

Pride History Group Oral History Interview with Bruce Pollack**Interviewer:** Larry Galbraith**Date:** 1st December 1995**Location of interview:** Newtown**Reason for interview:** Research for book on the Mardi Gras**Restrictions:** None

Time	Summary: Tape ONE B	Keywords
0.00.01	Not personally close to Tully - or any members of Board - but friendly with all. Tully close to Whittaker, engineered onto top job (Chair), and blocked Donnie Smith. Close to Tony and Rod, Jenkins on Board and close to him too. Relations with Damian and Donnie and Wilkins not close.	Peter Tully
2.14	Suggested when co-opted with Board that Furlong was now persona non-grata and socialising with him should not continue – won't say who suggested it.	Furlong
3.40	Whittaker says Donnie not invited back to Board because too close to Damian. Bruce will not be told who he can or cannot socialise with - they need to trust his integrity. Flaunted mixing with Damian one evening at the shift.	
5.00	Will not be drawn on the controversy over Damian and money - did not see the documents and not around at the time. Never saw proof.	
5.50	Impressions of Damian? These early boards had no staff - even if a smaller event. During 1985 parade - with HIV controversy - board under pressure.	Damian
7.30	Everyone went to Shift and so mixed with Furlong like everyone else. Damian axed May 1985	
9.00	A ticket prepared for 1985/6 election - with Bruce's name on it. Surreptitiously handed out. Did see the ticket - on the night of the meeting. Do not remember it being put together. Tully a player, also Cronulla gay group - told how to vote. Whatever happened over that ticket behind the scenes, Bruce elected to Committee.	voting
10.50	Bruce voted secretary when John Murray resigns and Kevin (?) becomes treasurer. Brian Hobday wants to become parade coordinator, Murray (McLachlan?) becomes parade coordinator and John Murray resigns because he had had enough (Larry's words).	Brian Hobday Secretary
11.30	Memory of that period - a good working committee. Better run under Whittaker than Furlong - also a time of instituting new things including management structures, new methods of working. Whittaker a strong chair - running MG full-time. Sometimes there could be more discussion. Sometimes referred discussion to a subcommittee. Bill always prepared and set agenda - ensured there had been any necessary discussion beforehand.	Working committee Bill Whittaker
13.47	Bruce does not remember this as a time of a lot of argument. A very cohesive committee. Certainly discussion over employing staff.	

14.25	Jim Jenkins first employed as office assistant in 1986 - proposal (april 86) - Opposition to money going to admin always came from 'the artists' - represented on board by Tully - his view was that all money should go to artists and if money was to go to admin then that admin person should assist artistic side.	Jim Jenkins
15.30	Tully's view did not always prevail - despite friendship with Whittaker. Tully got Whittaker into chair (Larry).	
16.28	Tully's ashes - fired out of a cannon over MG parade	
17.15	Main motivations of committee members involvement - fun and important - Bruce reminds people often why we have a parade - until Board and membership of Mardi Gras change the reason - all that happens at MG time the parade is the most important event - the MG is a political act - the gays and lesbians take over Sydney for one night.	Mardi Gras Parade
18.55	The political power and strength to take over for one night. By whatever means. Why - because we are a minority group who continue not to have the same rights or acceptance from broader committee - so we have to keep up our political act by holding the parade.	Raison d'etre of Mardi Gras
19.50	Other aspects - dress up, create floats, have fun, arts festival, party to fun it - whatever - goal the same from first day - and one Bruce endorses. That said Bruce is not a political animal and plays own politics a certain way - but that is his commitment. The parade counts as a reminder and statement.	
20.45	Important for Bruce - involvement for MG over 12 continuous years without question has changed my life than any other act - or foresee any other act or event having more of an impact. All embracing - feeling proud - giving me the strength initially to walk up street with a MG T shirt on - insisted by Whittaker.	Mardi Gras as a political act
21.55	Bruce's job as a board member was to look after a group of marshals and Whittaker gives him an area and a MH T-shirt - suddenly having to be very public.	
22.25	The first year the flag went up there were no names - then slowly names were added. In early 1980s - prior to media attention - you could be on MG committee without anyone knowing - eg Richard Wherrett - you could hide - but it helped Bruce come out and 'my business come out'. That's a minor part. It never impacted on business. (Larry: Affected other people's careers, say Kevin at Telecom).	
23.50	Another side to Bruce's story - as a gay father - and bringing up a child. So always refused to be named until he left school. Divided feelings - personally had to take into account his situation at school in the 1980s - esp. during time of early AIDS and those controversies. Son sat in on meetings at home, visited workshop, viewed parades and saw Bruce in action.	Life as a gay father

25.50	Staff relations within his own company, where most embraced activities related to LGBT community	
28.00	Discussion of board, expertise in certain areas, political motivation, seen as community service, civic values.	
30.00	Larry on Mardi Gras org and skills in events organisation	
33.45	Looked to people with certain skills to get things done – a cohesive group; certainly there were arguments over decisions, but never dissent.	
35.00	1987 AGM: the first time that there was no election; they were short of 2 nominations for the board; decided to go to the AGM with all positions filled, rather than have 2 people elected from the floor; looking for cohesiveness and ability to work together. They controlled who was elected to the board, so they decided who the 2 nominations would be. And they ended up staying and did a good job.	AGM
41.10	The Dennis Lennox event in the country: the most awful event ever – 1986 – so bad, so cold; was an attempt at a community event, with community involvement – slept in bunkbeds, Tully sat up in the night to go to the toilet and caught his hair in the wire of the bunk above. Had to extract him and his hair from the bunk.	Dennis Lennox
43.10	Summoned to Bill's house. He announced his resignation and determined that Murray would be next President. Decided that Dennis would be VP.	Anthony Babicci; Tony Crewes; Colin Fawcett; Kevin Golding; Jeff Hardy; Brian Hobday; Greg Howard; Robert Lake; Cayte Latte; Dennis Lennon; Murray McLachlan; John Murray; Bruce Pollack; David Springland; Peter Tully;
45.45	Bill's reasons for resigning were that he could spend more time with Warren and getting more involved in HIV politics.	Warren; HIV politics;
46.40	It came as a shock to BP that he was leaving. His departure was totally amicable.	