

GAY WEST MAGAZINE

MAY 2005

£1 - FREE TO MEMBERS

Brighton Pride's Theme

The Brighton and Hove Pride organisers have announced that the event's theme this year's is to be Heroes and Heroines. Their event is one of the country's biggest gay Pride celebration. They hope to see many thousands of people flocking to the seaside to take part this year. The theme was decided on by the event's organising panel and is hoped that many will dress up when they attend. The organisers were quoted as saying that "It's time to get stitching, weaving, gluing and sewing ready for anything from Wonder Woman to Superman, Zorro to Bond and Captain Kirk to Luke Skywalker", they went on to say that "it's real life heroes and heroines too – from Churchill to Chris Smith, Beckham to Arnie, Bette Davis to Diana, Madonna to Boy George to George Michael – the list is endless." The numbers attending have been increasing at Brighton's pride bucking the general trend in other cities who have been reporting less people taking part.

Anyone wishing to take part in the Pride's parade will still have time to register just visit their site on www.brightonpride.org for more information. The Pride festival will officially start on the 30th of July with the parade taking place on Saturday the 6th of August. If anyone is going to this pride please spread the information you may find others going and it would be nice to meet up as a group.

Attackers now get tougher sentences

New laws have come into force and from now on Gay's and Lesbian 's will be given even more protection from hate crime's . The new laws were introduced as part of the Criminal Justice Act these allow judges from now on to increase sentencing if the crime was aggravated by homophobia. Laws already exists for crimes based on racism so it is hoped that these new laws will not only punish anti-gay attackers more vehemently, but also deter criminals from future homophobic crimes. The police said they hope that the option of harsher sentencing will encourage more lesbian and gay victims of crime to come forward to report what has happen to them. Stonewall's Ben Summerskill said that "The Admiral Duncan bombing demonstrated clearly that hatred for gay people is sadly still held by people in Britain," and he went on to say that "Thousands of assaults on lesbians and gay men are still committed every year. From this week, the law now gives a clear message that homophobic hate crimes shouldn't be tolerated in a civilised society".

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Gay Catholics look to the future after Pope's death

Many minority groups - including gay rights campaigners - are calling for change within the Catholic Church after the death of Pope John Paul II. The pope had angered many liberal Catholics by continually slamming homosexuality he regularly referred to same-sex relationships as "evil" and called on Catholic politicians to mobilise against pro-gay legislation. He said that lesbian and gay people should be recognised as "intrinsically disordered" and advised the parents of gay children to visit psychotherapists. Because of his views on contraception the Church regularly advised its followers against using condoms this was despite the high prevalence of HIV in the strongly religious countries in the developing world. A US outreach LGBT Catholic group called New Ways Ministry said that, "He will be remembered for his strong voice on human rights and dignity," but "His record on lesbian and gay issues is not as admirable." They went on to say that, "He closed the windows of renewal that were opened by Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council." The International Catholic reform movement "We are Church" said in a statement that the pope was "full of contradictions","We applaud his efforts to bring freedom to Poland, his homeland," but added "However his pontificate was full of contradictions ,the direction in which he took the church internally was very distressing for those who had hopes for real reform." The group accused the pontiff of "ignoring" pleas from grassroots Catholics looking for more inclusion and openness in the Catholic Church, adding that "Among the human rights still crying out for recognition in the church are: gender equality...freedom of conscience and speech, the right to be respected for one's sexual orientation, and the moral adulthood of the laity in decision regarding reproduction and the use of condoms to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS." Voting for a replacement was taking place as we went to press however, since the cardinals making the decision were appointed by John Paul II, it is unlikely the successor will stray far from his teachings. George Broadhead of the Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association warned that change would not be happening soon he said "No self-respecting, rational-thinking gay person can be expected to mourn the Pope's demise, or be at all optimistic that his successor will take a more sympathetic approach,"

Sexual health clinics report

A report by the Terrence Higgins Trust with the British HIV Association (BHIVA), and Providers of AIDS Care and Treatment (PACT) said that as many as two-thirds of clinicians at genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinics have said that they have had to turn away patients. They also said that their ability to provide services had worsened in the past year. Waiting times for patients are continue to increase with one in five patients who need an STI test in England now having to wait at least a month. more than a third of patients are waiting more than two weeks for a HIV test as STIs and HIV are still not being considered a priority, despite the increasing number of cases across England - and the UK as a whole - in recent years. Nearly half of the Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) have made no increase in their spending on HIV and STI prevention. The governments plans to push forward with sexual health policies were facing obstacles with 40% of the Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) surveyed saying they had "insufficient capacity to make progress" on the National Strategy for Sexual Health and HIV. The Terrence Higgins Trust, said that the issue of sexual health needed to be addressed drastically, if real gains in the fight against them were to be seen in the UK in a statement they said "Despite the Government's commitment to improving sexual health, many PCTs and clinicians are still struggling to improve access to diagnostic and treatment services, and sexual ill-health continues to worsen in England," they went on "Too often, PCT managers are failing to take sexual health seriously."

"The Government's White Paper on Public Health commits the NHS to reduced waiting times in sexual health clinics and a national campaign to improve public awareness about safer sex.

"However, this needs to be matched by commitment at local level if we are to see better sexual health across the country."

First gay channel to launch 'by autumn'

A TV company has said that it wishes to be the first in this country to provide a Gay and Lesbian channel and it could be launched as early as this coming autumn. The Faze TV bosses made a formal announcement of the channel's proposed launch date to the press. There information implies that it could be similar to channels currently showing in France and Canada, these have combinations of informative content with lifestyle and entertainment programmes. It was reported that viewers can expect a range of programmes tailored to the lesbian and gay market. If it happens then this would be the first totaly Gay and Lesbian channel in the country. The new channel however will be subscription only and is likely to appear only on Sky digital.

Liverpool Capital of Culture?

Liverpool has announced that it is going to be the 2008 European Capital of Culture. The city is mostly famous for its association with the Beatles and Cilla Black but has been remade as a new centre of modern art and architecture. Organisers of the Yester-Queer festival are planning to make sure the city's gay past is remembered during the whole of 2008. A new club has just opened in the city and it is hoped that it will help breathe new life into the city's Gay scene. The organisers have said that they hope to set the tone for future lesbian and gay nights out. Its to be called the Octopus and will be held at Club Addiction in Cumberland Street first of all fortnightly on Sunday's. They have been quoted as saying that "It will be the sort of club that will appeal to a large cross section of gay and non-gay," "We felt there was a need for a club like this." Its planned to feature burlesque, singers, comics and drag acts and it is hoped the new venue will help to draw more of the local gay community into the city's gay scene. It was being said that despite having a large range of bars that many club-goers are going elsewhere to find more well-known and well-established events and nights. The local papers were reporting that the club will be different to the "usual disco bars" and will be open to everyone from the Northwest region.

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