

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

Respondent: Billy Ferrie

Year of Birth: 1960

Age:

Connection to project: Respondent

Date of Interview: 2nd of September 2024

Interviewer: John McCormick

Recording Agreement: Yes

Information & Consent: Yes

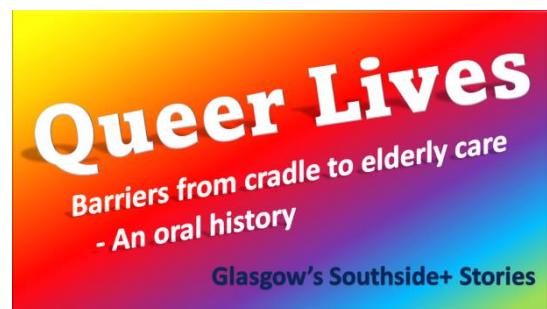
Photographic Images: No

Length of Interview: 58 minutes and 6 seconds

Location of Interview: Newlands, Glasgow

Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics)





Glasgow's Southside+ Stories



Time (from: mins/secs)	Description	Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs)
0.38	Respondent states that he was born in Duke Street Maternity hospital and grew up in Glasgow. He now lives in Glasgow.	
1.19	Interviewer asks the respondent if he has faced any barriers to education in his life due to being gay.	
	"I don't have any recollection of...I came out when I was 21 so that was 1981. So, by that time I was out of education mostly. But I don't recall any kind of barriers as such. I was aware of my sexuality at primary school. But, for a long time that was very, very private and hidden. So, you could argue that there wasn't necessarily an environment for me to address that kind of issue and come out. So, it wasn't the environment for that. A safe place for me in that sense."	1.33-2.16
2.20	Interviewer asks the respondent if barriers to education have changed over time and how he would like things to change going forward	
	Respondent says his general impression is that things have got better. He would like to see an acceptance of the wide spectrum of sexualities across society. He would like to see extra support for people being attacked and discriminated against. Mentions protected characteristics. Education in schools and religious communities.	
5.29	Interviewer asks the respondent if he has faced any barriers in the workplace due to being gay.	
	"I can't recall any significant events where because of my sexuality I was prevented or stopped from doing anything. Or progressing in terms of career. And, in some ways, because of my sexuality or my sexual orientation I have been kind of supported within jobs. Because I have lived experience. So, I've been in jobs where it may be in service to the gay community. So, because of my specialist knowledge, if you like, that has allowed me to progress in a way that I probably wouldn't of had otherwise."	5.40-6.25
6.28	Interviewer asks the respondent if barriers to workplace and career changed over time.	
6.38	Does not have much knowledge as out of the workplace. Knows there is legislation in place now that aims to protect people from discrimination.	
7.35	Interviewer asks the respondent what his experience of growing up as gay was.	
	"Well, as I mentioned earlier on, probably in terms of becoming aware of my sexuality, primary school. And for me that experience was one of confusion.	8.05-12.47

	<p>Cause I wasn't sure what was happening or what this was about. All I knew was I was attracted to boys. And it wasn't until just before we went to secondary school that I became aware of terminology like you get in the school playground. Like poof and things like that. And even then I didn't know what poof meant. All I knew was it was a derogatory thing you would say to someone...Only later did I realise it was connected with sexuality...So, I was confused. At secondary school it became more of an issue because I knew this thing was shameful and I tried to repress it. So, I force myself to have a girlfriend...Even though I hated the whole experience because I knew I was being dishonest to myself and I wasn't being fair to the people around me either. And growing up in Easterhouse in the East End where the culture is very kind of...At that time the 1970s, I guess, very macho. The culture, the sub culture there wasn't very conducive to being a poof in Easterhouse. Also at the time you had social deprivation, lots of gang warfare, drug issues. And all that fed into a very claustrophobic environment. So, the idea of me coming out even to my parents, to my family would be a big no. no. So, for a long time I pushed that down. But part of the result of that was I became depressed. And I remember going to Easterhouse library and looking at the books. And there was one on depression, how to overcome depression. And that was really useful. That was a good support. Because it helped me to look at my thinking and my sexuality and the situation I was living in. So that was a very useful resource to just allowing me to become a bit more resilient in that space. And that led me on to...Glasgow College of Technology it was called. It's now Caledonian University. So, I did a social science course. So, I studied things like psychology, social psychology, politics, sociology. Things like that. And that's where I got the intellectual tools to actually start thinking about myself and my sexuality. And questioning the prevailing orthodoxy about what it's like to be a man...or to be straight or gay...So, that gave me the courage to eventually come out when I was 21 at college. And part of that was actually meeting other gay people as well. That was a big thing because all the models I had of gay people up until that point were on TV. So, you had...John Inman, Larry Grayson...And I didn't identify with any of that. That just didn't fit who I was. And I don't think I was necessarily trying to overcompensate for my sexuality by being ultra-macho or anything. It was just it didn't fit with me somehow..."</p>	
13.20	Interviewer asks the respondent how this made him feel	
13.25	Respondent states that this made him feel a lot better in himself. He started socialising more and didn't finish college as a result. He learnt how to be him which he thinks is probably more important.	
14.20	Talks about how his family reacted to him coming out. His mum was ok. Thought he was going to say he was emigrating and was relieved. His dad did not take it so well but came round eventually when his sister had children.	
19.30	Interviewer asks the respondent if he thinks that the experience of being gay has changed over time in terms of acceptance.	
19.40	Thinks so as younger people he has met seem to have had an easier experience coming out. He acknowledges that not all have though.	
20.33	Interviewer asks the respondent if he thinks his experiences are similar to those of other gay people.	
20.39	He says that he thinks his experiences are similar to those of people from a similar background to him. He can only talk about his own experience and infer that it would be a similar thing.	
21.45	Interviewer asks the respondent if he believes there is such a thing as an LGBT community...	

22.01	Thinks that the official narrative is that there is but that this can be fluid. States that there can be conflict and antagonism within the LGBT+ community. Thinks that threats, violence and discrimination bring people together. The LGBT community to him is a reflection of the wider community. There is a whole spectrum of views.	
24.35	Interviewer asks the respondent about gender identity.	
24.47	He says he has sort of shied away from it but thinks it has been used by politicians to divide and rule. Says it is emotive. He resents that people will have to spend time accepting themselves like he had to do. Thinks this diminishes people's potential. He sees people as people.	
27.20	Interviewer asks the respondent what his hopes for the future of gay people are.	
27.25	He states that he would hope that sexuality and gender are no big deal and people have time to focus on their lives and not on having to defend themselves. Then people can fully use their gifts and qualities to contribute to the world.	
28.04	Interviewer asks the respondent how he socialised as a gay person in his youth.	
28.14	Went to the Vinter's Bar with friend from Uni. Describes this. Then went to The Waterloo and the Duke of Wellington. Describe this including an experience which he found strange.	
33.45	Interviewer asks the respondent if he ever had any negative experiences in non-gay venues when he was younger.	
33.56	Says that you would self-select anyway. You wouldn't go anywhere where you would expect trouble.	
34.53	Interviewer asks the respondent if he would like to see more gay focused venues.	
35.02	Says that he doesn't think necessarily think that more gay focused venues are necessary. Likes the freedom to be able to go to non-gay venues without any issue. Talks about the code word he and friends had as young gay men.	
36.53	Interviewer asks the respondent if he has experienced socialising in any other countries.	
37.00	Has travelled abroad to gay venues. Lived in London and remembers one negative incident after gay pride but that was all.	
37.25	Interviewer asks the respondent if he has faced any healthcare issues due to being gay.	
	"The only kind of thing I remember where I felt slightly... Well, it was a bit shocking. I'd moved down to London with my partner. There was a little place called Ernest Grove. It's at the end of one of the underground things. And we lived in this...in a converted church. And I thought-oh, I need to register with a GP. So I went along to the local...It wasn't far away from the flat. I went along and I waited in the waiting room and went into see the doctor and said I'd just moved to the area and I wanted to register with you. And he asked a few questions. And I explained I was openly gay and all that sort of thing. And then there was a pause and a -'Oh, this is a family practice. So, I'm really sorry. I can't take you on.' And I went-'Oh, ok.' And I think because I was just in such a state of shock I didn't have the wherewithal to sort of question him or challenge him or say-What am I supposed to do then? So, I just left and told my partner. And he was shocked as well."	37.54-39.25
39.59	Interviewer asks the respondent if he thinks that gay people need different or additional forms of health care.	
40.19	Talks about some gay people from his generation having unhealthy coping mechanisms due to circumstances in the past. Thinks that still goes on.	

	Thinks that there are not enough services and that they have been diminished in the past few years. For example the clinic in Glasgow for men who have sex with men.	
45.01	Interviewer asks the respondent if he ever thinks about the future as he ages.	
45.10	Respondent replies that he has noticed people getting older in his group. They have had light hearted banter about care homes for gay people. He looks after his own health well.	
46.45	Interviewer asks the respondent if he has any concerns about the provision of elder care for gay people.	
	"I think people may be anxious that if they go to a care home for example. That the staff are not trained up. That they won't understand the experience of a gay person and what they've gone through. What things are important to them. What things are not important to them. You know, for example, if a gay person has a partner who comes to visit them in the care home. It would be important for gay people to know that the partner is acknowledged and recognised. And not dismissed or diminished in some way. As say a straight couple who are married or whatever. So, I think there may be anxieties around knowing that gay people have different kinds of relationships. Well, I'm generalising there. Straight people have different kinds of relationships as well. But, to acknowledge that in gay people lives, friends and partners taken on a different kind of value. And that, that's recognised and respected."	47.27 to 48.35
50.40	Interviewer asks the respondent about legislation that has been rolled back or diminished the rights of queer people.	
50.45	Respondent mentions the UK government stopping legislation from the Scottish Government regarding trans rights. Thinks that is a backward step. Has concerns about things going further right and that the rights of other LGBT+ people being taken away. The Gender Recognition Bill.	
52.35	Interviewer asks the respondent what he thinks the barriers to equality are for gay people in Scotland at present.	
52.45	Worries again about regressive moves in politics and are we at the beginning of a backlash against LGBT+ people.	
53.40	Interviewer asks the respondent if he thinks that the general public are generally supportive of LGBT + people.	
53.45	Thinks that they are but that they could be very easily swayed.	
54.41	Interviewer asks the respondent what his hopes for the future of gay rights legislation in Scotland.	
54.55	His hope that rights become expanded and it's normalised to the point that none of it is an issue. We are just human beings.	
55.27	Interviewer asks the respondent to give examples of the positive portrayal of gay people in the arts.	
55.39	States that there are lots of openly gay people in the arts now. Also that representation tends to be good on TV and in films. Thinks role models were lacking when he was growing up. Talks about the death trope in films years ago.	
	Interviewer thanks the respondent very much for his contribution to the project.	
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