

# GayWest

A way of keeping in touch!

Vol. 9 November 2020

Top Stories in this Newsletter

**W**elcome to lockdown November, hope you are all well. In lockdown 2 sitting in your garden will not be much of an option. You can sleep with your partner/lover but remember you cannot play Tennis or Golf with them in public spaces but you can meet a stranger in the Park!

But there is some good news regarding our Café ( see info below )

This week we received the December Attitude magazine, which will be added to this years collection at the café, and they have included a 2021 Calendar which again we will have at the café. Below is a uplifting quote from it, that I would like to share with you from the calendar.

The images in the calendar have been chosen to remind us of the love and diversity to be found within our rainbow community.

***Younger, older. bigger, smaller, L, G, B, T, or Q, beyond artificial boundaries of race or religion, we are a glorious mix of humanity capable of extraordinary things.***

***Never forget how amazing you are, that your chosen family is never far away, and that every day is a new opportunity to start over.***

**Darren Styles OBE**

## GayWest News

**The Rainbow Café** will be open as planned on November 21st. This is because GayWest meets the criteria as a support group for Gay and Transgender people as stated in the Government guide lines. This has also been confirmed in our discussions with Age UK Bath who are also allowed to continue with their events at the St Michael's Centre. For details regarding coming along to the café please see information on page 4

*Thankyou to those who have sent in there stories about their music influences.*

From  
the Chairman

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## GayWest News

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The real Stanley Baxter

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**A saviour in  
music**

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## My Music

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**Look out for the  
December Xmas  
special Newsletter,  
to make your  
Christmas swing**

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**Rainbow  
Cafe**

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## The Real Stanley Baxter



**Stanley Baxter** is one of the most successful entertainers of his generation and for many years had his own Bafta-winning TV series. He was married for 46 years, but beneath his cheerful exterior lies a man tortured by the fact he is Gay. The most outrageously funny man on British television 50 years ago. He was up there with the likes of Morecambe and Wise, Tommy Cooper, Dick Emory and more. What none but his closest friends realised was that Baxter was desperately unhappy. He lived in dread of being exposed as a gay man. Today aged 94, he lives as a virtual recluse and has done for 25 years.

He was a star on the Glasgow talent circuit aged six, in 1932. Dressed in a Sailor suit, as his mother Bessie accompanied him on the piano, the boy belted out saucy music hall numbers. Since a toddler, Bessie had taken him to vaudeville shows. She called him her sonny boy and, as his precocious talent emerged, had him perform at every family gathering. In 1944 his call up papers arrived. Too short-sighted for active army service he became a “Bevin Boy” one of the conscripted mine workers. By then he had fallen in love, and says that he knew for years that he found men more attractive than Women. But he did not understand what he was feeling till he met Bill a schoolmate with blond hair and a taste for intellectual books. Bill had girlfriends, but he spent almost all of his spare time at the Baxter house. I was in love with Bill says Stanley. Then the inevitable happened, but Bill had been experimenting with his sexual relationships in the end preferring women. He died aged just 26 and Stanley was heartbroken.

After the War in Europe was over, a 19 year old Stanley was sent to India, then further east to Burma, as a typist. There, he saw a notice appealing for performers to join the Combined Services Entertainment unit ( CSE ) Auditions were in Singapore in 1946 and he was taken under the wing of a man with a strident nasal voice. It was the future Carry on Star Kenneth Williams they became close friends. It was in the CSE that Baxter met openly gay men for the first time. But he shied away, repelled by the “high camp” all chiffon hankies and make-up and flouncing about.

Baxter resolved to repress his sexuality when he returned to Glasgow, two years later to live as he put it, as a straight actor. He joined the Citizens Theatre Company in the Gorbals where he met his future wife, 22 year old Moira. They became lovers and he says it was to partly say “I will show them” I could be as heterosexual as the rest. They eventually married even though he told her that he was a gay man. She wanted to be with him anyway. Over the years her mental health deteriorated but she continued with their relationship even though it was a non sexual one. Back in 1962 he gave up the pretext of being faithful, or heterosexual, they moved to London and Moira gave up the Theatre to be a housewife her Husbands career blossomed, with a series of cinema roles that led to star billing in films such as The Fast Lady.

In January of 1962 he was arrested for soliciting for sex in a public toilet. He thought his career would now be over but his agent advised him to engage the celebrity barrister David Jacobs, who had recently won a libel case for Liberace when a newspaper implied the flamboyant entertainer was gay. Jacobs convinced the court that Baxter could not have been “soliciting” when he was arrested because apart from the two policemen, there was no one else in the lavatories. The charges were dropped, on condition that Baxter promised not to sue the police for wrongful arrest.

At the same time Moira’s mental health deteriorated She was desperate for a baby, something Baxter refused to contemplate. “I didn’t want to bring any child into the world who suffered what I suffered” He left for Australia in a Brian Rix farce, leaving his wife behind, anyone else would have left me but she was devoted. Fixated even.. When he returned he sort medical treatment for his sexual urges, that proved useless: his psychiatrist, advised him simply to return to his wife. Instead, Baxter told Moira he could no longer live with her. In 1970, with the Stanley Baxter Show a huge hit on the BBC he moved out and into an apartment in Highgate village that would be his refuge for the rest of his life. He still met Moira daily for lunch, she talked of killing herself and made attempts to do so.

After switching to ITV for the Stanley Baxter Picture Show he met a 28 year old German accountant named Marcus. Baxter was 46 and thought it would just be a short fling, there relationship lasted until Marcus died of Cancer in 2016 although they never lived together. Marcus was a constant support. But Baxter's anxieties were channelled into his work and his perfectionist instincts became overwhelming.

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*Cont. from Page 2*

Stanley Baxter specials became vanishing rare the last being an Easter special in 1979. He returned to the BBC in 1986 but rejection and stress of his double life had chewed away his confidence. He began to turn work down. He withdrew from the showbiz world. He saw Moira frequently, but the fractured marriage was always difficult. In 1997 he decided to spend some a month at the villa they owned in Cyprus, he thought that Moira's health was not good for her to travel so went on his own.

Several weeks later when he called her from the airport on his return to the UK, she didn't answer. Anxious, he took a Taxi to the house. The front door was open. Moira was dead on her bed from an overdose. She was 69 years old.

He had always felt guilty for marrying her. He felt guilty for his many affairs and the new partners. He felt guilty when he moved out, unable to share a home with her any longer. And now he felt incredibly guilty because at the end he wasn't there-to do what? Say sorry? Say goodbye? Or just give her the only thing she had ever asked for—to be with him.

*Taken from "The real Stanley Baxter by Brian Beacom published by Luath press Ltd. £20.00p*

Another good read - "Between The Stops" Sandi Toksvig  
a very funny part Memoir, Celebration and Confession.  
By Virago Press

## A Saviour in Music

After coming out of the armed forces in the 50's and becoming very bored, I decided that I would take on Singing lessons, and over a period of about a year or so I seemed to be doing quite well.

I then joined The Bristol Musical Comedy Club as they were putting on "Oklahoma" I was invited to be in the Chorus, eventually this led onto getting more of a singing role and moved onto playing leading parts in other productions.

I regularly went up to London to see the latest shows and they always gave me a boost.

I feel that music is a very good thing and picks you up if you are feeling a bit low, even if you end up singing to yourself. The conductor Andre Rieu always says that music is good for you and I do believe that,

So come on chaps.... Start Singing!

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## My Music

I too love music in its many forms. It moves the human spirit and can match the many different emotions we experience. The excitement of an opening fanfare, the quiet calm of an orchestral piece.

The human voice, an instrument we all possess to a degree, be it for singing in the shower, as part of a choral group, or maybe as a soloist never fails to stir the emotions!

As the Head teacher of a Primary School I needed to take a school assembly every Friday with 400+ 4 to 11-year olds. It needed a different 'story' each week, but I often fell back on the same piece of music that has

become one of my favourites, Mozart's Clarinet Concerto. It helped still the children as they arrived and so set the scene for listening and reflecting on the theme of the day's story.

In my retirement I have had the pleasure of singing in a male voice choir of some 70 members. We cover a vast repertoire from traditional male voice pieces to songs from the shows. Lockdown has silenced us for the time being, but we hope to return to full voice once the current pandemic restrictions are lifted.

On a final note I have requested that the Mozart Concerto be played during my funeral farewell – not for a long time yet I hope!

Eric

## Great news,

*The Rainbow Café will be open monthly until further notice from 10.30 - 12.30*

*To begin with, places will be limited so you will need to book in advance.*

*The Café will run on a Table Service system*

*On Entry, you will have to register your Name and Telephone Number and Post Code, or use the NHS CR Code, via the mobile app. Apply a hand sanitiser and wear a mask or face covering.*

*You will have to maintain a Minimum of one metre of social distancing as we all have to protect each other, through this difficult time.*

*Contact :- Colin on 07758810134 or [info@gaywest.org.uk](mailto:info@gaywest.org.uk)*

*30, Woodpecker Close, Keynsham, Bristol. BS31 2FU*

*The next Saturday Café opening is November 21st and again on December 19th*

A Big Thankyou to all members who have sent in items for publication,  
we will get some more in the next edition. The Editor