

Project: 'Queer Lives: Barriers from cradle to elderly care - An Oral History'

Respondent: Chris Preece

Year of Birth: 1953

Age: 71

Connection to project:

Date of Interview: 16 June 2024

Interviewer: Dr Sylvia Morgan

Recording Agreement: Yes

Information & Consent: Yes

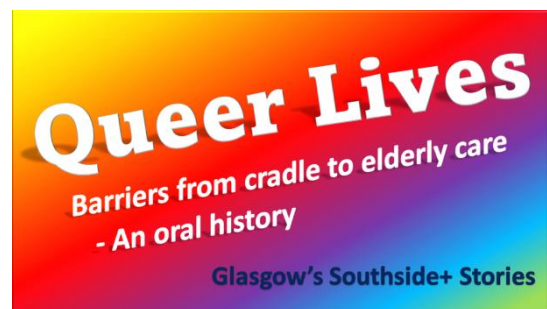
Photographic Images: Yes (Number of: 2)

Length of Interview: 1 hr 8 mins

Location of Interview: Forres, Scotland

Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics)

Glasgow's Southside+ Stories



Time (from: mins/secs)	Description	Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs)
0.18 -01.06	Chris doesn't identify as queer or in fact 'as anything'. She grew up with a gay brother who was beaten up for being queer. She would use the term lesbian or dyke, and 'There is no such thing as a 'preferred pronoun' ...'I am what you perceive me as'.	0.50-01.06
03.37-05.59	Legal barriers have changed more for gay men than women. Lesbians were never criminalised 'but the social pressures were huge.' For teachers 'there are advantages to remaining in the closet I guess, even now in 2024'.	05.-05.20
06.08-07.31	'At the moment there is a conflict within the gay community', although Stonewall is highly influential on many aspects of government policy and 'On the face of it everyone is happy to wave the rainbow flag'.	06.08-07.31
07.31-8.56	The change Chris would like to see in the future for LGBT legislation is 'a separate recognition of homosexual people' with a clear establishment of sex-based rights, and 'more support for young people to become the gay people they are', rather than social pressures to change sex. She believes the Cass Report (10.4.24) will contribute positively to the debate.	07.31- 8.56
09.40-10.16	Lesbians have not always been represented or positively portrayed in mainstream culture, and role models have been declining, but Chris cites as the first lesbian TV dating game show 'I Kissed a Girl' (05.24) as a positive influence.	
10.27 -11.25	Chris only came out as a lesbian in the workplace when she was in her 30s when working for the radical Leeds City Council where some staff were already out so it felt like a safe environment.	
12.11 -12.50	Barriers in the workplace have changed as many workplaces support Pride and inclusivity. Although it would be good if senior managers could come out more to act as role models.	
13.16 -13.30	There is still homophobia and 'you have to be a brave person to stand out if there is no other person in your environment who says they are gay or lesbian.'	13.16-13.30
15.70-17.30	Growing up as a lesbian was difficult because in the 1960s and 70s 'there were no positive lesbian role models'. ... 'I had a very negative view of being a lesbian, I hated the word. I knew I was different but tried to pretend I wasn't...it was a horrible way to grow up - to despise yourself'.	15.70-17.30
19.00 - 19.54	Chris does not believe there is an 'LGBT Community' with a coherent group identity. She has been a long time LGBT activist, organising LGBT groups, but 'it is clear now it is not a cohesive message and there is a massive divide' (between LGB and T).	19.00-19.54

20.13 – 22.45	There are widely different perspectives among lesbians regarding gender identity and legislation. She regards it as a class issue with middle class women being in a 'bubble of safety' whereas working class women may be placed in a more vulnerable position.	
23.00 – 24.00	Chris enjoys following the current public debates around gender identity, including a group called 'Sex Matters' who emphasise the necessity of a clear definition of sex in order to define 'homosexuality' - a term that Stonewall now regards as old fashioned: 'that for me is negating gays'.	
24.32 – 24.40	'It is mainly women who are speaking up against the gender ideology'. 'It is a misogynistic movement to shut women up, which is how women have always been dealt with in the past. Look what happened to the Suffragettes....once again it is men who are telling women to shut up.'	24.32-24.40
30.00-34.00	There has been a diminishing of lesbian social venues over the last two decades.	
34.00-39.00	Chris regularly attends lesbian and women's festivals eg: Skala Eressos Women's Festival on Isle of Lesbos where she lived for many years; Muma Moonshine Queer music festival in Cumbria; L-Fest for lesbians which ended in 2023; Unity Camping fests around the UK.	
42.00-44.00	There is a dearth of information regarding LGBT elder care.	
45.00-48.07	Regarding elder care issues in general, Chris describes a positive project is the Community Caring Circle, a volunteer group based at the Findhorn Foundation Park, who provide free courses on elder care and information on death and dying, and recruit volunteers to assist people in need of care.	
48.52-49.45	Question: 'can you think of any legislation that has provided more rights for lesbians' – Chris response: 'Not one!' Possibly the Equality Act 2010 was an improvement. But she adds, 'I am the author of my own life'	48.52-49.45
50.05 -53.47	Barriers to equality for lesbians in the UK: 'Particularly for butch women.. there is nothing in society that says it's okay to be a butch woman, that's really difficult'; 'the porn industry where lesbianism is perceived as a turn on for guys'; and 'rape culture'. She suggests it may be an easier role for butch women in our culture to believe they are men. In cultural representations 'the traditional butch woman is always the wicked character'.	50.05-53.47
54.50 -55.23	"There are whole swathes of the population who are not supportive of LGBT equality, but actually misogyny is the biggest fear for me, that's the biggest thing against lesbians. Because we identify as strong women, we don't require men, we are doing our own thing, that is a real threat.'	54.50-55.23
56.57-59.17	Positive portrayals of lesbians/gays in arts, media/social media: 'Maggie Hambling ...but unfortunately all the strong lesbians are coming out as they/them now so it's really difficult to point to somebody. Sam Smith is a bloody joke, and Eurovision Song Contest joke, and Ru Paul ...I hated drag before it was fashionable to hate drag....this is taking the piss out of women innit...it's a fantasy and distraction from the real issues.'	56.57-59.17
01.00.46-01.01.01	'There is no famous lesbian now, it used to be KD Lang, Indigo Girls...'	01.00.46-01.01.01
01.01.10 -01.03.50	Chris regards social media as positive and enjoys following the debates: 'love it, there you get more truth. I do a lot of You Tube, Twitter, and there's really, really cool outspoken people on that...Clive Simpson, Noel Cavanagh....And Posy Parker that everybody hates, I think she's great! She's setting up a women's party...That woman has gone every week to the Speakers' Corner ... and she holds up the microphone and any woman can come to speak....and she is surrounded by men screaming with rattles and shouting with megaphones to try and shut her up, and she is so brave, I admire that bravery.'	01.01.10 -01.03.50
	Interviewer thanks the respondent very much for her contribution to the project.	

