

**Pride History Group Oral History Interview with Jeremy Fisher**

Interviewer: John Witte  
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Time	Summary	Keywords
0000	Born in Te Aroha New Zealand in 9 November 1954. There were 5 children in the family. They came to Australia in 1964. His father had flown Lancaster bombers in the Second World War. They moved to Geneva near Kyogle NSW.	Te Aroha Kyogle
0425	The family then moved to Goulburn in 1966 and he finished primary school there and went to High School.	Goulburn
0500	In year 8 or 9 was aware he was attracted to the same sex. Thought it was a phase but it wasn't. Sexuality in general was something understood, and was not talked about by the family – if you asked a question you got an answer. But homosexuality was not considered normal.	
0700	Final year of High School the family moved to Newcastle. He stayed in Goulburn and stayed with a young couple. He had a relationship with the husband.	
0750	Planned to go to Macquarie Uni and study Linguistics. Moved to Sydney and stayed with sister then planned to move closer to the university.	Macquarie University
0846	Thought he should deal with the “sexuality issue”. Got the courage to knock on the door of 67 Glebe Point Road (Sydney Gay Liberation). Lance Gowland opened the door and a couple of days later had moved into his room for a couple of weeks until there was a fire. Moved out into Menzies College. It had vacancies, because it still wasn't finished.	67 Glebe Point Road Sydney Gay Liberation Lance Gowland Menzies College
0935	First impressions of 67. “It was grotty. It was. It was a really old neglected building. In the bathroom which caught on fire there was one of those gas geyser things which caught on fire, loose boards on the floor, kitchen was disgusting. It was the wreck of an old house. Double storey. You came in, stairs going up around and up to the top. Lance's room was the front one which had a balcony type of thing. Floorboards with mattress on the floor... Terry Bell was in the room next to it, bathroom was at the top of the stairs and the back room must have been Anton (Veenstra) and Rod's (Byatt) room ... the front (of the shop) was the meeting room. The glass was covered or blacked out somehow ... maybe 10 or 12 turned up (for meetings). They were consciousness raising sessions. They were crappy touchy feely type of things, I hated it... There was some political	67 Glebe Point Road Lance Gowland Terry Bell Anton Veenstra Rod Byatt Craig Johnston Brian McGahen

	discussion. Craig Johnston must have been there and Brian McGahen, he was there.	
1225	Met Terry Bell before this. Terry went to Port Hacking and Goulburn and Port Hacking did exchange sporting events. He was in the debating team as was Jeremy in year 10. Recalls a split with Women's Lib and can't recall women going to Gay Lib meetings.	Terry Bell Port Hacking High School Women's Liberation
1555	Came home from uni, early semester 1973, and found firemen walking around in the building. They asked if his mother knew that he was there.	
1650	Enrolled at Menzies College. The master was Reverend Allan Cole. "He was an evangelical. He was a complete nut in my opinion". There weren't too many other students living there. It was difficult to have much of a social life because there was only the 288 bus to the city. There were few facilities on campus.	Menzies College Reverend Allan Cole
1945	Joined the gay liberation group as soon as he was on campus. Jeff Hayler was running that and also President of the Macquarie University Student's Council. Student politics was pretty active. Rod Webb was editor of the student paper <i>Arena</i> and Rod was involved with Socialist Worker's Party.	Gay Liberation Jeff Hayler Macquarie University Student's Council RodWebb <i>Arena</i>
2030	Whitlam had just been elected and there was a lot of discussion about change. He joined <i>Arena</i> and one of his first jobs was to interview Whitlam. Describes the press Conference at the Boulevard Hotel.	Gough Whitlam Boulevard Hotel
2135	Politics. Had been involved in the Moratorium movement in Goulburn. Held anti-Vietnam War meetings in the Rotunda, in Belmore Park Goulburn which 10 people came to. Left but not particularly ideological. Had written off to Beijing for copies of the Little Red Book, which had arrived. He had bought books at the Third World Bookshop when he had been down in Sydney.	Moratorium Movement Goulburn Belmore Park, Goulburn Little Red Book Third World Bookshop
2240	His politics possibly became more strident at University. Was involved with Socialist Youth Alliance. But soon dispensed with this and the intricacies of the 4 <sup>th</sup> International.	Socialist Youth Alliance 4 <sup>th</sup> International
2350	At college he was cut off from a sex life and went into town to find it at places like Capriccio's. This started to wear on him. He was depressed. Hadn't told his parents about his sexuality. Around 26 May, Saturday evening, he took a lot of pills and cut some veins. A cleaner found him unconscious. He was taken to North Ryde Psych Hospital and his parents were contacted.	North Ryde Psych Hospital
2555	"Cole at this point told my father I could not come back to the College because he found gay lib materials in my room and different other things unless I renounced this really terrible sin.	Reverend Cole Robert Menzies College

	They couldn't allow this sin at a Christian College. Even my father who was just finding out that I'm gay thought that this was very unchristian."	
2640	Then I went home with my parents. His father did not want him to go back to Cole. But went to the Student Council and that's when the fuss started. Jeff Hayler and Rod Webb took up the issue.	Jeff Hayler Rod Webb
2715	They contacted the ABC who did an interview for This Day Tonight. They started talking to Bob Pringle at the Builder's Labourers and then Jack (Munday) got involved. They took the issue to the workers at Robert Menzies. "they said we won't do any work unless they let him back in".	This Day Tonight Bob Pringle Builder's Labourers Federation Jack Munday
2755	The Student Council took up the issue that Menzies was a residential college of the university and they shouldn't have any discriminatory policies. The Anglican Church said they ran the college and they could impose whatever they want on the students. The argument was they could run it but they can't impose their views on the college. The issue went to the Academic Senate. The Chancellor was Garfield Barwick. He handed it over to a committee and that was run by a Methodist lay preacher (there are two people who fit here; one is Justice Rae Else-Mitchell, who was Deputy Chancellor, and chaired the Committee. He was a total bully (he died in 2006 and I cheered). Also involved was Prof. Bruce Mansfield – both of these guys were involved in the Royal Australian Historical Society and Mansfield was later DVC at Macquarie. He was involved in the United Theological College later.). The Committee was railroaded to say that the church could do what it liked. This took a number of months.	Student Council Anglican Church Academic Senate Garfield Barwick Rae Else-Mitchell Bruce Mansfield
2915	In the meantime, the BLF continued their ban on the work. The ban was lifted when the Senate made a decision.	BLF
2950	Moved into a unit in North Ryde and continued his degree.	North Ryde
3010	Assessment of the campaign. Firstly, it highlighted a certain thing that these people assumed they could do and probably had done numerous times in the past. "The guys on the worksite didn't give a rat's arse about people's sexuality, which was really interesting, and all they cared about was that people get a fair go and they didn't see it as a fair go. What it highlighted for me was the way the University ran it. It was all run in these covers ... this backhanded sort of thing. Garfield Barwick and this other Justice would set things up to get things done because that's the way they did things. And it (the campaign) said 'you just can't walk over people'". It also brought homosexuality to the fore, so people could face it.	Garfield Barwick

3215	And when he went back to university he was well known and that was difficult for him.	
3325	Jeff Hayler was really strong and had a strong sense of justice.	Jeff Hayler
3355	Penny Short had contributed a poem to <i>Arena</i> . Then the Education Department removed her scholarship. In 1976 when he finished his degree he applied for a Teacher's Scholarship they gave him the scholarship even though he was "Jeremy Fisher: homosexual". You were still not allowed to teach if you were openly homosexual. He recalls discussing these issues with Greg Weir who had been discriminated against by the Qld Education Department around 1976.	Penny Short Arena Teacher's Scholarship Greg Weir
3625	After graduation, did a Diploma of Education at Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education (now UTS), then finished that and was an intake in July and finished in June 1977. It was a bonded scholarship. He could go to Balranald but if he did not want to go they would not hold him to his bond.	Kuring-gai College of Education
3715	Had been accepted on editorial staff for the Medical Journal of Australia near Sydney University. He worked there for four years and found the job interesting. It was very rigorous training.	Medical Journal of Australia
4040	Talked about the early National Homosexual Conferences.	National Homosexual Conference
4247	Knew about the Mardi Gras through involvement with the 4 <sup>th</sup> National Conference. He went with his partner but can't remember finishing it.	4 <sup>th</sup> National Homosexual Conference
4500	Can't recall details of the march from National Conference to Hyde Park.	Hyde Park
4740	By 1978 he was a member of the ALP in Glebe. Also members were Meredith (Burgmann), the Nashs. It was run by the right.	Australian Labor Party Meredith Burgmann Nashes
4920	His partner (Craig Sahlin) was more involved in internal Labor politics, through Young Labor.	Craig Sahlin
5035	AIDS. He had written an editorial for the Medical Journal on AIDS on an early theory was that it was connected with (inhaling) amyl in 1981.	AIDS Amyl Nitrate
5145	After 1981, moved out of political involvement. He says that with AIDS a door closed on the preceding era.	
5350	Then got a job with Esso Australia. There was an oil crisis at that time and they planned to turn shale into oil and were exploring Bass Strait with BHP. Lasted about a year. He was writing material for employee relations. He felt compromised and had to leave.	Esso Australia BHP

5535	In late 1982, he was offered a position by Richard (Dick) Appleton the editor of the Australian Encyclopaedia indexing and stayed until mid-1983.	Dick Appleton
5630	Took a position with Harcourt Brace Jovanovich publishing for 13 years and then McGraw Hill until 2000, then the Copyright Agency and then the Australian Society of Authors and now works at the University of New England.	Harcourt Brace Jovanovich McGraw Hill Copyright Agency Australian Society of Authors
5815	Talks about the commercial scene in the early 70s. He went to Capriccio's, Enzo's and Chez Ivy. To get to them he would have to catch a bus from North Ryde. Buy a drink, stand around against the wall and then catch the last bus back around 1230 am.	Capriccio's Enzo's Chez Ivy North Ryde
5900	There was not much else to do. Didn't do beats.	
5945	Later, he did not go out so much in the mid-70s after he met Craig. Went to Castellors once. Cops came through and asking patrons for ID and took their cigarettes.	Castellos Police
010125	Went to dances like Petersham/Balmain/Glebe Town Hall. Describes a typical dance. Upstairs, a band would play. Sometimes a women's band. You'd buy drinks at a table and dance and smoke drugs. It was a different scene, younger, more student. The commercial places, people dressed up.	Women's Band Petersham Town Hall Balmain Town Hall Glebe Town Hall
010400	Went to early mardi gras and recently as a spectator or a 78er.	78er
010645	Sex on premises venues. Terry Batterham and he went to Ken's. Enjoyed going to these places but was aware of the contradiction of a politically aware gay going to these places."	Terry Batterham Ken's Karate Klub