


Project: 'Queer Lives: Barriers from cradle to elderly care - An Oral History' Respondent: Tamsin Cairns Edwards Year of Birth: 2003 Age: Connection to project: Date of Interview: 05.08.2024 Interviewer: Rachel Kelly Recording Agreement: Yes Information & Consent: Yes Photographic Images: Yes (Number of: 1) Length of Interview: 55.13 Location of Interview: Marie Trust, Glasgow Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics)		Glasgow's Southside+ Stories 
Time (from: mins/secs)	Description	Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs)
00.42	<i>Where were you born?</i>	
	"In Stirling"	00.43
00.44	<i>Where were you brought up and where do you live now?</i>	
	"In Dunblane and I now live in Edinburgh."	00.45
00.50-1.05	<i>We use the term queer in an attempt to be as inclusive as possible but appreciate that not everybody would use that term to describe themselves/aspect of themselves. Is there a term you would use to describe yourself throughout the interview?</i>	
	"Queer to be honest. That's fine with me."	1.06
1.09	<i>Is there any pronouns you would like me to use?</i>	
	"She / her"	1.14
1.15	<i>Would you mind telling me if you've come out as queer?</i>	
	<p>"In January of 2021 was when I came out as bi-sexual. That was a weird time I think because it was just after Covid. And I'd just recently discovered myself and then going back into normality was weird after feeling all these emotions. But about two years ago I finally found myself and I realise that bi-sexual doesn't really fit me because I do like boys and girls but it was more than just that. It was more about the connection I had with someone else and I don't really care about what they identify as so I now go by pan-sexual. So I'm out as pan-sexual.</p> <p>A lot of my friends know, a few of my family members know. But it's a bit difficult because I grew up in a religious household especially coming out to my mum because she was brought up Roman Catholic and we went to church on Sundays and after school on Fridays I always had to go to Church. So it was a very big confusing thing and when I did come out, it felt very rushed because I basically wrote in my diary I think I like girls but I don't know what this feeling is and I ended up leaving my diary at home, going out with my friend, and then coming out to her. And then coming back and seeing that my Mum cleaned my room and I was like oh gosh she'd found it and my life's going to be over and it was really stressful. Then I get a message from that friend I was hanging about with who was the first person I came out to saying, oh was I not supposed to tell anyone? So she told her whole family, her sister, her brother and her parents who were close with my parents. I was going to come out already but now I had this pressure to do it now and it felt really really rushed. And I remember just like really breaking down in front of my mum because my dad was at work and it was difficult because what if she disowns me, you know with the religion and that. But my Mum is one of my biggest fans. She's very supportive and once my dad came back home I told him and he was like, oh I knew, I knew, I've seen the way you are. Then I slowly came out to a few other people. I haven't told many of my family members just because they still go to church and they're very traditional so it can be hard after hanging out with them that I can't fully be myself.</p>	1.22-05.10

	<p>But I'm sure one day I'll come out to them and they'll be fine, but for now it's something I keep close to myself and my friends, but it's fine. My Mum and Dad are my biggest fans.</p> <p>Some people were accepting. Some people weren't.</p>	
06.30=08.52	<p>Respondent said that during covid she changed high schools because she was bullied a lot and with having autism and dyslexia her needs weren't being met, the essential tools she required for reading were being taken from her which culminated in her struggling with examinations because she couldn't read the paperwork. Everyone at the new high school was really nice and it was a fresh start for her. The respondent decided to use snap chat to talk about her emotions. Some comments were alright some were not. Her closest friend Mia has always been very supportive.</p>	
09.03	<p><i>Would you say that people in general understand the term pan-sexual</i></p>	
	<p>"I wouldn't say so. Everyone knows what gay is, what lesbian is, what bi-sexual is. I feel like more people are asking what's pan-sexual and give me a dirty face when they ask and I'm just like, look, I just fall in love with someone with the way they are. I don't care if you're a boy or a girl. If you're non binary. I don't care if I've connected with you in a different way from others, then I'm going to fall in love with you. When I came out to my younger brother I had to explain it and he was like what does that even mean. He gets it now but I think a lot of people don't understand the difference from pan-sexual and bi-sexual. Yes there are similarities but they are not exactly the same."</p>	09.07-10.09
10.09	<p><i>In terms of your school experience what advice would you give someone going through school who has similar feelings that you had?</i></p>	
	<p>"I would definitely say don't be afraid to be yourself because high school in general has so much stuff happening, not only outside but in your body as well you've got all these changes happening. You've kind of got to change your path immediately so I think you kind of forget to think about yourself and look after yourself. I would always try and be someone else going through school. I never wanted to be me. I was always putting on a mask and I should've just been myself. No matter where you go in life, people are always going to hate on you, that's just part of life but it's just finding people who actually care about you and accept you for who you are. So yes, just be yourself and if someone's being mean to you, don't take it, no-one has the right to be mean to you or say stuff about you. If someone's doing that don't let it slide, be like, look I heard what you said I don't appreciate it. Let's talk it out don't go behind my back and do all this, just come to me. So yes, I'd say, just be yourself."</p>	10.19-11.46
12.00	<p><i>What brought about you wanting to become an actor?</i></p>	
	<p>"Ever since I could speak I've always been very dramatic and I've always loved watching TV shows and movies and looking into the smaller details of things and I just really loved how you can just step out of your shoes and become someone else for how long you want. And you have all these different monologues and different objectives that you need to follow and I'm also really interested in the directing and writing as well and I recently passed my exam as well with full marks, got an A, that I wrote, directed and acted in my own short film and it's called Pomegranate. So I really just love how you can do anything and be anything and I just love how I could be a man and I can just come back and be Tammy you know. The amount of exams I've done where I've had to draw on a moustache and pretend this woman's my wife. I just like doing so many different things you can do. I just love it so much. I love the creativeness especially during improvisation and seeing where my brain takes me because it's all about off the top of the head doing what you want to do. And I just love seeing how my brain does that. Yeah, I really enjoy it."</p>	12.05-13.55
13.56	<p><i>Have you found the other people on the course, the students, the lectures, accepting or otherwise of your sexuality?</i></p>	
	<p>"I'd definitely say so. I go to the Scottish Institute and that's got acting, dancing... and I think I've only got two straight people in my class. But yeah, everyone is really accepting, I've got so much support there and even some of my lecturers are always like giving us some words of advice and stuff like that and I actually did The Laramie Project. It's a play about this guy in America and he was basically murdered for being gay and when he was found one of the officers had to cut the rope off his hands and he was put up at a fence and because of that a bit of his blood went on to her and she got HIV because of it. So that started a lot of stuff in America. Gay Rights and stuff like that and I think that's probably one of my favourite plays I've done just because, obviously it's a horrible story,</p>	14.08-16.31

	but the fact that I get to tell this boy's story, who he was and what he wanted to accomplish means a lot. Yeah, everyone's really kind and it's a great place to meet people. I went to Edinburgh College beforehand and there were about 30 of us in the class. I just couldn't talk to anyone. I didn't have any friends, I was eating lunch by myself, sitting by myself in class, not even wanting to go into class. Then I go to there and everyone is just so much more loving. I really feel more connected to everyone."	
16.55	Can you give any examples of positive portrays of gay people in the arts?	
	"Well I actually watched this film the other day called Bottoms and it's basically about these two girls who start a fight club in their school to get with other girls, but the way they portrayed falling in love with a girl and having all these anxieties and stress, I was like, that's so me. There's definitely a lot of plays I've done I think one was called Stock Kids which is about these two girls who were in New York and basically build a connection together. And it's definitely naturalistic and it had the difficult parts of being gay and the positives and it had a sad ending. But it had a good portrayal of sometimes how the world sees you, how you are with others and the process of falling in love with someone who is the same gender as you."	17.00-19.04
19.23	Can you think of any positive portrayals of gay people on social media?	
	"I follow so many gay social media icons, having that portrayal just makes you feel a lot more closer and feel a lot more that you're not alone in the world. I watch something that's like Love Island, but it's for girls called I Kissed a Girl and I've just been following all of those people and I'm like, I love you all so much. There are a lot of social media influencers who are on Tik Tok who are really honest with their queerness, and it makes me comfortable to share my stories with them."	19.24-20.16
20.56	Did you face any barriers at work due to your sexuality?	
	"My first job I was a gymnastics coach and I wasn't really close with anyone so I didn't really tell anyone my sexuality, I didn't really think it was something to tell them but I then got a job making protein balls which are basically rice and veg and I came out to people there and they were really accepting. My manager was a gay man. I found a lot of people very accepting, especially in Edinburgh, in general, there's a lot more openness I feel and a lot more open minded people. And I definitely found it very safe going into work every day knowing that nothing bad was going to happen."	21.03-21.57
22.03	Do you feel that your experiences are similar to other queer people that you've met?	
	I'd say so. Recently when I started going to my new uni I met this person and they were non-binary and they were also raised in a very religious household, so we instantly bonded from that. And I know a lot of people who were really pushed to come out a bit earlier than they wanted which isn't a nice experience. I feel like I've been on this journey and there's some good in it I hope. I feel especially because I've got autism as well and did struggle a lot in Covid with who I was because you've just got time. I didn't really feel like a girl, but I wasn't a boy, it wasn't like I was trans-gender and if I said I was non-binary it didn't feel good for me. So I just felt really confused of what I was and I was just really lost, but I feel because of my autism I didn't feel like a normal person and I was trying to find out ways of why I was feeling like this when it's just my brain. I don't fit into normal society which is fine I guess, we'll get there, as the world will get there. A lot of autistic queer people I've talked to feel the same. I did go through the experience of not feeling really human and not really understanding what I was. So I have met a lot of people with similar experiences, yes."	22.07-24.36
28.52	Have you found any barriers to healthcare due to being queer?	
	"I don't go to my therapist any more but I do have occasional catch-ups with my doctor about my anti-depressant medication, but they don't know anything about my sexuality."	28.53-29.20
29.28	Do you believe that there is such a thing as the LGBT+ community which implies a coherent group identity based solely on a shared sexual orientation or gender identity?	
	"I definitely do believe there is a community. I definitely found a family in queer people and I feel so much more close to someone than I have. And it's a really nice feeling finding people who have gone through similar experiences and who understand on a different level. That's really important. So yes definitely. And I'm very happy and becoming more open minded about it all."	29.43-30.34

31.35	<i>Do you think acceptance of queer people by society has changed in your lifetime?</i>	
	“Yes, especially since at school I was never taught about it, I never knew about it and then slowly as I got through high school I was hearing things and so I did some research and thought that’s cool, not really saying I connected to it I was just kind of blocking out all the gayness at that age. But I definitely think things have changed for the better definitely. But there’s definitely a lot more that needs to happen for it to be an official safe place for gay people in general. There’s so much I hate right now but I do think slowly we’ll all come together.”	31.39-33.48
34.41	<i>How have you socialised as a queer person in your youth?</i>	
34.51-38.28	Respondent had a hard time at school because if she complimented girls on their make-up or clothes she was accused of flirting with them, this caused her to be more aware of what she was saying and how this could wrongly be interpreted and made her time at school very difficult.	
	“I remember the first time I visited my first gay club in Edinburgh and I went with some other gay people and this one straight guy and he was like no I don’t want to go in I’ll get hit on. I was like they’re not looking at you girl, believe me they’re not wanting you and afterwards he was like I’m really disappointed I didn’t get hit on.”	38.36-39.06
39.18	<i>How have you found visiting other clubs that are not gay in Edinburgh or Glasgow?</i>	
	“I definitely find gay clubs a lot more comforting. On my 18 th birthday I went with some people from my college accommodation to this club in Edinburgh and it was just disgusting the way I was treated. Just as a woman in general. I mean I’d walk past somebody and they’d just smack my ass, and I was like excuse me that’s horrible don’t do that. I also don’t like the music. If you go to a gay club they’ve got great tunes and no-one’s trying to hurt you. Everyone’s just trying to have fun and everyone’s a lot more accepting. Definitely I prefer the gay clubs.”	39.21-40.59
41.10	<i>Which clubs do you go to?</i>	
	“There’s one in Edinburgh it’s called Cici’s which is a gay club, that one’s got great, great dance floors.”	41.15-41.27
41.28	<i>Would you like to see more queer focused news in the media?</i>	
	“Definitely. I feel like there’s so much news that doesn’t get covered. I was reading an article and they just glossed over the fact that one country had now legalised gay marriage and I was like you don’t hear that on the TV. You had to read that you know. I go on the TV and obviously what’s happening in the world is not nice but I do think in general more happy news should be shared. I just think bringing a little bit of hope can help others, especially gay focussed news to help educate others. Because a few folk refuse to educate themselves on stuff like this and if it was shared during a news report then I feel like it would help them understand more that we’re all human. There’s nothing wrong with us, we’re all just the same.”	41.28-43.20
43.28	<i>Do you have any concerns for the future of gay elderly people and their healthcare?</i>	
	“To be honest I haven’t really thought about it.”	43.58
44.41	<i>Can you think of any legislation that has brought more rights for queer people?</i>	
	“Definitely gay marriage. I feel like it took ages. I definitely think, especially as more people are coming out as non-binary, there has been a lot of debate about toilets and how there’s only male and female toilets. And how can someone who’s non-binary choose one. I know at my uni they’ve started to do gender neutral toilets on one floor and some of the other floors are just male and female but I don’t know if it’s a legal thing but that’s definitely helped a lot of people I know. So I think it’s good that my uni has adopted this.”	45.00-46.37
47.00	<i>Has any legislation been diminished or rolled back the rights of queer people?</i>	
	“There are so many places in the world where you can just go to jail for being who you are or being sentenced to death for being who you are and it’s really heartbreaking. And sometimes it makes me want to just not tell people who I am. Which I should, I should be embracing who I am and what I am. But you could virtually go to jail for your whole life just for liking the same gender just doesn’t make any sense to me. I just really disagree with that, let people love who they want to love, there shouldn’t be this whole	47.11-49.19

	debate. I watched a video about the safest and non-safest places to go as a queer person and I was shocked at some of the places you couldn't go. I just don't see why. it's not affecting you just because a guy kisses a guy or whatever, shouldn't mean that they go to jail, shouldn't mean they should die for that. I keep saying this, but we are all people at the end of the day and we can love who we want to love, people have differences yes but what's wrong with that?"	
49.20	<i>How do you feel about the recent talks in the media regarding people's gender?</i>	
	"I just feel that it's none of their business if I'm being honest. I feel like a lot of people will call themselves feminists but as soon as it comes to trans women, it's like no, which is just disgusting. You're not a feminist, you're horrible. That's not the way you should treat people. I just don't see the need for all the hate. I just think we need more queer representation and younger people in really important powers to get an insight of what it's actually like. Because we've only got very old white straight males half the time with very traditional views and they're not going to move away from that which is horrible but it's the truth, they're not going to change. I just don't see why they should say all this hateful stuff."	49.48-50.12
51.54	<i>Do you feel that the general public are supportive of equal rights for queer people?</i>	
	"I think most people would say they are when it comes to two gay men or two gay women being together but as soon as it turns into trans rights it is not the best. I feel a lot of people will say they're okay with gay marriage and stuff like that but if someone wants to change who they are physically, then that's an issue. I don't see what the big deal is. I do think people are being more open minded but it is a very slow process and I really hope sooner rather than later will just be fine with it because everyone should live their life."	52.00-53.20
53.45	<i>Can you think of any negative portrayal of queer people in the arts?</i>	
	"I just can't remember."	53.57
54.53	<i>That's all my questions, is there anything you think I might have missed or you would like to add?</i>	
	"Keep being gay, be yourself, that's all I wish and there's only one of you, so love it."	55.06-55.17
	<i>Thank you very much. It's been a real pleasure talking with you.</i>	
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