Later, over coffee, Rhonda brought up the subject of membership again.

Heddy stirred her cappuccino vigorously although she doesn’t take sugar.

‘I’m not sure… It’s a long way…’

‘But you did enjoy the class?’

‘As I was saying, Brighton’s a long way from Montrose.’

‘I thought you were going to move. Anyway Red lives at Lilydale, don’t you, Red. He could give you a lift.’

Rhonda turned to the table behind her where Red, more familiarly known to Heddy as Bruce, was filling out an enrolment form. Red, looked up, simultaneously brandished teeth, pen and enrolment form.

‘Hi Beautiful!’ he said with eyes only for Heddy.

With her old skirt and jumper now in her calcio bag, Heddy turns into Young & Jacksons, orders a light ale, finds an unoccupied corner.

The beer tastes good. She downs it quickly, orders *pasta carbonara* from a thin woman with bad acne. The woman gives her a number.

‘It seems everything is done by numbers now — probably the pasta too.’

The pasta isn’t worth the money. The cheese sauce is thin and tasteless, and dribbles onto Heddy’s new cape. She is attempting to sponge it off when a shadow falls across the table. This belongs to a leery, overweight male in a blue singlet and unbuttoned, checked shirt who offers to *lick it off* if you like, _Luv._

Loud laughter from behind.

Heddy puts her nose in the air, wipes her mouth, places the crumpled serviette in the plate of leftover pasta, saunters out into the street. Back at her motel in Swanston Street, the room is dark, the window dirty, the traffic noise constant. She eyes the phone. Her fingers itch to start pushing buttons.

Out loud she runs through the names of potential recipients: Bruce, Rhonda, sons Jimmy and Billy…

‘Nah, it’s not worth the hassle!’

She replaces the handset, grabs the daily paper, flips through to the back pages.

‘Might as well see what’s on TV.’

Kay Readdy

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**Women’s History in Academic Journals**

The Australian Network for Research in Women’s History was established in the early 1990s, as a national committee of the International Federation for Research in Women’s History/Fédération Internationale Pour la Recherche en Histoire des Femmes. Its purpose is to encourage research in all aspects of women’s history. It publishes a newsletter, and organizes conferences, usually in association with the biennial conference of the Australian Historical Association. The 2006 conference was held in Canberra on 5 July, taking its theme from the AHA: ‘Genres of History’. For the opening session, Penny Russell and Jill Julius Matthews organized a round table discussion called ‘Genres of women’s history: Assessing the scene in scholarly journals.’ A panel of distinguished young historians considered the present state and future trends of women’s history by looking at the sort of women’s, gender or feminist history that academic journals were publishing in four main areas: race and colonialism, class and culture, sexuality, and dedicated gender and feminist history.

A snapshot like this one is necessarily partial, and limited by the categories initially selected for examination. We are conscious of other categories that might equally have merited detailed attention. But our purpose was to note emerging trends and encourage reflection on possible directions rather than to define the field comprehensively. The four historians approached their task with enthusiasm and rigour, and we are pleased to present their findings, as both a stock-take of the present state of women’s history in some popular fields, and a road map for younger scholars looking for places to publish and scholarly debates where they might direct their work.

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**Assessing the Scene: *Journal of Women’s History*, *Women’s History Review* and Gender & History Since 2000**

This contribution provides an overview of the work of three major international journals that specialise in gender history and women’s history, with a particular interest in the publishing opportunities they offer to young scholars working in Australia. There is an Australian presence in these journals, but it is a small one. I came away from my research with a strong sense of the special contribution that Australian scholars of feminist and gender history could make to expanding and deepening the intellectual fields of the three journals. While recognising the importance of commanding as wide an
Australian audience as possible for some work, I am compelled to encourage Australian scholars to speak to an international audience through these journals.

The Journal of Women's History began life in America in 1989. It is published by Johns Hopkins University Press and its two editors, Jean Allman and Antoinette Burton are based at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. In fact, although its birthplace was Indiana University where Christie Farnham, the journal's founding editor, was employed in 1989, the current book reviews editor and the associate editors are also on staff at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. It is clearly a US-based journal, and this is reflected in the contributors as well as the editors. Although many contributors work beyond the field of US history, most are based in institutions in the US. The journal's statement of purpose is as follows:

*Journal of Women's History* is the first journal devoted exclusively to the international field of women's history. It does not attempt to impose one feminist 'line' but recognizes the multiple perspectives captured by the term 'feminisms'. Its guiding principle is a belief that the divide between 'women's history' and 'gender history' can be, and is, bridged by work on women that is sensitive to the particular historical constructions of gender that shape and are shaped by women's experience.

Women's History Review is slightly younger. It began its life in 1992 under the editorship of the University of Portsmouth's Jane Purvis, who continues this work today. The assistant editors are based in the UK, the USA and Australia, and include Melbourne University's Joy Damousi. The journal is published by Taylor and Francis. Its statement of purpose reads:

*Women's History Review* is a major international journal whose aim is to provide a forum for the publication of new scholarly articles in the rapidly expanding field of women's history. The time span covered by the journal includes the 19th and 20th centuries as well as earlier times. The journal seeks to publish contributions from a range of disciplines (for example, women's studies, history, sociology, cultural studies, literature, political science, anthropology and philosophy) that further feminist knowledge and debate about women and/or gender relations in history. The Editors welcome a variety of approaches from people from different countries and backgrounds. In addition to main articles the journal also publishes short Viewpoints that are possibly based on the life experiences, ideas and views of the writer and may be more polemic in tone. A substantial Book Reviews section is normally included in each issue.

*Gender and History* began in 1988 and is published by Blackwell. Leonore Davidoff of the University of Exeter was the founding editor, but it is now edited by a combination of British and American scholars based at the Universities of Nottingham and Michigan. The statement of purpose for this journal is:

*Gender & History* is now established as the major international journal for research and writing on the history of femininity and masculinity and of gender relations. Spanning epochs and continents, *Gender & History* examines changing conceptions of gender, and maps the dialogue between femininities, masculinities and their historical contexts. The journal publishes rigorous and readable articles both on particular episodes in gender history and on broader methodological questions which have ramifications for the discipline as a whole.

I selected these three journals because of the consistently high quality of their content and thus their established reputations and influence on the field. They have published well-known scholars working outside Australia in the broad fields of women's and gender history, such as Janet Nelson and Leila Rupp, as well as some of Australia's best-known scholars in these fields, including Pat Grimeshaw, Marilyn Lake and Penny Russell. To make sure these were journals that my audience and their students could access I searched the library catalogues of 17 universities across the Australian states and territories. All three journals are held in the libraries I checked, with two exceptions in the case of *Women's History Review*.

I read 330 abstracts of articles published in the *Journal of Women's History, Women's History Review* and *Gender and History* since the beginning of the year 2000. I was looking for a number of things: areas of thematic concern, geographical emphasis, and reflections on the state of women's or gender history.

I identified approximately fifteen thematic concentrations in each journal — of which twelve proved common to all three. The other categories were derived from the idiosyncratic emphases of each of the journals. For example 'Science and Medicine' appeared as a thematic focus in 11% of abstracts in *Gender and History* and 13% of abstracts in *Women's History Review*, but did not come up in a focused way in the *Journal of Women's History*. The *Journal of Women's History* was striving for its emphasis on welfare (20% of abstracts), whereas the other two journals were not. Most of the abstracts fell into either two or three categories. For example, an article by Bronwyn Winter published in the *Journal of Women's History* (Spring 2001), called 'Fundamental Misunderstandings: Issues in Feminist Approaches to Islam' was included under each of the three categories of religion, feminism and race. Using these categories I charted the thematic interests of each journal and the overall thematic emphases in the three journals.
The second way I compared the journals was to look at the geographical emphases in the topics they addressed. I divided the regions that the journals explored into ‘Australia and the Pacific’, ‘Europe’ (including the United Kingdom), ‘Africa’, ‘the United States of America’, ‘Southern and Central Americas and the Caribbean’, ‘the Middle East’, ‘Asia’ and ‘Canada’. Women’s History Review and Gender and History publish more European history and, within this, more British history, than the history of any other place. Women’s History Review has a particularly strong focus on Europe and Britain, with over 60 per cent of its content addressing this region. The Journal of Women’s History, firmly anchored in the USA, publishes more North American history than the history of any other place (almost 50 per cent), although roughly a quarter of its articles address Europe and Britain. This journal publishes least frequently on Australia and the Pacific, a region that receives more attention in Women’s History Review and Gender and History. The Middle East is the region with least coverage, averaging about two per cent across the three journals.

The third characteristic I read for was the ways in which these journals reflected on the state of women’s history and the history of gender, as practices and genres of written history, in the twenty-first century, and particularly the political and epistemological traditions and developments they expressed.

This exercise led me to a number of conclusions about the state of women’s history and gender history in the English-speaking world. In general, I was left with the impression that an abundance of excellent scholarship is being produced within these genres of history, both by PhD students and established scholars. Women’s history and gender history seem to be healthy and self-assured genres of history in this international context. The journals express and reflect preferences of scholarly approach and thematic and regional preoccupations within these genres that are especially worthy of note in the Australian context.

In Spring 2003, the Journal of Women’s History published the transcript of a panel discussion that took place at Yale University in 2001, on the future of US women’s history. Gerda Lerner began the discussion by revealing some preliminary findings of a survey not dissimilar from this one. It provided a kind of partial pre-history to my survey by looking at the state of the field in America between 1998 and 2000. It took in titles of books, journal articles and dissertations listed under ‘Women’s History’ in the ‘Current Scholarship’ section of the Journal of US History. The results of this survey are food for thought in terms of the direction the Journal of Women’s History, a US publication, has taken since the panel discussion and its publication. Lerner was dismayed to find that biography, literature and representations in culture dominated the subjects of scholarship in this two-year period. Of the 270 journal article titles, 58% fell into these three categories and one third of the total were biographical studies. Although Lerner found an encouraging number of titles addressing African-American women’s history, sexuality and gender, she found almost no work on class and just a smattering of titles on suffrage, women’s organisations or feminism. She also found that while half the titles indicated that the work was about the twentieth century, only six per cent were about the colonial era.

Lerner’s dismay was a product of her concern about the usefulness of all this research to what she called ‘social struggles’. She worried that this focus on questions of cultural representation and identity, and literary subject-matter was steering women’s history away from important questions about women’s organised political activity. She also worried that the recent past was too dominant an interest. Her criticisms seemed to be that women’s history was using its tools too frivolously, and not demonstrating a commitment to the work of history and the feminist work of making political and social change. It seems that the Journal of Women’s History heeded, or shared, her concerns. In the following five years, the period of my own study, the journal published more articles on women’s organised activity than on any other topic except historiography and methodology. Lerner should be pleased to see that the English-speaking world of dedicated women’s history journal publishing demonstrates a very keen interest in the history of women’s movements.

Of the three, the journal that gave most attention to women’s movements is Women’s History Review, with 50 per cent of abstracts making explicit reference to this theme. This journal is also striking for generating a sense of feminist tradition, both in political activism and in scholarship. Not only did it show a distinct preference for histories of women’s movements but it also constructed — or reflected — a sense of a strong community of feminist scholars, or scholars of gender and history. This was done primarily through a genre of article it calls ‘an appreciation’ and through obituary pieces such as Marilyn Lake’s ‘Kay Daniels: Feminist Historian’. These pieces can be read for the intellectual interests and contributions of their subjects, but also for accounts of the ways in which these women were connected to broader scholarly and feminist political communities. They convey the importance of friendship and mentoring, and a sense of an international network of women with shared interests and aims. This is an edifying complement to the publication of scholarly work in these fields.

Providing a focus on the histories of women’s movements is a useful role for Women’s History Review to play but I was glad to find that the other two journals, while contributing to an overall emphasis on
the history of women’s movements, spread their range of thematic priorities across a number of other areas. Not surprisingly, my survey of Gender and History since 2000 pointed to an emphasis on histories of sexuality, 35 per cent of surveyed abstracts making explicit reference to this topic. With few exceptions, Gender and History was the only journal that dealt directly with questions of masculinity (19 per cent of abstracts). Obviously, histories of masculinity are not all that constitute gender history, not by a long shot, but they are easily identifiable as expressions of a journal’s interest in gender as a category of analysis. The interest in masculinity has some bearing on the journal’s overall emphasis on sexuality. Where femininity and masculinity are in the spotlight, so is sexual difference and the ways in which its meaning is constructed through relationships of difference and thus heterosexuality. That said, queer history is also given considerable space in this journal. Sharing the panel with Gerda Lerner in 2001, Ellen DuBois also called on historians of women and gender to inquire further into political cultures and questions of citizenship. The question of gender, taken deep into identity and the way people negotiate their selves and societies helps to explain why women’s and gender history have played such a rich role in historical analyses of the notion of political culture. DuBois made a cogent argument that these insights, gained from feminist theory and history and their inquiries into the nature of gendered identities, are indispensable to future historical research into political cultures and the meanings of citizenship.

The work in these journals is informed by theory, particularly in the case of Gender and History, but it is not deeply interested in exploring questions of theory and method. By and large, the abstracts seem to describe empirical studies that, while making claims for the benefit of a particular approach, are mainly concerned to outline the historical condition or moment of change in question. This was particularly true of the abstracts published in the Journal of Women’s History. They did not strike me as particularly interdisciplinary in their concerns, though neither did they argue against interdisciplinarity. Abstracts did not directly address the work of Sigmund Freud, Michel Foucault or Homi Bhabha or, for that matter, Judith Butler, Carol Pateman or Joan Scott, though I admit it is difficult to make a claim against the journals’ interests in theory or interdisciplinarity based solely on the abstracts.

The Journal of Women’s History scored highly in ‘histroriography and method’, with 41 per cent of abstracts making reference to this category. This was mainly because authors more frequently offered an explicit outline of their approach in the abstract and, perhaps more importantly, because the journal often includes a section called ‘Getting to the Source’ where authors discuss at length the nature of a particular archive or primary text (such as a biography or collection of obscure unpublished writings by a historical figure). Gender and History scored reasonably well on this count too (21 per cent of abstracts), which can be attributed to the inclusion of lengthy thematic book reviews and a section called ‘Forum’. Both of these tended to discuss historiography in particular sub-genres of gender history. Again, here the focus was more on thematic directions than on issues of epistemology or political theory.

As I’ve mentioned, Women’s History Review was especially striking for its consistent interest in the history of feminisms and women’s movements that would not use that term for themselves. It is also striking for purposefully describing a community of scholars in this field. I applaud the journal for providing what seems like a unique opportunity to read about this wide network and the individual scholars who have contributed to it. However, I can’t help but wonder if the overall effect of this overwhelming focus on the history of women’s movements is to give the impression of a self-referential field, uninterested in audiences beyond historians of women. But then I am reminded of Gerda Lerner’s discovery of a relative absence of histories of women’s political and social struggles and the importance of these for understanding the original impetus for women’s history and strategies for social change.

To conclude, I will make two points that are concerned with both the regions and themes that preoccupy the Journal of Women’s History, Women’s History Review and Gender and History. The purpose of these final remarks is to suggest areas of strength within Australian women’s and gender history scholarship that would benefit these international journals. It struck me that, overall, these journals did not reflect the extent of Britain’s long and complex history of colonialism, although a handful of articles offered postcolonial reflections on South Africa and, more frequently, India. There was only one article that I came across that addressed the experiences of Australian Aboriginal women, and few that reflected more broadly and in a focused way on Australia’s colonial and postcolonial history. Although I have not conducted a similar survey of Australian journals, I am more familiar with Australian feminist and history journals than international journals. In contrast to these British and American-based journals, Australian journals offer a much broader account of the colonial period and its impact on Indigenous peoples, and are more thoroughly informed by postcolonial theory. See, for example, the development of theories of whiteness in Australian history showcased in a recent edition of Australian Feminist Studies, Hecate’s current online article on the Stolen Generations and the exploration of empathy and imagination in Lilith: a feminist history journal. Perhaps because Australia’s
range of journals designed specifically for feminist work is necessarily more limited and therefore interdisciplinary, Australian scholars of women's and gender history are used to reading and thinking across disciplines.

It would be interesting to do a similar study of these three journals in the 1990s, particularly to observe how much work was being published in the field of history of the body and to what extent it was influenced by feminist philosophers of the body. This is an established strength of Australian feminist scholarship and my impression is that work in this field has been sustained into this century and beyond the period of heightened interest in the 1990s when philosophers such as Moira Gatens and Roslyn Diprose were critiquing the sex-gender distinction and developing theories of embodiment and ethics which, in turn, exerted an influence on feminist historians. My survey of abstracts did not suggest to me the same level of interest and expertise in this broad area within the Journal of Women's History, Women's History Review or Gender and History.

There was only a handful of articles by Australian historians in these journals. While publishing in Australian journals may be of greater benefit to discussions of issues in Australian history, the strengths of Australian scholarship, particularly in its treatment of postcolonial history, indigenous women's history and histories of the body are weaknesses in international English-speaking journals dedicated to women's history and gender history. I mean this as an encouragement to scholars working in these fields. Australian scholarship could change the outline of the trends I have described here and, in so doing, both expose the unique strengths of research and writing in Australia and encourage international scholars to include Australian examples in their transnational and comparative work, thus broadening the conversation about issues in Australian women's and gender history.

Catherine Kevin

Flirting with the Past: A Survey of Current Work in the History of Sexuality

My brief was to provide a survey of the range of women's, gender or feminist history currently being published in journals on sexuality. This encompasses an enormous historical, geographical and cultural terrain that ranges from female masculinity in eighteenth-century Britain to cultural anxieties about masturbation in nineteenth-century America; female genital cutting in Africa to Sapphic modernities; from the history of marriage in Europe to the renaissance of lesbianism in early modern England, to note only a small example of the diversity of research being carried out in the broad area of the History of Sexuality. Due to time constraints it isn't possible to delineate the wide-ranging interdisciplinary scholarship encapsulated by this term. Suffice it to say that there are points of overlap as well as significant points of difference in both theory and practice, as there are for instance, between feminist, lesbian and queer approaches to writing social and cultural history. Because my research is in the area of lesbian history I will emphasise the scholarly research and debates that have shaped this field more than others. I will give a general overview of the range of journals that regularly publish historical research on women, gender and sexuality, before turning to discuss the emerging trends in this area. I am more familiar with the scene in international journals and so the bulk of this paper is focused on that market. I touch on the publication of historical research on sexuality in Australia only tangentially. The most obvious difference between these two scholarly spheres is the absence of a journal dedicated to the history of sexuality in Australia. However this does not necessarily imply a lack of interest in these issues as, for example, the October 2005 special issue of Australian Historical Studies on histories of sexualities illustrates.

There are several paths to publication open to scholars working in the field of women's history generally, and the history of sexuality specifically. Because of the interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary nature of much scholarly work in this area, scholars tend to have a greater range of journals available to them than those working in other fields. This means their work may find a niche within journals focused on disciplinary or temporal frameworks (for example the Journal of Social History or Victorian Studies), as well as those focused on theoretical or methodological approaches (for example Feminist Studies or Rethinking History). Depending on subject matter or sources, scholars may also be able to situate their work in journals devoted to feminist cultural and literary studies such as Signs: Journal of Women and Culture in Society or Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature both of which have a distinguished history of