would have no, you know, go is that near Dublin, they would have no knowledge of the geography, never mind the politics, and it was a bit

tedious to have to go well, no, no, it's up on the north coast , it's near the Giant's Causeway, you know, that sort of lack of knowledge, it wasn't a problem, you know, I suppose it's no worse than somebody saying to me when I was a student oh I come from Cardiff and I'd think oh well, I think that's Wales somewhere, but I don't really know, you know [laughs].

BH: Yeah, you mentioned there your husband, so I'm just wondering when you finished your degree then in Manchester what did you do?

IS: So I finished my degree and then I did a post-, cos I couldn't get, the job situation wasn't that brilliant then, so I got, I did a postgrad in tourism management, which I never actually used and, oh what might be of interest for your, for this is actually in my final year of the degree I was getting a bit fed up with it, and a bit fed up not having any money as a student, and I actually applied to join the police.

BH: The police in England or the police in Northern Ireland?

IS: The police in England. I applied for, I tried to get into Greater Manchester police, but the height restriction was five foot six at the time, and at the time I was five foot five, and then I applied for the Cheshire police and got accepted, and then I lost my nerve and didn't do it, so there you go [laughs].

BH: Right, that's, it's quite a dramatic career change, as in, from information, library and information studies to the police.

IS: But see I wanted to get into the intelligence side of it.

BH: Right, okay.

IS: Or, or ironically be a dog trainer, I quite fancied that as well, I'm so shallow, you know, just, but I also thought the pay was good, but I do remember them asking me in the interview, you know, why would you not join the RUC and I just looked at them like they were mad, I was like, I said because I'd probably get shot, you know [laughs], and they went oh yes, yeah.

BH: So you decided not to take up the position with the Cheshire police?

IS: I did, I did, which my parents were quite pleased about actually, I think they thought being a librarian was a much safer option [laughs].

BH: Yeah, probably was.

IS: Yeah [laughs], don't know, dealing with fourteen-year-old stroppy girls is a bit dangerous at times [laughs].

BH: Did you have no intention once you finished your degree that you might return **[00:51:11]** back to Antrim?

IS: Ooh I sort of gave myself, well, I suppose I had, my intention was I did want to stay here because I could have gone, I knew if I'd gone back over there after my degree, you know, even on a sort of temporary basis, I probably would have stayed back in Northern Ireland, which is partly why I did the postgrad, to try and eke it out and see if I could get other opportunities here, and by that point I think I'd just decided, I had a good social circle of friends here and I just wanted to stay on here, so, and my mum did used to send me the jobs on a Thursday night, the jobs page out of the *Belfast Telegraph* regularly.

BH: Is that right?

IS: Yeah, but then I did get a job reasonably fast after my postgrad, in Manch-, in Stockport libraries, so I started working there, yeah, and just sort of settled here, in a, yeah, and by that point you see also my, both my brothers were in England at that stage, so I did, although not near me geographically, but I did have family here, which made me feel a bit better actually.

BH: Sure, you mentioned earlier that, you know, a lot of your friends would have went to university in Queen's and lived probably as students in Belfast. Did you, when you were at university in Manchester, did you go back to see any of those people in Belfast and spend any time in–?

IS: No, not really, because when I went back it was the holidays and they were on holidays as well. I mean, I had various friends over here who went to university in places like Sheffield and Liverpool and Portsmouth, yeah, Southampton and I would to see them, but no, not the ones, as I say, the ones that were in Northern Ireland, they were on holiday when I was back over, although I still would see them when I went home and see people socially, but not sort of visiting them in their student capacity.

BH: How frequently did you go home once you had moved to Manchester?

IS: As a student only, you know, Christmas, Easter, summer, and actually the second, by the second summer, I'm trying to think, the first summer I got a job at the University of Ulster library, second summer, second summer I went to America, worked on a summer camp, and then the third summer after my degree I don't know what I did, I think I was just trying to get a job over here, so no, I didn't go home that often, it was literally, you know, in the uni college breaks.

BH: Sure, and what about things like boyfriends and things like that? Did you ever bring anybody back home with you whenever you came back on holidays?

IS: Oh yeah, there was a stream of them [laughs], so my mother's thinking oh no, not another one, yeah, yeah, they all thought it was great over there, all quite amazed at what it was like really.

BH: So they actually liked, they enjoyed coming back?

IS: Yeah, yeah, yeah, you know, big house overlooking the sea, walks along the beach, although everybody was always amazed at how awful the weather was, so.

BH: Yeah, so then you started work in a library in Stockport then.

IS: Yes.

BH: And did you stay there or did, you mentioned London at one point there, did you move to London?

IS: Yeah, I, I did a couple of years with, in Stockport libraries and then I went into Stockport schools library service, did a few years there, going out round all the schools in Stockport, and then I moved down to London in nineteen eighty, ooh, six, yeah, '86, '87 and worked for another library service, Richmond upon Thames library service, and then I worked for Inner London Education Authority, that wasn't a great career move cos I got there and six weeks later Margaret Thatcher abolished Inner London Education Authority, so that wasn't, but I spent year sort of sorting out all their resources to be carved up amongst the London boroughs, and I moved back up to the north west in 1990, no, 1989, '90, yeah.

BH: Right, okay, what prompted that move to London? Was that purely about work or were there other reasons?

IS: No, I was seeing somebody at the time that lived in London, that moved, was in London, yeah.

BH: Right, and what was London like then as opposed to Manchester?

IS: I really liked it, I mean, I was there for four years, yeah, four years. I liked it to begin with, it was, you know, there was lots going on, I'm very into the arts and theatre and galleries and all of that and it was great to have all the doorstep. I lived in Twickenham, so that was good for all the rugby as well, but it was also a grind, it was a grind commuting, it was horrible in the end commuting everyday and that, and also house prices, I just knew you could never afford a house in London, it would always have to be a flat and stuff, so myself and my fiancé at the time we moved back up to the, made a conscious decision to move back up to the north west, so no, I, I think I was in London long enough to really enjoy it, if I'd stayed much longer I would have, it wasn't, yeah, it wasn't for me forever, at all.

BH: Sure, what about in terms of the effects of the Troubles then? Because, I mean, Manchester I suppose was relatively unaffected, there were bombs and things in the seventies and obviously the big one in 1996. London was much more of a kind of a target for I suppose republicanism in the 1980s. Do you recall any of the effects of that in the city?

IS: Not really, no [laughs], no, it's, I know it's awful, but I don't, I don't. Interestingly there's, I was sort of co-manager of this learning resource centre with about twenty-odd staff and my, the person I shared the job, well, it wasn't a job share there were just two of us on the same level, was a girl, Catherine, from Derry and we were, we were poles apart politically, but we got on really, really well and we were a really good team with work, and she would

have been, see I've forgotten all of this until I'm prompted, she would have been more involved in things politically, on the sort of Irish political side.

BH: Yeah, like, republican, the republican side?

IS: Yeah, yeah, than I was, yeah, I'd sort of forgotten all that, but it didn't, we just left our politics at the door and we worked really well as a team, yeah.

BH: People always say, not always say, but lots of people, particularly in those, sometimes people who lived in London and maybe Birmingham I suppose in the seventies, that they sometimes felt like their accents made them kind of a target for suspicion. Did you ever encounter anything like that?

IS: I did, I did, not, yeah, there were some times I did feel a bit self-conscious actually, I can't remember, I just remember that, I don't, I do remember, and it wasn't when I was living, lived in London, it was when I'd moved back up to the north west and I had an aunt over staying and we were in a shop in Wilmslow and there must have been something, I wonder was it '96, it might have been after the big bomb in Manchester, you know, and some, we were in a shop in Wilmslow and somebody said something to us, and I just remember being really embarrassed in front of my auntie that somebody would say, I can't, I honestly, I'm not being very useful here, I can't remember the details, but yes, there was, there were, there was at least one instance where I was made to feel uncomfortable because of my accent, yeah.

BH: Yeah, but it sounds like on the whole in the places where you worked, it wasn't really an issue, it wasn't something that–

IS: Oh God no, and Inner London Education Authority it was so diverse even then, you know, my accent was, nobody would bat an eyelid at my accent there.

BH: Yeah, and by diverse you mean that there were lots of different ethnic and national groups working there?

IS: Yes, yeah.

BH: Yeah, and what was that like, to work in an environment like that?

IS: Oh it was great, I loved it, I loved it and I learned so much and, you know, I realised I'd had quite a sheltered upbring-, I had had quite a sheltered upbringing. **[01:01:11]** No, I found it really interesting, yeah.

BH: I take it Stockport and the north west wouldn't have been as diverse as that?

IS: No.

BH: No.

IS: No, not at all, no.

BH: So you mentioned you moved back to the north west with your fiancé, is that right?

IS: Yeah.

BH: So did you get married then at some stage?

IS: Yes, yeah, that was in 1990, yeah.

BH: And was that the wedding then, in Bushmills?

IS: Yeah, yeah.

BH: Right, and you said, you told a story about you had brought people over for the wedding.

IS: Yes.

BH: Yeah, how was that, was that good?

IS: Oh yeah, I had a great time, it was on a bank holiday Monday and they were all washed out by the bank holiday Monday cos they'd been having a great time since the Friday night [laughs], so no, no, it was good, yeah, it was good, yeah.

BH: And then have you stayed then in Manchester ever since or have you been anywhere else?

IS: Well, no, lived in Hazel Grove, then Poynton, and my marriage broke up about 2009 and I'm now living in Macclesfield with my partner.

BH: Okay.

IS: So yes, so it's always stayed, you know, roughly, gone further away from Manchester city centre each time actually, but, you know, I like the access to the city in normal times and sort of with the Peak District and the countryside.

BH: You mentioned earlier that, when we were talking about kind of your political identity when you were kind of a teenager and you said, you know, you weren't really interested in politics, but later on you became more kind of interested in it. Could you talk a bit more about that? When did that happen and why did it happen?

IS: I think probably working for Inner London Education Authority, which was probably, which was, you know, it was quite, it was a pretty left-wing organisation actually, but I think that's probably where I got more aware of politics and probably more aware of injustices really, you know, got, yeah, and that's, yeah, I just got more interested then, yeah, you know, I suppose I became more of a *Guardian* reader at that point [laughs].

BH: That's really interesting, cos it kind of sounds like working in certain types of public sector job, particularly in London, is an environment where people talk about or are interested in things like social justice, is that the case?

IS: I would say so, yeah, yeah, I mean, I've always worked, I've never worked in, you know, the corporate world, I've always worked in local government or a college or, yeah, or Inner London Education Authority, or I'm in a school now, although actually it's an independent school, so it's not, it's probably more leaning to-, no, it's not, that's not true, it's not leaning toward the right at all, most of the staff wouldn't be like that at all, although it is interesting, when I went to work there as a librarian their range of newspapers was the *Times* and the *Telegraph*, so I changed that pretty quick.

BH: [laughs] Is that right?

IS: Get a more balanced view going, but yes, I think probably working for Inner London Education Authority, yeah, it was, there were all sorts of people with all sorts of views and it did make me think about things.

BH: It sounds like the change in your political identity was really to do with social and economic questions, kind of mainstream British political issues.

IS: Yeah, yeah, I think maybe if I'd stayed in Northern Ireland as I got older I would have, you know, I would have become more politically there, but I wasn't there, so that wasn't going to happen, was it.

BH: No, I'm wondering did that change in your sort of your developing interest in kind of social questions in England, did that have any impact upon how you thought about Northern Ireland?

IS: Probably, I wouldn't say it changed my core thoughts, but it made me more open-minded I would suspect.

BH: Yeah.

IS: Yeah, yeah.

BH: I mean, I've done some research on the *Guardian* over the last year and kind of one of the things I've kind of been studying on it is the way that it represents Northern Ireland.

IS: Oh yeah.

BH: And one of the things that comes up particularly in that paper is actually, not necessarily a pro-republican viewpoint, but certainly a viewpoint which is sympathetic to nationalism and also one which can be quite disparaging about I suppose what might be called the Ulster Protestant position within Northern Ireland.

IS: Yeah, you know, I realise that yeah, yeah, yeah.

BH: I wonder what would your response be to that, whenever you encounter that?

IS: Yeah, I don't always agree with it, but, I mean, I've never found a newspaper that I've agreed with absolutely everything in it anyway, you take your pick and choose and, you know, it's like, I suppose it's like being on Twitter, you don't, if you only ever follow thing, people that you completely agree with you'll never see other views, so it's, you know, so yeah, I will, I will get outraged at all sorts of things, but sometimes, you know, you can't just always just, yeah, the *Guardian* might take that viewpoint and I might not always agree with it, but I would tend to agree with it more than if I was reading the *Telegraph*, for example, you know.

BH: Sure, and of course the *Telegraph* would be a much more pro-Union kind of paper, probably one of the few actually in Britain that would take that view. What about your parents then? Did they travel over to England much whenever you'd been living here?

IS: Yeah, they did, they did, I mean, my dad's eighty-eight now and my mum died about five years ago after about six years of dementia, so, but in, yes, to begin with because also because both, well, both my brothers were there and their first grandchildren were down in Surrey, so yeah, they would, I mean, they would come over and sort of do the tour about seeing us all, yeah.

BH: And do you have any children of your own?

IS: Yeah, I've a daughter who's twenty-six, yeah.

BH: And did you take her back to Northern Ireland?

IS: Oh yeah, lots, yeah, lots, yeah, yeah, nice place, why wouldn't you, nice place to go [laughs], put her on the beaches of Portballintrae and things, no, she's got, both, interestingly both my brother with his two grown-up children and I with my daughter, you know, we took them, all the kids went over there to see their, you know, their Northern Ireland grandparents a lot actually, they've all got great memories of going there, yeah.

BH: When they were growing up did you try to instil in them some sense of identity with Northern Ireland, that it was somehow part of their, part of their heritage?

IS: Yeah, yeah, stories I would tell, songs I would sing, food, you know, oh yeah, very much so.

BH: What about the politics of Northern Ireland? Would your daughter have a sense of what that was about or would she not be interested in that?

IS: She does have a sense, but I've always tried to sort of give her the middle, I've never, she knows how I grew up, she knew that I mixed with people who were Protestant people, who were Catholic people, who were Jewish people, who were atheist, whatever, and I've always

tried to give her a view of the world, you know, there's two sides to it, but she would go with my view that, you know, it's too far when terrorism is involved on any side, that's, yeah, she's a bit of a pacifist, so that would be my view, yeah.

BH: I haven't asked you this, but I'm assuming your husband was from England, he wasn't from Northern Ireland.

IS: No, he wasn't, no.

BH: Yeah, and what does he think about Northern Ireland and about that whole side of your background?

IS: Well, we're not together anymore, so I'm not sure what he thinks now [laughs]. He was, you know, like most people that I brought over there from here, you know, they didn't see the political side of Northern Ireland when we went over, it was not something we really did, so he just saw the nice bits really. **[01:11:11]**

BH: Yeah, what about his like, parents and things like that? Did they have any views about Northern Ireland or, I'm just thinking about when you first met them, did they remark upon your accent or anything like that?

IS: No, they were from the Wirral, no, not particularly, no. I do remember one of his friends, overhearing one of his friends saying oh I believe you're seeing that Irish bird, I wasn't sure, I was more offended at the bird bit actually [laughs], but no, no, there wasn't really, there wasn't an issue, there wasn't an issue, well, not that anybody ever said to my face, put it like that [laughs].

BH: Yeah, something that I haven't asked you about is Manchester had a relatively large kind of Southern Irish population in the city, people who'd I suppose migrated after the Second World War, fifties and sixties.

IS: Yes, yeah.

BH: And kind of a lot of them I suppose would have worked in nursing or construction, things like that. Did you ever encounter people from that community and did you ever attend things like the, you know, the local Irish centre, the Irish clubs, anything like that?

IS: [pauses] No, not particularly, I have been to things, I have been to quizzes at the Irish club in Chorlton though, but not, not, Freedom from Torture quizzes, things like that, but I've, no, I never re-, I never got involved in sort of what in my head is like, sort of the expat side of things, I've never been, no, it's, I've never really got into that, in fact, the most, that's another thing I'd forgotten, when I was a student I had a friend I shared a house with who was from County Mayo, and her boyfriend at the time was a, we finally, I finally believed that he was a Manchester United footballer and he was from Dublin, and we would do things with them socially, and actually I mixed with more Irish people through them than I had done and I have, than I have since, at that point, yeah.

BH: Yeah, yeah, so this friend who lived in your house she was from Mayo?

IS: Yes.

BH: Right, okay, and was she a student as well, was she studying at the university?

IS: Yeah, yeah, she was doing fashion design at the Ulster Poly. Her parents owned a big Aran sweater company in County Mayo, I think she was being trained up to take it over.

BH: Right, okay, it's not somebody who would have migrated over really to work in the manual occupation, it was someone, to go back home to work in a business?

IS: Yeah, well, the laugh was that she did get some sort of grant from the Irish government and then she, she married Kevin, Kevin Marney, was a footballer, married him and she never went back over and she always felt that she, ended up, I think she ended up paying back her grant [laughs] cos the whole idea was to do the course and go back to Ireland.

BH: Yeah, did you ever, yourself, think of moving back to Northern Ireland?

IS: I have thought, yeah, I have thought at times in my life I've thought, you know, when my marriage broke up I thought oh should I go back, you could have a nice standard of living there at the time, the house prices were less, I don't think that's the case now, you know, I want, I felt my parents were getting older, I wanted to go, I felt, I sort of felt typical, you know, the daughter in the family guilt thing that I should be looking after them, and I did think about it, especially when my mother became ill, but at the end of the day my, I had family here, my daughter's here, I'd friends here, I had a career here, so yeah, I did think about it, but I never did it, no, but I don't regret it, I don't regret it, it's nice to be able to go back over, but there are things about over there that drive me absolutely mad still, the whole, there is that sort of, there is that sort of, you know, which side are you on, there's everybody wants to know everybody else's business and somehow does, you know, and that, and there is that sort of, there is still a narrow-mindedness about things that I just can't be doing with now. But also there's friendliness and openness and people will do a lot for you as well, so.

BH: Yeah, so I take it from that then, life in Manchester or the north west is easier in some ways, there are, it's a more open kind of place to live, is that right?

IS: Yeah, yeah, I think it is, yeah. You don't get, I think there's a, you know, there's, I get judged, I and my brothers get judged from afar because my dad's in sheltered housing in Portrush and he's had umpteen opportunities to come and live over here, but he won't, he'd be like a fish out of water and, you know, he just, that's, he just likes being in Portrush and, you know, at the minute it's like, you know, what pandemic, he just gets on with his life as he always has done, but he, but I know there are people over there that ver-, particularly judge me as the youngest and the daughter, that I should be there looking after him and I'm sure if I was there, if I wasn't seen to be calling in every night I'd get that hassle, and maybe that happens here as well, but I think there's a lot more of it goes on over there [laughs].

BH: Yeah, I think that, I get the impression that's quite a common thing, as in, daughters in particular, there's different expectations around them in terms of parents and things like that, what you're saying about, it rings quite true to me, I've heard that before.

IS: I think there are, I think, Northern Ireland has, you know, come a long, long way, definitely. I think there's, the DUP has stopped it coming a longer way, but, but there are still, there's still, you forget, I forget sometimes just how traditional things still are there.

BH: Yeah, you mentioned there the DUP. It sounds like you still kind of follow what's going on there.

IS: Oh yeah, I do still follow what goes on, yeah. I've, you know, I've got friends still in Portrush and they'll, they might rant about things on Facebook that I might not be as aware of, but, you know, I do, I do still listen, I do, you know, when I go on the BBC website I quite often look on the BBC Northern Ireland news as well, also cos I've got that vested interest in what's going on over there cos of my dad and things, so I do, I do still follow what's going on and just how mad it all still is there in lots of ways.

BH: Well, that's what I was going to ask you, I mean, you, you lived through the peace process, you were living in England at the time.

IS: Yes.

BH: But did you, did you follow it as it was unfolding?

IS: Oh God yeah, I mean, we went out for a meal to cele-, the night of the Good Friday Agreement as a family, I said right, we're going out, I need to have a drink, need to celebrate this, you know, it was momentous and I think, you know, all the stuff with Brexit and things, I keep ranting to anybody that'll listen about how, you know, it can't let the Good Friday Agreement go, it's so important.

BH: Yeah, yeah, so you def-, you seen the Good Friday Agreement as a good thing then?

IS: Yes, absolutely, you know, it's just I think changed, I think huge compromises had to be made on all sides and I think it took, it was very brave for a lot of people to do what they had to do, and I think it's really, it's, you know, who would, fifteen years ago would we have, twenty years ago, ever thought they'd have, you know, the British Open golf at Portrush, for heaven's sake, you know, you know, world-class events happening there, it just wouldn't have happened, you know, and the tourism, tourism's gone through the roof, you know, jobs, until recently, you know, jobs have been much better and I've, girls from my, girls from my school in leafy Alderley Edge have chosen to go to Queen's University in Belfast over going to places like Durham, you know, it's, it's, that would not have happened without the Good Friday Agreement, so I feel very strongly that, you know, it's, we forget how bad it was. In fact, I watched a thing on Netflix the other night about the Miami Showband massacre, which I remember at the time, but I was quite young and it was just, yeah, another awful thing that happened, and I watched and it had lots of footage of all sorts of places getting blown up and I'm thinking God, you know, they need to show that to the

politicians who go oh, you know, it doesn't matter about what happens with Brexit and the border in Northern Ireland and all of that, you know, cos they need to think, **[01:21:11]** it can't fall apart again, it can't return to all of that.

BH: Yeah, and do you think people in England are responsive to that, in terms of Brexit, or are they aware of kind of what's at stake?

IS: I suspect most aren't. I mean, God, fifty two per cent of the population voted for Brexit, so [laughs], I think on a pipe dream of all sorts of lies, oh I'm really getting off on one now, aren't I, but I suspect most people don't think about how it could affect things over there.

BH: Yeah, yeah, and would that include like, people from your own friendship network, you know, do you find yourself having to explain this?

IS: I do to some people, but most, most of my friends are pretty aware of it anyway.

BH: Okay, what about your daughter then? Do you think she would ever have any interest in ever moving to Northern Ireland or learning more about it? Is it something that's important to her?

IS: It is, her background is important, you know, that, it's part of her, it's part of who she is. I don't think she'd, I don't think she'd move, I mean, she goes over to see her grand-, her papa, quite a bit, but I don't think she would there, I think she's, you know, she's settled in Manchester and in a long-term relationship and she's got a good, luckily she's still got a good job and I don't think she would, but she is very aware, you know, she'll, when the little things come up on social media to do with Northern Ireland or accents or Tayto crisps or, you know, anything, she'll quite often ping me, it is on her register, you know, it's, yeah, it is part of who she is, yeah.

BH: I'm winding now to the last few kind of like, general questions, so these are just a set of questions really about kind of just reflecting overall on kind of what moving to England has meant to you really.

IS: Right.

BH: So looking back over your life, are you glad that you moved to England back in 1980?

IS: [pauses] Yeah, I am glad cos it, cos I've had a good, life's been a bit turbulent, but I've had a good life and I've got good friends and I think I've had a more wide-ranging life than if I'd stayed there, but, you know, it wouldn't have been awful I'm sure if I had stayed there, but who, you know, who knows, you don't know what, you don't know what's on the other side if you've not done it, so, and I, the thing is I've never lived there as an adult, I lived there till I was just eighteen, you know, so I don't know what it's like to live and work in Northern Ireland cos I've never done it, as an adult.

BH: Do, how do you think living in England has affected you? Do you think it has changed your views or your identity in any way?

IS: I suspect I'm probably more open-minded, I might have, yeah, because my experience is more diverse really, of, you know, the people I've met, the people I've worked with, friends that I've made with different interests, it is, it is narrower, it is a narrow society living in Northern Ireland, it's not all bad, as I say, you know, there's incredibly, I suspect there's, I think there's better community in Northern Ireland, you know, and you know, when somebody dies, my God, everybody gets together and everybody really supports and, you know, it all happens, that's the other thing, people are always amazed it all happens within three days over there, but that sort of community is there. Now maybe because I'm not part of a churchy community here I don't feel as part of a big community, as a very close-knit community. I have got a good community of my partner and friends and my daughter and my work colleagues, some of whom are really good friends as well, but there is a tightness of a community over there which I don't think is quite the same here, but that's maybe cos I've not lived in a, maybe if I had lived in a small, a small village or a very small town I'd have had more of that community feel, I don't know.

BH: I suppose that can be double-edged too, a very tight community has its downsides as well I guess.

IS: Mmm, mmm, well, I do, I do remember, when I was at, when I was a student in Manchester [phone rings] I'd been out on a, out at some party on a Saturday night or something and I, sorry, my partner's phone is just ringing there, sorry, I'd been out in Manchester on a Saturday night and I'd had a very nice time, and I always used to ring my mum from the pub round the corner from the halls of residence from the phone box there on a Sunday night, which completely drove her mad cos she thought I was in the pub on a Sunday night, which I was [laughs]. Anyway, and she did say to me, she said to me so how are you feeling, and I said I'm fine, and she said I believe you had a good time last night, I said what do you mean, she said I believe your toga was falling off you, and I said, I'm thinking, you know, this is pre phones with cameras or anything, and I went how do you know that, well, I was at Michelle Kelly's, Michelle Kelly's mum was at church and Michelle rings her mum on a Sunday morning before she goes to church and I met her after church and she said she'd seen you at a toga party last night in Manchester, and I'm thinking I'm away from there and the jungle drums, that's not a politically correct term, but the jungle drums in Portrush know that I was at a toga party having a really good time on Saturday, last night, you know, and that, and I always say that to people, you don't even have to be there and everybody knows what you're doing [laughs].

BH: [laughs] What about your political identity since you've moved then? Do you think has, have your political views changed?

IS: I think I'm more politically aware. I would like, I don't know that the ch-, I don't think, I, sadly, I don't think at eighteen I did have many political views, that's being absolutely honest, so I don't know that they've changed, I don't know if I would have, who knows what they would have been if I'd stayed there, I'd like to hope that I would have been reasonable, so I don't think they've changed, but bec-, but I have become more politically aware, yeah.

BH: Okay, what about the idea of I suppose national identity or cultural identity? Taking you back to that story about the guy who called you a Paddy, do you think moving to England has made you feel more or less British or more or less Irish–

IS: Ooh blimey [sighs].

BH: Or how now would you think of yourself in terms of your culture or your national identity?

IS: [pause] My national identity, pfff, oh it's a bit complicated, as I suppose it is for lots of people, yeah, yes, I do, I don't think of myself as Irish, I don't see myself as a citizen of Ireland. As I say, if I have to tick a box and my passport is British, so yeah, but do I go about, I'm not feeling particularly proud to be British at the minute the way everything is going, but that's who I am, but I'm also, I do think, I'm not English, that's what I keep saying to people, I'm not Eng-, I'm not from the South, I'm not from the Republic of Ireland, I don't feel I've got an Irish identity, I love all that, all the culture of it, I love the crossover into the Northern Ireland culture as well. I don't have, I don't have English culture, but I don't have Welsh culture, I have a bit of Sc-, my, yeah, I suppose five generations back my lot were Scottish, I suppose I have a bit of Scottish identity in me as well, not that it comes out really, but yeah, so I think that's, I'm nominally British, but would I, you know, I cringe at things, you know, I think Last Night of the Proms and flag waving and all of that I cringe, but then I cringed, I cringed at all the flag waving on the Twelfth of July, and I don't like, I don't like, I don't think, you know, the good old flags of Northern Ireland are a good thing at all, which, wherever they're from. **[01:31:11]**

BH: It sounds like identity's a complicated thing, as in, there's no one sort of clear, there's no one clear answer to that.

IS: No.

BH: Yeah, yeah, and I'm wondering is that, do you think, because you could ask some English people and some Irish people, you know, what is your national identity, where, to which culture do you feel that you belong, and they would be very vehemently I'm English or I am Irish.

IS: Yes.

BH: I'm wondering is it a Northern Irish thing to not be so vehement, as in, because the options are quite confused and complex, it's difficult to give a clear answer?

IS: Well, one of my, I meant to mention her, one of my best friends is called Mary Carroll and we met at antenatal group when our kids, well, before, just after our kids were born, and she's from Rosslea in County Fermanagh, from, it's a very nationalist town, Rosslea, and she has vivid images the place being overrun by the army and she is very, very definitely Irish. In fact, in fact, I was going ask if you needed any more people to talk to cos I did mention it to her and she said she would be interested, and she's lived over here for nearly as long as I have and she is my best friend, but we are from completely opposite ends of the

spectrum over there, you know, and she's absolutely definitely Irish. Her culture would be more Irish, even to the point where she would call, would have called her mum mammy, and mine's definitely mummy, you know, I mean, people, English people just look at me when I say things like that, you know, and, but, and we both acknowledge there are bits that are tricky, but we just go alright, we'll, we're beyond that now, our friendship is more important than those tricky bits, but her, she, she would definitely say, she has an Irish passport, I have thought of getting an Irish passport, my daughter's thought of getting an Irish passport, but there's, as have I'm sure tens of thousands with the whole Brexit thing, but I also feel it's a bit hypocritical cos I wouldn't probably have got one otherwise, but anyway, Mary's identity is very definitely, she's Northern Ireland, she will say she's from Northern Ireland, but she's, her identity's definitely Irish, and mine, mine isn't, I wouldn't say it isn't, mine's less so, but I have, I'm not, I'm not just British, I'm British stroke Northern Irish [laughs], it's very complicated [laughs].

BH: It is, yeah, it is, and in fact what you're describing there I think is reasonably common as well, as in, I think particularly if you come from maybe a strong nationalist background your sense of Irishness is a lot stronger–

IS: Yes.

BH: Whereas, you know, people from a Protestant nominally unionist background in England I think find it much more difficult to have a very strong, to assert belonging to one particular identity, which is interesting.

IS: Yeah.

BH: Your friend you mentioned there, Mary, did she go to university in Manchester too or was, did you meet her somewhere else?

IS: No, she, well, where did she go to uni, I can't even remember where she went to university, but I met her well after that when we were sort of all at the sort of young mums stage. Where did she, was she at Glasgow, she might have been in Glasgow, she went to university, but she, yeah, her experience of growing up in Northern Ireland is very, very different to mine.

BH: But that's a friendship you've maintained for many years, yeah?

IS: Oh yeah, for about twen-, God, when did I meet Mary, must be twenty-six, twenty-fiveish years now, very middle-class NCT baby groups, National Childbirth Trust, awfully middle-class yummy mummy thing [laughs], but we just hit it off, you know.

BH: Yeah, and do you think in that hitting it off the fact that even though you're from different, you know, religious background in Northern Ireland, simply being from Northern Ireland was still something that connected you?

IS: Oh yeah, yeah, there's still, there is still, that's what I said before, I think there's, there's that sort of, that whole thing, you hear the accent and it's like, ooh where are you from, you

know [laughs], I've not even done that bit with you yet [laughs], but that's, but that's, there is that, and my daughter used to laugh at me, she'd go oh good mum, you've found somebody else from there, you know, and I'm going, she said it's like, she said it's like me going round the world and going, hearing a sort of a Mancunian or a sort of Stockport accent and going oh where are you from, she said we don't do that, and then she actually, she was in Australia for a year and she said I've met somebody from Stockport in Melbourne, you know, I thought yeah, you do do that. But there is a commonality, despite, it's like, despite the, it's like the thing in *Derry Girls* with the blackboard with, you know, what Protestants do and what Catholics do, I'm assuming you know what I'm talking about, and, you know, the one thing they all have in common's they all hate their parents even though they've nothing else in common, and it's a bit like that, the whole Northern Ireland thing, that's, we're all from there, we might have different experiences and backgrounds and, you know, all shoved, you know, like, the only thing I would say is my friends with a Catholic background went to church more willingly than the Pro-, than us Protestants did [laughs], but I would say it's pretty, it's, and some of them might say they're not Catholic anymore, but they'll say they've still got, I think they would say, I would never say it, but they would say it's got into their skin more, more, they're kind of going, they're going, my friend Mary goes I might not really be Catholic anymore, but it's always in me, she said, you're Protestantism it's not very deep, it's a bit shallow, isn't it, Iris, you know, there'd be a lot of banter about that [laughs].

BH: I take it from that then when you moved to England church going wasn't a big part of your life.

IS: No, church going wasn't part of my life after I was about fourteen, yeah, no, I would say I'm an atheist, you know, I'm not very impressed at what religion does to people actually, and I think, I think actually that is probably part of a Northern, you know, I've seen, you know, I've seen what it does to communities, what it did to community in Northern Ireland and I'm pleased as punch there's now integrated schools in Northern Ireland. Ironically, I work at a school that was merged from a Catholic girls' school and an Anglican girls' school and at the head, when it merged, the headmistress going well, people have no idea how difficult it was, and I'm thinking in Alderley Edge, get out, you know, you have no idea about merging schools from two different traditions.

BH: Yeah, what does home mean to you now?

IS: Ooh, huh, huh, whoo, I still talk about going over home to see my dad, but when I'm here, but here if I'm say I'm, I don't know, I'm going to Wales for a weekend, I'm going home, that's still the home I have here in Macclesfield with my partner. Home's two places [laughs].

BH: Yeah, so it sounds, do the two homes mean different things? Do they, do they conjure different kinds of feelings whenever you think about them?

IS: Brrrr, crikey, oh God, I need some gin to get me through this, it's getting hard, it's getting very soul-searching, what does home mean, I suspect, I suspect that Northern Ireland as home will cease to be when my father's not there anymore.

BH: Right.

IS: So I've quite a lot of friends my age who still talk about going home to the town where, you know, their parents maybe still are, the area, whether it's in Wales, wherever, where their parents still are, so I think they mean different things. This is, this is where I've made my home, but on another sort of a **[01:41:11]** concentric circle there's also that sort of, yeah, home over there, but that's in a, probably that's more in a sort of more romantic fashion really. This is, realistically, where I live now, in my life, where my job is, where my relationship is, where my daughter is, that's, that's home, yeah.

BH: I think I've asked everything I'm going to ask.

IS: Okay.

BH: But is there anything I haven't asked about which is important and that you want to talk about? [pauses] Have we missed anything?

IS: I don't think so [pauses]. I think all, it's highlighted how complicated it all is really [laughs]. I don't know, I know there's the whole [pauses], sometimes I sort of feel, I feel slightly guilty that the Troubles didn't affect me as much as they did so many other people, but then I think about, you know, the eleven-year-old girl who walked out of an ice-cream parlour to see a man lying in the street with blood everywhere and, you know, all windows shattered, and my daughter said to me you'd get counselling for that now, and I said well, you know, went home and my mum made me pancakes and I went to bed, you know, it's, and it was, you know, everybody was going oh we could hear that bomb five miles away in Portrush, and it was Coleraine, and you were up where the bomb was and all of that, and maybe, maybe it did affect me, maybe I'm very fortunate I don't, I don't think it did, but it was bound, it must be bound to have an effect and I suppose I do think, I suspect the one thing that has affected me most possibly is my disdain for religion actually because I just think a lot of, although a lot of the reasons for the Troubles in Northern Ireland were political and people's rights, or lack of rights and people fighting for what they thought was right, a lot of it was under the guise of religion, and I think religion was used as an excuse for a lot of ill-doing on both sides, so yeah, I suppose it's affected, it has affected me like that quite negatively, or positively if you're free from a religion, I don't know, it depends what way you look at it, so. But I do sometimes think, you know, whenever Susan, when Sue said to me, you know, about doing this I thought I haven't got really much to contribute cos it didn't really affect me much, but I suppose it did affect me, but maybe just not as deeply on a daily basis as it sadly did a lot of other people, yeah.

BH: Yeah, it, having done some of these interviews now, it's striking how different people can be affected very differently by similar events. I mean, some of the things that you've described, I've spoken to other people or heard narratives off other people who experienced very similar things, but have genuinely been kind of like, traumatised by it and spent their life kind of dealing with it, whereas other people seem to just kind of brush it off.

IS: Yeah.

BH: It's hard to know why that happens.

IS: Yes, yeah.

BH: But it's definitely not something, I don't think anybody should feel guilty about. It's, it's, it's probably a pretty good thing if you can, if you can brush it off, you know.

IS: Mmm, I think possibly my parents were very balanced about things and they had that sort of, it wasn't sort of there, there, get on with it, you know, get a grip, forget about it, but there was kind-, absolute kindness, but they didn't, my parents were never one to make a big drama out of a crisis and I suspect I've, I'm a bit like that as well, I can't be doing with drama, especially about things that are important cos the crises themselves are important enough without making a big, big, big hoo-ha about it, but that's not to say, you know, if somebody has in effect post-traumatic stress from, you know, being involved in an explosion or, you know, or any other sort of trauma that it's not important cos it is, it is, but, as you say, different people deal with things differently. I've had other things in my life that have nothing to do with any of this, that have left me traumatised and that I've not coped so well with, so maybe it is, it is interesting what gets to one person might not get to another sort of thing.

BH: Sure, yeah, you said there that you felt, sometimes you feel slightly guilty that it didn't have more of an affect on you.

IS: Yeah.

BH: What do you mean by that? Why would you feel guilty about that?

IS: Oh I don't know, I think, I think just cos when people go oh you've grown up in Northern Ireland, it must have been awful, and my first reaction was I had a really nice childhood, you know, and a loving family, we weren't poor, my dad worked hard, my mum looked after us, we lived in a lovely, lovely place, you know, and yes, the backgr-, the Troubles from when I was what, eight, nine, '62, so nine, you know, they were there and they did encroach on our lives, and maybe there is a sort of that you just get used to things as well, but I'm just very aware that most people think oh you grew up in Northern Ireland in the sixties, seventies into the eighties, you know, you were living in a war zone, but I didn't, I didn't feel we did particularly.

BH: That's, that's really interesting because it suggests again that, you know, there is a kind of popular perception of Northern Ireland as a war zone within English culture, and that you occasionally feel disappointed when you're confronted with that because you can't live up to those expectations, they, they, they alm–

IS: I don't know if it's–

BH: They almost want you to be the, to be badly affected by what they perceive to be a war zone.

IS: Yeah, I wouldn't say I feel disappointed cos I actually feel quite pleased and go no, do you know what, they were lovely beach-, well, they still are, lovely beaches and, you know, a good sense of community and I nearly feel proud, I mean, I, I think that's why I used to drag, well, it wasn't drag, but, you know, take as many people from England as possible over there, and I should've got a blooming award from the Northern Irish tourist board for my wedding cos we did, I, you know, we hired minibuses to take everybody about, I wanted to show it off.

BH: Yeah, yeah, that's really interesting, that suggests that, you know, a sense of pride in Northern Ireland.

IS: Oh God yeah, yeah, definitely.

BH: Because obviously there would be people, there would be people who wouldn't see it that way, you know.

IS: I know, I know.

BH: As in, they would say it's a terrible place and it needs to be transformed kind of thing.

IS: Well, I mean, actually and I can't, I can only give you about five more minutes, to be honest, Barry.

BH: Sure, no problem, yeah.

IS: But just very quickly, I mean, my partner now is in the air force and I've taken him over there, we've been over, what, about six times in the last four years that we've been together, and he'd never been cos he had never felt comfortable, well, he'd never thought of going there, and he absolutely loves it, he was amazed, loves it now, when are we going over again and, you know, we went over in August, despite Covid we went over to see my dad, and, you know, and I was, I just wanted to show him, and we went to Derry and my cousin, we went on a tour all round Derry and, you know, there were parts that he said I, he, you know, he couldn't, there's parts of it he's not allowed to go to actually, he had to get permission to go to Northern Ireland, I'm going what, I'm not going to take you anywhere dodgy, you know, but he's fascinated, he's really interested in the background, in the culture and, you know, he sees it from another side as well, which I don't really want to get into now, but, you know, I was, I wanted to show it off to him and he was really interested in it all and, you know, we walked the walls of Derry, looked over to the Bogside, went into the cathedral where my granny's buried in the graveyard, you know, and he was really interested in all of that and I suppose I've always just had that sense of pride, I want to show it off, I want to show people that **[01:51:11]** there is more to it than people, you know, not speaking cos of a church they happen to go to or, you know, you know, the whole, just, yeah, people are, most people in Northern Ireland I think are better, better than that and it's always the minorities that give it, I think give it all a bad name.

BH: Yeah, yeah, listen Iris, I realise you need to go now, so I just want to finish off by saying thanks very much again for taking the time to do this.

IS: No, it's been quite enlightening for me, it's made me think about my past and, pardon me, excuse me, I'm going to sneeze, pardon me, my identity and all of that, it's been interesting for me, yeah.

BH: Well, that's great, I'm glad you got something out of it, and thanks also for sticking with it after the collapse of the laptop as well.

IS: That's alright.

BH: Listen, if your friend Mary is interested in doing one of these by all means pass her, have you got the, I think, did Susan send you the poster and the information pack kind of thing, or did I send you that?

IS: No, I don't think I got that, no, I've not got that.

BH: Okay, I'll send you the poster and the other thing.

IS: Okay.

BH: And if you want to pass it on to her, if she's got an email address or whatever.

IS: Yeah, I can do, I can do.

BH: I would definitely be keen to do one.

IS: She might have to do weekends or evenings cos she's not fortunate like me working in a school, she's an occupational therapist, so she's working in the NHS all week basically, but if you can fit it in sort of out of the working week time she probably would. Her, it'll be, yeah, be interesting cos her experience'll be very, very different.

BH: Brilliant, that's what we want, we want to hear the differences between your people. Okay, listen Iris, thanks very much again.

IS: Not at all, not at all, and that, my last question is, so where are you from? [laughs]

BH: Yes, of course. I'm from Cookstown, County Tyrone.

IS: Ah right, right, right.

BH: Originally from Lisburn and a wee village called Ballinderry.

IS: Oh I've heard of Ballinderry.

BH: Yeah, and then my mother's, my grandparents were from a place called Moneymore in–

IS: Oh yeah.

BH: It's going to be south, south Derry really, south County Derry.

IS: Yes, Moneymore, yeah, yeah.

BH: So yeah, I grew up in Cookstown and left, again, kind of like you I suppose, when I was about eighteen, but went to Glasgow and then to Manchester, so.

IS: Right.

BH: And I haven't been back, yeah [laughs].

IS: [laughs] Yeah, funny how it works like that.

BH: Yeah.

IS: Alright, well, I hope, I hope, I hope what I've done is useful and, you know, it helps with all your research and stuff.

BH: It's really useful, and if you want to sort of find out what we're doing and where we're up to drop me an email any time.

IS: I will do, yeah, yeah, be interested to see the finished thing, so yeah, alright, good, good to talk to you, Barry.

BH: Okay, thanks very much Iris.

IS: Alright then, bye.

BH: Okay, bye bye.

IS: Bye.

INTERVIEW ENDS