

Úna Gan A Gúna Interview Summary Sheet

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Collection Title: ÚnaGanAGúna Phase 1

Interviewee's Surname: Hadley

Interviewee's Title:

Interviewee's First Name(s): Marie

Interviewee's Gender: Female

Occupation:

Senior Procurement Adviser

Interviewee's Date of Birth: 1965

Mother's Occupation: Cleaner

Father's Occupation: NK

Date(s) of recording: 22.04.2024

Location of interview: In Marie's home in Birmingham

Name of interviewer: Pat Rodwell

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Additional material (e.g. photos, documents):

Photo of Marie with her sister Siobhan

Copyright/clearance:

Participation and recording agreements signed.

Interviewer's comments:

*Pat Rodwell: Right. Hello, this is Pat Rodwell recording an interview for the *Úna Gan a Gúna* project. It's Thursday the 22nd of February 2024 and I'm here with Marie to talk about her life as a youngster but particularly between fifteen and twenty-five. Marie, could you introduce yourself?*

[00:00:24]

Marie Hadley: Yes, my name is Marie Hadley, it used to be Mullen prior to getting married. I'm fifty-eight years old—fifty-nine this year, just had to think about that then—fifty-eight years old. I'm married. I have a daughter who's seventeen. I am a sibling with—I have a younger brother and sister and then there was my mum and dad as well. I do come from a big Irish family so there were always lots of aunts and uncles and cousins and—doesn't matter where you go to you seem to bump into somebody who's related in some way or another.

[00:01:01]

Pat Rodwell: And where do you live now?

Marie Hadley: Uh, I live in Sutton Coldfield now, been here since 2009 and moved here just before my daughter started school.

Pat Rodwell: Okay and where were you born?

Marie Hadley: I was born in Selly Oak at the QE [Queen Elizabeth] Hospital and lived in King's Heath from the time I was born up until 1974 when I moved to Ireland.

Pat Rodwell: Right, and why did you move to Ireland?

Marie Hadley: Uh, my dad was born in Ireland and most of his family were there. My mum has relatives, both in Ireland and in England but I think my dad was homesick and he wanted to try living back in Ireland, so my mum agreed to that. So, he went a few years before we all actually, kind of, up and went over. So he probably went in around 1972, '73 and then we ended up moving over there to him in 1974.

Pat Rodwell: Right. And whereabouts did you move to?

Marie Hadley: Ehm, we lived in Cabra in Dublin. It's just outside the city centre, it's about a twenty minute walk in. So, yeah, 99 Annaly Road, Cabra, Dublin 7. I remember it well, so—

Pat Rodwell: And how old—how old were you at the time?

Marie Hadley: Uh, so I would have been—1974—so I was eight going on nine. So I think we moved in the summer of 1974 and then I was nine in the September. Just after starting school there.

Pat Rodwell: And what was that experience like of moving to Ireland?

Marie Hadley: Oh it was very strange. It was, obviously, being uprooted from everything that you knew and placed in this alien environment and starting—I went to a convent school so we were taught by nuns, which was a very weird experience because I'd come from a school where you were taught by men and women. Going to this convent school where it was very strict, where you had to have all your uniform specially made for you—even—they did knicker inspection to make sure you were wearing the right knickers which was very, very

strange. And also, I was put back a year because—because obviously I was going into the school system there, I don't know whether there wasn't any room or because it was in between or whatever, so I was actually put back a year. But it didn't seem to matter because in Ireland they concentrate on different subjects. In England there was a lot of English whereas in Ireland, they concentrate a lot on Maths and Sciences. So it was kind of, like, a strange start to a new school because we were focusing on different subjects. When I started, because of my age, I didn't have to learn Gaelic whereas everybody else did and I used to have to—but it was weird because I didn't have to learn it but I had to sit in the class and listen to it. So, obviously you pick up little bits and pieces which I don't remember now, by the way, [Pat Laughs] but I do remember picking up on certain bits and then we had to obviously say prayers for every class and we had to pray in English and in French which was a bit weird as well. And every now and again they'd do Gaelic prayers as well and a lot of the nuns were very small and, kind of, very embarrassed about everything. I remember one particular sex-education class [laughs] where, basically, they'd put a diagram on the board and then the nun disappeared and that was it. So, we didn't get any further than that. I was thinking, that's not a very good start is it? For a sex-education class. So, yeah, I remember going to school there well.

[00:04:46]

Pat Rodwell: And had you been used to going to church and was religion—

Marie Hadley: Yes.

Pat Rodwell:—part of your life before then?

Marie Hadley: Yeah. Always, always—went to Mass every Sunday and then all the holy days we'd have to go and we'd all, you know, new clothes for Christmas and Easter and saints' days and all this kind of stuff. My nan seemed to be well-in with the bishop of Birmingham—I don't know why—but all these priests used to come around on a Saturday and we'd all hide and just wait 'til they'd gone so we could get sandwiches and cake when they'd gone because they'd always put on a spread and stuff like that. So it—I was used to, kind of, like a religious background but because I was taught in a non-religious school here, then going into a convent basically—so you went into the convent every day—some people boarded there but we didn't live too far away. It was in Cabra West which was about a twenty minute walk, so we just went for the day, so yeah—but it was in a convent.

Pat Rodwell: Did you find it easy to make friends?

Marie Hadley: Not at first. I think I was quite shy at that point and I found it quite difficult to make friends and I think I was big when I was younger, so I was a bit bullied for that *before* I'd even moved to Ireland. But then moving to Ireland and having an English accent—I think when I actually—because we moved in the summer and I didn't start school 'til the September so it was mainly cousins and aunts and uncles that I spent all my time with then. Then actually starting school—some kids kind of bullied me for having an English accent but some kids found it quite exotic, I think. So it was like—oh lets befriend the English girl—sort of thing. So, I did actually make some friends and weirdly enough, some of the—my cousins who lived here came over on their summer holidays to stay with us at the time of—in 1977 I think it was, around *Saturday Night Fever*, all that kind of stuff. And I remember we used to line up and do all the dancing and everything. But I invited some friends from school to do

this and a couple of years ago I went out—we went out with all the cousins and one of my cousins said that she went to a funeral and this girl came up to her and says, “I remember you. Your name’s Jacqueline,” and she went, “Yes.” And she went, “I went to school in Ireland with Marie.” And she actually lives here and I’ve not seen her and I—but it just shows what a small world it is that—that you know.

But yes. So it was quite difficult to make friends and I did realise that actually I was getting bullied for having an English accent there. But at the same time—on the flipside of that—when I came back to live in England I was being bullied then for having an Irish accent in England. And it kind of makes you realise, it doesn’t matter where you go in the world you’re going to come up against that kind of—those kind of people that are just, you know—you’re a bit different so we don’t like you.

Pat Rodwell: And before you moved there, aged eight, had you been over to Ireland before? Had you spent much time in Ireland?

Marie Hadley: Yes. So we used to spend all the school holidays in Ireland with aunts and uncles and cousins. So, it would be like as soon as you finished school you’d be on the ferry going over to Ireland and then going out on day trips and stuff like that and mum and dad would stay for a couple of weeks but then they’d come back for a couple of weeks: probably to get a break from us, I guess. But they’d leave us there for a couple of weeks and then they’d come back and then they’d pick us up and then go back, ready for school again.

Yeah—.

Pat Rodwell: And you’ve spoken of how you’ve suffered from some bullying—how about the rest of the family? How did they settle in? Your parents and your siblings?

Marie Hadley: I think my mum found it really hard because at the time when we moved over, in the seventies, it was still a man’s world basically. There was very—I mean they were still delivering milk by dray. I remember as a kid, when I was at school here, we used to watch this programme called “How—How We Used To Live,” a history programme, and it used to cover the Second World War and different eras. But then moving to Ireland: it was like stepping back into that world for me. It was like, you know, they used to deliver coal by horse and cart, they used to deliver milk by horse and cart, all this kind of stuff. But I remember my mum saying to me—because she was a cleaner in the hospital in Dublin—and I remember her saying that they didn’t have the same rights as men where they worked and all this kind of stuff. And I’ve come from a family where my nan used to work in a factory here and she was all like, “Equal rights for women.” You know, all that suffragette type-stuff. So, I’ve always come from a family who believe in equality. So, it was very difficult for her because I think for her, it was like stepping back and not having the same rights as she’d had when she was here. Especially at that time in the seventies when everything was, like, completely exploding for equality and all that kind of stuff, yeah—.

[00:10:03]

Pat Rodwell: Um, how about your dad?

Marie Hadley: I think because my dad had been there for a couple of years before we went and because he—he had a big community there as well: with all my cousins and my uncles and they all used to go out. So, they’d already built up this camaraderie when my dad had

been there two years before us so I guess it was like having a single life again. So he was out most nights with them and I think he loved being back there but my mum struggled—yeah. And I think that was probably one of the reasons that we ended up coming back in the end.

Pat Rodwell: When you—the year you went over was seventy-four—

Marie Hadley: Yeah.

Pat Rodwell: And that was the year of the Birmingham pub bombings?

Marie Hadley: It was, yes.

Pat Rodwell: Was there any connection between the two?

Marie Hadley: Looking back now, my mum and dad have gone. And I don't—it's something that I should've asked but didn't ask. But, the problem is, I've thought about that connection before and maybe it was a case of them wanting to take us out of any environment that would have been harmful or whatever. But I don't think it was because if you think about the fact that my dad had been there for two years prior. Building that up, looking for a house and all that kind of stuff. So I don't think there was a connection as such, but I just think it was the timing of things. But yeah, remember it well. Even as an eight-year-old, I can remember being at my nan and grandad's and watching it on telly and I just remember somebody jumping off this bridge on to the top of a bus.

Pat Rodwell: That's when you were still in Birmingham?

Marie Hadley: Yeah, yeah. And hearing the sirens because they lived in Nечells, which is not far from the city centre anyway. And as an eight-year-old it's frightening but you don't really realise what's happening but thinking about it now, I would never let a child sit and watch that on TV. So, you know, I think there's a big thing there about the fact that [pause] we think a lot more about how people are going to perceive stuff now than—than they did back then. It was just accepted—this is—this is life and you were there and you were going to see it.

Pat Rodwell: So, after your—after your period of living in Ireland, how—what year did you move back to Birmingham?

Marie Hadley: Yeah, we came back to Birmingham in February 1979. My grandad—because when we moved to Ireland we used to come back to England for summer holidays to spend time with aunts and uncles and my nan and grandad; we used to stay with my nan and grandad. And my grandad passed away in August 1978, not long after we'd come back from our summer holiday. And my mum took my younger sister over to England with her for the funeral and then—I think she found it very difficult to pull herself away from my nan and she made the decision that she didn't want to go back and live in Ireland so it was a case of, well actually, we'll all move back. My mum was already over so that meant there was me and my brother that were still at school there and my dad working all the time—sort of thing. And it was in the February then that we came back: my brother and me. And then my dad had to kind of tie everything up, renting the house out and everything and then he came back as well. So when we came back was February 1979, all the ska stuff and Debbie Harry and all that was kicking off and I was really into music—

Pat Rodwell: How old were you—how old were you then?

Marie Hadley: Thirteen.

Pat Rodwell: Right.

Marie Hadley: But I think I found my love of music when I lived in Ireland because we come from a musical family anyway. Everybody sings—always has done—all the family do's, everybody'll get up: sing a song—sort of thing. When I was living in Ireland, that's when I started—really before we went to Ireland, some of my cousins here used to watch the Osmonds and the Jacksons and all that kind of stuff. And then when I moved to Ireland that's when—when I was there it was all, like, Kate Bush and punk-rock kicked off and you've got the Boomtown Rats and rock music and all this. So I was being exposed to so many different types of music and everybody at that point was in a band in Ireland as well and had a lock-up. Even if they didn't play an instrument they used to go just to have a laugh and get-together: it was like a little youth club type-thing. So that's—so I've come back then and obviously my love of music is what, kind of, got me focused. I used to just listen to it all the time and then came back and lived with my nan. So, there was myself and my mum, my nan and my brother and sister and then my nan's brother lived there as well, so—but we lived—they lived in Aston so we were living in the house with them. But then, around—not far away, on the same estate, was my dad's sister and her husband and they had eight kids. And they used to go to the local social club which was on the corner by my nans. So I used to lie in bed some nights and I could hear them singing as they were going home. And it was just that feeling of, oh my god, I know—you know—I felt like I belonged there because I knew people that were, kind of, all over the—

[00:15:21]

Pat Rodwell: Was it an Irish social club? Or was it just a local sort of club?

Marie Hadley: Ehm, well the majority of the people there were Irish, yeah, yeah. And my uncle had like a—like a speech impediment type-thing so he couldn't pronounce some of his words properly. So my aunt used to win the Bingo a lot because she could understand [laughs] what he was calling a lot better—or the rest of the family, do you know what I mean? But yeah, so we lived there. So we moved in with my nan in the February when we came back and then I think it was around July when we actually—my mum managed to get a house to rent in Sheldon so we moved to Sheldon in the July. But when we moved back in the February, my mum wanted to move back to Kings Heath where we'd lived before we'd gone so she put me into Swanshurst Girls' School, which is where I would have stayed if we'd have moved back to the area. But I was only in there really for a term but I was in there with children that I'd been to junior school with before I'd actually left—infants and juniors—and yeah, so it was like, they kind of caught me up on how they'd been treated after the pub bombings and everything.

Pat Rodwell: So were they all from Irish families themselves?

Marie Hadley: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Obviously, it was a multiracial school so they weren't all Irish but there was quite a few kids in the school that were from Irish backgrounds and some of those were in the class that I was in and they said about all the—dirty Irish and having stones thrown at them and their hair pulled and their friends weren't allowed to talk to them and all this kind of stuff. So I was like, I don't know whether we had a close escape there or not because we're, kind of, English in Ireland, so it's—yeah it was just the other way around.

Pat Rodwell: Yeah and—and did you—did you settle back in Birmingham?

Marie Hadley: I did, yes, because again, we've got quite a lot of cousins and it was—when we lived in England, if we weren't going to Ireland during the summer holidays or the other holidays either—my mum would be working and my aunts would be working so they'd take it in turns so all the kids would be together. So I was quite close to all my cousins—so when I came back from Ireland, because we were living in the same kind of area as where all they lived we all used to get together. So, again, that kind of cushioned the blow of making new friends in school but obviously you make friends when you start school anyways.

Pat Rodwell: And I guess you'd seen each other because you'd been on holidays backwards and forwards.

Marie Hadley: Yes. Yeah, yeah, so it was just reconnecting, catching up again really—different things—

Pat Rodwell: You mentioned your—your mum was keen to come back.

Marie Hadley: Yes.

Pat Rodwell: And was she from an Irish background herself?

Marie Hadley: She is, yes. I think [pause] my mum is one of four children and she was the—so she had two elder sisters and a younger brother. And I think that her two elder sisters were born in Ireland, *she* was born in England and then her brother was born in Ireland because it was kind of lots of toing and froing. It was during—like just after the Second World War—stuff going on then. So, yes, so she was born here but she was brought up in an Irish household. So it doesn't matter—because you take that with you and I think we've—we've discussed this with—over the years with my mum, with friends I've got at school: Asian friends, West Indian friends. We've all got the same kind of background, in the fact that when you've got guests at the house you go into the front room and you're always hospitable and you offer what you've got and all that kind of stuff. And it just happens that, I come from an Irish/Celtic background—my friends that come from Asian backgrounds are exactly the same: my friends that come from West Indian backgrounds—so we've all got that connection in common. Because different generations view things in different ways. Some generations are kind of—hanker for the traditional ways of doing things but then they don't seem to realise that sometimes in those countries things have moved on anyway and they kind of get set in their ways, so yeah, I think we all have that in common.

Pat Rodwell: Yeah, that's nice. Tell me where you were when you were fifteen?

[00:20:07]

Marie Hadley: So when I was fifteen I had started school—secondary school—I think I was going into my second year at secondary school and we'd just settled in Sheldon. All my cousins and my aunts were actually working up at the NEC [National Exhibition Centre] at the hotel, the Metropole Hotel it was—it's the Hilton Hotel now, I think. But they were all working up there so some would do breakfasts, some would work on lunches—it was all silver service. And then some would stay on and do, like, the maid's stuff around the hotel and stuff like that or banqueting in the evening. But at that time my mum had said to me, "Well, you know, your cousins are working up there—you might as well come and work up

there," and I was like, "But I'm too young to work, I can't do that." And she was going, "Course you can. I was working at fourteen," and I was like, "But you need a national insurance number." And she goes, "Just—we'll just make one up for you like everybody else. We know how they're structured." So they did it and we got away with it and I couldn't believe that. So at that age I was earning quite good money because it was a three hour session or whatever but you got paid—

Pat Rodwell: What were you doing? What were you working on?

Marie Hadley: Ehm, it was either—it was either—because they taught me silver service, so it would either be breakfasts in the morning which was literally just bringing stuff out constantly: teas and coffees and all that kind of stuff. Or actually doing silver service, so it would be like three course lunches or banqueting in the evening when they had special events on. I used to do it—they had large groups of people and I remember one time that this man [laughs]—we were serving soup and my mum was on a table next to me and this man—I was only about fifteen/sixteen at the time and obviously very awkward, not knowing how to deal with things. He grabbed the back of my leg while I was trying to serve somebody, so my mum came over and just accidentally slopped a load of soup on his suit and he was like, "Ah!" And I was like, "Mum, I can't believe you've just done that," and she went, "Well, he can't touch my daughter like that." So, yeah, I remember that happening quite a lot—but there was always a group of us so, again, it would all be cousins or my aunts would be there. There was always somebody there so they'd say, "Do you fancy working today?" And I'd go, "Yeah, of course." The early mornings were a bit of a killer but I only ever did those of a weekend because you had to get up at half-five or something to get in. I know, it was like (for me) at that point it was like getting up in the middle of the night.

Pat Rodwell: Yeah. So you were working part-time, weekends and things and—

Marie Hadley: And going to school. Yeah, yeah.

Pat Rodwell: What did you do with your earnings?

Marie Hadley: Oh, I used to buy clothes. Clothes and records because that—that was my thing. And yeah, I loved music and I had such a great collection of records. I think that's one of the things when I got together with my husband. We were both quite young but we had the same taste in music so we used to go out and watch bands together and all that kind of stuff.

Pat Rodwell: Can you remember any particular bands you went to see at the time?

Marie Hadley: Oh my gosh, [pause] so we went to see Siouxsie and the Banshees. I went to see The Cure. When I was working at the Metropole I served—oh god, what was his name? Freddie Mercury because Queen were playing at the NEC, so I actually served Freddie Mercury. And we got free tickets to go and see Freddie Mercury in the NEC as well so that was really good. But, yeah, we used to go and see lots of small bands like—there's a band called Gong we went to watch them and yeah, loads of bands.

Pat Rodwell: Was there any difference between the music and the bands your Irish cousins were interested in and the music that you were interested in?

Marie Hadley: I think so, yeah. They seemed to be into more mainstream stuff where I liked—really liked rock music. So I was into all sorts of bands that they didn't really like and

I just loved guitar like—I like a band called Santana and Carlos Santana was just the most amazing guitarist but they were—like I say they were into Roxy Music and David Bowie. But I liked all sorts of music.

Pat Rodwell: Yeah, and is it—did you meet—when did you meet your husband?

Marie Hadley: I met my husband just after my sixteenth birthday.

Pat Rodwell: Where did you meet him?

Marie Hadley: Ehm—I—there used to be a club, which was a rock club, on a Friday night in Yardley. And I used to go there and I met this girl in there one night and she was in the toilets crying because she really liked this guy and he wasn't interested and I was like, "Forget about him. Come on, let's go and have a laugh," and everything so I got to know her. And she turned around to me one day and she said, "There was this guy I went out with and it was like—he really led me on." She was going, "Do you fancy meeting up with him and doing the same?" And here we are forty-odd years later [both laugh]. And she's like, "When are you going to get rid of him?" And I was like, "Oh, you know—." So—so that's how I ended up meeting him because she introduced us one day and we used to go into town to Mr. Bill's Bier Keller and they used to play rock music in there on a Saturday morning and we had a big group of friends and everybody used to just meet in there.

[00:25.20]

Pat Rodwell: I was going to ask about friends—tell me about your group of friends.

Marie Hadley: So, there was myself and Sarah and at school I had three friends. There was Sue, there was Ann, there was Sally. So we were quite close when I was at school but then when I met Sarah—because Sarah was into all the same stuff as me and they weren't really into the same stuff. I used to go and meet her in town and they weren't interested in doing that. And that's how I started going into town and met the group of friends that we had. There was myself, there was Sarah—she had a boyfriend called Mike, then he had a friend called Griff and then there was his girlfriend as well. And then, my husband, Haggis, was from west brom [West Bromley] and he knew a whole load of other people and then we met other people in there, and it was just like, everywhere you went—to go and watch bands and stuff like that. You'd end up seeing the same people all the time.

Pat Rodwell: So that—your friendship group really expanded from your sort of school friends and your cousins—because of your interest in music.

Marie Hadley: Yeah. I think it was the interest in music and I think it was also because by that time I'd got used to—actually—I've moved around, I've done this: I've done that. Let's go and see what's out there. So I was more adventurous in wanting to go into town and see what was happening and everything and my friends weren't really that interested in doing that.

Pat Rodwell: And why do you think that was?

Marie Hadley: I don't know really. I can't put my finger on it. I think—they seem to be more home-bods than—it got to that stage where it was like, "Come on, let's go." And I don't know whether it was because I could afford it a bit more as well because I had got the money

coming in. Maybe they couldn't afford it. I never even thought about that aspect of it before to be honest but—.

Pat Rodwell: With the experience of having moved countries and back and had to adapt—did that have an impact?

Marie Hadley: I think so yeah because, like I say, I think that made me more adventurous in actually wanting to go further afield and seeing what was out there. You know, when you've moved around and you've done that and you've thought—I think it was coming back again to that thing about—well actually—they bullied me there, they bullied me there, let's see what's out there: it can't be any worse. So, it was a case of, yeah let's go out and then from meeting my husband and having this friendship group out there that we all used to go and see bands together—that just kind of expanded and we met different people—people kind of—there was a small friendship group who were quite close. And then one of our friends went—because I never had my daughter 'til I was forty so a lot of our friends got married and had children when they were in their twenties. And me and my husband were like, actually, we're not finished playing yet: we still want to go out and see what's out there.

So, I think it was around 1989—so I must have been about twenty-four—no, [pause] '89, '85, twenty—twenty-four. So, at that point, myself and my husband decided to go on holiday and we went to Tunisia. And while we were there he—his mum was due to retire from work and she retired on the Friday and his dad woke her up with a cup of tea, as he did every Saturday morning, but she had passed away in her sleep. And we'd only been on holiday for about two days, I think it was, and then he got this phone call and I'll never forget the blood-curdling scream that came at the time. So anyway, we ended up coming home and going through that whole process of supporting his dad and all this kind of stuff. But my brother—at this point, he's left school now so it's his turn to start, you know, eventually now to—he did various things. He did Camp America, where he was working with disabled children in America and then after that he got a job delivering cars, so he saw most of America. A year after, he decided to go a work on a Kibbutz so he did loads of things. He was doing loads of travelling and meeting people. He'd been to India the year before and he decided to go back out and meet some friends, so he said, "With the money that you get back off your holiday, come and meet me after Christmas, just—," and I was like, "India? Yeah, let's get a plane—just take off." And he went, "Yeah. Come to—when you get to this place, get a taxi and get them to take you to Baga and then I'll be waiting in Laxman's Bar for you." So, a thirty-six hour journey—1990 this was—absolutely shattered, really apprehensive. This isn't going to work. We're going to the other side of the—we walked into this bar and this waiter turned round to me and went to me, "You've got to be Sean's sister. He's just gone back to the room, he'll back in a minute. Just take a seat." And I got a drink and everything and I was like, god this world is so small really to what you think.

But then after that, we met other people and before we'd done that we decided to do the band thing. So we're meeting different people because we were forming bands and then playing with other people. It all started basically with us saying, Let's have a go, let's try and form a band: we don't know whether we can play instruments or not but let's get in there. So we had one friend who could play drums a bit because he had played in Boys' Brigade. My husband played the keyboards a little bit and then we had another friend who played guitar and then we decided to rent this lock-up that was down the Tyburn Road. So, we were going in there

and just taking a few drinks in and having a laugh and stuff and inviting people in. We just got to know people in there—other musicians who then started coming and then we started auditioning for people. And then me and my sister got asked if we wanted to join another band and that's how we ended up doing the backing singing from—and meeting lots of different bands that were down there and different—really talented people, some of them. So we were doing all this as well—so we went away and then when we were away we started meeting lots of people who were DJ's and DJing in different types of music and stuff like that as well. And then from some of the bands that my husband had been in, he met this guy called John who's his—I'd say lifelong friend. I mean all the equipment that they've got here—they still write music and go out and play their music. It's like psychedelic-trance stuff—they—they make all that. They've been making it for years and in 19—2000—twin towers was 2001 I think. So in 2001, just not long after that had happened, they got invited out to play out in Japan. So we all trekked off to Japan and they got interviewed on Sha Booya Radio, in this big glass box and—oh my god, it was like being treated like rock royalty. It was fantastic.

[00:32:11]

Pat Rodwell: And all this started from an early interest in music, for both of you.

Marie Hadley: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Pat Rodwell: What did your mum and dad think about all your travels and music?

Marie Hadley: So my mum and dad had been quite ill in different ways. My dad had a triple bypass operation when he was forty and they only gave him—we didn't know it at the time—they only gave him six months to live. In fact, he only died two years ago. He was eighty—eighty-five I think he was when he passed away. And my mum, who was worried about my dad because he was ill first, she ended up with cancer. She had it eighteen years before she died and she used to say, It's about [pause] living with cancer and not letting it stop you and always having something to look forward to. And they always taught us, because of my dad being ill, they always said, You learn something new every day and life is about going out and actually experiencing new things, new cultures, finding out about different places: that's what life's about. So we kind of embraced that, I think, and that's why we did all the travelling that we did. And we enjoyed it—we enjoyed going out and seeing how other people lived. Japan is the most diverse place I've ever been to and it was, at that point, it was so technologically far ahead compared to us that it was like being in some sort of sci-fi world: it was really weird.

Pat Rodwell: And how—how about your family and your cousins—are they—they spread around the world?

Marie Hadley: They are, yes. My—I've just come back from New York where I've seen one of my cousins. She's originally from Dublin, her brother lives in Texas, her sister lives in Glasgow and another sister lives back in Ireland still. But all my other cousins, like my mum's children—sorry, my aunt's children that—there was four of them—they lived in Chelmsley Wood, they all still live in Birmingham. And then my other aunt—her children are spread around Worcester. Not too far though, do you know what I mean? But some of them have actually gone and lived in Australia and then come back as well so they've moved around quite a bit as well.

[00:34:33]

Pat Rodwell: Ehm, let's go back to what you did when you left school—

Marie Hadley: Yes.

Pat Rodwell: So was that age fifteen, sixteen?

Marie Hadley: Uh, I left school in 1980—actually it was '82, I think it was. So I was sixteen when I left school and at the time the—we were in the middle of a recession. There were no jobs and the—the careers advice was: this is where you go to sign-on. So they didn't give much hope to any of us really, you know, at that time. And they'd just started [pause] youth training schemes. So I thought, well actually, I haven't got any skills and my mum was saying, "You need to find something that you can do." So, I decided to go on a youth training scheme to do admin and things like that. And it was a Pitman's youth training scheme so they taught you to type and filing. But part of that as well was about how to dress for the office and make-up and they had—I'll never forget it—they had this woman come in from Rackhams to show us how to apply make-up and I was one of the people—

Pat Rodwell: Tell us what Rackhams is.

Marie Hadley: Oh, sorry. Yeah, Rackhams is quite a high-end shop that used to be in Birmingham. And they were the first one to have their own cosmetic counters and all this kind of stuff so—obviously had these beautiful women that are always lovely, really well presented and well-done-up. So as part of this year's training scheme they got people in from Rackhams to show us how to apply make-up and all this. And I remember being one of the guinea pigs for this and this women put my make-up on and she—and at the end she gave me a mirror and she goes, "Now, what do you think of that?" And when I looked at it, I just thought, I look like a clown [Pat laughs]. I would *never, ever* dream of putting this much colour on my face. It looked ridiculous and it was like—I don't think I'll ever do that again. [Laughs]. And to this day, I've never bought anything in one of those cosmetic counters and I think it always harks back to that day. I was like, no, that's not for me.

Pat Rodwell: And where did—in terms of jobs—where did the Pitman's training scheme lead to?

Marie Hadley: So when I actually did that, there was a few work experience sessions that you could do. It was like a—the full month's stint in one place. Because it was a two-year course, I think. So I remember working at BRMB [Birmingham Radio Midlands Broadcasting] Radio and bringing people up to the green room and working on the accounts and just being a runner and trying all the different jobs they had in there and met a few people doing that as well. And there was another one which was at a company called Parkinson Cowan. I think they made [pause]—I think they made cookers—something like that and fireplaces. But that was down the Stratford Road but I actually walked out of there after about three weeks because they, literally, had me franking stuff on a franking machine and making coffee. And I said to my mum, "I'm not learning anything." And she says, "Well if you're not happy with it, just tell them you don't want to do it anymore. Go back and get them to find you something where you're actually going to learn something." So I did. And I thought, god how grown up am I? Actually going in and doing something like that—

Pat Rodwell: How old were you then—when you did that?

Marie Hadley: Oh my god, I must have been about [pause]—if I started it when I was sixteen, I must have been about seventeen—about seventeen. And I think that was the point when I started to realise, actually, the hierarchical thing you have when you're in school. You have got to stand up for yourself in some situations. I think that was the first learning curve, for me, being able to do that and say, Actually, no: I'm not happy with this.

Pat Rodwell: And that led to a job with Birmingham City Council?

Marie Hadley: It did. I did a few temping jobs because another one of the work experience in—one of the work experience things I did, when I was doing the youth training scheme as well, was Solihull Maternity Unit and I had to use one of the plug-boards for the phone connections and stuff like this. And then I joined a temping agency and they sent me on one job and it was like—well you can use a switch board—so they sent me in, but it was this new-fangled thing and I had *no* idea what I was doing. I managed to blag it for about half a day and then they politely let me go after that. But I did get paid so that was good. And another job I did at the time as well was working for Yellow Pages and they just had loads and loads of newspapers and you had to cut things out—stick them on a bed of paper so that it could be passed on to their call centres, so they could call people up to see if they wanted to advertise. So that was another one and then I ended up temping for Birmingham City Council and just doing a bit of admin in their buying department basically.

Pat Rodwell: How much—can you remember how much those temping jobs paid and how much the training scheme paid?

[00:39:44]

Marie Hadley: So, the youth training scheme—I think, actually, that started at about twenty-one pound a week. But, obviously, I was subsidising that, at the time, with the money I was making from my waitressing. And then the temping jobs—I think I was earning more than the twenty-one pound a week but I can't remember exactly because they were like hourly rates. One job I did was up at the blood transfusion service—four hours a day—and it was just sticking labels on vials of blood and things like that which was very strange. But then, like I say, I got the one with the council and that kind of opened up a whole load of “adminey” type skills that I'd not actually had to put into practise before, so that was quite beneficial; I learnt quite a lot there. And being in that environment—as things changed, you had to change with it. So you were, kind of, learning on the job as well.

Pat Rodwell: And how long did you end up working for the council before you—

Marie Hadley: Thirty-four years.

Pat Rodwell:—moved on?

Marie Hadley: Thirty-four years.

Pat Rodwell: Right.

Marie Hadley: Just—always in the procurement department or buying department. So all the way through the complete—the digitisation process, through—and it all went from—at the time when we doing it, if you were doing an evaluation of a contract, you'd photocopy all the bits of paper and stick them all together so you could see them side by side and then computers came in and then Excel. I live my life by Excel. I don't know whether I'd be able

to exist these days without it. But, yeah, loads of changes but it also gave me the opportunity to get my degree because they—they wanted to train their staff up because they did believe that you invest in your staff and through that investment comes promotion. So they—they were able to hold on to a lot more staff because they were investing in them. And I think that's one of the things that's lacking today: there's no investment in people.

Pat Rodwell: How old were you when you—you got your degree through working with the council?

Marie Hadley: Ehm, I started it because, first of all, the foundation study—because I only had GCSEs [General Certificate of Secondary Education] when I left school, so I did a BTEC [Business and Technology Education Council] first of all which was a couple of years. And that was like the foundation of my degree then because I got a CIPS [Chartered Institute of Purchasing & Supply], which is the chartered institute of purchasing and supplies. Which is about eight or nine different modules that go to form that degree such as, like, setting up a stores, international purchasing and knowing all the documentation that you have to use and all the, kind of, traditions and time differences when you're dealing with different countries' time zones and all that kind of stuff. So I started with the BTEC, which was two years—

Pat Rodwell: And was that day release or—.

Marie Hadley: That was day release at the time, yeah. And then I started on the CIPS foundation because there was a foundation course which was two years and I think that was about five modules. And then the council stopped funding it, so there was a gap for about three or four years. Then they said, “Yes, we’ll fund you to do it.” So then we went back and we carried on doing the modules and we were doing, like, two or three modules a year until I actually passed. But then they stopped the funding again after about two or three—so there were gaps in between and I think I finally passed in—well, actually, I passed in 2005 and I know that because when I went to get my degree at Nottingham—Nottingham Trent University where I actually graduated from. When I went to get my degree, I was there with my cap and gown but I’d got this blouse on and it was sitting really funny and I was thinking, There’s a big gap—I’m sure I haven’t put on that much weight. And then, I think it was two days later, I found out I was pregnant with my daughter.

Pat Rodwell: So you were about forty at the time?

Marie Hadley: Yeah, yeah—thirty-nine I was when I’d finally passed it. But also, because of the different—because of the political situation within the council and with all the different changes—departmental changes—this, that and the other. One minute they wanted us to do the formal degree, the next minute they said, “Oh no, you can do an NVQ [National Vocational Qualification].” So I did the NVQ route as well and passed it that way and then I went back and finished formally. So I did the same degree about three or four different ways in the end. But also at the time, they said, That actually you don’t need qualifications to do a job as long as you have [pause] written specifications and procedures on how to do that. So under—I think it’s ISO [International Organization for Standardization]—nine thousand isn’t it? Where you—you write down—so I ended up mapping out and writing the processes and procedures and then they introduced “Investors in People” and people couldn’t get their heads around it, so I actually wrote the strategy and got the policy rolled out for that. And then, as a result of doing that, I got to know different people and one of the ladies was

working in the HR [Human Resources] in the training department and she was going on maternity leave and she said, "Do you fancy covering for me while I'm on maternity leave?" So I actually did the training—the trainer thing, so I was actually training people in induction and stuff—that were coming into work for the council as well. I did that on secondment for a couple of years and then went back to my substantive post of—but I think I was about twenty-four at that point because I wanted—I thought to myself, I've done this for so long I'm sure I must be capable of doing something else and that's why I was taking on these extra bits—to get new skills. And that's when I thought, Oh I'm going to have a go at that.

[00:45:17]

Pat Rodwell: Did—was education seen as important within—within your family?

Marie Hadley: Yeah, yeah. I don't—I don't—as long—I think from my mum and dad's perspective, as long as you had a stable job and you were happy, that's all that they were bothered about really. But I think it was [pause] going through the process of learning on the youth training scheme and then learning things at work. And then I, kind of, embraced the lifelong learning thing and I thought, There's always something new out there that you can learn, that you—and it's good to have all these skills because you never know when they are going to come in handy. Because a lot of the training skills have helped me in my procurement role in sitting-down clients, explaining to them the background of what it is they've got to do and why they've got to do it. Helping them with writing specifications and all that kind of stuff. And [pause] having that teaching experience gives you the opportunity to talk to people in a way—or use language that, kind of, breaks down those barriers, so it's not as formal as it would normally be. And making it interesting because buying's not the—it's not the most exciting thing and anybody—everybody goes, Oh anybody can buy. But it's like then, oh yeah, then you've got all this stuff—what if somebody slips and breaks their neck—you're liable for that and this, that and the other. This is why we have to do what we do in the way that we do it because we're a public service. And it's having all that knowledge and being able to impart that and explain it to people that makes them understand why they've got to do what they've got to do. Even if they're not interested in—it's a hurdle you've got to get over to get from A to B. So, let's try and make it as enjoyable as possible.

Pat Rodwell: Thinking about another aspect of your life in Birmingham between sort of fifteen and twenty-five. Tell me where you were—you were living at home with your family at fifteen—

Marie Hadley: Yes.

Pat Rodwell: Ehm, tell me—between then and the next ten years where you lived, how you lived, who you were living with.

Marie Hadley: Yeah sure. So I passed my driving test when I was seventeen because when I was young, it was one of the things I used to dream about—oh my god. When I was little and I had my bike—that was my first experience of freedom. Little bike with these—these red ribbons that came out of the handle and it had this big box on the back so we used to shove sandwiches and crisps and pop in there. And we used to out and just have picnics and stuff like that. And then as I got older I thought, I can't wait to be able to drive so I passed my test when I was seventeen. And then my mum and dad bought me a car—this, like, clapped-out old Volkswagen Beetle for my eighteenth birthday. I was sat in the window staring at it

because I was so excited because the world had just opened up to me—I could go anywhere I wanted to at this point. I'd got the money to pay for the insurance because I was working. So, basically, my husband at the time was still living at home and so I used to go to west brom a lot and he used to come over—he had a motorbike at the time. So—but once we'd got the car we could literally go anywhere, so we used to go—like, we'd go to festivals. We went to Wakefield Folk Festival—I think was the first one. And we met friends who lived in Cardiff, so we used to go down to Cardiff a lot and meet them and—but we knew people that, kind of—spread out so we'd take the opportunity as much as we could to just go and have an adventure. And when I was little, my mum and dad had a camper van as well and we used to have great adventures in that. So as we got older I said, "It would be brilliant to have a camper van." And because my husband was DJing at festivals and my sister-in-law—she is a clothes designer, or was at the time—she knew people that were designing clothes and selling them and everything. So, we started buying up clothes and then when my husband was DJing, I'd do a store selling clothes and I was like, "Well if we're going to go to, like, festivals in Europe let's buy a camper van." So we did and we had mad adventures with that and we've just recently bought a new one which is on the drive. So, we're kind of going back again. So yeah, so like I say, I left home at eighteen and I moved in to a flat and then that was it then. It was just travelling around—going for weekends away. We used to spend loads of weekends either down in Pembrokeshire or in Cardiff because we'd got friends that live down there. And all New Years and everything was all down there with all our friends. So we were just going to gigs all the time and just socialising basically.

[00:49:54]

Pat Rodwell: Sounds fantastic. [Laughs].

Marie Hadley: It was, yeah, yeah. Couldn't fault it. I ended up DJing myself as well, because while my husband was doing it, I started DJing all the chill-out-type music. And then, meeting people at the clubs—there was one guy who owned a—he produced a magazine in Leicester—can't remember what it was called now but he asked me to review some of the chill-out music that he was getting. So I used to get all this music through, and so I'd sit down and listen to it and that's how I got the music. So, I'd review it and all the good stuff I'd send off the reviews to him and it went in the magazine, and I got hold of all this music. So then I started getting asked to play at different places and the biggest gig I think I played was at Brixton Academy. So, yeah, it was brilliant. It was really—really good fun and, like I say, we used to do that all the time and then I was diagnosed with endometriosis and that's when I was told that actually because of my age—because by the time I was thirty-six. I was diagnosed with endometriosis and they put me on a course of tablets to try and clear it, which it did for a little while. But then it started to come back and they said, "At your age now, we would say,"—because I was at thirty-nine by this point. They said, "At your age now, we would recommend a hysterectomy but as you've not had children it's, kind of, your time to decide whether you want to have any or not." So we did, we decided and yeah, I got pregnant when I was forty.

Pat Rodwell: And you now have a grown-up daughter.

Marie Hadley: I do. She's eighteen in two weeks—can't believe it.

Pat Rodwell: And does she consider herself part of an Irish family or part of an English family?

Marie Hadley: I don't know. I've never really asked her but she—she knows she comes from a big family. But I think when you're little—you see my—my husband was adopted but my husband comes from a *really* big family in the Black Country as well. So he had loads of uncles and aunts and he—she knows that side of the family as well because there's different generations there as well. And she knows a lot of the family on this side—on my side as well but I think when you're little, you don't really understand it and because then you come home, you go to school, you do your bits and pieces. But it's only now—at her age now that she's starting to realise she's got this big extended family and, yeah, starting to connect with them and understand. But, I think, myself, my brother and sister are quite close anyway. Their kids are a little bit older than Mia but they're all coming over next week and taking her for her first drink, so I think they're all quite looking forward to that and she's quite excited about being accepted as one of them now as well. Yeah—.

Pat Rodwell: And do you find the time to visit Ireland much nowadays?

Marie Hadley: I don't. And I think it was because of all the toing and froing as a kid. But also, I remember going over—oh it's got to be about ten years ago now—and my aunt saying to me, "Would you ever think of moving back to Ireland?" And I said, "I don't think we could afford it now." Because with the kind of—the economic situation in Ireland, everything is so expensive and house prices are so much more there—now this was before they had their crash as well, so whether it's different now. But I should imagine it's about on a par. Now, I think I would like to move back, yeah, but—and I've got friends who have Irish connections and all of us are all saying now—be really nice to go and do a road trip. Because when I was a kid I've got fond memories of being up in the mountains and going to the beach and getting on the train and going to the beach with my mates. Like during the summer and stuff like that but [pause] I've never travelled around Ireland. So I really fancy the idea of doing that, yeah, so I think we'll probably—now that we've got the camper van as well—it's perfect. Yeah, yeah—.

Pat Rodwell: That's lovely. That's lovely—that's been really good, thank you—really, really interesting and lovely to hear. Is there anything else that you'd want to add—want to say? Given that this project is about Irish women between—their experiences between fifteen and twenty-five years old—

Marie Hadley: Yeah.

Pat Rodwell: Is there anything else you've thought of that you'd—you'd like to say?

Marie Hadley: Just—obviously from the Irish connection and coming from an Irish family [pause], the women in Irish families always seem to be the strongest. They seem to be the ones that take the lead and I should imagine anybody else that you interview will say the same. They've got this back-history, this back-story of all the women that have been there in the past that have been really strong women and would do anything for their families and I think that's about it. And I'd be interested in hearing other people's stories as well because I'm sure there's a lot of interesting women out there.

Pat Rodwell: There is.

Marie Hadley: Yeah.

Pat Rodwell: But thank you very much.

Marie Hadley: Thank you—

Pat Rodwell: Thank you for your time.

Marie Hadley: Thank you.

[00:55:16]

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