

WALKING WITH PRIDE

Report from Jenny McNae

On Saturday October 28 a group of us went walking in Northbridge. It was the Gay Pride Parade and we joined Christians from other denominations to show our solidarity with the gay and lesbian community. First, I have to say thanks to our chauffeur, Bob Keatch who took us there and picked us up after all the excitement. Many streets were closed and blocked off, so trying to get there and park anywhere convenient would have been almost impossible. Nan, Karen, Lorraine and I were a little 'trepidatious', but we had a glass that cheered at the Northbridge Hotel then headed off to join our group. There to greet us were Mother Christine and Wayne Simes and many other old and new friends.

Here at St Nicolas's we have a long association with George and Shirley Trippe who promoted the 200 feet campaign ie. 100 people walking behind our banner in the parade. The banner read, "Christians with Pride" and at the back of our group the cathedral banner proclaimed, "St George's Cathedral welcomes you". As we waited for the start, groups and floats all around us were preparing. It was all very convivial and Karen spotted Nan dancing with a large woman pirate at one stage! There was lots of colour and sparkle, but we didn't see anything untoward. Just people prepared to be open about their God-given sexuality.

There was a sudden roar of engines and the "Dikes on Bikes" riding Harleys led the parade along William St. Each participating group in turn set off and finally it was us. We moved off waving our psychedelic flashing candle/torches provided by Ross Withnell. He had brought 100 and because they were all given out we assume we made the goal of 100 participants. We proceeded in fits and starts, held up by whatever was happening ahead of us. Each time we set off we were greeted by applause. It seemed that people really appreciated our support. Shirley Trippe was clearly well known and greeted by many people reaching out to her as she passed. It reminded me of Princess Diana who also stepped out; in her case, to let HIV victims know she cared. We were photographed, applauded and smiled at by strangers. Karen Finlayson recalls, "They were really friendly and lovely. It was easy to catch eyes and people would smile and nod or communicate in some way".

Next year will be the 20th year of Pride. So keep the 4th Saturday in October 2007 available because next year we'll be aiming for 300 feet!