

# GAYWEST

A way of keeping in touch!

Vol. 2 April 2020

## Top stories in this newsletter



The Story of  
Vesta Tilley



Your GayWest  
Magazines from  
2015 to today all  
available on your  
website

## Keeping in touch !

**It has always been the policy that GayWest kept all members details strictly confidential, but we are now trying to work under very extraordinary circumstances, and we are getting more and more requests to give our members other members details, we cannot write to each one individually, so we are asking you to inform us if you would be willing to allow us to pass on your Email or Telephone number to other members, should they ask, so that they might contact you directly. We have already sent one list out, it is however expanding so an update has been included with this Newsletter.**

## Newsletter Blog.

Like many of us in GayWest I am over 70, at the low end, and started the lockdown life when the advise was for our age group to self isolate, I am now into my sixth week.

I am fortunate to have good support from my family who have been doing our main shopping for us. We have had to pop out to our local shop on occasions for Bread ,Milk, maybe some biscuits. We are also lucky to be able to pop out for our exercise just across the road to the public footpaths across the local farm land. These paths and public rights of way I have been walking for over 3 years now since we have been in Keynsham.

I would normally do a 5 or 6 mile walk on Sunday mornings and just a short walk the rest of the week to our local shop to pick up our daily newspaper. Now though my walks are less during the week as I am not going to the shop each day. I have signed up to receive my paper online where I can read it on my Phone or tablet which is really good as I can also access articles in video form. I still love having a more traditional paper, but very impressed with the online addition. The cost to me is about the same.

Back to my daily walks, I have noticed that the type of people I now see when out are not your usual walkers but the type you may find in the Gym on the treadmill. All done up in lycra, earphones on, and water bottle in their hands as they jog along. More people walking their dogs or I should say the dogs walking them, some keeping the 2 meters distance some not so. I have also noticed more litter, Drinks cans, tissues, empty cigarette packets, certainly more than before the present restrictions on our daily lives, fly tipping has also increased in our area. One thing that may come out of this is that these new faces out in the country side may find a new beginning in that there is nothing better than, if you are able, getting out and taking in the air and the natural world around you, preferably with out blocking your ears to the sound of morning birdsong that this year has been fantastic. But please can you take your litter home with you and enjoy your new found world.

**Colin**

**GayWest Email : - [info@gaywest.org.uk](mailto:info@gaywest.org.uk)  
30 Woodpecker Close, Keynsham, Bristol,  
BS31 2FU  
07758810134**



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## Vesta Tilley

Matilda Alice Powles (born 1864) was a star in both Britain and the United States for over thirty years. Tilley was born in Worcester, her father Harry Ball, was comedy actor, songwriter and music hall chairman: with his encouragement, Tilley first appeared on stage at the age of three . At the age of six she did her first role in male clothing, billed as “The Pocket Sims Reeves” a reference to the then-famous opera singer.



She would come to prefer doing male roles exclusively, saying that “I felt that I could express myself better if I were dressed as a boy.”

Under her father’s management, Vesta toured extensively in the provinces: she appeared on stage at St George’s Hall in Nottingham and in other towns such as Birmingham, Hull, Leicester, Derby and Liverpool. Successful from the outset, by the age of 11 her salary supported her parents and siblings as well.

Billed as “The Great Little Tilley”, the gender ambiguity of her name caused problems for audiences, so she was billed as Vesta Tilley for the first time in April 1878.

As she grew older, she portrayed characters such as Burlington Bertie and a number of military characters during the Boer War and WW1. She played principal boy in pantomimes, also the role of “Pertiboy” in “Beauty and the Beast” at the Birmingham Theatre Royal (1881-82 season). and appeared there again in the title role of “Robinson Crusoe (1881-82 season)

She further appeared at Drury Lane pantomime Sinbad (1882-83) season, and the same theatre’s production of “Beauty and the Beast” (1890-91) season.

As a celebrated vaudeville star, she laid the foundation stone of the Camberwell Empire and Sunderland Empire Theatre in 1906. The latter survives and has a bar named in her honour across the road from the venue.

Her career reached the US. In 1912 she performed at the first Royal Variety Performance as “The Piccadilly Johnny”.

Tilley made an effort to underline her femininity off stage, and to protect herself against criticism, she wore the latest fashions glamorously clad in fur and jewellery, as befitted her role. Another way she reinforced her image was through her ongoing involvement with children’s charities in the towns and cities where she performed.

Vesta’s farewell tour ran between 1919 and 1920. She made her final appearance at the London Coliseum at the age of 56. She had married Walter de Frece at Brixton Register Office on 16 August 1890, and for the rest of her life she lived as Lady de Frece, moving to Monte Carlo with her husband upon his retirement from politics.

Her autobiography, Recollections of Vesta Tilley, was published in 1934. Vesta Tilley died in London in 1952 aged 88.

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**Actor Laurence Fox**, when asked if the current crisis will bring an end to the obsession with “gender fluid” issues concludes; “seemingly the Coronavirus is good for people from the other 98 genders, none of them seem to be getting it....it seems to be only Men and Women.”

## GayWest Website

The majority of our members have registered their email addresses with the group so can access the Website. So now that you have more time at home why not have a look at the back log of GayWest magazines starting from February 2015 to 2020. The gallery also has photos going back to 1970. Just go to the home page and click on Gallery or publications and login as instructed using firstly your **MEMBERSHIP NUMBER** followed by your **PASSWORD** that you were given, **the system only works with these.**

In the gallery double click on a photo , you can then view them in your photo gallery on your device. You can copy to your desktop, put them into your own photo files and print out. All are Jpeg files.

For a magazine click on the month and year on the right of the page, this will bring up the information you have selected. Click on the green text for the magazine you requested. This will open as a pdf file that you can read, download or print out.

## Why not join the GayWest WhatsApp group.

If you already have the App just search for GW group

And follow instructions to join. Have fun and be in touch



Or to download the App go to you app store on your mobile and when you see the logo as above click the icon and then follow the instructions. When you have joined WhatsApp search for the GW group ( Logo as on top of front page of this newsletter )

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## GayWest membership payments

If you pay your membership in cash or by cheque and are due to renew soon,

Why not pay by **Standing Order**, which you can set up with your bank,

**Bank Transfer** using the details listed, Bank = Lloyds, Code 30-90-54 and account number is 1628599

Or **On-Line** with our online payment system.

To pay on line you only need to access our website at [www.gaywest.org.uk](http://www.gaywest.org.uk) and click on the Become a member/donation icon and follow on-line instructions it takes less the 5 minutes.

It is very important for the group that members keep up their payments, and at the present time even more so as it is the only income the group has at present.

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Three Italian nuns die and go to heaven.

At the Pearly Gates, they are met by St. Peter. He says, "Sisters, you all led such exemplary lives that the Lord is granting you six months to go back to earth and be anyone you wish to be."

The first nun says, "I want to be Sophia Loren." And 'poof' she's gone.

The second says, "I want to be Madonna and 'poof' she's gone.

The third says, "I want to be Alberta Pipalini."  
St. Peter looks perplexed. "Who ?", he asks  
"Alberta Pipalini," replies the nun.

St. Peter shakes his head and says, "I'm sorry, but that name just doesn't ring a bell."

The nun then takes a newspaper out of her habit and hands it to St. Peter.

St. Peter reads the paper and starts laughing. He hands it back to her and says,

"No sister, the paper says it was the 'Alberta Pipeline' that was laid by 1,400 men in 6 months."

If you laugh, you're going straight to hell !

The following thought was sent in by one of our regular contributors, this could equally apply to anyone of us. please send in other articles you think may be of interest to our members.

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I'm normally a social girl  
I love to meet my mates  
But lately with the virus here  
We can't go out the gates.

You see, we are the 'oldies' now  
We need to stay inside  
If they haven't seen us for a while.  
They'll think we've upped and died.

They'll never know the things we did  
Before we got this old  
There wasn't any Facebook  
So not everything was told.

We may seem sweet old ladies  
Who would never be uncouth  
But we grew up in the 60s –  
If you only knew the truth!

There was sex and drugs and rock 'n roll  
The pill and miniskirts  
We smoked, we drank, we partied  
And were quite outrageous flirts.

Then we settled down, got married  
And turned into someone's mum,  
Somebody's wife, then nana,  
Who on earth did we become?

We didn't mind the change of pace  
Because our lives were full  
But to bury us before we're dead  
Is like red rag to a bull!

So here you find me stuck inside  
For 4 weeks, maybe more  
I finally found myself again  
Then I had to close the door!

It didn't really bother me  
I'd while away the hour  
I'd bake for all the family  
But I've got no bloody flour!

Now Netflix is just wonderful  
I like a gutsy thriller  
I'm swooning over Idris  
Or some random sexy killer.

At least I've got a stash of booze  
For when I'm being idle  
There's wine and whiskey, even gin  
If I'm feeling suicidal!

So let's all drink to lockdown  
To recovery and health  
And hope this bloody virus  
Doesn't decimate our wealth.

We'll all get through the crisis  
And be back to join our mates  
Just hoping I'm not far too wide  
To fit through the flaming gates