

## Pride History Group Oral History Interview

**Interviewee: Ian MacNeill**

**Interviewer: John Witte**

**Focus of interview:**

**Date of interview: Monday 15<sup>th</sup> August 2012**

**Place of interview: Ian's home in Elizabeth Bay**

**Conditions:**



Tape	Log (summary of what was said)	Proper names
0-18	Born 6 <sup>th</sup> February 1946 – early life in Willoughby. Father was a marine engineer & in the Navy.	Willoughby, Castle Crag
1-41	Home life felt privileged in easy-going bush suburb.	
2-58	Went to local kindergarten – remembers those people very well. Went to Castle Crag Infants. Was “an effeminate child” & was sent to Willoughby Boys School separated from sister with whom he was very close.	Castle Crag, Castle Cove, Willoughby
6-10	Was rejected by father – father said in Ian’s presence “I think I’ve got a queen for a son”. This was extremely hurtful & relationship with father was “sundered from that moment.”	
7-45	Home life was not harmonious – a lot of conflict & tension between parents.	
8-30	Read extensively – C.S. Lewis’ <i>Narnia</i> , Biggles, the William books, adventure. Interested in dance, classical music. These interests were considered “poofy” at the time. Hated football – doesn’t understand how modern gay men can be interested in it.	C.S. Lewis; Narnia; Biggles; Just william
12-00	Had a crush on an older boy when in primary school. And also on his teacher, Mr. King when in 4 <sup>th</sup> grade.	
14-30	Notes the lack of any creative subjects in both primary & high schools.	
15-35	Was inspired to be a teacher by the <i>Anne of Green Gables</i> books [author: L.M.Montgomery]	<i>Anne of Green Gables</i>
17-25	Father died when Ian was 14. Financial constraints led to move to East Willoughby. Had a Soldiers’ Children Fund Scholarship which enabled Ian to go to university where majors were English Literature & Anthropology.	Soldiers’ Children Fund Scholarship
20-00	University was much more free than surrounding world – more possible to be ‘camp’ there – the social explosion of the 60s was happening	
21-51	went to Libertarian Society & Literature Society meetings	Libertarian Society Literature Society
22-50	‘loved’ Anthropology & found mention of homosexuals having ritual roles in some societies and murdered in others. Lecturer was Dr. Hoban, provided role model of the unmarried man.	Dr. Hoban
24-00	Fully recognised his sexuality. Spoke to a doctor at University who tried to refer him to Prof. McConaghy [sp?] at UNSW – offer rejected by Ian.	Professor McConaghy [sp?]
25-40	School colleague, David Gillay [sp?] had already come out. Ian acknowledged him as a model for doing so himself. This was an individual act rather than as part of some group or movement.	David Gillay [sp?]; coming out
26-40	Went every Saturday night to the Windsor Castle Hotel, Elizabeth St, Paddington, a site for camp people.	Windsor Castle Hotel
27-15	Sometimes went to parties after the hotel closed at 10:00pm.	

29-45	On Saturday nights, with 2 female friends would have a drink at Lorenzini's Wine bar in Elizabeth St before going on to the Windsor Castle	Lorenzini's Wine Bar
30-32	Went to the Purple Onion, Dawn O'Donnell's Trolley Car which was run by a lesbian called Ted. The upstairs would be opened for gay people only. This was a bit later than the Windsor Castle days.	Purple Onion; Dawn O'Donnell; Trolley Car,
32-08	Did not visit the gay bars then operating in the city. Recalls a bar opening in a hotel in Elizabeth Street which was frequented by young executive types, suit & tie – not as bohemian as the Paddington hotel bar	
33-27	Patches had a different crowd which was very mixed. Some date confusion here.	Patches
33-50	Recalls that there were dances at Petersham, gay & lesbian where people did the barn dance and the Pride of Erin, which he attended.	Petersham
34-95	Graduated with an Honours degree in English Literature. Got a job in the Public Service in the Superannuation Board. First intake of graduate clerks.	Public Service; Superannuation Board
35-40	Moved to Melbourne, started teaching without any teaching qualifications. Was offered an internship to get a teaching qualification and succeeded. Worked at Flemington High [School] where there were 2 out gay men, Chris [?] and Greg [Jones?].	Melbourne; Flemington High School; Chris; Greg
37-28	Started an MA, by course & thesis, while teaching.	
37-37	Became ill with depression – became a day patient at the Polkler [sp?] Road Psychiatric Clinic – had talking therapy & treatment with anti-depressants	Polkler[sp?] Road Psychiatric Clinic in Melbourne
38-49	Returned to Sydney & started teaching at Manly Boys High [School]. Lived in a share house with another gay man, Timothy Dunlop [deceased]	Manly Boys High School; Timothy Dunlop
40-24	Yolanta's Wine Bar in Manly was gay.	Yolanta's Wine Bar
41-12	Timothy Dunlop's sister was a key member of the church in Mosman from which Peter Bonsall-Bone was sacked so Ian knew about that episode	Peter Bonsall-Boone
41-45	Became more firm about being out & came out to his mother by sending her a letter followed by a phone-call. His mother denied getting the letter. Their relationship did not change much.	
43-25	Did not know E.M. Forster was gay – then read an article by Dennis Altman which discussed Forster's sexuality. Was aware of Patrick White and Manoly [Lascaris].	E.M. Forster; "Maurice"; Dennis Altman; Patrick White; Manoly Lascaris
43-55	"The Boys in the Band" was huge "mind-blowing, a revelation and thrilling" for him. This was put on by Harry M. Miller.	"The Boys In the Band"; Harry M. Miller
45-13	"The Lion in Winter" had 2 gay princes in a relationship. While not necessarily positive representations of gay men "at least they were there".	"The Lion in Winter"
47-05	Believed in Gay Liberation then and still does.	gay liberation
48-45	Teaching in Flemington (Vic.) was OK but Manly Boys High was very homophobic and very hard. Was on Librium while at the school.	Manly Boys High; Flemington (Vic.)
51-38	England is seen as a place to escape to. London seen as important	London, England;

	focus for attention. Worked as a waiter, a clerk, a library assistant, etc. Went to Greece.	Greece
55-40	Was aware of gay liberation in the early 70s but was not connected to it at all.	
56-25	Returned to Sydney & to teaching at St. Ives High School.	
1-00-00	Was arrested after the 1978 Homosexual Conference and had name published in Sydney Morning Herald.	1978 Homosexual Conference
1-02-51	Had become more active politically and went to the Mike Clohesy demonstration outside St Mary's Cathedral prior to the 1978 conference	Mike Clohesy; 33 Glebe Point Road;
1-04-00	Attends Gay Teachers [and Students] Association meetings at 33A Glebe Point Rd. [Gives examples of some campaigns – mentions the P& C (Parents & Citizens Association)]	Gay Teachers Association [GAYTAS]; Eddie Ashmore; Steve Vella; Phil [Walcott]; John Coseijn; Jenny [Lyons]
1-06-50	Gives a copy of "Young Gay and Proud" to his homophobic principal.	"Young Gay and Proud"; Geoffrey Ostling
1-11-52	Is asked, as the Federation Representative, to run a gay policy issue past his local Association of the NSW Teachers Federation, while at Hornsby High School	NSW Teachers Federation; Hornsby High School
1-13-23	Decides on return from London that he wants to write – contributes to "Campaign" & other journals.	"Campaign"
1-13-50	Wins "Campaign" short story competition – gives prize money to Greg Weir fund.	Greg Weir; Larry Galbraith
1-16-56	Patrick White's "The Twyborn Affair" is seen as not really addressing oppression.	Patrick White; "The Twyborn Affair"
1-20-35	Other gay publications such as "The Star" ; started by Michael Glynn then taken over by Larry Galbraith	Michael Glynn; Larry Galbraith
1-21-28	Wrote for "Gay Information" - was sharing a flat in Elizabeth Bay with Gavin Harris. Ian not part of the collective but contributed reviews, one substantial article on Australian gay writing.	Gavin Harris; Robert Laurie [sp?], Margaret [??]stock; Louise Wakeley [sp?]
1-23-18	Wrote also for "Gay Community News" [which came out of the Melbourne gay conference] This became "Outrage".	"Gay Community News"; "Outrage"
1-24-27	Wrote for "Campaign"	"Campaign"
1-25-25	Gary Dunne publishes first book of gay fiction –Blackwattle Press starts	Gary Dunne; Blackwattle Press
1-26-04	Laurence [??] 1997 started "Cargo" which runs for some time – becomes an e-book publisher.	Laurence/Lauren [??]; "Cargo"; Jill Jones
1-28-20	Self-published "Living", a collection of stories, poems & articles [date??]	"Living"
1-30-00	Left Dept. of Education – takes them to court on workers compensation case and, technically, wins. Moved into TAFE, teaching Communications, English, HSC English & Film and Media Studies.	TAFE

1·32·12	Has play called “Hors de Combat” staged in a Mardi Gras [date??]	“Hors de Combat”
1·34·04	Poetry book “Tricks” – cover designed by Ian & David McDairmid [sp??] under auspices of Mardi Gras	“Tricks”; David McDairmid [sp??]
1·34·26	Cath Phillips president of Mardi Gras, starts magazine called “Burn”; Ian writes several articles for various issues	Cath Phillips; “Burn”
1·36·00	Gay Men’s Rap, started about 1978, was important to Ian.	Gay Men’s Rap
1·38·55	Feels that the things he wrote about the personal being political were the most important things he leaves. Feels there is still a lot of oppression which needs to be addressed especially in regard to gay people’s self-image. Last piece of writing is called “Queen Lear” to be published by Gary Dunne.	“Queen Lear”; Gary Dunne