



YOUNG
GAY,
AND
PROUD

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YOUNG, GAY, AND PROUD

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Published by
an autonomous collective of
the National Gay Teachers and Students Group

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I N T E R O

If you're a girl you might find that most of the other girls have got crushes on Starksy and Hutch, but you wouldn't miss an episode of the Bionic Woman.

If you're a boy you might go to the footy to watch all those spunky guys playing, and if your team wins, that's O.K. too.

Maybe most of the other kids are "growing out of" the hero-worship they've had for some teacher or kid of the same sex, but you know you're not worshipping heroes — it's just that you feel really great about those people and

that's all that matters.

Maybe you feel embarrassed when your friends give you a hard time about not being interested in the opposite sex and you feel a bit scared about telling them who you're really interested in.

Well, you're the sort of people this book is written for because you're our sort of people.

They call us queers; the women lezzos and the men poofers. They try to insult us with these words, but we're not easily put down. Most books say bad things about us, but then we

- I get turned on by other guys — does that mean I'm a pooffer? P.S. I don't look like one.

- The gays I know aren't the sort of people I like or want to have anything to do with. Where do I meet guys like me?

- I've heard about treatment for being queer. Does it work?

- I'm gay now — but I've got a girlfriend. Will I grow out of it if I get married?

- My best friend says she's a lesbian. Should I drop her before she tries anything on me?



- I always thought I'd grow out of liking guys. But I know now that I'm not going to. What should I do?

- I'm gay, 16 years old, and I'm in love with a guy ten years older than me. If we have sex and my parents find out, what can happen to me? Would he go to jail?

didn't write them. We wrote this one to try to even things up a bit.

That's going to be hard because a lot of things need changing first. For instance, schools have to change before things are evened up. Most of them aren't great places to spend all day in. We know because most of us work in them. We're working to change them too.

Not so long ago, nobody talked about homosexuals (us) in schools at all. Now some people do, but they've mostly got it all wrong. They talk about homosexuality like they talk

about measles, like it's some sort of disease. It's up to us, all of us, to get the story right. That means being strong enough to say "Yes, I'm gay" or "Yes, I'm lesbian" or "Yes, I'm a pooffer".

That might sound hard now but by the time you've finished reading this book we hope you'll feel a lot stronger. You'll know that being gay is O.K., you're not alone, and together we can start to put things right.

Are these some of the questions on your mind? If so, then this is a book for you.

- I'm in love with a friend — but she's straight. I want to tell her about me but I'm scared she'll freak. What should I do?

- Do gay couples stay together like married ones? I'm scared of growing old and alone.

- I know my teacher's gay — I saw her at a gay dance. Should I let her know that I know? (She's really nice.)

- I don't know what I am. Sometimes women turn me on, sometimes guys. Does that mean I'm bi? If so, should I forget about marriage?

- I think I'm straight — but sometimes I think about how it would be to be with a woman. Is that normal?

- How do you pick a lesbian from a straight girl? Gee it's certainly hard, I always end up picking the straight ones. Stupid isn't it?



GETTING STARTED



Some people have their first gay feelings when they're children, some when they're much older. But it seems most people begin to notice their gay feelings at puberty. This usually happens sometime between the age of 10 and 15 years, a bit later for boys than for girls.

You notice in a movie that you get turned on by someone of the same sex. Or at school you can't keep your mind off a friend or a teacher of the same sex as you. When you're away from them you imagine them in all sorts of sexy ways. You might even get turned on by them in your dreams.

Only you know how strong your feelings are and what they mean to you. Some people will tell you that you're too young to know your mind. They might even say that your gay feelings will go away as you get older. That might be true for some people, but so what! For gay people they do not go away. This is just one of the ways that some ignorant people try to talk us out of being who we really are. No one would ever dream of telling heterosexual kids that they might be on the wrong track.



Young people however are often told to wait until they get married before they have sex. At least this is what many adults pretend to say. In fact most adults think it's OK if boys have sex **before** they are married. This is sometimes called *sowing their wild oats*. The more sex a boy has the more of a man he is thought to be.

Girls on the other hand are called *sluts* or *easy* if they have sex before they are married. *Nice girls* are supposed to wait until they're married.

These rules obviously don't make sense — especially if you're a girl. In fact most of the old ideas of what's right or wrong about sex don't make sense. There are all sorts of stupid rules, like nobody was supposed to talk about sex or enjoy it — especially women. Church teaching has had a lot to do with this, just as the church has had a lot to do with the laws and customs that have made things so hard for gays.

No one has the right to make people feel bad about their sexual choice. Sex by itself does not harm anyone. What really does harm people are the deliberate lies that are so often spread about sex. For instance being told that sex is dirty, or that sex is only for marriage. These sorts of ideas really do screw people up.

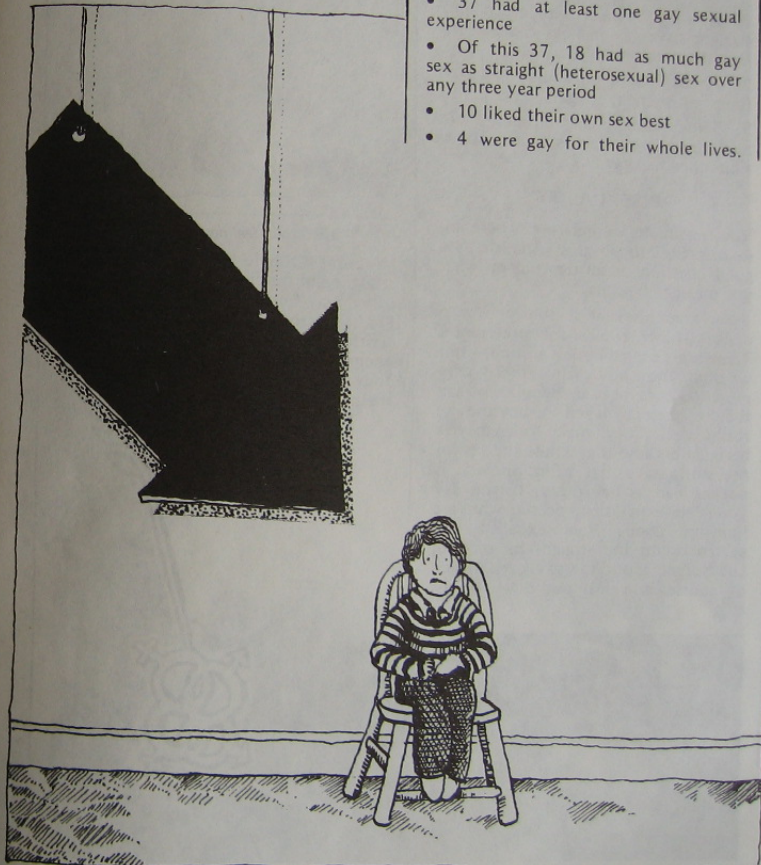
The one rule we need is simple: do what seems right to you, and take care not to hurt anyone else.

"Henry, you know that obese little Chris was going through? Well, it just turned into a lifestyle."

YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE

Alfred Kinsey, a famous sex researcher, found that about 50 out of every 100 American adult men had gay feelings from time to time. Of that 50:

- 37 had at least one gay sexual experience
- Of this 37, 18 had as much gay sex as straight (heterosexual) sex over any three year period
- 10 liked their own sex best
- 4 were gay for their whole lives.



These figures for women were about two-thirds of these. But Kinsey said we should remember his figures are on the low side. Many people probably wouldn't own up to having gay feelings.

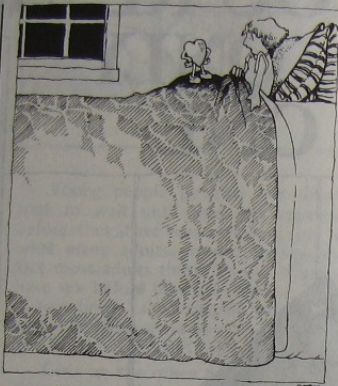
These figures show us three things:

1. A lot of people who are mainly straight have gay feelings and gay sex from time to time.
2. About 10% of the adult population (men and women) are gay.
3. Some people change around a bit. Sometimes they feel straight, sometimes they feel gay.

BISEXUALITY

You might be wondering where bisexuals fit into all this. And that's a good question. It all depends on what you mean by bisexual.

A true bisexual is someone who doesn't have a clear-cut preference. There are people like this around — but we don't know how many. What you're more likely to meet are people who say they're bisexual, when in fact they're really gay. They make out they're bisexual because they know the rest of the world says that being bisexual is not as bad as being gay. If you say you're bisexual then people who are hung-up about homosexuality can switch on to the straight bit of you, and forget about the gay part. Which of course is a real put down of us.



trust your feelings.....

Some people who are basically straight, but occasionally "swing the other way" call themselves "bi". This book is not written specially for them, but we hope they might switch on to the parts that apply.



WHERE ARE WE ALL?



Obviously the people we know to be gay are just the top of the ice-berg. You can't always pick gay people from the way we look. Most of us look pretty ordinary, and some of us are in good disguise. For instance many are married. About one in three of all lesbians are married, and many of them are mothers.

We're spread across all social classes too. From the Royal Family up to the Communist Party, from Redfern to Toorak, from brickies' labourers to the woman next door . . . we're everywhere.

If there are 50 teachers in your school, the chances are at least 5 of them will be gay. And about 18 of them will have had some gay sexual experience. If there are 20 kids in your class, at least two of them will like their own sex best.

Only a few of us have let the world know we're gay. The reason is that if

we did, most of us wouldn't have a job. For instance, the Education Departments and school principals can make it hard for teachers they know are gay. Things are getting better though. Especially as we're getting our unions to start to stick up for our rights.

Because we are so hard to pick out one of our biggest problems is meeting each other. There are places where gays meet — clubs, groups, etc. — and the gay phone services can tell you about these.

Telling people we're gay, starting with a few friends we can trust, is another good way of meeting other gays. If they're not gay themselves they often know someone who is.

When we're all free to be ourselves, open and proud of our way of loving only then will the straight world see that gay people come in all shapes and sizes . . . and we really are **everywhere**.



Actually, there are only twenty lesbians in Melbourne. It's all done with mirrors.

LETTERS

Dear Friends,

I am 16 years old and I don't know where my head is at now. I have never had a boyfriend and have no desire to have one. I have never made love with a boy and I now believe I am a homosexual.

I have a female friend whom I like very much but am very reluctant and too shy to approach her. I really need help.

I hope you do not think that this is some kind of crank writing to you as a joke as I am very serious and I need help with this matter.

Country Girl.

Dear Country Girl,

Obviously no-one else can tell you whether you are homosexual, bisexual, or whatever, this is something you must work out for yourself. If you do come to feel you are homosexual or bisexual you would probably find it helpful and supportive to meet other homosexual women. This may be more difficult in your case because you live in the country, and most of the homosexual bars and groups are in the city. However, I can give you a list of these. Of course there are many homosexuals living in the country, but most of them are reluctant to "come out" and organize activities in their own towns because of the likelihood of gossip and discrimination against them.

You mention that you have a female friend whom you like very much but you are shy about approaching her. Since I don't know you or your friend I can't tell you what you should do. However, I know a number of

women who have been in the same position so it might help if I list the possibilities as I see them.

(a) You might approach your friend and find that she feels the same way, and this might result in a happy and successful relationship

(b) You might begin a relationship and then your friend might decide that she prefers men, or that she feels too guilty, or that she wants the security of marriage — heterosexual affairs also break up from time to time, but there is a lot more pressure from outside on homosexual ones

(c) Your friend might say that she does not want a sexual relationship with you but that she wants to keep friendship as before

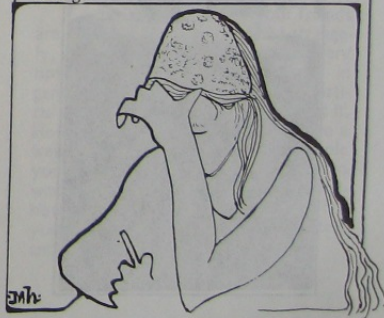
(d) She might break off the friendship altogether

(e) She might feel so upset that she not only breaks off the friendship but also complains about you to her family or yours or your friends.

(f) You might remain silent and unhappy.

You will have to weigh up these possibilities in the light of your knowledge of your friend and of your own feelings.

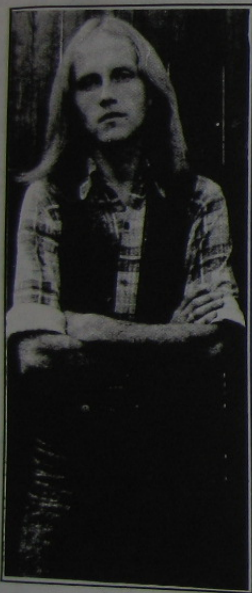
Good luck. I hope you will write again and tell me how you are getting along.



Dear Friends,

I'm a 16 year old male, and for years now I've wondered if I'm completely normal. I get turned on by girls sometimes — not to look at, just when we kiss and muck around. It's different with guys though. Often I'll get a hard-on even thinking about a good looking guy. When I go into the showers after footy it really gets me going. I have to cover up quick before they all notice.

Now you might think that I look like a queer. Well I don't. I would have no worries getting a steady girl. Do you think if I keep going out with girls things will work out?



I wouldn't mind meeting a guy who is like me and looks normal. I'm not interested in pansy types.

I don't know if I'm hetero, homo or bi. I think about this a lot. I know I need help.

Rick.

Dear Rick,

It sounds as though you do have stronger feelings for guys, and going out with girls is not likely to change that. You have homosexual feelings, and you should accept them as normal. You may be homosexual or you may be bisexual. That's something you'll have to work out.

If you go out with a girl it should be because you are attracted to her, and not because you are scared of being homosexual, or want to appear manly. You really can't tell homosexuals by the way they look unless they want you to know.

If you go to gay meeting spots you will find many men like yourself. But why are you so worried about appearance? It is hard in this society for anyone who looks like a homosexual. People who don't hide what they are ought to be admired for their courage, even if they are not the type who attract you. Have you ever thought what they have to put up with in the way of bashings and insulting remarks? They have a lot more guts than some of the manly types.

You might be interested to read the story of an American gridiron player who came out as gay in 1975 — **The David Kopay Story**. He writes about how he came to change his idea of what's manly in coming to accept his homosexuality.



Dear Friends,

I'm camp, I'm 17 years old and my name is Maria.

I thought it time I should ask someone for advice on how to speak my mind to friends about my being camp. At least they were friends before they found out.

They have called me sick, queer etc., two of them even said they pity me. I think that is sad and funny. Sad because they say I've lost control over my feelings for chicks (one in particular), sad cos I'm being forced to resent my feelings. I'm getting sick of thinking before speaking, and trying not to look at her when we are out at a public place. I am very careless nowadays because with every passing day I love her just so much more and this feeling seems so natural.

On the other hand it is funny coz they think I am the one to be pitied. I think that is really funny, so funny I could cry. I'm not ashamed of what I am and who I mix with. I pity them,

the ones that call themselves 'straight' (which is a lot of shit) for missing out on something beautiful.

Maria

Dear Maria,

I don't think you need my advice about how to handle your straight friends. You are doing a great job now. But perhaps you need to meet more gay people and get their support.

I agree with you that your friends are the ones who are behaving strangely, and not you. People are often very uptight and confused about sex in general and homosexuality in particular, but pretend to know all about it. However nasty people are, it's often a weight off your mind to tell people you are camp. Then you don't have to worry about them finding out somehow and you feel more respect for yourself because you've been honest and straightforward.

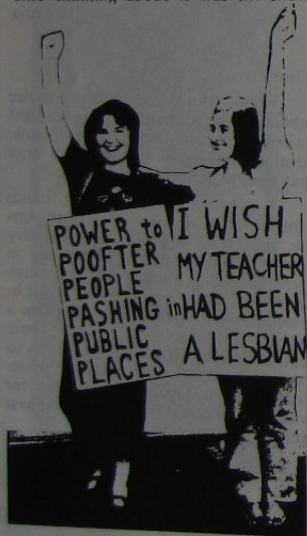
IAN

Dear People,

Hi! My name in Ian . . . I'm gay. I'm also fifteen, so as you can gather, I go to school . . .

I realized I was homosexual (or at least I realized I was attracted to men) around the age of 14, in fact it might have been even before that, I'm not sure. It took a little while to understand these feelings. After all, I was told homosexuality is/was bad. Actually, whether or not I was told this I'm not sure, the way kids used the words "poofter" and "lezzo" (although I had a vague idea of the meanings) it just had to be bad. Although I had an inkling that I was homosexual, I just couldn't be sure.

One of the things that started me onto thinking about it was the show



No. 96. I felt sorry for homosexuals (I don't know why) so I voiced that opinion. Everyone — at least the adults were — was afraid that I was homosexual, so I explained what I meant. That cleared their minds. I had been christian on and off for years before I realized I was gay (in fact it was a while after that, that I really felt I was).

I've been called "poofter" for years because of the fact that I don't like sport, bashing other males, acting tough, my features (facial), also, people might have been afraid of my intelligence in lots of ways . . . People also think that I've got a feminine voice.

My first sexual experiences happened at a pop festival. Naturally, I enjoyed them. That was the last step in my realization that I was gay. It's quite bad not being able to be "me", instead, I (and every other gay person) have to act straight.

I have told my father that I'm gay, but I couldn't tell him about my sexual experiences because these men would most likely end up in gaol and I would probably end up in an institution because I would be in "moral danger".

Just lately I've read articles about the gay movement (Anita Bryant, gay bars etc) and in **The Tribune** I saw a photo of two women. One held a sign saying "Power to Poofter People Pashing in Public Places". I enjoyed that comment.

Well, I'll go now. Power to Poofter People!

Yours in solidarity,

Ian.

BIG LIES & FUNNY PICTURES

We've all been around people talking about poofters and lezzos and making jokes about them. Often these people take off the poofters and lezzos they are making fun of. When they make jokes about poofters they flap their wrists, talk in a high voice and walk around wriggling their bums. To them

this is what every poofter is supposed to look and act like.

When a lezzo is being made fun of she is always talked about as being big with short hair and a deep voice, wearing rough clothes and acting tough. This is what every lezzo is supposed to look like.



The jokes make us look weird and stupid, and if we're around when this goes on we don't feel too good either.

HOW TRUE ARE THESE PICTURES?

About one in every 10 people in the population is gay. Does one in every 10 people look like the joke picture of a gay woman or man to you? Obviously not. Most times you can't pick gay people unless they want you to know.

A few gay men act in a feminine way (like a woman), and a few gay women act in a masculine way (like a man) just for the fun of it. This is their way of sending up the straight world. However for others this way of life is natural for them and they are just being themselves. Some straight men act in a feminine way too. And they get rubbished. Those people who are like the joke pictures of gays — whether they're straight or gay — get the rubbishing that's meant for all gay people.

As well as these pictures there are a lot of other wild stories and lies flying around about us. Here are a few examples.

1. GAY COUPLES DON'T STICK TOGETHER FOR VERY LONG.

FACT: Even though there are a lot of mean and stupid hassles put on us by the straight world to try and break us up, lots of us have loving and long-lasting relationships. But then again some of us simply aren't interested in having long relationships or being in a twosome forever. This is the same now for more and more straight people too.

2. MEN BECOME GAY BECAUSE THEY HAVE WEAK FATHERS AND TOUGH MOTHERS.

FACT: What a dumb story! Most gay men have brothers who are straight, even though they were brought up the same. So if this story were true how come their brothers aren't gay too?

3. WOMEN BECOME GAY BECAUSE THEY CAN'T GET A MAN. IT'S A SECOND BEST THING.

FACT: This is another lie spread around by straight men who can't live with the truth that there are some women who just aren't interested in them. For a lesbian, being with other women is the only choice they ever want to make. Some women, even after years of marriage, find that they really prefer other women and become lesbians.

4. GAY WOMEN HATE MEN AND ARE FRIGHTENED OF THEM.

FACT: Because of the rotten way that women are treated in this society, every woman should feel angry towards men. Why should gay women feel any different? The truth is that gay women just happen to like being with women rather than with men.



5. GAY WOMEN AND MEN WANT TO CON OFF EVERY STRAIGHT PERSON THEY SEE.

FACT: Gays don't want to get off with anyone who is not interested, whether they are straight or gay. There is nothing wrong with letting someone know that you are attracted to them, but we should all be prepared to take no for an answer. Anyway, why should straight people be so up themselves to think that we would all be attracted to them!

6. GAY MEN ARE FRIGHTENED OF WOMEN AND HATE ALL WOMEN.

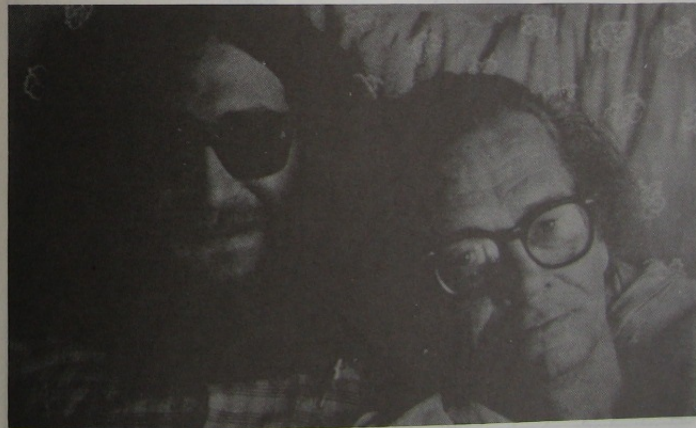
FACT: Most gay men don't hate women at all, it's just that they prefer to choose other men to be close to. In fact lots of gay men have women as their best friends. Some gay men, after years of marriage, find that they really prefer other men and become homosexuals.

7. GAY PEOPLE WANT TO TURN AS MANY PEOPLE AS THEY CAN INTO POOFTERS AND LESBIANS.

FACT: The straight world has been trying to turn us into straights by using every method under the sun, including torture, and it has never worked. You just can't con a straight person into being gay, just as you can't con a gay person into being straight. If a straight person gets off with a gay person it is because they both wanted it to happen.

8. GAY PEOPLE LEAD SAD, LONELY LIVES.

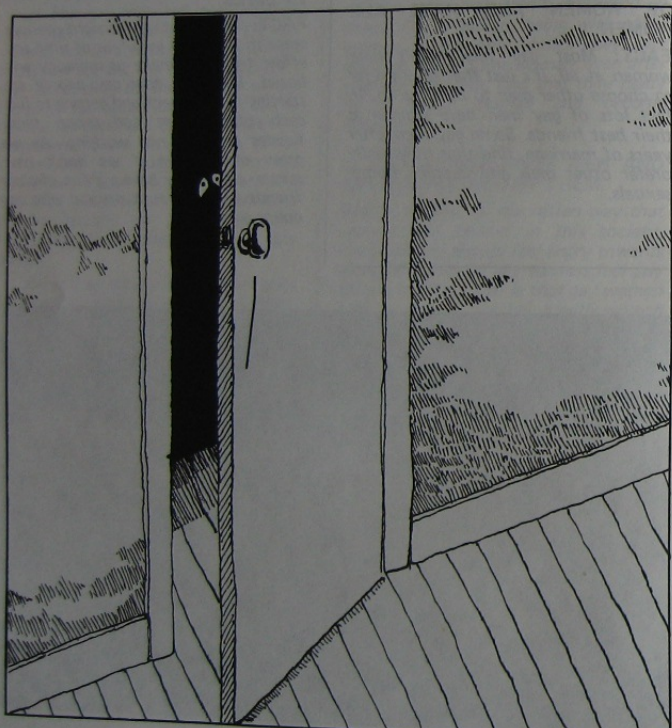
FACT: Some heavy straight people seem to spend an awful lot of time and effort trying to make us unhappy and bored. But now that gay people are starting to fight back and getting to like each other more and more, these hassles are just not working. As we grow older, even if we don't have lovers, we usually have a group of close friends we can count on and who can count on us.



These stories are made up to convince people that being straight is best, and that the way of life of the straight world is the only one possible. These stories are also spread about with the idea that we will want to hide away and keep quiet about ourselves.

Sometimes life is made hard for us, not because we are gay in the first place, but because so many people believe the lies about us. The last thing we should do is start believing these stories ourselves.

For instance, the stories that pretend to know what makes us gay. There is no need for us to worry about how we came to be gay, just as there is no reason why straights should worry about how they came to be straight. At last now gay people are starting to say **WE JUST WON'T TAKE IT ANY MORE.** After all, we have every right to live and to enjoy our lives. If other people want to worry about what makes us gay, then that's their problem.



CBTROM

WHY WE ARE HASSLED

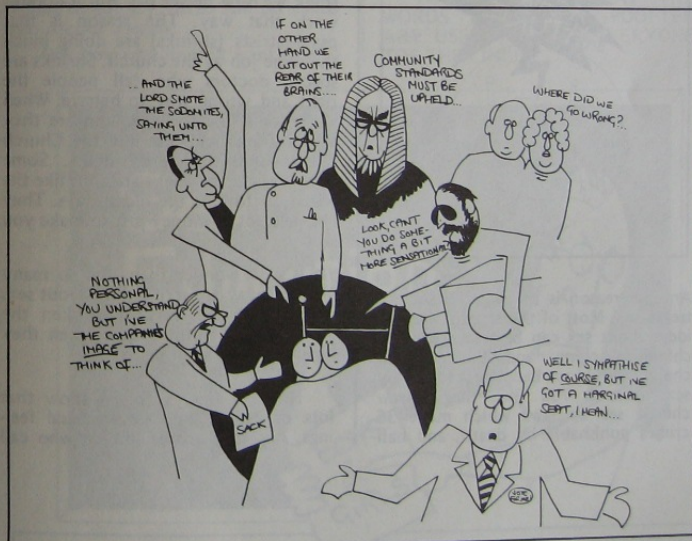
Gay people are hassled by lots of Big Lies being spread about us. A lot of people go on believing them. And not enough of the people who don't believe the lies speak up.

Why do they believe the lies? Well, because they are often spread by ministers, doctors, politicians, judges, and newspapers, even teachers — and the man or woman on the street expects those sorts of people to know what they're talking about. Besides, it's easier — and safer — to believe what you're told rather than to think for yourself and ask tricky questions.

There have always been people who

could see through the lies — but usually they kept silent because they were lazy, or scared, or had no say in things... or a bit of each. Up till recently you weren't listened to if you spoke up about homosexuality unless you were a minister, doctor, etc. Then gay people started putting the record right. This started happening in the late 1960's. Since then there has been a lot more disagreement among ministers and doctors. And among ourselves too.

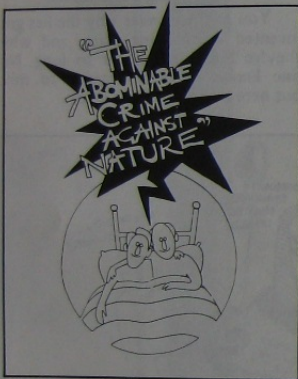
You might wonder why the lies got invented in the first place, and why they've hung around for so long. No one knows the exact answer to this, but here are some of our ideas.



WE'RE DIFFERENT?

Some people say that gays get hassled because we're different. People are often scared of what they don't understand. This is so for other people, like immigrants. It's happened to Jews a lot, (did you see Holocaust?) and it even used to happen to left-handers. Did you know that people used to believe that left-handers were possessed by the devil? When things went wrong, the left-handers got the blame. And society tried to make them into right-handers. Sound familiar?

THE CHURCH?



Another reason is the way our society treats sex. Most of the straight world's ideas about sex can be traced back to church teaching, and the christian church has always been freaked out by sex. Around 700 B.C. the Hebrew church set up laws which made 36 crimes punishable by death, and half

of these were to do with sex. The penalty for males guilty of homosexual acts was death by stoning, the most severe penalty. There were no laws against lesbianism, which probably explains why our laws today only punish male homosexuals. Women weren't taken seriously then either.

For centuries now the church has said that sex is only OK between married people so that they can have children. If people enjoy sex in any other way — by themselves, with someone of the same sex, or with someone they're not married to — then the church calls them *sinners* and tries to make them feel bad. Like the feeling you have if your parents catch you masturbating?

SHRINKS?

Where the church is losing its grip, as it seems to be in our society, you'd think we'd be better off. But it doesn't work that way. The reason is that psychiatrists (shrinks) are doing much the same job as the church. Shrinks are special doctors who tell people the right and wrong way to behave. When they don't like the way you are they say you are sick, just like the Church tells people they are sinners. Some people say that shrinks are a bit like the witch doctors of the olden days. They charge a lot of money just to make you worry.

It's no wonder then that so many people today are screwed up about sex. If they haven't actually broken the church's and shrink's rules, then they feel bad about wanting to!

Kinsey's figures (p. 7) show that lots of people have homosexual feelings, not just people like us who call

ourselves gay. People who don't like to face up to those feelings may be especially nasty towards gay people.

When people try and keep things pushed down, something might snap, and they will do some very violent things. If gay people can be picked out, we may become the target of this violence.

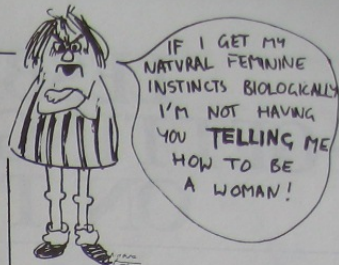
PLAYING THE GAMES THEY TELL US TO?

One of the main reasons we get picked on is because such a big deal is made about *men making it with women*. This is supposed to be the way of proving how much of a man or how much of a woman you are.

Men are supposed to act tough, get married and boss their wives around. Women are supposed to be weak, a bit stupid, and need men to lean on.

Now any man or woman who doesn't go along with these ideas, even if they're **not** gay, often still get called a poofter or a lezzo.

Any boy who doesn't want to play



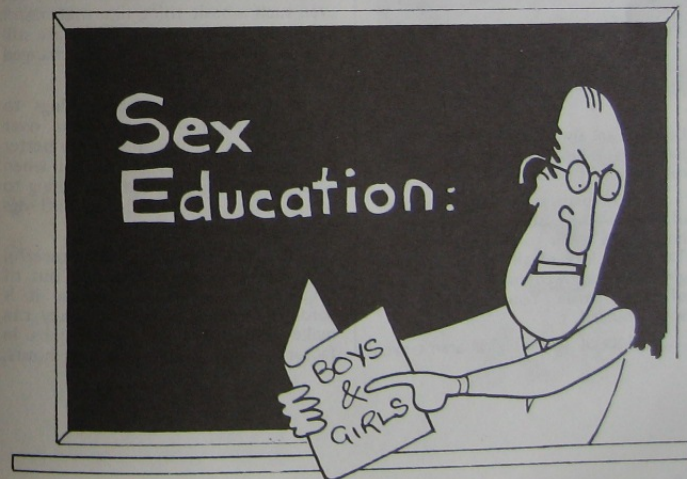
football or other rough games will often get called a *sissy* or a *poofter*.

Any girl who is good at sport gets called *tough* or a *lezzo* and the other girls tell her that the boys won't like her if she's too good at sport. Girls are made to feel bad about anything they are good at unless its needlecraft or cooking.

A woman who demands a better deal often gets called a *lesbian*.

A man who's gentle often gets called a *poofter*.

YOU CAN SEE THAT THE WORDS **LEZZO** AND **POOFTER** ARE USED TO MAKE EVERYONE TOE THE LINE!



LESBIANS -GETTING STEPPED ON TWICE



Lesbians are always going to get hassled two ways as long as our society is being run the way it is now.

First, lesbians get put down because of being women. Being a woman means not getting a fair go most of the time. There are lots of things women and girls aren't allowed to do just because of being female. You probably know some yourself.

In lots of schools girls aren't even

allowed to be on the oval, let alone play football.

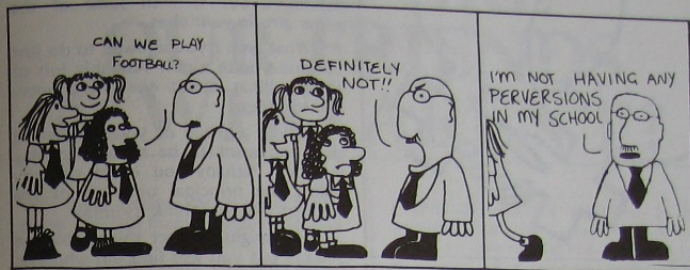
Maybe you're in a school that says you have to do needlework or cookery instead of woodwork or metal work or something else only the boys are allowed to do. Maybe some of the boys don't want to do woodwork but they don't get any choice either.

When you leave school you'll find that there are a lot of jobs that we don't get an equal go at, like being a train driver or even a motor-mechanic.

You might think things have got better since Women's Liberation groups really got started about ten years ago. Some important things like equal pay have been won for most women, but even such a basic thing like that hasn't been won for all women. There are still lots of things that need to be changed (the abortion laws for instance).

Most men don't want things to change. Men have got power over women, and because they get a better go than women they think that when women start fighting **they** are going to be the losers. They'd rather keep things the way they are now.

There are also some very powerful men making stacks of money out of keeping women down. Because it is hard for women to get jobs they can make them work in rotten jobs in factories for low pay and long hours.



You don't have to look very hard to see that women always get the worst jobs (if they get a job at all) and are first to be fired whenever it suits the boss.

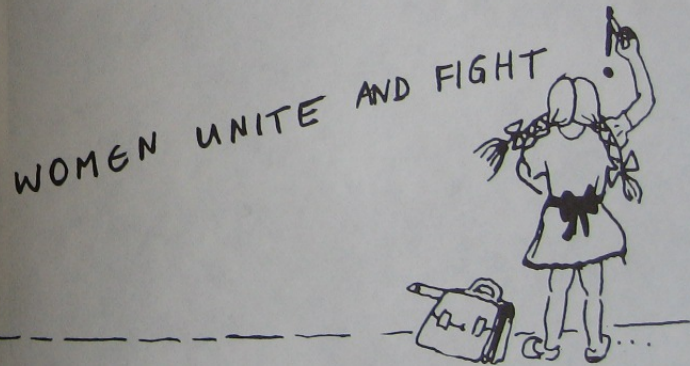
As well as being put down for being women, lesbians get put down for being gay. Most men are really scared of lesbians. Lesbians aren't doing what men want them to do. They're not stuck away in a house producing children and cooking, washing and ironing for men. They're not dependent on men for money, or to

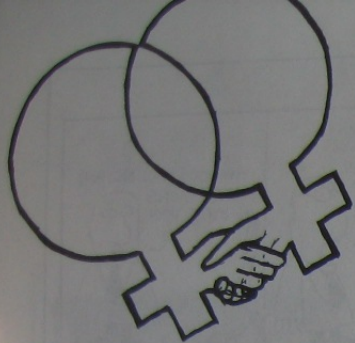
provide them with somewhere to live, like a lot of married women are. They're showing the world that they don't need **anyone** to lean on like that.

So we've got two big things to fight: being put down as women, and being put down for being gay.

SO WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT IT?

Well, we should join with other women to fight the things that put us down. It's not easy, but we can only win the fight by sticking together.





You might be able to find books in the library about Sexism, or Women's Liberation. Ask the librarian to help you, or ask a woman teacher whom you think might help, or just start

talking about it with some of the other girls in your class.

What aren't you allowed to do just because you're a girl? Probably lots of things. What about the things mentioned above?

Maybe a group of you will decide that you want to be allowed to play football. Perhaps you could start by telling the principal or some of the teachers that you think it's unfair.

You might not get things changed quickly but you will find out who's on your side, and who isn't. Finding the ones on your side feels really great. There are probably lots of people on your side, it's just a matter of finding them. Good Luck.



WHO ARE OUR FRIENDS & WHO AREN'T?

Only a gay person knows what it's like to be gay. But many people understand what it's like to be treated unfairly. These are the people who are likely to be on our side.

A lot of women, for instance, even if they're not gay, know what gay people are up against. Just as the church and the law try to run gay people's lives, they also try to make all women have children whether they want them or not. A lot of the straight men who put down women are the same ones who make life hard for all gay people. The people who say it's not natural for people of the same sex to love each other will often say it's not natural if women don't want to get married and have children.

The lies spread about women are just like the lies spread about all gay

people. Women are supposed to be weaker than men, and they're all meant to enjoy doing housework. A lot of women are starting to say that these are lies and are putting the record right. Some of the women are lesbians but some aren't. All of these women are likely to understand what we're saying and stick up for us. We should stick up for them too whenever we can.

Others who get a bad time for no good reason are aborigines and migrants, poor people and the unemployed. If you're one yourself you'll know the feeling. You get called names like *boong* and *wog*, *no-hoper*, *dole bludger* . . . which are meant to give the idea that what you are is no good. Isn't that just what names like *lezbo* and *poofter* do too!



One thing to remember though. Just because people are treated unfairly does not always mean that they are our friends. Often you'll find that mistreated people believe the lies about all other groups **except** their own. There are white gay people who put down aborigines, just as there are aborigines who put down gays.

It's not hard to understand why this happens. If people are made to feel worthless they often look for someone to take it out on. It's hard to fight back against the things that make people feel worthless, and sometimes it's hard to pick what they are (like the law, the church, the newspaper owners, the politicians, big businessmen). So these people look around for someone weaker than themselves to kick. If there's no dog around, it might be gay people they kick. That doesn't mean it's right. It's just something we have to watch out for.

There are also people who go on believing the lies even about their own group. If they're in power, these are really dangerous people. For instance, there are gay politicians who vote against homosexual law reform. Or gay shrinks who tell other gays they're sick just for being gay. These people are more interested in running the place than they are in helping other gays. They certainly are not **our** friends.

Our only hope of getting a fair deal is when we join with all the other groups who are fighting for their rights. On our own we are a small group, but when many groups get together — aborigines, unemployed people, gays, immigrants — then we are the majority. There are more of us than them. When we're all together we can fight back and win!



GETTING BY



If you are finding it hard at the moment, you may sometimes wish you were straight. You may have heard of so-called "cures" for homosexuality. Well, there's no such thing. **Not** one of these "cures" has **ever** been shown to work! And what's more, they are extremely cruel. They're not much better than torture. Don't let anyone kid you about them. You just can't make a gay person straight.

We have to learn to face up to our gay feelings. And not to feel worried about them. They won't go away if we ignore them. But why should we want them to?

The first thing we all have to do is find a way of getting by. A way to keep alive — and kicking!

At school most of us are dead scared if we think we're gay. Some of us decide to act quiet. We try not to give anything away about ourselves. Some of us become bookworms. We bury ourselves in schoolwork so we'll forget what we're feeling inside. Some of us push ourselves in other ways. Some get stuck into sport. Some become monitors. Some help teachers with this and that. Some of us put all our energy into acting more straight than the straights, so no one will guess.

If we act in any of these ways we are often just trying to push our gay feelings to one side. That may work, but probably only for a while. Doing these things certainly won't help us if we're feeling uptight.





There are lots of books you can read written by gay people about being gay. They will give you lots of useful info, and make you feel better about being gay yourself. You will find some of these books listed at the back of this one. There are some records listed there too.

You can try and find out what the gay groups in your city (or nearest city) are doing. Their addresses are at the back of the book. Write to them, or phone them, even if you feel you're not ready yet to mix with other gay people.

It's great if we're lucky enough to have some friends around us who will help us and back us up. They give help in ways that parents and families often can't. Friends are important for us all our lives.

But, of course, friends can only really help us if they know we're gay. A lot of people find the best way of getting by is to come right out and tell people. But that's not easy. We know. But the next chapter will give you some clues on how to go about it, and why it's helpful. And important.

TELLING OTHER PEOPLE



ASTROM

Do you feel the world is against you? Are you afraid of what will happen if other people find out you're gay? You think other people at school will start making jokes about you? They'll call you just a lezzo or a poofter. They might even beat you up. You'll lose your friends. And what if your parents find out?

Well, stop being afraid. We know that as gay people we're just as good as the rest of them!

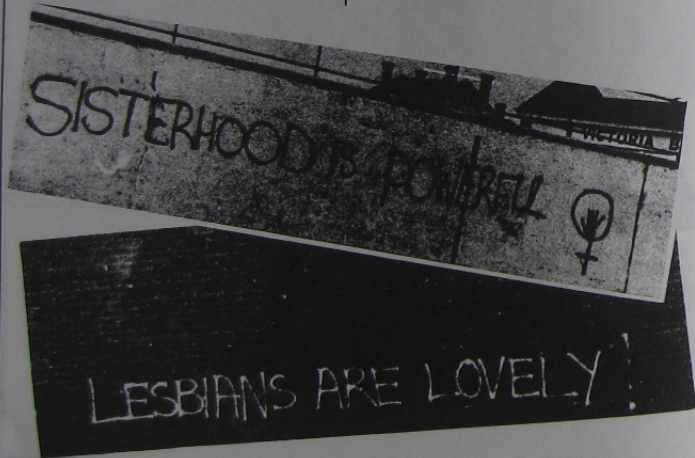
Just remember that. And then you'll start getting ready to say so. We're not going to say you won't have some real hassles, but you're going to feel much better if you learn to be proud and fight back.

For a start, **not** everyone is against gay people. In fact, most people are only repeating the lies and put-downs they have heard all around them, without ever having thought about what they are saying. Like the people at school who put down "wogs" — and have a best friend with an Italian or Greek name!

It is easier for you when you don't feel you've got to hide who you really are all the time. Doing that only makes you hate yourself as a phoney. Nearly every gay person has been through this. Especially at school. You are not alone.

Whenever one of us stands up and says we're glad and proud to be gay — even to one other person — it makes it easier for the rest of us. And it gives us an example worth living up to. So when we show we're not afraid, we're helping other gays too. And it's one way of finding out who the other gay people are.

The people you're going to want to tell are probably those you feel closest to. The first time you'll probably be feeling dead scared. But when you feel ready, and you think the time is right, do it. It really is like lifting a lead weight off your back. You'll feel really proud of yourself. And for a while you'll probably find you get a real kick out of telling people. Who knows . . . you'll want to paint it on walls!



HOW TO GO ABOUT IT



There's no one way. Some of us do it gradually. We start giving out hints — sounding out people's attitudes, asking them if they've got any gay friends, perhaps loaning them a good book that we've just read. Often then they will guess, and think about it, before we get to tell them.

Another way of telling people is when we're asked questions like "Do you think you'll ever be getting married?" If it's someone you can trust, you can say in a matter of fact way, "No, I won't be getting married." If they ask, "Why?" and you feel now is the moment, then say that it's because you're gay.

Deciding who to tell and when is something only you can know about. Of course, it's going to be more difficult telling some people than others. Just use your common sense.

Are you worried about your

straight friends? You don't want them to freak out and just walk out on you. But you'd like to be able to talk to them about the things you really feel. So when you tell them, make them think about it. How they take it is really **their** worry. They may need a bit of time to get used to the idea, but if they're your friends at all, they'll stick with you, and they will think about it. If they stop being friends because you're gay, it'll annoy you — but at least you'll know that **they're** wrong. Eventually they're going to have to get their heads sorted out. You're not the only lezzo or poofter they're going to meet.

Sometimes, you're right. It would be safer to shut up about it. If you think someone's going to bash you for saying you're gay, why shouldn't you be careful? But why shouldn't you be angry too? There's no reason why we should have to run away or hide because we're gay. So it's an idea to start getting ready to stick up for yourself and fight back if you ever have to. You'll take people by surprise because they won't be expecting you to. And if you're keeping out of fights, stay angry. Bide your time.



PARENTS

Telling parents might be the hardest bit, and it's going to depend a lot on what kind of people they are. You will know this best. Yes, there are some parents who will crack up, and just refuse to accept you for what you are. There are some parents who will just pretend that they haven't heard what you said, and that nothing has happened. There are some parents who will say they don't mind, but only so long as your aunt or your granny or the neighbours never find out!

But there are some parents who **really** don't mind. They will accept you for who you are. They may even help you. In America and England there are already groups of parents of gay kids getting together and working along with us to make things better.



Whenever you tell your parents, or anyone, in fact, it's a good idea to have lots of info about gay people ready to tell them. You'll find some things to

tell them from this book. There is more info in the books listed at the back of this one.

But if you know you have the kind of parents who would say, "My daughter's going to get married", or "No son of mine's going to be a bloody poofter", maybe it's better to wait till you leave school and aren't dependent on them. But if you do tell them, or they find out, and they act like this, try to stay cool and talk about it with them. If that doesn't work, you could go for help to good friends or other relatives who understand, or to one of the gay groups listed at the back of this book. But **never** let your parents — or anyone else — make you ashamed of who you are!

It pays to stop and think about why our parents are acting in the way they are. Often they are afraid for themselves. They are afraid other people will think they've failed as parents because their kid is different. And above all, they want us to do just what they did, and they're refusing to think that any other kind of life is good for us. Like other people they may try and scare us into thinking that if we don't get married, we'll be lonely.

Well, for a start, everyone's lonely sometimes. Even our parents. That's just a fact.

But what's so special about the way our parents live anyway? Today more and more people are finding out that it's easier and better for them not to live in a marriage or an old-style family. Some people like to live on their own.



Hello Benny. This is your mother. I only have a minute. Get married, have children, goodbye.

DEAR MUM & DAD

I read in the paper the other day that a mother marched in a New York Gay Liberation parade carrying a sign that said, "I am proud of my gay son". Since telling you that I am gay, I've been wondering if you are still proud of me. And if you are, I wonder **why** you are proud. A lot of your friends and neighbours seem to be proud of their children just because they have been to the University, because they have a new brick veneer house, because the girls have married rich men, because they have holidays in Surfers Paradise. That seems rather silly to me. Maybe it's because you brought me up to put people first and possessions second. If you are proud of me I hope it's because of who I am and not what I own.

Some people live in houses with groups of friends and share the food and the housework. Living in one of these ways can give us the chance to get on with people how and when we want to, instead of being tied to someone whether we like it or not, just because we thought that was how everybody had to live.

If you're a young woman, you'll know that it's you and your mother who get to do all the shit-jobs for all the men who are around. You'll be glad you don't have to do things like that for some man.

If you're a young gay man, you can be helping work out new ways of being friends with women, ways that don't put them down all the time like the straight guys you know are often doing.

Or are you ashamed of me just because I am homosexual? Being heterosexual is not an achievement and neither is being homosexual. It just happens. But being homosexual in a hostile society does take a bit of courage. It can be quite dangerous. Maybe for that reason you wish I was heterosexual, just as you would rather I didn't become a racing car driver, because that's pretty dangerous too. But you see, that's why I'm in Gay Liberation, because I want to make it happier and safer to be homosexual.

One of the things that I have learnt in Gay Liberation is that homosexuality is not a defect or a disease. There is nothing wrong with being homosexual. I think that you accept this easily enough where other people's children are concerned, but when it comes to me you ask, "Where

did we go wrong? Who is to blame?" The simple and happy answer is that no one went wrong and there is no one to blame. If you don't look at it as a problem, it ceases to be a problem.

And despite all the social pressures, I am happy. I think you can see that. I am happy because I accept myself and I live the way I want to.

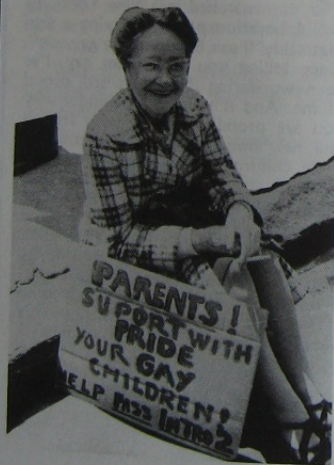
There is a generation gap, just because the world is changing so fast. (Have you read Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock*?) And that means that we both have to be very patient and listen to each other's point of view. Your opinion means a lot to me. Recently some people from Gay Liberation were talking at a Melbourne high school about homosexuals and their parents, and one of the other guest speakers said that children didn't care what their parents thought these days. The high school pupils all disagreed with her. They said they might pretend not to, but they cared very much what their parents thought of them.

I am very glad that I have told you that I am homosexual. It is a great weight off my mind and it is much easier for me to talk to you now that I have nothing to hide. It wasn't easy for me to tell you. I was pretty scared because I know of cases where parents had threatened their children, turned them out of the house, or dragged them off to see psychiatrists. They did not stop to consider how painful and degrading the psychiatric treatment was, that it can have dreadful side effects and that it hardly ever alters homosexual behaviour. No wonder Gay Liberation talks about oppression, when some of us are persecuted in our own homes and rejected by our families. I really can't say how glad I am that you didn't react that way.

When you meet my homosexual friends you will notice that they are nothing like the homosexuals described in the sensational Sunday papers or made fun of in the comedies on television. Did you think they would be? There are lies told about us all the time, and often we dare not answer back because if we do we will lose our jobs or our friends.

Like many other people, we in Gay Liberation are starting to question the old ideas about marriage and the family. Some of us may have children (homosexuals do have children you know), but we are not likely to marry and we think that the family has many faults. But when I criticize the family I am not criticizing you personally. I am saying that I think children should not always be expected to be like their parents (i.e. get married and raise a family). Still I know that you have done your best for me. You are a person I know very well and love very much.

Your child.



CHANGE

Ten years ago, nearly 65% of Australians were opposed to any sort of homosexual law reform. However, in 1978 fewer than 30% of Australians were opposed to equal laws for gays. Does this mean that it is any easier to be gay now than it was 10 years ago?

Yes and no. Many more people agree now that gays should not be treated as criminals. But many of those same people think that homosexuality is wrong, or at least not as good as heterosexuality.

The attitude of the Catholic Church is a good example. In 1976 the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Australia agreed that male homosexuality should not be a crime. But the Catholic Church still says that homosexuality is a *sin* and a *disorder*.

Lesbians know all about this. Sex between women has never been illegal in Australia. But lesbians share many of the problems that gay men have in dealing with family, jobs, insults on the street, etc.

So does this mean nothing has changed?

Not quite. Ten years ago there were hardly any openly gay people around. Now there are quite a few. Gays are coming out on T.V., telling their friends — many of us are sick and tired of hiding. The effect is that a lot more people are able to see what real live lesbians and gay men are like. People who thought they had never met a gay person find that that's not true. When a best friend turns out to be gay, it's not so easy to believe the lies and wild stories flying round about gay people.



HOW WILL THINGS GET BETTER?

Every time you tell someone you're gay, it makes it that much easier for us all. **What we need to work at is making it easier for all gays to be open.**

Changes in the law, such as in South Australia and the A.C.T., do help — but obviously they are not enough.

We need laws that make it a crime for employers or landlords to discriminate against gay people. Laws like this have been passed in Quebec in Canada, and in many American cities.

We need more unions to take a stand in support of their gay members, as the three teachers' unions have done in Victoria.

We need more radio and TV stations to have special programmes for their gay listeners, like 3CR in Melbourne does every Wednesday night. Programmes like these are also useful in reaching the heterosexuals who are on our side.

We need Government enquiries that look at the way gay people are hassled and which suggest ways to stop the hassles. For instance the Royal Commission on Human Relationships said the Federal Government should "set an example to employers generally in Australia by implementing a policy of non-discrimination against homosexuals".

We need sex education in schools that talks about gay sexuality without putting it down, and where gays can have a fair say. The Royal Commission said that Education Departments should take up this idea.

All these are ways that will make it easier for gay people to come out. The

question is **How can we help make these things happen?**

THINGS WE CAN DO

The first thing to do is to find our friends — the people who hate injustice and who will do what they can to stop it. Working with others is a lot more effective — strength in numbers! It's usually more fun too.

THINGS TO WORK ON

At school

- Find out who the OK people are, other kids at schools, teachers, etc.
- Read up on homosexuality — so that you can back up what you say whenever you need to.
- See what can be done about getting good books into the library or getting good sex education courses going.
- Find out how to go about getting gay speakers in to talk about being gay with students or with teachers.
- If someone is getting picked on for being gay, see what you and your friends can do about it.
- If you have a school newspaper write something for it about being gay. That's worth doing even if you don't sign it. At least they'll know there are gay people around!



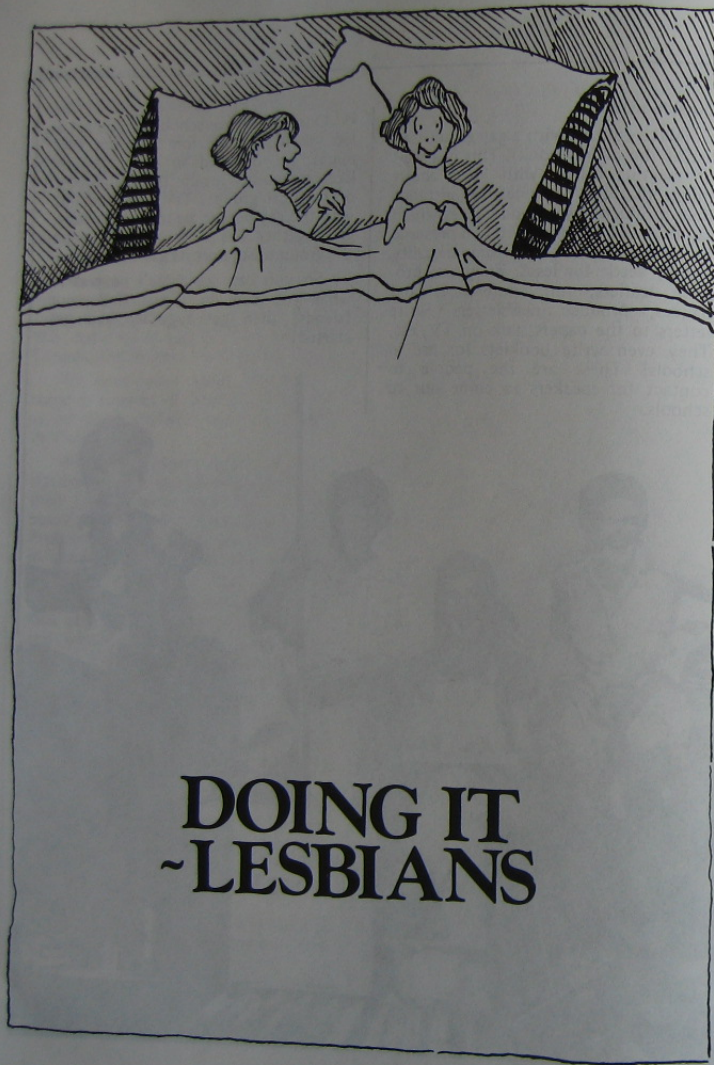
Outside school

- Make contact with a gay group (see list at the end of book). This is a way of meeting others with ideas about things that can be done. For instance they produce posters and badges which say things like, "How dare you presume I'm heterosexual", or "Homosexuality — why settle for less". They also produce leaflets, run conferences and dances, produce newsletters, write letters to the papers, talk on TV, etc. They even write booklets for use in schools! These are the people to contact for speakers to come out to schools.

- Once you leave school, if you get a job you'll probably join a union. You might get involved in other groups like community groups, sports groups, or political groups. Try and find out who the gay people are in these groups, get together and start working to get the group to support its gay members.

So you can see there's no end to what you can do. First, find your friends, then get together and get started!





DOING IT ~LESBIANS

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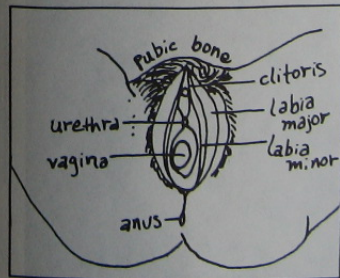
Well, the first thing we want to say about lesbian loving is that there aren't any rules and we don't want any.

There are lots of ways you can make love to a woman and we will mention just a few of them, but the first place to start is with you. The first woman you should start loving is yourself. That might sound strange, but you have to feel happy about yourself and about your own body before you can feel good with someone else.

One of the ways you can get to know your own body is by masturbating. Masturbation is simply you making love to yourself because it feels good. By itself it's going to make you feel good and it will probably give you ideas about what other women might like. Some of us like being kissed all over, some of us don't. Some of us like having our breasts touched, kissed, licked; some of us don't. Like we've said, there aren't any rules.

Probably all the sex-education books at your school were written by *heterosexuals* (people who have sexual relations with their opposite sex) and they probably show diagrams like the one shown here, but talk mainly about your *vagina* as being the super-important bit.

There are a lot of heterosexual people who think that the only real sex is when the man's penis is inside the



vagina of the woman. But this isn't true, even for heterosexuals. We know that the clitoris is one of the most sexually sensitive and responsive parts of our bodies.

Being a lesbian means exploring. Explore your own body, touch it, look at it, use a mirror to explore the parts you can't see easily. Get to know yourself and explore the woman you're with, sexually, emotionally, totally.

BUT YOU STILL WANT US TO TELL YOU HOW TO DO IT, RIGHT?

Well, here are a few ideas, but they aren't all there is.

First, fingers. Using your fingers, try caressing the *labia*, running them around the whole area, inside the vagina, out again and up to the clitoris until sexual excitement or orgasm happens. You can do this to each other at the same time or take it in turns.



You can use your tongue. You could trace the edges of her labia, kiss and push at her clitoris with your tongue, and you can both do this at the same time, too.

Another way of making love is to just lie together, one on top of the other and use the friction of one body on another.

Well, that's just three ideas which seem to be fairly common ones. However, use your imagination, and just keep doing what feels good.

Something to remember about orgasms — yes they're good and make you feel great but sometimes you can feel just as good without an orgasm. You don't have to have an orgasm to "prove" that you're feeling great about the other person and you don't have to feel guilty if she doesn't have an orgasm.

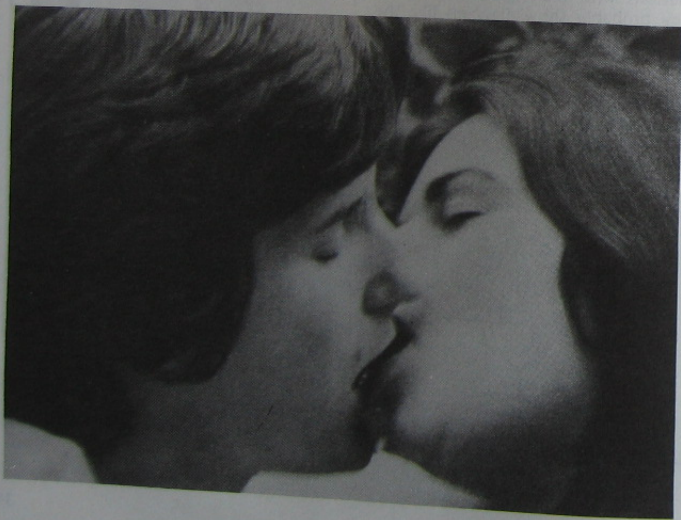
Now you're not going to be the world's greatest lover at your first attempt. So what? Practice in this case doesn't make perfect but it does help. You and the woman you're with will work out what feels good for each

of you. That means a lot of honest talking between the two of you about what you like and what you don't, in all parts of your feelings for each other, not just the sexual ones.

So it all comes back to exploring.

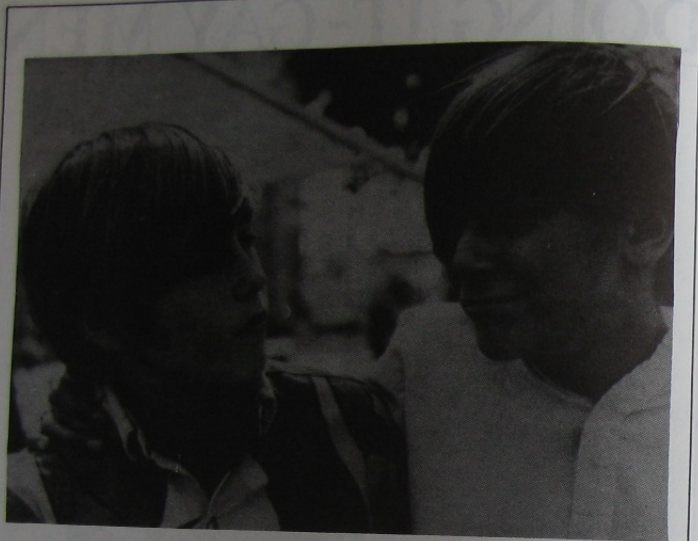
All women, whether we are lesbians or not, need to explore ourselves. We need to use our talents. We should ask ourselves a few questions.

Is life for a woman, for me, just going to be me married, a housewife, or a secretary/tea lady for men as most people expect me to be? As a lesbian you might not get married (although there are some married women and mothers who are lesbians), but you will have to make some hard decisions. You'll have to fight a lot because you will be doing something that men don't like and there are many things that are hard for women in the world the way it is now, because men don't like us doing them. As lesbians and as women we have to fight this. We have fought to choose a different way of living and we feel really great about it, and we think you will too.



DOING IT~GAY MEN





There are lots of different ways for gay men to have sex and to really enjoy it. You will soon find out what you like and how you like to do it.

The first thing you should do is to find out all about your own body. Get to know it and get to like it. Use a mirror for all those hard places to see.

You have probably pulled yourself off (masturbated). This is really just making love with yourself and it's a great feeling, isn't it? Masturbation is also a great way of finding out how good sex can be. Don't worry about pulling yourself off. It's absolutely harmless. Almost **everybody** masturbates, gay and straight, teenagers, adults, males and females. People get uptight about it because they don't

like the idea of young people enjoying sex, especially with each other.

The sex education books in your school are all written by heterosexuals, and they will tell you that the only way for a man to enjoy sex is when he is having intercourse (fucking) with a woman. That is, when his penis (dick) is in her vagina. This just isn't true. Not even for straight people!

There are lots of different ways for gay men to make love together. Here are a few examples.

- kissing, cuddling, stroking, and holding somebody close.
- pulling each other off, either together or in turns.
- sucking each other's penises, either

doing it at the same time or taking it in turns. Because mouths are soft and warm, having your penis sucked feels really good. If you are doing the sucking, hold the other person's penis with one hand, and put it gently into your mouth. It feels nice and smooth. Run your tongue up and down it towards the tip, and try and watch out your teeth don't get in the way too much . . . they're hard. Don't worry about swallowing the semen. It just tastes salty. And it's perfectly harmless.

By the way, don't get hung up about the size or shape of your penis, whether you think it's too big or too small. The size of your penis doesn't prove how much of a "man" you are in any way at all. The size of your penis has also got nothing to do with how much you enjoy sex or how much enjoyment you give to another person.

And try not to worry about when — or even if — you have an orgasm (come)! After all, sex is still enjoyable even if you don't actually have an orgasm. These things only seem a problem if you are feeling uptight about the situation you're in. You both have to feel relaxed to enjoy sex completely.

Because such a big deal is made by heterosexuals about men having intercourse with women, a lot of people think that for gay men having anal intercourse (arse fucking) with each other is the only way to enjoy sex. This isn't true. Anal intercourse is just one way of having sex. There's nothing special about it. You may find you like this kind of sex with other men best of all, or you may not like it specially. It's up to you. Just experiment and do what you like, and make sure you're not forced into doing anything.

Perhaps there are some men who

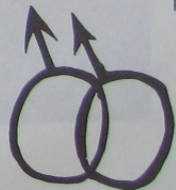
only enjoy taking the so-called "active" part in intercourse (doing the fucking), and some men who only enjoy the "passive" part (being fucked). But **most** like it **both ways**. It's good taking it in turns to play the "active" part with each other. But there are no rules. It all depends on what you both want and what you learn from each other.

If you are taking the "passive" part, and you feel worried that your partner is trying to put you down or play power-games with you by having intercourse, make sure you tell him first, so you can both talk about it. And make sure if you are taking the "active" part, you yourself are not playing power-games. You must always remember that you are making love to another person like yourself, and not just another penis or anus (arse-hole). Sex is something for you **both** to enjoy.

You have probably been told as you have grown up that your anus is a dirty place and shouldn't be touched. This is stupid. People should be happy with **all** parts of their bodies, and if they aren't it means they can't like themselves very much.

It is true that you get rid of waste out of your anus, but that's not the only thing that it's good for. You pass urine (piss) out of your penis too, but you can do more things with your penis than that. Your anus is only dirty when it hasn't been cleaned — just like any other part of your body.

Your anus is not only an organ to remove waste. It can be sexually exciting, just like your penis, because it has a lot of sensitive nerve-endings around the outside and also inside it, just like the nerves at the top of your penis. When these nerve-endings are being touched or stroked it can really turn you on.



You don't have to have intercourse to enjoy the feelings of your anus. You can use fingers, either your own or someone else's. Try using your fingers to begin with and you will soon see what we mean. Be a bit careful the first time though, and never put anything else up your anus, as this can be dangerous. Also it is a good idea to use something slippery when having sex this way, such as baby oil or Vaseline. You can use spit when there is nothing else around.

If you find anal intercourse a little hard, it may be because it is not your thing. Or it might be that you need to practice a bit for the pleasure to come through just like anything else that's new. Don't get hung up about it. Like we said, it's just one way of enjoying sex among lots of others.

There are gay sex books around now that really go into details. (See the list of books at the back.) But really all you both need to do is to

relax, take things gently at first, and enjoy the excitement of being close to the person you are having sex with.

Learning how to give and receive love through warm and enjoyable sex is one of the best ways of showing the world how much we like ourselves and each other.

It also shows the straight world that they are not going to force us to live according to their narrow-minded ideas. There are lots of stories about men and sex. Men are supposed to take a pride in how many different people they have had sex with, for instance. Well, that's **not** important. Men are even supposed to be proud of making someone have sex with them who doesn't really want to. That's an unforgivable thing to do. That's just the kind of stupid idea we can do without! As gay men we should be showing the world we can be loving to each other, and that all those stories about what "real" men are meant to be like are just a load of bullshit.



It is not a crime to **be** homosexual.

But in all states except South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory, it is a crime for any male, no matter how old he is, to have any kind of sex with another male. It doesn't matter if it's behind closed doors and both males are 14 years old. All gay male sex is outlawed.

It is illegal too for one man to let another know that he is interested in having sex with him. Catching a guy's eye can get you into trouble — if that guy happens to be a policeman.

In Victoria there is even a law that makes it a crime for gays to hang around public places like parks or beaches. Sixty-eight men got arrested at Black Rock beach in 1977 for just that. They got trapped into admitting they were gay to plain clothed police who were posing as gay.

Lesbian sex is not a crime in any state of Australia unless one of the women involved is a minor. However, lesbians often get treated unfairly by courts if they get divorced and the husband wants the children. Judges can say that a lesbian, no matter how well she has looked after her children in the past, is not "fit" to keep her children.

MINORS AND THE LAW

All sex between a minor (under 16 years of age by Victorian law) and a person over 16 is illegal. This is so for gays and straights — but the law is likely to hit harder in the gay situation. If a man of 23 has sex with a 15 year old boy, then the 23 year old could be in serious trouble if the police found out. This happens occasionally, e.g. when the couple are caught having sex in cars, or if the boy's parents find out and want to punish the man (or their son). The older man could be sent to prison.

There are also laws — "offensive behaviour" laws — that are sometimes used to stop gay people showing affection to one another.

Holding hands or kissing can be a crime — if it happens to offend a near-by policeman.

Gay groups in Victoria are working together to get these stupid laws changed. It seems that everybody except the politicians are convinced that the anti-gay laws are stupid. A 1976 Gallup Poll showed that 68% of Australians think that gay male sex should not be a crime. The major churches in Victoria are in favour of reform. Both political parties in Victoria say they support homosexual law reform. And the Premier has been making promises for two years. But the anti-gay laws are still there!

Police very rarely arrest people for gay sex in private, e.g. in your home. Although we do know of a few cases where men have been charged after they admitted to the police that they had gay sex in private. Most of the arrests of gay men — a couple of hundred each year — are for hanging around a street or park trying to meet other gays, or for having sex in places like cars parked in secluded spots.



YOUR RIGHTS

Points to remember if you are picked up by the police

1. Never say that you are gay.
2. In Victoria, NSW, Queensland and Tasmania: if the police ask you your name and address, you don't have to tell them unless you are in a car, or unless you've been arrested. If you are arrested and they ask you other questions, you should refuse to answer. Just say "No comment".
3. Police have no legal right to take you to the Police Station unless they arrest you. If you are arrested, you should ask what the charge is, and do not resist in any way. This only makes things worse.
4. If you are taken to the Police Station, you don't have to answer any questions, or make a statement to the police even if you are charged with an offence.
5. If you are under 16 years of age and decide to make a statement or be interviewed by the police, you should not answer any questions unless your parents or an adult friend is with you.
6. The police have no legal right to take your fingerprints or photograph you. If they ask your permission you should refuse.
7. Unless the police charge you with an offence they cannot force you to stay at the Police Station.

DEALING WITH THE POLICE

1. When the police ask you to answer questions their purpose is to get you to say things which they can use as evidence against you later. This is why you should never make a statement or answer any questions until **after** you have spoken to a lawyer. **Don't trust the police.** Often they will make promises which they have no intention of keeping such as "we won't tell your parents" or "if you'll make a statement you'll be out of here in 10 minutes".
2. If you do answer police questions **don't tell lies.** Although the law says you don't have to answer questions if you don't want to, there is a law which says that any answers you give must be truthful.
3. **Beware the good cop/bad cop routine.** A tactic often used to get people to talk is to have two policemen who take turns in asking you questions. Usually they will question you separately. One will pretend to be friendly while the other will be tough and pushy. The "nice" one will tell you to answer the other policeman's questions "to make it easier for yourself". He'll leave the room after a while and the tough one will come in and might say things like "you won't be leaving here until you make a statement" or "we'll charge you with something else if you don't co-operate". Once you have signed a statement your fate is sealed.
4. It pays to recognise that **many police are bullies.** They will heavy you if you look scared, and they will heavy you if you try to be smart. Be confident but polite . . . if you can manage that! It helps if you can remember to say **NO COMMENT** whenever you feel tempted to answer a question.

Are there gay police?

No doubt there are lots. As we said, gays are everywhere. But they don't remain in the force as soon as they are known to be gay. Two policemen who got off together were dismissed from the Victorian police force just this year (1978).

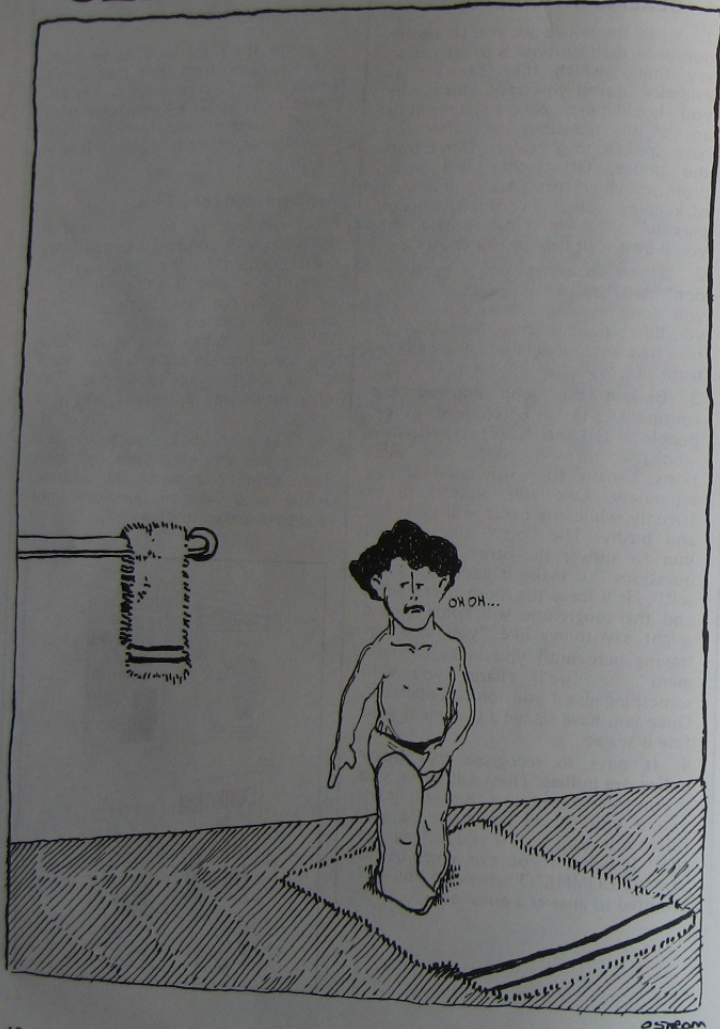
Are there good police?

Police vary, just like everyone else. But the point is, a policeman has to obey orders, or he doesn't remain a policeman for very long. It is the police's job to enforce the law. Some laws are obviously necessary, but some aren't. While there are bad laws, like the anti-gay laws, then unfortunately we can't afford to trust any policeman. The price for making an error of judgement is too high.

Chances are you'll never be arrested. But if you are, keep calm and apart from giving your name and address, refuse to answer all questions until you have spoken to a lawyer.



SEXUAL HEALTH



This section was written with the help of a gay doctor who is experienced in the treatment of venereal disease.

There are diseases which can be spread by people having sex. These are called venereal diseases (V.D.)

V.D. can affect all people — straight or gay. However, it affects gay men more than it does gay women. V.D. is very rare among lesbians.

There are many types of venereal disease, but two of the most common — and most dangerous — are gonorrhoea (the clap) and syphilis (the pox).

Gonorrhoea and syphilis germs live only in warm moist places like the vagina, penis or anus (arse-hole). They can be spread whenever an infected

penis, mouth, anus or vagina comes in contact with the penis, mouth, anus or vagina of another person.

Gonorrhoea and syphilis are **not** spread by towels, toilet seats, etc. The germs that cause the clap and the pox cannot live outside the body for more than a few seconds.

Both gonorrhoea and syphilis are easily cured, but if not treated they can cause serious harm to the body (especially syphilis). The first signs (symptoms) of these diseases sometimes go away even if not treated. This does **not** mean the disease is cured. It is therefore very important to recognise the signs of gonorrhoea and syphilis as soon as they appear.

Gonorrhoea (the clap)

How to tell you have it.

Symptoms show up 2–28 days after sexual contact. There are **no** symptoms for 50–80% of infected women, and for 5–10% of infected men.

In the penis:

Discharge (or drip) from the penis.

Stinging feeling when urinating (pissing).

In the vagina:

There may be a greenish discharge.

Burning feeling around lips of vagina.

Often no symptoms.

In the anus:

Often no symptoms, except for discomfort, soreness or pain in the anus.

Sometimes an anal discharge shows up on underwear. Perhaps itching, pus or blood in faeces (shit), diarrhoea (the runs).

Syphilis (the pox)

Symptoms appear 9–90 days after sexual contact.

There are 3 main stages:

Stage I: A painless sore appears on the spot where syphilis entered the body. It looks like a small blister or ulcer. The sore will go away in 1–5 weeks without treatment. But you are **still infected**.

Stage II: Starts 4–6 weeks after sexual contact. A rash all over the body. This rash is very contagious. May also be fever, sore throat (as though you had the flu). Hair might fall out in patches. A highly contagious stage.

The signs will disappear after a few months if not treated.

Complications

If untreated can cause sterility in both men and women, arthritis and disease of prostate gland (in men).

Stage III: Happens about two years after sexual contact (can be up to 30 years). Affects about 1/3 of all untreated cases. Can attack heart, brain and central nervous system — causing heart disease, insanity, blindness, deafness, paralysis or death.

How to find out for sure

Consult doctor for tests:
a) **gram stain test**
Quick and reliable if there are symptoms.
b) **culture test**
Often used as back-up test. Discharge is scraped from the penis, vagina, throat, or anus, and treated under special laboratory conditions. Gonorrhoea germs can usually be detected if present within 16–48 hours.
If gonorrhoea is suspected but not proven, then doctor may treat with anti-biotics, to be on the safe side.

Consult doctor for blood test. These are very reliable.

In stage I, a scraping taken from the sore and examined under a microscope may show the germ. A blood test may not show the presence of syphilis at this stage.

Treatment and follow up

Penicillin tablets or, more usually, injections. Other anti-biotics are used if you are allergic to penicillin, or if the strain of the disease is resistant to penicillin. One visit and a follow up visit a fortnight later to make sure the germs are killed off. Cure takes about 2 weeks. Then need blood test once a month for next three months.

** As soon as you know you have gonorrhoea or syphilis, make sure you tell all the people you might have given it to, so that they can get treatment.*

** Avoid having sex again until the doctor tells you you're cured.*

** Avoid alcohol, which can affect the medicine used for treating V.D.*

Check ups

It is possible to have gonorrhoea or syphilis without knowing it. You might only find out when you give it to someone else. The only sure way to protect yourself and others is to have regular checks for V.D. (every three to six months).

If you are in a steady sexual relationship with one person, and that person doesn't have sex with anyone besides you, then the risk of catching V.D. is very small. Otherwise there is a real risk, and a routine check up is

necessary.

When you go for a V.D. check, always tell the doctor that you're gay when that is relevant. Many doctors do not check a man's throat or anus for V.D. unless asked to.

Some final points

** You don't become immune to syphilis or gonorrhoea just because you've had them once. You can get either disease again, simply by sexual contact with someone who's infected.*

** It is possible to have both syphilis and gonorrhoea at the same time.*

** The law in Victoria says that doctors must notify parents when a minor is being treated for gonorrhoea or syphilis. Most doctors however use their discretion. If you are worried about this check with the doctor before you go along.*



A WORD ABOUT DOCTORS

Many doctors have bad attitudes towards homosexuality. They don't like us and they think we're sick in the head.

If your doctor starts giving you this feeling, go to another doctor! Their job is to make you feel better.

Some doctors even make you feel bad about getting V.D. Just remember, V.D. is like any other disease. It's nothing to be ashamed of, just a nuisance till it's cured.

If you ring up any of the gay groups listed at the back of this book, you will be told the names and addresses of some good doctors who will treat you just like you should be treated.



One last thing. Never try and treat yourself if you are ill. There are many things that could go wrong, and you could get a lot sicker. What is important is that you know the signs to look for. If you know what's wrong, you can help your doctor and you'll soon be feeling fine again.

N.B. There is nothing about gay sex in itself which makes us any more likely to get V.D. than heterosexuals.

OTHER VENEREAL DISEASES

N.S.U.

Non Specific Urethritis (known as NSU) is a very common condition which mainly affects men. Its cause is not known.

NSU is similar to gonorrhoea, especially in its early stages. The signs are a discharge (usually clear) from the penis, plus mild pain when urinating.

It is possible to have NSU and gonorrhoea at the same time, and the usual treatment for gonorrhoea (penicillin) does **not** cure NSU.

Sometimes the treatment for NSU is to avoid sex until the symptoms are gone, and for about a month after that. More often doctors will prescribe anti-biotics.

Avoid alcohol if you have NSU. It seems that alcohol prolongs the infection.

NSU is contagious, so all partners should be contacted. Although NSU is less serious than gonorrhoea, it must never be ignored. For one thing, untreated NSU can spread and do damage to other parts of the body. For another, it may not be NSU — it may be gonorrhoea.

VENEREAL WARTS

Venereal warts occur on the sex organs of men or women about three months after sexual contact, or other close physical contact, with someone who is infected.

These warts look ugly, but apart from causing some irritation, they are not harmful.

Perhaps the most important thing about venereal warts is that they may

not be warts — but the sign of some more serious disease, in particular syphilis. A blood test is the only sure way to prove that a wart is not in fact syphilis.

One or two visits to a doctor is usually enough to clear up the virus that causes venereal warts.

OTHER DISEASES THAT CAN SPREAD SEXUALLY

HEPATITIS

This is a very serious liver disease that gay men need to watch out for.

It can be caught in many ways — not only by sexual contact. However, sucking a penis or anus, or kissing, are common ways of picking up hepatitis from someone who has it.

Early signs of hepatitis are like those of the flu — muscle aches and pains, tiredness and fever. These signs usually disappear after some time, and then your urine turns brown and your faeces (shit) turns white. Later signs are loss of appetite and jaundice (skin and eyes turn yellow).

The treatment for hepatitis is lots of rest and special diet. There is no cure however. The disease may return if you get run down.

You don't remain infectious however. Hepatitis can be detected by a blood test, and the doctor will tell you when it is safe to have sex again. This may be some time after the symptoms have all disappeared.

VAGINAL DISORDERS

It is part of the body's normal cleansing process to produce a discharge occasionally to clean out the vagina. This discharge should normally be clear or white-coloured, and should not be strong-smelling.

If you have a discharge which is different from this, or if your vagina is itchy, it is a good idea to see your doctor about it.

The two main sorts of vaginal disorders are candidiasis (thrush) and trichomoniasis (trich). Trich (pronounced trike) may be passed on by sexual contact. Thrush on the other hand is brought on by changes in your body (such as pregnancy, diabetes, taking anti-biotics, infection, eg, flu).

The two discharges are quite different:

Trich: foul-smelling, clear/greenish

Thrush: thick and white, like cottage cheese.

The signs of trich or thrush often go away by themselves, but the disease may still be there. Treatment for both disorders is simple — but if not treated they can lead to trouble.

Before going to the doctor, it is best not to douche. You may make it harder for the doctor to see what the problem is.



VAGINAL DEODORANTS

Women's magazines are full of ads telling women to be clean and sweet-smelling by using "intimate deodorants". It is best to avoid these products. They are unnecessary — your lover will probably find your own smell attractive. They also irritate the inside of the vagina, causing more discharge. If applied just before intercourse they can lead to quite severe burning pain. For cleansing purposes, the best thing is hot water and a mild soap like baby soap or Velvet.

HERPES (pronounced HER — PEES)

Herpes genitalis, to give it its proper name, is a virus that is usually passed on during sex. In recent years it has become more common among women.

The signs are groups of painful blisters — like cold sores — appearing on the sex organs or other areas of sexual contact (such as thighs or buttocks). The sores soon break and ooze clear fluid. These open sores can easily become infected.

After seven to 10 days the blisters go away, but the disease may still be there. You can have relapses for years — especially during times of stress — but the first attack is usually the worst.

There is no known effective treatment for herpes. However, methylated spirits or a light dusting of Mycil powder will help the blisters clear up more quickly.

CRABS (pubic lice)

Crabs are a type of lice that make their home — by the hundred — in the pubic hair. They can get into other hairy parts of the body too — even on your wrists! You'll know they are there by the severe itch.

Each crab is about 1 or 2 mm long. Their usual colour is clear/white, but after a blood meal they turn black/red.

Ordinary soap won't get rid of crabs. You need to treat the infested area with Lorexane or Ascabiol (lotions sold at chemists). Put it on at night and wash off in the morning. Two or three applications five days apart is usually enough. Bedclothes and underwear should be washed at the same time. You also need to remove any eggs that you have overlooked. Shaving the pubic hair, and burning it in a tissue, is the best way. Wait for a while before applying the lotion, to avoid a nasty sting.

SCABIES

These mites burrow underneath the skin and leave little scabby tracks. They show up in lots of places, especially the wrists, and often on the ankles, near the groin or under the arms. They are very itchy, especially at night.

Scabies are passed on during sex by skin contact, but they can also be picked up from sheets and towels.

The treatment is the same as for crabs, except that shaving is unnecessary. If not treated, scabies do not do great harm, but they are annoying.

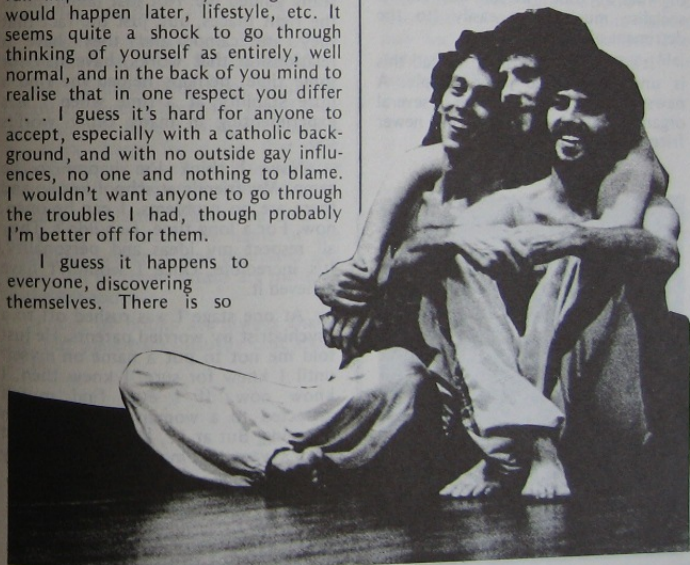
GARY

I think, really, I knew I wasn't attracted to girls at about the age of 12 or 13, though certainly I tried hard to deny it to myself at the time. If anyone had suggested I was homosexual, I would have been horrified. But one thing was there. I liked guys. I couldn't change it. I fantasised about men, and imagined all sorts of situations.

A strange thing is that I can never remember not being attracted to them. It seems to have gone on all through. My parents don't fit that dominant mother — passive father cliché usually blamed, so where it came from, I don't know. It was just there. I had to accept it eventually, although it really took until I was almost 16 to understand the full implications of my feelings. What would happen later, lifestyle, etc. It seems quite a shock to go through thinking of yourself as entirely, well normal, and in the back of your mind to realise that in one respect you differ . . . I guess it's hard for anyone to accept, especially with a catholic background, and with no outside gay influences, no one and nothing to blame. I wouldn't want anyone to go through the troubles I had, though probably I'm better off for them.

I guess it happens to everyone, discovering themselves. There is so

much more than can be written associated with the problem. The feelings when you are rapt in someone you know is "straight", and not really being able to talk to them. The feelings when you find you talk easily with girls, but there's little attraction. I think loving straights is the hardest part of it. You know it's impossible from the start and still you go on. I had a friend, one of the best looking guys in the school, just as a friend, but a best friend. We did all sorts of things together (but not sexual relations at all) until I decided that I liked him far too much for my and his own good. (He was straight.) He couldn't understand why. I eventually told him what I thought I was. One day we did have it off, but he remains straight to this day. There seem to be people who are mostly heterosexual, but like to "swing the other way" for a

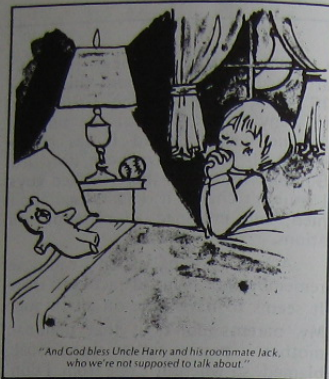
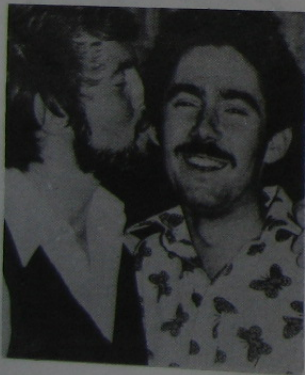


while every now and then. I've met others.

One day I learned the existence of Society Five. I rang their number and described my situation. (A great weight-removing feeling here too.) They suggested I come in one night. I did . . . This was the gay scene. Something I was totally unfamiliar with. Drag queens, effeminates, as well as the "ordinary" looking gays — all together in this disco-place. I was stunned and shocked at first.

It's hard to get used to other people's sexual tastes and preferences I guess from where I sit on "the scale". It's hard to see why they like what they like . . . but now, because I've seen a fair amount of the gay scene to date, I have a much broader picture. It's good now to be able to accept people more. Once, I had a very narrow perception of what a "good" person was. Now I socialise much more easily (to the detriment of studies!).

It's incredible to think that all this is underground. So many people. A newspaper like **Campaign**, several organisations, and many of my newer friends.



My friends have helped a lot. A couple living several miles away have really guided me. Not just taken me to the right places, but, just the fact that they are camp, and they have a relationship that works, have had for some time, perhaps helped me find a little stability at a time when I was experimenting in many other worlds too.

Now, I think I'm happy to be camp. My friends at school know, and there are no problems. I can be open, now. For a long time, I couldn't. They all respect my ideas and personality. It's incredible. Once I wouldn't have believed it.

At one stage I was rushed off to a psychiatrist by worried parents. He just told me not to put a name on myself until I knew for sure. I knew then. I know now. If I ever find myself attracted to a woman, I'll know I'm changing. But at 17, I'm pretty sure of what I want, and most straights will say the same thing.

RESOURCES

SOME GOOD BOOKS ON HOMOSEXUALITY

WHERE TO GET GAY BOOKS

In Melbourne, there are three bookshops that have a wide range of books on homosexuality:

1. International Bookshop, 2nd Floor, 17 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne, 3000. Tel. (03) 61-2859.
2. Open Leaves Bookshop, 16 St Kilda Road, St Kilda, 3182 (near the Junction). Tel. 51-5614.
3. Readings Bookshop, 384 Lygon Street, Carlton, 3053. Tel. 347-6085.

All of these bookshops would be happy to order a book for you if they don't already have it in stock. There is no extra charge for doing that. But you sometimes have to wait up to three months before the book comes in.

When ordering books you need to know the full title, the name of the publisher, where it was published and when. All of those details are included in the list above.

Prices of books are always changing, but paperbacks usually cost about \$3.00.

BORROWING

If you can't afford to buy books, then try libraries. Two public libraries in Melbourne that have quite good collections on homosexuality are:

1. Moonee Valley Regional Library, 762 Mount Alexander Road, ESSENDON, 3040. Tel. 370-5344.
2. Fitzroy Public Library (part of the Fitzroy Town Hall), 201 Napier Street, FITZROY, 3065.

Moonee Valley is the public library which has a specialisation on the subject of homosexuality. You can arrange an **Inter-Library Loan** through your nearest public library.

Society Five, a club for gay people, also has a good library. Borrowing is restricted to members — but visitors may use books on the premises. The address is 126 Franklin Street, Melbourne, 3000. Tel. 329-5555.

Here are some books we think you may like. The ones marked with an * are more difficult to read than this book.

*Sydney ABBOT and Barbara LOVE.AUTHORS
Sappho was a right on woman; a liberated view of lesbianismTITLE
New York WHERE PUBLISHED
Stein and Day
paperback (p/b) PUBLISHER
1973 YEAR OF PUBLICATION

This book deals with the authors' lives as lesbians, and it talks about overcoming the problems of unfair treatment of lesbians, and women generally.

*Dennis ALTMAN. **Homosexual; oppression and liberation.** London, Penguin p/b, 1971.

This book tells us why and how the Gay Liberation movement got started in America in the late 1960's where Dennis Altman, an Australian gay man, happened to be at the time. A good general book that is likely to be in many school libraries.

Rita Mae BROWN. **Rubyfruit Jungle.** Plainfield, Vermont, Daughters Inc., 1973.

This is a novel about growing up poor and lesbian in America. It's basically a true story from the author's own life. Molly Bolt, the heroine, has a lot of guts and a great sense of humor.

BOSTON Women's Health Book Collective. **Our bodies ourselves; a book by and for women.** New York, Touchstone p/b, second edition (revised and expanded) 1976. First published 1971.

This book is designed to help women look after their own bodies, and it has good chapters on sexuality, lesbianism, and venereal diseases. It is likely to be in many school and local libraries.

Jocelyn CLARKE. "Life as a lesbian" in **The other half; women in Australian society.** Jan Mercer (ed.,). Pelican, 1975.

A Melbourne woman discusses the oppression of lesbians in general terms, and in the light of her own experiences. She explains how the Gay and Women's Liberation movements changed her view of herself, and concludes with hopes for the future.

Peter FISHER. **The gay mystique; the myth and reality of male homosexuality.** New York, Stein and Day p/b, 1972.

*This book is about gay male life as seen from the inside. It has sections on gay teachers, gay friends, growing up gay. Written in a simple and friendly style, **The gay mystique** is an excellent introduction for straights or gays.*

Sol GORDON (text) and Roger CONANT (illustration and design). **Ten heavy facts about sex.** Ed-up Press, 760 Ostrom Ave., Syracuse, N.Y. 13210, 1971. Revised edition, 1975.

This comic book gives simple, basic information about sex without any preaching. It is one of the few sex-ed books that talks about gay sex in a matter of fact way. Good for school libraries.

Jospeh HANSEN

• **Death claims.** London, Quartet p/b, 1974.

• **Fadeout.** London, Quartet p/b, 1974.

• **Trouble.** London, Hutchinson, 1975.

Three detective story thrillers. A gay detective spots clues that the straights miss.

Laura HOBSON. **Consenting adult.** New York, Warner p/b, 1976. First published 1975.

A woman who in real life is the mother of a gay son, writes about a young man coming out with his family. The parents in this story make many mistakes — but in coming to accept their son, they learn a lot about the problems facing all gay people, especially those created by psychiatrists (shrinks) who believe they can "cure" homosexuality.

*Christopher ISHERWOOD. **A single man.** First published 1964.

A day in the life of a middle-aged gay man coping with lost love. A serious novel but hilarious in parts as he dreams up elaborate schemes of revenge for those mean-minded people who would make his life so boring and miserable.

*Jonathan KATZ. **Gay American history; Lesbians and Gay men in the U.S.A.** New York, Thomas Crowell Company, 1976.

An amazing collection of documents which shed light on the history of same-sex love in the U.S.A. between 1566 and 1976, plus some commentary by Jonathan Katz. Cleverly indexed to show which documents are relevant to lesbians.

*Dolores KLAICH. **Woman + woman; attitudes towards lesbianism.** New York, Morrow p/b, 1975.

This book traces the history of doctors' attitudes towards lesbianism since the last century. There are also notes on how famous lesbians in history viewed themselves, plus interviews with contemporary lesbians.

David KOPAY and Perry DEANE YOUNG. **The David Kopay story.** New York, Arbor House, 1977. (Also available in p/b).

An American grid-iron player writes about what it was like to come out as gay at the peak of his football career, and about his changing idea of what it is to be a "man".

Ronald LEE, Frank MELLENO and Robert MULLES. **Gay men speak.** Yes Book of Sex Series, San Francisco, Multi-Media Resources Centre, 1973.

Men who feel good about being gay talk about love, sex and life. Simple text, interesting pictures — fun to read quickly.

Fr. John McNeill. **The church and the homosexual.** London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1977.

An openly gay Jesuit priest and biblical scholar has written a book which questions the correctness of church teaching on homosexuality. Fr. McNeill received permission from his superiors in Rome to publish this book — but now the U.S. Catholic Church has ordered John McNeill to stop writing and lecturing on the subject of homosexuality.

Del MARTIN and Phyllis LYON. **Lesbian love and liberation.** San Francisco, Yes Book of Sex Series, Multi Media Resource Centre, 1973.

Same style as Gay men speak by Ronald Lee — and every bit as good.

Isabel MILLER. **Patience and Sarah.** New York, Panther p/b, 1974.

A nineteenth century lesbian love-story by a modern lesbian writer.

Frank MOORHOUSE. **Tales of mystery and romance.** London, Angus and Robertson, 1977.

Patricia NELL WARREN. **The front-runner.** New York, Bantam p/b, 1974.

A fictional account of a homosexual love affair set in the big time American athletic scene. A best seller in the U.S. and soon to be made into a film.

Patricia NELL WARREN. **The fancy dancer.** New York, Bantam p/b, 1976.

The story of a young catholic priest torn between obedience to the rules of his church, and his feelings for another man.

The NOMADIC Sisters. **Loving women.** Illustrated by Ann Miya. Sonora California, The Nomadic Sisters, 1976.

A serious guide to lesbian love-making, beautifully illustrated.

John REID. **The best little boy in the world.** New York, Ballantyne p/b, 1977, First published 1973.

A genuinely funny book about coming out, exploring sexuality, and the great pretending game we have all played at some time or other.

*Elizabeth RILEY. **All that false instruction.** London, Angus and Robertson, 1975.

A novel about growing up lesbian in Australia. Very well written.

Dr. Charles SILVERSTEIN. **A family matter; a parent's guide to homosexuality.** New York, McGraw Hill, 1977.

This is an excellent book for all parents who want to understand their gay children. It includes true stories of how different families have handled their gay children coming out. It also has an account of a meeting of the group in America called Parents of Gays.

Dr. Charles SILVERSTEIN and Edmund WHITE. **Joy of gay sex; an intimate guide for gay men to the pleasures of gay lifestyle.** New York, Crown Publishers, 1977.

A gay men's sex manual — with advice on topics, such as growing old, coping with jealousy. The section called "First Time" may be helpful for any man who is worried about anal sex.

Angela STEWART-PARK and Jules CASSIDY. **We're here; conversations with lesbian women.** London, Quartet p/b, 1977.

A cross section of lesbian women talk about coming out, friends, lovers, family, job, women's liberation, and so on. Simple language and really good reading.

Ginny VIDA (editor) and the women of the National Gay Task Force. **Our right to love; a lesbian resource book.** New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1978.

A wide selection of lesbian writings of varying quality. Excellent article by a lesbian teacher.

Gore VIDAL. **The city and the pillar.** St. Albans, Panther p/b, 1972. First published 1948.

One of the first novels to deal frankly with homosexuality. A young man leaves behind a sheltered life to explore the underground gay world of America in the 1940's. Despite an awful ending, still good reading.

*Dr George WEINBERG. **Society and the healthy homosexual.** New York, Doubleday p/b, 1973. First published 1972.

A heterosexual psychiatrist comes out on the side of gays. He talks about homophobia, the fear and hatred of homosexuality that he sees in his patients, his colleagues and society generally. A very good chapter on "Communication with Parents". A good book for straight friends, family, school counsellors.

RECORDS

A number of gay records have been released recently. Artists include Tom Robinson Band, Chris Williamson, Casse Culva, Linda Tillery, Meg Christian.

A wide selection is available at Readings Record Shop, 366 Lygon Street, Carlton. Tel. 347-7473.

GAY GROUPS IN VICTORIA

Gay Teachers' and Students' Group
P.O. Box 35,
FITZROY, 3065.

Meets the first Wednesday of every month at Society Five, 126 Franklin Street, Melbourne, at 8.00 p.m. Purpose is twofold; a) to support gay teachers and students rights and b) public education. Publishes monthly newsletter of general interest to all gay people.

Gay Liberation
P.O. Box 35,
FITZROY, 3065.
Tel. 41-4926.

Meets weekly, phone for details. Runs Gay Liberation Programme on 3CR (840 on dial) each Wednesday at 7.30 p.m. Provides speakers for schools, community groups, etc. Can advise on sympathetic doctors, lawyers and counsellors for gay people. Active in struggle for gay rights.

Society Five
G.P.O. Box 1801,
MELBOURNE, 3001.

Tel. 329-5555 (Gayline — staffed 7.30—11.00 p.m. nightly).

Clubroom at 126 Franklin Street, Melbourne. Very good library.

Central Victorian Gay Group
P.O. Box 973,
SHEPPARTON, 3630.
Tel. (054) 42-1176.



Mark Ambler

Brian "Dolphin" Taylor

Tom Robinson

Danny Kustow

Gay Readers and Writers Group

Meets third Tuesday of the month at Open Leaves Bookshop, 16 St. Kilda Road, St Kilda. Discussion on newly published gay books and any gay writings of those attending.

Lesbian Counselling and Information
P.O. Box 29,
FITZROY, 3065.

Council of Adult Education

A 10 week series of evening classes called *Understanding Homosexuality* is held by Council of Adult Education twice a year. In the past, courses have covered such topics as coming out with family and friends, work and the law, attitudes of the medical profession, biology, religion — for and against, gay lifestyles, literature and films. Telephone C.A.E. on (03) 63-4231 for details.

CHRISTIAN CHURCHES OPEN TO ALL, BUT WITH SPECIAL MINISTRY TO GAY PEOPLE

Christ's Community Church
Services each Sunday at 8.00 p.m.
62 Rathmines Street,
FAIRFIELD. Tel. 489-8823 for information.

Metropolitan Community Church
62 Toorak Road West,
SOUTH YARRA, 3141.
Services each Sunday at 8.00 p.m.,
Thursdays at 7.30 p.m. Tel. 26-4254.

Acceptance/Melbourne(group for gay Catholics)
P.O. Box 276
CARLTON, 3053.

For detailed information about gay activities in Melbourne, see special supplement to edition No 32 of **CAMPAIN** (national gay newspaper with a strong bias towards men). Write to P.O. Box J41, Brickfield Hill, Sydney, 2000 for back copies. Enclose \$1. Current issues available at newsagents. In Melbourne Tel. 63-5572 for further details.

SYDNEY

CAMP N.S.W.
33A Glebe Point Road,
GLEBE, 2037.
Coffee shop open 8.00 p.m. nightly.
Women only on Wednesday.
Young Camp Saturday 2.00 p.m.
Phone-A-Friend (02) 660-0061, 6.00—10 p.m. nightly.

ADELAIDE

Adelaide Homosexual Alliance (a broadly based group for gay men). Holds general meetings on second Saturday of each month.
P.O. Box 301,
NORWOOD, 5067.
Tel. (08) 79-2165.
Publishes a very informative monthly newsletter.

Gay Counselling Service.
G.P.O. Box 244,
ADELAIDE, 5001.
Tel. (08) 71-3688.

BRISBANE

Camp Club,
379 George Street,
BRISBANE, 4000.
Tel. (07) 221-9373.
Open every night 8.00 — 10.00 p.m.
Patchwork — gay women's group — every Wednesday.



A rationale, and some guidelines for use
by teachers, counsellors and parents of
gay students

As gay teachers, we have seen the situation of gay students from both sides. We have all been through the schooling system, and many of us recall school as the worst time of our lives. This was stated in an early Gay Teachers' Group manifesto:

...It's no paradise for homosexual people when they leave school. But looking back now, many of us can clearly see that the system which professed to enlighten, kept us fearfully in the dark about ourselves, defenceless against the forces that say it is sick/immoral/immature/or in some way inferior to feel love for someone of your own sex.

Sometimes the system actively persecuted us; more often it achieved a similar effect by pretending homosexuality does not exist.

It let you soak up the negative messages about homosexuality that abound in this society, and put the rubber stamp on them by remaining silent. The total control of school and family made sure that you had no way out of your isolation. You're left to think you are the only one one in the world, or the others are so worthless that you wouldn't want to know them anyway.

And today?

Notwithstanding the proliferation of human relationships programmes in secondary schools, there is still an abysmal lack of accurate information about homosexuality in schools. In the vacuum there prevails a welter of misinformation, half-truths and downright lies.

There are still no visible models to inspire optimism or courage in gay students contemplating their futures as homosexual adults (and the Queensland Government's treatment of Greg Weir is presumably intended as a lesson to any gay teacher who has the temerity to speak openly and without apology about his homosexuality).

There is still the constant anti-homosexual abuse - verbal and sometimes physical. In fact, if there has been any significant change at all in the past 10 years, it seems to be that students learn to use the epithets *poofster* and *lesso* earlier and more frequently than they used to.

The attitudes that most student demonstrate are understandable if not acceptable. They too have been force fed a diet of unchallenged myths by the institutions responsible for information dissemination,

and particularly by the media. Schools are often passive collaborators in that process. Most teachers now recognize that racism is an ignorant and offensive trait, and such name-calling as jew, wog, dago, blackie will usually not be allowed to pass. Yet the ignorant, prejudiced and intimidatory talk about homosexuality is rarely deemed worthy of examination and intervention.

Unlike the young members of mistreated racial minority groups, the gay student generally does not receive support either from family or peer group. Indeed pressures from family and peer group may be the gay student's greatest problem. Unless s/he decides to leave school prematurely and become financially independent, the gay student has no option but to cope as best s/he can with those pressures. It is at times such as these that young gay people are particularly vulnerable to the false promises of psychiatrists who sell "cures" for homosexuality. (1)

Why a book for gay students?

Two years ago the Gay Teachers' Group published an annotated bibliography of resources which deal with homosexuality outside of the sin/sickness/neurosis frame of reference. The purpose of this bibliography (2) was to provide a list of selected references for those of our colleagues who wanted to educate themselves and others about homosexuality. In surveying the literature, we were particularly on the lookout for books which could be recommended for students. Our criteria were three-fold. A suitable book would:

1. clearly affirm the validity of a homosexual preference,
2. provide accurate and relevant information to the gay student,
- and 3. convey its message in simple and direct language.

We found that there were many books written for adults that fulfilled some of these criteria - but they were either too sophisticated in language, or, in the case of the good fiction works, did not address themselves specifically to the questions likely to be on a young gay person's mind. The standard sex education works, it should be noted, were singularly unsuitable by all criteria. (3)

Undaunted by our lack of experience in writing books, a collective of the Gay Teachers' and Students' Group decided that there was no time like the present to start producing the book that we believed was needed urgently.

The idea was to produce an introductory book (4), consistent with the above criteria, which would communicate a few basic truths:

- that young gay people are not alone,
- that many of their anxieties about being gay have no basis in reality,
- that there are some real hassles in being gay, but the source of these rests not in them for being gay, but in a society

that is:

- anti-sex (except in so far as sex can be exploited for money-making, or contained within heterosexual marriage for the purposes of procreation);
- obsessed with enforcing artificial distinctions between the sexes (defining one set of characteristics as *human* and the other set as *womanly*);
- and brutally intolerant of relationships which fall outside of the heterosexual nuclear family norm,

that gay people's present circumstances are not immutable, that collectively gay people and others whose rights have been similarly abridged have the strength to effect change in the society that denies us our dignity, and tries to keep us isolated and afraid.

The book is written as if the reader is gay. As such, it is meant as an anti-dote to the countless number of sex ed. guides that assume everyone is or should be heterosexual.

This is not to say that students who do not identify as gay will not find the book interesting or relevant. Many people who have experienced gay feelings but whose basic orientation is heterosexual (or bisexual) will relate to parts of the book. And many of course will read it for no other reason than curiosity.

Whatever the reader's motivation, if the book promotes better understanding of the position of the young homosexual *vis a vis* society, then it will have achieved something important. Hopefully in that process it will also promote a better understanding of the reader's own homosexual potential, regardless of where that person stands on the Kinsey scale.

Using the book

Parts of the book could be used in isolation and here are some suggestions:

- The questions in the Introduction, the letters and perhaps the cartoons and photographs could be used as stimuli for writing or acting.
- The sections titled "Big Lies and Funny Pictures" and "Getting Stepped on Twice" relate to discussion of sex roles, sexism or women's liberation.
- The parents sub-section of "Telling People" could bring out hitherto neglected aspects of Family Relationships.

The "Doing It" sections (male and female) may be appropriate discussion starters on the topic of sexual ethics (besides their obvious usefulness in answering the perennial question "But what do they actually do?")!

"Sexual Health" could be used to correct the heterosexual bias in most writings about venereal disease.

The section on "Law" could be incorporated into an appropriate unit of study in either Social Studies or Legal Studies.

The Gay Teachers' and Students' Group is happy for sections of the book to be reprinted without permission, however we do request suitable acknowledgement.

Distribution

The book is not being distributed indiscriminately. The aim is to reach young adults who have identified themselves as homosexual, and whose anxieties may have been aroused by misinformation, and as is frequently the case, where these anxieties have been compounded by isolation.

We are aware however that many of the intended audience will be unlikely to seek the booklet in a way that would require them to risk being thought of as gay.

For this reason we hope that copies of the book may be left in places where it is accessible, with a minimum of embarrassment, to the students who really need it. For examples, in the sex education sections of school or public libraries.

Secondly, we hope that the booklet will be read by sympathetic teachers, parents, librarians, counsellors, social workers, school administrators - people who may establish a relationship of trust with a gay student, and thereby be in a position to offer support where necessary.

The role of sex educators

All teachers are in contact with a sizeable number of young gay people, whether they realize it or not. And this fact has special implications for the organisers of a comprehensive human relationships programme. Does the content of the course - the books and films used, the speakers brought in, the group discussion and the individually assigned work - reflect the reality of the 10% (5) of students whose homosexuality is not a "phase"? It is crucial that those people identified by students as "experts" on the subject of sexuality never confirm or appear to confirm the notion that being gay is somehow defective. Privately held liberal attitudes are of little value if the educator

selects resources which condemn homosexuality or which condescendingly refer to it as a manifestation of "immaturity", which dwell on its alleged causes, which suggest that it would be preferable to become bisexual, or which ignore it completely.

Whilst realizing the difficulties of setting up a human relationships programme in many schools, we feel that an unequivocal affirmation of the validity of homosexual relationships is the only responsible course open to educators. Gay students need support and they need it now. If you as a teacher or you as a parent feel uncomfortable about that fact, then we ask you to examine the basis of your feelings. Sometimes counsellors tell us they would like to help but feel inadequate (lacking knowledge, or being inexperienced in relating to people they know are gay). This is understandable, and it is one of the reasons the Gay Teachers' and Students' Group exists: to provide back-up resources - books, speakers, referrals - for colleagues who do accept responsibility for responding helpfully to gay students. Sometimes teachers say that they find the subject of homosexuality personally too threatening. In which case we admire their honesty and encourage them to collaborate with those teachers who the confidence and competence to counsel gay students honestly and positively.

Effective change in the situation for gay students will not be achieved by decree or by mere good intentions. The publication of Young, gay and proud is one small step in a long overdue educational campaign. Real change will be a long term process in which all of us who have helped perpetuate the cycle of oppression of our gay students, whether actively or by default, seriously examine our attitudes - and where necessary, make a conscious commitment to risk stepping out of that role. We've all got a lot of lies to unlearn.

The Booklet Collective,
Melbourne Gay Teachers' and Students' Group,
August 1978.

Footnotes

- (1) The notion of "cures" for homosexuality depends on the premise that homosexuality is a "sickness", and that is a value judgement not a medical fact. (Witness the decision by the American Psychiatric Association to remove homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses in 1973.) However quite apart from the question of the ethical propriety of attempting to "cure" homosexuality, there is a growing body of evidence exposing the fraudulent claims of psychiatrists who have claimed that such "cures" are possible. See "A critique of aversion therapy for homosexuals" by Australian psychologist Robin Winkler (Sydney, 1972) and "The Cure Issue" in The homosexual matrix, by Dr. C. Tripp (N.Y., Signet, 1975). Also see "The case

- (1) cont.
against trying to convert" in Society and the healthy homosexual by Dr. George Weinberg (N.Y., Doubleday Anchor, 1972).
- (2) A limited number of copies of Gay bibliography are available for \$2.00 (including postage) from P.O. Box 35, Fitzroy, 3065. A revised edition is planned for publication early in 1979.
- (3) For an extensive critique of the anti-homosexual bias in sex education books for young adults, see "Playing favourites; the trouble with sex ed. guides", by L. Stenson, in School Library Journal, v.23, no. 4 (Nov. 1976), pp. 34-35.
Also see comment by the Melbourne Gay Teachers' and Students' Group on the widely used Australian Science Education Project unit Males and females, and its sequel, Making sense of sex by Hugh Eadie, in Associate News (journal of the Technical Teachers Association of Victoria), April 29, 1977.
- (4) Young, gay and proud is intended as an introductory book, and the serious student of homosexuality is advised to consult Gay Bibliography for a comprehensive reference list. Its categories include: General reference; Fiction and literary history; History and social science; Counselling and anti-psychiatry; Periodicals; and Films.
- (5) For substantiation of this figure see "Memorandum on the incidence of homosexuals in the United States" by Paul Gebhard, Director, Institute for Sex Research, Indiana (March 18, 1977), reprinted in the Gay Teachers' and Students' Group Newsletter, July 1978. Gebhard's re-working and updating of the Kinsey data indicates (conservatively) that 9.13% of the U.S. adult population has more homosexual than heterosexual experience for a period of at least three years between the ages of 16 and 55 years.

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