

## Oral History Interview with Kendall Lovett

Interviewer: John Witte

Date of interview: 4 August 2011

Location of interview: Myrtle Street, Chippendale

Reason for interview: Pioneer/Activism, including involvement in Resident Action Group and Mardi Gras. Continuation of earlier 2007 interview by Ken Davis.

Restrictions: None

Log: Completed by Chelsey Perdue, 2020



Log	Summary	Key words
<b>Part 1</b>		
00:00:00	John Witte introduces the interview - Part 2, originally started by Ken Davis interviewing Ken Lovett in Melbourne, around 2007, was incomplete.	Ken Davis
00:00:44	Clarifications from the first interview, starting with background on Ken, born 6th October 1922, Hobart, Tasmania.	Hobart, Tasmania
00:01:04	Met Ron Owen when he moved to Sydney, North Bondi/ Willoughby when he was 7yrs old. Has one sister, two brothers. Ken went to Baptist Church, Ron to Anglican Church. Discussed performing in church events as "Baptist Drama League"	Ron Owen, North Bondi, Willoughby, Baptist Church, Anglican Church, "Baptist Drama League"
00:03:16	In his 20s he realised he was gay, he left church as his churches said it was evil.	Homophobia in Christianity
00:04:28	Wanted to travel overseas, worked odd jobs to save. Post war period, lots of naval jobs available	Work, travel, post war period
00:05:50	Fell in love while looking for dock work which kept him in Sydney. Moved to Melbourne to escape both of their families.	Melbourne
00:07:00	First relationship ended, met new partner and moved to London, broke up after 4 years, but stayed in London	London, Sydney, Melbourne, relationships
00:08:30	Appreciated the history of London, different from the experience in Australia. He was writing short stories, a few read on BBC	London, BBC
00:09:18	Returned home in 1968 because father was ill, was given 6 months, but lived for another 10 years. Was expected that he would care for his mother after father's death, but she actually died first Jan 1979. Family had limited knowledge of his activism	Father, mother, family
00:11:41	Lived with parents until 1970 in Sydney then moved to Woolloomooloo. Moved into Crown Street house across the road from Ron Owen. He lived there until he moved to Newcastle in 1994.	Woolloomooloo, Melbourne, Crown Street, Ron Owen
00:13:52	1970 Darlinghurst and Woolloomooloo were derelict. Tension over use of the area, Commonwealth owned Navy housing, State plans for Eastern Suburbs Railway, Housing Commission, private owners and locals. Burke St was the line that divided the neighbourhood, east versus west, right-wing labour party versus left aligned.	Darlinghurst, Woolloomooloo, Navy, Eastern Suburbs Railway, Burke St, Housing Commission
00:16:29	Before it as a gay ghetto it was known for prostitution, no first hand knowledge.	gay ghetto, prostitution
00:17:42	Joined Residents Action Group to keep Woolloomooloo a residential suburb for transitory people including migrants	Residents Action Group
00:18:47	The threat from developers displacing locals, issue extended to Glebe, The Rocks, Waterloo - all working class areas	Displacement, developers, working class,
00:20:20	BLF was involved from the start, increased involvement	BLF, unions, public involvement

00:21:19	Encouraged people to get involved and learn about politics through other activists and Resident Action Group (RAG) coalitions. They were fighting State and Commonwealth but mostly local council	Resident Action Group (RAG)
00:23:00	Action to support the Rocks, he couldn't go. Brenda Humble, Carol and Jack Mundy were arrested. Protested at Waterloo to save houses from demolition, 40,000 people waiting for homes. Lots of publicity.	The Rocks, Brenda Humble, Carol, Jack Mundy, Waterloo
00:25:00	Wanted carpark to be a "people's park", Brenda and daughter and others planted trees to prevent parking, roped it off. Telegraph came, Ken had sent out press releases, photos taken. Didn't work	Brenda, protesting, The Telegraph
00:26:22	Discussed some victories with RAG, including the Whitlam Government agreement for State to use land for housing commission over developers. Also discussed loses, a lot is now high rise buildings, and the area is gentrified	Whitlam Government, Housing Commission, gentrification
00:29:32	Discussed homosexual activity on Oxford street through to Bondi Junction in 70s, e.g. Ivy's. Surprised clubs like Ivy's were more open than in London which were more discreet	Oxford Street, Bondi Junction, Ivy's
00:33:00	Discuss letter writing. Requested ABC repeat The Checkerboard, they refused, but letter was published in Television News (or something similar). Letter writing to churches, mixed responses from Catholic and Anglicans. Peter Bonsall-Boone invited him to Cross Section	Letter Writing, Peter Bonsall-Boone, Catholic Church, Anglican Church, Cross Section, CAMP
00:37:45	1972/3 letter writing regarding Moss Cass's motion. Met Gary Stonehouse through Ron. Helped Gary with work as a drama teacher at North Sydney boys	Moss Cass motion, letter writing, Gary Stonehouse, North Sydney Boys
00:42:31	Unfamiliar with Gay Pride Week in 1973 and Mardi Gras in general, focused on Resident Actions. Eventually went to meeting chaired by Margaret McMann, 300-400 people present.	Gay Pride Week, Margaret McMann
00:45:23	1979 called for jury duty, went before magistrate for refusing to participate, argued he was biased because of his criticisms of The Crown and government. Occurred a few times before a judge finally discharged him.	Jury duty, civil disobedience
00:59:41	Motion for 15th July 1978 march to go with no permit held at Culture Palace - protest against brutality of cops. Didn't attend, but made cut out of himself saying "I supported Gay rights", carried by Ron Owen, photo by Jeff Friend of this.	Culture Palace, Police brutality, 1978 march, Jeff Friend
01:02:01	Joined GSG (Gay Solidarity Group) after July 15th March, meeting at 33A Glebe Point Road. Just casually attending meetings discussing the conference, offered to help in small ways. Went to Saturday public conference meeting with Attorney General, Frank Walker (27 August '78 March)	GSG, Glebe Point Road, Attorney General, Frank Walker, National Homosexual Conference
01:04:45	Women Against Abortion (WAC) campaign asked GSG to be added to conference. Made signs with slogans like "Get your laws off our bodies" to take to conference. Police were outside.	Women Against Abortion (WAC), GSG, police, protesting
01:06:23	Marching from conference at Paddington Town hall. Not everybody marched, there was a split. Cops prevented them entering Taylor Square and told them to return to the conference, they complied, but police incited violence.	Taylor Square, Paddington Town Hall, Police brutality
01:11:41	Ken was violently arrested, cop destroyed his sign. Filled paddy wagons, including Betty Hounslow	Arrests, Betty Hounslow
01:16:50	Taken to Darlinghurst Police Station to be processed, left in paddy wagon for a long time. About 20 men arrested, but they'd made a point of grabbing more women	Darlinghurst Police Station

01:21:31	104 arrests - 31 Hyde Park, 73 Taylor Square.	Arrests
01:22:34	Court cases followed, Ken went as GSG representative. They were trying to no bill everyone (?). Continually adjourned cases, was difficult for many. Charges eventually dropped for many on 26th January except for ones accused of violence against police	Legal proceedings, GSG
01:27:43	Listing those involved in Sydney Morning Herald, lead to some receiving hate mail from public, including Ken which he kept, also has copies of Liz Ross'	Sydney Morning Herald, Liz Ross, hate mail
01:32:19	4th November had a demonstration against a referendum in America deciding if homosexuals couldn't teach.	demonstrations, America, teachers
01:33:20	Involved in GSG 1978 onwards. Got a permit for next MG. but were very wary of police. Set up an emergency centre at Garibaldi's cafe, Ken manned the phone. David Buchanan was main contact. Went well, more dressing up	Garibaldi's, Mardi Gras, GSG, David Buchanan
01:38:09	Michael Glynn announce The Star launch after conference at a GSG meeting. Ken (different Ken) said something to upset him and Michael physically and verbally tried to attack him	The Star, Michael Glynn, Ken
01:40:08	Late '79 launched Australian and New Zealand Gay National Summer Offensive for Rights (or "Summer Offensive"). Gaye Walsh and Ken Davis suggested this at a conference.	Gay National Summer Offensive for Rights, Gaye Walsh, Ken Davis
<b>Part 2</b>		
00:00:00	Lead up to 6th national conference	
00:01:02	Michael Glynn, The Star versus Campaign, Starr less relevant. Michael not a regular GSG member	Michael Glynn, The Star
00:02:21	November 1979 Gaywaves radio show is launched, Ken provided info about GSG activity. David Abello, David Urquhart and Greg Reading involved	Gaywaves, David Abello, David Urquhart and Greg Reading
00:04:35	There was a move to push 1980 Mardi Gras to summer, GSG not in favour, preferred June to coincide with San Francisco MG/Stonewall history, ended up dropping out because of disagreements	Mardi Gras
00:07:01	Admin work for GSG kept him from attending a lot of actual events. Met Lauren McKinnon through media workshops, started Gaywaves Radio Information News Service, 1983-1993.	Lauren McKinnon, Gaywaves Radio Information News Service, GRINS Project
00:11:20	Liaised with Melbourne, plus overseas gay publications for news, Body Politic in Canada, Gay Community News in Boston, Advocate and Gay News in UK, and Scottish Gay Publication (unsure of name), plus a few Scandinavian ones	Queer publications, Body Politic, Gay Community News, Advocate, Gay New
00:13:24	Supplied International Lesbian Gay Association with Australian news. Discussed constant lack of money for GSG	International Lesbian Gay Association
00:14:35	Gaywaves versus Campaign and The Star. Gaywaves radio provided a broader audience and focused on politics over social scene	Gaywaves, Campaign, The Star, radio
00:17:31	Social scene interested him in '70s, e.g gay dances at Jewish centre Maccabean Hall, Australia Hall and Polly's, but more political focus in '80s,	Maccabean Hall, social scene
<b>Part 3</b>		
00:00:00	Introduced part 3 of interview, previously discussed Gaywaves and social scene. Moving on to GSG newsletter and Summer Offensive 1979	
00:01:31	1979-80 notes on running GSG. They suggested National and New Zealand Summer Offensive at a Melbourne conference.	GSG, Summer Offensive

00:03:54	Held forums e.g. on gays in the media and gay rights in work place to publicize Summer Offensive.	Summer Offensive, forums
00:05:30	March 22nd, demonstration in Townhall square	Demonstration
00:06:23	Ken was joint chair with Omar and Carlie Shaktie organising publicity for MG using Gaywaves and GCN in Melbourne	GCN
00:08:24	Gay Community News (GCN) originally newsletter for 1979 Melbourne conference.	Gay Community News, GCN
00:09:11	David Abello, Prue Borthwick, Gavin Harris, Susan Ardeal, Susan Hawks, David Urquhart, Greg Reading, Annie Parkinson main contacts with at Gaywaves.	Gaywaves
00:09:55	Sydney collective in 1980, Gerald Lawrence, Gavin Harris, Mark O'Fenetie, Prue Borthwick, Julie Daly, and Ken provided news for GNC. Discuss distribution and funding, mention other gay papers	Sydney collective for GNC
00:13:31	GSG members Lance Gowland, Graham Chuck, Barry Power on MG subcommittees.	MG committee
00:15:15	Conference held at Sydney Uni Merewether building, August 1980. Discuss alienation some women felt from gay male focus of MG e.g. Lesbians Against MG	Sydney Uni, Lesbians Against MG, sexism
00:17:15	Women set up Women's Warehouse. Some women GSG members were involved, Oma, Joe, Sandy	Women's Warehouse, Oma, Joe, Sandy
00:18:50	Running of GSG	
00:21:46	Demonstrations including May Day, Hiroshima Day. Not confined to gay or Australian issues e.g. Margret Thatchers section 28, met Mannie through one of these demonstrations	Margret Thatchers section 28, Mannie
00:24:33	Bit on Mannie and their relationship, his partner from '93	Mannie De Saxe, partner
00:25:24	June 1982 demonstrating against arrest of the editor of the Greek Gay Magazine. Ken Davis, Graham Chuck, Graham Head, Maitland Bowen, Max Pierce, Lee Raymond, Richard Wilson (murdered in the Philippines in '90s), Jamie Gardner.	Greek Gay Magazine
00:28:19	Discussed conferences from 4th onwards and their locations.	Conferences
00:31:08	Letters from gay and lesbian prisoners in '82, from Grafton, Longbay, Goulburn, Western Australia prisons who wanted link to outside gay community. Limited community interest other than from Sasha Soldatow.	gay and lesbian prisoners, Sasha Soldatow
00:40:12	Skid radio has a prisoner section, also had a gay program.	Skid radio
00:41:32	Jerry Falwell came to Australia for Festival of Light, few GSG members set up Moral Majority named after Jerry's US radio program. Did some demonstrations where Jerry spoke	Jerry Falwell, Moral Majority
00:46:32	GSG relationship with Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. Mentions Fabian as Mother Inferior and Betty Hounslow. Describes demonstrations at the time as fun.	Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, Fabian, Betty Hounslow
00:51:41	Mardi Gras moved to summer, Stonewall Marches in June wound down probably stopped around 1985	Stonewall Marches
00:54:04	GSG challenging Fred Nile statements on 2GB broadcast tribunal where he denigrated gay people	Fred Nile, 2GB radio
00:55:54	Club 80 raids in '83, GSG were anti-Club 80, but supported demonstrations against the arrests along with Camp. Discussed police actions against gay community and governments support.	Club 80, police
01:00:37	Did news reports for GRINS and Body Politic in Canada, Gay News in UK, and a Scottish one (unsure of name), plus a few Scandinavian ones.	International gay publications
01:04:16	Outcome of Club 80 raids - charges were dropped after a lot of hard work. Focus on bigger picture, rather than supporting the venues.	Club 80
01:06:36	Gender divide in gay groups. Discussion of changing GSG to Lesbian, Gay Solidarity Group, which he disagreed with, but eventually changed.	Lesbian, Gay Solidarity Group

01:10:37	Ken's view on GSG - open to everyone, focus on broader perspective. Maintains ongoing newsletter even as group declined	GSG newsletter
01:15:50	'83 they became aware of AIDs, Formation of ACON and Gay Men's Health	ACON, Gay Men's Health, AIDS
01:22:53	Networks formed, including trade unions to help those affected.	AIDS crisis
01:24:43	Aids response came under GSG's area of involvement, both politics and caring for people. Ken became carer after retiring.	Carer, AIDS
<b>Part 4</b>		
00:00:17	ACT UP demo at American Embassy regarding aids medicine. Ken Davis, Paul van Reyk and Fabian from Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence present. Police intervened after they vandalized a wall.	ACT UP, American Embassy, demonstrations, Ken Davis, Paul van Reyk, Fabian, Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence
00:03:55	ACT UP organization helped People with AIDS, spreading awareness and demanding free access to medicine	ACT UP, AIDS awareness
00:05:53	Becoming carers for the dying. Partner Mannie started public mourning plantings, formed SPAIDS (memorial in Sydney Park). Organised 3-4 plantings a year. Permanent memorial now in one of the Sydney parks	AIDS care, SPAIDS, memorials, Sydney
00:12:28	GRINS Project - Gay Radio Information News Service, created 5 minute weekly news update for Gaywaves, with Lauren McKinnon, broadcast to 14 gay radio stations	Grins Project, Gay Radio Information News Service, Gaywaves, Lauren McKinnon
00:18:20	Retirement in Newcastle, still involved in demos, not always gay issues, including against Pauline Hanson	Retirement, Pauline Hanson
00:21:32	Since 1988 had begun Gay Solidarity Newsletter, continues to publish once a year now.	Gay Solidarity Newsletter
00:23:41	Moving to Melbourne	Melbourne
00:29:03	Life in Melbourne, working in archives and continuing activism, particularly homophobia in aged care and discriminatory laws against same sex couples, inclusion as defacto couples	Melbourne, aged care activism, homophobia in aged care, defacto relationships

### Summary of Key Moments and Dates

Personal Ron Owen	Moved into his flat in 1970; was an actor and film maker; still with him in 1979;
Living arrangements	Moved into Crown Street then to Circle of gay friends at Ron's place;
ROW	Involved prior to 1972; politicisation – what understanding of the way the world operated from Resident's;
Job	Pink Pages → Choice
Gay movement	Demo at St Clements; letter writing to support Cass in 73 (circle of friends apart from gay movement); Inquiry into Human Relationships; Gary Stonehouse and Ron Owen were involved; Analysis of progressives vs reactionaries; impression of revolutionaries cooling ardour;
Gay venues/social	Maccabbean Hall; Isadoras in Day Street;
Gay Solidarity Group	What was your first impression of GSG? (vs circle of friends); what was the move to

	King Street St Peters all about?; Summer Offensive; Mardi Gras; male law reform;
26 June 78	Liverpool Street – you came back to W and did you go alone?
30 June 78	Stanley Palmer Culture Palace: Can you remember the day?
20 Aug 78	Drop the charges motorcade
27 Aug 78	Did you go to the Conference? 73 arrests + 31 arrests
11 Nov 78	Gayfed vs COGG: how did you see gays reactions to the MG?
12 Jan 79	Wran met at the airport
30 June 79	Second Mardi Gras: What do you recall?
6 July 79	Star launched: Michael Glynn; Gay Communitarianism;
21 Nov 79	Gay National Summer Offensive for Rights: what was this? Activities;
Nov 79	Gaywaves is launched. Who? Aim? What was its attitude to social scene?
March 80	Gay Information.
March 80	GSG organises 3 <sup>rd</sup> MG through a sub-committee.
30 Aug 80	6 <sup>th</sup> National Conference: Business and the MG.
Sept 80	Split Mardi Gras Task Group goes its own way.
16 Oct 80	Gay Rights Lobby. Relationship to this group.
21 Mar 81	First summer mardi gras. The move to summer. Who was in each camp?
27 June 81	Gay Liberation Quire. What relationship to GSG?
27 June 81	Stonewall march. Explain how this continued on after the move.
17 Oct 81	Sydney SOPI. What relationship to GSG?
Dec 81	Women's Warehouse closes.
14 Jan 82	How was the HLRC formed?
22 Feb 82	Second summer MG.
1 July 82	GSG Picket of Aquilina.
18 Nov 82	GSG granted "status" to challenge Fred Nile's statements on 2GB.
29 Jan 83	Club 80 raids.
15 May 83	AIDS Action Committee formed. June first public AIDS meeting.
14 April 83	Brian McGahen.
29 May 84	Gay Immigration Task Force formed.