

Galop and Stonewall Housing Oral History Project

Interviewee: Peter Dunn

Interviewer: Rashid Raman

Place of Interview: Acton, West London

Date: 24th June 2009

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Key

RR: = Interviewer, Rashid Raman

PD: = Interviewee, Peter Dunn

[time e.g. 5:22] = inaudible word at this time

[5:22 IA] = inaudible section at this time

[Word 5:22] = best guess at word

PD: ... speaking level, just anything at all ... oh, we've got feedback!

RR: Oh that's gone. Yep cool, keep going.

PD: Shall I go again?

RR: Yeah.

PD: Yeah, I mean this is a quiet, very pleasant area to live, it's very nice sitting in the action.

RR: So if you were to get really irate or annoyed and animated about something and start shouting, how would you do that?

PD: Well I'd start shouting like this and being really cross and animated and annoyed.

RR: That's great.

PD: But I probably won't <chuckles>.

RR: Right, OK. It is Wednesday the 24th of June 2009. The interviewer is Rashid Raman, the project is Galop and Stonewall Housing Oral History Project, and the interviewee is Peter Dunn, and could you just spell your name for the tape?

PD: Yes, it's Peter, PETER Dunn, DUNN.

RR: OK and if you can tell me where and when you were born?

PD: I was born in Wokingham in Berkshire on the 16th of June 1957.

RR: OK and we are currently in Acton in West London.

PD: Yeah, yes.

RR: OK Peter, could you tell me a little bit about your background, where you grew up and when you first moved to London I guess?

PD: Oh OK then yes, alright. Well I grew up in Kent in town called Tunbridge. And I left school when I was 18 and more or less moved straight up to London actually. Largely because Tunbridge wasn't a very gay friendly place to live really and I wanted to move away and establish an independent life for myself in London. So I came up here and lived in a very grotty little bedsit in Chiswick <chuckles>.

RR: And what was your ... had you come out by the time you'd left Tunbridge?

PD: Yes. I came out around the age of 15 or 16 I suppose. So I had the experience of being quite a camp young gay teenager in a secondary school in Kent really, which wasn't always a terribly easy existence really <chuckles>, particularly at that time, the early 1970s.

RR: And what was your school like? Did you enjoy school?

PD: Not particularly, well it was alright really. But I wasn't that keen on the school really. And there was a lot of homophobia around and that affected my enjoyment of school; I got bullied quite a lot as a result of being a gay teenager at that time. So I didn't really enjoy it that much, although I did enjoy learning I think, but it was the other atmosphere at school that I didn't like so much I think.

RR: And did you have any ideas of what you wanted to do work-wise when you were 16 to 18, around that age?

PD: I think at that age I didn't have any idea of what I wanted to do. Earlier I wanted to be a doctor; it'd always been my ambition to be a doctor and I was told at school I wasn't really bright enough to be a doctor and I wanted to think of doing something more realistic instead. And they suggested I should go and work in a bank, which is what I did as soon as I left school and I absolutely hated it! And I worked in a bank for six months and got sacked 'cause I was useless at it really! <Chuckles> So the school's career advice was absolutely hopeless.

RR: And was that when you'd moved to Chiswick?

PD: Yes, that was a bank in London that I worked in, in central London, yeah.

RR: OK and had you ... I suppose Tunbridge isn't too far from London; were you going up to London while you were still living in Tunbridge as a teenager?

PD: Yes I was, yes. I'd come up to London as much as I could really, yeah, as often as I could afford to.

RR: OK and yes, so tell me about moving to Chiswick and...

PD: Yeah, well it was interesting really because my parents and my step mother in particular were very reluctant for me to leave home and I think my stepmother was very worried that I'd find it difficult in London, I'd be a risk somehow in London. And I'd come out to my parents at that point, but they didn't want to discuss it at all. They weren't very happy about me being gay and it was very hard to talk to them about it, particularly my father. So there was this undercurrent of them I think knowing that I was moving to London to be a bit more free to develop the lifestyle I wanted, but without ever being able to

speaking about that. And I found that the only way I could make the transition was to tell them at first that I was only going to be sleeping there during the week and that I'd be home every weekend and that I was simply moving there because I hated the commute from Tunbridge to London every day. So it was all a bit of a falsehood really and it was quite difficult keeping up this false existence. For quite a while I was going home every weekend but trying to plan to go home less and less and gradually having more weekends in London, but actually not liking where I was living 'cause it was a very ... it was quite a depressing place to live really; it was just one room in a shared house with lots of other people who were all straight. So I didn't really have much in common with them. So I actually didn't live there very long, I only lived there for about five months. And then I found somewhere to live in a gay household in Edgware Road, right in the centre of London and it was three very large flats; three five-bed mansion flats all next door to each other with probably about twenty five gay men living in these flats and that was a lot more fun really. And I think that enabled me to finally make the break with home and I was staying up there a lot at weekends and things like that. So that was a very positive move for me really. I lived there for two years in that particular place.

RR: And were you still working in the bank at this point?

PD: No 'cause I was only working in the bank for six months and then after I left there I went and worked for a shoe shop and actually I became a shoe shop manager within about three months. So at the age of 18 I was managing a shoe shop which was probably, in those days, was quite unusual really. I didn't like it at all, but it was just a way of paying the rent <chuckles>. And I didn't do that for very long actually, I did that for about a year. And in the meantime, my brother started a company, he started a design studio doing wallpaper and furnishing fabric designs 'cause that was his profession and they were looking for an administrator, so I became the administrator of this design studio which I really enjoyed and I did that for two years, and that was a nice job really.

RR: And what was ... so you finally made the break from home you say, and how did you ... I suppose, what was it like for you being 20 years old in London, as a gay man having broken from Tunbridge?

PD: Yes, well I was quite political actually. I was more interested in the gay movement than I was in the commercial gay scene I think, which at the time, the commercial gay scene was small anyway really. But I got involved with CHE, Campaign for Homosexual Equality, which was the main campaigning group at the time with GLF, Gay Liberation Front. And I was quite involved with CHE and they had a London Information Centre in Piccadilly Circus which I used to be a volunteer for; I used to spend two evenings a week staffing their phone line, and I think it was a bit like the forerunner of the gay switchboard, and in fact it was around that time that gay switchboards started. So I was involved in CHE and I was also involved in London Friend which started at that time and I was a volunteer on the phone service at London Friend, 'cause I was quite interested in helping people, and by that time, I would've been about 20, 21, I'd applied to do a social science degree which I started when I was 21, so it was 3 years after leaving school, I went to university. So I was a lot more involved really in the gay movement than I was on the commercial gay scene and I think I was quite unconfident oddly in bars and clubs and things. Whereas I was very confident on marches and talking

to people on the phone and things like that. So I steered clear of the commercial gay scene around that time actually.

RR: Have you always been political of...

PD: Yes I had. Yeah, I was a member of the Labour Party Young Socialists in Tunbridge, where you're really up against it trying to be a socialist in a place like Tunbridge <laughs>. And I was a member of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, so I had quite a lot of interests in different political movements anyway. But by the time I was about 18 or 19 I'd switched all my interests towards the gay movement really.

RR: And what were the ... so when you were on the phones at London Friend or working for CHE, what were the main aims of those organisations at the time, what were the prevalent issues around the time you'd started working for them?

PD: Well for CHE it was law reform really. They were campaigning for a lowering of the age of consent which is 21 for gay men at the time, and as you probably know, a very restrictive 21, in private only and all that sort of stuff. So their main focus was on law reform, but on general improvement of social attitudes towards gay lifestyles as well. And we used to produce ... it's hard to remember it actually what we did. I think I wasn't so involved in the campaigning around law, I was more involved in service delivery to other gay people, 'cause that interested me more really. I think I got more satisfaction out of helping people who were ringing up over the phone who didn't know where to go or were perhaps a bit isolated or were just thinking about coming out and wanted somebody to talk to or wanted some advice about places to go in London, things like that.

RR: What was the service provision like at the time, where people would be calling up for the ... were there enough services for you to refer people to?

PD: Well not really, there weren't really any things to refer people onto because I think at that stage there was so much discrimination about gay relationships that if people were in a lot of need really in terms of being very depressed about being victimised or bullied or whatever, I don't think we would've been able to refer them anywhere really, because there was just nowhere that you would consider to be safe I think. So we used to try and talk people through the situation, would encourage people to go along to their local CHE group, because at that time there were CHE social groups all around the country really. So most large towns were going through the process of developing them and so on. So we used to try and link people up with each other in a supportive environment and that was about all you could do really, there wasn't much that you could do about referring people on. And people used to have terrible experiences, of going to see their doctor and their doctor telling them that they should have electric shock therapy, and this is the mid 1970s and this sort of thing was still going on in those days; it was appalling really how people were treated.

RR: And in terms of policing then, what did you come against people that were asking for services relating to...

PD: Yes we did actually and in those days Galop didn't exist and we did used to get people who were ringing up because they'd been harassed by the police

or because they'd been arrested when they were cottaging and things like. And we had somebody in the CHE who was a lawyer who used to try and provide legal advice and so on. So we would refer people onto him, we'd take their name and get him to give them a ring. And people's experiences of the police in those days were almost exclusively oppressive really. If you were victimised, if you were queer bashed or something like that, you wouldn't go the police and report it because you would expect to get similar treatment from the police, which is very different from the situation nowadays really. And my experience of going on gay Pride marches and things like that is that the police would be aggressive and I got pushed around a bit by the police on a couple of occasions on Pride marches and that was quite normal and people would get arrested because they were wearing outrageous costumes and things like that. So it was all very oppressive indeed.

RR: Were those the early ... tell me about those gay Pride marches that you used to go to.

PD: Well I think they were pretty amazing really 'cause they were very large. I mean by that time, 1975, '78, Pride had really taken off, it had been going for, I think, probably about 5 years by then, I think it started in the early '70s. And they were very big events, but they were very over-policed really, and the police were there to control the marchers, rather than to stop people being harassed and being victimised. And so you'd get a lot of insults and abuse from people in the crowd and you had to be really careful not to put a foot wrong in terms of where you went. If you strayed off the route or something then the reaction of the police would be just to come and arrest anybody that was going slightly off in the wrong direction or something like that. There was a feeling of tremendous togetherness in standing up to this harassment that we would get from the police in those days.

RR: And where are we up to in your work history now?

PD: I think we're up to the point where I was working as an administrator for this design studio, and I was just about to go to university and do this social science degree which I did in '78. So I went and did that. And I wanted to be a probation officer which I'd actually thought of doing when I was at school, but I'd abandoned that idea really when I was at school. But I thought of doing that again when I was doing the degree course. So I did a number of options that would be particularly relevant to criminal justice, so I did a social policy option and stuff like that. And at the end of the course I applied to work in a probation hostel in London and that was a real struggle because you had to show evidence of having done voluntary work, because otherwise you wouldn't get a job, but you couldn't be out. If I'd said that I'd done voluntary work with a gay befriending and counselling service, they wouldn't even have considered my application any further. So I had to lie about that and I had to talk about voluntary work experience that I'd had with a completely different organisation which I'd heard of but had never actually worked for, and I'd just had to hope that the probation service wouldn't take references for my voluntary work, because if they had obviously they'd find out that I hadn't actually worked there! But there was no choice really, and I think in those days, as a gay man or presumably a lesbian if you're a woman, going into social work you had to lie about your sexuality and you had to concoct quite a complicated past for yourself that would give you the credentials that people were looking for. And I was lucky because they didn't ask for references from this voluntary organisation, they got references from my previous employer

three years ago, and from my tutor at university. So it was actually OK, I got away with it really. But nowadays it'd be very different. If you wanted to apply to be a probation officer nowadays and you'd worked for the London Friend, you'd say so and there'd be absolutely no problem about it. But in those days it was completely out of the question.

RR: So did you have to hide your sexuality when you were working in the hostel for that job, or was that just the application process?

PD: I didn't actually. Once I got there I came out. I'd decided that I would do that because I wasn't used to not being out and it didn't feel to me to be acceptable to pretend to be straight really. So I came out as soon as I started work there and it was no problem at all, certainly to the colleagues. I mean there was some homophobia sometimes from residents there, not surprisingly really, they're offenders, a lot of whom have quite rigid attitudes. But actually the manager of the hostel was quite supportive really and he would address any homophobia that did come up and it wouldn't be tolerated, which for the early 1980s was probably unusual actually, I think I was quite lucky to be working there.

RR: And how long were you at the hostel?

PD: I worked there for three years. And then I applied to the Home Office for funding to do probation officer training and I had to then go through the process of concealing my sexuality again really, because once again really the Home Office at that time wasn't very pro-gay. And I can't actually remember how all that was resolved now, but I think I just kept quiet about the fact that I'd worked for Friend and just pretended I'd worked for a different counselling organisation. But in a way that wasn't so important by that time because I'd then got experience of working in this probation hostel. So having to provide evidence of previous voluntary work wasn't so important.

RR: And how long was it ... presumably you'd completed the training and became a probation officer?

PD: Yes that's right, yes. Yeah, so I qualified as a probation officer in 1984 and worked in London to begin with.

RR: OK, and I suppose just lead up to your involvement in Galop and your research work of homophobic and hate crime, from your role as a parole officer, what course did your interests and career take to get to Galop?

PD: Yes, that's an interesting question. I might need to think about that a bit really 'cause it's perhaps not very obviously.

RR: Were you aware of Galop when it started?

PD: Yeah, I was aware of Galop from when it first started really, because of my interest in campaigning around law and equality and policing and so on, although I didn't become involved in Galop until about five or six years ago. But I knew of it in the 1980s. I think it always had quite a high profile actually in London, on lesbian and gay scene in London. So a lot of people knew about what Galop did.

<End of Part 1>

But when I was a probation officer I was particularly interested in anti-discriminatory practice in improving the probation service's engagement with diversity generally and around race and gender and sexuality and disability. And I used to be quite proactive and for a while I was a freelance training doing diversity training and so on. And then I was a senior probation officer, I used to manage a probation hostel actually, I went back into hostel work for a few years as a manager. And then while I was a hostel manager, I persuaded the Home Office to make a lot of money available to refurbish the hostel completely, to the extent that I was closed for six months while it was rebuild, which was brilliant really 'cause it was such a wonderful investment in the building. So for six months I wasn't really needed, I didn't need to manage the hostel 'cause there were no residents. So I was asked to do some work on improving the probation service's engagement with victims of crime because at that time, in the late 1990s, the Victim's Charter had come out and probation officers were now responsible for consulting the victims of serious violence and sexual offending about the release plans of the offender who's offended against them, and we had no procedures for doing that in the area that I worked at the time. So I was asked to setup a system for consulting victims. So that made me more interested in victim work as well because I was actually going off and meeting and talking to victims, so that probably got me a bit interested in hate crime actually again. And having experience hate crime a lot myself when I was younger through a lot of bullying at school and so on, I think I had a bit of empathy and a bit of understanding really of the experience of being victimised on the grounds of your sexuality. And then I went to work for Victim Support and in 2001 I was working for Victim Support and I became the head of research and development, and we had a number of years of problematic service delivery really in Victim Support at the time, and one of those was service to the LGBT community, because Victim Support is an organisation which is run by volunteers who tend really to be middle aged, middle class and predominantly white and heterosexual. I think the service to minority communities was probably not as good as it should have been, well I know it wasn't. So I was interested in doing some research to improve the way that we engage with minority communities. So I raised some money to a research project into the effects of hate crime and service needs of hate crime victims, and that was focused in particular on racist and homophobic crime and decided then to PhD, which I'm doing now, I'm nearly finished now actually. So funnily enough having been told when I was at school that I wasn't clear enough to be a doctor, I'm just a few months away hopefully from getting a doctorate! <Laughs> Which is all a bit strange really! But anyway ... sorry, what were you going to say?

RR: Go on, carry on.

PD: So in a way, the PhD work, the subjects, the title of my research is abuse around difference, getting men's experiences of hate crime and its policing. So it's about their experience of hate crime and about their experience of the police as well, how the police responded, or their feelings about what happened to them if they perhaps didn't get any support from the police. So I guess in a way, that draws on the experience that I had at Victim Support and in the probation service, and it's relevant to my own interest in Galop's work as well.

RR: Tell me a bit about the research you did while you were with Victim support. What did you cover?

PD: OK, well we actually succeeded in raising a £100,000 to do this research, which is a huge amount of money actually for a research project, and it was Cooperative Insurance Services that made this big donation, which was wonderful really, I mean I think it was quite an achievement to get that much money out of an corporate donor actually. But they were really taken and inspired about this idea of hidden crime and they felt ... we were able to persuade them that hate crime is hidden crime, people tend not to report it because they're fearful of reprisals or they don't think the police would be able to respond properly, or they're fearful that the police will have a discriminatory response to them. And this really fired Cooperative Insurance Services' enthusiasm really. So they gave us this money to do this research project and we interviewed 111 hate crime victims in Lambeth, Oldham, Stoke on Trent and Cardiff. And we also held what we called Cooperative Enquiry Workshops locally in each of those areas, when we had analysed the research findings to present the research findings locally and to consult people about how services to hate crime victims in that area could be improved. So we invited the local Race Equality Council, the local gay rights groups, the police, the Crown Prosecution Service, the local authority, all those agencies. And the findings were very much what we expected really, which is that most victims of hate crime don't report it, those that do tend not to get a very helpful response from the police, they're persuaded that they should report it but when they actually do very often the police don't really actually bother to do anything, they don't always invest ... I mean sometimes they do, some people get a very good service from the police, but most often they actually don't and the police services seems to be completely writhen with incompetence really where somebody reports a crime then they hear nothing more about it. Then they ring the police two weeks later and say, 'Well I reported this over the phone two weeks, I've not heard anything,' and the police officer then says, 'Oh we've got no record of this,' which does happen quite a lot. Or a police officer attends, takes a statement and so on, and they never hear anything more and then they can never get hold of that police officer again, and they ring and they leave messages which are not returned and so on. So those were people's experiences with the police and we also had a lot of data on the social consequences of hate crime as well. There were things like a man who was made homeless through homophobic abuse because he couldn't stay in his house any longer because the abuse that he received was just absolutely constant and it started off with people throwing eggs at his windows, but ended up with his windows being broken and with paedophile being sprayed on the outside of the house. He wasn't a paedophile, but because that had been sprayed on the outside of the house, he was then harassed by the people on the basis that he thought he was a paedophile. So he had to leave, he had to make himself intentionally homeless and get out and actually ended up living on the streets as a result. And there was an Asian shop keeper who couldn't sell his business because it had been attacked so often that nobody else would buy it. There were people who had severe health problems as a result of racist and homophobic violence. So we had a lot of really good qualitative data through that research report, and I still write about it. I've just recently written a chapter for an American book on hate crime actually, which is all about that particular piece of research and I've written journal articles on it and so on. So it's kept alive which is nice, this is back in 2005, but four years later the data is still being used, which is great.

RR: And what were the differences that you found geographically with the interviewees from different parts of the country?

PD: Well that's all very much about supportive communities actually. The good thing about London is that if you're victimised in London, you've probably got more hope of being able to be plugged into a supportive community of people from a similar minority really, because there's a big gay community in London, there's also obviously very strong ethnic communities in London. If however you're victimised in Stoke on Trent, then the chances are you're going to very, very alone, 'cause Stoke on Trent is a very predominantly white area, it's also an area which has been subject to really serious economic decline, so there's a lot of resentment by working class white people there who tend to feel very racist 'cause they feel that black people are getting a better deal with housing, which of course they're not. But that's how they feel. And it's also a community where there's a very, very small and very fragmented LGBT community as well. So if you're homophobically victimised there, the chances are you won't have very much to draw on in terms of resources from the local gay community 'cause there isn't much really. So there are quite ... I don't think there are big differences in the experience of hate crime, but there are big differences in the extent to which you can get support and help afterwards.

RR: And tell me about the differences that you found when you looked at race hate crime and homophobic hate crime, do you want to talk a little bit about that?

PD: Yeah, I think one of the most significant things about homophobic hate crime is that people don't have family support normally as a way of dealing with it. Whereas people who experience racist crime or if they're disabled and they're being harassed or something, they will normally have family support. But very often for a lot of gay people who experience hate crime, families can actually be part of the abuse really and I think that's significant and that emerged a little bit in the Victim Support research, although not very much. But that has emerged as a very strong theme in my research and in particular that's very applicable to black gay men who tend not to be supported by their families in the way that white gay men might. So I think there is an element of double victimisation for black gay men. I don't know whether that accords with your personal experience, but it's certainly something that most of the black gay men that I interviewed talked about.

RR: <Pause> So you became Chair of Galop in...

PD: Last year, 2008.

RR: 2008.

PD: Yeah.

RR: Is that when you first joined Galop's Board or had you been involved before that?

PD: No I'd been on the committee since, I think, 2003 actually, so four years, maybe five years, yeah.

<End of Part 2>

RR: OK, for the next chunk I guess I'll just be asking you about Galop as the organisation as it is, since you've been involved on its Board, from 2003 to

now I guess, and what have the main aims of the organisation been and the priorities for Galop in your time?

PD: Yes, the main aim, the overall aim of the organisation hasn't really changed during that period and the aim is to do two things really; it's to combat homophobic and transphobic crime in London and to provide a service to victims of homophobic and transphobic crime. And actually, there are three aims, the third one is to improve the criminal justice system's response in London to victims of homophobic and transphobic crime. And that's always been the purpose of Galop in the last few years. It wasn't originally; Galop was originally setup to monitor the policing of the gay community in London. But as the police have become less oppressive to the gay community its focus has changed more onto combating homophobic crime. So that's pretty much as it was five years ago, I think the main thing that's changed actually in that period is that we've become more proactive around transphobic crime and I think what we've tried to do in the last four years probably is to put the T into LGBT in terms of a proper understanding of transphobia, rather than just a superficial assurance that we provide a service to transgender people as well. We are now trying to deliberately tailor our services more carefully to the needs of transgender people who are victimised. And we've done that through, for example, getting training for staff and management committee members around transgender issues, in trying to recruit transgender volunteers and committee members that we've had some success around, and transgender staff. And as you probably know, for the last few years we've had a transgender project as well where we've got funding to have a worker whose job is about reaching out to transgender communities and providing a better service to them. So that's probably the main change and possibly a slightly, something that we've tried to do perhaps a bit better is to influence the criminal justice system more effectively recently and we've tried to do that through having a very central role on the LGBT advisory group to the police by undertaking more research which is of us to criminal justice organisations and seeing how they can improve their services. For example we completed this filling in the blanks research project very recently where we coordinated data on unreported homophobic crime from several different LGBT service providers in London. And we've done things like have a conference this year as well which we got criminal justice partners to come and speak and participate as well, and we had a minister at that conference and so on. So it's about trying to enhance Galop's reputation as a professional voluntary organisation that produces high standards of research and is able to advise criminal justice organisations effectively on how to improve their engagement with the LGBT community.

RR: You talk about the nature of Galop having changed since its inception in the mid '80s 'til now, do you want to talk a little bit more how that relationship between the organisation and the police and the LGBT community, how those have changed over time from your perspective?

PD: There's a limit to how much I can say about that because I wasn't involved in Galop when Galop was that different type of organisation. But I think it had problems actually. I mean it had problems back in the 1990s where its funding was at risk because the major funder, which I think at the time was the old GLC, the Greater London Council, <pause> or perhaps not, because actually the GLC was abolished in the mid '80s, wasn't it? Or have I got that right? I can't remember now, my memory of history is...

- RR:** I think it was about '86.
- PD:** It was, wasn't it? Yeah h'mmm. Well anyway, a bit after that in the mid '90s Galop did receive London Council's funding, but it was at risk because I think there was a feeling that the organisation wasn't sufficiently in touch with LGBT communities in London and it ended up ... you might know all about this already, but it ended up with I think the whole of the management committee resigning and having a new management committee and a new chair and new staff appointed and so on. And the organisation was re-launched really in the late 1990s and from that point onwards I think a lot more effort has been taken to ensure that it really is representing the needs of the LGBT community in London than it was perhaps in its early iteration.
- RR:** And has there been any change from your days on the phone at London Friend to what you're hearing about homophobic hate crime in London in 2009? Has that changed guise in any way or...
- PD:** I think the change is that the criminal justice system is now concerned about it. Whereas in the early 1980s, if you were a victim of homophobic crime there was no point what so ever reporting it and actually you were likely to get beaten up by the police yourself really <chuckles> if you reported it. And of course that's very different now; there's a very clear commitment by the criminal justice system and by the Government to combating all types of hate crime including homophobic crime and providing a better service. And now there are people around that have had a very good service from the police where the police have investigated the crime very effectively, they've caught the person who's been dealt with, and they provide a good support to the victim. But there are an awful lot of victims that haven't had that experience in the police as well. So basically the police in particular still have a long way to go, they have a lot of improvements that they need to make before they can really be claiming to provide an effective service to the LGBT community nationally I would say, but in London in particular.
- RR:** And what have been the various initiatives that the police have put in place over the years to address this issue?
- PD:** Well their involvement in third party reporting I think is a very good example. Where you can now report what's happened to you without actually going into the police station by talking to a voluntary organisation like Galop or reporting online. Although again, I think the criminal justice system's commitment to that has been inadequate in many ways really. A good example of that is that the police third party reporting portal on the internet has been out of action now for a couple of years. So if you Google homophobic hate crime or reporting homophobic hate crime, you'll get taken to a ... well there's a whole range of websites, but one of those is the Home Office website around hate crime and that will encourage you to report to the police online and then when you get to where you're supposed to fill in your reporting form, it actually says this service is unavailable and it's been like that for a couple of years and I've been trying to put pressure on the police to resolve this and it's all about wrangling between the Metropolitan Police and the Home Office as to whose responsibility it is and who's going to pay for it to be done and they can't reach agreement. So that's a good example really of where a superficial verbal commitment to improving services is not always backed up by the provision of adequate resources to make sure those services really exist. <Pause> And sorry, the other thing in terms of the police, the other really

significant very positive development is LGBT liaison officers and there are about 200 LGBT liaison officers now in London and some of them have got their profiles on Gaydar and they advertise in the gay press and if you want to report a homophobic crime and it's really important to talk to an officer who's probably lesbian and gay, but if not will certainly have an enhanced level of understanding of gay issues, you can ask to speak to an LGBT liaison officer. But if you look their phone number on the Metropolitan Police website, the list of phone numbers is out of date 'cause it's not maintained properly, and with some officers you can't get hold of them if you try to ring them. And you find that their voicemail box is full, so you can't leave a message, or you leave a message on their mobile phone and they don't get back to you. So again, it's an example of where some very good commitments have been made to produce some real improvement but actually it doesn't always work on the ground because the resources are not necessarily in place properly. My research found that LGBT liaison officers waste a huge amount of time hanging around waiting for things to happen, or going to various slightly irrelevant partnership meetings with local authorities who seem to be completely incompetent actually in terms of their ability to address neighbourhood harassment against gay people for example. So LGBT liaison officers are not really half as effective as they could be if they were better organised, better trained and more motivated.

RR: And so long has the LGBT liaison officer been in existence?

PD: Well that role's been around for about ten years now, so it's quite well established. The police ought to be able to make it work better, there's no excuse really for people to not return phone messages, or to have voicemail inboxes that are full all the time. Because if people are vulnerable, if victims are vulnerable and they finally steeled themselves up to report what's happened to them, and the research evidence is that people will be victimised a number of times before they actually get round to report in many cases. If they then actually can't get hold of the person that they've been told is the person that can help them, they're not going to try again. And it's very dispiriting for them and it's an example really of secondary victimisation where more experiences which are victimising happen as a result of trying to do something about your victimisation.

RR: And how does politics play its part in the work that the police are doing in this area, I mean through local authorities, can that effect the service provision from one borough to the next or have there been central governments that have changed the emphasis?

PD: Yeah, I think local politics is very significant actually and I think that the different policies of different boroughs probably does account for some of the patchiness in provision for the fact that in some areas lesbians and gay men and transgender people can actually get a good service. Whereas over the boundary in another borough they get a really poor service. And I think a lot of that is to do with the commitment of the local authority, and there are some local authorities which seem to be notorious of not engaging at all with the LGBT community locally and they will very often have a strong commitment to combating racism, which is great, it's really important that they have that. But they're not interested actually in any of the other diversity strands as a result of that. So they're not doing anything around disability and certainly not doing anything around homophobia. And that means that a hierarchy of discrimination exists where LGBT people get a poorer service than black and

minority ethnic people will get from their local authority if they're being harassed and victimised. And some local authorities have quite overtly homophobic policies where they have grades of response to incidents of neighbourhood harassment for example. So a racist incident locally will be a grade one response where they have to send a housing officer out immediately. Whereas a homophobic incident is a grade two, where the policy is that they will write to the victim or ring or something instead. So there's actually a quite visible and overt homophobia in existence in some local authorities.

RR: And is that challenged in anyway by the organisation of Galop?

PD: Well yes, Galop seeks to challenge that kind of thing. Where we become aware of it then we try to take that up with the local authority concerned.

RR: The next question was about impact of Galop on you, I suppose personally and professionally and on the LGBT community more widely, and the impact of your work with Galop on others. Interpret that as you like.

PD: OK. I think the impact of Galop on the criminal justice system in London is tangible. You can actually see that Galop has made a difference I think and I think the way in which that's evident is in Galop's ability to get through to quite senior police officers if there's a problem. If a homophobic crime isn't being investigated properly, then we've got contacts in the police that Galop staff can ring and get things moving and that wouldn't be possible unless Galop had credibility at a high level with the police service. And the Chief Executive, Debbie Gold, works quite closely with Superintendent Joey Campbell who has responsibility for lesbian and gay, bisexual and transgender liaison officers in London and he and Debbie talk quite a lot really and Debbie can influence his work quite effectively. And Debbie is the Chair of the LGBT advisory group in London too. So Galop has got some very close contacts which are very effective. Another way in which there's a tangible effect is a number of victims of homophobic crime know about Galop and are grateful to Galop for what they've done, either in terms of Galop's campaigning work to improve the criminal justice response, or they've given unsolicited feedback about the quality of service that they've had from Galop. And that's happened to me; I've talked to about 90 gay men in pubs and things over the past year in the course of my research and I've interviewed, done in-depth interviews like we're having now with 26 gay men who've experience homophobic crime. And quite a number of them have said, 'Oh yes I know about Galop, I think the work they do is great,' or 'Oh yeah, I was in touch with Galop and they really helped me.' So we've got definite evidence that Galop is an effective organisation which is very much down to the quality of the staff team I think really. So Galop has a strong influence in London certainly and I feel quite proud of it, as a Chair of the organisation. I don't think I can take much credit for how effective it is, 'cause I think that's down to the staff really. The management committee are there to hold it all together and take responsibility for it and to support the staff and try to give the staff the resources they need, but we can't really take responsibility for the day to day service that Galop provides 'cause that's done by the staff who deserve a great deal of praise really and I feel really proud of the work that they do. So it's a good feeling for me really being Chair. I have to say for me it's very exhausting, because I work, I've got a job, I'm a director of a charity for my day job, I'm also trying to write up my PhD and I'm trying to be the Chair of Galop and in the past some of the previous chairs have not had much involvement really and I think things

have drifted a bit at times. And I'm trying not to be a hands-off Chair, I'm trying to be a lot more involved really to help the organisation along, and I do find that hard sometimes, I find it really hard work actually, and I'm not sure I want to do it for more than a year. I think normally Chairs do two years but I'm not sure that I'd want to do another <chuckles> year of it really. It'd be alright if I wasn't doing the PhD as well, but trying to both those two bits of work as well as my day job is too much really.

RR: So tell me more about the PhD and your...

PD: Yeah, well the title of is Abuse Around Difference; the experiences of gay men, no, I've got that wrong <laughs> ... gay men's experience of hate crime and its policing. And it's about the effects of homophobic crime and racist crime because there is no research evidence at all really about the impact of the interaction of racism and homophobia on black gay men. So that was something that I wanted to find data about and it's quite difficult to recruit black gay men for research project actually, as you probably know being a volunteer interviewer. And I only managed to find six that would have in-depth interviews with me, but that's actually more than more people managed to get. So the research is about how they're affected by hate crime, whether it was homophobic or racist or both, what the issues for them were in terms of deciding whether to report it to the police or not, so what were the thought processes that they went through in deciding whether to report and what the experience of reporting to the police was like, how they were dealt with by the police, what their support needs are, and what the support they got was like for them and how they experienced it, how effective it was, and how effective the service that the police give to gay men in London is. And to do that I spent a few months shadowing some LGBT liaison officers, I went out with them on outreach sessions in gay pubs and things like that. And one night I went out with two officers around the Rose Garden at Hyde Park at midnight on a Saturday which is a cruising area <chuckles>, and it was quite interesting really walking up to people who were cruising saying, 'Do you mind answering a few questions?' <Laughs>

RR: Were they receptive?

PD: They were, they were remarkably actually ... only about one person told me to 'fuck off and go away.' Most people were really actually quite engaged with it. They were suspicious to begin with, but I explained this is a research project about homophobic crime and that their views about homophobic crime, whether or not they had experienced it themselves would be really valuable in this, and it was about trying to improve the police response to homophobic crime in London. And once I'd gone through that with them, most people said, 'Oh yeah I don't mind doing that,' and they were happy to fill in the survey. And I spent a lot of time hanging around in police canteens waiting for something to happen which is I'm afraid what LGBT liaison officers do a lot of the time; they hang around waiting for things to happen and they don't deal with their voicemail messages in the meantime unfortunately, <chuckles> some do, but a lot don't. And the research looks a lot really about how police and local authorities work together over issues like neighbour harassment. And the answer seems to be that they don't really work together very well, largely because of local authorities being so disengaged around homophobic crime. Ironically the police themselves actually get frustrated with local authorities and at local authorities' inertia and inaction over this. And I've come to a lot of conclusions really about how the response of criminal justice

agencies to homophobic crime is based almost entirely on the response that they've had in the past to racist crime, which doesn't automatically transfer easily to homophobic crime, there were different issues around, and family support is one these different issues, because if you're gay, and particularly if you're black and gay, you probably won't have family support. And that makes a big difference to how people survive the experience of sustained regular homophobic harassment in particular actually. It makes it very different if you can't go and talk to your family about what's happening to you. So that's what the research is about.

RR: I found that interesting you going out with the liaison officers to a cruising ground at midnight. But I suppose cruising's always been a bit of a sticking point or particular issue with regards to policing in the gay community over the years; can you talk about that at all?

PD: Well it's a very interesting example really of how things have gone completely full circle, it's a totally different situation. Ten or fifteen or twenty years ago, if you went out cruising on Hampstead Heath or Hyde Park or Clapham Common, you would be on the lookout for the police and if you saw the police you'd have to leave because you would be arrested and very often you'd be ... well the police used to employ what we called 'pretty police.' Young police officers that would go into public loos and entrap gay men by smiling at them or giving them come-on signals so as soon as they got a response they would arrest them for importuning. And that sort of thing used to happen absolutely all the time and it was actually that kind of situation that Galop was setup originally to help with really. Whereas now it's completely the opposite. The police patrol cruising grounds in a way which is to provide reassurance and visibility. Reassurance being to reassure people that the police are there to protect them, and visibility being to send out a message to homophobic people that if they go and pray on gay men and beat them up there, then it's quite likely that they're going to get caught 'cause the police are taking an interest in what's going on there. So it's been a complete revolution actually in the police handling of that and it's very interesting and it's for me, as somebody who was a young gay man 30 years ago who was very wary of the police, to have now had the experience where I'm walking around a cruising area with a couple of police officers who are being friendly to the people cruising there, is an extraordinary experience actually and made me feel quite emotional at the time. I feel quite emotional about it now actually. I think how wonderful that the world can actually change. This does show that through activism and through standing up and being determined to make a difference you can actually change the world, it is possible. We're not all the way there yet, obviously from the things I've said about the inadequacy in the police response to homophobic crime and the fact that there's probably still just as much homophobic harassment around now as there was 30 years ago actually. So we've still got a long way to go. But the fact that we've produced those changes in criminal justice policy and the fact that we now have civil partnerships and an equal of consent and legislation to outlaw discrimination about LGBT people, shows that it is possible to bring about a complete social revolution really. And we all ought to be inspired and encouraged by that fact really; we should never ever give up because we can see that we can produce change. End of speech. <Laughs>

RR: And what will Galop's role be over the coming years in the future, what do you foresee?

PD: I'd like us to be able to spend less of our resources on working with the police. I think the police ought to be able to work without any involvement from Galop at all now. And that's where I'd like us to get to really, where it's no longer necessary for us to be ringing up police officers and saying, 'Why haven't you investigated this particular crime?' And I think we should be involved more in trying to bring about cultural change which I think means working to undermine heterosexist attitudes in society, working to improve the way in which homophobia in schools is challenged, 'cause I don't think it is challenged very effectively now. It's quite wrong that school kids can say things like, 'Oh that's so gay' as a term of abuse. That shouldn't be acceptable but I think it probably is acceptable actually most of the time. So I'd like Galop to be more focused on a social and cultural change and less focused on the criminal justice work really. And I think that we ought to be expanding nationally, so we shouldn't just be London focused, we should be trying to do this work all around the country.

RR: Is the situation with policing different in the regions than it is in London? Obviously the number of LGBT people in London is that much more, but in terms of those advances in the level of service in London, is that also reflected regionally?

PD: To some extent yes, and I think in every police service around the country you'll find that there is a spoken commitment to improving services to LGBT people and in particular to combating homophobic crime. Quite how well that filters down to individual officers in rural areas for example, I think is probably highly variable, and in fact there is some evidence of this. When we were doing the Victim Support research, we found that in one of the fieldwork areas the police had a very specific commitment that if they were called to investigate homophobic or racist victimisation they would treat that as being the issue to be investigated. They wouldn't then start investigating all sorts of side issues around the victim's immigration status for example. Whereas in another area the police weren't able to make that commitment. And we interviewed victims who had had their car window smashed, but when they reported it to the police, the police started asking them about their immigration status and not about the hate crime that had been committed against them. So I would say that in some areas there is a long way to go still in terms of changing police practice on the ground. But interestingly I think it was Stafford Police Service was actually named the most gay-friendly employer last year by Stonewall. You know Stonewall every year do this gay friendly employer thing, and I think the Staffordshire Police actually won it. So obviously some police services outside London are doing the right thing really. It's not very consistent between forces, I think that's the problem.

RR: And does Galop have a position on religious homophobia and does it do any work in that area? Or is that not a priority for you, is that not its remit?

PD: We haven't got a specific project on doing anything about that at the moment. We would support people and we have supported people who've been harassed by religious fundamentalists, whether they're Christian or whatever really, in the past. And I think we've intervened with getting the police to look at people being harassed by religious neighbours and things like that. But we've not done any specific work on that and I don't think we've got anything planned at the moment. It's a small organisation and we have to direct our resources partly in areas where there's the greatest need, but also towards the projects that have actually been funded because we have about six

different funding streams and obviously we have to do the work that those funders are expecting us to do and that's what we have to prioritise.

RR: And what are those at the moment? You say that...

PD: Well one of them is your history project. Another one is the BME project that we've recently finished actually. There's a transgender project which a staff member called Ben is running, which is about providing workshops to transgender people that helps them to resist transphobic victimisation. We've got a new project coming up quite soon being funded by the EHRC on black and minority ethnic issues. We've got ... what else have we got? Oh, and we've got the domestic violence project as well. So those are the main priorities for the organisation at the moment. Most of those have specialist workers and that's why all of Galop's staff, with the exception of the Chief Executive really are all on fairly short term contracts because they're being funded by a particular trust or government local council departments to do a particular piece of work. And that's one of the problems of the organisation actually; we've got very little unrestricted funding. So it's insecure for people all the time really.

RR: Who is Galop's main funder?

PD: Well the main funder's London Councils.

RR: That's your office costs and revenue funding?

PD: It is yes, that's right, and that pays for Debbie's post and I think that also pays for Peter's post as well, he coordinates the shout line and so on. But all the other posts are funded by smaller pockets of individual funding.

RR: OK. I think we've actually covered most of what I've got. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

PD: No, I don't think so. I mean I think this is a great project. I'm really glad that we're doing this piece of work because it's so important to have an archive. I think any kind of social movement needs to be able to look back at the recent past, but also the more distant past as well and to be able to understand where we've come from and what things were like 30 years ago, and what differences happened in a comparatively short space of time, 'cause 20 or 30 years is really a very short period of time. And it's important when there has been a large amount of social change in a short period of time, particularly around a particular issue, like sexual orientation, it's important to be able to understand what's driven those changes, because it's only through understanding the past that I think you can really know where to go in terms of what to do in the future. So it's great that this project is happening and it's really good that you're interviewing some older LGBT people like myself, the over 50s who are going to start dying out over the next couple of decades.
<Laughs>

RR: And so for the researcher that's coming across this sound archive in 30 years time, how would you describe London for the LGBT community in 2009 relative to what might be the future or in other parts of the world I guess and the international outlook on things?

PD: Yeah I think London in 2009 for LGBT people is a place full of a lot of fun, a lot of adventure, a lot of privilege I think really. I think we're very privileged to live somewhere where we do have the degree of acceptance and equality that we actually have. If we were in Afghanistan or something, life would be ... or Iran, life would be so much different really and we're so lucky that we're not there. Even Moscow where gay Pride marchers get arrested and so on, we are so lucky to be here now in 2009 and not to be in any of those other countries or to be in London 150 years ago really. So we ought to thank our lucky stars really and reflect on how fortunate we are that most of us, our lives are not really in danger. With some exceptions, some exceptions like Jody Dobrowski who was killed in a homophobic attack and the people killed in the Admiral Duncan bomb in 1999 and so on. But those are exceptional, they're not the normal thing to happen really. But there are a lot of dangers around in London as well and there are a significant number of LGBT people in London who live a life of misery really as a result of the harassment that they're getting from their neighbours, or from their family. And I worry that they are very invisible, we don't really know who they are, we don't understand the profoundness of what they're going through. And I'd like to think that in 30 years time people in London wouldn't be experienced day-to-day harassment from their neighbours or day-to-day beatings from their older siblings, parents and things, just because they're lesbian and gay or transgender. And I think there's a lot of fear around as well, and there's people who are fearful of other people, the people that look different. People who are homophobically abused in the street won't get support from bystanders because people are fearful about intervening and about saying, 'Are you alright?' Or saying to somebody who's abusing somebody, 'Excuse me, could you stop doing that please?' And I regret that, I regret the fact that there's that level of fear around where people don't, I think very often have a sense of responsibility to their fellow human beings, and I'd like that to change. So I hope very much that in 2039 when I'm in my 80s <laughs> that will have changed. But who knows whether it will or not.

RR: OK, Peter thank you very much.

PD: You're very welcome.

<End of Recording>