

years in Reading Prison and being socially disgraced and ruined as well. Not until 1957 did the **Wolfenden** Committee recommend repeal of this statute, which had inspired many similar innovations in the penal codes of other jurisdictions in the English-speaking world. Even at the time, when the first articles on homosexuality were appearing in the psychiatric press in the wake of appeals by homosexual apologists for toleration, the law was a retrograde measure. But it was part of the "moral purity" trend of the time in which Victorian humanitarianism interacted with Victorian prudery to put a new set of statutes on the lawbooks to enable the police to combat "vice and immorality" in which women and children were often the exploited victims. The law, dubbed the "blackmailer's charter," cast the shadow of criminality over British homosexual life until its repeal in 1967—82 years after its enactment.

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CROSS-DRESSING

See **Transvestism**.

CROWLEY, ALEISTER (1875-1947)

English writer and occultist. By his own account, as an adolescent he was initiated into homosexual practices by a clergyman. As a wealthy undergraduate at Trinity College, Cambridge, Crowley—who had changed his given name(s) from Edward Alexander to Aleister in order to have the metrical value of a dactyl followed by a spondee—had his first book published at his own expense [*Aceldema, or a Place to Bury Strangers in: A Philosophical Poem*, London, 1898]. In another book of the same year, *White Stains*, he extolled the joys of pederasty in verse. During this period he announced that "he

wished to get into contact with the devil." Crowley's occult interests took a quantum leap with his participation in 1898-1900 in the Order of the Golden Dawn, an offshoot of Theosophy. Under the tutelage of several members of the order he became adept in "Ceremonial Magick." In London he established himself in a flat in Chancery Lane, styling himself Count Vladimir Svareff. Two rooms of the apartment became temples dedicated respectively to the twin pillars of Light and Dark.

After the turn of the century Crowley's public career began, and he was regularly attacked in the press as "The Great Beast" and "The Wickedest Man in the World." In 1904 Crowley was visited—so he claimed—by his Holy Guardian Angel, Aiwass, who dictated to him *The Book of the Law*, which became the charter for his later activities. Among its precepts are "The word of Sin is Restriction" and "There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt." In a 1910 memoir he proclaimed, "I shall fight openly for that which no Englishman dare defend, even in secret—sodomy! At school I was taught to admire Plato and Aristotle, who recommend sodomy to youths. I am not so rebellious as to oppose their dictum; and in truth there seems to be no better way to avoid the contamination of woman and the morose pleasures of solitary vice."

In the United States during World War I he experimented with the mind-altering properties of mescaline. He then established a kind of commune or Abbey at Cefalù in Sicily, where (in 1921) he advanced beyond the grade of Magus to the supreme status of Ipsissimus. His earlier misogyny notwithstanding, the abbey also sheltered two mistresses and their children, placing a severe strain on Crowley's finances. He also had a male lover, the poet Victor Neuburg, whom he dominated ruthlessly. With the dissolution of the Abbey in 1929, he began to publish the volumes of his "autohagiography," the final text of which was not issued until

1969 as *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*. In 1945 Crowley went to live in a shabby room in a boarding house near Hastings, where he died two years later. Scarcely known today outside occult circles, Crowley is an extravagant instance of the concern with heterodox religion that has flourished among some male homosexuals who could find no peace within established Christianity, and more recently among female adherents of "the craft." Through his voluminous writings Crowley foreshadowed the emergence of the "Age of Aquarius."

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CRUISING

Cruising is the deliberate, active, and usually mobile search for sexual partner(s) in a social setting. One may cruise on foot, by bike, car, even by boat. The searcher watches for potential partners, and for signs of interest from others, while displaying a choice of signs (body language, gesture, clothing, even systematic color and key codes that may be regarded as social semiotics) to indicate that the search is on. Cruising is a way of avoiding the social inhibition that requires "proper introduction" or other mediation by third parties when seeking intimate encounter with a stranger.

Searching for sexual partners in social settings is not original with modern gay men; earliest published advice on cruising came from the poet of ancient Rome, Publius Ovid (*Art of Love*, ca. A.D. 1). His favorite cruising places were the market, temple, and race track. No sexist, he cruised both genders, and his poem includes advice for women seeking male partners. English gay men refer to cruising as "trolling." A quasi-equivalent among heterosexuals is "picking up."

Gay male cruising was traditionally a more systematic activity than heterosexual "flirting" because the gay searcher was taking serious risks—assault by a heterosexual who resented sexual approach, entrapment by undercover police, "queer bashing" by teenagers looking for "thrills," and the like. Gay cruisers who survive take precautions and master cruising skills. These include well-informed choice of locale, safety of entry and exit, subtle use of glances, and well-informed use of signs and code words to establish sexual understanding. Most urban centers have "cruisy" gay places—favored streets, parks, beaches, and the like—where the searcher is most likely to find a partner. Those not wanting to take an active searching role, but willing to be "cruised" or "picked up," could hang around these places.

Traditional gay male skill in covert cruising led to a myth that total strangers who were homosexual had some sixth sense to recognize each other. In recent years, as public knowledge and tolerance have increased, gay cruising has become less covert, and many cruising techniques are now used by heterosexual men and women. However, the threat of AIDS has increasingly inhibited cruising for casual sex partners by both sexes and sexual orientations. Potential partners are now more likely to want a "proper introduction" and background information.

Cruising today ranges from the most blatant—staring, openly following a desired partner for blocks, making comments ostensibly to a third party but intended to be overheard by a desired stranger—to the most covert, where third parties present do not even suspect a sexual liaison is being negotiated. Overt cruising uses imagination to find any excuse for introducing oneself to a stranger, and many of its techniques are similar to those of the male or female prostitute seeking clients. In covert cruising, skilled use of the eyes is critical. Eye contact must be less than a stare, but more than a casual glance, and is