

Pride History Group Oral History Interview with Terry Rolfe

Interviewer: John Witte

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Time	Summary	Keywords
0000	Born in Goulburn 21/12/49. Parents worked in Psychiatric Hospitals and moved to Nelsons Bay to Tomaree and then to Sydney. His father worked at Rydalmere Psychiatric Hospital as an outdoor attendant. The family had a house in the grounds	Goulburn, Nelsons Bay, Tomaree, Rydalmere Hospital,
0136	His father was born in 1895 and had retired when Terry was 10 and his mother became the breadwinner. They had moved to Parramatta East.	Parramatta East
0219	He went to nearby Macquarie Boys High School. This school served the Dundas Valley Housing Commission developments. He had gone to a Catholic Primary School - St Marys Rydalmere. He was a bright child and when he started high school was about 11 and he started university when he was 16.	Macquarie Boys High School, Dundas Valley Housing Commission, St Marys School Rydalmere.
0333	He found he wasn't interested in heterosexual porn and thought he was a late developer.	
Tape 2	(Break caused by change of microphone.)	
0050	Terry was initially a high achiever then became naughty and did no work.	
0105	In year 10, aged 14, he fell in love with the biology teacher, and subsequently did well in biology in the Leaving Certificate.	Leaving Certificate
0140	Went to uni on a Commonwealth Scholarship. Could've studied anything, but too young for medicine.	Commonwealth Scholarship
0219	Fell in love with a whole lot of people in his classes. Terry talks about a boy he fell in love with and followed for 4 years and subsequently found out that he was gay.	
0336	1969 he was doing his honours year in geomorphology and had a nervous breakdown and spent 2 years in a psychiatric institution – Broughton Hall and Rydalmere. He had Electro Convulsive Therapy to cure the schizophrenia and the depression.	Broughton Hall, Rydalmere Psychiatric Hospital, ECT,
0620	Most of the group at Broughton Hall was gay. He had sex for the first time, with a fellow patient when he was 19 and another patient. He found it very confusing.	Broughton Hall
0717	By the end of 1970 he was out of treatment. 1971 he went to NZ and "fighting the gay thing I guess". Met a woman and they had a relationship, although she knew Terry was gay.	New Zealand

0816	Came back to Sydney and live briefly in Bridge Road in a hippy household with Barbara – there were drugs, police raids, bonging on day and night.	Bridge Road,
0923	In late 71 he went over to CAMP in Darling Street Balmain, but could not bring himself to go in.	CAMP, Darling Street,
0944	By the end of 71 he went with 2 women to Bali until August 72. Then came back and lived in Hereford Street, Glebe	Bali, Hereford Street, Glebe
1000	It was a household with photographer, Pat Fisk, a couple of women liberationists and then they moved to Australia Street where there was lots of space.	Pat Fisk, Australia Street, Newtown
1043	Australia Street. Jan Roberts was the Camperdown Branch of the Communist Party of Australia. The Australian Lesbian Photography Collective was there. There were meetings almost every day. He had sex at the local beats. Later in 1972 he went to 67 Glebe Point Road (this was when he was in Hereford Street).	Jan Roberts, CPA, Australian Lesbian Photography Collective, 67 Glebe Point Road,
1158	There he met David McDiarmid, John Lee, Dennis Altman, and Barry Prothero. Meetings were held in the front room. They were lively and rowdy.	David McDiarmid, John Lee, Dennis Altman, Barry Prothero,
1227	He had a fling with David McDiarmid. He describes David.	David McDiarmid
1315	He went to the camp at CPA headquarters at Minto. Terry was torn between mainstream society activism which is more political and making your point rather than joining the ghetto. He decided to live in the ghetto where “you were surrounded by potential mates and lovers rather than in mainstream society where ... you didn’t know who was what”.	CPA Camp Minto,
1525	He went to Gay Liberation to mix with gay people rather than getting crushes on all the wrong sorts of people. (ie. straight men)	Sydney Gay Liberation,
1625	By early 73, 67 Glebe Point Road had broken up. Mid 73 he was in Australia Street and he was thinking “we just can’t see this thing die, we’ve got to keep it going and I remember that we started this little cell in Australia Street of trying to keep things moving. And I remember we meetings every Friday night and people like Barry Prothero came, ... Terry Batterham and Josepha said she was there and Ken said that the first time he ever went to a gay thing was at Australia Street ... it was in my bedroom, but my bedroom was truly enormous – it had a piano and lounge chair suite and a big fireplace ... and I remember we planned quite a few things of that week in that bedroom and also for the gay pride march itself. It was supposed to be Gay Pride Week, but it ended up being from 5 – 16 (September) ... We had a kind of zap thing in the Domain the Sunday before ...some poetry reading.	67 Glebe Point Road, Australia Street, Barry Prothero, Terry Batterham, Josepha, Ken Davis, Gay Pride Week, Domain,

1831	"On Tuesday or Wednesday we had the thing in the Cenotaph where Richard Jessop got arrested".	Cenotaph, Richard Jessop,
2038	He recalls the protest at the McConaughy's seminar earlier in the year as well as the homosexual brains zap.	McConaughy,
2130	"I remember going to Coles Cafeteria all dressed up in silly costumes ... it was a period of street theatre, I used to do mad things before I joined Gay Lib and wear hats around town with propellers."	Coles
2152	"I used to work at Darling Harbour in 71 when I was a hippy in Glebe ... in the goods yard. You worked hard in the morning loading up goods trucks and the rest of the afternoon they sat around smoking dope ... and sometimes we'd go up through the city and create a bit of havoc and these were perfectly straight people. It was bit of a mad period and hormone driven I suspect."	Darling Harbour Goods Yard, Glebe,
2222	"In my case more hormone driven, theatrical than politically driven ... I was doing it to be confrontative and a bit wicked I guess"	
2249	"I can remember distinctly having a meeting on Friday night and everybody being in a big panic and then Gary Schliemann having to deliver something or get something organised about flags, not the posters, we got the posters done at UNSW (uni) or get something organised with flags and I was waiting for him at home thinking, shit, because Gary Schliemann was always late for everything and imagining all these people gathering down town and I'm sitting at home in a fairly significant organisational role ... and he did come and I'm sure he had all the flags with the pink triangles"	Gary Schliemann, University of NSW,
2356	Tharunka was very important and Lindy Nolan. They had the pink insert in Tharunka.	Tharunka, Lindy Nolan,
2422	On Saturday we arrived just as march started. They tried to go down George Street and went up Park Street instead. "I remember running down Pitt Street on cars ...because we created such traffic jams"	George Street, Park Street, Pitt Street,
2450	Police tried to cut them off at Market Street. A lot rushed into Farmers and came out back into Pitt Street. Police headed down to Martin Place "It was complete chaos and panic".	Farmers Department Store, Martin Place/Plaza, Pitt Street,
2536	He saw police picking on a gay couple who were onlookers and he thinks they were trying to arrest them and Terry said "leave them alone" and got arrested and was charged with saying "get fucked you copper cunt ...That was the end of my day really."	

2623	"We were singing and having a great time inside ... it was festive". They were charged with some trumped up charge and sent to the room at the back.	
2700	Footage of the march was taken by Channel 7.	Channel 7
2730	Released on bail. He was also charged with resisting arrest.	
2550	In court Lex (Watson) and Dennis (Altman) provided expert witness testimony, that he was arrest at a completely different time and place. He still has to put down his arrest when applying for jobs.	Lex Watson, Dennis Altman,
2909	In Australia Street, Fred Hollows used to come to the house to see a woman who lived there and he used to lend them his car for use graffitiing slogans and one night he got arrested.	Australia Street, Fred Hollows,
3136	He had defended himself in court on the basis of his feminist beliefs. Only the difference in the times of arrest made any difference because they had trumped up the charges and times.	
3318	He remembers Pam Stein. Some (of gay liberation) was going to break into McConaughy's office to destroy his files on homosexuals. Pam, Mim and Trudi were involved. They met at Sydney University to discuss the plan. Richard Wilson did not approve. And it got leaked and it couldn't happen.	Pam Stein, McConaughy, Mim Loftus, Trudi, Richard Wilson
3455	He remembers being angry and bitter that he had suffered. It was a time when people didn't talk about sex and sexuality and there were no role models. He was one of those who intellectualised their sexuality. He got depressed and suicidal when he was 19. It changed his life. He thinks that he was probably heading toward being an academic, heterosexual when he was at university.	
3645	Doesn't think he ever came out. Speaks about his parent's Victorian attitudes and background and his relationship with parents	
3912	He went back to uni in 1974 or 75 and became a student again. Australian Street had broken up.	Australia Street
4127	In 74 he was living in Australia Street and a friend from Indonesia moved in. He drifted away from the gay politics after that.	Australia Street, Indonesia
4716	Gay liberationists had vilified the bars, but by 1974 he was in the bars and backrooms, at Capriccios and disco dancing.	Sydney Gay Liberation, Capriccios,
4837	Drifted into Glebe with his friend David.	Glebe,
4856	33a annoyed him with its ageism. He recalls in September 1973 on the Sunday and old guy came up and said 'I think I'm homosexual' and the reaction was 'you've left it a bit late' or 'I think you should go back (into the closet)'. "We were not nice to older people"	33a Glebe Point Road, Gay Pride Week,

5017	Other people at 33a. Martin Smith – a misogynist and woman (maybe Kay Martin) who did not acknowledge men. Terry Batterham and he were 'honorary women' and survived in a feminist household – Australian Street.	Martin Smith, Kay Martin, Terry Batterham, Australia Street,
5120	More on Martin Smith. He was a conservative, was a columnist with the Australian.	Martin Smith, The Australian,
5308	Barry Prothero, Paul Foss and Terry Bell. (Terry and his boyfriend lived in a house in Hereford Street Glebe with Paul Foss and Graham Tabenauer in 74-75 when they were doing Teapot Press.)	Barry Prothero, Paul Foss, Terry Bell, Graham Tabenauer, Teapot Press,
5420	Paul Foss. Editor or President of National Union of Australian University Students. He was a research chemist at UNSW.	Paul Foss, National Union of Australian University Students, UNSW,
5500	Terry talks about hormones and altruism.	
5542	Crystal Street. People like Helen Chevalier, were like Terry hippies from Glebe. Penny Short, Penny Gulliver, Josepha and her girlfriend Alex Kaufman (Venus). Not sure who set it up but Australia Street and Crystal Street were close. Terry Batterham and he were allowed into Crystal Street and visited often.	Crystal Street, Helen Chevalier, Penny Short, Penny Gulliver, Josepha, Alex Kaufman (Venus)
5800	In 68-69 he had invested in Poseidon shares and had enough money to live on it for a few years. But he was doing a lot of jobs – like contract cleaning, Darling Harbour Goods Yard, a hand bag factory near Central. In 75 he was at university to finish his degree. He and Gary Schliemann, Terry Batterham and Wayne Lynch drove down to Melbourne for the first National Homosexual Conference. At university he describes himself as a "sex rat". This was the end of his activism as such.	Poseidon Shares, Darling Harbour Goods Yard, Gary Schliemann, Terry Batterham, Wayne Lynch, National Homosexual Conference,
010147	In 76 he did a Dip Ed in English teaching. He was living in Bridge Road and became interested in things aboriginal. His friend Robyn and he got jobs on Aboriginal missions. Terry at Aurukun and spent 3 years there. Observations on Aurukun.	Bridge Road, Aurukun Aboriginal Mission,
010344	In 1980 he came back to do his masters. He had bought a bike and was hanging around bikie clubs like South Pacific Motor Club on Friday nights in Lilyfield.	South Pacific Motor Club, Lilyfield,
010624	Met a man there and moved in together.	
010653	Then moved to the family home at Parramatta when his Mum moved to Casino and bought the house from her.	Parramatta, Casino,
010727	He met a man at the gay bar in Granville/Granville Town Hall (was this Zodiacs – ed) and they lived together for 2 years.	Granville, Zodiacs,

010805	Moved to Indonesia in 1986 then moved back to Western Suburbs. Then bought a house in Newtown. He had sponsored someone from Indonesia.	Indonesia, Newtown,
010842	In 1991 he went to work in Indonesia for 6 years at the university. Came back to semi-retire on the North Coast. He sponsored a man from Indonesia, but he moved on shortly after he arrives. He teaches Indonesian locally.	North Coast, Indonesia,
011020	After independence in East Timor he went to East Timor as an Indonesian translator/interpreter with the UN and has worked with the UN since. (East Timor and Liberia)	East Timor, Liberia, United Nations,
011040	He met a guy on Gaydar who lived in Liberia and they lived together in Liberia for 2 years.	Gaydar,
011114	His partner is now in Australia on a student visa.	
011232	During the AIDS crisis he was working at Balmain High School in 1981 and moved to Parramatta in 82. He withdrew from the scene.	AIDS, Balmain High School, Parramatta,
011400	"I remember in 91 just before I went to Indonesia going to Jimmy Caruthers's place where Terry and Jimmy used to share an apartment in Elizabeth Bay and there was Stephen Auburn myself and Jimmy and Terry, 4 of us around a table and Jimmy pulled out an album of a big party he had at his apartment in 1977 and ... I remember the 4 of us sitting around the table were the only people that were still alive in any of those photos and that was a really major party ... They were all gone."	Jimmy Caruthers, Elizabeth Bay, Stephen Auburn, Terry Batterham,
011558	<i>Significance of his involvement in gay liberation:</i> His involvement was more "theatre than theory". It gave him the opportunity to go out and confront people. They changed things, but this was not his agenda. "I was always wanting to have fun, confront people, change people's attitudes, not talk about it. I think I was just there. I was a participant, certainly not any kind of leader or anything because I was never interested in talking about leading ... Did it change my life? I guess I made lots of good friendships, I guess I learned a lot about people and about politics, I realised what I didn't know and wasn't very interested in which was all the discussions about things, I guess I found that ... you can confuse hormones with altruism, I guess it gave us all a chance to look at who we were and why we did things which I find ... I arrange a lot of management talks and people don't know themselves and I think that is a really important lesson for people ... all this stuff about looking at ourselves, confronting each other, group dynamics I think all those things have really been important lessons ... I actually support gay marriage because at the moment it would help me perhaps get a visa for my partner ... I think there has been a lot of change its been good for me, it's	

<p>been good for the society ... it helped me develop as an individual and obviously got me out of a bit of a mess I was in there in 69, 70 I would not have found that support in a bar. I was lucky I walked in, for whatever reason, I think it was my tie dyed crushed velvet pants, flares, people found me interesting so I got taken into the inner sanctum and initiated in a sense and was accepted and ... if I was ugly or had two heads it might not have done anything for me at all, I might have bounced off and drifted away and jumped over the cliff or something. It was the right combination of things for me, it was a good time to be around. I'd been involved in anti-apartheid things and the moratorium ... the moratorium was very personal because I could have been conscripted. It was an extension of that kind of radicalism of the time. It was just a good time to be around and helped me develop as an individual I guess."</p>	
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