

INTERVIEW OF JOSE RODRIGO JIMENEZ MONROY

INTERVIEWERS: MARY HYLAND, MAGGIE BEASLEY, JESS HUFFMAN

NOTE: At times, it was difficult to decipher between Mary and Maggie, despite accent differences. As a result some inconsistencies may be present.

0:00:02.1 Jess Huffman: We are recording. The date today is Friday the 27th September 2024, and we are here at Honiton Library to interview Rodrigo.

0:00:19.2 Jose Rodrigo Jimenez Monroy: Sure, that's right.

0:00:21.1 Jess: Thank you! We've got Mary here as one of the interviewees. We've got Maggie as one of the interviewees. I'm Jess, and I'm the project coordinator. I think that's all the details we need. We're going to start by asking Rodrigo what it is he's brought with him today.

0:00:42.6 Rodrigo: I brought a photograph of most of my family. My grandmother had ten kids. This is her. This photo dates back from maybe 2009, 2008, probably. She died, sadly, a year-and-a-half ago. Everybody else is alive. I'm just going to point out the kids. This is [?Daniel], [?Francisco], [?Anna], [?Alejandro]. [?Athanasia 0:01:24.8], my mum. [?Carmela], [?Patricia], [?Gabriela], [?Armando], [?Rosa]. Obviously, all the kids are my cousins. All the extra people, also the extra adults are husbands or wives of my uncles or aunts. My cousin, [?Valentina], this one, she and I are very close. Really, really close. I am ten years older than her. No, fifteen years older than her, but we just get along so well. She was the one who gave me this photograph. She gave it to me on the day I was taking the plane to come here. She said, 'I want to give you this because we're going to miss you all - I am going to miss you a lot.' We cried, because it was literally just before I left for the airport, with all my luggage packed, etc. So yes, I wanted to share this photo.

0:02:50.8 Jess: Where was the photo taken? Was it an event or an occasion?

0:02:53.4 Rodrigo: No. Since I remember, every Sunday, we all go to my grandma's house. It's a big house. We all go there just to see her, just to visit her, ever since I remember. Some of them, they don't do it anymore, or just sporadically, but generally speaking, that was just a regular Sunday at my grandma's house. You can imagine, when I was a kid, along with all my other cousins, well, it was just playing all Sunday, playing computer games, playing with the football. One of my uncles, this one, Armando, he had a go-kart. We just used the go-kart just around the neighbourhood. It's a really quiet neighbourhood. It's in the south of Mexico City, literally next to the UNAM. UNAM is the National Autonomous University of Mexico. It's the biggest university in all of Latin America, in terms of size and students.

0:04:14.4 The university itself is probably as big as Exeter City, the city. It's that big. So my grandma lives - well, the house is still there, but just a couple of my aunts live there. So on Sundays, when we gather, we used to just go to the university because it's got a lot of gardens, green areas, and it was open just for the green areas. We used to go there, play with the football, go with the go-karts, go with the bicycles, or anything with wheels, essentially. Skateboards, or roller skates, or anything with wheels, just to have a fun Sunday, then come back. This was only just the nephews. I was 12, 13, and then there were three more around my age, give or take five years or more. Then we just used to go there on Sundays just to have fun, so that was just a regular Sunday.

0:05:30.9 Maggie Beasley: This sounds such a wonderful life that you had. The obvious question is, why did you leave Mexico? Perhaps I ought to link it all together. Why did you want to come to Britain?!

0:05:50.4 Rodrigo: It's funny. At some point, when I was a kid, I said to my mum, 'When I grow older, I want to either live in Japan, Germany, or England.' She was like, 'Yes, you're crazy,' or whatever. So time went by, and then I was 25 or something, and I met a girl from Chudleigh in Mexico City. She'd taken a year off. She started travelling in New York, then went near Cancun in Mexico, and then stayed there and then moved around that coast. Then eventually, she reached Mexico City. I met her because she was living there with a Mexican girl who was dating one of my best friends. So I called my friend. 'Hey, what are you doing tonight?' 'We're watching films.' He said, 'You can come around if you want.' 'Okay.' So I went there, and it was my friend with this girl, and then [Rachel] is her name,

and then me. It was just the four of us. We watched a couple of films, ate popcorn, and then I guess the rest is history. We just started going out. One thing led to another. She had to come back. So for a year-and-a-half, we had a long-distance relationship. This is back in 2008, I think so, or '09. I don't know. It was more difficult to be in touch.

0:08:02.0 There was no WhatsApp, or video calling, so it was regular calls, essentially, which were really expensive for both of us. Where I worked at the time, I cheated, and I used to call her from work's phone to her direct mobile, literally five minutes before finishing work. When I finished work, I transfer that call to my phone, and then I just kept talking with her for hours and hours. I mean, it's six hours' difference, so when I finish work, which was 4:00 pm Mexico City, it was 10:00 pm here, so we used to just call for a couple of hours. Three hours, probably, at the most, because she had to go to bed because it would have been 1:00 in the morning, and then she had to wake up and work, obviously. At some point, we decided to get married. Neither of us wanted to get married, but here, we found a way to be together. I tried to come for holiday to visit her. When she left Mexico, it was May.

0:09:44.4 Then in October, I came, and I had enough money to be here for, I don't know, half-a-year without any problems, without looking for a job or anything. Then customs agent at the airport, they said, 'No, you're not coming in,' and they sent me back to Mexico. Probably, she was down there, and I was here in a little office, and they said, 'No, you cannot.' We could not see each other. She had to drive from Chudleigh all the way to Heathrow. Anyway, they sent me back, and then she went. Three days later, she was there in Mexico for two weeks. Then I applied twice for a visitor's visa, and they denied the visa twice.

0:10:30.5 Maggie: Why would they deny the visa?

0:10:38.9 Rodrigo: The wording was, 'We believe you are not a...'

0:10:47.4 Jess: A visitor?

0:10:48.1 Rodrigo: No. I guess they are not allowed to say that, and they just put it in a nice-sounding way. It was like, 'We believe you are misrepresenting yourself. Therefore, for this occasion, we are not going to allow you the visa.' They used that word, misrepresent. To be fair, from their point of view, it actually looked like I was going to stay because, at the time,

I didn't have a bank account, so my wallet was this fat because I had enough money to be here for six months in pounds. For some reason, when you exchange money outside of this country, especially in Mexico, they give you £50 notes. You don't get these notes in this country! It's really rare.

0:11:49.5 Maggie: You don't see them.

0:11:50.4 Rodrigo: Exactly. So I had £50 notes, I don't know how many, in my wallet. I had American dollars because my flight had a layover in the USA and, obviously, I needed money for that. Then I had some leftover Mexican pesos. So I had three currencies in cash. Then I bought this flight with a friend, so I only paid the taxes for this flight. I think I paid \$100 for a return flight, which is next to nothing, but with the opportunity to be flown in business or first class, depending if there is space. So I was dressing with a suit, tie, smart shoes, and then with a wallet full of cash. It actually looked like I was going to stay, but that was not my intention. No, it was not my intention!

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

0:13:12.4 Rodrigo: Moving forward in time, after I applied for the second time, she came again. Well, rather, she went to Mexico one more time. That's when we said, 'What are we going to do? It's either, if we want to be together, we find a way to be together. If not, well, thank you very much; I go back to England, you stay here, and that's that.' So we decided to get married because, honestly, that was the only option just to beat the system, essentially, because when you marry, you get paperwork, as in you have a paper that says you're married to someone, and that is hard proof that their relationship is going somewhere. It's not just anything. So we got married over there, and then we applied for the visa, but when applying for the visa, we had to give tonnes of documents. By this time, we've already gathered all these documents. She was sending me letters, handwritten letters. I was

sending her these letters as well, so we had this proof. We had the telephone bills to prove that we called each other. We had tonnes of photographs, because we took a lot of photographs, so we printed tonnes of them just to present before the authorities that the relationship is genuine.

0:15:03.1 So we got married, and literally flipped a coin to the side: heads, England; tails, Mexico. Literally. Yes, we did that with a coin because we were like, 'What are we going to do? It's either Mexico or England. Well, I don't know. I want to be here. I want to be there. Bah-bah-bah. Okay, we'll toss a coin.' That's what we did, and England won, so that's why we applied for the visa. This was in August. Middle of October, I get the visa. Obviously, we get really happy, and then a week later, I was here. So I arrived here at the end of October 2009, I think. Yes, it was. No, 2010. We were married for nine years. So essentially, together, we were just over ten-and-a-half years until one day in in - when was this? - 2019, she came - literally out of nowhere, I was not expecting it, or maybe I couldn't read the signals, I don't know.

0:16:26.4 She just came and said, 'You know what, I don't want to be with you anymore. I don't love you.' I was like, 'What? Are you kidding? Can you repeat that?' I ask her, and she said, 'Yes, I don't want to be with you.' So I was like, 'Okay.' I thought about it for a few minutes, and then I said, 'Okay, well, that's the last time we have slept together. I'm going to go to sleep in the other bedroom, and then I'm going to start looking for a place to stay. You can stay here.'

0:16:59.3 Maggie: Where were you living at this time?

0:17:01.4 Rodrigo: In Exeter, in Heavitree area, near the Higher Cemetery. We were living there in Ladysmith Road. That house, we bought it between us, and her parents helped us with the deposit. Also, my mum sent me some money from Mexico. My dad, as well. Obviously, we also had some savings. So between everybody, we put some good chunk towards the deposit. Then one day, she came and said that.

0:17:49.6 Maggie: So in the years that you were married, did you go back to Mexico to see your family?

0:17:54.8 Rodrigo: Yes. Not much as I would have liked to, but yes, we went. We went with [Lyra*], as well, when she was a baby. Lyra* is our daughter. I've been back more now that we are not together, than when we were.

0:18:16.8 Maggie: How often do you get back?

0:18:18.6 Rodrigo: Twice a year. Once for work, at least a month, and another one for holiday with Lyra*.

0:18:28.7 Maggie: Did you manage to get work? Obviously, you managed to get work here. What did you do for a living?

0:18:35.7 Rodrigo: Well, I work now for a company here in Honiton, in Heathpark. It's called Computer Components Limited. We buy and sell computer chips around the world. I'm focusing on Mexico because China is number one producer of these, and Mexico is number two. Germany is three, Brazil is four, and so on. Yes, Mexico is number two in the world, so I am focusing on Mexico, to the point where I cannot cope anymore, and they need to hire someone else. My way of thinking this is, I self-create this position for me, if you see what I mean, because there is - I cannot cope with this. I need someone else to help me, or whatever. Then I become the Mexican manager, if you want to see it that way. That's what I am trying to do.

0:19:40.7 Maggie: So when your marriage broke down, did you not contemplate going back to Mexico and staying at home?

0:19:45.4 Rodrigo: Well, I did, but I didn't want to because Lyra* was a baby. My parents are divorced. They got married in 1978. My sister was born in '79, and they got divorced in '80 because he cheated on her. Legally, they divorced. Then he convinced her to go back together, and they were together. I was born in '83, and in '89, they split completely. So when I was growing, he was never there. Never.

0:20:38.6 Mary Hyland: So you want to be there for your daughter.

0:20:40.5 Rodrigo: Yes. I thought, I'm not going to do the same thing because I know what it's like to just literally be sat next to the phone waiting for a call that was never going to happen, or waiting next to the door because your dad told you, 'I'm going to go on Saturday, and I'm going to take you for lunch, and we're going to spend the day together, blah, blah, blah.' It was already lunchtime; I was really hungry, so was my sister, and then my dad called. 'Hey, I'm really sorry, I cannot go and pick you up because something came up.' So I didn't want that. I didn't want to be do that, or be that person, and that's why I stayed. I stayed for her, essentially.

0:21:33.6 Maggie: You do sound as if you've integrated very well in England, and with your job. Your job is obviously a really big one, isn't it?

0:21:42.2 Rodrigo: Yes.

0:21:43.1 Maggie: A lot of English people would be glad to be doing it! You've got a lovely hobby with your guitar, playing music.

0:21:53.0 Rodrigo: I started from the bottom. When I arrived, I started working at the same company as Rachel, which is exporting educational materials to schools around the world. I literally started in the warehouse, packing the books, packing anything, receiving the stuff, counting, checking the quality of the book, etc. So I started literally from the bottom. Then a job was advertised at the same company to help the schools team, because these companies divide into three teams. There's the schools team for schools, the ABC, which is for libraries and these kind of businesses, and there is another one which is the tenders, which is governmental stuff. So in the schools team, a vacancy opened, and I applied for it, I got it, and then that's how I started, really, with properly working. In the warehouse, I was on zero hours, so working at the office, it was my first contract. I already had experience in Excel and Word, and all this Microsoft package, and customer service. Obviously, I already had the language.

0:23:32.9 Mary: When did you learn to speak English?

0:23:36.4 Rodrigo: Since primary school, I started. In Mexico, if you go to paid school, they're going to teach you good English. If you go to governmental school, it's just rubbish, what they teach you in English! Yes, it is. Just door, puerta; ceiling, roof, and that's it. It's just like, [makes a noise]. So yes, I went to primary paid school. Secondary was governmental, and then just government onwards. At some point, I said to my mum, 'I want to learn English.' Then she put me in an English school, so I did all the levels there, finished all the courses there. Then I moved to another school to higher English. Many years ago, there was a test called TOEFL, Test of English as a Foreign Language. I think the maximum score was 650, and I think I got 640 or something like that.

0:24:49.5 So I got that, and then I thought, yes, I know English, and then I go and live in Canada for two years. Then it's just, obviously, completely different. I could speak it with everybody in Mexico, everybody who's learned it in Mexico. I go to Canada, and then when they start speaking, the process is, oh, I hear English, and then I translate it in my head; I think of an answer in Spanish and translate it in my head, and then I put it in my mouth to words and it's like, '[Makes noises].'

[Laughter]

0:25:27.3 Rodrigo: Anyway. I lived in Canada for two years. I became proficient in English there. Then I come here, and I'm like, yes, I understand English. Yes, right! Then I start meeting people from all around the UK, all these different accents. I go to Scotland thinking, yes, I know, I understand everybody because I have met people from London, from Bristol, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, everywhere. Yes, I can speak it. Then I go to Scotland and it's like, [groans], come on, when is this going to ever end?!

0:26:12.6 Maggie: We would be the same if we went to Scotland! We wouldn't understand a word.

0:26:17.9 Mary: I'm getting the hang of it. My son lives in Scotland, and I'm getting the hang of it.

0:26:24.7 Rodrigo: I like reading a lot, so I read in both Spanish and English.

0:26:31.4 Mary: Equally comfortably?

0:26:33.4 Rodrigo: Yes. Sometimes, I'm at work, and my manager, she's like, 'Where did you learn that word from?' 'It's just a word I use sometimes! I just read a lot.'

0:26:54.0 Maggie: So are you happy living in England? I know you've got divorce, which is always traumatic, but are you happy living here, or would you sometimes think...?

0:27:03.4 Rodrigo: It's a happy-sad situation. I am happy because the job I have, it's really good in any way you can see it. It's just down the road. I get to travel with all expenses paid. Economically, it's a good one. The boss is great. Honestly, he's probably the best boss I've ever had. My manager, everybody at the company, great people. Lyra* is near as well. I see her, get along with her really good. She makes music as well as me. We share a lot of great things. I love her. I have a lot of friends down in Exeter. So yes, that way, yes, I am comfortable, I am happy. Then I said to my mum once, 'My heart is split in two because the other half is in Mexico with everybody, with all of these people, with the food, with the people, with the climate, the noise.'

0:28:39.2 Mary: Do you still think of Mexico as home?

0:28:42.1 Rodrigo: Yes.

0:28:45.3 Maggie: Your family looks so lovely. That is the great thing about Mexico, and Latin-type countries, is that they are very family orientated, whereas perhaps in Britain, we aren't so much.

0:29:02.4 Rodrigo: Yes, it's a really close family. We all live in south of Mexico City, like 20 minutes away from each other, basically. So yes, we are a really close family. That is what I miss. The language, as well because Spanish, especially Mexican Spanish, it can be bent in so many ways.

0:29:39.6 Mary: Is it more expressive than English is?

0:29:42.8 Rodrigo: [Makes a noise]

0:29:43.5 Mary: Yes!

0:29:45.0 Rodrigo: Yes, quite a lot. Then we like to play with words a lot. I can talk to someone from Spain, from Argentina, any other country that speaks Spanish in a way that any Mexican can understand, but they cannot understand, if that makes sense. Every time I go to Exeter and meet my Mexican friends, it's just... We've had people from Colombia just coming with us, or whatever, for a drink or something, and sometimes they are like, 'What are you saying?! I don't get the meaning of what you're saying!'

0:30:47.3 Mary: This might sound like a really stupid question, but living in Honiton, how different is that from living in Mexico?

0:30:54.5 Rodrigo: [Laughs]

0:30:57.9 Mary: What about the weather?!

0:31:01.9 Rodrigo: I like this weather. I like the rain. I don't really like the sun much. When I was in Mexico City, I was always hiding from the sun, always. Don't get me wrong, when I go to the beach, I love it, and I love - just stay in the sun, just like this, and do nothing, but it's different because you get the breeze. You get a cold beer, or any cold drink you want.

0:31:39.2 Mary: How far is Mexico from the sea? I don't know.

0:31:43.4 Rodrigo: The nearest beach is four hours by car.

0:31:49.9 Maggie: So you're really near the see here, aren't you?

0:31:52.6 Rodrigo: Yes. So weather wise, I am okay with this weather, I am fine, I am comfortable. Even when it's raining, if I fancy a walk, I just take the walk. I don't care if it's sunny, rainy, windy; I just do it. In terms of, obviously, the size, Honiton population is 12,000 people. Probably, my neighbourhood and the surrounding areas is more than that, so shops are open 24 hours over there. Anything you want, you can get it at any time, food wise, drink

wise, transport, taxi, anything. Literally, anything. The noise never stops. They don't turn off the lights. For example, you know the road that goes up the hill, I've been there around 2:00 in the morning, 3:00 in the morning ,just walking because sometimes I just do that!

0:32:58.9 Maggie: That's what I was going to ask you was, how do you find the difference? It is so quiet here, isn't it? Round where I live, near the centre of Honiton, it seems as if everybody goes to bed about ten o'clock, and I'm the only person that's still up!

0:33:18.5 Rodrigo: I'm the only one still up as well! I live in the centre, as well, across the road from the church, I live there. Where I live, I am the only one who makes the noise, I think. I play the guitar. I have four or five guitars. It's good that, when I play the guitar, you cannot hear anything from outside, unless I am playing the electric guitar and I really turn it up, but you just don't hear anything. That quietness, I like it, but it's reached the point where it's too quiet. It is too quiet, definitely.

0:34:12.9 Mary: We have the seagulls in the summer! Do you not hear the seagulls, half-past three in the morning?!

0:34:17.5 Rodrigo: Yes! It is too quiet. Honiton has become too quiet for me, and I don't know anybody here. I couldn't make friends.

0:34:33.4 Maggie: How long have you lived in Honiton?

0:34:35.8 Rodrigo: Four-and-a-half years. Where I live, it's old school court, and it was divided into flats. Then the loft flat, there used to live a girl there. I used to teach her Spanish. I don't know, she didn't want to continue talking to me. I have no idea. I texted her a few times after she moved out. She still lives in Honiton. 'Hey, how are you? When can we meet? Duh-duh-duh.' Never replied. Then again, 'Hey, how are you? Hope you're fine.' Didn't reply, and I was like, okay, well, she doesn't want to talk to me, that's fine. There was this other lady with a kid. Funny, we met because we were coming back from the park, and Lyra* saw her daughter via the window. This was in lockdown. Her daughter is around

Lyra's* age. She's like one year younger. So they were waving at each other from the window, and then she came out.

0:35:57.8 Then mum comes out, and that's how we met, essentially. It was a good friendship, but then I go to Mexico. One of these times, I go. Then when I come back, I texted, 'Hey, how are you? I'm back. We should meet for a coffee.' Never replied again. I was like, well, she doesn't want to talk to me; that's fine. I am looking to move out and go back to Exeter, because it's where all my friends are. The other musicians I play with, they are there as well.

0:36:36.5 Maggie: Exeter is a really buzzy, lovely city, isn't it? I've lived in lots of English cities, and travelled a lot in my lifetime, and I'm amazed by Exeter. I think it's lovely.

0:36:50.3 Rodrigo: Yes, it is.

0:36:52.8 Maggie: I think it's because it's a university town. Can I just ask you about the guitar? Did you play the guitar in Mexico? Yes. Do you play it at gigs and venues and things, or do you just...?

0:37:10.2 Rodrigo: I've been playing since I was 15. Back in Mexico, I was in a few bands, and we used to play at the local pub every Friday, and that was quite fun. I used to keep my back to the audience because I was afraid of just playing. I was the singer. I don't know how to sing, but nobody else wanted to sing! We sang rock covers, so I was the singer, but I was afraid of singing. I was really scared of, 1) singing, 2) in front of people, so I gave my back to the audience! Nonetheless, they loved us, and we used to play there for, I don't know, a couple of years every Friday.

0:38:02.4 Jess: Can you tell us something about the music scene in Mexico? That's something I noticed when I went there, and that is that there are people playing music everywhere. On the streets, in the venues, any time of day. Tell us something about the music scene in Mexico, which is so different to here, or in your experience of it!

0:38:28.8 Rodrigo: If you know where to find it, you can find any kind of music, being rock, jazz, folklore, brass, heavy metal, classical, anything. Literally, anything, if you know. The most popular genre of music is cumbias, and salsa, and reggaeton, and just pop artists, Mexican and American, mostly. That is what, basically, you're going to hear, listen to on any radio station in Mexico, but like you say, there is music everywhere. Musicians, recent musicians, they have been fusing different genres of music to create something new, like electric cumbia, which is electronic music but with cumbia rhythm. Cumbia's a really, really Latin rhythm. Then most of the music talks about love, or broken hearts in Mexico, at least in Mexico. So I just remember, there is this singer. She doesn't actually know how to sing that well, but the lyrics, they are so - what's the word? They just stick to your head, because she sings against men all the time.

0:40:54.8 The translation for one of the songs is like, 'You are a rat of two feet who is always...' No, 'Are you listening to me? Not even the worst of the worst compares to your heart,' or something like that, but in Spanish, it sounds like, [makes a noise], this is coming from the gut. So yes, the music, the lyrics, it just comes from the gut. People just feel the music; people find the rhythm. I don't know how to explain it. Here, in this country, there is great music. Honestly, probably, my favourite bands are from this country, yes, and it's really technically driven music with a lot of theory behind it, with all of this knowledge. It's great music, but then Mexican Latin music is... Probably, they don't have the amount of knowledge, the theory, probably, but it just comes from within.

0:42:26.6 Mary: Spontaneous?

0:42:30.0 Rodrigo: I don't know how to say it. It just comes from the gut, if you see what I mean.

0:42:35.3 Jess: It's emotional.

0:42:36.5 Rodrigo: Yes

0:42:37.6 Jess: Rather than technical, it's emotions.

0:42:39.4 Rodrigo: A lot of emotions, yes.

0:42:42.2 Maggie: In Britain, generally speaking, we are a more reserved type of person, whereas we probably do feel it inside, but we reserve it, whereas in Latin American countries, you let it out.

0:42:47.7 Mary: I was just going to say that, yes.

0:42:56.4 Rodrigo: We just let it out, yes.

0:42:59.9 Jess: You talked about maybe the language allows you to expression emotion, maybe, in a way that English doesn't.

0:43:05.4 Rodrigo: Yes. Just now, everybody has their own personal space. You're not crossing that line. No one is crossing any lines. Then in Mexico, we touch a lot. We would be talking and, 'Hey, how are you? Duh-duh-duh-duh.' Then it will be like, 'Hey, just get close together, sit close together, we're just talking.'

0:43:34.9 Maggie: We do, in England, we do, but it would be more when you go out with friends or people you know really well. We consider this more of a business type meeting. We're trying not to make it too business, aren't we?

0:43:50.6 Rodrigo: Too business-y!

0:43:53.7 Jess: Do you miss that about the culture in Mexico?

0:43:57.9 Rodrigo: Yes. Personally, I like to touch. I like being touched, like with friends. 'Hey, how are you?' Just, 'Yes, let's get together.' I love this, and that's something I don't get here.

0:44:23.1 Maggie: We'll have to introduce you to a few friends! I went to a meeting yesterday, and some old chap I know, he's only a friend, he grabbed hold of my hand, 'Oh, I've missed you. Where have you been?' [Kissing noises]

[Laughter]

0:44:38.1 Maggie: He started kissing my hand, and all up my arm! You can delete that! It was quite nice, though!

0:44:45.2 Mary: I don't think Honiton is the easiest place to make friends.

0:44:49.5 Jess: No, you're not the first person to say that.

0:44:50.6 Mary: I've been here three years, and I've not made any friends. Not really. People I'm friendly with, but not like the friends I've had in other places.

0:45:03.2 Maggie: I've found it the other way. I've been here three years, and I can't believe how many friends I've got, and how much I go out, and how much I do.

0:45:13.4 Mary: [?That's probably because I'm 0:45:13.4] just an unfriendly person!

0:45:16.4 Jess: I don't think it's an easy place to meet people.

0:45:18.3 Maggie: No, it isn't. I can imagine.

0:45:20.6 Jess: Also, generationally as well, actually, to meet other young people is even harder in Honiton because there aren't the places that there used to be for people to meet.

0:45:33.5 Maggie: That was the biggest problem I found when I moved here. I moved from a small village in England, in the centre of England, and we had masses of pubs, which was the main... We thought of them more like community centres where we would all go, and you knew everybody, and we always had a good time. Here, I came here, and I said, 'Well, where is the local pub?'

0:45:57.8 Jess: Where do you meet people, yes.

0:45:59.2 Maggie: There were two pubs. When I looked at them, I thought, oh, I would never go in either of those! So it is different.

0:46:06.0 Jess: It's hard, so that's something that's been...

0:46:09.7 Rodrigo: I've been here four years, and I've only been to one pub once, and that was it. It was a year ago for my birthday. I invited the neighbour, and then he came, and then at the end, when everybody had gone, he said, 'Do you want to go to the pub?' 'Yes, let's go.' So we went down the one next to Complete Meats.

0:46:44.5 Maggie: Oh, yes.

0:46:45.0 Mary: Oh, yes, the bar.

0:46:45.7 Jess: Oh, the bar?

0:46:46.8 Rodrigo: Yes, that one.

0:46:48.1 Jess: It used to be called 102, but now it's called the Pine and Pony?

0:46:52.3 Mary: Pine Pony, yes.

0:46:53.6 Rodrigo: Before that name, it had another name.

0:46:54.8 Jess: Oh, yes, the Bruv Bar. Bruvs Bar!

0:46:58.1 Mary: Bruvs Bar, yes.

0:46:59.4 Rodrigo: So we went there. I think we had a couple of drinks. I don't know, I just have a sixth sense, and there was this guy. I just thought, I'm going to go because he's trouble, and I left. The next day, I run into my neighbour, and he said, 'It's good you went, mate, because this guy caused a lot of trouble, and they had to call the police, and they didn't let anybody out for a few hours.' I was like, 'Well, I have a sixth sense, and that's why I left!' So yes, it's the only time I've been to a pub here, or something similar here in Honiton. I go more in Exeter with my friends, etc.

0:47:53.7 Maggie: I don't know it's changed, has it? I don't think this is the norm.

0:47:59.6 Jess: It did actually change. Lockdown changed a lot of the pub culture, so a lot of people have stopped going.

0:48:06.5 Maggie: Next week, I'm going to Jeremy Clarkson's pub with my friends. A friend of mine is the sous chef there!

0:48:17.3 Jess: We'll stick to...!

0:48:17.9 Maggie: Yes, we'll delete that!

0:48:22.7 Jess: We've got, probably, another ten minutes.

0:48:24.4 Mary: How does your daughter feel about her dual heritage, because she's half-Mexican, half-English? Do you know? Is she too young for that yet?

0:48:33.8 Rodrigo: She's nine today. Yes, I'm going to see her tomorrow. She loves going to Mexico. As much as I can, or as little as I can - rather - I cook some Mexican food for her which, contrary to the popular belief, not everything is hot!

0:49:04.0 Jess: Tell us about some of the meals that you make.

0:49:08.1 Rodrigo: Say, for example, I buy flour that it's - this is a Colombian flour I buy in a Chinese shop in Exeter. This is weird, but it's the closest flour I can get to make tortillas. So I make tortillas, and then I make tacos, but these tacos, these are filled with pulled chicken. I roll them, so the taco, it looks like a recorder, if you want to say, with that shape. Then I fry this, and then they are crunchy. So I fry a few of these. They can be stuffed with chicken, or mash, or anything. Literally, anything you want to stuff them. When you're dishing out, you put the tacos. Then you add sour cream on top, you add shredded lettuce. You add cheese, but a feta kind of cheese. With your hands, you break it, and you sprinkle it on top. Then if you want, you can have a salsa, and then you can add it on top, if you want. If you don't, just grab a taco with your hand because it's fried, it's crunchy, it's stiff, so

you can just grab it like this, and [biting noises], and bite it. She loves those. That's a really common dish in Mexico.

0:50:53.7 I try to do that. I mean, I don't really know how to cook a lot of stuff because there are ingredients that I cannot get in this country, one. Second, there are dishes which are really difficult to make. Really, really difficult, so I don't really know how to make them. So going back to the question, since she was born, I always talked to her in Spanish. She understands Spanish. She's getting, now, the jargon. All this double-meaning stuff, she's getting it, she loves it, she applies this to me! Since her mum and I split, she's always asked me, 'Hey, when can we go to Mexico for Christmas? I want to be there for Christmas. Let's go Christmas,' because I've told her how Christmas is over there.

0:52:08.2 Maggie: Has she visited Mexico?

0:52:11.6 Rodrigo: Yes.

0:52:13.1 Jess: Tell us about Christmas in Mexico.

0:52:15.5 Rodrigo: We start celebrations on the 24th, but this is on the evening. Say, with all this, all the family; we get together at my grandma's house. We get together on the evening. Because it's a religious country, then before the actual dinner, we would - well, this is with my family - pray. I don't, but they pray, and get the Bible out, and read a passage from it. They do a nativity kind of thing, where some people go out of the house, other people remain inside. You know when the story says that, when Jesus was about to be born, they were looking for a place? Supposedly, they were knocking on different inns, and nobody wanted to let them in until one person let them in, and then Jesus was born. So we do this kind of thing. This thing is actually quite common in Mexico. So you get this little booklet with the dialogue, and you are singing this, people singing outside pretending they are Jesus, Joseph, Mary. Other people are inside, pretending they are the inn owners. So we do this thing, then people come in, then we pray. Then we break a piñata, but the piñata has to have seven points, because they represent the seven capital sins. So you are breaking them, meaning you are going to behave well.

0:54:30.4 So then after this, then we have Christmas dinner, but all of this starts around 11:00 in the evening. So when Christmas dinner comes, it's around midnight for

Christmas Day, because baby Jesus is supposedly born around midnight. That's why we have Christmas dinner around midnight. Christmas dinner, weirdly, the main dish is a Spanish recipe from the north of Spain. It's cod with capers, new potatoes, with these yellowy-green chillies. You've probably seen them in the supermarket. They are pickled all the time, and they are long, like this. With a tomato-y sauce. This is the main dish. Other people make other dishes, etc., but that is the main. It's the equivalent of the roast dinner in this country. Then after dinner, we give each other gifts, because Santa Claus, I mean, he's there as a figure, but doesn't actually go and give kids presents. It's more like, 'Hey, I'm going to give you a present. I give presents to whatever I want to give,' essentially. Then on the actual Christmas Day, on the 25th - because this celebration, when you arrive at my grandma's house, say you arrive around 7:00, 8:00 in the evening, you're going to start drinking, having a snack, like crisps or nuts or whatever.

0:56:33.7 You're going to have a talk with everybody who's around. Then around 11:00, this nativity thing starts. Midnight comes, the dinner. The toast. Oh, yes, the toast. I forgot the toast! Then the piñata, the gifts. Then you just keep drinking until - and talking, having fun. We used to play the guitars, and get the guitars out at some point, and singing. Everybody was singing and playing the guitar. Then I remember going to bed around 3:00, 4:00 in the morning. On 25th, people who are married, like my uncles, who are married; on that day, they used to go to their other family for Christmas food, like reheating the food. Kind of the same, but just on actual Christmas Day. So because everybody was married, or is married - rather - every Christmas, there were different people going around because they had to go to their other families, etc. So that's how I celebrate, or I used to celebrate Christmas with my family. In the broad spectrum, it's probably how it's celebrated all around Mexico.

0:58:03.6 Jess: Are there ever festivals that you miss?

0:58:10.0 Rodrigo: Day of the Dead.

0:58:11.3 Jess: Tell us about that because that's quite a significant...!

0:58:15.9 Rodrigo: Well, this one is a really old celebration. This is pre-conquistadores. Basically, we just honour the death. We put something called ofrenda. Ofrenda, the literal

translation is offering, but it's basically, say, this table. Just put a nice tablecloth on it, put some flowers of the season - which I don't know the name in English. It's a cempasúchil. I'm going to find a photo. Not this one. So yes, put a nice tablecloth, put this plant around, these flowers. Put the photos of your loved ones, the deceased, obviously, because it's for the death! Put their favourite drink, and put their favourite dish as well, and then you put candles around. Then there's going to be also papier-mâché, which is just colourful paper cut and adorned all around this table.

0:59:54.4 Mary: So would this just be the family dead, or would it mean your friends, or whatever?

1:00:02.3 Rodrigo: What do you mean?

1:00:04.8 Mary: Who is it that you're having the pictures of? Is it members of your family, or anybody you knew?

1:00:11.1 Rodrigo: Anybody you knew that you want them to be there. It's marigold, the plant. So that's the plant, it's being used. Yes, you just put anybody that you want to be there, anybody that you want to remember, anybody.

1:00:37.9 Mary: What date is this in the year?

1:00:40.8 Rodrigo: 1st November. The food stays there, the drink stays there, because we believe that, for one day, they are allowed to come back and enjoy the drink, enjoy the food, enjoy the family for one day only. It's like the film, *Coco*. Have you watched it, the Disney film? If you can, watch it, and a lot of the stuff from there is real, what they do. Obviously, Disney added a few more bits for kids, etc., but that's basically it. It's weird because, in the north of Mexico, this is not as popular. It is not that celebrated. It's from the middle down. I guess it's because of the Aztec influence, because Aztecs never reached the north. So yes, the Day of the Death. This is part of the celebrations. Other part is that people write something we called calaveritas, which is a poem in the sense that it rhymes. It doesn't have to do anything with love, for example, because poems are generally love-orientated. Calaveritas are more a fun way to see death.

1:02:26.6 I can write a calaverita for you, or for you or you, one for me, but it doesn't mean that you are wishing me, or I am wishing you our death, because the calaverita plays around with this idea that the bony one - the death. That's a different name. The bony one is going to come and get you at night, for example. There can be a line for the calaverita, but it doesn't mean that I am wishing you our death, or I am wishing the dead comes after you. It doesn't mean that. It's just a way to see that we are all going to die at some point. Just make fun of it. Just make it more amicable. Make it more bearable, if you want. Make sense, what the calaverita is?

1:03:24.1 Mary: Yes.

1:03:27.4 Maggie: In a way, how Halloween is celebrated in America, or started off in America. That is to do with death, Halloween.

1:03:36.4 Jess: Hallow's Eve, it ties in with pagan.

1:03:38.9 Maggie: It's progressed to this country.

1:03:40.9 Mary: Christian, as well, isn't it? Also [over speaking 1:03:43.3] souls.

1:03:43.3 Maggie: It's a similar thing, but not quite as intense as yours. We send children round to get sweets! Not quite.

1:03:53.3 Jess: Do you make a point of celebrating that festival here, even when you're not with family and friends?

1:04:01.6 Rodrigo: Yes. I am going to show you just an example of this ofrenda I was mentioning.

1:04:11.1 Jess: Oh, wow, it's beautifully colourful.

1:04:13.8 Rodrigo: That's the paper I was telling you. If you see it, it's got...

1:04:17.3 Jess: I remember seeing them all hanging in the streets.

1:04:22.4 Maggie: That's beautiful.

1:04:24.2 Jess: Lots of flowers, lots of colourful paper flags.

1:04:26.5 Rodrigo: Watch that film, *Coco*. This is for kids, but a lot of what I'm saying now will be visual, will make a bit more sense. We also have this, a bread, which is - it's called pan de muerto, which is Day of the Dead bread, essentially! It's a really sweet, orangey flavour. Really fluffy. It's round. On top, it's got something resembling bones, and that is also put in the ofrenda. It's nothing macabre about the Day of the Dead. It doesn't have to go that way, because it's just not. It's more like remembering those who are not with us anymore. Because we love food in Mexico, we just love food, and we love mixing colours, flavours, everything, then how else are we going to show that we love this person other than food? It is the way we see it.

1:05:53.4 Mary: The English are far too reserved, aren't we?

1:05:58.5 Jess: There's a fear of death that's maybe different because of...

1:06:00.9 Mary: We don't want to talk about it.

1:06:04.4 Jess: Do you think that, having those events, like the Day of the Dead, that allows you to see death in a different way, do you think that, as a person, your experience of life is different because your perception of death is maybe different?

1:06:12.0 Mary: I think it does, yes. Also, you know that, when you're gone, the people left behind will honour you on the Day of the Dead.

1:06:31.0 Jess: Have a way to remember you.

1:06:32.7 Rodrigo: Yes. I grew with all this belief, obviously. Day of the Death, and then history books, how the Aztecs - anybody who lived before the Spanish arrived, anybody

who lived in Mexico before Spanish arrived, the way they saw death is completely different. For example, there is a dish that Spanish changed the meat for pig, because pig's meat resembles human meat. Before Spanish arrived, the Aztecs, they used to eat their enemies after they have killed them, but it was because they believed they consumed all their energy, all their belief, everything, and they wanted to become part of it. They wanted them to become part of the conquerors, if you see what I mean. So in the way they did it was with a soup, which is called pozole, which is a soup with corn, with the meat, with radish, oregano, onion, lettuce. It's a tasty soup, but obviously, Spanish arrived, and they were like, 'Whoa, they are eating people. No, no, no, no. We have this little animal here. It's called pig. Let's use this instead.'

1:08:22.4 Now, it's really popular, this dish. It's really popular. When I talk about these things, I saw your face and you were like, [makes a noise]. Well, yes, because they were eating people, yes, but it was for a reason, not just because, 'I'm going to kill you and I'm going to eat you.' They had a reason. I'm not saying I am in favour. I am not, but it's just an example of the background of death, the way I see death, the way that we're all going to die at some point. Be more afraid of the living rather than the death. I have experienced, twice, near-death experiences. I almost drowned twice. Once, when I was six, and then another one when I was fifteen. Both occasions, they had to give me - what do you call it? - the...

1:09:30.9 Jess: Oxygen mask?

1:09:31.9 Rodrigo: No.

1:09:32.5 Jess: Oh, mouth to mouth.

1:09:32.8 Mary: Resuscitate.

1:09:33.0 Rodrigo: Yes, both of them. So the way I see death is just a natural thing. Just a natural thing. I have heard a lot of noises in this house I live now. In the previous one, people have said, 'You have ghosts.' I'm like, 'Well, if I do, so what?!' I'm not afraid of them. I'm not scared of them, because I am not.

1:10:07.4 Maggie: The way you've explained why they eat people, that is quite a rational explanation, isn't it?

1:10:15.5 Rodrigo: Yes.

1:10:17.8 Maggie: When you hear of cannibalism, you often think, is it not right, and is eating people...?

1:10:25.4 Jess: Without the wider context and understanding of it.

1:10:28.9 Rodrigo: Yes, because it's not just eating people for the sake of eating people.

1:10:34.9 Maggie: Because you're hungry!

1:10:35.7 Rodrigo: It was because of this belief. Like I said, I'm not in favour of it.

1:10:48.2 Maggie: You can understand.

1:10:48.9 Rodrigo: I'm not against it, but I can understand because it's my background, it's my heritage. For all these reasons, that's why I see death in a different way. I'm not challenging death, either. I am not driving drunk or driving really fast just to see if - no, I'm not doing this because that would be just something stupid. It's just different, the way I see death and life. It's just part of life, and that's it. I don't talk about it as in something bad, because it's not bad. I don't see death as something bad. Even in funerals, before Spanish arrived, it was a celebration for everybody, and everybody dressed in colours, and there was a party. Then Spanish arrived with all these European reservations, and they were the ones introducing wearing black. Now, we all wear black when it's a funeral. Well, my mum is the exception because she always goes with the top with the most flowers on it! This is just what we inherited, I guess.

1:12:41.7 Jess: So it informs your identity, those concepts, doesn't it, and a sense of who you are, is that right?

1:12:47.7 Rodrigo: Yes.

1:12:51.8 Jess: Mary touched on it. Why do you think it's important that your daughter hears your stories and gets a chance to go to Mexico? Why is knowing about your heritage important to you and your daughter?

1:13:09.0 Rodrigo: She's half me, and I am Mexican. Also, because I don't want her to not understand a lot of things when we go to Mexico, like the language. Like I just mentioned a few minutes ago, that we just stretch the language, bend it in so many ways. If she's not going to understand even that, then when she goes to Mexico - I don't know, I'm just thinking in a few years, she'll probably tell me, 'I want to go by myself. I want to go for a month.' Whatever. Then if she doesn't understand this, then people are just going to bully her, or I don't know, anything. Then if she understands all of the language, the traditions, the food, I don't know, moving around the city, all of this, it will be like she's Mexican only because she's got a Mexican dad, if you see what I mean.

1:14:21.2 Jess: You want her to feel that she is part Mexican, embrace that element of her identity.

1:14:25.7 Rodrigo: Yes. As well, any Mexican celebrations, like Independence Day, Day of the Dead, Christmas, even Mother's Day - which is on a different date than in this country - I do them with her, and I explain, 'Oh, this is Independence Day because blah, blah, blah. Day of the Dead, blah, blah, blah. Let's do this.' Last year, I dared to bake this Day of the Dead bread, but I couldn't get it fluffy! It was almost as hard as a stone, but it tasted nice. The point here is that she helped me doing it. She helped me do the ofrenda. She cut the paper. Not the right paper, but she did it anyway. She helped me set everything up. This is part of her identity as well.

1:15:31.5 Mary: You want her to feel comfortable with her Mexican heritage?

1:15:35.3 Rodrigo: Yes.

1:15:36.8 Mary: I get that, totally.

1:15:38.3 Maggie: When you go to Mexico, you presumably speak Mexican again, do you? Spanish.

1:15:45.1 Rodrigo: Yes.

1:15:49.5 Maggie: Is it Lara?

1:15:50.5 Rodrigo: Lyra*.

1:15:51.9 Maggie: When you go with Lyra*, can she speak Spanish, yes?

1:15:56.1 Rodrigo: Yes.

1:15:58.6 Maggie: That's really nice.

1:15:59.8 Rodrigo: It's a bit of a broken Spanish, but she understands everything. Sometimes, when we have been there, people tell me, 'Hey, can you help me? I cannot understand your daughter.' I'm like, 'No, you are talking to her, not me.' 'Daddy, can you help?' 'No, talk to her, talk to him. Find a way. You two, find a way to talk. Don't get me involved.' Eventually, it just happens. My mum at the beginning, she was talking to Lyra* in English and I said, 'No, use Spanish because it's your language, because what you want to say, it's just going to come naturally to you, rather than you thinking in English for the sake of talking to Lyra*.' No, she will understand because I talk to her every day since she was born. Rachel speaks Spanish, so when Lyra* was born until we separated, we only spoke Spanish at home all the time. When we went out, it was Spanish, but then if there was someone who didn't speak Spanish, we just switched to English. Now, Rachel is with a guy from Venezuela, so the guy, obviously, he speaks Spanish, and I told Lyra*, 'Just speak Spanish with him. It's fine.' So yes, she understands. She understands everything.

1:17:49.7 Jess: It's amazing. She's going to be bilingual. That's an asset, isn't it? She'll be able to speak two of the most commonly spoken languages across the world! She'll be able to go anywhere!

1:18:03.2 Rodrigo: Yes, without the need for a school.

1:18:06.0 Jess: Rodrigo, I'm just aware of the time, because it's 25-past 12:00. You've shared so much with us; we really value that and thank you a lot. Has anyone got any final questions? Is there anything that you think, oh, I just wanted to...?

1:18:24.5 Mary: No, just an observation. My heritage isn't English, it's Irish, and I feel about my background how you want Lyra* to feel about hers. Even though you're from the other side of the world, I can identify an awful lot with the things you've said today, so thank you for that.

1:18:47.6 Maggie: It's been so interesting. Your story is really lovely, really very interesting.

1:18:54.0 Rodrigo: Thank you. I just wanted to share a photo. Her mum sent me these photos today because it's her birthday.

1:19:10.7 Jess: Oh, wow, look at her. She's all dressed up. Black hat, birthday cake.

1:19:16.7 Rodrigo: Nine.

1:19:17.5 Jess: Lots of balloons.

1:19:18.7 Maggie: She's lovely.

1:19:19.2 Jess: Heart-shaped sunglasses.

1:19:21.5 Maggie: How lovely.

1:19:22.8 Rodrigo: Let me see if there are more photos I can share.

1:19:27.6 Jess: One question I always ask everyone, and we've touched on it a little bit by talking about your daughter, but why do you think it's important that you share your story and your experiences with us through this project?

1:19:51.4 Rodrigo: People, probably, would not realise who their next-door neighbour is. I've been in the same house, the flat, for four years. I like talking to people. I used to talk to the neighbour next door, but she sadly passed away, and I found her really interesting. Her name was [?Stella], and she passed away during COVID. She was 85, I think. One day, I was there with Lyra* in the garden. She was there. It was a bright, sunny day. She said, 'Are you from a Latin country?' I'm like, 'Yes, I'm from Mexico. Why?' 'When I was a kid, I was taught Latin at school.' I was like, 'What? Latin, wow, it's incredible!'

1:21:13.4 Mary: So was I!

1:21:15.6 Rodrigo: I just thought, this is incredible. Like I said, I love talking to people, and especially old people, because everybody has a story, and she gave me the most amazing stories. She gave me some books. We just used to chat a lot. I'm just thinking, the upstairs neighbour, I have talked to her as well. She's also from Ireland. She lives with her son, who is the guy I went to the pub with, but them two never talked. They were like, 'Hey, hello. Hey, how are you? Hey, all right?' That's it. There used to be another - well, the upstairs flat above me, this has changed so many times. People, they have come and gone. I just talk to people. I talked to everybody who has been there, but they don't talk amongst themselves. I'm like, 'Well, we are neighbours. I've been here for four years. What if you need something? What if I need anything? What if I just want to talk to anybody?' I have found English people are more reserved. Nothing wrong, nothing against, but it is also good to just get to know your next-door neighbour. You may find a good friendship, or not, or you may find a good story, or not. I don't know, I just feel it's important to share this.

1:23:41.3 Mary: Maybe the world would be a more peaceful place if neighbours did speak to each other.

1:23:46.9 Rodrigo: Maybe. Well, yes. If you put it in a grand scale, then there wouldn't be any wars because next-door neighbours, countries, they wouldn't be at war one another. Again, I say it metaphorically speaking. This country is an island, so it's secluded from the rest of the world as an island. Like Japanese, they are, as well, really reserved, really just to themselves. Then again, they are an island. So it probably has to do with something like

that, as well. I don't know, but I just feel comfortable sharing. I am also glad to share my story, a brief glimpse of my story! I wanted to share this photo. My mum wanted to give Lyra* a birthday party when we were there, because we're never going to be in Mexico for her birthday because it's school days. So these are a couple of cousins.

1:25:00.0 Jess: In Mexico, having a party for Lyra*?

1:25:02.3 Rodrigo: Yes. They are her age.

1:25:06.6 Maggie: How lovely.

1:25:08.8 Rodrigo: Yes, that's my mum.

1:25:12.6 Jess: The things that you go to in order to maintain a sense of connection and normality, even though you live so far apart.

1:25:19.7 Rodrigo: This cousin made her the piñata. Actually, this guy is this guy.

1:25:28.5 Jess: Oh, he's so young there.

1:25:30.0 Rodrigo: Daniel.

1:25:30.7 Jess: Wow, he's grown.

1:25:32.2 Rodrigo: He's finished university and everything, and this is everybody who attended.

1:25:38.7 Jess: Wow.

1:25:39.5 Rodrigo: It's not everybody.

1:25:40.5 Jess: I love that just a normal gathering consists of about 30 or 40 people! 'It's just a normal Sunday at my grandmother's. There were 40 of us.'

[Laughter]

1:25:51.2 Rodrigo: Yes.

1:25:52.7 Jess: That's amazing. Thank you, Rodrigo. That was a really lovely message that you've put forward there, that we want to share in our project, and that is to ask questions, isn't it? Don't be afraid to ask questions and find out who your neighbour is.

1:26:08.6 Rodrigo: I wasn't.

1:26:13.2 Maggie: Your neighbours don't always respond with you, though.

1:26:17.2 Jess: No, not necessarily.

1:26:17.5 Maggie: When I moved to Honiton, I went round to all of my neighbours, and knocked at the door, and I said, 'Hello, I'm your new neighbour. My name's Maggie. I'm going to be here for a long time.' They all looked at me... I hope you've turned this off now.

1:26:33.5 Jess: No, it's still going!

1:26:35.1 Maggie: They all looked at me completely surprised, and 'Oh, oh.' I've kept that going because I thought, well, what the hell? What have I got to lose at my age?

1:26:45.5 Jess: Yes, what have you got to lose?

1:26:46.5 Maggie: What have I got to lose? I've kept it going, and now everybody is really friendly with me. Then I feel like I'm in Mexico because, after living there a few days, things would appear on my doorstep. Bags of apples, plants, all sorts of things.

1:27:02.9 Rodrigo: Nice.

1:27:03.0 Maggie: Just to welcome you.

1:27:03.2 Jess: You've instigated something there.

1:27:04.8 Maggie: Yes, and I thought, oh, my gosh, this is lovely people. Lots of people said to me, 'That is not the norm in Honiton!'

1:27:12.1 Mary: It's not.

1:27:13.4 Jess: Let's try and make it the norm!

1:27:15.1 Maggie: Let's try and make it the norm, yes, let's try and do it. So if anybody moved in near me, I would be the same. I do lots of things for my neighbours!

1:27:25.9 Jess: Also, the aim of this project is that we've all met new people and made new friends, haven't we?

1:27:30.1 Maggie: Yes, and we've heard interesting stories.

1:27:36.0 Jess: From each other.

1:27:37.0 Maggie: Different stories. One chap I interviewed was from Ireland. He was...

1:27:43.7 Jess: I'm going to turn this off because we'll end up transcribing it.

1:27:45.5 Maggie: Oh, yes, we don't want to put that in there.

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]

Telling Our Stories Finding Our Roots

DEVON'S MULTICULTURAL HISTORY
HONITON
