

alga NEWSLETTER

Australian Lesbian & Gay Archives Inc
Incorporated Assn No. A000240Z
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Histories at Work

In November last year, as part of our twentieth anniversary celebrations, the Archives sponsored Australia's first ever national gay and lesbian history conference. Speakers from (almost) every state presented some twenty papers dealing with issues as diverse as Gay Liberation, nineteenth century passing women, the Uniting Church, Mardi Gras, PFLAG, AIDS, lesbian feminist activism, media panics, the Australian pop charts, homosexual law reform – and more!

The event turned out to be profitable in both the strictly financial sense and in terms of the networking among Australian scholars, both professional and amateur. The money raised is being put towards publishing the papers, in conjunction with the Australian Centre for Lesbian and Gay Research in Sydney, as the fifth in the **Gay and Lesbian Perspectives** series.

One other outcome was the establishment of an email-based discussion group – **OzHomoHist**. If you are interested in joining this list email Graham Willett on g.willett@politics.unimelb.edu.au and he will arrange it. It is not a high-volume list, but it has about 60 members and is a useful way to keep in touch with events, as well as a means to get information out to people.

The conference was successful enough that we have decided that we will organise it again this year – to be held on Friday November 5 and Saturday November 6.

On the Sunday we will be organising a **Gay and Lesbian History walk** through the streets of Melbourne. This will be the fifth time we have done this walk and as it has been several years since the last we have accumulated a lot more knowledge and a lot more stories to share.

On the Saturday night, we will be celebrating the **life of Monte Punshon**, 'the world's oldest

lesbian', as well as the contribution of older lesbians and gay men to our community. This is our contribution to the International Year of Older Persons.

The committee has also decided to establish a prize to be awarded to the best fourth year thesis (or equivalent) dealing with gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or queer themes in any discipline. The prize will be \$250. We see this as a means of encouraging research in this newly developing but exciting area of study at the undergraduate level and of making sure that the Archives gets copies of such work.

Donations

In a nice reversal of form, we recently got to donate to someone else for a change!

Flinders University in South Australia is the lucky recipient. The library there holds an extensive collection of sex-related research materials, including the papers of the Eros Foundation, the sex industry's peak lobby group. Our surplus sets of *Campaign*, *OutRage* and *MSO*, with the classifieds, porn reviews and ads and the general advertising with its ever-greater emphasis on the body, for example, will find a good home there and be of considerable use to South Australian researchers.

Our thanks

The Archives gratefully acknowledges the following people for making donations to the Archives:

Ken Payne
Warwick Abrahams
Nanette McGregor
Sally Newman
Kendall Lovett & Mannie de Saxe

Queer Spot

***Brother Sister*, in both its Melbourne and Brisbane editions, has been publishing brief historical snippets as Queer Spot on page three for the past year or so.**

These have, not surprisingly, been provided by Archiveers and have included topics such as the Black Rock beat arrests in 1978, shocking goings-on in wartime London (courtesy of Truth), lesbian chic, great moments in law reform, fairy floss and kissing booths, lesbian kissing arrests, Dr Duncan, cross-dressing husbands and so on.

Round up of Summer events

Over last summer the Archives took part in Melbourne's Midsumma activities, hosting an Open Day in our premises at VAC, participating in the Pride March, and holding a stall at the Midsumma Carnival.

We had a good attendance at the Open Day, which was notable for the interest created by a screening of the archival video of Monte Punshon. Made by Melbourne filmmaker, Nancy Peck, for the Women's Archives, the video records an interview with Monte in the 1988, the year before Monte died at the age of 106. This year marks the 10th anniversary of Monte's death. Many people were riveted by the video and we are planning another screening later this year, possibly as part of the Homosexual Histories conference in November.

Response to ALGA's stall at the Carnival was very pleasing. We had a prominent spot – right opposite the line dancers – and many people dropped by to renew their acquaintance, or to let us know that they had been thinking about making contact with us for some time. The day led to some fruitful exchanges of information, and donations of material.

Our contingent in the Pride march was small but energetic and the trademark ALGA banner, balloons and placards were well-received. Next year we are thinking about taking up Helen P's suggestion of dressing for the occasion – nominating a decade, and coming dressed for the decade. If you've got a flair for costume and history, we're very happy to be organised into looking ridiculous! Seriously, we like the idea, but need help to make it work, so if this is your thing, we really would love to hear from you.

Recent acquisitions

We thank all of the people mentioned below for their donations of the following materials:

- ◆ A set of framed Mandate posters acquired with the assistance of Peter Gaca who passed them to us at cost and of the former Mandate proprietor, Ken Payne, who donated the money to buy them. The posters are a wonderful visual record of the popular 1980s Melbourne venue, and we are looking forward to unveiling the collection at a function later this year.
- ◆ Early records of Melbourne's Gay and Lesbian Immigration Task Force, donated by GLITF
- ◆ An extensive collection of OutRage magazines, donated by Sam V.
- ◆ A wide-ranging collection of personal and academic papers, periodicals, newspaper clippings, ephemera and memorabilia spanning the 1970s – 1990s donated by Ken S.
- ◆ Several books have been donated - with thanks to Geoff A, Steven O'C, Caitlin and others.

We also thank those who have helped us fill vital gaps in our periodicals collection:

- ◆ Liz Ross (*Scarlet Woman* volume now complete).
- ◆ Ian Purcell and the SA Gay and Lesbian Library – missing issues of newsletter of the SA Gay & Lesbian Counselling Services

Do You Have By Any Chance...?

The following issues are being sought by the Archives to fill gaps in otherwise complete series:

- ◆ *Adelaide GT* No 114 (16 May 97)
- ◆ *Bliss* (Melb) No 18 (1995)
- ◆ *Brother Sister* (Qld), No 33 (2 Dec 94)
- ◆ *Lesbiana* nos 38 (Aug 95), 56 (Apr 97)
- ◆ *Melbourne Star Observer* Nos 281, 283, 286, 288, 290, 293, 298, 300
- ◆ *Panda* (Canberra), Vol 3 No 4 (1995) and Vol 4 No 8 (1996)
- ◆ *Sydney Gay Liberation Newsletter* Vol 1 No 4 (1972), No 14 (1973)
- ◆ *Sydney Star Observer* No 369 (27 Aug 97)

Boilers' 40th anniversary

A group of ALGA people recently attended a very enjoyable 40th birthday celebration for The Boilers, one of Australia's oldest gay social groups. Relatively few people know about The Boilers, because they have relied mainly on word of mouth communication. The group started in 1959, formed by a circle of men who used to gather for a drink after work on a Friday at the Royal Arcade Hotel in the city (303 Little Collins between Elizabeth and Swanston Streets). This was the era of six o'clock closing in Melbourne, and for people coming from work, the occasion was always a bit rushed. Out of the lament, "There has to be something better than this", a consensus was reached that on the first Friday of the month, people would adjourn from the Royal Arcade to a private home of one of the group on an alternating basis, and that people would abide by some basic rules:

- BYO grog
- bread rolls, cheese and cold meat would be supplied by the hosts
- it was not a party but a civilised drink after work
- people were expected to be gone by about 8 pm.

The host was free to invite new people along, however Boilers had to have the permission of the host to bring a friend. In later years, there was a committee, and the group began to run larger functions as well as the monthly Friday night at home, but the emphasis has remained on providing companionship in an informal setting for those who want it. If you come along and enjoy and stay, you are a Boiler. If you drift away that is OK too. There are no membership drives.

In the early days The Boilers was a male only group, but in the early 1970s some women friends came along and stayed. Two of them were Bev and Mavis, and it was Bev's initiative that began the Boilers charity work for the Guide Dog Association, raising many thousands of dollars from raffles at the regular gatherings over the years. Later the Boilers raised funds for AIDS purposes.

Some of the original Boilers are still involved, and over the years a few have participated in ALGA's oral history project with their recollections going back to the 1930s.

And how does a group get to be called The Boilers? One of the stalwarts of the Royal Arcade days was Charlie B, then 25 years old, who

remarked to some of his older friends, "You are no chickens, you are a couple of old boilers." In the best camp tradition of turning a derogatory label around, they all became Boilers, including the young chickens of the time such as Charlie.

Any group that lasts for 40 years has to be doing something right, and it's clear the Boilers know more than a thing or two about enjoying themselves, supporting each other, and making new people welcome. ALGA congratulates The Boilers on its milestone, and wishes the group continuing success.

Gary Jaynes

Internet Resources : Discussion Lists and Links Pages

The Internet allows people to not only find information but to also communicate with each other.

This is done through email, joining Newsgroups or Discussion Lists. Discussion lists should provide a forum for people interested in a common topic to network and share information and ideas. Some of the topical and professional lists are good examples of lists used productively. A word of warning however – the more general the nature of the list, the more subscribers it will have. You may find yourself bombarded with mail from people replying to each other on a topic where the initiator has become fed up and left the list already! Here are some lists which may be of interest:

GENERAL

OzChat mailing list. A general Australian queer chat mailing list which is quite busy.
<http://ausqrd.queer.org.au/qrd/net/lists/ozchat.html>

AusGBLF mailing list. The main Australian gay, bisexual, lesbian, transgender mailing list
<http://ausqrd.queer.org.au/qrd/net/lists/ausgbf.htm>

QAnnounce mailing list. Media cuttings, announcements and what's happening in Australia
<http://announce.queer.org.au>

OzBi mailing list. Mailing list of the Australian Bisexual Network and Australian bi's in general
<http://ausqrd.queer.org.au/qrd/net/lists/ozbi.html>

GayYouth of Australia mailing list
<http://ausqrd.queer.org.au/qrd/net/lists/gayyouth.html>

QueerDissent. We don't all feel the same - we're queer & we argue

<http://ausqrd.queer.org.au/qrd/resources/full.html?r743>

QwaSOH. Queers with a Sense of Humour
<http://ausqrd.queer.org.au/qrd/net/lists/qwasoh.html>

TOPICAL

Crux mailing list. Discussion of issues surrounding sexuality, spirituality, faith & social justice
<http://lists.queer.org.au/mailman/listinfo.cgi/crux>

OzPoz mailing list. Emotional support and sharing of medical info for Aust. gay men who are HIV+.
<http://ausqrd.queer.org.au/qrd/net/lists/ozpoz.html>

IronRose. Discussion of butch/femme issues.
<http://ausqrd.queer.org.au/qrd/net/lists/ironrose.html>

PROFESSIONAL

GALNET mailing list. Discussion list for academic and general staff working in Australian universities
<http://ausqrd.queer.org.au/qrd/net/lists/galnet.html>

QUEERLIB mailing list. Discussion list for queer librarians and library workers in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region
<http://lists.queer.org.au/mailman/listinfo.cgi/queerlib-aus>

COUNTRY

CountryOz. Linking gay guys in rural Australia and country towns.
<http://www.syd.net.au/~adam/CountryOz.htm>

STATE

ACTQueer. Local list of the Australian Capital Territory
<http://ausqrd.queer.org.au/qrd/net/lists/actqueer.html>

VicQueer. Local Victorian social list
<http://ausqrd.queer.org.au/qrd/net/lists/vicqueer.html>

QldQueer. Local Queensland discussion/social list
<http://ausqrd.queer.org.au/qrd/net/lists/qldqueer.html>

[Sources: <http://www.queer.org.au> and <http://ausqrd.queer.org.au/qrd/resources>]

Also try searching the following to find other lists:

Deja News This is a discussion list network that allows for a direct search option or use of the subject browsing facility.
<http://www.dejanews.com>

Reference.com This site covers more than 150,000 newsgroups, mailing lists, and web forums.
<http://www.reference.com>

Liszt, the mailing list directory. Search Liszt's main directory of 90,095 mailing lists
<http://www.liszt.com/>

And as usual, I can't help but throw in some of the most useful pages of links and resources for Australian Gay and Lesbian information one will find on the Internet. Some are links pages, others are gay oriented service providers with tenants worthy of attention.

Gayscape claim to have over 52000 websites worldwide indexed on their search facility and directory. It certainly looks impressive!
<http://www.gayscape.com/>

GayLawNet aims to provide general information and resources concerning the law as it affects gay and lesbian people in Australia
<http://www.labyrinth.net.au/~dba>

Gay & Lesbian Rights Lobby Links Page.
<http://www.rainbow.net.au/~glrl/Links000.html>

Rainbow Net's content index divides homepages into Community Organisations, Business, Media/Webzines and personal homepages.
<http://home.rainbow.net.au/homepages.index.html>

One Institute/International Gay & Lesbian Archives in San Diego. Their list of related organisations worldwide is one of the most impressive I've come across.
http://www.usc.edu/isd/archives/oneigla/index_sites.html

Australian Queer Resources Directory. Community resources listings.
<http://ausqrd.queer.org.au/qrd/resources>

Mary Mavroudis

Why an Archives – and how you and your friends can contribute

The Archives is the memory of the gay and lesbian community. We aim to preserve records of Australian homosexual life, past and present, for use by future generations.

The Archives has been going since 1978. The collection of periodicals is probably the core of the Archives' collection – and this relies on the goodwill of gay and lesbian groups around Australia sending complimentary copies of their publications to the Archives.

But we also seek records of gay and lesbian life outside of organised groups, through personal letters, photographs and other memorabilia, including from times before there was a gay movement. We also encourage those with recollections of pre-movement days to record their recollections for posterity through the Archives' Oral History Project. Requests for confidentiality are strictly adhered to.

The Archives is an incorporated association run by an elected committee which is independent of any other organisation.

You can support the Archives financially by becoming a member (\$20, \$5 concession), or by making a donation. All donations to the Archives are tax deductible.

For those with the time and interest, you can contribute as a volunteer. There is a range of tasks to suit people's different talents and levels of commitment. For example:

- ◆ writing to groups around Australia to let them know about the Archives, and seeking their support
- ◆ listing and ordering parts of the collection that are of interest to you, eg. at present we have no listings of badges, videos or photographs
- ◆ taking care of the collection of a group that has special significance to you – ordering and listing that group's papers, maybe interviewing some of the people who are involved in running the group
- ◆ photocopying and ordering press clippings
- ◆ liaising with other collectors of gay and lesbian material, and arranging swaps of duplicate material
- ◆ helping with fund raising and organisation of major events. In 1999 we are planning to run an Historical Tour, a Trivia Night and a Homosexual Histories Conference.

- ◆ writing promotional material to help raise awareness of the Archives
- ◆ arranging displays
- ◆ helping us solve the perennial problem of insufficient space.

The Archives lives in the basement of VAC at 6 Claremont Street, South Yarra. We are open on most Tuesdays and Thursdays nights from about 7pm to 9 pm, but we ask that people phone to let us know when they are coming. Tel. 9482 1184, or email on g.willett@politics.unimelb.edu.au

Matthew Wayne Shepard 1976-1998

When I heard that Matthew Shepard had been bashed, I gritted my teeth, hoped and prayed for his recovery. Several days later, I was rang early in the morning and was told that he had died without regaining consciousness. Following that news, I decided to pay a trip to the State Library and check out the Internet.

What I found was a stunning testimony to the Gay and Lesbian community's embrace of the Internet and its related technologies.

The best web site was simply and still is www.wiredstrategies.com which is run by John Avroias, a political consultant. On his own initiative, John set up the Matthew Shepard Online Resource Centre which contained anything and everything one needed to know. John's site also included links to every major US newspaper, religious right hate sites and most important of all, a resource that anyone could use to write their Congressperson requesting the need for a national hate crimes law. John also issues updates on continuing developments in the Shepard case as well as religious right watch. To get on that list contact john@wiredstrategies.com.

Another good site to start research is www.yahoo.com. By typing in Matthew Shepard, a comprehensive listing of sites, articles and bulletin boards is freely available.

All of the major US newspaper covered the events in great detail. Among the stand out coverage was *The New York Times*. In an eloquent article titled "[The Road To Laramie](#)" by Frank Rich, he pointed out the connection to Matthew's death and the rabid anti gay campaigns that had been going on in the US for years now. The NY Times site is at www.nytimes.org. Other impressive coverage was in "The Washington Post" which is at www.washingtonpost.com. Openly lesbian columnist Deb Price wrote a

heartbreaking column in the *Detroit News* which can be reached at www.detnews.com.

Naturally, Gay and Lesbian organisations took advantage of the situation to educate people on the necessity of hate crime laws. The Human Rights Campaign and The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force sites were a treasure trove of information. Their sites are www.hrc.org and www.nglhf.org.

Another fabulous source on Matthew was Planetout which keeps ongoing track of events and releases GLBT news everyday. They are at www.planetout.com. Another good news site is www.data lounge.com.

On the day of the funeral which was 16 October, every major GLBT site blacked out their screens in tribute to Matthew. The Net was also handy in organising vigils all over the US including the violent demonstration which took place in New York City.

Naturally, the alleged Religious Right attempted to absolve themselves of any blame for Matthew's death. For several months previously, they had been running an aggressive advertising campaign in US newspapers stating that it is possible to change one's sexual orientation. Because of the then forthcoming Congressional elections, verbal attacks on the GLBT community in particular by the Republican Party had reached an all time high. A demonstration of this can be found at the Family Research Council's site at www.frc.org. Interestingly, due to enquiries from the media and outraged individuals, that site had to be closed for nearly a week after Matthew's death.

The most odious site is that of alleged preacher Fred Phelps who is best known for picketing funerals of AIDS victims. Phelps picketed Matthews' funeral drawing outrage from the media and even several religious rights groups who usually put their hatred into polite language. To make matters worse, Phelps' filth of a web site www.godhatesfags.com featured an image of Matthew burning in hell with the number of days since his death. After viewing it for less than five minutes, I needed several very stiff drinks when I got home.

Using the Internet to find out about Matthew's death was very beneficial as the Australian media including the GLBT media did not pay much attention to what happened.

Since then, one of the assailants Russell Henderson has been sentenced to life imprisonment without parole and the next trial for Aaron McKinney will be held in August.

Matthew's mum Judy Shepard has become an outspoken advocate for hate crime laws and has started a web site at www.matthewsplace.com.

To keep up with all the ongoing developments that somehow never make the media out here, surfing the Internet is a great way to keep up with the happenings of an event that has galvanised the GLBT of America like nothing else in previous years.

Kate Doolan

Thesis – AIDS Writing

I'm writing a PhD thesis on AIDS writing in Australia. I'm interested in personal writing, fiction or non fiction, autobiography, short stories, poetry, whatever.

If you have written anything which touches on AIDS, published or not, I'd like to hear from you, read your work, and talk with you. If you know a writer, pass this on to them.

Your work could star I an academic thesis!

Please contact me:

Helen McCulloch, 40 Baldwin Avenue,
Upper Fern Tree Gully 3156
Telephone (03) 9758 9675

hmcc2@student.monash.edu.au

Subscribe for 1999

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I would like to become a member and enclose:

\$1 joining fee (new members only) \$

\$20 (full membership) \$

or \$5 (student or pensioner concession) \$

Donation (tax deductible over \$2) \$

TOTAL \$ _____

Please make cheques payable to 'Australian Lesbian & Gay Archives', or 'ALGA'.

Please indicate if you are agreeable to your donation being publicly acknowledged, eg. in ALGA's newsletter:

Yes No

If yes, please state if you are happy for your full name or only your initials to be used.

Full name Initials only

.....
Signature

Please return this form to ALGA at

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