

ORAL HISTORY RECORDING SUMMARY

'Fighting for our Rights' project

Surname	Tong
Given name	George
Date of birth	1965
Place of birth	Surbiton, Surrey
Date of interview	13 June 2017
Length of interview	01:10:31
Number of tracks	1
Name of interviewers	Ijeoma Aniyeloye, Jen Kavanagh

Track 1 of 1 [01:10:31]

George Tong (GT) was born in 1965 in Surbiton to parents Colin and Eileen. Father worked in retail, mother as a secretary. Attend Tolworth Infant School, St Matthew's and Southborough Boy's School. Talks about school experience, including dealing with dyslexia. Describes Southborough being a tough place. Attended a reading centre to help with dyslexia. Talks about volunteering at Bedelsford School, mentions headteacher Tom Macmillan. Assisted students with reading [00:05:25]. Talks about medical model at Bedelsford. Explains that many students didn't reach adulthood due to disabilities. Talks about terminology, handicapped vs disabled, and discrimination. Talks about social side, describes the school environment like a family [00:11:10]. Left school age 18 and volunteered full time, then applied for job at Bedelsford as welfare assistant. Provided personal care to students. Then moved into social care. Joined Centre for the Handicapped, later called Crescent Resource Centre, age 21. Job involved industrial workshops. Describes work and clients [00:16:00]. Talks about shift in service from rehabilitation to social activities, medical model to social model. Talks about occupational therapists (OT) leading rehabilitation. Describes process of name change in 1990s. Some service users were resentful. Talks about consultation and election, decision then imposed by management [00:21:50]. Describes diversity of service users. Talks further about the term handicapped. Explains services and care provided at Crescent, including social and education activities. GT worked at Crescent for over 25 years. Talks about Kingston Association for Disabled People (KADP). Mentions fundraising project in partnership with KADP, selling stamps. Talks about Direct Payments and Independent Living Scheme (ILS). Crescent members approached to consider joining [00:28:50]. Describes reactions to ILS. Some wary of responsibility of becoming an employer and managing a budget. Gradually ILS users acted as role models in the Crescent. GT now works for Your Healthcare, home and day centre for people with dementia. Explains changes in Crescent, including outreach and community support. Less dependence on building-based services [00:34:30]. GT was manager of the Crescent at the time it closed. Mentions KCIL (Kingston Centre for Independent Living) and Younger Disabled People home case team (YDPT). Talks about providing training for service users in being an employer [00:39:05]. Describes staff as ambitious and forward thinking. Mentions marches and direct action, disability rights campaigning. Talks about the closing of the Centre and reasons, and attempts to redevelop the service. Mentions The Causeway. Describes missed opportunity to modernise the facilities. Running the building was very expensive [00:44:55]. Talks about angry and worried reaction from service users. Land is still derelict. Talks about alternative services offered. Talks about reduction in resources and impact this has had on ILS. Mentions YPDT and activities offered [00:49:50]. Describes Mike Oliver's description of disability, economic

definition. Talks about work experience, including learning disability work. Mentions Ann Macfarlane, Jane Campbell and Jane Lawrence. Talks about current campaigns surrounding learning disabled community. Challenges of people with dementia being able to communicate their care needs [00:55:10]. Describes partnership work with charity Discover, for people with aphasia, when at the Crescent. Discover group continues to run. Talks about sustainability of services being important. Mentions brain injury group that also continues to meet. Reflects on current disability support system. Concerns about home care being poor and dangerous in some cases [01:01:40]. Talks about need for more disabled voices being heard. States address of the Crescent in New Malden. Closed in July 2011. Ends with moving story about two Crescent Resource Centre users, a couple called Tessa and **Graham**, who had left institutional care and lived independently.

End of recording [01:10:31]