



Gay West

**Member's Magazine
for May 2016
In Print - On-Line - Mobile
Non-members £1.50p**

Member's Page

**THIS IS YOUR PAGE WHERE YOU CAN VOICE YOUR
OPINIONS ON JUST ABOUT ANY SUBJECT AND YOUR
MAGAZINE AND IT'S CONTENTS.**

History of Gay West

There are still a few copies left of Robert Howes's History of Gay West (Gay West: Civil Society, Community and LGBT History in Bristol and Bath 1970 to 2010. ISBN 978-1-906236-75-5). This tells the story of the group's development from its origins as the Bath Gay Awareness Group through to 2010, with lots of information about the gay scene in Bristol and Bath in previous years. Take a trip down Memory Lane! Robert will be bringing copies into the Rainbow Café for the next few weeks, where they will be available at the reduced price of £7.99. Buy one while you can!

Official Notice

When attending GayWest Events, would everyone please make their own way to the venues and book independently where appropriate.

Chatroom Host Wanted

Do you fancy having a chat? If so why not join the committee members in using the Private Chatroom on our Website.

You can talk about anything and everything and direct this to individuals of the membership or all of them as a whole. All from the comfort of your home.

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

Website :- www.gaywest.org.uk Email:- info@gaywest.org.uk



:- www.gaywest.org.uk



:- www.gaywest social

Chair's Blog

May! Blue skies, gentle breeze, smell of freshly cut grass. A mug of tea or coffee, maybe something stronger! Sitting in a garden, your garden, a park, a beach or your favourite countryside place. Quiet moments, thoughts running through your head. "What if there were no religions, no different cultures to worry about, no problems about peoples' sexuality, no problems with peoples' different financial status. Who cares! Does it matter? Because at the end of the day we are all humans on the same planet sitting under the same sun.

Are we blind to the wonders of nature all around us especially at this time of the year or are we so busy with our opinions to notice what a privilege it is to be on this amazing blue, spinning object, amongst a vast universe. We are only a very insignificant blob in a much bigger picture. Think about it but not for too long, as your opinions do matter, and your views, likes and dislikes. Just remember that

Happiness is being a member of GayWest, 46 years in the making, a drop in the ocean! Have a good month. Colin.

HELP REQUIRED - We now have our places booked for Gloucester, Bristol and Weston-S-Mare Prides. Myself and Jim will be manning the GayWest stall at these Prides. So that we can have a toilet, and grub break please could you help us out for an hour or so on our stall it is great fun and with the sunshine and lovely gay people to chat to what could be a better way to spend a couple of hours in the summer time.

Also we will be doing the same in September at the Age UK's event at the M-Shed where we also require some help.

If you can help with any of these events please contact me.

On 07758 810 134 Colin

NEWS FLASH.....

The Manager at "The Lads Locker Room" has agreed to offer GayWest Members a **discount** on production of your membership card.

Sex Faith and Coming Out

Coming out is a difficult experience for many young people. But when your sexuality is at odds with everything you have been taught, it can be deeply traumatic. Many gay youngsters brought up in the Islamic faith face extreme opposition when they reveal their sexuality to their communities.

For a 26 year old British Muslim living in London it was truly terrifying. When he told his parents he was gay at the age of 15, they forced him into an arranged engagement with a cousin in Pakistan in an effort to curtail his homosexuality.

Being one of a largely silent population of gay Muslims who remain oppressed because of the hard-line view taken by many religious parents he is speaking out for many other young Muslims who are finding themselves in the same situation. "It's crushing to realise that your parents don't accept who you really are, coming to terms with your own sexual identity is difficult enough but being rejected for something which is part of you and that you have no control over is devastating."

Many believe that the Koran teaches them that homosexuality is not a valid sexual identity. While it is not known exactly how many openly gay Muslims there are in the UK, studies suggest one in 10 are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. With more than 2.5 million people here identifying as Muslim in a recent census, this means as many as 250,000 Muslims may be grappling with this issue in the UK.

According to a 2009 Gallup Poll, Muslims in Britain still have zero tolerance towards homosexual acts. Gay and lesbian relationships are forbidden by Islam because strict rules about sexual intercourse only taking place between a man and a woman as husband and wife.

In 2014 a 34 year old killed himself by jumping from his penthouse flat after his Muslim mother told him to cure himself of being gay when he revealed he was in a gay relationship. Last year a 23 year old confessed his homosexuality to his father.

Sex Faith Contd.

He was forced to attend an exorcism to “rid him of the sin” and recently the leader of a new LGBT-friendly mosque in Paris described living as a gay Muslim like “trying to decide whether to cut off one arm or the other”.

In 2006 he confided in a close school friend that he had begun to come to terms with his attraction to men. “Finally being able to say it outloud lifted a huge weight off my shoulders”, he said.

But when word spread in the small community his parents were distraught at the news.

“When mum found out, she hit the roof, saying our community would be ashamed of me and my family”. Three months later his parents decided to take their 16-year old son to Pakistan where, unknown to him, he would become engaged to a female cousin. He recalls: “When I arrived, relatives were coming up to me and congratulating me, putting money into my hand. I was confused. I couldn't believe that I had been engaged and wanted to run away”.

But his mum who was elsewhere in Pakistan had taken his passport. Nothing could be done and he had to return to the UK and resign himself to the situation. A year later fate intervened on his behalf when his parents divorced and he was able to talk openly with his dad. He told his father he was desperately unhappy to be engaged to his cousin and the engagement was broken off. Although his father was unhappy about his decision, it was his mother who most strongly opposed her son's sexuality. A decade after he came out, his father is only just beginning to understand and he hasn't spoken to his mother in eight years. Speaking out about his experience it is hoped will help other young Muslims who will be struggling with the same issues. “I still think of myself as a Muslim but I struggle to balance religion with my sexuality.”

“If I should find the right partner and get married I know I will have to face the fact that my family won't be there.”

Colin.

If you have any comments you would like to make regarding this article then please send to the editor via our various contact methods.

Story of Joe.... Part 3

Last month you read about Joe Stonewall. A fictional character born on the day of the Stonewall riots, we now continue his story...

Joe goes to work

It was only in the 1990's that real progress was made on the issue of protection in the work place. During this time in the States where Joe grew up the situation was complex, with legal challenges against discriminatory practices at the federal, state, and municipal levels. In the US at this time the passage of a national law banning discrimination based on sexual orientation was a long way off. However if Joe lived in the UK or Denmark he would have those rights. In the UK it would be part of the 1986 Sex Discrimination Act and in June 1996 the Danish parliament passed an act banning discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.

Fit for duty: Joe enlists

After President Clinton reneged on his election pledge to allow gays into the military, and a number of high-profile court cases in the 1990's, there can be few people unaware that Joe Stonewall will not be allowed to serve in the US Armed Forces if he is open about his sexuality. A similar ban in the UK was overturned in 1999 and in the Netherlands the ban had been lifted in 1974. If Joe Stonewall were to join up in the Netherlands, for example, the law would permit him "to engage in consensual homosexual relationships, when off duty and away from military premises, both with a civilian and with a member of the armed services of the same rank".

Trading places: Joe emigrates

Joe Stonewall has fallen in love, but if he and his partner are of different nationalities, how will he fare as far as immigration rights are concerned, either for himself or for his partner? At this time in the 1990's only Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Namibia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Sweden and the UK had immigration rights allowing them to be together.

Story of Joe.... Continued

Here come the grooms: Joe gets hitched

Joe can “marry” his partner in a private ceremony anywhere in the world, as an ever-growing number of gay men and women have been doing since the 1970’s in a dizzying variety of settings, solemnized with even more diverse officiants, both civil and religious, including the world wide Metropolitan Community Church (MCC).

Unofficial gay marriages were common in the developed world, but have also been recorded in the developing world. As soon as we leave the realm of private ceremonies, we enter the areas of legal obligation and financial benefits granted to partners. In some parts of the world there were some legal rights but it would not be until the 21st century for there to be equality on a par with heterosexual marriage. The first law providing for gay marriage of people of the same sex was enacted in 2001 in the Netherlands. As of April the 7th 2016 there are 15 countries that allow same sex couples to marry.

Now Joe will be 47 on June the 28th this year, things have come a long way for LGBT people and their rights, but many problems and issues still remain and there is troubling news of some of the laws made to protect and allow gay people to have the same equality as our heterosexual friends are being repealed. Some are in the US, the birthplace of our imaginary Joe Stonewall!!

Colin.

Barry Humphries on Barry Humphries

“If I’d been a man my gynaecologist would

have mentioned it by now”

or Dame Edna Everage

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 01 May 2016 Battle-hardened Tewkesbury. A walk around the Battlefield, Abbey & Saxon Minster.

This flat 9 mile circular coincides with the anniversary of the Battle of Tewkesbury in May 1471, a bloody affair in the Wars of the Roses, we'll tour the battlefield after walking over from the famous Saxon minster at Deerhurst, much of the bloodiest acts of the battle were enacted around and inside the famous Norman Tewkesbury Abbey, which we'll take a tour of after our lunch stop, with it's many Royal monuments and connections. Afterwards we'll make our way back along the River Severn to the start point.

Sun 15 May 2016 (East of Eden?) West of Bath

A 9.5 mile walk in the Avon valley to the west of Bath to include a climb up to Kelston round hill, followed by field paths beside the river Avon. Bring a packed lunch. There is a pub at the end of the walk for refreshments.

Fri 27 to Tue 31 May 2016 The Isles of Scilly Breakaway

36 miles from the mainland, we will make the outward sailing to St Marys on 27/5/16 returning on 31/5/16 with 3 days to explore some of the islands. Most of those already keen to take part, have plans to stay longer. Everyone to arrange their own travel & parking at Penzance, ferry reservation, and accommodation in Hugh Town on St. Marys, which will be our base. We will explore the stunning coastal tracks, choosing from the islands of St Marys, St. Martins, Bryher & Tresco to include the impressive sub-tropical Tresco Abbey Gardens.

Gay Monuments

There are now a number of monuments to the LGBT struggle around the world, of all shapes and sizes. I'm not sure I'm ready yet to go on a pilgrimage specially to see them but when I'm in the vicinity, I make a definite effort to go and have a look. Still, I've now learnt that you need to do your research beforehand to make sure you don't miss something.

Perhaps the best known is the homo monument which was inaugurated in Amsterdam in 1987 to a design by Karin Daan. According to Wikipedia, it is based on a pink triangle, the symbol of oppression applied to LGBT concentration camp prisoners. The monument comprises three triangles near to the Keizersgracht. The largest triangle measures 10 metres and commemorates lesbians who were persecuted because of their homosexuality.

Fine, I was passing Amsterdam last summer. I went to find the street map off Westerkerk and there was a large raised area about a metre off the ground. Job after clearing Coca Cola cans

which less reverential visitors had left on it, I took lots of photos and went on my way. Now, checking my facts for this article, I discover that I only saw one of the three smaller triangles and didn't appreciate the whole monument, part of which sticks out into the canal. Anyway, here is a photo of what I did see – and at least I now have an excuse to go back to Amsterdam and look for the rest.



by the Nazis, and interlocking granite triangles near the Westerkerk and canal. Each triangle measures 10 metres and the largest measures 36 m. It commemorates all gay men and lesbians who have been persecuted because of their

orientation. I went through Amsterdam, so clutching my street map I went to find the monument. Sure enough, nearby the Westerkerk and canal, there was a large raised area about a metre off the ground. Job after clearing Coca Cola cans

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GayWest and other Events

April 27th Social Evening **NEWS FLASH !!**
Bath Social Evening ; 8.30pm at The Barley Mow

May

A GayWest Boat Trip Sunday 22nd
at 2pm at Bristol Packet Pontoon (Watershed)

Second Wednesdays of each month GayWest's
Bristol Social Evening ; Old Market Tavern 8.00pm

Fourth Wednesdays of each month GayWest's
Bath Social Evenings - as above

Monday 30th - June 11th Priscilla Queen of the Desert
Also a full programme throughout the year of other titles
Hippodrome Box Office 0844 871 3005

June

Saturday 11th Gloucester Pride, Gloucester
Park, Gloucester.

Thursday 16th **1pm Lunch at Harbourside Wetherspoons fol-
lowed by the first GayWest "Queer Ale" pub visit in the area.**

Saturday 18th Midsomer Norton Event being organised
GayWest having a stall.

GayWest and other Events

July

Saturday 2nd Exmouth Pride

Saturday 9th Bristol Pride, Millennium Square, Bristol.

(PLEASE NOTE NEW VENUE)

Sunday 10th **1pm After Pride Lunch at**

**“Catch 22” Restaurant on College Green, varied menu
at reasonable prices.**

Sunday 31st *Puppetry of The Penis ONE NIGHT ONLY*
Bristol Hippodrome

August Sunday 14th 2pm **GayWest PICNIC**

**Hanham Woods Bring your luxurious Picnic hampers to Conham
River Park Picnic Area, off Conham Road, Hanham.**

September Sunday 25th at M.Shed Age UK - Celebrating Age.

Christmas Time **Tyntesfield visit to be arranged**
(A fabulous Victorian outing).

December

The GayWest Annual Dinner - Another event not to be missed.

What do you call a Gay Dentist ? The Tooth Fairy.

If you obey all the rules, you miss all the fun!!

Gay Monuments

The other homo monument I visited was in Montevideo, Uruguay. Uruguay was the first country in Latin America to legalise civil unions in 2008 and has allowed same-sex marriage since 2013. I got up early one Sunday morning and did manage to see all of it (I think) but it wasn't easy to find up a side street in the centre of the city. But there it was, a squat pillar about a metre high set in a small plaza where the Uruguayan LGBT movement starts its marches. It was inaugurated in 2005 and carries a list of the organisations which contributed to its construction. Different monuments which bear testimony to the fact that the LGBT movement is worldwide and in each country LGBT people have found their own way to struggle for our rights and then to commemorate the struggle. In the UK, there is the monument to Alan Turing in Manchester. Maybe Bristol should have one as well. Robert



Committee Meetings :-

Thursday 19th May and Wednesday 15th June at 2pm any member who wishes to attend, please contact Colin on 07758 810 134