

GayWest Journal

For July — August 2017

£1.50 for Non — Members



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Chair's Blog

Welcome to your summer Journal. A lot has been happening since the last edition. We have been at two pride events, a trip to the American Museum, a trip to the seaside and some of you have been to the theatre. So see inside for the reviews of these events.

Social media and the generation gap

Many of you, as I am, will be hoping that we have come to the end of elections. I am a strong believer in having the right to vote, but overkill is not what I want. Whatever your views it is worrying that the art of grownup debate seems to no longer exist, and there seems to be a terrible intolerance between the young (under 30's) and the older generation. Not only in general but very dominate in the LGBT community. Have a read in the Gay publications such as "Gay Times" and "Attitude" where almost all articles are directed at the younger age group. GayWest has experience of this in our communication with other groups in the gay world, younger groups tend to find it difficult responding with us on a continuous level.

On Social Media, the young blame the older generation for all their ills, some maybe, but not all. Many in our age group have worked hard for the life they lead now, and many of us in all age groups, have a lot to thank those of our generation for, the campaigning they did to enable us to have the equalities that we now enjoy. Many throughout the world are still fighting for the same rights.

GayWest has its own Facebook and Twitter accounts. I have my own Facebook account, but I am finding that comments made on these sites are quite often very one-sided and if you disagree, watch out! The young are our future and should be given our support, but they and us oldies, not always wiser,

Chair's Blog Contd.

must work together for a better society that benefits all.

In the recent TV events and campaigns the one thing we all must be aware of is that age old saying “**Money does not grow on trees**”. Robbing Peter to pay Paul does not work and never will. Dialogue is always best, hate and vindictive views are the way to disaster.

Your Committee (Important Notice)

Very small at the moment and working hard for you and needs your support and help if GayWest is to survive the next few years and beyond. So the next Journal is out on the 1st September and this is also the month of our AGM. So during your lazy days of summer give this some thought, and get ready to nominate your next committee. Have a good summer. Colin.



The Rainbow Café

**The Rainbow Café meets every Saturday Morning
from 10.30am -12.30pm**

At St. Michael's Day Centre,
St. Michael's Place, Bath. BA1 1SG
(Next to the Little Theatre Cinema)

The Rainbow is open to all.

First-time visitors are made very
welcome and are entitled to their **first drink FREE.**

Theatre Review

La Cage Aux Folles

Back In May we went to see the Musical by Bill Kenwright. ***La Cage aux Folles*** at the Bristol Hippodrome. We went on a Thursday matinee and were surprised to find many seats still available.

The show started off at a rather slow pace and at times seemed as if it was biding for time and I was not that impressed with the show so far. However the second half was as if you were watching a completely different production. It was slick, funny had some great songs, camp and at times very Gay! One of the best songs was the well-known ***"I am what I am"***.

Would I recommend it , probably not due mainly to the first half performance, but if they would cut out the unnecessary fancy dancing and long dialogues in that first half I think it would be a much better show altogether. I would be willing to give advice!



Dress to Impress!!

This was held at The Bar Cameo in Weston Super Mare on Saturday 22nd of April 2017. It was supported by about 13 GayWest Members and our thanks must go to Nigel from NSLGBT and the Bar ownership and staff for all their help and support.

A special thankyou goes to Brian Milligan for supplying the 46th Birthday cake, which was really well done.

Due to the lack of Member support, other ways will have to be found to increase our funds, to maintain the functioning of GayWest. **Any ideas?**

Other Events

Leyhill Prison Pride events

1. **Quiz evening** Sunday 21st May we were invited to organise their quiz night in the Chapel, The Committee read out differing topic sections, the evening was well organised and all turned out very well and everyone seemed to enjoy it.
2. **Pride Day**—this was held on the Spring Bank Holiday Monday we had an early start when we set out our stall with a history of GayWest along with advertising. They organised the day by selling tickets at £1.00 for coffee and cakes, the proceeds being divided between GayWest and FFlag who also had a stall there.



Notice,

Sid Roberts has informed us of the sad passing of **Bob Paget**, who some of you may remember. Bob was a member of GayWest for a number of years, but in latter years developed Parkinson's Disease and it was after a fall earlier in the year that he died in May.

Bits and Pieces

Arguing with woman is like reading the Software License Agreement. In the end , you ignore everything and click "I agree".

A woman walked into the kitchen to find her husband stalking around with a fly swatter. What are you doing? She asked.
"Hunting flies," he responded. "Oh! Killing any?" She asked. Yep, 3 males, 2 females," he replied. Intrigued, she asked.
"How can you tell them apart?" He responded, "3 were on a beer can, 2 were on the phone."

Martin Reeves has very kindly given GayWest some more books and old Magazines for the Library and archives, the books will have to be catalogued and will be available to members to borrow from the Rainbow Café.

GayWest Events for 2017

- July:**
- Friday 7th Bristol Pride** Event on the Harbourside featuring American singer Belinda Carlisle, early bird tickets from £15.00p.
 - Saturday 8th Bristol Pride** We have a stall in the community marquee.
 - Sunday 9th Post Pride lunch** The Hatchet in Frogmore Street at 1pm. **(Please book your place with us, 7 days ahead to avoid disappointment.)**
 - Saturday 15th Bath Carnival**, venue: bottom of Milsom Street, see Facebook, Bath Pride have a stand, details when available
 - 26-30th Queer Spirit Festival** at Thoulstone Park but need to book online.
 - Saturday 29th Weston-Super-Mare Pride Celebration, at Grove Park** (Early bird £3.00 Tickets are available at The Rainbow Café) GayWest has a stall.
- August:**
- Sunday 13th Picnic** at Keynsham Park and bandstand (free parking) Meet up for 2pm by the bandstand, and entertainment will be **The Redland Wind Band and Bristol Fashion Chorus.**
 - Thursday 17th Avon Gorge Cruise.** Departing from Bristol Harbourside Pontoon Watershed for the 12.30pm boat trip & returning at 4pm. Contact us for more details.
- September:**
- Sunday 10th A Prowl** around Bristol Zoo and tearoom, Time to be confirmed.
 - Saturday 23rd Age Festival** at Bristol City Hall, College Green. 10am – 4pm
 - Saturday 30th GayWest's AGM** at the Rainbow Cafe

GayWest and other Events

October: A walk in the park in Bristol up to Cabot Tower – to be confirmed **November: A visit to the TV Studios at Bristol** more information later in the year.

December: Saturday afternoon or Sunday, first weekend in December: visit to Bristol Beer Factory for their Brewery Open Day – (TBC – when they have updated their website. MR to phone in autumn to enquire)). 12.00-6.00pm - www.bristolbeerfactory.co.uk

GayWest Christmas Dinner

Exact date to be confirmed (8th or 15th)

For further information on all listed events, contact us on info@gaywest.org.uk or Colin on 07758810134

GayWest Social Evenings

Second Wednesday of each month - 12th July & 9th August etc.
at **The Old Market Tavern** in Old Market Street, Bristol.

Official Notice

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



Gloucester Gay and Lesbian Community.

They will meet on the **1st Thursday of each month** at the same venue and time, 7.30 – 10pm. Details of all their social activities will continue to be on their Website. www.gglc.co.uk

Weston-S-Mare Rainbow Café at Cameo Bar

On the Second Saturday of every month from 2 - 4.30pm

American Museum in Bath

A small group of us visited the American Museum on Claverton Hill on 18 May. We caught the free shuttle bus driven by former committee member of GayWest, Martin Reeves, and he gave interesting background information to the founding of the museum.

Originally, it was going to be in a Quaker building in central Bath, but the deal fell through and Claverton Manor was bought instead. Built in 1820, it is a bow-fronted, neo-classical style country house with a stunning view overlooking the woodlands of the Limpley Stoke Valley. A somewhat incongruous setting for such a museum, but in the 1950's the founders thought that Britain needed educating in the American decorative arts. In World War II, the manor was occupied by the RAF and home to the South Wales Balloon Barrage Headquarters. Its Commanding Officer, Squadron-Leader Kenneth Horne was to look fondly at his war time years at Claverton Manor and it seeded the idea for his radio show 'Much-binding-in-the-Marsh'. We remember him best in the 1960's series 'Round the Horne'.

A Transatlantic Alliance

The three founders of the museum were Dr.Dallas Pratt, a US psychiatrist and collector; John Judkyn, an English antiques dealer and later US citizen; and Nick Bell, a furniture restorer. Together they collected and brought back original room settings found in old buildings in America that were about to be demolished, and represented them on three floors in an English country house.

On the Lower Level (basement) we entered the world of Buffalo Bill and the Wild West, with an easy-to-follow timeline of American history year by year.

American Museum in Bath

The Pilgrim Fathers settled in New Plymouth in 1620, but did you know that the Mayflower was bought second-hand? Originally it was used to ferry wine from the Baltic and sat so low in the water that it is astonishing they survived the journey across a stormy Atlantic. A particular favourite was the darkly atmospheric Conkey's Tavern, a tap room and bar founded in 1758. We were shown a sausage 'gun' whereby you put a sausage skin over the nozzle, push the ingredients through, and this gave rise to the expression 'forced meats'. A strong theme running through the basement exhibits was the sad fate of the Native American Indians as the newly arrived settlers spread west. It became a cruel history of expansion as traditional hunting grounds were annexed and buffalo herds destroyed. A quote attributed to the Creo and Hoppi Indian nations says it best:

'Only after the last tree has been cut down

Only after the last river has been poisoned

Only after the last fish has been caught

Only then will you discover that money cannot be eaten.'

First Floor

We entered the Lee Room set in the 17th Century with its fold up double bed. The mattress was supported on a fretwork of ropes which needed adjusting depending on the time of year. This gave rise to the saying: 'Night Night – sleep tight.' The Textile Room is the mid-point of the building with its wonderful collection of quilts. You needed time to really study them, and there was a separate exhibition by Joyce Petscheck, the textile designer in Bargello needle-work who has created a range of furnishings in strong flame-stitch patterns of silk thread.

American Museum in Bath

Not to everyone's taste but in the most unusual and dramatically vibrant colours.

Ground Floor

We arrived into the 18th and 19th centuries of American elegance with its beautiful furnishings. My favourite was the Stencilled Bedroom with its four-poster bed which belonged to a young girl. At the foot of her bed was a miniature one for her doll.

There is so much to see in this magnificent collection that you come outside feeling somewhat addled, which is a good excuse to come back and visit the museum again. There is still a Folk Art Gallery which I have yet to see.

The group met up in the café for tea and an all-American Connecticut Snickerdoodle cookie.

Michael Reid



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Tel:- 0775 881 0134 or 0785 433 6047

Info@gaywest.org.uk

You can now pay by Credit/Debit Card via the Website

Cheques should still be payable to Bath GCO (GayWest).

Members Page

A is for apple, and B is for BOOK BARN



Established in 2000, this business is sited literally in a converted barn in Hallatrow, Somerset: it is a huge air-conditioned single-storey building, just off the A37 /B3355 .

Entering the barn you are greeted by friendly and helpful staff, who will advise you where to look for your choice or choices of books, of which there are over 150 categories! All sections are clearly marked and these range from Antiques, Alternative Health, Economics, Fantasy, Ghosts, Foreign Languages, Music, Railways and Weddings. Oh yes, there is a comprehensive Erotica section too. But the magic does not stop there: apart from the Antique volumes, all books cost just £1 each and are in very good condition – providing incredible value by today's standards.

In-store computers enable searches for obscure titles; there is a website and books can be bought on-line but at slightly higher prices.

A cafe provides home-made food and refreshments.

Open Monday-Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Sundays 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

I would highly recommend a visit – whether you are a bookworm or not. Valentino April 2017



The Jazz Age

This was a separate exhibition at the American Museum showing women's fashions through the 1920's, a decade of social and political change that followed World War One.

The costumes were arranged in themed groupings to mirror the lifestyle of wealthy ladies who changed outfits frequently.

'Cocktail Hour' in which evening trimmings were of two kinds – flutter and fall or embroidery. I had a chat with one of the volunteers who looked after the exhibition. She explained that although the costumes themselves were quite plain in style, the detailed embroidery was all done by hand. I particularly liked the silver model sitting on a large crescent moon – all fringe and feathers.

Other tableaux showed a 'Picnic on the lake', 'On the Ocean liner' and 'In the Boudoir'. These were softer, more relaxed clothes that could be bought in the newly emerging department stores of America or by mail order.

A tableaux called 'The Wedding' displayed the vulgarity of the age: a gold lame wedding dress of silk and metallic thread in heavy Russian style c.1928. One got the impression that this wedding was not based on romance but hard-nosed cash.

'Opening Night at the Theatre' featured big collars and cloche hats. Apparently it was agony for a lady if a high collar interfered with headwear, so beaded evening hats were worn flat at the back of the head.

One woman exemplified this age of excess, Beatrice Mai Benjamin Pratt, the mother of the American Museum's founder, Dallas Pratt. We saw her portrait, sporting diamonds and emeralds, in the main house. Convinced that it pays to advertise, she did so with flamboyant extravagance yet was more than just a stylish clothes horse

The Jazz Age

A prolific writer of articles, she was known as the 'Sportive Designer' for her flair in interior design. Her dinner parties were noted for delicious entrees and gorgeous men.

Around the walls were James Abbe photographs, with one of Gertrude Lawrence in 1923, wearing acid yellow and green satin pantaloons as the Parisian Pierrot, from Noel Coward. This was the decade of dance and jazz, of the Charleston, the Black Bottom and the Shimmy, and when night clubs flourished in London and New York. We had background music to the exhibition, but only a small screen high up in the ceiling that was easy to miss. I would have liked to have seen a larger screen as a main feature.

One bonus was to see the coloured illustrations by the female artist, Gordon Conway, showing Women of the Jazz Age. These were fashion sketches by a gifted self-taught artist who went on to work for Vogue and The Tatler.

It occurred to me that behind these stylish fashions was always a man paying for it all, and the decade long party came to a halt when certain husbands jumped out of the window to greet the Wall Street Crash of 1929. The Jazz Age Exhibition lasts until 29 October.

Michael Reid.

Notice - Join us on Facebook you may find it easier by going to the link at the bottom of our Website

The Weymouth Trip



On the 15th June members of GayWest boarded the Train to Weymouth. We were blessed with fine weather, and part of the reason for the trip was to meet up with The Weymouth Gay group (Formally known as The Dorset Knobs), who meet every Thursday evening. It was great to chat and get to know about the Weymouth group which was started about 9 years ago..

Gloucester Pride

June the 10th was the pride day and in typical fashion with this event the weather was not on its best behaviour. I found the event to be less supported than in previous years. Our old friends G.G.L.C. had their stall with its usual Tombola chances to win prizes, which we duly did, we being the only Gay Groups present.

