

GayWest Magazine

March 2015



From The Museum of Erotica, Barcelona

Chair's Blog

Ah March - days are getting longer. Our Saturdays at the Rainbow Café are marked by different events, on 14th March we will be having one of our regular visits from Richard Jackson from Bristol T.H.T. The first day of Spring is the 21st and the start of British summer time is on the 29th, so I am sure you will all be itching to get out and about after the long dark days of winter. You do not have to look far as GayWest have it sorted with places to visit, pub trips for your long warm evenings, Pride events to volunteer your help and of course starting Saturday mornings with wonderful company and lovely refreshments at the famous Rainbow Café. As you read this, myself and a few other members will have visited Ashfield Prison in Pucklechurch for their event celebrating February's History Month. This will have been GayWest's third visit and more information on how it went will be in the next Magazine. Back to March and I want to stress how important it is for as many of you as possible to attend the E.G.M. on Saturday 21st at 11.30am at the Rainbow Café. This has been convened to discuss our deliberations and changes to the constitution and GayWest. Also at the time of writing this blog, our new Website is under construction and will be a great asset for us when launched later this month (details will be put out at the time). One thing I am concerned about though, is where all our members and friends from Bath are on our Bath pub nights ? Are we all too tired to come out for a chat or maybe its just the cold dark nights at the moment ? Do try and support these events if you can, the committee works hard to make sure that they go ahead. Remember "if you don't use it, you could lose it!" That's it, I'm off for a nice mug of coffee at that GayWest place in Bath, see you there! Colin.

GayWest

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Extra-ordinary General Meeting

Don't forget, on 21st March there will be an E.G.M. at the Rainbow Cafe from 11 30am for discussion and approval of proposed changes. You will find enclosed with this magazine a copy of these constitutional changes and an Overview of what has been happening in the group in the last 18 months. Please read these carefully and give any comments you have about them to a committee member before the E.G.M. or raise them at the meeting itself.

Peter Tatchell

On 10th March 7pm – 9pm Peter Tatchell will be at Tony Benn House, Victoria Street, Bristol BS1 6AY marking LGBT History Month. For details contact :-0117 9230555 or Lesley Mansell at Unite Bristol Branch Email:- swestcamp@yahoo.co.uk Tel. 07980 695 117

Editorial

We are looking for a new Magazine Editor, Robert Howes has transformed our magazine in the two years he has done the job. Robert joined GayWest In 1982 and has been on the committee since 2012 and as our Editor since early 2013, he has decided to stand down from this post as he is finding that he has rather a lot on his plate at the moment, and needs to reduce some of the workload. We thank Robert most sincerely for all the input and work that he has done on our behalf, he has agreed to become our archivist at a future date. As all the work we all do on the committee is voluntary, the rest of us appreciate that you can get overwhelmed sometimes with all that needs to be done. Best wishes and thanks Robert from all your friends and colleagues at GayWest. Jim Temporary Magazine Editor.

“Magazine Editor”

As explained above, we urgently need a Member with reasonable IT skills and a good command of English who is able to attend our monthly Committee meetings.

Please contact Colin to discuss the position further:

barny231@googlemail.com

The Museum of Erotica

I had such a good time in Barcelona last September. On the first morning, I walked along the famous La Rambla that leads from the city centre down to the seafront. Halfway down, I discovered the Museum of Erotica, opposite the Bouqueria, the fruit and veg market.

The museum opened at 10.00 am and I was one of their early visitors. Situated on the first floor, I was greeted by a huge carved phallus, about 7-foot high, which was quite a shock. This led me to the Oriental section, and a display of Shunga, or images of spring, an Asian euphemism for sex.

At first I was trailed by two Japanese schoolgirls who tittered their way through the forbidden art of ancient Japan. I particularly liked the porcelain collection, with its delicate paintings, that traditionally a mother would give her daughter on the eve of her wedding to show what was expected of a new bride.

I quickly lost my two giggling geishas and found my way to the lovely miniatures of the Kama Sutra, and a large collection of hand-carved wooden and marble dildos. On display were strange little figurines with huge engorged penises, that originally were teaching aids for young people when they culturally came of age.

Naked Apollo

The Graeco-Roman Collection and my favourite room, where I was greeted by a magnificent golden statue of a naked Apollo, beautifully proportioned and with buns to die for.

Having been brought up on the novels of Mary Renault, I love the history of ancient Greece and Rome. In this room you got your money's worth. Photos, references, frescoes of group orgies, sodomy, fellatio – it was bliss!

Homosexual practices were widely accepted in Ancient Rome, as long as Romans had the active role, and slave or non-Roman the passive one. Political enemies of Julius Caesar, for example, alleged that he was “the husband of all women and the woman of all husbands”, spreading rumours that Caesar had been the passive lover of kings.

I was surprised at how large the museum's collection was, over 800 pieces, ranging from around the world. I loved a set of glazed phallic salt-and-pepper pots from Russia. There were reproductions of paintings from the grand masters of art, like Velazquez, Goya and Klimt through to the limited edition illustrations of the 18th and 19th centuries. Even Picasso and Salvador Dali explored the female form through exaggerated geometric shapes.

Tucked away behind a curtain was a small cinema showing the private video collection of King Alfonso XIII. By today's standards all rather tame, but made in 1926 and filmed in Barcelona's red-light district, it showed titillating cuddles between coy ladies and randy men, in what I call 'Charlie Chaplin' style.. These were the first pornographic films to be seen in Spain and they seeded the start of the Spanish film industry.

The Erotic Garden

It came as a relief, to discover a magical quiet space set out like a roof garden, with arabesque tiles, plants and a photographic fresco along one wall. This was the Erotic Garden, displaying the natural world at its suggestive best, from long-stemmed hairy cacti to the delicate vulva-shaped petals of orchids. You don't think of tortoises having sex – but they do, as the photo-montage on the wall proved. This was a lovely garden, and I noticed that one could hire it for events and parties.

The Red Room

There was so much to see that I risked suffering from information overload, but what sticks in my mind was the Red Room. A display of fetishism and sadomasochism – whips, chains, handcuffs, the lot. Lurking in a corner and firmly bolted to the floor was a most uncomfortable looking 'thrusting' or pleasure machine. A beautiful piece of engineering, with cogs and wheels, and a central prong that held the dildo of choice.

The two staff on duty were very friendly and they explained that the museum had opened in 1997 and was hugely popular with visitors. The corridor down to the street was lined with quotes from famous people. I laughed at Jackie Kennedy's remark that "sex is a bad thing because it rumples the clothes." I left the Museum of Erotica with a huge smile and an urgent need for a coffee.

Michael Reid

Entertainment

Love is Strange

Without any media hype or fanfares, this American gay film arrived in cinemas during February of this year. Directed by Ira Sachs, it tells the story of a gay couple both in their 70's, who have shared their lives for 39 years. They get married in Manhattan and immediately George (played by the excellent Alfred Molina) is dismissed from his job at a Catholic School. As they can no longer afford the mortgage on their apartment, they are forced to sell it and down-size, as well as go down-market. In the interim George moves in with two gay policemen in the flat

below, whilst Ben (played by John Lithgow) moves in with his nephew's family. Numerous problems arise for the parted couple before they are happily re-united. This is a truly superb film, treating gays as adult human beings and not as silly wild caricatures as in many stage, and screen portrayals. The sub plots, all to do with love and relationships, are not necessarily rounded off and the cinema-goer is left to apply his own interpretations as to their conclusions. A truly remarkable film, and one which I will doubtless see again.

Photo Competition

Back in the December Magazine, we mentioned about a photographic competition and the original idea was to use the winning photos for a calendar. However, after some thought and consulting you our members, we have decided that the calendar idea has passed it's peak. So what we would like to do now is have a competition for the best photos and the winning pictures will go on the front cover of future magazines and also on our website.

There is no picture category but must be within the law, your entry will need to be sent to us as an email attachment, and the finally selected pictures will be published in the Gallery of the new website, where you the members will be able to choose the final winners. You now have until the end of summer to take all those amazing pictures that are going to dazzle us! Further details will follow, so get snapping. **Colin.**

The Triple Bill

During the first half of February this year, I made three visits to the theatre: this is a brief resume: in London's Apollo theatre, I saw a revival of the 1994 gay play “**My Night With Reg**” written by Kevin Ellyot with the AIDS epic as a background. In his garden flat a supper party is given by Guy in memory of the recent passing of his friend Reg. Five men turn up, and as the meal is being prepared, they reminisce and talk about their love – lives and conquests. It slowly emerges that at one time or another each guest had slept with Reg, and so disbelief and jealousies soon begin to surface. As the evening progresses some of the guests pair off and disappear into the bushes in the garden, and another couple have a row and one goes home by himself. The characters portrayed were either drama queens, near alcoholics, or in one case, a twink, and the play lacked totally in humour. But it was slickly acted and presented in typical West End style: there was much nudity in the closing scenes of the play.

My Second visit was to Covent Garden to see John Cranko's 1965 Ballet **ONEGIN**, which followed the story of Eugene Onegin that is usually presented as an opera. With Tchaikovsky's exquisite music adapted by Kurt Heinz Stoize,

the leading role was danced by Thiago Soares: Tatiana by Marianeia Nunez and her sister by Akana Takada. With superb settings, beautiful costumes, and imaginative choreography, a vivid and intense atmosphere was created of early 19th century St. Petersburg. The story concerns crossed lovers, intrigue, betrayal and eventual tragic consequences. This happens to be one of my favourite ballets and one of which I will never tire of seeing.

My Third visit to theatre-land, was to see **Fanny Hill**, starring Caroline Quentin: written as a novel in 1748 by John Cleland, it was adapted for the stage by April de Amgelis and presented as a world premier at the Bristol Old Vic. The action as bawdy and explicit; the specially composed ditties and dance displays, the vintage costumes and crisp dialogue all contributed towards a lively evening set in the Bristol docks! With meticulous care given to research, it was disappointing that the whole presented on a set consisting of box cubes at different levels with no effort having being made to capture the eighteenth century period. But the cast worked hard and were accordingly rewarded by an enthusiastic audience.

Antony.

Events & Information

Gay Outdoor Club

Sunday 15 March From Frome

A circular walk of 8 miles with good views, starting from the centre of Frome Somerset, the original Historic Market Town. Centred on the River Frome, it is now well known for its regular vintage markets. Our route will take us through Orchardleigh Park, visiting Lullington before reaching Orchardleigh lake & church.

Park at the Central Car Park(should be free on Sundays). Meet outside Cheese & Grain, OS 142 CP 777 482 (nearest postcode BA11 1BE) Bring a packed lunch & friends for a prompt 11am start. Leader is Steve.

GMG South West

The group's website is www.gmgswsouthwest.com. The group meet regularly in Bristol and Weston -Super- Mare on Thursday evenings and hold other social events.

GGLC Gloucester Group

Meets on Thursday evenings at 7.30pm. New members and visitors can contact the committee on info@gglc.co.uk or phone 07050 627273. and www.gglc-glos.co.uk.

GayWest

The Wednesday pub nights this month are Bristol 11th at The Old Market Tavern, Old Market and Bath on the 25th at Mandalyn's, Lansdown Road.

A Short Story

It was late afternoon on a summer's day and the shadows made by the sun were growing longer by the minute. There was the sound of singing and a guitar being played amongst the bustle of shoppers rushing for their bargains in the late 1950's style shopping precinct. As I walked towards the not so wonderful music being played, annoyed that it could be done better, I caught my first sight of the busker. He was young, beautifully handsome with long flowing golden hair which was being picked out by the sun. This certainly made up for his lack of musical skills.

As I approached he looked my way and gave a wide, broad smile that was so welcoming that I had to fumble in my trouser pockets – so as to find some change to put in his hat which was on the ground in front of him. When he said “Thank you” it brought a tremble to my knees, he was far better at talking than singing. I stood in front of him frozen in time, with thoughts going through my mind of us walking alone on a sun drenched beach with his blond hair flowing in the breeze and his hand holding mine, as we approached the edge of the waves gently rolling in we kissed. “What are you staring at?” I heard someone say. I was brought back to the real world with a sudden jolt.

Barney

The Rich O'Brien Project

Last September's Bristol pub night took place at the Golden Guinea and was a musical pub evening that was enjoyed by all who attended. The music on that evening, supplied by three talented local musicians, are also part of a larger outfit led by Richard O'Brien, “**The Rich O'Brien Project**”. The band will be playing in the gold block foyer at the Colston Hall on **Friday March the 6th from 6.00pm** as part of the Bristol Jazz and Blues Festival weekend. For those of you who like Jazz both modern and traditional, with some original material, do go along and give your support to our local musicians.

The weekend show-pieces many different bands from around the world. The foyer events are all free!

Contact us

To contact us by phone, call us on the new
GayWest Mobile phone number **0758 469 6771**. The Line is
open 5pm – 10pm during evenings, If there is no answer, please
leave a message on the voice mail and one of the committee
will get back to you.

We can also be contacted:- In Person
at the Rainbow Cafe any Saturday Morning.

by email:- info@gaywest.org.uk.
Or on our Website:-www.gaywest.org.uk

The Rainbow Cafe

**The Rainbow Cafe meets every Saturday Morning
from 10.30am – 12.30**

at St. Michael's Day Centre
St. Michael's Place, Bath.
(Next to the Little Theatre Cinema)

The Rainbow is open to all.

*First-time visitors are made very
Welcome and are entitled to a FREE drink*

GayWest Forthcoming Events

March

E.G.M at the Rainbow Cafe on Saturday 21st at 11.30am.

Launch of the new **Gayest Website** later this month, see information on next page.

April

Easter Raffle at the Rainbow Cafe on Easter Saturday 4th April

May

Come and take part in the start of the Bath Music Festival on Friday evening 15th May when the Rainbow Cafe will be open from 7pm—9pm. The evening's concerts throughout Bath are free on this night.

June

Gloucester Pride will be on the Saturday 13th (more information from the Committee)

July

Bristol Pride at Castle Park on the Saturday 11th (again information from the Committee)

After Pride Lunch on the Sunday 12th July , suggestions for venue are welcomed.

July/August

Annual Picnic, date to be confirmed.

August

Weston-Super-Mare Pride on Saturday 8th. This event still needs to be confirmed by the organizers. We are in touch with the North Somerset Forum who are the people involved and are waiting for their reply on this. GayWest hope to have a stall there this year and hope to see many of you there . It was a great event last year and we very much hope it will be going ahead this summer.

Funding for a lot of the Pride events this year, including Bristol, have been drastically reduced, so we all need to give our support to everyone who works hard to make them happen

And Finally

The New Website

It has taken many months of planning and hard work by your Committee, involving lots of effort and discussion, sweat, tears, and frustration but finally we have some good news. The launch of your new website is almost here ! This would not have been possible without generous donations and the securing of a grant from St John's Hospital, for which we are most grateful.

What will it mean for you?

The new site will give information about GayWest activities and events coming up for our and other groups. There will also be a comprehensive contacts list for other LGBT organizations. It will also have links to Facebook and Twitter and most importantly, our own Members' page. As a Member you will be able to log on to access our latest magazine, communicate with other members (in a similar way to Facebook), arrange social events with each other and chat all within a private members-only area.

It will take time to be fully up and running on all of these aspects, since it will be a developing site, so the initial launch of the basic functions will be built upon as time goes on. However, we are excited to be getting so close to its launch after all this time and we very much hope that you will find it helpful and very user-friendly.

Café Talk

As you enjoy the hustle and bustle of Saturday mornings at the famous “**Rainbow Cafe**”, do give a thought to your friendly Committee, who make sure it is there for you to enjoy each week by **volunteering to help** them . Just let one of them know which date suits you and we will do the rest - it's easy, rewarding and fun.

See the information box for contact details.

This magazine has been produced for the members of GayWest.