

GLF on Clear Spot, Resonance FM

Content warning: discussions of homophobic hate crime and policing, suicide ideation

- DJ Ritu Now at Resonance FM, it's the Clear Spot, and today we'll be talking about LGBTQ matters, Pride past and present, with members of the Gay Liberation Front, the pioneering equality group that are nearing their 50th birthday. I'm DJ Ritu, your host for this programme, and with me in the studio are: Dan Glass, Stuart Feather, Andrew Lumsden, Ted Brown, Nettie Pollard.
- Song A Gay Song by Everyone Involved
- DJ Ritu Well, welcome to Resonance 104.4 FM, Gay Liberation Front, GLF for short. How we doing?
- Guests (MUMBLING) Great, great...
- DJ Ritu Pretty A? Is it a little bit hot for you today?
- Dan Sweltering.
- Guests (LAUGHING)
- DJ Ritu Sweltering or weltering. Now, when was GLF formed exactly?
- Nettie October 1970, wasn't it?
- DJ Ritu October 1970. Andrew Lumsden, did you have a different date in your head?
- Andrew I don't have a different date, but there are two different dates floating around and nobody can establish which of them it is, because one of the founders, Aubrey Walter, gave one date, and another founder, Bob Mellors, gave another date. But they're all in October.
- DJ Ritu Okay, well roughly, we're saying October 1970. How was it formed? I mean, where did you all find each other?
- Ted Apparently, the initial meetings were held at the LSE, and the difficulty in establishing when and how it was formed is that GLF was never a very structured organisation. It was a movement and anyone who was LGBTQIA who wanted to participate was allowed to do so and considered themselves a member of the GLF.
- DJ Ritu Is it difficult to get your heads around all of the initials that we have to use now to make sure everybody is included? Because in the old days, we just used to say "gay." And then we started to say lesbian and gay. And then it became lesbian and gay and bisexual. And now it's LGBTQIA... plus. Or QTPOC, yes, etc. etc.

Ted I wake up in a sweat sometimes dreading that there's going to be 30 more letters.

Guests (LAUGHING)

Nettie My view is that women are so often ignored, it should say "Lesbian + all."

DJ Ritu (LAUGHS) Okay, well there's a suggestion, Nettie Pollard. Can you describe the climate for LGBTQ+ people at that time? Think back to 1970. What was it like? I mean, fair enough, you had your first meeting at the LSE in October. But where were you able to socialise?

Stuart Oh, there were lots of bars where you could socialise. Tonnes of them. But yes, Gay Liberation started off at the LSE and continued there for about four or five months, and then we were kicked out because we'd gone from seven or eight to begin with to 250 people. And there was too many of us and so the LSE said, "Sorry, we can't cope with you anymore."

DJ Ritu And where did you go next?

Stuart Andrew found the spot, didn't you?

Andrew Middle Earth.

DJ Ritu That far away?

Andrew It was famous in the sixties. Middle Earth in Covent Garden. In a huge eighteenth century house. And it was famous for the leading bands of the time, going to. And then it closed for a while. Somebody I knew had the lease. I said we'd been asked by LSE to leave. "We need somewhere!" And he said, "I'll see if I can get keys for it." So I announced at a Gay Liberation Front meeting with hundreds of people there (LAUGHS) that we're gonna meet at number 41 Kings Street, Covent Garden. And I had no keys and no permission. But I thought, "We're good, we're the Gay Liberation Front. If we have to walk around in the middle of Covent Garden, we can do it." But we got in. Down in the basement, colossal cellars, still there. And the person who formed one of the worst laws we had to deal with – Henry Labouchere in 1885 – he used to go down into those same cellars as a teenager to ogle the ladies' legs at theatrical shows. Same place that we ended up in.

DJ Ritu Right, okay. Well, tell me more about what was going on in your lives when you were not at Middle Earth and you were not at GLF meetings.

Ted I was in my twenties, and as Stuart has pointed out there were lots of bars. If, like me you were quite isolated and living in a middle class area like Black Heath, and Black and gay, there was a sense of isolation. And although I consider myself a very strong person, on two occasions I very strongly considered committing suicide because my future appeared to be one of isolation. At that time, being a homosexual—sexual activity amongst men was illegal. I couldn't be very open and easy because one would be threatened. You could lose your job, you could

be attacked, you could be arrested. So, until I actually met up with GLF, I had nowhere to ... find support.

DJ Ritu So, it was very much the saving of you in some ways?

Ted In many ways, yes.

DJ Ritu And Nettie Pollard, what was the situation like for women at that time, in the 1970s/60s?

Nettie Well, I actually wanted to answer the question you asked before which was what we were doing when we weren't doing GLF. Well, the point was, I was doing GLF *all the time*, pretty well. You know, on Monday I'd go to the action group, on Tuesday I'd go to the Red Lesbian Brigade, on Wednesday I'd go to the general meeting, on Thursday I'd go to Camden GLF, on Friday I'd go to the Women's Group, Saturday we'd have a demonstration, and Sunday I'd go to the Counter-Psychiatry group.

Guests (LAUGHING)

Nettie So, I mean that was my life, really, and it was brilliant. So, except from when I was actually at work, I was at GLF.

DJ Ritu Were you able to be out at work?

Nettie I... wore a badge everywhere. A GLF badge. And I did for years and years and years, and I've got one on now.

DJ Ritu Did people know what GLF was, initially?

Nettie A lot of people didn't actually, no, you had to explain what it was?

DJ Ritu Okay. They probably thought you were some branch of the GLC. Did the GLC exist in the 1970s?

Nettie (LAUGHS) No it was LCC then wasn't it?

DJ Ritu Oh yeah, that's right. London County Council at that point.

Nettie Even now people often don't... I mean I think people do know what gay means a bit more now, but certainly people didn't then. And I just have one little story. My girlfriend and I were involved in a housing group and we both wore GLF houses all the time. And they had a sort of disco thing and we were dancing together, and there was this woman we were working with, and she suddenly went (SCREAMS)...

Guests (CHUCKLING)

DJ Ritu Yes, okay.

Nettie She hadn't realised, even though we always turned up for work together and obviously lived together.

DJ Ritu Right. Where did people actually go to meet partners, find partners at that time?

Ted Well, that was something that happened to me spontaneously. I was at a school in Eltham Green and we had a very hip school teacher who took us to see the *Othello* played by Laurence Olivier. Not a very good performance, I'm afraid, he rather overhanded it. But after the show, he took us to Earls Court to go to a club called the Troubadour, which is still there. It's famous for its music and for its antique articles it has in the building. Everyone left and I was one of the people who left late and the Troubadour was two or three doors away from one of the most famous gay pubs at the time, which was the Coleherne.

DJ Ritu In Earls Court?

Ted In Earls Court.

DJ Ritu The handlebar moustache was ... or did they come later, in the eighties?

Ted No, at that time, the Coleherne was rather divided. On one side, there were the leather jacket and jeans crowd, and on the other side were the cashmere sweater cigarette holders and never the twain could meet. I stood outside the pub and I saw one or two people leaving, particularly one young gentleman I saw who was dressed exactly like Helen Shapiro who was a fourteen-year-old pop star at the time. And he was followed by a very masculine looking man in leather and jeans, and I didn't have the nerve to go into the pub on that particular occasion, but I came back the following week, and that was my first gay pub.

Andrew Stuart knew it before it was like that.

Stuart Well, yes.

DJ Ritu The Coleherne?

Stuart The Coleherne, yes. I first went in there in 1960 when I first came to London and then, it was on a Sunday especially. It was the only place that Black musicians were allowed to play in the whole of West London. And they had Fletcher ... Russell was his name, and he had a group that came every Sunday and they jammed at the Coleherne. And they brought their girlfriends as well and we'd all give them the eye, and you know, and at the same time, we were all dressed in sweaters and things, and you couldn't be seen in the same sweater twice without comments being made.

Guests (CHUCKLING)

DJ Ritu No pressure.

Stuart No pressure, no, no. You just had to go and get another sweater. There was no way out of it. (LAUGHS)

DJ Ritu So, at which point did the Coleherne actually become a full-frontal, as it were, gay venue.

Stuart Well, it started in the seventies, really. Although again, one of the members of GLF had been in San Francisco and become a friend of oh... the gay poet, Thom...

DJ Ritu Gunn?

Stuart Thom Gunn, yes. And Thom Gunn was in leather in San Francisco, and Mick Belsten got a leather outfit too and came back and went to the Coleherne, and he was one of the earliest gay men that was in leather and jeans and looking very macho and tough and unapproachable.

DJ Ritu And setting the standard for everyone else, or how more or less everyone else started to dress when they went to the Coleherne afterwards.

Stuart That's right.

Andrew But if you overheard them, they were all talking about interior décor.

Guests (LAUGHING)

DJ Ritu Were they now, were they now. Nettie, where did women go? Was there anywhere to go out to in the 1970s? I mean when did Gateways in Chelsea, when did that first begin?

Nettie I think it was in the 1950s, wasn't it?

Andrew 1930s.

Nettie Did it actually start then? I'm not an expert on these things because I didn't go to them, to be honest. But there was very little scene for women, and it was very, very difficult for women.

DJ Ritu Okay. And Ted Brown, did you encounter many other people of colour in any of the venues that you went to in the 1970s?

Ted No, no.

DJ Ritu Did you encounter *any* other people of colour? (LAUGHS)

Ted I did, I did, occasionally. But unfortunately, on the gay scene, the racism was very much the same, except it had the added stereotypes about gay male sexuality, about being well-hung, about being very virile, about possibly being very violent. And I remember, on a number of occasions, being introduced to

people who seemed to think that they were civilising me or introducing me to the modern world. Very patronising. Very difficult kind of racism to deal with.

DJ Ritu Yeah. And then, Holly and Dan Glass, you are the younger members of GLF. What are your thoughts when you hear some of these stories about what gay life was like 50 years ago?

Holly Well, I suppose, it for me is something that... it's where we've come here, it's where we're from. But it kind of speaks to all of these other inequalities that we're still fighting worldwide. It's like a direct link. Yes, so I think it's important to hear these stories and be with people who experienced that, and kind of take their experiences to further where we're going, basically.

DJ Ritu Okay thank you, Holly. Dan, your thoughts?

Dan Yeah, on one hand, so much has changed, and on the other hand, not much has changed if we're looking at LGBT hate crime. If we're looking at the last couple of weeks, we've seen all the attacks on the bus, on the tube. LGBT hate crime in London, in Britain, is getting so much worse. I know it's a 150% rise since Brexit, but just in the last couple of weeks, it seems to be super intense. So it seems that that hasn't changed so much.

DJ Ritu It's actually a 144% spike in homophobic hate crime in the last four years. That's the actual figure.

Dan (WHISTLES) Yeah, yeah.

DJ Ritu But coming back to the original members of GLF, was there as much actual physical violence, attacks on people from the community at the time in the 1970s. Or was there less because it was less possible for you to be out there and visible, and perhaps there was more of a secret life being led, a double life being led? Nettie, you mentioned going to work. On the other hand, you had this nightlife, this weekend life that was around being an activist. What are your thoughts?

Nettie Well, I think less people were out. I think it was actually a more peaceful era, to be honest. I felt much safer out and I think a lot of people feel that. Unfortunately, I think things have got a lot worse in the last few years. Does anyone disagree with that?

Andrew I think I disagree in *one* way and that's about murders. If you look at the newspaper *Gay News* that was an offshoot of Gay Liberation Front, from 1972 to 1973, you could hardly read an issue over a fortnight without a murder in it. And that's largely forgotten because there was a defence in law in Britain that you had been so upset by what you took to be a homosexual advance that you lashed out and killed, and people were declared innocent of murder because of that.

Ted Yes, it was called the Gay Panic attack. You would often hear stories of a 23-year-old visiting an 80-year-old and being shot. "He put a hand on my leg, so naturally I had to stab him 80 times." That kind of thing. And it's echoed by what happened to Alan Turing. He actually went to the police because he was being robbed at the time, and the police ignored that and focused on his sexuality and challenged him on that. So gay people who were subject to violence often kept quiet about it and risked being arrested themselves if they came out. This was one of the reasons that some people initially in the gay community were very wary about the publicity that organisations like GLF were stirring up. I remember on the first march we had that went past the Coleherne, many of the people in the Coleherne came out and threw bottles and coins at us because we were rocking the boat. But later, many of the people in the Coleherne were our staunchest supporters.

DJ Ritu So, in effect, silence to some degree was wanted, anonymity was wanted ...

Ted As a defence mechanism.

DJ Ritu As a defence, yes, and also to protect people from being coerced or blackmailed, etc. If I take for example, the laws in India. The Section 377 that's only just been hammered on the head again, and prior to that, many people that were gay in India were being blackmailed basically, and so it was a case of you keep quiet, because otherwise you would lose your job, your family your community around you, etc. etc. But that seems to have been roughly the climate you were living in in the 1970s, as well.

Ted Yes, and that was highlighted very significantly by a film that unfortunately was overlooked, called *Victim* which starred Dirk Bogarde. And his representation as a lawyer who was being insulted for being gay – he was a married lawyer – was one of the films that the Campaign for Homosexuality used to argue against the blackmail that was being implicated on many lesbian and gay people.

DJ Ritu Yeah. Well you've mentioned CHE, the Campaign for Homosexual Equality, which I think was set up a year before ...

Nettie 1963.

DJ Ritu Oh, 1963. Okay, but it was set up in the North West.

Nettie Yes, so they had a different name.

DJ Ritu Yeah, it was the committee of homosexual equality and then became the Campaign for Homosexual Equality. But you know, slightly the predecessor to gay liberation--

Nettie No, it wasn't. Because they were a gay *rights* organisation. Their aim was to have gay equality in the law and that was *not* our aim.

DJ Ritu And what was the aim of GLF?

Nettie Our aim was of revolutionary change in society.

Song Secret Love by Doris Day

DJ Ritu So, it's DJ Ritu at Resonance 104.4 FM and in this Clear Spot for this evening, we are talking with the Gay Liberation Front who will be celebrating their 50th anniversary next year. So, I've got Ted Brown, Dan Glass, Nettie Pollard, Holly Buckle, Andrew Lumsden and Stuart Feather in the studio with me. Bit of an all-star line up. We've just been listening to the track "Secret Love" by Doris Day from the film *Calamity Jane*. Why did you choose that? Who chose it, was it you, Ted?

Ted Yes, I chose it.

DJ Ritu What did Doris Day mean to you back in ... well the film came out, what, 1960?

Ted '62, I think? Something like that? No, '56! '53.

DJ Ritu But Doris Day, was she even a bit of an icon back then?

Ted Not her herself, but the part that she played in *Calamity Jane* was that of a woman who was very masculine and the people around her wanted her to become a feminine female and she didn't want to be. And I think, as I was saying earlier on this evening, that the film is one of the gayest, most lesbian straight films you'll ever see in your life. She wears men's clothes all the time, she goes to town and get visibly cruised by other women. She approaches a woman who's wearing feminine clothes and asks her how does she manage to keep this bustier up and so on. She moves in with that woman into a house, they write their names on the door and they sing a song together called "A Woman's Touch," the original lyrics of which had to be toned down as they were quite erotic. And at the end of the movie, when she does get married, in the original edition, she's wearing her bridal gown and she's ideally female, but she lifts up her skirt and she's still wearing her boots and her jeans underneath. But that edition was later changed rather like *The Taming of the Shrew*, having her tamed as an ideal woman.

DJ Ritu Okay, so she was non-conforming, let's just put it that way, perhaps sort of embodied some of this revolutionary change in society that Gay Liberation Front wanted to put into place. I mean, did you create a mission statement quite quickly when you came together? Andrew? Nettie? Stuart? Everyone?

Guests (LAUGHING)

Nettie Shall I read it out?

DJ Ritu From 1970.

Nettie This was from 1970 and this is by somebody who was in GLF called John Chesterman, and it says "Gay Liberation Front Demands 1970."

We believe
That apathy and fear are the
Barriers that imprison people
From an incalculable landscape
Of self awareness
That they are the elements of
Truth
That every person has the right
To develop and extend their
Character and explore their
Sexuality through relationships
With any other human being,
Without moral, social or political
Pressure.
That no relationship formed
By such pressure, or not freely
Entered into, can be valid,
Creative or rewarding.
To you, the others, we say
We are not against you, but
The prejudice that warps your
Life, and ours
It is not love that distorts,
But hate.
On your behalf, and ours,
We demand:
The same right to public
Expressions of love and
Affection as society grants
To expressions of hate and scorn.
The right to believe, without
Harm to others, in public and
Private, in any way we choose,

In any manner or style, with
Any words and gestures, to wear
Whatever clothes we like or to
Go naked, to draw or write or
Read or publish any material or
Information we wish, at any
Time and in any place.
An end to the sexual propaganda
That disturbs the innocence of
Children, conditions their image
Of human relationships and implants
Guilt and nurturers shame for any
Sexual feelings outside an
Artificial polarity.

An end to the centuries of
Oppression and prejudice that have
Driven homosexuals from their
Homes, families and employment, have
forced them to cynicism,
Subterfuge and self-hatred and
have led them, so often, to
Imprisonment or to death.
In the name of the tens of
Thousands who wore the badge of
Homosexuality in the gas chambers
And concentration camps, who
Have no children to remember, and
Whom your histories forget.
We DEMAND honour, identity and
Liberation.

- Guests (CLAPPING)
- DJ Ritu Wow. And actually, I know we're on radio, but I could see a pink triangle in there somewhere. Of course, the badge that ...
- Nettie That was the badge they wore ...
- DJ Ritu ... in the concentration camps.
- Nettie And women wore, of course, the black triangle.
- DJ Ritu The black triangle for women. Okay, so, you collected together your thoughts and came up with a mission statement, a list of demands in terms of how you wanted to see society change. And particularly, for people like ourselves. Who was listening? Who listened?
- Ted Well, we made people listen, because one of our fundamental arguments was that the personal was political and that every LGBTQIA person should come out and live openly as themselves, because part of our persecution was the silence that we were submitting ourselves to.
- Andrew We took to the streets. Our demonstrations. The first of them was in November in 1970, Highbury Fields, protesting about police behaviour to a man they accused of cruising, though he always said he wasn't doing that. And Stuart was on that demo.
- DJ Ritu And was that before the first actual Pride march?
- Andrew Yes, a long time before.
- DJ Ritu Because that was 1972 wasn't it?

Andrew We think 1971 should really count because there was a march in London in 1971, but there's a kind of learned scholarly dispute between the queer academics about the way you define these things, so we settled...

DJ Ritu It's hard to remember, and I know that we've been trying to gather some information about the history of queer Asian and South Asian people. And already we're forgetting. We're forgetting things from the 1980s, you know, when did this happen, when did this happen? So it must be even more difficult if you're trying to then, you know, think back that many more decades.

Ted Well the first march through central London was 28th August 1971, which was organised by the GLF's gay youth group, and they were protesting the unequal age of consent laws. And that was held even before Pride. I have 32 photographs that have yet to be published of that very first march. I was participating in it. I went with my partner and was biting my nails because at the time I could have been, or he could have been challenged on the basis of my age at the time.

DJ Ritu So, he was under 21?

Ted No, I was under 21.

DJ Ritu Oh, you were under 21, sorry. Okay, so just, very quickly, tell me Ted in case people don't know. What were the age of consent laws in at that time in 1971?

Ted I believe the age of consent for heterosexuals was 18?

Andrew 16.

Ted 16, sorry. But for homosexual men, it was 21.

DJ Ritu And it had to be two men in private, consenting.

Ted Yes, consenting adults in private. And it was *extreme* in private. People don't understand. If you lived in a block of flats and you had sex with your partner in your own rooms, but there were other people within the building...

DJ Ritu In the entire block.

Ted ... you could still be done for it.

Dan (GASPS) No way!

DJ Ritu Oh, yes. Dan Glass, you're a member of GLF. How don't you know this?

Dan I don't know where I would have ended up. Jeez!

Guests (LAUGHING)

DJ Ritu Yeah! I mean, this is what we're saying about people living in fear, living in secrecy, living in isolation. It was pretty extreme.

Dan I didn't realise those nuances.

Ted After the 1967 Sexual Offences Act, prosecutions against gay men by the police increased by over 200%.

Nettie So 1967 was when they partially decriminalised sex between men, but the actual, as Ted says, the actual prosecutions went up because they really targeted people for gross indecency. They targeted people who had sex with people between 16 and 21.

Ted And you could be done for holding hands in the street as behaviour likely to cause...

Nettie Breach of the peace or something like that.

Ted Breach of the peace, yes.

Andrew There is an unwritten story about the police here.

DJ Ritu Go on.

Andrew And that is that they first asked for the very severe laws against gay men – they asked for them several years before Parliament decided to bring them in. The *police* asked for them. And so, ever since then, it's the unwritten story of the British police. They have been the most homophobic police force *ever*. And in the last few years, to see members of the Metropolitan police on a Pride, with flowers around their heads and so on, is so disconcerting.

DJ Ritu Yeah. It's a little bit strange. The rainbow flags. I mean, if I think back to the 1980s, I certainly remember the police sometimes being outside venues that we were going to, gay clubs and so on. And they'd be outside and arrest people just for leaving. Just for coming out, just for being gay. So, yeah. That's a bit of a tricky one. Certainly that was happening in the seventies at the very few places you could go out to. Stuart, you haven't spoken for a while. Is there anything you want to add here?

Stuart Well, there is. Just, in 1968, for instance, a year after decriminalisation, the International Times, which is one of quite a number of alternative newspapers that were around at the time, the straight men running that newspaper decided in 1968 that nothing had really happened for homosexuals. The law had been changed but they were still considered the same way. And they thought they would help us along by having a sort of column in their paper where they invited people to look for a partner in the newspaper. So it was a personal ad. And as soon as the police discovered that, they raided International Times and took away all the evidence and it came to trial just a few weeks after gay lib had started, but no one present in gay lib then actually knew that the trial was going on. And that was a missed opportunity really. But anyway, the police had to subpoena all the men that they picked who'd written to say they were looking for someone else and telling them about themselves. And there was a story: one of the men was Tarsus Sutton who later became a member of gay liberation, and he was

asked by the judge if he would explain to the judge what the word "well-hung" meant."

Guests (LAUGHING)

Stuart And Tarsus Sutton replied: "It means I have no hang-ups, m'Lord."

Guests (LAUGHING UPROARIOUSLY)

Song Over the Rainbow by Judy Garland

DJ Ritu Well, what a lovely track. "Over the Rainbow," Judy Garland. *Wizard of Oz*.

Ted Yes. Which is reputed to possibly have inspired the LGBTQIA rainbow flag.

DJ Ritu There we go. Thank you for that bit of extra information there, Ted. So, okay, we've got just over 15 minutes left to run on today's programme. We're talking with the original members of Gay Liberation Front, GLF, who are going to be marking their 50th anniversary next year. And we're at Resonance 104.4 FM and I'm DJ Ritu hosting you through this programme. So, July 6th this year. An enormous, enormous Pride parade happened in Central London. Smaller events of course have taken place in local boroughs and up and down the UK. You've already told me about the very first Pride march – *real* Pride march – as it were, which was in 1971 or 72.

Stuart 1972.

DJ Ritu It was in 1972, okay. What are your thoughts about the current Pride parade? It's not called a march anymore.

Stuart Well, first of all, there weren't that many people on the parade as there used to be, because before this present group who are organising it now, we had 100,000 people coming on a gay pride march. We had over 100,000, we had 120,000, we had 130,000, but now it's restricted, and they make all sorts of excuses, and they're banning individuals for just joining the parade.

DJ Ritu Now people have to pay for a wristband to join it. And there's how many people allowed on the parade in total?

Andrew 33,000.

DJ Ritu 33,000, yeah. Okay.

Andrew And that allegedly is because of advice from fire chiefs and from police and from Transport for London and one other body given to the mayor, and the mayor told you cannot have more than that. And yet, so many of us went out on marches against the Iraq war – millions of people. So why can we not?

Nettie Or the Remain march.

DJ Ritu Yeah, okay. Now, so GLF, you're not happy about the current state of play. What do you think about the corporates being involved as well? Very heavily involved. Something that people call rainbow-washing. Lots of corporations, they've got big floats and trucks. I mean, do they bring money into Pride in London, don't they? Isn't that a good thing? Is it a good thing that they want to be associated with us? I mean, back in the 1970s no one wanted to be associated with us. What are your thoughts?

Ted I think mainly that they're chasing the pink pound, they're chasing a positive image. But we have various companies like BAE Systems who proudly walk along with Pride in the march and yet sell arms to Saudi Arabia where lesbian and gay people are being treated abysmally, and sometimes being killed. So there's a hypocritical aspect to some of this corporate ...

Andrew They brought – BAE Systems weapons company – they brought a mobile cinema onto the Pride parade this year. And that film was on a loop. Every now and again, what it had on it was a war plane.

Dan (GASPS)

Andrew A totally up to date modern warplane. A big picture, about 15 feet by 10 foot, for people watching our march to see. We have one photograph of that warplane on the march.

DJ Ritu I mean, is the parade a place you even want to go to anymore? Do any of you go to it.

Andrew I do.

Stuart Yes.

DJ Ritu And you manage to get a wristband and pay for that and then you get to go ...

Andrew By the friendship of friends, it might be one or another of the voluntary organisations, and they say "do you want a wristband?" And then I think most of us do a lot of walking around talking to people on the other side of the barriers. They are wonderful to talk to. Their enthusiasm - they've come from all over the world, all over Britain.

DJ Ritu But a lot of those people as well that are on the other side of the barriers, on the periphery of the march, are the community itself, who couldn't get on the march, right, and couldn't get the wristbands and so on to go. So, I know that GLF in leading up to the 50th anniversary next year, have now created a new mission statement. And part of that is about how you want to see Pride change. Can you give me an idea of what's in this new statement from GLF?

Holly Yes, I can read it for you. So we have seven demands towards Pride 2020. The first is that Pride is free. Pride organisers who want ticketed events should arrange free Pride marches as well. No one should be denied Pride entry because they don't have enough money. Number two is that Pride is always a protest as

well as a celebration. We've a whole world to change and we've hardly begun. Number three is that the LGBTQIA+ community groups actually engaged in empowerment programmes or key allies such as the Miners in the 1980s, always head Pride marches. Number four is that arms dealers and other corporations who trade with nations in violation of the UN International Charter on Human Rights never again be allowed to sponsor or have floats at Pride events. Individual LGBT employees of such organisations to be welcome as always, but not marching in groups with corporate logos. Number five is to be vehicle free. No diesel powered vehicles unless for mobility or safety reasons. And six, full accessibility and reminders to LGBT friendly venues near the march that full accessibility is the target. And number seven is Gay Liberation Front to lead Pride in 2020 and for the Mayor of London to show courtesy and cede their present contractual right to be at the front.

- DJ Ritu Okay. So ...
- Guests (CLAPPING)
- Dan Gonna make it happen.
- DJ Ritu So, GLF is still revolutionary.
- Nettie GLF is still revolutionary, and its exactly the same as it was to begin with in fact. We believe there's got to be a real revolution in society. Gay rights won't do. Gay rights can be taken away. Look what's happening in America, look what's happening in Brazil, look what's happening in England for that matter.
- Dan Poland.
- Nettie Poland. Loads of places. We believe in getting together with other oppressed groups and changing society for the better. Solidarity with the struggle in Hong Kong for instance. That's a GLF demand.
- DJ Ritu I mean initially, surely, as well, when GLF was set up, you had solidarity with the Black Civil Rights movement and the Women's Movement, and so on.
- Nettie Absolutely, and particularly the Women's Movement, because both LGBT+ people and women are oppressed by sexism, therefore we have a lot in common.
- DJ Ritu Now, where can people find this new mission statement from GLF? Where is it published?
- Dan It's on the Queer Tours of London website. We're currently working on a Gay Liberation Front website. We meet every month in London School of Economics, back where our friends used to meet, our fellow activists used to meet 50 years ago, and it's such an honour to be part of the continuing legacy of that. So every month ... I think the next is August 7th ...

Nettie It's the 7th I think, it's a Wednesday anyhow. First Wednesday of the month, and it's in the Library, London School of Economics on Portugal Street, 6PM. Do come.

DJ Ritu Dan Glass, can you just give me the actual website again. Queer tours of London...

Dan Dot com.

DJ Ritu Queertoursoflondon.com if people wanna find out more and perhaps join the meetings.

Dan Thank you, please do.

Ted Can we just quickly add that the importance of community groups organising together was recognised in both directions. Back in the 1960s, Huey P. Newton who was the Commander-in-Chief of the Black Panther Party actually made a speech and wrote a document saying that the NAACP (National Association of the Advancement for Coloured People) the civil rights movement with Martin Luther King, should work together with gay people in order to achieve fairness and equality for everyone. So it wasn't just GLF that was arguing for this cohesion. It was coming the other way as well.

DJ Ritu And it's the way it's gotta be because together we are stronger.

Ted Yes.

DJ Ritu Didn't someone awful say that, though?

Everyone (LAUGHING)

DJ Ritu So, just very quickly, because we haven't got very much time left. I want to know what really, really fills your heart now about being part of GLF. When you look back over almost 50 years.

Ted The realisation of some of the achievements we've had. I remember walking down Brewer Street in one of our leafleting campaigns when we were arguing for things like equal age of consent, and recognition of our relationships in terms of marriage, and at that time I had no idea it would actually happen, and its happened within our lifetime. And when you think that at the start of the 20th century, gay men could be arrested just for holding hands, and here we are at a time when many celebrities are getting married and arguing in favour of stronger rights, that's no minor achievement after 2,000 years of oppression.

DJ Ritu So, for you Ted, you can very clearly see the achievements and what you've achieved for equality.

Ted And very importantly, I don't want to forget the demonstrators of the Stonewall Uprising which happened on the 28th June 1969 that started the modern movement.

DJ Ritu In New York. Andrew Lumsden?

Andrew I think for my part, I'd say what we can see looking back is that this was a revolution. It's a revolution in the same sense there was a French revolution, an American Revolution, you name them. And the name Gay Liberation Front probably comes originally from the Vietnamese Liberation Front because of the impact of that during the Vietnam War. So, this meets the problem of education. In schools and colleges, it should be taught that there was a gay revolution – you can call it the Stonewall revolution. And that is a world event.

DJ Ritu Thank you. Stuart Feather, very quickly?

Stuart I think one of the things I'm most proud of is the Gay Liberation Front street theatre group combining with the Women's Liberation street theatre group, combining with some other alternative media groups attacking the Festival of Light, the moral right who, three years after decriminalisation of GLF and abortion, they were trying to recriminalize abortion and homosexuality. And they were defeated at their inaugural rally in Westminster Methodist Central Hall in 1971 and their rally in Trafalgar Square and the major rally in Hyde Park afterwards was also disrupted. And the whole movement collapsed. And GLF were left victorious along with Women's Liberation.

DJ Ritu GLF will probably always be victorious, hopefully.

Ted And to quickly add, we did that with love, without violence. We had GLF members dressed as the nuns of perpetual indulgence.

DJ Ritu Oh, yes.

Ted Did the can-can.

Andrew Who are reviving. They're starting new chapters.

Dan The sisters? Ah, wicked.

DJ Ritu Just very quickly, I'm gonna leave the final word to Nettie Pollard. What do you want to say about what GLF has meant to you on a personal level?

Nettie I think what it meant to all of us is absolutely life-changing. It changed us and it changed us forever. And the bond we feel between each other is extraordinary. The people in this room that I've known for nearly 50 years, we're really really close now. I mean, how many people can say that? And it's not just the people in this room, it's the other people in GLF. And also younger members as well, there's a real bond with them as well. It's a pretty good time.

DJ Ritu Well, goodness. GLF, Gay Liberation Front, it's been incredible having you right here in the studio at Resonance FM. Thank you so much. I'm hoping it's going to be one big party for the 50th next year.

Guests (MUMBLING) That's right! Do come!

DJ Ritu I think you might need a DJ. I'll be there. So, thanks again to Stuart Feather, Andrew Lumsden, Holly Buckle, Nettie Pollard, Dan Glass, Ted Brown and all the other fearless pioneers and game-changers. A big thanks to Resonance FM, Sarah on production, and to you for listening. Have a lovely rest of the evening. Goodnight from me, DJ Ritu.

Song Look for the Silver Lining by Etta James