

Gazing into the Mirror: Censorship and Self-censorship in Early Gay

Australian novels

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Two years ago, a student asked if she could read my novel *Music from another country* (Fisher 2009), which amongst other things details the death of one of its characters from AIDS. The book is set in the early 1990s, before the advent of retroviral drugs and before this particular student was born. A little miffed that she had not bought a copy, let alone sought out a library copy, but secretly pleased at her interest, I gave her the book. After she had read it she told me that it was very moving but asked why the key character, Kieran, had to die. People didn't die from AIDS, she said. Not now, I told her, but they did in the time when this book was set. Times change so fast.

I could also have told her that I still have a letter from a publisher rejecting that book because “the setting and subject matter are refreshingly unusual and the writing is good, and this is why I've had several goes at reading it with a view to the possibility of helping making it less confronting. And eventually I've decided that I don't want to do that, and I can't publish it as it is” (MacLeod 1998). It took years for the book to finally emerge, still in its original “confronting” form, but apparently not so for at least one reader born after the time in which it is set. For similar reasons, the creative work that was part of my doctoral thesis remains unpublished in complete form, though a segment has seen the light of day (Fisher 2004a). The book has not been taken up by any publisher because, in the words of publisher Bruce Sims, who examined the thesis: ‘The vagaries of the publishing world could lead to publication, depending on the personnel involved at a particular publishing house and “market forces” at the time. There have been small wavelets of publishing gay novels, though they have often been cut short, not by censorship, but a belief that a gay audience will

swallow anything, so to speak. Gay readers have as much, or as little, taste as anyone. The publication of some less than passable gay novels harms the market, and publishers back off again for a while. As one publisher says in the dissertation [accompanying the creative work], “I’ve had my fingers burnt a couple of times!” It wasn’t the fingers; it was the sales figures!” (Sims 2002). In these two works of my own I can see the dilemma facing every openly gay writer; should market forces, at least as interpreted by publishers, or a sense of being true to telling gay stories be the writer’s guiding light? How much do gay writers self-censor their works in order to create works that publishers will accept?

As an editor at Penguin in the 1970s and 1980s, Bruce Sims made the publishing house the first major Australian publisher to add gay literature to its list. This was a remarkable achievement that required support from the firm’s Australian publisher, Brian Johns. It is sometimes difficult to remember that 50 years ago homosexuality was illegal. It needs to be borne in mind that New South Wales, Australia’s most populous state, decriminalised homosexuality only in 1984. At that time, there was an emerging gay press, some of it published by the nascent gay rights movement and others by publishers with less noble motives, but all of it often restricted by the oppressive obscenity laws and State police forces keen to enforce them (Fisher 2014). As well, by the time of decriminalisation the AIDS epidemic was already spreading new fears about gay men and their lifestyles in the heterosexual mainstream.

I have written extensively on the first Australian manifestation of the gay novel, G.M. Glaskin’s *No End to the Way*, written under the pseudonym Neville Jackson (Fisher 2004b, 2005, 2010, 2012, 2013). Glaskin was very aware of the commercial pressures under which publishers operate. In a recent paper (Fisher 2015) I documented how in November 1963 Glaskin wrote to his publisher Barrie & Rockliff very grateful that his manuscript, which Barrie & Rockliff had been rejecting for two years, was being reconsidered. However, he also

wrote: “(t)he homosexual theme for launching the new pseudonym of Neville Jackson was chosen quite deliberately, believe it or not”. He then continues: “I wonder if you have already guessed that this first book is intended as a deterrent rather than an encouragement of that kind of life, which I feel that the conventional melodramatic and mostly untrue endings of suicides, etc., never accomplish” (Glaskin 1963).

For his book to be accepted by his publisher, and championed by them, Glaskin knew that he had to deny his own identity, even though he was writing about his own life. He wrote that letter to his publisher from the Amsterdam flat under that of his ex-lover Edgar Vos and from where he liked to wander out to cruise for sex with men in nearby Vondel Park (Burbidge 139). He was consigning his real life to fiction. None of it can have been easy to do. But the context in which he was being published was very different from today.

His new editor John Pattison acknowledged the legal risks of publication; the book could face a charge of obscenity, though Pattison thought that defensible. Three years before the decriminalisation of homosexuality in Britain and in the light of the Wolfenden Report, Pattison saw the novel as a plea for tolerance for the homosexual. He thought it had “well sketched subsidiary characters” and one of its merits was its depiction of homosexual society. He felt the main characters came over as real people (J.P. 1963). So Australia’s first gay novel emerged, its author denying his sexuality and its publisher somewhat reticent. But at least Ray, the main character in *No End to the Way* determinedly identifies himself as gay.

Such resolute characters were not present in other books from that early period that also dared show Australian homosexuals in fiction. To attempt to determine how much is omitted before a manuscript is first read by a publisher, three early works, which would best be classified as popular fiction, will be discussed here. Each of them is different in its depiction of gay characters. Much of this has to do with the authors’ backgrounds, as far as

these can be established, and the willingness of their publishers to push the envelope with regard to conventions and legal restraints.

Jon Rose's *At the Cross* (1961), narrated by seventeen-year-old Jon, is set in Sydney during World War II and documents Jon's heterosexual dalliances, yet there are other lovers, identifiably or presumably males, where the story stops with an ellipsis. Two examples:

Watching them [Cliff and Dennis, an identifiably gay couple who offer him accommodation] I became more and more sad at leaving this flat. I liked it and it liked me, but I had to go and stretch my own wings. I went back into the bedroom. Dennis was sitting in a little heap on the pillow, Cliff stood looking at an invisible spot in his underpants. I gave them a half-hearted smile, looked at the light switch, and said 'Can I sleep on the outside?' (Rose 30)

I suddenly felt drunk and very sad in a strange way. At that second I saw a low fence and sat down on it. As I was sitting, a half familiar voice said 'You all right?' I looked up, saying yes, but I couldn't really see properly. The voice said 'I live just here. Would you like some coffee?' (43)

Jon, who looks even younger than his years, has hitch-hiked to Sydney from Victoria. He is a young innocent abroad. The supposedly heterosexual couple who pick him up both try to seduce him and when he rejects their overtures he finds himself with no place to stay. Then he rooms with Cliff and Dennis, later finds other accommodation at the Cross, and eventually settles in with a middle-aged woman of dubious reputation. His various experiences are recounted with a dash of self-deprecation. He mixes in a very camp milieu, but Jon is never

fully “out.” Yet even though Jon’s sexuality in *At the Cross* is equivocal, at the same time it is coy, perhaps too much so, a camp “in-joke.” The codification of secrecy is in place.

The novel reaches its dramatic zenith with the Gala Drag and Drain Party which is attended by a vast range of camp people dressed as characters such as Carmen Miranda, Peter Pan and Greek soldiers. It is a riot, in more ways than one, with a police raid and later court appearances.

The book uses camp slang which is sometimes explained and sometimes not; suggesting two audiences, one “in the know” and one not. Perhaps the editor, if in fact the book had one given the comments that follow, was “in the know”, and missed some opportunities for clarity for the general audience for whom the book is presumably intended; there was no pink market in 1961. As Graham Willett (ALGA 2014) notes: “Who knows what your uninitiated reader would make of ‘TBH’, ‘TBHID’, camp slang which is used but never explained (‘to be had’; ‘to be had in drink’).”

At the Cross was published by Andre Deutsch, an entrepreneurial and idiosyncratic London publisher (Calder 2000), where its author was living at the time. Jon Rose had moved from Australia to London, working there in theatrical circles throughout the 1950s. He lived for a period with Sandy Wilson, writer of the musical *The Boy Friend*, in 1953. Wilson describes him in his autobiography as “a singer, one of a growing colony of Australian immigrants in London who had come to Europe seeking the culture and fulfilment which their own country seemed to deny them. He was volatile and articulate – at times excessively so – and possessed of a personality with [sic] either charmed people into the ground or sent them screaming out of the room. We had a close and stormy friendship which lasted for several years, and no account of the following events would be complete or honest if Jon’s part in them were omitted” (Wilson 181). In the course of their friendship, Rose went on a holiday to France with Wilson and accompanied him by ship in a shared cabin to New York

for the American premiere of *The Boy Friend*. It is tempting to consider how these events might have been portrayed by “volatile and articulate” Jon in a “novel” about his life with Sandy, the boyfriend. However, we have only the memoir/novel about his life in Kings Cross in the forties with the sexuality of the narrator excised.

With regard to contemporary reception of the book, which was quite comprehensive for a first novel from an unknown author, the poor quality of the editing was noted in *The Canberra Times* (R.R. 1961), where the book was reviewed as memoir rather than novel:

Jon Rose rarely puts a sentence together in the conventional way, some of his mis-spellings are appalling (‘emptyness,’ for example), and his punctuation is so bad it is disgraceful. This book has been so carelessly and clumsily put together that I suspect that in years to come it will become a source book for literary howlers. Example (p 110): ‘His Honour says “... I am going to bind you over to be of good behaviour for a year and you will be find three guineas each (11).”’

The book may indeed be more memoir than novel, and therefore what is omitted is quite crucial for what these days might be expected to be revealed in a life story. However, in 1961 even what is not omitted was found morally repugnant:

In this book Jon Rose bares his soul in a way that makes the reader almost ashamed to go on turning the pages. It becomes patently obvious that Rose and his associates were only fooling themselves that they were really living. Their contempt for decency and self-respect becomes pathetic. This is not a ruthless self-examination; it is petty exhibitionism. If, however, one is prepared to do a little literary slumming, the book is good entertainment (R.R. 1961, 11).

Reviewer R.R. had another go at Jon Rose in March, 1962, though to be fair it looks as though one long review of two books was cut and used as space permitted. In this second piece R.R. compares Rose's work to the American Peter Cohen's heteronormative memoir *Diary of a Simple Man* (1961):

This is where Jon Rose failed. He had his drunks and his sex but his attitude was: 'Oh, I am a naughty little boy, so I must be enjoying myself. This is living.' Peter Cohen, on the other hand, although far from being overtly a moralist, nevertheless casts doubt on the joy of the moment, finds a lesson in his weariness and boredom, and values decent things when he finds them (R.R. 1962, 17).

Joyce Halstead (1962) was as unkind in the *Women's Weekly*:

A sordid mixture of 'squalor, vulgar emotions, sin, and vice is used for this picture of Kings Cross – a lopsided picture without much of the color and charm which characterised the Cross even in wartime, when this autobiography is set. A boy of 16 comes to Sydney from Melbourne hungry for life and the reputed excitement of the Cross. His growing-up process is speeded by experience in such dead-end jobs as washing dishes in a hash house, contact with people of doubtful sex, failure as a nightclub singer, and friendship with Bella, a big-hearted madam, in whose house he has a room. His life seems concentratedly seamy, with a gaol sentence thrown in for good measure. All the descriptive detail of Sydney and the Cross is there, but the story is flat. One has the feeling that maybe he lived in the Cross, but that these things never happened to him. Moreover, a few errors in place names do not convince. These may have been deliberate, but the wrong spelling of a well-known coffee shop chain must certainly jar on Sydneysiders (14).

These reviews suggest that Jon Rose had stepped too far out of his reviewers' comfort zone. Cautious as he was in his depiction of Jon's sexuality, his story still managed to offend. Hopefully, this was the author's intention. More than fifty years later, it is easy to question why *At the Cross* ever saw the light of day. It has so many weaknesses in its writing and editing. The last suggests the publisher gave the book the tiniest budget. However, *At the Cross* does offer some insight into camp culture in Sydney around the time of World War II. Because of that it has survived as a Sydney story and had some influence on Sydney's gay scene having inspired Alex Harding's musical comedy *Only Heaven Knows*, which was first performed by the Griffin Theatre Company at the Stables Theatre in Kings Cross in 1988 (Hurley 195).

Another book from this period, *Winger's Landfall*, has been less influential, but it provides an interesting insight into the camp sub-culture aboard cruise liners then transporting most of the passenger traffic between Australia and Europe. Unlike Rose's book, *Wingers Landfall* (1962) offers a clearly identified gay character, Harry Shears, though Harry is not always open about it. John Bryant's (1967) review of two of the author's later books noted that *Wingers Landfall* (misnamed as *Wingers Handfull* in the review) "was based on his first-hand experience of life in the British Merchant Navy and as such had the flavour of well-documented realism (Bryant 1967)." Whether or not the author was also gay is unknown but the book when reviewed on publication was described as having "scenes of homosexual brutality that make the Army seem like Eden by comparison" (TLS 1962).

The book is attributed to Stuart Lauder, a pseudonym used by David Stuart Leslie, an English author who was educated and lived for a period in Australia. He also wrote a book set in Australia, *The Green Singers* (1958). The action takes place in Emu Plains, now a western Sydney suburb. The *Nepean Times* ("Cock-eyed" 1958) gave it a short, sharp review:

'The Green Singers' is a book written by an Englishman, who takes his readers to the 1920's to 'outback Australia,' which was Emu Plains, where he had to live amongst 'those uncouth, foul-mouthed Australians . . . whose only interest seemed to be beer, tea, horse racing and two up.' If ever a book gave a wrong impression, of a country and its people this book does. The author, David Stuart Leslie, didn't like Penrith. There seemed to be only one thing which David Stuart Leslie liked, and that was David Stuart Leslie. The 'green singers' were the cicadas (8).

As Lauder, he wrote at least five other novels, including the oddly-titled *Camp Commander* (Longman 1971) which explores gay themes. The back fly cover of *Camp Commander* gives a potted biography of "Stuart Lauder", noting that he had extensive experience in the merchant navy and an undistinguished record of service during World War II, in the last years of which *Camp Commander* is set.

The melodramatic plot of *Wingers Landfall* concerns Harry Shears' attempt to discover what happened to his half-brother Danny who fell overboard from the liner *Cyclamen*. He was in unrequited love with Danny, so an odd theme of incest is hinted at.

[...] Of course I loved him, he admitted bitterly. What choice did I have? That's how I'm made. But at least he never knew. I was always too careful for that [...] (Lauder 86).

While this is ostensibly a British novel, there is a close identification with Australia and some acute observations on Sydney, Melbourne and Fremantle, providing an insight into

a gay subculture in Sydney, one in which Harry is an active member, and of how members of that subculture lived, worked and travelled at a time when their sexuality was illegal in both Australia and Britain. The reason Harry is in Australia is because his mother had moved there with her children from London to escape domestic violence.

Harry is a winger, an onboard steward. He joins the ship in Sydney, first having demonstrated what a fine character he is by bashing unconscious on a street at night the man whose position on board he takes. He shares a peak (cabin) with other wingers. He keeps his sexuality secret, though the book features a number of other openly gay characters. Harry has a relationship with young Prince, and the following exchange would perhaps be taboo in a novel today with our current heightened fear of pedophilia:

“You want to?” Harry murmured against his ear. “Be my boy? You know?”

“Yeah, if you like . . .” Prince gulped. “I don’t mind.” (Lauder 126)

Harry investigates the mysterious Bernard and Bernard’s hold over a group of bellboys, a group to which he discovers Danny was once part. He follows them onshore in Colombo and finds Bernard is part of a Buddhist-Christian religious order, though this involves the boys bathing naked in a swimming pool.

For 1962, the plot and the actions of the characters appear to be relatively uninhibited until the book reaches its conclusion. Censorship is then revealed. Harry has knocked out and possibly killed Bernard. The police arrest him on Prince’s information. He suffers an epileptic shock, as his half-brother Danny had on the ship, and which made him jump overboard. The book’s fast pace crashes to an unsatisfactory weak ending. This strongly suggests it was rewritten to provide the appropriate tragic ending for any gay novel of that time. Before law reform took place in 1967, the British Home Office required such endings in

order to discourage illegal behaviour. E.M. Forster delayed the publication of his final novel, *Maurice* (1971), until after his death to avoid such a fate being visited on it.

The final work discussed here was published almost a decade after the other two. Like those, *Wayward Warriors* is not a great work of literature. However, it is a well-told tale with strong characters and a refreshing candour in its approach to men at war and their personal interactions. It is also just one of the many works produced by its author.

Its Australian incarnation was as pulp fiction when it appeared as a Gold Star paperback in 1972, but it had first been published as a hardback in London by Robert Hale in 1970. Australia was undergoing social change in 1972; censorship had been lessened, there was talk of homosexual law reform and the women's movement promoted gender equality. Geoffrey Gold, son of the Gold Star founder Gerry Gold, claimed the paperback was a big seller as it had a gay front cover "which was unusual in those days" (Nette 2013). There is no evidence of its reception on publication, but other of Watkins' books received favourable if not effusive reviews (Lesley 1966).

Its author Wal Watkins was a prolific writer whose works of popular fiction are now largely forgotten. His short story "Mulga Heat Wave" won the State section in the World Short Story Quest, for which Watkins received £50 ("Judges make pertinent comment" 1952), and was published in *The Western Mail*, the Saturday magazine of the *West Australian* in 1953. A note alongside the story notes that Wal 'went to Hallett Public School, S.A., and says that he learnt story-writing while working as a navy on the east-west railroad. "John Campbell, of the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme, tutored me by correspondence," he says. "I love roaming the outback, and I wrote 'Mulga Heat Wave' in a rouseabout's hut on Wirrealpa station, where I was a member of the shearing team." ... A frequent contributor to *The Western Mail*, he has had over 300 stories accepted in seven years of writing. He also writes articles and radio scripts and is now working on a first novel.

During the last war he served for five years in the Royal Australian Navy. Married, with a son, he lives at Edwardstown, South Australia. His recreations are tennis and music' ("About the author" 1953).

Wal signed up for the Navy on his eighteenth birthday; his occupation was listed as "farm hand" and his religion as Methodist (National Archives of Australia). He was discharged from service in early 1944. After the war, took an interest in civic affairs. In 1951, he wrote a letter to the editor of the *Adelaide Advertiser* complaining about the light sentences given to four medical students from the University of Adelaide:

Sir— The recent sentence passed on the four University students has roused me to write in protest. Why did these boys escape with such a light punishment for such a crime? As one who sat in the gallery throughout this long trial. I feel entitled to ask this. The evidence was conclusive. The jury did a good job and reached the only logical verdict. Almost every week we see unfortunate sex offenders sent to gaol for crimes over which they have no control. In the same Criminal Court as that in which the students were tried, I recently saw a young man sentenced to four years' hard labour for having tried to assault a married woman. No harm was done to the woman. And if some say, 'There might be harm next time,' then I say there might be death again next time when someone throws a non-swimmer in the water for a lark. WAL. WATKINS. Morgan avenue. Edwardstown (Watkins, 1951, 4).

What the students had done was to toss one of their numbers into the Torrens as an initiation ritual. The tossed student unfortunately drowned. There is some prescience in Watkin's letter to the editor. Dr George Duncan, a lecturer in law at the University of Adelaide, was similarly thrown into the Torrens twenty years later on 10 May 1972. Dr

Duncan also drowned. It was widely believed that police officers were responsible. The furor was such that it led to the decriminalisation of homosexuality in South Australia later in 1972, making South Australia the first state to enact such a change.

The plot of *Wayward Warriors* is constructed around a mutiny on an old destroyer, HMAS *Jacaranda*, serving in the Royal Australian Navy. In reality, there was a mutiny aboard HMAS *Pirie* in June 1943 in Townsville. The corvette, on escort duty in New Guinea, had been strafed and bombed by Japanese aircraft in April of that year and there had been significant loss of life (Royal Australian Navy). The ship underwent repairs at Maryborough, and these left the crew with crowded and dank quarters. As well, the crew's pay was withheld and only a few were permitted any leave. Their commanding officer, Lieutenant Commander Charles Mills, was a strict disciplinarian and when *Pirie* recommenced duty escorting shipping along Australia's east coast, tensions came to a head. Forty-five crew members refused to report for duties (Nicholson 2006). The incident obviously provides inspiration for *Wayward Warriors*; Watkin's naval records show he served on the *Pirie*, though it is not entirely clear whether or not he was a member of the crew during the mutiny (National Archives of Australia).

Official records and histories skim over the facts of the *Pirie* mutiny (Frame and Baker, 2000). It is not mentioned at all on the official naval site (Royal Australian Navy). It has been censored into official non-existence. Homosexuality in the Navy, too, has no place in official records, though an independent DLA Piper report showed there was systemic and long-term homosexual sexual abuse within the Navy (Rumble et al. 2011). *Wayward Warriors* then seeks to shed light on censored aspects of the Australian Navy. An author's note on page 6 reads: "*Wayward Warriors* is based on lesser known facts of life in the Royal Australian Navy in which I served. Names of ships and characters are fictitious but similar events and incidents did happen and those concerning mutiny and homosexuality were

carefully ensconced by those in authority.” The meaning of “ensconced” in the *Oxford Dictionary of English* is “establish or settle (someone) in a comfortable, safe place” though the *Oxford Dictionary of Etymology* gives a meaning of “fortify, shelter behind a fortification; establish secretly or securely.” Presumably, the author means something like the second meaning.

The story begins with a short account, in second person, of an invitation to a first meeting of the HMSA *Jacaranda* club in Adelaide on the day before Anzac Day. The scene then turns to Southampton and introduces John Rupert Hardridge, newly appointed Captain of HMAS *Jacaranda*, a World War I relic forced back into service and refitted. His crew is on leave and, in London, seaman Rocky McCall is trying to entice a young girl to have sex with him. They stop in a darkened doorway during a black-out, and are caught in the act by a trio of young men who mock the girl because she is Jewish. This sub-text is not explored further, but McCall, after lashing out at the youths and bashing them, finds the girl appalled at his violence. He makes his way back to his shared room at the YMCA through the darkness and an air-raid, during which he takes shelter in an Underground station. He eventually reaches his room where his friend, handsome Freddy Fennessy, is reading a book, having, he says, found himself unable to have sex with a willing girl. McCall undresses and Freddy admires his strong build. The two talk, McCall telling Freddy of his rough and violent upbringing. Freddy, “the kid” to McCall, gets out of bed and carefully folds McCall’s dropped clothes. He tells McCall Hardridge is now Captain, and he needs to be sharp when he returns to the ship next day or he’ll be in trouble. Listening to McCall snoring, the kid ponders: “What else can I do for him then? What does a man like him need? Good looks, that’s all. I’d share that with him if I could. If I could give him half of my looks and him give me half of his courage ...” (24). The kid is coming to terms with his sexuality, and develops a crush on McCall, who does nothing to spurn his young admirer. On the ship they are known

as opps, each covering for the other. They share a mess and hang their hammocks next to each other.

Hardridge is a martinet who decides to make an example of McCall who is always suffering some punishment for lack of respect or other infringement. Because the kid is so handsome, he is fancied by a number of men on the boat including Petty Officer Wales. The ship is sent to Alexandria in Egypt via Capetown. Hardridge tightens up on discipline, instructing his officers and petty officers that there must be no fraternisation with the ordinary sailors. When Slee, a reserve officer, attempts to offer advice that Hardridge's policies might be too harsh, he is called insolent and charges of insubordination are mentioned. When the ship reaches Capetown, McCall is forbidden to go ashore because of the charges against him. The kid stays to keep him company.

The ship continues its journey up the coast of Africa and through the Suez canal to Alexandria, where, after a few days, the two go ashore and McCall has sex with a prostitute while the kid waits for him. When they go back to the ship, the kid showers, puts talc on his feet from his neat locker, and dresses in his silk pyjamas.

After the ship has seen action in the Mediterranean, McCall goes ashore without permission and then is forced to undergo strenuous physical punishment. The ship sails for the Indian Ocean to an island "about a thousand miles south of Colombo and just east of Chagos" (86). Petty Officer Wales takes a particular delight in punishing McCall. He offers the kid the job of being the petty officers' messman, but it is clear the job comes with certain conditions. Wales touches the kid: "The hand moved across his shoulder; the fingers playing with the hair at the base of the neck." (88). McCall shows signs of jealousy, which secretly pleases the kid. McCall is forbidden to land on the tropical island. Slee offers McCall the chance to go ashore if he will agree not to get booked on charges for a few days. McCall

agrees. The next day he and the kid go ashore and climb a cliff to a private spot overlooking the island. They are alone together. They make love.

Slee is then reprimanded for allowing McCall to go ashore and, as he is a popular officer, this causes disquiet amongst the crew. Hardridge posts a notice forbidding sailors to have their hammocks anywhere but in the stifling, hot messes because of prevalent indecent behaviour on board the ship. Mutiny begins to be discussed. The mess petty officer, Dusty Rhodes, who shares the crew's quarters, discreetly encourages the talk. After a fierce storm, Wales is found unconscious, seemingly knocked out, requiring the *Jacaranda* to rendezvous with HMAS *Augusta* to allow a medical officer on board. Hardridge suspects McCall, who had threatened Wales the day before, of assaulting him and McCall is arrested. However, McCall is given a cast-iron alibi.

The book gives graphic details of what ensues; it reads as an eye-witness account, which perhaps it was. In a moment of consciousness Wales says he has been attacked. The Captain calls the crew together and demands the guilty person step forward. No-one does so the crew's leave ashore on the island is cancelled. The crew grows more mutinous, with McCall egging them on. The Captain assembles them and reads naval regulations advising the penalties for mutiny. The crew turns on the officers, and lowers a cutter into the water ready to go to the island. The Captain orders Slee to fire on it. He refuses to do so and is arrested. When other officers try, they are fired on with a Lewis gun by McCall. The Captain retreats to the officers' quarters and calls for support by radio, advising that the crew has mutinied. The crew awaits the arrival of the cruiser HMAS *Carpentaria*. McCall and the kid find a spot together, the kid conscious this might be their last time together: "And so, faced again with the ending coming swiftly nearer, the kid reached out and claimed him for the last time" (184).

The *Carpentaria* arrives and the crew is arrested. The scene then moves 26 years on to the reunion. While a number of the crew have moved on the rest appear as older men, including McCall who now runs a carrying business and is married. There's a subplot showing Hardridge living on his wool station with comfort provided by Roger, his secretary. At 11 pm, McCall goes with Dusty Rhodes to a basement club in search of the kid. The kid is in a gay bar with a lover or trick. They chat then go their separate ways.

These three books reveal aspects of an Australia coming to terms with sexual difference and also how differing aspects of censorship were involved in their publication. Each has its own problems as a novel. *At the Cross* suffers from self-censorship, the author coy, understandably so given the reception of the book by critics, to reveal his narrator's sexuality and it could well be more memoir than fiction. Harry, the protagonist in *Winger's Landfall*, identifies as gay, but he is a broken character, and the book falls apart when it offers him and his relationship no redemption. *Wayward Warriors* seeks to redress an historical inaccuracy; it is the most satisfactory of the three narratives in terms of characters, structure, point of view and resolution. While all of these books were published within a decade from 1960 to 1970, they are almost forgotten today. However, they are all similar in that they seek to tell formerly hidden stories of homosexual relationships, but to varying degrees. In doing that they assisted in developing an environment in which the young student who asked to read my novel can happily believe that no-one dies from AIDs. Our stories have come a long way in fifty years.

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