

Pride History Group Oral History Interview with Philip King

Interviewer: Barry Power

Date: 23rd July 2006

Location of Interview: Alexandria, Sydney

Restrictions: None

Reason for interview: Early Mardi Gras Parades

Tape logger: John Witte



Time	Summary	Keywords
File 1		
0200	Philip was born on 10 th June 1944 in South End on Sea in the UK. His father was Arthur Edward King and mother was Marie Alma Rasmussen. His father was a naval officer and mother a housewife. Religion is or was Church of England. His early school days in the UK and he migrated to Australia in 1953 when he was 9. He went to school in Mt Gravatt in Qld. Took on an apprenticeship when 16 in the boot trade until he was 20. He finished his apprenticeship and moved to Sydney where he worked in the retail trade. He knew he was gay all his life and his first sexual encounter was when he was 13, 14.	South End Mt Gravatt
0715	Early years in Brisbane he was involved in social groups. He met up at the Treasury Hotel in Brisbane – despite being underage. His gay friends in Brisbane gave him the names of contacts in Sydney.	Brisbane Treasury Hotel
0831	Left Brisbane in late 1963. In Sydney he had a relationship with a guy which lasted 10 years. They would meet at different people's houses or at Vintage Car Clubs. His partner, Sid was a member of the Packard Car Club. He met other gays in the Buick and Classical Car Clubs. They would go to the Criterion or the Australia Hotel in Sydney.	Packard Car Club Buick Car Club Classical Car Club Criterion Hotel Australia Hotel
0953	He was involved in shows in Broadbeach for a short period.	Broadbeach
1006	In 1978 after the first Mardi Gras he became involved in organising the 1979 Mardi Gras with Barry Power, his partner. Barry was a close friend of Lance Gowland, who was a member of Gay Solidarity who was trying to get Mardi Gras which was a part of Stonewall, off the ground.	Barry Power Lance Gowland Gay Solidarity
1054	Philip was not political up until then. He didn't realize there were so many political factions. In 1979, there were the womens' movements, Gay Solidarity Group and the social clubs – all had different political agendas. He got people involved from the commercial scene in the Mardi Gras, because he knew the management of these venues – Flinders, Albury, Beresford, Capriccios. They helped with fund raisers, selling tickets, promotions and put posters up.	Gay Solidarity Group Flinders Albury Beresford Capriccios
1342	He never thought it would fail but didn't realize how big it was going to get. More and more people each year coming along.	

1435	Public meetings. Early stages. Different groups with different agendas and it was hard to get groups to the one agenda.	
File 2		
0000	Philip was an associate member of the Dolphins Motor Cycle Club and an assoc of the Roo Bike Club that met at the Barrell Inn. Met other groups like the Southern Pacific Motor Cycle Club. Went to Pollys to get them involved.	Dolphins Motor Cycle Club Roo Bike Club Barrell Inn Southern Pacific Motor Cycle Club Pollys
0113	President of Pollys at the time said that they were a social club and not a gay club and didn't want to get involved in anything political. But it was run by gays and its members were gay.	Pollys
0150	1980 The first party which was a part of Stonewall Week and they got the Paddington Town Hall. There were 2 gay guys who had a hotel in the Haymarket, Mary Street. They could transfer their licence to another venue. They transferred their licence to the Paddington Town Hall and gave 10% of the takings to them.	Paddington Town Hall Mary Street Belmore Hotel
0244	It was a financial success. They could only have 700 in the Hall and had to turn people away. "It was unbelievable".	
0300	1981. The Paddington Town Hall was too small. He didn't realize how hard it was to work with councils and get venues. The parade was cancelled due to rain and "electrical stuff being on the main float". It was postponed.	Paddington Town Hall
0428	The parade terminated at Hyde Park and people went up Oxford Street for drinks.	Hyde Park Oxford Street
0437	1982. Brian McGahen came on board the Committee. Barry Cecchini from the Beresford had thrown a private party at the AMP Pavilion at the showgrounds earlier. So he said he would get the AMP Pavilion as licensee.	Brian McGahen Barry Cecchini Beresford AMP Pavilion
0522	After 1981 they negotiated directly with the show grounds.	
0531	After the AMP Mardi Gras party there was quite a backlash from the commercial establishments about Barry Cecchini only having a licence. So the next dance had a combined licence all commercial outlets ran the bar for the dance. By that time Michael Glynn from the Sydney Star had done a hell of a lot of work for them by advertising Mardi Gras in his paper.	Barry Cecchini Combined licence Michael Glynn Sydney Star
0647	1983 they worked with John Marsden for Mardi Gras to get its own licence. This was very hard to do at the time, because "we weren't classified as a ball or anything like that".	John Marsden
0721	Philip was the licensee. Undercover police were watching for breaches, so that "they could close us down". It was a financial success.	
0807	After 1984. All the time they dealt with the showground people they kept raising fees and put strict restrictions on Mardi Gras. In 1981 Mardi Gras has to have its own security – there was "not	Showground people

	one security company in Sydney that would touch us". So they had to get a security company from Melbourne. In 1982 after seeing how much money was made, said that Mardi Gras could not control the turnstiles – they would have staff on the turnstiles and pay their wages. After Mardi Gras got a liquor licence they said that would be the last time that Mardi Gras could handle the liquor, that they were licensing the whole showground and they would run the licence.	Melbourne Security Company
0926	They had a total monopoly. 1982-83 Mardi Gras tried to get the Markets in the Haymarket which the Haymarket people were willing to hire. But Council and police said that it could only be hired if the Fire Department gave it full approval. And the fire department was very hesitant and during this time there was a fire so they couldn't use it as a venue.	Markets Council Police Fire Department
1017	1984 was Philip's last year. The first 5 years were the hardest. Mardi Gras was fortunate in 1984-5 to have Val Williams to help with the finances. She was an accountant.	Val Williams
1111	Val was the only woman involved on the committee up until then.	
1130	The early years were very hard. "A lot of knocks and bruises. I'm also proud that it is still going".	