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Dear Jeff,

Many, many thanks for sending me the texts that was really helpful.

What I have done is precis some headings and notes into a one and a half

page document to see what a structure for the film might look like.

If you hate it, that's okay, it can be reworked.

We won't cover all of this adequately in a one hour documentary but what

I would hope is that we could do some one to one reminiscence interviews

with people who would be prepared to talk about their lives, hopefully

different generations also.

This means that some people may be required to do two interviews.... but

I am going to look at that to see if there is some way we can film which

fits both requirements.

Everything will be included in the final archive and be placed online.

We do have some archive ourselves and the PRONI stuff is invaluable... I

trust that they will let us film some of it with your permission...

photographs which interviewees have or film/video also useful.

We can also transfer for them to a more up to date format if something

like VHS.

With best wishes and thanks, Jeff.

Marilyn

DRAFT IDEAS - AT THE EDGE OF THE LAW

Perhaps begin with personal recollections, for example:

“Twenty five years ago the RUC were preparing a case against me for an offence that merited life imprisonment. Now, that is no longer a crime, and I am invited to lecture the Chief Constable and his force on issues associated with policing the gay community”.

Context – historical within the context of Belfast, what life was like for gays, areas where they met – Albert Clock, Botanic Gardens, GNR in Great Victoria Street, Dubarry’s etc … again based on personal recollection where possible and historical knowledge where not. Social attitudes. Church & State.

Personal – the effects on people forced to the edge of society or to denial and the growing realisation in the late sixties when society was opening up and becoming more liberal… elsewhere in UK if not NI, female emancipation, civil rights etc – of the equality agenda and gay people’s place within that. Gay Liberation Society at Queens. Discos at Queens.

Advocacy – European Convention of Human Rights – period 1975 – 1981. How minorities can gain protection, keep it and advance their status. This was also during one of the bleakest decades of the Troubles – effects of civil unrest and reactionary politics. Social attitudes – on the streets, in schools, educating people to rights of gay people etc.

Support – setting up Carafriend and NIGRA. 1976 gay raids and arrests. Private violence and law enforcement. Changing laws and police practices meant that disproportionately large number of gays came into unwelcome contact with the state's enforcers.

Solidarity – other sectors in society who supported gay people, parallel journeys such as women’s liberation. North/South Ireland. UK. International support.

Gaining Visibility – becoming part of society/moving outwards. Initiatives by the gay community – Chariot Rooms, Carpenter Club, Dunbar Arms…Finding one’s place albeit still on the margins, in this case in one of the more dangerous areas of the city centre during the Troubles. Greater visibility – greater violence, personal thoughts and historical knowledge of some of the consequences – murders and beatings.

Gaining Visibility through collective and personal tragedy – AIDs, effects on delivery of services/resources. Social attitudes.

Media coverage – challenging stereotypes.

Gaining Acceptance – Successful inclusion in the Sexual Offences Bill, Gay Pride, civic banquet at City Hall etc. Assisting in the training of police officers and CID.

Urban/rural – reflections on other areas of Northern Ireland and social attitudes. Isolation?

Post Ceasefire - Reassessment of social attitudes towards the small gay minority through education, visibility and changes in the law and the procedures of law enforcement agencies. Do changes in the law stem the violence?

Reflections - on last forty+ years both re gay liberation and also lessons, which other minorities with changing ethnicity in the city etc could learn. Gay scene today – welcoming, attractive and expanding.

Conclusions – as the beginning to bookend… personal comments of what the struggle meant to contributors and their lives and what they hope for current and next generation.

Marilyn

People mentioned in texts:

Mac Pedlow (died last year aged 90 - he recalled the blackout, GIs, and the 1941 Belfast blitz.)

Andy Hinds (theatre director, out of Ireland)

Martin McQuigg (whereabouts unknown, if alive)

Dick Sinclair (lives in Derry)

Maeve Malley (out of Ireland)

Joseph Leckey (out of favour)

Brian Gilmore (lives near Ballynahinch) BrianJGilmore@aol.com

Kevin Merrett (disappeared to London)

Billy Forsythe (no longer gay, lives in England)

John McConkey (died ten years ago of AIDS in London)

Michael McAlinden (lives in Luxembourg) Michael-H.Mcalinden@ec.europa.eu

Doug Sobey (lives in Canada half of the year but just here now for the winter) d.sobey@ntlworld.com

Richard Kennedy (married with 2 children, lives in Huddersfield but happy to talk) rkkukuk@yahoo.com

Tim Clarke (no longer gay, married with children)

Geraldine Sergeant (whereabouts unknown)

Maureen Miskimmin (lives in the Orkney Is. and married with children)

P.A. MagLochlainn (Belfast) alainlongchamp@hotmail.com

Kieran Hayes (died earlier this year)

That synopsis is fine and comprehensive.

If you want to contact some of those you mention I have provided email addresses where I know them. Some others might be tracked down with effort.

A remarkable number wandered away from homosexuality which I think had something to do with being political/gay activists. This became known as the curse of NIGRA when two successive Presidents plus other office bearers got married

There are of course droves of younger, involved people many of whom I could put you in contact with or the groups they work with and for.

One other name from that era is Brendan O'Connell who returned to Belfast from London. He was 18 in 1976 yet retains a 'leftist' perspective.brendanoconnell@ntlworld.com

Jeff Dudgeon (Belfast)

Richard Hodgson (lives much of the time in London but has a Belfast residence) rickyhhh58@yahoo.co.uk

Andre Graham (lives in Canary Is. most of the time)andre.graham@btinternet.com

Richard Sweeney (??)