

GayWest Journal for July
and August 2018

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Features

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

Chair's Blog

Welcome to the July and August Journal. I do hope that being a member of GayWest is an enjoyable experience. For those of us on the committee it can be challenging. Over the years as GayWest Chair I have been enthralled at the group's history, have been involved with its present structure and always looking into how it will survive in the future. I am however concerned about the future of the group. The plus side is it can have a fantastic future, the group is attracting new members on a regular basis, six in the last month alone, this is more than other similar organisations at present.

Great news and a credit to members of the present committee. The challenge for us is that the organisation will not survive without these committed volunteers, who give up a lot of their time to make GayWest what it is today and this has been so in the past. So if you hope to be still a member of GayWest in the years ahead, come and have a chat, GayWest needs your input.

So what are the advantages of being a member of GayWest—

Well you belong, to a long established LGBT group, that has helped many Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender people over the years, many have found new friends, companions, love, and marriage. You belong to an organisation that has embraced the improved equality for gay people in the UK, the realization that the old order of inclusive venues such as gay only clubs and pubs, hotels and shops are slowly disappearing outside of the large cities as LGBT people become more accepted and do not have to live in a separate universe. This itself brings challenges, especially with some older gays who fought hard for this equality and are finding it difficult to adjust to the new norms.

Chair's Blog

GayWest is also one of the few LGBT groups to represent the gay community at non gay events such as Age UK's "Celebrating Age Festival," Bath Dementia Awareness group, and this year we will be at Bristol Amnesty group event in August.

GayWest will have a stall at Weston-S-Mares pride again this year but will be giving the Bristol pride a miss due to lack of GayWest volunteers to help on the day.

GayWest along with Fflag give support and help to inmates of Leyhill Prison's Gay Forum, this includes helping them find LGBT groups in the areas that they will be living in when released back into society. Support is also given to the Weston-S-Mare "Rainbow Café"

As a member of GayWest you have access to a website where you can find present and past editions of Journals, a gallery page of event photos. Information on upcoming news and events, you can pay your membership fees via the website, many of our recent new members joined this way. The links page gives you access to many different organisations' websites, these include, social groups, help and support groups, holiday and leisure groups and many others. Access is with your unique membership number.

You also have access to a gay book library of over 300 titles. They are free to borrow. These books are kept at our "Rainbow Café" so come along and take some good novels home to read.

Every member should have a Rainbow Café loyalty card for use at the café.

Chair's Blog

GayWest takes an annual subscription for Gay Times magazine that are also kept at the café and can be read at the café, also other gay related magazines are available.

Every month GayWest hosts a regular social evening in Bristol, at present held at "The Old Market Tavern" in Old Market Street, on the second Wednesday of each month.

At present members have a by-monthly Journal that is published on the website, a printed version is available on request, either to be picked up at the Café or posted.

Copies of monthly committee meetings are also available at the Café, or on request by e-mail.

Members can contact the committee via phone, website,

E-mail and in person at any time.

Members can use the group's Facebook and twitter pages via the website to see what's going on, contact other members and share events.

The Rainbow Café is probably the longest running L.G.B.T. café in the country starting back in early 1982 and opening on every Saturday morning since (apart from when Christmas Day falls on a Saturday). It continues today, and will only continue for many years to come, if well supported by GayWest members and friends.

So here is the deal, would you be willing to give some of your time to help run GayWest? As without support GayWest will struggle to continue. Colin



Official Notices

GayWest Social Evenings Second Wednesday of each month - 11th July and 8th August

at **The Old Market Tavern** in Old Market Street, Bristol.



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

The Café is no longer in operation, but we will let you know if there are any changes in the future.



All GayWest Post to :-

30, Woodpecker Close,

Keynsham, BRISTOL. BS31 2FU

Tel:- 0775 881 0134 or 0785 433 6047

Info@gaywest.org.uk **You can now pay by Credit/Debit Card**

Official Notices

Your Committee needs you!!

Your Committee consists of :-

Colin O'Brien Chairman and Assistant Editor

Michael Reid Secretary and Events coordinator

Jim Phimister Membership Secretary, Treasurer and Editor.

If you can help with any of these roles, please do get in touch.

Colin or Jim



Gay life in — Russia

Medieval Russia was apparently very tolerant of homosexuality with foreign visitors to the country surprised by displays of affection between homosexuals.

The first laws against homosexuals in Russia came about in the 18th century. In 1832 this meant that men lying with men was interpreted by the courts as meeting for anal sex. Application of the law was rare and by the turn of the century was relaxed. It was not until under Stalin that homosexuality was re-criminalized with imprisonment of up to five years, and it was not until 1993 that this again was relaxed.

Modern gay life in Russia is in the process of increasing openness, in large cities such as Moscow and St Petersburg gay bars and clubs have opened but in the provinces L.G.B.T. life remains difficult.

In 2013 Putin signed the so called "Gay Propaganda Law" after it had been passed in the State Duma by an overwhelming majority, the law prohibits disseminating "propaganda" about homosexuals to minors.

Colin

Keynsham and Queen Charlton Walk.

In April In spite of the ominous weather forecast ten walkers assembled outside St John the Baptist Church in Keynsham. In the event, there was some drizzle at times during the walk, but the temperatures were very pleasant and the views of the surrounding country side quiet extensive. Before commencing the main walk, we visited the nearby roman ruins and site of Keynsham Abbey. Once outside Keynsham, just after passing the almshouses built for the widows of soldiers killed in the Monmouth Rebellion of 1685, we followed tracks and paths to Queen Charlton, a pretty village green surrounded by stone cottages and an imposing parish Church. We had our lunch here, on the green, among the pretty spring flowers and to the sound of birdsong. After lunch, we followed country lanes to Chewton Keynsham, a Somerset village noted for its black glazed "Bridgwater" roof tiles and lovely gardens featuring a variety of spring flowers and splendid Magnolia trees in full flower. We then followed the River Chew through meadows, to Albert Mill which was the last working dyewood mill in the country until it shut in 1964. Many of its features have been retained in the new housing development. Our route then took us further along the river into Keynsham, where we found a pleasant café to enjoy afternoon refreshments and a chat.

Many thanks to those who came to the walk and made it an enjoyable event.

Annual Picnic

To be held at Brandon Hill, Bristol, BS1 5RR
Sunday 19th August 2018 at 1pm.

This is open to everyone, and you are encouraged to bring your own picnic.

MEETING POINT – It will be in the front of the Cabot Tower.

BRIEF HISTORY - Brandon Hill is a very hilly park and a very popular picnic spot, in between Clifton and Hotwells, with fantastic views of Bristol. It is one of the oldest municipal parks in the country.

TOUR - During the afternoon, you are very welcome to join with me for a brief walk around the park and visit the Cabot Tower (108 narrow steps!).

PARKING - There is no dedicated car park, but nearest multi storey car park is West End car park in Jacobs Wells Road. Plenty of on street parking near the park, is free on Sunday (please double check!!).



BUSES - It is well served by the Bristol First Buses 1, 2, 3, 4, 8 and 9 (nearest bus stops on top of Park Street (buses from city centre) or Triangle (buses towards city centre outside Sainsbury's Local).

WET WEATHER - In event of wet weather, please meet me at The Berkeley Wetherspoons at the top of Park Street opposite Bristol Museum & Art Gallery.



An Evening Out

My husband and I were dressed and ready to go out for a lovely evening of dinner and theatre. Having been burgled in the past, we turned on a 'night lite' and the answering machine, then put the cat in the back yard. When our cab arrived, we walked out our front door and a rather tubby cat scooted between our legs inside, then ran upstairs. Because our cat likes to chase our budgie we really did not want to leave them unchaperoned so my husband ran inside too retrieve her and put her in the back yard again.

Because I did not want the taxi driver to know our house was going to be empty all evening, I explained to him that my husband would be out momentarily as he was just bidding goodnight to my mother. A few minutes later he got into the cab all hot and bothered, and said, (to my growing horror and amusement) as the cab pulled away.

"Sorry it took so long but the stupid bitch was hiding under the bed and I had to poke her arse with a coat hanger to get her to come out! She tried to take off so I grabbed her by the neck and wrapped her in a blanket so she would not scratch me like she did last time. But it worked! I hauled her fat arse down the stairs and threw her into the back yard....she had better not shit in the vegetable garden again."

The silence in the taxi was deafening...

Visit to St. Fagans

A select trio visited St Fagans on 7 June which proved to be a most interesting day. This is the National Museum of Welsh Life History near Cardiff, which has reconstructed over 50 original historic buildings from all over Wales, and re-set them in parkland in the form of an extended village.

So we went for a walk through a time line of buildings: old farmhouses, mills, even a working men's institute.

The red ochre farmhouse was the immediate eye-catcher dating back to 1610. Painted in oxblood with a thatched roof, its lurid colour together with a nearby rowan tree was thought to ward off evil spirits – and as the guide said 'visiting school kids!' Sadly the rowan tree has just been chopped down.

The Iron Terrace, a row of six cottages and gardens built for workers in the iron-smelting industry, was fascinating. Each interior showed a different setting from 1805 to 1985 with old sepia photographs and hand-carved furniture. There was a prefab from the 1950's with a well-fitted kitchen and bathroom (and a bath).

The woollen mill showed how fine blankets and shawls were created from sheep's wool into beautifully coloured fabrics. My favourite was the Corn Mill, partially run by a waterwheel and electricity. You could see the flour being ground and filtered from one floor to the other.

Visit to St. Fagans

I made a gaffe in the Smithy. At St Fagans, traditional craftsmen demonstrate their skills, and I asked the blacksmith if it was a hobby. No, he said, it was a 30-year long career. Not only did he make horse shoes and tools, but he also repaired farm machinery and wheel rims.

Some of the buildings have been used as film sets – several episodes for Dr Who, and farmhouse scenes for the current BBC's Poldark series.

On the other side of the park were the Castle Grounds and its terraced gardens. We managed to climb a lot of steps but the views were beautiful looking over a landscaped stream and boating lake. St Fagans Castle was the home of the Earl of Plymouth, and we had a quick look inside the house. It had been recently re-wired and they discovered that the main staircase was in such a dangerous state that the first floor was now closed off.

The Main Entrance Building is surprisingly modern and houses exhibition spaces, gift shop and café. New galleries will open in the autumn, so St Fagans is well worth revisiting. The extended village will soon have a reconstruction of a medieval prince's court, a Bronze Age barrow, and an old-fashioned hotel, and we mustn't forget the police station.

Michael Reid

www.museum.wales/stfagans

Growing Older

According to folklore, "Nothing is sadder than an old Queen". For young gay men, who are enjoying their sexual orientation, the prospect of growing old, ugly and lonely generates a great deal of anxiety. They look in the mirror for wrinkles and approach each birthday with dread.

The truth is actually quite different according to studies made. Older gay men are usually happier, more content and better adjusted than younger gay men (which may be the reason that quite a few young men prefer mature partners.)

When younger gay men want to torment themselves about their chances of happiness in their fifties, sixties, and seventies, they latch onto an obviously disturbed older man walking the streets or haunting the bars or saunas and say to themselves, "That's the way I'll be." What they don't realize is that the example they have chosen was probably always unhappy, even when he was twenty or thirty. A successful older gay man has recognized that what he has to offer is not apparent in public meeting places. He may not look as dashing as when he was young, but with age he knows that he has become more secure, more honest, more interesting and more interested.

Rarely do we discuss our lives after the club lights come on, and the dancing shoes are laid to rest. Despite gloomy statistics gay life does not come with an expiration date, gay youth is just that.

Growing Older

Of course ,what younger men fail to understand is that older men are less frantic about selling themselves to every buyer. Quieter domestic pleasures have superseded the more frenetic excitement of long nights at the disco or the tortuous chase from bar to bar. The chase may still have its allure for the older man, but he generally knows how to conduct it with more patience, even more amusement. Gay older men always retain their sexual desires and their ability to perform. What they may have lost in terms of firmness of muscle or dewiness of skin, they have gained in technique and versatility and sexual worldliness. More over, the slight diminishment in sexual drive they may have experienced can leave them feeling, more in control. Where as older men can control their desires and select partners with more care, the young gay man is always desperate to get laid.

Bristol Pride will this year be on Saturday 14th July and this time will not clash with London Pride as it has in past years. GayWest will not be having a stall there this year.

Weston—S—Mare Pride will be a two day event over the weekend of 28th/29th July. We have had support to enable this to go ahead so we have a stall again this year so please do come along and give us your support. For more information go to www.pinkuk.com.

On Sunday May 20th in glorious sunshine

members of GayWest arrived at 11am to visit this unique folly known as Beckford's Tower. It was a steady climb of around 157 steps to the top where we had wonderful views looking

over towards South Wales and closer over the city of Bath and beyond. There is a very good detailed History of the man who built the tower and many fine examples of period furniture on display in the museum. After our visit some of us went for well needed refreshments at The Hare & Hounds just down the road.



Members of GayWest on the Keynsham to Queens Charlton walk.



Outside reclaimed gents at St Fagan's (Brings back