

Pride History Group Oral History Interview with Kaye Greenleaf

Interviewer: John Witte

Date of interview: 3 May 2017

Location of interview: Edith Street, Leichhardt

Reason for interview: Lesbian history; first Mardi Gras parade.

Restrictions: None



Time	Summary	Key words
00:00	Introduction	
00:44	Kaye was born in 1953 in Auckland NZ and lived there until six. The family then moved to England and then back to Auckland and at aged 12 they moved to Brisbane.	Auckland; Brisbane;
01:10	Dad was a book seller and previously a sailor in the merchant navy during WWII. Mum had been a teacher and lecturer before her marriage. In Brisbane, Dad went back to sea. Kaye has two younger brothers. The family weren't particularly political.	WWII;
02:50	Kaye believes she was politicised around age 14 in Qld under the Joh Bjelke-Petersen government. She obtained a place at a prestigious but antiquated private school.	Judith Wright; Joh Bjelke-Petersen; Diane Cilento; Margaret Olley;
06:45	After school attended Qld University and did History and then Philosophy. Her friendships were formed during her interest in politics and the Women's Liberation Movement.	University of Queensland; Women's Liberation; Gordon Greenwood;
08:35	Politics at the time was dominated by reaction to the Bjelke-Petersen's government. The Vietnam Moratorium was based at the university. Police treatment of protestors.	Joh Bjelke-Petersen; Moratorium; Police;
10:05	She lived in shared houses and many long-standing friendships were formed there. One house was under constant police surveillance by Special Branch police. See Chris Master's <i>Hillbilly Dictator</i> .	Share houses; Special Branch Police; Chris Master's <i>Hillbilly Dictator</i> ;
11:00	The Bjelke-Petersen government fell after the Brisbane Expo and because of the Fitzgerald Royal Commission when members of parliament were gaoled.	Brisbane Expo; Fitzgerald Royal Commission;
11:50	Kaye and some friends moved to Sydney when she was 20 and they moved into a shared house in Surry Hills.	Surry Hills;
12:30	Women's Liberation in Brisbane was important for raising political awareness through Consciousness Raising Groups. It was also a meeting place of like-minded people in the era of youth rebellion, drug taking, rock and roll and the Moratorium. Women's Liberation, Gay Liberation, Feminism went hand in hand. At that time, Kaye had gay friends, and boyfriends. It was a period of sexual experimentation, the pill liberated female sexuality. Shulamith Firestone quote, "Feminism is the theory, lesbianism is the practice."	Women's Liberation; Consciousness Raising Groups; Moratorium; Women's Liberation; Gay Liberation; Feminism; Shulamith Firestone;
15:35	Qld University itself was not politicising. Study was formal. A couple of academics addressed rallies and Merle Thornton came to Consciousness Raising Groups.	Dan O'Neill; Merle Thornton; Peter Wertheim; Consciousness Raising Groups;
16:55	Kaye was a Part-Time Arts Representative for Qld University Student Council for a year. There were all men, highly organised and she couldn't talk at meetings. Not aligned to any political party.	Student Council;
18:50	She had been arrested, and jailed for 3 weekends, for an action at the Brisbane Stock Exchange for a Vietnam Moratorium protest against the mining of a harbour in North	Brisbane Stock Exchange; North

	Vietnam. Blood was thrown because companies were making money from the War.	Vietnam; Margie Ferguson;
21:50	Moved with a group of friends to Sydney. Sydney was more exciting than Brisbane. Danielle Martin a flatmate knew Tamar Goldstein who lived in Surry Hills and they moved in. Got a job in a restaurant and as a trainee nurse and enrolled at Macquarie University part time.	Surry Hills; Macquarie University;
24:10	Met the women who set up Elsie Women's Refuge and volunteered with them on the second collective. Elsie became all encompassing. Others were Diana Beaton and Christina Gibbeson, who became life-long friends.	Elsie Women's Refuge; Diana Beaton; Christina Gibbeson;
25:20	Elsie has now been handed over to one of the church charities.	Elsie Women's Refuge;
26:25	Macquarie University student in the afternoons after nursing in the day and volunteering at Elsie at the weekends. Studied Philosophy, English Literature.	Macquarie University;
27:55	She was Women's Officer at the Students Union and they set up a gay and lesbian group and talked about setting up a child care centre. Professor RW Connell, Professor of Sociology was a member of the gay and lesbian group.	Macquarie University; Professor RW Connell;
30:00	Gay Pride Week 1973. Recalls friend Bill Cochrane, a member of CAMP, Bill's friend Stuart Round and herself going to the demonstration and being chased down Pitt Street up to Central by police. Bill and Kaye shared houses in Brisbane & Sydney .	Gay Pride Week 1973; Bill Cochrane; Stuart Round;
32:05	Second National Homosexual Conference at Sydney University in 1976. She attended with Bill, Stuart and Christina and Christina's son Max. What was being done had not been done before.	Second National Homosexual Conference; Bill Cochrane; Stuart Round; Christina Gibbeson;
33:30	Elsie had begun in the early 70s by a group of women breaking into a house in Glebe, owned by the Department of Urban Renewal and Development (DURD). They took over houses but did not repair them. Christina Gibbeson, Trudy Brickwood were two of the women who broke in to Elsie and Anne Summers's role was to contact the press.	Elsie Women's Refuge; Christina Gibbeson; Department of Urban Renewal and Development; (DURD); Trudi Brickwood; Anne Summers;
34:55	Kaye went to Elsie a few months later after Lesley Fraser, a friend of Bill Cochran's told her about Elsie. Lesley and her friends were on the original collective.	Elsie Women's Refuge; Bill Cochran; Lesley Fraser;
35:40	The building was a run-down squat. Beverley Garlick built bunk beds. The women lived out of plastic bags, the backyard was mud. A small single fronted terrace, probably two bedrooms. A lounge room, kitchen and an outside toilet and bathroom. It was dark inside.	Elsie Women's Refuge; Beverley Garlick;
36:45	The original collective knew how to contact relevant agencies to help. Christina Gibbeson started researching and fed the first information on domestic violence into the Royal Commission on Human Relationships, by interviewing the women sheltering at Elsie.	Elsie Women's Refuge; Christina Gibbeson; Royal Commission on Human Relationships
37:40	With support from the Whitlam Government they were given a large house in the next street. Note: the name "Elsie" came from the name plate on the first house.	Elsie Women's Refuge; Whitlam Government;
38:05	Kaye's role in the new house initially was as a volunteer, answering the phone, talked to community groups, social work students etc. Some were qualified nurses, but most of the volunteers brought life experiences. None were qualified social workers. They drew upon Erin Pizzey's first refuge in the UK and her book, <i>Scream Quietly or the Neighbours Will Hear</i> .	Elsie Women's Refuge; Erin Pizzey; <i>Scream Quietly or the Neighbours Will Hear</i> ;
39:00	Anne Summers, Christina Gibbeson and Trudy Brickwood were on the original break-	Elsie Women's Refuge;

	in. When founded there were a couple of dozen women on the collective. Federal government funds were for five workers and the salaries were split among ten workers.	Christina Gibbeson; Anne Summers; Trudi Brickwood
39:45	Kris Melmouth set up the Rape Crisis Centre in Glebe. There was collaboration between Elsie and the Rape Crisis Centre.	Kris Melmouth; Rape Crisis Centre; Glebe;
40:00	There was no money for women who left a violent partner, except for some state money you could claim. The Whitlam government created a single parent's pension and women could then leave their husbands.	
41:00	At the second house women who had lived at the first Elsie joined the collective – Dot; Robyn; Nola – once they were set up.	Elsie Women's Refuge; Dot;
41:55	Bill Hayden the Australian treasurer visited Elsie before they were funded and by the end of the Whitlam Government there were over 50 funded women refuges in the country.	Elsie Women's Refuge; Bill Hayden; Whitlam Government;
42:35	There was and is a need for refuges. They had to turn many women away. Currently the funding is being diverted to religious charities.	
43:20	They were relatively safe from estranged husbands with the Glebe Police Station nearby, but someone attempted arson on the building and another man arrived with a shotgun.	Glebe Police Station;
44:00	<i>The Glebe</i> the local paper ran a campaign against Elsie. A cartoon in the paper had a large butch lesbian covered in tattoos and needles at the door. The <i>Women's Weekly</i> also ran an article.	Elsie Women's Refuge; <i>The Glebe</i> ; Dina Beaton; <i>The Women's Weekly</i>
46:00	About 50% of the workers were lesbian at Elsie and Rape Crisis Centre. There was an urgent need for women's welfare support and politically active women got involved in practical activities like organising accommodation and clothing for women.	Elsie Women's Refuge; Rape Crisis Centre;
48:00	A 12-year-old son of one of the women staying at Elsie was murdered. Police not seen to be helpful.	
50:10	Under Prime Minister Fraser, Diana would go to Canberra and funding continued.	Diana Beaton;
50:35	Early lesbian involvement in the Women's Movement. No identity had yet evolved for gay and lesbian activists. There were spaces and suburbs where local residents were tolerant.	Women's Movement;
51:55	Crystal Palace, in Crystal Street, Petersham was an early lesbian household.	Crystal Palace;
52:30	A large women's liberation meeting at a hall in Chippendale. There was talk of spies – notably the Spartacists who were disruptive and took notes and it was rumoured that they fed this information to the Police Special Branch. A motion to ban the Spartacists was lost on a re-count. This was a lesson in how formal meeting procedure could be used to stifle debate.	Chippendale; Spartacists; Special Branch; Joyce Stevens;
55:15	Christina Gibbeson and Wendy Bacon worked at after school care at a primary school in Rozelle and this idea has been taken up by many schools.	Christina Gibbeson; Wendy Bacon; Rozelle;
57:30	There was a cross over between Elsie, Rape Crisis Centre, Leichhardt Women's Health Centre. Later Lesbian Line was set up.	Elsie Women's Refuge; Rape Crisis Centre; Leichhardt Women's Health Centre; Lesbian Line;
58:15	At age 27 Kaye went to Europe.	
58:45	Heather Grey was at the first Mardi Gras with Kaye. Heather later created with Ron Smith the first women's Mardi Gras float – the Martina Navratilova float.	Heather Grey; Ron Smith; Martina Navratilova;
1:00:55	Going out. There were fund raiser dances, parties at people's houses in Balmain, Rozelle, Leichhardt and Glebe. None of them went to gay bars. There were cultural	House parties;

	events like art exhibitions, live music in Sydney at that time.	
1:02:50	Bill Cochrane and Kaye tried to get into Capriccios nightclub and were refused admission because they looked like a straight couple. Stuart Round, Adrian Brooks, Jenni Dawson and Kaye went to the Albury Hotel and they were heckled for being straights. It was a gay mono culture.	Bill Cochrane; Capriccios; Stuart Round;
1:05:05	Kaye was in a band. Sue Wray (singer/guitarist); Vivienne Johnson (drums); Roberta Johnson (guitar) in <i>Alias</i> expanded the band with Kaye (guitarist), a man, Ricky (guitarist), and Moira Maclean-Cross as singer and it became <i>Electric Fans</i> . With a male in the band it could not play at women's events. They did play at various fundraisers. They wrote their own songs. Played at the Native Rose in Chippendale. Other bands that played there were Angie Bickford in a rockabilly band. They knew other bands like <i>Mental as Anything</i> , <i>Laughing Clowns</i> and <i>The Saints</i> .	Sue Wray; Vivienne Johnson; Roberta Johnson; <i>Electric Fans</i> ; <i>Alias</i> ; Native Rose Hotel; Angie Bickford; <i>Mental as Anything</i> ; <i>Laughing Clowns</i> ; <i>The Saints</i> ;
1:07:45	Trip to China in the 1970s. Kaye went with Christina in an ACTU delegation.	Christina Gibbeson; Australian Council of Trade Unions; ACTU;
1:10:30	Kaye went to the first Mardi Gras parade with Heather Grey (a teacher) and Genevieve Errey (a Probation and Parole Officer). Heather and Genevieve lived in Royston Street, Darlinghurst. The night was cold and they thought that this would keep the numbers down so they went to swell the numbers. She wore a woollen polo neck top and a boiler suit for warmth and protection if arrested and dragged along the ground. "We all suspected that might happen."	Heather Grey; Genevieve Errey; Royston Street;
1:11:25	To explain, she recalls a recent White Bay Anti-Uranium Demonstration where she had been dragged along the ground on her knees, by police, but not arrested. Wendy Bacon was arrested there and Kris Melmouth let down the tyres on the paddy wagons.	White Bay Anti-Uranium Protest; Wendy Bacon; Kris Melmouth;
1:12:26	At the first Mardi Gras parade, they had a contingency plan, because Kaye, Heather and Genevieve had full time jobs, and that was to break off from the parade if there was danger of arrest. So they left before William Street.	Heather Grey; Genevieve Errey; William Street;
1:13:10	There was a good turn up for the parade. She had gone to parade after meeting with Heather and Genevieve who lived nearby.	Heather Grey; Genevieve Errey;
1:14:10	Recalls another demonstration in Elizabeth Street, where Genevieve had been dragged off and her blouse was ripped off her to humiliate her. Kaye believes she was experienced in dealing with violent police at demonstrations, coming from Queensland.	Elizabeth Street; Genevieve Errey;
1:15:45	They could hear the noise coming from Darlinghurst Road and people came back to Royston Street to tell them what was happening.	Elizabeth Street; Genevieve Errey; Darlinghurst Road;
1:18:50	In 1978 mid-year, Kaye had some strange neurological symptoms possible precursors to multiple sclerosis and was off work for a year on full pay . She recovered. Heather Grey took her snorkelling and swimming.	multiple sclerosis; Heather Grey;
1:19:50	Gail Hemming and Paul Cochrane and Kaye decided to go to Europe in 1980. Bill and Kaye lived in Paris. Returned to Australia five years later and got a job in publishing.	Bill Cochrane; Gail Hemming;
1:21:00	Her job was Sales and Marketing Manager in the English Language Teaching area with Cambridge University Press.	Cambridge University Press;
1:22:50	In 1982, she had lived in a house in Annandale with Christina and Gail and their children, saving to go back to Paris. And went back and taught English in Paris in the French TAFE system. Part time and hand to mouth existence. Then came back in 1985 to the publishing job.	Gail Hemming; Christina Gibbeson; Annandale; Paris;
1:24:10	Multiple sclerosis returned in her mid 50s and she had to give up her job in publishing.	multiple sclerosis;

	She lives in Leichhardt with her partner of 30 years Jenni Dawson, reads a lot, goes to concerts at the Opera House, sees friends, signs petitions. Her mobility, but not her spirit, is affected by MS.	
--	--	--