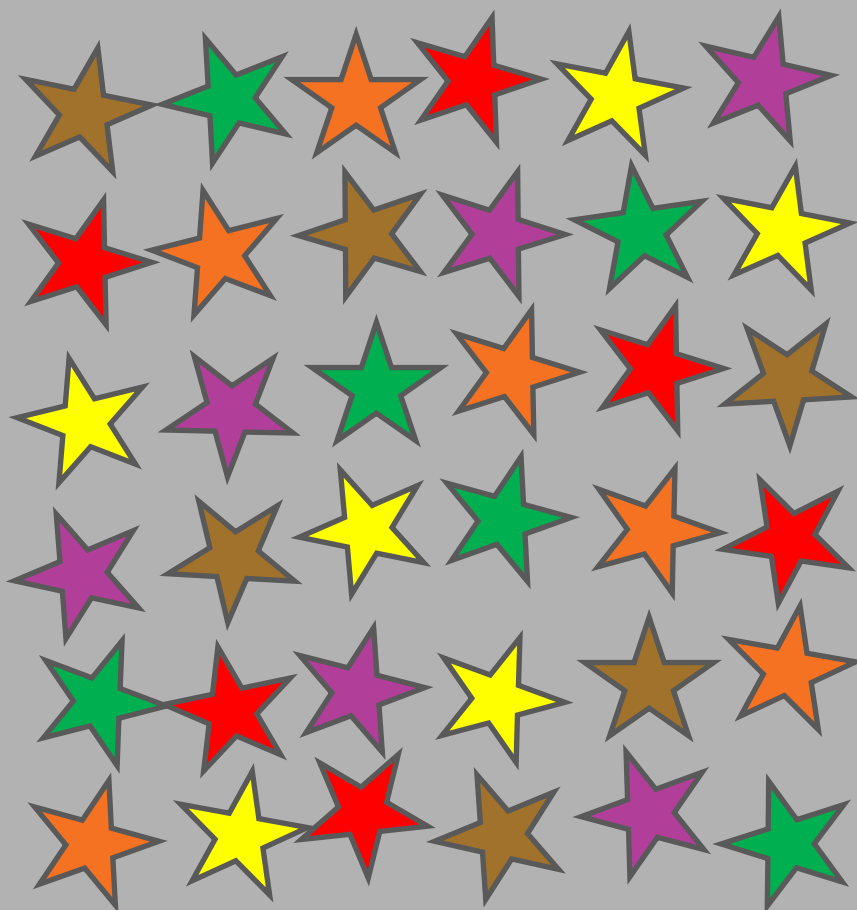


# Gay West



**Member's Magazine for March 2016**

**In Print On-Line Mobile**

# Films and Book Section

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## Film Section

### FreeHeld out from 19th February

**S**tarring Julianne Moore as the terminally ill Laurel Hester and Ellen Page as her partner Stacie Andree. It is reported as an LGBT cinematic Slam Dunk, a Lesbian drama with an element of romance.

The World famous LGBT London Film Festival recently renamed FLARE celebrated it's 30th anniversary this year.

**“Holding The Man”** a love story based on Tin Conigrave’s account of his life, it is blisteringly, hilariously frank and his wicked spirit lives on in this film. A film to look forward to.

Gaywest has purchased a copy of “ChemSex” a documentary on drugs in a sexual context. “A wake-up call”, to the reality.

It will be available to members to borrow from the Rainbow Café.

## Theatre Section

Further joy: The show of Guys and Dolls going on tour and **during July 2016 it will be at the Bristol Hippodrome. Booking is now open.**

## Book Section

“A Whole New World Two Dads” by Carolyn Robertson and Sophie Humphreys, It hopes to teach children about the ever changing world around them.

Beautifully illustrated-life affirming story of growing up with parents of the same sex, written from the perspective of an adopted child.

The book even comes with an all-female alternative– title “Two Mums and an menagerie.”

# Chair's Blog

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**H**ere we are in March, the year is moving on at a galloping pace and your committee have been busy with sorting out events for this year. There has also been a lot of activity in the support area of GayWest and we are now actively involved in helping and supporting GBT groups in the prison service in the South West area.

February as you know was the LGBT History Month and it has been a busy time for GayWest with our talk of its history along with other groups at the M-Shed, our display at the Rainbow Cafe and other events we have been involved with, more of which I will talk about next month.

Recently I received an e-Mail from a member with a suggestion for a visitor that we could ask to visit us at the Rainbow Cafe. This has now been looked into and hopefully there will be a successful outcome.

Please, if you have any ideas or suggestions for us, then let us know and we will do our best to get things sorted.

One of our favourite events of the year enjoyed by many of our members was the Annual Picnic that we were able to have at Camers in Old Sodbury. It was held for seven consecutive years but it is sorely missed. So, if you have any ideas where we can have a summer picnic, then please let us know through the usual channels. (Maybe someone has a large garden?)

Events to look out for in the coming months will be our next fund-raising raffle on Easter Saturday in March and Spring Auction in April - all at the Rainbow Cafe. Our man for events is also putting together visits to various national attractions for the summer and of course there are the Prides so a lot to look forward to and enjoy. Doesn't it make you glad you are a GayWest member!

**Contact us on:- GayWest PO Box 586, Bath. BA1 2YQ**

**Website :- [www.gaywest.org.uk](http://www.gaywest.org.uk) Email :- [info@gaywest.org.uk](mailto:info@gaywest.org.uk)**

**Facebook :- [gaywest.org.uk](http://gaywest.org.uk) Twitter :- [gaywest social](#)**

# The Biograph Cinema

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**T**he Biograph Cinema in Wilton Road, Victoria, London was one of the first cinemas to be built in the UK and it opened as THE ELECTRIC THEATRE on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1909.

It was built for Biograph Theatre Ltd., the first of a small chain operated by an American named George Washington Grant who had taken over five existing cinemas in London. The seating capacity was for 560 on one level.

A plaque on the foyer wall for many years incorrectly stated “BIOGRAPH 1905 England’s first cinema. Originally called Bioscope, the first name for cinema”.

A press release in 1965 stated (again incorrectly) that it opened in March 1905 and was the first cinema to be granted a licence under the Cinematograph Act.

It was extensively rebuilt in 1927 under the plans of architect George Coles. The auditorium was widened to seat 630 (with standing room for 124) and a stage, dressing rooms and a new proscenium was added.

It was renamed THE BIOGRAPH and operated by the Hyams Brothers. The first film with sound shown here was SHOW BOAT on 30th September 1929. During the war the cinema was closed for a short period due to bomb damage and the staff rooms and offices were lost.

The Biograph quickly re-opened with live variety acts as part of the programme. There was a change of programme three times a week, which gave film buffs a chance to catch up on missed movies. In 1952 Kenneth Williams visiting “in the hope of traditional entertainment” complained bitterly, after finding it “terribly desolate”.

In the 1960’s the cinema was doing good business, helped by the fact that it had become a gay men’s meeting place, and was nicknamed

THE BIOGROPE.

## The Biograph Cinema Contd...

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**T**he Metropolitan Police's increased surveillance of public lavatories drove men looking to "pick up" into the comfort and darkness of the cinema. Men would often change seats to sit next to a young man.

Admission around 1964 was 2/6d (half-a-crown) about 13p in today's money & coinage. And very good value too! Following an article in the News of the World headlined "Close Down This Cinema of Vice", the reporter wrote descriptively about the activity there and the constant moving from seat to seat by the audience and frequent visits to the gent's toilet. Despite this expose, nothing happened apart from the appointment of a bouncer, and the films continued with the house lights raised slightly. The cruising continued and the occasional "tourist" would be lured in by the programme, to see what was going on and to have their money refunded. An eye-witness (who wishes to remain anonymous) confirmed to me 'that there were non-stop bodily movements in the stalls and because of the sticky mess on the floor, the wearing of wellington boots was advised!'

Although claimed as the oldest cinema in England, it was not listed due to its pre- and post-war modernisation: The owners (must have) panicked and on August 1983 the cinema closed down and demolition started immediately, and only the site remained after two weeks. It remained derelict for the next twenty years when a small hotel was built on the site.

### Members Notices

#### Help Needed on Allotment

Mark's allotment is in Victoria Park( Lower Common),

opposite Argos, and he offers a small part-share

in lieu of help with the digging.

Anyone interested, please contact

Mark Rees, mobile: 07950 354 620

# Story of Joe.... Part 1

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**F**ew in 1969 would have imagined that a mere two decades after the Stonewall riots, two men would marry in a ceremony recognized and sanctioned by their national government. The right to marry is one of many rights that gay men and women have campaigned for and won in the years since Stonewall, rights that cover every aspect of our daily lives-at home, at work, at play, and in between the sheets.

## **The fight for gay rights: one man's story**

This is the story of Joe Stonewall, born in the early hours of the morning of June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1969. He's not a real person, of course, but through his imaginary birth and life, we can trace the evolution of gay rights from the time of the riots to the dawn of the new millennium. He would have been coming into this world when the Stonewall riots were in full swing. The question is: Was little Joe born homosexual or did something make him "gay" at some point between birth and his first sexual encounter with a man? This is a very important issue and as such is a subject that is still hotly debated today.

## **Born not made: the genetics argument**

The basis for the "essentialist" position is that homosexuality is a "natural" inherited trait, much like eye or skin colour, through the presence of one or more "gay" genes. From the early 19th-century European Homophile movement to the late 1960s pre-Stonewall Gay Rights campaigners often portrayed homosexuals as victims of a natural "abnormality" who, like other sufferers from other genetic disorders, should be pitied for a condition they could do nothing about rather than persecuted.

The latest advances in genetics, which have allowed scientists to identify and manipulate genes, have also raised the spectre of screening the population for "undesirables" genes such as being gay.

## Story of Joe.... Continued

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**P**roof of their theories has so far eluded the pro-genetics camp, apart from the rather obvious question of why a gene that discourages its own sexual reproduction could survive in the population. There is as yet, no single satisfactory theory to account for a process as diverse and complex as the development of human sexuality.

**Joe goes to school.** Joe Stonewall goes to infant school and....To be continued next month.

**In 76 countries homosexuality remains illegal, in at least 5 countries the death penalty prevails.**

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### Identity

**F**inding one's identity has always been difficult, but maybe easier nowadays than before, but do we need to have all the boxes that some would like to put us into; and the labels that some would like to give us. Surely it is love and respect that most people would appreciate, whatever their gender or sexual preferences or fetishes.

After many years of campaigning Homosexual Equality is now accepted in this country, but not everywhere.

Some of our number still want to be separate from the rest of the civilisation wanting "Gay Friendly" venues for socialising and holidays etc. But I feel that we will never get real equalisation across society until we demonstrate that we can mix socially with everyone, regardless of our sexual preferences.

There will be many in our community who do not discuss their sexual preferences with their family or friends. If this works for them then it should be fine with others. There are others who have to tell everyone they meet that they are gay, which must be difficult for the person getting this information which they didn't maybe wish to know.

All rights have been hard to gain and should be cherished as should all our brothers and sisters, **but most importantly always be true to yourself.**

# Leisure

## **GAY OUTDOOR CLUB (GOC)**

A wide range of walks and other outdoor activities locally and nationally. For further details see the GOC web site <http://www.goc.org.uk> .

Local telephone contacts are: Nigel 01793 770099 Ken 07790 759162 or Bill 07503 650354.

### **LOCAL EVENTS THIS MONTH**

**Sun 20 Mar 2016 Wick Rocks, it's a blast!**

A pleasant 6 mile ramble in south Gloucestershire following the River Boyd. Known for the mining of ochre in the past, only bats now hang out in former mine workings. Passing through a woodland valley nature reserve, we make an interesting diversion through a working quarry where signs say 'DANGER BLASTING' - gladly not today though as its also our lunch stop! Far ahead we cross the historic Cleeve pack horse bridge spanning the Boyd. Bring a packed lunch.

### **Editorial Apology**

*In the last issue some of the text in the “Gay Icon” article became truncated, for which I apologise, slapped wrists—must do better.*

### **Political Comment**

“Not to be sniffed at.” Could you be arrested for owning Poppers?

The Psychoactive Substance Bill is due to come into force on the 1st April 2016. Bath MP Ben Howlett along with others, are campaigning for changes to the Bill.



# LGBT History

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LGBT History Bath Walk, Sunday,

28 February 2016, 2pm - 3.30pm

**M**eet at the War Memorial at the entrance to Royal Victoria Park, Queen's Parade, Bath BA1 2NJ

A walk around the Centre of Bath, pointing out the buildings and monuments which have LGBT associations, either as places where people socialised or as meeting places for the LGBT movement over the last sixty years. The walk should last about an hour and a half and finish back by the War Memorial, with the option of warming up in a local tea-shop. Led by Robert Howes of Gay West. Contact: 0775 881 0134/[info@gaywest.org.uk](mailto:info@gaywest.org.uk)

This is a free event but a donation to Outstories Bristol/Gay West would be welcome.

## Travel

Although for years we campaigned for equality—all the world is not the same and sometimes we want travel and accommodation in a “gay friendly” hotel or resort.

Travel firm **KUONI** has recruited gay holiday experts after a 76% rise in bookings for same-sex honeymoons. They have a ten-person team with specialist knowledge of gay-friendly destinations,

The most popular spots are the Maldives, Thailand and the USA.

The Gay Travel market is expanding vastly, and a firm called

**OutOfOffice.com** can arrange your gay-friendly flights, hotels, transfers and excursions. It is protected by Atol the travel regulator.

# GayWest Events

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**February**            Wednesday 24th    **Bath Social Evening 8.30pm**  
**Mandalyn's**

**March**                1st - 5th            Matthew Bourne's

Gothic re-write beguiling and true    Sleeping Beauty  
Bristol Hippodrome

Wednesday 9th    **Bristol Social Evening**  
**Old Market Tavern 8.00pm**

Thursday 17th    **Committee Meeting 2pm**

Wednesday 23rd    **Bath Social Evening 8.30pm**  
**Mandalyn's**

**April**                Wednesday 13th    **Bristol Social Evening**  
**Old Market Tavern 8.00pm**

Saturday 23rd    **Spring Auction 11.00am**

Wednesday 27th    **Bath Social Evening 8.30pm**  
**Mandalyn's**

**May**                 Wednesday 11th    **Bristol Social Evening**  
**Old Market Tavern 8.00pm**

Wednesday 25th    **Bath Social Evening 8.30pm**  
**Mandalyn's**

# GayWest Committee

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## M<sup>e</sup>mbers

Chairman / Assistant Magazine Editor	Colin O'Brien
Rainbow Café Chief Host	Antony Russell
Secretary / Treasurer	Brian Milligan
Events	Michael Reid
Magazine Editor	Jim Phimister
Membership Secretary	Jim Phimister
Outreach Officer	John Martin

### Website Sub-Committee

Facebook / Twitter Administrator	John Martin
Facebook / Twitter Editor	Colin O'Brien
Website Manager	Michael Reid

**Contact No.                      Colin O'Brien                      07758 810 134**

**W**e are always looking for members who feel that they have a talent for Committee work, so whatever you are good at, why not give a little of your time and talent to GayWest with all the things we do.

It would really be appreciated. Many thanks

# GayWest History Display

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## The GayWest LGBT History Month Display

The photo above is of a display of GayWest History Archives. These copies from the originals, were on show during February at The Rainbow Café.

GayWest has a fascinating history going back over 40 years and shows the foresight and passion of those who wanted to do something for the Gay Community.

Colin