

Pride History Group Oral History Interview with Martin (Marty) Douglas

Interviewer: John Witte

Date: 29th May 2010

Location of interview: Benledi, 182 Glebe Pt Rd, Glebe

Reason for interview: Sydney Gay Liberation and Early Venues

Restrictions: None

Call no.:



Time	Summary	Keywords
00-50	Born 1934, family in Melbourne	Melbourne
01-20	sent to live in Riverina during WWII, schooling from Correspondence School, then Xavier College post-war	Xavier College;
05-27	after school went to sea; grandfather considered him a poofter and organised placement on a ship. Sexuality was not a problem in family – was never closeted in family – loved being at sea and never left	
06-30	1950. First ship was the “Cape York”, a lighthouse resupply ship run by the Commonwealth Lighthouse service, out of Melbourne. Stayed in merchant navy all his life. “The boys on board were lovely”	Commonwealth Lighthouse Service;
08-45	1956-1960 Started Arts degree at Sydney University – did not complete it.	University of Sydney;
09-30	gay sex at university - also lots of drunks.	
10-20	quite often left university to go to sea to earn money.	
11-02	there was a gay sub-culture at sea. Active partners often did not consider themselves gay but passive partners were poofers.	Sailors;
13-20	In NSW then buggery attracted a 14 year sentence so those seamen / stewards who were “out” were very much at risk.	The Law;
14-15	One steward was a blatant queen called Boadicea / Boady – died late ‘60s.	Boadicea/Boady;
15-04	The <i>Welcome Inn</i> in Woolloomooloo was Martin’s regular pub. Pub was nicknamed <i>The Bunch of Cunts</i> . Originally called <i>The Three Nuns</i> . [describes pub interior]	The Welcome Inn; “Bunch of Cunts”; The Three Nuns;
17-35	Some “trepidation” at coming out to the industry – did so at a stop-work meeting in Sydney. This was a positive move.	
19-00	When Martin joined Gay Lib. he wanted laws repealed and “equal rights within the community”. Believes there is still prejudice within the general community.	Sydney Gay Liberation;
21-30	About 6 pubs catering to a gay clientele – mainly for pick-ups and beats. The <i>Welcome Inn</i> in Sussex Street was rough trade. <i>Rex Hotel</i> was more for navy rather than merchant seamen.	the Marble Bar in George Adam’s Hotel; Pfahlert’s Hotel; the Welcome Inn; the Royal George; Rex Hotel (Kings X); Chevron Hotel;
27-01	Went to the <i>Purple Onion</i> a bit. Never went to <i>Les Girls</i> .	Purple Onion; Les Girls;

28-45	was at the last night of the <i>Marble Bar</i> when the Pitt St bar was closed down.	Marble Bar;
30-15	There were serious beats all over Sydney – all the railway stations. Underground lavatory in Martin Place (sic), another at back of Wynyard Station	Martin Place; Wynyard Park; Pfahler's Hotel;
32-05	Was involved in demonstrations on behalf of the Seamen's Union mainly in 1970s. Politics of union were left wing – basically Communist.	Seamen's Union;
33-40	Martin was a member of the ALP. Was asked by E.V Elliot to join the Communist Party.	Australian Labor Party; Communist Party of Australia;
34-25	Opposed the Vietnam War as part of the Seamen's Union. This was linked to the Trade Union movement and the Moratorium Movement	Vietnam War; Seamen's Journal; Vietnam Moratorium Marches;
37-45	Read about Gay Liberation being set up in Sydney, drove down from house at Lake Macquarie to a meeting at Glebe.	Gay Liberation; Lake Macquarie
38-24	First people met at Gay Liberation were organising " <i>Phone-a Friend</i> ". Not able to be closely involved because of work commitments.	Chris Vine; Graham Frank; Phone-a-Friend; Lance Gowland; Ron Austin;
40-35	People met at Gay Liberation. Brief affair with Jeremy Fisher before his expulsion from Macquarie University.	Lex Watson; Jeremy Fisher; Lance Gowland;
41-30	Interested in repeal of existing laws. Sees current treatment of refugees & ongoing homophobia as symptomatic of a nasty side to Australian society.	
43-25	Consciousness-raising within Sydney Gay Liberation. Weekend retreat at Minto run by Communist Party.	Gay Liberation: Communist Party;
45-05	Sees Sydney Gay Liberation as directly responsible for the Mardi Gras, disagreeing with Ron Austin's account.	Ron Austin; Mardi Gras;
46-20	Lists his opinion of reasons for establishment of Mardi Gras	Mardi Gras;
48-25	Took minutes of meetings in shorthand & had kept all the Gay Liberation meeting notes. Also kept a detailed private journal.	Sydney Gay Liberation;
49-50	Comments about age gap between the generations in Gay Lib.	Anton Veenstra; Rod Byatt; Jeremy Fisher;
53-15	Was never a member of CAMP and regrets this.	CAMP;
53-40	Comments on the "ghetto" in gay Sydney.	
55-10	Took part in 2 Mardi Gras. Partner Joey dressed as the Pope for one of these	Mardi Gras;
55-38	Gave interview to Channel Ten News about Mardi Gras and its purpose(s).	Channel Ten; Mardi Gras;

57·10	Gay Pride Week assembly in the Domain. March with Hari Krishnas and poetry reading. This became a march through Kings Cross (sic).	Chris; Graham; Lance Gowland; Kings Cross;
1·01·05	Gay Liberation's first premises were at 67 Glebe Point Rd. This was where Gay Liberation meetings were held. Premises were shared by Womens' Lib and by Bob Gould.	67 Glebe Point Rd; Gay Liberation; Phone-a-Friend; Womens' Liberation; Bob Gould;
1·03·20	Photographs saved from 67 Glebe Point Rd belonged to [John Storey]	David Street, Forest Lodge; John Storey;
1·04·15	[Martin offers John 2 items of interest. These are not described in the interview.]	
1·04·35	Gay Liberation has faded by 1974. Martin's involvement after that became less significant. Seamens' Union activity was more important. Visits to Sydney were rare because of work & living commitments.	Gay Liberation; 1974
1·05·50	Gay Lib's links to Womens' Liberation	Gay Liberation; Womens' Liberation; Pam Stein;
1·06·47	1973. Women involved with Gay Lib.	Gay Liberation; Pam Stein;
1·08·50	Delegation from Melbourne Gay Liberation; radical lesbians; very active in Melbourne, never met any of them.	Melbourne Gay Liberation;
1·10·40	Not involved in later organisation, the Gay Liberation Front	Gay Liberation Front;
1·11·00	may or may not have attended 1975 Gay Conference	First National Homosexual Conference;
1·11·40	not involved in activism after the first few years.	Anton Veenstra;
1·12·10	remained involved in politics in the Seamen's Union and the ALP which he eventually left after Morriset branch of ALP was asked to introduce a Gay Rights Bill via the local Member of Parliament at the time of Law Reform action in Sydney	Seamen's Union; Australian Labor Party; Lex Watson;
1·15·00	Seamen's Union winds up and becomes Australian Maritime Union [Edd Ashmore notes: the SUA amalgamated with Waterside Workers Federation to form the Maritime Union of Australia in 1993 – info from MUA website] Marty is a Life Member of the MUA.	Seamen's Union; Australian Maritime Union;
1·15·48	Retired in 1999	
1·16·05	Now lives on shores of Lake Macquarie. Large collections of records, books, comics, gay material.	Lake Macquarie;
1·18·00	Describes picture of Boadie [Boadicea, queen from the <i>Bunch</i>]	Boadie/Boadicea