



alga NEWSLETTER

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The cutting of our 30th birthday cake.

30th Birthday GALA

What's an anniversary without a party? And so we all gathered to celebrate the Archives' Thirtieth. The venue was Fitzroy Town Hall, beautifully restored (although the absence of a kitchen turned out to be a challenge for the caterers!). Gorgeously decorated with banners and pictures from the collection. The crowd was 200+ of our best friends – and who knew we had so many? Hosted by Julie McCrossin we had founding members, community members and Archives volunteers to talk about favourite moments in queer history and why they do it (archiving, that is). There was a cake and entertainers. And what entertainers – the glamorous Kaye Sera, the feisty (now there's an archival word) Yana Alana and the Paranas, Lady Lamenta's background stylings ...

Of course, it wasn't all about us. Not content with celebrating our own longevity, we welcomed Mac and Geoff whose 60th anniversary as a couple seemed worth a mention. Val, of the 1950s' coffee shop fame was there with us, as was Peter de Waal whose histories are accumulating at a very satisfactory rate. We also had our shiny new Patrons to show off – thanks to Dennis Altman and Joan Nestle for coming onboard.

An all round good time and with the quinquennial pattern set, you should feel free to note your diaries for the next one.

Coming events

Annual General Meeting

11th December, 2008

7.30 pm, ALGA annual general meeting at the Victorian AIDS Council Training Room, 6 Claremont Street, South Yarra. Come and get a full round up of our years activities, place your votes for next year's committee, and hear words from one of our new patrons, Dennis Altman. All members and friends welcome.

Join us at Midsumma

Check out the 2009 Midsumma guide. Or go to the Midsumma website, <http://www.midsumma.org.au/>

Carnival

18th January, 2009. Alexandra Gardens. 11am.

Come say hi and discuss homo history with us at our annual stall.

Pride March

We're always looking for recruits to hold banners and placards.

History Walk

Our annual history walk is trekking through the CBD next year. Check the Midsumma guide for dates and details.

History race

Next year's Midsumma sees a new addition to the Archives schedule. Think, 'The Amazing Race' but with a queer history slant. Prizes! Fun! History! Stay tuned to the Midsumma guide for more details



Our Birthday audience, amidst the splendour of the Fitzroy Town Hall.

Winter Lecture Series

OK as series go, two is probably a bit light on. But as a trial for the idea of doing queer history in winter, when the walk is a bit of a risk, the history sit was a pretty good start. The first of our public lectures was Graham Willett on the topic of 'Fifty Glorious Years'. He drew attention to the fact that in 1958, the attempt to start up a homosexual law reform society here in Melbourne was sooooo out there that it simply failed to get off the ground. Half a century later, we are on the verge of genuine legal equality. Laws stretching back 400 years have been swept away and at the state and federal level politicians are doing their best to catch up with public opinion which thinks that equality for homosexuals and same-sex couples is a pretty good idea. How we got to this – and what we should be doing now, provided some lively discussion.

Our second lecture came from Simon Matthews, who drew upon his research into the life and legend of George Andrew Scott, or Captain Moonlite as he was known. Moonlite was Australia's only (known) gay bushranger, although as Simon argued calling him homosexual raises all sorts of questions about sex and sexuality in the nineteenth century. Simon showed excerpts from his play about Moonlite as performed a few months ago. Let's hope we see more of that in the not too distant future.



Captain Moonlight

Unearthing Captain Moonlite - Queer Bushranger

For those of you who missed out on one of our stimulating Winter Lectures, Simon Matthews has compiled a summary of his lecture for your historical records.

Bushrangers provided masculine heroes for the frontier Australian society. The anti-authoritarian stance of the enterprising male larrikin hero in the Australian frontier landscape is subverted in the play, "The Adventures of Captain Moonlite and his Companions", by exploring the decadent and romantically adventurous Andrew George Scott alias Captain Moonlite (1845-1880).

Scott was officially silenced during his lifetime and tried and executed in an atmosphere of public hysteria; the words he penned in his own defence in his final days at Darlinghurst Gaol were seized by authorities to either be

destroyed or never released. In terms queer historian Garry Wotherspoon describes as "amazingly explicit for the Victorian era", Scott's heartfelt sentiments regarding fellow gang-member Nesbitt's character and the illustration of the depth and posterity of their attachment raise questions about their kind of mateship and masculinity, provoking a challenge and subversion to the heroic heterosexual representations of Ned Kelly.

Moonlite writes, "My boy with a golden heart who died trying to save me... I am proud that my own dearest, trustiest friend, despised bushranger though he be, had a heart as kind as it were brave. He was my constant companion; we had the deepest, truest bond of friendship. We were one in heart and soul, he died in my arms and I long to join him, where there shall be no more parting. He died in my arms; his death has broken my heart. When I think of my dearest Jim, I am nearly driven mad. My dying wish is to be buried beside my beloved James Nesbitt".

In January of 1995 Captain Moonlite's body was unearthed from Sydney's Rookwood Necropolis and transported by horse and carriage to Gundagai cemetery so that his death wish to rest in the same grave as Nesbitt with a joint tombstone could finally be fulfilled.

Fundraising News

The 30th year has been a great opportunity for ALGA to highlight the strengths of our collection and talk to people about the need for funds to continue preserving GLBT histories.

ALGA's volunteers are masters of doing a lot on a shoestring budget but some costs, like binding and acid-free materials are inescapable. We've also spent a lot of 2008 talking about options for the Archives future and the need for a big injection of funds to make sure we have the space, equipment and staff required to sustain us through the next 30 years.

Some of the new things we've instituted in 2008 include:

- Online donations through the OurCommunity secure giving centre.
- A new Future Fund brochure, which explains the work we do and how donors can help "give the past a future and the future a past." This gorgeous full colour brochure was generously designed for us by Lin Tobias of La Bella design.
- The History Supporters' scheme. Donors who give over \$1000 are now Bronze, Silver, Gold or Pink Gay and Lesbian History Supporters depending on how much they give. All History Supporters will be acknowledged on a special plaque at the Archives as well as on our website.

We've had a great response to our 30th year campaign, and donations were up by 500% in 08 compared to 07. The number of people giving more than \$100 has also more than doubled.

Looking to 2009 we're hoping to get out and speak to a lot more of the community about our work and ask for their support. As always, we're keen to talk with you and meet with your friends and contacts and we're eager to recruit more volunteers to help with the vital work of fundraising.



One of our newly announced patrons, Joan Nestle, shares some inspirational words with the audience at our 30th Birthday bash.

Committee Member Drive!

If you've been thinking about getting involved with the Archives, why not join our committee? We're losing a few of our valued committee members next year due to grand overseas adventures. We always need more help with the general running of the Archives. Get in touch to find out more about becoming a committee member.

Tributes

We are saddened to record the passing of three people who made significant contributions to the lives of gay men and lesbians in Australia.

Del Martin 5.5.1921 – 27.8.2008

Del Martin was founder of Daughters of Bilitis in the US in 1955 with her lifetime partner, Phyllis Lyon, but it is perhaps not so well known that both women were influential in Australia. DOB was an inspiration to the women who set up an organisation by the same name in Melbourne in 1969 (later called the Australasian Lesbian Movement); many subscribed to DOB's long running magazine, *The Ladder*, of which Del was the second editor following Phyllis (1960-62), and many more read their ground-breaking book, *Lesbian/Woman* (1972), one of a handful of books which helped shape

the thinking of a generation of young Australian women hungry for writing which spoke to their lives. There is much more that can be said of Del Martin's legacy – see for example the obit at <http://www.eqca.org/site/pp.asp?c=kuLRJ9MRKrH&b=4445141> – however ALGA notes that in those pre-internet days, Del's and Phyllis' work and example went well beyond their home country's borders, and our communities today are the richer for it.

Lance Gowland, 04.11.1935 – 06-10-2008

Perhaps best remembered as an organiser and driver of the sound truck that attracted so much hostility from police at the first Mardi Gras in 1978, Lance had another pivotal role the following year when he was one of two people designated by Gay Solidarity Group to negotiate with police over the route of the second Mardi Gras parade in 1979. Lance's conversation at Darlinghurst Police Station is memorably recounted in Graham Carbery's history of Mardi Gras (1995). The nascent gay movement faced bullies at every turn – Sydney police at the forefront of them in the 70s - and in Lance they faced a formidable opponent. Joseph Chetcuti has written a fine tribute to his friend Lance at <http://mcv.e-p.net.au/features/farewell-lance-gowland-4216.html> For those of us who didn't know Lance personally, it captures the essence of a courageous and lovable warrior against injustice.

Ian Malloy

Well known in activist circles in Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney through the 1970s and 80s, ALGA heard only recently that Ian Malloy had passed away in Sydney in October 2007 after being diagnosed with cancer in 2006. Ian played organising roles in many important campaigns – the 'homosexual motions' adopted by the Australian Union of Students, the early gay liberation radio programs with 3CR in Melbourne, the Greg Weir Defence Campaign, and the kits he produced to counter the right wing campaigns in Australia around Anita Bryant and Mary Whitehouse – which remain good examples of the diligence and resourcefulness of Ian's activism. After the onset of HIV/AIDS he was involved in the Australian Government's first responses to AIDS, and in the work of AIDS Councils and the Bobby Goldsmith Foundation. Ian was a longstanding contributor to the community radio station 2XX in Canberra - where he was a presenter and trainer and held the position of president for many years.

Thanks to our Donors!

A full list of our Donors for 2008 will be published in the 2008 ALGA Annual Report.

Volunteers Update

As always, our volunteers have been hard at work keeping the Archives running. We are very grateful to all our volunteers who collect, compile, catalogue, list, sort and copy all sorts of materials for us. We couldn't do it without you! This year there have been lots of new volunteers getting involved, working on everything from cataloguing the Archives' objects collection and listing ephemera files on queer films, flyers and theatre. For this newsletter, we spoke to a new volunteer, Jamie:

Why did you choose to become a volunteer at the Archives?

Firstly, for something to do and to give something back to the gay cause and because I have an interest in history per se. I think that you often have to look back in order to go forward, it stops people from re-inventing the wheel. The Archives is something that enables us to appreciate the things that we have today. If it wasn't for the things people fought for in the past then we wouldn't be able to live as freely as we do now.

What interests you about Archives?

Because it is the home of so many interesting pieces of history, plus if it wasn't for this place so many pieces of history would be scattered far and wide and maybe even lost.

How did you hear about the Archives?

I heard about the Archives through the stall at Mid-summer and then I did an internet search and found the website.

What have you been working on?

The homosexual law reform coalition files and boxes. I've been going through and doing preservation work – like removing staples and making copies of documents on fragile paper.

What kinds of things would you like to do in the future?

I'd like to get involved in doing some face to face stuff.

What would you say to people thinking about getting involved in queer archiving?

Go for it! And as I said initially, it's a great opportunity to give something back. We have fought so hard to make history that it's really important that we fight to keep that history.

If you are interested in volunteering please contact Daniel (daniel.marshall@latrobe.edu.au) or come along to the AGM.

Recent acquisitions

A list of all the Archives' acquisitions in 2008 will appear in the 2008 ALGA Annual Report.

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