

GayWest

A way of keeping in touch!

Vol. 2 February 2022

Welcome to your February Newsletter.

On the last few days of 2021 we learnt of the sad news of Peggy Hancock's passing. She will always be remembered as a good friend to GayWest members for many years and in her latter years being an honorary member of the group. I first met Peggy when I joined GayWest in late 2009 at my first visits to the "Rainbow Café" where she made me very welcome.

More about Peggy on page 2.


As this is the February newsletter I should mention that as many of you know that its LGBT+ history Month. This year we are not ourselves putting on any history event. But Jim and myself will be attending an LGBT+ history event at Erstoke prison, which we have done before. This time as invited friends rather than a more formal visit. GayWest as a group has now discontinued our Outreach work in this area due to personal and financial reasons.

Well, as soon as the weather gets better we have some interesting places for you to visit with other members, and also have had many suggestions, such as a visit to the Book Barn, places of interest and museums. So much to look forward to. See page 4.


As before I would like to mention that there is a role waiting for you on the committee such as.....

Newsletter editor, Events co-ordinator, IT geek, or shall we say Website and IT development officer!!

Committee members (without portfolio) Rainbow Café Host & co-ordinator. So what are you waiting for get InTouch, at the Café, email info@gaywest.org.uk phone or text 07758810134.



Also this Month it is the time to get romantic and maybe pluck up the courage and send that valentine card to the one you admire, fancy or whatever. Maybe splash out on that romantic meal for two in a top restaurant, you know, dim lighting soft back ground music, expensive wines to impress! Or just buy him a drink down the local. What ever you may do or not do on the 14th February, enjoy!



Colin.

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**Peggy Hancock,
1923-2021**



Peggy Hancock's real name was Mary but she was always known as Peggy or Peg. For many years she was a leading light in the gay scene in Bristol. In the early 2000s she moved to a retirement home in Bath and soon became an active member of Gay West, regularly attending the Saturday morning coffee shop and other events, often accompanied by her grandson, Chris, and sometimes her daughter, Misha.

Peggy was born on 28 April 1923 and died in Bath on 28 December 2021, aged 98. She was brought up before the war in Clifton. After the war, Peggy worked as a bar-maid at the Radnor Hotel (now known as the Radnor Rooms, 30 St Nicholas Street, Bristol) a gay pub which operated from the early 1940s, or even earlier, until the mid-1970s. Peggy first visited the pub in 1938 aged 15 and began working there in about 1955, ruling the bar for nearly two decades. The pub was long and narrow, and had a sort of snug bar at the back, which was divided from the street end by a step and a curtain and was where the most outrageous queens congregated. A table was always reserved for a group known as 'The Tea Set'. There were three young barmen, known as Bubbles, Edwina and Victoria Melita. The Radnor Hotel's gay history is unclear because nothing was written about it until many years later.

Peggy remembers: "During the War it was full of gay Americans, soldiers stationed up at Clifton College...wonderful!" They may have been the first in Bristol to use the American term 'gay' rather than queer. The clientele was mixed – straight in the daytime but at night and at weekends the pub was full of gays and theatricals from the Old Vic in King Street or from the Hippodrome, including the actors Anton Walbrook, Eric Portman and the drag artiste Danny La Rue. Peggy would look after young gay men and took them under her wing. Chris Watkins remembers her saying she would take young gay men home as her father enjoyed their company and dancing with them.

Peggy left her job as barmaid at the Radnor Hotel temporarily in about 1965 to open the disused rear snug of the Ship Inn as a cocktail bar. The Ship Inn was a well-known jazz venue and Acker Bilk played there. Her crowd of regulars from the Radnor followed and for a while it was very successful. The Ship stood next to the old Shot Tower on Radcliffe Hill and was demolished in 1968. Peggy also worked at a number of other pubs in Bristol, some of whose landlords welcomed her gay following and some did not, one giving her instant dismissal.

Peggy was a supporter of Gay West, Chris's Coffee Club and GMG South West. She went on 3C's holidays to Torquay and attended GMG lunches, dinners and parties. She also attended Gay West events, including the Christmas dinners.

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Continued from page 2

Everyone on the gay scene seemed to know Peggy or know of her. Chris Watkins recalls standing outside Skiathos Airport on the way home from a holiday and Peggy greeting a group of six retired men on the flight who all remembered her from her days at the Radnor. One of the men Chris had worked with and never knew he was gay! Peggy had a big international friendship and would stay with friends in Palm Springs, who also came over to visit her.

Peggy had a wonderful, infectious love of life. She had a tremendous memory. If you gave her a gift, she would always remember it. Her warm wit and stories always raised your spirits and a visit with her made you feel good. Peggy was kind and thoughtful. She loved a drink, smoking and chocolate.

Robert Howes adds that he first got to know her when he was researching the history of the gay scene in Bristol. Peggy was a font of stories and anecdotes, fondly recalling the private parties which helped relieve the difficult times before 1967. She had a zest for life as well as a waspish sense of humor but, above all, she had a great empathy and compassion for people. She will be much missed by so many.

[This obituary is based on notes compiled by Chris Watkins using information from OutStories Bristol and other sources, edited with additions by Robert Howes]

Film Reviews

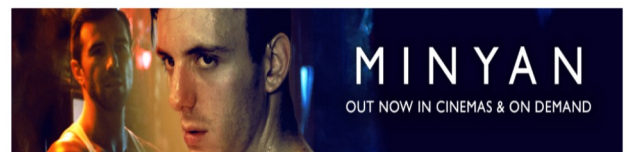
LICORICE PIZZA

Cooper Hoffman, Alana Haim, Bradley Cooper, Sean Penn.



Nearly a quarter of a century after *Boogie Nights*, director Paul Thomas Anderson's new film takes another nostalgia trip to LA's San Fernando Valley in the 70's, though its gawky 15-year-old hero Gary is no Dirk Diggler. He wishes he were such a lothario, though, when he falls for 25 year-old Alana-triggering an unusual platonic romance across the adult minor divide. It's a low key, lovable hangout movie, beautifully played by its two novice leads. Out now.

Minyan.



Going back to 1987 NYC, Brighton beach, aka little Odessa.

Handsome David (Samuel H Levine) is confined by strict rules of his Russian Jewish immigrant community in New York, When he moves in with his Grandfather he befriends their new neighbours a closeted gay couple, survivors of the Holocaust.

The friendship opens up his imagination to the prospects of love and same sex desire, David soon starts to explore the intoxicating east village, a world teaming with the vibrancies of youth and forbidden gay bars.

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Events for 2022

At our first committee meeting this year we have put forward some events that may interest you.

February Wednesday 9th the return of our social evening with a change of venue. So join us at 8pm at **The Iodekka** Tramway Rd, Brislington, Bristol BS4 3DS The 39 Bus stops nearby, plenty of parking. The pub is part of “The Hungry Horse” chain.



Valentines Day raffle *Saturday February 12th at the Rainbow Café we will celebrate the up coming lovers*

February, Sunday 27th Join us to visit **Algars Manor** to see the **Snowdrops displays**.

The Manor is in Station Road, Iron Acton, Bristol BS37 9TD Open 1pm—4pm



March 20th 2022 ,Woodpecker Walks return

A new exciting medium distance walk has been



planned to get the bounce back in your step. Starting and finishing at 30 Woodpecker Close. Partly country lanes and across farmland and up and down. So good footwear a must.

May 18th The City of Wells Wednesday Market

Join us on a day trip to Well's Market. An enjoyable place to visit, lots of stalls .

Pubs and cafes all nearby and you could also fit in a visit to the Bishops palace.



Sunday lunch !

Lets get together again for a Sunday lunch.

Step forward and organize this event ,

somewhere that you recommend and would like to invite your GayWest friends along. Send the details to info@gaywest.org.uk.



GayWest Zoom Meetings.

Back in May 2020 we set up a weekly zoom meeting. First on Saturday mornings then when the Café was back up and running weekly on a Wednesday evening. We have now decided that it has run its course and certainly was a bonus to many members. If however you wish to run your own zoom meetings and would like to invite other members to join with you then get in touch and we can publicize it for you in the newsletter.