



GayWest Journal for  
November and December 2018

# 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

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**W**ell here we are the last Journal of 2018 and its been a up and down year for GayWest. The ups have been our events, socials and the prides and the steady flow of new members joining us. The downs has been the ever increasing costs, but on the whole a great year.

This will now be my sixth year as the Chair person for the group and I appreciate your faith in me in this role. This new year for the group we start with an increased committee number which will hopefully bring some extra sparkle to the group. In the New Year this publication will return to being a called a Magazine as requested by you in the questionnaire and will have a make over, so look out for the 2019 magazine coming soon to all members.

A while ago, at the age of 16, I started work as an apprenticed carpenter & joiner and worked all my life in the construction industry. I have met people from all over the world, gay, straight, whatever and all different religions and political beliefs, so it worries me a bit by the recent development of having everyone put into labelled boxes, this being most prevalent at our pride events and also by on-line newsletters that GayWest receive. Not just whether you are LGBT+ but such groups as Black Gay History and Black South West Gays. Surely we should be promoting gay life as a whole, irrespective of what colour your skin is, or if you have any disabilities.

Whether you are rich or poor, young or old, have a religion, or support a particular political party, what matters is that you are a human being that lives on an amazing planet. GayWest as an organisation is open to everyone from the community even if straight, and does not promote any particular religion or political view or put its members or friends into labelled boxes. Let's all build a better world free from labels and divisions.

In 2020 GayWest will be celebrating its 50th year, what an amazing achievement, so don't put your party cloths away yet!!!

**Colin**

# Official Notices

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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.



**Please Note:- The Rainbow Café - Rent Charge Rise -** From 1st October 2018 the charges for our use of the room at St. Michael's Centre will go up from £30.00 to £40.00 per week, so if you wish the Café to continue, we will need your support in the form of purchases of drinks and cakes or donations to keep it viable.

# Official Notices

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**GayWest Social Evenings** Second Wednesday of each month – 14th November and 12th December 2018  
at **The Old Market Tavern** in Old Market Street, Bristol.



**Gloucester Gay and Lesbian Community. ( GGLC )**

They will meet on the **1st Thursday of each month** at the same venue, from 7.30pm Details of all their social activities will continue to be on their Website. [www.gglc.co.uk](http://www.gglc.co.uk)  
or by phoning 07050 627273



**Weston – Super – Mare – New Club/Bar**

Proud Bar 20, Boulevard, WSM, BS23 1NA

Open :- Wednesday–Friday 5pm till midnight

Saturday + Sunday noon till midnight



**All GayWest Post to :-**

30, Woodpecker Close,

Keynsham, BRISTOL. BS31 2FU

Tel:- 0775 881 0134 or 0785 433 6047

[Info@gaywest.org.uk](mailto:Info@gaywest.org.uk) You can now pay by Credit/Debit Card  
Cheques should still be payable to Bath GCO (GayWest).

# Gay Life in — The Commonwealth

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**G**ay rights Activists from the Commonwealth Countries are demanding that laws banning homosexuality should be overturned.

Campaigner Peter Tatchell has said people face violence and imprisonment just because they are gay. So where is homosexuality still outlawed. 37 of the 53 Commonwealth Countries still Criminalise Homosexuality.

Many of the laws criminalising homosexual relations originate from British colonial times. Arrest in these countries are still made. For instance, in 2017, 40 men in Nigeria had been arrested during one weekend for performing homosexual acts.

Jamaica is regarded as a homophobic society and in other countries existing laws have been tightened, including Nigeria & Uganda. A spokesperson from the Commonwealth Secretariat said “ We work with the National Human Rights Commission to help encourage national dialogue when it comes to LGBT rights.

## **Possibly the world’s first Gay Rights Movement ?**

This was founded by Dr. Hirschfeld, pioneer of Sexology and founder in 1897 of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee, which campaigned to repeal paragraph 175 of the German Penal Code;

Hirschfeld’s ‘Jahrbuch fur Sexuelle Zwischenstufen’ was published annually from 1899, a vast work gathering together data of all kinds on the subject of sexuality in general, homosexuality in particular.

His other works include other studies on Transvestism (a term he coined ) in 1910, and Homosexuality of men and women in 1914.

# Gay Life in — The Commonwealth

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**D**ated though many of his theories seem now, with his notions of “intersexes”, and homosexuality being “caused” by hormonal imbalance. Perhaps the most valuable thing he accomplished was to put homosexuality into a social context, illustrating that it was a variation of the human sexual experience, and a remarkably common one.

As a Jew, a homosexual and a communist, Hirschfeld did not stand a chance when Hitler’s National Socialist Party came to power. In 1933 the institute was destroyed and it’s irreplaceable archives lost, this happened while he was on a lecture tour in Paris, He died two years later and is buried in Nice.



## **Annual General Meeting Report**

held on **Saturday 22nd of September at 11.30am**

The meeting was well attended with 24 members there. Last year’s reports were followed by electing the new committee:-

Colin O’Brien - Chairman, Jim Phimister - Treasurer and Membership Secretary, and Michael Reid as Secretary, We then had nominations from the floor and John Martin came back as Outreach Officer, along with Duncan Ross and Chris Martin, their roles will be discussed at the next committee meeting.

The meeting continued with lively discussion on quite a few subjects, to see the full minutes go to the website or see the copy in the Rainbow Café.

# Woodspring Priory

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Visit to Woodspring Priory, near Weston – S – Mare

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2019 between 1.00pm and 5.00pm.

**W**oodspring Priory lies adjacent to the sea in a quiet valley to the north of W-S-M. Originally founded in 1210, it flourished in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century when the tower and the nave of the church were rebuilt. At Henry V III dissolution, the buildings became a farmhouse, which was added to in 1701.

The property belongs to the Landmark Trust, which lets it out as holiday accommodation. James has hired it for a short period in January, and is making it available for **GayWest members only** to come and wander round the whole building and grounds between 1 and 5pm on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January.



# A Grand Day Out

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**T**here will be a charge for this of £4.00 per person to include a tea of scone, jam and cream, plus cake. All of the money will go to GayWest funds.

If interested you will need to pay and sign –up in advance to facilitate catering arrangements.

See Jim about this, you will need to make your own way there, or share lifts, and you will need to park in the **FREE public car-park** close to the sea.

**The car-park is found to the right as you approach the Priory,**

Straight ahead is a narrow cul-de-sac with no parking upon pavements, you will be given full directions from the M5 to the Priory.

Book early to avoid disappointment—places will be limited.



## Deciphering your Membership number -

Understanding the new presentation.

M = Membership,

the next two letters indicate the Month you are due to renew your subscription, -

The three digit number is personal to you,

and the last two letters are your main initials. E.G. **MFE160AP**



# The Good Times of Mother Clap

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**W**e tend to think of gay venues like our Rainbow Cafe as a modern invention, but there was a thriving gay male subculture in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century in places known as molly houses. These were the precursors to our modern gay pubs and bars.

We provide coffee, cake and conversation, but the molly houses were meeting places where gay men could drink, dance, dress up as women, and indulge in sinful debauchery.

Mother Clap's Molly House situated in north Holborn, London, was the best known example. In 1724, she rented rooms for up to forty men a night (especially on a Sunday) and ran the place as a private coffee house with a back room known as the Chapel for illicit sex.

Mother Clap insisted that her venue was not a male brothel, as no money exchanged hands, but ran her establishment like a private members' club, with music, a welcoming fireplace, and a good flow of drink which she fetched from the Bunch o' Grapes tavern next door. Margaret Clap, a married woman, just loved the company of bawdy gay men.

The good times didn't last long. In 1726, she was snitched on by one Mark Partridge who turned informer. There was a raid which resulted in a series of trials that shocked public opinion. Reforming Societies became over-zealous and there was a witch-hunt of gay men.

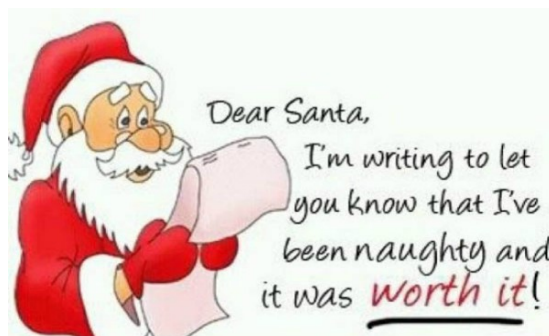


## Mother Clap—Continued

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**M**other Clap died in Newgate Prison, and strangely enough if it hadn't been for the raid on her house and other venues, and the public outcry that followed, we might not have known that a gay subculture had once thrived in the 1720's.

**Michael Reid**



## Christmas Greetings

The Committee wish all GayWest members  
a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

The Menu for the Annual Dinner is on-line and available at the Rainbow Café, or by post, on request, please book with your choices and monies by Saturday 8th December.

The Cost for members will be £25.00 and Guests are £27.50



# Forbidden Love

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**W**hile on military training during World War Two, Gilbert Bradley was in love. He exchanged hundreds of letters with his sweetheart - who merely signed with the initial "G". But more than 70 years later, it was discovered that G stood for Gordon, and Gilbert had been in love with a man.

Then letters were found after Mr Bradley's death in 2008 .

In 1939 he was stationed at Park Hall Camp in Oswestry, Shropshire, to train as an anti-aircraft gunner. He was already in love with Gordon Bowsher. The pair had met on a houseboat holiday in Devon in 1938.

Mr Bowsher was from a well-to-do family. His father ran a shipping company, and the Bowshers also owned tea plantations. When war broke out a year later he trained as an infantryman and was stationed at locations across the country.

At the time, not only was homosexuality illegal, but those in the armed forces could be shot for having gay sex.

Here are some extracts of the letters.

*Wednesday January 24th 1939*

*My darling, .. I lie awake all night waiting for the postman in the early morning, and then when he does not bring anything from you I just exist, a mass of nerves...*

*All my love forever,*

*February 12th 1940, Park Grange.*

*There is nothing more than I desire in life but to have you with me constantly.*

# Forbidden Love

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*...I can see or I imagine I can see, what your mother and father's reaction would be... the rest of the world have no conception of what our love is - they do not .*

*February 1st 1941, K C Gloucester Regiment, Priors Road, Cheltenham*

*My darling boy, For years I had it drummed into me that no love could last for life...I want you darling seriously to delve into your own mind, and to look for once in to the future. Imagine the time when the war is over and we are living together... would it not be better to live on from now on the memory of our life together when it was at its most golden pitch. Your own G.*

Although the couple wrote through out the war, the letters stopped in 1945. However they went on to lead interesting lives. Mr Bowsher moved to California and became a well known horse trainer. In a strange twist, he employed Sirhan, who would go on to be convicted of assassinating Robert Kennedy.

Mr Bradley was briefly entangled with the MP Sir Paul Lathan, who was imprisoned in 1941 following a court marshal for “ Improper conduct” with three gunners and a civilian. Sir Paul was exposed after some “ indiscreet letters” were discovered.

Mr Bradley died in Brighton in 2008. The letters are now in the Oswestry town Museum. When they were first looked at in detail they realised that what was thought was a girlfriend was in fact a boyfriend.

# John Anthony Curry OBE

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John was the third son born in September 1949 to Rita and Joseph Curry in Birmingham. With leanings to become a dancer, but at his father's objections, he took up figure skating, training at the Summerhill Road ice rink under the guidance of Ken Vickers.

When John was sixteen years old, his father died, and John moved to London to study with Arnold Gerschwiler, through whom he won his first award. In 1972 he met an American sponsor and this enabled him to study in the U.S. with Gus Lussi and Carlo Fassi. The latter coached John to European, World and Olympic titles in 1976, after which he turned professional and formed a touring skating company.

The Company was short lived as John was reported to be difficult to get on with. On Broadway John acted in revivals of *Brigadoon* and *Privates on Parade*. The German tabloid *Bild-Zeitung* outed John as gay and in 1987 he was diagnosed with HIV and then AIDS: he spent his last years with his mother and died on 15th April 1994 aged 44.

In a biography of the actor Alan Bates, it was claimed Curry and Bates had been having a two year affair, and that Curry had died in Bate's arms. In spite of intensive research this has never been proven.

Valentino 2018



# A Scottish Tale

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**A** Scottish Soldier, in full dress uniform, marches into a pharmacy. Very carefully he opens his sporran and pulls out a neatly folded cotton bandana, unfolds it to reveal a smaller silk square handkerchief, which he also unfolds - to reveal a condom.

The condom has a number of patches on it. The chemist holds it up and eyes it critically.

"How much to repair it?' The Scot asks the chemist.

"Six pence" says the chemist.

"How much for a new one?"

"Ten pence" says the chemist.

The Scot painstakingly folds the condom into the silk square handkerchief and the cotton bandana, replaces it carefully in his sporran, and marches out of the door, shoulders back and kilt swinging.

A moment or two later the chemist hears a great shout go up outside, followed by an even greater shout.

The Scottish soldier marches back into the chemists and addresses the proprietor, this time with a grin on his face.

"The regiment has taken a vote," he says.

"We'll have a new one."



# GayWest Annual Christmas Dinner Friday 14th December



The Pavilion Restaurant, Victoria Park, Bath. BA1 2NR  
Friday 14th December 7.15pm Drinks Reception for 8pm Dinner.