

## Pride History Group Oral History Interview with Ian Black

Interviewer: John Witte

Date of interview: Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2009

Location of interview: Benledi

Reason for interview: Project 40

Restrictions: None



Log	Summary	Key words
0000	Born in Liverpool UK and was evacuated to Scotland during the blitz. He returned to grow up in Liverpool. His father was a policeman. His career was 'mental nurse'.	Liverpool UK;
0214	His family was upper working class.	
0242	He was interested in reading and went to the local library after school.	
0330	He went to the local elementary school and then got a scholarship to the Merchant Tailors College.	Merchant Tailors College;
0430	He was aware of his sexual preferences at 7 or 8 and had crushes on some boys at school, but nothing came of it.	
0500	He had a secret inner life and an outer in which he appeared to conform.	
0600	Ian talks about the 50s being the era of homosexual repression, with large scale arrests, including high profile people. The local MP was Sir David Maxwell, the chief driving force for the police arrests of homosexual men.	Sir David Maxwell Fife; Nuremburg trials;
0900	High profile cases.	Lord Milson Haven; John Gielgud;
1017	Nothing positive about homosexuality in that period.	
1020	The Wolfenden Report came out in 1957 advocating consenting adults to have sex in private. He remembers the release of the Kinsey Report in the press in the 50s.	Wolfenden Report; Kinsey Report
1215	National Service. He did his 2 years and was chosen to go in the Royal Army Education Corps and taught pre-literate and illiterate recruits.	National Service; Royal Army Education Corps;
1444	After National Service he decided to come to Australia.	
1540	Stayed first in South Australia. He did an Arts Degree at Adelaide University. He did his PhD in Canberra.	Adelaide University; Canberra;
1830	He did not develop any close relationships and this can be traced back to his childhood.	
2030	When he was lecturing in Adelaide he fell madly in love with a straight friend and kind of fell in love with a girl. This created a crisis for him and he went to a psychiatrist who told him to adjust to living with his homosexuality. He decided to be honest about his sexuality and this coincided with his move to Canberra.	Canberra;
2250	Went to Sydney and gay bars such as the front bar of the Rex. It was a public bar packed with gay men.	Front Bar Rex Hotel;
2435	He also visited the Purple Onion and its drag shows and wit. Description of venue and performers.	Purple Onion; Beatrice; Black Lesley;
2717	Life in Canberra was very dull socially. Ian's office was next to David Hilliard.	David Hilliard;
2815	He spent most of his social life in the local journalist's circle. Gay life in Canberra was very difficult to negotiate.	Canberra;
3000	Gays generally went to parties, some picnics.	
3100	When he came to Australia he considered himself a small L liberal. He joined ALP for about a year in 1969. His attitudes to the left, National Service, the Liberal Government. He went to many anti-war demos.	ALP; Vietnam; National Service; Liberal Party;

3700	He left Canberra and got a job at the University of New South Wales in 1969.	University of NSW;
3730	Ian describes the camp commercial scene in Sydney at the time and police corruption.	
4123	The Midnight Shift was the first place without a seamy background.	Midnight Shift;
4300	He was not aware of law reform prior to 1970. A demand for change in the late 60s. This was the background for his interest in CAMP when it came along.	Homosexual Law Reform; CAMP;
4500	He knew John Ware and Christabel Poll who he knew through a mutual friend and they lived in an apartment block, Belmont in Milsons Point. He agreed to get involved in setting up CAMP.	CAMP; John Ware; Christabel Poll; Belmont Apartments; Milsons Point;
4600	Ian reflects on his views about being "out" at the time.	
4755	He had got to know John and Chris through Jill Roe who he had met in Adelaide and Canberra and she was the partner of Christabel Poll.	Jill Roe; Adelaide; Canberra;
4833	An informal meeting was organised in Jill and Christabel's flat. Agreed to publish a magazine, how to get to the media, and organising a first public meeting.	
4955	Talks about Sydney media at the time. The Australian interviewed John and Christabel.	Sydney Morning Herald; The Australian;
5115	The inaugural meeting of CAMP was held at St Johns Church Balmain. He describes the meeting and notes the attendance of straight supporters like the late Dorothy Symonds.	St John's Hall; Balmain; Dorothy Symonds;
5445	Talks about the early meetings of CAMP in Darling Street. Describes consequences of informal meeting procedure.	CAMP; Darling Street;
5715	John and his partner moved into the upstairs of the Darling Street premises.	John Ware;
5800	The organisation of the finances. David Widdup was the Treasurer.	David Widdup;
5837	The reason CAMP eventually got a constitution.	CAMP;
5900	Ian talks about the intention of CAMP – to encourage people to come out and to change society or at least the law.	CAMP;
10052	He sees phone a friend as the main thing to come out of CAMP.	Phone a Friend;
10114	CAMP changed a lot of lesbian and gay men's minds.	
10155	Description of CAMP Ink, John Ware's role; the material in the magazine, and its aims.	John Ware; CAMP Ink
10315	Some members who did not want to come out.	Coming Out;
10430	Ian talks about the importance of coming out. To break down stereotypes.	Coming Out;
10730	Describes the dances at Darling Street.	Dances; Darling Street;
11135	Reasons for moving out of Darling Street.	Darling Street;
11145	Ian left CAMP because it didn't seem to be going anywhere.	CAMP;
11330	His views of the aims Gay Liberation and the New Left.	New Left;
11450	After leaving CAMP he was busy with work and his often went to Oxford Street.	Oxford Street;
11535	He bought a house in East Redfern in the early 80s near Clover Moore. He supported Clover and believed the South Sydney Council needed a shake up.	East Redfern; Clover Moore; South Sydney Council;
11745	The old Council saw itself as a provider of garbage services, Clover saw it could provide public amenity parks, playgrounds, trees, street closures etc.	South Sydney Council; Clover Moore;
11810	The highlight of the Clover Moore campaign was winning the seat of Bligh from Michael Yabsley in 1989.	Clover Moore; Bligh; Michael Yabsley;
11933	Susan Harben standing for the seat of Bligh.	Susan Harben; Bligh; ABC;
12100	Ian was involved in the campaign to save the Showgrounds (from redevelopment). He outlines the campaign and was achieved.	Sydney Showgrounds; Clover Moore;

122300	Ian outlines his career at the UNSW until 1998 when he retired. He was head of the school of History for 8 years. The Asia Australia Institute, under Stephen Fitzgerald in the late 80s early 90s. This aimed to rouse Australian interest in Asia.	UNSW; School of History; Stephen Fitzgerald; Asia Australia Institute;
12355	Ian recalls the changes in the public interest in Asia.	
12510	The demonstration outside Liberal Party Headquarters in 1971. It was decided that it would not be aggressive, but be jolly. He was the spokesperson and had to speak to the police.	Ash Street Demonstration; Darling Street; Liberal Party; Police;
12810	He was also at the demonstration at St Clements at Mosman.	St Clements; Mosman;
12840	He was sent out to social organisations and the media to talk about homosexuality. Describes some of these events and the incident at Channel 10.	Rationalists; Presbyterian Youth Group; Channel 10;
13145	He was interviewed by Ann Deveson on 2GB and there was caller talk back. The tape is in the State Archives.	Ann Deveson; 2GB;