

Alex Bayley: Digging up Queer Histories on the Victorian Goldfields

The late colonial period (1850-1900) is under-represented in Australian queer history, and queer history in general seldom strays outside major cities. Alex (an independent researcher) and Tom (local history podcaster) have been digging up stories of queer life during the Gold Rush, centred around the regional city of Ballarat. We've presented our discoveries through public history displays and tours for local LGBTQ+ and Heritage festivals. We talk about our experiences using the Trove newspaper archives for colonial queer history, and the challenges and successes we've experienced in presenting our research to Ballarat residents and visitors.

Alex Bayley: White Australia, Straight Australia: Anti-Chinese Homophobia in the Gold Rush Press

English-language newspapers during the Gold Rush often reported sodomy cases involving Chinese men, yet this part of Australia's queer history is little known. My research has unearthed a number of stories of Chinese same-sex activity on the Victorian goldfields, as well as frequent mentions by white Australians of their concerns about "sexual immorality" (including sodomy, polygamy and prostitution) among Chinese immigrants. These primary sources show intersections between racism and homophobia in the newspapers of the era; at the same time they also provide glimpses into Australia's multicultural queer histories.

Leigh Boucher and Sophie Robinson: Men's Sheds and the History of (Hetero)sexuality in Australia

Since the first Men's Shed emerged in Australia in late 1998 they have proliferated across neighbourhoods in Australia – whether as purpose specific 'Shed's' or as a part of a neighbourhood community centre. We might even say there has been a Men's Shed movement in Australia that has been remarkably successful in making claims for local government support and funding on the basis of a sexual and gender identity. A Men's Shed is typically a community based centre for 'all men' to build community through 'meaningful tasks' which are often, but not limited to, building projects. Sheds are often characterised as crucial to male health and wellbeing, offering a space to talk 'shoulder to shoulder' rather than 'face to face'. This paper will explore the emergence of the Men's Shed movement and the kinds of claims it makes about men's behaviours and their need for specific rights and protections – often articulated in a local rather than national imaginary. This paper will place the 'movement' in the context of histories of activism concerning gender and sexuality in Australia. In what ways has the Men's Shed movement adapted and reframed the narratives and stories of homosexual and feminist activism, and for what political ends? What kinds of communities and identities are being nourished and produced by the Men's Shed movement and how do they engage, or not, with questions of sexuality?

Joseph Carmel Chetcuti: Binary gay and lesbian history in a 'non-binary era': Ditching the social/political divide in our history.

In one respect, our history has tended to be a binary affair with 'social' groups set against 'political' groups, but is this distinction warranted? Is the distinction grounded in our failure to locate social groups within their appropriate historical, social, political, cultural and legal settings? Maybe it also reproduces the priorities of historians who, in the main, have been political activists—some with links to the political fringes of our movement. If the *personal is political* and if *homosexuality is political*, as the slogans go, why is it that gay bars, beats and social groups have not been assigned the 'political' label?

In this paper, I wish to argue that social groups—particularly those that predated the formation of CAMP in NSW—must not be written off as *merely* social groups. Their politics may not have been as overt as that of organisations like CAMP NSW and Gay Liberation; even so, social groups were also 'political' given their historical context. The paper begins with an examination of the complex issue of definition—what do adjectives like 'social' and 'political' actually tell us about the groups?

Cameron Colwell: Beneath the house, under the station, and in plain sight: The obscurity of queer Sydney in Sumner Locke Elliott's *Fairyland*

This paper uses a geocritical lens to analyse queerness within Sumner Locke Elliott's 1990 novel *Fairyland*. Through his portrayal of Sydney during the 1930s and '40s, Elliott dichotomises the publicity of heterosexuality and the obscurity of homosexuality. There is an emphasis on private, obscure, and marginal space in the novel which is used to emphasise the alienation felt by queer people at this time. As Dennis Altman writes, the novel "captures some of the intricacies and prohibitions surrounding sexuality in Australia during the middle of the last century." It is this paper's goal to investigate how the novel does so.

Karen Donnelly: Move over Priscilla: The Female Impersonators of the AIF

This paper explores the narratives of two of the most popular WW1 AIF female impersonators. Overlooked and underestimated, their narratives bridge two world wars and offers an insight into war theatre, theatrical performance and versions of masculinity. A restoration of their first world war-service, spent performing on the western front and in England, not only offers an understanding of war entertainment but informs how the military dealt with homosexual soldiers. How these two men managed their sexual identity, within an extreme environment of homophobia, is poignantly demonstrated in their downfall during World War Two; orchestrated by military and civil authorities.

Matthew Egan and Barbara Voss: Coming out within the accounting profession during vitriolic public debate, and the subsequent passing of, marriage equality

In this study we undertake 56 semi-structured interviews across all 4 of the 'big 4' professional services firms in Australia, to explore the experience for LBGTI staff in coming out (or not) during a period of debate, and subsequent passing of marriage equality (2017). Drawing from queer theory, we find mixed attitudes and approaches to coming out. Many, regardless of age or gender, had been comfortably out for years. A sense of safety and comfort was central to enabling related declarations. Having allies, friends and networks were in turn, central to affecting that sense of safety.

John Fowler: 'Coming out' at the ANU in 1972

To place a personal experience into a political and cultural context as it pertains to the experience of 'coming out' at the ANU in 1972; examining the themes of personal political and sexual as social catalysts for a gay society and definitions of self and group identity. By reviewing personal recollections, primary sources of media as well as contemporary histories to understand recent gay history.

Robert B French: "You won't feel so gay behind bars!": The beginnings of the campaign for homosexual law reform in NSW, 1969-1981

The quest for the decriminalisation of gay male sexual behaviour in NSW actually began 50 years ago when activist Lex Watson joined the ACT Homosexual Law Reform Society on the day of its formation. He then attempted to found a NSW equivalent. This effort, however, was overtaken by the formation of CAMP Inc in 1970 and a new homosexual visibility. Yet, it was to be another 14 years before decriminalisation was actually achieved. Why did it take so long, and why so even after the election of a reformist Labor government in 1976? What were the problems that had to be overcome by the supporters of reform? These are some of the questions to be explored in this presentation that sets out the early steps towards reform when, what eventually became a gay community campaign, came bang up against political reality.

Catherine Freyne: Bergman, Bechdel, Brownstein and me: Daughters write gay dads.

Like me, the late poet Susan Bergman, the cartoonist Alison Bechdel and the musician Carrie Brownstein had dads who were 'gay and married' (to use a twentieth century term). My paper compares the experiences of these American women and their families, as documented in their works of memoir – respectively *Anonymity* (1994), *Fun Home* (2006) and *Hunger Makes Me A Modern Girl* (2015) – and considers them in relation to my own family story. In particular it investigates generational matters: Bergman was born in 1957; Bechdel in 1960; Brownstein in 1974, like me. Engaging the methodology of the microhistorian, I use these autobiographical texts to explore how transformations in the social categories of 'gay life' and 'the family' in the 1970s, 80s and 90s in the USA and Australia affected the experiences, behaviours, choices and self-understandings of homosexually active married men and their wives and children.

Tim Jones: Religious LGBT conversion practices and spiritual health care in Australia, 1973-2019

Religion-based LGBT conversion practices, attempting to change the sexual and gender orientation of LGBT people, have been present in Australia for the past 50 years. As Australian psychiatric authorities declassified homosexuality as mental illness in 1973 and ceased attempts to 'cure' it, conservative religious organisations in Australia were developing their own spiritual and counselling practices directed toward the sexual and gender reorientation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Over time, Australian LGBT conversion movements became affiliated with a global network of similar religious conversion therapy organisations. This paper outlines the history of religious sexual and gender identity change efforts in Australia, indexing that against changes in the history of psychiatry and LGBT civil rights. It then explores the utility of spiritual health as a strategic analytical category to avoid the polarising effects of dominant culture war narrative frameworks.

Katerina Liskova: Sexual deviants and delinquents: from a non-issue to a large-scale problem

In 1970s state socialist Czechoslovakia, homosexuality was not deemed problematic, at least not by experts. Sexologists had researched homosexuality back in the 1950s and found it incurable and unchangeable. With this knowledge, they lobbied for decriminalization which was accomplished in 1961.

Dozen or so years later though, another problem emerged: with un-conforming heterosexual men. These 'sexual delinquents', as they were labelled by sexologists serving as forensic experts, were sentenced to the sexological wards of psychiatric hospitals. Czechoslovak sexologists began experimenting with the treatment of aggressive heterosexual men in the 1970s and the treatment protocols consolidated in the following decade. By now, the Czech Republic has the highest number of 'sexual deviants' who are 'treated' by permanent surgical castration.

Following the methods of the sociology of expertise (Gil Eyal), I will show how sexological expertise went from ignoring sexual deviance (in the 1950s) through experimenting with aetiologies and treatments (in the 1960s) and subsequent massification of the problem (in the 1970s and 1980s) to the panacea of surgical castration.

Sharon Lobo: Melbourne's (In)conveniences: Homophobia and the Dequeering of Queer Spaces in Melbourne

As we gather for Before Mardi Gras: Gay+ in the 1970s, we are reminded of some significant anniversaries which occur about this time, such as the founding of Campaign Against Moral Persecution in Sydney and the Homosexual Law Reform Society of the ACT. These organisations and other activism were instrumental in achieving law reform, but homophobia remains with us, not least in the actions of public authorities. With this in mind, my paper takes a before and after Mardi Gras approach as it reconsiders some incidents in which public authorities have attempted to dequeen queer spaces in Melbourne, namely the police raids at Black Rock Beach in 1976 and the closure of the men's underground public toilets near the corner of Queen and Collins Streets in Melbourne in 2013. These events are separated by almost forty years of chronological time, and my paper examines not only how homophobia manifested itself in the dequeering strategies employed by public authorities at Black Rock during the seventies, but also how traces of that homophobia persist today when officialdom decides to dequeen public space.

Scott McKinnon: Adults Only: Film classification and depictions of homosexuality in 1970s Australia

Legislative reforms in the early 1970s saw the introduction of a new film classification system in Australia. A legally enforceable 'R' rating replaced the previous 'adults only' advisory guideline and required that cinemas ban entry to specific films for anyone under eighteen years of age. Assured that depictions of homosexuality would not be seen by child viewers, Australian censors allowed a range of films that might otherwise have been banned or heavily cut to appear at local cinemas. This paper will examine the response to these changes by film reviewers, politicians and campaigners. While CAMP and gay liberation activists had reason to celebrate increased access to homosexual stories on-screen, the reforms equally conformed to an argument made by conservative commentators: that information about gay and lesbian life was inherently harmful to children.

Craig Middleton & Nikki Sullivan: Queering the museum online: A workshop

Museums use objects to tell stories, but not everyone's stories are collected or told. 'Queering the Museum Online' opens up the History Trust of South Australia's collections to diverse interpretations by community members from all over the world via a web-based platform. Contributors to the platform can use objects to tell their personal stories, share historical information (and hidden histories), or even create artworks and other creative media. This workshop will explore and explain the aims of the project and walk participants through the process of contributing. Participants will need to bring their own device (laptop, ipad, phone).

Bruce Moore: The word *Camp* in Australian English and in Australian Camp/Gay History

From the 1930s to the early 1970s the international sense of the adjective *camp* [(of a man or his manner) ostentatiously and extravagantly effeminate; deliberately exaggerated and theatrical in style] existed side-by-side with the neutral and non-pejorative Australian sense 'homosexual'. The international noun *camp* meant 'deliberately exaggerated and theatrical behaviour or style' whereas

in Australia this noun could also simply mean ‘a homosexual’ (as in ‘I met two camps at the pub’). These semantic differences can help us understand some of the ideological conflicts that underlay the early stages of the camp/gay liberation movement in Australia (for example, the history of the organisation that called itself Camp Inc.).

Wayne Murdoch: Sissies at the Movies: The 1930s

In the 1920s and early 1930s Hollywood films were quite open in showing a range of illegal, deviant, or sexually progressive behaviours, including drunkenness, crime, sex and sexual situations, etc. Among such films were the so-called “sissy” films, which included gay or effeminate male minor characters who added comic relief or acted as the foil to the leading (hetero) man. So mainstream was the phenomenon that even the very popular Fred Astaire/Ginger Rogers musicals regularly featured several such characters.

Drew Pettifer: "A sorrowful act": Art and Australia's first sodomy trial (1727)

This paper derives from a broader investigation within my work to unearth hidden queer histories through archival art practices. This specific project centres on the shipwreck of the Dutch ship the *Zeewijk* 65km off the coast of Geraldton in 1727. While the ship’s crew were stranded, two young mates were accused of committing the ‘sorrowful and God forsaken act of Sodom and Gomorrah’, according to the captain’s log. After convening the Ship’s Council to hear the case, the mates were found guilty and sentenced to death. Using this historical narrative as a case study, this paper argues that archival art practices offer vehicles for historical revisionism that can recontextualise social histories and advance the case for social change in the present.

Eric Riddler: Kites, crochet and camp: Queer art in the seventies

As the swinging sixties moved into the sexy seventies, many Australian and New Zealand artists explored issues of gender and sexuality in their work. This was not without its problems. Gay male artists’ camp and homoerotic aesthetics were challenged by the conceptual ideals of ‘high art’. Lesbian artists found that the exciting opportunities of second wave feminism were all too often dashed against the glass ceiling. Transgender issues were a sympathetic subject for cisgender artists but trans artists struggled to be heard. Intersex artists were invisible. Yet, despite these challenges, the 1970s were an exciting decade for queer art, with consequences which echoed into the next decade.

Peter Robinson: Gay men’s working lives in the 1970s

Stereotypes for gay men at work in 1970s Australia mostly concerned feminized work, including, for example, in hairdressing and on aeroplanes as cabin staff. The school drama teacher was assumed to be deviant as was any man who worked in theatre or in a ‘brainy’ job. To what extent these stereotypes have changed is moot. An early study suggested that, because of internalized shame, middle-class gay men tended to under-achieve at work, while working-class gay men did not (see M. Pollak, ‘Male homosexuality—or happiness in the ghetto’). This paper examines work life-stories of a group of men interviewed for a book I wrote on gay men’s working lives (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). It uses unanalysed data to investigate the sort of jobs gay baby-boomers had in their early 20s and how these changed over time.

Daniel Rogers ‘Rubbers are Bringing Men Together Again’: Condom packaging during the AIDS Crisis

Gay men's relationship to condoms was one made under duress at a very political time for homosexual sex. I'm interested in the way promotional and name-brand condoms marketed themselves to gay men during this transformative era. Using the packaging of ACON, Sleaze Ball and Safe Sex Sluts condoms at the Mitchell Library, as well as the collection at ALGA, I will talk about the relationship between gay men and condoms, and the interventions of community organisations and events.

Gary Schliemann: Homosexual Rights and Sexual Freedom: Living It

The struggle to understand and enact social change continues to confound us. Which is primary, the parliamentary authorisation of the freedom to be our authentic selves, or the mutual support and acceptance of our peers? To what extent is social acceptance secondary to parliamentary approval? The antiwar and the women's movements of the sixties and seventies saw their locus of action as our communities: not the power structures which pretended to a top-down authority over our lives. This was the liberatory social politics, the largely interpersonal politics that gay liberation emerged from and embodied. I will share my life experience within gay liberation as a perspective on the enormous social changes in which so many participated.

How many of these films were released in Australia, given our strict censorship of film and literature at the time, and also how these films were received by the public? Did they influence or inform public opinion of male homosexuality?

Will Sergeant: Rainbow Oral Histories from South Australia 2019: the 40th anniversary of John Lee's oral histories of older Adelaide camp men.

Excerpts have been used in all Adelaide history walks, by John in 1990, and by Ian Purcell, Will Sergeant and Gertrude Glossip, from 1997 to the present. In conjunction with ECH, Oral History Australia SA/NT, and the State Library of SA, Will is currently participating in an oral history project recording the lives of SA rainbow elders; lives traversing days of criminalisation, discrimination and repression into a more embracing 21st century. This paper explores this 40 year oral history journey and the importance of recording and preserving rainbow oral histories.

Richard Turner: 'What is this Gay Community shit?'

In the early 1980s Sasha Soldatow wrote and distributed a pamphlet titled 'What is this Gay Community shit?'. Written before the gathering AIDS storm wrought havoc on gay lives in the Western world, it caught the tension between a growing gay activist movement and burgeoning commercial scene as represented by the 'Golden Mile'. Soldatow's splenetic vent argued activists were 'selling out' to that commercial scene. Unacknowledged was the initially hesitant but then full embrace of much of the agendas of Gay Liberation. This paper explores the relationship between individual human rights and growth of community in Gay & Lesbian Sydney between 1969 and 1989 as one of the post WWII's greatest social democratic transformative movements took shape.

Bart van der Wel: "God, give me chastity, but not yet": An history of Western attitudes to male masturbation.

Masturbation: from religious rite to mortal sin; from creating insanity, blindness and wasting to ultimate safe-sex practice and possible cancer and coronary risk reduction. In ancient, irrigation-based civilisations, creation myths told of evolution from supernatural masturbation. Religious rituals invoked masturbation to incite river flow. Later, Judaism and especially its splinter cults of Christianity and Islam, used sex as a control mechanism and masturbation became sinful, codified

in the Christian Penitentials of the 5th century. After secular criminalisation of “sodomy” in 1532 in the Holy Roman Empire, men were executed for mutual masturbation. Biblical texts were re-interpreted to justify the rhetoric against masturbation. During the peak of masturbation hysteria in the 19th century, many devices, surgical procedures and diets were presented to control it. Despite the Kinsey report and subsequent surveys finding that masturbation is widely practised by the sexually capable, there are still religious rants against it. Contemporaneously, pornography is a major industry.

Anthony Venn-Brown: Why I chose Christian gay conversion in the early 70s

The recently created term “Conversion Therapy” is a double edged sword in that it has created awareness and now on the radar of many LGBTIQ rights group but also has often been confused with medical interventions of the 50s and 60s. The film Boy Erased accelerated that increased awareness. What we are tackling now is the attempts to change sexual orientation and discredit the transgender/non binary experience in religious contexts. Researching for my next book 'The Quest to Cure Queers', I've discovered that possibly I am the oldest living survivor of religious conversion therapy in the world. In this presentation I will talk about the influences that drove me to seek hope of change in the Christian world in 1971 and 72 and highlight the those that remain.

Chris Wallace: 'Dear Maie... Love Patrick': The Maie Casey, Patrick White Correspondence 1966-1978

Maie Casey and Patrick White, a generation apart in age but sharing similar class backgrounds, sensibilities and interests as working writers, enjoyed a warm friendship conducted mostly through letters, from the mid-1960s to the late 1970s. The daily concerns of the writing life, mutual aid on writing-related research queries, attitudes to contemporary literature and art, the activities of their overlapping social network, travel and domestic concerns feature in the letters which provide an intimate portrait of these particular creative lives as Australia emerged from the cultural shadow of empire.

Tyler Whitmarsh: An evaluation of Citizen Heritage in the identification of Queer heritage in Melbourne

Australia has been slow to acknowledge the existence of its Queer heritage. Without proactive attempts to identify, nominate and safeguard, the heritage of LGBTQ+ identities will remain invisible and at risk. This paper evaluates a Citizen Heritage led methodology as a means to democratically identify Queer heritage in Melbourne, Victoria. Utilising qualitative participant interviews and digital cultural mapping, 41 individual Queer heritage sites have been identified. The strength of these results show that a Citizen Heritage led methodology offers a unique opportunity to democratically identify, nominate and safeguards Australia's rich and vibrant Queer heritage.

Graham Willett: The three scandals of Alfred Gottschalk

Alfred Gottschalk came to Australia with his family in 1938, refugees from Nazi Germany. He had an illustrious career as one of the world's most prominent virologists. And then in 1962 a visit to the Hotel Rex and an invitation to a young man to come back to his flat on Northbourne Ave led to violence and scandal. In the course of investigating this incident, I unearthed three homosexual encounters which leave us to think about what it means to be perpetrator and victim.