**TRANSCRIPT**

**INTERVIEW WITH REN CLARK**

***CONDUCTED BY LOUISE SIDEY***

**THE GLASGOW WOMENS LIBRARY, THE UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE**

**Interview Status: X open to public** \_ confidential \_ anonymous

**Name of interviewee:** Ren Clark (R.C) (any pronouns)

**Date of birth:** 29th March 1966

**Name of interviewer:** Louise Sidey (L.S) (F)

**Name of videographer:** N/A

**Number of sessions:** 1 **Session** (19th February 2021)

**Length of interview:** 35:21

**Place of interview:** Remotely via zoom

**Dates of interview:** February 19th 2021

**Language of interview:** English

**Name of transcriber:** Louise Sidey

**Date of transcription:** 11/03/21

**Software used to read DVD:** VLC Media Player

**Editorial Note:**

The interview was easy to transcribe and all of the recording was audible and clear. Prior to the interview, R.C was given this sample list of questions:

So, to begin can you tell me a bit about your role with GWL?

How did you end up at GWL, what drew you to this specific institution?

Prior to the pandemic what was a normal working day like?

How have you had to adapt?

What is your workspace like?

What has been the biggest challenge?

What other challenges have you encountered whilst at GWL? And how do they compare to now?

Have you been surprised by anything you have enjoyed during this time?

You opened on Tuesday the 1st September on a phased return, what was that like?

What do you miss most about the library?

How have you found the transition onto digital online life?

How do you manage to find a work/ life balance?

Have you still managed to work with the community?

**Interviewee’s Biographical Details/ taken from GWL website:**

Ren Clark joined GWL in November 2020 as the Volunteering Programme Assistant. Working alongside Gabrielle Macbeth, the Volunteer Coordinator, Ren assists in recruiting, training and supporting volunteers in the library and remotely. Ren is interested in volunteering as an activist endeavour and is passionate about feminist organisations and how they support and uplift marginalised people.

**Transcript and Time-Coded Summary**

00:00:01.199 --> 00:00:02.909

Louise Sidey: Okay, I think that’s it recording again.

00:00:03.389 --> 00:00:07.230

Louise Sidey: So em, I’ve got you here today Ren and, just to make sure, well first of all, it is the 19th of February 2021, and just to make sure, that you consent to this oral history interview

00:00:16.740 --> 00:00:17.670

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yes, I consent.

00:00:18.150 --> 00:00:27.900

Louise Sidey: Perfect and so without further ado then so, if you just want to start by telling me a little bit about your role with the Glasgow woman's library.

00:00:28.680 --> 00:00:38.490

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah I’m the volunteer, the volunteer and program assistant, so I helped recruit train and induct volunteers and sort of helping the day operations of the volunteering programme.

00:00:39.090 --> 00:00:47.550

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah, I basically help support the volunteer coordinator who does that alongside doing like funding applications and developing the program I kind of broader sense.

00:00:48.000 --> 00:00:54.570

Louise Sidey: Yeah, it must be quite strange em then, and because obviously, you started, you started in November, you said.

00:00:54.930 --> 00:01:00.690

Ren Clark: Yeah, yeah

Louise Sidey: So how are you kind of finding role, obviously, it must be quite hands on?

00:01:01.290 --> 00:01:07.440

Ren Clark (any pronouns): And yeah, it's kind of weird is I guess it's like it's not really the job that I thought I was going to have like I applied back in like last February, am so it was kind of in my head it was like on your feet, based in like maybe a bit more events based so it's been kind of weird like working from home.

00:01:18.780 --> 00:01:25.350

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Em, but like I've been a volunteer with the library for like three years before that, so I kind of like I know how the organization works, so I haven't had to like, I haven’t been in the dark, I guess, like I think if I didn't know the organization that would be totally hell to try and like integrate myself and find out what my role is and all that kind of stuff.

00:01:35.970 --> 00:01:41.970

Ren Clark (any pronouns): And you know, yeah, it's been good it's just been different. I guess from what I thought that I was applying for way back when I did it, you know I mean.

00:01:42.390 --> 00:01:49.200

Louise Sidey: Yeah, of course, because I guess when you applied back then, was it kind of like very, it would have been very much like you situated in the library.

00:01:49.680 --> 00:01:51.270

Ren Clark: Yeah, like working in there.

00:01:51.780 --> 00:01:52.290

Louise Sidey: Yeah.

00:01:52.470 --> 00:01:54.960

Louise Sidey: Because it would have been so people facing.

00:01:55.200 --> 00:02:01.710

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah, yeah, yeah it wouldn't be that aspect like that was part of the charm of, I guess, and it still is people facing. I think it will go back to like being a bit more of that, I think, like going from working from a bar to like work in a home has just been like such a different change in like environment and I miss people (laughter)

00:02:13.260 --> 00:02:14.010

Louise Sidey: yeah.

00:02:14.730 --> 00:02:15.180

Ren Clark (Any pronouns): No, I feel it’s been good.

00:02:17.610 --> 00:02:26.940

Louise Sidey: I feel I feel the exact same at the moment. That kind of like that social factor kind of that just being missing, its meeting people you usually wouldn't on a day to day basis, I think.

00:02:27.360 --> 00:02:33.570

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah, totally no I really miss being on a bar but that's fine it’ll, it will happen one day at some point, I think.

00:02:35.190 --> 00:02:42.270

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah so it's been good, I guess it's just like weird as well, because all of the roles that we would normally be able to offer are also different now, like everything has to be remote. So, I think in my head is maybe like a bit of a harder job than I thought it was going to be just because I knew all the roles and I knew what the library was like and now we're having to, like, do everything digitally and like try and find roles for people to do a remotely which has just been a bit of a challenge but it has been easy in a way for just I don’t know, it’s just little guess it's different from what I had anticipated.

00:03:04.320 --> 00:03:13.110

Louise Sidey: Yeah of course, and like what, if you could just give us like an example of some of the roles that kind of you’re training people for as volunteers.

00:03:13.650 --> 00:03:19.140

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Eh yeah so we've been doing lots of like subtitling things because obviously everything's digital now and we want to subtitle all our videos. And lots of zoom training lots of things for like digital training for front of house or like people who would normally do front of house in the building like are still doing in front of house but it’s for events like, you know, like work- learning how to work zoom and get the captions for people and deal with the technical issues and all of these kind of like weird pernickety bits of events and doing lots of training for that and yeah, that's been like the main training and stuff. We've been doing- a lot of people are like writing blogs and, like doing their own research and stuff like that it's just a bit different because I think so many of the volunteers like love getting the hands like on the collection and being able to like rifle through it but it's not having that which is really weird I think.

00:03:59.760 --> 00:04:11.250

Louise Sidey: Yeah yeah and I guess like for the role, you would never have expected your role as a volunteer coordinator as being online I guess. You probably have never sat at a computer as much in your life.

00:04:11.310 --> 00:04:20.400

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah, it’s so weird and yeah if I very much feel used to it, I think, like the first month or so like I think motivation was hard as well like, trying to like, I don't know, not feeling quite as comfortable in my role yet like combined with the fact it was all online, whereas I think I'd have got more comfortable so much more fast if I was actually physically there.

00:04:32.430 --> 00:04:32.940

Louise Sidey: Yeah.

00:04:33.390 --> 00:04:40.710

Ren Clark (any pronouns): But like in a way, like, as it happens now I am comfortable and like that's fine doesn't bother me that much, but I think in the beginning, it was quite. I don't know not frustrating, but I wanted to be in the building like I wanted meet people and like make friends and I felt like it wasn't really been able to do that. But I guess it’s easier now.

00:04:50.460 --> 00:04:56.460

Louise Sidey: Yeah, because I guess well you said that you volunteered for three years before you ended up applying for the job then?

Ren Clark (Any Pronouns): Yeah, yeah.

00:04:56.910 --> 00:05:03.990

Louise Sidey: Yeah, so what, when you were kind of volunteering was that basically just doing kind of blogs, or like were you, what was your kind of role?

00:05:04.560 --> 00:05:13.170

Ren Clark (any pronouns): It was kinda like a mixture I don't know I think like I was so sporadic with it like I see now that we've got so many volunteers to do like long term projects with us. I would like do nothing, and then like come in to help paint a wall or come in to help run an event, so I did like some production stuff for various events and then I did some research stuff for Adele's eh, leadership like research that she does, and I did some subtitling, I did some front of house work for a while, like just sort of like bits and bobs, I did a lot of painting.

00:05:37.920 --> 00:05:38.850

Louise Sidey: Yeah, that’s great.

00:05:39.030 --> 00:05:52.440

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah, I don't know it was just like because I was working in a bar as well, like my role was so sporadic that I was just sort of like picking up stuff as I went, so I actually got through like quite a lot of different roles but didn't really commit to any of them, not long term.

00:05:55.740 --> 00:05:59.370

Louise Sidey: No, I actually feel like I get a real sense that the library, that there is kind of like, It is kind of like your role can really change, especially for your volunteer. Like it's always kind of shifting. People are doing it for best like even looking on the website, it was like people were like to do in your garden kind of thing and it's just really nice that you can kind of go in and have that other aspects of your life almost.

00:06:17.250 --> 00:06:19.620

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah so nice and super flexible as well, so. Yeah I think I felt like when I started the job I was like wow I don't feel like I’ve been volunteering here for ages and I don't know any of the volunteers as because like there's so much going on, that you don't always like cross paths with people more than once. Like everyone's doing so many different things, and for different reasons you just sort of like run into lots of people and it’s nice.

00:06:38.640 --> 00:06:40.530

Louise Sidey: Yeah, oh that's so lovely. I know so yeah, what do you think it was then, that like brought you to the class library. Do you remember, even?

00:06:49.230 --> 00:06:54.150

Ren Clark (any pronouns): I lived around the corner for from it when I first moved to Glasgow.

00:06:54.750 --> 00:07:03.960

Ren Clark (any pronouns): And yes, I’d like walk past it been like and I was already a feminist and stuff by that point but I was just like well, I want to find out more about what that place is.

00:07:04.410 --> 00:07:13.020

Ren Clark (any pronouns): And I think I was like working, I was working in a bar full time at that point and I just left you need so I was just like wanting to do something else that was more like about me and maybe more constructive than working in a bar, even though I loved my job. And yeah and then I just like walk past it Googled it and then I was just like wow this looks amazing and then just started volunteering, I think.

00:07:26.670 --> 00:07:34.350

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Ah yeah but yeah, but it was just like wanting a feminist space, I guess I was wanting experiences and like skills and things too because I wasn't really sure what I wanted to do then.

00:07:35.070 --> 00:07:45.870

Ren Clark (any pronouns): And I was very much just like I had just graduated in physics, I was just like I don't want to do that but I don't know what else I'm going to do so I'll just find something I'm interested in. I just wanted to do some feminists stuff I think.

00:07:46.710 --> 00:07:54.990

Louise Sidey: Yeah I completely like relate to that feeling and working in a bar and being like well I need something more substantial not that it is anything to do with the job but…

00:07:54.990 --> 00:07:55.530

Ren Clark (any pronouns): yeah.

00:07:55.650 --> 00:07:59.370

Louise Sidey: Being like I need to feed the other part of me.

00:07:59.400 --> 00:08:09.600

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah definitely I'm like yeah I loved working on a bar as well like I'm quite socially anxious or I was definitely back then, so it really pushed me and I really loved that. But as you say I just want something a bit more like powerful to do like something that resonates with me a bit more and at that point like before all this like, obviously there were loads and loads of events on just loads of stuff going on all the times, and I was just like really drawn to it.

00:08:23.430 --> 00:08:29.460

Louise Sidey: Yeah of course. Did you do you think that then kind of catapulted you, like led you into gender studies course then?

00:08:29.520 --> 00:08:30.390

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Oh yeah

00:08:30.450 --> 00:08:39.240

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Like yeah hundred percent yeah, I often think about if I hadn't started going to other women's library like what would I be doing, I would have no idea.

00:08:39.840 --> 00:08:50.310

Ren Clark (any pronouns): And then it wasn't even like causes like a specific thing I did at the women's library, I think I was just like so inspired by like like the safeness of the space that I was just like realized how important like I wasn't just like a feminist but realized how important my feminism was to me and like who I am and I think that was definitely, em, spurred on by the library plus all the books and stuff like being able to like just read all of this like amazing, like, literature.

00:09:07.050 --> 00:09:09.450

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah I think that definitely pushed me in that direction.

00:09:09.840 --> 00:09:16.950

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Em I don't think I felt at the time, but like I’ve ended up doing this degree, and I have no idea if I would have done it if I’d done something else.

00:09:17.520 --> 00:09:29.790

Louise Sidey: Yeah it's amazing it kind of shows like how, because obviously it's a library it's a space for growth, we identify it with reading and all that kind of thing I feel like almost it's been like a springboard for like this huge part of your life you know.

00:09:29.820 --> 00:09:41.340

Ren Clark (any pronouns): yeah definitely I think for lots of people to like it, I think that's why it's such a special place like, even though it doesn't feel like maybe they it changes your life so much like on a day to day basis, but like yeah I think we underestimate how important it is to have a space that is so safe and so like nourishing like it's just such yeah, yeah it's definitely changed my life, and I think it's just loads of people so just yeah pretty beautiful.

00:09:53.790 --> 00:10:04.020

Louise Sidey: Yeah I think it's so great that and I think it’s why it's been such a shame at the moment, I think that so many people can access it em.

00:10:04.800 --> 00:10:13.590

Louise Sidey: And do you feel do you feel like and considering that do you feel like the library is made quite a good like, that it's adapted well to kind of lockdown?

00:10:14.130 --> 00:10:23.280

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah yeah, I think, so I don't know I think I would I would know more, but I think I’d know more if I'd been like working here when that that process of adapting it happened.

00:10:23.610 --> 00:10:30.450

Ren Clark (any pronouns): But it just feels very natural to me because I sort of came into the role and this was, they were already used to it sort of thing and. Yeah I think has adopted pretty well it's been great because we've had lots of like outreach to communities that we maybe wouldn't have normally who can know like we're getting lots of people like tuning into our events from England like and lots of people with disabilities or health issues that would normally be able to come to our events and like. It's been great in that sense, because there's also people like picking up on our work and maybe wouldn't have done before. And yeah I think is adapted, as well as as you could think and like he goes to so many online events are rubbish really and not accessible and not engaging and the library just doesn't seem to have any of that, so I think like yeah I think it probably is adapted as best as it could do I suppose.

00:11:10.020 --> 00:11:24.450

Louise Sidey: That’s so good, it is really amazing when you think about like highly managed make that shift the online and because, so you know, like going back to you personally, so, when you, when did you actually find out that you've got the job if you applied in February?

00:11:25.230 --> 00:11:26.310

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Eh yeah, yeah. Ah I can't even remember. I applied in February and obviously once lockdown started, they emailed me to be like obviously we paused like the recruitment process. Maybe it was Mar- it must have been March I applied actually. Em yeah and they paused the recruitment process, and then I think in like October it reopened it and I like reapplied. And em yeah and then got it at beginning in November or halfway through November so yeah it was just a bit. It was quite severe to get because it was just like wow this life was so different when I applied for this job. I'd like changing my application for it too is like so much time and pass like so much past, so I should say, well, I really have to redo this whole application now.

00:12:08.010 --> 00:12:17.580

Louise Sidey: I know I think that is the thing which is bizarre about lockdown is it feels like it's very like everyone's like it's stagnant, in that the sense that a lot of the days feel the same. But when you look at it now and it's been like a year you're like so much has changed and.

00:12:24.570 --> 00:12:34.440

Ren Clark (any pronouns): It's kind of bizarre like yeah like I've got totally like a brand new job like so much just so much has changed for me in the past year, even though it feels like nothing has changed it’s so strange.

00:12:35.340 --> 00:12:46.050

Louise Sidey: Yeah because yeah because I guess like how did you find working from home, primarily because that's I think that's been like the biggest change that everyone now faces, that are our bedrooms.

00:12:46.890 --> 00:12:56.880

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah I don't know, I find it really strange, I feel I feel used to it, and I think like I'm still like struggling with focus and stuff like that, because it is such a blurred boundary between like your life and your work life.

00:12:57.240 --> 00:13:00.300

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah and yeah I think I thought it was, I think I felt. I feel like it's strange because I never imagined myself working like in an office set up ever and even when I applied for the women's library like it wasn't an office setup because it was the women's library and I’d be like moving about and meeting people and it wouldn't be like that sort of official environment. Whereas now I feel like have a home office and sort of like. I don't know just like an environment I didn't think I'd ever been working in just sort of like I mean, especially on my own also just kind of office-based work generally and so what it feels like I do a lot of the time which is just weird.

00:13:31.740 --> 00:13:38.190

Louise Sidey: I think you're so right I didn't think about it like that, before, but I think that's still the case like I think so many people especially if you've worked in like hospitality or care where you have very active jobs and then it is that shift like especially I've got the exact same thing right now I'm like I'd never ever chosen like just sitting at a laptop all day.

00:13:51.300 --> 00:14:04.440

Louise Sidey: Yeah but I guess, do you find that you're still able to kind of like interact a lot with, if you're training, people and then you've got kind of the staff members. While still maintaining that kind of interactive element.

00:14:04.980 --> 00:14:12.750

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah, yeah I do think, so I think in the beginning, at the beginning, I was always doing that anyway, I was definitely struggling with it but I feel much more comfortable with it now.

00:14:13.470 --> 00:14:20.460

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Like I think I mean I helped knowing so like a lot of the stuff beforehand and like already having those face-to-face connections and like I had a week where I worked in the library like my first week of work was in the library and then lock down happened again and I haven't been back since.

00:14:28.410 --> 00:14:38.640

Ren Clark (any pronouns): And so, yes, it is it's just different I guess making those connections, but I think now that it's been like three or four months like I'm starting to feel like I know people. Which is nice but I may just make it weird when I actually meet them face to face will be quite surreal I think and yeah, it is a bit harder and I think like so much of the women's libraries is like the welcoming-ness miss of it and, like getting a cup of tea and like sitting on a big comfy chair and, like the kind of and formality of your interactions which you don't really get across zoom quite so much I think that's been hard but yeah I feel like it’s getting easier.

00:15:04.560 --> 00:15:15.420

Louise Sidey: That's good, yeah I think it definitely know we mean by feeling like it takes, I think it takes much longer to feel like you build up that relationship with people especially through a zoom screen. And yeah do you think maybe that do you think has impacted almost like your training volunteers or…?

00:15:24.180 --> 00:15:26.610

Ren Clark (any pronouns): [pause] I don't know like I think I sometimes wonder if I’m going to get like too used to training people on zoom and then when I have to do things face to face it will be different, because they have had everything over zoom like my whole induction my whole. Like everything that is the basis of my job has been through a screen and I think it'll be it'll be fine like doing a face to face again but it is like just a bit of a weird concept that it's been through. Like I haven't actually been in my job or like met the people that I’m doing my job with just a bit weird and, yes, it’s definitely like an extra layer of I guess like complication because you can't just show people stuff like. It's all like sharing screen you got to make sure that they know how to use zoom that they have access to a computer that they're comfortable see like going on zoom and there's like all of these. Although it's like more accessible, because people don't have to leave their house like at the same time is less accessible for so many people because there's all these barriers to normally like getting on zoom but also feeling comfortable on zoom and yeah all these other sort of things so it's just like grass is always greener, like, I think that there's barriers to both and yeah.

00:16:30.900 --> 00:16:41.460

Louise Sidey: Yeah is, it is definitely the case, I think it's like I think if you are kind of self-conscious person as well, like, the platform of zoom at the start can be really, really quite daunting.

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah, definitely.

00:16:43.380 --> 00:16:54.060

Louise Sidey: And, and it is kind of, yes, but what I find strange, as well as that that transition, because I think it started was for people it was like almost like a pastime, like everyone was using it to interact with their friends. And I think it's the pandemic kind of progressed, it became more of a kind of work-based activity.

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah

00:17:00.030 --> 00:17:10.890

Louise Sidey: How have you found like having that separation between kind of work and like the rest of your life, like you can find balance?

00:17:11.400 --> 00:17:14.130

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Ah I don't, I don't know, I don't know.

00:17:14.760 --> 00:17:22.290

Ren Clark (any pronouns): I think it's helped that like I, like my flatmate is like my best friend we get on, really, really well and I've known her for ages so it's helped to have like someone that I like leave my room to go to the end of the day and I sort of like shut my door behind me. I think, like, if I didn't have, If I didn't know my flatmates that well or if I didn't have a living room, I think I would feel really different about. Like I'm privileged in the sense I can just be like okay I will work until five and then at five like my flat mate will come through and be like, are you finished I’m bored like hang out with me and I kind of like takes me out of the work space.

00:17:49.320 --> 00:17:58.830

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah yeah I think it's tricky especially like having Uni work continually work on my laptop to and yeah it's sort of blurring the boundaries of everything, because everything's accessible all the time I mean. Yeah I’m just trying to be like stricter with myself like more focused.

00:18:04.200 --> 00:18:10.740

Louise Sidey: Yeah I definitely think you're so right. I think, it’s a hard time to be like, you have to be stern and be like I need to shut the laptop now.

00:18:11.610 --> 00:18:14.640

Louise Sidey: And not just feel the urge to be like I just I'll just do it in bed.

00:18:15.540 --> 00:18:16.500

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah literally.

00:18:16.980 --> 00:18:17.250

Louise Sidey It'll never work

00:18:18.270 --> 00:18:20.610

Louise Sidey: It's a spiralling circle and next you're doing in the shower next.

00:18:21.240 --> 00:18:34.200

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah I know literally I think like at the beginning, is just the beginning of January, like I had covid, and I was super unwell like because I could because I could work from home and because I had to work from home. Like I just felt like I should keep going like, and it was only like after we had like a team meeting and I said, like, I’ve got covid so like I’m not going to put my camera on like above here like I just feel a bit unwell so I don't really feel like being looked at really, I guess, and obviously everyone a library was like what the hell are you doing, take a week off work like go and rest, you don't need to be doing this. And no in a way I’m like glad I did because it was just a total blurring of like boundaries, yeah unhealthy boundaries, like I should have been like resting and looking after myself but because, like I would be resting next my laptop I would do work on it didn't seem necessary to rest, you know. I mean, whereas like if I'm an ill, I would have been sent home from work and not at work, and therefore I would like just gone to bed, I mean yeah it was weird.

00:19:24.240 --> 00:19:31.830

Louise Sidey: Yeah, I think I actually think that is one thing I think is so strange it's like I like to speak to people like, even if I got coronavirus I think I probably still try and work and I think like it's so bizarre that we have broken down that barrier despite the fact we are all kind of isolating anyway, because of the virus. It, actually, I feel like we lost those barriers between work and illness and is it is quite strange.

00:19:52.260 --> 00:20:00.510

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Definitely, and I think like I'd like to be able to blame, like, I mean generally I'd like to be able to blame like capitalism from making us feel like we have to be productive all the time. But like I literally could not work somewhere more understanding and more like loving and caring and the women's library and even I was still like well I'm not that ill and my laptop just there, so I'll just keep going so it was really. It felt fine at the time, but I look back now and be like that was there was that was an unhealthy like relationship to work from home, I think, but it was no one's fault it's just.

00:20:23.730 --> 00:20:27.630

Louise Sidey: It's just yeah it's like a personal thing yeah.

00:20:27.690 --> 00:20:29.520

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah, It felt natural to just keep working.

00:20:29.790 --> 00:20:34.230

Louise Sidey: Did you do you don't really even tell anyone at first, that you had corona virus?

00:20:36.870 --> 00:20:43.230

Ren Clark (any pronouns): [laughs] I think like because I was the beginning of January, like it wasn't that busy, and most people are so off from the holiday’s anyway, so I was like doing very general work anyway. I wasn't like pure sitting on my laptop stressed about stuff which I think is why I felt like oh well, I may as well just like sort of do some bits and pieces and I like mentioned it to some people, like, aw like, I’ve got covid and everyone was always like- are you okay? like what are you doing? And I was like no like I’m fine. Like I feel fighting and because sometimes I did feel fine, but I think it's like the mentality of you have to stop and rest like even if you feel fine if you're ill like you're ill with anything you still have to like look after yourself and just like if you don't need to think about work don't think about that kind of thing, whereas I was just like yeah pushing forward with it with for literally no reason at all.

00:21:23.880 --> 00:21:34.710

Louise Sidey: It’s good though it is nice that you were working you're working in an environment that really was like rest and take care of yourself and I think that just shows that the woman's library is just such a caring institution as well.

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Absolutely

00:21:35.220 --> 00:21:40.620

Louise Sidey: It is nice that you guys have that network, I think, and.

00:21:41.610 --> 00:21:43.410

Ren Clark (any pronouns): so nice I was really grateful for it.

00:21:44.760 --> 00:21:56.820

Louise Sidey: Because we I guess like that is quite a weird question, and I know we kind of talked about more like the negative side effects, but do you think there is like anything at this time, you kind of enjoyed or like been surprised about?

169

00:21:59.520 --> 00:22:06.570

Ren Clark (any pronouns): [pause] Ah I guess like I guess I’ve enjoyed seeing myself be more confident with what I’m doing that I thought I would be prior to getting the job if you don't mean like. Like I mean prior to the pandemic like I hated video calls like and calls just in general, like I’m just so much better face to face so like I’ve enjoyed like impressing myself in a way, by being so comfortable on it. And yeah apart from that, like, I think, just from I’m sure that other people working at the library have like so many more good things because their job has changed, but for me I'm just like very much still waiting for this to be over, so that I can get back to doing this and also being face to face, so I don't know like there isn't it yeah it isn't like massively good things that jumped out at me.

00:22:43.290 --> 00:22:44.070

Louise Sidey: No.

00:22:44.460 --> 00:22:47.130

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Not that is not been enjoyable like it has but it's not has not been the ideal we're starting to job really I guess.

00:22:52.140 --> 00:22:58.080

Louise Sidey: No, I think the thing is, I think your situation is just so unique that's why it's so interesting to get your perspective because I think you are so alike many people who are kind of our age as well kind of going into a new job and haven't or, starting university degree, and having never ever met maybe their tutors or met a lot of people who are actually working there.

00:23:14.940 --> 00:23:16.260

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah it’s bizarre.

00:23:16.560 --> 00:23:17.130

Louise Sidey: It’s just really strange and it kind of it comes with, I guess, a lot of kind of new anxieties that you’ve never had to deal with before.

00:23:26.640 --> 00:23:27.870

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah definitely.

00:23:28.410 --> 00:23:38.010

Louise Sidey: How have you felt that, like if you have had like problem or something you might have resolved in the workplace have you've been able to do it easily digitally do you feel?

00:23:38.040 --> 00:23:41.610

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah yeah like everyone I think everyone's so on the same page about like there's so many different ways to contact each other and everyone saw on it with like their emails and there's no like stupid questions or whatever I think. Like at the beginning I found it kind of, because I don't like, how this is my first like proper job really there's not in hospitality so like I don't I don't really know, about like, things like email etiquette or whatever, and I think it was kind of weird to like if I had a stupid little question rather than just been like oh gabby blah blah like in the library I to send an email to get the answer to my question, so it was like. A bit yeah I guess it's just very strange because it's just like oh like I'm having to do this, like really official email, whereas rather we would just chat and it wouldn't be like this event, having to ask a stupid question if you know I mean.

00:24:24.780 --> 00:24:25.290

Louise Sidey: Yeah.

00:24:25.560 --> 00:24:39.600

Ren Clark (any pronouns): But yeah but also like I think everyone is feeling that way, and everyone is in the same boat, that was that was a very like internal anxiety, rather than anything like nothing in the library had made me feel like that was an inappropriate thing to do, I think it was just yeah. Yeah having to officially contact people rather than just like be able to have a chat.

00:24:46.290 --> 00:24:46.950

Louise Sidey: Yeah I think.

00:24:48.030 --> 00:24:55.800

Louise Sidey: I completely get I think it just makes everything seems so much more of a grand statement when it could just be like you'd be like, how do I say this. [laughter]

00:24:56.310 --> 00:24:58.890

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Exactly yeah strange.

00:24:59.490 --> 00:25:00.270

Louise Sidey: Oh, I guess. So, are you kind of really I guess you, you are you looking forward to kind of getting back to the library obviously you are yeah.

00:25:06.810 --> 00:25:15.960

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah yeah totally I mean yeah yeah I am I feel bad because, like I’ve had such a like amazing couple of months do this job and I have really enjoyed it. But I think it will only get better being in the physical space so I’m just like raring to go, just like want to be in there and like meet people face to face and have a workplace as well, like yeah I think it will be nice, I mean it will be nice.

00:25:32.190 --> 00:25:38.220

Louise Sidey: Because how many, so as a kind of coordinate how many volunteers, will you train at one time kind of thing?

00:25:38.340 --> 00:25:45.630

Ren Clark (any pronouns): And we'll just know we have, I think, maybe over 30 active volunteers and

00:25:45.810 --> 00:25:46.170

Louise Sidey: That’s quite a lot.

00:25:47.160 --> 00:25:48.240

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah it's quite a lot. Have I made that up? Of like there's, there's like maybe, on volunteer mailing list there's about 60 people obviously like not everybody. Not everybody does a role with us all the time and that kind of thing so then there's some volunteers who like kind of pick up sporadic things like ideas and then there's some volunteers to do like long term projects or help like with events and things like that and, so yeah so that's yeah for me, I like help look after maybe like five to ten volunteers are like my volunteers, as opposed to Gabby's if you know what I mean, so I’d be like the first point of contact only kind of stuff but I’ve taken like a while to grow. From start and then the role, I guess, like only really in the past couple of weeks, I felt like all like I’m like not not in charge, but like I am the first point of contact for these people like I-I'm sort of doing my job, the way I thought I was going to. And in terms of like actually delivering like training like over zoom or whatever, I mean there's never really more than like four or five people because, like obviously that those 30 volunteers and then broken down into each role of each one to do and it isn't really like mass training of everybody.

00:27:01.110 --> 00:27:05.130

Louise Sidey: Yeah. It's really good and I got I got it's so hard you wouldn't really know. If you hadn't like more work now, then you would have when you were in the library before I guess it's so hard to kind of tell.

00:27:14.580 --> 00:27:21.450

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah, I think like yeah, I think, maybe I have less less work, I think. Yeah I think it's strange because I think working from home you feel you've got to work all day like solidly whereas if you were in the library, you would you would get distracted you'd have a cup of tea and chat a bit like that would be parts of the day that are filled with just like being there as well as well as actually working and

00:27:38.430 --> 00:27:39.240

Ren Clark (any pronouns): So-

00:27:39.660 --> 00:27:40.320

Louise Sidey: I think this.

00:27:40.740 --> 00:27:41.010

Ren Clark (any pronouns): -weird.

00:27:41.460 --> 00:27:53.940

Louise Sidey: I think you're so right and like I think it's that thing of being like because now we don't have like a commute for a lunch break now feels like I don't know about you, but I feel like it's a rush as possible icon or to sit in front of a laptop screen.

00:27:54.330 --> 00:27:58.920

Louise Sidey: And you think about how many kinds of normal interaction you’d be having with your colleagues.

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Mm

00:28:00.090 --> 00:28:04.650

Louise Sidey: Do you guys have any informal kind of meet ups?

00:28:04.680 --> 00:28:11.970

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah there's I haven't actually been but there is like coffee breaks every, I think every, fortnight I'm not sure if they're still going on there were in January.

Louise Sidey: That’s so great

00:28:13.980 --> 00:28:15.390

Ren Clark (any pronouns): It yeah it's just like. I think, just like a quick zoom where everybody, just like has a chat, at like module like eleven when you'd normally just go and make yourself a cup of tea and I haven't been to any I keep missing them.

00:28:25.290 --> 00:28:27.540

Ren Clark (any pronouns): yeah, it’s still a really sweet idea, I think.

00:28:27.960 --> 00:28:39.900

Louise Sidey: I think it is, I think is so necessary you forget about that kind of like normal everyday interaction that you just have with people and I guess, because you worked at a bar before that was main kind of premise of everything-

00:28:40.020 --> 00:28:41.250

Ren Clark (any pronouns): That was the whole thing-

00:28:41.700 --> 00:28:42.990

Louise Sidey: That was every interaction you have

Ren Clark (any pronouns): yeah you have yeah-

00:28:43.860 --> 00:28:44.550

Louise Sidey: that's insane.

00:28:45.150 --> 00:28:51.030

Ren Clark (any pronouns): So weird yeah and I think like I mean before Christmas, we had like a Christmas like a party for all the staff. And it was really nice because I felt like I got to see like actually hang out with people, even though it was over zoom like yeah. I think it's just like tricky starting a new job and not being able to like do any social bits to like get to know one another, like outside of work.

Louise Sidey: Yeah.

00:29:05.700 --> 00:29:18.840

Ren Clark (any pronouns): I think it's like coming now like the more comfortable I’m getting and the more I’m getting to know people through work the more like you can make those kind of connections but like hard to go from colleagues to pals when it’s all over the screen, I think.

00:29:19.380 --> 00:29:33.540

Louise Sidey: Yeah completely, I think that is where you, why your role is just so unique I guess like for these interviews is just so interesting to kind of get a perspective of someone who's had to do all of their work from the pandemic, of this setting (inaudible)

00:29:35.250 --> 00:29:44.760

Ren Clark (any pronouns): I think like I don't know if you're planning on speaking to Naomi who is the digital service she started in May in the pandemic and I don't even think. I don't I'm not sure she was even a volunteer before there's I’m not sure what her involvement was so she I think she might have just started and doesn't know anybody, or didn’t, But now she's like really good pals with everybody and it's just like it's so nice, because such a unique way to start a new job, it’s nice to think like that people are comfortable.

00:30:01.290 --> 00:30:07.830

Louise Sidey: Yeah I think it is a testament probably library as well and how like open and kind of inclusive the spaces, but-

Ren Clark (any pronouns): -one hundred per cent.

00:30:08.130 --> 00:30:12.150

Louise Sidey: Yeah the shift online has kind of enabled that like.

00:30:12.720 --> 00:30:28.950

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Definitely yeah unlike up under no illusion that is like my own, like work or like comfortable-ness. That has like has got me to feeling comfortable like it's very much been like sustained support and understanding, like from everyone else at the library I think that's got me there.

00:30:29.370 --> 00:30:33.090

Louise Sidey: Yeah, no I think I’ll probably I’ll be a combined effort. I bet it is.

00:30:34.680 --> 00:30:35.910

Ren Clark (any pronouns): [laughter] Maybe but it's mainly them I think.

00:30:37.140 --> 00:30:37.710

Louise Sidey: yeah aw.

00:30:38.100 --> 00:30:52.110

Louise Sidey: Oh, and I guess I'm just kind of almost I think I've asked basically nearly everything but and I guess we're gonna ask a couple more and I guess you were to kind of gone over it, but what do you think has been the biggest challenge of this time?

00:30:55.980 --> 00:30:57.060

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Eh, god I don’t know.

00:30:58.500 --> 00:31:01.410

Louise Sidey: It could be personally or it could be professionally.

00:31:02.760 --> 00:31:06.510

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Do you mean like of the whole pandemic or you mean specifically my time in the Women’s library?

00:31:07.650 --> 00:31:08.160

Louise Sidey: I guess. Maybe in the women's library yeah.

00:31:12.480 --> 00:31:20.220

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Em yeah I guess that like that would be for me, like the social aspect like not being able to, I just I still feel like I’m so much better face to face. And I find it hard to like get like validation like in relationships with people I think like when I face to face with someone I can really like tell that they're responding to me well and I don't find it hard to see that over zoom. And so I think that's it’s been like making connections, I think it's probably been the biggest- the biggest challenge.

00:31:40.170 --> 00:31:52.770

Ren Clark (any pronouns): But I think like I’m getting there it's just a matter of time, as well as like the fact it’s over zoom, like, even if I was in the library, it would still take the time to build these relationships and to build connections with volunteers and with staff and things so.

00:31:52.800 --> 00:31:53.280

Louise Sidey: Yeah.

00:31:53.700 --> 00:31:58.680

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah I’m trying to like not like worry about it too much, I guess, because that would that would have taken time anyway.

00:31:58.920 --> 00:31:59.160

Louise Sidey: Yeah-

00:31:59.550 --> 00:32:01.110

Ren Clark (any pronouns): It’s just been a bit harder and yeah and I think like after working in hospitality where things are so like you’re so team focused like in hospitality and you are in the women's library to but like your team behind a bar kind of become your family, and I think I've been missing having that like face to face friendships with people.

00:32:18.660 --> 00:32:33.420

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah that I normally have, but it will come in it's like it's already been there, all these things are starting to form anyway, regardless of the fact over zoom is just like taking more time than it would have done had we've all been there in sort of normal times.

00:32:34.020 --> 00:32:47.910

Louise Sidey: Yeah aw, that’s so good, I know I think that's a really lovely way to think about it actually and I guess what ism what is going to be the first thing you do when you get out of lockdown and out of the pandemic?

00:32:48.390 --> 00:32:49.650

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Like at work?

00:32:50.370 --> 00:32:53.160

Louise Sidey: Yeah work or just personally.

00:32:54.750 --> 00:33:00.360

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Oh, I don't know I’m so, I don't know I don't know it's such a like abstract thought at this point like it’s so hard to imagine. I want to go back to the bar that I normally work in and have a pint. Really it’s what I want.

00:33:05.430 --> 00:33:06.420

Louise Sidey: Yeah.

00:33:06.480 --> 00:33:17.880

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Yeah I'm working like I’m still on furlough and I’m I like hope that maybe I I’ll go back to like working maybe one shift or whatever, because I just love the bar I work in so much and I love all my regulars. And yeah, I just want to go and like have a pint, with my pals at my pub.

00:33:23.580 --> 00:33:28.800

Louise Sidey: Yes, I very much feel you on that one. What, what pub is it you work at?

00:33:29.730 --> 00:33:31.920

Ren Clark (any pronouns): I work in The Old Toll Bar it's like in Kinning Park.

00:33:31.980 --> 00:33:34.470

Louise Sidey: You work in The Old Toll Bar

Ren Clark: Yeah

00:33:34.830 --> 00:33:38.580

Louise Sidey: I cannot believe you work there I used to live on Admiral street.

00:33:40.230 --> 00:33:42.390

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Oh, my God that's crazy.

00:33:44.340 --> 00:33:44.640

Louise Sidey: I can’t believe I never saw you there that’s insane.

Ren Clark (any pronouns): That's mad.

00:33:45.150 --> 00:33:49.260

Louise Sidey: We used to always go like pre pandemic that’s amazing-

00:33:49.380 --> 00:33:52.680

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Oh, my God it's like your regular oh my God yeah I don't know maybe, we must of we must literally have crossed paths like we absolutely must have because-I worked there for ages.

00:33:59.610 --> 00:34:00.120

Louise Sidey: I am so jealous that you worked there.

00:34:00.870 --> 00:34:01.110

Ren Clark: Right-it’s like, the-

Louise Sidey: -the best pub in Glasgow.

00:34:02.550 --> 00:34:15.210

Ren Clark (any pronouns): It's the best public Glasgow, is the best pub Glasgow like, even if I don't work there, I don't care like I just love being in there, like a miss, like the physical space so much because it's just my favourite place on earth in there, I love it.

00:34:15.660 --> 00:34:25.320

Louise Sidey: It's great I can't believe you were and then the guy you met the guy who's always there he honestly I’ve seen him make like 15 negroni’s like back to back.

00:34:25.860 --> 00:34:27.030

Louise Sidey: He had he always had on-

00:34:27.060 --> 00:34:28.170

Ren Clark (any pronouns): With the glasses- Charles.

00:34:28.230 --> 00:34:29.400

Louise Sidey: yeah yeah.

00:34:29.580 --> 00:34:30.450

Ren Clark (any pronouns): His wee braces.

00:34:30.510 --> 00:34:32.370

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Oh my god I miss it in there, so much.

00:34:33.990 --> 00:34:35.700

Louise Sidey: wow okay, no wonder you want to get back to the pub job, because that place is a Glasgow institution in itself.

[laugher]

00:34:40.740 --> 00:34:48.120

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Aw I am so glad you think so so many people don't know and have literally never heard of it, and never believe me when I’m like it's the best pub in Glasgow.

00:34:50.190 --> 00:34:51.990

Louise Sidey: It’s gorgeous and I think it’s the best spot to take friends take dates taking family is it covers all grounds.

00:34:57.450 --> 00:35:00.090

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Honestly, does it’s amazing I miss it so much.

00:35:00.450 --> 00:35:01.530

Louise Sidey: it's great.

00:35:01.800 --> 00:35:03.150

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Aw I am so glad you know it, it’s so cute.

00:35:03.480 --> 00:35:06.330

Louise Sidey: yeah it's amazing I can't wait I’m gonna tell everyone that you work there [mutual laughter] and as soon as you open I’ll be there too.

00:35:10.020 --> 00:35:10.950

Ren Clark (any pronouns): Oh my god it’s gonna be so nice.

00:35:12.450 --> 00:35:15.630

Louise Sidey: Oh well, thank you so much for speaking with me today Ren, it’s been great.

00:35:16.080 --> 00:35:16.800

Louise Sidey: Right I’ll like I’ll stop recording and come up.

00:35:21.240 --> 00:35:21.600

Louise Sidey: Is that even it, yes.

**-End of Interview-**