

On Queer Street¹

Matt Cook

Queer urban life has changed dramatically in England over the last fifty years. Economic, occupational, cultural and attitudinal shifts, burgeoning mass culture – latterly fuelled by the internet and smart phones - have all played their part in this. But, as I show in this chapter through an exploration of Brighton and Manchester, both well-known queer hubs, and Leeds and Plymouth which were much less so, this happened in different ways in different cities. Industrial decline may have had a resonant impact on Manchester and Leeds, for example, but they were also queerly distinct because of variance in local council strategy, policing, activism and counterculture. Brighton and Plymouth on the south coast were different again and again from each other. Their respective distance from London and their different coastal economies - anchored in the service sector on the one hand and the docks and navy on the other - fostered divergent queer cultures. Partly because of the ban on homosexuality in the military until 2000, Plymouth's vibrant underground scene functioned below the proverbial radar long after the 1967 Sexual Offences Act. In Brighton, meanwhile, there was already by the time of that supposed watershed a much-touted visibility which in the 1970s became the hallmark of wider gay liberationist politics.

Despite shared co-ordinates relating to legal change, the AIDS pandemic, and European and transatlantic pulses in activism, culture and counterculture, LGBTQ scenes and identities thus had a different cadence in each of these places because of particular local geographies, demographics, economies and inflections of local, regional, national, ethnic and other identifications. If the call to 'come out' was articulated loudly nationally and internationally, it was taken up very unevenly in these different cities. This, I would extrapolate, was the

case for other English cities too, and, of course, for cities in the other nations of the UK where further factors came into play - including the different legal regimes of Scotland and Northern Ireland and the sectarian divisions in the latter.²

‘Queer’ is useful in my discussion in an embracing and umbrella sense, and to denote places, lives and behaviours which didn’t neatly sync with now familiar LGBT categories.³ I nevertheless try to avoid using queer too magisterially and in a way that flattens or obscures those divergent identifications and the ways in which they were experienced differently in Manchester, Leeds, Brighton and Plymouth. I meanwhile selected these particular cities because they fall within the same national jurisdiction, because of distinct parallels between them (some of which I’ve already indicated), and more pragmatically because of the extent of local LGBTQ community history work in each place, which, along with interview and archival work undertaken by myself and the ‘Queer Beyond London’ project team, forms the bedrock of this chapter.

Manchester

The population of Manchester was falling in the 1970s as its manufacturing base declined and a programme of slum clearance took effect. 544,000 people lived in the city itself in 1971, a drop of 80,000 from 1961. The population fell by a further 90,000 by 1981 before gradually recovering to roughly the 1971 figure by 2021 under very different economic conditions. The wider Greater Manchester region meanwhile maintained a more consistent population of c.2.7 million, including some of those who left the central parts of a city apparently in decline. Others moved in, however. Afro-Caribbean immigrants settled in the inner south suburbs from the later 1950s and the number of students doubled from c.12,000 in 1961 to 24,000 a decade later in line with the national trend.⁴ These incomers contributed to a burgeoning youth culture in the city centred on dance halls, shebeens and all-night cafes,

which were, according the *Bolton Evening News*, “hives” of “moral decadence”.⁵ A queer scene developed alongside and overlapped with some of these places. It was brought to wider visibility during the sixties by particularly aggressive policing which came with the appointment of John McKay as the new chief police officer in 1959.⁶ Landlords and punters from the Rembrandt, “a country pub in the city”,⁷ and the more working-class New Union, both on Canal Street in the southern part of the city centre, found themselves in court on various indecency and licensing charges. These and other venues were mapped in local press coverage as a result, flagging the existence of a nascent queer scene as surely as the dangers associated with it.⁸

The intense police activity and press interest in part explains the stridency of queer community here. Luchia, who arrived from Ireland as a teenager in the mid-1960s, described a working-class community of queers, queens, lesbians, drag queens and sex workers tightening at the New Union at this time. “We had to t[ake] care of ourselves”, she said. “As [our numbers] got bigger we got bolder and we would step out together onto Canal Street with our drinks”. “Queens” would stand “at each end guarding us” – and were “vicious” against the queer bashers.⁹ The North-Western Homosexual Law Reform Society (later the Campaign for Homosexual Equality [CHE]) also emerged from this febrile context in 1966, with founder Alan Horsfall regularly decrying the targeting of “homosexuals” in his letters to the local and national press.¹⁰

Lesbian and gay organising at the start of the 1970s - in a campaign of kiss-ins and slogan painting on city centre railways bridges, for example - has been understood locally as an extension of this queer push back and also of the city’s longer radical lineage of Peterloo and the Pankhursts. Paul Fairweather, Manchester City Council’s first gay officer (from 1984, and another radical local initiative), suggested that this Mancunian history and tradition underpinned a particular sense of solidarity and an “upstart” queer scene, “large enough to

have lots going on” but, unlike London, small enough to be socially and politically networked and “completely manageable”.¹¹

Several pubs and clubs endured from the 1960s and there were some new venues. Subversion at the Polytechnic Student Union bar on Aytoun Street near Piccadilly Station was especially popular. It provided an “alternative” to what some “superior and patronising” gay activist students ‘would call ‘the straight gay scene’”.¹² So said Gay, a member of the nearby Grassroots Books collective (and who we will meet again later in Plymouth), and who also remembers Subversion for its “really wide mixture of people [and] quite a lot of group dancing”. “It was a safe place”, she said, “of which there weren’t that many in Manchester at this point.”¹³ There were then central venues like Paddy’s Goose, Tommy Ducks and Blooms Hotel which were nominally regular bars but popular with queer and trans people. “If I went to The Goose [on a Wednesday], I’d be sure to find some other trans people to spend the evening with”, said Jenny-Anne, who felt anchored in the city in the seventies and eighties as a result of these places and a trans support group running out of the university chaplaincy on Oxford Road.¹⁴

In the inner suburbs of Hulme and Moss Side, meanwhile, Afro-Caribbean shebeens were often easy-going venues for late night and after hours drinking in these years. “It was a sort of class thing”, said Paul. “They were very rough actually. [But] people were ok about lesbians and gay men being there. We wouldn’t have gone had we not felt relatively safe, really. A bit of a sense of commonality against the police, I suppose.”¹⁵ These places, like the lesbian private members clubs on Oldham Street on the opposite side of the centre, came and went as “the police came and closed you down”. They would set up elsewhere, though, and “you just went and joined another club, as happened many times”.¹⁶ Judith’s words resonate with an oft repeated narrative of resilience amongst queer Mancunians – what a more recent club promotor described as “a give it a go spirit; a bravado that had some substance”.¹⁷

In the early 1980s the area around Canal Street was still “full of cotton workers by day and prostitutes by night”, according to the former landlord of the Rembrandt. Thereafter “the warehouses emptied and only the prostitutes were left”.¹⁸ Unoccupied buildings here and in what is now known as the Northern Quarter (the area around Oldham Street) provided openings for the punk, indie and rave scenes, with music and bands like The Buzzcocks and The Smiths often pushing at conventional machismo and tacitly and more explicitly suggesting some scope for sexual and gender difference.¹⁹ The Hacienda on Whitworth Street (1982 to 1997) hosted iconic queer club Flesh from 1991 to 1996 and fusing out there “Madchester” with camp flamboyance.²⁰ Transwoman Kate suggests it was “the queers [who] kick started cool clubs in Manchester” at a time when the population of the city was at its low point, rents were cheap and city centre living didn’t yet have a wider appeal. “The only people who seemed to live in town were queer. [...] We didn’t even have a supermarket ... there was something about not just moving to Manchester but living in the centre of it. We didn’t want to have to get taxis. We just wanted to be right in it, and be it, be part of it”, she said.²¹ In this context venues with a new style began opening. The first, in 1990, was the plate glass fronted Manto on Canal Street. It was modelled on bars in Paris and Barcelona to “introduc[e] a bit more sophistication” to the scene (though punters initially crowded upstairs to avoid being in full view; the risks of exposure were still very real for many).²²

Proactive council support for lesbians and gays had come with a change in the leadership of Manchester City Council’s Labour group in 1984.²³ The council helped foster the development of Canal Street by introducing flexible licensing for pubs and clubs, pedestrianisation and new lighting and street furniture. They also funded the gay centre (on Bloom Street just adjacent to Canal Street until 1988 and then in a purpose-built venue a fifteen-minute walk to the south) and established dedicated (though separate) gay and lesbian committees and officers to the council structure. No surprise, perhaps, that Manchester hosted

the UK's largest anti-Clause 28 protest in 1988, organised partly from a secretly allocated office in the town hall. The event flagged to a much wider audience Manchester's queer credentials - including the nascent "village" around Canal Street which was rapidly becoming the hub for city centre warehouse apartment living, bar and club-based socialising, and AIDS-related community fundraising and support. The new potential of the pink pound was especially evident here (though the 1996 Phoenix lesbian and gay shopping mall foundered; it was the night-time economy that was flourishing).²⁴ "Queer as Folk", the landmark Channel Four series of 2001, cemented the village's place on a queer cutting edge for much wider audiences and the city tourist office was soon promoting it alongside "curry mile" and other newly defined urban "quarters".²⁵ Paul would travel here from Leeds: "You could be just who you are. It was the excitement of going to Manchester where you could hold hands with your partner and kiss him in public in the gay village." Cerydwen, also from Leeds, found it "liberating ... exciting to have such a place" where there was at least a couple of lesbian venues and nights alongside the majority that were gay male. Jo contrasted the "bright lights" of gay Manchester with "parochial Plymouth".²⁶

The village has been criticized for being an exclusionary ghetto; for being too commercial, too young, too white, too straight, too gay; for not being queer enough.²⁷ And, partly as a result, it provided a spur to an alternative in the 2000s, associated especially with the Northern Quarter and harking back to earlier music, queer and drag scenes. This scene traded frequently on ideas of local working class, industrial and radical authenticity rather than the Euro-American trends which were seen to dominate in village venues. It pushed boundaries in terms of music, performance, and what it meant to queer (the more frequently deployed term on this alternative circuit).²⁸ The gay village nevertheless maintained its status as a place of socialising, community and remembrance. The bars and clubs, etched out of former industrial buildings, were still busy and were a tourist draw. The new LGBT

Foundation and its support services opened here in 2002, and across the canal in Sackville Gardens memorials were erected in memory of those lost to AIDS and to transphobic violence; a statue of wartime code breaker Alan Turing (1912–1954) was unveiled here in 2001.²⁹ This part of the city still retained a distinctive sense of Mancunian queerness - a fusion of industrial working-class heritage and nostalgia, of local authority and civic support, of community solidarity and stridency, and of large-scale partying.

Leeds

Like Manchester, Leeds underwent a major economic and occupational shift in the second half of the century. The number of people working in clothing and textile manufacture fell by nearly a half between 1951 and 1971 to 40,000. This figure dwindled further to just under 2,000 by 2011. The resident population was steadier than Manchester, though, fluctuating between 715,000 and 750,000 people between 1971 and 2021 (aside from a dip to 696,000 in the 1980s during the recession and the marked wider appetite in this decade for suburban rather than urban living). There was plenty of scope here as in Manchester to live near to but beyond the city limits - with hinterland towns and cities like Bradford, Wakefield, Halifax and Huddersfield forming with Leeds the fourth largest conurbation in the UK with a population hovering around 1.8 million.³⁰ Despite these parallels, there were nevertheless significant differences between queer lives and scenes in Leeds and Manchester - and not least in a pull away from, rather than into, the city centre here.

In 1968 an expose in the national *People* newspaper described queer goings on at the Hope and Anchor pub near the station on the south side of the city centre. There was same-sex dancing, a butch-femme couple “sitting quietly together”, a mock marriage ceremony and a fashionably but “not outrageously” dressed man who was having electric shock therapy to “correct” his “deviant’ desires”. Another punter, Jane, arrived at and left her work at a local mill (probably one of those just across the River Aire) “before everyone else because they

ridicule him [sic] so much”. At the Hope and Anchor, though, she was able to request her” and “she” as pronouns, and, like the others, Jane felt “at home” here under the watchful eye of a landlady who was “like a mum” to them (rather like the protective straight couple who ran the New Union in Manchester). *The People* journalist described the customers as “distasteful” and cited Lord Arran’s 1967 appeal to homosexuals to behave “with dignity” after the partial decriminalization of homosexuality in that year. This kind of pub might be expected “in sinful Soho or permissive Paddington”, he wrote, ‘but not in “the homely Yorkshire town of Leeds”’.³¹ A week after *The People* article appeared, the Hope and Anchor was ransacked amid running battles between Leeds and Glasgow Rangers football fans. It reopened a year later as the New Penny, a gay bar that has endured – together, initially at least, with a sense of surrounding peril. “There was quite a lot of straight people going round [to the New Penny] to see the freaks”, Roy remembered of the seventies. Ted, a teacher, avoided it because “everybody in the staff room knew about the ‘Bent Penny’; it was in folklore, so it wasn’t a place that nice or respectable people went”. John, who worked at nearby Yorkshire Chemicals, avoiding going out in the city altogether. “I always had to keep a low profile’, he said: ‘If you went around Leeds, you’d be seen and everything would be straight back [to work]. Your job would have been untenable. The attitude to homosexuality was disgraceful”’.³²

Women often felt unwelcome in this area. In the mid-1970s Ruth would get off the train from Wakefield and hang out in the area “sort of looking for like-minded people”. “Most of the people I could see [coming in and out of the pubs] were men”, she said; “there was very little outlet in terms of finding other women”.³³ In particular, she and others found that there was no space in the centre for the “new” feminist politics; landlords apparently preferred less overtly political “gay girls” and “bar dykes”.³⁴ That politics meanwhile underpinned lesbian networks and community developing in the inner north suburbs of

Chapelton and Harehills which had been sparked by the first women's liberation gathering in Linda Street in 1969. This had been fostered by housing that was cheap and sometimes squat-able, and consolidated in anger at the horrific murders by Peter Sutcliffe (the so-called "Yorkshire Ripper") between 1975 and 1981 and at the misogyny which laced the press and police response.³⁵ There was a significant separatist strand here, with women working, socialising, and creating family apart from men, including in artistic and workers cooperatives, in large shared houses in Sholebroke Avenue, and at regular discos and fundraisers in rooms above pubs and in community centres.³⁶ Some looped local reggae bars into their social circuit in this Afro-Caribbean area - and often with a sense of solidarity because of the particularly active neo-fascist groups in the city.³⁷ "The [National Front] was something that brought a lot of people together [in opposition]", said Yvonne. "Really the only people who supported our community were the Black community and the only people who supported them were us and so like a very close link developed in the seventies, *ad hoc*, not official", she said.³⁸ When Gay Pride was switched from London to Huddersfield in 1981 (to protest against escalating police activity against gay men in what had previously been a fairly convivial queer hub), marchers travelled into nearby Leeds after the march to join the 20,000 people gathered in Harehills' Potternewton Park for the Northern Carnival Against Racism.³⁹

Ajamu, as a young then bisexual Black man, likewise found community in Harehills and Chapelton rather than in the city centre (he felt objectified in the New Penny and under physical threat from drinkers at the nearby National Front pub, The Whip). He was part of a small group of Black queer men and women who met every Sunday in each others' homes in these suburbs "for food and a chit-chat". This felt safer than going out and was also more discreet given that several were negotiating expectations of nearby family (unlike the local lesbian community who had often specifically moved away from kin). Ajamu sometimes also

went out to Chapeltown's shebeens, like the ones in Spencer Place, which "were kind of diverse and bigger" and where "you could think: 'oh, maybe they might be a sex worker, they might be queer'. It was a mix of Black folks in these spaces. ... I'd hear rumours and you then go to the club and see [that particular person] and give a smile."⁴⁰ Ajamu, Yvonne and many others found such queer and queerly tinged venues and communities mainly beyond the city centre, and in Huddersfield, Bradford, Hebden Bridge, York, and further afield in Sheffield and Manchester. The result was a decentred network offering multiple opportunities for sex, socializing and activism in years when the centre of Leeds was felt by some to be too dangerous, reactionary or depoliticised.

Things began to shift in the late 1980s when lesbian-initiated action against Clause 28 drew gay men to the kind of joint campaigning that had waned here in the early seventies. Cerydwen remembers "walking with men for the first time We were talking about joint efforts about being lesbian and gay, that was new and scary."⁴¹ There was also more heterosocial socialising, including at the biannual Victor-Victoria costume balls, which were "huge events ... significant not just in their scale ... but because they were with men," Jude said.⁴² The Pink Picnics held annually on Woodhouse Moor from the early 1990s were similarly mixed, as were the growing number of social, sports and arts groups and projects across the city.⁴³

The area around the New Penny was meanwhile beginning to gentrify. City centre living was becoming generally fashionable again and new and converted warehouse apartments in this area near the station appealed especially to those who were travelling to and from London for work as Leeds developed from a centre of manufacture to a hub for legal and financial services.⁴⁴ New bars and restaurants followed as did somewhat more mixed gay venues like Queen's Court and Bar Fibre. The more male-dominated Viaduct tapped the glass-fronted trend of Canal Street in Manchester and Soho in London; if punters

at the Hope and Anchor / New Penny in the 1960s and 1970s feared being spotted, the trend now was for a proud visibility. This didn't suit everyone: some still needed to be discreet in their queer socialising and others were nostalgic for the shuttered, down-at-heel bars of earlier decades. Leeds' reinvented scene spoke to LGBT identitarianism but sex and desire were still not only understood and experienced in these terms. When the AIDS and sexual health charity MESMAC was established in this part of the city in 1990 it served "men who had sex with men", an approach rejected in Brighton where campaigning was directed specifically at gay men. In ethnically and culturally diverse Leeds it was more common than in Brighton for men to have sex with each other without claiming an associated distinctive or exclusive sexual identity.⁴⁵ A sense of this expansiveness was fostered at nearby Wharf Street Chambers, an anti-capitalist workers' co-operative which began operating in 2012 in a disused hosiery factory, partly in reaction to the local commercialisation of the gay scene. Social and support groups met here and it gained a particular reputation as a welcoming space for trans and gender non-binary people who had previously often felt the need to travel or move from Leeds for community - notably to Manchester where there were longer standing networks and a different if still uneven tradition of inclusivity.

This central part of Leeds was marked out by the rainbow-painted railway bridge and features bars decked in rainbow flags. Pride has been celebrated annually here since 2006, drawing crowds of around 40,000. It has very clearly become Leeds' queer hub again and there is a sense of return in this, even though the shape and dimensions of community have shifted dramatically since the days of the Hope and Anchor in the 1960s. In the years in between Leeds' queer life flourished mostly beyond this part of the city – in the suburbs and satellite towns and through social and political networks converging in community centres, the upstairs rooms of "regular" venues, and people's homes. "The scene was always underground in Leeds", said Ajamu, and as a result for people like Colin, from Plymouth, "if

you said a gay city, Leeds would not have come to mind at all”.⁴⁶ This was to do with geography and demographics, with alternative social, sexual and political scenes, and with a local authority which was supportive but less proactively so than in Manchester. As a result, industrial decline played out differently on queer life here.

Brighton

Brighton and its westerly neighbour Hove were smaller than both Leeds and Manchester, with a combined population of 248,000 in 1971. This also dipped during the recession of the 1980s, before slowly growing again to 277,000 by 2021. If economic downturn bit here too, the difference was that there were not the seismic economic and occupational shifts experienced in the northern cities. The local economy was instead consistently reliant on sole traders rather than big employers; hotels, cafes and shops provided what Alan Berube described as “classic low paid queer work”.⁴⁷ Only 21% of Brighton and Hove’s population worked in manufacturing in 1971 - 10% below the national average and 20% lower than Manchester - and this declined further over the period. More people here were self-employed and in professional, managerial and skilled roles, with a substantial proportion (one in 20 in 1971 and one in 12 by 2011) commuting the 60 miles to office-based jobs in London.⁴⁸ Such work, which expanded exponentially across the post-war period, opened out possibilities for women in particular to have “lifestyles independent of family”.⁴⁹ Commuting separated work from home, sexual and social lives for many Brightonians, further underpinning the onus on pleasure and consumption here.⁵⁰ There was moreover much less of the workplace and union solidarity that in different ways shaped queer experience and currents of feeling in the other cities. Instead the keynote was self-expression and individualism. Brighton Ourstory’s lesbian and gay oral history work from the late 1980s showed this was already evident in the 1950s, but it was elaborated further in the 1960s with the arrival of the University of Sussex (1961),

the new town centre buildings for the College of Arts and Craft (1966), and the inception of the Brighton Festival (1967), which rapidly became the biggest arts festival in England. All this in a compact city, hemmed in by the Channel and South Downs countryside.

Queer life was tangibly woven into Brighton's cultural and commercial fabric. The pub scene in the 1960s, in the area between the piers, was substantial enough to be riven by cliques and snobbery. Grant recalled that "lots of queers would say, 'oh, I wouldn't go into that place, it's frightfully rough and tumble.'" His own queer set went out during the week to avoid the "rouger" "queer blokes" from midland and northern cities who visited at weekends.⁵¹ There was a distinctive style here. Michael found "the quick-witted Brighton queens ... very alarming" when he arrived from Luton in 1960 as a twenty-two year old, and Grant remembered that "colour-wise [in Brighton] it was a bit grotesque ... pink velvet trousers with a green shirt"; "terribly Hawaiian shirts with all sorts of tulle at the neck".⁵² Filk'n Casuals – a saucy fusion of the proprietors' names, Phil and Ken – fed this distinctive look, stocking those bright shirts and their own innovations in tailored underwear (including in leather). There were echoes here of the new fashions emerging from Kings Road and Carnaby Street in London but also – in its campiness – of the earlier Sussex Arts Balls which ran in Brighton in the 1940s and 1950s and were notoriously sequin-strewn and flamboyant. Meanwhile, Aileen, from Glasgow, "could not believe the freedom women had" in the 1960s, including being able to wear "slacks" (trousers) and to visit a barber on St James' street who catered especially to butch women.⁵³

By 1968 the town was "'gayer' than Hampstead" according to one woman who moved here from London (apparently partly for this reason),⁵⁴ and a journalist wrote that in "no other European city is homosexuality so open and apparently so tolerated".⁵⁵ A Gay Liberation Front group formed at the University of Sussex in 1971 with around fifty members and an emphasis on self-

development and fun (with the occasional protest). One of the GLF's first events was a mixed "pop music discotheque with psychedelic lighting" at the Co-op Hall near "hippie" Preston Circus, a mile inland from the seafront. "The overall feeling", the local paper reported, "was one of relaxed enjoyment, natural pleasure in dancing, and lots of laughter." The disco provided an upbeat and community-oriented alternative to what the organizer described as "the extremely sordid atmosphere gay people usually have to put up with" - a tacit critique of the central scene adjacent to the sea front.⁵⁶ Nearby were Unicorn Books, a squatted Women's Centre where the bands Devil's Dykes and Siren rehearsed, and the hippie Open Café which hosted a weekly trans meet-up in the mid-seventies and, from 1974, Brighton's Lavender Line, the forerunner of the local Gay Switchboard. These places, set back from the sea front scene, linked hippie, feminist, left-wing and queer people and causes, helping to make Brighton, to Jim, "possibly one of the easiest places [in the country] to come to terms with an alternative from mainstream identity".⁵⁷ This was certainly political, but the sense of queer ease and possibility in Brighton in these years partly explains why it wasn't urgently so – certainly in comparison to Manchester and Leeds where gays and lesbians were facing especially heavy-handed policing and open violent hostility from the National Front.

A major community survey conducted in 1996 showed that a large number of gay Brightonians had moved here in the eighties because of the town's queer friendly reputation and to escape rising homophobia elsewhere.⁵⁸ A cluster of new bars opened on or around St James' Street just to the east of the earlier scene. The Bulldog, Aquarium and Secrets were all male-dominated, the Queen's Arms more mixed, and the Longbranch more lesbian. Melita was later nostalgic for these venues and this time. It was "really scuzzy, really down-at-heel", she said, but rents were cheap, counterculture and the arts were thriving, and the scene was growing and diversifying.⁵⁹

There was local disdain, though. It was mainly Conservatives who were elected to the council until the mid-1980s and to parliament until 1997.⁶⁰ This was, after all, a town of small businesses and without the kind of strong working-class community and history that energized gay and lesbian, left wing and wider radical politics in Manchester and Leeds. Attempts to make the GLF disco a regular event had been blocked by the council back in 1972;⁶¹ there was push back against the Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE) having its conference in the town in 1979 for fear of a paedophile influx;⁶² and come the eighties the local press and various Conservative councillors eagerly added their voices to the new moralism of the Thatcher years.⁶³ Councillor Blackman wrote in the *Brighton and Hove Leader* that he believed in “live and let live” but that the town “is and always has been vulnerable ... to lunatic fringes spewing their squalid excesses”; he resented “public exhibitions of filth” (in this case the staging of a gay-themed play).⁶⁴ There was not the overt local authority support we saw in Manchester, and the local Labour administration from 1986 was cautious because of the fragility of its majority and uncertainty about wider support for a pro-gay agenda given the confected press outrage greeting radical local authorities like Manchester’s.

Alongside these controversies, AIDS was changing the tenor of queer life in Brighton, and more dramatically than in Manchester or Leeds because of the size of the town and the concentration of cases; rates of HIV rose rapidly to twelve times the national figure here.⁶⁵ Most people (gay or straight) would have known someone who was ill or who had died. Many had lost partners, friends or colleagues; Ken once went to three funerals in one day.⁶⁶ New sites became a regular part of gay life – including doctors’ surgeries, the Royal Sussex and Hove General hospitals, the Sussex Beacon AIDS hospice and respite centre (which opened in 1992 after intensive local fund raising), and Woodvale Crematorium on Lewes Road. What this meant for Brightonians is difficult to gauge; grief, loss, anxiety and

uncertainty play out in multiple and unpredictable ways.⁶⁷ What is clear, though, is that it contributed to a shift in the relaxed tenor of queer life here as people reacted with a particularly strong push “from below” against the relative inaction of the local council and health authority, and in response to the affront of Clause 28 in this town of historic queer ease.⁶⁸ There was a rapid, “phenomenal”,⁶⁹ mobilisation of care and protest in the late 1980s. Brighton Area Action Against Clause 28 (formed in 1988) sparked Brighton Ourstory (which set about recording voices which could be lost or suppressed), Pride (from 1991), and, alongside and throughout, much more concerted activism.⁷⁰

The introduction of anti-retroviral therapy together with legal and wider cultural and political change from the mid-1990s dampened the invective of some local commentators. The *Evening Argus*, which began to dilute its trademark homophobia after a change in editor in 1993, cheerfully announced that the city and council were “the most gay-friendly in England”.⁷¹ The authorities began to celebrate and market the liberalism of the new city of Brighton and Hove (from 2001), especially after the repeal of Section 28 in 2003 which freed the hands of council-employed teachers, librarians and curators to explore and celebrate LGBTQ life. Pride became a city-wide event. Some suggested that the particular sense of queer fun and counterculture in the 1970s or of activist and radical community from the late 1980s was lost with this wider embrace.⁷² For Melita it was Trans Pride (from 2013) that was more “authentic”; “a scrappy little underdog of an event, all acoustic musicians and hand-made banners” reminiscent of gay prides of the early 1990s.⁷³

In part response to the seeming ebb of counterculture, the Cowley Club was launched near Preston Circus in 2003 as a social and resource centre for queer, feminist, trans, ecological, animal and worker activism - not unlike Wharf Street Chambers in Leeds. It was appropriately near the alternative and countercultural venues of the 1970s and at the foot of “Muesli Mountain”, as the studenty Hanover area of the city was now known. Cowley Club

organizers tried to capture the connective political spirit some felt had been lost in the city, not least by choosing to name it after Harry Cowley, a Brighton window cleaner who campaigned for squatting, homeless and anti-fascist causes between the wars and up to his death in 1970. The name, like its location, signalled a reach to the past and for what some saw as a more communal grassroots politics in an increasingly expensive and unevenly gentrifying city.⁷⁴ Gay bars and clubs endured but were less central to the social lives of many queer people in the city given the other LGBTQ-friendly venues that felt safe or safer. Queer history meanwhile energised community organising in projects including Brighton Trans*formed (2014) and Queer in Brighton (2012-14), and found expression in new exhibits in the 2010s at the Brighton Museum (The Museum of Transology [2017-20], Queer Looks [from 2018]) and Queer the Pier [from 2020]) – all drawing heavily on testimonies which tacitly and more explicitly flagged Brighton’s individual and individualising spirit.

Plymouth

Devastated by the air bombardment of 1941, Plymouth was remodelled in the post war years as a self-consciously modern city.⁷⁵ Its centre was depopulated and reconstructed suburbs were zoned for supposedly more convivial family living. You were much less likely here than in Brighton to have a central bedsit a couple of doors down from a queer bar. This reconfiguration was apparently something of a draw. The population grew by 35,000 across the 1960s reaching 239,500 in 1971 – more or less akin to Brighton but less densely packed. The city’s culture and reputation still revolved around seafaring. A full 40 per cent of men, 11 per cent above the national average, worked in public service of one kind or another, largely on account of the military presence. 25,000 people were employed directly in the dockyard or navy in the 1970s and roughly the same again in associated trades. This amounted to just under a quarter of the city’s working population. More people here than nationally were

skilled and semi-skilled, with fewer in the professional and managerial or unskilled social categories.⁷⁶ As a result, many Plymouthians shared a class and occupational background and identity, often aligned with a strong sense of family tradition and culture.

Though there seems to have been tacit knowledge and even quiet acceptance of sexual permissiveness, this abutted a frequently articulated concern with “what the neighbours might think” and a real danger of dismissal or dishonourable discharge from the services if you were found to be gay or lesbian; the ban on homosexuality was not lifted until 2000.⁷⁷ There was a desire and perceived need for Plymouthians carefully to negotiate established local, military and familial expectations in this relatively small remote English city. The landlord of the gay Clarence pub in the Stonehouse area in the mid-90s reported that many of his punters “have been married in the past for 10, 20 or even 30 years and are not out gay ... they were bogged down by peer pressure. It’s not just yourself you have to consider – it’s the stigma you impose on your immediate family,” he said.⁷⁸ The half-hidden scene, at a distance from residential areas, partially enabled such careful navigations. In the late sixties and seventies it was oriented around the discreet backbar of the Lockyer Tavern in the city centre and more diffusely queer clubs and bars along Union Street, which ran from the Devonport dockyard into the city. The Paramount Club, for example, was “squeezed between two pubs” on this street:

You got up to this tall, really tacky room with a tacky bar where they played juke-box music. ... And you got all the services, you got the prostitutes, you got the queer boys, basically the dregs of society ended up there And sometimes you’d get a drunken sailor... saying: “Come ‘ere darlin’, I wanna dance with you!”⁷⁹

Drinking at the Paramount and similar spots like the Long Bar or Diamond Lil’s did not necessarily mark you out as queer. It could be often part of a regular night out for sailors and

“normal” men, who were often also found on what *Gay News* described in 1976 as Plymouth’s “phenomenal” cruising and cottaging scene; Hoe Park (at night) and Lion’s Den (a screened off daytime bathing spot), both on the seafront, were especially notorious in these years. “You have your joke, you muck about, but nothing else”, one seaman told the *Gay News* journalist.⁸⁰

When the landlord turfed the gays out of the Lockyer in 1977, one customer described the loss of “a home”. The Gypsy Moth (later renamed the Yard Arm) took up the mantle, and down the hill in West Hoe Mr Harrys was by now notorious. Peter, from rural Dartmoor just beyond the city, remembers it being mixed gay/straight, men/women: “it had always been very seedy, before it became a gay bar it was a prostitutes bar, you know that sort of place, the water came through the ceiling, the toilets didn’t work, all a bit run down”. Sometimes, he went on, “we had the National Front waiting outside Harry’s and we had to kind of run the gauntlet of all this taunting, people were punched to the ground and stuff”.⁸¹ Though there were plentiful opportunities for sex and socialising, being gay here was risky. At a workshop I ran in the city, a story surfaced of a father who badly beat up his son in the early eighties when he discovered he was gay despite the fact he himself had regular casual sex with men.⁸² In this military, “male-dominated” city there was an especially thin dividing line between the sex men might have with each other and homosexual identities taken up by others which were deemed to be beyond the pale. Such lines were sometimes policed by the kind of violence this father meted out to his son.

Inland, at a distance from Union Street, there was “a big, big gay scene” for women in the early 1980s around the station. Sharon remembered that “we used to ... designate, god, loads of the little pubs around North Road – everyone would kind of gather on a Thursday night. ... So [the landlord would] know we’d all descend on them on whatever night. The Penrose (on Penrose Street, also near the station) opened in 1981 and was run by a lovely

couple whose daughter was a lesbian. They were “really good to us all and we used to have lock-ins. It was amazing”, said Lynne, who was brought up in a Plymouth naval family.⁸³ This scene was, however, fairly invisible unless you knew women who were part of it. When Prudence and Gay moved here from Manchester in 1982 to set up In Other Words Bookshop they also established a local Lesbian Line because of what they identified as a local “ignorance of where to go for advice and for friendship with other lesbians”.⁸⁴ The couple themselves brought a certain queer Mancunianism with them and because they ran their own business and didn’t have local family to worry about, could afford to be more overt than many queer people in the city. In Other Words was remembered by several as a daringly prominent hub. “It was almost like an alternative reality,” remembered Alan. “I was living in Plymouth, and I was living in the traditional Plymouth, but there were these little pockets of places [like In Other Words] that I could access if I was brave enough”.⁸⁵

The CHE group here was a key social network for both men and women in the seventies and eighties, but there was little of the activist politics evident at different times and with different intensities in Manchester, Leeds and Brighton. Plymouth University developed and expanded later than universities in these other cities and did not gain their reputation for queer organising and socialising. Peace and anti-racist activism, which often intersected with LGBT politics elsewhere, was meanwhile subdued in Plymouth because of the city’s overwhelming whiteness and military underpinnings (“it ran against an individual’s civic responsibilities to question the presence of nuclear submarines”, said Alan).⁸⁶ The arts scene, another engine for queer identification, expression and politics, was also fairly limited; there were more obvious arty and studenty places in the west country that took up that mantle – amongst them Falmouth, St Ives, Exeter, Dartmouth College, and, closer at hand, the twin seaside towns of Torbay and Torquay.⁸⁷ The terms of Clause 28 resonated with Plymouthian

reticence about raising a queer voice and as a result there were few signs of protest apart from a window display at In Other Words.

Plymouth's queer scene started to fade in the late 1980s. The military presence and dockyard work was in decline and there was also decreasing ease with queer-normal crossovers in the contexts of the AIDS pandemic and broader homophobic backlash. The Long Bar, the Paramount and Mr Harry's all closed around this time, and, according to Michael, the city became "less free and easy ... from a slut's point of view"; "more queer people were leaving the city rather than staying", he said.⁸⁸ Plymouth's heyday for lesbians had also passed, Jo felt. "Manchester seems to have, you know, a scene that's ongoing. Plymouth did have ... and it's disappeared."⁸⁹ There was a considerable nostalgia amongst interviewees for the former distinct queer social and sexual texture of the city. Kevin reported that Union Street had lost "it's sort of magic. I know people regarded it as rough and that, but there was a magic down there. ... Although there were fights, there was this great camaraderie of people."⁹⁰ Dennis, who came out as gay and left his marriage in the early 2000s, captured something of this earlier culture and the subsequent shift:

When I was a junior rating [naval trainee] in the 1970s I shared a cabin with three guys ... And so we had that community feeling of, you look after one another ... It was normally a case of a group of us going [to Union Street]. You go out together, you enjoy together, you are entertained. And you take it from there. ... And I think that's lost now, because everyone is an individual. ... They go back to their room and they shut the door. They just live on their own. ... The places, the pubs, the bars. They were probably frequented by sailors, be they gay, be they straight, or what have you. It's gone.

At The Swallow, the only remaining gay bar, "where 95 per cent of the people were LGBTQ", Dennis said he "didn't feel comfortable [amid people] doing their own thing, being

flamboyant, being garish, being loud”. The greater visibility of LGBTQ people in the 2000s has not led to a greater feeling of community for Dennis. Like those serving in the navy in these later years, people at the Swallow were just “doing their own thing”.⁹¹ The culture here around sexual pleasure was now anchored more firmly in identity, as it had been in Brighton since the sixties at least. With a single gay bar and a receding public sex scene, Plymouth had less to offer the casually interested or indeed those who identified as gay and lesbian. If there was a drive to re-invent a scene in Leeds and Manchester at this time, there was little of that here. There was not the critical mass several interviewees referred to a local apathy and an enduring reluctance to “put your head above the parapet.”⁹²

The pattern in Plymouth in the 2000s was of a dispersed queer hinterland rather than of the urban consolidation and clustering evident in Leeds and Manchester by this time. This perhaps suited the Plymouthian culture of discretion and careful negotiation of ties and identifications. While queer folk often moved to Manchester, Leeds and Brighton to find a way of expressing themselves away from family, in Plymouth there was a tendency for people to negotiate queer and familial lives in the same place. This didn’t fit well with the trend in the other cities for a very visible gay scene and whilst several interviewees in Plymouth valued that openness elsewhere they didn’t want it at home. Kevin described friends who went annually to Pride in Manchester “to be gay”: “they have four or five days to be drunk, dance, they have World AIDS Day remembrance and then they come back to normal life down here”.⁹³

Conclusion

In the 1970s and eighties Pride was a London event. By the 2020s there was barely a weekend between June and September without a Pride event in one city or another across the UK – including Manchester, Leeds, Brighton and Plymouth (which held its first Pride later than the other cities in 2010 and out of public view in the city hall). This fanning out from the capital in the 1990s but especially the 2000s speaks to shared queer co-ordinates and trajectories. These relate to shifts in understandings and experiences of identity and community, to changing attitudes and patterns of socialising, to the internet and inception of smart phones, to legal change, and to processes of industrial decline and urban regeneration. We can point also to broad economic and occupational shifts towards the service sector which had an impact on queer scenes and flagged new potential in the pink pound. Deindustrialiation meant that in some cities there were vacant buildings ripe for queer conversion (and sometimes trading on a machismoassociated industrial paraphernalia and bare brick). This was part of a process of gentrification which made city centre living and socialising fashionable once again, especially for those who were single or child-free. Some celebrated these shifts, others saw a homogenising commodification, commercialisation and loss of radical edge. There was much unevenness in these processes, though – the result, I've suggested, of particular local circumstances. The tenor of local government, the scale and fervour of local LGBTQ and intersecting politics, the activities of the police and neo-fascist groups, and then the particularity of local geography, hinterland and demography modulated the way wider trends played out on local queer life. Hence, though pride as a feeling has been

wrapped into queer identification since the 1970s, it has had a different cadence in different places. In Plymouth there was a longstanding “pride in passing”; in Manchester a twisting together of gay and civic pride; in Leeds a transformative feminist pride and politics; and in Brighton a pride in self-expression, camp visibility, and in being, as the council now proudly announces, “never normal”.

¹ This chapter is based on research for the Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded “Queer Beyond London” project (hereafter QBL) on which I worked with Alison Oram and Justin Bengry. I am hugely grateful to the AHRC for their support. See Matt Cook and Alison Oram, *Queer Beyond London* (Manchester: MUP, 2022); for discussion of queer urban life in the prior decade see Matt Cook, “Local Matters: Queer Scenes in 1960s Manchester, Plymouth and Brighton”, *Journal of British Studies*, 59, 1 (2020): 32-56.

² On these other contexts see Jeff Meek, *Queer Voices in Post-War Scotland: Male Homosexuality, Religion and Society* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Daryl Leeworthy, *A Little Gay History of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2019); Marian Duggan, *Queering Conflict: Examining Lesbian and Gay Experiences of Homophobia in Northern Ireland* (London: Routledge, 2016).

³ For more on this usage of “queer”, see: Cook and Oram, *Queer*, 9-10.

⁴ Statistics on population and occupation derived from: GB Historical GIS/University of Portsmouth, “Greater Manchester Through Time” at: www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10056925/ (accessed 20 April 2023).

⁵ “Teenage Clubs”, *Bolton Evening News*, 31 October 1964. See also: Louise Jackson, ““The Coffee House Menace”: policing youth, leisure and sexuality in post-war Manchester”, *Journal of Social and Cultural History*, 5: 3 (2008): 289-308.

⁶ See “Vice Between Men – and a City’s Police”, *Manchester Evening News* (hereafter *MEN*), 30 August 1963.

⁷ Comment on a 1962 image of the Rembrandt posted on Flickr by Manchester Archives, www.flickr.com/photos/manchesterarchiveplus/5335375310 (accessed 7 April 2023).

⁸ See, for example: “Hotel Outraged Public Decency”, *MEN*, 15 October 1965; “Why a Policeman Had to Dance”, *MEN*, 9 September 1968.

⁹ Luchia Fitzgerald, interviewed by Sarah Feinstein for Manchester Digital Music Archive (MDMA), 28 September 2016.

¹⁰ See, for example: “The Witch Hunt Is Horrifying”, *Bolton Evening News*, 12 July 1963.

¹¹ Paul Fairweather, interviewed by Matt Cook for QBL, 4 September 2017.

¹² Unidentified speaker in the group discussion chaired by Amelia Lee for the “This Is How We Got Here” project, Manchester, 1 March 2014.

¹³ Gay Jones, interviewed for the Before Stonewall project, British Library Sound Archive; BL C1159/104.

¹⁴ Jenny-Anne Bishop, QBL workshop Manchester, 18 March 2017.

¹⁵ Paul, QBL interview.

¹⁶ Judith, interviewed for Lesbian Identity Project (henceforth LIP), 2008.

¹⁷ Greg Thorpe, interviewed by Matt Cook for QBL, 5 September 2017.

- ¹⁸ “The Gay Village”, *Independent on Sunday*, 9 June 1996. For discussion of Manchester’s industrial decline see especially Ian Taylor, Karen Evans and Penny Fraser, *A Tale of Two Cities: Global Change, Local Feeling and Everyday Life in the North of England* (London: Routledge, 1996), ch. 1.
- ¹⁹ John Robb, *Manchester Music City, 1976–1996* (London: Aurum, 2009).
- ²⁰ “‘Gaychester’: Remembering Manchester’s Early 1990s Gay Scene”, *Guardian*, 7 February 2013.
- ²¹ Kate O’Donnell, interviewed by Matt Cook for QBL, 4 September 2017
- ²² Carol Ainscow, interviewed by Rachel Adams for the Modern Lesbian Project, 4 August 2010, <https://soundcloud.com/themodernlesbian> (accessed 10 June 2020). See also Paul Flynn, *Good As You: From Prejudice to Pride – Thirty Years of Gay Britain* (London: Ebury Press, 2017).
- ²³ Ian Deas, Jamie Peck, Adam Tickell and Kevin Ward, “Rescripting Urban Regeneration the Mancunian Way”, in Rob Imri and Huw Thomas, eds, *British Urban Policy and the Urban Development Corporations* (London: Sage, 1999).
- ²⁴ “Manchester Retailers Back Gay Mall Concept”, *Property Week*, 29 February 1996; “What Happened to Manchester’s First and Only Gay Shopping Centre?”, *MEN*, 30 April 2016.
- ²⁵ David Bell and Mark Jayne, *City of Quarters: Urban Villages in the Contemporary City* (London: Routledge, 2004)
- ²⁶ Paul Greystock, interviewed for the WYAS LGBT project in 2008; Cerydwen Evans, QBL workshop Leeds; Jo Lewis, QBL workshop Plymouth, 4 March 2017.
- ²⁷ Bev Skeggs and Jon Binnie, “Cosmopolitan Knowledge and the Production and Consumption of Sexualized Space: Manchester’s Gay Village”, in *Sociological Review* 52, no. 1 (2004): 39–61; Taylor, *A Tale of Two Cities*, 190. See also “Straights to the Point”, *Daily Express*, 30 August 1999; Philip Hensher, “Please Keep Out of Gay Bars and Clubs”, *Independent*, 5 June 2002.
- ²⁸ Greg, Jen and Kate, QBL interviews; DJ Wolfy, ‘Shake the Foundations’ (short documentary, 2017) www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9FMOUNCHGc accessed 20 April 2023. On the recourse to the local and the past in the face of economic shifts and globalization see Taylor, *A Tale of Two Cities*, 11.
- ²⁹ Laura Doan, “Queer History Queer Memory: The Case of Alan Turing”, *GLQ*, 23, (2017): 113–136.
- ³⁰ Statistics on population and occupation derived from: GB Historical GIS/University of Portsmouth, “Leeds through time” at: <https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/place/620> (accessed 18 April 2023) See Katrina Honeyman, *Well-suited: A History of Leeds’ Clothing Industry, 1850–1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- ³¹ “Even in These Permissive Times, Do We Want Pubs Like This?”, *The People*, 24 March 1968. *The People*’s interest was likely prompted by (and overlapped in detail with) a more sympathetic piece in the Leeds student newspaper: “The One in Twenty”, *Union News*, 8 March 1968.

³² Roy Blanchard, QBL workshop Leeds; Ted Donovan, interviewed for West Yorkshire Archive Service LGBT Project, 2008 (henceforth WYAS LGBT); John Gravett, QBL workshop Leeds.

³³ Ruth Middleton, QBL workshop Leeds.

³⁴ “Lesbians Banned in Leeds?”, *Gay News*, 18–31, March 1982, 13.

³⁵ See especially: Louise Wattis, “Exploring Gender and Fear Retrospectively: Stories of Women’s Fear during the Yorkshire Ripper Murders”, *Gender, Place and Culture*, vol. 24, no. 8 (2017): 1071–1089; Louise Wattis, *Revisiting the Yorkshire Ripper Murders* (London: Springer, 2018), ch.3.

³⁶ On the Women’s Liberation Movement in Leeds see Jeska Rees, “A Look Back at Anger: The Women’s Liberation Movement in 1973”, *Women’s History Review* 19, no. 3 (2010): 337–354; Sue Bruley, “Women’s Liberation at the Grassroots: A View from Some English Towns, c.1968–1990”, *Women’s History Review* 25, no. 5 (2016): 723–740; Antonia Lant, “Women’s Independent Cinema: The Case of Leeds Animation Workshop”, in Lester D. Friedman, eds, *Fires Were Started: British Cinema and Thatcherism* (1993; London: Wallflower, 2006).

³⁷ “Gay Lib HQ Ransacked”, *Leeds Evening Post*, 17 December 1973; “Fascist Violence Increases: Gay Driven Out by Ultra Right”, *Leeds Students*, 6 October 1977; “Gays Against Fascism Resource Manual” (1978), p. 21, in LAGNA Yorkshire West, folder I 079.

³⁸ Yvonne Stringfellow, interviewed by Elizabeth Alridge Ross for the oral history project: “Women in the Women’s Liberation Movement in Leeds and Bradford, 1969–1979”, 14 March 1995, Feminist Archive North.

³⁹ “Gay Club a ‘Cess Pit of Sexual Filth’”, *Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, 12 March 1981; “‘Police Harass Us’ Say Huddersfield Gay Group”, *Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, 12 February 1981; “Gay March Attracts 1,500 and No Trouble”, *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 4 July 1981; see also Paul Ward, Graham Hellowell and Sally Lloyd “Witness Seminar: Anti-Fascism in 1970s Huddersfield”, *Contemporary British History* 20, no. 1 (2006): 119–133.

⁴⁰ Ajamu, QBL interview.

⁴¹ Cerydwen Evans, QBL workshop Leeds.

⁴² Jude Woods, QBL workshop Leeds.

⁴³ See Cook and Oram, *Queer Beyond London*, 67.

⁴⁴ On gentrification in this area see: Paul Dulton, “Leeds Calling: The Influence of London on the Gentrification of Regional Cities”, *Urban Studies* 40, no. 12 (2003): 2557–2572.

⁴⁵ Discussion between Matt Cook and MESMAC project worker (unrecorded). See especially MESMAC’s Sholay Love project: www.forumcentral.org.uk/new-mesmac-project-sholay-love/ (accessed 18 April 2023).

⁴⁶ Ajamu, QBL interview; Colin, QBL workshop Plymouth.

- ⁴⁷ See Allan Bérubé, *My Desire for History: Essays in Gay, Community and Labor History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).
- ⁴⁸ Statistics on population and occupation derived from: GB Historical GIS/University of Portsmouth, GB Historical GIS/University of Portsmouth, “Brighton and Hove UA Through Time” at: www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10056410 (accessed 17 April 2023).
- ⁴⁹ See: Matthew Williams and Tony Wilson, “IES at Fifty”, www.employment-studies.co.uk/news/ies-50-half-century-brighton-hove-our-local-labour-market (accessed 18 April 2023); Alison Oram, “Arena 3 and Lesbian Politics in the 1960s”, in Marcus Collins, ed., *The Permissive Society and Its Enemies: Sixties British Culture* (London: Rivers Oram, 2007), 63.
- ⁵⁰ On this developing reputation see Author? “The System of Pleasure: Liminality and the Carnavalesque at Brighton”, *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol.7, no. 1 (1990): 39–72.
- ⁵¹ Grant cited in Brighton Ourstory, *Daring Hearts: Lesbian and Gay Lives in Fifties and Sixties Brighton* (Brighton: QueenSpark, 1992), 71.
- ⁵² Michael and Grant, Ourstory, *Daring*, 109 & 51.
- ⁵³ Aileen, Ourstory, *Daring*, 14.
- ⁵⁴ Ourstory, *Daring*, 14.
- ⁵⁵ Geoff Roberts, “Last Exit to Brighton”, [likely *Brighton Gazette*, c.1968], Lesbian and Gay Newsmedia Collection, Bishopsgate Institute Library (East Sussex folder).
- ⁵⁶ “And a Gay Time Was Had by All”, *Evening Argus*, 1 June 1971.
- ⁵⁷ Jim, in Maria Jastrzebska and Anthony Luvera, eds, *Queer in Brighton* (Brighton: New Writing South, 2014), 22.
- ⁵⁸ This was the crowd funded Zorro community project, 1996-7. On migration to Brighton see Peter Scott, *Zorro Report: An Assessment of the HIV Prevention Needs of Gay Men in Brighton* (Essex: Project SIGMA, 1998), 45.
- ⁵⁹ Melita, interviewed by Justin Bengry for QBL, June 2017.
- ⁶⁰ See www.electionscentre.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/composition_calc.html (accessed 4 April 2023).
- ⁶¹ “It Looks Grim for the Gay Front”, *Evening Argus*, 9 September, 1973.
- ⁶² Brighton Ourstory, “Out of the Closet: 1967–1987”, *A History of Lesbian and Gay Brighton* at www.brightonourstory.co.uk/brighton-s-history/a-history-of-lesbian-and-gay-brighton-chapter-3-out-of-the-closet-1967-87/ (accessed 20 April 2023).
- ⁶³ Martin Durham, *Sex and Politics: Family and Morality in the Thatcher Years* (London: Red Globe, 1991).
- ⁶⁴ “I Believe in Live and Let Live”, *Brighton and Hove Leader*, 4 August 1988; see also: “Brewer Fights for Mums and Dads: No Gay Sex Lessons in E.Sussex Classrooms”, *Eastbourne Herald*, 22

November 1986.

⁶⁵ Peter Scott, *Zorro Report*, 5.

⁶⁶ Ken's testimony in Stephen Mayes and Lyndall Stein (eds), *Positive Lives: Responses to HIV – A Photodocumentary* (London: Cassel, 1993), 77.

⁶⁷ See: Matt Cook, "'Archives of Feeling': the AIDS Crisis in Britain in 1987", *History Workshop Journal* Italicise, vol. 83, no. 1, 51-78; Matt Cook, "Local Turns: Queer Histories and Brighton's Queer Communities", *History Compass* 17, no. 10 (2019): e12594 Page numbers?

⁶⁸ While the Department of Health recommended that half of the overall prevention budget should be spent on core groups (here unquestionably gay men), in Brighton spending was significantly less than this – estimated at around £200,000 per annum out of a total prevention budget of £1.1 million. There was no dedicated HIV clinic and, until 1995, no specialist HIV physician employed by the health authority. Rose Collis, *Death and the City: The Nation's Experience Told through Brighton's History* (Brighton: Hanover Press, 2013), 77; Scott, *Zorro*, 9.

⁶⁹ Melita, QBL interview.

⁷⁰ Cook and Oram, *Queer*, 30-33.

⁷¹ "Council Most Gay Friendly", *The Argus*, 9 January 2009.

⁷² See Kath Browne and Leela Bakshi, *Ordinary in Brighton? LGBT, Activisms and the City* (London: Routledge, 2016).

⁷³ Melita, QBL workshop Brighton.

⁷⁴ Melita and "Belle", QBL workshop Brighton. For more on Cowley see QueenSpark authors, *Who Was Harry Cowley?* (Brighton: QueenSpark, 1984).

⁷⁵ See Jeremy Gould, *Plymouth: Vision of a Modern City* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2010); S. Lloyd Jones, "Working to a Plan — Committee Structure in Plymouth During Reconstruction and Subsequently", *Local Government Studies* vol.6, no. 5 (1980): 29–36.

⁷⁶ Statistics on population and occupations derived from: GB Historical GIS/University of Portsmouth, "Plymouth through time" at: www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10168259 (accessed 13 April 2023).

⁷⁷ Potentially prying neighbours were repeatedly referenced in oral history interviews here. When Plymouth Pride Forum (formed by two Plymouth incomers – from Manchester and London) held its first workshop event in 2001 it was titled, tongue-in-cheek, "What Will the Neighbours Think?".

⁷⁸ "Fear Drove Gays in from the Cold", *Plymouth Evening Herald*, 6 March 1997.

⁷⁹ Michael, interviewed by Justin Bengry, QBL, 26 November 2016.

⁸⁰ Keith Howes, "Plymouth", *Gay News*, 7–10 October 1976, 13.

⁸¹ Peter Buckley, interviewed by Helen Philips for Pride in our Past (henceforth: PioP), 30 January 2012.

⁸² QBL workshop Plymouth.

⁸³ Lynne Roberts, interviewed for PioP, 24 February 2012.

⁸⁴ Prudence De Villiers, interview by Mike Upton for Before Stonewall, 7 August 2003, British Library Sound Archive re: 235/PL4. Also: Gay Jones, interviewed by Lorna for PioP, 20 November 2011.

⁸⁵ Alan Butler, QBL workshop, Plymouth.

⁸⁶ Alan Butler, “Performing LGBTQ Pride in Plymouth, 1950–2012”, PhD thesis submitted to University of Plymouth, 2015, para.560.

⁸⁷ On the relationship between gay activism and wider counterculture see Lucy Robinson, “Three Revolutionary Years: The Impact of the Counter Culture on the Development of the Gay Liberation Movement in Britain”, *Cultural and Social History*, vol. 3, no. 4 (2006): 445–471.

⁸⁸ Michael, QBL interview.

⁸⁹ Jo Pine, interviewed by Alan Butler for PioP, 16 December 2011.

⁹⁰ Kevin Kelland, interviewed by Alan Butler for PioP, 29 February 2012.

⁹¹ Dennis, interviewed by Matt Cook for QBL, 21 March 2017.

⁹² Kevin Kelland, interviewed by Alan Butler for PioP, 29 February 2012; QBL workshop Plymouth.

⁹³ Kevin, QBL workshop Plymouth.