

## TELLING OUR STORIES, FINDING OUR ROOTS ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW SUMMARY FORM

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Date of interview</b>           | 1st September 2020   |
| <b>Location of interview</b>       | Remote   |
| <b>Name of interviewee</b>         | Anna Geroghiou   |
| <b>Name of interviewer</b>         | Nicole Redfern   |
| <b>Length of interview</b>         | 01:15:10   |
| <b>File format, storage format</b> | WAV, hosted on Soundcloud. Digital copy obtainable from DDE. |

**Tags:**

Cyprus ; Greek Cypriot ; Art ; Travel ; Education ; Community ; Heritage ; Identity ; Third Generation Story ; Okehampton

**Interviewee's wishes regarding use of interview**

None.

**Interviewer's notes / any issues on recording**

There is a very short pause in the recording at [00:38:00]

**Linked objects/photographs.**

Anna starts her interview discussing her grandfather's traditional shepherd bag

**Key themes and topics covered in the interview**

| Theme / topic                                  | Timecode on recording                           |
|--|---|
| Traditional Greek Cypriot Shepherd's Gear      | [00:00:00 - 00:02:30]                           |
| Family History & Grandparents' Move to the UK  | [00:02:25 - 00:10:21]                           |
| Being of Mixed Heritage                        | [00:10:21 - 00:11:13]                           |
| Moving to Cyprus and Finding Artistic Identity | [00:11:18 - 00:35:41],<br>[00:58:43 - 01:04:24] |
| Okehampton Cultural Feast                      | [00:35:01 - 00:37:47]                           |
| Arrival in Okehampton                          | [00:38:00 - 00:42:59]                           |
| Life in Okehampton                             | [00:42:59 - 00:52:31]                           |
| Differences between Okehampton and Cyprus      | [00:53:22 - 00:58:43]                           |
| Hopes for the Future                           | [01:06:24 - 01:12:00]                           |
| Anna's Song                                    | [01:12:00 - 01:15:10]                           |

**Interview highlights**

"I think if anyone has mixed heritage I always urge them to go - if they're born in the UK - and to urge them to go to the other half of who they are and and and to to experience spending valuable time in that that country"  
[00:10:21 - 00:11:13].

### Interview summary

Anna Georghiou was born in Torquay, in 1981, to an English mother and a Greek Cypriot father. Her father's family moved to Britain in the 1960s, when he was just a toddler, with the family settling first in London and then Torquay. In Cyprus her grandfather had been a shepherd: in Britain he became a builder, then a restaurateur.

Anna begins the interview by speaking of her grandparents, and showing the interviewer her grandfather's traditional shepherd's bag, a *vourka*, handed down to her by her mother [00:00:00 - 00:01:55]. Anna discusses what she knows of her family's decision to move to the UK, and surmises the impact she thinks the move must have had on her grandparents [00:01:55 - 00:07:07], though she admits that family history was a topic rarely discussed: "I find a lot of people in my family don't like to talk about their history". Anna then goes on to mention which elements of Cypriot culture that her grandparents brought with them to the UK, and how they featured in her upbringing [00:07:07 - 00:09:28]

Her father is similarly reticent about speaking of his experiences growing up in England. Of why Greek was never spoken in the home to Anna and her siblings, Anna says: "he said he it just,[...] he was just embarrassed". [00:09:28 - 00:10:21]. Of growing up with mixed heritage, Anna says: "I think if anyone has mixed heritage I always urge them to go - if they're born in the UK - and to urge them to go to the other half of who they are and and and to to experience spending valuable time in that that country" [00:10:21 - 00:11:13].

Anna goes on to describe how, at the age of nine, she went to Cyprus, on her own, to stay with her father's relatives. Anna returned for a longer period of time in 2004, when she took up a place at the Cyprus College of Art in Limassol, studying Art and Design. She here describes the joy and rush of immersing herself in the Cypriot culture and the process of starting to "find [her] voice as an artist" [00:11:18 - 00:16:00].

Anna then goes on to talk about her work as an artist [00:16:00 - 00:18:47], and how she came to define her cultural identity after spending time in Cyprus [00:18:57 - 00:25:57].

Next, Anna talks about her move back to the UK from Cyprus at age 29, and of bringing her art to Okehampton by starting the 'Okehampton Acoustic Club' [00:25:32 - 00:29:37]. She goes on to consider, in more detail, her move to Okehampton, including the reasons for her move, and how she adapted to her new surroundings [00:29:37 - 00:35:41]. She briefly mentions also being part of a "multicultural feast in Okehampton", where she shares food and conversation with local people of diverse cultural backgrounds [00:35:41 - 00:37:47].

Anna recalls first arriving in Okehampton after "We packed up our house, got it shipped over. We had no address to um ship it to because we didn't know where we were going to live" [00:38:00 - 00:42:00]. She describes finding a community of artists in Okehampton, with whom she shares a studio, and about their previous ambitions to create a community art centre in the town. Anna notes of the cultural scene in Okehampton that: "it's definitely starting to come - I don't like the word alternative, but more diverse and more growth." [00:42:59 - 00:50:09]. She then describes her day-to-day life in Okehampton ("I find it can be a bit frustrating and quite limiting"), and her work as a complementary therapist [00:50:09 - 00:53:22].

### Interview summary

Anna discusses spending time in Cyprus each year, and the differences between Okehampton and Cyprus. She asserts ultimately that "I feel like for me my home is with my partner, like he's, I feel in myself like they are my homes" [00:53:22 - 00:58:43]. She shows one of her paintings, entitled 'Between Places' and describes it as "a combination of the places" in which she has lived. This leads her on to discuss her own artistic philosophy, ways of working, and inspirations [00:58:43 - 01:04:24].

Next, Anna talks briefly about the changes that she has noticed in Okehampton in the ten years she has been living there, including "new people coming into the town and contributing to it community-wise, and culturally" [01:04:24 - 01:06:24]. She talks of her hopes for the future "that people respect, cherish, look after and love the beautiful magical environment" in Okehampton [01:06:24 - 01:08:10], but notes that she may not be able to stay in Okehampton herself for financial reasons [01:08:10 - 01:09:26].

Anna then goes on to think about what she would like to ask her grandparents about their decision to move to the UK: "I would ask them why they wanted to move and maybe why they're not happy with their side of life with the life that they had." [01:09:26 - 01:12:00].

To close the interview, Anna plays a song that she wrote in her twenties about a fisherman [01:12:00 - 01:15:10].