

Out On An Island volunteers recorded 17 oral history interviews which are available at [www.outonanisland.co.uk](http://www.outonanisland.co.uk)

The interviewees shared their memories of being LGBTQ+ on the Isle of Wight. The interviews are archived at Carisbrooke Castle Museum.

Each interview is around 1 hour long but you don't have to listen to the full hour as you'll find selected below specific parts of 8 of the interviews and highlighted (with timestamps/TS ) how these parts link to specific curriculum topics and issues.

**Sydney Cardew**



Sydney was born in 1987, she is a transgender lesbian. The interview focuses on her transitioning journey and life in a rural, close knit community, Rookley. It is largely positive and discusses gender fluidity.

**Listen** to Sydney's interview: <https://outonanisland.co.uk/2021/08/26/sydney-cardew/>

**Curriculum links:**

PSHE – identity, gender (TS 0.54 – 2.32); family life (TS 2.32 – 2.56); IW Pride (TS 42.40 to 47.52); support for trans people (TS 50.40 – 55.33)  
English – feminist and science fiction authors (TS 25.20 – 28.05)  
History – importance of oral histories (TS 1.21 – 2.00)  
Content warning: the interview contains themes of suicide (TS 15.00 – 17.15) and genitalia (TS 1hr 17 – 1hr 19)

**Rosa MacCormack**



Rosa was born in 1954 in London, she is a lesbian. In the interview she talks about the difficulties she faced being a lesbian in London at the time of Section 28. She moved to the Island in 2003 where she volunteered for the Lesbian & Gay Switchboard.

**Listen** to Rosa's interview: <https://outonanisland.co.uk/2021/08/26/rosa-mccormack/>

**Curriculum links:**

PSHE – coming out to your family, relationships at school (TS 2.38 – 9.29)  
Going out, masculinity/femininity (TS 18.50 – 22.30)  
History/Law – Section 28, homophobic violence and protests (TS 11.35 – 18.00)  
Community, challenging homophobia, lesbian and gay switchboard (TS 22.30 – 31.49)  
Content warning – Violence. Rosa talks about how a woman was hit in the face with a bottle in a homophobic attack (TS 18.12 – 18.40).

**Robin Ford**



Robin was born on the Island in 1942 and identifies as queer. Robin's interview reflects the extreme challenges faced by gay men at this time and the time of Section 28 and their impact on his mental health. He talks about his work as a Teacher and public life as a Councillor and Mayor on the Isle of Wight. Robin's poetry collections are published by Cinnamon Press.

**Listen** to Robin's interview: <https://outonanisland.co.uk/2021/08/26/robin-ford/>

**Curriculum links:**

PSHE – school life, trying to be straight, first relationship aged 20 (5.19 – 9.50)  
LGBT History – the word 'homosexual'; Lord Montague (1.05 – 5.00); life as an English Teacher at the time of Section 28 (27.28 – 30.55)  
Law – changes in the law, Pride (36.30 – 42.10)  
English – Language IW County Press describes a 'self-confessed homosexual' (45.52 – 46.42)  
Content warning: Explicit sexual language (23.30 – 23.45); Suicide, overdose (17.05 – 17.30)

**Karl Love**



Karl was born in 1961, he is a gay man. The interview focuses on his move to the Isle of Wight in 1992 as the first young person's outreach worker for sexual health. This is a positive story of Karl's community role and work as an IW Councillor.

**Listen** to Karl's interview: <https://outonanisland.co.uk/2021/08/24/karl-love/>

**Curriculum Links:**

PSHE and History – Karl highlights the so-called 'AIDS budget' funding for the Island (2.58 – 10.35)  
Geography/LGBT History – inclusive venues: Tollgate, Pugwash barge, The Crab Shack, Seaview (28.20 – 33.20)  
LGBT hidden community on the Island, life in a rural area, impact of AIDS (10.35 – 18.00)  
History and Government & Politics – Appointment of first Police LAGLOs (Lesbian and Gay Liaison Officers), Hate Crime, NHS funding (42.50 – 53.30)

**Michelle Norcott**



Michelle is a transgender female who lives in West Wight. In the interview Michelle talks about her parents' attempts to make her more masculine, her marriages and four children. She also highlights the lack of support for transgender people when she came out aged 60.

**Listen** to Michelle's interview: <https://outonanisland.co.uk/2021/08/24/michelle-norcott/>

**Curriculum links:**

PSHE – crossdressing, coming out, family counselling (18.10 – 20.30)  
Transitioning, trans activism (21.50 – 29.02)  
NHS group, Time For T, parents of LGBTQ+ children (35.39 – 39.00)  
Life as a transgender parent, gender roles, male privilege (39.22 – 48.00)



**Lucy Benton**



Lucy is a transgender woman who moved to the Isle of Wight in 1997. In the interview Lucy talks about her early gender dysphoria, shyness and anxiety she faced, knowing from an early age that she wanted to live as a woman. This is a positive interview, illustrating a supportive community on the Island, in contrast to the Midlands where she was born.

**Listen** to Lucy's interview: <https://outonanisland.co.uk/2021/08/24/lucy-benton/>

**Curriculum links:**

PSHE – experimenting with gender expression as a child, home life (06.00 – 10.10)

Becoming your authentic self, transgender dressing services (18.39 – 26.30)

Moving to the Island & role models (26.30 – 29.55)

Transitioning in your 40's, mental health and self love (29.55 – 35.50)

Acceptance and joy, Island life compared to life in Birmingham, support, Time For T Group & gender reassignment surgery (37.47 – 49.40)

**Melissa Gilmore**



Melissa is non-binary and moved to the Isle of Wight aged 8. The interview is a positive affirmation of the joys and benefits of being part of the LGBTQ+ community if you have a supportive family and friends.

Listen to Melissa's interview: <https://outonanisland.co.uk/2021/08/24/melissa-gilmore/>

**Curriculum links:**

PSHE – Coming out to friends and family, bisexuality, homophobia/biphobia (4.42 – 11.15); the joy & delight of being queer, sense of community (34.40 – 37.53)

University life, confidence, coming out to parents and grandparents, religion (17.20 – 23.00)

Geography/PSHE – life in London and the Isle of Wight, coming out scenarios to your GP, at work, privilege (24.25 – 29.25)

**Karen Wright**



Karen is a lesbian who came to the Isle of Wight with her parents and brother when she was 6 months old. The interview shows how being LGBTQ+ impacts on a person's mental health from coming out to family to internalised feelings of homophobia and confusion.

**Listen** to Karen's interview: <https://outonanisland.co.uk/2021/08/24/karen-wright/>

**Curriculum links:**

PSHE – family life, same sex attraction (0.00 – 3.49); coming out, marrying a man, seeking psychological help (3.50 – 7.00)

English – Karen mentions a book 'Curious Wine' by Katherine V. Forrest published in 1983 and regarded as a masterpiece of lesbian love.

LGBT History – role models Martina Navratilova and the women of Greenham Common, the gay scene in the 1990's, venues and the Pink Paper (7.10 – 12.25, 15.20 – 19.15)

Content warning: Karen talks about contemplating suicide (20.40 – 21.00); she also describes a hate crime, being attacked because of her sexuality and having her nose broken (28.55 – 32.53)

**Interviewee portraits by Jon Habens** for StoneCrabs' Out On An Island project.

Jon Habens is a concept designer, illustrator and photographer with a specialised interest in storytelling and portraiture. The work produced for this project sought to capture a character snapshot of the interviewees in familiar settings, either at their homes or local areas. The individuals interviewed for the project covered a range of stories some finding hope and acceptance at the end of a difficult road, while others had more sobering tales. Each case was approached from the starting point of listening to the interview and trying to create an image sensitive to the mood and tone of those words.

*"It felt a privilege to be involved in the project and meet the people in these images, I am proud of what I have produced but my main hope is these portraits convey the authentic and charismatic characters behind these real life stories."*

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