

Transcript of interview with Thomas (Tom) Warde**Interviewer:** Mary Cunningham**Date:** 31 October, 2019**Location:** Thomas Warde's home in Kylebrack, Co Galway**Length of Interview:** 42 minutes

The following items were copied and submitted by Thomas for the Tuam Mother and Baby Home Archive at the Hardiman Library. NUI Galway.

DOCUMENTS**1: Birth Certificate - Thomas Warde****2: Birth and Baptismal Certificate - Thomas Warde****3: Death Certificate of Thomas Warde's mother - Maureen Flaherty Hogan (née Warde)****4: Remembrance card for Thomas Warde's mother****5: Letter from Adoption and Tracing Service****6: Death Certificate of Thomas Flaherty - husband of Maureen Flaherty Hogan****7: Marriage Certificate of Thomas Warde and Anne Flood****8: Information from Tuam files re. Tom Warde supplied by TUSLA in 2018****9, 9a, 9b: Foster parent contract and details re. foster home****10, 10a -10e: Correspondence re. proposal that Thomas Warde be employed as an apprentice mechanic in a garage in Woodford, Co. Galway.****11: Message from Joe Duffy - presenter of Liveline (RTÉ Radio Programme)****12: Tuam Herald article on proposal to close the Tuam Home. (date unknown)**

PHOTOGRAPHS**1: Maureen Flaherty Hogan - Thomas's mother****2: Thomas and Anne Warde on their wedding day****3: Thomas and Anne Warde****4: Thomas's daughters: Carmel, Breda, Ann-Marie****5: Thomas's wife Anne with their sons Thomas and Patrick****Transcript of Oral History Interview:****Key:****MC – Mary Cunningham****TW – Tom Warde**

MC: It's the 31st of October 2019. I'm Mary Cunningham and I'm with Thomas Warde. We are doing an interview which is part of the Tuam Mother and Baby Home Oral History Project run by NUI Galway. We're in Tom's house in Kylebrack, Loughrea, County Galway.

Now, Tom, you are a survivor of the Home [in Tuam]. I'm wondering if you could start to tell your story, if you have any memories of it or the circumstances of your birth.

TW: Well I have no memories of the birth. I was kept in the home for five years and two months. I was fostered to a family, the Hayes family, in Loughatorick, Woodford. Moyglass would be the address that time but we always called it Woodford. **See items #9a, 9b listed above.**

I have no memories of the Home because we were never let out. I never seen out of that room, wherever it was. Maybe there was a lot of children in that room.

So I arrived to Hayes's in 1947 at that age [five years two months]. It was a new world when I arrived there. I remember leaving the Tuam Home in a green van. Now, anyone I was talking to that left it, left in a green van. When I arrived to the family - I don't even know where they picked me up or where the green van left me - I went running after turkeys and hens, because I had never seen anything like that. I was terrified of dogs. They had to retrain me all around again as if I was a child of twelve months old or that. I had to be learned everything. We remained there until 1954. I went to school in Loughatorick, a one-teacher school. It was pathetic. We were left down at the back. There was a couple of us fostered in the area, and we were left down at the back of the school, and we were never taught anything. Now when I look back on it, we were only taken out for the money

really that was out of it, and to be slaves to do that work around. Now, I fared out a little bit better, more than my friends that was in it there.

In 1954 we left there and we went to Woodford to live. It was a new world to me altogether. The thing about living in either Woodford or Loughatorick was, the Relieving Officer - he used to be called that time, he's called the Community Welfare Officer now - he got the money from the council to pay those people to look after us. I have documentation there about that. **See item 9 listed above.**

He'd tell them - I don't know if it was weekly or monthly they drew the money - but he'd tell them that someone was coming to visit on such a day, and things would be ready, you know in order for this person to come. There would be no questions asked. They'd look at the room and whatever and off they'd go again. They never interviewed the young lads or anything.

MC: Sorry can I just ask you what were they called. I didn't catch what you said.

TW: They were called Relieving Officers.

MC: Relieving Officers. Okay.

TW: They're Community Welfare Officers now. I don't know who the man was at that time. So, they got the money, they were told when there'd be an inspection. But no-one ever came on spec to see how this thing was working out. When I got to Woodford the school master realised that I had got a problem. And he was very vexed over it because he said I was lost. I'm not able to read or write, as such. He brought up the people that was minding me to the school and said did they notice any _____(??). They didn't bother, like. We were only there – really - for the money that was out of it.

MC: What age were you when you came to Woodford?

TW: I was twelve years of age.

MC: And was it the foster family moved? Was that the reason?

TW: It was. They had one daughter and she wasn't well at the time. She had asthma. There was a new secondary school built in Woodford in them years. They wanted to have her near the secondary school; she wouldn't be cycling the six miles into Woodford in the rain and the wet. That was how we got out of there, and that was my lucky day, because I had seen something in Woodford, I had seen nothing up in the mountains. It was out in the wild mountains we were, like. Anyway the school-master there was nothing they could do with me then. Anyway, the things I used to be doing in the school it wasn't a lot - but he used to have me doing mechanical work on lawnmowers and things like that. He wanted to put me in as a mechanic. He thought I was very good with my hands. But, to buy a bicycle - the council would buy a bicycle to send you to the Tech in Portumna. But, it

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would be carpentry work and they wouldn't buy the bike for me to do mechanical work. So I remained where I was. I worked away, I was pretty good, like, in Woodford. I wasn't treated as bad as the others.

The one thing that used to lean on me was, when I'd be brought from Loughatorick, maybe once in a blue moon, to town, people would ask who is the little lad. Once they would hear he was from the Tuam Home, they all looked the other side. You know we weren't classed in at all as what we should be. Them sort of things hurt me. You'd have young lads saying you have no mother and father. All these things got to me. As I grew older I realised that there was a mother and father anyway.

So I went in search of them. I spent years at it but I finally got through. Only for a priest in Loughrea - he's now dead, he only died last year, Father Bernard - I'd never have found her. We were working there. We were working beside the graveyard and we were digging up bodies. They reckoned they were buried there in the famine times, down by the walks in Loughrea. He came out one evening talking to me. He asked me where I was from. I said I was from Woodford, but that I originally came from the Home in Tuam and that I was looking for my mother, and I had gone into the council so many times. 'Oh Tom, I know who baptised you', he said. So he wrote to him, and he wrote back that he wanted to see me. As far as I can think he was Father Donoghue and he was a P.P. in Dunmore. So I went to see him. He opened the door. 'God' he said, 'you made a fine man since I baptised you'. So he wrote a letter for the council. I went in again and she said, 'I told you we can't give any information'. I gave her the letter and she put up her hand and took down the book and she got my mother's name - from Boodaune [Bodane?], Tuam.

Tom asked that the recording be paused

MC: Right Tom, we stopped there for a minute. Just to get back to when you found out who your mother was. What age were you when you met the priest in Loughrea who pointed you in the direction of the priest who baptised you?

TW: Around twenty. Father Jennings was the priest in Kilbannon. He was a curate there. He was a very wicked [cross] man, but he made the arrangements for me to meet my mother. I met her in the Imperial Hotel in Tuam. I met her on a Sunday. It was very good, she accepted me there and then that I was her son. She brought me out home to meet her husband and some of the family.

MC: Immediately?

TW: Yes, immediately. So, I met them. I had six sisters and four brothers in the family. They were after me now. Everything went well. But as time goes on, they begin to slip away from me. But I always kept in with my mother. Then her husband died, and she remarried a man from Roscrea by

the name of Christy Hogan. They lived happy enough and they used to call here to see me. We kept the love affair up. But the only one thing, I found very hard to say mother. Even though I knew she was my mother, I don't know what it was. I did call her mother, at the same time, but I always found it very hard. Would I call her Maureen instead of mother. I suppose because I was reared in the other house as well and I suppose I used to call her mother **See Photo #1 listed above**

Anyway, things worked on and the next thing I got married. My mother stood for Carmel. We were great [friendly] then for all them many years until she died. **See item #4 listed above.** I got to know my grandmother as well in the height of the whole thing. I understand that my grandfather would have brought me home and reared me, but my grandmother wouldn't. When I met my grandmother she was all about me. (*laughs*) This is what does happen, I suppose.

I got married then and I have five children of my own. I'm very happy with them. You know, I got on with life. There was ups and downs and all those things. It was tough, it was hard going. I will never forget this mother and baby thing. It was always on my mind that I'd see it through. I hope and pray that we will dig up those young bodies in the Home, and re-bury them in the graveyard where they should be. That's my final thing on it. I won't be happy until they do it anyway.

So, that's really my story. I had it better than most. I won't say about other people, how they were treated and one thing and another, but they were treated very bad. They were treated by their own generation, by what you would call Irish people. If it was the English who done it to us it wouldn't have been so bad, but our own people treated us very bad. We were treated just the same as if we weren't there at all. We weren't brought out. I fared out maybe good enough, but we weren't brought everywhere either like, you know. We were kept in the dark. If you mentioned had I a mother - 'Oh no, forget about that sort of stuff'. They never wanted you to trace it up or anything like that.

MC: And your foster family, there was no kind of mother father relationship really was there?

TW: No, it wasn't there I suppose, but yet they were good to me, in ways, besides other people. Some people ate in sheds, they slept in sheds, they weren't let into the house at all. There were some cruel things done. I have another thing to say about all that. All those of us, when we came to a certain age, the money stopped. Then we were in no man's land. We remained in those places as slaves working, no education, no nothing. **See item #10e listed above.**

I don't know how to address that now and I won't try, but it was cruel. The people who got out to places like Woodford, like I did, have seen a lot more of the—you know when you're out in the mountains you don't see nothing.

MC: You were saying that there were a good few people from the Home in that Loughatorick area.

TW: I suppose there would have been twenty or thirty. It was the done thing, and the only reason it was done was for the money.

MC: And this is all in the Woodford area. Just generally, up the mountains.

TW: Yes, up the mountains, is right. So, that was how life was. These children then, when they came to a certain age, and maybe some of them were very bright, there is no doubt at all about that. I have something wrong, something wrong with my brain I suppose, I don't know what it is, but I just can't recollect everything so fast. Any of them that were very bright were sent in as priests' housekeepers, sent in to the convents, sent in to the county homes and sent in to the hospitals. All those young ones and young lads, that's what happened them. A lot of the young lads was trained as carpenters. The girls were trained how to bake and one thing and another. They were sent in then and we can all nearly say what happened. We don't want to put it into that many words, but when they went in to the priests and doctors and whatnot - You know, it all started at home - I want to make this very clear to everybody - all this started at home. The priest came along to assist the woman of the house when her daughter went wrong, and he says, 'I'll look after it'. Then that's when these mothers were shoved into these Magdalene Laundries, and the Baby Homes in Roscrea, Tuam and wherever else. They were treated badly, very badly.

MC: Did you mother ever speak to you about the Home?

TW: No, she never spoke a word about it. I'd say she carried it all her life and said nothing about it. She never gave me anything - damn all information. But I worked it all out, slowly but surely. Anywhere I did go looking for information, and stated my case, I got on good. All these girls, you know, even that they worked in the hospital, they were treated wrongly. That's my feeling about it and I'll stand over that too. I have a woman now at the moment that was reared in the same house as mine, she's eighty-eight I think, she's in a nursing home in Galway. She never—she was a good cook and everything alright, they were trained for that—but she was never what you would say upper class, she always remained sort of that way, backward. And a lot of them were the same. That's really the story. We were treated very, very badly. I haven't a clue of what happened in the Home. I never seen out, that I'm sure of.

MC: There's no record of you having been in school in Tuam?

TW: That's the one thing I'm fighting with them. Is there any medical record, anywhere? There's no medical records here in that thing (*points to a file of documents*), it's only all about - You see, there's nothing from the day I was born to the day I left the Home. There's nothing from there to the day when I went out as a man to work for myself. It was all about- get the money, keep you there and send you to school and whatever. And then get you a bike and go then to the Tech. That's all that was. But, there's no medical records and my theory about all this is, while it was bad in

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Tuam, it was bad where we were fostered too, because the priest, the doctor, the guards, the schoolteacher knew everything that was going on and they swept it all under the carpet. I have a feeling that if you had a disease no one knew anything about it anyway. No one ever stood up and said, 'There's something wrong with this young lad, we must get something done with him'. That's my feeling about it. I have learned in the last two months that I was to go back to the Tuam Home again. Now I was never told that by the foster parents, but their daughter told me about two months ago. 'Do you know', she said, 'that you were to be sent back to the Tuam Mother and Baby Home. There was something wrong with you, but she wouldn't let you go'. That was one good thing she done anyway, Lord have mercy on her. She kept you in spite of them. Now what was wrong with me is not noted anywhere and no one ever told me that. So, that's the size of the story. I think that's all I can say.

Recording was paused as Tom's daughter Breda came into the room

MC: We had another interruption there, but no worries. Just to get back to where you were saying about your opportunity to go and work in a garage, that you weren't able to go into Portumna because it was carpentry that was offered.

TW: Yes. You'd get a bike to go to learn carpentry.

MC: And the council would give you the bike? Is that what you were saying?

TW: Yes. They'd buy you a bike to go. That's how there was so many carpenters out of these homes. That's how they were carpenters. They got the bike and they cycled into the Tech and learned how to be carpenters. But, I didn't like timber work anyway, and I liked messing with machinery. He wanted me to go as a mechanic. The only people who could take me at the time was Harts'. They had a garage in Woodford and they wanted one hundred and fifty pounds for to train me. I don't know if that was for the full term or was it for a year.

MC: Yeah, I see a letter about it there. I think it says two years or something. **See item #10b listed above**

TW: But they weren't forthcoming with that money, the council, that's where that went down. So I was just left to the ways of the world then. Doing odd jobs around Woodford when I was young lad.

MC: And did you stay living with your foster parents?

TW: I did. I left them when I came to nineteen, and I came to Kylebrack. I'm sixty years nearly in Kylebrack. I never left Kylebrack either. I worked on machinery. I worked in the mines. I drove the machinery and I fixed the machinery. I worked in Galway Metal and I drove machinery there. So, I was always stone mad for machinery.

MC: So it was Tynagh mines you worked in, was it?

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TW: I worked my way along. I worked in the sewerage and different jobs and I got an opportunity of getting a job in the mines and I took it. Thirty-eight years I worked. That was a long stint.

MC: Well the Tynagh mines was great boost for the area, I suppose, in terms of employment.

TW: It was at the time. I've a fairly good head to think of things. I was in the union in the mines as well. We done good work in it too. What happened in the mines at that time, I still have it in my head.

MC: In what way?

TW: In the meetings that we had about certain things, I should have it there. I've a file up there about it. I signed it—that thing is still running is it? *(Tom points to the recorder)*

MC: It is. It doesn't matter. If you need to take out anything later, you can.

TW: No, no. I've said what I've said. I always do that in any interview, I don't go back.

MC: Moving to Kylebrack. Did you move here because you met your wife?

TW: Yes. I stayed here for a couple of years before we got married. The priests were at me over that too. *(laughs)*. I did, I married and we had a small house here. We wanted to do it up after she dying. An engineer came out and said it wasn't fit for doing up. It was a Land Commission house anyway. He said you would be better off to build a new one. I said, 'If the young lad builds a new one, if the rooms aren't big enough, you might as well stay at home'. So, he designed this. Now, I'd sooner a bungalow, but it's a two-story. I'm living downstairs, there's an ensuite there and there is another ensuite overhead. I'm quite happy with it. I'm not able to do much work now. I always do a bit. I play a bit of music too, or used to. I was at the music for years.

MC: What do you play?

TW: I play drums and I sing a bit as well. I don't play drums at all now. I gave up the time my wife got sick. I gave up work, I gave up the music and I minded her here for four years. Of course I played a bit of music, the young lads would mind her, but when I'd come back, the young lads were sacked and I had to take over. **See photo #5 listed above**

MC: Did you play with a band?

TW: I did.

MC: Who were they?

TW: Pat McMahon - Pat McMahon was my best friend - Ned Coleman down the road, Raymond Muldoon, Willie O'Loughlin and myself, five of us, and I'm the only survivor. My best friend died very young. We had twenty-five years at it, not so bad.

MC: Very good. So you were travelling around to different -

TW: Clare mostly.

I had my thing there and I can't find it, but that's something about the DNA. I think it is anyway. *(Tom shows a document relating to a DNA test)*. It's in another piece of a letter—the eighty-five per cent.

MC: But that's in relation to the other investigation you did that you don't really want recorded, do you?

TW: No, because it was one of the _____ *(name redacted)* did it with me.

MC: That's fine. Listen Tom, I think you've covered most of the stuff.

TW: I did. I could talk about other people, but that's not what I do, I just talk about myself. I did fare out better than a lot of them, I might as well be honest. It wasn't what you'd call home, but they looked after me and they reared me. That, I will bring to the grave with me. I look after their daughter up here, her husband died last year. She married a man from Scotland. I do visit them and I used to look after them. Her brother now is in hospital, and I bring him in and out to hospital and things like that. I never let them down. I was always very grateful to them to have reared me and bring me to where I was. I brought myself, I suppose, a long way, but even so -

MC: They've both passed away.

TW: They've all passed away.

MC: And the daughter from the house is still in contact with you?

TW: She is, she's living up in Woodford.

MC: I know you don't want to talk about other people from the Home who were in your area, but did ye have any contact with each other?

TW: Not really, no. We were never let to - in them times - even though you were living in an area and you're meeting, and you'd go dancing, you wouldn't be - do you know, some of them weren't able to go dancing, they were that backward. The slang that was in it that time when we went to a dance, when we were able to go to a dance - 'Don't dance with that lady, she had a child'. Oh, yeah, that was very well drummed into us. But there was a lot of those poor people, I don't want to say this too loud, they weren't able to go anyway. We brought back a girl there a while ago, we spent a nice while looking for her but we found her anyway and what did she say when we brought her -, now she's a _____ (??) woman, she's fairly old - 'My mother and father's house is down'. She reckoned they were her mother and father. She hadn't learned anything.

MC: She had what?

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TW: She hadn't learned anything from her experience, she slept in the shed and she ate in the shed or out in the back kitchen. She never ate with the family. She was a slave, terrible slave. Aah stop, some awful things happened. But, I wouldn't know, that's of no concern to me - I'm only just saying -

MC: I know you are just talking about your own story. Right, well you have done a lot of research yourself.

TW: Yeah, I done all the research. I got a good bit of help now.

MC: I suppose the network that has started in recent years is helpful for people.

TW: Yes, we are terribly involved in that at the moment. This is a part of the Network. We met TUSLA (*Tom shows a photo of some of the members of the survivors Network taken on a day when they were given access to records stored by TUSLA*) That's the photo. Some of the TUSLA people are in that, I'd say.

MC: Is that a day ye had in Merlin Park recently to see records?

TW: Yes

MC: Is that when you got those records that you were showing me?

TW: No, I got them before that.

MC: 2018, you got them.

TW: I went in one time to them and she asked me was I a solicitor. 'No', I said, 'why?' 'Well', she said, 'you're asking very awkward questions'. 'Well, that's what I'm here for', I said. I can do that. I can debate with a person.

That's us on our own, I think. (*Tom is referring to the photo of the Network members*).

MC: Well Breeda is there.

TW: You know Breeda fairly well, do you?

MC: Yeah. I've met her several times.

TW: I think I've a brother living around the Athenry, Craughwell area. I'm not in touch with him at the moment. He wasn't too nice to me at one stage.

(*Tom goes back to looking at the photo and points to a number of individuals*) He's a guard, he's a very good man—he's involved, but he's not from the Mother and Baby Home. He wasn't from the Home either. Her mother, I think was [in the Home], she's from Headford. That's P.J. and I don't know who that is back there. That's me. That's Carmel - (*Tom can't remember Carmel's surname and points to another person*). She's from Limerick. That's Pat - he's from Abbeyknockmoy. This

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woman is from Dublin. That's her husband there I'd say. *(Tom points to another person)* I don't know where he's from.

MC: That's Michael, I think.

TW: Oh, this lady, I don't know where she comes from. She's a very old lady. They're nice -

MC: It's nice to have the support of the group.

TW: Carmel Naughton is this lady. She's from Tuam. She has a daughter, she's dead, you don't want to meet her. That was the letter from TUSLA that -

MC: That was in relation to you coming in to see the books. That was in May this year. Did you find anything new that day?

TW: No, the thing that I wanted is not in it.

MC: Which is?

TW: The medical reports. Or was there no doctor? That piece you read earlier today, they never mentioned a doctor. She went into labour, they never mentioned a doctor or a nurse, sure there had to be someone around. **See item#8 listed above.** That wasn't an official document and they don't mention it on the one you wanted to copy. There is nothing in that file about doctors.

MC: Not that I saw.

TW: From the time I left there, from the time I was born there's nothing, for the four years or five years I was there. Then there's no medical report from -I never went back for a medical, to a doctor to see how I was getting on or anything like that. All those things - or a school medical, I never came across one.

MC: Was there not any medical people calling to the school at that stage?

TW: There was of course, but I never remember them doing anything with me anyway. Maybe that was the bit that was wrong with my head, that I could never recollect all those things. But they definitely said there was something wrong somewhere.

Now, that's my father's wife and the young lad. *(Tom shows a photo)*

MC: Now, you don't want this recorded. So we'll finish the interview.

TW: That's my aunt in England, she's only two years older than me, she's dead. And that's him then with his wife and some of the -

Recording was paused for the interviewer to clarify if Tom wanted information he had on his biological father recorded. He had previously asked that it not be recorded as his statements might be subject to a legal challenge.

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MC: I think you have covered as much as you want today Tom and I know you have other information that you don't want to put on record at the moment.

TW: No, no.

MC: So, thank you very much for giving me your time.

TW: If I'm any help at all to you.

MC: No, it's good to have this information for future generations to see and, I suppose, know what the experiences of people who were born in the Home were, and how their lives turned out.

TW: Some of the lives turned out very bad. Some of them got on very well, there's no point saying they didn't, but, by God, some of them did earn it. A man would go to Tynagh for a loaf, and when he'd get back, she'd send him up the field and she'd take the small loaf and she'd leave a stale one back in its place. That was rough. The rats taking the cheese out of the caravan. They weren't allowed into the house at all, at all.

MC: So, you are aware of a good few people who were like that.

TW: Well, there was a few of them.

One thing I'd love is to be able to read and write. I'd write a book if I was able. But, that's how it is. You get picked on, I don't know why, when I went for Confirmation, the bishop had died in Clonfert - he was Bishop Duignan, he died in nineteen thirty-five, I followed that up the other day. Now we have a new one and he's Bishop Duignan as well. A bishop from Tuam confirmed us, but the day that the monsignor came out to the school to examine us, and of course we were terrified that if we didn't pass it we would be put back another two or three years. We passed anyway, but, on his way out, he said to the teacher, 'Do you see that little lad there? I want a birth cert for him and a baptismal cert for him before he can get confirmation'. Why did he pick me out? He knew well, I suppose, there was three or four of us -

MC: There was a few of you in the school, you said.

TW: At times, there was. He picked me out from the group that was going for Confirmation. She had to go down to Tuam to get my baptismal cert, and go into Galway to get my birth cert.

MC: Your foster mother did that?

TW: No the teacher did it. Sure, they had no car, and at that time there was no way of travelling much. I hope she's in heaven, the same teacher, she was terrible nice. But, that's how it is.

MC: This is the teacher in Loughatorick?

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TW: Loughatorick was a very backward spot, and the first teacher that was in it was a Miss Griffin. She wanted them to bring me down, and it was only to bring me down a quarter of a mile, and she'd teach me the piano. And no, they didn't.

MC: Your foster parents?

TW: These little things that they could have done, that they didn't do. I don't know why, what was the reason, I don't know. She must have seen something in me in the music line -

MC: She must have known you were able to sing -

TW: She saw something anyway.

MC: But you weren't given that chance.

TW: That's something you'll never see. *(Tom hands over a booklet)*

MC: What's this now? This is a ration book.

TW: I just had in the file

MC: Oh, this is following the war. Nineteen fifty-one?

TW: I brought them home from school, the last of them, the last that ever came out, I brought it home from school.

MC: Okay. I've never seen one but I've heard of it all right.

TW: You got so much on the ration book.

MC: You did. Okay, we'll finish up this. I'd say you could talk all day.

TW: I'm sure I could. I wouldn't like to put all I'd want to say on record. As far as I'm concerned, this is it, but if you wanted to put the other bits into it, it could be very libellous.

MC: Yes, that's fine.

TW: Even in my time around, I never mentioned anyone really. We all knew who was here and there. Now, a girl I know very well, she was here at a birthday party the other day, and she wouldn't acknowledge this at all. She doesn't even want to hear about it. She's an old woman now. There's some of them like that.

MC: She is a survivor of the Home, you are saying.

TW: She is.

MC: She won't talk about it.

TW: I don't think she has a pick of paper about it.

MC: Well, I suppose people deal with things in different ways.

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TW: They do. I'm quite open about it. I'd walk into an office and I'd say I'm not able to read or write. There's no point in someone handing you out forms, and saying fill them up, when you're not able. Everyone is on an even run then. There's a lot of people who'd take them and stick them in their pocket and not let on at all. What I feel sorry about, I used to be playing cards, and there was a lot of young people who weren't able to write down their name and I felt very very sorry. I'm able to write down my name, and I'm able to read a little, but then, it gets banged up on me - big words, definitely out - I can read a death notice, I got used to it, you can know what's in it nearly anyway. I'm not able to work the phone, isn't that the sad part of it, or the television. The television goes wrong; computer stuff goes out of my head all together.

MC: A lot of people find that difficult.

You were saying there about Joe Duffy, I see you have a card from him there. **See item #11 listed above** What prompted you to ring Liveline, what was the discussion?

TW: A girl was on Liveline the day before, I can't recollect the story, but I was very hurt anyway. I don't know did they say she was wrong or what, but, I said I'm going to take this on, and I rang Joe, and that's how that started. He was very interested in it; he gave me twenty minutes, which was a long time. I got twenty-five minutes from Marian Finucane. I even had a priest here listening to that. He'd never heard of the like before, he didn't even believe that the likes could happen. I have his photo there, he died a young man and he was a school-teacher. *(Tom goes to get a photo of the priest)*

MC: When were you on the radio? Was it last year?

TW: Not last year, it's two years ago, I'd say. *(Tom shows the framed photo)*

MC: This is the priest.

TW: Yeah. Father Abe Kennedy, he was a teacher in Portumna - from Fethard in Tipperary. A lovely man. It was the only time we got a good priest and he had to die on us.

MC: Oh, he was a priest here, local, the parish priest?

TW: He was.

That's how life was, but we survived. I meet the neighbours, and I go out at night, and one thing and another. And this house - never locked - open twenty-four hours a day.

MC: *(laughs)* You'd better be careful, people might look at this and come visiting. Okay, we'll finish with the tape. Thanks very much Tom.