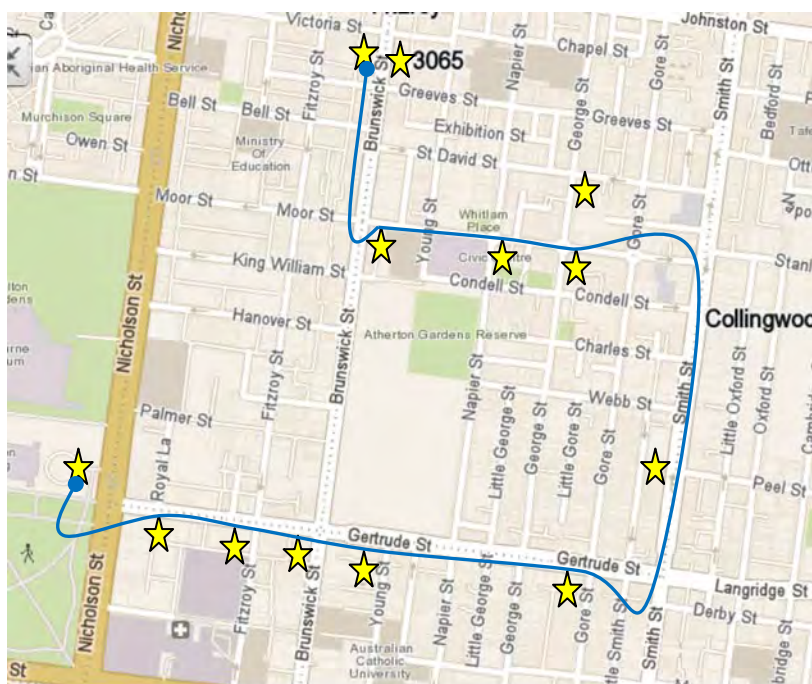alga's
midsumma history
walk, fitzroy, 2015

Fitzroy

2015 History Walk Guide to Places and Acknowledgments

From whereis.com

Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives

For over 35 years, the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives has been collecting and preserving Australia's very queer history. From camp life in the 1950s, through Gay Liberation in the 1970s and eighties, to the vibrant queer communities of today – all of this is part of our heritage; and all of it is represented in the holdings of the biggest such collection in Australia. The Archives is volunteer-run, not-for-profit and community-based.

What we collect and preserve

Books, badges, posters, t-shirts, gay and lesbian newspapers and magazines, newspaper clippings, photographs, court transcripts, newsletters, videos, scrapbooks, banners and placards, postcards, party tickets, theatre programs, flyers, personal memorabilia. The collection has been used by students, filmmakers, novelists and historians, researchers and activists – as well as the just plain curious …

The Archives has no ongoing government funding and relies entirely on the support of its members and the community. You can become a member for $20 per year ($5 concession) plus $1 joining fee – and if that's not enough you can donate as much as you like (it's tax-deductible).

We have regular working bees to bring order to the collection. In 2015 there will be six – three for inducted volunteers and three for people who've not volunteered before.

For more info, check out our website – alga.org.au

Start
Exhibition Building,
Nicholson Street

Stop 1
Key Club
22 Gertrude Street

Stop 2
Cyclorama, corner Gertrude and Fitzroy Streets

Stop 3
Mansions and boarding houses
Corner Gertrude and Brunswick Streets

Stop 4
John Wilson, corner Gertrude and Young Streets

Stop 5
Gertrude Street, corner Gertrude and Gore Streets

Stop 6
Northside, corner Smith and Peel Streets

Stop 7
St Marks, corner George and Moor Streets

Stop 8
Gordon Lawrence,
274 George Street near corner St David Street

Stop 9
Fitzroy Town Hall,
201 Napier Street

Stop 10
Women's Cultural Palace,
74 Moor Street

Stop 11
Gay Lib HQ,
259 Brunswick Street

Stop 12
Correct Line Graphics
256 Brunswick Street

We acknowledge with thanks
o the State Library of Victoria for photo on page 1 (Cyclorama).
o Graham Willett for the cover photo, 2015

ALGA's 21st lesbian and gay history walk of Melbourne

Start – Exhibition Building

Fitzroy. Long one of Melbourne's smallest suburbs it has had a remarkable history. From posh to perverts, buggery to bohemia, mansions, public parks and laneways. From discretion to courage. Just made for a queer history walk.

photo: Graham Willett, 2007

Stop 1 – Key Club

22 Gertrude Street

From discretion to courage wasn't always an easy thing to do. There were many half-way steps. In the 1970s, Mama Seka opened the Key Club, a members-only club that offered safety and a chance to meet others. We were on the way.

L to R: Mama Seka, Michael Jarmyn and Paul Mathews at the Key Club (photo: Ivan Polson - ALGA collection)

Stop 2 – Cyclorama

Corner Gertrude and Fitzroy Streets

The Cyclorama: a panorama of thrilling episodes from history – and from the marvellous life of Marion-Bill Edwards, the notorious man-woman.

photo: 1889, source: State Library of Victoria

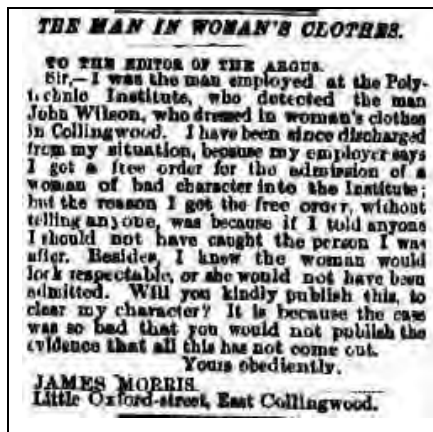## Stop 3 – Mansions and boarding houses

Corner Gertrude and Brunswick Streets

Fitzroy went from boom to bust and back again in the 19th and 20th centuries. Nowhere was this more visible than in the way mansions, boarding houses and flats appeared.

photo: Graham Willett, 2015

THE MAN IN WOMAN'S CLOTHES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ARGUS.

Sir,—I was the man employed at the Poly-
technic Institute, who detected the man
John Wilson, who dressed in woman's clothes
in Collingwood. I have been since discharged
from my situation, because my employer says
I got a free order for the admission of a
woman of bad character into the Institute;
but the reason I got the free order, without
telling anyone, was because if I told anyone
I should not have caught the person I was
after. Besides, I knew the woman would
look respectable, or she would not have been
admitted. Will you kindly publish this, to
clear my character? It is because the case
was so bad that you would not publish the
evidence that all this has not come out.
                                    Yours obediently,
JAMES MORRIS.
Little Oxford-street, East Collingwood.

Stop 4 – John Wilson
Corner Gertrude and Young

Poor John Wilson – one minute he is chatting up some bloke, trying to make some money for himself. Next minute he is in full fight down Victoria Street, a policeman in hot pursuit, his frock in one hand to stop him tripping. But getting caught was only the beginning of his woes. In 1863, his was an occupation that attracted the death penalty.

The Argus, Friday 23 October 1863, p 7

Stop 5 – Gertrude Street
Corner Gertrude and Gore Streets

Lesbians, queers, Aboriginal people… Pleasures, politics, pints … What a very checkered history Gertrude Street has.

Advertisement from *Gay Community News*, February 1980, p 25

Rosie O'Grady's Café

FOR WHOLESOME AND EXCITING VEGETARIAN AND SEAFOOD MEALS AT MODERATE PRICES. OPEN TUES – SAT FOR DINNER, 7-11 PM 182 NAPIER ST. FITZROY (OPP. TOWN HALL). BOOKINGS 4154473
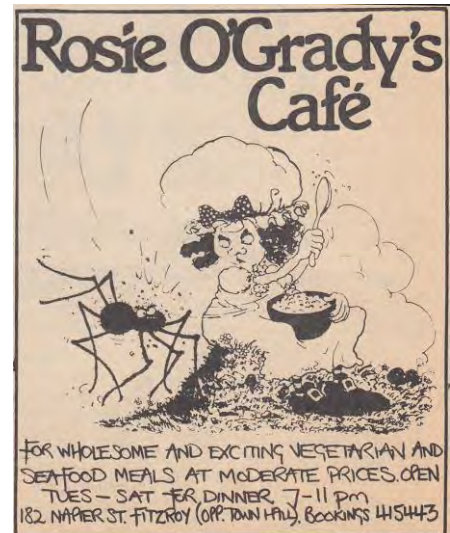

Hares and Hyenas logo

Stop 6 – Northside
Corner Smith and Peel Streets

Northside, a gay world of its own. In the last couple of decades a distinct gay sub- culture has emerged here.
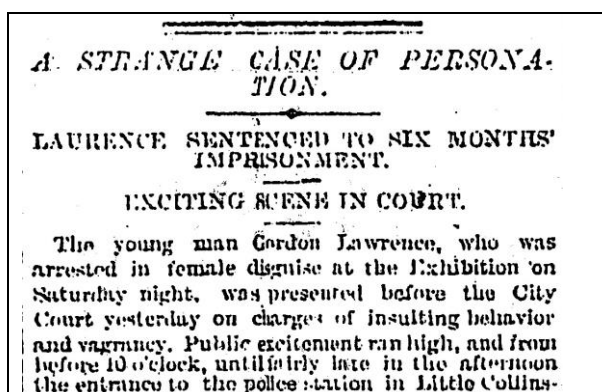
The Peel, the Laird, Sircuit. And before them Ashleys and cafes, and Hares and Hyenas.

Stop 7 – St Marks
Corner George and Moor Streets

The churches have not always been queer folks' best friend – to say the least. But there is, as well as the oppression and discrimination, another story – refugee and friendship and support. St Mark's has long been in the second camp. Let's talk about both.

source: St Mark's website

Stop 8 – Gordon Lawrence
274 George Street

This story begins at the Exhibition Buildings, but let's take it up here – where Gordon Lawrence lived and where his possessions – articles 'of a suspicious nature', oil used 'for a certain purpose' damned him before the law.

The Age, 2 October 1888

A STRANGE CASE OF PERSONA-
TION.

LAURENCE SENTENCED TO SIX MONTHS'
IMPRISONMENT.

EXCITING SCENE IN COURT.

The young man Gordon Lawrence, who was
arrested in female disguise at the Exhibition on
Saturday night, was presented before the City
Court yesterday on charges of insulting behavior
and vagrancy. Public excitement ran high, and from
before 10 o'clock, until fairly late in the afternoon
the entrance to the police station in Little Collins-

Stop 9 – Fitzroy Town Hall

201 Napier Street

Fitzroy has the honour of having, in 1984, elected Australia's first (openly) gay mayor – Ralph McLean, a gay man, art lover, eccentric and activist. His courage, and that of the LGBTI community, is remembered and celebrated in Whitlam Square.

Source: Obituaries page of the website of Kendall Lovett and Mannie De Saxe, www.josken.net/sp-obit2.htm#ralph – original source *OutRage*, Sep 1985

Stop 10 – Women's Cultural Palace

74 Moor Street

It is no surprise that the women's movement was full of stroppy dykes who worked hard to make the world a better place for all women, but especially for their Sapphic sisters. And the Women's Cultural Palace was just one of the places where this work went on.

Photo: Graham Willett, 2015

Stop 11 – Gay Lib HQ

259 Brunswick Street

Opinions vary – rather bohemian, or a rat-hole? But no one doubts that Gay Liberation's activities laid the foundations for the world we live in where pride and equality are well and truly happening things.

Source: ALGA collection

Stop 12 – Correct Line Graphics

256 Brunswick Street

Correct Line Graphics and Gay Community News seem, in retrospect, to be a stepping stone, from one gay world to another.

Photo: James Spence at Correct Line Graphics, c. 1980. Photo by Helen Pausacker or Sinon Hassett. ALGA collection.
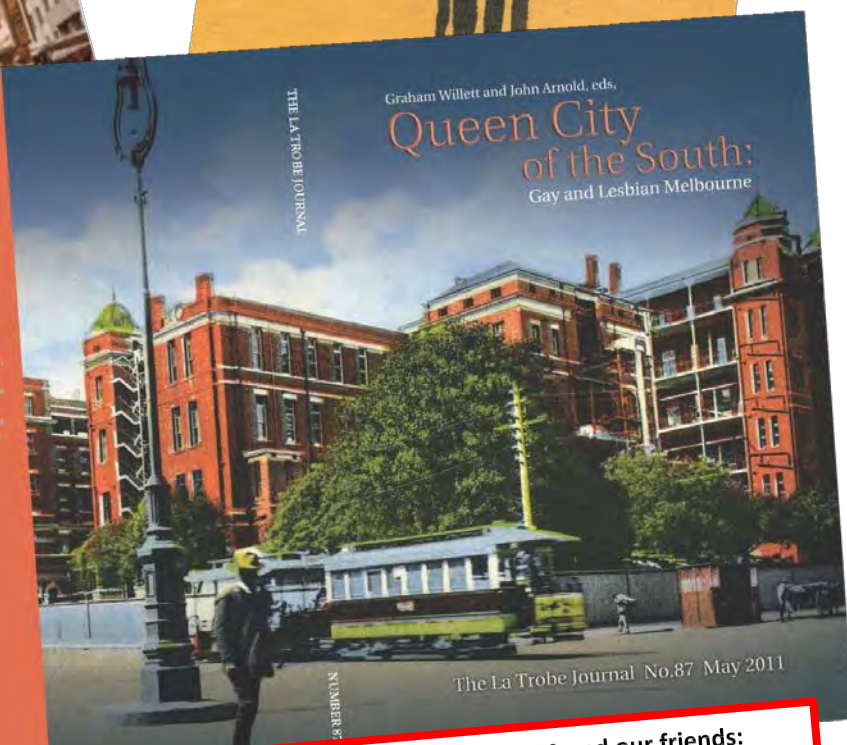
The Fitzroy History Walk on Sunday 25 January 2015

was conducted by Graham Willett, with Gary Jaynes and Helen Pausacker.

Graham Willett, Gary Jaynes and Helen Pausacker produced this programme.

This is the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives' 21st History Walk.