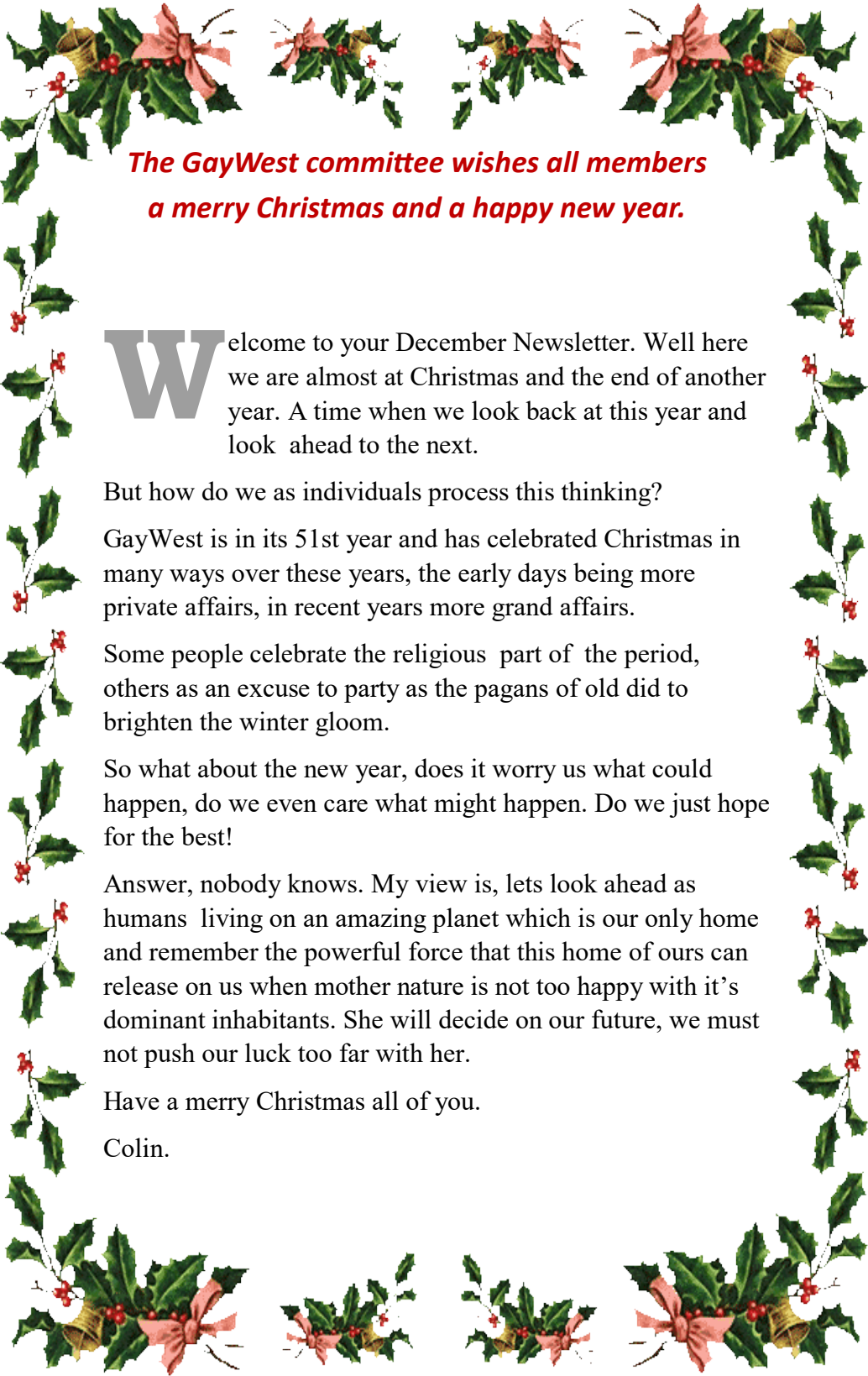


GayWest

A way of keeping in touch!

Vol. 12 December 2021



*The GayWest committee wishes all members
a merry Christmas and a happy new year.*

Welcome to your December Newsletter. Well here we are almost at Christmas and the end of another year. A time when we look back at this year and look ahead to the next.

But how do we as individuals process this thinking?

GayWest is in its 51st year and has celebrated Christmas in many ways over these years, the early days being more private affairs, in recent years more grand affairs.

Some people celebrate the religious part of the period, others as an excuse to party as the pagans of old did to brighten the winter gloom.

So what about the new year, does it worry us what could happen, do we even care what might happen. Do we just hope for the best!

Answer, nobody knows. My view is, lets look ahead as humans living on an amazing planet which is our only home and remember the powerful force that this home of ours can release on us when mother nature is not too happy with it's dominant inhabitants. She will decide on our future, we must not push our luck too far with her.

Have a merry Christmas all of you.

Colin.



Gay in a Catholic school, true story.

Film and book reviews

Gay films for Christmas

Age Wants TO

Dinning out!



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Gay in Catholic Boarding School, True Story

I'm a gay man who grew up in a very, very devout Catholic family. From a very young age I remember not being okay with God. Initially, I hated God. I hated the God who would go out of the way to make me different from other boys, to give me something sinful and awful that I couldn't control. No just God would make me a sinner on purpose. As I grew and matured, I stopped believing in God altogether. But I loved my family, and so I kept it all bottled inside. I studied the good book, I went to Church, I avoided the temptation of admiring Devon Sawa...whole nine yards. When I was done with elementary school, I was shipped off to a notoriously strict Catholic boarding school, the name of which I won't say.

It was fine. I told myself it would be fine. No one had to know I was gay, no one had to know I didn't believe in God. I just had to get through it, treat the theology like a game to play, and eventually distance myself from it all when I moved out of the house. It seemed like a sure plan. I was smart, I had fantastic grades, no one suspected I was different.

But...I made a mistake. I mean, we all do, right? Especially when we're young. I had a roommate. I liked him. I really, really liked him. I misread some signals. I made a pass. He didn't like that. His first reaction was to hit me. Hard. And he kept hitting me. And he wouldn't stop. I screamed and held up my arms to block his blows, but he was bigger and stronger than me and he was angry beyond words.

Then the room door flew open and one of the teachers (A Priest) said "What are you doing?" He demanded. It was 'that voice'. Simultaneously loud and whispering at the same time. He didn't yell often, but he still spoke in a booming way that filled up the whole room. Before I could even speak, the other blurted it out.

"Father, he's gay!"

The priest stared at the boy...then at me "Then you hit him. ""Yes, Father, I did." Why? "I was angry and upset." "So you hit him." ..Father, yes, I did. "You hit him first and kept hitting him, is that correct ?" "Yes." "Because you were angry." "Yes, Father." "Why?" "...Father, he's gay." "Yes, he is." "...I don't know what you want me to say." "I want you to tell me why that made you hit him." "Father, it's a sin." "Is it?" "Y-...yes, it says in the Bible."

To not lay with another man. Did he lay with another man?"

"...Father, being gay is a-" sin" Church doctrine dictates being gay is not a sin. Homosexual actions are a sin. So is violence."

"Father, he shouldn't be allowed here if he's g-" "Do you sin?"

"That's not f-" "You will answer my question. Do you sin?"

Keep in mind, this is not my house.

This is the house of God. When you lie here you are not lying to me. Do you sin?" "Yes, Father." "You attacked this boy." "Yes, Father." "The Lord tests the righteous, but his soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence. Isn't that right?" "Yes, Father." "It isn't just that either. You sin daily, don't you?" "...Not d-" "You sin daily...don't you?" "Yes, Father." "Why should I not hit you?" "What?"

"You attacked this boy because you thought he had sinned. You also sin. Why should I not attack you?" "B-...because that's a sin, Father." "And?" "... "AND!?" "I don't...know what you want-" "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Correct?" "Yes, Father." "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." "Yes, Father." "Do not judge, and you will not be judged? Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven."

"Yes, Father." "You sin daily. Every time you move past someone without helping them, you have sinned. Every time you keep a handful of change that would be better used by someone else, you have sinned. Every time you hurt someone, you have sinned. These are sins that harm others. These are the sins that necessitate repentance and forgiveness. Being gay harms who exactly?" "...No one, Father." "If you were to choose between committing homosexual acts and keeping a single penny that may be used by someone less fortunate? So that a person may avoid being a penny short of a full stomach or a penny short of a warm home or a penny short of clothed feet? Then I would rather you be gay." "...Yes, Father. "I was in a blur. A wicked, weird haze of complete disbelief. I barely heard the priest talk as he arranged for the other boy to move into a different room and ordered him to directly apologize to me. I accepted the apology without thinking. He gripped the other boy by the shoulder and told him plainly that if he heard a single rumour about me being gay, he'd assume that it was him who had told without my permission. "I can, and will, have you expelled."

I started to cry. I cried more than I cried when I was being beaten up. I bawled like a baby and I told the priest that I was thankful. "Thank you so much", I hiccupped out between gushing sobs.

He looked at me, cocked an eyebrow, and asked. "For what?"

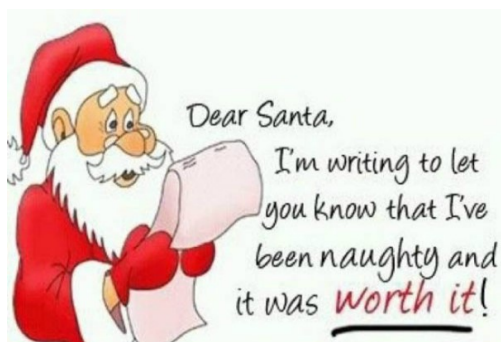
I do believe in God now. A lot of people would think it's silly, but I do. Just a few hours before writing this, I finally came out to my parents. They never stopped loving me, not for an instant.

It gets better.

One to think about !

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Film Reviews

The Male Gaze.... Celluloid Dreams

Giving us a tour of the gay experience from 1985 to the present day, this collection of short films brings together the old and the new, out now. Films remastered and some new from around the world such as *Alger La Branche*, following a teenager who doesn't know where to draw the line with his illustrator secret boyfriend, and *Toto forever*, a first-class tale about a wide eyed postman in a spot of trouble when he starts dating a gangster. The UK entry *Some Difference*, ramps up the drama when two brothers fall for the same guy_ scandalous!

Mothering Sunday,

Odessa Young, Josh O'Connor ,Colin Firth, Olivia Colman

Avid Josh O'Connor will be delighted that he has a full frontal scene in this sensual English drama.

French director Eva Husson's film has plenty more going for it including an excellent performance by Odessa Young as a working class maid whose affair with O'Connor's posh scion has reverberating effects across the decades. Not all of its structural tricks work, but its moving, unusual and gorgeously mounted!

Gay Films for Christmas.

Carol 2015

Female Love Story about a soon to be divorced New Jersey socialite and a mother who falls for Therese a shop girl.

Love The Coopers 2015

Dysfunctional family that get together for one last holiday at Christmas

Mixed Nuts 1994

Comedy with Steve Martin as head of a suicide prevention Hotline.

Let it Snow 2019

Netflix's *Let It Snow* depicts several sweet stories of love and friendship unfolding on a particularly snowy Christmas Eve in a sleepy town, one of which is a love story between teen girls that's sure to warm hearts.

To watch the trailers on U tube and find out more about these and all 21 films got WWW.Pride.com/movies/queer-christmas-movies

Book Review

COMING UP FOR AIR: Tom Daley

Our favourite Olympic gold medal-winner opens his heart about diving, love, loss and fatherhood. An emotionally articulate memoir from the most-decorated British diver of all time.

At its heart, this book shows how Tom developed resilience and inner composure. Being bullied at school, shutting down when emotionally after his fathers death, and handling the pressure to deliver are all openly discussed. He also explores his battles with self esteem and body image and the abuse he received after coming out.

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***The GayWest 50th Christmas party on Friday
10th December at The Rainbow Café. Is now
fully booked so let the party begin!***

Please note.

Alcoholic drinks brought to the event by members will be their responsibility for opening and disposal after.

AGE WANTS TO...

HAVE FUN, DO STUFF, MEET PEOPLE,
DANCE, SING, FALL IN LOVE,
LAUGH, LEARN, TRAVEL,

IT HAS NO WISH TO

DEFINE OR LIMIT YOU.

NUMBERS SAY NOTHING;

WHAT YOU DO

IS WHO YOU ARE.

Our Second Sunday Lunch

On Sunday 21st November 2021 a group of GW members arrived at the Crown Inn in Saltford on what was a clear crisp and Sunny day. After meeting and ordering drinks from the bar and a good old natter we were shown to our Table. The venue was very busy and the mainly female staff were at maximum level of working. Mainly as with a lot of the hospitality business they are short of staff. Our table was situated in what would be a large conservatory and was basked in the Autumn sunshine.

The food is good quality and good portions. By the time it was dark outside everyone were suitably satisfied that they had had a good meal and a good chat before leaving the warmth of the venue and into the cold evening.

Our next Sunday lunch will be in the new year, so would you like to organise this event?

To make it stand, you wet it.

To make it wet, you suck it.

To make it stiff, you lick it.

To get it in, you push it!

Damn!

**Threading a needle at any age
is no joke!**