

Oral History Project	Achill Oral Histories
Oral Historian	Dr Angela Maye-Banbury
Interviewee	Martin 'Dennis Lavelle
Track no	1
Date and time	6th August 2023 13.13 hrs
Location of interview	Peter's home in Achill Sound
Running time	40 mins and 15 secs

1 **00: 001: 00 Introductions and welcome**

2 **Angela:** Okay, so my name is Angela Maye-Banbury, I'm an oral historian and we're up in Ashleam
3 School here on Sunday 6th August 2023 and the time is 13.13 hrs and I've got the great pleasure of
4 being with the Lavelle family and the Lavelle and Mallinder family who have just arrived in Achill
5 yesterday. So welcome home everyone. And maybe we'll talk about that and I'm just really - it's just a
6 real joy to have you all here. It's not often in oral history that we have an intergenerational perspective.
7 So I think that makes it really, really special. And just want to name check Malcolm as well for bringing
8 us all together and working his magic to bring us all together.

9 **Martin:** Cheers, Malcom.

10 **Angela:** So thank you all so much because I know you must have so much going on and so many people
11 to catch up with and you're very much in demand. So without further ado, let's just open up. Martin,
12 it's Martin Dennis isn't it? Can I call you Martin or Martin Dennis? What would you prefer?

13 **Martin:** In Ashleam, when I come to Achill, they always call me Martin Dennis but back home in
14 England, it's just Martin.

15 **Angela:** Martin. What would you prefer to be called?

16 Martin: It doesn't really concern me.

17 Angela: OK. So Martin, tell me about when your first memories of being in Achill when you were a boy.

18 **00: 001: 23 Martin describes his first day at Ashleam School**

19 Martin: Well, the first... I can't remember the actual first day at school here (in Ashleam). But I do our
20 teacher was Miss Heaney, the school teacher and Mr Flannery was our head teacher here in this
21 classroom. And on our way to school every morning, we had to bring our heating which was two sods
22 of turf and we put it in the shed at the back here, I want going to say coal shed but the turf shed. And
23 then the elder boys would come and make the fire in that classroom and the one here. And that was
24 it and we finished that, we finished school about, I think ,the lower class two o'clock.

25 Angela: And how old would you have been?

26 Martin: Four or four and a half.

27 **00: 002: 32 Life In Ashleam As A Boy**

28 Angela: And where you born in Ashleam?

29 Martin: I was born in Ashleam

30 Angela: So tell me a little bit about that. What was it like when you were there at home in Ashleam?

31 Martin: Very good. I could not complain. It was a place where young people grew up and it was a
32 fantastic place to live. We had...we didn't have a lot of money, our parents...my Dad was an immigrant
33 worker and come home and that was how we lived but we never went hungry. 'Cos my Grandad lived
34 over on the hill. You might have seen that house over on the hill there in Ashleam.

35 Angela: That was your Grandad's. I've always wondered who lived there. But that was your grandfather.

36 Martin: James Dever. And my grandmother was Julie Dever and she come from a marvellous family,
37 the Mastersons which Cooney is a part of the tribe. She was part of the Dans The big Masterson, I

38 don't know how many times he was married, his wife died and married again. Mc Gintys was the
39 names. My grandmother was a fantastic old lady. We never went hungry while she was on that hill
40 because she had loads of sheep, loads of cows. And every time I would spend my childhood over there
41 backwards and forwards. And every time we'd come back, she'd send us some eggs in the red
42 handkerchief, I'll never forget it.

43 Angela: Right. A red handkerchief? A handkerchief sort of thing.

44 Martin: Yeah, the neckerchief. We'd always come back and then when he would go back again.
45 Grandad was a great fisherman. He'd never come from fishing without having some fish and we were
46 sick in our youth days of eating fish.

47 Angela: (laughs) Where did he fish from in Achill?

48 Martin: He fished at the rocks and he had a boat. Him and another four people in Ashleam had a boat.
49 One was, we should call him, his name was Michael Ruddy and my grandfather's brother Pat Dever.
50 Now the nickname for this man was Clúdach" (sp) ⁱ

51 Angela: Clúdach"

52 Martin: Clúdach" (sp) because he had a walking stick or something. I don't know.

53 Angela: (laughs) Oh right.

54 **00:05:01 Fishing in Ashleam**

55 Martin: And there were four of them had this boat, it was the Grandad, Pat Dever, Mícheál O' Ruddy
56 and Mannis O' Donnell. They had this boat between them and they on the used to go fishing in the
57 spring and the summertime. And I was telling somebody yesterday about this. When they'd come back,
58 there were four men in this boat and they'd have quite a lot of fish between the four of them. And
59 they used to put this fish out, this... one of them used to do this, he was the main man Michael Ruddy
60 was the main man for distributing the fish. And he would gather some stones now. And what he would

61 do with these stones, I do not know. And he'd pick that stone and he'd throw that portion of fish. And
62 he'd say to my Grandad "Seamus, that's yours." And then he'd do it again and he'd say, "That's yours."
63 What he done with the stones, I don't know, whether they were big stones or little stones or what, I
64 don't know.

65 Angela: But he would give them out to people.

66 Martin: He'd give them out to these people and that was the fishing. Because we used to go to meet
67 the boat when they were coming in, a couple of young lads like us, to give them a hand to pull the boat
68 off the... off the ocean and bring it back to where it should be.

69 Angela: So was that here in Ashleam?

70 Martin: Yes, in Ashleam. In the bay. Yeah. Two boats there, the fishing boat. He used to make his own
71 nets, kill his own pig. Granny has loads of chickens. But that was my youth over on the hillside there.

72 **00: 006: 46 Martin Talks About What He Likes About Achill**

73 Angela: What did you like about Achill when you were growing up, Martin?

74 Martin: What did I like about it? Everything. I couldn't find a fault with it. Go swimming in the
75 summertime. We didn't have any hot running water like we have today. We had to boil the kettle to
76 have a decent wash, you know. And that was it.

77 Angela: So how old were you when you left Achill to make a new life?

78 **00: 007: 12 Martin leaves Achill and the Achill dance halls**

79 Martin: About fifteen. And then we kept coming back every wintertime and spending time at home. In
80 our youth days, we used to go to the dance hall in Mulligans, in Keel - that was the dance hall. And
81 there was another one at Bunacurry, another dance hall we used to go there.

82 Angela: Tell me about those because obviously those dance halls have gone now. Can you describe it
83 to me? What was it like when you were in there?

84 Martin: It was packed solid, these halls we used to go to in our youth and we used to cycle from here
85 to Suala to the dance.

86 Angela: Oh wow. That's quite a way. Very hilly.

87 Martin: Well, that was it. We used to always go in a gang, like, you know, all the boys would go together
88 and the girls would do the same thing. There was another dance hall in Dooega which is Mickey's pub
89 now. That was a dance hall there.

90 Angela: What was the music like?

91 Martin: The music was all traditional Irish music.

92 Angela: With a live band?

93 Martin: Oh, a live band, yes. Oh yeah. It was 'Around The House And Watch The Dresser.'

94 Angela: Ah, yes, I know. Yeah.

95 Martin: And when somebody got married they used to have the *cleamairi* boys.

96 Angela: Ah, the straw boys.

97 **00: 008: 38 The Strawboys and Weddings in Achill**

98 Martin: They called them the *cleamairi*.

99 Angela: Maybe Emma could get them for her wedding for when she gets married (laughs) if she could
100 persuade Malcolm to be a straw boy. I think Malcolm has been a straw boy. I'll have to ask him.

101 Martin: I made some straw hats for Raymond's (sp), didn't I?

102 James: Yeah.

103 Angela: Did you ever act as a straw boy? Were you a straw boy yourself?

104 Martin: No, I never was, no.

105 Angela: Will we maybe explain what the straw boys are. But you probably know what they are – for
106 everyone else.

107 Martin: These guys, they weren't invited into the wedding but they'd come to the door and somebody
108 said "Oh yes, come in" and they'd dance around with the bride and the groom or whatever and they'd
109 come outside they'd be dressed in white. I should have brought that picture of me and what you call
110 him, the Doogan girl.

111 Emma: At Siobhan's wedding, was it?

112 Martin: When Sean Mac Neill got married, my nephew, I'm jumping a couple of years now. I was going
113 to the toilet. And Josie's mum said "Where you going? We want to see you when you come back." So
114 I come back. She said, "Come in here." I went in. They dressed me up as a young boy. Put an old coat
115 on me. Old hat. All dressed up in this old. No-one recognised who I was. I went dancing with Bernadette
116 Duggan (sp). What's her married name? Bernadette?

117 Malcolm: Who - my name?

118 Martin: No!

119 Angela: (laughs).

120 Martin: Bernadette Duggan (sp).

121 Malcolm: What's her married name?

122 Martin: Yeah. You know Sean got married. I was there.

123 Malcolm: Yes. The old man.

124 Martin: And she was the old lady.

125 Malcolm: Oh, Bernadette.

126 Martin: You were there, weren't you?

127 Malcolm: Yes, I was dancing.

128 Angela: (laughs).

129 James: You were one of the straw boys.

130 Martin: It was your mum that got me involved with it.

131 Malcolm: Do you mean Bernadette Kinney? (sp).

132 Martin: Kinney. Ever such a nice girl. She'd always come and see me.

133 Angela: How else did you spend leisure time when you were younger in Achill?

134 **00: 011: 05 Leisure time in Achill as a boy: football.**

135 Martin: Leisure time? We used to have...we didn't have no toys like they have today – no iPads or
136 whatever. Nothing. There was nothing. We used to play football. Soccer – there was no Gaelic football
137 in our day. There was soccer. And we used to play down in Ashleam Bay on the top of the bay field
138 there.

139 Angela: You used to play down there, did you? -Where the car park is now, no?

140 Martin: Further down. On the green there. It was all levelled up. We used to play against Dooega and
141 if didn't end in a draw, we'd have a stone throwing match to see.

142 Marty: There was three teams in the village, weren't there? Malcom was telling me there was three.

143 Martin: There was two, just two. And they used to call one half of the village back as far as...let me see,
144 Biddy's stable., that was our meeting place. At Biddy's stable. The stable's gone now. Do you know
145 Juliette? Right behind her house there was a great stable there and that was where we used to meet
146 and play football and alley ball up against the gable. And we picked the team there and who was going
147 to play. There was...that part of the village back was Cul la bhaile and if you look at the house above
148 Kevin's house, my neighbour's house, up on the wall, 'Cul La Bhaile' – I don't know if you noticed it.

149 Angela: Chúl la bhaile I did. And now you've given me a bit of history on it and that makes it really
150 special.

151 Martin: And that's where it is. Chúl an Bhaile. And the girl that lived there, that was...she died and that
152 was one of the things she done. Now where did she come from? The back end of the village in other
153 words. And the other side was 'inis'. Now what it meant, I haven't got a clue. And that was from back
154 as far as Barrett's house(sp)? back here

155 **00: 013: 20 Martin moves to England aged 15**

156 Angela: And you left Achill when you were fifteen. Describe to me what happened when you went to
157 England. What part of England did you go to at first?

158 Martin: I started my apprenticeship as a mechanic in Huddersfield.

159 Angela: In Huddersfield? In West Yorkshire?

160 Martin: West Yorkshire. And I didn't like it – the hustle and the bustle of it, you know and getting dirty.
161 You know when you're young, you don't want this. I thought I can't put up with this. So they took me
162 off of there and they put me with a cousin of my Dad's – Tom Barrett (sp?) and he said "Well, I'll get
163 you a job with this excavator." To grease and look after this excavator. This driver taught me to operate
164 this machine and that's where I finished up. And then I worked same the same company for over thirty
165 years in Matlock.

166 **00: 014: 21How Martin met his wife Sylvia**

167 Angela: Tell me how you met Sylvia. Take us for a trip down memory lane. How did you first meet?

168 Sylvia: At "The Railway"(hotel).

169 Martin: We were in having a drink with my friends. This lady walked in. And I thought "Who's she?"
170 And this guy said "That's Sylvia." So he told me. I don't know how we got chatting – I can't remember.

171 Sylvia: And we went to the dances then.

172 **00: 014: 50 Bands and Dances in Matlock, England**

173 Martin: And we used to go to the dances. In Matlock Bath.

174 Sylvia: They used to have one at the Pavilion one week and another at the Drill Hall another week. And
175 another at Masson (Mill – Matlock Bath).

176 Angela: On the main stretch of Matlock where the road curves round? It's a lovely part of the world
177 there, isn't it?

178 Angela: So you met at the dances. And how similar or different were these to the ones in Achill?
179 Different culture, different way of being?

180 Martin: Entirely different.

181 Sylvia: They used to have bands, you know, come round. Not big bands but bands come around
182 Matlock.

183 **00:015:40 Martin and Sylvia get married in Dublin and go on honeymoon to Achill.**

184 Angela: So when did you get married? When did you pop the question, Martin?

185 Martin. My parents were getting on so they couldn't travel to anywhere. So we got married in Dublin.
186 In St Andrew's Church, in Dublin - Wesley Road. And we've been back a couple of times, haven't we,
187 to church. And we went back to the church when we were on holiday Sylvia and I. So we seen the
188 priest. I says we were so many years ago and we've come back to the scene of the crime (laughs). And
189 a couple of years after, Martin took us back. You were with us – and Ann – to this church.

190 Marty: Yeah. But when my mother came over for her wedding, she'll tell you. She didn't have an
191 address to go to. She didn't know this woman from Adam.

192 Sylvia: I came a week before we got married and I ordered my dress. And I got my dress. And I ordered
193 digs where we were all staying.

194 Angela: So you did it all at once. That's amazing. You organised your wedding in a week. My goodness.

195 So impressive. When did you first come to Achill, Sylvia?

196 Sylvia: When I got married.

197 Angela: When you got married. OK. So you got married in Dublin and then did you come here for a

198 honeymoon?

199 Martin: Yeah, we did, yes.

200 Angela: Oh, lovely. Tell me about that. Did you go to Ashleam?

201 Sylvia: We hired a car in Dublin, a Morris Minor.

202 Angela: Oh, lovely. I used to have a Morris Minor.

203 Sylvia: And we went to Galway, didn't we?

204 Sylvia: We went to Salt Hill in Galway. We stopped there a couple of nights in Salthill.

205 Angela: It's quite a drive, isn't it from Dublin in a Morris Minor?

206 Martin: Then we drove down to Achill. We were only here a few days.

207 Angela: What sort of a Morris Minor did you have? Did you have the one with the old-style indicators

208 that came out?

209 Martin: Yes.

210 Angela: Lovely. Ah. How long did you stay in Salt Hill for?

211 Martin: I think a couple of nights.

212 Angela: It's a lovely part of the world.

213 Martin: Beautiful.

214 **00:017:58 Sylvia's first impression of Achill**

215 Angela: What did you think of Achill, Sylvia when you first came here?

216 Sylvia: Well, I loved it really. But the toilets were outside. You had to go up the back of the yard, you
217 know, the back of the yard. We used to have a toilet years ago outside but it was in a building if you
218 know what I mean. Not like...

219 Marty: Tin hut.

220 Angela: And where were you born, Sylvia?

221 Sylvia: I was born in Two Dales. Darley Dale.

222 Angela: Oh, Darley Dale. Oh lovely. You were still in the Yorkshire...

223 Sylvia: I was born at my Grandma's ,actually.

224 Marty: Your dad, my grandad, didn't give you away, did he? He couldn't come to the wedding, could
225 he?

226 Martin: And my cousin, Paddy Lavelle was...My dad and mother went to...

227 Sylvia: A couple of aunties but that was all we had...your mother had broken her leg at the time.

228 Angela: So, right, OK – so you had to make alternative arrangements. How long have you been married
229 now?

230 Martin and Sylvia together: Sixty-four years (in unison).

231 Sylvia: Sixty five In September.

232 Angela: Congratulations. Wow, that is incredible.

233 Martin: We'd been together three years before we got married.

234 Angela: Right. And when were you born, Marty?

235 **00:019:20 Martin and Sylvia's sons Marty (Jnr) and Vincent**

236 Martin (jnr): '61. Vincent was born in '59.

237 Angela: Vincent isn't here. No, no. So tell me, did you come...oh, thanks very much, Malcolm (drinks
238 cup of tea).

239 Martin: Every summer, Sylvia would come to Achill with the kids when they were little. Stayed up all
240 summer and I'd come the last 2 weeks to bring them back home. I was working.

241 **00:019:51 Sylvie talks about Achill**

242 Angela: So what did you think of Achill, Sylvia, when you first came? You'd lived in the Derbyshire Dales
243 – in some ways not dissimilar, the rural setting.

244 Sylvia: Well, I liked it very much. And all the old ladies used to come down to the house and they used
245 to sit on a stool, a long stool under the window, you know, and they used to talk to me and different
246 things. There were two pouffes at the side of the fire. And I used to sit on one of them. And they used
247 to talk to me. And I used to sit on one of them. And I used to sit on one of them. And I used to sit on
248 one of them.

249 Martin: There was a lady who used to look after... Raymond McGinty's mum. Raymond's mum
250 was my cousin.

251 Angela: Oh really? OK.

252 Sylvia: And she used to come every morning and she used walk up with the cow to the field. And she
253 used to fetch me. So...

254 Angela: Did you like that? The gentility and the culture of that?

255 Sylvia: That's right. Yes.

256 Angela: And how old were you then?

257 Sylvia: I was 23 when I got married.

258 Angela: And you've been coming...Malcolm's told me you would get here as often as you could. You'd
259 be back and forth.

260 **00:021:08 What the Lavelle family do when they return to Achill**

261 Martin: We'd stay with Sean O' Neill, our nephew, in Ashleam.

262 Sylvia: That was your mum's house, wasn't it?

263 Angela: That was your mum's, right. And that was your grandfather's, the one across the way.

264 Martin: I'll say something for Sean's dad. He was a fantastic guy because he was married to my sister.

265 My sister died and that didn't matter. One, two, oats to Kevin. He said "If you ever want to come on a
266 holiday, this house is always ready for you."

267 Angela: That's really kind, isn't it?

268 Martin: Ever such a kind man.

269 Angela: You're always felt... you're obviously very deeply connected with Achill and Ashleam in
270 particular.

271 Martin: Oh yes.

272 Angela: How is it...both worlds? When you come back to Achill...

273 Martin: This is home when we're here. When we're going back, I say "We're going home."

274 Angela: So you can have different homes and be in different places.

275 **00:022:05 About Martin and Sylvia's grandchildren**

276 Martin: All our grandchildren...Sam is coming next week.

277 Angela: Lovely.

278 Martin: We've got another two grand...we've got great grandchildren. Harper is our other
279 granddaughter.

280 Marty: Great-granddaughter.

281 Angela: So how many children do you have?

282 Martin: We have four boys.

283 Angela: So Vincent, Marty, Paul and Sean. Sean's the youngest.

284 Angela: So Marty, what did you think of Achill when you first came here? How old were you?

285 **00:022:32 Marty talks about visiting Achill as a boy: cutting turf, tin baths; fire.**

286 Marty: Oh God, my recollections are...It was fantastic. We used to come here for summer holidays.
287 And I used to say, we're about to see many islands. Many merry Ireland. But it was completely different
288 to what my mates...they used to go to the seaside of England. And coming back here was different.
289 The village was full of other kids. It was great. And we'd be helping them. We'd be cutting turf and
290 milking cows and things like that. Even as a kid, I remember having baths in front of the fire. Tin baths
291 and the water being a different colour. And Granny was always boiling water over the fire. The fire was
292 always on...no matter the heat. It was always brown coming out of the tap. But she was always boiling
293 water. And a big kettle over the fire.

294 Angela: So the fire was on constantly to service the hot water. What did you think about this more
295 simple way of being? Did you like it?

296 Marty: It was just... never even thought about it. It was just that's the way it was and that's the way it
297 is. I never give it a second thought about going to the toilet outside and things like that. The potty and
298 all that. And we used to be in the same room as Granny and Grandad. They'd be in one bed and we'd
299 be in the lower bed. And when they used to tuck us in at night, you couldn't move because of blankets

300 were that heavy and hard. And my Granny used to have her hair in that bun. And I remember watching
301 her one night. She put her hair down and I couldn't believe how long her hair was.

302 Angela: She had it tied up a bit like how Emma's hair has hers now.

303 Marty: It was really long. Right down her back. And she was combing it and I couldn't believe
304 that her hair was like that.

305 Angela: How old would you have been then?

306 Marty: Oh God, I was only ten...maybe seven or eight.

307 **00:024:41 Sylvie brings the children to Achill for the first time**

308 Angela: And how old were you when you came to Achill when you were able to bring the children?

309 Sylvia: Vincent was only three months when he came.

310 Martin: We bought a pram from England.

311 Marty: You have got cine cam things, haven't you, from when we were kids.

312 Angela: Oh have you? How about you James? What was your first memory of coming here to Achill?

313 **00:025:01 James talk about his memories of Achill**

314 James: I can remember Grandad killing the chickens over there. Cut there heads off. I thought that
315 was fascinating. You just get food on a plate when you're home. Here you kill it, cook it.

316 Angela: Things here were very self sufficient in a way, weren't they? People had the pigs and chickens
317 and the vegetables. There wasn't any Sweeneys as there is now. There was no Supervalue or any
318 other...

319 **00:025:25 Martin talks about shops: Dooega Co-Op**

320 Martin: The only store that was in Achill well in Upper Achill anyhow was the co-op in Dooega. There
321 was a co-op. And that's where my mother used to do her shopping. Now everybody was in the same
322 boat. They gave you a book from the co-op and everything you bought was put in this cup and it was
323 priced. Then if you didn't have the money to pay for that, that doesn't matter. You could come and pay.
324 And they used to get the flour from there to bake the bread. The stone batch of flour. And mother
325 used to bake bread every day.

326 Angela: People were very supportive of everyone else and working together.

327 Martin: The neighbours were fantastic people. Now Raymond's granny was such a lovely woman. Sivy
328 (phonetic).

329 Angela: This is Raymond McGinty's granny.

330 Martin: Sivy (phonetic). Raymond McGinty's granny. A lovely woman. No matter how naughty we
331 were, I never heard her us scold us or complain about our bad behaviour. Never. And later years, when
332 we were coming to Dooega, she'd make bread, Sivy, and she put it under her white apron and bring
333 it in and leave it on the table. She was a lovely woman.

334 Angela: So gestures like that are very lovely.

335 Sylvia: I used to love the soda bread.

336 Angela: Oh soda bread, yeah.

337 Sylvia: Granny used to make it.

338 Angela: Beautiful taste, isn't it?

339 **00:027:05 Martin talks about baking bread**

340 Martin: She used to make lovely bread, Granny on the hill. Everything I tasted though was different to
341 my mother's somehow. I don't know why.

342 Angela: Are you able to take any of those sort of tastes back to England? I mean, it's maybe not quite
343 the same if it's not in the environment that you're experiencing.

344 Martin: I used to make boxty. I tried making that a couple of times back in England.

345 Marty: You used to make it quite a bit.

346 Martin: And potato cakes, we brought that with us as well.

347 **00:027:30 Martin's granddaughter Emma talks about Achill**

348 Angela: I'm just going to bring in Emma here because I know that little Francis is talking, because I can
349 hear him say "Achill, Achill" (laughs). It's just my imagination maybe. So Emma, when did you first come
350 to Achill?

351 Emma: Young.

352 Angela: You were a baby.

353 Marty: It was important to me that they came and they'd come back here. They got to know Ashleam
354 and Achill like I did. I wanted them to come back and have the feel for it.

355 Angela: Isn't it great you've passed that on throughout the generations? It's a very special thing.

356 Marty: That was important to me.

357 Martin: Our family here were very supportive. Nephews and...David used to have a quad bike and we
358 got pictures of Emma on the quad bike and she wasn't that much bigger than Francie.

359 Angela: Right (laughs). So your family would create a pathway for you all to be able to come back here.
360 Was it very different do you think? Are you in Matlock as well, Emma?

361 Emma: It was different but again, I never thought that it was different because we'd just always come
362 since I was a kid so I loved it. Just the beaches and Dooega.

363 **00:028:59 Todd, Emma's fiance, talks about his first impression of Achill.**

364 Angela: Dooega is beautiful. And how about Todd? So Todd, when did you first come to Achill?

365 Todd: I met Emma in 2017 and I thi8nk I came the year after. She was always on about how it was a
366 second home to her and obviously all the family mentioning about how it's their home. So I mean I
367 was looking forward to coming and since I've been here I've been four times now.

368 Angela: Yeah. Yeah. Were you born in Matlock as well?

369 Todd: I was born in Chesterfield.

370 Angela: Right OK. Outside Sheffield just there.

371 Todd: Not too far. I suppose it's just embracing different people's culture to a certain extent. Yeah. It's
372 similar to Matlock but I suppose it has a different environment around it in terms of the people and
373 the way in which people communicate and everything I suppose. But yeah.

374 Emma: It's a lot more peaceful.

375 Angela: Malcom has joined us now as part of the group because people playing back this recording
376 and they want to know what's been going on there. So I know you've got little Francis as well who's
377 nine months is he? How old is he?

378 Todd: Eight months. Near enough nine months.

379 **00:030:22 Martin's vision of the Achill of the future.**

380 Angela: So he'll be coming back often as well. So what would you like to see as the Achill of the future
381 do you think? Is there anything that you'd like to see?

382 Martin: I'd like it to stay as it is. Exactly as it is. I wouldn't like to see any more changes. I'm going to tell
383 you something now. Malcolm's granny was a shopkeeper. You know this, don't you? She used to sell
384 paraffin oil, you know, when they had the lamps. And Malcolm's mother and my mother are first
385 cousins.

386 Angela: Is that right? Oh, there you go. I knew you were related.

387 Malcolm: My grandmother.

388 Martin: Your grandmother – yes – were first cousins. And when the oil was scarce, she always made
389 sure that Kitty had some oil for the lamp. Somebody would have to say “We haven’t got any.” And I’d
390 go back and come away with this liquid for the lamp. They were very close. I use to go to Mass on a
391 Sunday, walk from over there, across the carriag across Dereens to Church. And on a Sunday, I’d go
392 with them sometimes. Granny and Grandad – way back and I’d be with her. And on the way back, she’s
393 visit all her friends – all the Masterons in carraig That was one Sunday. The next Sunday, we’d go to
394 Bleanaskill, up to Johnny’s up the hill, you know up there - that was Aunt Kitty. Bridget Masterson that
395 was another one of her relations and after that, we’d come back to Joe’s – walk over the river road.

396 Angela: This was all in one day.

397 Martin: All in the one day – a whole day.

398 Martin: And we’d then walk back and Grandad would be there waiting for us. She never spoke in any
399 English. All in Irish. And he wanted to go fishing but he couldn’t go till she come. All in Gaelic. But he
400 wanted to go fishing because she wasn’t home.

401 Angela: House to house.

402 Martin. House to house and a cup of tea.

403 Angela: It’s not so common place now, is it, Malcolm? We try and keep things like that going.

404 Malcolm. Things have changed now. Everybody is on phones and stuff.. It’s communication. It’s sad
405 really.

406 Martin: Your door was never shut. I can’t remember a time...the only time your door was shut was at
407 night or if it was pouring rain or something. The door was always open.

408 Angela: So it’s a real shame we don’t have that connection with people like we had then.

409 Marty: I remember the Kilcoine girls coming back to give Granny milk. Milk. Warm milk. We'd never
410 had...milk was always warm. I'd come to the door and they'd be there with warm milk. Why would you
411 have warm milk.

412 Vincent: I used to love that.

413 Angela: Sylvie was saying it was straight from the cow?

414 Martin: It was neighbourly. If our cows had milk, we'd give milk to people down the road down to Scully
415 we used to call it. Mc Namaras.

416 Angela: It is John Pat Mc Namara?

417 Martn: No a different Mc Namara.

418 Angela: Dermot Mc Ginty from Bleanaskill dropped down some fish to us that his son Jamie had caught.
419 He had a surplus and he was out there two or three weeks ago. And he just landed round at 11 o' clock
420 at night and we were heading to bed. And there was Dermot and Frances. Just so nice. Beautiful fish
421 too. We cooked it up the next day. With some lemon

422 Sylvia: I loved the way they used to make the butter. Pats of butter.

423 Martin: I've seen them make patched quilts in our house. And my mother gave us one – it was a really
424 heavy thing this was. It was made out of old coats.

425 Angela: Right. A patchwork quilt.

426 Martin: And we'd seen the women who use to come in in the winter time and they used to do this.
427 And they'd come in and put a few patches on and then go and do their own thing.

428 Angela: it was a great way for the women to stay in touch with one another too.

429 Martin: And the spinning wheels as well. And they use to spin all their own wool. And I seen Raymond's
430 grandad had something where he used to hang the wool before they took it to the place to make the
431 blankets.

432 **00:035:35 Vincent talks about his memories of Achill**

433 Vincent: I used to love coming here because I use to get really bad hay fever when I was in England.
434 But when I came back here, it never affected me.

435 Angela: Oh, really? The sea air is different. There's not the pollen or pollution.

436 Vincent: Yeah. Yeah. I could go hay cutting in the fields. Because when I smelt cut grass back in England,
437 It was terrible.

438 **00:036:06 Martin talks about his father smoking fish**

439 Martin: Well, Father used to have all this fish in the summer and he used to smoke it for the winter.
440 He'd put it up the chimney, you know, the smoke goes up, the turf goes up the chimney.

441 Angela: How did he do it? Did he used to wrap it up in paper?

442 Martin: I don't know but we'd be sick of this damn fish. We'd have enough of it in the summer but to
443 have it in the winter.

444 Angela: (Laughs). So you're hear for nine days. Or is it eight?

445 Martin: Ten.

446 Angela: Ten days. What are your plans for the next week or so? Are you just planning to take it easy?

447 Martin: No plans.

448 Angela: Yeah. The best plan of all.

449 Martin: There's a marvellous community here in the villages here - with this festival at Patten's.

450 Angela: Oh, the Kildownet Festival? Malcolm has been very much involved with that.

451 Martin: We went to the Achill Beag one.

452 **00:037:09 Angela thanks the Lavelle family.**

453 Angela: Oh yes. Well, I wish you all just a brilliant time here. It's just amazing to meet you all. Go raigh
454 mile maith agat. I'll be up here with a couple of our volunteers on Wednesday. So if you want to come
455 back in. Malcolm has just been amazing in helping me to get this project going and I commend him
456 really, really highly for that.

457 Martin: It's nice it is being recorded.

458 Angela: It is. And that you all so much for giving your consent to out this into the archive. Thank you
459 all so much.
