

Project: 'Queer Lives: Barriers from cradle to elderly care - An Oral History'

Respondent: Rik Kay

Year of Birth: 1961

Age:

Connection to project: Respondent

Date of Interview: 1st of November 2024

Interviewer: Rachel Kelly

Recording Agreement: Yes

Information & Consent: Yes

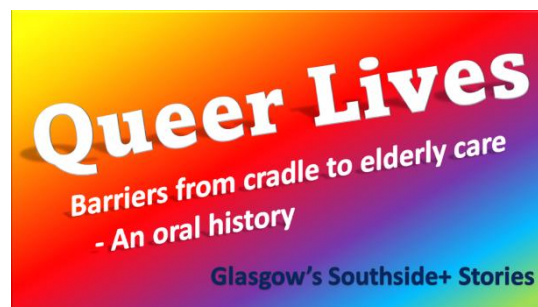
Photographic Images: Yes (Number of: 1)

Length of Interview: 52 minutes and 53 seconds

Location of Interview: Rik's home in Edinburgh

Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics)





Glasgow's Southside+ Stories



| Time (from: mins/secs) | Description | Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs) |
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| 0.39 | The respondent was born and grew up in Kirkcaldy. | |
| 1.28 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he would mind telling her if he has come out as gay/queer. | |
| | "I came out...I'd been to university which was in Edinburgh. And I'd left university. And at the time there was a gay centre in Broughton Street. And so, I realised, late developer, I realised I wanted to explore being gay, so I went down to the gay centre. And probably not all that long afterwards I went and told my family. And that was perfectly alright. I told my sister one night when I was visiting back home. And I can't remember but I told her upstairs in the bedroom. I must have spoken to my mother. And then my mother said to leave it and so my mother told my father and the rest of my siblings and it was fine. The only funny comment that my other sister said was, when she found out that I had something to say-'Had I got somebody pregnant.' {Laughs}." | 1.38.2.55 |
| 3.00 | Interviewer asks the respondent if there was anyone who had a bad reaction to him coming out. | |
| 3.05 | Respondent says that the family didn't tell a wide spread amount of people at that time. He also had one flatmate that was nasty and took exception to him being and not having told them this before he moved in. This may have been partly to do with her religious convictions. All of his other flatmates were lovely. Had been to a lesbian and gay conference in Vienna around the same time and then became open and started dropping the fact he is gay into the conversation in most context. Not at a gardening job though. | |
| 4.55 | Interviewer asks the respondent about going to the gay centre in Edinburgh. | |
| | "The gay centre was very friendly. Upstairs it would have been a café area in the front room and a meeting room in the back...And I can't remember, at the time, whether Gay Switchboard were based there. But, I kind of joined activities there. And I even ended up helping paint the downstairs in the gay centre. And became very close..with a friend there which lasted until he died just a few years ago. And, also, probably not long afterwards-I don't know if there was an Edinburgh lesbian and gay movement. But certainly one was set up. So, again, I stated meeting young gay people of all sorts. And so we had social activities and stuff like that. We organised a corrupted youth conference in 1984 for a weekend...And I remember folk came up from | 5.00-6.26 |

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| | certainly England. And we would have had workshops and things like that. I can't remember the ins and outs but It was a nice crowd." | |
| 6.51 | Respondent mentions Lavender Menace books and talks about reconnecting with them. | |
| 9.10 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he would say that he has faced any barriers to education in his life due to being queer. | |
| | "No not at all. But, again, being gay was never talked about at school in my age. And it was pre-Section 28, so I missed all that. There was no sex education that I can remember, as such. So, there was no barriers apart from that probably was why I came out later on. When I was...would have been 20/21....So, I don't know when I would have been aware of things and obviously in terms of...there was no role models. But I do remember... and I've just watched it recently. Sneaking and watching Naked Civil Servant with John Hurt which was 1976. So, I would have been about 15 or so. And that was probably one of my first experiences of a type of gay community. And of course you had the camp comedians at the time as well. So, you were ridiculed. I do remember going to secondary school and somebody called me a poof in the playground. But, it just went over my head. I didn't really think about it. Just cause I was slightly different. It was a 4 year secondary cause the catchment area changed from where I went to primary school. So, it was a mixed group of people and then I moved after 2 years to Kirkcaldy high school. But, as I said I never came out so nobody would have been aware of things. I was involved in amateur drama. So I was aware of a gay community. Again, we went to the pub under age in Kirkcaldy after going to our youth drama group...But, I remember vaguely in the front of the pub gay people...gay men would have met there. So, somehow we would of been told about that but it didn't really mean anything." | 9.19-12.00 |
| 12.05 | Interviewer asks the respondent about university. | |
| 12.12 | Didn't put himself out there as he said. Knew about the Kenilworth pub. The Laughing Duck? Might not have been opened. Talks about acceptance in the drama community. | |
| 14.20 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he ever faced any barriers in his workplace or career. | |
| | "Not at all. Because, again, I probably never said-I am gay, but I met my partner in 1989 through the drama group I'd just joined. And he was actually a director. But, even before then I would mention passing...And then obviously when I started a relationship with him then I would always say my partner, so people would always know socially that I was a gay man, so. And, again, there was no discrimination that I came across at all. I would hope it has changed. Again, I worked as a civil servant and they were probably more open and friendly. There would have been other areas...I worked temporarily in gardens in the council in East Lothian. And I never came out then even though I was out to drama people. And I think it was just I felt a slight stigma or them judging me. Especially when I hadn't really dealt with anything about being gay." | 14.25-15.55 |
| 16.11 | Interviewer asks the respondent if there is any way he would like things to change in work places going forward. | |
| 16.19 | Talks about Scottish Government LGBT and Allies groups. First pride 1985 in London. Talks about the National Theatre of Scotland social dance group. Has gone back to attend Prides. Describes bigoted people at the march. | |
| 19.59 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he would say that the experience of being gay has changed over time. | |
| | "I would say yes. And also there is lots more support for all ages. The LGBT Health and Care have activities for elders. But they also have LGBT Youth Scotland. And you've got things like events for young people. And I've been | 20.08-21.42 |

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| | to a couple of inter-generational events where us elders have gone and mixed with the youngsters. One was a day celebrating Pride. And Lucia the American who came out 50 years ago would talk about the San Francisco Pride marches that she was on. And the youngsters seemed to be fascinated by our life experiences. And they're nice crowd. And it's nice to see youngsters. And probably younger than my time in Edinburgh at the Lesbian and gay youth movement...And as long as...there still will be discrimination...But there's hopefully more support by families and for the families themselves." | |
| 21.55 | Explains that this was a good experience and the young people were really engaged. They also do fun things like board game nights. LGBT Health has groups in Glasgow too. The respondent thinks that rural areas might be a bit more isolating. They might make their own community if they can. | |
| 22.50 | The interviewer asks the respondent if he believes that there is an LGBT plus community. | |
| 23.10 | Says that there should be but feels that attacks on trans people are like section 28 coming back again. Does not understand people calling a trans woman a man. Thinks some of it is being hijacked by religious groups and the far right. Doesn't think there has been enough fair discussion about women only spaces and the fears that some women might have. | |
| 25.16 | Interviewer asks the respondent what it was like to socialise in places like The Laughing Duck in Edinburgh. | |
| 25.35 | He enjoyed dancing so liked going out. Went to Planet Out. Thinks it's a shame that some places have disappeared. Mentions Key West, CCs, Chaps, Café Habana. Run by Lesbian and gay people for the community. He felt more uncomfortable with such a wide mix latterly. Hen nights etc. Not sure why. Good to have a space for LGBTQI plus people to inhabit themselves. | |
| 33.30 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he thinks about the future as he ages. | |
| | "Probably. Because I've had back problems...There was one point just pre-Covid I was housebound with my back for the lead up towards Covid. So, I'm conscious that living on my own in this..in a building that has an upstairs. How long if my health deteriorated where I would go to. Because I live right in the centre. And trying to find somewhere, even smaller, on a ground floor and with lifts. And LGBT friendly would be difficult. I wouldn't want to go back into the closet. And if people ask if I'm gay then I still talk about my partner. So there'd be no under the illusion that I'm a gay man. I throw things into the conversation. But I always have. That's how I dealt with coming out. You didn't have to tell them-I'm coming out. You just...What you said told the story that yes you were a gay man in a relationship." | 33.38-35.37 |
| 35.05 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he would like to be in a queer friendly care home if he ever went in. | |
| 35.25 | Respondent would like the home to have educated staff and other queer people and non queer people. Has heard of a queer home in London. Questions have been asked about this. Who could afford it? | |
| 36.55 | Interviewer asks the respondent about any legislation that has brought more rights for queer people. | |
| 37.00 | Respondent talks about his civil partnership in Plockton. Had a fantastic day with family and friends. Felt no need to move sideways to marriage. | |
| 39.25 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he can think of legislation that has diminished or rolled back the rights of queer people. | |
| 39.30 | Not being able to bring in the Gender Recognition bill in Scotland. He hope this will change. Can see parallels to how gay men were treated in the past and thinks there are still people who think strange things about gay people. Mentions the Cass report. | |

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| 42.15 | Interviewer asks the respondent what he feels the barriers are to equality for queer people in Scotland/the UK. | |
| 42.30 | Thinks it's difficult to say as there have been a lot of in roads made. There has been nothing that has affected his personal life that much that he doesn't feel equal to anyone else. | |
| 43.05 | Interviewer asks the respondent about positive portrayals of queer people in the arts. | |
| 43.30 | Talks about Play, Pie & Pints in Oran Mor in Glasgow. More diverse themes in terms of writing and acting. Less so in amateur theatre. Dracula, National Theatre of Scotland. All women or non-binary. Hated Sixties farces with camp gay characters. Prefers things to be by the by. Graham Norton, Queer as folk or any Russell T Davies. Russel Tovey. Didn't like John Inman but loves the camp side of things now. Cites the play Vicious with Iain McKellan and Derek Jacobi. Mentions negative portrayals of trans people in the media. | |
| 50.05 | Talks about his partner dying when they were in China seven years ago. First thing he was asked was if his partner was gay. It was very difficult for him to repatriate his partner's body due to the fact that their marriage was not recognised. Asked for letters from doctors to say that there was no underlying medical condition. They wanted his sister to sign forms but she had no passport. Nicola Sturgeon intervened on their behalf. | |
| | Interviewer thanks the respondent very much for sharing his memories with the project. | |
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