

Did you ever come across rumours about him?

PR No, and this is what I find people have a great tendency to re-write history. I was in the young liberals, I can honestly say that at no time did he ever do anything inappropriate with me.

AH Did you ever hear about it with anything else?

PR No, never. The only issue that I was ever aware of was the article that appeared in RAP in 1979 with regard to Cambridge House and he never denied that. The bit that was printed in RAP, not what is now being said. He was always in favour

NG What was printed in RAP in the '70s?

PR That he'd administered corporal punishment to a young man at Cambridge House and he never denied that. He always supported hanging and he always support corporal punishment. You see, I remember when I started teaching, I went to a school where no corporal punishment was used, you know, we live in a very different world now.

NG Yes, I went to one where corporal punishment was most certainly used.

PR Yes, yes but when I moved to Oldham I was given a strap in my first week and it took me nearly 18 months to get staff and pupils to understand that I didn't need to beat somebody to actually get them to do what I wanted them to do. All those sorts of things are now totally unacceptable when its done quite a lot

NG Absolutely. You say Cyril Smith never denied it, he issued a libel writ against RAP and then withdrew it and paid their costs.

PR Yes, my understanding at the time and you know his secretary is also still alive and will probably be able to tell you more than I can because I wasn't directly involved, I was actually not living in Rochdale at the time, was that he had been told or advised that it would just end up costing an awful lot of money and he wouldn't get anywhere which I have to say has been my experience of libel actions.

AH One thing we have been trying to understand, you might be able to help us with given you knew the man, is given he had this nasty side and he could be quite abusive to people, sorry I don't mean physically necessarily and that there were these rumours supposedly forming around about him and

PR I'm going to stop you there because as far as I am concerned there weren't rumours. The Labour Party in 1979 went round canvassing using the RAP to stir all these things, he increased his majority. The vast majority of people in Rochdale at that time and subsequently, you know, including I organised his birthday party for his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday believed he had done an awful lot of good. You wouldn't get people like the likes of Maureen Cooper who was Chairman of the Rochdale Childer and also a very formidable woman, she would have nothing to do with somebody if there had been rumours at that time of inappropriate behaviour.

AH You've kind of answered my question anyway because the thing we were struggling to understand

PR It's been invented by our current MP for purely political purposes. If you don't believe me go up on the website and have a look at Rochdale's alternative website which was something that Matt Baker put up before the last general election unattributed because Google and that will not allow you to find out who, and he used for all sorts of stuff about me, about Cyril about people who