

## M22: ALISTAIR SCOTT INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Interviewee: Alistair Scott
Interviewer: Dr Barry Hazley
Interview summarisers: Dr Fearghus Roulston and Prof Liam Harte
The interview was recorded as a single audio file with no section breaks

M22: Alistair Scott	Start time: 00:00	Finish time: 01:36:14	Duration: 01:36:14	Brief summary of content:
00:00–09:59	Born in 1958 in Castlecaulfield, Co. Tyrone and grew up there. One of five siblings, his mother was a housewife and his father a linen factory worker who later became a traffic warden and RUC reservist. Recalls having lots of friends, all of them Protestant, in the 'quiet village' and being in the 'very much Protestant orientated' Boy's Brigade. Describes his family as relatively poor: 'we were [...] all on free school meals, that type of thing, and grants'.			
10:00–19:59	Explains that going to church and Sunday school were 'automatic' activities in his youth and that, while he is no longer a practising Presbyterian, he 'still would feel a lot of the fire and brimstone from the pulpit'. Voices his antipathy towards Orange culture – 'the Twelfth of July just makes me shudder, I hate it. I think [...] it just churns up people's emotions' – and mentions his awareness of sectarian tensions as a child. Remembers being a shy boy who enjoyed school, and being one of two children in his class to get into grammar school in Dungannon.			
20:00–29:59	Recalls his father's support for his children's education and his non-sectarian outlook. Remembers his grammar school days as uneventful and details the various part-time and holidays jobs he had. Explains that he had no ambition to go to university until he was drawn to pharmacy as a career. Began his studies at QUB in 1976. States that he was 'oblivious [...] or just didn't think about' political and sectarian conflict until the mid-1970s, by which time there had been some Troubles-related deaths in Castlecaulfield.			
30:00–39:59	Describes how he adjusted to the changes the Troubles brought to his home village. Although of unionist stock, he himself was politically apathetic. Recalls the domestic security checks necessitated by his father being an RUC reservist, then reveals that he was murdered 'the year I was doing my A-levels'. Audibly upset, he explains how this tragedy affected his education and his mother's mental health, and the importance of his older sister's support: 'she was more of a mother to me than my mother'. Recalls moving to Belfast to begin his studies and forming a close and lasting friendship with a classmate from Enniskillen.			
40:00–49:59	States that during his first year of university he began a long-term same-sex relationship with a non-student. Recalls the difficulties of being gay in 1970s NI, when homosexuality was seen as 'a disease'. Reveals that he took 'medication to try and change me' and had counselling from a psychologist who was also a religious minister. Discusses the effects of his hormone treatment and the inner anguish that came from not wanting to be 'abnormal'. Discusses becoming aware of his sexuality, his mother's tacit knowledge of it and the mental and physical toll of leading a double life. Recalls the 'very underground' gay scene in 1970s Belfast, where he was once mugged, and his underlying need for intimacy: 'I just wanted some male company, just somebody to hold me, somebody that was stronger than my mother because my mother wasn't strong at all'.			
50:00–59:59	Mentions that his being mugged 'was another factor in wanting to change. I didn't want to be gay'. Recalls times when the Troubles disrupted his life in			

	Belfast and Lisburn, but states that 'it was the other thing that's more personal to you was the more difficult thing'. Explains that he had a girlfriend for a couple of years, followed by an affair with a married Catholic man, after which he was in a sixteen-year relationship with a senior Orangeman, with whom he moved in 1991 to Manchester, where his brother owned a house. He enjoyed the freer social environment in England and worked in pharmacy management until 2001, when he moved with his partner to New Zealand to take up a position there.
01:00:00–01:09:59	Returned to Manchester in 2002, by which time there were 'cracks in the relationship', which ended in 2003. Discusses his involvement in competitive dog showing and the friendships he has made through that. States that he seldom frequented the gay village during his early years in Manchester, but now thinks of the city as his second home. Recalls the 1996 IRA bomb, noting that he lived close to where it was detonated, but experienced no hostility afterwards, despite having a 'quite pronounced' NI accent.
01:10:00–01:19:59	Comments on the tendency of English people to regard him as Irish, but stresses that he is 'very much, you know, Northern Ireland or Ulster, [...] that's what I am'. Explains that he rarely reveals the circumstances of his father's death to his English friends and avoids discussing politics with his Irish and Catholic friends, especially since a drunken argument with a good friend about passports and nationality. Confesses that his visits to NI have become infrequent since his mother's death: 'I've no pull now for Northern Ireland at all to, other than to meet up with family and then after a day of that I just want to come home'.
01:20:00–01:29:59	Explains that he has planned for his ashes to be laid in the Moray Firth in Scotland and not in Castlecaulfield, 'the last place I ever want to be'. Regards NI as 'too insular' still and says he would 'feel choked if I went back to live there again', not because of his sexuality – he is now 'totally out' – but because of the agony of re-experiencing the grief and trauma of his father's death: 'The pain is [...] only when I go up to that graveyard, when I go inside the gates [...] it's horrific for me, I just can't deal with it, I just hate it'. Living in England has helped to ease his pain, yet he would wish NI to remain in the UK 'because I just feel I have too much there, my, my, sort of my history is from, from there'.
01:30:00–01:36:14	Explains that while he is sometimes saddened by the lack of enthusiasm for the Union among English people, his own sense of Northern Irishness has remained constant and stable throughout his time in England. States that he found the interview 'quite therapeutic', even though 'it stirred up things that you think you've dealt with'. Interview ends with a brief discussion of the project's timeline and planned outputs.