

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

Respondent: Jane Foster

Year of Birth: 1979

Age:

Connection to project: Local Knowledge

Date of Interview: 04/07/2024

Interviewer: Dr Sue Morrison

Recording Agreement: Yes/ No

Information & Consent: Yes/ No

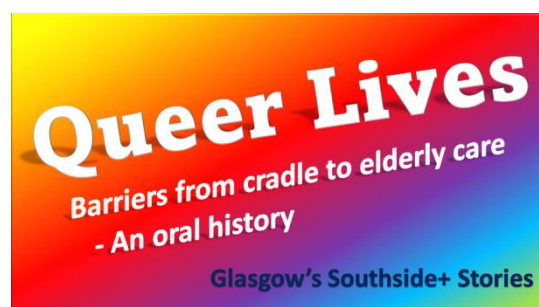
Photographic Images: Yes/ No (Number of:)

Length of Interview: 42.07

Location of Interview: Portmahomack

Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics)

Glasgow's Southside+ Stories



Time (from: mins/secs)	Description	Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs)
00.37	Where were you born?	
	Inverness	00.39
00.40	Where did you grow up?	
	Kilbarchan down in the central belt and I now live in Portmahomack.	00.41-00.48
00.50	When did you move to Portmahomack	
	2012	00.52
00.54-01.08	We're using the term Queer in this project in an attempt to be as inclusive as possible, is that your preferred designation or would you prefer something else?	
	I don't really think about it too much but gay probably I would normally say.	01.09-01.16
01.20	Do you have any preferred pronouns you'd like me to use?	
	No.	01.21
01.22	Would you mind telling me if you've come out as gay?	
	Yes I have.	01.26
01.29	When was that then?	
	About 2012(ish), about then, probably to everyone then but before that some folk knew.	01.35-01.49
01.50	When did you first suspect that you might not be straight?	
	Probably from a very young age actually, like a child I would've said but obviously I didn't understand really then, because even in my lifetime, it's changed so dramatically people's perceptions and whatever, it was not like nowadays. I think kids are more aware and have a better conversation or whatever about it. So yeah, a very young age I definitely knew. I would question things for example I had a friend and I wanted to marry her and my Mum went 'you can't marry girls' and I went 'that's ludicrous why can't you marry girls?' and she went you just don't do that and I was like 'if I want to, I will', and I was like how can you even think like that and I always remember that going forward. My Mum doesn't think like that at all now.	01.58-03.09
03.10	How old were you at the time?	
	I don't actually remember the exact age, but I'd say roughly 10 maybe.	03.12

03.16	<i>Did you have anybody you could speak to you about your feelings back then?</i>	
	Probably I could've spoken to my Mum and Dad because they were quite open and I would go to my Dad with a lot of things and I could speak to friends as well, but I don't feel it was as comfortable a time to be thinking that way. So yes and no if that makes sense, I didn't speak then like I can now	03.22-03.57
03.58	<i>What was your friends reaction?-</i>	
	Friends that I grew up with I would say they were more shocked some of them, but other ones like friends from college or whatever, they weren't.	04.06-04.20
04.21	<i>Do you think it was an age thing?</i>	
	I don't know, because actually what I did find,, the older generations, like my grans' generation were more like, yeah, whatever. I would say it was my peers, I know that sounds ludicrous but my kind of age group that reacted more like I thought the older ones would have reacted to it.	04.27-05.25
05.26	<i>Were any of your friends gay?</i>	
	Yeah, but not from school	05.27
05.40	<i>When did you come out to your peers?</i>	
	Probably not till the first time I went to college, so it would be the late '90s, I would've been about 18 or 19..	05.48-06.01
06.04	<i>What was their reaction?</i>	
	I was doing silver-smithing, I suppose it's quite an arty course, and most folk were quite open-minded, nobody really reacted.	06.07-06.24
06.25	<i>What age did you come out to family?</i>	
	Not till about 2012(ish)	06.26
06.27	<i>Why was that?</i>	
	I don't know, I actually don't know.	06.15
07.01	<i>What was their reaction?</i>	
	If anything, relieved, that I'd spoke to them about it and both of them said, if you've any problems come to us, don't feel that you're alone. They were good about it. It was a relief for me speaking about it.	07.02-07.54
07.55	<i>Do you remember the day that you told them?</i>	
	Yes, I was Inverness, so I phoned and it was my Mum that I told first because my Dad wasn't in. It was a bit nerve wracking. I don't remember if I planned it or it was a spur of the moment thing. Knowing me, I probably planned it.	07.56-08.30
08.38	<i>Do you have brothers or sisters and how did they take it?</i>	
	One of my sisters doesn't hold back with what she says and thinks, so she was asking lots of questions, but she was fine, everything's fine now.	08.43-09.26
09.27	<i>Did you have any relationships when you were a teenager?</i>	
	Yes, a couple and I did have relationships with guys too. I actually moved up from Kilbarchan to Inverness with a guy. He was a Pharmacist and he got a job up there, so I moved up with him, about 7 years I was with him.	09.33-10.09
10.10	<i>Were you unsure about your sexuality at that time?</i>	
	Well I suppose I was. I wasn't sure if I was gay or not. I would've maybe said I was Bi then. I don't think I am now.	10.15-10.33
10.35	<i>Did you come out to your partner at that time?</i>	
	He always knew that I was Bi because that's what I thought then. That wasn't the cause of the break-up.	10.40-10.55

11.02-11.15	<i>Just going back you weren't out at that point at school, did you feel that your sexuality or confusion at that time held you back in any way at school?</i>	
	I don't think so. I felt shy and quiet at school but people that knew me didn't think I was. So I don't think it did.	11.16-11.41
11.42	<i>Did your feelings at that time influence your career path?</i>	
	I don't know actually.	11.47
12.07-	<i>Can you tell me about your choice of silver-smithing?</i>	
	At school I was always in the art department and I did craft and design and all that kind of stuff at school, that was what interested me. I also liked chemistry. So it was bringing them all together. The head of the art department he had a daughter a bit older than me and I'd went to him, he was very easy to talk to, so I talked to him because I wasn't sure about what direction I would take and I didn't have the qualifications to get into art school, although I'd have loved it at that time. So it was him that said what about this my daughter's doing this at a college in Glasgow. So that's how it first started. I went and did the course and then got an apprenticeship afterwards at Hodgkinson in Glasgow and then I did end up going to art school once I moved up here. I lived in Inverness and went through to Grays in Aberdeen. So I eventually got to art school.	12.17-13.57
13.58	<i>After college what did you do next?</i>	
	I did 3 years at Murray college doing a degree and then I did the last year at Grays and that's where I met Emma. In 2006 I graduated. I was working one day a week in Tesco. I ended up working in Tesco a wee bit more but then I started my own business as a Jeweller, so I've got my own business and I'm still working in Tesco as well as running my own jewellery business.	14.00-15.08
15.10	<i>Did being gay affect your work path in any way?</i>	
	No I don't think it did. If anything Tesco are very good and I've never had any problems in the workplace with them at all.	15.17-15.36
15.39	<i>How did you go about setting up your own business?</i>	
	I can't remember how this came about but Hazel, a jeweller in Inverness had been looking for somebody to rent a space in her workshop and unbeknown to me I actually knew her but I didn't realise and it turned out she was two years above me at college and anyway I ended up renting a space from her and helping her in her shop as well and made my own jewellery and that's when I started my own business.	15.40-16.56
16.57	<i>Where did you progress from there?</i>	
	Here, I have my own workshop in a little hut we built at the side for that.	17.00-17.11
17.12	<i>Has it been successful?</i>	
	In the last year it's been a bit more difficult but I do a lot of craft fayres and I've got jewellery in the shop down there and jewellery in the store house. Eventually I'll do more and I'd like to do more art again but there's only so much time in a day at the moment.	17.13-17.31
17.33-17.49	<i>When you first realised that you were gay or Bi-sexual you weren't quite sure, what were your pastimes at that time? Were there any clubs or anything that you could go to?</i>	
	I was in the Guides having went right through it and ended up being a Leader. I was in a choir. I was in gymnastics at one point. I liked swimming. I did a lot of cycling, and we used to go a lot of camping as well. This is all when I was young.	17.50-18.39
18.40	<i>As you got older were there any kind of gay clubs that you could go to?</i>	
	There was in Glasgow yeah, we'd go to a few but I can't remember the names of them	18.43-18.50

18.51	<i>Since you've moved up here are there any venues you could go to?</i>	
	There was when I lived in Inverness and I had a lot of friends and we'd go but they weren't necessarily just for gays, but some of them if you were gay in Inverness, you just knew the ones to go to. I can't remember for the life of me any of the names of them.	19.05-19.50
19.51	<i>Going back to you meeting Emma, how did that come about?</i>	
	We met, not as a couple in 2006 when I went to Grays to do my Honours and she was in my class and that's how we met. We were both doing sculpture.	19.55-20.26
20.27	<i>Did you know at that time that you were both gay?</i>	
	No, Emma had a partner and so did I at that point. So no we never knew, we were just friends.	20.28-20.41
20.42	<i>When did you get together?</i>	
	About 2012. We were friends though. She lived in Aberdeen so we were in touch after I moved back to Inverness and she moved further up but we were still friends.	20.43-21.00
21.01	<i>When did you decide to move to Portmahomack?</i>	
	About that year actually because she'd got here and I was coming up a lot and I got offered a transfer to Tesco in Tain and I thought just the money driving back and forward was astronomical, even the time if you had early starts or whatever, so it made sense to move.	21.02-21.35
21.36	<i>How easy was it to find a property here?</i>	
	It was good in that Emma's parents owned this	21.40-21.45
21.46	<i>What was the village like when you moved here?</i>	
	It's a lovely village. Emma's got a lot of family in the village as well. Her Mum and Dad didn't live here then but they met here when they were young. She was brought up in Brechin but her Aunt and Uncle and Granny stayed here.	21.47-22.27
22.28	<i>Can you describe the village to me?</i>	
	It's a very community-minded village, it's a friendly village. When I first moved here as well there were holiday lets as well so I had a cleaning job as well along with everything else, on a Saturday doing changeover and things just for a bit of extra money. There's a golf club, there's the pub, there's a wee shop which is a post office as well and I used to work there at one time and there's the discovery centre which is like a museum.	22.29-23.30
23.31	<i>So how were you received by the community?</i>	
	Generally very good and I can't think of anybody that was kind of negative towards us or anything, generally everybody was and still is very nice.	23.35-23.56
23.57	<i>So you and Emma got married. Can you tell me about that?</i>	
	It was 2015, we had been living here a couple of years or so. We were married by a celebrant. We'd set off to have a civil partnership and then the law changed and we could actually get married. I think we were one of the first. We were in the process of completing our paperwork when we found out that we could get married, and this was great. Our wedding was held in a marquee in our back garden, family and everybody there. It started off as a very small wedding, it didn't end that way, it was really good. So we got married in the back garden then went down to the Carnegie Hall, the village hall, and that was where we had like a buffet style meal and we had a hog roast and we had a lot of photographs down there and photographs on the beach, it was unbelievable. Emma's sister's husband, he oversaw the whole thing so we didn't have to worry about things and he did a play list as well, there was music to suit everybody, so that was brilliant. Emma's	24.00-29.29

	cousin's wife made the cake, we got massive things of cheese from the Cromarty Cheese Company and the funniest thing that happened as well was both my Dad and Emma's Dad, and this is not a lie this is the full truth, both danced the soles off their shoes. Then after the village hall a lot of people came back to our house. Folk had come from quite far to come to our wedding and the next day we had a big barbeque in the back garden and finished off a lot more of the food. We'd bought wine and other drinks, but at night we had a bar set up but we still had loads of wine left. The next day we were going on our mini honeymoon to Loch Ness House Hotel for the first , got there about 3.00pm, pulled the curtains shut and fell fast asleep we were that knackered, but we did wake up for dinner, thank goodness. It was a good wedding.	
29.41	<i>After the wedding, did you feel any different the pair of you?</i>	
	I don't know, felt skint that's for sure. I don't know if we felt any different towards each other or anything.	29.46-30.00
30.01	<i>So later that year you went on a big honeymoon?</i>	
	We went to Portugal on a surfing holiday. We went to Ericeira, it was brilliant. Tiring, but good fun.	30.08-30.34
30..35	<i>At what stage did you decide or not decide about having a baby?</i>	
	We had kind of always spoke about it. I was going to be the birth mother originally but I had a lot of Fibroid and things that I had to get operated on beforehand. So they did that, I started having tests, and just about when everything was starting with me, Covid shut everything down so we had to stop. Then we had a talk realistically about my age and Emma's age because we didn't know how long that would go on for, so they spoke to us and said look it's up to you both, because I would only have one go because of the timing of it but then the decision was made that actually it made sense for Emma to be the birth mother and start the process, because it's a long time, the paperwork, the tests, everything. Once things started up Emma could start getting tests, do paperwork, have counselling, but in a way it was good because you could do a lot of it on-line, whereas with me I had to go to the hospital for everything, so then Emma went through the whole process and we went to Aberdeen and they said we're good to go but they're locking us down again, but then it opened up again and now we've got Maisie.	30.44-33.45
33.53	<i>When you decided to start the process how did you go about that?</i>	
	I had been in at the hospital to do with my fibroids and just asked, because they were trying to figure out what operation to do and they asked if I would ever have kids and I said, actually yes, and it started from there. Emma just went through the G.P.	33.53-34.24
34;25	<i>Did you find the NHS quite supportive?</i>	
	Yes, yes, very. I can't think of anybody that wasn't. Probably because of Covid there was a few issues, but generally the NHS were amazing. I didn't feel discriminated against at all.	34.32-34.57
35,00	<i>Where was Maisie born?</i>	
	Raigmore Hospital Inverness. She's just over 14 months old now.	35.08-35.13
35.22	<i>You've now got your child, how are you getting on as a family?</i>	
	Good, it's been good. Some things have been challenging. We had an old dog, we'd had her for a while and she died suddenly which was hard. We weren't going to get another dog for about a year until Emma found these wee pups from near where she was brought up. I said no, and now we have the dog. Maisie and the dog are lovely together.	35.233-6.42
36.43-36.50	<i>As your child gets older, starts nursery then school, do you have any concerns about you being a gay couple?</i>	

	Yes and no. I think she might come across people that might have opinions on it however in the village she's got various kids of her age and they will be going to school together. Emma's cousin is related so I would like to think that will be quite good for her in that respect and she will have a few folk to back her up, if you know what I mean but it might be when she goes to high school, I don't know. I think it's a bit different now because a lot of kids are more open about things like that and there are more people about that have kids that are gay, so potentially there could be but I'm not going to over-think it at the moment unless it comes up.	36.53-37.56
37.57	<i>How do you think you'll react if one day your child comes to you and says I'm also gay?</i>	
	I'll support her and talk about it, yeah.	38.10
38.18	<i>Do you envisage any potential issues concerning yourselves being gay going forward?</i>	
	I'd like to think not, but I'm not naive. There might be people who'll say to her, but I'd like to think we'll bring her up as best we can so she can cope with that. I think we'll be able to stand up for ourselves in a non confrontational way. I'll cross that bridge when I come to it.	38.27-39.20
39.21=39.33	<i>You're both you and probably haven't thought about this at all, but has it crossed your mind what will happen to you get older and either of you need residential care?</i>	
	Not thought about it yet, no. I probably should, but I haven't yet.	39.34-39.42
39.44-39.47	<i>Would either of you be averse to going into a residential home that is mostly for straight people, would that concern you?</i>	
	No, not at all	39.48
39.52-40.00	<i>How would you feel if an LGBT+ only residential home was set up, would you go there?</i>	
	I probably would to be honest, because it would be people with the same outlook on things	40.02-40.18
40.20-40.35	<i>I'm delighted most of your experiences have been positive, can you recall any negative experiences due to being gay?</i>	
	Nothing to my face, but sometimes you hear things that some people have said to other people, and nothing bad, you know the kind of flippant comments you hear about whatever and to be honest, it just makes you think, oh, I'll remember that but some of these folk will be lovely to your face but that would happen whether you were gay or not. Sometimes people are just the way they are, that's their problem, not mine.	40.35-41.19
41.20	<i>What's your favourite memory to date?</i>	
	The wedding, the wedding was amazing.	41.24
41.45	<i>That's all my questions Jane, is there anything that I've missed that you'd like to put on record?</i>	
	I don't think so, I can't think of anything else, no.	41.50
42.05	<i>Thank you very much for sharing your memories with me</i>	
	<i>Thank you</i>	42.06
