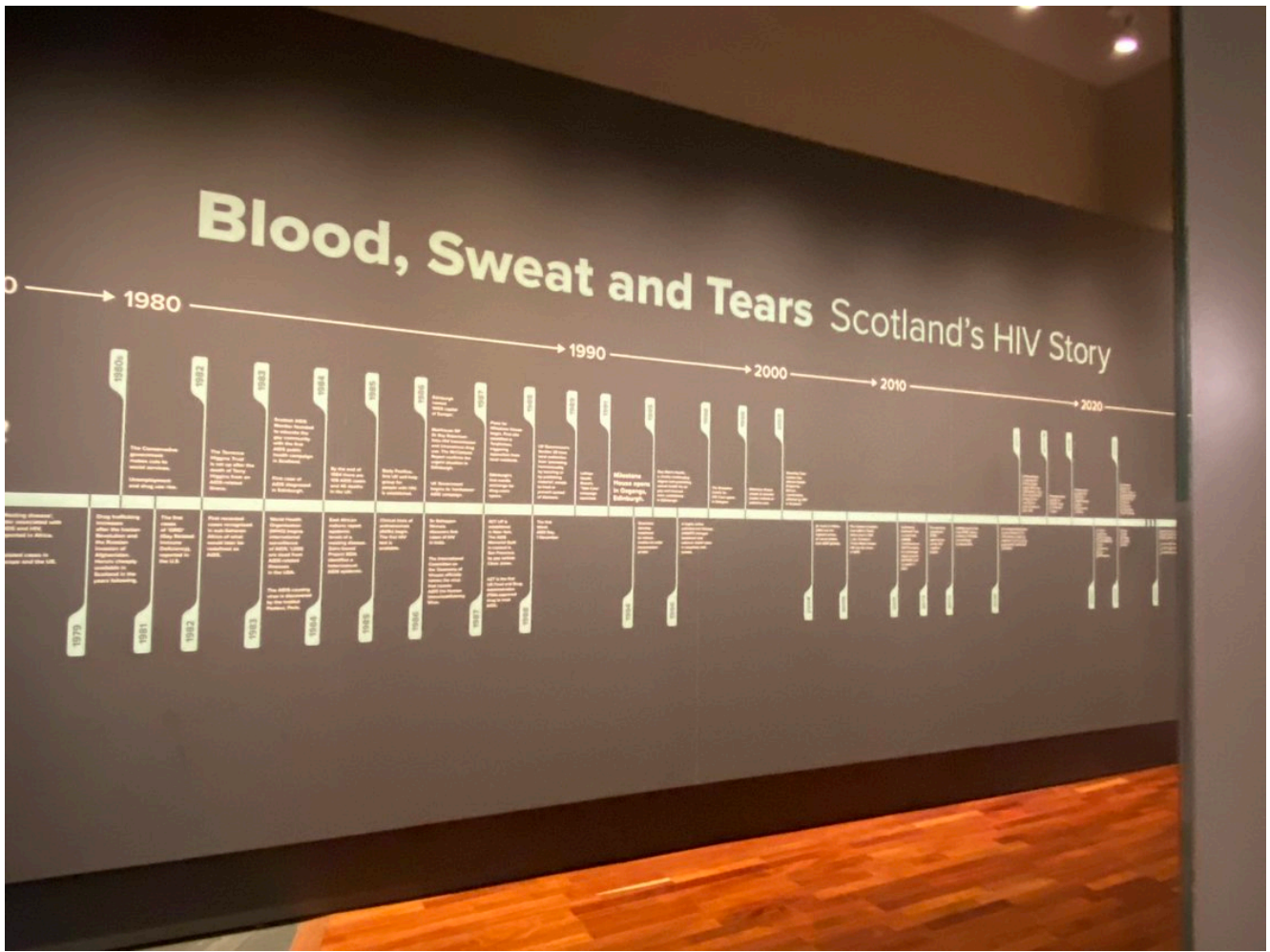


Edinburgh Art Festival 2023 – Blood, Sweat & Tears: Scotland's HIV Story

From the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, the HIV virus swept through Edinburgh and the Lothians; by 1988 the area had an AIDS infection rate of *seven times* the national average.

In 1986, Muirhouse GP Dr Roy Roberston linked HIV transmission and intravenous drug use. As hostility to already marginalised groups – particularly IV drug users – increased, communities responded. People came together to overcome stigma, ignorance and neglect. Some were the families and friends of sufferers, some were simply concerned individuals who saw the need for care and support rather than fear and prejudice.



In 1989 the charity **Waverley Care** was founded, and it is now Scotland's leading HIV and hepatitis C charity. An exhibition at the **National Library of Scotland**, *Blood, Sweat and Tears*, tells the story of HIV and AIDS in the Central Belt, and the ways in which Waverley Care – and others – set out to help the victims of this terrible disease, to raise awareness, and ultimately to influence national policy around sexual health and blood borne viruses.

Waverley Care opened its flagship centre Milestone House, the UK's first purpose-built AIDS hospice – in Oxbgangs on 25 January 1991. The situation was challenging; people were having to deal with a new illness while trying to cope with addiction, grief and stigma. Waverley's approach was – and remains – person centered;

'Everything we do is guided by the experiences of the people we work with.'

A flexible, non-judgmental, experimental approach recognised the complex needs of the residents. Instead of thinking they knew best, the staff and volunteers asked people,

'What do you need?'

Other community groups followed their lead. Some of the most disadvantaged and ignored voices in society were being heard at last.



Original plans for Milestone House

The exhibition includes the original plans for Milestone House. It had bungalow-style apartments for each resident, all with French doors leading into the garden. Pets were welcome, chickens were kept, sculptures were installed in the grounds. Creativity flourished;

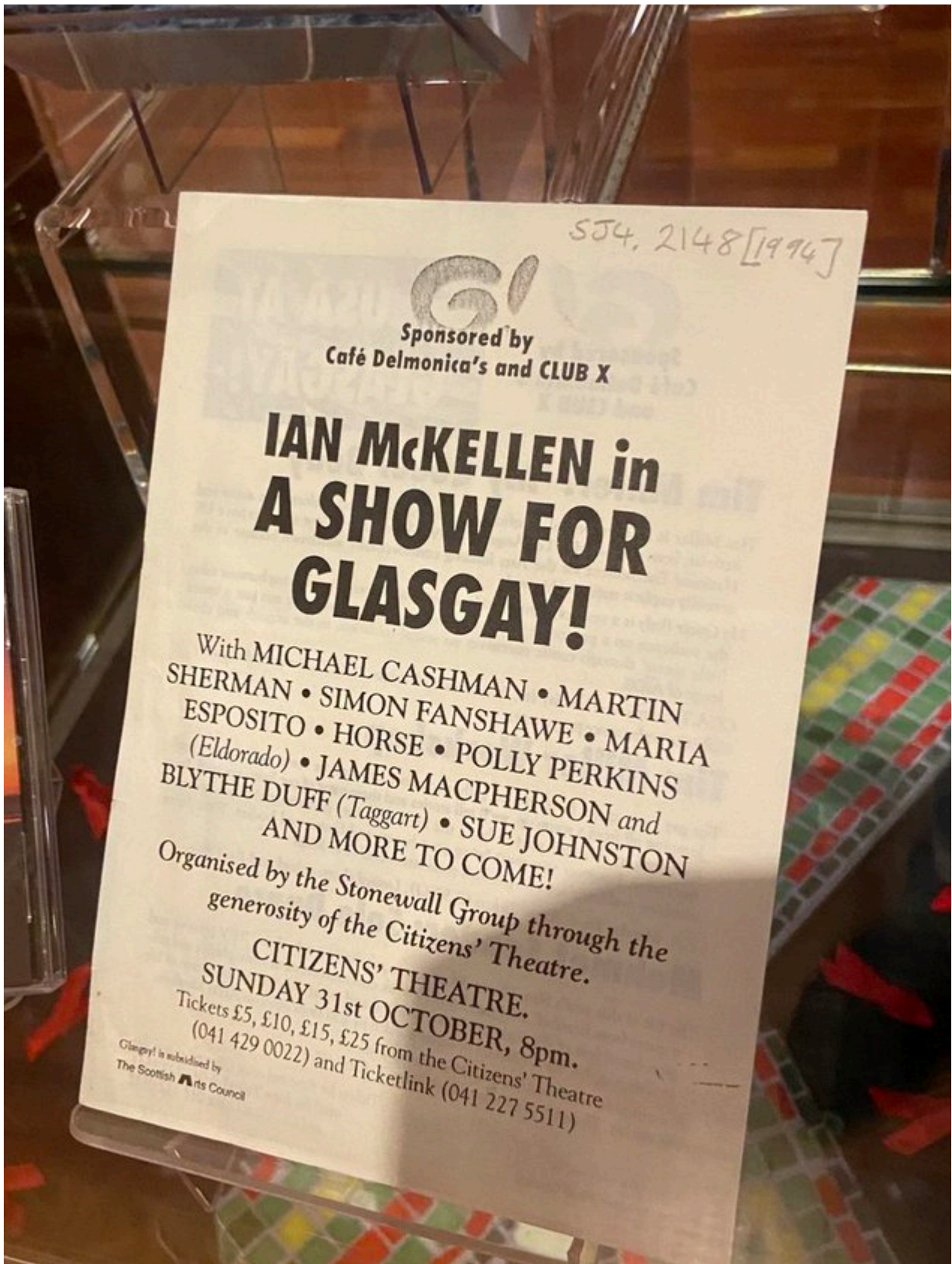
'I just remember loads of different workshops...there were sleep, relaxation, stress, drama workshops, art workshops...'



Among the exhibits are two huge glass mandalas made by art therapist Gary Smith with relatives and friends of those who had died, and originally hung in the Solas Café in Edinburgh, an HIV/AIDS advice and drop-in centre. The panels include a lighthouse, a candle, and Henry Scott Holland's poem "Death is nothing at all."

In Gaelic, *solas* means light.

Local community action spread across Scotland; on show here are posters for fundraising comedy nights at the Edinburgh Playhouse, Stonewall's *A Show for Glasgay* (stars included Ian McKellan, Michael Cashman and Simon Fanshawe) at the Citizens Theatre and an exhibition of the Names Project Quilt at the Solas Café. Pop stars held benefits – Annie Lennox performed at Red Hot + Blue (and continues to campaign to increase HIV-awareness worldwide.) In October 1991 Princess Diana visited Milestone House.



But despite all this positivity, the media – and some politicians – continued to push a sensationalist, homophobic agenda. Also on display in the exhibition are newspapers with headlines 'Row over AIDS alert to Africa medics' and 'Junkies export AIDS around Europe.' And although effective medication

is now available to reduce an HIV-positive person's viral overload to almost nothing, enabling them to lead long and healthy lives, the exhibition points out that AIDS continues to decimate third world countries, where sufferers are victimised, ostracised and scorned.

JUNKIES EXPORT AIDS ROUND EUROPE



Someone's got to do it... Peter helps out

DRUG addicts from Edinburgh are spreading AIDS throughout Europe.

There's one shock finding of a report by Scottish doctors published yesterday in the British Medical Journal.

Junkies from the capital admitted sharing needles with users in 17 other UK towns, including Glasgow.

VIRUS

They also did so as far afield as Northern Ireland, Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Paris.

The doctors found that the rate the deadly disease is spread by needles is up to 100 times the rate of infection by sexual intercourse.

The finding is considered the "most telling evidence yet" that AIDS is more likely to spread in the general population by

By ALESTAIR CAMPBELL

with more than 1200 abusers in this category.

This means that more than half the city's junkies were carrying the HIV virus.

The rate is rising in England and Wales, Dr Jenette added.

Estimates of the number of carriers in Britain range from 40,000 to 100,000.

The Government are to launch a new campaign next month aimed directly at drug abusers.

There are currently 25 known cases of full-blown AIDS in Scotland, and 21 people have died from the disease.



Tony Booth
Elsie's man for Street

THE man who wed 2 Put Phoenix as she lay on her deathbed is named for a Ceres street.

Tony Booth will play Ruth Charles Hamilton, who turns up as best man when the new landlord of the Rivers Barrow, Alan Gilroy, marries Ben Lynch.

Booth, 54, married Pat - Eadie Towner for 22 years - a week before she died last September.

Fireball horror as mum sees car girl die

A FRANTIC mother watched horrified yesterday as her little girl burned to death, strapped in the back of the family car.

April Rawson, 34, had to be dragged away by her husband and neighbours as she fought nearly an hour for only child, four-year-old Tony, trapped unconscious in her safety harness after the car exploded into flames.

Rescuers kicked in the rear window but were driven back by intense heat.

Burns

The horror happened after Mrs Rawson reversed 30 yards down the drive of her home in Droversfield, Woodhouse, Derbyshire.

She got out of the two-door Mini Metro hatchback to investigate a smelt of petrol - and it exploded into a fireball.

Later, Mrs Rawson, a health visitor, went to hospital with her husband John, 31. She was treated for hand and face burns, but a spokesman said she would be able to go home.

John, who is studying music, was unharmed.

Last night police and firemen examined the A-registered car to find the cause of the blaze.

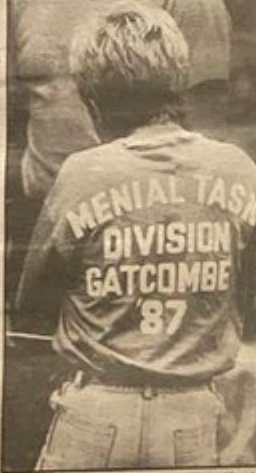
Peter knows his place

EVEN Princess Anne's son, Peter, wanted to help out.

His home, Gatcombe Park in Gloucestershire, was being prepared for the British Open horse trials yesterday.

As last-minute touches were sorted out, nine-year-old Peter set a hand to put up fence posts.

And the message on the back of his T-shirt left no one in doubt about his position in the organisation.



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Castle Hill	1st	30 August	97,100	£225,000
Barbican Heights	1st	30 August	17,000	£229,000
Magna	1st	30 August	27,000	£239,000
Brick Barnham	1st	30 August	27,900	£245,000
Castle House	1st	22 August	27,000	£279,000
Thames	1st	25 August	17,900	£199,000
Castle House	1st	27 August	16,000	£179,000
Tisbury	1st	24 August	17,100	£259,000
Mable	1st	24 August	16,000	£219,000

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Daily Record, 1987

The battle is not over. Waverley Care now offers preventative rather than palliative care, and aims to play a major role in Scotland's plan to achieve zero HIV transmission by 2030.

Perhaps the most moving things in this sobering, yet ultimately life-affirming exhibition are the recorded voices of people who were involved in Milestone's House early days.

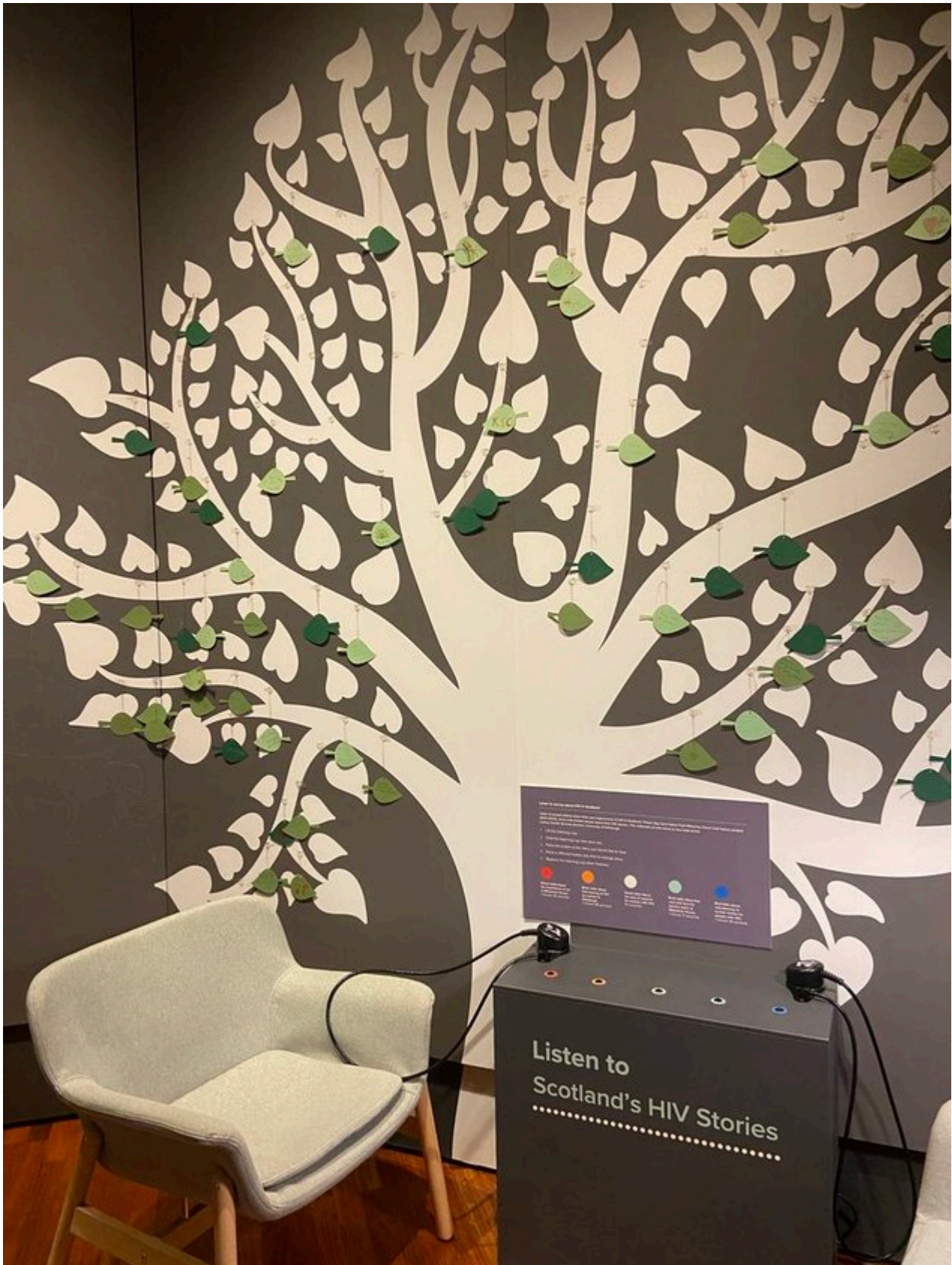
Brian, a trainee priest in the early 1980s, tells of a fellow ordinand who refused to take Communion in case he caught the virus from the chalice. Brian later joined a street project to help IV drug users, one of the highest at risk groups. He eventually left the priesthood to devote all of his time to this work.

Sarah recalls how little help there was for HIV-positive women; at the outset they had to seek support from the services set up for gay men;

'But this became uniting; gay, drug and women's communities came together.'

Ruth, who worked at Milestone, describes the experience as "a huge learning curve":

'I learned how awful most drug users' lives had been...abandonment, abuse, neglect. They never expected much out of their lives. Milestone House gave them a sense of safety, a place where they could be at home...the ethos of the place was creating that sense of safety that they'd never had as kids....Willy, (an addict who visited Milestone House several times before eventually dying there) said "I had no idea that places like this could exist" – he never believed that people could genuinely care for him.'



Visitors to the exhibition can sit and listen to these recollections beside a wall painted with a tree on which people are encouraged to hang notes of memories and hopes. Someone has written;

'Everyone is worthy of love and respect.'

Waverley Care, along with the Terrence Higgins Trust, the Glasgow Bars AIDS Welfare Fund, and many others, gave people that love and respect when they needed it most.

Blood, Sweat and Tears: Scotland's HIV Story is at the National Library of Scotland, George IV Bridge until 2 December 2023. Admission is free, and the library is open 9.30am to 7pm on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10am to 7pm on Wednesdays, and 9.30am to 5pm on Fridays and Saturdays. (NB: Closed Sundays.)

waverleycare.org