

## INTERVIEW OF ANA C

INTERVIEWER: MAGGIE BEASLEY and JESS HUFFMAN

JULY 2024

**0:00:03.1 Maggie Beasley: I haven't done this before.**

**0:00:06.1 Jess Huffman: I've got it switched on. We've started.**

**0:00:07.2: Maggie Beasley: Okay.**

**0:00:07.5 Jess Huffman: So, Maggie, do introduce yourself.**

**0:00:10.4 Maggie Beasley: I'm Maggie, and I'd like to ask you some questions, Ana, about your Irish ancestry, if that's okay?**

0:00:19.7 Ana C: That's absolutely fine, thank you.

**0:00:21.9 Jess Huffman: We'll start with the date today is the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July 2024, and we're here in Crewkerne in Ana's home. We're interviewing Ana today about her Irish ancestry. Ana will be talking about her grandfather and her father. Maggie Beasley is the volunteer on the Telling Our Stories project, and will be asking the questions. I'm Jess Huffman, and I'm the coordinator of the Telling Our Stories project. I'm here today to support Maggie with this interview. So, Maggie, over to you.**

**0:00:59.6 Maggie Beasley: Hi, Ana. What was your grandfather's name?**

0:01:03.1 Ana C: So, my grandfather was called Timothy O'Brien, and he came over to Honiton, or Navy Dunkeswell, during the Second World War, and he was at Dunkeswell Airfield working for the Ministry of Supplies, we have discovered recently. Not Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Supplies. So, he was in charge of the stores there. Dunkeswell,

obviously, was the... RAF Dunkeswell became the home of the 479<sup>th</sup> Anti-Submarine Group of the United States Army Air Force, USAAF. So, he was up there during that time. He was also an air raid patrol warden. [Unclear words 0:01:54.2] doesn't have his badge, so that sort of put that in there. I don't have much more information, actually, about his life up at Dunkeswell because no records really were kept. They have lots of records of...

**0:02:10.4 Maggie Beasley: Do you have an approximate date? I know you said during the Second World War.**

0:02:13.5 Ana C: I don't because there is no ship's passage for...

**0:02:16.2 Maggie Beasley: So, it would have been sometime between '40 and '44.**

0:02:20.8 Ann C: '42 is when they started building Dunkeswell Airfield, and '43 was when it was finished. So, it was sometime during that period. There are as far as I know, there are no records that... Because it was the Ministry of Supplies, one of the stewards at the - believe it or not - the Museum of English Rural Life in Reading the other day, who I spoke to, and she said to look through National Archives and see if there were any records because there might be. She had some feeling that he could have been Civil Service. That he would have been working for the British Civil Service and not just the labour force because he was... Basically, he'd served in the First World War for Britain because Southern Ireland was still part of Britain at that point, and he was honourably discharged after the First World War. It does say that he was disabled on his certificate, so he would not have been strong enough and able to physically build the airfield at Dunkeswell, but he could have been able to help with the administration of the stores and the building supplies, etc.

0:03:41.7 So, I'm going to literally look into that situation. He'd lodged, whilst he was in Dunkeswell at the pub there, which I think is called the Royal Oak, but I'm not 100 per cent sure on that.

**0:03:53.6 Maggie Beasley: Can you give us a bit of background of where your grandfather lived in Ireland, and his background as to why he decided to come to Britain - England - I should say? Do you know any of that?**

0:04:10.9 Ana C: Timothy was literally born in Limerick - rural Limerick - so that's outside the city, and that's where he grew up. Him, and I think three other brothers, all went into the military serving for the Royal Irish Fusiliers to start with, and then coming over to some of the English regiments. Timothy was in the Worcestershire Regiment, as it says on his certificate. So, then he married, and he was living in cork on the outskirts of cork, so that's where he raised the family. As I say, there are no records, but what has been said is that he was called over to London during the Second World War by the ministry, and I was told it was the Ministry of Defence - but we can't prove anything at the minute - and asked, would he do that work at Dunkeswell? So, this is why there's a little bit of secrecy along that one, and I'm hoping the records will be able to be opened because, unfortunately, Timothy, my granddad, died when I was only three years old because he became so very disabled. He was then diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, and so he died quite early, really. I mean, he was born in 1890, but he died in 1961.

**0:05:36.9 Maggie Beasley: So, you were living in Britain. He obviously brought his family to Dunkeswell?**

0:05:44.1 Ana C: He very much enjoyed life around Dunkeswell and Honiton. He thought the people were very friendly, and so he decided that was his new home and that's where he wanted to be. So, he first of all, sent for my father [?Jeremiah], and told him to come over. So, my dad came over. At that point in time - this is after the Second World War - unemployment was absolutely awful in Southern Ireland. Most of the people were, actually, leaving. Many workforce labourers etc, coming over to England, basically because there was no work unless you were a fisherman working the small harbours over there. There was hardly any work at all, but my dad was working on the Post Office, so he did have a job, and he used to drive a little post van around the little, rural places around East Cork, and he was living in Aghada at the time. Anyway, he came over, and yes, he arrived at Honiton railway station and walked down the road. He only had a couple of shillings in his pocket at the time, so this was a new life with a couple of shillings, and he had to...

**0:07:03.1 Maggie Beasley: So, this was before he was married.**

0:07:05.0 Ana C: Before he was married, yes. He then had to get a life to Dunkeswell to meet up with his dad. Then, afterwards, his dad said to him, 'We'll get you some work, my lad.' So, this was all good, and we'll get you some building work. Well, my dad had never done any building work at all in his life. So, he said, 'Well, there's no worries,' and he told my dad to turn up at the Angel Hotel in Honiton in the High Street, which is now Costa Coffee. He told him to turn up there on a Saturday morning at 11 o'clock prompt because then he would introduce him to some people. So, my dad went along, and Tim was in there having a drink with some of the people that owned, and I don't know the names of the building companies in Honiton. All of the business people, basically, would meet there on a Saturday morning, and Tim was well in with them, which was lovely. He introduced him, and he said, 'Right, we'll sort you out,' and off he went then the following weekend for a training course in Plymouth. It was just a weekend's course to become a building, to learn building, and then he came back, and he worked on the buildings in Honiton.

0:08:18.2 One of the streets was George Street, and he helped to put those buildings up and lots of other council estates that he helped with. So, he did that to start with, and then, obviously, shortly afterwards, Timothy called for [?Anastasia], his wife, who was still living in Aghada in East Cork, and said, 'Well, you better come over here because we're not coming home.' So, she wasn't very happy, apparently, and she was quite a strong character, so I can imagine her reaction that she just had to pack everything up and come over. The trouble was, in that sense, that we lost all the family photos and things like that. So, the heirlooms and photos and that, they didn't come over. Didn't seem to come over with her. She just probably packed a case, and just came over, basically, with some clothes.

**0:09:08.1 Maggie Beasley: Did your family give you any indication of how Irish immigrants were treated when they came to Honiton?**

0:09:15.6 Ana C: My dad said there was a scuffle outside the Dolphin, the Dolphin Bar, the Dolphin Hotel at one point because some of the local blokes round about the same age as my dad were giving it a bit of verbal and having a go. Saying, 'Well, come on then.' My dad wasn't scared of anyone. He never was. He just literally rolled his sleeves up and said, 'Well, one at a time or all at once? I don't really care.' Then, shortly after that, there was great respect for my dad. He would go and have a drink in the local bar with some of the other Irish guys that were here. There was two brothers. There was [?Dennis Collins], and I think

he worked on the British Exchange, but he was also a barman for a short while at the White Lion Hotel. He was a great friend of my dad's. His brother Bill, who I think was younger - Bill Collins - he worked at Marl pits Hospital. He wasn't a doctor or a nurse or anything like that, but he helped up there. He was very, very well thought of, little Bill Collins, so there were other Irish people in Honiton that my dad knew, obviously, so yes.

0:10:32.7 They set up home, and basically, that was it, and eventually, my dad went to work on the railway, but... It's a nice story about how my dad met my mum, which I literally love. So, apparently, he is...

**0:10:51.8 Maggie Beasley: Could I just go back to how the immigrants were treated? It sounds from what you're saying, as if there was quite a strong need for an influx or people to carry out work in Honiton. It sounds as if we were very short of labour, and that was quite strongly needed, would you say?**

0:11:16.7 Ana C:

[REDACTED] because Southern Ireland was neutral during the Second World War, and afterwards, there was... There was also a need for a lot of social housing. So, a lot of the social housing, actually, as we know as council houses, actually started. That was the period after the Second World War when there was a lot more council houses going up. So, they had to build them, and so, yes, there was a need for labour force, but my dad didn't particularly like building work. He did it as a job. He did spend a bit of time - and I don't know what the years were - at the NAAFI, which was out at the Army camp. He was there for a short while, and then he went on to the railways, starting at Tiptop St John with the shunting because that's where you all start on the railways. You start with the shunting of the old steam trains, which is great fun.

**0:12:18.4 Maggie Beasley: And that's the time when he met your mum.**

0:12:21.0 Ana C: One day, he was pushing his bicycle through Honiton High Street, and I believe he was going past the Red Cow, which is now a Yellow Deli or something. Mum worked at Honiton Pottery. She was a Cotley girl. She came from Cotley - a little village called Cotley - and she used to cycle in every day to work and back, bless her. Anyway, she was on lunch break from her painting work at Honiton Pottery, and she was walking back to work, so she must have been going up the High Street as he was coming down the High

Street pushing his bike. She just thought, wow, he looks nice. He looked very smart. Apparently, he had one of the long raincoats on that the American film stars would be wearing at the time on the television. So, she stopped to have another peek after she'd passed him, and he stopped as well to have a peek because he thought, mm, okay, that looks okay, and he turned around. So, they both looked at each other and in a sense, it could have been love at first sight because, although they didn't speak at that point, later on, through a friend of mum's - so it must have been one of his friends knew a friend mum's from the pottery - there was a date arranged.

0:13:46.2 Their first date was on Wednesday, the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 1953. It was at Honiton Fair in the Fairfield in King Street, and that's where their first date was. Apparently, he was late. She was there. He was late. She wasn't very impressed with him, but he did turn up, and literally, they ended up... Well, I think she said he had to buy her candy floss and spoil her a bit because he was late, but they had a lovely time, and that was in then. Well, they got married three years later on September the 28<sup>th</sup>, 1956, but mum said she was engaged for three years, so they didn't know each other that long before they got engaged, so obviously, it was love at first sight, which was lovely. They were very happy, and then my dad, as I said, he progressed from shunting at Tipton St John. He did a bit of work at Seaton Junction, which was also known as Honiton. He then did portering before he ended up at, actually, being the man in charge at Honiton station. So, yes, it was all good, and so it was very interesting, really, what...

**0:15:08.3 Maggie Beasley: I think you've told me that later generations will say they remember him in... What was his position at Honiton station?**

0:15:19.4 Ana C: Yes, well, the station master position was...

**0:15:22.5 Maggie Beasley: Oh, station master.**

0:15:23.7 Ana C: They got rid of that, and they called it senior railman. So, he was a senior railman. He worked himself up there. He was on the railways for over 30 years, and basically, he loved it. The only trouble is he was never really off duty. I remember, as a child growing up, that people would knock on the door, even when he was day off or off duty, and say, 'What time's the next train to Exeter?' 'I need to go up to Liverpool to see relatives. Can

you work out the fares for me and the times of the travel?' 'Oh, yes, no problem.' This is what he was like, and I think everybody knew him. He couldn't go up the street without anybody saying hello. Like I said, Tim was very well-respected - his dad as well - because Tim had been part of the Royal British Legion in Honiton. Not the clubhouse because that wasn't built then. The one in Dowell Street they knocked down recently wasn't built till 1963, but he did know some of the other veterans that were great friends of his, so that's really good, but...

**0:16:36.2 Jess Huffman: Ana, am I right in thinking that at some point, was it your dad or your grandfather that was sent back to Ireland to recruit more men to help?**

0:16:44.5 Ana C: No, no. They did that during, as I say, the Second World War.

**0:16:51.0 Jess Huffman: Okay.**

0:16:52.6 Ana C: Because it basically was - just bear with me - the work was carried out by the George Wimpey and Co, and was for to get the labour force to come over to build the airfields in England. So, they were incorporated as one of the country's largest civil engineering contractors incorporated by the British Government during the Second World War into the Royal Engineers as operational Army units, along with Laing, Mowlem and McAlpine. A high proportion of the labour force at Dunkeswell were from Southern Ireland, as the Wimpey had been granted permission under the Group Labour Recruitment scheme to recruit workers from the neutral part of the country, following a bilateral agreement in July of 1941 by the British and Irish Governments. So, there you go. As I've said, employment was not really rife in certain parts of Ireland, particularly Southern Ireland, and so it was great. If you look at records, it will just say thousands, hundreds of thousands came over, mainly working in building work and things like that. So, they didn't keep records. This is the only point.

0:18:15.8 Nobody can actually find when the ship's passages were. When did these people come over? Nobody actually knows because they didn't keep records. It was too many people. It was a massive influx. It was too many people, but, as I say, I want my story told because my granddad sent for my dad and his wife, Anastasia, and basically, settled in Honiton and was part of the community and helped to shape the town to what it is today,

basically, putting into the economy. He wasn't the only other one. There were other Irish names. My dad's best man at his wedding to my mum was Christopher [?Tanham], and he was born in Dublin. He lodged with a Mrs [?Newbury] in King Street, and I can still see that house! It was a pink brick house, so I know what house it was, and he was also my godfather. Sadly, he died in 1967 December 1967, but I tracked a story down the other day because I remember my dad saying that he was a knight. I thought, what do you mean, he's a knight? He was a Knight of St Columba.

0:19:34.3 So, I thought to myself, I need to check this out. Anyway, so I contacted the Knights of St Columba whose head office is in Scotland - serve God by serving others - so it's a charitable organisation. They were Catholic men. It's a brotherhood that were recruited from all over England, Scotland, Wales. They took him on as a Brother through the Exeter Lodge because Honiton wasn't big enough. It didn't have a Lodge, but yes he was. So, they were very kindly. They were grateful to me because they'd only known him as Brother C Tanham, and I told them that he was called Christopher Tanham and that he was born in Dublin. So, they were very grateful that I told them that and changed their records so that he's called Christopher. So, yes, they sent me a lovely letter saying that he definitely was one of the Knights of St Columba. I know that he did a lot for the Catholic church in Honiton - The Holy Family Church - and so that was all about charitable acts, basically.

0:20:44.9 From what I remember, even though I was quite young, he was very gentle. He was a gentleman in all sense. So, he was a gentle person as well as being a gentleman. If you needed help, he would help you. I thought that he was buried - I thought his body would have gone back to Ireland - because as far as I knew he still had family in Ireland, in and around the Dublin area. I've now discovered that he was actually buried at St Michael's Church. I've got the plot number, but I've yet to actually see if it has got a headstone or a marker, so that's on the agenda for me to follow through.

**0:21:21.5 Maggie Beasley: Did your father and your grandfather, did they continue with their Catholic religion or...?**

0:21:28.7 Ana C: Very strong Catholics. My mum wasn't Catholic when she met my dad. She was Church of England, and she changed, and she became Catholic, and she ended up one of the best Catholics ever, I have to say, even though she wasn't born into the faith.



So, we all came up in the Catholic faith. My granddad, obviously not, because he was getting more and more disabled, but my dad... I don't know what year this was - I think it was '60s - helped to build the church hall outside the Catholic church. Beside the Catholic church there was a church hall because... That was it, or extend it or something. They built it anyway, but that's where mum and dad's wedding reception was held anyway, so it must have been before then. The dates get a bit confusing, but they had their wedding reception in the hall because Father Ortiz was the priest who married them. Father Sullivan was the priest that played the piano. He was a jolly chap, and he was Irish, obviously, so...

**0:22:40.2 Maggie Beasley: From what I've heard, the Catholic church does have a really strong following still.**

0:22:48.4 Ana C: I wouldn't like to comment on that one. I have heard stories, and I wouldn't like to comment, but it did, at one point, have a very strong following because... It was anybody that was Catholic was literally welcomed in, and so you had Polish Catholics, Italian Catholics, Irish Catholics, anybody that came into the area. It was a good community. It was a community, and they would have functions in the hall, which were lovely. They had a Saint Patrick's Day now social in the evening. To me - I had to be the waitress one time! [laughter] The less said about that, the better because, apparently, I was a bit late delivering some of the food to my mum and dad apparently. They started shouting at the waitress - well, my dad did - 'Waitress, where's my food?' 'Excuse me. I'm a volunteer here.' [Laughter]

**0:23:47.6 Maggie Beasley: Have you got any objects from your father that you would...?**

0:23:52.7 Ana C: I have.

**0:23:53.6 Maggie Beasley: To share with the group.**

0:23:54.8 Ana C: Now, I know that I inherited a harmonica, so I thought I'd look the harmonica out the other day, and instead of one, it's sort of doubled in size. I now have two harmonicas. I'm not quite sure which one's which, so I started tracking it down. I would imagine that the twelve-hole one called the Super Chromonica by a German manufacturer,

M Hohner, H-O-H-N-E-R, is the more professional one with the twelve holes. So, I would think this is the one that my granddad Timothy gave to my dad or my dad's inherited when Timothy died in 1961.

**0:24:48.9 Maggie Beasley: They both played the harmonica, did they?**

0:24:51.1 Ana C: My dad played the harmonica very much because when he was in Ireland, he won medals for doing that form of dancing they do. That step-dancing type thing. He won medals, and he would play the harmonica around the house. I was like, 'Oh, my God, how do you play that?' Not my forte. So, sometime, this was manufactured - this one, the twelve-hole one - sometime between 1930s and 1950s, but because of the insignia that doesn't have a star - but it has two hands as a trademark with the German word in the middle - we're thinking it's post-World War Two. So, you can have a look at it if you like. The other one, it's probably for the novices that have never played a harmonica before in their life because it's a 48-hole harmonica. So, I think this is the one that dad bought me, and it's called Hero harmonica, and the trademark is Lark. I wanted to know, okay, where does this come from? Well, believe me or not, this Chinese. How about that? This was made in Shanghai, China, but this was made secretly by the Shanghai General Harmonica plant, which was founded in 1939, but this is not from 1939.

0:26:29.9 This is definitely much later, say '60s or '50s, I don't know when he bought it for me. Basically, they were making harmonicas for the major brands of harmonicas around the world, but it was all kept secret. Nobody actually knew that it originally came from Shanghai, from that company. So, there you go, and that's that one, forty-eight hole one. No, I'm not going to give you a rendition on the harmonica today, thank you very much! [amused tone]

**0:27:00.8 Maggie Beasley: Oh, dear.**

**0:27:03.6 Jess Huffman: So, Ana, tell me a little bit about what life was like growing up in your household, because it sounds like there were people in your family that may still have had strong accents. It sounds like there's music. It sounds like your family were very sociable. Tell us, what was life like growing up?**

0:27:20.5 Ana C: My dad spoke with an Irish accent, but after many, many years, he said, 'I can't believe someone up the road has said, 'Oh, you're Irish, originally, aren't you?' 'Well, yes sir, because you sound Irish.' 'But I don't.' 'Yes, you did,' and he never lost his accent, but he did have a very strong Irish accent to start with. We always had music on. There was music on the old-fashioned record players that were literally going. So, we'd have Irish music, which was really lovely. As I say, he would play the harmonica. I don't remember him doing any Irish dancing. I tried it once or twice, but not my forte, as I've said, and very hospitable and lovely. Anybody that came in the house, they were always going to have a piece of cake and a cup of coffee, or a cup of tea, and sit down now and have a rest for yourself. So, it was a very friendly place. The priests constantly visited because they just liked the social aspect, basically. They'd come up of an evening, and they'd sit down and have a meal that mum had cooked, and they'd have a few whiskies. Then, they'd go back to St Peter's afterwards.

0:28:32.3 So, a very friendly household in that way, which I miss dreadfully now because there's a massive connection that's been lost, basically, because I never had any brothers or sisters, so I might have kept that connection a bit stronger if I had had. Obviously, I've still got my Irish music that I play, and I still have my wonderful memories. What I didn't say, which... And I had to make a bit of [?Russell's 0:29:01.1], so I do apologise, and I don't know if I have it, but my granddad was... When he was up at the airfield, he basically... They were trying to pay for the Catholic church in Honiton, and so basically, they wanted to cut the Irish labour force that went to church on a Sunday. So, they basically said, 'Right, we'll put the plate around,' but by Sunday morning, there's no money left because the workers have got paid up at the airfield on a Friday afternoon. So, there's no money left, so my granddad Timothy said, 'I have a cunning plan. I have a suggestion. Why can't we have a mini-service at the airfield on a Friday afternoon in one of the Nissan huts where we put the cap around? They've just been paid, so they'll throw some money in.'

0:30:05.8 It got cleared that that was allowed to happen with the ones that were in charge of Dunkeswell air base. Father Egan, who went on to become a Monsignor many years later for the Pope, he was the priest at the time. He came up, and that was what they did. They had a very short Mass with a blessing, passed the cap round, money came in, and they helped to pay for the church. There is a plaque in the church, but it's in the choir loft, so I felt that was important just to put that story in because...

**0:30:39.0 Maggie Beasley: Oh, definitely.**

0:30:40.6 Ana C: Of how he came up with these ideas. My dad was very much an idea man, and I think I am as well, so it's just a shame my granddad, Timothy, didn't live a bit longer, basically.

**0:30:53.0 Jess Huffman: What was on the plaque? What's on the plaque then in the church?**

0:30:57.7 Ana C: How much they raised. I can't think how much it was. I think it might be a hundred and something, which was quite a lot of money in those days. They weren't the only ones raising money because the USA as well - the American servicemen that were over here that went to the church that were Catholic - they also had a collection as well. So, there's two plaques, one from the servicemen that were American, and one from the labour force that were predominantly Irish.

**0:31:35.6 Jess Huffman: So, Ana, I'm just interested about your grandmother having moved. It sounds like she brought very little with her. I don't know how old you were when she passed away, so I don't know, do you remember much about your grandmother and how she felt about having to leave her home and her family and friends?**

0:31:54.8 Ana C: My grandmother, Anastasia, was a force to be reckoned with. She was beautiful. I loved her to bits, but keep on the right side of her. She was extremely religious so that all sort of came... It just forgot... Water under the bridge, basically, because she got to know Mrs [?Sluggett] that was at the Catholic church. They became really good friends, and I think Mrs Sluggett was Irish as well or had Irish relatives heritage. So, they basically are women that ran the church, I would say probably. They went to church nearly every day. I've never known anybody that religious. So, not only are they going to church on the Sunday... Well, Saturday evenings was usually confession, and Stations of the Cross was Friday evenings, from what I remember. Then, other days, they'd go to church, and they'd also do the flowers at the church. So, they were really great friends, and Anastasia loved it. That was it. That was her life.

**0:33:01.8 Maggie Beasley: So, she settled really well from the sound of it.**

0:33:04.4 Ana C: Very much. Yes, she very much settled. She did have a sister also that lived in Plymouth, but she died quite early - Auntie Sarah - and she did come up to Honiton a few times to visit Anastasia.

**0:33:18.3 Maggie Beasley: Did all of her children come with her? So, that would be your father's...**

0:33:22.9 Ana C: My dad was the last remaining one that survived because the others... Tim died very young, around about the age of three or four - little Timothy - he died of meningitis. My dad's two brothers, Patrick, who was training to be a priest, and Jack, who was in the Navy, they died of tuberculosis. So, yes, so quite a sad story, really, but I'm proud of what my dad achieved. I'm glad that he came to Honiton to meet mum, so I'm here today! [laughter]

**0:34:07.7 Maggie Beasley: There's lots in there, Ana. It's lovely. I want to carry on asking you questions. Is it worth just talking a little bit about...? We know that we're going to use your dad's role at the Honiton Railway Station as a kind of a portal into other stories that we're unearthing. So, do you want to talk a little bit about his role in meeting other people that came to Honiton from elsewhere around the world?**

0:34:33.8 Ana C: I think I'll leave that for now because, as I say, I'm writing an article on that anyway, which I'm trying to encompass a lot more with the interest linking with the station. All to say that, basically, he was on the railway for well over 30 years. It was either 33 or 35. I'm not quite sure which one. He was very well thought of by the workers that he worked with, the passengers that used the train. Also head office were very well to do with. He was a union rep at one point - a trade union rep - but he still got well on with the ones at the top because he used to go to some conferences. He went to Bridlington when I was young. I remember that because I went with him - me and mum went with him - stayed in a hotel. He was very well thought of. There's some funny stories, which I won't write about, but obviously, I can share. Like, because he was so well thought of by the area managers and

things like that, they would come up to Honiton Railway Station on a visit, and if it coincided with lunchtime - because dad would always have a little lunch break - and he'd always walk home for lunch.

0:35:51.9 Obviously, if one of the area managers came up, they had the car, and then he would just then present himself with area manager back at home to mum. 'Well, you've got enough food to go around, haven't you darling?' So, she'd have to eke out the food. Particularly in the summer, they would like coming up for the fresh strawberries because he had one of the best type of strawberries that were in the area. I don't know what the actual type of strawberry it was, but he'd bought them, I think, from St Bridget Nursery near Exeter. Everybody loved them. They were just so full of flavour. They were so lovely that everybody came up for the strawberries. I think Mr [?Lewis] was an area manager at one point, and he'd go away with some strawberries for his wife - for him and his wife - and take them back to Exeter or wherever they came from. Yes, mum always had to say, 'Oh, no, here he comes again with a visitor.' A railway visitor and she's had to stretch the food, the menu, but yes, he thoroughly loved it.

0:36:55.5 He loved the railway. It was his life. I remember going up there and seeing the steam trains when I was a young girl. I used to love it as well. I did think, at one point, he probably would have liked to have had a son because he probably wanted a train driver. Unfortunately, he had a daughter who didn't turn out to be a train driver. I did love the railways, and we went everywhere by train because he didn't drive. Part of the deal in those days, if you worked for things like that, the railways, the pay wasn't brilliant, but you got the perks of the free travel. So, some of that would also extend to ferries years ago. So, you could go across on the ferry to Europe - places in Europe and that - which we used to go to, so we had lots of lovely holidays.

**0:37:47.7 Jess Huffman: Can we sum it up? You've said this before, and you're very eloquent, but... I think you mentioned it right at the beginning. Why do you think it's important to share your story about your Irish heritage?**

0:37:59.8 Ana C: I think it's important for the generations coming up, really, to know. Especially anywhere, really. I mean, mine is particularly Honiton, obviously, but for anywhere, it's important for the younger generations to know how their towns and villages, how their areas were shaped by people of different nationalities and different cultures, that

came over and put into the community. Basically, became one of the community, and helped to shape the future and to keep the economy going.

**0:38:34.0 Jess Huffman: Amazing. Thank you, Ana. Well done, Maggie.**

**[END OF TRANSCRIPT]**