






Project: 'Queer Lives: Barriers from cradle to elder care - an oral history' Respondent: Jack Dickson Year of Birth: 1959 Age: Connection to project: Local Knowledge Date of Interview: 29/10/2024 Interviewer: Rachel Kelly Recording Agreement: Yes Information & Consent: Yes Photographic Images: Yes (Number of: 9) Length of Interview: 57.50 Location of Interview: Marie Trust, Glasgow Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics)		Glasgow's Southside+ Stories 
Time (from: mins/secs)	Description	Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs)
00.37	<i>Can you tell me where you were born and grew up?</i>	
	"I was born in Saltcoats in Ayrshire and grew up there."	00.43
00.47	<i>Where do you live now?</i>	
	"I live in the East End of Glasgow."	00.53
00.54-01.09	<i>We've used the term queer in an attempt to be as inclusive as possible but appreciate that not everybody would use this term to describe themselves/an aspect of themselves. Is there a term you would prefer me to use through the course of the interview?</i>	
	"I think Queer is as good as anything."	01.15
01.19	<i>Do you have any pronouns</i>	
	"He."	01.21
01.24	<i>Would you mind telling me if you've come out as queer?</i>	
	"It's one of those really weird things; I've never come out but I think everybody knows."	01.28-01.35
01.39	<i>Would you say that you faced any barriers to education in your life due to being queer?</i>	
	"No, but I think I was around at a time and a place where my sexuality/gender identification whatever you want to call it was less important, both to me and to the people I was around. I grew up in the 1970s and I was heavily into bands and music and specifically not mainstream music and if you're at school you usually found a tribe and if you were into anything that wasn't mainstream, you got lumped in with and made friends with an incredibly diverse selection of people but your bonding factor was that you weren't like everybody else. I think I perhaps came up against antagonistic forces in education because I was working class or because I had a stammer. The whole idea of being queer or being gay wasn't something that was talked about anyway."	01.43-03.50
05.08	<i>Do you know of any positive role models in the arts at that time?</i>	
	"Frankie Howerd. He was my role model at the time. He was a Roman slave in Up Pompeii but it was clear he was in charge. I saw Larry Grayson in The Generation Game but I cringed. He was not somebody that I aspired to be like at all. He obviously was gay but that wasn't a part of the whole thing at all."	05.09-06.36

06.56	<i>Can you tell me when you knew that you were queer?</i>	
	<p>"I don't think of myself as queer, I must be something because I know I'm not like everybody else but when you come down to it everybody's a bit queer but it's up to the individual how much we want to make that part of our lives and identify as that.</p> <p>I'd say about eight'ish. I don't know if I just hormonally developed really early but I was really into guys. I was sexually experimenting with both boys and girls from the age of eight onwards. I'm reluctant to say everybody does but I never had any problems finding other people to experiment with so they were obviously like me."</p>	06.58-08.31
08.45	<i>Would you say barriers to education for people like you have changed over time?</i>	
	<p>"I've got to say no and my reasoning for saying that is that I don't have any connections with education myself but my wee sister is a teacher and she does mention a lot the lengths they go to in schools to make sure that anybody who wants to be called by a certain pronoun, is called by that pronoun. Everybody is really conscientious about getting that pronoun right and then six months later, they change their mind. I have no justification for saying this but I think that's what kids always did. Up to the age of about 18, we're constantly experimenting, who we are and how we want to be seen. It's so difficult to phrase this, but you hate to think of any kid being upset, being in distress, because they're constantly being pushed into some sort of identification which they're obviously not. You're only at school for so long, you're only with your family for so long, you've got the best of your life to be who you are, so if you've got into people's pre-perceptions for a few years, it's not the biggest sacrifice you're ever going to make."</p>	08.52-11.57
12.17	<i>When were you involved with bands?</i>	
	<p>"It was from 1978-1983. I was always just into bands and the music. In 1976-77 we loved people like Siouxsie Sioux. In a weird sort of way every guy straight or gay wanted to be her and you had that interesting thing where you wanted to have sex with her and be her at the same time. The sort of people I was in bands with were anything but androgynous. It was one of those big times where the public would accept an androgynous. Adam Ant, he was huge with both boys and girls. At that age you don't think of the person, you don't have an agenda. Adam was this incredible creation and it would be a complete lie to say he didn't come over as a guy because obviously he did but it wasn't a representation of masculinity that you saw a lot and when you went to an Adam Ant gig there were all these 13, 14, 15, 16 year old boys, obviously completely straight, all in Adam stuff. It was one of those magical times when you didn't want to put into words. It just happened, you didn't want to go home and write about it, you wanted to do it, you wanted to be in that.</p> <p>I was in bands that could possibly be described as New Romantics. I played the bass guitar then I moved on to the keyboards. I was always in bands where there was a vocalist who wanted to make it big. We never got anywhere at all but the whole band thing it was just so much fun. One of the bands I was in was called Gomorrah and the Sodomites."</p>	12.18-18.14
18.21	<i>How did you feel as yourself in those bands, did you feel comfortable?</i>	
	<p>"Oh yes, yes, because I was always into the bands and the music. If there was anybody in the band that I wanted to have sex with, the gender-sex sort of thing came in a little bit. I didn't feel under threat, I didn't feel singled out, I didn't feel that I was in those bands because of who I was, we were in those bands because we were all interested in the same sort of music and the band concerned was looking for a bass guitarist at that time and I could play and I turned up to practices on time and in bands that matters more than anything else if you turn up to practices on time."</p>	18.23-19.33

19.38	<i>Would you say you faced any barriers to work/career due to being queer?</i>	
	<p>"No, but I didn't ever go down the traditional career path anyway. I worked when I was a student on the CalMac Ardrossan to Arran car ferries as a steward. Then I was self-employed as a fashion entrepreneur for ten years. It was good, it was fun and then I was unemployed for a while but it was at a time when it was quite good to be unemployed. Not like now, if anything has changed, it's that, it's so bad now. Because I had so much spare time, I was unemployed, I started writing and I got into print with 8 novels and then I got into screen writing and I did a couple of films and I did 4 years as a screen writer on River City. Then I got into writing plays and I've been writing plays ever since. I'm obsessed by everybody's untold stories. I've written about heroin addicts, I've written about people in care homes who've formed a joint suicide pact, I've written about explosive workers in the 19th century, I've written about an ash tree that's suffering from the dreadful ash die-back disease."</p>	19.46-23.12
23.13-23.26	<i>Would you say the experience of being queer has changed over time in terms of acceptance or otherwise?</i>	
	<p>"I can only speak for me and I would say no. If you watch the news, you watch the documentaries, if you go on social media, if you go on Twitter especially, it's like the hardest thing in the world and it's become a debate between the people who can shout the loudest. I think it's really great that gay people now can't be sacked for being gay. It completely horrifies me that people did that but I think we just have to accept that people did do that. I have slight concerns in those sort of situations and if you've got a big mouth at work and you rub your co-workers up the wrong way and happen to be gay that's not the reason you're sacked, it's because you are you and that's why you're sacked because you're not doing that job. So no, I don't feel qualified to answer that."</p>	23.31-25.55
26.07	<i>Do you think the reason you didn't go into mainstream work because you were queer or not?</i>	
	<p>"You couldn't have got me into mainstream work with a tow-truck. I'm not going to say all queer people are incredibly creative, I'm not going to make that claim. I think having to self-examine at an early age does make you start to see the world in a different way and I don't know if that can be a spur to creativity. I would say the reason I didn't go into mainstream work because I was queer/creative but I think if I had what would've been a disaster was because I was creative."</p>	26.10-27.99
28.18	<i>Do you think queer people have similar perspectives of gender identity?</i>	
	<p>"Oh God, no. I'm sure there's queer people who have an incredibly confining sense of gender because I think that's possibly why the big explosive issue for our times isn't gay and straight, it's the gender thing. People want to know the gender of who they're attracted to because that tells them something about themselves and if the person they're attracted to isn't willing to pin down their gender or isn't the gender of the person they thought they were attracted to, that causes a whole lot of problems for the person who is attracted and it's nothing to do with you being queer or straight, the problem is in the person who is attracted to you. It's incredibly complicated."</p>	28.19-29.50
29.51	<i>Why do you think gender is such a big thing in the media and politics?</i>	
	<p>"Because it can distract everybody from the important things like the fact there is more food banks in this country than there's ever been, the fact that Israel is in Palestine still and won't get out, there's so many more important things. I also think the media does that awful thing, it stops us thinking of ourselves as a group that's got the power to act and it makes us think of ourselves as individuals. I am sort of a trans person and I don't feel that my rights are being respected. I don't believe any trans person ever says that. People don't say things like that. The news says things like that because it's a useful device to get us all thinking about ourselves and turning inwards and spending so much more time examining how</p>	29.58-32.22

	we feel about ourselves rather than what we feel about what's going on in other parts of the world."	
31.33-31.45	<i>Do you think people in general think about these things or is it mainly on Twitter forums etc that this is going on?</i>	
	"I think people in general are forced to think about these sort of things because the social media thing is everywhere and I don't think that's a healthy thing."	31.46-31.45
32.21	<i>How did you socialise as a queer person in your youth?</i>	
	"I was always part of this big tribe of 8 or 9 people whose main point of getting together was the fact that they were into things that other people weren't whether that was out of fashion or bands, that was your whole social life around that. I only started going to gay discos when gay discos appeared and I don't have any personal experience of this but old and gay friends and guys have said the big thing for going out was the parties. Everybody had parties. We went out to concerts and the amount of alcohol that I drank in my youth; we all drank, you look back and think how could I drink that much?"	32.34-34.29
34.38	<i>How did you find acceptance in non-queer venues?</i>	
	"Fine, because it was Adam Ant time, everybody looked like that. I have to say, in Saltcoats the local populous were incredibly understanding. There were a couple of hairy times but in general, it was fine."	34.41-35.10
35.14	<i>What queer venues did you go to?</i>	
	"We used to go to Bennetts. We also went to the S.H.R.G. (Scottish Homosexual Rights Group) up in Queens Crescent and they used to have a disco and we went there. I should say the main reason you went to the gay discos was to have sex. You didn't go to the Adam Ant gig to have sex but if you did happen to have sex that was great. It was mainly gay men who went to the discos."	35.15-36.38
36.56	<i>Have you experienced socialising in other countries other than Scotland?</i>	
	"Yes, in Amsterdam. I actually didn't get to Amsterdam until I was older. The clubs in Amsterdam have sex, so you can go, have a drink, have a dance and there's a section at the back and you can go in and just watch or you can take part. There's something about Amsterdam, it's so strange, but it didn't feel sexy at all because the Dutch are so open and so relaxed but for me personally, I like a wee bit of an edge. I'm sorry, as a country they're great, and I understand that's a strange thing to say, but that is just a sexual thing."	37.03-39.03
39.09	<i>Have you faced any healthcare issues due to being queer?</i>	
	"No."	39.10
39.13	<i>Do you think being queer people need different or additional healthcare?</i>	
	"No."	39.18
39.19	<i>Do you think about elder care as you age?</i>	
	"I do yes."	39.28
39.36	<i>Do you share your thoughts about ageing with other people?</i>	
	"I do. I've got this plan. If my partner dies before me, I'm going to sell everything and I'm going to move into a hotel and just stay there for as long as I possibly can. I think the big thing for a lot of people as they age, and this is for gay and straight, is being on your own, so I'll be in a hotel, I'll have company."	39.37-40.50
40.59	<i>What do you think of the idea of queer only care homes?</i>	
	"I think a care home stuffed with old queens sounds both absolutely fabulous and the worst thing I can imagine at the same time."	41.00-41.16
41.55	<i>Can you think of any legislation that's brought more rights for queer people?</i>	

	"Everything, yes and I have to say hand on heart, all a good thing. It's completely scandalous that everybody didn't have those rights from the very start."	41.58-42.23
42.26	<i>Can you think of any legislation that's diminished or rolled back rights for queer people?</i>	
	"Off hand, no."	42.27
42.54	<i>In your opinion are there any barriers to equality for queer people at present in Scotland/U.K.?</i>	
	"It depends on what you want to do. If you want to go down the traditional route and get a nice job, yes you can get that and you can stay in your nice job and they can't sack you for being gay and if you want to adopt kids that's fine. If you want your partner in law, you can. I think it's all smashing; it's all positive stuff. I can't think there's anything I want to do that there's a law that would stop me from doing it."	42.55-44.05
44.06	<i>Do you think the general public are supportive of equal rights for queer people or not?</i>	
	"I think the more you bang on about stuff, the less supportive the general public get and I have to say I can see their point at times. I'm not saying queer people should be treated as second class citizens at all but there are a number of ordinary citizens who are treated as second class citizens, it tends to be the people who shout loudest that get attention and they are presented by the media as someone who represents all of us and I'm sure there are a lot of gay/bi/queer/lesbians watching the television and cringing, thinking this isn't me but it's being presented as me."	44.10-45.08
45.15	<i>How do you think that can be addressed?</i>	
	"It's taken me a long time to reach this position, but I am completely upfront and open about it and genuine and it is my personal opinion. I think we should all think less about ourselves and start thinking about other people. Start interacting with other people, especially other people who aren't like you and especially if you are the sort of person who isn't like them. People judge you by what you do. In my opinion if you want something, shout about it less, don't go on and on about it you're grinding people down."	45.21-46.57
47.15	<i>Can you think of any positive portrayals of queer people in the arts?</i>	
	"The best example of role models is The Crying Game. Is that a positive role model? Everyone says it's not. Everyone says she can't decide or he can't decide, but that's interesting because that gets people talking. In my opinion they shouldn't be making these positive things, because for a lot of people, it isn't a positive experience."	47.31-51.40
54.38	<i>Can you give any examples of negative portrayals in the arts?</i>	
	"I don't tend to look at things like that. I think that sort of thing assumes everybody has the same idea of a positive portrayal and what's a negative portrayal and I don't feel in a position to say if it's a negative one."	54.47-55.30
55.42	<i>You mentioned Frankie Howerd, is there a modern-day version of him?</i>	
	"I can't think of anyone at this time, sorry."	55.43
56.03	<i>That's all my questions, have I missed anything or is there anything you'd like to add?</i>	
	"I'd like to imagine my younger self and I'd like to pass on a message to anybody who is 15-16..., if you're going through a hard time and although I did say it was great it obviously did have its moments because every teenager has their moments and all I'll say is, get through it, because it gets better, it gets so much better and the older you get, believe me take my word for this, the better it gets, so keep going."	56.20-57.26

57.27	Thank you very much Jack	
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