

Anders, born 1941

I belong to that large group of gays who didn't dare come out when they were young and instead ended up getting married and having children. When I realised how wrong this was the ensuing struggle was tremendous, life was anything but good. Would I dare contact other gays – how and where?

Then one weekend my wife decided to take the children to visit her best friend who lived 100 kilometres away. I would be at home on my own, the sheep needed to be fed and watered. So the family went off and I immediately got on the phone and found out that there would be an LGBT-party in town that night. I hesitated, considered, and decided NO, I won't go, but then three seconds later it's a YES; and this is how it went on for hours.

In the end it's a yes, so I take the car to town and park three blocks away. After walking around the block three times I finally ring the doorbell and am let in straight away. Just think if I, with my heart pounding, had to wait for a minute or two – how many people would have seen me? But, if I am honest, the premises were off the beaten track and the risk of people being out that way on a Saturday night at 9 was minimal.

There I meet Anders who had gone in a parallel class with me at school. He was openly gay, a member of the board of RFSL (The Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights) and currently had no boyfriend so of

course I went home with him. And in the morning he came home with me to help out with the sheep.

After that weekend I started to work late one evening a week, blaming a research assignment. But it was Anders I was researching, in every way. I was happy and my wife noticed this and asked why. Now I was in a mess. I told part of the truth, that I had met up with an old school friend who was helping me with my writing. She thought it would be lovely to meet him so one Saturday afternoon he invited the whole family around for coffee.

Anders and Eva realised that they both liked folk-dancing (which I do not) and all of a sudden they decided to go on a course together. It ended up with me putting the children to bed when they were on their course and then having the sandwiches and tea ready for when they came home afterwards.

And of course rumours started circulating that Eva had a man on the side; how convenient. But what would have happened if people had known that he was my lover and not Eva's? Just one more person knew, the folkdance teacher who was also on the board of RFSL...

So what happened? Divorce, I was introduced to Anders mother. And then one morning Anders was found dead, heart attack...

Photo: Steve Warburton