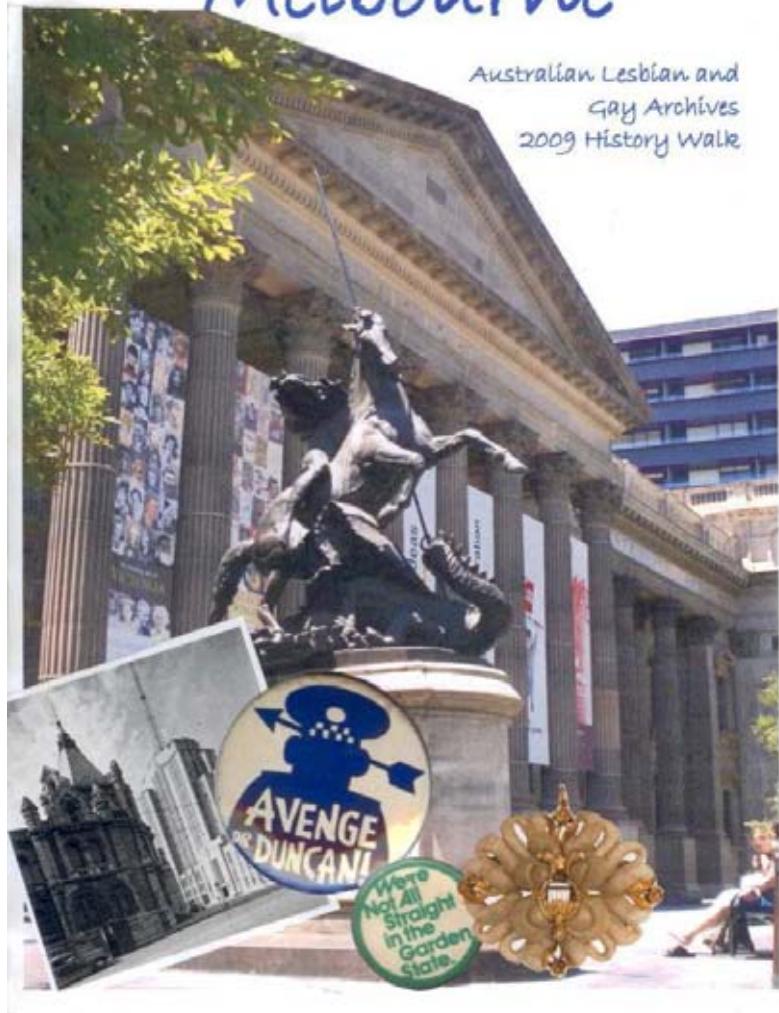


# Melbourne

Australian Lesbian and  
Gay Archives  
2009 History Walk



# Melbourne

## 2009 History Walk Guide to Places and Acknowledgments

★ indicates stopping points      Total distance is about 2 Km



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### ALGA in 2009

Thanks to everyone who helped us celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> year in 2008. This year ALGA is preparing for a bright future by refitting extra space made available at the Victorian AIDS Council. We will soon be on the look out for equipment to help us fit out the new space - good quality computers, lamps, office chairs, etc. If you think you may have something we could use or you'd like to donate money towards the purchase of these items, please email us at [algarchives@hotmail.com](mailto:algarchives@hotmail.com). Donations can be made online from ALGA's website [alga.org.au](http://alga.org.au) (click on 'Donate'). All donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

If volunteering for ALGA interests you, we'd love to hear from you. All skills welcome ... archiving, IT, fundraising, promotions, design, data entry, admin ... we try to match up volunteers with projects that fit their interests and time available.

### Congratulations to The Boilers ...

thought to be Australia's oldest gay social group, who celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in May this year.

### Start

**State Library of Victoria**

### Stop 1

**RMIT (ex Working Men's College)**, 124 La Trobe Street, cnr Swanston Street

### Stop 2

**City Baths**, 420 Swanston Street

### Stop 3

**Trades Hall and Dover Hotel**, Lygon Street, cnr Victoria Street

### Stop 4

**Police Station and the Magistrates Court**, Russell Street, cnr La Trobe Street

### Stop 5

**The Australian Communist Party**, 12 Exploration Lane

### Stop 6

**Carlton Gardens**, Rathdowne Street

### Stop 7

**Comedy Theatre**, 240 Exhibition Street

### Stop 8

**East End Bookshop**, 181 Exhibition Street

### Stop 9

**Her Majesty's Theatre**, 219 Exhibition Street

### Stop 10

**Parliament**, Spring Street

### Thanks

... to the State Library of Victoria for permission to reprint photos on the front cover and pages 1, 2 and 3; and to Melway Publishing for permission to reproduce the map above.

Front page graphics : State Library of Victoria (ALGA collection, 2006); Russell Street Police Station, the Magistrates' Court, mourning brooch made from the hair of Miss Anne Drysdale (State Library of Victoria Pictures Collection); badges (personal collection)

Back page graphic:  
Badges (personal collection)

ALGA's 16<sup>th</sup> lesbian and gay history walk of Melbourne.



## Start - State Library of Victoria

Naked saints, cross dressing saints – is this the campest spot in Melbourne? The diaries of Miss Anne Drysdale tell of her life with Miss Newcombe. And Governor Latrobe – his Tasmanian years tell us a lot about sodomy in the colonies.

Mourning brooch made from the hair of Miss Anne Drysdale, ca. 1853  
(Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria [SLV])

## Stop 1 – RMIT cnr LaTrobe and Swanston St

Formerly known as "the working men's college" – tradey boys and earnest commercial studies students: during the 1930s, RMIT had one of Melbourne's biggest student beats.

RMIT Building 2, built in the 1930s and Building 4, built in the 1890s  
(photo by Helen Pausacker, 2009)



## Stop 2 – City Baths 420 Swanston St

Bathing, swimming, relaxing – and picking up and getting off. Much of what we know about the history of the Baths as a camp site comes from the *Truth* newspaper – and is all the more entertaining for that!

City Baths, c. 1909  
(Pictures Collection, SLV)



### Stop 3 – Trades Hall Lygon St, cnr Victoria St

The struggle for gay and lesbian equality and liberation found many allies over the years, not least in the trade union movement. From boofy builders labourers to teachers and nurses, gay people were everywhere – including in their unions.

Poster for event at Trades Hall (ALGA collection, left)

### Dover Hotel Lygon St, cnr Victoria St

By about 1973 gay bars were the coming thing, replacing the old camp haunts. Upstairs at the Dover was one of the first.

### Stop 4 – Russell Street Police Station, the Magistrates Court Russell St, cnr LaTrobe St

While homosexuality was illegal (and even sometimes after) the cops and the homosexual world were often at each others throats (usually in a bad way!) Here we look at some of the saddest cases – lives damaged, reputations ruined, freedom lost.

Melbourne in the late 1930s. Looking south down Russell Street from Bourke Street corner (Pictures Collection, SLV)



### Stop 5 – The Communist Party 12 Exploration Lane

Down this laneway the Communist Party of Australia had its last headquarters. The social movements of the 1960s and seventies reshaped Australian politics, and the left played an important role in that (after it caught up with what was going on!)

Badge circa 1980s (personal collection)



## Stop 6 – The Carlton Gardens Rathdowne Street

Warm dark nights, winding shrub-lined paths ... you can see where this is going. Tales from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to lift your spirits. With the occasional arrest.

Photo by Helen Pausacker, 2009



## Stop 7: Comedy Theatre 240 Exhibition Street

Bohemians, theatricals, communists, homosexuals and other non-conformists... Melbourne was never as dull as it was painted. For those who wanted to live different kinds of lives, Theatreland provide safe spaces, tolerance, like-minded people. A selection of stories.

Photo by Helen Pausacker, 2006

## Stop 8 – East End Bookshop 181 Exhibition Street

The site of the East End bookshop in the late 1960s. In *Art and Life*, Philip Jones recounts his life with Barrie Reid (the State Librarian) and the bookshop they ran from here for many years. With a red plastic floor and blue hessian walls – could anyone not have known it was at the very least camp-friendly?

## Stop 9: Her Majesty's 219 Exhibition Street

More on Theatreland, and especially 'Our Glad', Gladys Moncrieff, stage and recording star of the 1920s and 1930s, who did not retire until the 1960s. And behind every great woman ... Elsie Wilson, who became her secretary and companion, and stayed with her for the next 46 years. A story to gladden the heart.

Her Majesty's Theatre, Exhibition Street, c. 1901  
(Pictures Collection, SLV)



## Stop 10: Parliament House Spring Street

From the foundation of the city in 1835 homosexuality was a sin and a crime. Parliament passed laws and the police and courts enforced them. Until in 1980, Victoria threw off its Victorianism and legalised sex between men. And then made it illegal to discriminate. And then recognised same-sex relationships and then set up a register ... At last, a happy ending.

*Gay Community News Law Reform issue, October 1980 (ALGA collection)*



## Melbourne

*History Walk on Sunday 25 January 2009*

was conducted by Graham Willett and Wayne Murdoch, with Helen Pausacker. Gary Jaynes, Graham Willett and Helen Pausacker produced this programme.

This is the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives' 16<sup>th</sup> History Walk of Melbourne.

## Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives

For over 30 years, the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives has been collecting and preserving Australia's very queer history. From camp life in the 1950s, through Gay Liberation in the 1970s and eighties, to the vibrant queer communities of today – all of this is part of our heritage; and all of it is represented in the holdings of the biggest such collection in Australia. The Archives is volunteer-run, not-for-profit and community-based.

### What we collect and preserve

Books, badges, posters, t-shirts, gay and lesbian newspapers and magazines, newspaper clippings, photographs, court transcripts, newsletters, videos, scrapbooks, banners and placards, postcards, party tickets, theatre programs, flyers, personal memorabilia. The collection has been used by students, filmmakers, novelists and historians, researchers and activists – as well as the just plain curious ...

The Archives has no government funding and relies entirely on the support of its members and the community. You can become a member for \$20 per year – and if that's not enough you can donate as much as you like (it's tax-deductible).

We have regular working bees to bring order to the collection. Why not join in?

**Want to know more?**

Email: [algarchives@hotmail.com](mailto:algarchives@hotmail.com)  
Postal: PO Box 124 Parkville 3052  
Website: [alga.org.au](http://alga.org.au)

Australian Lesbian and Gay  
**Archives**