

## From a Whisper to a Roar

Interview Summary	
<b>Name:</b> Jacky Logan	<b>Date:</b> 9.12.2019 <b>Age:</b> 60+
<b>Key issues:</b> Activism: Social/cultural – same sex dancing DJ, same sex formation team and competitive dancer. Co-founded Pink Jukebox, runs the LGBTQ inclusive nights at the Rivoli ballroom. Resisting the impact of Section 28 in the library service.	
<b>Narrative summary</b> Jacky came out at the age of 30 in 1985. One of the early actions she became involved in was resisting the impact of Section 28 on the library service in which she worked: rejecting the ‘under the counter’ policy around Gay newspapers and trying to keep up the stocks of books from gay authors.  She discovered same sex dancing through Ralph Schiller’s classes in the early ‘90’s, becoming part of Ralph’s Pink Dancers formation team in 1992, who have done much to promote same sex dancing and increase visibility.  She already had some experience as a DJ and was asked to run an LGBT night at the Rivoli (iconic ballroom dance venue) once a month in 1995. She refused to make it exclusive and said it would be open to all, but the management made it clear that no homophobic attitudes would be tolerated from others attending.  Ralph and Jacky started the Pink Jukebox in 1996, a mixed LGBTQ bi-monthly event including tuition and social dancing. Jacky and her partner Mary have been competitive dancers continually for the last 21years; the longest same sex dance partnership on record. They attended the first Gay Games in 1998 and Jacky recounts some moving experiences from this event.  Jacky feels that social dancing, rather than the competitive element, has perhaps offered the greatest challenge to traditional norms and has opened up dance to greater diversity and accessibility. It has introduced the concept of Leader and Follower which removes the traditional gendered assumption that the man will always lead. More experienced dancers can swap roles within one dance. This initially offered a huge challenge to traditional dancers and competitive judges. Jacky feels this increases accessibility and her philosophy is around using dance to increase visibility, challenge traditional gendered roles and build confidence in a really welcoming atmosphere, which she has been fostering for well over 20 years.  Jacky received a British Empire Medal in the 2020 New Year’s Honours list.	
	<b>Length of interview:</b> 1 hour, 30 mins





Evelyn: So today this is an interview for From A Whisper To A Roar, an oral history project conducted by Opening Doors, London and supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. It's the 9th of December 2019 and I'm interviewing the indomitable Jacky Logan. Hello.

Jacky: Hello.

Evelyn: Well, Jacky perhaps we'll start with you, tell us maybe a little bit about your early days and how you came to an understanding of who you really are.

Jacky: Okay. Yes, I was married very early. I got married when I was 21 or something and unfortunately I became a widow within a year of the marriage. So I then was on my own and I just never quite felt comfortable in... I had several nice relationships with men, but I didn't really feel that I'd found something special. I actually went to college in 1984 to do a librarianship qualification because I've worked in libraries all my life. And yeah, I met a whole load of lesbians and started going clubbing and I thought, "Oh, this is where I belong." And then I came out when I was 30 and then I met Mary probably seven or eight years later through the dancing in the dance class and we've been together a long time, 24 years I think now. Yes. I might have to check that. A long time.

Evelyn: A long time.

Jacky: Yeah.

Evelyn: A long happy time.

Jacky: A long happy time. Exactly. And one of the things that's important to us is ballroom and Latin dancing because that's where we met. We met in Ralph Schiller's class all those years ago, '93, '92. And we started dancing together and we started competing together in 1998. Well, that's over 20 years ago now. And I believe we're the only pair on the scene that have met dancing, that have consistently competed every year from when we started in 1998. So we're on our 21st year of competing together at the moment.

Evelyn: So let's wind the clock back a little bit to start with. What was the dance scene like in your early days? When did you start?

Jacky: Very much the same as it is now actually, very welcoming. Went alone to the class and somebody came up to me and said, "Oh, would you like to do a waltz?" "Okay. Yeah." I liked the classes, but really it's the social dancing and the pulling together of people that I'm more interested in. And I really liked the atmosphere and I really enjoyed the fact that everybody dances with everybody else that you can get to know lots of people, so you don't have to know people really well but you can if you want to, but you can have this periphery of 100 friends, it's nice to see. And also I felt it was really nice to go alone by myself. I felt totally confident just to go into the environment by myself and I knew there would be somebody that I could chat to or that I knew, so yeah.

Evelyn: And have you always danced in same-sex dance groups?

Jacky: Yes. Yeah. That's really socially what I've been doing, not particularly that dancing has been lesbian and gay and now LGBTQI, but yeah. And in a mixed ...I prefer a mixed male female environment actually for dancing because I just think you get slightly different energy, which I like.

Evelyn: And how did you feel in those early days? That same sex-dancing sat alongside heterosexual dance?

Jacky: No. I didn't go to straight heterosexual dance as much in those days because I just enjoyed the gay element of it. However, and the main thing was the gathering rather than the dancing but back, probably 95, yeah, 95, I became the DJ at the Rivoli ballroom. And the reason for that was because a group of us had started going on the first Saturday of the month to various different straight dances. But, um we went to one at Battersea Arts Centre, and Jeffery Kebbi, who was a dancer at the time, was dancing with a male partner and they asked them to leave because it was disturbing the rest of the dance space.

So we then started looking around for somewhere to establish a gay ballroom dancing night. And we were already going to The Bell, but that was within a lesbian and gay environment and then the owner of the Rivoli approached me and said, "Would you like to do a gay night?" I said, "Actually, no. I don't want to do a gay night. I'll do a night that's open to everybody. And it would just be open to everybody." So I started that in 1995 and I've been doing that. I think this might, well if it's 1995, that's my 24th year of doing that now. Which is a hell of a long time.

But the first time I did it, it was probably 80% straight and 20% gay and the gay, quite a small little group and there were some people that really took offense and complained to me and I said, "Well, I'm sorry, this is a night that's open to everybody blah, blah, blah." And the owner was very supportive. He said, "Well, if you don't like it, you can leave." He supported that element and, you know, but I think they just never seen two men dance together. And it was like, "Oh, this is really strange, or whatever."

Evelyn: Did they complain about the men more than the women?

Jacky: I think what was most disturbing was the women leading the men because it actually challenges their world a bit more. Because then ballroom was pretty much the man leads the woman, I don't think it was so much the two men. I think it was more the women switching roles round which was a bit of a challenge to them. However, by about the third or fourth one, all those people that complained just didn't come back and it gradually got more.

Now it's probably 40% straight, 60% gay or in between. But I think that's really interesting because my belief is that the more visible it is to be lesbian or gay in society, then the more tolerant people become. It's just that if they're not used to seeing something, they have a reaction to it because it doesn't fit in for their experience. Whereas as soon as they become used to it, then they don't bat an eyelid anymore. And I think that's a very powerful act of bringing equality. But politics with a small p.

Evelyn: Absolutely.

Jacky: Socially, anyway.

Evelyn: I wonder why the owner of the Rivoli was so keen to have an LGBT night.

Jacky: I think he's not daft, Bill. I think he could see that there was a market and that there would be enough people coming and he wanted to do something new. And also he liked the crowd that were coming and he was prepared to stick up for us and say, no, this is what it's going to be.

Evelyn: So for the sake of people listening, maybe many years into the future, describe the Rivoli ballroom as you walk in the door.

Jacky: It looks like nothing at all from the outside. It's like a tatty little building, right opposite Crofton Park station. But you open the door and you come into this little passageway that's quite red velvety and it looks quite nice but then you open the main doors and you see the chandeliers and the glamorous setting. Don't look too closely because it's quite old but it's got all the-

Evelyn: It's a bit tattered around the edges, but it's shabby chic.

Jacky: Yeah, exactly. It's got an amazing atmosphere. And I watch people come in there quite often. People who haven't been to my night before and their jaws drop

Evelyn: Because you're on the stage directly opposite that door

Jacky: Yeah. People walk in and also people then make their way through the bar and I've got little access to the corner and then they come out the bar and their jaws are still dropping. And I always know when somebody hasn't been before. And I usually hop off the stage and just go say, "Hello, I'm Jacky. Welcome, blah. This is my night and this is what happens and this is how it works". And they are just usually really amazed. That venue is used for filming so often, for various different things, not just strictly come dance in type things. It's used in films because it's just a very original venue.

Evelyn: Iconic.

Jacky: It's really iconic.

Evelyn: Deco, I think.

Jacky: 1930s. So don't think so much art deco. I think it was a cinema during the war and actually the first time I went to the Rivoli when I wasn't a DJ because I was in that little crowd of gay people then, there was somebody doing the deejaying, a rather old elderly chap, of course it was all records then, carrying the record out, putting it on, shaky old hand, putting the needle on the record and off we go. And then literally, probably four or five minute gap between each, while you turned around and picked the next record

and then brought it over and put it on the turntable and put the needle across on and it warmed your heart cockles to actually see that. And he had apparently been the cinema operator all through the war and he'd been the DJ when it was used for dances during the war and things like that, been in the family a long time. So we're very lucky. Pink JukeBox has been doing their annual competition there now for 21 years, I think it is. We started in 1999. Wasn't our first competition, but it was our first big international competition.

Evelyn: So how did you get into deejaying?

Jacky: I had a boyfriend when I was 15 who was a DJ and I used to go and help him so I just learnt how to do it then. And then I had another boyfriend in my 20s who was a DJ.

Evelyn: Busy girl!

Jacky: Yeah. And I used to go along and then basically when I came out and I split up from that relationship he kept all his singles and records and I kept the equipment. So I had to then build up my entire collection again.

Evelyn: And again that would be vinyl.

Jacky: Yeah. It would have been on vinyl originally. Yes. And then I moved to CD. I've got piles of CDs upstairs. Used CD for quite a long time. And then, can't remember how long ago, six, seven, eight years ago I probably came off CD and went on to my computer, but I've still got some amazing tracks on CD that I haven't transferred to the computer that I keep meaning to do. For the moment they're lost to people because I haven't had time to transfer them across or re-download them or whatever. But yeah, I've got massive collection of ballroom and Latin dance tracks. I don't mix them myself like some people do. I tend to just pick them out for their rhythm and because I like dancing to them basically.

Evelyn: It's good a reason as any. So tell me a little bit about the early days of Pink JukeBox.

Jacky: Well, I did a lot of my early dancing at The Bell Pub. You've ever been there? King's Cross?

Evelyn: Kings cross? No, I haven't, so tell us a little bit about the Bell.

Jacky: Okay. So that again was quite tatty pub, but it was very iconic in terms of the gay community because there was different nights for different things. So there was discos, it was quite male, it a bit like the Vauxhall Tavern is now. It was frequented by gay people all week, but we had our tea dance in the... Well the tea dance actually with Ralph teaching started off at the London Lesbian and Gay centre, in Faringdon.

That's where I joined the class first of all. And then when that closed, we then moved to The Bell near Kings Cross. And he was teaching there with Jo Purvis as the DJ and she was deejaying at the London Lesbian and Gay Centre as well. And it was great. It was

just like Pink JukeBox is now ... wasn't called Pink JukeBox . It was just like the Bell Sunday afternoon tea dance or something like that. And then that closed and then we went to the Garage in Islington for a while. And then Ralph said to me, "Oh, shall we form a new club and you can be the DJ and I'll be the teacher." Because by then I started building up quite a good collection of Ballroom & Latin tracks.

And yeah. So we started Pink JukeBox in 1996 and as I said, we were garage for a while. And then we had several different venues, which I can't even remember, but we were first of all at the Central Club Hotel in Great Russell Street, which was a YMCA hotel. And then we went to Grafton Hotel, Tottenham Court Road. Then when they chucked us out we then went to Auberg which was like a restaurant near London Bridge. Then when that closed, we didn't find anywhere for long. I think we were about a year without meeting. But we kept in touch with everybody and went off to various dances. And of course by then the Rivoli was going so people kept in touch by that way. And then we've ended up now no, hang on.

Then we went to the La Cantina, which was in the basement of the Old Women's Centre at Wild Court and by then that was owned by Kensington Business College, I think. And then when they threw us out, we then got a very nice offer from Bishopsgate. And we love being at Bishopsgate because they've got all the LGBT archives and it's a very fitting place for us to be and we like the room upstairs and yeah, it's great.

Evelyn: This recording's going to be into the Bishopsgate Archive as well.

Jacky: Yeah. Well, I'm really pleased about that because we've deposited all our Pink JukeBox archives now with Bishopsgate Institute as well. I met somebody, might've come to Pink JukeBox actually or it was a contact, a friend of a friend or something and they'd been looking to research or do a master's or something into same-sex dancing and they didn't find very much and I thought, "Oh, if it's in my front room. People aren't going to find the information about it". So I deposited it there so at least people can find it.

Evelyn: So what do you think there's a straight world of dance if you like, what do you think is special about same-sex dancing: A, socially and B, even technically that the different bodies working together?

Jacky: Well, there's two different sides to same-sex dancing. One is a competitive side where you're working together to get the little nuances of all the different shapes and things. And then that has its own place trying to make its way in the mainstream competitions and gradually that's happening. I'm not at the forefront of that because Mary and I have been doing it too long. We're too old in the tooth now. But there are some of the youngsters coming along and some of the world champion same-sex dancers who are making waves and are taking part in mainstream competitions, which I think is amazing and will be good, especially if... I've gone and wandered off a bit but strictly come down to they have a same-sex couple, then that might draw attention to that.

So there's that competitive side. Then there's the social side. And the social side, really, from what I gather and from my own observation, if you go to a mainstream tea dance,



then it still has quite a bit of a traditional etiquette attached to it. So if you're a woman, you can sit there all evening without getting a dance because it's the prerogative of the man to ask the lady to dance. And also it's normally the woman follows so they don't really have any power in the thing. So it has that element to it. What I like about the same-sex dancing is that there're so many different combinations.

You can have two men dancing together two women dancing together you can have a man leading a woman, you can have a woman leading a man, you can have trans people dancing together, just any combination goes. And also I think it opens up the whole hobby of ballroom dancing to everybody, because now we have loads of people at the Rivoli and you do a circle dance where people change partner and these older people who are used to dancing in the more traditional circuit, they come along, they join in and there's a man and a lady dancing together and all of a sudden the partners change. So he ends up with a gay man that he's dancing with and they don't mind it anymore. And actually that to me is real progress because that's a very traditional way of dancing and it's been going on for years and they're used to it.

Evelyn: It was very fixed.

Jacky: Yes, very fixed. So that's been challenged. So if people haven't been to the Rivoli for example sometimes I DJ at the Festival Hall and they're trying to get me to introduce more partner swapping and more gender swapping and things like that. And I do try, but there's a real resistance in some of the older people to changing any of these old traditions. So I think breaking that down... We're not trying to take away anything that people are used to, because they can still dance. And the other thing about the mainstream is they tend to come with a partner and they stick with that partner and they dance with that partner.

Evelyn: All evening.

Jacky: And then the women that come without a partner, they'd be lucky if they get maybe one or two dances. And I see that and I don't really like it. So I do try to encourage women to lead or encourage men to follow or, but also it makes sense. I was listening to, I'm going off on a tangent here but I was thinking about it in relation to disability because we have a few people who've got Parkinson's who come and obviously you watch them struggle with that over the years and I listened to a radio program yesterday about ballroom dancing and Parkinson's. Did you listen to it?

Evelyn: I heard parts of it, not all of it.

Jacky: Yes. And it made me think that actually by making the roles a little bit more fluid and gender changing and changing lead and follow, it's more inclusive for people like that because if it's a man who's got Parkinson's, they're not going to be wanting the responsibility of leading a woman around the floor. They're going to want to be held and directed and so it makes perfect sense for them. And I noticed in that radio program that they used the term leader and follower. So I thought either they're people that come to the Rivoli and have got used to the same-sex community because I don't hear

that phrase ... that originated from our world of same-sex dancing, leader follower. That was not a language that is in any way in the hearts, minds of any mainstream teachers. They will say lady and man and occasionally they try to say leader and follower, but it's not in their-

Evelyn: It doesn't come naturally.

Jacky: It doesn't come naturally to them. Bless them. They do try really hard but I noticed that whoever's teaching that class on the radio, they naturally said leader or follower.. They've definitely been to the Rivoli or been to Pink JukeBox or something.

Evelyn: The same-sex stuff-

Jacky: Yeah. So how good is that? But it just opens it up to everybody. Makes it more equal, makes it more accessible. And I'm a great believer in accessibility and openness and everyone can join in. I don't like cliquey things. Obviously people want to come with their friends, they just want to stick with their friends. Of course, they can. But if they're at Pink JukeBox, they don't get much chance to because I'll come and grab them and make them dance with someone they don't know. It's part of how I was inducted into the same-sex dance community. So I'm bloody well going to-

Evelyn: Within the... Usually the dancers have an element of teaching and within that-

Jacky: Yes. That's where you set the scene, really.

Evelyn: Swapping all the time.

Jacky: Yeah. Ralph was the very first teacher to ever teach same-sex couples. Actually at that time it was an all male class when he started off. Not from his choice, but just because that's what it attracted. And then Mary and various different people came along to the class. And then I joined the class and by the time I joined the class, it was about half and half, but it did start off as a male environment. But I just like that open situation. I think it's welcoming and I've seen people gain confidence. That's what motivates me. You see people gain confidence, you see people who don't think they can put one foot in front of the other, eventually they do. It takes some people a little bit longer than others, but there's no judgment.

People judge themselves, of course because it's natural, but there's no judgment that you have to be able to do this. And quite often either myself or Mary or any of the experienced dancers take somebody who's struggling out the class and show them something separately. It's just part of the philosophy that you do whatever it takes to involve people and to enable them to feel empowered because empowerment, confidence is a very important thing within the LGBTQI community because often you've been at the butt of being told that you're not valid or you're not doing the proper thing if you don't fit to the stereotypical ballroom dancing model. In the old days, as I say two men were asked to leave. That was when I first started.

And then there was another occasion probably now about six years ago in the Royal Festival Hall where this older man was swearing at these two men for dancing together. And he was quite abusive, telling them to F-off and everything. I think people see me as 'big mummy' of the community. So, "Jacky, Jacky, that man's swearing at me." So, "Okay. All right." So I didn't.. I went to the management first of all and I said, "Look, this is the situation here." So they gave this gentleman a warning, he was probably in his late 70s. And then he did it again. So they threw him out of the Festival Hall. So in 20 years the abusers were thrown out as opposed to the gay men. And I think I always draw that comparison because I think it's really interesting. And that shows the influence of same-sex dancing in the straight world has changed mainstream dancing, genuinely.

Evelyn: Absolutely. So tell me a bit about your competitive career.

Jacky: I've always loved performing. I'm afraid I've got my fingers in quite a few different pies. I run an amateur dramatic and operatic society as well. So we've just done a production of the Adams Family, which was on in Chingford and it was absolutely fabulous but I'm vice-chair, but there is no chair so I'm chair, really. So I do that. But I explained that my husband died when I was very young, 22 and I was completely lost at the time. I didn't know what to do with myself and this operatic society picked me up, put me on my feet, shook me down, very much like Pink JukeBox in that you go along and you join in with the whole big group type thing. And I absolutely loved it.

And I loved performing, I was in Oklahoma and South Pacific and all those big musicals I enjoyed. And I learnt to stage dance, tap dance and jazz dance. I was very gangly and very uncoordinated, very, when I was younger. So I went through the experience in that world that quite a few people do in our Pink JukeBox. I went along and somebody said, "Do you want to learn to tap dance?" Why not? So I had got a little bit of dancing experience in my background from those early days, but then when I came out as a lesbian in 95, no, that's wrong. Must have been 85. Sorry. Yes. If you go back to that time, it was very much, lots of lesbians in dungarees, there wasn't many femme lesbians about really, and there wasn't many lesbians that were into show dancing or tap dancing or anything like that, you know what I mean?

Evelyn: The serious group.

Jacky: Yeah. It was a bit more political with a big P and lots of freestyle dancing, yes. I went mad when I came out, lots of drinking and as one does. But I don't think there was a lesbian tap dancing class at that time. And I don't think there was a lesbian dancing class. And then I was at a carpentry class with my friend and she said, "Well, come dance. Why don't you come dancing. This is great. I thought that sounds interesting. So that's what brought me to the dancing community. And immediately I felt at home because it was performing. And you were asking me about competitive dancing. But what appeals to me about that is I love performing and I love just presenting something out there and getting a big nice clap for it. I don't know whether it takes me back to my childhood.

I think that, "Well done, Jacky, you've done really well." But I love all that and to find somebody to do it with as a life partner who likes it as well, it's something that we do

together because if you think about it as a DJ for ballroom Latin dancing, I never get to dance. I'm stuck behind the DJ thing most of the time. And there came a point where because I wasn't getting a chance to do any classes or anything, I think I said, "Well, I think I'm going to give up dancing. I'll just be the DJ. I won't do any more dancing."

Mary said, "Well, hold on a minute, why don't we do some competition dancing and we can practice together." We practice. We do two lots a week. We do two hours on a Thursday afternoon and two hours on a Friday morning. And we just practice our routines and practice and it's something we do together. So actually that's the competitive dancing is very much about myself and my partner Mary and how we enjoy the dancing. And then of course on a Friday we'd go off to Pink Dancers every Friday night for the last, well since 1993, I don't know how many years is that. 27?

Evelyn: Yeah. That would be about it.

Jacky: 27 years. Yeah.

Evelyn: 27. Yeah. So tell us about Pink Dancers.

Jacky: It's lovely. It's-

Evelyn: The Pink Dancers arose from Pink JukeBox.

Jacky: Yes. It arose from Ralph. It came from within his soul, if you like, to create something. The first Pink Dancer performance was a foursome with, at somebody's 40th birthday party. And that was the very first Pink Dancer performance. And then he decided to pick some people from his class, I don't think the Pink JukeBox did exist then because it was 92 to form a little group and then there were probably eight of us. No, actually it's quite about 12 and we did a performance for the very first Stonewall Equality Ball. And actually I was deejaying for that, so I wasn't part of the performance.

But then the second one, which was at Chelsea Horticultural Hall, which is a huge venue, And actually, I've still got video of it. There was 12 or 14 I think of us then. And it's just that Ralph has given up his time. He doesn't get paid for it. He gives up his time voluntarily, every Friday night and we just all go along. And to be honest, we have quite a nice social time learning the dances because it's not like he comes with a routine in his head and then he teaches it to us. It's not like that. What happens is he teaches us a few different steps and then one of us will come up with an idea for music, it's very corporative and it's a bit like being part of a painting. So I actually enjoy the process of Pink Dancers, probably more than I enjoy the actual performing.

So what happens is it evolves and you're like a little pawn or you're like little colour in the oilpainting. So we have a little dab of red here, a little bit of Cha Cha there and then we'll have a little bit of rhumba, let's do a little bit quick step here. And it gradually gets put together. I been for quite a long period of time, but the Pink Dancers were the ambassadors for same sex-dance dancing in the very early days, 93, 94, 95 when people hadn't seen same-sex dancing. So we did food-chain fundraisers, we were at the London

Lighthouse doing performances. We used to do about five or six performances a year and actually one of the ones that was most memorable.

It was just before the election where, no. It was after the election when the Labour Party got in, when Tony Blair became elected, Stonewall decided to have a gay night at the Labour Party Conference. So we were invited to perform at the Labour Party Conference. And because it attracted a lot of attention, it just was blasted all over the Standard, the Mirror, the Mail, pictures of these Pink Dancers dancing because they derided it actually a lot of the mainstream papers, but it didn't really matter because it just gave it a lot of attention. So it was publicity and being visible is really, it's been the job of the Pink Dancers, I think over the years, more so than the social dancing obviously you have to come for that.

Whereas the performances get taken out into the world and, "Oh was that a man there. Oh, and there's a woman following a woman." And all of a sudden the man's leading the woman because we swap partners all the time and it's very difficult to define because we used to be the only group of its kind in the world. We were the very first gay formation team, if you like. But now other countries have seen what we do and they do it themselves now. So there's two teams in Berlin, there's two teams in Brighton that competed in the Wimborne UK Open Championships a couple of weeks back. So I think we've influenced the world.

Evelyn: Yeah and that was going to be the next thing I have in my mind that it is growing all over Europe and probably beyond.

Jacky: Well, also funny enough, just before you came, I was playing some videos, I wanted to just remind myself of the old competition and actually I found one from 2002, which was the third one at the Rivoli ballroom. And although they were same sex couples, they were mixed in together because I don't think there wasn't enough people to do an all male competition and an all female competition. And I remember at the time the female competitors were feeling like it wasn't quite fair because a lot of the men coming to competitive dancing were probably gay, quite young and gay, there's a lot of gay guys within the ballroom dancing world in general.

I don't think you'd find many lesbians in the straight ballroom dancing world. So initially they were higher level than the women and of course it meant that women never won any competitions. It was all dominated by the men and that's when we set up Pink JukeBox competition. We aimed towards having a female competition and a male competition separate. Now, it's funny how things go in 20 years time because quite a lot of competitions now going back to mixing them again, but it's different situation because it's been going 20 years and now the women's competitions are equally, sometimes even more high standard than the male competitions. But the reason for it in the old days was that women, lesbians probably didn't come to ballroom dancing as a natural thing to do in the straight world as a natural thing to do because of the subservient role that you have to take. Would a lesbian? It wouldn't be attractive, would it?

Evelyn: Sitting around waiting all evening for someone to ask her to dance-

Jacky: No. Whereas gay men, yes, they would have had competition experience. So they were naturally better than the women originally. I'll probably get lynched for saying that, but historically that's how it was. And now it's not, so there isn't a need to do that now. So it's fine. The only reason we don't mix up the couples in the Pink JukeBox trophy is because, legally speaking, if we do that, then we have to have mixed couple competitions as well. And whereas I support mixed couples taking part and having an open competition.

I loved Wimborne. I loved that it was the first UK Open. But we don't have time during one day Rivoli ballroom to do that and do social dancing. And I very much believe that to separate the two to just have a competition just because it's not very entertaining for people to come along all day and just sit there. It's nice to have people cheering and it's a bit of a spectacle. But I do think it's important to involve some social dancing in it. And we were unusual doing that in Europe. Other competitions were just either a competition... They're very separate in a lot of towns in Europe.

You go to a competition class and you learn how to do competitive dancing or you go to a social class, they don't mix them up. And Pink JukeBox is essentially a social club. We don't teach competitive couples. If people want to compete, they have to go and find a teacher or you can use the skills and things that you learn at Pink JukeBox and get together with a partner to do it. But we don't specialize in couples dancing because otherwise it wouldn't work socially. You wouldn't get this lovely mix of everybody dancing with everybody. Couples would come along and they would just want to practice their competition routine. It wouldn't work socially.

Evelyn: What's the Pink JukeBox or the Pink Dancers schedule over the years?

Jacky: Now, well, I've got a whole list of what we used to do and we used to do more performances, but now we tend to prepare a performance for a little bit longer. Probably takes us two or three months to put together something because it's collaborative and because we're working on something. And it's a new thing competing, we've only really just started doing that in the last three or four years. So we will take it to various competitions. But we're up for anything visible. My view is that if they do do a same-sex couple on strictly next year, like in September or whatever, they're going to want lots of outtakes showing some same-sex dances surely, unless they don't do it properly and make it look stupid or something, you know what I mean? It depends whether they bottle out or not really on acknowledging the history of it or not because if they do, then they should have the Pink Dancers on.

They should do an outtake with Pink Dancers performing something or they should visit the Rivoli and see. It would be nice if they did it in context and not taken it out of context and sensationalize it. I get so bored with people interviewing me from the radio and from the BBC about this marvellous new thing of same-sex dancing, you know, that's about to hit the TV screens ....I'll just go, "Yawn, yawn, yawn. Yes. It's only been going on 24 years. Yes. It's quite, it would be." But it is important politically to get all the millions of people that watch the television to accept it as something that's natural. My worry is that they're going to make some sensation out of it, make it look stupid or something. I don't know.

Evelyn: Because it would be good if there was an understanding of the depth of what equality really means in terms of dance when you don't have people being passive because I think even in the Rivoli even if you are a woman who happens to be a follower, you still are empowered to say... 'Will you lead?' to someone.

Jacky: Yes. I'm always saying over the microphone, right. If you're a follower you can just walk up to somebody, go up to somebody across the room from you and say "Are you able to lead this dance or are there any leaders around?" So I'm encouraging it to be more socially equal. But-

Evelyn: Because it's an equality issue beyond..

Jacky: It's an equality issue.

Evelyn: beyond the LGBT-

Jacky: Yeah, beyond. Yes. I remember one year we went to Blackpool and when we were dancing, we were visiting and dancing around the Tower Ballroom in amongst the... And I remember seeing a woman leading a man going past this little crowd of older women. And they were laughing because they thought that they didn't know how to do it and they just got it the wrong way round and then they went round and then they swapped. So then the next time they came past, the man was leading the woman and then they started looking really puzzled and then they swapped again. And then they came past with a woman leading the man and they looked really angry, like it was, "Oh my God, they're doing it on purpose. And how dare they disrupt the tradition." I don't know. That must be about 20 years ago now. I think.

Evelyn: It's a kind of radicalism, isn't it?

Jacky: Yeah. It's quite interesting because I think we were in Munich for one of the Euro games. And somebody from the paper interviewed Mary they said, "What do your work colleagues think about you being part of this competition?" And Mary said, "Well, actually I'm out as a lesbian at work, but I'm not out as a ballroom dancer," because they wrote that down. And then it first came out as a quote in Time Out but then all the newspapers picked up that quote and it went all again, also the Mirror, the Standard, quotes, papers have quotes of the week it was quoted, Mary from East London said I'm out as a lesbian but I'm not out as a ballroom dancer. I can understand that because ballroom dancing had such a traditional unequal, stuffy, image. So she'd found it easier to come out as a lesbian than to come out as ballroom dancer. Which is interesting.

Evelyn: So tell me about some of the competitions you and she have done together.

Jacky: The best competition ever was the first one. And they all say that the first one's always the best don't they? That was in Amsterdam in 1998. And what was nice about that was that it was huge. There were 13,000 gay people in Amsterdam, which meant that you couldn't move on the streets because suddenly it was a small city really. And there was about 2000 UK competitors, not in dancing, in football, in netball all the different sports.

Evelyn: Oh, because it's the Gay Games.

Jacky: Yeah. Gay Games. Yeah. And there was about 4,000 from USA and there was various different things. But they had a program and in the program was a map of the world and it showed how many competitors from each country. So it had a different colour for each country, the biggest was from the States, then Australia, then the next biggest was UK the next biggest was Canada, I think, something like that. In terms of numbers from each country. And going right the way down to two from Turkey and three from Uzbekistan and various different places like that. Thailand, three lady boys there, et cetera. However, they then had a transparent map that went over the top of that. And I don't think I've got it now, but I wish I did because it showed what the punishment for being gay was and in each country on this transparency. And I can't quite remember which countries it was, but obviously the countries with the least number of competitors, you could see that it was death by stoning, death by hanging, death by being buried, life imprisonment.

It went from the worst thing through to at the time, I think it was South Africa who were acknowledging same-sex partnerships at the time and Canada I think, because UK wasn't, and I don't think the States were that time. So you could see the, what's the word? The parity between those two facts. And then can you imagine the atmosphere when these three men from Uzbekistan walked into the stadium and you had this transparency showing you that they would get death by stoning in their country. So the whole stadium just erupted. We were all crying. It was the most moving experience ever. And this little map in the program, really was significant. That was a very moving competition. And actually there was so many competitors, there were more competitors in that competition, dance competitors. There was 300 couples and we've never gone up to that since but I think it's because it was the first Gay Games that they had ballroom dancing and everybody just went mad.

So we actually had to have... It was a big gym and you had to have the floor split in two. So you had a Cha Cha played and there were six categories of this, A, B, C, D, E, F. That's right. You had A, B and C dancing on the same floor as the D, E and F. So you had two lots of competition going on at the same time. So I think myself and Mary, we weren't in the bottom, I think we're in level E But at that time Mary Matthews and Amanda Greenwood got a gold in level C and that was like, "Whoa." And it was the time when Gay's the Word was on television so they came out to Amsterdam and they did some filming. And also it was reported on the news because it was such a big thing. That ballroom dancing was part of the gay games for a start and for second start, there were the same-sex dances going on. The BBC did a lot of filming of that Gay Games and... Just a slight funny story. Mary's got eight brothers and-

Evelyn: Wow.

Jacky: Yeah, she's the only girl of the eight brothers and-

Evelyn: A very busy mother!



Jacky: At the time, Match of the Day was on. And then the news after Match of the Day they all channel-hopped at the same time and three of them literally hopped channels. And there was Mary and I dancing on the television as part of the news because they massively reported that Gay Games for some reason and it hasn't been really since so publicity is a very.. and media is a very important aspect in the visibility thing. And I don't really know where it went wrong, but because as I said that was reported all over the place and presented as something positive. How comes 21 years later making such a fuss about maybe having the same-sex couple on Strictly Come Dancing. What happened to the... Why didn't that continue? I think probably change of government.

Evelyn: So over that period of time there has been successive legislation improving equalities. Have you felt an impact in terms of attitudes changing over that time? I suppose you have given us some examples.

Jacky: It depends on which field because obviously I'm a librarian by trade as well, so I was very much affected by clause 28 in 84. Because I was a librarian at the time and I was out as a lesbian and I was in all sorts of national groups as a lesbian making sure that libraries were accessible to LGBT people. I was in a group called Burning Issues, which was about that. And it was all at the same time where Silver Moon, they were raided, weren't they?

Evelyn: Bookshop.

Jacky: Yeah. The bookshop was raided-

Evelyn: And Gay's the Word was raided.

Jacky: And abolished. Yeah. Anyway, so just leaving the ballroom dancing for a moment, I'm also quite active in the field of making sure that gay people get information. I've been a public librarian all my life and so I was quite involved in fighting clause 28 from the library point of view.

Evelyn: So, for the purposes of the future listeners, clause 28 or section 28 was a piece of legislation that prevented local authorities from promoting homosexuality in any way or 'pretended family relationships', homosexual 'pretended family relationships'.

Jacky: Yes. Teachers weren't allowed to talk about it in schools, libraries were ... we had to ban the pink paper, we weren't allowed to put up pink paper. But we did carry on doing that, but we were several different library authorities were in the danger of being prosecuted, but I just actually think that it went down that route in several different authorities and they never won it really by the time it did get to trial it had been talked about being repealed. Can't remember when it was repealed, but anyway-

Evelyn: Repealed quite a lot later. But there were a huge protests and things in the community were you out there on that?

Jacky: Oh, yes. I wasn't actually involved.. there was one protest my friend was involved and I actually wasn't there, well I was on the march, but they got kettled in Brockwell Park and surrounded by policemen on horseback. And there was a real danger of being trampled on by horses. It was a horrible time. I did become a bit of an activist and have been ever since really. I set up a lesbian reading group, 11 years ago in Waltham Forest, very much supported by the borough. But I think that my lesbian reading group now is the only surviving lesbian reading group in a library. There are other lesbian reading groups, but I don't think they are part of a local authority-

Evelyn: Public office.

Jacky: Public office. So that's another thing I'm very keen on continuing.

Evelyn: What are meetings like that there?

Jacky: There's about 12 of us and we try to choose books that have strong female characters or are maybe written by lesbians, but actually it's not so easy to do that all the time. So we read any books really but, yeah. We get together once a month and we've been doing so for the last 11 years and talk about issues and become a bit of a support group as well for people who are isolated. We have a woman in a wheelchair, who uses a wheelchair, who's probably was quite isolated indoors and she comes to the group and she's not that much of a reader, but she enjoys having a chat about this that and the other. And the other and we've got a few black people in it. It's a diverse group which I'm very proud of it because it's not always been easy to have a diverse range of people.

Evelyn: Because back in the day, at the time of section 28 there was a fear that censorship would creep in if you're not allowed to promote anything homosexual suddenly will schools not be allowed to teach about Oscar Wilde or all the huge number of gay authors.

Jacky: Exactly. I think that the problem was that there was more fear around it that caused its own self censorship. So for example, a lot of library management, they were worried about getting into trouble. So they said, "We won't have the gay paper and go, "Okay, we'll have it, but we'll have it behind the counter." "Oh, no,no, no" or it was put out and because of clause 28, people would complain that their child has seen it or something like that. But no, and making sure you buy books from an independent bookseller because the mainstream publishers, that's how libraries saved money.

They have a consortium where all the borrowers get together and if they buy 50 copies of Small Island which is by Andrea Levy then obviously they get a lot of discount if they buy 50, as opposed to one copy. But there wasn't the consensus amongst the consortiums to go to Gay's the Word or whatever. So that would have to be each individual little library authority, making their own choices to go to Gaze the Word for their books. And therefore, over the period of time, really they became less and less gay novels and gay books in libraries because they haven't got a section. We used to have a section for it, lesbian gay collection, same as it was black interest collection. Quite few bookshops. Waterstones has a, I don't know what they call it actually.

I think they have a black author section. They don't have a lesbian or gay author section anymore. So I think it's become harder in that way. But I certainly was involved in promoting that. Yeah. And again, diversity again. I seem to have a bit of a theme in my life about accessibility and equality and making sure that people feel at home and grow and have confidence. I like seeing people learn new things and learn new skills and growing confidence, especially as a LGBTQ person because as I said earlier, you get told by the media and you get told by people that you're not-

Evelyn: You're not good enough.

Jacky: Yeah. Not good enough. Yeah.

Evelyn: So are there any other groups you're involved with?

Jacky: I've got my finger in too many pies, actually. I have to stop at some point. Well, as I say this operatic and dramatic start again it's about increasing the diversity. It's based in Chingford, which has been very much a Tory area; Iain Duncan Smith. In a couple of days time, it's going to be challenged by a very nice woman called Faiza [Shaheen – Labour candidate] And-

Evelyn: Just coming up to an election.

Jacky: Yeah, just coming up to an election. But I've been standing outside stations promoting this group and trying to get new members because it nearly fell down. Two years ago it was down to 10 members, nearly all over 60, one man and because that group put me on my feet when I was younger, I came back to the same group and I thought, "Gosh, they've really helped me out when I was younger. I'm going to help them out now." So we've increased our membership from 10 to 24 we've increased what we call Patron members or support members from about 10 to 20. But I like this crossover thing because I run a Fitsteps class-

Evelyn: As well.

Jacky: Yeah. I'm a retired librarian, but my two things that I do is deejaying for ballroom dancing and Fitsteps. And I've still got my leggings on this morning from teaching my class. I only do two classes a week now, 9:30 to 10:30 in the morning. But again, it's about seeing people grow, seeing their confidence grow, it's ballroom dancing Fitsteps, actually. It's all rhumba quickstep but it's done in lines so people can get the postural side of things and get the rhythm side of things. So we do all the steps that you would normally do in ballroom dancing. We do New Yorks, we do Botafogos, we do all those things. We do samba, we do waltz, but I now get about 24 people in my class and they're nearly all over 60, my oldest is 84 and my youngest is about 56 or something like that.

But I see those women, they're nearly all women. I've had some men over the years, but I haven't got any at the moment. But I see those women turning up 9:30 this morning and suddenly, their postures improved, they're puffing and they do their exercises, they

do the various dance steps, et cetera, et cetera. It's got a link with Strictly so they can watch Strictly Come Dancing and say, "Oh, we did one of those. That's a blah blah and that's a blah blah, that's a sliding door or whatever". So they really enjoy that. Now I forget why I'm talking about footsteps now. You asked me-

Evelyn: All the other things that you do.

Jacky: Yes. Oh, I know. I was talking about the crossover, because there's a woman in my Fitsteps class. You know Chingford is quite far out of town, it's not near the centre, but there's a woman there, she's about 76, I think, but she was married to a 90 year old man or something and he'd become ill and he wasn't able to come out anymore and she loves dancing. So she really found her confidence in my Fitsteps class. And then she became a support member of the drama group. So she turns up to do Front of House. Then she came to the Rivoli, she loves the Rivoli so she travels by public transport all the way from Chingford, all the way to the Rivoli to come and dance.

Evelyn: South London.

Jacky: South London. And now she started to come to Pink JukeBox. And now she's decided because she's been part of this traditional world of dancing where you can sit there for hours and wait for some man to come along and ask you to dance. She's decided she's going to learn to lead. So she's coming to Pink JukeBox specifically to learn to lead. And now she leads everybody. She comes to the Rivoli and leads everybody around. Now that's from somebody who didn't have any confidence, who didn't go outside their own area very much because they were very much a carer for the other half. So somebody very liberated goes to Buenos Aires to do the Argentine tango, she goes to Paris and she's hooked in with the Paris gay dancers in Paris.

Evelyn: The Rainbow Evidanse

Jacky: Yeah.

Evelyn: Yeah. Excellent.

Jacky: So she's my example of how the LGBTQ same-sex dancing ethos has affected the ballroom dancing world in general.

Evelyn: So you're all about diversity and bringing people together. And-

Jacky: I love seeing people come together. Yeah.

Evelyn: Building their confidence-

Jacky: Seeing something grow out of nothing.

Evelyn: Yeah.

Jacky: That's what I love. When we start rehearsing in my drama group, I've been the choreographer for the last couple of productions, so you start off with people with two left feet who can't do it. And then gradually it evolves in something more exciting. And then you have all these different people from different walks of life who would never in a million years come together normally. And that's what I like to see as well. I like to see... There's a guy who was made homeless, was sleeping on the floor of a stable where his mum worked, camp bed and everything and he'd come along to the drama group. And then alongside that you've got all typical Chingford Tory person, woman or whatever. And I loved to see the-

Evelyn: The mixing.

Jacky: The mix up.

Evelyn: So when you're planning your Rivoli nights or big events, what is it that makes that magic to bring people together and mix people up? What makes the perfect night?

Jacky: I think it's certainly not planning because I don't plan anything because if you plan something then you're fitting people into a plan. So it's a bit like child-centered education, really. You look at the people, they're in front of you and you say, "Oh, I think they'd like a bit of salsa, I'll make sure I put salsa on later on. Oh and there's a couple of Argentine tango dancers over there, they'd like..., you know" And then you might decide, "Oh, there's a lot of people here tonight who don't know each other. We better do some dance that changes partner so everybody changes around and gets the chance to meet new people, big circle and people move on.

So you do a few steps with somebody in this big circle and then the followers all move on one and then you do another few steps with people. I call them circle dancers or community dancers if you like. So it's a bit like how I described Pink Dance rehearsals with Ralph. I take my lead from him as well a lot. You have this paint pot in front of you and "Oh yeah, I'll have a little bit of red and a little bit of blue and we mix it all up." I never plan in advance. I always look at what's in front of me and then decide what to play, what to do.

I quite often, 30 seconds before I'm putting on a track, don't know what I'm putting on next because I have to feel it. It's an emotional feeling, it's not I'm a DJ and I've got this list of songs and I'm now going to play that one. It's not like that. And I used to be like this when I just did it straight discos. Well, I just suddenly you get the feeling, "Oh, that would be a nice thing to put on." So it's the intuitive and a bit comes from the people in the room.

Evelyn: Feeling from the room.

Jacky: Yeah, the feeling from the room. And then what happens is I think the magic is created because you play something and they all go, "Oh yes, I like this dance," and then the energy builds up and then you think, "Oh, I'll put on another one like that because they really liked that one." So you won't do exactly the same dance, but you might put a Cha

Cha and then you'll put in a samba because it's got a similar energy to it. And then you come to a point at the end of the samba and you think, "Oh, the energy is going down a bit now. Let's put on something like a waltz or a rhumba."

So you feel the energy in the room and then you react to it. And also people come up and request things. So if the same people start coming up and requesting the same thing, I'm thinking, "Oh, okay, it's time to do that now then." People come up and say, can we do, it might be three different types of line dance, but if I haven't played the line dance for half an hour, and people suddenly come up asking for line dances, I think, "Oh, okay, well, let's play line dance then." So it's really very intuitive and I think that's what makes it magical from... You'd have to ask the audience, I don't know.

Evelyn: I've been there and it's magical.

Jacky: You'd have to ask the audience. But I think that's what the secret is for me as a DJ. It's about not planning things and about the interaction between populous and the-

Evelyn: I also think that inclusivity comes from how you choose your music and how strong-

Jacky: Yeah. And how strong the rhythm is and it's got to be inspiring in some way, hasn't it? Yeah.

Evelyn: So when you were thinking of me coming along and annoying you this afternoon, was there anything you felt you might want to talk about that we haven't touched on?

Jacky: There is and the timing of it is a bit awkward because I'm sworn to secrecy but if I don't talk about it now, then by the time you've interviewed... You'll probably take two or three weeks, won't you, to process this. It's not going anywhere.

Evelyn: Not going anywhere for a while.

Jacky: Well as long as because there's an embargo on the information I'm about to tell you. It's not allowed to come out until 10:30 AM on the 27th of December. Can you guess what it is? Some New Years Honors list. But-

Evelyn: What are you going to have?

Jacky: An OBE[British Empire Medal]

Evelyn: Well deserved.

Jacky: For my contribution to same-sex ballroom dancing.

Evelyn: Fantastic.

Jacky: And you're the first person in the press I guess I've told because I'm not allowed to tell people at the moment.

Evelyn: I know, my lips are sealed.

Jacky: Yeah, well it's on the tape but hopefully by the time this tape is heard by anyone, it'll be past the 27th of December. So yes. I have decided to talk to you about it because I'm completely gobsmacked, but I guess it represents the it's... Clearly I've been nominated by people in the community who-

Evelyn: Know what they're talking about.

Jacky: Who have benefited or have seen what's been achieved over the last 20 odd years. And yes. And also I believe it's the first anyone's been nominated for a same-sex dancing. And I-

Evelyn: That's another first.

Jacky: Yes. And I think it will be an opportunity to talk about it because I think there'll be some interest, probably.

Evelyn: Hope so.

Jacky: Hopefully that will enable me to talk and promote same-sex dancing as something that is very attractive and that people should investigate, whether they're straight, whether they're gay, why not? Everybody should have a chance to participate in ballroom dancing on a more equal basis. Again, not that I have any problem with traditional ballroom dancing, I think it's beautiful and I think obviously there's a huge following and there's people who've been doing it all their lives, I wouldn't want to take away from anything from that, but there are other ways that you can dance.

And you can swap, lead and then follow in the middle of a dance. As I say, it's more accessible for people with disabilities because it means that you can adapt the partnership to... You could do wheelchair dancing, people should learn more wheelchair dancing. We've become very friendly with the UK wheelchair dancing champions. And in fact, in Wimborne new two male partners of the wheelchair people competed in the men's same-sex competition.

Evelyn: Fantastic.

Jacky: And they were crying. One of them was crying because he obviously never won a medal before as a follower. And that's a new experience for them. So I think it's so tired an argument: "Oh, should men be able to dance with men and should women be able to dance with women?" I get interviewed by the radio and you get people like Ann Widdecombe coming on the radio and saying, "Well, I think it's not right and I wouldn't like to see it because children might be watching." "Oh, so what? It's two men. They're not having sex on the dance floor. They're dancing together in a very beautiful way."

And ballroom dancing and Latin dancing has its own technique, its own language and how you interpret that, certainly on a competitive dance floor, can be many different

ways. Some women couples, the woman wears a tail suit and in the more traditional way and the other woman is very femme-y and wears a little skimpy dress or whatever. That's one way of doing it. Then you get other dancers, they're more equally dressed, they're more androgynously dressed if you like, so that when you get the lead and follow, you don't even notice it. There's an issue for some judges because they say that they can't mark people against the traditional male lead or female follower because they can't compare. But I don't know what that's all about.

You'll see there's a BBC, what'd you call it? BBC story. They interviewed Mary and myself and Michael Lita and Sergio Briganti, we made that film to show how beautiful it can be and how you can adapt the style. You can have two men dancing together. When we were in Paris, you had a male dancer and a guy dancing opposite him who was dressed very much as a woman. You could barely tell whether they were a man or not. That's another way of doing it. But on the other hand, it opens it up so you can do any combination really. And any interpretation. And actually one of the things they said in that film, Sergio and Michael, they said they created a new style where they have more open leg positions where they're more equal as a dancing couple. So although there is a male well it was Latin dancers, it's not so much in hold, so sometimes you can't tell who was leading.

Evelyn: And also that the physicality of two men dancing together, women dancing together, it brings a whole different dimension to the dance. Men's musculature or whatever and the women's fluidity can bring a whole different-

Jacky: Why not? Mix it all up.

Evelyn: And have a much wider range of technique and whatever. So you're going to the Palace.

Jacky: Yeah, I guess so. I don't know much about it yet. All I know is I've had a letter which I looked at and I had to get Mary to come and read because I couldn't make head or tail of what it was saying. And then so yeah. I don't really know. I still can't talk about it without giggling really, it just seems such a strange thing. It's-

Evelyn: A very special outfit for this for this performance!

Jacky: I don't know. I really don't know. I think what happens is it gets announced on the 27th of December-

Evelyn: Yeah. The Honour's list.

Jacky: And then there's the list and then sometime later on in the year you get invited to the Palace for a Garden Party or something and then go and collect your medal or whatever it is. No idea. All I know is I've been nominated and I've accepted and that's it.

Evelyn: One medal amongst so many. Over all the years just another gong.



Jacky: I'm speechless. You probably have to end the interview now because I'm speechless about it to be honest. And obviously there are lots of people. I feel like I'm collecting it, not just for me, I'm collecting it for all the people who've put work into allowing men to be examined as followers, that wasn't allowed when we first started.

Evelyn: So, yes. Tell me some of the changes that have come into the rule book.

Jacky: Yeah. It's not so much that there's changes in the rule book. It's more that it was never stipulated in the rules that... Actually I'm not an expert on this competitively, so you might have to check your facts out but I understand that in this country two men can enter the mainstream competition and two women can. And some people do. In other countries it's not allowed. But it's not because we're progressive, it's more because we haven't-

Evelyn: Never considered it a might be a possibility.

Jacky: Yeah. Yes. But certainly in terms of... There was a very lovely teacher and examiner and fellow of the ISTD called Janet Clark, who was the first woman to examine a male as a follower. And also Heather Gladding and various different people, Ralph, various different teachers pressed for them to be allowed to be examined as a follower. That's happened since the whole thing. And obviously Wendy and Juanita running aWaltzing with Hilda. That was set up before the Pink JukeBox actually. They were one year ahead of us in-.

Evelyn: That was the women's only.

Jacky: That's the women only. And that's been going years as well, they go on holidays together and that's still running, they're still having a holiday where people can go away with Waltzing With Hilda, but there's a new dance night called Sapphires, which is a women known night, which is, again happening now at Bishopsgate Institute. So there's that whole world. I feel like I'm collecting it on behalf of everybody who's contributed to this whole wonderful world of same-sex dancing and it's not just about me, but-

Evelyn: I think everybody in the world of same-sex dancing is grateful to you. Me included, having come to Pink JukeBox.

Jacky: I don't feel I've done an awful lot really. It's in my philosophy to make people feel welcome and see that they grow and that everybody can join in and it's just part of my philosophy really.

Evelyn: Well, I clearly remember you welcoming me on my first visit to Pink JukeBox. I do indeed.

Jacky: Yeah.

Evelyn: Well, the last question I always ask in these, is thinking back to young Jacky with her DJ boyfriends and such back in the day from your position now of almost same-sex OBE Jacky, what would you say to her?

Jacky: To the little Jacky?

Evelyn: Yeah.

Jacky: I've created immediately a little vision of me completely gangly, last in the class for anything to do with anything physical, running or legs everywhere, I was quite gangly and tall and I wouldn't have even thought I'd be a dancer let alone a lesbian who's promoting same-sex dancing. And I think I'd just say to her, "Well done for just getting up and doing it because if you don't have a go at something, nothing can come of it, can it?" And there's two things I wouldn't do, ice skating and skiing because my knees are now a bit, you know ... had it. But I wouldn't endanger my body, but I would have a go at most things that's what I'd say to little Jacky, I'd say "Go and have a go and don't be put down by anybody, just do it."

Evelyn: And you have just done it all the way through. So all I'll say is thank you on behalf of the dancing community and the LGBT community and thanks a million for your time.

Jacky: No. I've thoroughly enjoyed it because it does make you realize how far we've come actually. Yeah. Thank you.

Evelyn: That's what it's all about your activism across the years. Thank you.