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Somewhere over the rainbow: Gay porn travel writing and the British gay male imaginary of the late 1970s

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Abstract

This article examines the role of travel writing in British gay pornographic magazines of the late 1970s, focusing on *Q International* as a case study to explore the construction of a transnational gay male imaginary. Positioned within the socio-economic and political turbulence of late 1970s Britain, *Q International* addressed a readership navigating the tensions between persistent social stigma, and emerging gay consumer power. The magazine's travel features, advertisements, and editorial content collectively interpellated an "average homosexual" as mobile, culturally curious, and aspirational, encouraging identification with a broader European (and global) gay world. Travel is framed not merely as leisure but as a route to self-realisation, sexual freedom, and escape. We situate these representations within histories of gay consumer culture, suggesting that gay travel and publishing were integral to the emergence of modern gay identities. We complicate narratives of gay sex tourism as exploitative, demonstrating instead that *Q International*'s travel writing articulates complex desires for connection, belonging, and a utopian "elsewhere." We contend that *Q International* offers a valuable archival lens onto a pre-AIDS moment of possibility, in which mobility and imagination were central to gay male identity formation. Its travel writing captures both the promise and fragility of this imagined world.

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Introduction

In 1977, Tony Reynolds, editor of the British gay magazine *Q International* advised readers in his editorial that the success of the magazine (that had only been in circulation for just over a year) could be attributed in no small part to an appeal that extended beyond the libido of its readers:

> From the letters and many comments we have received from you the readers over the past 18 months, we have been encouraged to learn that one of the main reasons *Q International* is purchased is because it has not stood still and become just another boring 'sex rag'.
>
> It is fully read and admired for its enormously varied range of original interviews, news, comments and photo-spreads. In fact *Q International* has catered for the person who lives a full life and has an inquiring mind. In other words what we have achieved is a magazine in the true sense of the word.
>
> It is interesting to note that the most successful **homosexual magazines** from other countries do not concentrate on sex alone, but cover all aspects of life as followed by the average homosexual. […] Q International is a homosexual magazine in the truest sense, produced by homosexuals for homosexuals.
>
> (Vol. 2. No. 3, p. 5)

There's a lot to unpack here; that 'sex rags' are boring for example, the implication that there is an international gay magazine industry that Reynolds uses as a comparison for his own editorial decisions and finally (and perhaps most intriguingly for us) is the figure of the 'average homosexual' who has an 'inquiring mind' which helps him to live a full life. Reynolds' remarks here are more than promotional rhetoric. Alongside erotic photography, *Q International* published editorials, political commentary, interviews, consumer features and, above all, a sustained body of travel writing that encouraged readers to imagine themselves within a wider (largely European) gay world. Rather than treating pornography and lifestyle as distinct publishing genres, the magazine assembled them into a single cultural project through which travel, desire, politics and consumption became mutually reinforcing aspects of gay life.

This essay examines the travel writing of *Q International* between the late 1970s and the early 1980s. It is less concerned with where British gay men travelled than with how travel was written. We argue that the magazine's travel features transformed a relatively disparate collection of destinations into an imagined geography of belonging, aspiration and possibility with Europe as its centre. Long before many readers could experience these places for themselves, *Q International* invited them to inhabit Europe imaginatively

through travel journalism reinforced by editorials, photography, advertising and the magazine's broader 'international' editorial vision.

Our intention in this essay is to contribute to histories of British gay print culture, pornography, travel writing and queer Europe without being confined to any one of these fields. This interdisciplinarity reflects the publication that we draw on as the foundation of this research. *Q International* routinely dissolved distinctions between pornography and lifestyle journalism, between political commentary and consumer culture, and between erotic imagery and travel writing. Rather than treating these as separate genres, we see them working together to construct a coherent vision of a European gay world.

This then is an essay about gay travel writing rather than gay travel per se. The already substantial literature on gay tourism has examined the links between tourism and sexual consumption, exploitation and unequal power relations (Bell and Valentine, 1995; Binnie, 2004; Puar, 2002) and our intervention here takes a different object of study and makes a different case. We want to suggest that the cultural and imaginative work performed by travel writing in *Q International* constructs travel as not only the movement of bodies across borders in pursuit of sex but also as a way of imagining different futures, rehearsing forms of cosmopolitan belonging and writing Europe into being as an attainable (and utopian) horizon of gay life. Our interest here in this essay is its explicitly and intentionally internationalist field of view emerging from a very particular social, political and cultural moment in the UK. As Joy Jenkins' research on magazine journalism argues:

> Magazines create connections among readers based on shared interests, ideologies, and perspectives. Through these connections, magazines can construct identities for their audiences. (2016: 322)

Magazines don't just reflect a zeitgeist or a readership they construct one and they are concerned with what Jenkins refers to as 'place-making' which is geographically located and what we describe here as 'world building' which extends beyond ideas of geography and demography to encompass the construction of a 'lifestyle' as we will discuss subsequently. In this context *Q International* (and its competitor publications) can be seen as building a world for its readers. Central to our interests in this essay though is how the travel writing of *Q International* interpellates the 'average homosexual' of the late 1970s. The magazine both assumes and constructs a particular reader: British (and this means English ostensibly), mobile, curious, politically and culturally aware, and seeking both pleasure and community beyond the confines of the nation-state. The content of *Q International* therefore provide an opportunity to examine how travel writing participated in the cultural production of a European gay imaginary in Britain immediately before the AIDS crisis reshaped both the geography and the imagination of gay life. In retrospect, the world building of *Q International* and the travel writing specifically reads as simultaneously aspirational and poignant in light of the events that would shortly follow. The research that this essay represents is preliminary, partial in scope and consciously so in both cases in that we want to bring a publication into view at this stage that has eluded critical attention and accounts of gay print culture in the UK.

Q International

In Brian Dempsey's annotated bibliography *Pink Papers* published in 1995, *Q International* is listed and described with admirable precision thus:

> **FORMAT:** A4 56–80 Pages Monthly.
> **CONTENTS:** Photos of naked men; Fiction; Letters; Fashion; Reviews; Graphics & Cartoons; Ads. for porn; Small Ads. and Contacts; FEATURES on sex & the scene.
> **NOTES:** Includes a relatively high proportion of written material for a porn magazine (1995: 17).

Published between the mid 1970s and the early 1980s, *Q International* emerged during a period of rapid expansion within British gay print culture. Cultural historians have already charted the evolution of the British gay magazine publishing industry (see Bengry, 2009; Engelstein, 2022) and this literature includes Paul Deslandes' essay (2013) which discusses the 'cultural politics' of gay porn in the 1970s with a focus on the publications of Alan Purnell, *HIM* magazine and its various iterations (*HIM Exclusive, HIM International, HIM Monthly*). Our object of study in this essay is a smaller scale contemporaneous competitor publication that forms part of the database of our research and one that is both incompletely archived (unlike *HIM*) and did not attract the same level of media attention (and furore) as *HIM*.[1]

Reconstructing even a rudimentary production history of the magazine presents some challenges. Firstly, no complete print run exists in a single location and surviving copies are dispersed across a range of institutional collections, including the Bishopsgate Institute, (which has the closest to a complete collection) the Australian Queer Archives, Cornell University, the New York Public Library and other specialist holdings, alongside copies that surface intermittently through booksellers and private collections. Similarly, online bibliographical records are inconsistent, with different catalogues proposing slightly different publication dates and numbering systems. We can say with confidence that the magazine was first published in 1976 however its final issue remains uncertain. Some library catalogues suggest publication ceased in 1979 and others indicate that copies continued to circulate into the 1980s (Dempseys bibliography for example suggests that there was a run extending to approximately 46 issues.) Our own archival research reveals that the magazine continued until issue 48 at least which was published in 1982 by which time the *Q International* title was licensed to HIM publications and jointly published by Roger Kean and the graphic artist Oliver Frey.[2]

Published in London by Q Centaur Ltd, *Q International* was designed from the outset as a glossy monthly 'lifestyle' magazine. It is as an A4 publication typically running between 56 and 80 pages (there is considerable differences in page numbers between issues) combining erotic photography with travel writing, arts coverage, reviews, fiction, fashion, reader correspondence, advertising and reports on the gay scene. The magazine cultivated an explicitly international outlook, with an emphasis on articles on overseas travel, features from international correspondents and reports on gay cultures beyond Britain. There is evidence that the magazine itself circulated outside of the UK and was subject to import scrutiny in countries including Australia. Consequently, the title *Q*

International describes an editorial aspiration at least to be a transnational publication. This breadth of editorial content distinguished it from many contemporary British gay magazines and positioned it somewhere between earlier lifestyle publications like the earlier *Jeremy* and contemporaneous magazines that were more clearly marketed as ostensibly porn such as *HIM* or *Zipper*. The surviving evidence also suggests that *Q International* might be understood as the pillar publication of a rather more ambitious publishing venture rather than as an isolated (and relatively obscure) gay magazine. For example, by 1979 Q Centaur expanded its ambitions with the publication of *Vulcan*, a title designed more explicitly to compete with visible market leaders such as *HIM* but doing so by catering to a market for younger 'twink' type models.

In addition to their publishing activities, Q International maintained a physical presence in London's Earl's Court (then a centre of gay commerce and the gay bar scene) with a branded bookshop on Kenway Road selling books, American gay magazines, clothing and leather goods. An advert for their mail order operation (that ran from the same premises alongside the publishing offices) promotes the store:

> In stock now… The latest swimwear…Italian 'Garda' underwear… Paperbacks… Leather goods… Hot American Magazines…Super Disco Suits… and the Friendliest staff around… Where?… "THE 'Q' STORE, 60 Kenway Road London SW5" (1979: 17)[3]

The magazine was originally edited by Tony Reynolds (who we believe was an early member of the Gay Liberation Front) and subsequently by Alan Gloak who had contributed as a writer at various points to *HIM* and *Jeffrey*, although the chronology of these associations based on oral histories and disparate accounts remains unclear. Gloak was certainly a politically active figure throughout his life, becoming a councillor in Somerset and latterly no less than the Mayor of Glastonbury.[4] The backgrounds of these pivotal figures in the publication of the magazine have been gleaned in snatches from a range of archival sources including mentions in the gay press, contemporaneous press shots and personal accounts and our research has made us keenly aware that reconstructing the careers of figures such as Reynolds, Gloak and their contemporaries is an important (indeed an urgent) avenue for future research. This moves beyond the production history of one magazine to understanding the interconnected structures through which commercial gay cultures were produced, circulated and consumed during a formative period in the development of the British gay press.

Q International then, was a publication rooted in a very specific historical moment, and it is precisely this narrow temporal window that makes it so interesting for us. Its relatively short run situates it as a snapshot of a particular phase in British (gay) culture, one framed by the politics of the late 1970s and what we see as a longing for a better 'elsewhere'. Unlike some of its contemporaries, which focused more narrowly on erotic content, *Q International's* editorial position engages with politics (and the politics of sexuality in particular) in ways that were perhaps less common in its competitor publications.[5] This awareness shaped not only its editorial voice but also its representations of gay life, culture, and importantly for us here, mobility. Whilst the format of the publication wasn't profoundly different to its competitors (either in Britain or elsewhere) it's

notable just how much the realities and fantasies of international travel were so central to its editorial identity.

The structure and format of *Q International* intentionally positioned it as more than a 'boring sex rag' by cultivating an aspirational tone aimed at a readership interested in culture, politics, and travel alongside erotic material. Its content combined news and reportage on gay politics with commentary on the politics of publishing pornography alongside photo spreads, erotic fiction, comics, fashion and personals. Notably the magazine foregrounded current affairs and coverage of middlebrow culture, particularly theatre and cinema. Notwithstanding the elevated and aspirational editorial elements, *Q International* was nonetheless a 'top shelf' porn magazine and led with images frequently produced by international photographers and models. The format of each issue of the magazine and regular features change routinely over the course of the run. Analysing the magazine, we can see the editorial team trying out and working through feature ideas some of which remained and some of which fell by the wayside, in part no doubt as part of an ongoing endeavour to 'fix' the magazine's identity and the lifestyle, tastes and concerns of the 'average homosexual'. Erotic photography, travel writing, editorials, advertising and readers' letters all worked together to construct an aspirational vision of gay life in which bodies and desire were connected to consumption, mobility and place. As we will argue travel is the organising thread through which these different elements converged and through which *Q International* imagined a wider gay world.

Gay print culture, 'lifestyle' and travel writing

It has become something of an established orthodoxy that modern gay identities developed both through political mobilisation and through changing relations of work, leisure and consumption practices. Jeffrey Weeks (1980), Frank Mort (1996), Matt Houlbrook (2013), Justin Bengry (2009), and David Johnson (2019), among others, all situate queer identities within the development of capitalism and the (ostensibly commercial) forms through which gay men could recognise themselves and one another. Denis Altman called for a 'political economy' of gay identity 'which recognizes the interrelationships of political, economic, and cultural structures' (1996: 91) and John D'Emilio goes further yet to make the case that capitalism provides the conditions for homosexuality to exist as an identity in the first place:

> […] gay men and lesbians have not always existed. Instead, they are a product of history and have come into existence in a specific historical era. Their emergence is associated with the relations of capitalism – more specifically, its free labour system –that has allowed large numbers of men and women in the late twentieth century to call themselves gay, to see themselves as part of a community of similar men and women, and to organize politically on the basis of that identity. (1993: 468)

Our case in this essay is that gay activism and consumerism (including tourism) are not discrete domains but in fact that one connects to the other and that a nascent gay publishing media is imbricated in the construction and development of both. It's important then that consumerism should not be understood as the apolitical counterpart of

gay liberation in this historical context. After all, gay commerce and entrepreneurship often preceded and frequently enabled (and overlapped) with political organisation. Engelstein's (2022) account of the earlier British magazine, *Spartacus* (that would eventually become a longstanding travel guide) for example, demonstrates the permeability of the boundary between commerce and Gay Liberation. Christopher Ewing, in an essay on German activism, publishing and travel makes the aligned observation that "gay publications and guides often viewed sex tourism as not only compatible with the campaign for international gay rights, but in many ways constitutive of it" (2017: 111).[6]

Magazine publishing was especially important to this process because as Joy Jenkins argues, they create connections between readers through mutual interests and ideologies and in the process construct shared identities for a readership (2016: 322). We extend Jenkins' account of magazine 'place-making' into what we describe here as world-building. In *Q International* world constructed for readers was assembled cumulatively through repetition: of destinations, of idealised bodies, of types of consumption, of cultural reference points, of politics which recur appeared monthly and thereby trace the contours of a legible, gay way of life. In this way each element of the magazine works to establish the terms through which the 'average homosexual' lives his life and the world to which he might aspire to belong. The idea of 'lifestyle' is necessarily useful here, not least because as we have already noted *Q International* demonstrably functions in part as a lifestyle magazine, but also because the term itself was gaining purchase in popular parlance during precisely this period. Lucas Hilderbrand notes that 'lifestyle' became central to the emergence of a public gay identity in the United States during the 1970s and connects this development to Dean MacCannell's use of the then still relatively novel term in *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1976). MacCannell defined lifestyle as a particular combination of work and leisure that was beginning to replace occupation as a basis for social relations and social status. Hilderbrand suggests that the public emergence of a gay 'lifestyle' coincided with (and perhaps helped crystallise) this broader cultural shift in which identity was increasingly communicated through leisure, consumption and taste (2013: 377). This conjunction between gay identity, lifestyle and travel is significant for our purposes not least because Fletcher et al. argue:

> Tourism has long been identified as a quintessential expression of the capitalist political economy. From this perspective, tourism expansion has been analyzed as both an instrument of capitalist development […] and a primary means by which the overarching capitalist economy sustains itself. (2023: 710)

Travel occupies a very particular position within discussions of lifestyle because it conflates capitalist consumption with mobility, with taste making and with identity formation, that in their otherness, foreign places uncover the 'real' (or new) you. The expanding availability of international travel from the 1960s onwards consequently provided gay publishing with a powerful imaginative resource and magazines like Q International were well placed to market the practical possibility of a gay holiday at the same time as linking travel to (often much older) ideas of cosmopolitanism, sexual liberation and crucially (in the period that we're interested in here) to escape. Paris, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Rome or Venice become fantasy

locations that are more sophisticated, permissive, beautiful and more 'liveable' than Britain. This is why the process of travel writing as opposed to actual tourism is important here. Of course, these glamorous locations are unlikely to have mapped very closely onto the travel practices or lived experiences of their readers very closely. Instead, through the act of writing about travel *Q International* actively produces the gay world for its readership.

Britain, Europe and the fantasy of gay travel

Whilst our interest in this essay is in travel writing and the utopian fantasies it produces, we note that scholarship in gay tourism focuses on the unequal economic and racialised relations that structure encounters between comparatively affluent northern European tourists and men in poorer destinations. Sex tourism, sexual consumption and exploitation inevitably then cast a shadow on this history and *Q International* repeatedly eroticises specific destinations and the men that inhabit them as we will note later. What the magazine makes visible, however, is that exploitation alone cannot fully explain the cultural and affective work travel (writing) performs within gay male print culture. The travel writing of *Q International* articulates desires that reach beyond the search for sex and even whilst sex is routinely framed as a motivation for international travel we believe that seeing gay travel (and writing about gay travel) exclusively through the lens of exploitation loses sight of the imaginative work at play in the writing here. *Q International* promoted travel, wrote about travel, advertised specialist travel agencies for gay men and collectively interpolated the gay everyman as an inherently cosmopolitan gay tourist, whose outlook was facing away from the UK rather than inwards, and someone for whom travel was linked to questions of identity. Indeed, UK venues and travel destinations are often measured against international standards in the pages of the magazines. Notably whilst *Q International* also looked repeatedly towards the United States and the visibility and commercial confidence of American gay culture its travel writing returns insistently towards continental Europe. The magazine therefore provides a particularly productive site from which to examine the position of British gay men between different cultural imaginaries: geographically and historically connected to Europe, increasingly exposed to American models of gay identity and consumer culture, yet situated within a national culture that frequently understood itself as distinct from both.

Lucas Hilderband, drawing on Dennis Altman notes the extent to which a gay identity (according to Altman at least) was in essence an American identity:

> Altman saw gay identity and politics as being particular to the United States in their contradictory notions of liberty and repressive mores, their bases in capitalism, and their notion of civil rights. As he observed, even in Paris the gay bars had names that referenced the United States (or, more specifically. New York City), further reinforcing the association of gay life and American culture. (ibid, 376)

Q International actively participates in this transatlantic meaning making and New York, Fire Island, San Francisco, Los Angeles are all referenced in the magazine as

locales alongside American erotic photography and other gay cultural artefacts. However, these fantastical accounts of American gay life are placed alongside an altogether more proximate geography (physically and psychically) of Paris, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Hamburg, Munich, Venice, Naples, Sicily, Athens, Mykonos and Torremolinos. In this context Europe offers British readers an alternative gay imaginary, one that is geographically accessible and at the same time connected to much older (class based) British traditions of continental travel.

Since at least the Grand Tour between the 17th and 19th centuries in Britain, European travel has been tethered to cultural education, to the imagination and of course to (often gay) sexual experiences. As Vorobjovas-Pinta and Hardy observe wealthy and educated northern European men travelled south in search not only of the art of antiquity and warmer climates but also sexual encounters with men (2014: 637). Jennifer Mori similarly notes that "sexual adventure, particularly initiation, was an accepted part of the tour for men" (2010: 161). Italy was a central destination on the Grand Tour and the association between classical culture and male same-sex desire meant that the journey south could be imagined simultaneously as cultural education and sexual possibility. The contemporaneous euphemism of the 'Italian vice' is significant here in that homosexuality was displaced onto foreign places and foreign bodies via a northern European fantasy of a more permissive European south populated with uninhibited virile southern men.[7] This history of travel cannot be separated from questions of class, race or power. The freedom to travel has never been evenly distributed, and the Grand Tourist's ability to access foreign people and places as sources of cultural and sexual experience depended on unequal distributions of wealth (and mobility). The study of gay tourism has frequently made the case that contemporary tourism reproduces related asymmetries, particularly where comparatively affluent northern European travellers encounter men in economically poorer destinations. Our point here is instead is that Grand Tour illustrates a historical context in which travel could carries an accumulation of meanings for British gay men encompassing culture, education, escape, self-discovery and sex. What changes by the 1960s and 1970s is the social reach of this imaginative geography as the expansion of package tourism made European travel available to a much broader constituency. To be well-travelled (and therefore cosmopolitan in outlook) became realisable (if only as an aspiration) for a generation of gay men. The 'average homosexual' of *Q International* then is not necessarily imagined as wealthy but instead as cultivating *savoire-faire* by knowing something about Paris or Venice, contemplating holidays in Greece or Spain and by regarding travel itself as evidence of this. Reynolds' description of the magazine's reader as someone who has an 'inquiring mind' and 'lives a full life' suggests that acquisition of cultural and social capital in Bourdieu's terms (1986). The magazine's attention to culture, theatre, politics, food, nightlife and foreign cities repeatedly invites its reader to become the kind of man who knows about such things (even if he does not have the means to participate). In this sense, the older ideal of travel as self-cultivation is perpetuated in the pages of the magazine.

Furthermore, *Q International* appeared at a moment when Britain's relationship with the continent was being renegotiated politically as well as culturally. Britain had joined the European Economic Community in 1973, against a background of concern about relative economic decline, and the 1975 referendum confirmed continued

membership. Yet membership did not dissolve a much older tendency to imagine Britain as simultaneously part of Europe and separate from it. That ambivalence runs like a thread through the writing in *Q International* which constructs an imagined Europe that is recognisably close whilst at the same time 'elsewhere' enough to suggest freedom and escape. Additionally, *Q International* circulated in a Britain in which male homosexuality had been only partially decriminalised in England and Wales in 1967 and in which public expressions of gay identity continued to encounter substantial hostility. At the same time, the middle and late 1970s were characterised by a pervasive discourse of national decline. Economic stagnation, industrial conflict, inflation and the IMF crisis contributed to the familiar description of Britain as the 'sick man of Europe' (Crafts, 2012). Against this backdrop, *Q International*'s travel writing offered an imaginative route out of a Britain represented, explicitly or implicitly, as constrained, grey, economically troubled and sexually inhibited.

That Europe is a fantasy in the pages of a gay porn magazine like *Q International* is important to note in this essay. The Europe described by *Q International* is no more an accurate account of continental gay life than the 'average homosexual' is a sociological description of the magazine's actual reader. In this context Said's concept of 'imaginative geographies' (1979: 54) provides a framework for thinking about how 'foreign' spaces acquire meaning through contrasts between the familiar and unfamiliar. However, in the travel writing of *Q International* Europe is constructed as foreign and familiar simultaneously. This proximity distinguishes much of *Q International*'s European imaginary from more obviously colonial fantasies of the exotic (and far away) elsewhere. Whilst the eroticisation of cultural difference, especially in representations of the Mediterranean and destinations beyond Europe is very evident in the examples we will shortly provide, Paris, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Rome are more often imagined as centres of gravity within an emerging gay world. We see in *Q International* the fantasy of a transnational community in which the British reader is invited to recognise himself as already having a place. Europe becomes a space that offers another way of being and the utopian natural home of the gay man.

Reading (and writing) gay travel

Perhaps one of the most striking features of Q International's travel writing (and one that perhaps maps onto the ambiguous relationship of the British with Europe) is the oscillation between fantasy and quotidian practicalities. Its destinations may be glamorous, extending all sorts of possibilities however its travel writing repeatedly returns to the ordinary mechanics of getting there: passports, luggage, money, transport, accommodation, tour operators, bars, guides and sources of local information. This veering between aspiration and the everyday translates the idea of international gay mobility into a series of manageable practical problems, the magazine makes the wider world it imagines appear not simply desirable but attainable.

This is evident from the first issue. 'Tony's Travels', penned by Tony Tripp (which we might surmise is the *nom de plume* of the editor Tony Reynolds) emblazoned with a logo featuring a phallically shaped passenger jet, was to become a monthly fixture during the magazine's early run. From the opening article Tripp is sceptical about the conventions of

travel journalism. He complains about having to wade through endless accounts of 'My weekend in Amsterdam', 'Gay Paree' and essays on Athens, New York, Copenhagen, Rio and Mexico City (1976, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 45). This irritation suggests that travel was evidently already sufficiently established within gay publishing to have developed its own clichés. More importantly, Tripp objects to writing that assumes an implausibly affluent reader, observing waspishly that "ordinary folk find it hard enough to afford a holiday at all let alone go to Rio!" (ibid.) The expression 'ordinary folk' is significant not least because it complicates the aspirational reader constructed elsewhere in *Q International*. Tripp's travel writing instead addresses someone for whom a holiday involves budgeting, planning and uncertainty. In this first article, the glamourous shimmer of gay travel is instead replaced by information about what to do if a passport is lost. The following month for example offers detailed advice about luggage and packing. Readers are advised about baggage allowances and the virtues of a good quality bag with zipped compartments in which to organise film, traveller's cheques, tissues and, inevitably, KY jelly (1976, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 47). The mundane comedy of this list comes from this veering between fantasy and humdrum realities and is characteristic of the magazine more broadly. Gay travel is simultaneously passports and possibility, suitcases and sex. This very particular rhetorical register is why this form of travel writing is interesting to us. We see in these articles that knowledge itself becomes a form of mobility as it's undoubtedly the case that many readers experiences are unlikely to have extended beyond dreaming about travelling to the continent. To know how to pack, which documents to carry, where to find information, how to reach a city and what to expect on arrival is already to begin inhabiting the mobile gay identity the magazine promotes. The reader can rehearse the journey before (or instead of) taking it. Practical advice therefore can be seen to do cultural work by reducing the (imaginative) distance between everyday British life and the international gay world that *Q International* repeatedly sets up as an ideal.

This fluctuation between glamour and reality extends to the range of destinations and activities that *Q International* describes. For example, Tripp's account of Glasgow, follows immediately after Gene Jourdan's reflections on the leather scene in New York City. Jourdan excitedly regales readers with an account of the excesses of bars including the Ramrod, Spike, Eagle, Nine Plus and Anvil (1976, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 32). Tripp's Glasgow is almost comically different. He details the relative merits of travelling by air, road and rail, recommends the 'Glasgow Gay Advisory Service' as a source of local information and concludes that his visit "finished with an evening tour of Glasgow's conveniences from the nice to the nasty" (ibid., p. 36). In the world of *Q International* the Manhattan leather scene happily coexists with train times, advisory services and public toilets in Glasgow as part of the same imagined gay world. The magazine's travel writing repeatedly teaches its reader that gay life has locations, social networks and an industry through which it can be accessed. Bars and clubs are at the heart of this but gay organisations, travel agents, and specialist publications are the mechanisms through which to find them. An advertisement in Issue 4 for the *Golden Key Gay Guide 77*, for instance, promises access to the "swinging gay life" and describes itself as one of the most comprehensive and up-to-date guides available in Europe, covering "everything from pubs, clubs and hotels to restaurants and trolling areas" (1976, Vol. 1, No. 4, p. 4). Guides of this kind are important historical artefacts for gay historians providing evidence of a

relatively developed transnational infrastructure designed to make gay mobility possible. A traveller arriving in an unfamiliar city need not depend entirely upon chance or personal contacts as guides with *Golden Key* or *Spartacus* were intended to make the scene legible in advance. *Q International* participates in the same process through advertisements and through travel writing, translating unfamiliar places into viable (and desirable) destinations. This relationship between the magazine and the gay travel industry is illustrated in an Athens feature published in Issue 6. Much of the article is to the mechanics of reaching Greece, including detailed discussion of travel arrangements and tour operators. Gay travel specialists *Uranian* and *Man Around*, both regular advertisers in the magazine, are specifically discussed. The editorial and commercial functions of *Q International* consequently overlap with the travel writing informing readers about the infrastructures advertised elsewhere in its pages with both participating in the process of making gay travel imaginable *and* practicable. The article presents practical information alongside the production of cultural stereotypes. Tripp approves of the city and its many handsome men but advises readers to exercise caution when interpreting displays of male affection (1976, Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 39). Greek bureaucrats, by contrast, are characterised as petty and officious. The writing moves easily between useful advice, erotic observation and cultural stereotypes. In this way the cosmopolitanism of *Q International* brings with it a specifically British set of ideas about the elsewhere and the 'foreign'. This disparaging tone is not uncommon in the magazines' accounts of destinations and is a feature of what might be described as the bathetic register that the travel writing adopts, shifting from breathless celebration to acidic sideswipes often in the same article. So, Amsterdam may be described as a "gay mecca", but Tripp immediately qualifies its status by presenting it as a poor imitation of the supposedly more desirable Copenhagen. Birmingham, meanwhile, is advertised as the subject of a forthcoming feature and jokingly described as 'that tourist trap of the Midlands' (1976, Vol. 1, No. 4, p. 51), although the promised article never appears. Destinations are compared, ranked, mocked and occasionally found wanting. The cosmopolitan reader is being taught not just to travel but to discriminate between which cities are exciting, overrated, sophisticated or worth the journey. In this way travel writing contributes to the production of taste as we have previously noted. To read *Q International* is to acquire a vocabulary through which places can be judged and discussed, even if the reader never visits them. In this sense, the magazine extends the older relationship between travel and cultural capital discussed earlier. The difference is that this knowledge is now distributed through the relatively inexpensive and repeatable form of the monthly magazine. Furthermore the act of becoming the cosmopolitan 'average homosexual' is incremental as each issue adds another city, venue, correspondent, or guide, gradually enlarging the territory within which an imagined gay life might take place.

By the middle of 1977 *Q International*'s editorial and advertising strategies had become increasingly (and explicitly) international in orientation. An editorial describes Issue 4 as "our first truly international edition", pointing to an international distribution network and readership, the use of French photographers and models, and content "covering many aspects and interests of homosexual life" (Vol. 2, Issue 4, p. 3). We note that the magazine's claim to international credentials extend beyond travel writing. In the fifth issue in 1976 a photo spread entitled 'The Sicilians: A Q Discovery' photographed

by the long forgotten Gambera Assunto evokes the aesthetic tradition of Mediterranean imagery and homoerotic visual references associated most notoriously with Von Gloeden. In 1977, the new year issue featured a cover image of 'Mr Germany' who, readers were, assured will "reveal all" in the pages of the magazine, accompanied by an editorial statement announcing that the magazine acted as a UK agent for several well-known photography studios, including the American studios Colt and Target, as well as Cadinot in France, pointing to the emerging transnational gay porn market. We want to note of course that the richness and range of content published in *Q International* and in almost all of the magazines that we have collated as part of our research illustrates vividly the extent to which porn magazines are very far from either being 'rags' or boring and instead are important historical documents that have a singular facility to capture the zeitgeist of the gay experience in a given moment. The shift is reflected in the appearance of 'Around Our World', superseding Tony Tripp's more conventionally authored travel feature with reports from correspondents on gay cultural scenes globally. This editorial decision is especially significant. 'Tony's Travels' was providing advice and instruction to an individual traveller whereas 'Around Our World' makes an altogether more ambitious pitch to readers. Sydney, Rio de Janeiro, New York, Paris, Istanbul and Hong Kong are explicitly incorporated rhetorically into 'our' (gay) world. Full-page newsletters from distant cities give the magazine a breathlessly cosmopolitan reach, while recurring reports from New York and Paris (established centres of gravity) allow readers to follow changing gay styles and scenes. In these pages, the magazine increasingly speaks less like a traveller returning from a holiday and more like a publication with correspondents positioned inside an international gay network. The evolution from 'Tony's Travels' to 'Around Our World' therefore marks a change in editorial format as well as a shift in who *Q International* imagines its readership to be. The practical advice of the early columns had taught readers how to move through the world and the latter feature increasingly assumes that a gay world already exists and that the magazine can report from within it.

A map of the known gay world

What emerges through this accumulation of travel writing, guides, advertising and fiction is what we describe as a 'map of the known gay world'. It is not a literal or comprehensive map, and its centres of gravity differ (sometimes strikingly) from those familiar today. *Q International*'s geography links the major urban centres of the United States with key destinations in continental Europe, but Europe (and an aligned sentiment of Europeanism) sits very clearly at its heart. This was already implied of course by Tony Tripp's complaint in the first issue about having to wade through 'eight articles on "My weekend in Amsterdam" […] and umpteen essays on Athens, New York, Copenhagen, Rio, and Mexico City' (1976, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 45). Tripp's sarcasm identifies a recognisable itinerary of cities that demonstrates an internationalism that was already being narrated, to a greater of lesser degree, in the gay press. Tripp may decry this in Issue 1 but as *Q International* develops over the course of the decade it becomes clearly invested in expanding that narrative.

Paris, in particular, functions as a physical and psychic focus and it's rare for an issue from this period not to contain some reference to the French capital, whether through travel writing, advertisements for bars and discotheques, photography or cultural reportage. This sustained attention marks Paris as the European gay capital *par excellence*, a site of style, culture and sexual freedom within the transnational gay world that the magazine constructs. We can see *Q International*'s gay world building in Issue 12 where articles on New York City and Fire Island sit alongside advertisements for gay hotels in Edinburgh, promotions for Parisian bars and discotheques, an interview with Tom of Finland and travel writing on Venice. The reader encounters a city guide beside an erotic photoshoot, a foreign correspondent's report besides advertisements for bars and hotels, reportage on gay rights in the UK adjacent to a travel feature. The resulting map extends from London to Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Hamburg and Munich, to resort destinations such as Torremolinos or Mykonos and into Italy, particularly Venice, Naples and Sicily. In the United States, Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco form powerful parallel centres. The magazine's 'internationalism' describes an emerging social and sexual network in which certain locations recur and accumulate significance.

We note that not all places charted on this map are represented as successful gay destinations. A 1979 feature on Dubrovnik written by John St Clair, for example, draws an explicit parallel between the beauty of the city and the attractiveness of the men who live there. Yet the article frustrates the expectation that physical beauty will translate automatically into gay possibility as St Clair complains that Dubrovnik has no identifiable gay scene and finds the local population unfriendly. Beautiful men alone are not enough in *Q International*'s gay world. A successful destination requires an infrastructure of bars, hotels, saunas to function for the gay traveller. For instance, a newsletter from Sofia, Bulgaria in 1979 describes what might be seen as the outer edges of the imagined gay world in stark terms:

> One of the delights of Sofia is that the town centre contains many charming squares and gardens, most of which offer the usual "facilities." These are primitive constructions, underground, with little or no lighting and questionable water; they rather resemble two pillboxes of either sex. The chances of falling when descending slippery steps and breaking a leg are definitely high. The gardens around them do act as a focal point and meeting place, and it was here that contact was made with a bank official, Boris.'

The encounter with Boris, however, shifts the tenor of the article away from travel anecdote towards a more pointed reflection on the political meaning of mobility:

> We conversed, rather haltingly, in German, which both of us knew imperfectly. He never came to see me off when I left but stood at a distance. It is unwise, apparently, to be seen to be too friendly with tourists. He was intensely proud of his country, the musical, rather continual propaganda emitted on television and radio notwithstanding. He was resentful of my freedom to travel, but, technically, he could not. For him, to travel abroad demanded high fares and was impossible in practice.' (1979, Vol. 3, No. 9, p. 59)

The self-consciously elevated style of writing in this article can also be seen in an erotic memoire series entitled 'Travels with My Aren't You a Nice Boy' from 1977/78 which recounts Stephen Scott's exploits travelling in central and South America, the USA and Europe. In both cases the stylistic register and content imitates (intentionally or not) Christopher Isherwood's accounts of his own European exploits decades earlier.[8] More importantly though, the article is making an inequality legible that is easy to overlook elsewhere in the magazine. *Q International* frequently treats the freedom to cross borders as part of the ordinary experience of the 'average homosexual', even when travel requires careful budgeting and planning. Boris's inability to travel troubles that assumption. In this moment mobility and participation in the gay world is revealed as a privilege shaped by political and economic conditions and the utopian Europe imagined elsewhere in the magazine is confronted by the realities of the Eastern bloc and by radically uneven access to movement.

Despite its new global outlook, the publication continued to oscillate between cosmopolitanism and parochialism in ways that reflects a liminal late 1970s gay identity still rooted in the *demi-monde*. Issue 5 of 1978, for example, juxtaposes an account of a visit to Bognor Regis with reports on gay rights in Greece, features on the glamorous gay scenes of Los Angeles and New York City (inevitably abbreviated to LA and NYC) with, the now routine, practical discussions of European travel. The British reader is interpolated in the pages as looking simultaneously across the Atlantic and across the Channel. This juxtaposition can feel comical to a contemporary reader (we were certainly often amused by the shifts in tone and locale) but this captures something of the magazine's peculiar scale. *Q International* transitions (not exactly seamlessly) between English seaside towns, the transatlantic metropolis and the political condition of gay men elsewhere in Europe. Its imaginative world is ambitious and aspirational but never entirely loses contact with the mundanities of British (and provincial) gay life. The relative prominence of particular locations is especially interesting to us here. Amsterdam (as we have already noted) appears early on and Hamburg, rather than Berlin, emerges as the more important German destination in the earlier issues, in part because of its developed leather scene. Berlin finally receives more substantial coverage only in 1979 and, strikingly, appears primarily as a cultural destination rather than as the clubbing and sexual capital it would become for gay travellers (Vol. 3, Issue 8, pp. 48–49). Likewise, destinations that would later become fundamental to European gay tourism such as the Canary Islands or Ibiza for example, are largely absent from the surviving material. Indeed, much of Spain is overlooked with Barcelona and even Sitges receiving relatively little attention. However, the magazine does foreground the Spain created through mass tourism. Torremolinos, for example, belongs to the expanding geography of affordable package holidays and its nascent gay scene made it especially significant as it illustrates how mass tourism facilitated gay sociality. Tony's bar, opened in 1962 by an English owner and catering largely to British and international visitors, is often claimed to be the first gay bar in Spain.[9] We should be cautious here because the archive is incomplete, nevertheless, the map that is drawn here by Q International illustrates both the perimeters of an imagined gay world in the late 1970s when the status of particular cities and resorts remained unsettled and open to revision and also records a moment before the later commercial gay

tourist map had fully consolidated. We note that by the 2020s some of *Q International*'s locations have receded from the centre of gay tourist culture, while destinations largely absent from its pages have become canonical. The magazine predates the commercial gay cruise and the rise of circuit parties in the late 1980s, developments that would further consolidate transnational connections and contribute to what might later be described as a 'gay spice route' of established global destinations (Ghaziani, 2005). *Q International* therefore captures not the completed geography of modern gay tourism but a stage in its cultural formation: a gay *Mappa Mundi* in the process of being written and rewritten.

A new direction?

The map constructed through *Q International*'s travel writing is inevitably framed and contextualised by politics. Indeed, one of the limitations of dismissing gay porn magazines as nothing more than masturbatory material is that it obscures the extent to which many of them articulated an overt politics. *Q International* maintained its investment in travel, lifestyle and cultural aspiration throughout its publication history, but as the 1970s drew to a close its political position became noticeably less optimistic. The idealistic internationalism that we have discussed in this essay increasingly faces the stubborn realities of legal inequality, political conservatism and the uneven freedoms available to gay men both within Britain and across Europe. This shift is illustrated in Ted McFadyen's 1979 article 'Into the 80's' in which he forecasts what the coming decade might hold for gay men. McFadyen's assessment of the British political climate is not a hopeful one. The election of a Conservative government and the appointment of senior legal figures regarded as hostile to gay rights lead him to conclude that domestic reform is becoming increasingly unlikely based on the work of the Gay Lobby of the Campaign for Homosexual (CHE):

> What will the next ten years bring as we move close towards Orwell's significant year, 1984? The political omens, as far as the UK is concerned, are mixed. The senior law appointments, since the change of government, are now held by people known to be anti-gay […] The new government has brought in a greater number of Conservative MPs than we have seen for many years, and they are likely, in general terms, to be more anti-gay rights than Labour MPs. There is ample evidence for this in the findings of CHE's Gay Lobby. (1979, Issue 35, p. 14)

What is significant in McFadyen's piece for our argument is less the pessimist tone but in where he locates the possibility of change. If Westminster offers little cause for optimism, Europe becomes a potential legal and political resource. McFadyen continues:

> It is unlikely, then, that there will be a foreseeable change in the law in terms of equality with heterosexuals, or the elimination of the anomalies that now exist. At least, these changes are unlikely to come as a result of internal pressure; what might bring about change is the judgement of the European Commission of Human Rights, which is considering the case of a Northern Ireland gay man. A case is also being brought before the Strasbourg Commission by three members of the Scottish Homosexual Rights Group. The outcome of the Strasbourg cases could be significant for the UK as a whole. Bringing about any effective change in the law is now being

> seen as increasingly unlikely by a number of gay people in the organised gay movement, indeed as a waste of energies which could be put to better use. (ibid.)

Europe here assumes a rather different meaning from the Parisian bars, Mediterranean bodies and holiday landscapes discussed earlier. It is more than a utopian, fantasy 'elsewhere' but a hope for legal change. This is an important extension of the magazine's European imaginary as the appeal of Europe is that it can also offer a political framework through which the conditions of gay life in Britain might (via the ECHR) be transformed. The geographical movement outward that characterises the travel writing in the magazine is at this point accompanied by a political looking outward towards Strasbourg. McFadyen's pessimism also seems to complicate the relationship between the largely consumerist aspiration and political liberation that *Q International* had often promoted in relatively uncomplicated terms. The mobile and aspirational 'average homosexual' could indeed read the magazine, book a holiday, visit Paris or Amsterdam and participate imaginatively in a utopian international gay world, while remaining legally unequal and socially vulnerable in Britain. The freedom and possibility promised by travel does not automatically translate into citizenship and by the end of the decade this contradiction becomes harder for the magazine to ignore. This contradictory tension is articulated particularly vividly in David Hirst's 1980 article, introduced with the strapline that "David Hirst is browned off with England". Hirst's account begins with the disorientation of returning to London after a month in Italy. An apparently mundane encounter on Marylebone High Street becomes evidence, for him, of a profound difference between English and Italian ways of inhabiting bodies and public space:

> Seeing an attractive boy on the other side of Marylebone High Street, I noticed him and, without thinking, crossed the traffic to walk over. I was nearly mown down by a motorist. When I reached the other side, the boy walked straight past me without so much as a glance. I felt invisible. It was my first day back in England after a month in Italy; I hadn't adjusted. In Milan, Rome, or Palermo, drivers, though they move fast, are tuned differently. What sort of country do we live in, for God's sake, where fear, threats, and cunning combine to kick you in the teeth? In Italy, a friend had got into conversation with a young man in the street only a few minutes after meeting him. The Italians are proud of their sexuality; their bodies proclaim this, and they always dress to maximum advantage. The same is true of the boys. If you smile appreciatively at an Italian, he is more than likely to smile back and probably adjust his crutch; he feels flattered. If you smile at someone in England, he feels threatened. (1980, No. 39, p. 16)

For Hirst then, England signifies invisibility, fear and inhibition whilst Italy offers visibility, body confidence and sexual liberation. In this respect the article dramatises one of the central propositions of Q International's travel writing, that travel reveals the shortcomings of home by allowing another way of living to be imagined and (temporarily) experienced. The European elsewhere becomes the standpoint from which Britain can be criticised. Hirst makes this contrast still more explicit when discussing Italian men and homosexual relationships:

> In their homosexual relationships Italian males show none of the guilt and fear which is so prevalent in England. They accept their sexual drive, they are open and direct, and, because they both know what they want and therefore what you want, they are fabulous lovers. My only regret is that on my first few trips [I wondered whether their behaviour] betokened natural warmth or they were after my wallet. No way. It was my body they wanted. (ibid.)

This is perhaps an example of the problems inherent in the magazine's imaginative geography. Hirst interprets demonstrative physicality, dress and homosocial behaviour through the eyes of an English gay traveller and reads them as evidence of sexual visibility and liberation. In doing so he projects his own desires onto Italian men and constructs them as fundamentally different from the repressed British. The account consequently approaches the kind of imaginative geography identified by Said in Orientalism. Here Italy offers the fantasy of a freer culture and the limits of that fantasy become especially visible when Hirst's account is compared with evidence from contemporaneous Italian gay publishing. His assertion that Italians experience 'none of the guilt and fear' supposedly characteristic of Britain would have scarcely described the lives of many queer Italians. A letter published in the Italian gay magazine Doppio Senso in 1980, for example, offers a strikingly different account. Writing from the Tuscan city of Lucca, a trans woman describes her situation as "desperate":

> Repression and hypocrisy rule; they want to measure everyone, wanting everyone to conform to the narrow social margins, without striving to understand the serious situation that someone like me finds themselves in. (1980, No. 205)

The contrast couldn't be more vivid, however, Hirst's memory of Italy is less about the realities of the country but about what Italy could be *made to mean* by British gay travel writing. We can see in these examples the distance between the traveller's fantasy and the lived conditions of queer people in the place onto which that fantasy is projected. This is precisely why our focus in this essay has been on how travel was written as *Q International* gives us access to a British fantasy of a European utopia of sexual liberation, rather than a reliable account of European homosexuality. Taken together then, McFadyen and Hirst reveal two different ways in which Europe functions as an answer to the perceived limitations of Britain at the end of the 1970s. McFadyen looks to European institutions for the possibility of legal reform whilst Hirst looks to Italy for an alternative sexual and social culture. These examples act as a corrective to the magazine's world-building as straightforwardly celebratory. Indeed, by the transition into the 1980s we can see that the act of looking 'elsewhere' for gay freedom has become increasingly politicised. The magazine's travel writing has moved beyond the quotidian concerns of how one might travel to comparing (often critically) late 70s Britain with the imagined possibility of a gay life in Europe. The 'average homosexual' is not only encouraged to consume, to travel and to desire, he is invited to imagine that the life available to him in Britain need not define the limits of what gay life could be.

Conclusion: The end of the rainbow

Issue 9 of *Q International* includes an article published to promote a summer holiday writing competition entitled "Wish You'd been here!" (with a not inconsiderable 25 pound prize). The short passage provides an elegiac reminiscence of the end of a holiday on Mykonos. It is an extremely affecting account that stands as both a remembrance and a yearning for a gay utopia:

> The last evening comes and the last walk back from Super Paradise across the dry fields and headland. We all run around swapping addresses with the relaxed, bronzed guys we've spent our time with. Perhaps we may see them again in London or wherever. We will be disappointed and will they. Because in the enchanted light of Mykonos we are all glamorous and attractive. Light, warmth, good food, enough money and freedom from work pressures all play their part. But at home that all fades along with the tan. (1977, Vol 1 No. 9, p. 36)

We are especially touched by this extract and include it here in conclusion because it points to something significant that we want to stress. Throughout this essay we have observed the extent to which gay travel as it is described in *Q International* (and elsewhere) is framed, paradoxically as a route to an authentic experience of the self and a dream of escape to a better world; a world that is ostensibly (though not exclusively) located in Europe and that enshrines European liberal values. This is epitomised in this short article which furthermore illustrates that accounts of gay travel are about more than a simplistic discourse of sex tourism even in the context of a gay 'porn' magazine. We find evidence in the content of *Q International* that resists the reductive logic of a gay travel narrative that posits the figure of the wealthy Northern European homosexual traveling south (and east) to sexually exploit handsome (but poorer) Southern European men. The travel writing in *Q International* provides a succession of vignettes like this recollection of Mykonos that illustrate that this isn't the whole story. What Mykonos (or more accurately this *memory* of Mykonos) is offering here is a dream that like a suntan, fades on the return to reality. Travel and how it is experienced and recounted in *Q International* is both about the fantasy *and* the possibility of self-actualisation. We see that the cultural and imaginative work performed by travel writing in *Q International* constructs travel as not simply the movement of bodies across borders in pursuit of sex but also as a way of imagining different futures, rehearsing forms of cosmopolitan belonging and writing Europe into being as an attainable (and utopian) horizon of gay life.

The value of *Q International* as an object of study (and historical document) then is that it offers a window on a nascent moment: a fleeting period of excitement and possibility based on international mobility and the dream of escape from the mundanity of late 1970s Britain a few years before the epistemological rupture of AIDS and before the consolidation of the gay Europe that we now inhabit. Its travel writing reveals not only how a British gay identity was imagined at the time, but how the mobility of mass tourism and a dream of belonging were fundamental to visions of personal freedom and self-realisation a few years before the profound historical change of the 1980s.

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Notes

1. This essay is part of the research project *The Europe that Gay Porn Built, 1945-2000* concerned with answering questions about the development of a transnational European gay porn magazine industry.
2. It's also notable that by this later stage in the magazine's history it was distributed by David Gold, notorious publisher of straight porn titles such as *Rustler* and *Raider*, and subsequently the owner of the Ann Summers retail chain, the Sport newspaper and Birmingham City Football Club and West Ham.
3. Contemporary reports in *Gay News* from 1978 also record police raids on the shop under the Obscene Publications Act.
4. https://www.libdemvoice.org/cllr-alan-gloak-mbe-a-life-well-lived-74633.html.
5. We do not want to overstate this claim though as we're mindful that Alan Purnell's *HIM* similarly engages with not just the politics of gay liberation but also issues of censorship and the wider political climate.
6. Christopher Ewing has also written about Spartacus to illustrate some of the sexually predatory politics that were at play. Its proprietor, John Stamford was found guilty of obscenity in 1972 and relocated to the Netherlands following his conviction. See: https://historyofknowledge.net/2017/04/10/translating-sex-spartacus-and-the-gay-traveler-in-the-1970s/ and Ewing, C. (2025). The trials of John Stamford: gay travel, sexual harm, and Spartacus International Gay Guide. *Rethinking History*, *29*(3), 509–536. https://doi.org/10.1080/13642529.2025.2490356.
7. See Champagne, J. G. (2025). *The Italian Vice, Italy and the Invention of Modern Male Homosexuality. Genders and Sexualities in History*. Palgrave Macmillan and Aldrich, R. (1993) *The Seduction of the Mediterranean: Writing, Art and Homosexual Fantasy*. Routledge.
8. In issue 10 in 1977 Christopher Isherwood is interviewed by Larry Beaumont.
9. https://www.bbc.co.uk/travel/article/20230605-torremolinos-where-spains-gay-rights-movement-began. We also note that Benidorm on the Costa Blanca also lays claim to the first Spanish gay venue with Gay Bar Pretext (though it's opening date is contested) https://www.elespanol.com/alicante/economia/turismo/20220630/anos-pretex-primer-benidorm-desafio-dictadura-franquista/683931992_0.html.

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