

[0:00:00]

Interviewer: So could you begin by telling me a little bit about your childhood, where...siblings, parents etc?

Respondent: Yeah. So I grew up in this small community, it's a little bigger now, and I lived, or we lived, my parents, I'm the firstborn, and I have a brother who's five to six years younger than I am. And in fact, not long after he was born, we moved from the centre of the village to its very perimeter, which was like another village. And we lived on a brand new council estate there.

Interviewer: So were you a church attending family or...?

Respondent: My mother had been very involved in the Methodist church, and I was baptised at the local Methodist church. Yes, I did get involved with the church, but not immediately actually. At that point, because we lived near the Baptist church, I went to the Baptist Sunday school and we would go to chapel and also they had a very good social life, the Baptist church, so they did an annual pantomime, which I was usually in.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: And so there were some choruses of us in the...photographs of us in the chorus of Aladdin, singing "China Town, My China Town."

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: "When are the lights low."

Interviewer: Fabulous. So you had a bit of an experience of lots of traditions then, church wise?

Respondent: That was quite good, and the other unifying thing as well at that time were the Whit Walks. So the chapels in particular, they expected great crowds at Whitsun, and it was very scary, that, they would put up scaffolding to connect the main seating with the... oh, what are they called when you have seating at the top of a building as well, they're not boxes...galleries, the seating in the galleries.

Interviewer: Galleries, yeah.

Respondent: And then they would put white sheets over all this scaffolding and wood, and you were sitting on - which was a bit scary because you were frightened of, as a child, you were frightened of falling through. But they also had the Whit Walks, so they churches would unite. That's why they needed all the seating they could get. I think they would unite, start at one church and then they would walk in procession with the Band, through the village, to another chapel or something, or vice versa. That was all very lovely. I don't know whether it quite happens in the same way, but the Whit Walks, and all the churches or the Sunday schools had big banners, like the trade union banners that you can still see on marches. So it was a sort of...it must have been a 19th century tradition that was being carried on.

[00:04:46]

Interviewer: Yeah, wow. Good job there weren't charismatics falling over in the spirit on top of these high seats.

Respondent: Indeed. (Laughter).

Interviewer: So would you say you had a faith, a Christian faith? Or were you attending church because that was what one did?

Respondent: Oh, an interesting question. Oh, I believed strongly, I think. I remember once going down to the chapel, I was older by this time, and for some reason, it was cancelled, and coming home and being really, really disappointed, so it was obviously a big part of my life. And did I have a faith, is, "Did I pray?" really. I suppose I prayed in church, and also I had, like, I had an experience when I was about 12, a feeling of a sense of some sort of calling, but it didn't happen in church, it happened by the little river, little stream that ran by the church, just across the road, and there were sort of arching bushes and things. And yeah, that's where I had it, outdoors, out in the open.

Interviewer: Oh, okay, you were 12?

Respondent: I think I was about 12 then, yeah.

Interviewer: 12, okay. And can you tell me, I mean, this is not on my crib sheet, but at what point did you have a kind of awareness of your identity, sexual identity, is that something that happened in your early teenage years or older or...?

Respondent: Early teens. I mean, I used to listen to the radio a lot, so I remember hearing a sort of discussion about gay, and this is at the time where gay meant happy, but was beginning to be used for people who had queer identities. And you know, the rather snooty speakers were talking about that, but it sort of raises your curiosity. And the other thing, the other peculiar thing about growing up in the time I did was Round the Horne with Kenneth Williams and Hugh Paddick playing Julian and Sandy, these screaming queens, speaking Polari, which everybody used to sit having their Sunday lunch with this on in the background. But it was obvious. I suppose as I got into my teenage years, it was obvious what that was, but nobody ever said anything, "Oh, Hello Mr Horne," and all that stuff, nobody ever said anything about it.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: So it was sort of outrageous what the BBC got away with, as it were. But people quite like camp, and I think in working class culture, which is what I grew up in really, I think they quite like camp. So it was all celebrated. Where it became difficult was when it all become overt, it became overt and people starting to talk about themselves. I think that became more challenging, especially in the sort of world I grew up in. But I would say, I think I knew I was attracted to males, oh...well, 14, certainly, I had a tremendous crush, because we went with the Scouts to the International Scout Chalet at Kandersteg in Switzerland, and I just fell in love with this French boy. We became penfriends. Then, that's 14. I mean, I did fall in love with a girl as well though, so I mean, it wasn't sort of clear, it's never clear, is it, for teenagers, how their sexuality will develop?

Interviewer: It shifts a bit for a few years, certainly, yeah.

Respondent: Yeah. But then, and a sense of being transgender, though I wouldn't have been able to use that word, that was quite early as well. I think I sort of cross-dressed quite early, maybe 11, 10 or 11.

Interviewer: Where did you get your clothes from?

[00:09:21]

Respondent: I just raided my mum's wardrobe, when she was out.

Interviewer: Were they fashionable enough?

Respondent: Well, when you're 11, you don't care, do you?

Interviewer: Oh, I don't think I would have worn anything...I don't think I would have worn some of my parents' clothes, but they maybe weren't as fashionable as yours.

Respondent: Well, they didn't fit me anyway, did they, at that age? So I suppose it was just an exploration really.

Interviewer: I have very short parents, so...

Respondent: And sort of rarely and secretively done as well, and feeling guilty about it, so there would have been all those things going on. Then I think when I was about 16, I did see things in Sunday newspapers which alerted me to the fact that there was sort of a world out there, but it did seem very seamy, and, at 16, a friend's sister said she had read a book about what she described as 'sex change', because I mean, that's what it was in those days. So I asked to borrow it, and I found it quite alarming in that the person was sectioned because of what they said. So again, that makes you think, "Ooh, this is a very dangerous part of one's self."

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: And so I didn't feel any particular need to explore it. And anyway, the possibilities... Oh, oh, and while I was at school, there was one very camp boy, and I know he was arrested in Leeds in female clothing, but arrested for soliciting, because that's what they would get you under. So again, that seemed to send me signals that this is pretty dangerous.

Interviewer: Sort of dark and dangerous, yeah.

Respondent: Repress, repress... [Laughs]

Interviewer: ...there wasn't a heaving metropolis that you could just escape into?

Respondent: Well, you see, he went off to...he was brave, he went off to Leeds, but I didn't do that. I suppose I was very cautious really, quite studious as well.

Interviewer: So, yeah, would you say you threw yourself into study?

Respondent: Definitely, I did that, yeah. And I'd had this peculiar experience where they didn't do the 11 plus that year, so although I was the brightest person in school, when the marks came out, and they did this thing where they sort of selected some to pass, some to go to grammar, some to go to secondary modern, and there were four of us in the middle. And there were two of us who always scored really well in exams, and then the other two who didn't do so well. What happened, and we went for interviews, and I think, like you with your cold, I think I'd spent two days in bed prior to going to this interview. Anyway, I went and did what I...I did the maths and did the English, but the outcome was that myself and this other person who'd always scored highly, we didn't, we went to secondary modern, and the other two went to grammar school.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So that was quite a sort of awkward thing, and they didn't...the headmaster didn't publish the exam results that year. And I was quite fearful of him. However, I went to the drawer, he was out of the room, I went to the drawer and opened it up and there

were the results, and I had the top marks, but I pushed it back. But my family were not financially able to do anything about that. We did have an opportunity to, like, to sit an exam in the first year at secondary school, but I didn't. I thought, "No, I don't want to go through that again. I can't bear to fail again." So I just stayed at secondary mod. And then when I did...I mean, I did really well, but I then transferred to the comprehensive school for sixth form.

[00:13:45]

Interviewer: Going back slightly, why do you think they fiddled it and you didn't get into the grammar school?

Respondent: I don't think they fiddled it, I think the people who interviewed us didn't know us.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: And...

Interviewer: So irrespective of your marks?

Respondent: I think the other people were quite extrovert, the other two, and probably performed really well on the day. The girl who got through was expelled within about three months and sent to our school for behavioural issues really. She was...not next door neighbour, but next door neighbour but one, and was quite a volatile person.

Interviewer: Yeah. Were you naturally more reticent or would you say you were kind of repressing a lot of things, so you weren't extrovert for that reason?

Respondent: It's a really interesting question, because when I was younger, I was more extrovert, so it does feel as though... I mean, whether it was that I would have been an introvert anyway, but it does feel as though a lot of stuff shut down, yeah, which is a bit of a shame really [Laughs].

Interviewer: Yeah, I probably went through similar stuff really, and identified bisexual and Christian, and it was very difficult. I know that I'm an extrovert person who just went very quiet for a few years at that stage of my life. So I'm just interested from a personal point of view, you know, why you felt that was. So you were dressing as a boy, and you were Chris...

Respondent: I was Chris, I liked to be...I really liked to be Chris, because it's quite gender neutral as well.

Interviewer: Yeah. So you were Chris to all intents and purposes...

Respondent: Male.

Interviewer: Male, straight? Whether you felt that or not, but that was your outwards identity at that time, would you say, or...?

Respondent: I was open about feeling attracted to boys, with my peer group as a teenager, they knew that. I'd just do it in a camp way, but...

Interviewer: Okay, in a sort of Kenneth Williams way?

Respondent: [Laughs] Yeah, playful, a playful way.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: But you know, seriously, I think I probably did know, you know.

Interviewer: But you saw yourself as a gay boy, gay teenager at that time?

Respondent: Well, I suppose I did, but a cross dressing one.

[00:16:27]

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: So that was part of the identity, but I wouldn't have talked about that, you know.

Interviewer: Yeah. And were you bullied at school at all?

Respondent: Not much. I think I was...I was on the bus backcombing the hair of another boy, you know, we were sort of ribbed for that. I certainly, again, I would try and avoid people who were likely to bully me. Yes, I was bullied by one, I was bullied by one boy and my parents made me stand up to him. I know I was chased by...we were all chased, a group of us were chased by a group of older lads, and I got caught, and I was late home. And after that, I had to learn how to box, which I absolutely hated doing.

Interviewer: Real boxing, or, like, kick-boxing stuff.

Respondent: No, oh no, my dad rigged up his old kit bag, because he'd been in the merchant navy, and I had to learn how to jab, jab, swing, jab, jab, swing. Actually, it was fantastic, because when I went to, as a research student in Cambridge, about 21, maybe 22. I went to ring Rob, my partner, and I was surrounded in this telephone box by a group of yobs basically, and my purse and gloves were on the where you put the cash, and I think I...I thought, "Oh, I better get out of here." And I remember a friend of mine, another research student, saying how a similar thing had happened to him and he'd talked his way out of it, so I thought, "I've got to talk my way out of it", you see. But somebody said, "Oh go on, ginger, put the boot in." So I just said, "Oh no you don't," and I started, I just got into that position, da, da, da, [jab, jab, jab], and they all scattered, which was wonderful really. We had to report it, and there was a whole string of incidents that they'd been involved with - theft from colleges, you know, milk crates and stuff like that. So while I hated it because it was so masculine to do the boxing, it did sort of save me on that occasion, I was really grateful for it.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: And just linking it all up, and sort of a healing of that [Laughs], I remember when I came to work in London in 2001, and my boss gave me Sandra Bullock, Miss Congeniality, where she's that very tough cop who has to glam in order to infiltrate, and of course, it begins with her, when she gets home after being a tough cop all day, the first thing she does is her punchbag [Laughs]. But you know, she's really sort of svelte and pretty as well, so I thought, "Oh, that's really nice." And it brought back painful memories, but it also felt, "Oh, that's really good, to see this gorgeous woman belting what have you out of the punchbag."

Interviewer: Yeah. I don't know if you watch Arne Dahl, one of the Nordic noir things on Saturday nights, Swedish, she's a police lady, the chief investigator of the team there who does kickboxing and she's really glamorous and then you can just see her in the gym, so... So yeah...

Respondent: Stereotypes, isn't it, that?

Interviewer: Yeah, it is a bit. Did your dad insist on you doing the boxing because he knew you identified as gay or just simply because you'd been beaten up, or you know, bullied?

Respondent: I think that was before I identified. He...I heard him say to my grandmother, probably I was about 12, I'm not sure, my maternal grandmother, that the thing he had a problem with was that I was so effeminate, and my grandmother said, "Well never mind, they'll grow out of it." Over decades, I've had to...I mean, I found that really painful that he said that, because I wasn't aware that I was effeminate, I was just me. But then who measures what's effeminate as well? I mean, compared to the boy at school who was arrested in Leeds, I wasn't as effeminate as him, but I must have been effeminate on some standard my dad had. My therapist helped me with that because she said, "Well, it wasn't so much that you were effeminate, as that you were feminine," and that helped.

[00:21:36]

Interviewer: What age was that when you were speaking to that therapist?

Respondent: That would be...oh, I'm in my 50s, no, no, 40s, in my 40s, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. What happened with your church attendance? Was that something that you kept going as a teenager or did that dwindle or...?

Respondent: I had one little bit of rebellion when I was about...how old would I have been? 12? But then...or 13, but then I was in the youth group at church, and we did lovely things, and my dad wrote plays for us, we did carol singing after midnight mass at Christmas, so there were lots of things going on, yeah, we did charitable stuff. And I think that nurtured a vocation as well, that youth group.

Interviewer: Yeah. Did you talk about your sexuality at all in that environment?

Respondent: It wasn't like today; you didn't really do that. [Laughs]

Interviewer: No, it wasn't like that when I grew up.

Respondent: One strange thing, I mean, oh, I don't know whether I'd better tell you this, we could always take it out but it was just a strange thing, it struck me as strange, that [my friend] had this nice boyfriend, and we all went to a party at his house; [my friend] told him that she wouldn't stay the night, and then at some point during the party he and I bumped into each other in the house on our own, and he said, "Oh, N's not going to stay the night, would you like to stay the night?" And I thought, "Oh, well that's interesting." I said no, because I thought, "No, I'm not going to do that, you know, you're her boyfriend, I'm not getting in between you two."

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: But that was just very interesting, that he saw me as an option.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay, well, we haven't mentioned any names.

Respondent: No

Interviewer: Okay, so talk me through education, where did you go after school? A Levels, university? Yeah?

Respondent: So I had...I did A Levels, and then I think, I mean, I think my confidence was really knocked with all that Thorne Scheme thing, but the deputy head was very keen that I did enough A Levels to go to uni, and I went to Sussex University to do Religious Studies. I wasn't really sure whether I would do teaching, or whether I'd put myself forward for ordination. And I hadn't, you know, I hadn't got the languages, because I'd done French, because of being at the secondary modern, and the ways...Religious Studies at Sussex was really good because you could do all sorts of different [models]... you could take it anywhere you wanted, because there was African and Asian Studies, English and American Studies, which is where I did it, in that School, and I did a lot on history and philosophy. And I had a wonderful woman, personal tutor, Kathleen Bliss, and she was just a great inspirational figure, she'd been involved in the setting up the World Council of Churches, and she was very much a woman in a man's world as well.

Interviewer: Yeah.

[00:25:12]

Respondent: And she would have been in her 60s by that time, late 50s, early 60s. And I did really well in that, in my first degree, and got a first. So I'd set up a place to go to teacher training, but I then had the option of going to Cambridge to do research. So having been in Brighton. Oh, what I have to say as well is I met my husband in Brighton. But maybe we'll come back to that, let me finish the education and then we'll do that.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: So I went to Cambridge, Stephen Sykes was my supervisor, and he gave me...I wanted to do historic, 19th century, religion, and he gave me a couple of options, but I focused on Robertson of Brighton - because he thought it was quite good as well that I'd been in Brighton - who was this Victorian preacher, who was an evangelical, who studied German theology a bit, became liberal, preached these amazing sermons, which were still very biblical. And I was really going to look at why did he change, what was it, which I was looking at in terms of intellectual influences, which is, you know, that is true. But when it came - and you know about this, doing a doctorate, I had my viva and I was asked to revise it. What I didn't know at that time is most people are asked to revise dissertations: just a few are passed, a few, a very few are failed, and then quite a lot in the middle you just have to revise. Anyway, I think because of what happened when I was 11, all that stuff came back, and I found it ...; and by this time, I'd gone, entered the discernment process, and I'd gone to Wescott House in Cambridge, I'd finished my, I'd just finished my two years there, and I'd started in a parish in Portsmouth. So, to finish that story, I come back to the dissertation in 1997 when I had a sabbatical, because there are two, because there are two bits of unfinished business that I look at. One is the dissertation, and the other's my gender identity. And I can tell you more about how that panned out, but that's the sort of educational...

Interviewer: Okay. 1997, so you're in your 40s...

Respondent: Mmm, 46.

Interviewer: Okay, interesting. Okay, so obviously you become involved in campaign work, tell me about, you know, your involvement in any sort of activism, campaign work, organisations you've been involved in?

Respondent: If you don't mind, let me do coming out; can I do that in stages?

Interviewer: Sure, yeah.

Respondent: So at Sussex University, I realised I needed to do something about identity, and in the newsletter for the Christian Community, which was at the chapel, they advertised a CHE – Campaign for Homosexuality – group was starting in Brighton. And of course, the law had changed in '67, so this was '72, so it's quite soon afterwards.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: I thought, "Well, I'm going to join it." So I make contact with the convenor who was an incredible retired colonel, John Gough, who wore pink chiffon scarves and was an artist. And I went along and took an instant attraction to the secretary, Rob. And we didn't talk for weeks, I think, but eventually we spoke, and it was quite sparky, this conversation.

Interviewer: Rob is your husband?

Respondent: Yeah, and I thought, "Ooh, that's good." So, we became a couple in 1972, and I then wanted him to come home with me, you see, and I'm 21 now, and so I told my mum, came out to my mum, and she said, "Well we can't tell your father." So I said, "Well, I still want him to come home with me," [Laughs] so he did, and nothing was ever said, you know, about why he was there. So that was that, so I came out to my mum at 21. Then, and I'm at Cambridge at this time, and I go to Wescott. Now, when it's time to leave Wescott, so this is '78, and I'm 27, the Principal says to me, "I want you to go to this parish, it's got a very strong preaching tradition, you're interested in preaching, I want you to go to this parish in the West Country." I said, "Well, I don't really want to go there." He said, "Well why not?" – he was very direct, the Principal at that time. And I said, "Well, I've got my own reasons, you know." "Well, what are they?" you see, so I thought, "Oh well, I'm going to tell him then." So I said, "Well, I've got a partner, and he works in London, and he doesn't want to leave his father, and move, relocate to the West Country." "Hmm," he said, [Laughs] "Hmm."

[00:31:15]

Interviewer: How erudite. How do I spell that for the transcription...?

Respondent: [Laughs] The interesting thing was, you see, the chaplain of the college had come out in a Compline address in the chapel, the year before I went there. So he couldn't really say, "Oh, that's not acceptable," because he employed somebody who was out. So he said, "Well, look, I can't promise that you'll be ordained," he said, "But I will try and find a bishop who will ordain you," you know, "Leave it with me." So, he came back to me, he said he had found such a bishop, who was the Bishop of Portsmouth, and I'd got to go and see the Bishop of Portsmouth. So, I went to see him, and he was aware of the situation, he said, "Will you live together?" and I said, "I don't think I will," he said, "Well, I hope the time comes when you will be able to live together." About campaigning, he said, I think I said, "I won't be campaigning," I mean, I'd been part of that CHE, but it was very much support for people more than campaigning.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: And so he said, "Oh, that's good, yeah, that's fine." I don't think I had to make a promise I wouldn't campaign. The other thing, just thinking, while this is sort of in my mind, is the whole thing with CHE and Gay Liberation Front, which were both operating in Brighton. And GLF was much more fun, they had fantastic discos and stuff like that, but we were in the rather staid CHE, which had an older age range. But that didn't matter, because anyway, I was busy, I was researching, so I'm not even there. And Cambridge, although I did sort of look up, like, the historical aspect in Cambridge,

because you'd had E.M Forster and King's College Cambridge, the fellowship there was sort of known to be very gay-friendly, and the wonderful Norman Pittenger, who wrote *Time for Consent*, had retired to King's. But there wasn't much overt LGBT stuff at that time. So then the Bishop sent me to meet William Richard Gerald Sargent, the vicar of St Mark, North End - Bill - who was a Christian Socialist, CND, Vice President of housing associations, Prayer Book Catholic, who was just "bloody marvellous", to use one of the expressions [he tended to use], and he was to be my incumbent. So he said, "You've got a girlfriend?" I said, "No." "Got a boyfriend?" I said, "Yes." "That's alright," he said, "We've got another here on the team." [Laughs]

Interviewer: Another type like you... (Laughter).

Respondent: But he was just a wonderful person to be...to have as your incumbent.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: And I think people have said, he was an Abba, so like one of the desert fathers really. Unconditional love. And his wife, Jill, has continued that. His widow, I should say. So that was great, but it was a thing of coming out to people who needed to know.

Interviewer: Yeah, so a 'need to know' basis?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. So...

Respondent: You want to know what happens next, don't you? Campaigning? I'll tell you what ...

[00:34:56]

Interviewer: Yeah. I'm wondering, I mean, at what point are you beginning to identify publicly as female. Does that happen?

Respondent: Not yet. No.

Interviewer: Okay, I don't want to get the story wrong.

Respondent: No, that's a good question to ask though, just to sort of clarify.

Interviewer: Okay, well, you proceed in the order you feel it goes, that's fine.

Respondent: So what happened was, so I worked with Bill just over [it was just under] three years, and at the end of that, he said, "Well, I'd like you to stay in the parish and go to one of the daughter churches." And so I did that. So I was there nearly seven years. And then I was...because it's very different days, you didn't apply for jobs then. It was suggested that I move to these two parishes, Catherington and Clanfield. There was no bishop [there was a vacancy in see], the erm...was it the Provost [of the Cathedral] suggested me moving there? And they'd seen one person, and they hadn't taken them. They were seeing people one at a time. So I went there, so this is 1985. In 1987, I'm thinking of the timelines, we have the Highton debate, which for somebody in my position, who is sort of out to those who need to know, but not to, you know, generally, is really awful, because I've been...I've been supported in my vocation as a partnered person, and then when it comes to the vote in Synod, they're saying that homosexual genital acts fall short of this ideal, the biblical ideal, and they're to be met with compassion, and so on and so on. There was a gay priest in the next parish, and prior to the debate, he and I did write to all the Synod representatives from our diocese, setting out what we thought should be

said, and what the way forward should be. But of course, it didn't go that way. So I struggle on, I'm finding it quite difficult with these two parishes, running two parishes, which are very different. And also, I'm having struggles, I think, with assertiveness as well. And we come to a crisis, and what triggers it is Bill's death in the June of 1989.

He had written to me in 1987 and he said, "Oh, the silly old Church of England," - because somebody at Sarum College had resigned, one of the staff [as a direct result of the Highton debate] - he said, "It's such a shame, Jeremy's resigned," he said, you know, he said, "Don't you do that, and you know I love you, I love you," he said, "And I would lay down my life for you." I read this postcard and thought, "Oh blimey, cor blimey, what is that?" You know, for somebody to say that to you, and then two years later, he died. And although I hadn't run back to him, I just felt this safe...figure had gone.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: So I was basically grieving, and I know I was in grief, I kept bursting into tears when I was driving the car on long journeys. Anyway, there was another trigger, which I'm not going to talk about, that will come in my autobiography if I ever write it. And I entered this crisis really, in which I ended up going to stay, I was going to stay for a couple of nights on the Isle of Wight on retreat, and the first evening, I went in and spoke...I had dinner with the person who ran this little place. His wife and children had gone out, it was really interesting, and I was just telling him what I was going through, and he said - this is I suppose what I would have talked about with Bill, you see - but he gave me what I needed. He said, "Well, the thing is," he said, "You've had quite an easy life, haven't you?" He said, [Laughs] "The Lord's just given you a little shake up, that's all, that's all it is." And in the caravan, which is where I would have stayed, I know...I just prayed as I'd never, never prayed before, about trying to resolve all the problems that were going on. So I said to him, and we prayed and I said, "Look, I'm not going to stay, I need to go home." I went home, and back to Rob, and...we took children and adults to the cathedral at the weekend [to be confirmed], and I had this incredible experience of the Spirit moving in the cathedral, because I was so broken really, I was broken...I'd hit the buffers, I'd hit rock bottom. But by the Saturday, I was sort of coming back up again. And there was the fair, the bonfire night fair right behind us in the fields, and we took friends, and I was seeing bright lights in people's eyes and things, so I was... I don't know what you call it really, it wasn't a nervous...I don't think it was a nervous breakdown, but it was some sort of...what it was was probably all the repression, actually, now I think about it. In fact, having reread one of Susan Howatch's novels the other day, it was fragmentation, I think. Or let's put that on as the label.

[00:41:20]

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Or it was a mystical experience.

Interviewer: Was it a positive or negative?

Respondent: Yeah, positive. So we went to bed and the next day was the first communion of the newly confirmed. So, I said erm, oh, I woke up in the early hours and I had this very strong sense that I had to say in sermon the next day, "God loves me, including the fact that I'm gay." "Mm, oh, alright." So I went back to sleep. I woke up in the morning and as we were getting dressed, I said to Rob, "I've had these words in the night and I really think I should say this today in the sermon, 'God loves me, including the fact that I'm gay'," he said, "Are you sure you're meant to say that?" I said, "Well, no, I'm not sure, 100% sure, but I'll know when I get there." This is very interesting for me because I'm not naturally an intuitive, I'm a sensing person. So, you know we do the service, and I'm

preaching, and this thing of the lights in people's eyes are happening, and there's tremendous spirituality flowing between me and my reader, our parish reader, Margaret, who was older than I am, and sometimes our relationship could be a bit difficult, because she was...she was quite sort of disorganised, but there was this lovely flow. You know, we'd taken the youngsters, everybody to the cathedral the day before. So I said it. Things could never be quite the same again. [Laughs] So that's 1989 now.

Interviewer: So this is...it's just not really long after the time there's been gruesome AIDS adverts on TV and Section 28?

Respondent: Yeah. And maybe that was part of it as well in terms of timeline. I mean, obviously the whole stuff about AIDS, we'd had all the campaign stuff, and one lovely family in the parish, the eldest boy - I'm going to talk about the mother in a minute - the eldest boy wanted to become a doctor and became a doctor, and he was very, very hot on all the stuff about HIV in the youth group. And she said, "People might think my son's a bit strange, you know, but he has got this very strong medical interest as well." And we got the leaflets, AIDS and the Chalice, which I had there in the rack and everything. And I think by this time, I might have been networked with the Clergy Consultation, which became the Lesbian and Gay and then LGBT Clergy Consultation. So I would have been getting support as well, personally, from them and hearing some of the stories. And we just had one person in the parish, a young man of 21, who had come to [gone to] London to study drama, and whose funeral I took, and we supported his mother. Yeah, so that was all happening. So the parish held it. A few people left, some people kissed me as they left, because of course, probably a lot of people suspected and knew anyway, because Rob did live at the vicarage then. And the parish held it until nearly Christmas.

Interviewer: Sorry, what time was the service where...?

Respondent: Oh, it was the 5th of December [No I say the wrong month here - it was the 5th of November, hence the reference to fireworks], so it was my firework...

Interviewer: So they controlled themselves for three weeks over that? [In fact, it was about 6 weeks, 5th November - 20th December]

Respondent: Nearly Christmas.

Interviewer: Nearly Christmas, yeah.

Respondent: Three...October...December, oh yeah, you're right, yeah. So about the 20th of December, it was the front headlines in the newspaper. But it was that headline, "God loves me." What a wonderful headline!

[00:45:37]

Interviewer: Which newspaper?

Respondent: Portsmouth Evening News, and then it went everywhere, it went everywhere.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: The Bishop was very good, he said, "I can support you in what you said," he said...

Interviewer: "But not what you do in bed."

Respondent: [Laughs] He said, "If you were to say that you and Rob were in a relationship, you know, had a sexual relationship, I couldn't support that."

Interviewer: Hmm.

Respondent: He himself was gay, as probably was the previous Bishop. But he was supportive, so that was good. A few weeks later, the mother of this young man who was very hot on us having up to date awareness about AIDS prevention, she and her husband ran the Sunday school and the youth group - they were just amazing. He [the husband] died last year, sadly, and I have seen her recently and I'll be seeing her again soon which will be lovely. She came to see me about something to do with the Sunday school and she said, "I think it's fantastic that you've come out," she said, "Because it's wonderful to see a gay man in a caring role." And then as she went away, I thought, "I didn't say I was a man." So that was the beginning of the dawning realisation that...I hadn't got there, I hadn't...

Interviewer: Was that, like, an instant reaction to what she said to you?

Respondent: Yeah, it was.

Interviewer: Were you aware that you had...was that a very sudden realisation because of her assumption about you?

Respondent: Yeah, and it was an assumption, it was a realistic assumption from my presentation. But what it shows, I think, is that gay was an umbrella word for a long time, and that people like myself inhabited it, comfortably or uncomfortably. You know, because there were people like Quentin Crisp around, who were sort of genderqueer, very much so. I think I remember reading Quentin Crisp saying about, this is back in the early 70s about starting...oh, it was Lunch, a new gay magazine, and they asked him his opinion and he said, "But what would you write in a gay magazine? Would you give advice about how to shave your legs over the bath?" [Laughs] Which, you know, we're going to go very, very quickly from a very femme idea of gay men, which we've talked about already, to the really sort of butch, leather, moustaches, all that thing is going to come in, which was never anything that appealed to me, and I'm very fortunate with Rob, I suppose, that he was attracted to feminine men, not to masculine.

Interviewer: How old were you at this point where you made this big announcement?

Respondent: 1989...

Interviewer: 1989, that's right...

Respondent: So I'm...yeah, my birthday would have been in September, so I'm 38.

[00:49:23]

Interviewer: So you're 38, yeah.

Respondent: Career-wise, that was, if I had a career, which I suspect I probably did, that was pretty catastrophic, that would be a very bad move. Mental health-wise, it had to be the best thing I could possibly do. And of course, it would liberate me to look at my gender as well.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent: I had an image, well, in the sort of... I think I did feel, I wasn't depressed, but I did feel depressed at times, I think just by the sheer social pressure that's, or waves that were caused by that, that it should be such a big deal. Why should it be such a big deal? I had an image of me in the church, one of our churches, hanging on a rope from a beam, in Eucharistic robes, and not thinking ... that's not, thinking to myself, or interpreting it, that's not a suicidal image actually, that's just the death of an image, of a self-image. That's just the ...it could be, like, well, it's the end of one sort of priesthood, which wasn't real, it's about being more real.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: And I remember one young woman in the congregation, she'd probably been in the congregation about four years by that time, she said, "Oh, I think this is fantastic," she said, "You're living the gospel now, you're living it because you're living by grace and not..." Because I think I did have a slight thing of, "Oh well, Rob and I, we're a monogamous couple and we're keeping to the rules," and actually, I just think, "Well, you're just like everybody else really, and you can't pretend that you are not who you are."

Interviewer: So this lady says to you, [Laughter] calls you a man and you have a kind of massive internal reaction to that. So what happens next?

Respondent: I think we'd already been to, when she says that, or it may have been...we'd been to a party which had a historical theme, and we'd gone as Napoleon and Josephine, so Rob had gone as Napoleon, he looked wonderful, we'd got wonderful costumes. And I know he said to me, "Actually, you wouldn't have done that before you came out." It's as if that was the sort of release. And I was able to talk about it. I had one, my curate colleague, she was incredibly supportive; she was very, very intuitive. I know she found it difficult when I started to say, you know, fairly soon afterwards, "But actually, although I've come out and we're dealing with this, actually, this is who I am," and I did share it with her, I felt safe to share it with her. But it was very difficult to do anything with it, being in that public role. And anyway, I'm trying to deal with the fallout from what I've said. What I came to feel was, I mean, I'd been a member of LGCM for a long time, so when it had the 25th anniversary, they got people to send good wishes, so they had/took a big section of the Church Times, and you had all these signatures. And I think I was one of the very few reverends, 'out' people. I think possibly, wholly out, there was only myself and Michael Peat, who died a couple of years ago. And so I thought, "Well, I don't need to ..." Maybe I still had this thing about campaigning. I know one of the church wardens said, "Oh, you didn't appear on Newsnight," she said, "I thought...oh, why didn't you appear on Newsnight?" and then she said, "But actually, that's not really you." She said, "I think it was better that you'd..." So I felt I'd done something, it's in the public domain, I didn't want to make anything else of it, and to be honest, I think it would have been incredibly dangerous to do anything else with it. So '89, and I don't actually do anything about the gender till '97. I think...I asked Rob to come with me to a drag ball, because I just need safe spaces where I can go. I join the Sybils, which is Christian spirituality for transgender people. But the whole thing at that time of being outed as trans would be really catastrophic, I think. And women hadn't been ordained either. So let's come to that [Laughs], '93.

Nip on to '93, I mean I went to this parish to work with two women. I had to nail my colours to the mast about supporting women's ordination. I joined Priests for the Ordination of Women. But when it happened, and I remember working in the office and having the television near, it was a very strange feeling when it happened. Because I was delighted, but at the same time, I think we were all taken by surprise, because it had failed so many times. My therapist said, "You were okay till women were ordained, because you could say to yourself, 'I'm a priest, priests are male, therefore I'm male',

but once women were ordained, 'I'm a priest, priests are male and female, what am I?'" That's what came up. But the opportunities for working through it were incredibly limited for me, I found. So, in '97...but what I did do, right from 1989, was to dance. I did lots and lots of classes in dance and movement, and of course, they were often women-only classes, they were open, but only women attended. And that felt like great progress, and also, it was for me to be able to relate to my body, which wasn't as I would have liked it to be, but at least I could begin to relate to body and not live so much in my head and spirit.

[00:56:51]

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: So that was very liberating, so I wanted to go on...in '97, and I kept putting off my sabbatical, which was well overdue, and in '97 I got the opportunity to go, so I tried to do dance things. But everywhere I wrote, they said, "Oh, you can come and do it, but not those three months." So again, I went to bed one night and in the early hours I woke up and it came to me, "You've got to do two things, you've got to go back to your dissertation and see if you can rewrite it now, and you've got to look at your gender identity, that's your task for these three months." So that's what I did. And the interesting thing is that this Victorian preacher, he reflected a lot about gender, because the gender debate doesn't begin in the 1960s, you know, it begins in the 18th century really, with Mary Wollstonecraft and all that, and so he's very, very conscious of what's happening, men's roles and women's roles, and he applies it to Christ as well. So that was going on. I went to stay with my goddaughter, and I did a five day workshop in 'gender in performance' with Diane Torr, who is a New York-based drag king, but born in Scotland. It was mainly women, there was a man there who I've kept in touch with, and mainly people who were performers. And I'm in my 40s, you know, mid-40s, but because I've done all these movement classes, I'm reasonably supple to do it. I wouldn't be able to do it now. At the end of that week, my body is absolutely humming, and I'm given a name, one night I'm given a name of...this is just before the sabbatical, this is in the July, I go on sabbatical in the September. It starts the day Diana dies actually.

Interviewer: August the 31st?

Respondent: Yeah. But prior to that, I'd done this workshop, and I remember ringing Diane afterwards and saying, talking it through, and she said, "Well, I have the best of both worlds, you know, I'm a mother, I can go out with my daughter, I can be girly, then I can become Danny and go to these male-only clubs." And I said, "But that's not what I want, I know that's not what I want." She said, "Well, look, you've talked about Jungian things in the workshop, so I suggest you go for Jungian therapy." And a friend of mine ran a counselling service in Portsmouth, and he'd asked me to run a workshop for him on clowns and harlequins and Christmas revels, and I didn't think I could do it, and after doing Diane's workshop, I thought, "Oh, I can do it." And I rang him, and I said, "I can do this workshop," and he said, "Oh, great." And I said, "I'm also looking for counselling, but it needs to be Jungian," and he said, "Oh, that's what ours is, I'll put you in touch with one of our counsellors." So, it all fitted together.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: I went to visit my goddaughter during the...the sabbatical, and went and got my ears pierced. I started growing my hair longer, I started wearing running trousers and an H&M top, or a cassock, but nothing else, which was a bit strange for people. And so it was, like, gender neutral, but sometimes I'd wear Doc Marten boots with it, because I thought it looked cool, but my husband just thought I looked crazy. [Laughs] I know when I came back from sabbatical with the ears pierced, somebody came to see me and

said, "Oh, some of us have been talking and we really don't like it that you've had your ears pierced," "Well, it's too bad, isn't it? That's what I've had done." But that illustrates, doesn't it, how clergy are very much public property.

Interviewer: Yeah, and also how they're always at least 10 years behind, because that doesn't seem that drastic.

[01:01:32]

Respondent: Well, I don't know, you might have one pierced as a male maybe. But anyway, lots of black guys always have both ears pierced, don't they? So I wasn't particularly fazed by that.

Interviewer: Did you have any body hatred going on?

Respondent: Not especially. I was very hirsute, and I had, yeah, I didn't like my...I had a very heavy beard, so that really took some shifting. I think that might have been one of the reasons why I hadn't done anything earlier. The thing was I needed to leave the parish, but nobody was going to offer me a job. I went for various jobs, I'd get interviews, but then I wouldn't be appointed. And I talked to Rob about stepping out of parish ministry. He was very happy where we were because he loved the setting, this rural/suburban setting. He didn't particularly want to move. And I joined the Gender Trust, I met somebody at the Gender Trust who told me about Russell Reid, who was in private practice. I'd gone to see my own GP, he had kept it off the record, he'd sent me to somebody for a tertiary referral, but the outcome of that was, "Just stick with the counselling." He, I think, saw a lot of Catholic priests, so again, it was all very boundaried, which was great, I mean, it was the right thing, but you're getting nowhere... So anyway, I thought, "I don't want to go into the new millennium..." because everything is building up to that, "...as a male."

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: So I thought, "I'm going to Russell Reid," so I made an appointment and went to see him, because I knew that his diagnostic was to give you hormones, so he put me on hormones. And I know I had to go to the Men's Christmas Dinner a few weeks later. So it was going to be a men-only event, there weren't many of those in the parish. But I felt absolutely fine, because I was on hormones. I had a splendid evening with all these blokes. [Laughs] Which is very weird, isn't it really, what pleases you. But it was sort of progress, it was progress. I know I bought some new gender-neutral clothes as well, which were trousers and things like that. So that was great. And then I got shortlisted for a job, I suspect...it was very part time. It was 12 hours a week as a hospital chaplain, it was near where we lived, and for two years in my ministerial review, I'd been looking for part time job, non-parish, near where we lived. So I got my heart's desire, which was incredible really. I know the Archdeacon had said in that second review, when I said I was thinking of stepping out, he said, "Well, don't step out, because people will think there's something wrong and there's nothing wrong," but I couldn't tell him. My therapist was very keen that I didn't say anything to anybody, until I actually stepped over the line. So I moved in the June of 2000, settled in, and of course, as I settled in, I thought, "I can't just transition now, I've got to get settled in." But in the November, I went to see my manager and told her. She said, "Well, I'll talk to HR and come back to you." I now know, working in the NHS how slowly things move, so it was by...I think by the February, at Sibyls' event, which is really sad, I must have said something to Jay - who founded Sibyls - about, that this was in process, and somebody overheard that, and let slip to a journalist, who tracked me down. And it was published but didn't name me, so I then had to tell the diocese, and again, it was a vacancy in see. And they were quite panicky, but I wasn't named, it just said, "A hospital chaplain," and the journalist was convinced that the Sibyls was full of clergy who were about to transition, but it wasn't.

That was Christopher Morgan who committed suicide, sadly, he was the religious affairs correspondent for the Sunday Times. So that was a bit awkward, I hadn't done anything to modify my appearance, but I basically said to the bishop, "Well, I'm going to set a date, I have to do this now, to set a date." The CEO of the hospital had come in after I'd started, he ran a big house church and he thought God had appointed him to stop me doing this, so I had to have sessions with him, which presumably broke loads of boundaries. But it wasn't too harrowing. And I transitioned at work, but I knew that I wouldn't be able to survive, that the new incoming Bishop wasn't supporting me, the CEO wasn't supporting me, and with trans people, they'll find any excuse, "It's not because you're trans but..." you know.

Interviewer: Yeah.

[01:07:34]

Respondent: So I actually had the support of Liberty to take me through that, up to transition, because it was a war of nerves, because the diocese were saying, "Well, we want you to surrender your licence," and I was being supported by a new therapist and by Liberty not to. And I said, "And if I don't?" "Well, we could withdraw it." "Will you withdraw it?" So it was a cat and mouse thing. But they didn't withdraw it, but they did then restrict me to the hospital. So I thought, "Well, I'd better apply for other jobs." I was shortlisted for three jobs, the third one I got at the Chelsea and Westminster as Assistant Chaplain, and that was very interesting, because the advisor, the diocesan healthcare chaplaincy advisor was on the panel, the manager said, "Contact the bishop, tell him we've got a transgender candidate, we don't know who we'll appoint, but just in case, is it a problem?" The bishop says no [i.e. it wouldn't be a problem]. I come out top in the interview, they ring the bishop and he goes ballistic. Then I have to wait for him to decide what to do, and he gives me PTO, which again, restricts me to the hospital, so I can't vote in Synod elections, I have to have my annual appraisal with him. But after four years, he gives me a licence. And he was very affirming, I think he was just scared of conservative churches when I first went there.

Interviewer: Yeah, so you got PTO when?

Respondent: 2001.

Interviewer: 2001, yeah.

Respondent: And gender recognition comes in 2004. My PTO had run out and I wrote to him [the bishop] and said, "Look, it's run out, I hadn't noticed, my dad's just died, I'm really focusing on other things, but there is gender recognition, would you give me a licence? And I don't want you to do a big song and dance, I'm quite happy to come to your chapel," and he says, "No, I'm going to license you, not because the law's changed, but because you're in the right place there, you're doing a great job, and we want to license you." But it was uncomfortable, those four years, feeling you're not quite pukka you're not quite... But it's understandable at that time. Things have moved enormously, haven't they, even since that time.

Interviewer: Yeah. So you were undergoing hormone therapy.

Respondent: Yeah, which is lifelong, of course. When I arrive at Chelsea, I've transitioned, and in 2005 or early 2006, I get gender recognition and then we get married that September in church, which is really nice.

Interviewer: Okay, yeah. And how did Rob, how did he cope with your...when you say that you've stepped over a line, I'm guessing that's when you're publicly dressing as, identifying as

female, how did Rob deal with all of that? Was he okay about it? Was it something that when it actually happened, he found difficult to deal with? Or how was it?

Respondent: I think it was more difficult when it happened. I mean, obviously I've been talking to him about it for many years. And he'd seen me change my appearance insofar as I could. I think I decided, when we moved back to our home, that I would dress as female as much possible when not at work and be gender neutral at work. The hormones were having an effect by then, you want them to be really dramatic, but I suppose I was only just over six months in when I got there. And by a year in, people are relating to you as a female, or as a male, it can be either, and you're getting more and more female. I think the problem for him was what the neighbours would think, that was the most awkward bit. And a neighbour...we'd known for a very long time, he said...used a male pronoun in front of her and her husband, and I got quite cross with him and said, "Look, I've transitioned, it's she." And then she saw me on my own a few days later and said, "Look, what you're going through, I hope it's not going to split you up," she said, "Because it is a marriage you have, isn't it?" which was really nice. I mean, obviously she wasn't, they weren't...nobody's bothered too much actually. Rob was frightened we'd lose our gay friends.

[01:12:39]

Interviewer: Yeah, how did it affect his identity? I mean, is he...?

Respondent: He might be here soon: you can ask him!

Interviewer: People must assume you're a straight man.

Respondent: His answer now to that is, "Well, it's more complicated than that." Yeah, it's really for him to say. I think he felt we were climbing a mountain. That we were heading for trouble. [Laughs] You know, when the journalist turned up, he [Rob] suspected that there was something going on, we saw this car one Sunday up the lane, and then I went to work. And of course, they broke every rule in the book because they went on hospital property to try and get a photo, they didn't get it, and then they came to the house. And I just said [to the journalist], "Well, look, I don't feel safe actually." And work - this was the hospital where I'd had trouble with the CEO - they were brilliant, the press office were brilliant. I went into the press office the next day and she said, "Right, you're off to Worthing Herald, you know, you're going to have an interview, we're going to get it to the Press Association so that the Sun can't get an exclusive, and it'll be your story, not their version of it." So all that was good. There were a lot of hurdles. [Laughs] So I think...you can't say it's easier for people now. It's not easy for clergy, I don't think, because it is a public role and people have got used to you in a certain role. And the hierarchy are fearful. So the clergy who've...just prior to me was Carol Stone, the late Carol Stone, and she and I were at theological college together, with no idea that we had this similar identity. She transitioned very publicly in 2000, then I come along in 2001. The next person, 2002/3, leave parish ministry. The next one leaves parish ministry with a view to coming back but the Bishop doesn't take them back. It's not a good story for those who transition as clergy. If you transitioned and come forward as a candidate for ordination, that seems to go better, and you can see why. And of course, all the other clergy who've transitioned have all been married, and the ones who I think transitioned prior to coming forward. So when they transition, they become, if they're still married, they become lesbian, don't they, the opposite to what's happened to us. So we've been...what's happened to us then? We've sort of conformed to the heterosexual norm, so now get, you know, like my previous bishop, I would get a Christmas card to both of us. Whereas I don't think gay clergy would necessarily get, "Your partner," they might do, I don't know. And I felt really...I felt guilty about that, I did feel guilt about that, which is why I was glad I was part of Changing Attitude. So I

was the first trans trustee, and I did seven years in that role. I mean, we had three trans trustees at one point, which was great, I had two other colleagues and we represented different constituencies of transgender. But I absolutely love doing that, Colin and I were at theological college as well, the then director, and it was wonderful both from a spiritual point of view, because...and a theological point of view, because it was such a... the residential each year, it was such a sort of powerhouse of ideas, and I've got sort of practical skills, I like doing minutes and facilitating and stuff like that, so I could contribute a lot and get a lot out of it.

Interviewer: Yeah. So I'll draw to a close soon. So what other organisations are you involved in or...?

Respondent: So I was on Sibyls committee for 10 years, and LGCM I've always been a member but never been part of the...

Interviewer: Leadership.

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: Are you still a member?

Respondent: I'm still a member, and I went to see Richard after I transitioned, because you know, I'm one of his out gay priests, and then I'm suddenly changing, so I thought, "I'd better tell him the background, why it's happened, so that he understands, and apologise [laughs] that he's losing..." you know, but by 2002, one or two, there must have been more out gay clergy by then. And yes, and Changing Attitude. Have I been part of anything else? I've done an awful lot of speaking in that role. I worked closely with Sharon Ferguson. So within the Sibyls, Michelle O'Brien and I, we've collaborated, we collaborated on a book, some guidance for trans people with an appendix on intersex that Michelle wrote. We worked together on a workshop which has been running since about 2007, and I've done it with different people - Gender, Sexuality, Spirituality - and taken it to loads of conferences.

[01:18:35]

Interviewer: yeah.

Respondent: I've often worked with Sharon Ferguson and with Jeremy Timm from Changing Attitude. What else...and of course, Michelle and I have now edited the Sibyls book, which has been gestating a long time, so that's due to be published in May.

Interviewer: Is that DLT?

Respondent: That's DLT. I've done the Health Summit, LGBT health summit. Michelle and I took the workshop to the Evangelical Fellowship of Lesbian and Gay Christians. We've done it as a full weekend with the Sibyls, we've done it as a small workshop with Sibyls, we do it with the York Spiritual Directors. And that's sort of very good because we're taking it out of the LGBT world and taking it into the straight world, and getting people to talk, because LGBT, we're so good at doing this, aren't we, we're so good at talking about ourselves, our journeys, and with straight people, I don't get the sense that they've got that impetus to talk about themselves in the same way, so sexuality becomes something detached, about 'them', about other people. So we do need to encourage straight people to talk in this open way as well. Which will be painful for them, it will be difficult, because they'll have had affairs and they'll have infatuations and things which are tricky to talk about, but I think we have to encourage this openness if we're ever going to get anywhere.

Interviewer: What would you say is your mission, looking forward?

Respondent: I feel I've had a mission, which I've really enjoyed - to get out there, to speak at these events, to be trans, Christian, clergy, and a hospital chaplain, and to sort of be respected for being grounded in daily pastoral care of people, not just an activist. I feel that's been important to me. So I'm coming up to retirement this year as head of chaplaincy, I'll be 65, so I need to ease off. Maybe I will want to focus more on the writing, if I can, and do it that way. I still want to have some practice, and I teach healthcare chaplaincy, and keep my teaching going. I wouldn't want to let go of the activism altogether, except I'd like there to be no reason for activism. I'd like to feel that the work will finish at some point, and we have a more accepting church, that the stuff I've had to live through, people won't have to live through. But sadly, you know, there isn't a sign of that. It's a question I asked Savi yesterday, the gap between the grassroots acceptance and the hierarchy, especially in the Church of England, seems to be quite wide. And I write to people, I wrote to the Bishop of Winchester about Jeremy Davis not getting his.... [PTO]

Interviewer: Yeah, he is my Bishop.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. And I notice in Savi's book, she records the protest we did at York, and I was the only clergy person there. So maybe my mission is to encourage other clergy to be a bit braver.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, that's a very good mission. Is there anything major that we haven't touched on that you think you maybe anticipated we would or...I'm quite new to LGBT Christian circles, so I don't have a lot of maybe knowledge that other people do.

Respondent: Oh, you've reminded me. The other thing I was part of was the LGBT Anglican Coalition. I know working with Changing Attitude, when we did the annual vision work at our residential, it became very clear to me that there were huge swathes of work that we just didn't tackle because we couldn't do it alone, and that we needed to do it with the other groups. So I was very much part of the encouragement to Colin and the rest of the trustees to try and network with the other groups. And it was very democratic, the coalition, because each organisation would chair it for a time. So I chaired it, and the Sibyls are very democratic. I know it's a women thing, but we did it as co-chairs, we had three co-chairs, which worked quite well and we did it for a year, I think. And so I can't remember which...I think I might have been submissions to Pilling that we were the chair, so we held it at quite a busy time. And I was also a female co-chair of the LGBT Clergy Consultation, so I have been involved in rather more things than I mentioned earlier, yeah. So that was a good prompt. I was to be on the...the Mission, the LGBT Anglican Mission, but I came off that and I'm so glad that I did. It was just very clear to me that I could only do it for six months anyway, because of what was happening at work, and I came off sooner, and I think that was a good move. The only worry that we had was that they didn't have a trans person on there, so we've kept reminding them that they needed to do that. Maybe they've done that now.

[01:24:47]

Interviewer: Did they have a bi person on there?

Respondent: I'm not sure. It always gets missed, doesn't it? That's a bigger gap really, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay, well, it's been really brilliant talking to you.

Respondent: I'm sorry there weren't too many laughs, because I know you like your laughs!

Interviewer: No, no, it's fine. So I will be in touch just to check through the transcription with you.
Thank you very much for your time.

Respondent: Lovely, thank you.

[End of Transcript]