



OutStories Bristol - Recording the lives of
lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans
people in Bristol.

Annual Report 2013

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OutStories Bristol aims to

- a) Capture the stories of LGBT individuals, living or associated with Bristol and its surrounds
- b) Capture the stories in written, audio, video or other media
- c) Gather publications and artefacts of the various campaign, commercial, social and support LGBT groups, meeting places and venues, that have come and gone over the years, through existing sources and research
- d) Manage the information gathered
- e) Seek to archive the material in relevant public institutions
- f) Seek to have material displayed by relevant public institutions
- g) Promote the use of the material telling the LGBT story in any form

[OSB Constitution, Section 3]

Membership of the Association

“Membership is open to individuals sixteen years of age and over or organisations that are approved by the trustees. Membership is not transferable to anyone else. The trustees must keep a register of names and addresses of the members.”

[OSB Constitution, Section 8]

Membership at 31st October 2013 was

45	Registered members (43 in 2012)
234	People on the e-mailing list (226)
200	Members of the facebook group (171)

Trustee and officer roles

“The association and its property shall be managed and administered by a committee comprising the officers and other members elected in accordance with this constitution. The officers and other members of the committee shall be the trustees of the association and in this constitution are together called 'the trustees'. The association shall have the following officers: two co-chairs of different gender; secretary; treasurer; web administrator. A trustee must be an individual member of the association. No one may be appointed a trustee if he or she would be disqualified from acting under the provisions of clause 20. The number of trustees shall be not less than five but – unless otherwise determined by a resolution of the charity in general meeting – shall not be subject to any maximum. A trustee may not appoint anyone to act on his or her behalf at meetings of the trustees.”

[Constitution, Section 17]

Trustees in the period since 9th October 2012 were:

	<i>First elected or co-opted</i>	
Andy Foyle	10/10/11	Co-chair 10/10/11
Andy Hole	09/10/12	Osbox Admin 20/08/13
Charlie Beaton	10/10/11	Secretary 10/10/11
Cheryl Morgan	10/10/11	Co-chair
Chris Leigh	10/10/11	Web Admin 10/10/11; Osbox Admin 20/08/13
Donald Branch	18/06/12	Treasurer 18/06/12
Gemma Tiley	09/10/12	
Kim Renfrew	30/08/12	
Paul Taylor	10/10/11	Resigned 18/06/13
Leighton de Burca	Supporter	
Robert Howes	Supporter	

A volunteer who participates in the business of the trustees but does not wish to become a trustee is styled, “supporter”. The supporter has no voting rights and takes no responsibility for the affairs of OutStories Bristol.

Activities in the Period November 2012 to October 2013

1. Trustees

Trustees met on 15th November 2012, 19th February, 16th April, 18th June, 20th August and 15th October 2013.

2. Collections Policy

One of the main remits of OutStories Bristol is to collect documentary material for preservation in the Bristol Record Office for future researchers and students.

The group has achieved the following in this area:

- Drawing up a written collections policy, in consultation with the Bristol Record Office
- Production of various leaflets and flyers to publicise this policy
- Deposit of various collections in the Bristol Record Office, viz:
 - Items collected at Bristol Pride 2010 (73 items)
 - Items collected at Bristol Pride 2011 (55 items)
 - Items collected at Bristol Pride 2012 (19 items)
 - Leaflets and publications collected at launch of LGBT History Month 2013, City Hall, Bristol, 1 Feb. 2013 (24 items)
 - Items collected at Bristol Pride 2013
 - Gay West newsletter (title varies), 1983-2013
 - Amicus newsletter, no. 2-63, 1982-1989 (a few missing issues)
 - Miscellaneous newsletters, leaflets, etc.
 - Records of Bristol Lesbian & Gay Switchboard, 1975-2012

One of the major issues to be resolved is the conflict between the needs of confidentiality and access for research. The Data Protection Act 1998 requires confidential information to be closed for 100 years and this helps reassure potential donors that their material will not be misused. On the other hand, we want to encourage interest in LGBT history and this means that researchers need to be able to consult the material now. We are investigating the possibility of producing copies of important sources in which the confidential information, such as names and addresses, has been redacted, so that the sources can be made generally available.

Once the planned series of Revealing Stories travelling exhibitions is completed, we plan to start a project of writing to local LGBT organisations, inviting them to deposit their newsletters and archives in the Record Office.

Robert Howes, 22 September 2013

3. Oral History Team

During 2012 OutStories Bristol established a team of volunteers to collect the stories of people living in or associated with Bristol and the surrounding area. Volunteers were recruited first by publicity in the LGBT History Month Programme of 2012 and following a series of preparation sessions attended a one-day training course delivered by a professional oral historian, Julia Letts, accredited by the Oral History Society for the purpose. This preparation resulted in ten active interviewers meeting and recording the stories of forty-eight people using British Library recommended equipment paid for by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Following each interview, the interviewee would decide on the level of consent appropriate to them with regard to subsequent use of the recording. Then the interviewer would provide them with an audio copy and compile a summary to accompany the recording into the OSB and M Shed archives. Work is about to begin on creating an anonymous version of the summary and the audio recording so that the material can be made more widely available without infringing anyone's confidentiality. Grateful thanks is due to the ten volunteers and in particular those with particular roles – Charlie Beaton (contacting potential interviewees), Gemma Tiley (managing audio recordings), Janet Fitzgerald (managing correspondence) and Kim Moody (managing summaries).

4. Osbox

OutStories is accumulating a lot of digital information and some is confidential, for example, the oral history interviews we are conducting. Holding this information on personal PCs does not provide acceptable security, both in terms of ensuring confidentiality or having back-ups in case of data loss. The solution is "Osbox", remote 'cloud' storage for our digital files. It uses one of the largest data storage services in the world, Amazon S3, and is accessed via any internet connection. Log-in rights are given to those who actively contribute to OutStories' work or require access to our records and archives. It has a sophisticated system of permissions so that each user only sees the files they require – and are denied access to confidential information unless they have a 'need to know'. Osbox has taken over six months to set up by Chris Leigh and Andy Hole (both had to learn the software from basics) however it is now operating and will soon hold over 100GB of data – audio recordings, digital photos, scanned documents and our administrative records.

5. Web-site and social media

Our website "outstoriesbristol.org.uk" is the principal point of contact to the group. It details our aims, activities, events and news, and also provides brief articles on significant LGBT people and places associated with Bristol and the surrounding area. Website 'hits' reflect group activity with about 800 during an average month and peaking at over 2000 during February 2013 ('Revealing Stories' exhibition at M Shed).

The website is maintained by two people: Andy Foyle (editor) and Chris Leigh (website administrator). Its design and appearance was much enhanced at the end of 2012 thanks to the graphic skills of Drew Rose. Regrettably the website content

has developed little during the last year. It is our intention to resume development of the website during the coming year and add audio clips from some of the oral history interviews, more photos, scanned documents and new or expanded articles on Bristol's rich LGBT history.

Our Facebook page "www.facebook.com/outStoriesbristol" provides a more informal forum for news and discussion and currently has over 200 members. Many thanks to our regular contributors and to Andy Foyle, editor and most prolific post writer.

Thanks also to Mark Small who at the end of 2012 initiated our Twitter presence "www.twitter.com/OutStoriesBris" and then volubly tweeted about Revealing Stories.

Our website and social media are critical to our reach in the wider world. At present they are too dependent on the efforts of one or two people and it is our intention to expand our contributors. Everyone is welcome to help develop the website or submit articles and material.

6. Events

Celebrating Age Festival, 29th June 2103

OutStories Bristol set out our stall at the Celebrating Age Festival in June 2013, as we have done for the past few years. Although many visitors do not see us as relevant to them, there is sometimes a sense of surprise that we are present and occasional expressions of approval. Several professionals from other stalls took away information which they felt might be of interest to their LGBT clients.

Pride Bristol, 13th July 2013

OutStories Bristol also had a stall in the community tent at Pride Bristol on Castle Park displaying one panel of Revealing Stories, where a large number of questions were answered and new contacts made. For our gallant volunteers, it was a long hot day in the unventilated marquee.

LGBT History Month February 2013 – OSB-organised events

Launch of Revealing Stories Exhibition at M Shed by Lord Mayor, Cllr Peter Main
Talk by Neil Bartlett – writer director and performer, M Shed
Cycle tour by Gemma Tiley, "Buildings associated with John Addington Symonds"
Talk by Diana Souhami – biographer, Bristol Central Library
Talk by Cheryl Morgan, "Michael Dillon – the man who invented transsexuals", M Shed
Tour of Revealing Stories at M Shed with British Sign Language interpretation
Walking tour by Andy Foyle, "LGBT associated sites in central Bristol"
Talk by Robert Howes, "From Scandal to Domesticity: cartoon images of homosexuality", BCL
Talk by Jack Wolf, "Literary Trans-gressors", M Shed
Walking tour by Robert Howes, "LGBT associated sites in central Bath"

7. Revealing Stories

OutStories Bristol's major outward activity in 2012-13 was the Revealing Stories exhibition, covering local LGBT history from roughly the 1930s to the present. It was funded by a grant of £20,300 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, with additional grants from Gay West, Wizard's Tower Press and Bristol Library Service. The centrepiece was an exhibition at M Shed (February 2 – March 17). The project took 19 months from inception to the M Shed opening, and thousands of hours of work. About 90 volunteers contributed, with a core team of c.15 people. Fourteen text panels were displayed with about 45 objects in four glazed cases. Among the objects were loans from the London School of Economics and Bristol University's Feminist Archive. Several artworks were loaned, and a set of three portraits of Bristol LGBT activists was commissioned from the Bath artist Malcolm Ashman.

"It made me laugh, sad and angry in equal measure."

"Lovely display - made me feel proud of our Bristol history."

"Absolutely beautiful, thought provoking exhibition. There should be more like this. As an academic working in this field, I particularly appreciated the emphasis on history and use of the archives. Thank you. You made my day!"

"Brilliant exhibition. Very interesting, charting the change of attitudes since I was young. Particularly moved by the testimonies from younger people who have a freedom of expression I could never have had."

Key outcomes

- Estimated 18,000 visitors attended the exhibition at M Shed
- Feedback was overwhelmingly positive and many non-LGBT visitors expressed approval
- The project was delivered on time and roughly £2,000 under budget; this was mainly achieved by several significant donations of equipment or professional services which we had budgeted to pay for, and by changes in the project delivery enabling savings eg in the design and printing of text panels.
- Revealing Stories was discussed at some length by Stephen Williams MP during a Parliamentary debate on the Marriage Equality Act in February 2013 (see below). Subsequently Maria Miller, Minister for Women and Equalities, extended a visit to tour the exhibition and meet some of the project team and curators.
- Pupils from four schools (aged roughly 13-17) contributed to the content and some created responses to other gallery exhibits in M Shed with hidden LGBT meanings.
- Forty-two oral histories recording the lives of local LGBT people were made. These recordings are now in Bristol Museums' permanent collection.
- The accompanying programme of events during LGBT History Month 2013 included talks by authors, a tour of the exhibition with British Sign Language translation for deaf and hearing-impaired visitors and a guided walk of LGBT history in the city centre, also with a BSL signer.

- Key relationships were established with staff at the Museum and Bristol Record Office. These are a central element in our ongoing activity and we are already in discussion about future activities.
- Some items loaned for the exhibition were subsequently donated to M Shed's permanent collection, such as Dale Wakefield's dining table at which Bristol Switchboard first operated c. 1975-8.
- The professionally trained oral history team plans to continue recording memories from our growing list of subjects.

Bristol West MP Stephen Williams said in Parliament of Revealing Stories:

"It tells the stories of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people in Bristol over the last half century, and it begins with the story of Oliver, a 55-year-old partner in a firm of solicitors, who in 1963 was found guilty of gross indecency and sentenced to three months in prison or a fine of £40. It reveals all the trials and tribulations of that half-century, the ups and downs, and the way in which the experiences of gay people in Bristol have changed during that period."

Asking MPs to support the Marriage Equality bill, he said:

"It makes one think about one's own place in history ... I was born in 1966, when homosexuality was still without the law and a criminal offence. During my life we have seen much progress, but it has come in fits and starts and has not always been easy."

Revealing Stories beyond Bristol

From the first concept it was agreed we should broaden the audience for Revealing Stories by showing it at other locations outside Bristol. To this end the text panels (but not the objects) have been exhibited at Bath Central Library in August 2013, Yate Library in September and Weston-Super-Mare Library in October. The audiences here were undoubtedly smaller but the events were significant in terms of symbolic presence and as a milestone in the subject matter covered by those organisations. The Yate exhibition was incorporated in South Gloucestershire Council's Discover Festival and the opening was accompanied by a talk from OutStories members. Planned future showings of the exhibitions panels include the new Southmead Hospital and possibly the University of the West of England.

8. Heritage Lottery Fund

The Heritage Lottery Fund was supportive from the first of the concept of an LGBT History exhibition in Bristol. Similar projects were funded previously in Plymouth and Cardiff. Pre-application discussions were guided and pre-approval gained for the concepts and rough shape of the formal bid for Revealing Stories, which took nine months to produce. The bid was successful at the first pass. Progress reports as required have kept the HLF informed throughout the project.

The HLF was able to showcase our project via two representatives present during Maria Miller's visit in February 2013 as an example of LGBT inclusivity and community development supported by HLF funds. The HLF Regional Director expressed his support and appreciation for the work that had been done. It is particularly unusual for such a community project to be delivered under budget, for which we would like to recognise the hard work and unpaid hours by so many volunteers that have made it possible.

The HLF is now encouraging us to seek further funding on the understanding that a future project should be designed to build on the achievements made so far. Any such bid would be made easier by our existing experience and the relationship which now exists between us and the HLF.

9. Partnership with staff of M Shed and Bristol Record Office

Valuable partnerships and trust have also been built with Bristol Museums Service, especially with Catherine Littlejohns, our curatorial mentor and partner at M Shed, the Exhibitions Programme Manager, Phil Walker, and the Education team. The project was a success for them and became the prototype for M Shed's development of a model for public exhibitions based on community partnerships. We have already participated in a training day for museum staff to communicate the lessons of *Revealing Stories* and museum-community partnership. A similar learning and feedback meeting took place in October 2013 between a representative from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, museum staff and *OutStories Bristol*. The PHF sponsors the *Our Museum* programme, helping museums to reflect local needs and include communities in decision making and development of skills.

Julian Warren has been our main liaison at Bristol Record Office throughout *Revealing Stories* and has contributed invaluable work and suggestions to improve and refine the exhibition. He continues to act as ad-hoc advisor on all things related to archives, and has been invaluable in the delicate negotiations required to get certain LGBT group archives deposited with Bristol Record Office for permanent preservation.

10. Thank you

And, for their invaluable contribution that made it happen, thank you to trustees, supporters, key volunteers (Chris Webb, Eugene Byrne, Janet Fitzgerald, Mark Small, Paul Bradley Cong and five others) and key partners (Catherine Littlejohns and Julian Warren).

The Next Chapter – plotting the future of OutStories Bristol

Trustees arranged a members' meeting on 23rd July 2013 to review progress and make recommendations for future activity. This is a summary of the points arising.

OSB achievements

- 4 ½ years existence
- Core of trustees and active members
- Facebook 175 and email followers (approx 300)
- Creation of website
- Revealing Stories at M shed in Feb and March 2013
- Achieved audience of 15-18,000 in 6 weeks – exposure and recognition – building relationships – Council, museum, record office
- Second phase – taking exhibition to surrounding area
- Objects in Bristol Museum and BRO permanent collections – plus some that don't qualify that we will keep for now

OSB current weaknesses

- Greater recognition – audience penetration
- More involvement of wider membership
- Building membership – publicity
- Lack of representation of Bi people and ethnic minorities
- Need more younger people, more older people (70+)
- Networking with other LGBT history groups and national LGBT history groups (10s of other groups)
- Raising money

From the proposals, what could we be working on now?

- Putting oral-history transcripts on-line
- Doing more oral-history recording – developing means of presenting material to the public
- Fundraising – HLF, match-funding
- Charging (small amount) for events to raise revenue
- LGBT HM 2014 – Music – 50s/60s club night – venue, lindyhop classes etc.

What are OSB's next steps?

- Getting input from BRO and M Shed
- Seeking feedback from wider membership on proposals
 - Connecting with relevant organisations (Category "A" in the Appendix)
 - Finding people with LGBT history OSB should target (Category "B")
 - Researching archives – BRO and libraries (C)
 - Delivering projects in pursuit of the aims of OutStories Bristol (D)
 - Arranging events (E)
- Considering members' feedback and partners' input to shortlist
- Choosing future project(s)
- Inserting OSB in city calendars.
- Presenting OSB options

End-of-Report

Appendix

This is the categorised and sorted list of ideas generated in the members meeting held 23rd July 2013 at City Hall, Bristol.

- A. Infrastructure – connecting with relevant organisations to network/connect with (A will often lead to B)
- B. Infrastructure – finding groups of people with LGBT history we need to target
- C. Research archives – on-going background tasks – archival research (BRO/libraries) – may feed into many projects or delivery media
- D. Delivering projects in pursuit of the aims of the Association
- E. Arranging

A	Exchange programme with other LGBT history groups
A	Find target 70+ group via Care homes, social services orgs caring for.
A	Working with educational institutions (school, college, uni), freedom youth,
A	Link with academics studying LGBT history
A	Coalition with pressure groups to keep loos open (Older Peoples Forum)
A	Maintain links to oral history society
A	Contact alumni – presence at reunions
A	LGBT History Month Launch invite (Music theme in 2014)
A	Face to face things – eg working with groups of people, (pink herrings, or others for an evening – Members, Indigo, Lions, halcyon)
A	(Lions...) Contact groups with LGBT networks – Lloyds, UB, UWE, KPMG
A B	Presence in other peoples' events ("gate-crashing")
A B	Target organisations used by our research target audiences (the underrepresented groups eg 70+)
A B	Capture the experience of recent arrivals (immigrants, asylum seekers, students + YP), minority ethnic, religious
A B	Bristol Post – appeal to over 70s
B	Contact organisations asking to give their records to BRO
B	Children of LGBT parents – record their stories
B	ALSPAC (Children of the 90s) – could we work with them?
B	Keeping accessibility at the forefront (BSL, other disabilities?)
B C	'Relationship recognition' project – (spinoff from legalisation of same-sex marriage) – recording views – how people felt when the Bill passed?
B C	Target people with key stories eg. BnB court case couple
C	Oral history interviews on-going
C	Study of 'meeting places' – earlier centuries – taverns and graveyards
C	Pre 20 th century project – using BRO archives
C	"Cottaging and cyber-cottaging"
C	Write a political history of how local council/party politics re LGBT people have changed/not changed?
C	John A Symonds and boyfriend (Willie Dyer)
C	Local press' attitude to LGBT stories

C	LAGNA visit, start researching national 'Bristol' stories
C	Group visits to places...flash-mob style
C	Establishment of research team (with BRO) – regular meets (Central Library)
C	Mental Health and its impacts on LGBT people
D	Interpreting oral history interviews – something other people can read – accessible
D	Publish a book!
D	Make Oral History transcripts accessible
D	Publishing what we've already got (eg film on youtube channel)
D	Create Know Your Place overlay of LGBT sites
D	Expanding our online presence across the board
D	Create a Bristol Museum of LGBT History
D	Produce Annual Report (on-going)
D	Increase twitter presence
D	Video – Matthew White? Christian Aldridge? My Transsexual Summer, uni student film units, City Council Film
E	On-going talk programme
E	WW1 themed project(s)
E	Develop guided tours
E	Pride Week bus tour
E	Develop programme for next Feb (LGBT History Month), IDAHO day (17 th May)
E	Fundraising Events
E	Jumble Sale
E	Online events
E	facebook - regular focussed discussion events: 'do you remember xxx??'
E	Social events (fun) (fundraising raffle)
E	Creative projects (not just documents and reports)
E	50s/60s club night – recreate Calypso/Moulin Rouge