**Taylor Love-Taylor extract**

**TLT:** Of course as a young undergraduate I married a boy. We all did in those days, and we moved up to London and after a year over the factory, we moved to Myddleton Passage which is a cul-de-sac just behind Sadler’s Wells Theatre. Erm, and I lived there for sixteen years, seven of which were with my husband.

Just to mention here, we parted amicably and it wasn’t because I realised that I was a lesbian, although I see now in retrospect that it was because I was a lesbian! Erm, and we’re still friends today. And the … I came to recognise and accept my lesbianism through the Women’s Liberation Movement, and my first contact with that really was to buy Shrew at Collette’s Bookshop in Charing Cross Road which was then of course, the street of bookshops. Collette’s was actually the Communist party bookshop and I bought Shrew and it told me where the Women’s Liberation meetings where taking place.

I did separate from George, or suggest that we separate, because I got interested in Women’s Liberation and I real … somehow I felt I couldn’t be married to him and pursue this, and I discovered there was a Women’s Group in N7. That was its name, N7 group, um, which was the nearest to me and I … so I joined this group. It was all heterosexual women and it was very high flown academics, erm, it included Juliet Mitchel who wrote Woman’s Estate and Psychoanalysis and Feminism, and she was, funnily enough, she was my tutor at Reading University and er, took us through ‘Paradise Lost’ for which I thank her, otherwise I would not have read it or appreciated it, but she was very modern. She was married to a man, they married in Iceland because you could get erm, divorced by mutual consent, and she use to wear black tights and sit cross-legged on her desk so we all thought she was marvellous. She wore mini skirts as well which was avant-garde even then.

Also in the group were a couple of other writer … women who turned out to be writers: Jean Radford and Mary Kennedy. Mary Kennedy wrote a book about Suffragettes and worked on the TV series on Suffragettes in the ‘70s er, I think it was, and I don’t recall

the name, and, also in the group was Annie Freud who is now a poet. Annie Freud, and Annie Freud came and lodged in my flat when I was taking in lodgers after George and I had split up. Erm, and so it was outside that group that I met women, some women, a colleague at work, and someone who turned out to be her ex-girlfriend and I knew them both quite well and I suddenly realised … had the realisation, and the piece in the jigsaw fell into place that I was a lesbian. And I came out in my N7 Group, and I have to say I think they all thought it was rather a distraction [laughing] from the reality of life. They weren’t very interested in sexual orientation at that time, erm… But I think one or two of them, not the named ones, may have dabbled later on.

Erm, and the other place that I discovered to go to was called The Camden’s People’s Place or The Hole in the Wall, in Kentish Town Road, and once a week, every Thursday this was a meeting place for women, and as far as I know it was the first place that as it were, was a women’s centre in London. That one night a week was dedicated to women only and there were a lot of, er, again, very bright intellectual women and it was just amazing to be in that milieu and hear women speaking out brilliantly about things, and I, of course, began to identify the lesbians there, and so I plucked up courage to approach one who came regularly, and I said “Oh, I want to know about the GLF meetings” and she said “Oh, you don’t want to go to that, we’re just splitting up from the men’s group. We’re leaving GLF”.

So the very first lesbian meeting or indeed Gay Liberation meeting I went to was in the All Saints Powis Square which was were the women decided to separate from the men because they felt GLF wasn’t addressing women’s issues and feminism. So that was a … that was a great beginning for me and where I met many people whom I still know. Um, for some reason I was taken with a fit of activism and said I would find a venue for the lesbian meetings! But, of course because I lived in Islington, I found er, the pub on the green which is currently I think Cabaña or something, or Brazilian; or something like that but it’s The Three Wheatsheafs and its still got The Three Wheatsheafs plaque or what do you call it? Er, plaster work at the top of the building, and we used to meet there regularly, and that, as far as I know is the first all women, all lesbian meetings in London.

**Interviewer:**  What year was that again?

**Taylor Love Taylor:**  That would been about 1972, I think. Erm ... We were always highly amused ‘cos the landlord would put ‘Private Ladies Meeting’ on the door and it was there that erm, met, erm, there was an American woman who was … as throughout the British women’s movement, she was very active, but erm, she had come out as a lesbian sometime before so she knew all the terms and she used to say things like … ‘cos men would come and put their heads around the door to see what was going on, and she would call them ‘lessie lashers’ which was a term I hadn’t’ heard of at the time.

Anyway we then … we met at The Three Wheatsheafs for at least a year maybe more, I don’t recall, but we got a fit of the politics and decided, you know, that we had it too

easy and we shouldn’t be meeting in a place where [Laughing] there was no threat to us! And so we decided we should be more active and find somewhere in Soho which was the scene of the height of the sex trade at the time, of course. I might mention here that the man I married at one point was out of work and did work for a year as a light man … the lighting manager in a strip club, so I had a slight acquaintance with that side of Soho as well. So we … we used to meet in St Anne’s Church, Soho, which of course is still a very staunch supporter of the LGBTQ society and I was there only yesterday serving tea to older LGBT people for Pride 2015.