

**Pride History Group Oral History Interview with Cameron Williams**

Interviewer: John Witte

Date of interview: 1 August 2011

Location of interview: Castlereagh Street, Sydney

Reason for interview: Camp friendship circles

Restrictions: None



Time	Summary	Keywords
0000	Born 1947 and lived in Seaforth. Father was self-employed small businessman. He went to Seaforth or Balgowlah Primary then to Shore and completed the Leaving Certificate.	Sydney Church of England Grammar School (Shore);
0130	Comfortable life.	
0155	His school was churchy mid-Anglican. Homosexuality was not mentioned in sex education classes.	
0245	Mentions homosexuality among other boys, but generally it was not talked about. Only at university. Films in the mid-1960s (with Peter Finch and Robert Morley) and a biography of Wilde.	Oscar Wilde
0355	He was going out with girls at university and didn't think about a gay identity until 20/21.	
0500	Keen on cricket, squash and golf and topped the state in economics.	
0540	Headmaster was a disciplinarian, but he had some good teachers. David Marr, the headmaster's nephew also went to his school.	Pat Eldershaw; John Colebrook; David Marr
0620	At Sydney University he did Economic History, Government.	Sydney University
0715	Boarded at St Paul's College. Loved it. Very hetero and sporty.	St Paul's College
0820	Friendships from university include Garry Wotherspoon.	Garry Wotherspoon
0900	First job was a reserve bank cadet, then spent 40 years in stockbroking.	
1000	In 1968, after pining for a straight man, he realised he was gay. His father did not speak to him for 12 months. Support from the family and among straight friends and from other friends coming out around the same time. He recalls some friends whose fathers had seen homosexuality during the WW2 and said it was terrible.	Homosexuality
1325	Moved to Double Bay. Bought a unit there in 1969-1970.	Double Bay;
1450	The camp scene – Chez Ivy, the Rex, Steam baths Bondi Junction. The Purple Onion was only gay on Sunday nights – on other nights it was a “straight as an RSL Club”. Pub under the Chevron was gay for a short period. Bar “in town” gay Wednesdays and Thursdays and closed at 8pm in the Carlton Arcade.	Chez Ivy; the Rex Hotel; Steam baths Bondi Junction; The Purple Onion; Pub under the Chevron; Carlton Arcade;

1635	Chameleon Dances – didn't hear about them until 1971-1972.	The Chameleons
1700	Beats. Venues closed at 10pm. The Bondi Junction Steam Bath closed at Midnight. People went to beats. Balgowlah, Manly, Shelley Beach on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, Narrabeen, Collaroy, Rushcutters Bay, William Street Double Bay, Rose Bay, Bondi Rocks in summer, Randwick, main street near the park, near the bus terminus.	Balgowlah; Shelley Beach Manly; Narrabeen, Collaroy, Rushcutters Bay, William Street Double Bay, Rose Bay, Bondi Rocks; Randwick
1850	Colin, a friend was bashed by a policeman at William Street, Double Bay. The only two people at the beat besides Cameron and a friend were two policeman. One policeman told him to stay away from the bashing, "if you were to move we may be forced to shoot you".	William Street, Double Bay; Police; Bashing;
1930	In Rushcutters Bay 11.30pm two cops rounded up 20 gay men at the beat and 10 escaped. They asked Michael Binder "What are you going here?" "Looking at real estate".	Rushcutters Bay beat
2015	Years later he helped a man bashed almost senseless at the Wall in Darlinghurst by passer-bys.	The Wall, Darlinghurst
2105	At Balgowlah the police would clear the beat out, but not arrest anyone. The Narrabeen beat was dangerous. As was the Bondi Rocks.	Narrabeen; Bondi Rocks
2155	People would meet long term partners at beats as well as for casual sex.	
2205	Casual parties at people's houses. Flagon wine, orgy – after Enzo's and Ivys closed. When Caps and Midnight Shift opened with later closing times this meant the end of casual party scene.	Enzo's; Chez Ivys; Capriccios; Midnight Shift;
2255	Ivys was close to where people lived – generally renting semi-detached housing. Numbers – 30 – 60 people and people you knew or recognised. Enzo's was more of a club (it had no entertainment) People went four nights a week and people knew each other.	Enzo's; Chez Ivys;
2415	Enzo was a good-looking social man and introduced people to each other. He was supported by Ray Caldwell, a heavy drinker, a butcher. Enzo later married and had children. Ray presumably put up the money for Enzo's. Ray had been a sociable queen in the 1950s.	Enzo's; Ray Caldwell; Enzo;
2625	Ivys. Ivy Richter was there. There were fun shows and there was the Steam bath next door.	Chez Ivys; Bondi Junction Steam bath;
2930	Sylvia and the Synthetics hired the Purple Onion for parties. He knew Andrew Sharp from school and Andrew had gone to Cranbrook. Doris Fish came from Brookvale.	Sylvia and the Synthetics; Purple Onion; Andrew Sharp; Cranbrook; Doris Fish;

3100	Regularly went to Scarborough Hotel. Drag shows on Sunday (note the 30-mile limit for customers before they can be served alcohol). People shared cars. Warren Fahey was in the party.	Scarborough Hotel; Warren Fahey
3255	Yolanda's in Manly in the 70s. It was situated near the tennis courts at Manly, near the Oval, just out of the main shopping centre. "flat, level, backyard, not big, a bit like Enzo's, but wider, would have been an old fruit shop". Bar on the right as you walked in, there were chairs and it had a good backyard.	Yolanda's, Manly
3430	A mixed gay friendly bar at Collaroy near the picture theatre. The name was the number of the street. Packed. No straight aggro. Very friendly place.	Collaroy
3515	Older gays at Enzo's. Graeme George (was living on the Gold Coast in 2011) had parties in the eastern suburbs. Phillip Bell (Judge Bell), Philip Davies, 'Cora' Harrington house at Bronte. His parties – people born in the 1930s, Leslie Walford parties at Palm Beach, Dick Keep (had the house with Leslie at Palm Beach). Many of these men were wealthy or had good jobs. There was the ABC coterie – a large social group Max Ambrose, John West, Peter McCormack, Richard Coombe, Ivan Walker.	Enzo's; Graeme George; Phillip Bell; Cora Harrington; Leslie Walford; Dick Keep; Max Ambrose; John West; Peter McCormack; Richard Coombe; Ivan Walker
3820	School teachers at Waverley, at the Girls School at Kings Cross. There were camp doctors – Harry Mitchell, Nick Lyons – they were social.	Harry Mitchell; Nick Lyons
3900	Relationship to older homosexuals.	
3931	Leslie Walford genuinely interested in younger people. Dick Keep. Older people taught him manners. Peter Harrington, John O'Brien, real estate manager. Bobby Samuels was sociable.	Leslie Walford; Dick Keep; Peter Harrington; John O'Brien, Bobby Samuels
4035	Everyone adopted a camp name.	
4105	Channy (Chandler) Coventry had parties, as did Tim Ridgeworth, Colin McLeod.	Chandler Coventry; Tim Ridgeworth
4120	The parties got smaller, as people got more conscious about looking after their possessions in the late 1970s.	
4220	Art scene was important for these people. Rex Irwin worked for Channy Coventry and before that for Frank McDonald. Tuesday night at galleries almost replaced Saturday night teas. It was a chance to talk rather than pick up.	Rex Irwin; Chandler Coventry; Frank McDonald
4320	Galleries – Chandler Coventry, Rex Irwin (formerly worked at Coventry's), one in Double Bay, the Macquarie Gallery in the City. Leslie Walford would go to all in one night. Rex Irwin got a lot of young people in to be collectors. Robin Gibson was in Paddington, Bonython	Rex Irwin; Chandler Coventry; Macquarie Gallery; Leslie Walford; Robin Gibson;

	owned Robyn's gallery and Robin ran it. Then Robin opened his own.	
4600	Charles Lloyd Jones group. The "Eastern Suburbs milk run".	Charles Lloyd Jones
4645	Some people he knew married and were also on the gay scene. Bruce Morgan, Gordon Stuart, Gordon Douglas. James Fairfax and Charles Lloyd Jones did not get married.	Bruce Morgan; Gordon Stuart; Gordon Douglas; James Fairfax; Charles Lloyd Jones
4755	Lesbians. Nick Lorschy (went to the same school and both came out around the same time) held parties where half of his friends were lesbians at his large house in Mosman. Cameron was 50 before he had lesbian friends.	Nick Lorschy
4915	He went to Rubies and Jools. Jools was 50:50 men and women. You dressed up for Jools.	Rubies; Jools
5040	He and Nick Lorschy gave CAMP money in the early days. Nick and he saw Lex Watson, Ian Black etc and they knew what they were doing. They didn't get involved. Nick and John Lewis – a friend of Lex and worked for the Attorney General who got involved and when Law Reform was happening he was involved in drafting.	Nick Lorschy; Lex Watson; CAMP; John Lewis
5150	Remembers the first meeting of CAMP at a hall in Balmain.	CAMP; St Johns Church Hall
5230	Supported the gay movement went to early Mardi Gras.	Mardi Gras
5340	After AIDS things changed and some thought that they had bought it upon themselves.	HIV/AIDS
5415	Cameron went to Moratorium marches. His friend Geoffrey Williams was called up. He developed an anti-police attitude. Stories of police not taking action against bashers.	Moratorium; police; Geoffrey Williams
5600	At Manly police station Sergeant Ellis, and another were bashers, but the boss was broadminded "leave 'em alone" in relation to patrolling Shelley Beach cruising during the day.	Manly; Sergeant Ellis; Shelley Beach
5700	Creating a "gay" identity rather than a camp one. Cameron was going to San Francisco in 1973-1974 and they had become "gay" and there was a swing to perceived masculinity.	San Francisco
5915	Books on homosexuality, <i>Lord Dismiss Us</i> , <i>Dancer from the Dance</i> , Edmund White.	Edmund White
10000	AIDS. First heard about it when on with Robert Bolton. Seemed to arrive quickly from the US. Richard D'Alpuget buried two friends on successive days. After a while he only went to the funerals of very close friends.	AIDS; Richard D'Alpuget
10100	He was a mess when Nick Lorschy died. And he lost John Lewis.	Nick Lorschy; John Lewis

10150	Community work – gave money to BGF. He knew Bobby Goldsmith. Simon Grace was a close friend of Bobby's. Michael Dickenson, an architect. Rex Cramphorn a theatre director.	Bobby Goldsmith; Simon Grace; Michael Dickenson; Rex Cramphorn
10255	AIDS ravaged Sydney's gay community. Impact on Cameron's attitude to life – fatalist, here for a good time not a long time.	AIDS
10815	Sees life as much more mixed now than it was – generations, genders etc.	
11030	David Beatrice Williams left Australia with his cousin Deborah Allard (Lady Macmillan).	David (Beatrice) Williams; Deborah Allard
11126	Ray Seedy a friend of Beatrice is a decorator. Lives on the Sunshine Coast. His friend is Hugh Jamieson head partner of Allen, Allen and Hemsley. Hugh created the firm's art collection.	Ray Seedy; Hugh Jamieson