**5th Alan Horsfall Lecture, 29 March 2019 by Jeffrey Weeks**

**‘History as Personal, the Personal as History: a journey into the LGBTQ past and present’**

Jeffrey Weeks was a pioneer of LGBTQ history in the 1970s. In this lecture he tells the story of the development of his thinking about the queer past and how it shapes the present. Jeffrey Weeks is Emeritus Professor of Sociology at London South Bank University. From his first solo book *Coming Out* (in 1977, and recently revised and republished), he has explored the shifting understanding of LGBTQ lives and identities and wider sexual regulation in over 20 books and many articles. He was awarded the gold medal of the World Association of Sexual Health in 2017 for his life time contribution to the study of sexuality.

Jeffrey Dudgeon report for CHE

It was a great pleasure listening to one of my heroes, Jeffrey Weeks, giving the 5th Allan Horsfall lecture in Belfast at the Outing the Past conference in March this year. He is the author of *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain from the Nineteenth Century to the Present*. Published in 1977, this was the bible of the gay liberation generation who only came of age after the decriminalisation struggle of the 1950s and 1960s. It told latterly of that struggle in which the Belfast MP Montgomery Hyde majored, as did Allan Horsfall in Manchester CHE and his London colleague, Antony Gray of the Homosexual Law Reform Society.

Antony was the last of the campaigners who did not come out, Allan the first of those who did. I manged to meet Allan once at the London conference in 2009 celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Wolfenden Report and was duly impressed. Jeffrey spoke there too while I eventually turned my paper on Montgomery Hyde into a short book in 2018. I corresponded with Antony in his last years and read many of his insights into the decriminalisation campaign and the internal difficulties, especially with the parliamentary advocates Leo Abse and Lord Arran.

Allan never reached the political top rank, being too radical in the 1960s and later too sensible but he pioneered gay rights in the Labour Party. Jeffrey told of his own career, his difficulties in getting academic posts, his influences and of his distinguished publishing record. An early and consistent feminist, he argued our relatively brief history should be about memory and identity but also about questioning taken-for-granted myths (including our own). He told of how belonging helps us to live with a better understanding of the present and a greater hope for the future. That way lies stability for without it we can too easily become rudderless, prey to unconsolable and impossibilist views.

Know them by their achievements if not their rank.

Jeffrey Dudgeon

Author of *H Montgomery Hyde: Ulster Unionist MP, Gay Law Reform Campaigner and Prodigious Author*

**8 November 2019**