



# Telling Our Stories, Finding Our Roots

## Interview with Christine Star

Interviewers: Callum White & Greta Button

**Christine 00:00:00**

Ready to go.

**Interviewer 00:00:04**

Okay, this is Callum White and Greta Button, interviewing Christine Star on Monday the 21st of September. [Unintelligible] So Christine. To start with, do you have an object or a photograph you'd like to talk about in relation to your journey?

**Christine 00:00:26**

I have an interesting object. These two objects are more or less a reason that I'm in England. It is - one of these belongs to Cilla, my friend and partner, and the other one belongs to me. And the story is I never wear jewellery. But roughly half a year before I met Cilla the first time I started looking for bracelets. I had copper ones, I had ones with [unclear] and so on, until I found this one. And I never stopped wearing it. When I then met Cilla by accident, or by destination. After a while, we found out that she wears the absolutely identical bracelet. And she got it via a friend in Hong Kong, who met and said, you know, Cilla in Plymouth, please give her this as a gift. And she wore it, all the time. And so the way how we met, we had the feeling somewhere if we believe in a life before, we said we will meet and we will identify ourselves. And without this one, we wouldn't have that interview today.

**Interviewer 00:02:04**

That's marvellous. Thank you, Christy. So - what? Yeah, what's the story behind your name? I think your surname in particular.

**Christine 00:02:18**

Yes, My surname is not really Star. My surname is Staudigl. So when I came to England, and I gave little talks, got introduced, people always said, this is Christina, I can't pronounce her surname. And I was introduced, and I thought that's not good enough. Now, if I would have translated my German name, I would have been a bush hedgehog, Staudigl, bush hedgehog. No, that would have been quite nice as a name, but a bit long for computers. As I'm also an astrologer, I just thought, I work with the stars, I look into the stars. Make myself a star. And I have to say that name brought me a lot of luck. It was the best choice I ever could have done.



**Interviewer 00:03:17**

That's really interesting. Has, yeah, does any of the luck that it's brought you relate to your journey here or your experiences here now?

**Christine 00:03:30**

Do you mean the journey from Germany to England or what country do you mean?

**Interviewer 00:03:38**

Perhaps the journey from - any any further travel within the country itself? Because I know you're in the process of moving from Plymouth to Okehampton.

**Christine 00:03:52**

I live already 50% in Okehampton, that's right. So 30, 31 years ago, I moved to England. Actually, my partner first tried to live with me in Germany. But she didn't come home. It was not a very happy experience for her so I thought fair enough and I was ready to stop this my job. Let's try, try to start in England. And whether you believe it or not, it was like coming home. It is I'm sure that the delivery nearly 70 years ago was just wrong. I was always destined to come to England, but that stork, you know, which carried me over the Alps, had a sneeze, left me in Bavaria and never picked me up again. So 37 years later, I arrived and I have felt at home here from the beginning.

Now we lived for 30 years now, nearly 30 years in Plymouth. Cilla then, six years ago, decided for all sorts of reasons, very good reasons, to move to Okehampton, so I visited her always on the weekend because I was still working. And so I could see the difference between Plymouth, I love Plymouth. And I think Plymouth is a little bit like, Marmite, you like it, or you don't like it. And it also depends where you look. I look always at the bright side. So I also see all the beautiful sides of Plymouth, the Hoe and the Barbican. And honestly, I mean, I just have such a lovely rapport with the people.

But coming, Cilla lives now six years in Okehampton coming to this village, I experienced it something entirely different. It wasn't so small that it's a village where everyone knows everyone's business. But it wasn't so big, that nobody is interested in anyone's business. And I find this is like, a big family. You know, it's like, the community spirit is unbelievable. Shall I stop, and you ask me something between? I could go on now, you know, until we finish.

But this is sort of my my first impression it is, I want to say something else. Because people say, would you like to go back to Germany? And you know, how do you like it here? I see Germany as a fatherland. And if you see a father is the authority. It's a discipline. It's a structure. So if you like that one, you're absolutely fine in Germany. But I always have been, may I say, a bit odd. Not quite on the normal side. And so I had to work very hard to fit into the system. When I came to England, now, I say this in the nicest way, please. This country is full of oddballs.

I arrived, you can be yourself and I call England a motherland. And that is that the caring for other people is more important than the discipline and the structure and being right. And specifically now during the lockdown, this village, this - village? - town, sorry, sorry, sorry. This town has proved that caring side for its vulnerable people, the elderly people, for anybody who needed. It was amazing. And that's why I love England. I came home.



**Interviewer 2 00:08:03**

Could I ask something at this point actually, Christine. When you talk about you [unintelligible noise] Your words were initially you were looking for home. And you found it and it appears what you said you found home. But did you think when you first came to England, you would find home? Did you have a feeling you would find home? Or or was it, it wasn't till you came and spent some time here that you realised it was home, or - That's what I wonder, when that came to you.

**Christine 00:08:05**

Yes I think it was that being welcome so early. Again, I'm always full of funny stories. I came visiting my German friend through whom I've met Cilla. And I wanted to go in town, she couldn't help me. So she sat me in the bus and told me where to get out, you know, Royal Parade, and I was very nervous because I was actually not journeyed at all. I was a very dull person in that sense. And so she went with me into the bus, sat me on a seat and said to the neighbour person, she's a foreigner and she needs to get out in in Royal Parade. Can you look after her? So this lady she spoke heavily English with me. I didn't understand a lot, but I thought that was lovely. In the middle of she said, I have to go now, I need to get out here, passed me on to somebody else in the bus, who then told me the entire story life story of that person. And when we were in Royal Parade told me I have to get out. And I thought these are my kind of people. Would that explain? So it was very quickly that I felt like at home.

**Interviewer 2 00:09:42**

Yeah. Yeah, that must have been a feeling where, as soon as you met that person, where it made sense. Yeah. Absolutely.

**Christine 00:09:48**

Yeah.

**Interviewer 2 00:09:49**

Thank you. That's lovely.

**Christine 00:09:51**

Yeah.

**Interviewer 00:09:59**

That's good. I think you've answered one for us, Christine, as well. But I - and you've covered some of this already, and we can cover more of it again later. But what part has Cilla played in your story, in your journey to England?

**Christine 00:10:17**

Cilla? What role? No it's really a very important one. One of the things is I never have been in for or rarely, you know, just a neighbour country in Germany, possibly Holland or France or something, but



nothing really big. And the biggest journey was to England to visit my German friend. And my English was very low. I went in Germany and commercial school that wasn't even, you know, grammar or something, it was just, they wanted me to become a secretary. Can you see me as a secretary? Hmm? Um, so my English there was I write the standard 'please send me 10 bottles of wine with the best wishes'. You know, I didn't learn communication, but how you write letters, if you have to write in English. I think my English teacher also died and they never replaced him. So as I said, my English was miniscule.

I remembered another very good and important sentence which I used very often in the beginning. And this is I know, my pronunciation must be terrible. Now the answer of the English people is an 'oh no, your English is wonderful. If I would speak German as you speak English, I would be glad'. So I bubble chest on. And Cilla helped me a lot in learning English, because she spoke very clear and very slow. She was in a lot of things braver than I. She was in her, she was a social worker, I was a social worker, my friend, actually, too, was one of the reasons that we thought we set something up in England. And she was, at that time, and the state where she knew her job was done. You know, when you do a specific hard social work, you reach a level where you get either burnout, or compassion fatigue. And when that happens, you need to go because you're not a good social worker anymore. And I came in her life.

That's when she decided, okay, I stop working and I move in with you, Christine, in Germany. It was quite a shock. For a selfish woman like me, never lived with anybody. During that time, this, you know, my English became better, talking. We also found out that I was on the end of a crossroad. And a year later, I made the same decision as Cilla, I knew I had to stop what I was doing, even though it was a fantastic job. And we started our life together with an eight weeks holiday, or, I don't know, didn't feel like holiday, in India. Now for somebody who never journeys, you know, sits on the aeroplane for 14 hours, arrives in New Delhi. And it was a cultural shock, it was everything.

But we did a little bit history. You know, we had sort of a diary and looked at addresses and so on. And I would say if you survive, eight weeks, India, you survive, actually 30 years' friendship. So, Cilla was in a lot of ways, the, the one, the spearhead of things. She was much braver than I. She went for things where I was still pondering. She encouraged me. Again, where she more or less said the route for my occupational success must have been a half a year after I've been in England. She came home and she said, I have enrolled you in the College for Further Education, as it was called then, for aroma therapy. I said Well, yeah, I think, you know, you're good with your hands. I think you should study something. So I said I don't speak proper English. How can I do an exam or anything? She said Oh you will get through this one. And do you know what I got through it? I got quite a good and I have no idea that with such diploma, she opened all the doors what's happened after. It might come later that you ask for my successes I had here. But she was the initiator. She was the person who encouraged me. It gave me confidence. And she gave me a home.

#### **Interviewer 2 00:15:19**

Lovely. Can I ask a question here, Christine? When you and Cilla spent your time together in Germany? --



**Christine 00:15:26**

Yeah.

**Interviewer 2 00:15:26**

-- Which is this time before you went to India and then came back to England. Can you remember what you missed most of you'd spent a small amount of time in England before then, but there must have been some things you missed. What did you miss? about --

**Christine 00:15:38**

What, in Germany?

**Interviewer 2 00:15:39**

Yeah. When you were in Germany, you were thinking, harking back maybe to England, because you were drawn back. So what? --

**Christine 00:15:45**

No, no, no, no I was - you missed something. I was actually only visiting Cilla and meeting her. I think I have seen her three times before she decided to move to Germany. So I, I at that time, I wasn't in, you know, I didn't even think about it. I didn't even know where our friendship is going. [Interviewer 2 hums] But I said if you want to move in, move in. So there was not yet anything missing. It was more what Cilla was missing. And she missed the sea and the seagulls. I'm sure she missed also the English - and it was everything too regimented. You know, she didn't feel comfortable and the warm she has in that country. So she was the missing one. I didn't know yet what to miss. I can tell you what I would miss now.

**Interviewer 2 00:16:40**

Yes.

**Christine 00:16:41**

But at that time? I didn't. Hmm.

**Interviewer 2 00:16:44**

So it's very true to say then that your feelings for Cilla were what the reason or your relationship was Cilla was the reason you initially came back to live here?

**Christine 00:16:53**

Yeah

**Interviewer 2 00:16:53**

Absolutely. Lovely. Thank you.



**Interviewer 00:17:04**

So - So with the journey in mind, what differences did you experience moving from German - from Germany to Britain?

**Christine 00:17:30**

Do you mean sort of cultural differences?

**Interviewer 00:17:35**

Yeah, [unintelligible]

**Christine 00:17:36**

I think I answered it a little bit already -- -- where I said it was actually so much more structured in Germany. And I had a freedom and no fear of being judged, in this country. I have, I have to say, I have only the most wonderful experience with England, and with English people. And one of the things when you, when I started working, I, you know, became self employed, then with my training as an aroma therapist. I didn't have to - in Germany, if you're not wearing the right attire, you get sort of ostracised. I created my own little uniform, and nobody ever did like me or not like me, because of the thing I wore. People don't judge them for how you look. I mean, yes, there are some. But I think that's a bit more people who see the negative sides, you know, we say, oh, people on the streets say oh, you fat cow. I tell you, I'm reaching soon my 70s Club. I've never been called that. Never. Because I think there is a little bit how you bring it out. You know, I have only received kindness and that is different. If anything, I'm a little bit disabled, automobility disabled. And I remember in Germany where I needed some assistance and help, I could not get it. And the response was in such a unkind manner, sort of, often, Don't go on a journey if you can't walk. Here, I remember at one point in Okehampton, I felt a little bit dizzy, you know, nearly lost the balance. Two people came, you know, immediately sort of holding me on the arm and say, Are you all right? Do you need any help? That's the difference.

So I don't know whether these answers your questions but it is just, I like the culture more, I like the people more, I like the opportunities more. Ahat I could do in my in my work, I could not have done in Germany. Does that answer your question? A little bit?

**Interviewer 00:17:39**

Yeah. Yeah, thank you. Um, so how the and and in terms of living arrangements, how did they compare from Germany then? To England?

**Christine 00:20:18**

Ah, yeah, there are things I have to say two things which shocked me a little bit. The one was the food. Because I was absolutely sure I would starve in this country until they opened Lidl. And the other one, we live, more generous, the roads are wider, the houses are bigger, the rooms are bigger. And when we together found our first house, I wrote to every one of my German friends, we have just moved into a doll's house. And I have to walk sideways to get up the stairs. Having been 25 years here, seen other houses built, which are more like shoe boxes. Actually, my awareness of that house grew and I



thought it was actually quite a comfortable house. But these were, sort of, things like that you have your pipes outside the house. It's why outside, why haven't you put them in the houses? Because you don't have such cold weather as we have. Because all our water would freeze. Yes, possibly about the litter. You know, there are elements you could, you know, it's not a perfect country. But you take that into account for what you have to - what you have left. Again, I hope I answered that question. I go always on on a tangent, aren't I? Always answer masses of questions. Okay.

**Interviewer 00:21:58**

That's good. I think the way you answer questions is excellent. It's, I think lovely to hear you --

**Christine 00:22:06**

Oh really? Thank you.

**Interviewer 00:22:06**

-- tie things together for us. And yeah, you may feel that you've answered this. But what are your thoughts on the English? Do you have any more thoughts than the ones you've shared on the British people?

**Christine 00:22:32**

Again, if I might share a little theory of mine, and that's really an interesting - I like thinking about things. It is the first contact. First contact with English people is fantastic. Especially if you have a dog. You just go into the park and you talk with everyone, you stroke every dog. But also you say, as I said, you sit in a train and you chat with them and they tell you that they have been in China and everywhere. But what I have noticed when you reach a specific level, sort of beyond the acquaintance, you reach a bit of rock. It is very, very hard to get deeper with the English.

The German are different. They're rock hard, you're really difficult to get through them. But when you cut through them, they are soft like pudding. And making a German friend is a friend for life. My eldest friend, which is still in contact, is over 44 years. And we still ring every week and share everything we have done. But if you're patient with the English, with a lovely friend - we always smile about that - I needed seven years, seven, before I could hug her the first time and, Greta, you should know that I am one of the big huggers. It's my, it's my therapy, you know, and I waited for seven years and now she demands hugs. So that's a difference. The cultural difference is first very open very friendly. But actually they themselves, you as English people say, we are very reserved. And this very reserved is to become really a friend, what I understand, and a friend, certainly it's hard work and a little bit of story together. All right? I think that's all I can say add to that.

**Interviewer 00:24:49**

[That's brilliant --]

**Interviewer 2 00:24:50**



[That is - I - oh] Yeah, I really enjoyed your analogy of that, really interesting. Thank you. Yeah. Do you have - [Interviewer 1 makes an unintelligible remark] Can I just ask something here Christine? Just a very simple thing about the language. You know, so much of meeting friends is talking to them for the first time and things like that. Was that hard at first when you wanted to make friends with people and ask all about their lives when you had a smaller grasp of the language? Or do you always do you feel that that was not everything, you know, that you could use [everything --]

**Christine 00:25:22**

[It wasn't] - it wasn't everything and it was the patience I [computer crackle] have really to say it was all the patience of my friends. And one of the things which I always did when I'm very tired and I started do that now again, I think it's all age. When I'm very tired, I suddenly move into German and then you look at the person looks like this and [thumping noise] you you think [German utterance, meaning 'looks confused']. And then I notice, I say you don't understand a word, don't you? They say, no you spoke in German. Very nice. So I think the the generosity of the people, but I'm also a little bit a hidden actor. So I think I learned the language language more through imitating to playing English than actually to learn English. Does that make any sense? So I like to imitate and now I'm possibly good enough that I can make a joke in English, you know. In the beginning, I tried to make a joke and nobody laughed. That's actually something else cultural. Nobody laughs about German jokes. Forget it. But I now can partly say English jokes and people smile. [Laughs].

**Interviewer 00:26:45**

With what you've just said in mind, would you say your German personality is different to you English personality? Do you change at all when you change one language to the other?

**Christine 00:27:00**

No, otherwise they would possibly notice that I'm speaking German. I don't think that I have a German or a English personality. It's just always me. And I have less more less difficulties in England to be me. And I had in Germany, but I've always, even in Germany, I've always been myself. Is that sort of what you meant? So it's not, I don't have that sort of stiff German, stiff upper lip. Even my German has become so soft, that people think I'm South African, or Netherland or something very rarely, people think actually, that I'm German. They think I'm South African. Don't know why. And I think because I imitate the English language. And it's not very German.

**Interviewer 00:27:57**

That's good. That makes sense. Thank you.

**Christine 00:28:03**

See, you want a little bit to know about my, my working life? What I sort of, what this country has allowed me to do? Is that [something which would be of interest?]

**Interviewer 00:28:16**



[Yeah, yeah, I would]. That is something that would be very much of interest. Yeah. Thank you.

**Christine 00:28:22**

Because I had a rich, rich, 30 years working life here. So it all started with the gift of my darling Cilla, [laughter] the aroma therapy course. And again, something a little side story. Um, I was at that time we weren't in the EU. And I had just finished my training. I just tried to set up my school, not my school, my therapy centre, and I get a letter from England, that I have to leave the country immediately. Because I'm not having a job. So I wrote back in my very good English, with a dictionary, that it is very inconvenient for me to leave the country immediately, as I'm just in the process of setting up a business. And proof was I set up a business with the Enterprise Allowance Scheme, which was at Thatcher's time in that moment, because I could prove this one I was allowed to start and not only was I allowed to start, I actually, for a year, had the help of this government and that was again, one of the most important step ladders to succeed in that business.

My English got better and better. There was a lovely shop in the Barbican. Well Oiled, it was called, I loved these people and I went always in there, I had a little chat. Until Paula asked me would you like to teach an evening class? Again, you know, hands up, what do you think? And so I met that manager and she said, Just try it. If nobody comes, you can go home again. 18 years, I was teaching evening classes.

During the evening classes, I have, I think, a way of talking to people, I could, can engage them I can, enthusiast - that's a word? I don't know how it's proper said. I can enthuse them. So a lot came and said, you know, after we have done the introduction, we wanted to move into the college but nobody teaches like you. Why aren't you teaching diploma classes?

So I started to set up my own school. And again, for - that wasn't quite as long - for 9 or 10 years. I had diploma classes in massage, aromatherapy, anatomy, physiology, reiki, you know, all these things. I then also have been asked was an organisation HIV and AIDS Association was called at that time, in Exeter. And I worked for nine years with people with AIDS and HIV. Still have friendship with some of them.

And the highlight for me was then becoming first just a member and then an executive of the British Complimentary Medicine Association. BCMA. And when I was an executive, I was responsible for school inspection and setting school standards. And that was just, you know, first you are the pupil, then you become the teacher. And then you become somebody who looks for the people teach well enough.

So as you can see, my life was just so full and rich and, and and happy. And I only have now stopped working during the lockdown. I saw how wonderful it is not to work. And so I'm now a bonafide pensioner. So that was a quick run through my occupation in life.

**Interviewer 00:32:40**

I'm particularly interested in the, the, I guess it would you - aroma therapy, to my knowledge, comes under. I can't think of a

**Christine 00:32:58**



Complimentary therapy

**Interviewer 00:32:59**

I'm sorry - complimentary therapy? Thank you.

**Christine 00:33:02**

[Complimentary therapy, yes.]

**Interviewer 00:33:04**

[And] I, I heard that things like, well homoeopathy was the term that I'd heard, is practised more by GPs in Germany to this day, and less so in Britain and I'd just be interested to hear if that is the case and your thoughts on it.

**Christine 00:33:25**

The difference with Germany and England is again, if you want to become an homoeopath, naturopath, any of this complimentary therapist, you still have to have first the training as a doctor. During you can here in England do a course for aroma therapy, a course for massage, course for natural medicine. You have to go through the medical training in Germany, then you can sprout out and the truth is and you can actually do any quirks you want to do because you always sit on your title of doctor. Here it is different. Even in the complimentary therapy there are some which need to be registered: acupuncture, herbalism, I think. So some they need to go via government. Ours, the government wanted really to get their hands into it and wanted to regulate us. I would have said regulated us to death. But it somehow I think politically something happened where they had other things to think about than ruin our life. So for that one, organisations like the BCMA the British Complimentary Therapy is the one who is not controlling but supporting associations and therapists in their work and giving them through that one a credence to work. Does that sort of answer it?

**Interviewer 00:35:15**

That does. Thank you. Yeah. I'm glad to hear about that. Just to go back if case you have any more to say, though you did cover it a bit briefly. Does your impression of Okehampton [computer glitch, rendering speech unintelligible] England, and you might have covered [that and talked about] how it differs from - hello?

**Christine 00:35:41**

[I can't hear you]. Can you ask that again? You

**Interviewer 00:35:45**

[Can you hear me? I can't -]

**Christine 00:35:46**



[You - the sound was suddenly] - Could you ask the question again, please? The sound was [distorted and I couldn't -]

**Interviewer 00:35:52**

[I can. Can you hear me again now?]

**Christine 00:35:55**

I think so. Yeah.

**Interviewer 00:35:57**

Okay, good. Does your impression of Okehampton differ at all from the rest of England? And how so, if so? You did talk about how it differs from Plymouth. I don't know if there's anything more you'd like to say on that.

**Christine 00:36:16**

I don't know whether I can actually. That's the one thing I've been in London visiting and in bigger cities, I know that I never ever, ever, ever in my life want to be in a bigger city. So having seen London I always thought that Plymouth was actually quite small, but Okehampton is such a little bit smaller. It's only - I've always a feeling whether Okehampton is a little island. It is like something which is still existence which is **slow [?]** - it isn't there anymore. The same as our Dartmoor and these beautiful rivers, where the world is exploding and and full of negativity and you sit on a river in the Dartmoor and you think what is it all about? And I feel whether there is some kind of wholeness some kind of healthiness still in the people with Okehampton. I don't know whether it's right but it's my - I find it a little bit, just a little sort of Paradise. Special people.

And the lockdown, I must go really back to the lockdown and, Greta, I mean, you should at least have a gold medal if not more you should be a dame by now, for what you have done. But if I just say just we base under the roundables and specifically Cilla and we opened the door and there is a bunch of flowers outside our door. Not asked for it. There is food outside, there is cake outside, and when we find out who it is and we ring we say oh you shouldn't have done it and said yes, I was thinking of you. I mean where do you find? Would you think in London anybody puts a piece of cake outside your door? No. So it's an amazing place. That's all I can say, it is something special.

**Interviewer 2 00:38:27**

I agree. [laughter]. I do agree. I wonder if I [unintelligible overlap] - I do, and I think maybe Okehampton brings that out in us, as you say it's a little bit of Paradise, maybe it affects us and makes us be our best selves. Maybe.

**Christine 00:38:39**

Possibly. Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer 00:38:48**



You - Is there anything more you'd like to say? Before we move on about about your decision to move here permanently? Did that start with the lockdown?

**Christine 00:39:01**

Yes. I love Plymouth and I love my flat. You know if you think I worked 30 years and it's something which I have created. In the sense of the word with these hands that mouth. So I have great difficulty to let go of that. And I thought what am I going to do when there has to come a decision? And I have always been only Friday, Saturday, Sunday, sometimes Monday here but my life was still more in in Plymouth, my energy, my my my activity.

Now when the lockdown came, you know I say I'm moving to Okehampton, I'm not [laughter] not seeing Cilla. And suddenly, I saw the garden here, I experience the garden. I'm sitting here in the moment and look actually out of the window and I thought, if I'm unable to ever walk again, big problems with that, I could sit here, I could never ever get bored. So it's like, if you believe on, higher little voices they just said, Look, Christina, that's your place. I've I really clearly heard that. And I couldn't think of a better place to be and Cilla's flat is perfect for us both to live here. Is that good enough?

**Interviewer 00:40:39**

Thank you, Christine. Yes. Having - I'd love to be able to think of another question to follow on from that. But from for now, having having dragged you away from work into town, I'm going to drag him back to work from town. Which you talked about being able to teach aroma therapy and give course on that? How, how has astrology if at all, impacted your work? And have you been able to work with that in England?

**Christine 00:41:16**

Yes, yes, I actually just started to study astrology in Germany. And that love affair happened, which pulled me back or into England, and I had still a year missing before I had my diploma. And so I actually flew every month for the weekend to finish the course. In the beginning, I could not get with the astrology anywhere. Because there was a very strong Astrological Association here in Plymouth, which come from a different school also. And I just have not been accepted by them. I tried, and was not very successful.

And then when people, because I worked also as therapist, you know, I gave people treatments. And when they are in - astrology is for me, when you are in a situation in crossroads, when you just don't understand, when you don't know any further. So I use that one as a template to look and say, so what's actually, what does life want from you? What's your homework plan? Why is life as it is, I always say if you walk and walk and you run into walls, you just haven't found the door. And somebody needs to say to you stop running into the door, and let's go on the search for the door.

That's for me astrology.

And so more I did astrological interpretations. People gave me extreme good feedback. Sometimes when they told me how good I was, I thought I want to meet that person. It's because I just work with knowledge, but also instinct, and tuning into that person. And so in my own practice, I think I became quite successful. And had even two courses where I taught people astrology, and my astrology is not



head stuff. It is living, you know, it's the energy of the spring and the summer, of the water and the earth, you know, not just words, it is, what does water do with you, you know, and so people finding themselves and through finding myself, I can understand other people better.

**Interviewer 00:43:54**

That's really interesting. Thank you. I'd love to hear. I'd love to hear more on that.

**Christine 00:44:01**

Come for a cup of coffee and we talk about it.

**Interviewer 00:44:08**

So it sounded like that was something that started for you in Germany? That - partly -

**Christine 00:44:16**

Yes, yes, [it was.]

**Interviewer 00:44:20**

[And -]

**Christine 00:44:20**

Oh sorry, I interrupt you always, because illogically I know but you're talking. I was in Germany, a civil servant. You can't be more structured and disciplined than a civil servant. And I worked in youth work. I loved it. I loved it very much. And I went on very well with the youth. But the policy and the politics in the social services environment was that they wanted us more and more to police social work than to work [unintelligible] for the youngsters. And during my work, I came firstly in contact with astrology. Secondly, with crystals, and thirdly with tarot. And I learned it and I practice it and was very happy. Now the place where come is also very Roman Catholic, you know. Only praying is accepted, everything else is a sect. And on my desk in my work sheet was that I have to work against the sects who work with astrology, [laughter] with tarot and with whatever. And I thought to myself if you would know! But I also knew that it was time for me to go, because that was not my place anymore. So that knowing this is my pathway, but as I told you, I could have not succeeded in Germany. And I would say for my braveness to leave that country, to leave a job, I mean, I would have been now a pensioner, fantastic pension, you know, as a civil servant. I've given that up. And as a thank you, as my price, I got what I have now, which I would at anytime, anytime, choose again and again. And on top of it, my Cilla [laughter].

**Interviewer 00:46:32**

That's lovely. That's all - that's all things -- So as well as, as well as your work, is there anything as well as your work that you've bought across from Germany, to Britain? Anything of the culture?

**Christine 00:46:52**



Singing possibly. I loved, I have to say loved singing, because I'm since 20 years on a kind of medication which ruined my voice chords. So I can't now sing anymore. But it was also one of the things when Cilla and I couldn't talk so very much, what we always did we sung together. And even when we were ringing, I was in Germany and she rung me from England, you know, and I didn't know any more to say I said, Oh, Sing me the song again. You know, so I brought singing over and I did it for quite a long time. I love singing in churches and actually, you know, you couldn't shut me up really. [laughter And then came came that that voice thing, you know, so for a little while sometimes I can get a nice tone together but my voice isn't just cutting off, so I'm not in a choir anymore. But I brought that over and enjoyed it.

**Interviewer 2 00:48:02**

Can I, can I ask something now, I wonder if you had any particular favourite songs? Whether they were English or German, either or, but any ones that stand out for you that when you hear them you think, ah, yeah.

**Christine 00:48:14**

I am a classical singer. So if things like Mozart or Bach I am so and so always expanding. I think the first song Cilla sung to me is the Wind in the Willow. [She sings:] Oh the wind in the willow and the birds in the sky [end of singing] da da dum. And that was a song she always had to sing to me until I could sing the words. Then Cilla has and had at that time a little and now it's a big boy. Her little son. And she always sung him songs. Puff the Magic Dragon and I mean, I think I learned actually English with Yan. You know, he was a little boy, he was sort of five and a half, six. And so when he went into school, I went to the school, so, but we did a lot of singing together.

**Interviewer 2 00:49:17**

That's lovely. Yeah.

**Interviewer 00:49:29**

Before before I ask my next question, is there anything more you'd like to say?

**Christine 00:49:34**

I think I've said enough. [Laughter].

**Interviewer 00:49:39**

You've said enough? [Laughter] [Never enough]

**Christine 00:49:40**

[I'm I'm certainly not a shy one, aren't I?]

**Interviewer 00:49:44**



No. No, it's wonderful. It's wonderful to hear it all. So as well as that which you've brought over, is there anything more that you've picked up of British culture than you've already talked about?

**Christine 00:50:00**

Not British culture, but what I have actually through the lockdown is starting painting. I was always absolutely sure, and, in my school, the teacher looked over us with great sadness at me because they could see that I tried, but there's no success. I've never ever been exhibited on any school wall. So I forgot about painting. And I think roughly a year actually where thought one should learn something new. And somebody gave me, an old lady gave me a whole box full of pastels, all pastel and - the powdery ones. And I thought she's so lovely, she gives me that I need at least to try something. So I started to go on to YouTube and have lessons on learning. And I knew then pastel is not my medium. And I had some friends who encouraged me very much and went into acryl. And without their encouragement to say, you know, art is not something which you produce or imitate, it is something which comes from you. So that, actually, is wonderful. I tried to learn the ukulele. I've given up on that. Hand, brain, this hand, this hand and the brain and there isn't they don't work together. So yeah. The only new culture or new things I have learned. Not sure whether I answered your question now. [laughter]

**Interviewer 2 00:51:46**

[Can I go? Sorry Callum, I just -]

**Interviewer 00:51:47**

[So it sounds -Yes you can, Greta, that's that's fine]

**Interviewer 2 00:51:49**

While we were still talking about cultural things, and we were talking about music and everything else. We're very lightly touched much, much earlier on about food. And we didn't stay there. It's my favourite subject. [laughter] I just wondered. I know, Christine, particularly you said that you didn't like the food at first and you almost felt like you would starve until Lidl came, and I can imagine back then, you know, there was, yeah, it was an interesting time in England for food. And how has that changed for you? Is there English dishes you like to prepare now? Or is there stuff from Germany that reminds you of Germ - you know, when you cook, it reminds you of Germany? I'd love to know how food features in your life now, in that way.

**Christine 00:52:28**

I have become very brave. I am still a very simple eater. I don't like all these explorations with chuck as much in and then guess what's in there. I actually like to see and identify what I'm eating. But I come from Bavaria. That's why we also were voluptuous. I like the word voluptuous because we love good food, good food is meat, this portion. I got my first portion in England. Roast. Slices. You could have read through it. You could have played the father, our Father in heaven through it. Two, three little slices. I mean, they have the joke, how did you find the meal? I said by accident when I put this the leaf

away. So the portions were different. The quality, really the quality. I mean, the meat quality in Germany is amazing. And we do live very much on potatoes, everything you can do with potatoes. And here it's pastry. I mean, everything was pastry: pasty pies and some other p's.

And I remember Cilla said oh, I you will get the best fish and chips you ever have eaten. In that piece of paper on the road. Never eaten a piece of food on a piece of paper. That fat thing. Greasy. Somewhere inside was something a white slice I'm sure that was a fish. And these thick, fat greasy pommes frites, or what do you call them? Chips. I said no, I can't stand it.

Now Cilla is the cook in the house. And she knows I like the pure food. So we still know have you know we had recently just a baked potato with grated carrots and grated beetroot and some mushroom and that's for me the best. But I have experienced and explored pasties and pies and have found some deliciousness in them. So I've adapted to the culture. Thank you, Cilla, you answered that question wonderfully. Really well [Laughter from Christine and Interviewer 2].

**Interviewer 00:55:16**

It sounds like, where you lived in Germany, food was a bit of an art form and arts sounds now like it's becoming more and more important to you, do you think that might be another avenue for you to continue looking forward or not?

**Christine 00:55:37**

What cooking? Art? Cooking is art? No. No. For that I have Cilla. If I have to cook, I do it and, actually, yes, I do like to prepare everything very colourful and nice, but no that whatever become an art. Not in my life. [laughter]

**Interviewer 00:56:01**

I thought you might say that I was just interested to hear. [Christine and Interviewer laugh. Interviewer 2 makes an unintelligible comment] Is - I mean, yeah, so art, but yeah, art does sound like it's become more important to you recently, now that you've got more time, [and -]

**Christine 00:56:20**

[The] advantage here, the advantage is you can sit down. You know, more and more being mobility impaired, things, I liked - going out, riding a bike, you know - now, I don't get the leg over anymore - garden work, handiwork, that's all what I like - gets less and less. But when I go now in the art, I make it nice and comfortable, can take my time. And even if I would be at one time unable to walk, I still can do some, some art. So through that one, I think it has become important. And it's very meditative. It's really I don't know, you can do anything with it.

**Interviewer 2 00:57:28**

Christine, can I ask you a bit about just about now that you're not working? And you saying you're enjoying some of these lovely pleasures of your views and your art and things like that? Do you still feel a huge sense of self that you had, obviously, through your work? Because you've done some really



important work in your time, connected with people? Are you still? Do you still have that feeling? Are you still connected, you don't miss that terribly in that way.

**Christine 00:57:55**

I don't miss the handiwork anymore. Because it's hard work. You know, you have to stand, massage somebody for an hour. Myself first is very very good. I'm so really, really proud of what I have achieved. But where I still feel that I can work, you know, I would at any time do an astrological interpretation for somebody. I feel sitting with somebody and listening, giving feedback, possibly if you ask advice, can still be healing work. And I also try in the moment to sign up with the Okehampton community driving transport, Okehampton community transport here, which Cilla has, is is a member and has worked since five years. And I thought that could be a nice little still being helpful. So I feel I have the hard work is gone. But it doesn't mean that I'm not socialising with people anymore, that I can be helpful in other ways.

**Interviewer 2 00:59:07**

Absolutely. Thank you.

**Interviewer 00:59:17**

I think you may have answered just there what I wanted to ask next, which was, -

**Christine 00:59:23**

Oh!

**Interviewer 00:59:24**

Yeah, yeah, as well. You talked about the work that you did with the HIV and AIDS Association in Exeter. And I'd just love to hear more about how your work has benefited the communities you lived in since moving here, but you might have covered all of that by now.

**Christine 00:59:47**

The HIV and AIDS Association, the work was something very special because it was actually voluntary and I have been at that time in the 90s people still died of that disease quite heavily. And I partly treated people - the shortest was an hour before they died, often a day before they died. And I had actually to find that mortality in us. But I also learned so much about dying in dignity. I learned not to be afraid to be with the dying. To be, to hold the hands, to encourage them. So on the one hand side, it was just the massage I did. But on the other hand, you know, I went to the hospice, I worked in hospitals, we had at one time a clinic in Derriford Hospital. Each of the people became, not friends in that sense, but they touched you. And as I said, I have still, actually it's a one, two, just two of my good friends recently died after 20 years. So I have one left now. It will always stay with me. What I have learned there. What I have experienced in the trust people had in me, but it was possibly for my personality building of my character important.



**Interviewer 01:01:57**

In terms of, in terms of the question we had, the questions we have written down, we're coming to the end now. So,

**Christine 01:02:05**

[I think so, I have told you everything].

**Interviewer 01:02:07**

[having, having, having, having] yeah, and but yeah, having already done some recapping, I think the last one's are most a bit a bit more recapping, potentially, but let's have a look. I think can you, as you talked about it throughout, can you summarise how you feel you changed since arriving here in England. If you, you might not have anything more to say on that though.

**Christine 01:02:42**

I think that might be a good final word. I have changed beyond recognition. Before I came to England, I was a very insecure person. I was so insecure that I had for everything two insurances because one might not pay out. I had for everything two things, two irons, because one might fall, you know, might bad breakdown. So, I found a lot of safety and security in my own little space. I was actually very, very tight. Coming over here and actually living really proper, proper poverty. And seeing that poverty is not how much money you have. I I have lived with very little money, but actually I haven't lived through poverty, poverty, because I had such a rich life.

And now, any person who knows me out of German time can cannot believe it when I say I'm not really worrying about that. It will turn out right. No, doesn't matter. You know, if something breaks down then I'm not ironing you know, if my iron breaks down, I'm just not ironing. So, yes, I am a happier person, I am a rounder person, and I'm a much much more relaxed person. That's a good summary, isn't it?

**Interviewer 2 01:04:19**

It absolutely is. Yes.

**Christine 01:04:27**

Because otherwise I think we just going in circles. I think I have given a lovely round lay, haven't I?

**Interviewer 2 01:04:34**

Absolutely. You've made our job incredibly easy today. It's a [wonderful story, so I'm sure that -]

**Christine 01:04:39**

[Really?]

**Interviewer 2 01:04:39**

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Yeah.



**Christine 01:04:41**

Happy. Okay. Okay.

**Interviewer 2 01:04:43**

Yeah. Well done.

**Interviewer 01:04:47**

Thank you. So, now I think do you have any questions, Christine, about how the interview will be summarised. And about, yeah, that's kind of it and about consent forms and whatnot that will be sent to you [by Nicole?]

**Christine 01:05:11**

[Yeah, Nicole] has informed me already quite well, I think I have signed some of it. I think our arrangement has been that I might get to see the interview before you put it on wherever you put it on. And I trust you, especially Nicole. And she's used to do these things entirely. And I don't feel that I have a question because I see Nicole tells me what to do and I do it.

**Nicole 01:05:43**

Okay, so I'll jump back in. So I'm just going to stop [the recording there.]

**Christine 01:05:46**

[Yeah, hello.]

**Nicole 01:05:47**

So you keep your interview file and then we can talk about the next step. So I'll just stop the recording there. So this is the recording being ended.