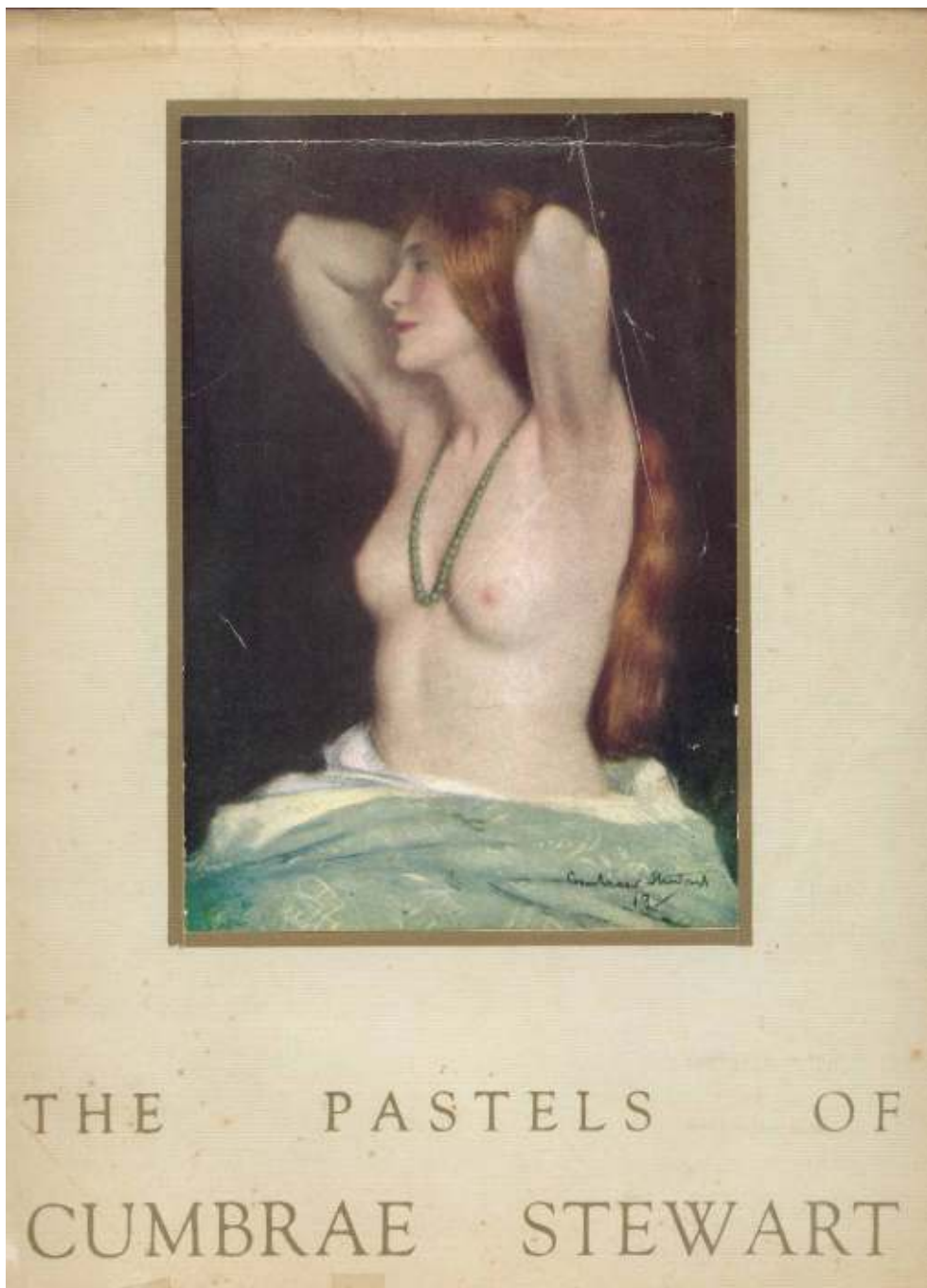


# Annual Report 2011



Reproduction of cover of a rare edition of *The Pastels of Cumbrae Stewart*, c.1921  
Further information inside.

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## **Committee members 2011**

***as elected at Annual General Meeting 25 November 2010***

Graham Willett (President)

Daniel Marshall (Vice-President)

Mark Pendleton (Secretary)

Gary Jaynes (Treasurer)

Nick Henderson

Sarah Rood

## **Patrons**

Professor Dennis Altman, AM

Joan Nestle

*Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives Inc*

*PO Box 124*

*Parkville, Vic 3052, AUSTRALIA*

*Email: [algarchives@hotmail.com](mailto:algarchives@hotmail.com)*

*Website: [alga.org.au](http://alga.org.au)*

*Incorporated Assn No. A0000240Z*

*ABN 92 450 443 760*

**Cover image:** ALGA holds two editions of *The Pastels of Cumbrae Stewart*. For an appreciation of the work of Janet Cumbrae Stewart and others, see article by Peter Di Sciascio (donor of this book), "Australian lesbian artists in the early twentieth century", in Yorick Smaal and Graham Willett (eds), *Out here : gay and lesbian perspectives VI*, Clayton, Monash University Publishing, 2011.

## **OFFICEBEARERS' REPORT**

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 16 NOVEMBER 2011**

#### **Introduction**

2011 has been another very good year for the Archives. The major expansion of our space has been completed and virtually the whole collection is now in one place for the first time in many years and is better organised than ever. Membership is at an all time high and our finances are very sound. Volunteers are continuing to present themselves and we are working to utilise the skills and enthusiasm that they bring. Alongside collecting and preserving Australian queer history we have as one of our primary activities the celebration of that history and our outreach activities have been very strong; marked not least by the publication of what we usually politely refer to as the 'long-awaited' *Secret Histories of Queer Melbourne*.

Nonetheless, there are challenges ahead including changes in committee membership, the continuing growth in the size and scope of the collection and in the number of users wanting access. Major projects including the development and recording of policies and procedures, collection management and preservation are on the agenda.

We are optimistic and remain enthusiastic without being indifferent to the challenges that we face.

#### **Storage and collection work**

The third and final phase of ALGA's renovations of the new spaces at the Victorian AIDS Council has now been completed. This involved installation of extra shelving in the basement, to supplement the compactus which was installed there late 2010. The new shelving includes two plan cabinets, giving us much needed storage capacity for ALGA's poster collection (which numbers about 1150 catalogued and a backlog of over 300 yet to be properly housed and listed). We're grateful to the many people whose donations and advice over several years has enabled the refurbishment work at the Victorian AIDS Council.

After decades in storage in various members' houses, the ALGA book collection (about 3600 titles) is now located in the basement storage area. We're much indebted to Liz R for housing the book collection these last four years. Thanks also to the volunteers who helped with the relocation and rehousing the books, and in particular John W and Anton for several days of work on this task. ALGA's VHS video collection, international periodicals and now the books have all been rehoused and relocated this year. Thanks to Anton and Harsh, ALGA's international periodicals have been audited for the first time in many years – a demanding job over several months.

Other collection work undertaken this year includes

- Nick Henderson's finding aids on the papers of Peter Tully and Ralph McLean and research guides on Transgender and gender-questioning communities, and Indigenous gay and transgender (sistergirl) material in the ALGA
- Lee J's index of Melbourne Gay Liberation Newsletter (320 records)
- Kristy's index of Wicked Women – in progress.

- Anton's listing of Ian Goller's papers (1420+ records, nearly complete)
- Digitisation of photographic collections from The Organizers, Bill Brooks and Quilt Project – Trevor and Harsh
- Conversion from Word to Excel of ALGA's photograph listing (over 3600 records) – Anton
- Digitisation of analogue audio cassettes and VHS videos – ongoing - Francis G, Luke and others from time to time.
- Ephemera file audit and rehousing – ongoing - Carla

### **Thanks to VAC**

We wish to thank the VAC Board for providing us with the space on the first floor and in the basement and for the welcoming attitude of all the staff. We would especially like to add our thanks to Mike Kennedy who resigned this year. His support over the years has been much appreciated.

### **Great Big Catalogue Project**

Led by Nick and Sarah, a group of volunteers, including John S, Cornel, Joh, Michael (all with some interest and expertise in the areas of IT and cataloguing) have been working on how we might go about developing a single 'great big catalogue' to bring ALGA's collection lists and indexes together into an easily searchable form. Such a catalogue would enable access to information about the collection items online, including digital images of some collection items. The group is about to start testing a sample set of data relating to a number of collection material types through two open-source collection database software systems.

This project is supported by a grant from Grants to Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations program.

### **Preservation Needs Assessment**

Following on from last year's Significance Assessment, we were granted \$4,400 by the National Library of Australia's Community Heritage Grants program for a Preservation Needs Assessment, conducted by Jude Fraser from the Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation and the Report is being finalised this month. From the draft we are working with, it is clear that the Archives has done a remarkably good job of preserving the materials in the collection and the issue is not one of how to address basic needs but rather what further activities could we undertake to enhance the long-term survival of the materials.

This is essentially stage two of a three stage process: Significance Assessment (2010), Preservation Needs Assessment (2011), and an application for preservation activities funding as recommended by stage two. We will be developing our stage three application in the coming months.

### **Website Renewal**

Over the last few months John W, who has been managing our website for some years now, began a process of reviewing and renewing it. This has involved a shift away from our existing service

provider to one which provides more storage space at a reasonable cost. John has also shifted us to Wordpress and has created a website that is considerably more content-rich. We now have images, refreshed on high rotation, and frequently changing text content drawing upon our history columns. We expect to move to online sales of books and other paraphernalia and membership renewals in due course.

## **Users**

People using the collection this year have been working on/interested in topics including: the 1969 Melbourne season of *The Boys in the Band*; JOY FM; the Performance Space, NSW; hate speech; beat culture after WW2; 'outings' c1954-1956; photos of the late Wayne Bennett (also known as Wendy Wayne); the Northern Territory; gay and lesbian media history; pre-movement homosexual life in Melbourne; aversion therapy in the 1960s and 70s; ageing and care in GLBT communities; the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence; Dykes Diary 1977; dance parties; Chillout; 1970s wine bars in Newcastle; Telstra ad campaign 1995; physical culture/ fitness/ bodybuilding in Australia; Melbourne Gay Liberation; 1980s gay male life ...

This material was being sought for a range of uses from documentary films, plays, TV programs, Honours, masters and PhD research, anniversaries ...

## **Collection**

Thanks as always to the groups around Australia which continue to provide ALGA with copies of their publications. Without your support, there would be no Archives. And to all those who have made one-off donations of material which has greatly enhanced our collection – who are literally too numerous to mention here – thank you very much.

## **Venues photographic project**

From time to time we are able to initiate the collection of historically significant materials. One such opportunity presented itself with year with the sudden announcement that the Market Hotel in South Yarra was to close after many years as one of Melbourne's premier commercial venues. John Storey, who has been photographing the gay community since the early 1970s offered to take some photos of the interior of the Market while it was still operating. Nick spoke to the managers and has collected some digital material that reflects the Market's rich history.

John has since produced a fine collection of photographs of DT's Hotel and Dulcie Du Jour's shows.

Melbourne photographer Benjamin Ashe also donated a collection of photographs taken at what was thought to be the last night of the Xchange Hotel in South Yarra (it later re-opened).

These projects have enhanced our photographic collection and our commercial venues collection considerably and we thank John and Benjamin very much for their efforts.

We also invite other photographers who may want to assist in this project – particularly those with connections to venues outside Melbourne.

## Members

Current **membership** is 133, a new high for us again this year. Our occasional newsletter goes to about 440 people via email and our Facebook site has many friends signed up.

## Volunteers

The Archives is of course entirely volunteer-run and we have about a dozen people apart from Committee members who regularly contribute to our work by volunteering their time. This work includes ongoing and regular activities as well as one-off projects such as maintaining the website; collecting and processing the periodicals; digitising VHS, audio-visual material, scrapbooks and photos; indexing periodicals; auditing and reorganising individual and group collections within the Archives; staffing opening hours, staffing the Carnival tent with us ... Helen did the history walk program again this year – one of our best.

We want to express our thanks to all of those people who make all this happen: Anton, Carla, Chris, Graham C, Francis G, Harsh, Helen P, Kristy, Lee J, Mohamed, Trevor S, John W, Helen P.

Thanks to the increase in volunteers, we have been able to add Tuesday night to our regular opening day of Thursday, and maintain Friday as a working day for volunteers.

Sarah has been running oral history training sessions for some volunteers who are interested in taking on interviewing to enhance this part of the collection.

## Events and outreach

Because of the demands imposed by work on the fit out of the premises we held only one Open Day this year (31 July). It was very well attended, with over 60 people – it was chance to show off the new space, and display some of the recent acquisitions. Michael Williams, the VAC's new president, spoke. Bill Calder reported on his research project on the history of the gay and lesbian media in Australia. And Sally Goldner formally presented ALGA with a copy of her DVD, *Sally's Story*

Our Midsumma 2011 History Walk attracted a good crowd to South Yarra, starting and finishing at the VAC, so we could show off the collection and the space. We conducted walks for delegates to the Oral History Conference in Melbourne and for the City Library of Melbourne.

And then there were the publications we were involved in: *Out Here* (edited by Yorick Smaal and Graham Willett), a collection of papers from the 2010 Homo Histories Conference; *Queen City of the South*, a special issue of the LaTrobe Library's journal on GLQ Melbourne history; and the long-awaited *Secret Histories of Queer Melbourne*. A bumper year for Australian queer history.

The launch of *Secret Histories of Queer Melbourne* at the University of Melbourne in April was a well-attended event. We are grateful to everyone who worked on the book. We especially thank the City of Melbourne for supporting the book project financially; Annette Xiberras for welcoming us to country; Christos Tsiolkas for graciously launching the book; Lin Tobias for her work above and beyond the call on the book's design; and the Queer Department at the Graduate Student Association at the University of Melbourne for contributing to the cost of the launch. The book

received front-page coverage in MCV and Graham and Daniel were kept busy with print and radio media work promoting the book and the Archives. Steady sales means that we have recovered our costs already.

Daniel has continued his education work with queer youth groups this year in Melbourne and in regional Victoria, providing workshops based on the Archives' collection.

The Archives has continued to play host to tours of the collection by community groups, including a recent visit by OutMinds hosted by Gary and Daniel.

## **Finances**

The full Treasurer's Report is attached but we do want to acknowledge the importance of, and express our gratitude, to all those individuals and community groups who by becoming members and/or making donations keep our operations going. In particular we want to thank Vic Bears who adopted us as this year's recipient for the annual Hibernation Festival's fundraising. The \$ 10,000 is one of our largest ever donations and we plan on using the money for the unglamorous but vital task of updating our photocopier. We're grateful, too, to the Australian GLBTI Multicultural Council for nominating ALGA as a beneficiary of their annual United We Dance fundraiser this year.

## **The coming year**

This coming year will see some changes in the Committee. Mark is going to Sheffield in England to take up a position at the University there. Gary has indicated that he would like to withdraw from his committee role by the middle of 2012.

With the continuing participation of Daniel, Nick and Sarah and with Graham's changing working arrangements meaning that he will have more time for the Archives and Carla expressing an interest in being a member, we will see significant changes in the makeup of the Committee.

We would like to take advantage of the opportunities that these changes present to organise our work a bit more tightly and we will be meeting shortly after the AGM to look at a portfolio structure and at our major priorities for the coming year. Losing and gaining people means that we have a strong incentive to work on procedures and processes to make sure that the transitions go smoothly.

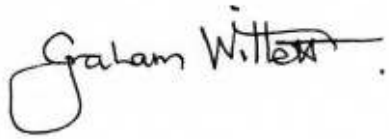
One issue we would like to consider is whether our fundraising can be directed to getting a part-time worker for the Archives for a year and what that person would do.

We also need to look at the backlog of offers that has built up – we no longer have to put people off pending the completion of the fit-out of the new space; on the other hand, we cannot accept everything that we are offered and so we need to consider the offers carefully on a case by case basis. Expanding and tightening up our accession (and de-accession) policies will assist in this.

We will be participating in Midsumma as usual (at Carnival and with our History Walk) and we are co-sponsoring a major international conference in February (After Homosexual), marking the 40th anniversary of the publication of Dennis Altman's *Homosexual: Oppression and Liberation*. Yorick Smaal has offered to host the Homosexual Histories Conference in Brisbane in mid-year.

We will be participating in Mardi Gras Fair Day next year in conjunction with Pride History Group and potentially that an ALGA committee member will be attending Feast Festival in Adelaide.

No doubt, other issues will arise as we make our way through our 34th year. We are looking forward to the challenges.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Graham Willett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'G'.

Graham Willett

President

16 November 2011