

Pride History Group Oral History Interview with Garrett Prestage

Interviewer: John Witte

Date of interview: 14 April 2016

Location of interview: Redfern

Reason for interview: Activism

Restrictions: None



Time	Summary	Keywords
0000	Introduction	
0030	Born in 1955 in Balmain. Parents separated. Lived in the Glebe Estate. Mother worked and re-married. Moved to Seven Hills.	Balmain; Glebe Estate; Seven Hills;
0635	Awareness of homosexual identity by last years of school and accepted it later in university.	
0815	Favourite subject was history at school. He went to university. Pressure in year 10 to leave school, after father lost his job. First in family to get to university.	Grantham High School;
1215	University on a teacher's scholarship. Failed first year. Then concentrated on finishing university.	University of Sydney;
1800	At first not aware and not interested in a gay scene at university. He found the Gay Liberation group, but left. Lex Watson and Garry Wotherspoon involved.	Lex Watson; Garry Wotherspoon;
2120	Finding himself (and his sexuality) through the left rather than coming out into a gay life.	
2215	Civil libertarianism and social justice dichotomy. The Australia Party and civil libertarianism.	Australia Party;
2335	Move to the left through involvement with student politics. Headed up Australia Party Club on campus. Became Secretary Treasurer of the Students' Representative Council (SRC). Politics shifted toward the Labor Club. Becomes President of Labor Club. Involved in the Communist Club as well.	Australia Party Club; Labor Club; Communist Club; Students' Representative Council;
2645	Members of the (Communist Party of Australia) Communist Club – included Gary Nichols, Steve Lewis, Greg Schofield.	Gary Nichols; Steve Lewis; Greg Schofield;
2750	Set up a a more appropriate campus gay organisation, a weekly meeting of gays and lesbians on campus to drop-in and chat. About a half dozen met in a hut near the sports oval.	Active Defence of Homosexuals on Campus (ADHOC)
3045	Meetings moved to the Students' Representative Council more people attended, including Lesley Podesta. They organised parties.	Students' Representative Council; Lesley Podesta;
3320	1977 – 1978 ADHOC became active as a social focal point for the left. Interaction between straights and gay/lesbian politics.	ADHOC;
3530	Fourth National Homosexual Conference members of ADHOC were involved.	Fourth National Homosexual Conference;
3640	Discussions leading up to the idea of a local International Day of Gay Solidarity. First with Ken Davis, then Ken Davis with CAMP. A meeting was organised and ADHOC as individuals went to this meeting. At the meeting the idea of a "mardi gras" was raised by Ron Austin, but it was a minor part of the meeting. Garrett and Lesley Podesta tasked to talk to the media and organise the afternoon forum.	International Day of Gay Solidarity; Ken Davis; CAMP; ADHOC; Ron Austin; Lesley Podesta;
3945	Newspaper article spoke of bars exploiting gays.	<i>The Australian</i> ;

4050	The Mardi Gras as an opportunity for people in bars to join the parade. Low expectations of success of the parade.	Mardi Gras;
4220	Garrett had no knowledge of gay venues prior to the parade.	
4250	Socialist Lesbians and Male Homosexuals was set up by people like Ken Davis to be a place where socialist and left homosexuals could discuss and theorise. It was not organising anything. Sees it as setting up Gay Solidarity Group (GSG).	Socialist Lesbians and Male Homosexuals; Ken Davis; Gay Solidarity Group;
4530	GSG was at the beginning an umbrella for the groups organising the International Day of Gay Solidarity, not a group, rather than a coalition.	Gay Solidarity Group; International Day of Gay Solidarity;
4715	ADHOC approached the Native Rose Hotel, Cleveland Street and the Hotel agreed to have a gay and lesbian night (Fridays).	Native Rose Hotel;
4930	1978 National Homosexual Conference. Jean Rhodes member of ADHOC organised <i>The Red Revue</i> .	<i>The Red Revue</i> ; Fourth National Homosexual Conference;
5100	Mardi Gras Parade. Dressed in overalls. With other ADHOC people. About 300 people at the start.	Mardi Gras; ADHOC;
5250	There was a festive mood. Didn't experience harassment from police. Chants of "out of the bars into the streets" and people were coming out of the bars into the streets. Surprised to see this.	
5500	At College Street, scuffles with police. Craig Johnston called out "Let's go to the Cross". He ran with Craig Johnston down back streets to William Street and to the Cross.	College Street; Craig Johnston; William Street; Kings Cross;
5720	At the Cross, the marchers re-grouped at Darlington Road and William Street. Locals were siding with the marchers against the police.	Darlington Road;
10035	The events of the night were unexpected.	
10135	He had become separated from friends 30 feet from the action, surrounded by people throwing garbage cans. Saw Peter Mitchell.	Peter Mitchell;
10220	Followed crowd to Darlington Police Station and stayed a few hours.	Darlington Police Station;
10320	At Liverpool Street Court House a large angry crowd and many police.	Liverpool Street Court House;
10435	The Sunday meeting at CAMP organised legal support and protest at the Court House on Monday.	CAMP;
10535	The meeting at the Stanley Palmer Culture Palace was a turning point for Garrett's politics. Disturbed by people from the left arguing against applying for police permits – ideology at the expense of people.	Stanley Palmer Culture Palace;
11020	Previously he had been ideological and now forced to doubt this approach.	
11120	The 4 th National Homosexual Conference. Presented a paper on bisexuality. Had pulled back from involvement in groups. Did not go on march from the Conference. Remembers the march being discussed. The march was more about the right to march, rather than being about gay and lesbian rights.	4 th National Homosexual Conference;
11430	<i>The Red Review</i> . Performed on Saturday night. A send up. Jean Rhodes, Peter Mitchell performed. Some performers were from ADHOC.	<i>Red Review</i> ; Jean Rhodes; Peter Mitchell; ADHOC;
11700	SRC in the late 70s. Garrett was Secretary Treasurer when David Patch was President. Then Barbara (Ramjan) and then Tony Abbott was President. Garrett was an employee of the SRC during Tony Abbott's Presidency. The right had the	Students' Representative Council; David Patch;

	presidency, but the SRC was balanced, left and right. Abbott's statements were anti-gay, anti-women, but he had a sense of humour. He represented the conservative element. Kerry Chikarovski (nee Bartels) was also a student.	Barbara Ramjan; Tony Abbott; Kerry Chikarovski;
12240	Abbott did not oppose a new progressive employment contract for the staff negotiated by the Social Welfare Union (check name). He was OK with traditional labour issues, but not women's and gay issues and the left.	Social Welfare Union;
12450	Damien Furlong was the Arts representative. Politically positioned in the middle, rather than Labor.	Damien Furlong;
12620	The second Mardi Gras. Garrett was living in a house in South Dowling Street with a couple of drag queens. People using the house to prepare for the parade. A celebration with spectators cheering. "A joyous pride which was a different sort of thing to the sort of political pride that I was used to".	1979 Mardi Gras; South Dowling Street;
13100	Job with Social Security. Youth work.	Department of Social Security;
13220	Prostitution and sugar daddies. Difficult relationships with their families.	
13400	Need for bar outreach programme. Provide young gay people with referral options.	
13500	Job as a youth worker.	Albion Street Remand Centre;
13630	Job with Sydney City Council focusing on homeless gay kids. Initiative of Robert Tickner. Youth homelessness and prostitution were in the news. Set up Twenty Ten.	Sydney City Council; Robert Tickner; Twenty Ten;
13835	Set up network of volunteers to talk to kids in bars. Applied to the Drug and Alcohol Authority for funding for research into drug and alcohol use by young gays and lesbians. Also wider issues such as homelessness. Survey using Twenty Ten volunteers. Publicity.	Drug and Alcohol Authority; Twenty Ten;
14225	Funding from Youth and Community Services for a Youth Refuge for gay and lesbian kids. The Committee had already been established. Operating when Garrett returned from the US in 1984.	Youth and Community Services; Twenty Ten Refuge;
14500	Retreat from left politics in 1979. Brian McGahen was a friend who introduced him to City Gym in William Street. Doris Fish (Philip Mills). Joined a gym and transformed his appearance. More in line with how he felt about himself. Reaction of friends on the left. Men only venue policies and the Midnight Shift.	Brian McGahen; Doris Fish; Philip Mills; Midnight Shift; City Gym;
15430	Twenty Ten Committee clarification.	Twenty Ten;
15515	First heard about AIDS in the Star. Had a conversation with Michael Glynn about it. Community meeting at Gay Centre in Holt Street. Dr Jim Walker addressed the meeting and described the symptoms. Personal reaction.	AIDS; <i>Sydney Star</i> ; Michael Glynn; Gay Centre; Dr Jim Walker;
15720	Late 1983. Goes to the US for six months and works out a way "to have sex in an epidemic". Lesson learned from community groups. "Protect our right to be sexual".	
20115	Returning to Sydney. This view was shared by some, but many were just reacting. Got involved in the AIDS Action Committee.	HIV; AIDS Action Committee;
20430	NSW Health provides funds for a needs assessment for HIV among gay men. These funds plus money from John Galletly of Bobby Goldsmith Foundation and Gays Counselling Service to create an education campaign – "Rubba Me".	NSW Health; HIV; John Galletly; Bobby Goldsmith Foundation; Gays Counselling Service; <i>Rubba Me</i> ;
20535	Need to do something explicit to show men that they can have sex and how they could do it. Launched in Roman Bath Sauna.	Roman Bath;
20745	Work done by the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence.	Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence;

20840	History of ACON. Work with AIDS Education Committee. Ken Davis, Don Baxter, were involved with the <i>Rubba Me</i> .	AIDS Council of NSW; AIDS Education Committee; Ken Davis; Don Baxter; <i>Rubba Me</i> ;
21010	Involvement of gay businesses. Nick Lorschi (the Roman Bath) was involved in setting up ACON. Ken Kandy Johnson (KKK), Terry Patterson (Midnight Shift) involved their businesses in the education campaign. Roger Claude Teysse de of the King Steam Sauna not involved.	Nick Lorschi; Roman Bath; Ken Kandy Johnson; Kens Karate Klub; Terry Patterson; Midnight Shift; Roger Claude Teysse de; King Steam; ACON;
21230	<i>Being a Prostitute</i> written with Roberta Perkins from material gathered in the early 80s that was used in a submission to the Inquiry into Prostitution in NSW at that time.	<i>Being a Prostitute</i> ; Roberta Perkins; Inquiry into Prostitution;
21500	Articles written for <i>Village Voice</i> and <i>Campaign</i> . To provoke discussion, to make sex OK.	<i>Village Voice</i> ; <i>Campaign</i> ;
21600	Beat research and newspaper series called <i>Beat It</i> . Approached by Simon Chapman (researcher at Westmead Hospital for Western Sydney Area Health, Sydney University) for research about the needs of gay men in Western Sydney. Police were brought in on discussions and were supportive. List of the main beats. Negative reaction from a beat user. A successful survey. 1988 and 1989.	<i>Beat It</i> ; Simon Chapman; Westmead Hospital; Western Sydney Area Health; Sydney University; Police;
22115	A lot more homosexual behaviour than gay men.	
22340	1990 a larger study of non-gay men having sex with men – the BANGAR (Bisexual Activity Non-Gay Attachment Research) Study.	the BANGAR; Bisexual Activity Non Gay Attachment Research;
22430	Conclusion from beat research of non-gay men having homosexual sex.	
22705	Overview of research work. Long term study of risk behaviour 1992 with the National Centre on HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research. Now the Kirby Institute. He still works for the Kirby Institute.	National Centre on HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research; Kirby Institute;