

From a Whisper to a Roar

Interview Summary	
Name: Janet Jones	Date: 21.08.2019 Age: 55
Key issues: Latex Theatre Group. MESMAC. Sexual health education. Section 28. Community growing/health project. Disabled access in LGBT community. Queer the Pier	
Narrative summary Janet recounts how she felt 'different' and felt attracted to other girls but she didn't have the language to articulate what this meant. So from early attractions to girls she moved into an unhealthy relationship with a much older man in Wales. However she grew close to a woman at work and thought that she was bisexual. These feelings grew until eventually she went to a Kenric event in Leeds, fell for a woman and moved to Leeds where she lived for several years meeting other lesbians and having relationships. She got involved with the Latex Theatre Group working under the auspices of MESMAC (one of the oldest sexual health organisations in the country). They wrote and performed pieces to help educate young people, often based on their own lives. The involvement with the theatre group was a political awakening for her. They performed against the backdrop of Section 28 which had created a climate of fear denying young people access to information and understanding about LGBT life and issues. She found the young people were hungry for information and angry about the lack of opportunity to discuss how they felt. This was also during the AIDs crisis when accurate information and support was often scarce. Latex travelled to many towns that were very poorly served by any kind of performances, particularly those with LGBT content and in some very rough places. She also reflects on the difficulty people had of finding a community in these areas far from large cities. She speaks about attending the very large Section 28 march in Manchester with the support of her mother and sister and listening to the speeches. She was becoming increasingly politicised because Section 28 was impinging in such a personal way as her partner had young children. They had T shirts and banners that said 'We are Not Pretending'. She went on to do a degree in Human Ecology which further developed her political awareness after which she went to work in a community garden project in Bradford. This grew into developing food policy throughout the Bradford area around growing fresh food and healthy eating, often as an intergenerational venture. Whilst there she was diagnosed with MS and became a wheelchair user. She discusses attitudes to disabled people within the LGBT community and beyond, with the biggest issue being access to LGBT venues, particularly pubs and clubs. More recently Janet has been involved in 'Queer the Pier', a museum project in Brighton to uncover queer associations with Brighton Pier performers etc. She expresses some frustration about limitations to her activism because of her disability, but has become a 'clicktivist' to carry on the fight!	
	Length of interview: 1 hr 25 mins



Evelyn: Today we're doing a recording for the project From a Whisper to a Roar, which is undertaken by Opening Doors London and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Today is the 21st of August and we are interviewing the delightful Janet Jones. So, Janet, to start us off, if you would tell us something about your early days and how you came to an understanding of who you really are?

Janet: This is a coming out story then, I'd guess. In the olden days they'd call it that wouldn't they?

Evelyn: They would, they would. Tell me as much or as little as you want.

Janet: I would say that from teen, slightly, nearly preteen but from that age, I became aware that I was attracted to girls and really aware of a difference between myself and other girls, because I would say that teenagers at school, girls were very much about makeup, hair and boys and I completely didn't fit into that group at all. So it was quite challenging to make friendships in a peer group in school because I just had so little in common with so many.

- Janet: There were one or two other girls that were more like me, shall we say, but the context was so closeted, not because we knew why but just because there wasn't a familiarity with what it was, what this is, how come we feel different and that, being attracted to your best mate, it was a thing that I didn't have a... I couldn't have verbalised what it was about or have an understanding of what that was about. I was experimental with other girls at that age group. What was your question? I've forgotten.
- Evelyn: How you came to an understanding of who you are at the time.
- Janet: So I'm moving towards knowing that, and then I had, it was a very difficult childhood circumstance. There's a lot of difficulty within my family. My parents parted company after quite extreme violence from my father so you're not in a norm. It probably is more norm than you care to wonder, really, but so there's already a disruption to a stability in my family life but within that time, I was attracted to girls and engaged in low-level physical intimacy with girls but in a that's really not all right kind of way. Then later, like I say, I got involved in a heterosexual relationship with a man who was a lot older than me. This is a person who was in his probably 30s and I'm in my teens so it was a not healthy relationship.
- Janet: Anyway, so as a kind of recovery really from childhood anyway and a security about being with a man that oh I must be normal, I'm searching for this normal, as in heteronormal state. So I was involved with him and became quite isolated with him and we went off to different parts of the country and I had some jobs and stuff but I kind of lost an essence of myself or a security in that.
- Janet: But I guess from when I was 16 I left the town where I grew up with him and we went off to the south of England and then I got a job in a slaughterhouse and bacon factory down there and I was a butcher, just because that was the work that was available. But there, I was working with another woman called Janet and we became intimate in that, kissing and then we slept together. But in the context of everybody was bisexual. We were striving for that. It was kind of, oh that's the new norm so I can do that and it meant that I didn't have to disrupt the relationship with the guy because... I don't know...for whatever reasons
- Janet: For me, I was besotted with... It's kind of why I was in love with her and I was a teenager and I was in love, and she was 19... 18, and I was 16. And it kind of was speaking to me in a different sort of way, like oh yeah, this is...
- Evelyn: This is me.
- Janet: This is my normal. But the relationship with the guy went on a long time and it wasn't until I... I think I must have been sort of starting to feel more and more that I want that, the relationship, that historic sort of a one time thing earlier, and then another woman later on that was, we were working actually in a factory together and I had a brief, quite brief sexual relationship with her. So I'm moving more and more towards that and then this feeling

about, that's the thing that I want to be doing, not being with this guy in a relationship but...

Janet: So I went on a weekend, I'd seen a thing, I can't remember where. I think it was Kenric had got an advert somewhere about a thing that was on in Leeds, and I thought, right, I'm going to go to that. I'm still with the guy and that but that was in mid-Wales where I was living. So I came up and went out on the Kenric thing, and at that event met this other woman who we kind of fell for each other on that night.

Janet: So I guess then I'm moving more proactively towards, this is the thing I want and I'm doing that. So I think that kind of really answers your question, maybe.

Evelyn: So a gradual move. So then when you realised where your sexual orientation lay, how did you find your people? How did you find your folk? Was there a certain look?

Janet: I think that's more... It's a shift. There's a shift from oh, it's cool to be bisexual era within the heteronormative world, and then when I'd gone up to Leeds and got involved with this other woman, then I kind of stayed there, although my mother, I was going back and to from Hebden Bridge because my mother lived there, but I moved in with this woman I was involved with really briefly because she went off to do something else.

Janet: But then I stayed... I moved to Leeds and stayed there, and so I was within a lesbian kind of... There were a few of us and stayed there. So I didn't move back to anywhere, I stayed in Leeds and lived in Leeds for about five or six years, but got involved with another woman actually, two or three not loads but one or two relationships within that and then latterly was involved with a woman who had two children. And then I was living with her, proper living with her for about six years in the end. So it was a kind of... Just by being there and being involved with that group of people, then I met all different women. Lesbians then. And did all sorts of things.

Evelyn: So when we're talking, is this late '70s, early '80s, roughly?

Janet: I'll tell you exactly when it is. This is a piece of writing that we did. So it was in the...

Evelyn: '94, oh sorry, I'm going back too far.

Janet: So it was the '90s. And then '94, so I think I got involved with someone else in the late '90s and then we sort of broke up and I was involved with someone else for another couple of years.

Evelyn: So did you belong to particular lesbian organisations or social groups? You went to a Kenric, but...

Janet: That was then but this was a brilliant time, actually, because I was involved with the one person in Leeds but then we broke up and then I got involved

with this person whose name [inaudible 00:09:36] but I'm not... We, quite early on, saw this advert in the local alternative paper and it's called Leeds Other Paper, you know there's always a photocopied version of alternative papers. At the time, this is pre-internet, pre-anything, so it wasn't, this was actual paper. Anyway, we'd seen this advert for this theatre group beginning. So we went along to the meetings and joined in and it was a sexual health project set up by a gentleman who worked for MESMAC at the time, and I'm not naming individual names but I'm saying [inaudible 00:10:23] actually in the community. It was set up as a sexual health project.

Janet: Every week, we met every Wednesday and we wrote our lives basically. Then we went and performed it all around the country at various gay dives and pubs and London Pride, and we wrote, this person who was my partner at the time, we were creative, we wrote together creatively, basically about our lives. And it was humorous and not just humor but there wasn't any... there was very little... and even representations with lesbians. So we were writing, this is a person, she had some children, all of the stuff that went with the challenges of moving from a heterosexual relationship to being together.

Janet: It was this time of Section 28, kind of at its height and its most pernicious and hideous time. It was a culture of fear is what it did. No cases were ever heard as part of Section 28, but there was a culture of fear. So, within that we were writing and acting and speaking-

Evelyn: And performing.

Janet: Yeah, and performing it. It was a very powerful time for me. In terms of, I'd not been out very long and I'd been in a heteronormative relationship, quite isolated within that since my mid-teens to my, this is 25 that I actually came out. So I hadn't been around the politics of it, and I hadn't spent any time around or in the company of gay men and hearing those stories, and it was right in the hideous time of the HIV/AIDS crisis. So I was immediately involved with that and political about that and that was a really powerful time.

Evelyn: So for the sake of future listeners who may not know much about this, tell us a little bit about what was happening in the late '80s and give us a bit of a picture maybe about that sense of uncertainty and fear in the community around HIV and the onslaught from the Thatcher administration?

Janet: Well, it's interesting because a good friend of mine, who I'm not going to name but... sensible, leave that up to her to do that but she has been quite out about her experience. She's the person that introduced the book Jenny Lives with Eric and Martin into the school's library and it was one of the things that was a catalyst for the introduction of clause 28 by the Thatcher government, which you can read around the politics of that, there are many people that speak about that and look at the context of the time.

Janet: But it did mean that anybody who was out, I mean there were swathes of teachers that were not able, anybody that was working in the context of

children or any family service was fear, it was a culture of fear around being encountering problems within your employment, teachers were fearful of losing their jobs or being... Or being, and it did happen I think, but it's out of context to me but I remember the stories of people being accused of all sorts of things. What was your question, I forgot your question again now. Oh, the context of the time?

Evelyn: Yeah.

Janet: Yeah. So for example, I was involved with a person with children, not young children... Well, young, they're sort of under 10 and early teen, very young, that age teens. There was a lot of difficulty in the context of a breakdown of a heterosexual relationship, the courts, where there's a battle around children and custody, the courts at the time were finding in favour of men over women if you identified a non-normative sexuality, if you identified as a lesbian then-

Evelyn: You were treated as pervert.

Janet: Exactly. And the women were at risk and did, I know some women who did lose their children [inaudible 00:15:19]. And in the context of the relationship that I was in, there was a protracted court case where the father involved, despite being a violent person, the courts, it was a battle to-

Evelyn: For her to keep her children?

Janet: Not to keep, not keep them at this stage but to be allowed access to them and him be prevented having access. This is an abusive person. So the context was really harsh for lesbians, particularly around children, but around property, women lost houses and resources because of that law.

Janet: And I think the thing is, it was the fear. I mean, Latex Theatre Group, the theatre group I'm talking about, we went... It was a wonderful thing really. There was a youth worker whose name I can't remember... I can remember but I'm not going to search for that, but who worked in the youth service in Bradford, invited Latex, the theatre group, to come along and do a piece of work with young people, a youth, what do you call it?

Evelyn: Like a youth club?

Janet: Not a club no but it was... she was working with them, working with young people. But invited Latex to come along and do some work with them. So it was a wonderful thing in that we went there, initially performed our show, the show was made up of a sketch format where we'd all written stuff. So I would be performing and reading my stuff, but everybody, we performed a series of sketches for the young people.

Janet: And then we had a workshop with them where we wrote a whole other show together where they talked about their anxieties and... What's the word when you make an assumption about something? Yeah, the assumptions that they made about sexuality and so on. It became a really

positive thing because they're talking about... They were from a Catholic school, as it goes, and they were saying, "We get shown films about abortion and all that but we never get any sex education."

Janet: So in a way we were working with a group of very angry young people that weren't angry about being exposed to homosexuals talking about gay sex and lesbians, they weren't fearful of our life but they were angry about the lack of support and resources they got for their own lives, not about sexual orientation but just about sexual identity in any form.

Janet: So it was really interesting to be working with some people who the state would assume would be damaged by an interaction with us or would be fearful or whatever, but actually it was the reverse.

Evelyn: They were longing for it.

Janet: Exactly. We had a fantastic relationship with them. It became an exploration and a shared time where you could debunk many myths about things and this fear about HIV, there was so much fear and it was parallel to the emergence of HIV in a UK context where people were vulnerable to contracting that virus and the things that were... the streams of things that were based on a culture that was impacted by a right wing... Tories, not, it wouldn't matter what, but impacted by the state or the government on the freedom to express things and the services that are available to people. The culture was unsupportive of difference in any form but not just difference but youth.

Janet: And diversity was very... It was a very challenging context to be a young person in but also to be lesbians and gays who were... We'd go performing in clubs where a local lesbian and gay population would come and see the shows and say, "Oh, this is fantastic, we never get this, nobody comes here." Because we were performing way out of the way places, coastal places, different parts of the country, not just... We went and performed at gay pride, that's true, but it wasn't just that, we performed some rough gay pub in some part of the world where they were saying, "Hurry up with your show, we want to get on with the cruise." Do you know what I mean? It wasn't the context of the development of a voice. It was a challenging time, I think, and it was a challenging time for people for lots of reasons.

Evelyn: So what was some of the similarities and differences you found in all the places around the country that you went to?

Janet: Well, for example, some places, Leeds for example, which is where this Latex-

Evelyn: Started.

Janet: ... began, yeah. As part of a sexual health project that was linked to a project called, or I think called AIDS Advice where people, it was a drop-in sort of thing where people could go to get advice about that..So that was in Leeds. I know that Leeds as a city, it's got quite a radical history anyway, there'd

already been quite a lot of political things, not around sexual orientation or whatever but there was... [inaudible 00:21:22] is coming to mind but it's not them as a group but there were various political groups that had a voice in that city in that time, it was well known, and around sexuality there was a... And you may or may not recall this, maybe, I can't remember the exact time around this but there was a big thing around the lesbian sex wars and the anti-SM sex time, that might have come a bit later.

Janet: But in... Leeds was famous for being radical in some ways and not in other ways. So those places then maybe you're more likely to have something you can connect into as... [phone ringing interrupts] Sorry about that. Do you want to...

Evelyn: So we've had a slight pause there. We're in Leeds and you were saying that somewhere like Leeds, because it has a radical-

Janet: Already a political history around a variety of different...

Evelyn: That you could kind of make connections with the group, like Latex Theatre.

Janet: Or they were more likely to be visible. I would say that that, in terms of feminist focus, I would say that Nottingham was similar. I think basically what I'm saying is different cities will have a different atmosphere around sexuality and lesbians, and also it would depend, for example, Greenham Common, Greenham the protest against the... the various protests, anti-nuclear demonstrations, those kind of things were a place where you're likely to get a range of people who were involved in non-normative lifestyles or politics or whatever. I think that lesbians, many lesbians gravitated to Greenham Common as a protest, an anti-war, anti-nuclear protest, or anti-nuclear armaments protest. From that, met other lesbians.

Janet: I know, in fact an ex-partner of mine from around that time, left... Went to Greenham Common to protest against the armaments and got involved with another woman at Greenham Common and then subsequently left her husband and became an out lesbian. I think it was a catalyst for lesbians to meet other lesbians, and we weren't necessarily out, or to meet other women and then-

Evelyn: Things happened.

Janet: Yeah, absolutely. And that would depend where you were. I mean people went from all over the country to Greenham Common, for example, just because to protest against armaments, but that wouldn't... You wouldn't have known that. It's like, you want to go to Greenham because maybe you have an anti-war or an anti-nuclear armaments focus, but you wouldn't have known that. It was a lot of lesbians were-

Evelyn: Would be involved.

Janet: Yeah. But then I guess if you get... I mean I think that's a historic thing that's a challenge, that if you live in a rural area, your access to social and meeting,

a context where you could meet other lesbians is limited if you're in a rural area compared to a city. In a city, chances are you're going to have like what happened for Gay's the Word, you're going to have alternative bookshops, there are alternative bookshops in Manchester. I think you're more likely to have access to alternative... Alternative, that's not the right word, but to non-normative living and people and identities than you are in a... You'll get that more in a city than you would in a rural area.

Janet: And I think that is one of the things that happens, isn't it? It's like, not around sexuality but that's like even back into fairy tails, isn't it? Have your handkerchief tied in a stick over your shoulder to go off to London to make your fortune. But it's a similar sort of thing, that sense of moving from a rural, isolated... Or not just isolated but not having a peer group around you in rural areas is... I'd say that partly answers your question, like what... I don't know about other cities, I've not... I went to the original... the nearest cities to me were Leeds and then Manchester. I'm the original, that march that featured in the film, it's been out at the moment. Are You Proud?, have you seen that film?

Evelyn: No.

Janet: It's worth a lookup. Note to self.

Evelyn: Note to self.

Janet: Note to self, interviewer-

Evelyn: On my list.

Janet: ... look up, yeah, Are You Proud? because it features decades of lesbian, gay, and transsexual, transgender, trans... LGBT histories within that film. There's some old footage and material.

Evelyn: And so you were on a march?

Janet: That was the anti-Section 28. I mean, the Section 28 marches, I went to London to the big one there, but also there was a Manchester march which actually was an incredible... It was a time when I was politicising myself, I was becoming more political myself, and...

Evelyn: Because the Manchester march was the one where the London contingent booked the pink express train, if I recall correctly.

Janet: Er, I don't know the answer to that.

Evelyn: They booked a train from London to Manchester and filled it up with LGBT and decided it was a really good idea to serve pink champagne.

Janet: But you're focusing on a thing that's going from London to Manchester, but I'm talking about, I'm in-

Evelyn: You're coming from Leeds to Manchester.

Janet: No, I wasn't in Leeds, I lived in Todmorden with my partner at the time and our focus is that it's not about London at all. I'd probably been to one pride march in London but it wasn't the focus, London, it sort of didn't matter, it wasn't about London. It was about... I was hoping, but I can't find it now, find you a picture, because it was a joyous, joyous thing, because my... I can't find it. My young sister, who passed away, and my mother, I'll find it in a minute, it's worth a look.

Janet: I was starting to be political and my partner that I was talking about, we did move then from Leeds back into Todmorden Hebden Bridge, you know back. And I went on a march with my younger sister and my mother, against Section 28, and it's quite a famous march that features in the film... Well, features in a lot of films, but as a kind of seminal moment of protest because that was... Who's the actor? Ian McKellen, and there's a whole load of footage about him speaking at that march, and speaking, and myself and my partner at the time, my mother and my sister who's sadly no longer with us went on that march.

Janet: It was a very... I mean at the time it was but now I look back on it and think, gosh, that was such an incredible thing, and my mother in that way is quite an amazing woman, who herself is a lapsed Catholic for reasons of I'm not going to... Yeah, her own reasons but they weren't... I always thought, right through my life, I thought it was because she was pregnant with my older sister when she was 19. That's the family wisdom is oh well she lapsed because she got pregnant with Sarah but that's not the case.

Janet: I've recorded myself, my mother telling me this story because it is powerful stuff. She lapsed from Catholicism because she wouldn't do something, she went to a Catholic boarding school and she'd... To make them into proper girls, marriage market girls I guess, they had a debating society every week... A society, a debating thing, which was led by the priest who would be the teacher, what are they called? Anyway, and I wish she could remember what the question was but she can't, but some question came up and she disagreed with it and then the priest at the time saying, "Well, no, you have to agree with this because the Pope says so." She said she experienced it like a bolt going through her head, where she... and she said no. And that was when she knew that she'd lapsed, that she couldn't-

Evelyn: She couldn't just blindly accept that.

Janet: Agree with it because the Pope says so. Which, so you can get the sense that I'm coming from a... my mother wasn't radical in that way through my life but I am coming from being raised by someone who was... When I came out, it was the easiest thing in the world because I'd said to her, I've been going to Leeds and I've met these women and I'm trying to find some way of saying to her, like... She just said, "Do you think you might be like them darling?" Easy as that.

- Janet: She is a person that has very little judgment in those kind of things, which in some ways you think that's surprising coming from a Catholic but then maybe it's not. For her own reasons or whatever she was never anti, or never had a problem around sexuality when I was coming out. And then she was supportive and generous and positive around my relationship with the person I was involved with, with her other children, and then when this... There was a strong sense of I was, had started to become very vocal about the politics of everything because I've just woken up to this, I'm just realising this, so I'm always talking or sharing these thoughts about things that are... That's not right, that's terrible that that's the case, quite a politicised, vocal young person.
- Janet: And then, up until then, I was in my mid-20s when this was all going on and this is when the rise of the political culture that is very oppressive, repressive was happening, and then when this march was... Then it's like, let's all go on this march, and then my young sister, Emma, she had become political also in her own right. So it was a real... I'm looking for this picture, I will find it for you because it's beautiful. It's like me and my mum and my sister on that march and to have that in my own history, I feel proud but also it says a lot about us as a family but also of the time that people were.
- Janet: That's how come the bringing down of the Thatcher government, eventually, around the council tax, the poll tax riots and all that. It was a very, a politicising of times, strongly, in a way that I think is different now because things are done quite differently. And also I speak to, people always, wax lyrical about history don't they in that way? "Oh it's not like the olden days." But in some ways I do know people that kind of miss that kind of opportunity to be really vocal as a group about things that don't feel just and fair in a society.
- Evelyn: So your family together, give us a sense of that day, the sights and the sounds.
- Janet: Give you a sense of it? I will find the picture. The sense of it was I'd been on the Pride in London thing, which is different. Like, going for Pride, that's a... That's a celebratory thing ultimately but it is a political, we're here, like visibility thing. But that, the Section 28 march in Manchester was very much around the streets of Manchester, past public buildings, and then I can't remember whereabouts the speeches were, but the speeches with Ian McKellen and one or two other people whose name I've forgotten now.
- Janet: It was a different kind of politicizing around sexual orientation, which became and was a really powerful thing because it's a bit, there were people saying, "Hang on a minute, you can't treat us like this, it's wrong. People have the right to express their identity in these ways." I think it was a real shift in the tide around that, at the time, and it was very... it was new. I'd never, well I'd been to, well anti-nuclear power demonstrations, but it didn't have the same sense because it was me.
- Evelyn: It's very personal.

Janet: Yeah. Nuclear power, that's affecting everybody and we're all going to die but being legislated against personally around sexual orientation when I'm not even, at the time, I'm not even a person that's going to be doing anything that you would want to legislate. It's like, what? It felt confusing and I was angry. It's like there was a different kind of energy to it.

Janet: But also the march itself, it was really a strength gathering thing, the fact that that happened, that I've got my mother and my sister who were...

Evelyn: Because it was an attack on family as well, homosexually as a 'pretended family relationship'.

Janet: We had the banners with that written on, "We are not pretending". T-shirts with that on, "We are not pretending". It's really true. And at the time, because I was involved with somebody with children, it felt really like, you want to legislate against us, let's do it. It was very personal. But personal in that way of group personal in that actually this means all of us are going to be affected by this, and that feeling of the other things that were very visible at the time, and Operation Spanner, do you know about that?

Evelyn: No.

Janet: There were some men, gay men, who were imprisoned for having sex with other men in their own home, in their own bedroom, their own home. That was a really... I mean it was really not all right because they went to prison. I think that, from some other things that I'm involved in, Queer the Pier and that, I think that they're not long, or they may be still in prison. They were sentenced, they were imprisoned for having a particular type of sex, you might have different views about it, but in their own home.

Janet: The idea that that can happen, that you're going to be legislated against about things you do. Even in private, where you're being pressured. It's like, I don't mind you lesbians and gays as long as you don't do it in public. That was quite a thing, you know, don't do it in public, as if that makes... the shame, the idea of the shame of it, but the idea that you can legislate against what people will do in their own bedroom... It was a march of not about that but there were...

Evelyn: Lots of strands coming in.

Janet: Yeah, coming together around that time and I think that's what it felt like, a powerful thing to be doing, just like, no, we're not standing for this.

Evelyn: Because in some ways, Section 28 brought the community together.

Janet: It's true.

Evelyn: Because it was a common adversary, if you like.

Janet: Yeah. I mean I guess in the way that the council tax, you know I went on the poll tax marches, that's the one that I think ultimately brought down the

Thatcher government because then it was a mass coming together, and in a way, that affected everybody, because plenty of people were like, "No, we're not paying that," whereas sexuality, or sexual orientation is a different focus in some ways, but it's true. The idea of big marches about things, something that was on the rise, in a way that I think maybe that was of a time, because I don't think you necessarily encounter that in the same way. And of course because it's before the internet.

Janet: I mean one of those things that's amazing, there was no internet so we weren't planning marches based on telling everybody on the internet, so in some ways it was quite a powerful... Just get a drink of water, a powerful sort of mobilisation of feeling and strength about, a rebellious strength about the idea that you can be limited in what you do. The theatre group, which went on a long time, actually.

Evelyn: The Latex Theatre Group?

Janet: Yeah. We were writing and performing stuff for a few years and then the relationship that I had at the time, we'd moved to a different location, not in Leeds anymore and it was more challenging. I think for everybody involved in Latex it was more challenging to continue that because people, people's lives move on in different ways and we weren't as focused in that location. And maybe there's a sense that the politics is shifting or people are finding different ways to do things or... I'm trying to think what the time scale of the internet, coming in, there would have been different shifts in things anyway, but personally, aside from the partners at the time, moved out of Leeds to another place, and I got involved with somebody else. I'm smiling because it's like...

Janet: So that relationship in the form that it was changed and I got involved with someone else. What was your question? I've lost my thought, I was thinking-

Evelyn: Moving on beyond Latex Theatre, what happens for you next?

Janet: Yeah, so Latex, it carried on as long as it could but then I'd moved away, various people have moved away so it didn't carry on in that form and the relationship that I was in...

Evelyn: Came to an end?

Janet: That relationship came to an end and I was involved with someone else and moved location completely. So the focus of my life changed in that way anyway.

Evelyn: So what did you move on to next, kind of professionally, if you like?

Janet: Well, I went and did undergrad, I did a degree in Huddersfield, which... It was human ecology, it was called, doesn't exist as a thing anymore, but it combined environmental human science, biological science environmental science, and social and political structures in one degree.

Janet: So that also, because I was coming from a place where I... Well, I was political in my teens, and then a sort of wilderness period where I wasn't really aware of any thing and then I came out and got involved with Latex and did stuff. So my political awareness was grown but in terms of other things, I was kind of not that knowledgeable and I think that that degree was really helpful in that because it had a focus on international, on global, global politics, global issues. It was a kind of a fast forward to an awareness of all sorts of things personally.

Janet: Then the types of things politically that I was involved with, probably followed from there, but I've forgotten your question again, sorry.

Evelyn: How you moved on professionally and possibly even politically as well, beyond the Latex years.

Janet: Yeah.

Evelyn: Sounds a bit dodgy really when you say it like that.

Janet: Dodgy, there was all sorts of dodgy but funny too. I went and did-

Evelyn: Your degree.

Janet: ... in human ecology in Huddersfield, and then after that I decided I wanted to volunteer, you know after the degree I'm looking for things to do because obviously you're not studying, you're not in uni. And I went to a newly established community gardens in Bradford, in West Yorkshire, which is... So I was commuting there and got involved with that, which is... There was a growing, there was allotments..Well, the estate, everybody had gardens. Council had big gardens, that was the good thing about that development of council housing in its time, and then we had a community project, community garden project, where there was two buildings and different stuff where actually people could either borrow tools to garden but also have support and the skills to bring people together, where an older generation know how to garden, because we all did that, and then how to grow food as well because they did that. You know what I mean, there were skills-

Evelyn: Yeah, there were certain skills there but it might be younger, urban communities.

Janet: Well, this is not an urban community in that sense, well it is... it's a housing estate but it wasn't a city, it was a big town ... Yeah. So it also turned out to be just fantastic, so you're bringing people to learn how to grow vegetables but then there was also a kitchen there so we'd have these, growing what's been produced and I started off as a volunteer but then I did some fundraising through European money, set up a post so I got a job, ultimately... I think what the strand of that, I don't suppose it matters in that much detail but basically it was a food policy across the whole of Bradford district, ultimately, because that's when my health, whilst I was working at

the community gardens, that's when my first was diagnosed with MS, so I had a period of quite long-term sick and I wasn't okay.

Janet: And then when I went back to work, as a way of me still having to work, I couldn't do really the work that I had been doing before but then I went into food policy. So I went all over Bradford district in supporting people. Or looking at all of the ways that food was being... All of the stuff that Jamie Oliver did later, I was doing that 10 years before with the dieticians and the community dieticians, like supporting people, because there was a generation gap or a gap where, once domestic science had been deemed not the thing, so young people weren't learning how to cook in the same way that they had been and it had all gone on to technology and different things that people were learning in schools.

Janet: So there was this generational, there was a group of people that didn't know anything about it but then at a community project, you've got an older generation. So it was a wonderful intergenerational thing where you could bring people together and have the older people supporting the younger people. So we've got a community kitchen, we've got food growing, we've got the dieticians joining in to tell us how to make it healthy enough.

Evelyn: Fantastic.

Janet: Yeah. And it's what I was saying, look, if you've cooked something and it tastes terrible, just put a load of tomato ketchup in it. As long as you've got sharp taste in there then you can eat it. It was a lovely thing that supported people to do things without it being this big sort of judgmental, you can't cook environment.

Evelyn: Yeah, top down thing.

Janet: Dieticians are brilliant at supporting people to get food and feed their kids. You know, feed their kids, I don't mean that, but to produce meals that are nutrition but also just get people eating vegetables. It was massive. And because we're growing vegetables, I set up the whole five a day project that then was broadened out to be the whole of Bradford district, which went all the way up to North Yorkshire and the edges of Bradford district is huge, and we were looking at that. We had celebration of food days in the community venues, community centers across Bradford district and then there was one where it was a high African-Caribbean population, so you'd get people cooking kind of what they wanted, so whatever the community wanted to cook to support people to... It was a real, of its time, quite a...

Evelyn: Cutting edge.

Janet: Yeah, and quite positive. And like I say, Jamie Oliver was doing a bit similar, you know the schools thing because we were-

Evelyn: Trying to persuade the schools to cook.

- Janet: Discussing, yeah, all of that. So yeah. And personally, for me, it became something that it was possible for me to do until ultimately I'm medically retired from that job because my health was deteriorating in a way that made it limiting.
- Evelyn: And as a wheelchair user within the LGBT community, have you felt there was extra support, have you felt it very inclusive, or has it been problematical?
- Janet: In terms of wheelchair use, has only been true for a certain timescale because, although I have MS, that went on for a long time without me needing. It's only been about the last five years, really, I think I needed to use a wheelchair. Was it six years? Anyway, I've lost time, but you know it wasn't the whole of that time.
- Janet: But I think one of the things that's challenging is that on an individual level, people are mostly supportive. Within my friendship group they're really, people are supportive, but as a community overall when it's a lot, been focused historically around clubbing, more social venues that are about drinking or... not drinking but you know what I mean, that kind of venue. And none of them are accessible, none of them are physically accessible. When you look in any town. But particularly in Brighton, any venue that you want to get into is likely not wheelchair accessible. So it isn't that LGBT people specifically are not inclusive, but actually society is not inclusive of people who use mobility equipment.
- Janet: So you put those two things together and also the LGBT people as a group, resource wise, probably don't have, like venues. When Latex was performing, amongst... LGBT people historically, you'd be in the upstairs room of some pub, some rough pub in the arse end of nowhere, not necessarily venues that had any physical, inclusive perspective as part of the ethos or the way that things operated. And that's, like I say, you've got a minority within a minority so we're doubly impacted because actually the world's not accessible anyway.
- Janet: So I would say, I mean... It's hard to give that kind of... Overall, I would say I don't think that the LGBT community is less inclusive as a group but also in general you would think, and it depends what the context is but overall, you'd say it was inclusive in terms of minority group is already challenged in terms of how inclusive society is. So you've already got a bit of an inclusive take on it. And generally speaking if I get in venues then people are lovely, or that's a whole another layer, which is about actually what does your sexual identity become if you're a wheelchair user, do you know what I mean?
- Janet: And that's really true, that there is a struggle around what your identity is once you start to use mobility equipment, that's a very visible sense that you're not, you're different. It's a difference that's challenging. And your capacity to be involved and engaged in things is challenged but overall I'd say that the LGBT community tend to be as or more inclusive around attitudes towards me as a person with a disability, which is a good thing, but

that doesn't have money attached to it so it's very difficult for any group to maintain-

Evelyn: Provide a physical access, even though-

Janet: Yeah, exactly.

Evelyn: ... the possibly emotional, and the-

Janet: More so, a bit, yeah. That's really true.

Evelyn: Because it's the, obviously you're accessing mainstream national health services, probably, rather more than everyday folk who aren't affected in the way that you are. Is there any sense that they embrace your sexuality as part of the whole package of caring?

Janet: The health service?

Evelyn: The health service.

Janet: I've been really fortunate.

Evelyn: You do live in Brighton, which I suppose helps.

Janet: Yeah but I haven't lived here the whole time. I started off in Leeds then I was Halifax, that area, and Brighton is relatively recent. And I've been back too, back up north for a couple years in amongst that. But I would say that health professionals, already have an inclusion a bit. It's improving. And I've had... I don't know whether I've been lucky. Because years back, a few years back, I had a fantastic GP. She was really on it about things, because I did a lot of stuff, or looking at a perspective at that time, about am I excluded? Are assumptions made about sex and sexuality about me, just because you think something, or an assumption rather than a known thing.

Janet: But then having a positive attitude to that and making it more like you will be able to access health services that are appropriate to you. There's quite a lot of work done within the community, and also linked with health professionals coming to... I mean in Brighton, yeah, there's an LGBT disabilities group, and then health professionals or people from the local authority and the health services will come and speak.

Janet: I think that you're right, that in that sense that it is similar to what we were saying before, in which city and in which location you're in will impact what the service is like, but also I do know that Manchester, different places, I mean I don't know where in London, you know more than me about that but I think there are boroughs that are better in that than others, and the ones where it's good, I think health professionals generally are already positive because they're not making a judgment about it, they want to know things about your health. So if your sexuality impacts on your health, then-

Evelyn: They'll need to know.

Janet: Mobilize the appropriate resources to support you with that. Or I've been lucky enough, had some really lovely health professionals.

Evelyn: And you haven't found that they've sort of negated any kind of sexuality whatsoever, because as sometimes with older people, it's as if...

Janet: You're old so you can't possibly have sex, that kind of thing?

Evelyn: Yeah.

Janet: I don't know because I'm not that old a person at this stage but also there is a... I think the here are assumptions. Like, I would guess, I don't know, but if you're a heteronormative person with MS, then the whole focus is about erectile dysfunction, because that's the view of sex, that's what sex means. Penile penetration is what that means. So if you've got a condition that does affect that then that's the focus of health professionals.

Janet: And that isn't my experience, so that's, I don't know whether it's different. For me, I think I'm vocal, I'm able to articulate things, but I don't think I've really found a need to... I mean I've variously been in or out of relationships. It assumes that you're having sex, which I think is a different thing, isn't it? Depending on the culture of the group that you're in. Like now, yeah, some lesbians are [inaudible 00:58:24], won't know because it's not me, but there is a kind of a one night stand type of thing that's more, but that's not true for me. But it wasn't true for me before.

Janet: So I don't know, I've got nothing to compare in a direct way and I don't know, like if you were interviewing a gay man with MS, I mean you may ascertain that the impact on sexual engagement is different. I mean, I was chatting with some people the other day where it's all that thing about the new way of getting off with people is Grindr or whatever it is for the women, I've forgotten what. The whole way of dating, the dating scene is all done differently now anyway.

Janet: And because I'm not doing that myself, particularly, I'm not as concerned about it, I'm older. If I was younger, I don't know whether it's an age thing or what. I mean, plenty of people are involved in the dynamics of dating and more... You know, generating relationship opportunities but it's not something I would be able to speak on. I don't know what your question was, how far away I've moved from your question.

Evelyn: I think we both wandered along the road there. So I'm interested, now you've... the period at which you've been diagnosed with MS, but not so impacted upon in the early stages. Were you doing different jobs or projects at that point?

Janet: Well, no because the job that I was doing that I was telling you about, the community gardens job that then turned into the food policy job, then that's the one I retired from. So after that I've done no paid employment around that. But I've been doing a whole bunch of other things in amongst that. Now, like locally now, I'm involved with all sorts of things that are more...

still activism but social. We're putting on a Queer the Pier exhibition. That's like, I've been quite involved with that in recent months.

Evelyn: So what's that going to look like? I thought the pier looked fairly queer as it was, but.

Janet: It's not the pier, it's the museum, so it's a space in the museum where we're generating all sorts of historic stuff about people who performed on the pier, different things related, different minority groups really, because that's how it's worked out that they're involved in performance, linked to the pier. And that's an exhibition within the museum.

Evelyn: Excellent. And when's that?

Janet: Starts in beginning of December, I think.

Evelyn: Sounds exciting. What have you been doing with that?

Janet: Well, I'm looking over there now because... I saw it, I found on my bench, because I don't know if you're familiar with the pier, are you? How familiar with the pier?

Evelyn: Yeah.

Janet: So there's rows of benches along and then there's the buildings in the middle with all kinds of acts and amusements and sort of performance space, but the benches are, people usually go and have a beer, pier, sit on a bench, eating ice cream, around and around or whatever.

Janet: So I found a bench online, on eBay, and bought it. And then it's as we speak being... That'd be an interesting picture. I was looking at this. [showing pictures on iPad] Yeah, so I bought it, and... This is interesting. This is a model that someone's made of Vesta Tilley, who was a lesbian.

Evelyn: Oh yes.

Evelyn: She was-

Janet: They've made it fantastic, I think.

Evelyn: Yeah, Vesta Tilley was a, well, a drag act essentially, wasn't she? That's a model puppet, with Vesta Tilley dancing.

Janet: That's part of the Queer the Pier, they've made that, which I think, god. People have some skills.

Evelyn: So that's a fun project to do.

Janet: Yeah. I mean, here we are. That was the bench, well this is when it's being moved into my friend's... it was collected from where it was miles away.

Evelyn: So this is the bench you bought.

Janet: Yeah. But, I should get the actual... So that's the one I bought, but... I'll have to go to find it.

Evelyn: Is it being transformed for the museum?

Janet: Well, it will be, I hope. Well, it is. Yeah, there we go. [showing the photo] This will be relevant, because why, like that's the difference, that's the... I'll turn it the other way, if it's bigger, but that's the benches, that's what they look like on the pier. So this is what is being done to the one I found that was roughing in someone's garden on the other side of Sussex somewhere and I bought it.

Evelyn: And it's going to be stripped down and brought back to the pristine condition that it would have been-

Janet: Yeah, and be part of the exhibition in the library. This is in the museum where the exhibition is on. So that'll be in there. And Vesta Tilley, there's a whole load of physical artefacts and tons of posters and things that were associated. Well, you know what it's like, like pier, like what's going on, there'll be loads of posters.

Evelyn: A poster every week, yeah.

Janet: Different things. And what we're finding is queer performance, there's a connection to LGBT identity or Queer the Pier, because chances are there's loads of performers, or even not just performers but loads of things that people are involved with, linked to the pier, that will be queer focused or non-normative identity.

Evelyn: So you've still got a toe in the water of queer performance and queer culture?

Janet: Yeah. And a celebratory way and ways of doing things, yeah, absolutely.

Evelyn: So, looking back, say to the period of the march at Section 28, to the present day, there's been a massive unfolding of different legislations and so on. So do you feel the impact of those changes? Do you feel that as a lesbian woman you've got more of a voice?

Janet: More of a voice in what sense?

Evelyn: Do you feel heard because the different legislations have led to a more liberal society or better attitudes?

Janet: It's interesting what that is because Section 28 was only off the statute, Blair took it off very late. It's very recent that that was... So in a way, I wouldn't say it's to do with the legislation but I do think that for everybody, the whole of society has had a shift over the period of time, you're talking since that was introduced, whatever, what was...

Evelyn: I mean the legislation goes on in the background but the important thing is the change in attitude and whether they're tied or not, of course, is debatable.

Janet: I would say that that's been happening anyway, so it's not to do with that. So as an individual, I would say that the movement in things anyway, regardless of legislation or not, over the last 20, 30 years, that actually it's more... It's opened out for everyone. And I think one of the things that's awful is the recognition that if you're bringing laws, or if you link to the legislation now, is if you're bringing a culture that is... I'm trying to remember what it is, I'll kick myself for not remembering what it is. Brighton, Brighton, and in London recently, two lesbians were beaten up on a bus. Did you see this imagery of that?

Evelyn: Yeah.

Janet: And two guys were beaten up in Brighton, like the homophobic incidents of assault and negative attitude is, it follows along with any sort of culture, which the current prime minister and people are I would say contributory to that. It's like, it's getting worse again. And right wing religious attitudes and so on, that is, I'd say the negativity of that is on the rise.

Janet: So even though you're saying, oh is it better than then? On one level it is, but on another level it's a wave-

Evelyn: Feel the tide is turning a bit.

Janet: ... and it's turning back against minority groups in all sorts, but specifically around sexuality.

Evelyn: So thinking of when-

Janet: Which is upsetting.

Evelyn: Oh, it is. Very.

Janet: In a deep way. Because that bit of you, when you're that age that I was doing that, you think, ah, it's happening, it's getting better. It's that things are getting attitude and now I don't feel that and I feel upset by that, the fact that it's a backwards feeling.

Evelyn: It's distressing.

Janet: Massively. Because in this country, we're lucky because I'm not imprisoned for my sexuality and neither are those young men. They did have the crap beaten out of them and people are killed, and particularly violence against transgender people is up, a rise of that in this country. But then if you look internationally, it's illegal to be a homosexual in a lot of the countries. There's a map, people in Stonewall produce a map about that and be aware of where it's still illegal and where you're executed.

Janet: If you follow any kind of LGBT press kind of thing, well in mainstream if it's bad enough it makes mainstream, but in general the behaviour towards LGBT people internationally, in some countries, yes it's hideous that people were beaten up, and I'm not minimising what happens to people here, it does happen, but the scale of it, when you think that people are murdered every day in other countries and anything that's quite visible, which I think then you come across what you were saying, I think you referenced it and I can't remember-

Evelyn: That you can be political just walking down the street.

Janet: Exactly.

Evelyn: Particularly with trans women in particular.

Janet: I think that I'm less visible because I'm an older lesbian who uses a wheelchair, so I'm less-

Evelyn: Less of a target.

Janet: Yeah.

Evelyn: Potential target.

Janet: For different reasons, I think that I have bad behaviour towards me for being a disabled person, probably in equal measure around sexuality. But then I'm not mixing places where if I am out as a lesbian, that that is more visible, attracts negative attention just like you say. I'm in Brighton, so... Well, it depends what parts of Brighton, any city has its dark places. But I'd say in general it does feel that what is happening to people in other locations in the world is hideous.

Evelyn: It is hideous.

Janet: Hideous, beyond hideous.

Evelyn: Scary.

Janet: Yeah. Particularly if that's, if you're visible for whatever reason around an identity. Any identity. Trans people beaten up, aren't they? It's like a minority group that is... People can be vocal internationally around some things and it's upsetting. Then I do think, more I think that one thing about challenging health and physical mobility issues is that it makes me upset about what is, so what is my political capacity now in these... I'm a clicktivist, I respond to every petition going about things, but does there come a point where you think, well that's not really good enough?

Janet: I think then I get upset about my health because I kind of think I don't have capacity for activism in a way that I would like to. Not just the marching but just the mental energy to get it together. You know my friend has a lovely,

well you know Jane, Jane [inaudible 01:12:30]? We've said something, all right, a name.

Evelyn: Doesn't matter.

Janet: Anyway, she's just done a brilliant, brilliant thing where she went to Manchester and there's a lovely group of... They're all lesbians? Yeah, they're all lesbians. I've met a lot of them. Asylum seekers who were at risk of being deported. One person in particular, Jane went to court and spoke on behalf, and the woman was subsequently got, I think the final celebration was that she got leave to remain... Whatever the term is, it means that she wasn't deported immediately.

Janet: But there's a whole group of them. We finished up, we all travelled. Well, I bumped into them all. Me and Jane travelled up together and another person, and then we met them. Because we were changing trains to go over to Llandudno where Lfest was held this year. So me and Jane were traveling up and then we met, we changed trains at Crewe and then this massive gang of young lasses, full of energy and spark and whatever, and it turns out it was them, it was the group of lesbian asylum seekers that Jane's been working with. We met them on the station.

Janet: Which is a lovely thing, but then overall, it's so... Just, I feel lucky to be here and to live in this country and when you see, and what people go through to be safe, as a whole different level, if you come from a country where you'll be raped or murdered or killed or deported or whatever happens to you. Imprisoned or... And to be able to have the capacity, I mean Jane's, very articulate and very knowledgeable and-

Evelyn: Absolutely forthright.

Janet: Absolutely. And was able to speak to the judge in the case, saying, "Hey..." She was together enough to amass all the evidence that she needed to present to the judge to go, "Hang on a minute." And that was successful and I think that that's the possibility of that, to support that kind of activism is the way now, more than a street march in the same way, but the activism that means that you're supporting people within a legal framework.

Evelyn: So when you were thinking of me pitching up here today, was there anything that you wanted to talk about that we haven't touched on?

Janet: Well, probably there is but as you know my medical condition, my health condition, impacts my memory and my brain function, cognitive processing in a particular kind of way, which is a bit sad.

Evelyn: Were you saying you were involved in making a film?

Janet: Oh yeah. Have you not seen the film?

Evelyn: No I haven't.

Janet: All right, my good friend Amanda, she won't mind me saying her name. Was manager of the bookshop, Gay's the Word, when customs and excise raided it for the importation of obscene material. And the story of what happened to her, which I was outraged about at the time and all, we were, like I say, good friends at the time over a pint of beer. I had said to her, "Come on, we must do this." So I interviewed her, made it into a film, and then we've screened that film all over the place, wherever we've got an audience for it, we've screened that film. What was your question, I've lost the thread again.

Evelyn: It was just if that was the you wanted to talk about.

Janet: Well, I think I want to talk to talk about it and I think a lovely thing happened because I went to Jane's place, a bunch of us went at the weekend because she's got loads of friends in the age range down. I was happy, usually, or often on the youngest end of that group that are her mates. But this time there was some other people, younger people, who came along, I can't remember what context she met them in but she's that sort of person that will bring together all ages and all things.

Janet: Going back to your question, that's coming back in my head then I'm going to stop I think because my brain's not doing it, but go on.

Evelyn: Yeah. Talking about film.

Janet: Right, yeah. The thing that, yeah, why the young people is relevant because if I talk to younger people about Section 28, they don't know what you're talking about. There's a sort of a sense that part of the cyclical nature of things is that if we aren't able to support younger people to know that history, which is a lot of your work and what you're involved with, that's massive in that, that actually it's not that the history gets lost, because I won't ever forget that and you'll record it in a particular way, but within the minds and the understanding and the capacities of the people, the younger people, what went before, it's easy for that to drop off as an understanding.

Janet: Then when you do engage people and when Jane, there's a film that was made with the young person that was a friend of mine and I was doing an MA, can't remember what I was in, but she was saying, "Oh I don't have to make a film about my housing co-op or about..." And she'd seen... I don't know. Anyway, I'm saying, "What you should do is..." Obviously, what you should do isn't it? "What would be a good thing to do would be to interview all of these older lesbians that Jane has." So that's what happened.

Janet: So the friend I'm talking about made the film and interviewed Jane and a whole load of the other lesbians that Jane was involved with interviewing. And then it was presented various places. And there were younger people that Ben had interviewed, but were saying, "We didn't know anything, we didn't know about any of this." And I think there's a... That brings the upset feeling in me, thinking, I'm glad you don't know anything about this but also I want you to know because I want you to know what we went through, in a kind of a... You know, we were there, we did that, we stood there.

Janet: You want the younger generations not to... I'm glad they don't go through that but then when you get the edges of people being beaten up, like when it does touch on them then you realize the strength and importance of shared-

Evelyn: History.

Janet: Not just shared history, no, shared expression of the rebellions, not the most ideal world, but to stay in activism against structures of state and religion that will limit your opportunity to express and be involved with whatever your identity, sexual or political, whatever that you feel is appropriate for you to do, where it's limited. Then I want younger people to feel a strength and support of the history of what the rest of us in the other generations went through.

Evelyn: Because it's a role model, it's an example of how they can...

Janet: Maybe you could say that but I think of it much more on a look to yourself, look to it, or see where it is now, because my activism then is not the same as what you will need now. And it's about having an eye on what the possibilities are and what is impacting on you. There's this pressure on young people to do all manner of things now. It's like, actually, is that the new, the fact that you've got to have the right gear, you've got to have the right tech, you've got to have the right clothes.

Janet: I mean for women especially, age old, you've got to have the right body shape, you've got to have the right... there are different things oppressing younger people that I think the thing that I'd like to be able to say and to keep fresh and I think that's one of the things that if you engage intergenerationally, that's what can happen, is that younger people get a sense of, oh, all right, a view of where that history is, one that you can be knowledgeable and then doesn't get lost. The outrage doesn't get lost. But also, the ability to look at what are the oppressive forces impacting you, because they'll be different but...

Evelyn: But you've got to be...

Janet: Well, and like I say, I'm glad that people don't have to deal with things. I'm glad that the possibly of LGBT education is coming into schools. But it's the realization that that's not a done deal because there are still religious schools that can opt out of that and go, "Oh no we're not. We're not teaching that." So then you're getting a new generation of people that are fearful of coming out, that never get to... Do you know what I mean? It never ends, does it, in a way. Until you get at a point where you can feel like people have enough of a voice or that things can be legislated against, not against sexuality, but against oppression. If you could stop a school from being able to not teach LGBT, then that's the new activism isn't it?

Evelyn: Absolutely.

Janet: Okay. On that note I think my brain is done. Unless I've missed a thing.

Evelyn: Not at all. Not at all. So, well I think the younger generation should be grateful and have a lot to learn, I have to say. And many know they need to know and are hungry to be able to understand how they can combat any erosion of the equalities and liberations that people like you have helped fought to put in place for them.

Janet: I think it's a bit like we're going full circle here in a really good way because isn't that what the young people that Latex were working with in that time saying, "Hang on, we don't have the right to education about sexuality on any level. Not about orientation." So I would say that I have utter faith in the youth because... And I utterly support them. And I don't expect any special kind of respect just because I did all that stuff. I think it's helpful and a good thing. It's a good thing if history is recognised and people's contributions, you know it's like people supporting people that were blown to bits in a war, isn't it? It's like, I feel that now, I feel deeply moved by watching what particularly young men went through in terms of going to war. I'm absolutely not, I don't believe in war. I think stop war, that's what the focus is. But knowing that having empathy for what people go through in the pursuit of their life, I think it is important to express that to young people and support them, support young people too.

Evelyn: Absolutely. So on that note, I will just say thank you so much for your time and your energy. I think I've worn you out.

Janet: No, not at all, I'd be worn out anyway, it's okay.

Evelyn: It's been a real privilege to hear about your life. Thank you so much, Janet.

Janet: Thank you. You're welcome.