

Green and Blue Project Eileen Twomey Interview Transcript

Yes I went up in May '72. when my husband J.P. was serving on the border

We had two children, a two and a half year old... and about a six week old.

We had an apartment in the monastery, which was the... Christian Brothers had... and I suppose the Christian Brothers left, they left Carrickmacross, and a lady bought the... monastery, and she converted it into... oh maybe there was five or six apartments in it. So we had people we new. They were transferred from Galway, and we just happened to go at the same time, because his dad had died... and he put back his transfer until the fourth of April as well, so that, you know to get, get his father... sorted out, buried and all that kind of thing... so, yeah only for them I don't know, would I have... or maybe it made it easy not to mix... having people...

Yes, it's like say our apartment was here, and maybe theirs was at the end of the house, just a corridor away... and we just had... kind of kitchen/living... room, sitting room, and... a bedroom, shower and toilet, and for the kids we got maybe our bedroom divided in two just... so we'd a double bed and a single bed at the other side of the partition.

Probably... maybe busy... busy you know, you washed the clothes, we didn't have a washing machine, we washed by hand.

And... you know, trying to get to the clothes line with kids, and you know, all that kind of thing... that owned the apartment was just fantastic, and just loved the kids, and loved to talk to them, and... or maybe J P might take us shopping, and I presume the local Guards didn't know whose... wife was who. People in Carrickmacross were... nice people I suppose once you understood... their accent.

Right, so that was a complete, like you'd never been up that side of the country, had you?

There was some lovely women, and we had children, I remember the first time I went for a walk with Clare after being born... a friend came down and we walked together, do you know, my first outing with the pram, you know, nice people, and I suppose 'twas hard, you only saw that... relationship I suppose... and... maybe one or two nights we were out on our own in Carrickmacross... and the Guards that were there came over and asked us to join them, which was... very nice of them... and

they would mainly have been from... you know, a line from Galway to Dublin up, where we were from the south completely, yeah.

Well I suppose being a Guard's wife at that particular time, very few had their own homes. Now they did in Carrickmacross... they did have their own homes, we had rented in Clonakilty, and... this is our first home, you know, we came here [pause] as I said the twenty second of December, '72 and J P had bought this site, so I had no input at all into it!

I [pause] loneliness, probably was number one, And... I suppose the hours that the men worked, you know 'twas case of... do you know, you're in for lunch, you're in for dinner, and... the phone would ring, he was gone again like the squad car would arrive... I suppose there was a lot of stress attached to it, that you didn't know where they were. How handy mobiles are today, lack of communication, probably was a huge I suppose it was bound to happen, with stress, stress.

And... you know, sometimes you'd, I suppose nine times out of ten you'd turn on the radio and say, 'what's happening around... where would he be?'

Yes, and you know I remember he saying one time, say here, down south... one guy would go off in the squad car on their own, or maybe two at night, but 'twas four to a car...

Always... always... you'd be on the alert all the time, you know?

Yes, that when you went into the, into the supermarket you had to put your basket... on the window sill, and then went along and did your shopping and picked it up as you had your shopping done, I probably found that very strange,

Presumption on my part it must have been, presumption it must have been, but I didn't, wasn't used to it, and... kind of felt *guilty*, you know just, gee am I going to take anything, or what is the idea of it, but I got used to it, it didn't... you know and I suppose you go in with a pram, and two children like you know that probably the ways and means of, you know I just forgot about it afterwards, but I found it very strange,

'Twas a different, yeah, you know I still have that thing, the box, the basket is still in the house,

'Tis, yeah full of Lego, but... yeah I found that... probably a country town [pause] you know, cattle were walking the street, Yes, it reminded me of home, really, Castleisland.

It was very like, well home isn't, my home is Tralee really, but Castleisland was our, would be a shopping town for us as well, and it was a huge wide street and fair days there were something similar, and I suppose that reminded me of home as well.

J P was there from April to December, And I was there from May to December.

I suppose we were anxious to get back south, we were [pause] I think he did apply. He heard at that particular time there was a vacancy in Bantry, and he applied I think three times, so when it came, oh! we were to leave in November, and Darren was in hospital with meningitis,

So we had to put it back again, so... you know 'twas tough times I suppose with the kids sick, and... Very stressful, you know it *was* very stressful, yeah.

Being so far away and if you wanted to make a phone call you'd to go to town to a telephone kiosk. It was, and you, we were about a mile out from town, so... it was a lovely setting like, it was lovely... but you know, I suppose that's what we did, and... you know we kind of moved in... lock, stock and barrel... would go in a car, a carry cot, and... pram on top of the car.

Well he did several stints on the border, he did, yeah kind of a month at the time, but sure sometimes twice a year. I suppose he started going to the border... in nineteen sixty... seven I suppose, with the foot and mouth disease.

It was, he did a fair, I couldn't tell you now exactly how many he did, but he did...

Totally different... well of course, if somebody's away from home, you're worried anyway.

But, I have to say overall the people were very nice, I never had a... everywhere, no matter what group we dealt with, they were quite nice.

