

INTERVIEW WITH IRENE McINNES, ALICE McINNES, ELI FARROW AND JASON BEST, THE HOSTS OF THE PODCAST *QUEER AS FACT*, 21 JULY 2019
INTERVIEWER: JESSIE MATHESON

I just want to start by thanking you all for participating in this interview. Could we maybe begin by you each introducing yourselves, and maybe a bit about your background?

Jason: I'm Jason. My academic background is in Media and Comms, and Politics. I then did a Masters in Advertising. So, I, unlike the others, do not have a history background.

Alice: I'm Alice. My academic background is in Ancient World Studies and Classics, and now I'm doing a Masters in Cultural Heritage, which I'm trying to make as queer as possible by interviewing queer people about public history and queer content in museums.

Eli: My name is Eli, I also did Classics and Ancient World Studies. I did my Honours thesis on the poetry of Sappho, which was chosen because it was a gay thing, and I definitely plan to keep doing more gay-related history in the future.

Irene: I'm Irene, I did modern history – I'm the only one here who did anything after BC! I did my honours in twentieth century Chinese history, on women's experiences during the Cultural Revolution- that wasn't

explicitly chosen because it was gay, it was chosen because it was interesting and then incidentally turned out to be a bit queer. Which is life, I guess.

Could one of you explain what *Queer as Fact* is, and maybe a bit about how it came about?

Eli: Yeah. So, *Queer as Fact* is a queer history podcast. We can't really get more specific than that—it aims to talk about as diverse a range of topics as possible in terms of queer experience, geographic location, era and so forth. Which means we talk about a lot of stuff we're absolutely completely not qualified to talk about! It came about because I started listening to a lot of history podcasts and had a lot of opinions about how they could be better, and also queerer. So, I pitched that to these guys and I just said; 'Hey, you wanna do a queer history podcast?' and then I forced them to stick with that forever, and now here we are!

And Jason, could you talk a bit about when you joined?

Jason: Yeah, so I live with Eli, and we spent a lot of time talking about podcasts when Irene and Alice would come over to record. We would talk about potential episodes we could do, and we would talk a lot about queer media. So we started a sort of sub-series called *Queer as Fiction* within *Queer as Fact*, where we talk about historical pieces of media –

either pieces of media that are set in a historical time period, or pieces of media that are old enough to be themselves historical.

This may be a slightly loaded question, but probably one which is worth starting on. Your chosen title uses the word 'queer'. Was that a conscious decision – do you have a particular reasoning behind identifying yourself as a 'queer' podcast?

Irene: I definitely have thought about why we chose the word 'queer', because it is something that people question, sometimes.

Alice: I don't recall us actually sitting down and thinking 'What word are we going to use for this? We want to use the word "queer".' I think it's just the word that we are all comfortable using to describe that community.

Eli: I think I at least going into it knew that there was... a controversy about that. I decided to use it despite that.

Irene: Yeah, and I was going to say that; One: it is the word that we all tend to use, so we are all comfortable with it, and two: for me it is just the most all-encompassing word that I can think of. We always have that option of using the acronym but there are two problems with that. One is that 'LGBTQIA+ as Fact', is a terrible name. The second reason is that I just feel like as soon as you start listing

things in your community it becomes this very limited, exclusive, closed space, and I think that, as we develop different words to talk about identity, using that acronym is going to end up leaving people off the end, or just relegating them to the 'plus', which is a very 'et. al.' situation!

Eli: And also, we're not just trying to talk about all possible identities that could fit into the acronym *today*, we are trying to talk about whatever manifestation those identities could have had throughout the entirety of human history. And, I would love to sit down and try and make *that* acronym some time! It's impossible.

Could you talk a little bit about what kind of people you feature in the podcast, and your process for choosing those people?

Alice: When we first started we had a policy that was something like, out of every four episodes we want to have at least one that's about a woman, at least one that's about a person of colour, something like that, I can't remember the specific details. So, we were actively trying to avoid the focus you often get on white men from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Irene: As far as how we choose people, we do keep a spreadsheet, that lists time period and geographical area so we can look through everyone we've done and say to ourselves, 'oh, we've

had five like this recently, I better think of something different.'

So, you aim for diversity?

Alice: Yeah. And we do get a lot of suggestions sent in, so when I'm choosing, I also go to that list of suggestions and see what one leaps out. So, for me it's a balance of providing what people are asking for, while also maintaining that diversity and exploring those areas of queer history which aren't as well known or well publicised.

Could you talk a little more about maybe the process of putting together an episode, from research to technological considerations?

Eli: It's kind of weird to think of this from an outside perspective, because we've just been doing it for two years now. We go to the library catalogue! I mean I'm sure there is more useful stuff to be said, but we borrow some books, we read them, we scramble around to find out whether the one scholar who is talked about if this person actually was queer. We write about all the ways in which we hate everything they have to say, and then we put it all in order, and say it out loud!

The reason I'm sort of interested about the, pragmatics of it is that, you all kind of have history backgrounds, and queer historiography is really important. I think you seem to make

a point of talking about it explicitly in your podcast. So, I was wondering if you have any particular approaches to this, or there are any particular challenges you always come up against?

Alice: As well as going to libraries and relying on books, I'll often just Google the person and see what's there. Because there is often a lot of stuff being written on the internet that's well-intentioned but ill-informed about queer history. So, I'll look at how they are represented in the public eye, and how that is influenced by, or how that compares to the scholarship. And then when I'm presenting the episode, I also want to hear these guys' thoughts on that and how they interpret the historiography, so I'll often get up to points when I'll think 'I'm going to give this information, and then I know we'll have a ten minute discussion' and I can rely on the others to bring that analysis.

Irene: I definitely note down things that I want to talk about as I am going. When something comes up and I'm like, 'I have an opinion about this', I'll note it down and put it to these guys.

It sounds like a lot of work! I feel that in history spaces, people always end up with so many jobs! Is it as much work as it sounds?

Eli: It is, yeah. I think we didn't really anticipate all of the sort of different jobs that would come up within it

when we started. There's the research, which can take really as long as you're willing to spend on it. There is no point at which, you can go 'I now know everything about Horace Walpole.'

Alice: One thing that I think we definitely didn't know going in is how long it takes to edit an episode. We record about twice as much as we actually put out, and then cut that down to create our episodes.

Irene: I guess there is a version of us that sat down and went, 'we can just make this a conversation and people can deal with whatever happens to come out of our mouths, and we could have just put that up', you know only cutting out the most obviously off-topic sections. But we very much don't do that! We go through and cut out all the filler words and make ourselves sound smart!

Eli: Also, there was a period where we tried to transcribe everything for accessibility, which was something we all felt pretty strongly about but ultimately had to give up.

Irene: Because you just physically can't do it. Once it's an hour-long episode, , they were ending up being around 10,000 words and you have to sit down and type it all out and honestly, we physically can't type that much without starting to have wrist problems!

I did want to ask you guys about the accessibility question. Kind of on two fronts; I'm interested to think about what the role of a queer history podcast is in terms of being accessible to the widest range of people, and also if you have thoughts on the role of public history in making history accessible?

Eli: I think, going back to what Alice was saying about how we look at academic scholarship but also just look at what people, queer people, say on the internet about Sappho, or Marsha P. Johnson, or whoever, there's definitely a tension between wanting to make it as enjoyable to consume by the public, but also not to start losing nuance.

Irene: That's definitely something I think about. When we make an episode sometimes it's in the back of my mind where I say to myself, 'are we getting too academic here?' Because that's our background, and that's the way we approach history, and sometimes I'm like 'will this get in too deep for the public?' But I never stop it. Because I feel like we have this tendency to underestimate the public.

Jason: I mean, certainly in the articles that have been written that mentioned us, probably the only piece of criticism that we get is that it's a little bit dry, and I think that is because we are trying to have it be more rigorous. There is very much

a balancing act there, where you are trying to make something that is an informative and valuable piece of work and also to be entertaining and accessible. I think we do a pretty good job. It's tough, I mean certainly there are episodes of our podcast where some people might struggle to follow what's happening.

Eli: I don't know how true that is. Probably to some degree. But I think I side more with Irene's point that we tend to underestimate the public. Because a lot of our reviews specifically do mention, like 'they cite their sources', 'they're willing to interrogate the scholarship', and stuff like that. I think that in general the queer community is very thirsty for information about its history and I think it's very thirsty as well for information that it feels like it can trust. You know, sure the general public doesn't necessarily interact with history the same way people who are in university, who are in academia do.

Irene: But yeah, I think the general public is certainly capable of the kind of nuance that they are just not necessarily given most of the time.

And do you think that that's something that distinguishes you as a podcast that looks at history and in particular queer history?

Eli: Not from every other queer history podcast, but I think that it is an

unfortunate pitfall of the fact that a lot of the people who are doing this kind of public queer history, who are queer themselves and therefore have sort of the knowledge to talk about being queer, often don't know how to talk about history, and vice versa. A lot of the academics who are writing books about queer people certainly know what they are doing as historians but don't have the nuance to talk about queer issues. So, there are definitely other queer history podcasts out there who we support in principle, and who definitely have very good ideas about how, say, queer history is necessary for the community and so forth, and who want to contribute to that, but who...

Irene: Just don't have the research skills to do it

Eli: Yeah, who sort of just spread blatantly inaccurate information, and I don't want to say, 'and we're perfect! And we always have the facts exactly', despite our name!

Irene: 'Queer as Probably True, I Guess'.

Eli: But I think it's a matter of when is it true enough? There are definitely times where we have not gone as in-depth as we could have, and someone goes, 'hey, I think you are wrong because of this', and I'm like 'yeah, obviously okay in hindsight...' I struggle with deciding at what point other queer history podcasts become

good enough for us to publicly support them. There's not a clear line there. There is not a point where your history becomes 'good' as opposed to 'not good.'

Irene: Yeah, it's not like there is 'right' history and 'wrong' history.

Eli: I mean there's wrong history!

Irene: Yeah! But beyond a certain level...

But do you think maybe one of the skills people with history training have is an ability to talk openly about what we don't know, and uncertainty? Whereas others have a tendency to be a bit like 'this definitely happened'?

Irene: That's something that I think you get comfortable with as a historian: Coming out of something saying 'we don't know whether or not this happened'. People often come at queer history wanting to know the 'facts', like, 'did this person have sex with other men?' and sometimes you do just have to say 'we don't know, we can't know'. So yeah, I feel like we are more comfortable with uncertainty. I think that's something you learn.

Do you think that equally, it's important that you are historians, but it's also important that you're queer people doing queer history?

Irene: Yeah, I think that has value. It's like Eli said, there are a lot of academics out there writing about queer people, or queer experiences in history, and many of them are not queer themselves and they come at it with kind of weird ideas of what queer experience is.

Eli: I think also if we talk specifically about trans history, I feel like I'm a mediocre historian who has the trump card of being trans and therefore not being a complete idiot about trans issues. Because, the hurdle you're trying to get across with historians talking about potentially transgender dynamics in, say, the ancient world, or potentially trans people in history is not even that they have questionable ideas about it. It's that you have to have a very lengthy argument about whether trans history exists at all. And it does!

Irene: The other one that we often discuss is that it's incredible how prevalent it is in general scholarship that otherwise accomplished scholars with university educations can't distinguish between sexual attraction and gender. I find things like basic ideas like that a woman can be attracted to another woman without wanting to be a man, or that trans men exist and that doesn't automatically make them gay. That kind of understanding is often lacking!

Eli: I think it's more than just having the understanding. It's what comes from a default point of viewing queer historical figures as people and having empathy for them. In a lot of the scholarship we come across, that sort of base-level of respect isn't there. Instead, there is this tendency to view the experiences of queer people as completely perplexing.

Irene: Or even as just a sort of novel salacious titbit.

Alice: I think that's something you get also in public history. Whereas in scholarship people are like 'this is weird, we don't understand it', in a lot of public history it's like 'oooh, this is so weird!' Those are both problems you get from not having queer people involved.

I wonder if sometimes if in academia and in public history there is also almost of bit of identity politics point scoring? I was struck by this in your episode on Pauli Murray, I think sometimes, there is this reluctance to kind of consider the possibility of Pauli Murray being a trans man because he was such as good figure for lesbian history! And there is this sense of wanting to acquire inspirational figures you can identify with, and unwillingness to give them up to uncertainty.

Irene: This is something Eli talks about a lot, that I feel he feels particularly strongly about. It's something that

we *do* notice, this kind of thing where people feel the need to claim this figure for their identity. It often comes up with trans women and gay men, there is this ongoing argument of 'he was a gay man', 'no, she was a trans woman' and sometimes you have to be in this place where we say, 'we don't know how this person would have identified, or the metrics they have for identity are different, or, you can identify with this person from either of these perspectives!' You don't have to *own* a historical figure to identify with them!

Jason: It's almost like you *can't* own a historical figure!

Irene: It's almost like property is theft!

Alice: But I also think that you do have to be having a pretty long conversation to get that point across, and to say 'this person can be identified by this group because of these reasons, and by this group because of these reasons, and we shouldn't fight over it because of these reasons'. If you weren't making a long in-depth kind-of-academic podcast like we are, you don't have the chance to do that, because people do just want to say, you know, 'Pauli Murray was a lesbian,' or, 'Pauli Murray was a man' or whatever you want to say about Pauli Murray. So that's something we have an opportunity to do in this format.

Nuance requires space...

Eli: I think with Pauli Murray especially there's this sort of unwillingness to view him as a trans man, because he never medically transitioned and lived his life publicly as a woman, experienced sexism, and had a career defined by fighting against sexism. And so, it's incomprehensible to people that Pauli Murray could have had a male identity. Again, we need nuance, particularly with trans identities, because there's this unwillingness to understand that you can still be trans without having that popular narrative of: transitioned at age 19 and from then on had the exact same experience as a cisgender man.

And wrote in their diary which is now in an archive, 'I identify as a man'

Eli: Which is interesting, because Pauli Murray basically did that.

I feel like we are talking a lot about nuance, and throughout we've been mentioning how you respond to reviews, articles, tweets. Could you talk about your online presence in those various spaces, because nuance exists in your podcast, how does it go in, like your tweets?

Irene: Well I have no idea how to use social media, let's be honest.

Eli: It's sort of like editing the podcast, as in it's something we knew we had to do if we were going to have

a podcast, but that we are in no way actually all that skilled at. And to return to someone like Pauli Murray, trying to contextualise who Pauli Murray is in a tweet where we also have to then post a fun fact as well is really difficult.

Alice: I was posting about Pauli Murray the other day on our social media, and every time I post about Pauli Murray I use he/him pronouns and then I think, since Pauli Murray is a reasonably well-known figure, we're probably going to get some kind of response, or backlash, or people reading that and going 'huh, I thought Pauli Murray was a woman.' So every time I post about him I think, do I have to have a paragraph saying 'Pauli Murray is trans and here is the evidence, here are the quotes, here is the source for the quotes.' It's frustrating.

Eli: And I think we have this ongoing struggle as well where if we use, say, our Tumblr as an example. There are more people who follow us on Tumblr than who listen to the episodes, so we view the Tumblr posts as just something which supports the episodes, to refer people to the episodes. But there are a bunch of people who interact with that as their only exposure to what we have to say. And we often have people respond to the posts with corrections or additions of information we do address in the episode, but who are likely never

going to listen to it. It's hard to know how to respond to that. So, all of that is to say, no we are not as nuanced and it's an ongoing problem!

Irene: Yeah, and at the end of the day, you end up trying to stick to 'fun facts, nice pictures' on social media a lot of the time, or a lot of 'solidarity posts'. You can't get the same kind of conversation in there.

Jason: I totally agree with what we were talking about before, that there is an audience who is thirsty for more rigorous queer content, but I think the thing is, we are trying to grow our audience, and the way to do that is shorter, more engaging pieces of content, and particularly through social media. But then you get all those academic queers who are like 'well, that's not the full picture' and it's just like 'yeah, that's why we have these hour-long conversations.'

Irene: *Increasingly* long episodes.

Jason: But in terms of 'listicles' and other media outlets that mention us, we tend not to get a huge amount of trouble with those because they are so simplistic. The people who are writing these listicles are under actual financial pressures in terms of their writing- unlike us when we write our social media posts. So they're bringing across the most basic facts about us as possible

Eli: 'This podcast has an episode on this person', and we are like 'that is a true fact'.

How do you find and deal with feedback from listeners? It's a public history thing, so how would you characterise your interactions with the public?

Irene: They are... largely very positive. Most of what we get is people send us these reviews that are go something like 'everything you do is so interesting, you are witty and charming', and we are go 'are we? oh shit, okay!' But we did turn off anonymous messages on Tumblr, because people get weird when they are allowed to be anonymous. For example, Eli and Jason did an episode on *Call Me By Your Name* and we had a bunch of anonymous messages on Tumblr, which I assumed were from the same person, that were just different variations of 'you guys are paedophiles, this isn't queer media this is paedophilia, have you seen the age difference, why are you talking about this?'

Eli: Also, some people specifically accusing the podcast of being a Jewish conspiracy.

Irene: Oh, I had forgotten that one! Or that one where someone got on 'Anon' and asked Eli to share his personal social media to prove that he was trans.

Eli: Yeah, that happened.

Irene: But people, when they have to attach a name to what they say, are much more reasonable.

Jason: Yeah, I'd say we probably get two or three different kinds of messages. We get people being overwhelmingly positive, and then we get people who want to talk about their own experiences with their queer identity, and how our podcast has helped them with that. It's really lovely. And we also get people who have either lived through an event we have discussed, or know people who were involved, or have access to material about what we were talking about, or are close to the locations where things happened, which is really cool!

Irene: Yeah, sometimes we have people who live near an area we are talking about who have gone and taken pictures to send to us, which is super nice.

Something I was kind of curious about is whether it's positive or negative interactions, is there an emotional labour as well as a time consideration when you do something that is not only in the public eye, but also online?

Irene: Yeah, if people send us a complicated message that will require a thought-out response, we definitely

will have to workshop it in the group chat.

Jason: We've had messages that are basically asking us to write essays.

Alice: Yeah, sometimes we get very complex, nuanced questions about history, and I think the issue there is that I don't think people recognise the amount of work that goes into what we do. Just because we can present this information in a podcast, doesn't mean there's not hours of work behind that. So, we do get messages that ask us these questions that we just can't give them the answers that they want.

Irene: Or you can't give an off-the-cuff answer that is going to help them. You can give those sort of answers where it you say, 'this is a complex issue, it's hard to say one way or another, this may have happened, or not,' and if they wanted anything more, that's a four thousand word research paper!

Jason: Or it's another podcast episode.

Irene: I do think that sometimes people just don't see the work. On one level, it's flattering, that people imagine that we just kind of go into this just knowing all this stuff. People think 'Oh *Queer as Fact*, they'll be able to tell me about this'. We could, but what that really means is, we have the tools to do this, not that it's just sitting in our heads.

Jason: And I do think this is a reflection of how people in the general public feel about historians, they think that you know everything that happened in all of history.

Irene: That's definitely a thing that happens! It's like they are trying to catch you out!

Eli: But to talk about emotional labour. When we first started the podcast we were so excited about any interaction, because basically no one was listening. But now I just try to ignore our social media as much as possible! I think a lot of that came out of those very occasional, but still fairly consistent interactions that went something like 'hey, you should stop speaking about trans issues until you get a trans person on', to which we would respond, 'okay, but Eli is trans. So, the person who did all the research for that episode is trans', to which they would then say, 'okay but what proof can you give me?' Stuff like that, I'm just sick of it! I think something that is worth mentioning regarding the responses we get, is there is criticism we get where they're very overtly trying to soften it and be nice...

Irene: They send you something like 'I love your podcast, I love everything you do, I just noticed that you didn't go into as much depth as maybe you could have'.

Eli: Or even just commenting on the terminology we use and how it might be upsetting for them even if we didn't mean it that way. It's very easy to respond to that kind of criticism, but then we get other criticism where they'll be very aggressive. I think it's just as easy for us to decide that we don't have to respond to that kind of thing, but their tone doesn't mean there isn't some reasonable criticism at the core of what they were saying. I find it really hard to find that line where we can say that this something we should be taking on board in the future and when it is valid to ignore.

So it just struck me that I forgot to ask. Obviously there is the emotional labour of responding to people who have reached out to you, but I imagine that kind of clashes with the emotional labour of actually doing the research and putting an episode together. I mean, deep research into a single person often becomes emotional, and then to put that out there...

Irene: Yeah, to me it does always feel quite vulnerable. I did this research, and I tell these guys, and they respond to it and we have some conversation, and there is always part of me thinking, what if I did bad research? What if I missed something important? What if?

Eli: Yeah, and on that note we've been doing this for a while now. There are

definitely discussions that we have now that just wouldn't have occurred to us at the start. Not to be 'that person', but particularly about trans things!

Irene: I mean left to my own devices each episode would be like 'this woman was very good, and she loved women and I love women and this is very good'.

Eli: But in terms of vulnerability. I'm sure there is stuff we are saying now that in two years, hopefully, we will be like, 'well, that was embarrassing'

Irene: Like, 'that was weird and simplistic'.

Eli: And now that's just out there forever! Hopefully in ten years when I'm further along in my career than I am now, people can just find that on the internet and hear my bad history opinions from when I was twenty-two!

Irene: I mean I'm hoping that we reach the point that, I've reached with the fan fiction I wrote when I was fourteen! I know that's still out there, and it gives me a good laugh and I don't mind if somebody finds it and laughs. Hopefully, in ten years' time when we realise that, 'wow, we were like academic infants, we've come a long way since then', it will be the same kind of feeling, 'I've grown since then', rather than 'oh god, wipe me off the face of the earth!'

Jason: If public queer history and media discourse gets to the point in the next ten years where the stuff that we are doing now is considered incredibly un-nuanced I will be so happy!

Eli: But, I'm not saying that the standards of the public have moved on since we started, I'm saying that my standards have.

Irene: Yeah, I think for us, we're always going to feel like we keep thinking more, we keep trying to get better. The other day Eli had prepared notes for the Nero episode and he was like, 'this is the shortest script I've done in ages, we're just going to bang this out it won't take that long, it'll be great.' We ended up recording for more than two hours and we were like, 'whoops, what have we done?' I guess we have more to say now! Every episode you do you want to get better, get a little bit more thoughtful about how you talk about things, you touch on things you haven't thought of before.

Eli: I think that is something all scholars should stop and ask themselves though, 'am I actually getting more nuanced or am I just getting more verbose?'

I guess putting it out into the public keeps you honest?

Irene: True!

Jason: I was just going to say that the advantage of doing what we do and publishing content twice a month is that we are getting so many more iterations of these discussions. There will be episodes that are asking similar questions, so you end up having to find new things to say about the same fundamental issues. I think the fact that we are constantly doing that, rather than, you know, publishing a paper once or twice a year, means there is a huge difference in terms of how quickly iterations of those ideas come about.

So, you guys have been so generous with your time, but I thought it would be good if we could end on any particular episodes that you're happy with, or that you might want to talk about?

Irene: The one that I actually really like, and I don't actually remember if I was in this one or if I just edited it, but it was the episode on the Warren Cup. I remember editing it because we'd ended up having these sort of two weirdly overlapping conversations that were half an hour each, and I remember going through it and just thinking 'I'm going to shuffle this around, so it flows' and when I did it, I was like 'that actually came out really well!' That was something I was quite proud of, not as much from a scholarship point of view but just as I kind of put it together. I made us make sense!

Eli: That can be a hard thing to do!

Irene: I was very proud of that one!

Jason: I think probably for me, simultaneously, the episode I don't want anyone to ever listen to, but also the one that I kind of was proud of in terms of what we did do with it was the episode on *The Colour Purple* because that was, of the episodes that I've done research for probably the most intense – like, 'I'm wading into some *discourse* right now, and I am in no way qualified for it, but I'm going to go in anyway!' I think the episode came out all right in the end, but I definitely thought to myself, 'Is this going to be okay, or am I going to hear about how racist I am in two weeks?' So, it was an intense experience.

Eli: I think for me, when we did the Pauli Murray episode, I felt like we, or at least I, took a step forward in terms of having stuff to say. I realise I've said nothing in this entire interview that hasn't been like 'but have we talked about the trans people?' But with a lot of the trans and trans-related topics we've done, it does feel like I'm actually contributing to something, in a way it doesn't always feel like. For example, we all know that Oscar Wilde slept with men, we can tell people that, they'll be very interested to hear it, but I don't feel like I'm really contributing anything. But when we talk about Pauli Murray and Billy Tipton and other trans people it

feels like we are actually contributing something, and also, I definitely have that emotional connection to them, more than I do to some other people we've covered.

Irene: I remember when we did the Harvey Milk episode, and that was a very emotional episode. We paused the recording in the middle, so we could all make a cup of tea and have a cry and we could keep going. And every once in a while we get a comment from someone on that episode that's like 'I cried in the Harvey Milk episode' and we're like 'us too, I love you, stranger!'

Jason: I think there is definitely a thing where when we do episodes about trans people that there are a lot more examples where even queer people often don't know that there even is trans history.

Irene: I learn so much from you, every time you prepare one of those episodes.

Jason: And I feel like there are queer people who don't know about gay and lesbian history as well. We don't really know many people like that in our personal lives, but, for example, I came out of high school not knowing that Oscar Wilde was gay. So, it is sometimes hard to recognise that even the most basic episode, that we think everyone will know about, might not necessarily be the case; there are tonnes of people who didn't know this stuff.

When we get messages from people who are just like 'oh my god, this is so amazing, I never considered this, I never considered that my identity would be represented in history like this' it is really heart-warming.

Irene: Yeah, and sometimes we get those messages where somebody writes in to say; 'it's just so nice to hear about two women, living together and being happy – I just didn't know that happened in history!'

Eli: I think it's one of those things where we all went into this, knowing that queer people have always existed, if we push aside questions about 'when did "homosexual" become an identity' and so forth and, we knew that there were always queer people who were happy but we didn't really understand that until we did this. We've come across *so* many happy stories, and we weren't looking for them. They just happened to be there and that was really nice. But yeah, to finish off, doing trans history for this podcast, to get a little too real, as someone who is not a genius and has typical struggles in academia, it was the thing which convinced me that I had something to contribute to history, which, somehow I did a whole history degree *not* thinking that!

Well that sounds like a nice note to end on, thank you all so much!