

ORAL HISTORY RECORDING SUMMARY

'Fighting for our Rights' project

Surname	Shaw
Given names	Robert Thomas
Date of birth	1954
Place of birth	Peterborough, Cambridgeshire
Date of interview	15 th May 2017
Length of interview	01:17:45
Number of tracks	1
Name of interviewers	Ijeoma Aniyeloye, Rhian Betty, Jen Kavanagh

Track 1 of 1 [01:17:45]

Robert Thomas Shaw (RS) was born 1954 in Peterborough, Cambridgeshire. Parents' names Thomas Arthur Shaw and Audrey Patricia Shaw, nee Crowson. Mother worked as a housewife, father an insurance broker. Owned his own business, Shaw and Sons. RS attended Stamford Grammar School then a local technical college before attending teachers training college in Reading [00:02:34]. Describes being allocated a teaching job at Lincoln Road Boys School in Cambridgeshire. Talks about his route into teaching, and unhappiness in first year. Quit job and worked at summer camp in Romney Marshes in Kent [00:06:01]. Later joined civil service. Re-joined teaching through opportunity at Southborough High School in late 1970s, working with lower level groups of students. Describes Warnock Report regarding special educational needs [00:10:11]. Mentions Kingston's special schools – Dysart, Bedelsford, St Philips. Describes experience of working at Southborough. Mentions doubting his career in teaching [00:15:03]. Opportunity arose to join St Philips. RS started in April 1981. Describes St Philips as caring, with pastoral heart. Talks about aims and provisions of St Philips [00:19:01] and facilities, including orchard and animals [00:23:15]. Describes changes to school provisions including qualifications, including GCSE. Local authority removed primary offer [00:28:00]. Sixth form added to St Philips in mid 2000s. Talks through progression to Deputy Head Teacher, including research around introduction of National Curriculum [00:33:30]. New Head Teacher appointed, Helen Goodall. Mentions therapists who work at St Philips. School became an academy in 2016. Talks about establishing Parents' Association [00:38:20]. Mentions involvement with choir and pantomimes. Comments that special educational needs provision in Kingston is well respected. Describes St Philips as a happy place to work. Comments that mainstream education is very results driven, rather than focussing on the needs of students [00:42:20]. RS is concerned about current state of education system and impact on mental health of young people. Mentions National Association of Special Needs conference. Talks about challenges of young people entering workforce post-education. Speaks positively about Special Olympics, Surrey branch and RS's involvement [00:46:05]. Discusses challenges of working at St Philips, including finding balance between academic and pastoral. Describes circumstances of becoming Acting Deputy, and then Deputy Headteacher [00:49:17]. Mentions OFSTED inspections [00:52:15]. Talks about work experience and career programmes that St Philips adopted, including Young Enterprise. Shift from vocational focus to more academic focus meant these eventually shrank. Concerns that this shift would result in heart being lost [00:57:02]. St Philips aimed to be aspirational. Mentions transfer of some students to mainstream schools. Sense of stigma felt by some students. Talks about pride of seeing past students in the street and them wanting to say hello [01:01:45]. Describes starting at St Philips as comparable to falling

in love. Talks about some elements returning, such as animal care. Talks about retirement including injury just prior forcing RS to take time off [01:05:35]. Led to decision to stop working. Other staff also left at the same time, which also influenced decision. Mentions speaking to school staff counsellor about retirement. RS retired in 2016. Continues to volunteer for the school [01:09:30]. Talks about retirement plans including singing in choir, course on mindfulness, doing sport. Also considering befriending with elderly in community. Reflects on hopes for future of special educational need provision [01:12:20]. Concern over funding. Hope that all children achieve their potential and enjoy their schooling. Concerns over what provision is available post-schooling. Ends with positive story about a former pupil who is living independently. Confirms names of head teachers at St Philips.

End of recording [01:17:45]