



GSA 2023

Building Bridges > Catalyzing Research > Empowering All Ages

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Older LGBTQ+ people's perspectives on discrimination & ageing in the UK

Emerging Findings from a Timeline Study

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DISCLOSURE

FINANCIAL

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COMMERCIAL

We have no commercial relationships to disclose.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

We have no conflicts of interest to disclose.



OUR RESEARCH STUDY

Socially Inclusive Ageing Across the Lifecourse

3-year mixed-methods study focusing on 'new' ageing populations

- LGBTQ+ people (25 -30 interviews)
- Post WW2 generation migrant groups (African, Caribbean, South Asian)
- People ageing with a lifelong disability or enduring physical and/or mental health condition



Socially Inclusive Ageing across the Lifecourse





TIMELINE INTERVIEWS

Qualitative interviews with target groups, drawing on Adriensen's (2014) methodology:

- Timeline as eliciting autobiographical milestones & producing visual representation;
- Timeline as an 'organising principle' for the interview;
- Led by participant with input from researcher;
- Potentially holistic- linking biography with social, historical political contexts;



TIMELINES: LINEAR APPROACH

GREW UP BEING DIFFERENT BUT NOT REALISING UNTIL PUBERTY. WISH Hindsight HAD BEEN APPLIED TO MY OWN SEX FREQUENTLY.

LATIN TEACHER RAN HERSELF UP ME BY SETTING ME FRASME OF EREMIAN MEN WHO DIDNT GO TO GAE WITH CHARGE ~ CAMPAIGN LEFT HER CLASS!

KEPT HEAD DOWN

SERVED IDENTIFIED APPRENTICE SHIP IN EARLY 1960s WORKING OFFICE IN EDINBURGH, UNEMPLOYED.

TURNED CIVIL SERVICE AS HIGHLY TECHNICAL BUT VERY BORED. Aged 1968-80 CIVILS 1968-87

LEFT C.S. TO LIVE AND WORK WITH MY LOVER GEORGE IN DEVON

GEORGE DIED VERY UNEXPECTEDLY OF ISCHAEMIC HEART DISEASE. BOTTOM FELL OUT OF MY WORLD AND JUST GET THROUGH LIFE AS POSSIBLE.

WENT BACK TO LIVE WITH MOTHER AND ENDED AS HER CAREER. WE WERE ALWAYS GOOD FRIENDS.

RETIRED TO N. LONDON VOLUNTEER AT PUBLISHERS (MAG) VARIOUS PART TIME 'JOB TO 65 FINAL RETIREMENT'.

READ ABOUT TOM HUBBARD IN ODL. HEAD LETTER, THE CAPTION, TRODIE HUBBARD PLUNGED ME INTO CONVENTIONAL GAY AGE CONCEPTS + THING WHICH FOR SMALL TIME FRIENDS ON 10th FLOOR.

BORN 19.9.35
OLDER SISTER + BROTHER
RECORDED BY BROTHER
THE REST OF HIS LIFE

ABOUT 1950, AT SCHOOL YOU HAD TO DECIDE WHAT SUBJECTS YOU WOULD WANT FOR FUTURE CAREER.

ALL TIME
~~1968~~
1968-1988

1968-1971

1972

1980

1980-96

1996-2022

2022 - TODAY

55 Found Toni's housing

53 Covid / Isolation / Got very ill
- Dad Died / lost twins

49
Big love no 3

37 Major breakdown - Capricorn
Got HIV (☹️) nearly died

23 Went travelling - 6 months
Set up own business as a Coach
Facilitator + Educator

28
Secs ♡
Experience on LSD changed my life

20's
First ♡
RAVING! + CAREER IN ADVERTISING,
LIVED IN AUSTRALIA!
Started working
Apr 21
Apr 20

Age 18 left home university

Age 16 first gay experience

Age 15 first girlfriend

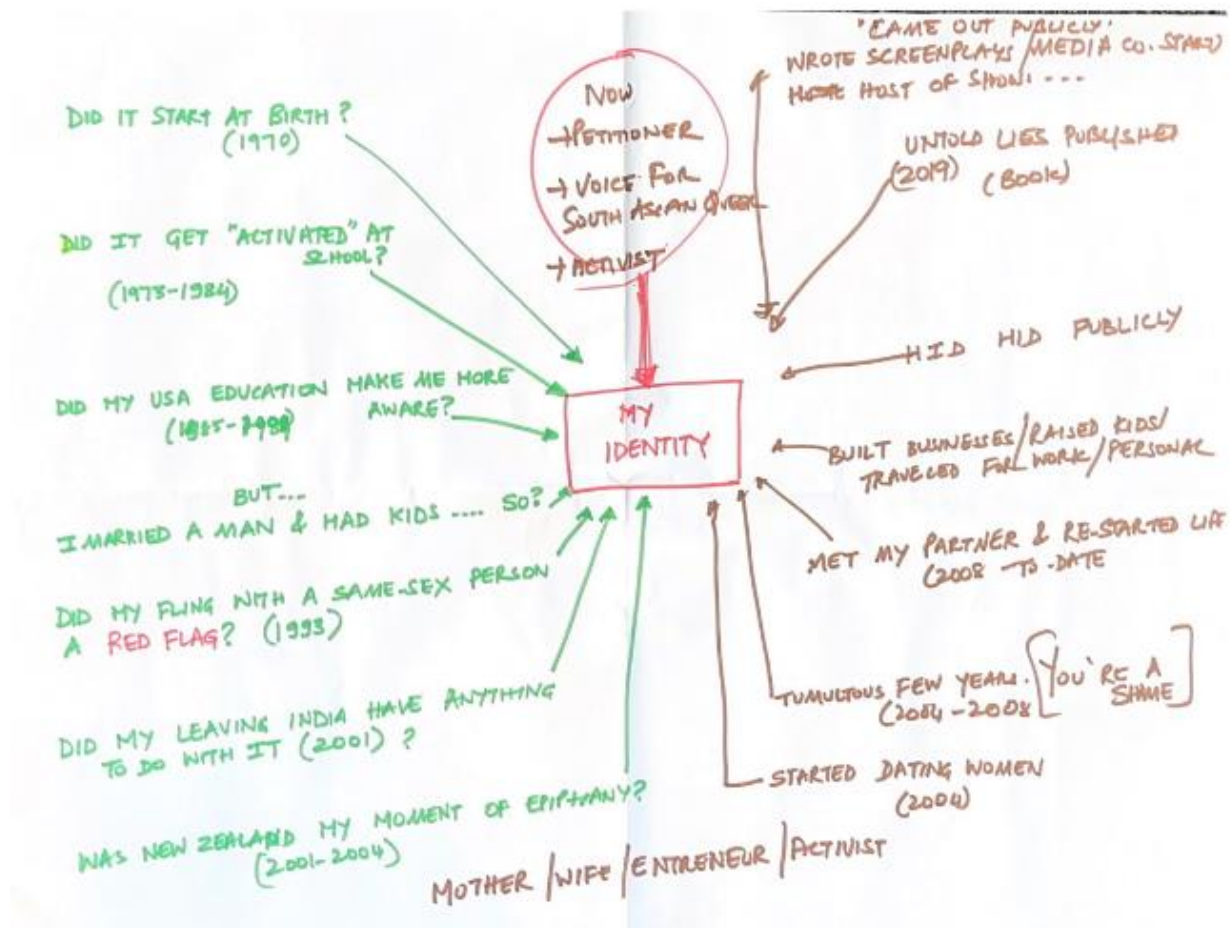
Age 11 Bullied in school
(→ trust issues)

Age 6 nearly died

1967 (3/6) Born in Derby UK



A MIND-MAP APPROACH





A LONG AND WINDING ROAD





WHAT DO TIMELINES INCLUDE?

The timelines reveal information about:

- Social hierarchies
- Life stages;
- Place;
- Key relationships,
- Work/occupation & finances;
- Physical and mental health;
- Wider political/social context of individual biographies.





THE DISCREET 'OTHER'

That's what I found about being gay. It's better not to make a big thing of it, after all, I don't go around saying, are you heterosexual? Do I? So why? Why do people ask me if I'm gay? Yeah. So I don't usually discuss it.

White gay male, aged 79



LOCATION/HOUSING

Well, we didn't really want to move out because of who we are or where we were. So we always been a bit worried about moving to the country. And the spotlight on us, we didn't really want that. OK. So London, we could be anonymous. We can be anybody. But yeah, so I feel more comfortable.

Chinese gay male, aged 74



HIV & SOCIAL NETWORKS

I immediately made sure that I had safe sex. Forever. Yeah. I wasn't gonna give it up, but I wasn't gonna be stupid. Yeah. So I sort of apart from, I mean losing my friends was so sad. Seven funerals in one year. And they were really young, and one of them was my best friend.....

He went and loads of others and it was such a horrible day, my best mate wouldn't let me go to the hospital to say goodbye because he looked so unwell. He was probably my age and he looked like a man of a hundred.

And I respected him for that, sent my message to him and my love. And that was it. It was horrendous.

White English gay male aged 73



DISENFRACTURED GRIEF

And I had made tea and toast for him early in the morning. And he got up to eat it in the bedroom. And I cut the bread into, well, I cut the toast into soldiers, just to make it appealing and he had a couple of bits and I'm busy saying, See, you're getting better because the doctor was supposed to be coming in. And then he lay down in the bed. And I sat on the bed and he suddenly kicked his legs out... And he was dead. Just like that.

The world is bottomless when anything like that happens, that's, that's the end of that life.

It was my aunt [name] that said to me... about me and [partner] and me missing him. But she was the only one that said that to me, yeah.

White Scottish gay male, aged 87



INTERSECTIONALITIES

The, the hospital wasn't too bad. I was able to just put a put on bed for me when Tim was there for about 3 weeks at first. I was there and we're not, I'm not going to leave the room. So I was actually like a cell for three weeks in the in the room because I couldn't move. If I come out, I can I. Will not allow to come back then.

A lot of people come in thinking I was his personal carer. Because, because I'm Chinese and he's White, so it was sort of, people perceive. But then it didn't really matter to me. Yeah. Yeah, one way or the other. Yeah, as long as there was no positive discrimination I'm fine.

Chinese gay male, aged 74



LEGAL RECOGNITION

I mean, we were really pleased about the civil partnership ... it's it's makes someone like legally, we make it sort of, you know, it was OK to be gay it's accepting, the law says so, so it's quite nice.

And the other thing was actually we were worried about was the, when you know legally, legally, when we were ill, we heard so much about people's partner was, was denied visiting rights and also the death afterwards, that the family rejected the partner and that was really scary.

And not because we want to get, we don't really want to do this married thing, but we just want to have a piece of paper to to make us feel legally. Well, we're binding. Yeah. And also the law says so.

Chinese gay male, aged 74



AGEING (DIS)GRACEFULLY

I can go to the [local gay pub]. I can go to the other gay pub for a little jiggle around, yeah. I can go to the sauna if I want a bit of sex, yeah. Not that much of that happens, but I know it's there. So really all my needs are, but I'm really happy being here. Is it something about this place? It just, I love it....

I mean, my brain's, still 30 years old. I still wanna do things up there, but my body's beginning to tell me I'm, you know, you're 73.

White English male aged 73



RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

- Sexuality is a factor in the biographies of LGB people, from childhood to later life;
- Impacts on social networks, choices about work, housing, health and care;
- Disclosure, being out is still problematic- stigma sticks.
- Lots of positives about finding community, enjoying sexuality in later life;
- Despite equality law, marriage equality, services still don't 'see' LGB elders;
- Policy and practice need to avoid one-dimensional approaches: identity is multi-dimensional.



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THANK YOU!

Please share your thoughts and questions!

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