



Celebrating 50 Years
Magazine for
March & April
2020

Social and Support Group for all
The LGBT Community

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Welcome

Tipping Point

This year is a milestone for our organisation. As you know we are celebrating the group's 50th year. This I think is an amazing achievement and has only been realised by the hard work and commitment of past and present members.

But now I think the LGBT community is at a tipping point (The phrase being used elsewhere at the moment I believe). Many LGBT organisations I feel are trapped looking inwards amongst themselves, rather than embracing the wider community as a whole. Having been the Chair of GayWest for seven years now, my belief is that LGBT people are as equal as heterosexuals in every way apart from the obvious. I believe there is too much of an emphasis on negative attitudes and issues that are too much focused on themselves rather than looking beyond narrow boundaries.

Some of you may not agree but I think that GayWest is one of the few LGBT groups that look beyond itself, by reaching out to the wider community of life by celebrating who we are and holding out a welcoming hand by being passionate and welcoming to all.

So, let me give you an example of how GayWest is achieving this reaching out; we are working with Age UK Bristol on their **Age Proud Bristol** campaign, which promotes that being old is as exciting as being young, and fighting against Age discrimination. This applies to everyone, Heterosexuals, LGBT of all races and religions indeed every human being.

The work our team are doing with some local prisons is changing lives for the better. So in the groups 50th year we can all be proud of belonging to a forward thinking LGBT Social and Support group, **that is GayWest.**

All the different organisations we help support can be found on our Website's Links page. Have a look. Colin

Outreach Review

GayWest at present have six members on the committee and they carry out the work of what should be about 12. Two of them, apart from other duties also carry out Outreach work for the group. This work is done voluntarily and in their own time. The bulk of this is working with the Prison section of our society.

It was in February 2014 that myself and a team from the committee visited, for the first time, Ashfield in Pucklechurch. This was in support of their LGBT History month events organised by their internal group known as **Real Voices**, a forum for gay and bisexual residents. This was the start of our connection with Ashfield that still continues today.

From these first visits we were invited to Leyhill Open Prison and in 2015 we started working with Leyhill. Now added to these are Erlestoke and Horfield prisons. All the prisons are of a different security level, Leyhill being the lowest.

Since 2014 GayWest has helped 12 residents from these prisons on their way back into the wider society; some have settled here in the Bath and Bristol area others in Wales, and southern England. These are Gay, Transgender and Bisexual men who have found their true identities during their time as residents of these prisons and found support from GayWest.

Recently I attended one of the monthly visits to Horfield in Bristol. The guys who attended the meeting were troubled and vulnerable. The meeting was light hearted and I observed the skill and friendliness that our outreach officers showed as they worked with these vulnerable young men.

So let's say thankyou for the delicate and supportive work that our two Outreach committee members do to help others less fortunate than us.

Colin

Website Updates

Renewing your membership a Problem?

Well, now we have the answer.

Now you can renew on-line

- 1. Current single membership** can be renewed by going to the website home page and clicking on the **Become/Renew membership**, This will bring up the page and you need to **click the Membership button**, this will bring up the Card Payment Form.
- 2. Current Joint Membership** or any other payments can be made by **clicking the Donation Button**, enter the amount, and complete the Card Payment form.
- 3. Other payment methods**, Cash, Cheque & Standing Order

The Treasurer

Bilbie Green Forestation

We live on a new development. One amongst three, all about 200 houses each, not large by some developments today. Built not on good farmland but more like a boggy moor. Across the road from our home the sheep still graze and crops are still grown, for how long who knows!

Where there was once a soil of mostly clay, now it's covered by brick and tarmac. But wait, they have made a small park with two play areas where there was once only one. Footpaths cross this park so you can walk your dog. Next to our homes there survives a wooded area known as Abbots wood, managed by the local council on behalf of the Woodland Trust I believe. We first moved into our home in 2016 and in 2017 some new trees were planted on the new park and a few streets. The dry hot summer of 2017 killed off half of these new trees due to poor management.

However we are now delighted to see all these have been replaced and dozens more planted lining the footpaths and the streets. Also along Charlton road trees have sprung up overnight. I look forward to the arrival of the spring when we hope all these new trees will bring joy to not only us but to the birds and bees around us.

A new development can play it's part in providing a good environment for us humans and help restore some of the natural surroundings the bulldozers have taken away. But we must all play our part by greening our surroundings with nature's wonders and not the artificial plants and lawns that occasionally spring up on such a development such as ours. There is so much pleasure in enjoying Mother Nature's wonders but we must look after them, as we do ourselves.

A Christmas Chandelier

Because of a change of circumstances, the annual Gay West Christmas Dinner could not be held in the usual venue in Bath. So instead, the G.W. Committee arranged for an informal buffet to take place at the Rainbow Café on a Friday evening during December. The occasion was sold out, and by the purchase of a modestly priced ticket, guests were treated to a very pleasant evening best described as *Food, Fun and Frolics!*

On arrival guests were offered a drink of their choice, and there was an exchange of greetings in the beautifully decorated café, with pleasant subdued lighting. There was background CD music of a local choir. Seats were soon all occupied, and Colin made an announcement as to the evening's events. As well as a buffet, there was an entry-ticket draw with one lucky winner; there was a brain-searching quiz: and an extensive raffle with numerous, lovely seasonal prizes and a special guest Miss Crystal Chandelier was due to appear later to entertain guests and to announce prize winners.

The buffet was excellent with something for everyone (including vegetarians): an outside caterer had prepared a whole array of seasonal food of both savoury and sweet choices.

Just before the raffle took place: the special guest was announced and appeared: a gorgeous apparition in a trendy-long light coloured wig, a sparkling tangerine coloured gown with sash, nylon stockings and heeled shoes with diamante trim! Crystal entertained us with jokes and lively banter before calling the winning raffle ticket numbers. Eventually, the identity of the guest was revealed.

A brain-teasing but clever quiz had been prepared by Jim with prizes for the winners. My favourite question was "What is at the end of the Rainbow?" Answers included *The Land of Oz* and a *pot of gold*; but the correct answer was the letter "w" which all guests thought was very clever and imaginative. So with Ernie busy photographing the proceedings on his very professional-looking camera everyone was in the best of Christmas cheer.

From me and I am sure from all that attended, a very big THANK YOU for a most pleasant and memorable festive evening.

Valentino

December 2019

A Post-War Memory

1947 and All That.

This was a memorable year for me. The war was over, I was a shy, introverted boy just turned 15. A friend of my age suggested I came along to the Scouts with him, so I joined the Fourth Ruislip Methodist Troop.

Although I was a bit old, I fitted in well with the other scouts, all younger than me. I was in the Lion Patrol with 6 other boys.

The Patrols were named after the Jungle Book stories by Kipling. I enthusiastically took to scouting, including my Tenderfoot training, this included learning the Scout Law and Promise, some simple knots and camp craft. At troop nights our 3 Scouters - the Scoutmaster and 2 Assistant Scoutmasters, all middle-aged men, taught us about our founder, Robert Baden-Powell or B.P.

I acquired his book 'Scouting for Boys', it now seems dated, based on his Boer War experiences.

Scouting quickly flourished from 1908 at Brownsea Island and he remained Chief Scout of the world until his death in 1943 in Africa. His wife, Olave Lady Baden-Powell founded The Girl Guides.

With my patrol I went on day hikes in the nearby countryside, we learned to be independent, which I found was to be most useful. In July the troop went to the week long Summer Camp at Arborfield, near Reading. We travelled there in an open-topped lorry, equipment and all. We slept in tents, wrapped in blankets, on the ground, in a farm field. We had to fetch our water and cooked on open fires with billy cans and frying pans.

We played cricket, at which I was hopeless. We swam in the nearby River Loddon, but ably supervised. I was awarded a medal for 'Best Boy' at the camp's end to my astonishment, and I still have it.

I loved being in the countryside, this has remained with me to this day.

As I was getting a bit old for the troop, I moved up to the Senior Scout Troop. This was smaller and more adventurous. We too held a Summer camp at Arborfield, in August. I was then with boys older than me, but I fitted in well quite soon.

A Post-War Memory

At 16 I had romantic feelings for another scout, which sadly remained unrequited.

In 1948 the Olympic Games were held at Wembley Stadium, I was one of the scouts to lead in the different contingents, I led in the Cubans, we formed up in the arena in front of the King and Queen. Then the famous torch entered, borne aloft by an athlete.

It was a glorious hot sunny day and most thrilling for me; wearing my scout uniform, shorts, shirt, wide brimmed hat and orange coloured, triangular troop scarf, which I still have, with leather woggle.

I took part in 1949 at the Royal Albert Hall in a Ralph Reader pageant, called 'Boy Scout'. There was a dress rehearsal at Gilwell Park camp site, north of London, this is Scouting HQ. Ralph Reader was charismatic with his 'show biz' New York, Hollywood background.

In 1968 I was a member of the staff at the World Scout Jamboree, held at Marathon in Greece. We flew to Athens in an ancient Constellation. There were contingents of scouts from many countries, wearing their different uniforms. It was truly amazing to see such a cosmopolitan assembly, all members of the Scout Movement.

Latterly, I became a Scoutmaster of the Fourth Ruislip, it recently moved its location, has a smart new headquarters and is still thriving, though I no longer am connected with it. Scouting has modernised, now I would be a Scout Leader, not Scoutmaster and girls can now belong to a troop. It is better organised and staffed. There are waiting lists to join and a shortage of leaders.

I am very grateful for what Scouting gave to me and I have many fond memories of it.

Ernie

A Blog From LGBT + Advisory Group

When I was asked to write a blog, I was very apprehensive, as I had not done one before, but once I got thinking and typing it flowed a bit better.

The LGBT + Advisory Group meetings for the over 50s, was, to say the least, an eye opener for me, although I with my husband, help to run a well-established group, it was still something that I had not experienced before.

A brief history of myself - From the age of 28 I had been in a relationship with another man and due to his profession, we had to keep our relationship hidden and unspoken. We were also living in London and although life and work was good, we still could not be as open as we are today. After his death in 2011, I moved to Bristol and met my husband. At last we were able to be more open and we celebrated by getting married in 2015.

I have attended the last two meetings of this group and have found it very revealing, as some of the other attendees have been more outspoken than myself about their sexuality, habits and fetishes.

I have learnt a lot about people and feel this has been so beneficial, as it has enabled me to become more open about myself, and being able to empathise with others.

It is good that we are all different and that we should give our LGBT + followers the individual respect that we would like for ourselves. The subjects that we have discussed have been varied and I think that we have arrived at some very forward thinking ideas.

The subjects covered in the last meeting have included, ways in which the over 50s could be accommodated at the

upcoming Bristol Pride. A Bristol Pride Trustee, along with other events leading up to Pride, involving older LGBT+ people, these could involve a discussion panel covering the problems of both the youth and older sections of our population, with a question and answer section, also "Out and About projects" and Diversity.

1. We would like to have a covered area with tables for display boards of Photos of us , Poetry and Art. We thought an exhibition. Of pictures of us in our youth and showing how we are still getting on with life today. as older LGBT+ persons.

2. There are quite a few new LGBT+ books out at the moment, and we thought that it would be something different to have a book reading, or an author there to chat to about creative writing, informally.

3. Having seating, soft drinks, and to get over to all who ventured in that we Celebrate and have Pride in our sexual choices, giving respect and consideration to all, in their understanding of "What it means to be getting older and being LGBT+"

4. We discussed HIV and health in general of the older LGBT person, but not in a negative way but in a positive forward thinking way. We felt that the "troubles" that are regularly affecting the young, we have all experienced in our youth and got over them without any need for help, these problems of life straighten themselves out over time.

We did discuss older people in the community and what is dreaded about getting older and having to go into a "Home". It was felt that there was a great need for more education and awareness from the carer on how to help in this difficult transition, and to make the changes more acceptable.

JP Editor

GayWest

Saturday Breakfast Rolls -

These have been prepared by Chris Martin who holds all the relevant qualifications to handle food. Since the start, on January 19th he has given freely his time and for no profit for himself, and to date he has collected over £500 towards our funds from the proceeds of the service.

Also at The Rainbow Café... Mathew has been selling his Homemade Christmas and Event Cards, which have been very popular, here and at other locations.

Congratulations are in order, as, since 2017 he has collected monies to the sum of over £5000 for the Alzheimer's Society.

Events

March	Thursday 19th 7pm Italian Meal
April	Saturday 25th 50th Celebration Day
May	Wednesday 20th Wells (Market Day)
June	Sunday Boat Trip - Cream Tea
July	Sunday 5th Keynsham Music Festival Saturday 11th Bristol Pride
August	Sunday 16th Picnic at Victoria Park, Bath.
September	Saturday 12th at Gloucester Park, Pride

Important Notice

Important Notice

All Café drink prices will rise by 10p each due to the continuing rise in our costs.

This will apply from the beginning of

MAY 2020

As always, the Café has to be self-supporting and the prices are continuously under review.

Also we would like to ask members to act as **hosts** on a Saturday morning, this helps the committee greatly.

The Treasurer

Email Addresses

Important information wanted.....

We send out information to our members by Email.

If you change any part of your Email Address, we need to be informed of this, as it will affect you being kept up to date and more importantly having access to the GayWest Website.

GayWest

GayWest Social Evenings Second Wednesday of each month, 11th March and 8th April 2020
at **The Old Market Tavern** in Old Market Street, Bristol.

Membership

Since our last issue we have welcomed Oli and Russell as new members, and, but sadly lost a few for various reasons, so we have 101 members at the time of going to print.

All GayWest Post to :- 30, Woodpecker Close,

Keynsham, BRISTOL. BS31 2FU

Tel:- 0775 881 0134 or 07898 790 855

E Mails to info@gaywest.org.uk

Facebook, and Twitter [@gaywestsocial](https://twitter.com/gaywestsocial)

You can now join and pay on-line by Credit/Debit Card,

You can still pay by Standing Order, Bank Transfer, Cheque or Cash.

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

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

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.



Available at the Café; Breakfast rolls with a variety of fillings, at competitive prices. Gluten free rolls will be available, other dietary needs can be catered for upon request. Or, if you prefer maybe a slice of cake . A variety of Coffees and Teas.

But remember all this can only be achieved with your continued support.

So why not put your name down to help with the serving one Saturday. Its fun, its easy, and you will be helping keep to this wonderful regular GayWest event open for many years to come.

The Café has been running since 1982

Gay West
Celebrating 50 years
Saturday 25th April 2020
At Rainbow Café Bath

Open

11am for Free Tea & Coffee

12noon – 2pm Cold Buffet

2pm Special Guest
Michael Cashman CBE

3pm Presentation
To “Prospect” Local
Prostate Cancer Group.
Raffle, Stalls and Displays
Commemorative Booklet & Pen