

Oral History Project Interview Transcription

Interviewee:	James / Male	Interviewer:	Andrew / Male
Date of Interview:	27/04/2013	Track Information:	Five Tracks
Topics	Gay Life and Gay Community in Brighton since 1984		

Time	Content
Track 1	
0.00.00 – 0.00.32	<i>This is Andrew Mckinnon interviewing James Ledward. It is uhh April the 27th, midmorning. James thanks for giving us some time for this. What I'd like to do is start talking a bit about you and your background, and your past. And then we will talk a little about you in Brighton as it were. So are you, you are not a native of Brighton are you?* summary of interviewer question*</i>
0.00.32 – 0.01.53	No, I come from Liverpool as a cathedral chorister when I was young and I was part being of a cathedral choir boy that they give you a fabulous musical education. Our tutor was Charles Groves who is the conductor of the Liverpool Phil and they paid for us to have music lessons and I, umm, played the oboe? So I went to, umm, first of all I was going to study music in university and umm accepted a place over at Leeds with Alexander Guther and umm, and on the day I went, I had to do an assessment for my work in Liverpool and it was done by Bill Llyod Webber who was Andrew Llyod Webber's father. He was the principal of the London College of Music, in London and he said to me, "You are wasting your time going to university. You should come down to London." And so I did. So I went to London College for a year and then I transferred over to the Royal Academy the following year and learnt oboe? So I became a professional oboe player.
0.01.53 – 0.01.55	<i>And did you become an orchestral musician or?</i>

<p>0.01.55 – 0.02.53</p>	<p>Well no, I was never really interested in the orchestral side of things. I was a soloist and so, that's what I wanted to do. That's all I enjoyed doing. I found it quite boring actually, doing the orchestral stuff and so I was always interested in performing. I had two very good chamber groups and I had a music publishing company which were commissioned contemporary music for my groups to play. So we sort of built up a reputation as being a complete package. There were five great performers in the group. One was a wind quintet, the other one was an oboe quartet and we worked everywhere and I enjoyed it.</p>
<p>0.02.53 – 0.02.55</p>	<p><i>And you were based in London all this time?</i></p>
<p>0.02.55 – 0.02.57</p>	<p>Yes absolutely</p>
<p>0.02.58 – 0.02.59</p>	<p><i>And then?</i></p>
<p>0.02.59 – 0.03.12</p>	<p>And then, what happened? I had a stroke when I was very young. It affected the right hand side of my body.</p>
<p>0.03.12 – 0.03.13</p>	<p><i>So it affected your playing?</i></p>
<p>0.03.13 – 0.05.02</p>	<p>So it affected the ombosure and all of that. I just published a work by, a work that Liam Goosen, the obus had rediscovered. It's an Algore work I think and I spent time with him over at his place. He said ... because he had a road accident, he had to learn how to play to the oboe upside down. He turned his ombosure right round the other way and did all the control in the bottom lip rather than the upper lip. And I thought, I can't be bothered with doing this and so my last concert was at the Queen Elizabeth Hall doing, funny enough, with the composer that I had dinner with yesterday. I had not seen him for 20 years or whatever it was, called Geoffrey Grey. He had writen this ensemble piece for wind quintet and five soloist John Gibbons, John George Gibbons. So that was my last London concert and then I came down to Brighton, recovered from the stroke. But I never got the feeling back in this side of the face. I can't basically control the ombosure. So I thought I dint't want to do it and do8 it badly so I just made the decision not to do it anymore. They appointed me professor at the London College of Music, and so I would go up and teach for two days a week which I enjoyed. I moved to Brighton and bought a printing company. So I estalished a printing company so I could print my own music editions which we sell through the shops. It was just around the corner from here, the first factory we had and so I just went into business.</p>
<p>0.05.03 – 0.05.06</p>	<p><i>And what brought you to Brighton? Had you known the city before?</i></p>

0.05.06 – 0.05.45	No, not at all. I came and like a lot of people come because of the notion of the gay community here. At that time, that was attractive for me because I come from Liverpool in the sort of late 60's and 70's where everything was underground. I sort of grown up in London, in the early days of the Roll Fox Tavern, the Elephant Castle and the union Tavern. The choice was: coming down to Brighton or going to New Zealand. So I chose Brighton.
0.05.45 – 0.05.47	<i>So you saved on the fare? (laughs)</i>
0.05.47 – 0.06.45	Yeah I saved on the fare (laughs). Chose Brighton and also, I chose Brighton because I thought it was so close to London and if I made the wrong mistake, I'm not far apart. I can nip up or whatever. From the day I arrived here, I have no desire to go back to London. It's really difficult to get me up to London. I had to go last Thursday funny enough. I had to review the Britain tailor script at the Barbican and it was such an unpleasant experience of going up. The whole thing, I didn't enjoy it, didn't enjoy going on the train. Now that I'm not very mobile, the facilities for the disabled people were just dreadful and I've only had this problem since Decmber. So before December, I never thought about it. Now I can't go anywhere. I have to know what before I'm going.
0.06.45 – 0.06.47	<i>What, you mean, what the facilities are?</i>
0.06.47 – 0.06.59	What the facilities are. So I don't have to do steps and things like these. I very rarely come into this office now because I can't get down those steps. So that was my first time I've been in London, in maybe for 3 years.
0.07.00 – 0.07.24	<i>It is quite, this is a separate thing though, it is quite shocking. I teach at Birkbeck and one of my students broke her leg and was in a wheelchair. At Birkbeck and all these places completely arranged for disabled people. So they say. And in the end, I had to have a team of people who were pushing around because it was completely impossible for her to get around.</i>
0.07.25 – 0.07.50	I couldn't get out of Barbican and I was shown out of Barbican by a black begger in a wheelchair. He said to me, "Are you lost Sir?" and I said "Yes" and he said "I'll show you how to get out." And he took us out. It was a maze, the signage wasn't very good. I was talking to somebody down here about it and they said it was so wrong because they get so much public funding. It should be easier than that.
0.07.50 – 0.08.00	<i>It should be perfect and they've had so much money. So you came down here in, what, middle life you would say? Or were you quite young?</i>

<p>0.08.01 – 0.09.30</p>	<p>Well, how old was I? I came down here in 1984, I was born in 54'. 64, 74, 84. I was 30 when I came here. So I lost my career very early and as part of the whole recovery from it, I was dealt with very badly. The doctors left me on steroids for 18 months and I wasn't getting any better. In the end, I went private ? in London and they did all the test and they said, "We just don't understand what's wrong because the brain scans were all good." And the doctor asks what medication I'm on and I told him I was on steriods. He was mortified, he said, "You should have been on steroids for only six weeks." I put on, during this period, about 8 stones in weight. That was for me, a very defining thing because apart from losing the career, I was having to deal with the whole thing about becoming fat, the image of the body. As it was a time the whole body fashionism thing was being promoted by the gay press in London and they went with the whole beautiful bodies, the most merriest and that whole thing was going on and that was depressive</p>
<p>Track 2</p>	
<p>0.00.03 – 0.00.14</p>	<p><i>So we were talking about this double problem of getting with and body fashion. Were you conscious of entering a friendly, a gay friendly city?</i></p>
<p>0.00.15 – 0.01.17</p>	<p>Exactly the opposite. When I arrived, I lived over on the other side of the gay village, just behind American Express and I found this city very unfriendly. I found the bars very unfriendly, they were very clique-y. Most of my friendship networks at that time were built up outside of the bars. I was living with somebody who worked at American Express and so we had our sort of circle of friends but we went to the gay bars, maybe two to three times a week to have a drink. That's all. This was the time when there no internet or anything like that. Everybody went out every night and maybe about 10 o'clock to try and pick up somebody at the bars. So the whole sort of scene thing was very different and it was much more prejuditorial at that time.</p>
<p>0.01.18 – 0.01.22</p>	<p><i>So where were your bars of choice? Were there particular places?</i></p>
<p>0.01.23 – 0.01.46</p>	<p>Well Bulldog because it was so close and I used to love going to The Malborough and then the Aquarium. They were my, sort of my little trio bars at that time. Then of course the whole thing developed with The Beacon Royal and then Revenge opened. And one by one, you know the bars were added to the village.</p>
<p>0.01.47 – 0.01.53</p>	<p><i>I think I said to you that I've been talking to Freddie Bate when I'm at Scene 22's move from whatever it was.</i></p>
<p>0.01.54 - 0.01.56</p>	<p>They were at Preston Street</p>
<p>0.01.56 – 0.02.03</p>	<p><i>Preston Street and they moved, and how it conincided with the kind of burgeoning of things. Was it a very sudden thing, that just suddenly happened?</i></p>

0.02.03 – 0.02.18	It was very dramatic, it was very dramatic. Everybody minds became focused on it and it happened, that was no planning that went into it, it just happened. Everybody bought into it.
0.02.19 – 0.02.24	<i>But there wasn't one particular, it wasn't like one thing happened and then everything else happened. This all happened at the same time?</i>
0.02.24 – 0.02.33	It all happened at the same time but after the problems of the Beacon Royal, the opening of Revenge became the big magnet
0.02.34 – 0.02.35	<i>So what actually happened to the Beacon Royal?</i>
0.02.36 – 0.02.54	Well the two people that were running it, found it difficult to work with each other and that's a diplomatic way of putting it together. So they split up. They weren't life partners, they were business partners and one stayed there. Tony Chapman, the other one went to open Revenge.
0.02.54 – 0.02.55	<i>Right, so where was The Beacon Royal?</i>
0.02.56 – 0.03.01	The Beacon Royal was in Hove, in Oriental Place
0.03.01 – 0.03.16	<i>Oh of course, that's right. So this sudden of burgeoning of gays and stuff, suddenly, did it feel like it was going to go on forever and ever? Or?</i>
0.03.17 – 0.04.59	It did actually, it did. Everybody bought into it and international people bought into it. So Brighton became this place that people went to, to be gay. But what was interesting is, that I was at the 25 th Anniversary Conference for the IGLTA (International Gay and Lesbian Travel Agents) in Las Vegas, about five years ago and I'd always had good relationships with the big gay centres in America. Some of them used to advertise with us. At the conference, the person from 'Visit London' did a pitch to all the delegates and she just stood up. She said, "How many people have been to London?" and of course every hand in the place went up and then she said, "How many people came back for the second time?" and almost every hand went up. She said well I've done my job well. (laughs) So I stood up and said, "How many people have been to Brighton?" and about three people. It was the biggest shock of my life and I thought, crikey Brighton is really, it was the center of the opening of the time and yet the most important link of the chain in the gay travel agents didn't know about it. It was before the whole sort of commofidication of gay culture, gay subculture, the very people that brought the people here, didn't know about it. So people came here by themselves, do you know what I mean?
0.04.59 – 0.05.01	<i>Yeah, they found out about it separately</i>
	fiddling with mike of interviewer

<p>0.05.13 – 0.05.55</p>	<p>So it was their secret and the three travel agents that put their hands up, when I said to them have any of them been back, they never. (laughs) So it was an eye opener for me and what it did, just that one thing happening, convinced me that long term we had to identify the whole notion of the gay village in Brighton. It was very important to the survival of that area. It was very important to the gentrification of that area and it was very important to the whole model that we worked to for raising money for the voluntary sector that they needed successful business</p>
<p>0.05.56 – 0.06.03</p>	<p><i>So at that time was there any kind of organisation around the gay village? I mean was there any links between the various businesses?</i></p>
<p>0.06.03 – 0.06.04</p>	<p>No, absolutely not</p>
<p>0.06.05 – 0.06.12</p>	<p><i>So when did that, how did that start to happen? How did that begin to be managed?</i></p>
<p>0.06.12 – 0.06.18</p>	<p>Well, I started the magazine in 92' I think.</p>
<p>0.06.19 – 0.06.24</p>	<p><i>Right, was it, you just decided to start the magazine? Did you have other magazines before?</i></p>
<p>0.06.24 – 0.06.35</p>	<p>No and yeah, I had a magazine before called 'Impact' which was sort of a listings magazine about the straight scene in Brighton. I wasn't really interested in magazines.</p>
<p>0.06.35 – 0.06.36</p>	<p><i>Was it a free magazine?</i></p>
<p>0.06.37 – 0.08.25</p>	<p>Yes, it was a free magazine, I wasn't really interested in magazine but through the printing side of things, we were lumbered with it because basically, it was going bust. Ode as a print build, we ended up with the magazine. So G-Scene starts as a four page insert into the center of this straight magazine and it was fascinating how it happened because it grew from a four page insert in a straight magazine to being a sort of forty-eight page magazine within six months. It was astonishing. So this sort of, this thing has been waiting to happen. People have been waiting for something to support, to tell them and the way we approach it at the time was, we had a very strong campaign edge. We were never a fluffy gay magazine, we always had a very strong campaigning edge and of course, that tended to put people into two camps. They either loved what we did or they hated what we did and hated me for rocking the boat. So that was always a very difficult one to manage because at that time, most of the power brokers were the rich gay men that lived in Sussex Square. The irony of it was that one of the glossy magazine two years ago produced their sort of, Brighton's Top 20 power brokers and I was number four above all the politicians (laughs). So I thought it's funny how things turn around.</p>

Track 3	
0.00.03 – 0.00.04	<i>Carry on</i>
0.00.05 – 0.01.12	So they agreed to start giving seed funding to all the gay organisations and up until then, not one organisation in Brighton got any funding, even Switchboard didn't even get any funding. The, umm, in 1992, the council gave a five thousand pound grant to the Pride at that time and the Argus just went crazy. And just wouldn't let it go and it almost brought down the Labour ministration at that time. That's why Pride has always remained a sensitive political issue in Brighton because of that one thing happening. After that, they just wouldn't, after 1992, they just wouldn't fund anything. So we didn't have many groups in 90's, we had Switchboard and then when Zoro reported, all the money became available. So groups started forming because they knew they could go get their five thousand pound grant to start up and then they could go back every year to get, that created a structure that became the voluntary sector as we know now
0.01.13 – 0.01.22	<i>So, one of the things you were doing was fund raising, umm did you have to do from scratch?</i>
0.01.22 – 0.01.23	That's right. Yeah.
0.01.24 – 0.01.25	<i>Did you train yourself, or did you get trained?</i>
0.01.25 – 0.01.26	Nope
0.01.26 – 0.01.27	<i>Did you have a big network of rich people?</i>

<p>0.01.27 – 0.04.14</p>	<p>No, I mean that was the beauty of it. It was done without rich people. Zoro was done with ah, the richer public (?) helping and it wasn't until the very end of it that umm Boy George agreed to come and do the final fundraiser because we were about three thousand pounds short of finding the money to print the report. At that time, it was in 95', you know the Internet was in its very early days. It was really important to get the report printed. Anyway, he umm sort of came to the final thing for us and you know, we got the money to print the report. But now I just, umm, I met up with someone along actually, because I wasn't, there wasn't a rule book to go to, to say what do I do. But also because, there hadn't been umm, a real model to work to in Brighton. It was quite easy. The subtext of that was umm, in 1990, a charity started called 'Brighton Cares' and they saw all the problems that would come with funding of HIV and they used to do shows to raise money. And then in 1992, The Argus went after them big time. It was the time that The Argus were ravidly homphobic and they attacked the chairy for paying a director to work. The point is, the director was, he was basically a fundariser. He put the shows on and he raised the money. The Argus didn't get it and against the backdrop of this organisation setting up and having a fabulous Board of Trustees, included Jack Tinker, I mean they did the PR side of it well. But The Argus didn't like the fact that this, umm what was perceived as a gay charity and it wasn't a gay charity. It was very much a mainstream charity but it was a HIV charity which meant it was gay in the eyes of the mainstream media. Just went for them big time and drove the fella out of town. He then went on to South Africa, he was Javine's (?) manager, the drag queen, his name was Berna Jay. He went to South Africa and controlled all the media events in South Africa. So we lost the opportunity to have that wonderful person here and you know, he had contact with, I mean at that time they were talking about bringing Liza Minelli to the Brighton center. So the plans were fantastic but umm, they were crushed by The Argus and he was run out of time and was treated poorly.</p>
<p>0.04.15 – 0.04.36</p>	<p><i>So, as the age thing moved on and devloped and the deaths and the whole kind of illnesses uhh in London, could you see any light at the end of the tunnel? In terms of this kind of constantly sapping?</i></p>

<p>0.04.38 – 0.07.00</p>	<p>(pauses) Umm, when it was happening, I could see no light at the end of the tunnel and issues wise, it was to a funny sort of extent till it is now, it was the hardest thing we had to deal with in trying to pitch the giving of the information each month with a reporting of the people that had died. I remember one classic month when we had fifteen obituaries in the magazine and it was, it was, it was really really difficult because it was never a good news story. And so, it sort of put us in a mindset of being like that all the time. Umm it took, I remember it took me a long time to recognise that and to say actually, we're going to approach this HIV thing from a different angle and let the people that get the government money umm do that, let them tell you about the news of it, let us start talking about fundraising and things like that, supporting the groups that do well in Brighton. And so, umm, so what I did was I let them the magazine champion the organisations I knew who were delivering the services. So, I suppose the subtext to my agenda is that you can always tell who we support and who we don't. And the, I've always been very vocal, very upfront of who we support and umm, whereas I very rarely go on record as to who we don't support. It's very clear from their absence and you know that, I will only support organisations that are about the, about the victim focus so to speak, rather than the big corporate organisations that are not clear of what they are doing.</p>
<p>0.07.01 – 0.07.12</p>	<p><i>So, when you made this change, when you started to focus more on that, did it take a long time to bite or to back down or was it quite quick to change?</i></p>
<p>0.07.12 – 0.07.43</p>	<p>It was quite quick to change actually. Uhh and one of the things we used to do is, we used to do this big parties called 'Red Hot Poker' parties and internation DJs would come from all over the world to play them. This used to raise a lot of money. So umm, I suppose that change happened at that time and people started partying positively.</p>
<p>0.07.44 - 0.07.47</p>	<p><i>Can you put a date to that? Roughly?</i></p>
<p>0.07.47 – 0.08.48</p>	<p>Umm, I'm struggling, I think that would have been about '96 actually, '96, '98'. And umm the, there was a shift, you could link that to into the use of ecstasy and the MDMA culture and the raves. The whole thing created a shift in the community and umm, the community was extensively using drugs. They were using ecstasy but it was the time when ecstasy was very nice and it wasn't coat with rubbish like it is now. When you went into a place, it was always uplifting and happy. And then for a period of three years, I just went out and partied and might have to say, between the age of, oh my god when was it, between the age of 38 and 42. Best years. I'm glad I did it then and not when I was younger.</p>
<p>0.08.49 - 0.08.50</p>	<p><i>So where were you living at this time?</i></p>
<p>0.08.50 – 0.09.00</p>	<p>I was living (laughs), I was living in Tongdean Road, which is at the top of Dyke Road. It was called 'millionaires road'</p>
<p>0.9.00 - 0.09.02</p>	<p><i>It's quite posh</i></p>

<p>0.09.03 – 0.10.56</p>	<p>It was very posh and I always wanted to live in a big house. Uhh, where I was originally, it was in Windmill Street, which is behind American Express and it was just a little terrace house you know with the big lounge downstairs and two rooms, two bedrooms upstairs and I always wanted to live in a big house. I was living a Columbian boyfriend at that time and his family used to come over regularly and there was 11 people in the family. So I thought, we could have a house and live happily ever after. So I bought the house and the family would come and stay for a long period of time but nobody came to visit. See when I was at the back side of Kemp Town and then I moved into the factory here in Farm Road, people would drop in all the time. The moment you went onto the top of Dyke Road, it feels too far away and people wouldn't make the effort and they wouldn't come. And I used to, actually get quite lonely by it all and I also get fed up with the family being around and beause Spanish aren't quiet. When you sit down for dinner, they don't talk, they shout at each other and so I ended up staying in the house for two years and then came back to live right back in the center of town in Farm Road, which is where I had three, two bedrooms on top of the factory and so I lived in one of those and they were the happiest times I've had. It was right in the center of town and we could park, and I could go downstairs and work and if I didn't want to work, I could stay upstairs. I loved it and the best part of it people would just pop in. There was much more of a community feel then.</p>
<p>0.10.57 – 0.11.00</p>	<p><i>So were you publishing lots of other things apart from G-Scene?</i></p>
<p>0.11.01 – 0.11.48</p>	<p>No, the, what we did is, with my music I was. I was publishing my music till maybe, ten years ago but we printed the music for everybody else. So all the big London publishers used us to print their music and we printed, we had contracts for a lot of the west end shows. So we printed all for Cats, you know selling at the music shop and for Les Mis, we did that for quite a long time. So that used to be printed on our presses down here. That was made the money, doing a gay magazine. Doing a gay magazine, that's like throwing money in a black hole.</p>
<p>0.11.49 – 0.11.58</p>	<p><i>So did you start, I mean compare to this, this is probably not the right word, but there were other gay magazines. Were there other gay magazines being producing in Brighton at that time?</i></p>

<p>0.11.58 – 0.13.30</p>	<p>Well what happened was, it was The Argus for a years had a homophobi ceditor whose name I can't even remember now, and they changed the editor to somebody called Simon Bradshaw who was clearly a liberal, clearly more enlightened and changed The Argus's whole appraoach to umm, dealing with sensitive issues. After one year's Pride, they did this fabulous spread on Pride for the first time ever in The Argus. People, mainstream readers saw the event and so I just wrote a letter to the editor of The Argus saying nice that this is happening now, you're representing all facets of umm, of the many different types of communities in Brighton. And I got on well with him. Then one day, he rang me up and said oh you're not gonna like this. So I said what's that, and he said umm the people above me have decided we're gonna do a gay magazine. So I said oh that's interesting and when are you doing it. He said it will get off the ground in about three months. So at that time G-Scene was still black and white inside with just a coloured cover. So I thought, right about to put this magazine in full colour. So I put it in, in full colour and went head to head with The Argus and they lost a fortune (laughs)</p>
<p>0.13.31 – 0.13.33</p>	<p><i>What did they call their magazine?</i></p>
<p>0.13.33 – 0.13.34</p>	<p>Threesixty</p>
<p>0.13.33 – 0.13.36</p>	<p><i>Oh that's what it is, I didn't realise it was The Argus</i></p>
<p>0.13.37 – 0.14.56</p>	<p>Threesixty was born out of the, umm The Argus buying in to the misconception that the pink pound was valuable. So they wanted to get the, you know, they wanted to get all the fabulous pink pound that was there. But it was never there and all my advertisers, basically, only one switched. So all of my main advertisers were loyal and they tried everything. And umm then, one day the editor of The Argus rang me and he said, you've won we're gonna, what did he say, we're giving it up. And I thought that's a bit of relief because you can't run two gay magazines in a town like Brighton. And then at that time, we were having a massive hoo-ha with Pride and the person that was running Pride, had upset all the local businesses because he had ..</p>
<p>0.14.56 – 0.14.57</p>	<p><i>So where are we now in terms of date?</i></p>
<p>0.14.57 – 0.15.01</p>	<p>It must have been in 2004 or 2005 maybe</p>
<p>0.15.02</p>	<p><i>Just gonna stop it</i></p>
<p></p>	<p></p>
<p>Track 4</p>	<p></p>
<p>0.00.00 – 0.00.02</p>	<p><i>Okay</i></p>

0.00.03 – 0.00.07	So umm, he basically decided to take on all the local businesses
0.00.08 – 0.00.10	Was he somebody from outside Brighton or?
0.00.10 – 0.01.30	He was a journalist that came from outside of Brighton and he was someone I knew very well, got on very well with. But the moment I realise we was going to take on the local business community, I said I can't support you, it was suppose his first year as chair. In the second year, I said look I'll support you because this will end up in tears which is exactly what it did. But what it did, it prolonged the death of threesixty. So they ran for a couple of years and then liquidated in massive debts and so the, it was the context that it was important because the Pride people, it happens time and time again with the Pride organisations. They think they can get away with doing anything they want, there is no accountability, no transparency and that was my big beef with them. They weren't open and transparent about the way they operated so they thought that by having their own magazine, they could control the media. So they went out and bought the, umm, of The Argus for a pound or something (laughs) and again, it did nobody any favours. And then that all ended in grief a couple of years later then, more new people took over Pride. And so...
00.01.31 – 0.01.44	And that was roughly the time I arrived here and I was just aware of how much was in chaos and in disorder and arguments all the time
0.01.45 – 0.02.59	Hmm. Yeah, it was a very difficult time because you know, the, what I've always, umm I've never wanted to get involved with Pride. For one year, I sat on the committee just to have access to the accounts. So if anybody ask me any questions, I can honestly say what the position was and the, for me, Pride became burdensome because it made everybody fight each other. What I could never work out was that this event was suppose to bring everyone together but it did exactly the opposite. It just pitted people against each other and then people would come into town, and umm have no track record, nobody knew them and they end up as Chair of Pride. It's been really worrying, and I've got a very strong view that if you're gonna be involve in any committee or organisations, any voluntary sector organisations, when you come into town, there should be a complete criminal record check done on you so that you know you're not buying in a problem for another city.
0.02.59 - 0.03.08	Yes, it is quite intersting that cause if you were going to be made Chairman of an arts ogranisation say, that would happen absolutely automatically
0.03.08 – 0.03.09	Absolutely
0.03.09 – 0.03.18	* gibberish * Because that's just part of the process, but it doesn't work in this case

<p>0.03.18 – 0.05.05</p>	<p>Well it doesn't work in Brighton because of the umm, it's the council's fault really. Because the council was so rocked and hurt with the stuff that happened in the early 90's. Pride for them is a political problem and if you ever put a question to the council, they'll say oh but we don't make decision about Pride. Well that is completely dishonest, because this event only happens if the council gives landlord consent and then they start making their conditions about what type of event they want. This is a council event run by the community and that, the model is the worse model to work to. The best model to work to is, in my view, is the Manchester model where the local authority are umm, vital to the successful delivery of an event and what that does, it turns around the problem that Prides' all over the world have of not being accountable. When I went, I didn't get to go to Sydney's Mardi Gras till five years ago, and umm Gaydar was the sponsors and they introduced me to umm the woman that was running it and I'll never forget it. This was the morning of Pride, of Mardi Gra in Sydney and so, I get introduced and she was so gracious. She said to me, 'Is there anything we can do to help you?' and in all my time with dealing with Brighton Pride, they were always saying what can you do to help us? And so the whole approach with Brighton Pride was wrong, because the business model it was based on was dysfunctional and it was ...</p>
<p>0.05.05 – 0.05.06</p>	<p>And it was proved to be time after time</p>
<p>0.05.06 – 0.05.55</p>	<p>Absolutely and the umm, you know, over the years I had no problem with saying this is not working and I made myself very unpopular for doing it because people were so desperate to have this event that they didn't pay for and umm, didn't raise any money for anybody and just ran up debts everywhere, brought this community into dispute and actually achieved very little. But then, then of course when the organisation finally goes bankrupt, somebody leaked me their accounts and then I realise it was very serious, they were in debt over 250,000 pounds and I just rang up one of the trustees and I said, I can't believe that you thought you could hide this and that's the problem, they thought they could hide it</p>
<p>0.05.55 – 0.05.59</p>	<p>It's a trustee problem, they were very lucky not to be sued</p>
<p>0.05.59 – 0.06.03</p>	<p>Absolutely. Well I think, there's still stuff to come out</p>
<p>0.06.07 – 0.06.25</p>	<p>(pauses) Right. I mean it is something, it is interesting because I've been on the boards for some art organisations for 25-30 years and one of things you start with is, is being taught with what your responsibilities are and yet, it is very obvious, in those cases that they weren't told. Should we move up to something different?</p>
<p>0.06.26 – 0.06.27</p>	<p>Yeap</p>

Track 5	
0.00.00 – 0.00.11	<i>So I wanted to ask you a bit about the digital revolution and how it has affected somebody like yourself as publishing a very successful free magazine?</i>

0.00.12 –
0.04.45

Well, umm I resisted umm internet for a long, long time. We didn't have a website or anything. I didn't understand and as I was getting older, I found it difficult to re-learn basics skills and in the end, Switchboard said to us, 'it is really important that people can get G-Scene online because it reduces the number of enquires they get for scene things. So they created a website for us, Switchboard did and all we did was put the PDF on the website so people can download it and you know, I just didn't take it seriously. Somebody called in and Gowlers? did their idea at that time and he came to explain it to me and I didn't really understand at that time what he was talking about to be honest and I said but nobody is going to tell others this and I honestly thought you know we would be lucky to get umm, a hundred people downloading it. In the first month, we had 5000. Then the second month was 8000. In the third month, it was 10,000. Within six months, there was a regular download of between 15 to 20, 000 copies in the magazine online and the, when it was tracked, we came to the conclusion that we were getting to the difficult gay people that never accessed the gay village and things like that and we were astonished at how many downloads we got from the Eastern countries, so from Russia and all those countries where people log onto it and just wait a copy for their copy of G-Scene. The only disappoint thing is now that we got this new singing or dancing website, which they finally taught me how to use and I can tell you, its been the biggest uhh achievement of my professional life to learn how to use this platform. It was very frustrating at the start but now I can just about manage everything on it and the download of the PDF has come down slightly because they can read it, they just press this button and read it on the magazine but we've trained people to go everyday to get the 24 hour breaking news. So the breaking news stories, people just go automatically looking for, which gives us about 5000 unique hits a day for people just going for that. So that for me is the crucial thing because in the case of crisis or emergency, I know that we can get to a body of people very, very quickly. I don't have to wait for the new magazine. If it was a murder or something like that, I know that we got this connection with an awful lot of people and we just had the SEO's done, what's that, Search Engine Optimisation done. We just had it redone because when the new website came, the designer for some reason changed the name from .doc to .org and it just drop us down from the search engine. So we just had it redone and within three days, we're back upon page one and of course this is all new to me and I just don't understand it. My partner is learning IT at college so he is getting his read around that. So I want him to be able to handle but the good thing is, with this product, there is still a desire for the printed copy and we have two very separate audiences that read it. We've got the parish magazines set, you know the older gay men who have been with it since 92' and are still with it and they just wait for it to come out each month and then you've got the young kids who sort of flirt with it but don't really buy into it. And for me, that has been the biggest problem, has been engaging with the younger end. Because when the magazine first came out, we did engage with the younger end but that was pre changes in the legislation. Since post change in the legislation, there's just a complete different attitude with the youngsters. And..

<p>0.04.46 – 0..04.51</p>	<p><i>Can you talk a bit to what that might be? About the attitude?</i></p>
<p>0.04.51 – 0.06.42</p>	<p>Well, I'm the, I just, so many of them when I talk to them and facilitating an awful lot with the Pride stuff and trying to sort the last two years out. I spent a lot of time with the students and I went along to their public meetings to see what their perception was and more and more, it was, I came to the conclusion that in their world of academia, they didn't identify as gay. They didn't, they thought, what we had now, its how it's been for the last 30 or 40 years. That for me was the biggest shock and that's because, if any grouping was not to do that for me was be the students that are suppose to be the bright ones and it was really a big surprise to me. And in Brighton, because the nature of Pride over the years, they squeezed the politics out of Pride Brighton right from the start. It was never a polticial Pride, it was always a party. So you never had that, that serious political conciousness going on with anything. And with the students, the good thing is that over the last two years, they are slowly starting to repoliticise Pride within the framework of being a party and umm, it is bringing the people that maybe have been slightly off-message back on board. And so the students now are much easier to engage with but I think there's a responsibility to make sure that the history isn't re-written and the history isn't painted out and people know exactly what happened in the 90's and how lucky they are to be in the situation that they are now today.</p>
<p>0.06.42 – 0.06.44</p>	<p><i>And how lucky they are to be alive</i></p>
<p>0.06.44 – 0.08.20</p>	<p>Absolutely and so the umm, I think what worries more for me than anything else is that the umm, the post Thatcher, the awful lot of gay men move from the right to the left and were seduced by the new Labour agenda and the moment they got their legislation, those very same men were quite happy to move back to the right which I think has been really unhelpful and the umm, it, I think the problem we've got now is that all those gay men that moved their focus back to the right, they think everything is okay and we still have lots of hearts and minds arguements. And you know the whole marriage debate, especially with what is going on in France at the moment, just reinfoces that to me, we've got the changes, now we got to go out and do the work all over again and win the hearts and minds arguments. Now the interesting thing is, I think the subtext of the stone wall agenda is moving to that now. They've suddenly realise that there is a big piece of work to be done there and so, more and more, that's what, what my agenda is about the hearts and minds arguments and it's not only winning with mainstream, but it is also redfining it with gay people because there has been this seismic shift back to the right, which I feel very, very uncomfortable with.</p>
<p>0.08.21 – 0.08.39</p>	<p><i>Can I ask you a bit more of that in terms with the hearts and minds agenda, very, very roughly speaking? Can you still do that effectively with G-Scene? Or do you think you need another tool?</i></p>

<p>0.08.40 – 0.09.56</p>	<p>Uhh, let's put that in context of the changes that has happened. Prior to The Argus doing threesixty, it was very easy to do because I could take positions and take risks and I not have to worry about my advertisers, you know throwing a tantrum and going to another magazine. The moment threesixty appeared that became a lot harder to do and so, umm, pre threesixty it was easier for me to go around about and bang heads together, it really was and I could go and have those conversations privately and everything will be sorted out, everything will be fine. With threesixty, it became a lot harder and umm the thing now that, an awful lot of people learnt how to behave badly during that period and it's getting them to refocus on why we need a gay community and how, it comes back to that to the respected gender for me and where we fit in.</p>
<p>0.09.57 – 0.10.08</p>	<p><i>Do you think there is actually a group of people advancing that agenda? In a kind of concentrated way or do you think it's just up to the individual?</i></p>

<p>0.10.09 – 0.13.36</p>	<p>Well the most exciting that has happened to me in the last three years, is that, well let's go back actually about eight years ago, umm people were clearly disatisfied what they were getting from the gay commercial scene. So rather you know going to the bars, they started going to gay choirs. So the gay choirs became the alternative gay scene. You could meet people that way, do something you enjoyed and umm, you didn't have to go to a bar which is playing noisy music and all that. And for me, the big surprise was, it took the gay businesses a long time to realise that was what happening. So their customer base was being eroded and they didn't seem to realise it. And it was rather massed at that time because we were doing very well with getting the gay tourists coming in that were keeping, they were making their contributions. They were masking the problem. But what's happening now is that those gay tourists clearly aren't coming so it's really now exposing how difficult and how fragile the whole thing is. And, umm, and everybody has got choices now which I didn't have when I was younger. And you know when I talk to people or have dinner parties, which I don't like doing, but if I do it, I always go around the table and it usually will be the back side of the Kemp Town side, around Sussex Square or whatever, and uhh, the number of times people say to me, 'when will you get tired of your goody goody stuff' you know and I always ask them the same questions you know, I ask them why do they still go to gay bars umm, why they stop going to gay bars, do they think we still need gay bars? And it is very interesting that it's always the same answers that come back that people have abandone the commercial gay scene in Brighton because the bars are not what they want, the toilets are dirty, they play loud music. They know. It's not rocket science, you can put that together very quickly but here we are ten years after and nothing's changed. And then when you asked that same group of people, are they happy now that the gay places is becoming more mixed, they're not. And that's the reason for them to not go there so they don't want to go to gay bars that are actually mixed, they want exclusively gay places but when they have the opportunity, they don't go there because the gay places aren't providing what they want so they, they need, they need to have a re-think for somebody who opens a gay venue that they must concentrate again on this sort of exclusive gay mentality and make the place welcome to everybody rather than what has happened is they have gone and tried people to convince people that they need the places to be mixed nowadays. But by having them mix, it is isolating the core customers who are saying that they want to go to an exclusively gay venue.</p>
<p>0.13.37 – 0.14.19</p>	<p><i>I think, I think this is very important point because uhh you know there are some bars where, which are mostly, mostly gay male but periodically get invaded by lots of hen parties and that kind of thing. It's a real crisis in a way because do you let them in or do you not let them in? When the Calford(?) opened, the Calford made this real thing where they didn't have music and that kind of thing, and for a time it became a gay male bar. They seem to me to have quite successfully managed to make it a gay male bar that does have sort of neighbour ambience and it's really the only one.</i></p>

<p>0.14.20 – 0.14.32</p>	<p>Well it's the only one with a clear blue thinking on and their problem was, that they had a problem with one of the managers who just seemed to upset everybody and so it went from...</p>
<p>0.14.33 – 0.14.35</p>	<p><i>And clients as well (laughs) absolutely extraordinary</i></p>
<p>0.14.35 – 0.17.13</p>	<p>I still don't understand it because I can gauge everything from what happens with the votes and ?? each year. So the votes come in and I sit and look at them and straight away I can almost tell you what the results are gonna be for the next year because I see the trends and the first year the Calford opened, my god, the vote for them was just huge because everybody loved it. The second year, the vote completely collapsed and so, the, you gotta ask yourself why that happens and that where the very dedicated, exclusive gay clientele because the people that are voting are the gay people that go in there and for them to take the trouble for voting as well. The Golden Handbags most years, 5000 people vote. That's an awful lot of gay people. So it gives me a snapshot of what is, what's really going on and what the people want and that's the scale I bring to produce the magazine because I target everything at that. People say to me, why don't you do more lifestyle? And you know, my answer to that is, I am not convinced that people pick up my magazine for lifestyle. People know what exactly they are gonna get when they pick up G-Scene, they know exactly how I am gonna present the news. I don't even bother to do editorials most months now but if I do an editorial, they know what I am gonna say and it's the whole thing about articulating something. I grew up through a period where gay men weren't allowed any opinions and what I gave in the magazine in the early days was for gay men an opportunity through the columnist to have opinions and that's what people don't like. So they don't like gay men having a voice and the fluffy gay men dislike it even more. So for me, it's always been a balance of trying to keep everybody happy with this magazine and some people use it for everything. It's very interesting, no one's loyal to it, just use it for everything and they read it from cover to cover and they use the advertisers. The National Press, ?, said to me, how did you get away with presenting all those words? I said because people read them, people, you know, people buy in. I know some people who would pick the magazine up to read one columnist every month and ..</p>
<p>0.17.14 – 0.17.15</p>	<p><i>Yeah, but that's the job done</i></p>
<p>0.17.15 – 0.17.55</p>	<p>Absolutely and so you know, it might well be then, that they dip into something else or, so, the, for me you don't have to be a great writer to write in G-Scene. You have to be great opinions or have challenging, clear opinions yeah. And the bunch of contributors we've got at the moment on the whole are very, very good. I mean there's four of them that are outstanding and the, you know, I just sit every month, I enjoy reading theirs before they be sent or whatever.</p>

<p>0.17.56 – 0.18.10</p>	<p><i>I mean, I read them every month, well virtually, I mean, I wouldn't say I read every single bar listing but I read all the stuff you know and in a way, Martin has said ...</i></p>
<p>Track 6</p>	
<p>0.00.00 – 0.00.28</p>	<p><i>So James, uhh, can you think about what's gonna happen in the next few years, have, you kinda have a vision at how it might developed with what you got, you talk about the agenda of trying to make G-Scene more of a messenger for this message, can you make an estimate of what might happen?</i></p>

0.00.29 –
0.07.14

Well, umm, the most encouraging thing is that umm, since I arrived in Brighton till two years ago, umm it always the same group of people that we're doing the activating as I call it. So you know, in the, in 2000 I helped develop the beard (?) for the anti-victimisation unit with the police. Sat down with them, wrote the beard (?) with them, negotiated everything and became the, scrutiny really and made sure the project was delivered for us but everytime I turned up for a meeting, it was the usual suspects and I've always been very, very nervous about that because then about me being identified as one of the usual suspects, but what I learnt over the years was it was easier for me to do that groundwork and stop problems happening than to stand back let problems happen and I spend, firefighting and the, that's the history for me being here in that, we've been happy to go out and sort problems out, which at times has compromised our position as an honest broker. Because, you know, like say with Pride and stuff, when you know there's a problem and you know you're dealing with people that are either incompetent or dishonest, it's hard to be a third of both sides. And the, and what I always bring to the table is, 25 years of whatever it is experience of building up a network where people trust me. And so, whether it be people in the police, or within the council, or in health, we worked with the health people in Zoro, with the anti-victimisation work with the police. They are all very cautious of me but I can speak off the record with most sections of the city, now the exciting thing is in the last two years, a whole new group of people are coming through and umm, for me, the most interesting thing is frightening the position (?) and they don't want people with views and opinions coming through to run the community agenda. They see the community agenda as theirs and they, umm, that's gonna be the hardest thing to solve but we've got people coming through taking responsibility. So these are people with skills who normally wouldn't have touched the community agenda but now they see that actually everything happens, affects them and their businesses, be it wherthere they are hotel owners or whatever. The safety for them is being resurected and despite, the establishment working against it, the, umm, it's doing fantastic work and it's slowly winning people round and the same thing goes with the pub watch. The pub watch was basically closed down by Dave, the manager of the Calford (?) and he destroyed it and the, it's still not clear to everybody why he destroyed it. We had somebody who was an independent secretary at pub watch who the police didn't put any pressure on and the, umm, he was removed and so I sit here as a journalist thinking, oh why do you remove from an organisation the one person no one can lean on? And so, all of that stuff is, I think, slowly shaking out and people are taking responsibility. The businesses need to take, umm, a much greater interest in the gay business forum that will be their salvation. If they don't work together, nothing's gonna get better. They've got to learn to on the commercial side, we have to repackage Gay Brighton and you can only do that with everybody working with each other and understanding that we have to start remarketing Gay Brighton nationally and internationally. I was on a press trip to Iceland last year and it was at the time when an awful lot of the bad news stories were coming through about the attacks on St. James Street. And I've got a clear view about that and that is, it wasn't anything new, it's been going on and

**0.07.14 –
0.07.31**

I think one of the things in that particular case, it has a very clear, very simple message and the name encapsulates the message and that's, it's so easy to grasp

0.07.32

That's right, absolutely. And so an organisation like that hasn't coop, corporatised. And so, this is the big issue, you know, all these organisations started as volunteer organisations that made the step then when ? came to having paid workers and then sort of tend to lose connection with their volunteer base which I understand. I think what's happening now is everybody is starting to understand from the community side that we don't need the organisations. But I am a great believer in when an organisation has run its course, to close it. I don't think you should support a dead duck organisation is soaking money from other organisations and I also don't think that organisations that have no longer a purpose to spend their time chasing the pots of money that is available. So they chase the funding and so it doesn't become about service delivery, it doesn't become about the people out there, it becomes the cost of the building, the overheads. And that I've got no time at all for. So from my point of view, we've got a group of people needing the voluntary sector now that know what they are doing. The message I just keep trying to get to them is that they have to be open and transparent about everything they do. There's a tendency of them to be secretive and the, the reason that they are getting more support now is that they've gone through a period of being more open and they need to do that more, they've got to seen as accessible. Tell you a quick story. A young boy wrote to me, about 8, 7 years ago, he said I live in Crawley and I've just come out as gay and my father's remarried. He said I'm coming to live in Brighton, can I write a column for you? So I said yes, we will never meet, you just deliver the column, this time on this deadline date and month. So he comes here and he's here for about three months, column comes in each time on the dot and it was always the same thing, you know, get up in the morning, go to work in the shoe shop on Weston Road, where I'm abused by their manager there and then I go sit in the Amsterdam (?) at night till it's time to go to bed. And that's what happening every month so I sent him an email and I said to him, 'meet me in the Amsterdam'. So I went to meet him and it was, for me it was a revelation because it turns out he was living in a hostel because he can't afford the rents in Brighton and he was living in a hostel with four people in the room who were all homophobically abusing him. And so he's gone from being a victim in his own home to being a victim to a place he comes to for refuge, to be helped and I said to him, have you accessed any of the services? Bearing in mind, he was writing for the magazine and the profiles he seivces and he said, what services? And he hadn't made the connection that organisation like All Sorts and Mind Doubt were for him and so that was a very important lesson for me actually and what I try and do now with these teen issues that, once a year we revisit the youth issue, the mental health issue which is important one as far as I'm concern and then, the, I still make sure we have this one big month with HIV issue prior to World Aids Day every November. So it's about, its about making sure people don't forget and the problem that we've got is dealing with the police, council and all these staturatory bodies is they remember for moments in time and what they've got to remember is what they've done, they have to do it every year cause they have a new intake of people coming in and they've got to keep training the people to deliver what they learn to deliver post crisis and at the moment, the council are sitting on a

0.13.53 – 0.13.59	<i>Well that is the thing, yes, since he knows that he should be doing something about it</i>
0.13.59 – 0.14.31	Well he should be removed from post very quickly (laughs). So once they've got their claws into you and they're paying you more, it's very hard to have an opinion and be outspoken and I think that's why for me, we came that close. The politicians were away at that time and the senior officees got their way and that's the problem, the council is controlled by the officers and the politicians are almost irrelevant.
0.14.31 – 0.14.33	<i>At particularly, at the moment</i>
0.14.33 – 0.14.36	At particularly at the moment, the officers are running circles around the grave.
0.14.36 – 0.14.44	<i>Astounded at the politicians, I mean some of the stuff I read in The Argus is just mind blowing</i>
0.14.45 – 0.14.49	For me, it's the most disappointing that's happened because the greens had the opportunity to make the change
0.14.50 – 0.14.52	<i>They had a blank sheet of paper in front of them and they didn't ..</i>

<p>0.14.52 – 0.18.36</p>	<p>They didn't, they just fell for the same old thing where the officers umm control. So you know, the, I don't see that changing I have to say in looking to the future, we have to learn to work to our strengths and our strengths are that we've got a good healthy voluntary sector, we've got a business sector that needs to reinvent itself and we've got all these gay people in town that umm, have got a tendency now to think that they just engage with the gay thing one day a year at Pride. And so again, that's a hearts mind argument in umm, in trying to persuade them to be nicer to each other, to socialise with each other and support the fundraising of the groups and to do that, you got to go to all the gay businesses. So it's, umm it's a virtuous circle yes and the good thing is, when I sat there years ago, thinking, how am I gonna make a change? I had a plan in my head, my plan was to tackle the health thing first which we did and by tackling the health thing, it released all this money to the group, which then developed the voluntary sector so for eight years, I attacked the council because they wouldn't fund any of our groups and then we got the money from the, umm, the health people to do it and then within two years, the council followed because the health people are giving them money and the second hitlist, thing on the hitlist for was dealing with the police stuff, and so I just stopped work for nearly eight months to work on that project, the anti-victimisation initiative and for that time the project was working, everything was perfect. The battles where it has always been lost was between the council because I, I just don't get them. I just don't, I really don't understand what motivates them. I've got a theory and that is during the period of the new labour people there, the whole, when the new labour were in control, the whole thing with croynism, people came in just aren't up to the job and if any chief of executive said to me, what would you rcommend? One did, one gay one came, and a few years ago, he said, well if there's one thing you can do to make my job easier, what would you do? So I said, what I would do is that for every new member of staff that comes, don't worry too much about giving them a political briefing, give them a briefing on how your community of interests work cause that's where you get most of your brief from. If the chief of executive asks me the question now as to what I would recommend, I'd say make all your middle managers and senior managers reapply for their jobs and see who's got the skills to continue because umm, the stuff that goes wrong, I just sit there thinking, how has this happened? And more and more of the professional people I know that work outside, just don't want to work with the council and that's insitutional, you know they might be institutioanlly racist, institutionally homophobic, more and more they are more institutionally incompetent and you know we're not paying for that. We deserve better actually, we derserve much better.</p>
<p>0.18.37 – 0.18.39</p>	<p><i>I think that's a very good moment to end, thank you very much</i></p>
<p>End Time</p>	<p>End of Transcription</p>

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