

# brighton ourstory..



Carol Prior Waiting for the Green Light

## NEW IN THE ARCHIVE...

**B**ack in the freezing days of February, Linda made a snowy trip to Gloucestershire to collect from his niece the rest of Syd Lewis' photograph collection (see issue 24). It includes a beautiful album of the theatrical career of his late partner Tony Stuart, some fabulous colour shots of the interior of the 42 Club and four albums of personal photos taken at home and on trips abroad. A huge thank-you to Gill for keeping these treasures and passing them on to Ourstory for the enjoyment of family members now and for generations to come. Can anyone date the 42 Club photo?

Singer/comedienne Carol Prior has donated two videos. One is of a concert she did in 1995 at Brighton's fondly-remembered Blue Moon lesbian bar and restaurant and the other is a Channel 4 docudrama *Waiting for the Green Light*, which follows Carol through a variety of situations as she finds her feet as a lesbian performer in the mid Eighties. Incidentally,

**Three years' worth of newsletters and correspondence nicely complement those already in our collections...**

some of the featured comedy routine in that programme was written by Tash Fairbanks of Brighton's own Siren Theatre Company.

We were thrilled to receive from Robert a set of papers from the very first CHE group in Brighton. Robert was the group's first secretary when it started in May 1972. Included are three years' worth of newsletters and correspondence, which nicely

complement those already in our collections from later on in that decade.

Veteran campaigner and hero of homosexual law reform, Antony Grey, has published an

autobiography *Personal Tapestry*, which "draw[s] together the personal and public sides of my life as a unified whole". Using for the first time his family name of Wright, Antony traces a life motivated by high principles, a desire to help and to make life better for others. It contains all the wisdom you would expect from the lofty height of eighty-one years' experience. We are grateful to Antony for donating one of a limited edition of 100 for our archive.

Our ongoing thanks go to Nina for taking cuttings from the national press and to Hove Library for keeping the Argus for us. Last but not least, a very belated thank-you to Viv and Helen for sending a copy of their civil partnership DVD – it looks like they all had a ball!

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Viv and Helen's civil partnership



Simon and Mark today and in 1971 (left and above)

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY GAY LIB!

**W**hat a year of anniversaries this is. The big one, of course, is the Stonewall Riots, which led directly to the Gay Liberation Front and thereby to Gay Pride. So it was with pleasure that Brighton Ourstory collaborated with Brighton Pride and Hove Library in a celebration on 27th June. Video footage from America was followed by an entertaining talk by Mark Rowlands about Brighton forty years ago and what it was like to be young gay and proud before and after Stonewall. Mark and his then partner Simon Watney founded the Sussex Gay Liberation Front and it was good to hear their memories – and those of other SGLF members - of this intensely exciting time. An exhibition produced for the event will stay at the library for a few weeks, so catch it if you can. The evening was rounded off in symbolic style by members of anti-homophobia campaigning group IDAHOBIT, who helped us

send coloured lanterns high into the sky above Hove seafront.

The next anniversary is the 1979 national conference of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality, when 800 delegates from all over the country took over the Dome and the Corn Exchange. An exhibition centred on this event will be Ourstory's contribution to this year's Brighton Pride festival and will be on show at Jubilee Library from 25th July until 2nd August.

We hope soon to be learning even more about the events of the 1970s and '80s as we embark on a new and sustained round of life-story interviewing about that period. A Grassroots grant from the Sussex Community Foundation to buy new digital recording equipment has coincided with a band of volunteers interested in gathering memories. After a series of training sessions they're now ready to go. If you would like to contribute your story, please get in touch.

**Good to hear memories of this intensely exciting time...**



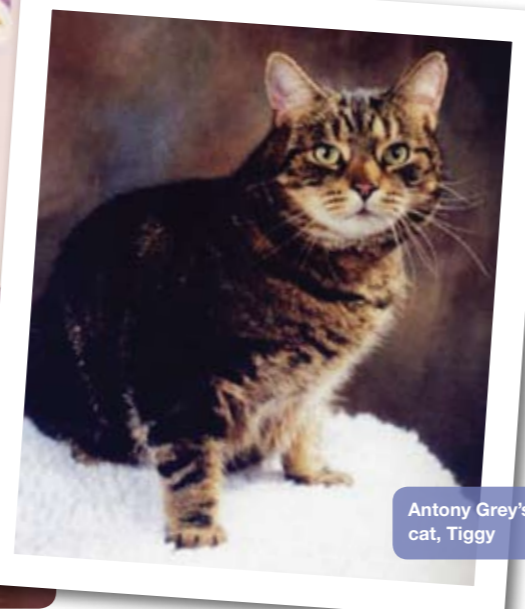
Panel from Stonewall Anniversary exhibition

The Sussex Community Foundation has also contributed to the all-important archive rent as has Brighton & Hove City Council enabling us to keep a nostril above water financially. If you think what we do is worthwhile and provides some interesting moments, please help make it the whole nose with a small contribution to our coffers.

Our medium-to-long-term plans to open a trial museum have bumped up against an obstacle. The Heritage Lottery Fund, which for years didn't include running costs in its grants - and so was of little use to us - now does but has introduced a neat Catch 22 clause, which effectively excludes new museums. The trial museum project is a stepping stone to getting permanent premises. For a while it seemed that we might get a stepping stone to the stepping stone in the form of a vacant shop in which to hold our own twentieth anniversary event – a retrospective of all the exhibitions we've ever done – during the Pride festival. But the shop we had in mind has been taken by a permanent tenant. If we spot other, large, city-centre premises, we might still go for it, though! Nothing if not determined.



42 Club interior



Antony Grey's cat, Tiggy

**C.H.E. BRIGHTON GROUP**  
The Brighton group held its first meeting on 14th. May 1972 at the home of the convenor. Among the 17 present were MICHAEL DE-LA-NOY, a Vice-President of C.H.E. and ROGER BAKER, C.H.E.'s Press Officer.  
MICHAEL DE-LA-NOY welcomed the formation of the new group and wished it every success as well as offering his advice and support particularly in any matters concerning local affairs. As a result of his experience in managing the Albany Trust and his discussions with C.H.E. he made three main observations about the group:-

CHE papers 1972

# ONE OF US

Patrick Newley, a man of many parts and good friend of Brighton Ourstory, died on May 29th this year of cancer of the oesophagus. He was 54 years old. Patrick told us his life story back in 1991 when we were compiling our book, *Daring Hearts*. He spent his formative years as a gay youth in Brighton, notably adopted by the American poet Bill Butler and his partner Michael Hughes who ran the underground Unicorn Bookshop in Gloucester Road. Ironically, this was the one situation in his life where Patrick was initially coy about his sexuality. His two mentors were happily asking about girlfriends until he left a note on the till for them saying "For fuck's sake - I'm gay". After that he became part of their family, working in the shop and often sleeping there on a makeshift bed. Impeccably behaved, neither succumbed to his teenage charms much to the regret of Patrick and his raging hormones.

In the psychedelic, incense-filled atmosphere of the Unicorn that made hippies swoon with delight, the young Patrick found and relished works by gay authors such as William Burroughs, expanding the literary background passed down by his anarchist father, the playwright Patrick Galvin.

After a period of trying his hand at many trades, including comic in the northern working men's clubs and as half of comedy duo Newley and Ruck, Patrick renewed his connection with

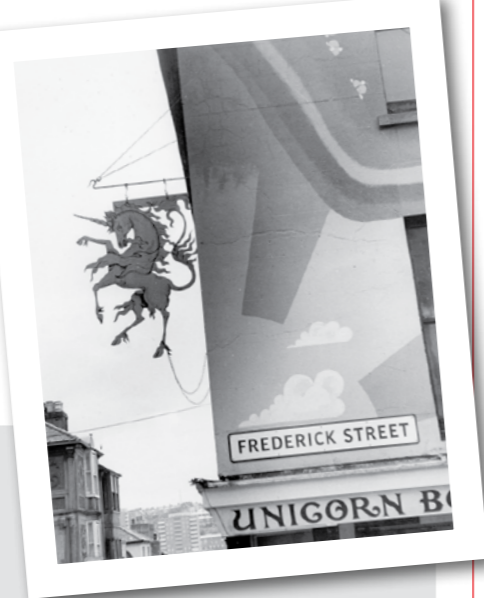
Brighton by becoming manager and press agent to music hall star, Dougie Byng, who lived in Arundel Terrace and author Robin Maugham who had a house in Clifton Road. Dougie's career was revived when Patrick got him a slot on television's Michael Parkinson Show – no longer as a female impersonator but as a raconteur. He secured the publication of Maugham's novel *The Corridor*, and became

## He spent his formative years as a gay youth in Brighton...

a great friend of 'Lord Robin' and his partner, William Lawrence.

Patrick made his mark on the world of journalism as a regular contributor to

*The Stage* and *The Times*. He also wrote for *The Sun*, where he challenged homophobic attitudes and succeeded in getting certain stories withdrawn. As comfortable with young hacks as he was with old queens, Patrick's ability to bridge the gap was a rare gift. He will be sorely missed.



Patrick (right) with comedy partner Richard Ruck

Call Brighton Ourstory on **01273 206655** or contact us by email on **info@brightonourstory.co.uk**



Acclaimed lesbian author Jane Rule



Jane Boston c 1980

## Jane Rule DESERT OF THE HEART



★ Evelyn Hall goes to Reno to dissolve her sixteen year old marriage. Staying in a Reno guesthouse she meets Ann, younger, free-spirited, seemingly her opposite. Their relationship is the strong centre of this fine novel which uses the nightworld of the Reno casino where Ann works and the Nevada desert itself as both background and counterpoint to a powerful love story.

*Desert of the Heart*, first published 1964

NOW A MOVIE  
★★★★★  
**DESERT HEARTS**  
directed by Donna Deitch

# FROM THE DESERT TO THE DOWNS...

Jac came to borrow my backpack. We hadn't met, people thought we *should* meet, that was the story. She was involved with somebody else and they were going on a romantic trip to America and people suggested that they go and visit a gay man called Robin in Santa Cruz. This was 1982. As it happened I knew Robin and had been a student with him at Santa Cruz University three years earlier as part of my American Studies degree at Sussex. Interestingly enough, we don't know quite how it happened but he had a sort of instinct, he felt that I should read this great book by Jane Rule, *Desert of the Heart*. He said, 'I think you need to take this for Jane Boston.' And she said, 'Alright, but I don't really know her.' She read the book on the way home and so it gave her a great sense of I suppose pre-connection with me and when she got back

she followed through her promise and delivered it. And that act of delivering the book and returning the backpack began our relationship, which is now twenty-seven years' standing.

I don't think *Desert of the Heart* was available in Britain at the time. I felt it was in advance of

its time and it certainly hadn't been on the reading list for American Studies - it was much more of an outsider book, off-piste book in that sense.

I loved it - it was that quest for identity that we were all pursuing then as feminists and lesbians, how that would happen. And there was something about landscape in it that made a big impression on me because I'd been in the Lake Tahoe area she describes with my partner Tash whilst I was in America. We'd explored this

area where landscape is reflective and indicative of the mind. The mind in this book is about how do we find a satisfactory, fulfilling relationship context, being lesbian women. It also had an erotic charge without being overstated. I liked that. And I liked that metaphor where Nature

plays its part, I mean literally the landscape and the weather and the storms - there's a passage where Ann and Evelyn spend a day at the lake which is just beautifully written in terms of what's happening atmospherically around, to talk about the mind and the body and the sexuality. It really made an impression on me and it informed later the work that Tash and I did in Siren Theatre Company - that kind of American writing, that poetic writing.

Jac said to me the other day, 'Delivering that book to you created the Sussex chalk path of our lives.' The Sussex chalk paths that we've walked together." **Jane Boston**

## I don't think *Desert of the Heart* was available in Britain at the time...

### Lesbian Life and Reading in Britain, 1945-1970

● Are you a lesbian over 55? What are your memories of life in Britain before 1970?

I am a PhD student researching lesbian life and lesbian literature in Britain from 1945-1970. I am seeking participants to take part in discussions and interviews which will allow me to explore lesbian women's experiences and recollections. I am conducting interviews around Britain and now need to record the experiences of women living in the South East. I am interested in hearing about any and every aspect of lesbians lives during this time, such as home life, dating and relationships, work life, family, the lesbian scene, 'coming out' etc. I am also particularly interested in speaking to women for whom reading and literature have been important throughout their lives.

For more information, with no obligation, please email me at [a.murphy@englit.arts.gla.ac.uk](mailto:a.murphy@englit.arts.gla.ac.uk) or phone 07931 175986.

Many thanks, Amy