

FROM CAMP TO GAY:

THE HOMOSEXUAL HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE, 1960–1976

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From Camp to Gay

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IT IS DIFFICULT FOR US NOW to remember that there was a time when gay people were not a visible and active part of the daily life of the University. Today, we have a queer room in the union building, and queer students staging kiss-ins, sitting in classes, holding hands on the South Lawns. Openly gay and lesbian academic staff teach, their subjects ranging from the queer-focused to the general. Non-gay staff include materials on sexuality as a matter of course in study areas as diverse as social studies, literature and law. Indeed, university policy requires that issues of sexuality and sexual preference are addressed in all subject development proposals. Gay and lesbian general staff expect that their sexuality will be as accepted in the same way as that of their straight peers – and for the most part their expectations are met. Same-sex relationships are recognised in the enterprise agreement negotiated between management and the union.

It has not always been like this, of course. It was not until the 1960s that homosexuality was discussed in the pages of *Farrago* and it was not until 1970 that homosexuals began to speak openly for themselves. In this paper, I want to look at the emergence of homosexuality onto the public agenda of the university and at the early years of gay and lesbian activism.¹

This is not to suggest, of course, that there is no history of homosexuality as a lived experience to be told. On the contrary. Many of those who I have interviewed, some of whose stories are drawn upon here, had active homosexual lives at the University before the rise of gay activism – and there are many more of these people to be found. But for the most part, the history of homosexuality on campus is a secret history, revealed in brief flashes, as in this letter, for example, to *Farrago* in 1968:

‘Sir, May I suggest the construction of a third dressing room at the Beaurepaire ... for heterosexuals, Paul Davidson, Science IV’.² But uncovering that history—and documenting the rich history of what comes *after* these early years—are different projects to that which I have undertaken here.

It is also worth emphasising that my concern is with the political aspects of gay life during this period. Already by the 1970s a gay and lesbian culture had begun to emerge and there are clear signs of this in *Farrago* and in the writings and memories of gay activists. This piece, like my book *Living Out Loud*, is concerned with the public rather than the private, the visible rather than the subterranean, the political rather than the cultural. This is a decision that has occasionally been criticised. I can only say in my defence that this is my area of interest and expertise but I would urge others to get busy on these compelling areas of research and writing.

There is a now-widely accepted argument concerning the emergence of homosexual politics in Australia that places much emphasis upon the 1950s. This version of events, articulated most forcefully by Garry Wotherspoon and Ruth Ford, but taken up by other scholars including the authors of *Creating a Nation*, argues that there was an intensification of anti-homosexual repression during this decade which, as well as creating fear among, and disrupting the lives of, homosexual women and men, also had the entirely unintended consequence of bringing awareness of homosexuality to a wider public attention than it had formerly enjoyed. That is, ironically, the attempt to silence and repress same-sex activity had served rather to amplify it and to encourage its spread.³

While there can be no doubt that the lurid newspaper stories regarding homosexual parties and clerical anxieties and police squads raiding ‘homosexual haunts’ brought to many camp people an awareness of

a wider world of homosexuality than they might otherwise have been aware of, it is difficult to make the case that the crackdown of the 1950s can really explain the emergence of homosexual politics in the late 1960s. As I have argued elsewhere, the 1950s is best characterised as a period of intense policing of public homosexual life coupled with a widespread effort to silence all discussion of the issue.⁴ There is very little press coverage of homosexuality outside the pages of the *Truth*, for example, and books and films and plays dealing with homosexual themes were systematically censored. Far from there being an increase in public knowledge about homosexuality, the 1950s continued the long-established habit on the part of the authorities of refusing to acknowledge its existence if at all possible. It is likely that the vast majority of Australians lived from one year to the next without ever giving the matter a moment's thought.

When homosexuality did begin to emerge onto the public agenda, I have suggested, it was at the hands of a group of modernising liberals who had set out in the 1960s to critique and reform Australia, to bring it into the twentieth century, and who saw the laws against homosexuality as simply one of a myriad of ways in which this country remained mired in outdated ideas and values. It is my view that the emergence of liberal attitudes towards homosexuals was not the ironic effect of public hostility, but the work of liberal, mostly heterosexual, political activists who saw homosexual law reform as simply one part (and actually a rather small part) of the modernisation of their country.

One of the places where this liberalising work can be detected is at the universities – and at Melbourne University in particular. This is not so surprising. Australia's universities had become, in the period after the Second World War, havens for critical thought, places where the received wisdom of many generations came to be questioned, critiqued and rejected;

places where new ways of thinking about old issues were developed and articulated.

The most obvious evidence for this comes from a survey of the student press of the 1960s. It is here that we see most clearly debates about issues that, in the wider community, were barely questioned – issues such as White Australia, Aboriginal affairs, censorship, urban development and homosexuality. This is why the modernising liberals were so keen on the student press. As ‘Junius’ wrote in the August 1969 edition of the *Australian Book Review* (itself one of the flagship journals of the new liberalism):

Student magazines are no longer the inward-turning undergraduate ephemera of 15 or so years ago. They now constitute a press in their own right, and they are the only group of mass circulation periodicals in the country that consistently argue out matters of principle and ideology.⁵

In *Farrago* there is, by the late 1960s, a willingness to review and report on homosexuality. Between 1967 and 1969, the paper reviewed plays such as ‘When Did You Last see My Mother’ and ‘Boys in the Band’, the film ‘The Leather Boys’ and John Rechy’s *City of the Night*.

The tone and content of the coverage varied greatly, according to the prejudices and preferences of the writers more than anything else. Occasionally, the reviewers were entirely unsympathetic. In 1969, the anonymous reviewer of Rechy’s 1963 novel *City of the Night*, banned by the Australian government for its tendency to deprave and corrupt, emphasised the loneliness, despair and futility of the homosexual lifestyle, arguing that the novel was unintentionally ‘a manifesto against homosexuality by virtue of its description of it’ and left the reader with a

sense of pity and, more powerfully, of gratitude that he or she is part of 'Conventional life'.⁶ The reviewer had noticed that the novel is mostly concerned with the world of homosexual prostitution but seemed content to generalise from this to homosexual life in general. In the same year, though, Libby Booth, interviewing John Krummel, lead actor in 'Boys in the Band', recognised the text's plea for acceptance of homosexuals – ordinary people unjustly persecuted as a minority group and saw the play as likely to assist in challenging prejudice.⁷

On a lighter note, in July 1968 *Farrago* reported, quite straight-faced, the speculations of the vicar of the university church of Cambridge in England as to whether or not Jesus Christ might have been a homosexual. The evidence for this – that he was thirty and single and that we do not know anything much about the early part of his life – is not exactly overwhelming. The suggestion, in the same article, by a well-known British psychiatrist that Jesus' belief that he was God may have been an effect of repressed homosexual tendencies is not much stronger.⁸ Although both offer interesting insights into the commonsense thinking of the time about the homosexual condition, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that this report was not much more than an early sign of the use of homosexuality as a means by which to shock the bourgeoisie.

If all this discussion in the pages of *Farrago* seems rather early, it was in some ways actually rather late. Among students, homosexuality was an issue that had been on the agenda for some time already. As early as 1964, the Debating Union at the university had held a meeting on the issue, attracting a very large audience. Some 500 students – a capacity crowd for the venue – heard speakers present the case for and against the decriminalisation of homosexuality.⁹

For the affirmative, AA Bartholemew, court psychiatrist, was joined by students Patrick McCaughy and Gary (later Gareth) Evans. Those presenting the case against decriminalisation were Mr Clifford Pannam, lecturer in law, and students Michael Redfern and Peter Carter. Bartholemew argued that homosexuality was a ‘natural phenomenon’ rather than a wilful crime; his team declared that the law unduly impinged upon the individual freedom of a large number of people. Against this, Pannam and his team supported the law on the grounds that it ‘conformed with the popular code of morality’, that it caused the disintegration of marriages, and constituted a public affront. It was, in the words of Mr Pannam, ‘revolting’. The *Australian*, which reported the meeting, declared that it was the opposition that was most ‘vigorously questioned’ by the audience. Farrago referred to ‘audience question onslaughts’ against those arguing the negative. And in the end the vote in favour of decriminalisation was a remarkable 281 to 98 (or 293 to 97 according to the *Australian*).

This proportion (about three to one in favour of reform) is high, but it is worth noting that the issue was not exactly a new one. Talk of law reform had been circulating among the educated since at least 1957, when the British government’s Wolfenden Committee had recommended decriminalisation of homosexual acts between consenting adults in private—sparking a debate in Britain which caught the attention of the still largely Anglotropic (if not entirely Anglophile) cultural elites in Australia. In 1962, Rupert Cross, visiting from Oxford University’s Magdalen College, argued the case for reform in his Allen Hope Southey Memorial Lecture meeting held in Wilson Hall.¹⁰

Nor were the students alone in their views. The *Australian*—a newspaper then only a few weeks old—having reported the Debating Union vote then went looking for comment. Without exception, those

whose views they sought, supported the students' viewpoint. The President of the NSW Humanist Society, the warden of St Paul's College at the University of Sydney, the Professor of Philosophy at the same institution – even Dr Woods, the Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne, accepted that decriminalisation was acceptable. The debate in the letters' columns over the next few days ran along predictable lines—for and against the imposition of the law of God upon a secular society—except for one correspondent who wondered whether he had 'the honour of being the only homosexual reader' of the *Australian*. He noted that less than a month ago (that is, prior to the existence of the paper) such a report would not have been possible in any newspaper anywhere in the country.¹¹ From our perspective, it is worth noting, too, that without the decision of the Debating Union to arrange a discussion of this topic, there would have been nothing for the paper to write about.

It is not likely that the crowd who gathered at the Debating Union was typical of the student body as a whole on this (or any other) question. But five years later, a random sample of students surveyed as to their attitudes on abortion and a number of associated social issues, revealed a very similar proportion (66.6 per cent to 29.9 per cent) in favour of the 'legalisation of homosexuality between consenting adult males'. Women were more likely to be in favour than men (71 per cent to 63 per cent) and only the under-18 year old age group disapproved (39 per cent to 52 per cent).¹²

This last comes as a surprise because we tend to think of liberal attitudes as being stronger amongst the young, especially in the 1960s. And yet there is at least one other investigation that found similar results. In the mid-1970s, the Whitlam government's Royal Commission on Human Relationships commissioned some research into attitudes towards

homosexuality. The Melbourne report found among its focus groups that there was greater tolerance among those aged thirty and over, than among the younger age group.¹³

There are a couple of possible explanations for this. One is that liberalism is an effect of education levels, not of age as such, and that those recently out of high school (in the case of the university survey which breaks down the age cohorts more closely) were less radical than those who had been exposed to the critical thinking of the university for a longer time. Secondly, however, it may be that the younger group had no clear idea of what was being asked of them. Marjorie Theobald tells, for example, of her embarrassment as a young university student (in 1959) at not knowing what the word 'lesbian' meant. After asking a friend and having homosexuality explained to her, she suddenly realised that a cousin of hers was one. He in turn had assumed that she had known all along and that she had simply never raised it with him.¹⁴ The young are perhaps more affected by the invisibility of homosexuality than those whose experience of life is likely to have brought them, at least occasionally, into contact with 'one of them'. Again, the Royal Commission's research may reinforce this view. As late as the mid-1970s, fully 24 per cent of those asked could not accurately define what 'homosexuality' meant (and 40 per cent got 'heterosexuality' wrong!)¹⁵

Given all this, it is not surprising that when gay people began to organise on their own behalf, it was to the universities that they looked for immediate support. The Daughters of Bilitis (DOB), a lesbian group that can rightfully claim to be the first homosexual rights organisation in Australia, was set up in Melbourne in 1969. The Melbourne branch of the Campaign Against Moral Persecution, the first national organisation and the first open to both women and men (and indeed to gay and straight

people), was founded in January 1971. Although neither organisation was campus-based, both groups were quick to seek support from university circles – and quick to get it.

In mid-1970, the secretary of the DOB wrote to *Farrago*, explaining that for several weeks she had been, in her words, ‘sneaking around campus in the dead of night’, putting up posters advertising the existence of her group. Frustrated that they were being so rapidly torn down, she decided that her best recourse was to write to the paper. The anonymous writer presents lesbians as victims of a hostile society, arguing that

Most of them are very lonely people. They feel alienated from the rest of you – they are desperately afraid of “discovery” and they often suffer guilt feelings arising from religion and social inculcation – they have to “pretend” twenty-four hours a day.

The purpose of the group is to alleviate some of this suffering by bringing lesbians together and by helping them to meet well-adjusted homosexuals. The group also wanted to work to change community attitudes.¹⁶ The letter was published, although the author had to write again to the next issue, pointing out that in omitting her post office box address, the editor had rather defeated the purpose of her letter, which was to provide a mechanism for lesbians on campus to contact the group. The address duly appeared on this second attempt.¹⁷ DOB, listing its achievements in its 1970 *Information Sheet*, noted that among those who had offered support to the group were professional bodies connected to the university and the campus Women’s Liberation group.¹⁸

The first public appearance by the Melbourne branch of CAMP took place about two months after its formation.¹⁹ On Wednesday 17 March, the university Debating Union was again the host for a discussion, just as it had

been in 1964, providing both the venue (the Buffet in the union building, which could accommodate the several hundred people who attended), and some publicity. (The fact that it was the Debating Union that organised the publicity explains the fact that on the flyer CAMP is spelled KAMP – a widely accepted variant spelling of ‘camp’, but quite wrong for an organisation whose name began ‘Campaign’). Richard Ball, psychiatrist from the Parkville Psychiatric Clinic, and Julian Phillips of the university’s Law School, spoke. But they were joined by two members of CAMP. Winsome Moore, the secretary, spoke and for the first time in Melbourne an openly homosexual person spoke publicly on behalf of gay people. Alan Beggs, a member, wearing a carnation in his lapel Rodney Thorpe recalls, in imitation of Oscar Wilde perhaps, declared simply, ‘I am a homosexual. I am just as much a male as anybody else—the only difference being that I prefer to go to bed with males’. A statement that won the support of the audience, according to the *Farrago* reporter—‘for his audacity, if not his disposition’; for ‘standing up for his way of life’ as the *Lot’s Wife* report put it. It was noted that at no point did anyone, either from the platform or from the floor, try to defend the existing laws against homosexuality. As it turned out, the most intense part of the debate seems to have been between Phillips and Ball over the merits or otherwise of psychiatry as a scientific practice. Phillips’ attention to the use of aversion therapy (also known—not entirely accurately—as electro-shock therapy) to cure homosexuality also raised the temperature and Alan Beggs was quick to cash in on this, asking the audience how many of them would be prepared to be cured of their heterosexuality by these means. A flood of hostile questions directed at Ball from the audience rounded out the evening.

It is a striking fact that, almost alone of the various state branches of CAMP, the Victorians never set up a campus chapter. This was almost

certainly due to the conservatism of the branch. Winsome Moore reported at the Debating Union meeting on the existence of Campus CAMP in Sydney and made a plea to those in the audience to help her organisation in anyway they could. But her emphasis in her presentation on the role of CAMP as being primarily to help and assist homosexuals with their problems and on the group's social activities²⁰ can hardly have endeared her or the organisation to the young and fast-radicalising gays in the audience.

It was only with the rise of Gay Liberation that the university came to centre-stage of gay politics in Melbourne. In early 1972, Dennis Altman, author of *Homosexual: Oppression and Liberation*, widely regarded (then as now) as the definitive statement of gay liberation ideas, was visiting Melbourne from Sydney. He met over dinner at a Greek restaurant in Drummond Street, Carlton with a group of lesbians and gay men, including Jude Munro, Sasha Soldatow, Rodney Thorpe, Jeffrey Hill, Tony Crewes, Julian Desailley, Rex Rohmer. It was at this gathering that the decision was taken to establish a gay liberation group in Melbourne. The group was composed more of friends than of anything wider, and the personal connections between them were important in getting the group started. In particular, the fact that a number of them were Melbourne University students made the campus the inevitable focus for its meetings and other activities.

The university was always going to be an important centre for gay activism, as it was for political activism more generally. As Rodney Thorpe noted, students had a great deal of flexibility with their time:

For instance, I was at university, but I hardly attended a lecture because I was so busy running around with gay liberation and

Di was at Melbourne University as well and she had more energy than me and she actually did lectures as well as gay liberation things.²¹

Tony Crewes made a similar point:

so many people were either students or on the dole. I was on the dole. Back then, in '72, it was \$11 a week and you could live fine on that. Because the political work and all that sort of stuff mattered more. So you had people who had this free time to devote to it too, which was a real blessing for the movement.²²

The decision having been made to form a Gay Liberation organisation, weekly meetings began almost immediately and a plan of action was developed. As reported to the student body in a leaflet in early 1972, the group proposed to

leaflet the campus and other places for the purpose of information and gathering support; to run a stall in the union foyer for the same reasons; to conduct our own demonstrations and to join others where there is an overlapping of interest. More generally, we intend to be ourselves. You will see gay couples walking around openly as such, arm in arm, dancing at union nights etc. so that students on campus will become accustomed to have gay people amongst them as a legitimate and integral part of this community; so that we will be accepted rather than tolerated.²³

In August 1972, the Melbourne University Gay Liberation Front was affiliated as a student union club. Its constitution listed four aims – the

work towards society's acceptance of homosexuality as 'a legitimate alternative to heterosexuality'; to assist the homosexual in his [*sic*] own personal liberation, defined as acceptance of his sexuality and willingness to live openly; to work for the repeal of laws concerning homosexuality with a view to complete legal equality including an age of consent of sixteen; to work alongside other groups campaigning against society's wider repressive nature.²⁴

Union affiliation was seen as having both symbolic importance—an acknowledgement by the student body of the legitimacy of gay people and gay issues—and a more practical significance. As an affiliated club, Gay Liberation (the names Gay Liberation and Gay Liberation Front seem to have been used indiscriminately) had certain rights and responsibilities. The combination of these provided much of the initial activism. Opening a bank account required coming out—having the signatories go to the local branch and declare themselves, through the club's name, as gay. 'And of course that caused an absolute storm', Rodney Thorpe recalls. Organising a fundraising dance at the Beaurepaire Centre required confronting the caretaker, 'this old, horrible, homophobe who would yell at people in the shower and stuff if they fooled around and we were asking him to have his precious hall for a gay dance'. This in turn required the student union to step in to support an affiliated club.

Not all the experiences were this negative. Indeed, Rodney Thorpe observes that 'we didn't really encounter much discrimination, that was the extraordinary thing. We did through the media and stuff like that but you know individually, you'd go [in this case to collect the badges that the GLF had produced]—and they'd say what's all this all about and you'd say 'oh, that's a homosexual club' and they'd say 'ok, well, sure mate I'll just get your badges'.

The regular weekly meetings were central to the life of the group. The early meetings were held in the undergraduate and graduate lounges on the second floor of the union building. They were very large (often fifty to sixty people as most of those present recall) and reflected the euphoria which so many felt during these early, heady days. All these gay people in one place; talking, working, meeting, cruising, debating, sharing, planning actions—or simply basking in the company of *so many* gay people. Given the university base, the meetings mostly attracted the young and the political, but the group had its own diversity—socialists who wanted to ‘link the world up with the blacks and women and the gays and the oppressed people and the students’, radical Christians who ‘had no idea about what their sexuality was’, people who were out to all the world and happy to appear on television and

kids coming over from Melbourne High, who were still at school and who had to sneak into the meetings and who hadn’t had sex and they wanted it ... Then there was women who hated men, who really later on stopped being lesbians but who at the time were lesbians in the political sense ... and every week we’d get new people coming and then you would have go through a lot of those things again... we had to deal with people’s fears and ignorance and their coming out.²⁵

Not surprisingly, the group talked a lot and argued a lot and if it occasionally seemed to Rodney Thorpe like a ‘hell of a mess’—and he was not alone in this impression—somehow they got through it all. Priorities for actions were discussed and tactics sorted through. One man remembers intense debate over whether or not to have a kissing booth in the union foyer and whether to hand out ‘homosexual apples’ on the trams.²⁶ (To this

day I have never found anyone who can recall what, if anything, was particularly homosexual about apples—but their presence both in discussion and at several demonstrations is attested by many of those I have interviewed.)

Very quickly it became clear that the sheer size of the meetings and their diversity required a degree of organisation. In mid-1972, the Friday night weekly meeting was divided into two halves. In the first half there was general business, including a presentation (by Alan Beggs one person recalls) on the role of consciousness-raising and the first small CR groups were formed.²⁷ Later, Friday night became the general meeting, which remained the decision-making body, and the site for the ‘big discussions’. These discussions were often carried on at a level of theory that was intimidating for many and with a fierceness that was often off-putting – although they were nowhere near as unpleasant as the Sydney Gay Lib debates which Rodney Thorpe remembers often degenerated into screaming matches.

Unpleasantness is a feature of all political debates. What exacerbated Gay Lib’s debates was the fact that they were held in entirely new territory. A whole series of problems that have long since been settled for most gay activists, or have been pushed into the ‘agree to differ’ basket, were new and confusing at the time. Rex recalls that the discussions were often very hard to follow and that there were always ideas flying around and much heated debate and stabbing in the dark, the real problem was that quite basic terms such as ‘coming out’, and ‘liberation’ were not yet defined, which made them the focus of conflicting interpretations.²⁸

Consider, for example, the 1972 debate on non-homosexuals in Gay Lib. All that remains, in a documentary sense, is a two-sided foolscap leaflet entitled, ‘Queens and Dykes Want Gay Lib Back’. The leaflet—

signed by five people, all prominent members of the group—explains that Gay Lib was ‘faced with a peculiar problem: non-homosexuals within its ranks.’ Gay people, a category that includes homosexuals and bisexuals, is counterposed to ‘heterosexuals, non-sexuals or simply sexually confused people’ who were inhibiting the development of a radical gay consciousness. There is, it is asserted, a ‘unique homosexual experience’ involving issues that non-homosexuals could not really understand, or even fully empathise with. Activists remember furious debates around this—Tony Crewes in particular has referred to ‘incredible, incredible debates’ but has highlighted the personalities at issue within the broader ideological arguments: ‘we had these people, ... a number of people who were—well, really a heterosexual couple and they wanted to be not traditionally heterosexual and thought this might be an interesting option or whatever ... And there were people who were homosexual but who were humansexuals, as we called them then, and they sort of supported them. It got quite nasty as these things do.’²⁹

But at the time that the Friday meeting was turned over to these big issue discussions, a number of working groups were also set up, each of which attended to one aspect of the organisation’s activities. (Predictably enough, the decision to establish the task groups was less controversial and less fiercely debated than was the problem of whether to call them ‘groups’ or ‘committees’.)³⁰ The dance group arranged Gay Lib’s regular dances, the main source of income and (more importantly) part of the effort to create an alternative gay culture, ‘our own [and] free from exploitation’³¹ The publications group produced the one and only issue of *Gay Rays* as well as flyers and leaflets for meetings, demos and distribution in pubs. The theatre group worked on street theatre as well as planning a more formal production. Grouping representatives of all of these, as well as freelance

volunteers, was the task group, which dedicated itself to the ‘hack-work’ and day to day organising that the general meetings could not cope with.

There were also consciousness raising groups. Described in a Gay Lib leaflet as ‘the guts, the heart and soul of the movement’, CR groups were small groups of people who gathered on a regular basis to ‘explore the meaning of their lives, their experiences, their oppression’.³² The intensity of the CR experience was often commented upon in terms of ‘excitement and elation’ and its rewards included ‘the feeling it develops of being free and open with other people. That in itself is liberating.’³³ The freedom just to talk about one’s homosexual feelings and experiences was not something that many gay people had had until this point. Even today many circles of friends trace their origins to such groups and activists still speak fondly and enthusiastically of their time in consciousness-raising. In the end, though, it was said, if CR groups were really to be understood, they had to be experienced rather than talked about.³⁴

The importance of the support and solidarity that Gay Lib could offer—and the hope it engendered—can be emphasised by reference to those cases where it was not enough. The shock that attended the loss of activists is palpable even in print, as when the women who produced the 1974 sexuality supplement in *Farrago* dedicated it to Jenny, ‘our lesbian feminist sister murdered by psychiatry’, noting the date of her death as being 20/9/74’, which must have been during the production of the materials for the supplement.³⁵

Tony Crewes was as eloquent of a slightly earlier experience of loss:

There were some tragedies. I can remember a guy who was involved right at the beginning call Rex Rohmer who committed suicide. I can still remember that because I thought

‘here we are, we’ve found nirvana, the truth, and yet here’s someone who’s involved and yet he’s killed himself: why?’
And I found that really disturbing: that there’s a worm in the bud somewhere, that this just shouldn’t be.

Coming out of the radical milieu of the late 1960s, the group held strongly to the principles of participatory democracy and structurelessness. Although meetings were chaired (and people still remember with awe and affection Jude Munro’s skill at this difficult task), there were no formal office-bearers, no minutes and rarely were issues voted on. Rodney Thorpe recalls the freedom that this gave to activists,

because there was no authority in the group one lot of people in the group could go off and do something without the approval of the other sectors. For instance, one of the first things that I remember we did was storm a performance of ‘Boys in the Band’ which was on at the university. We disagreed with that because it portrayed homosexuals as limp-wristed and it was a stereotyped thing and so we had a meeting – it just came up at one of the meetings and some people wanted to go and storm ... the theatre, the performance; it was on that very night in that building. And other people said we can’t do this because of liberty, of freedom of speech; so a group of us just went off and did it, but then the other group didn’t agree with that.

Despite his opening remarks here about the absence of authority in the group Thorpe has no illusions about the existence of a leadership within Gay Lib:

It was a very close knit social group of men and women who basically had a lot of time on their hands because they were usually young students ... Actually there was in those early days—there was a lot of crossover between friends and that's how the group stayed—the core group—stayed strong. Because we knew what was going on, and the poor people that disagreed, [or] just happened to come to a meeting, didn't have any power because they didn't have the friendship network so much ... And when we actually found people who—you see people just came along to meetings ... So when someone interesting came along we grabbed them and made friends with them.

The university provided a congenial environment for gay and lesbian activists in these early years, offering a concentrated source of resources, allies and audiences that could hardly be matched anywhere else in society. Even at the most mundane level, access to meeting rooms that could accommodate scores of activists, venues for public meetings of several hundred, smaller spaces for the consciousness raising and action groups and working parties—all these were available, and were free or cheap for student union affiliated clubs. Access to state of the art technology, such as gestetners, made the production of leaflets, even in quite large quantities, quick and easy.

Leaflets like 'Come Out' and 'Gay Liberation Front' revealed the presence of homosexuals on campus, explained the demands and goals of the movement, advertised meetings and activities and are as good an insight into the politics and practice of the early gay liberation movement as we are likely to get. Similarly, the student press provided a platform for gay

liberationists to reach to wider audiences and the first few years of activism are played out as much in the pages of the press as on the streets of the city. The student press was prepared to publish longer and more esoteric articles than the mainstream press—still titillated by the mere existence of homosexuals to a large extent—was less interested in. As early as July 1971, Lex Watson of Sydney CAMP published an article in *Farrago* arguing *against* the value of law reform to the struggle for homosexual freedom, pointing out that very few men were ever prosecuted for sexual behaviour in private. In his opinion, consciousness raising and personal changes (coming out to family, friends and workmates especially)—work that would change society rather than laws—was of greater significance.³⁶ But Watson's view that 'the camp critique of society holds that camps are oppressed because of ignorance, prejudice or just plain unthinking reactions' was soon to be subjected to a critique of its own. In 1972, a more radical view emerged, arguing that the oppression of homosexuals was an effect not of prejudice, but of deep structures of social power.

Gay liberation held that, while individual prejudice certainly existed, and that discriminatory acts had to be combated as they occurred, both had to be understood as the products of a twisted society, as symptoms not of prejudice, ill-informed opinion or ignorance, but of *oppression* conceived as the systematic denial of civil rights and social legitimacy by powerful forces. The aspect of society that made it so anti-gay was named with a variety of adjectives: capitalist, hierarchic, Judeo-Christian, straight, patriarchal, sexist. But the interconnectedness of the institutions of oppression was taken for granted. In one leaflet, the Melbourne University Gay Liberation Front identified education, big business, the public service and government as the sites of oppression.³⁷ In another leaflet, the 'legal

system, the police, the church, the nuclear family, the mass media, the psychiatric establishment' were highlighted.³⁸

The 1972 leaflet 'Gay Liberation Front' offers an eloquent and succinct statement of gay liberation thinking at that time. It argues that if oppression was to be eradicated, society had to be transformed—replaced by 'a new society, open and [sex] role-free'.³⁹ The struggle for gay liberation was therefore and necessarily a broad one, fought on many fronts and alongside many allies: 'Gay Liberation has a perspective for revolution based on the UNITY OF ALL OPPRESSED PEOPLE. There can be no freedom for gays in a society that enslaves others through male supremacy, racism and economic exploitation (capitalism)'. The goal was freedom—freedom *from* personal oppression and sex roles; freedom *for* all, gay and straight, women and men; a recognition of the natural right to diversity that all human beings had. 'Gay' itself had to be seen not as a synonym for homosexual, but as a state of enlightenment or liberation or freedom: 'Gay, in its most far-reaching sense, means not homosexual, but sexually free'. And it was a state of being available to all: 'Gay Liberation is more than the liberation of homosexuals—it is, in fact the liberation of us all, whether we be homosexual, bisexual or heterosexual'.

On campus, numerous allies were found. Chief amongst these was Women's Liberation. It is true that some early feminists expressed doubts about the tactical wisdom of associating with lesbianism, and some straight women shared the prejudices of society more broadly. The most dramatic example of this came in late 1972 at the Women's Liberation Theory Conference held at Mt Beauty in Victoria. A paper presented by members of the Hobart Women's Action Group entitled 'Sexism and the Women's Movement' (and often subtitled 'or why do straight sisters sometimes cry when they are called lesbians?') evoked a 'near-hysterical' reception from

some of those present and a grating liberal tolerance from others who failed to see the arguments for the links between movements that were committed to a notion of liberation which included a recognition of 'female sexuality, female autonomy and ... freedom from sex-role stereotypes'.⁴⁰ In general, the university branch of the women's movement was much less prone to these failings. Laurie Bebbington, for example, says that she was aware of nothing like this when she arrived at Melbourne University in 1972.⁴¹ Although it is notable that in their four page supplement in the July 1972 edition of *Farrago*, women's liberationists did not once mention lesbianism, two months later, on September 15, Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation jointly organised a day of activities on campus (Sexual Liberation Day) which included a public meeting, street theatre, discussion groups and a dinner dance.⁴² A year later, the two groups jointly produced a five page supplement in *Farrago* to coincide with Sexual Liberation Day on 27 July.⁴³

The rise of Gay Lib provided a group of people determined to push their issues and an environment in which such pushing was likely to be successful. It is not surprising to us that both the bookroom and the newspaper kiosk were happy to sell *Camp Ink*, CAMP's national magazine,⁴⁴ but we need to remember how important this was. There were few places around town that would have sold it and certainly it was the responsibility of activists to distribute it. Willing stockists and potential buyers were rarely as closely in touch as on campus.

More formally, in September 1972, the student union council endorsed a motion calling for homosexual law reform and condemning gay oppression. A year later, Clubs and Societies amended its regulations to ensure that no affiliated club could exclude members on the basis of 'race,

colour, creed or moral views', this last item included at the request of Gay Liberation.⁴⁵

In mid-1972, Jude Munro and Rex Rohmer wrote on behalf of the Melbourne Uni GLF to all clubs and societies and to all faculties, departments and colleges, to inquire as to their attitudes and policies towards homosexuals. In a brief, half-page letter (slightly different versions exist for the two groups of recipients), GLF asked whether the recipient would in any way discriminate against homosexuals or those who have homosexual relationships. They went on to ask whether or not there was a policy on homosexuality and, if there was not, the recipient was requested to formulate one at their earliest convenience. The letter went on to point out that the GLF was 'firmly opposed to any discrimination based on a person's sex or sexual preference. We are prepared to expose and resist any such discrimination' before concluding with an earnest hope that 'you will be able to oblige us with our request'.⁴⁶

Over the next month or two many replies were received. Twenty-four from clubs and societies; thirty-four from faculties, departments and colleges, including one from the Vice-Chancellor's office. The Arts Faculty Association replied, with admirable brevity: 'AFA Committee: Likes it both ways!' The Dental Students Association, on the other hand, found itself sharply divided. Five members were opposed to discrimination; one was for it; three didn't know any homosexuals and three more didn't know what they thought. The letter reports that there was a long, and no doubt agonising, discussion of the meaning of the word 'discrimination'.

The vast majority of those who replied reported that they did not, and would not, discriminate; for the most part they seemed offended at the very suggestion that they might do so, and often they expressed confusion as to why it was being raised. The Christian Anarchists, constrained by the

Bible's unequivocal condemnation of male homosexual acts, declared that although they could not approve of homosexuals, they did not judge them. They had 'more than one of these' associated with their group and did not discriminate against them. MUSFA also acknowledged that many of its members were also members of Gay Lib, including persons on the executive.

Few of those who responded felt the need to formulate a policy on the issue, although occasionally it was suggested that if GLF wanted to follow up on that idea, the University Council would be the appropriate body to approach. MU Community Aid Abroad and the Law Students Society, however, did in fact adopt policies against discrimination in response to the approach making them among the earliest organisations in Australia to do so.

One of the more striking features of the early years of the new movements in Australia was how little opposition they found. This was especially true of the gay liberation movement. Its sudden appearance seems to have taken conservatives by surprise, and on campus, in particular, it was many years indeed before any serious opposition could be mobilised. The sole exception to this came from an unexpected quarter – the far left. For the most part, the left in Australia was quick to embrace gay liberation. But the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist–Leninists), supporters of the Chinese model of Stalinism, made a name for themselves campaigning against US cultural imperialism, including within that the new gay rights movement. This was most seriously a problem at Monash ('Mao-nash' as it was sometimes dubbed) and Melbourne University was protected to a considerable extent by the absence of any serious Maoist presence on campus.

Which is not to say that there was no opposition to the rise of gay liberation at Melbourne. Rodney Thorpe remembers ‘there was a lot of animosity towards me but it wasn’t open, it just reflected in the fact that people knew that I was involved in Gay Liberation and they didn’t talk to me’. As early as 1971, *Farrago* published a photograph of a letter sent to it by the High Priest of SCIIAES (the Society for the Containment of Immoral Impulses Among Engineering Students), complaining about the rejection of an advertisement submitted to Ad Rag (the daily events bulletin of the university) which had invited people to join the ‘SCIIAES QUEER BASHING’ at Naughton’s Hotel every Saturday night. (The significance of Naughton’s is that it was the venue for regular, advertised gay student gatherings—the ideal place for ‘pansy picking’, to ‘kick a queer or hang one on a homo.’)⁴⁷

For the most part, student objections to Gay Lib expressed moral revulsion or focussed upon student union time, energy or money being expended on minority issues. F.J. Thomas, a commerce student, responded to the gay liberation issue of *Farrago* of 15 September 1972 with a letter denouncing the editor’s ‘sick state of mind’. Derek C Banks claimed that the paper was discriminating against, among others, heterosexuals. Alan Webster and friends, writing as ‘ordinary working people’ complained: ‘We don’t think there should be stuff about bloody pooftas especially not pictures of blokes screwing each other. Also you shouldn’t have pictures of blokes in the raw’. Jeff Nichols, law student, announced the formation of the first Australian Bestial Necrophiles Lib Group. Only Alison noticed the editor’s odd juxtaposition of articles condemning ‘social and sexual stereotyped roles’ with pictures of naked women and other ‘tit-bits’ which served to reinforce capitalist, patriarchal, traditional consumer society’s sexuality.⁴⁸

Perhaps the most serious attack on Gay Lib came in September 1973 when the Sex Liberation Dance, organised as part of a week of activities, was cancelled after ugly scenes erupted between gay libbers and science education students. Both groups were holding dances in the Union building on the same evening and after threats of poofster-bashing were allegedly made by science students some fifty angry gay and lesbian activists pushed their way into the science students dance hall. In the following weeks allegations and threats flew thick and fast in the pages of *Farrago* and it is difficult to be sure what happened and who was in the wrong (it is not even clear whether the Gay Liberation dance was cancelled by the Union Council or by Gay Liberation itself) but for gay activists it provided evidence for the persistence of anti-gay feelings within the university.⁴⁹

The university certainly provided a generally comfortable environment for gay and lesbian activists—and so it might seem surprising that at the end of 1972, the group upped stakes and moved off campus. Inevitably over the summer break the university was going to be less relevant as a location for activists, but there seems to have been a certain suspicion of the university in general – a feeling of being cut off from ‘the real world’. The group took out a lease on a house nearby, which became the Gay Lib Centre for some time. Tony Crewes recalls the decision:

we decided to move off campus, because we felt that we were identified too much with the intellectual elite and students and academics. We’d get people who’d come along to meetings who were manual workers or whatever who’d just be overpowered by the fact – who saw us as intellectuals. And we thought ‘this is really bad’ and they’d never come back and that was a real heartburn issue. So we decided to move off

campus and we got a house at 23 Davis St in Carlton, which was just a little terrace and we had meetings and parties, little parties and things.

But if the group was no longer meeting on campus, it retained a strong presence in student life over the next few years. *Farrago* published supplements on homosexuality and/or sexual politics in 1974 and 1975 and reasonably regular articles at other times.

As I have argued in *Living Out Loud*, political life became significantly more difficult for the left after 1973 and this was as true for lesbian and gay activists as for any other group. Many lesbians had grown frustrated with the inability or unwillingness of gay men to come to terms with the feminist analysis and with the intractable nature of male sexism. Moving, by way of radicalesbianism, towards an active role in the women's movement, women were playing a noticeably smaller role the gay movement during this period. Looking at the Sexual Politics supplement to the *Farrago* of 4 October 1974, it is striking that many of the names seem to be those of lesbians who had been active in Gay Liberation in previous years.⁵⁰

But in this difficult climate, Melbourne University's problems were exacerbated by the fact that it was somewhat overshadowed by the Australian Union of Students, whose national office was located just down the road in Drummond Street Carlton. The national student union had become increasingly radical over the course of the late 1960s and into the seventies and provided a focus for a great deal of the energy for activists from many different campaigns and movements. This was particularly true of gay and lesbian activists.

In early 1975, a caucus of homosexual members of AUS was convened to prepare for the annual conference, among whom were Laurie Bebbington and Jude Munro, both involved in Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation at Melbourne University. This group drafted, argued for and won a majority in favour of a pro-gay motion which opposed 'all discrimination—legal, economic and social—against homosexuals', supported the 'struggles of lesbians and homosexual men against heterosexist oppression' and offered active support to campaigns aimed at advancing the struggle for homosexual liberation. The motion recognised the 'validity of homosexual relationships' and committed the union to 'publicly advocate the positive and healthy nature of those relationships'.⁵¹

At this conference a number of gay and lesbian activists won election or appointment to the office-bearer positions within AUS, which brought them to Melbourne from interstate. Among these were people who had been campaigning for gay rights and gay liberation for many years—since the founding of CAMP in the case of Gaby Antolovich and Gay Liberation in Sydney (Craig Johnston)—as well as people who had been active in regional campuses (Jeff Hayler, Peter O'Connor, Ron Thiele and Gay Walsh). All were to have a major impact on the student union and, through that, upon students more generally.

The 1975 AUS conference adopted a number of motions. It called for the repeal of all laws referring to the illegality of homosexual acts between consenting parties and deplored action to dismiss members of the armed services for homosexual practices (an issue then topical).⁵² It also adopted a more wide-ranging set of motions that called on education departments to form committees to examine curricula to identify biases in favour of 'heterosexual nuclear family-oriented lifestyle in texts, songs, library facilities and general course disposition etc'; called on teachers,

trainee-teachers and teacher unions to undertake similar investigations; required AUS officers to mobilise resources to challenge the exclusively heterosexual nature of teacher training and to prepare a submission to the Schools Commission on this matter.⁵³ These motions went well beyond the then-widely accepted calls for decriminalisation and tolerance.

At the initiative of the homosexual caucus, conference also voted to submit these motions for ratification by student union members at all affiliated campuses. Ron Thiele, who was one of those involved in the caucus, explains that this approach was designed to take the issue beyond the hard core activists of the AUS conference and out into the wider student community, the belief being that having the debate was more important than the risk of losing the vote.⁵⁴ The flavour of the debate at Melbourne is captured in a letter by Vivian Bounds who suggested that if homosexuality was to be presented as a valid alternative lifestyle (which was indeed the underlying assumption in the motions and argued explicitly at various times during the debate), then why was it necessary to stop there? Why not present sadism, masochism, bestiality in the same light? And why should this pluralism be confined to sexual life? Why not extend it to politics, and accept the validity of totalitarianism apartheid etc as alternatives? Until these questions were answered, suggested Ms Bounds, no sensible debate on these motions was possible.⁵⁵ In the end, the motions were put as the second item to a student general meeting on Thursday 17 April, though only after a considerable number of students (having voted to reject a rise in union fees) had left. The motions were carried 45:42.⁵⁶

AUS's most important contribution to the movement was its organisation of the National Homosexual Conference at Melbourne University on 16-17 August 1975. AUS succeeded in organising a national conference where earlier efforts by the movement had failed because it had

both the money and the formal networks to turn its plans into action. Organised by a collective of lesbians and gay men, and funded by AUS, the Conference was expressly not a Gay Liberation conference, being open to a wide a range of participants – ‘from Christian homosexuals to feminist lesbians, for society five [*sic*] to effeminists ... homosexual activists of many years, and homosexuals for whom the Conference was first contact’. But it was open only to homosexuals, rejecting sympathetic heterosexuals, voyeuristic social scientists and anti-gay activists, in order to ensure that the ‘Conference was homosexual territory’.⁵⁷ In the end some six hundred people attended from as far away as Perth and Townsville. In what proved to be the first of an annual series that lasted into the mid-1980s, the conference brought together gay and lesbian activists to share ideas, to develop strategies, to debate and argue, to pick each other up. The conferences were the highlight of the annual gay calendar for over a decade and an important means by which the movement continued its work through an increasingly difficult period.

The following year, Ron Thiele, former Media Officer at AUS and now enrolled at Melbourne University, decided, along with three friends, that gay people needed to re-establish their visibility on campus. Their new organisation, the Melbourne University Gay Society, had rather different goals to that of the old Gay Lib. Whereas Gay Lib had emphasised social change, Gay Soc (as the group came universally to be known) put much greater emphasis on meeting the needs of gay people. Its objectives were:

To promote communication, cooperation and understanding amongst homosexual students and staff; to cater for, and foster, the interests of members through social and other

activities; to promote cooperation between other homosexual organisations.

Social change is, in fact, entirely absent.⁵⁸ Ron Thiele explains this in terms of a need to reach out as widely as possible to gay and lesbian students and to draw them together around a common, albeit reasonably low, denominator: 'Explore your sexuality, meet some new people in a friendly get-together' urged the group.⁵⁹ But there were the traditional information tables in the union foyer (during Contraception Week ironically enough)⁶⁰ and the dances staged by Gay Soc were seen, as they had been for Gay Lib, as both social and political in their aims and consequences. If, as a consequence of this activity, some found the desire and confidence to become more politically active, then the founders would be more than pleased. Certainly, Gay Soc played an important part in the foundation of the Homosexual Law Reform Coalition and its early work and in the campaign against the threat presented by the resurgence of moral conservatism during these years.⁶¹

Formed in a rush in the week before first term started, the organisers found themselves carrying much of the burden for the first year or so, constantly urging members to become more active. The creation of a number of groups within the society indicates a degree of success with this—the encounter group (a kind of CR group apparently), the dance/social collective, a sexual politics discussion group, a music group, a publicity group all existed by the middle of 1976.⁶² Obviously it required more than the committee to keep these operating. And to those observing from outside, it was the success of the group that was most obvious. Ashley Roberts, reporting for *Campaign*, claiming a membership of one hundred, described it as having achieved 'success unparalleled in Australian tertiary

institutions' and as providing a model for future organising efforts. Compared to Monash and Latrobe, in particular, where there was little going on, it was doing very well, despite the lack of women participating.⁶³ Even so, it is striking that the eight page supplement in *Farrago* in June 1976 (the 'Gay Issue') contained nearly three pages of reprinted material. Other items included a vox pop with (heterosexual) students, an interview with Reg Livermore (whose Betty Blokkbuster show was then being staged in Melbourne), a survey of the available gay fiction and political writings. One page consisted of responses from various clubs, colleges and political parties about discrimination policy—a survey modelled directly upon Gay Lib's survey of 1972 but which elicited only six responses (and which included a reprint of the Vice-Chancellor's response from 1972 on the assumption that his attitude had not changed).⁶⁴

Still, the group reappeared in 1977 and published a page of articles about the gay experience which provided powerful insights into the difficulties of being gay or in coming out that many students experienced.⁶⁵ Gay Soc proved to be remarkably enduring. Since its establishment there has always been an organisation for lesbians and gay men on campus at Melbourne University, sometimes more active, sometimes less so. There have, though, been changes over time. In the early 1990s, the formal committee structure was abandoned and the open organising collective set up (echoing, though it is unlikely that those responsible knew this, Gay Lib's aversion to hierarchies). In 1996, in a happy, though coincidental, celebration of Gay Soc's twentieth anniversary, students at the university voted—at a large and noisy general meeting and over the opposition of Liberal Club members and assorted Christians—to establish two Queer Officers within the union. Their roles are to provide advice and information to gay students (or the 'non-heterosexually identifying' to use the jargon of

the day) and to challenge heterosexist and homophobic practices on campus.⁶⁶ In recent years, they have overseen the publication of two editions of *Contagion*—a magazine for queer students and Melbourne Uni students have played a prominent role in Queer Collaborations, the annual gathering of queer students.

All of this serves to remind us that the forces set in motion in the mid- to late-1960s have not yet played themselves out. Despite achievements in law reform and levels of public acceptance that would have astounded those who founded Daughters of Bilitis, CAMP and Gay Liberation, not all has yet been achieved. It is likely that the gay and lesbian (now queer, tomorrow who knows what) history of the university will be with us for some time to come.

¹ On terms: Inevitably over the course of the past few decades, gay people have used a variety of terms to describe themselves and their activities. Until the early 1970s, ‘camp’ was the most-used term (sometimes spelled ‘kamp’), applied to men and women both, though terms like ‘camp women’, ‘camp ladies’, ‘camp girls’ were sometimes used to single women out when required. From about 1972 on, ‘gay’ (imported by radicals from the USA) became more popular, then ‘lesbian and gay’, and more recently, as bisexuals and transgender people (and, as we speak, intersex people) have been welcomed into the gay community, ‘queer’. My general preference is to use the term(s) that were most in use during the time under discussion, though I have started to employ again the term ‘homosexual’ which was furiously dismissed by the early movement as having pejorative and medicalised connotations. My sense is that it has lost these and may be usefully reclaimed. This is still a somewhat contested analysis. (Ironically, radical activists of the 1970s often rejected ‘gay’ as a euphemism, preferring ‘homosexual’).

² Paul Davidson, ‘An Approach Has Been Made’, letter, *Farrago*, 4 March 1968, p. 8.

- ³ Garry Wotherspoon, *'City of the Plain': History of a Gay Sub-culture*, Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1991, pp. 110–11. See also Garry Wotherspoon, 'This Nest of Perverts': Policing Male Homosexuality in Cold War Australia, *Working Papers in Australian Studies No. 32*, Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, University of London, London, 1990; Ruth Ford, *Deviance and Desire: Meanings of Lesbianism in Post-War Australia, 1946-1960*, BA Honours thesis, La Trobe University, 1992, p. 104; Patricia Grimshaw, Marilyn Lake, Ann McGrath, Marian Quartly, *Creating A Nation*, McPhee Gribble, Melbourne, 1994, pp. 268–71.
- ⁴ Graham Willett, *Living Out Loud: A History of Gay and Lesbian Activism in Australia*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2000, chapter 1.
- ⁵ Junius, 'The (Student) Press', *Australian Book Review*, May 1969, pp. 220–2.
- ⁶ 'The Agony of Deviation', *Farrago*, 9 May 1969, p. 13.
- ⁷ Libby Booth, 'Just a Boy from the Band', *Farrago*, 11 July 1969.
- ⁸ 'Christ—Homosexual?', *Farrago*, 5 July 1968.
- ⁹ 'Union Morality', *Farrago*, 3 August 1964; 'Students Vote for Legal Homosexuality', *Australian*, 27 July 1964, p. 4.
- ¹⁰ The text of his lecture is reprinted in Rupert Cross, 'Unmaking Criminal Laws', *Melbourne University Law Review*, vol. 3, November 1962.
- ¹¹ 'Dr Woods Agrees With Legalised Homosexuality', *Australian*, 26 July 1964, p. 4; plus letters: 4 August 1964, p. 5; four letters, 8 August 1964, p. 5.
- ¹² 'Abortion Survey', *Farrago*, 21 June 1968, p. 12.
- ¹³ Alan J Scott, 'Attitudes to Sexuality, Melbourne: People, Melbourne and Sex', Research Report No 5, Royal Commission on Human Relationships, *Research Reports*, AGPS, Canberra, 1977, p. 100.
- ¹⁴ Marjorie Theobald, personal communication.
- ¹⁵ Scott, 'Attitudes', p. 17.
- ¹⁶ 'Well-Adjusted Homosexuals', letter, *Farrago*, 10 July 1970.
- ¹⁷ 'Omission', letter, *Farrago*, 17 July 1970.

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- 18 Australasian Lesbian Movement, *Information Sheet*, n.d. [1970], Australasian Lesbian Movement ephemera file, Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives [the group changed its name to ALM in July 1970].
- 19 Peter K Cashman, 'Homosexuality' *Farrago*, 26 March 1971, pp. 4–5; George Tavistock, 'Gay Power', letter, *Lot's Wife*, 15 April 1971, p. 12.
- 20 Cashman, 'Homosexuality', p. 5.
- 21 Interview with Rodney Thorpe, 12 October 1996. Unless otherwise specified, all further references to Rodney Thorpe as a source refer to this interview.
- 22 Interview with Tony Crewes, 16 February 1997. Unless otherwise specified, all further references to Tony Crewes as a source refer to this interview.
- 23 'Come Out', leaflet, n.d. [1972], Gay Liberation Papers, Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives (ALGA).
- 24 'Melbourne University Gay Liberation Front', leaflet, n.d. [1972], Society Five Papers, ALGA.
- 25 Interview with Rodney Thorpe.
- 26 This is discussed on an audio tape dated 7 February 1976, in which a number of people (usually unnamed) reminisce about the early years of Gay Liberation in Melbourne, Gay Liberation History, Tape Number 17, ALGA.
- 27 Gay Liberation History, Tape Number 17, ALGA.
- 28 Gay Liberation History, Tape Number 17, ALGA.
- 29 Tony Crewes interview; Rodney Thorpe also discussed this more briefly.
- 30 Gay Liberation History, Tape Number 17, ALGA.
- 31 'MGLF' [*sic*], *Gay Rays*, December 1972.
- 32 'Gay Liberation Front', leaflet, n.d. [1972]
- 33 GLF Melb. Uni. [*sic*], 'Gay Lib', letter, *Farrago*, 3 August 1972, p. 4.
- 34 GLF Melb. Uni., 'Gay Lib', letter, *Farrago*, 3 August 1972, p. 4.
- 35 *Farrago*, 4 October 1974, p. 10.
- 36 Lex Watson, 'What's It Like To Be Camp?', *Farrago*, 14 July 1971, p. 9.
- 37 'Come Out!', leaflet, Melbourne Uni Gay Liberation Front, n.d. [1972].
- 38 'Gay Liberation Front', leaflet, n.d. [1972].
- 39 This whole paragraph: 'Gay Liberation Front', leaflet, n.d. [1972].

- 40 The document with some introductory remarks is reprinted in ‘Sexism and the Women’s Movement’, *Refractory Girl*, Summer 1974, pp. 30–3.
- 41 Interview with Laurie Bebbington.
- 42 ‘Gay Day’, *Farrago*, 15 September 1972, p. 12.
- 43 Sexual Liberation, *Farrago*, 20 July 1973, pp. 3–7.
- 44 *Five*, [Society Five newsletter], April 1972.
- 45 Kevin Azo, ‘Union News’, *Farrago*, 5 October 1973, p. 7.
- 46 [GLF Melbourne University], Original Circular Sent to University Departments, and Original Circular Sent to University Clubs and Societies, unpublished papers, 1972, Gay Liberation Papers, ALGA.
- 47 Lex Watson, ‘What’s It Like to Be Camp?’, *Farrago*, 14 July 1971, p. 9, illustration.
- 48 Letters, *Farrago*, 29 Sept 1972: F.J. Thomas, ‘95% Horny’; Derek C. Banks, ‘Discriminate’; Alan Webster et al, ‘Yea Workingman’; Jeff Nichols, ‘Bestial Necrophilia’; Alison, ‘Of Males and Tit-Bits’.
- 49 Details are drawn from four letters published in *Farrago*: Chris Johnson, ‘Sexism’, 31 August 1973, p. 18; Peter Brighton, ‘CAMP Fighters’, 7 September 1973, p. 22; David Neal, ‘Neal’s Wisdom’, 21 September 1973, p. 22; Laurie, ‘Shut up, Sci-Eds’, 21 September 1973, p. 21.
- 50 Helen *et al*, ‘Hardlines: Are They Really That Hard?’, *Farrago*, 4 October 1974.
- 51 ‘Vote Yes to Homosexual Motions’, *National U*, 28 April 1975, p. 20.
- 52 Quoted in GLF Melbourne University, Original Circular Sent to University Departments.
- 53 Quoted in ‘Homosexual Motions’, *Farrago*, 11 April 1975, p. 6.
- 54 Interview with Ron Thiele, 14 August 1996.
- 55 Vivian Bounds, ‘Homosexuals Queer’, letter, *Farrago*, 11 April 1975, p. 2.
- 56 ‘General Meeting: Yes and No’, *Farrago*, 18 April 1975, p. 3.
- 57 Jeff Hayler, ‘National Homosexual Conference’, *National U*, 8 September 1975, p. 10.
- 58 Constitution of the Melbourne University Gay Society, unpublished paper, n.d. [1976], ALGA

- ⁵⁹ 'Gay Soc', *Farrago*, 2 April 1976, p. 13.
- ⁶⁰ *Gay Soc Newsletter*, no. 2, 6 June 1976.
- ⁶¹ Willett, *Living Out Loud*, pp. 137–8, 149.
- ⁶² 'Gay Soc', *Farrago*, 2 April 1976, p. 13.
- ⁶³ Ashley Roberts, 'Welcome to MUGS (Melbourne University Gay Society)', *Campaign*, May 1976, p. 36.
- ⁶⁴ *Farrago Gay Issue*, *Farrago*, 11 June 1976, pp. 9–16.
- ⁶⁵ 'The Expression of Human Sexuality', *Farrago*, 3 June 1977, p. 15.
- ⁶⁶ Daniel G Taylor, 'Campus Capers', *MSO*, 16 August 1996, p. 8.