

**Project: 'Queer Lives: Barriers from cradle to elder care- An oral history'**

Respondent: Helena Fox aka King Hoberon

Year of Birth: 1998

Age:

Connection to project: Local knowledge

Date of Interview: 16/09/2024

Interviewer: Billy Ferrie

Recording Agreement: Yes

Information & Consent: Yes

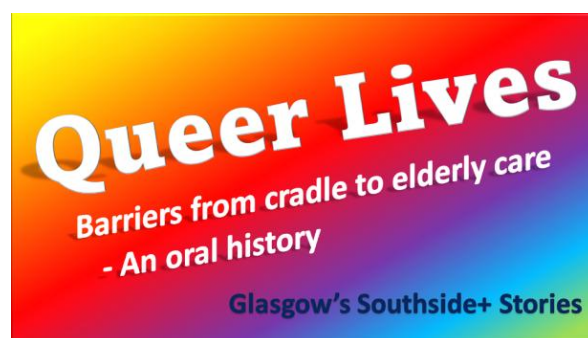
Photographic Images: Yes (Number of: 2 )

Length of Interview: 01.20.26

Location of Interview: The Marie Trust, Glasgow

Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics)

**Glasgow's Southside+ Stories**



Time (from: mins/secs)	Description	Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs)
00.32	<b>Where were you born?</b>	
	"Singapore."	00.35
00.36	<b>Where were you brought up?</b>	
	"A bit all over the world and in the Midlands and the South East."	00.39-00.44
00.45	<b>Can you tell me where you live now?</b>	
	I live in the Northwest of Glasgow, although I am moving to Pollokshields.	00.46-00.51
00.53-01,00	<b>We've used the term Queer in an attempt to be as inclusive as possible but we appreciate that not everybody is going to use that term to describe themselves. Is there a term you would prefer me to use?</b>	
	"That's okay."	01.01
01.02	<b>Do you have any preferred pronouns?</b>	
	"She/her and they/them."	01.04
01.06	<b>Would you mind telling me if you've come out as queer and if so, when?</b>	
	"I use the word queer as an easy bi-word. I am a lesbian and I came out to friends when I was 16 at school and then it trickled through to different people over the next couple of years but then when the attack happened at the Orlando Nightclub Pulse in 2016 that was just after I finished school and I was 18 and that compelled me to come out more publicly on my Facebook status as Queer but then I became more comfortable in a lesbian identity in the years following."	01.15-02.11
03.45	<b>Have you faced any barriers to education in your life due to being queer?</b>	
	"No, I come from a pretty middle-class background and I went to private school all the way through my education and I went to an all-girls school from the age of 7 - 18 and I certainly didn't face any barriers though coming from financial privilege. I would say it's still the case that I stuck out a bit like a sore thumb and I'm the only person in my year who ever had short hair but not specific barriers. It wasn't always the best time and there was a posh boys' school in the town that really ruled the roost and that felt pretty oppressive to me as a woman and as a queer person and then I went to Cambridge which is the gayest university in the country. At the time there	03.52-05.24

	was a huge queer scene there and again it didn't feel like there were any barriers and the subject I did it was quite small niche subject with a lot of queer people studying it which was quite good but I would say it was similar to school, my experience with people in authority sometimes felt not good and like I was talking to a brick wall or not being able to be my full self. That was more problems made and not barriers."	
07.54	<b><i>Did you receive any support at that time from anyone?</i></b>	
	"At uni I had a huge circle of queer friends, I started doing drag. There was a drag troupe base at Cambridge which is still going called Drag Time and they were both students at Anglia Ruskin University and people who live in the city and that was amazing. I work part time as a drag performer and that all started when I was at uni and I had a lot of queer friends and the professors on my course too. At school I had good friends who are still my friends and my family. My parents and my sister are very liberal. So yes, it was those kind of authority figures I kind of clashed with. That made me feel terrible, I had mental health issues too and they didn't know how to handle that."	07.58-09.34
10.15	<b><i>Do you think some of the experiences you've had are still being experienced by other queer people?</i></b>	
	"I think so. Obviously, there's talk about the guidance that's being issued in school for trans pupils echoes of Section 28 which was repealed when I was young at school and that kind of approach that we must hush it or out trans pupils to their parents. That feels pretty regressive to me or not very helpful necessarily. In my old school they have a private society and I see on social media much more students with short hair and very different to when I was there and not everyone fits the same mould, but I'm cynical as to how it feels on the inside for students."	10.16-11.41
11.43	<b><i>How would you like things to move forward?</i></b>	
	"For me it would be doing away with that respectability politics nonsense that I see of people being well it's fine as long as it fits my very particular idea of how people should look and speak and I would like that to not be the case. My sister is a teacher in a secondary school and I also think that a lot of schools are really trying to support queer students as much as they can but the Government are making it quite difficult for them. With the general election people are hopeful that they might lift the ban on puberty blockers. So just that culture of listening and hearing what they would like in the way of support, I would like that. I think a lot of teachers are trying to do that on the ground but it's difficult."	11.45-13.26
13.50	<b><i>How do you think this could be changed?</i></b>	
	"A lot more queer and diverse people in Government and on school boards and stuff like that would be great."	13.51-14.27
16.27	<b><i>What are your thoughts for queer people's careers in education?</i></b>	
	"I think it's still difficult and I know a couple of really cool young queer teachers and I think that's brilliant and I think their students are really, really lucky but I still think it takes a lot of guts to be openly queer going into the teaching profession and again I think it's that thing of representation if you don't see someone do it it's much harder to feel that it's even a possibility for you. It's getting there, but to me anyway, it's still a bit hush hush and it's rare to see queer teachers who feel able to be totally loud and proud but interestingly the new head at my old school is a gay man with them having had women head teachers before, and I think is welcomed more by the Surrey brigade ban lesbian set."	16.30-17.47

18.00	<b><i>Has there been any barriers in terms of your own career due to being queer?</i></b>	
	<p>"I don't think specifically. I work part time in the theatre as a drag performer and as a drag artist and that's a very queer scene although I would say I am interested in the drag scene where everyone is queer, lots of people are trans and then sometimes when I go into more traditional drag spaces feels like much more of a journey and there's much more diversity and I start to feel a bit of the oh I'm a woman in this space, that's probably more to do with being a woman than being gay and similar to education there's been nothing that's been blocked for me. I'm quite easily identified as being gay and sometimes it feels like I'm the only person in a room of 50 and that doesn't always feel great even if no-one's being actually homophobic it's just that I'm the only gay in the village again and feeling the effects of that. It feels a bit alienating and isolated, like I'm the problem, or tone yourself down or be more 'respectful' and my reaction to that is to shave my head and wear a bigger nose ring and do the opposite in rebellion. I stand out and I quite like standing out and makes me feel in control of it and everyone is having these boring conversations."</p>	18.05-20.42
20.56	<b><i>Have you had any negative experiences of not being chosen for a particular role due to being queer?</i></b>	
	<p>"I don't think so but I think towards the end of my time at school potentially but not in a career sense I don't think there'd have been a case like that would've been a reason for rejection or being passed over."</p>	21.04-21.17
21.18	<b><i>How would you like to see things change as we move forward?</i></b>	
	<p>"I think just more that culture of openness not performativity, don't be an organisation that tweets every five months and then not actually think about your queer employees and how that may impact their lives. You know put your money where your mouth is like supporting trans colleagues and just to have more diversity. I think getting more queer people into high powered roles and actively affecting these changes by virtue of going about their day-to-day lives will be helpful."</p>	21.25-23.44
25.39	<b><i>What was your experience of growing up as a queer person?</i></b>	
	<p>"Mixed I think, a lot of time fun and I didn't really think of it as anything affecting me. When I was about 11 I started thinking about my sexuality and I never ever worried about whether my parents or my sister would have a problem with it which I'm grateful and love them for that It was when I left school and went to uni that I could explore how to be queer in different ways and how I could express myself and what that meant to me. I think I found it difficult for a long time that feeling of isolation and alienation. I think my mental health was affected by my trying to process different things I really rallied against people suggesting my queerness was what was making me unhappy and that was said by a counsellor at the time and my queerness was at the root of why I was unhappy. Yes, the stress of feeling different and what the future was going to hold definitely wasn't good for me, it definitely did impact on me but I can also have sympathy for my younger self talking to a perfectly straight counsellor. Don't tell me my queerness is why I have depression."</p>	25.47-29.49
33.47	<b><i>In general, has the experience of being queer changed over time in terms of acceptance?</i></b>	
	<p>"For sure and I think obviously the law has moved and that is great. I remember being a teenager and equal marriage coming in in the U.K. and America. I do think it's becoming much more open for young people who are talking about their sexuality in general and expressing themselves. So, there is so much more openness and representation."</p>	33.50-35.32

37.13	<b><i>Do you feel your experiences are similar to other queer people?</i></b>	
	"I think other people from my background probably yes. The T.V. series from I Kissed a Girl. There was a Surrey private schoolgirl on that who was a lesbian and we're not that similar in some ways but a lot of things she said I thought, yeah that resonates with my experience. Yes, people from middle class elite, yes, their experience is similar to mine."	37.17-38.10
38.19-	<b><i>Do you believe that there is such a thing as an L.G.B.T.+ community which implies a coherent group identity based solely on a shared sexual orientation or gender identity?</i></b>	
	"I think so. It's important, I think it's what human beings need. I think queers are community animals and that's how we survive and I think community is really important that's how I choose to have only queer friends because it's just easier, less exhausting and makes me feel more fulfilled because we're kind of all on the same page but I do think there are different breaks within the community and different shards within the community, some of which I have sympathy with, some of which I don't. There are a lot of conversation about queer venues and accessibility which are not accessible at all, they are often in basements which anyone with a wheelchair or rigid mobility can ever get down to and therefore that's cutting down a whole lot of opportunities. I think we really need a community and I really believe in community but I think there are different shards of it. Often, I will feel more comfortable with other queer women or non-binary people or trans gender men. I think there is a lot of unity and positivity to be found especially inter-generationally. I love talking to all the queer people. When I was at university I went with a friend to an L.G.B.T. event and was talking to older queer women, some of them were dancing together, some of them were single and my parents age and it was a really important moment for me and I'm still in touch with those women and I think things like that can't be under estimated. I understand, especially for lesbians, their fears of the trans movement."	38.24-41.44
42.57	<b><i>What are your thoughts on the current debate on gender identity?</i></b>	
	"A mixture. I have she/ their pronouns but I identify as a woman and my woman-hood is a really important part of who I am partially because at times I've really resented being a woman because of sexism, misogamy and violence against women and all that. I see my woman-hood as something I hold very dear and my lesbianism is part of that and for me it's another factor that kind of rebels against what society expects of women and I like that about the fact that I'm a lesbian. I feel people who have no right to have power over people's bodies decide that they do have that right. I think there's a lot of black and white in what people are saying and letting people explore their identity and seeing what feels good for them is not the scary ending society thing. I think for a lot of people they're scared. I just think why are you wasting your precious energy on this when you could be doing so much more for other people."	43.03-45.23
46.50	<b><i>How do you socialise as a queer person?</i></b>	
	"I don't think I really thought about it until my teens that it was anything to think about in terms of socialising. I don't remember being that worried about what my friends would think but I think maybe I'm looking back on it as slightly nicer than it was Since university I've found it very easy to meet people in the queer community that I like so much."	46.55-49.05
49.06-49.10	<b><i>In terms of going to queer venues and non-queer venues, what has been your experience there?</i></b>	
	"I feel a bit like the odd one out. I don't club often at all; I did at uni but I don't now. On the odd occasion that I have it hasn't been a queer night and	49.11-51.00

	I kind of forget what it's like and blocked it out because I spend my time with my queer friends. I feel if I go for a coffee in town, I'm back to being the one who sticks out like a sore thumb which I don't necessarily mind and feel safe and not have to worry if I will get heckled or not. It has before, many times because I look quite outwardly queer. I've been shouted at on the street by people many times but not specifically in venues."	
51.02	<b><i>Would you prefer to see more queer venues where you could relax more?</i></b>	
	"I think a mixture; I want everyone to feel safe and I know that quite often it's not and queer spaces are really good for that automatic I'm not on high alert. I would say that I don't think non-queer people should go into queer places, there are many straight places to go to, don't go into the small spaces we've carved out for ourselves on very little money when you could quite literally go anywhere else in the whole world and you would be fine."	51.11-52.28
52.46	<b><i>Have you visited any queer venues outside the U.K.?</i></b>	
	"I was in Canada about a year and half ago visiting Toronto and Vancouver and it was really nice to be in those spaces. I sometimes am conscious of where I travel as a queer person and I think this is a thing that straight people don't have to think about."	53.26-54.03
54.13	<b><i>Have you experienced any issues accessing healthcare services due to being queer?</i></b>	
	"Not specifically accessing but that same thing of it feels like my queerness is a problem and that's not helping my healthcare. I would hope that nurses or professionals would be more aware of queerness."	54.13-54.20
58.49	<b><i>Do you think queer people need additional forms of healthcare?</i></b>	
	"I think so, yes, that awareness in gynaecology healthcare and things like that you know, could you be pregnant, things like that. I think people who have different experiences need more tailored healthcare that is more helpful and not made a big deal over. Those differences where you don't have to justify yourself to get the basic healthcare that everyone else has. Because I've not had terrible experiences, I think integrated care that recognises, especially for me, the ways that homophobia and misogyny has impacted my mental health would be great."	57.08-59.04
01.01.24	<b><i>Have you ever thought about elder care as you age?</i></b>	
	"I do think about elder care and like a lot of people I get scared of it and I try and be accepting of the nature of human life and cycles. Thinking about this project and what would happen if I went into a care home would it be that bigoted from a nurse, professional or patient, that would be awful."	01.01.26 - 01.02.38
01.04.11	<b><i>Do you think there's enough information about queer people's elderly care?</i></b>	
	"I don't think I've ever seen anything. I haven't sought it out, but I haven't seen it."	01.04.13 - 01.04.24
01.04.25	<b><i>Have you ever become aware of a queer only elderly care home?</i></b>	
	"No. It sounds like a great idea though because in my experience anyway you have to imagine yourself as an elderly queer person and there isn't that representation there's still that little bit of meeting people that are older than me and it's like, oh yeah you do exist. I haven't personally seen an elderly queer person."	01.04.36 - 01.05.47
01.07.07	<b><i>Can you think of any legislation that has brought more rights for queer people?</i></b>	
	"Equal marriage because that's when I was more aware of politics."	01.07.08
01.07.27	<b><i>Can you think of any legislation that has been rolled back or diminished for queer people?</i></b>	

	"The puberty blockers ban. The U.K. is slipping down the places for people to be L.G.B.T.+ I think a lot of the diminishment has been in the media and kind of trying to attack trans people. That can be quite distressing to think about."	01.07.37 - 01.09.45
01.10.21	<b><i>Do you feel the general public are supportive of equal rights for queer people?</i></b>	
	"I find it really hard to judge because I do live in a bit of a bubble and I'm aware of that when I step outside and I'm aware of this level of heteronormity and stuff exist but I think a lot of people are scared of being trans gender means and might mean the demise of society as they know it but I think the average person I don't see as being homophobic"	01.10.24 - 01.11.18
01.11.44	<b><i>What are your hopes for the future legislation for queer rights in Scotland?</i></b>	
	"Having grown up in England I'm less familiar with Scottish law on queer rights, but I think if they can, clawing back puberty blocker rights from Westminster, that would be great."	01.11.45 - 01.12.20
01.13.30	<b><i>Can you give examples of positive portrayals of queer people in the arts?</i></b>	
	"I watched The Last Tango in Halifax, the Derek Jacobi and Anne Reid thing and Sarah Lancashire and Nina Sosanya played a middle aged queer couple which was really beautifully written and just as Nina Sosanya's character got pregnant with the child they were going to raise together, Nina Sosanya's character got killed and left Sarah Lancashire with this baby alone as a single mother. There was a lesbian couple in Call The Midwife which was really well written and took into account the time period which was the 1950s so obviously they weren't kissing openly in the streets but it was a happy portrayal and then one of them got knocked down by a car in 1950s London, got amnesia and forgot her girlfriend. I do think there are more things now and more sports people are coming out and presenters, where it becomes more casual. There are more queer writers, it is improving."	01.14.41 - 01.16.36
01.16.45	<b><i>Can you give any positive portrayals of queer people in social media?</i></b>	
	"On social media there are pretty gay men who also appeal to straight women and who tend to do very well and appear to be very successful as well. So, I think it's good there are queer people out there who are doing exciting things with their life."	01.17.00 - 01.17.38
01.18.07	<b><i>Are there representations of lesbians that you are aware of?</i></b>	
	The Dead Lesbian Trope I think is a way of them denying queer people a happy future. Something that was pointed out to me was queer villains and often villains are either camp men or butch women and is often played by a man on stage."	01.18.08 - 01.18.59
01.2-.26	Thank you, Helena,	
