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Welcome to your August Newsletter

Well here we are in our 8th Month of this year, soon be Christmas! You are probably all aware of the severe heat effecting many parts of our world and because of this I have noted not so many complaints about our own weather this summer, well it could be better I suppose, not to hot and not so much rain and oh I think its too windy oh yes and I don't like those yellow warnings.

I myself have a keen interest in meteorology and have many books on the subject (one of the many careers I wanted to be in that never happened) also as I keep a diary I record the daily weather and have a weather station in our garden linked to a computer read out screen in our lounge. So you might say I am keen on the subject.

However I do think we have to be careful about reading to much into these extremes that have happened naturally over the centuries, yes us humans since the industrial revolution have contributed to these events.

I will say though that our weather here in the UK is different than it was when we were growing up. I also have a kind of record of this as my mother kept diaries and I have most of them here at home. She did the same as I do by mentioning the weather on a daily basis. I have found it very interesting reading what the weather was like when I was growing up, although I do skip the bits about myself that my mother was not to pleased about, but the weather was interesting.

Have a happy August and if you are visiting these very hot places please take care.

Colin

Important !!

It is that time of year again, when you have the opportunity to elect your committee for the next year. Both Colin and Jim are standing down after over ten years, and we need others to come forward and take on even a small role within the group. Do consider helping out if you can, by filling out a Nomination Form and Sending or giving it in at the café, in plenty of time for the meeting.

So come along to the Rainbow Café in Bath for the Annual General Meeting (AGM)

on Saturday 16th September at 11.15am

Donald Fairgrieve 1935 – 2023

Sadly, Donald passed away 21 June in a nursing home in Saltford after a long illness.

Donald – perhaps better known to most as Don was born in Reddich but lived in a number of areas of the country including London where he met Bob, his partner of 45 years at a Campaign for Homosexual Equality meeting.

When Don's job transferred to Bristol in the late 1980's he was able to move to this area with Bob (who had retired by that point) and they both became involved with the Bristol gay scene and specifically Gay West. They became stalwarts of the coffee shop for many years and were noted for the delicious home made cakes they provided when serving coffee. They also held many events at their home in Stoke Bishop as part of the GW calendar of events.

Don had many varied interests: he loved opera and classical and modern music and was very active in the Bristol Elgar Society. He and Bob loved going to Covent Garden and seeing West End shows on their frequent trips to London. He had a keen appreciation of art and would go to exhibitions whenever possible.

Don and Bob were lucky enough to have had the ability to travel and once they were both retired very sensibly made full use of their passports, visiting the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Asia, China, Russia and of course Europe (they both especially loved France). Later in life health problems curtailed their travelling, but they were immensely glad that they took the opportunity to see the world whilst they were able to.

Don was always a supporter of Stonewall and could never forget that when he was a young man coming to terms with his sexuality, homosexuality was illegal and that two men living in the same property could be the subject of a police raid and face prosecution for perceived 'offences'. The Britain of the 1950's and 60's was a very different place to the 2000's when Don and Bob were able to have a Civil Partnership. Don was always aware that there are right wing factions in this country who would happily take away our rights and return us to the 'good old days' of hate and repression, hence his support of Stonewall.

Don had a very serious stroke about four years ago which he was lucky to survive, but unfortunately it left him partially disabled. About a year after the stroke Bob died which really was a double blow to him after their 45 years together. With this and his increasingly bad health he never regained his zest for life. He did always recognize that he had had a very full life, had travelled very widely and was lucky enough to be able to live in comfort, so I think one has to conclude that it was a life well lived. Don chose to leave his body to medical science, so there will not be a funeral.

While I have your attention can I just say that everything was made much easier in Don's declining years for Pete and myself (who have helped look after him) by the simple expedient of Making a comprehensive will Making an Advance Directive Making an enduring Power of Attorney

Unless one owns nothing more than the clothes one stands up in, a will is essential (not making a will add considerably to the bank balance of any solicitor).

On the many occasions Don had to go to hospital in his latter years, the medical staff were extremely impressed that he had an Advance Directive as it makes their job very much easier when they know what treatment the patient wanted/didn't want in particular circumstances.

Having a Power of Attorney in operation long before it was actually needed meant that when Don became unable to manage his own affairs, Pete and I were able to do so for him. When there is no next of kin it is especially important that someone has the legal authority to act for the person.

Bob Johnson and Peter Webb

A warm welcome to the latest members to join us....Jane , Lou, and Alyson

We hope that you will enjoy this unique group.

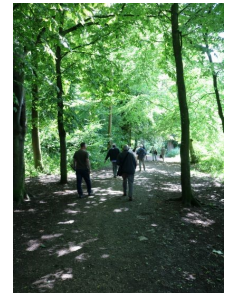
Lydiard House and Grounds Visit



The house from the lake



Inside the church and walking in the grounds



Members of GayWest had an enjoyable day out on Wednesday July 12th on a visit and guided tour of Lydiard house and grounds. The day started with some heavy showers, followed by a nice sunny day. We first went around the house and learnt about its history and the family heritage, and oh what grand people they thought they were. Having friends in high places and being involved in Politics, we know where that can lead. After the house we visited the Church next to the house and then after some lunch a walk around the lake and some of the grounds. A truly great day out. More information on the park and house can be found at www.friendsoflydiardpark.org.uk

Colin

True stories

I was 28. Ended a long-term, bad relationship at the end of February (he cheated). I was facing being single for the first time in five years. Started running again, lost 50 pounds, got a new career, moved 400 miles away. When I was emotionally ready to re-enter the dating scene, I decided to expand my horizons. I had never officially 'dated' a woman, but I had had a secret 'Friends with Benefits' situation with a female friend back in college. I wanted to be open to giving the real thing a chance. Fast forward to the date.



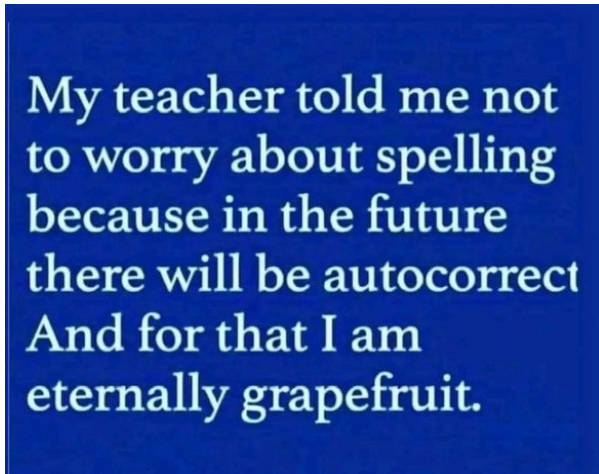
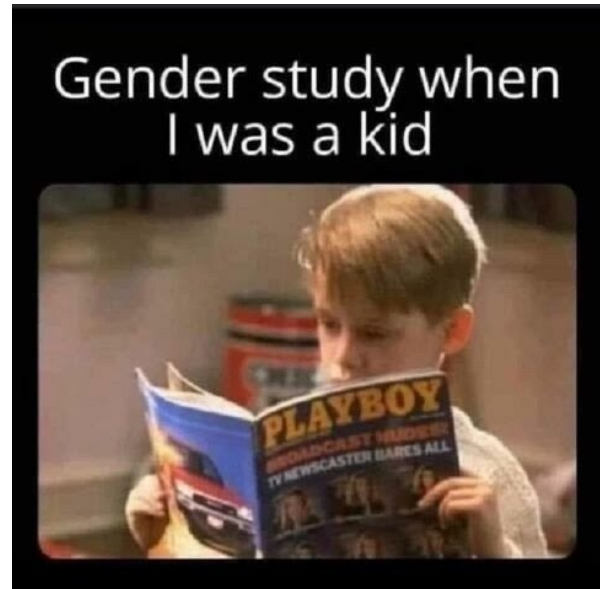
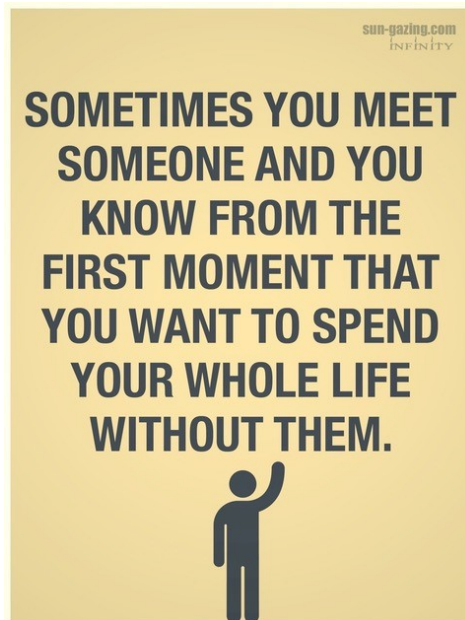
I had been talking to a girl I met on a dating site for a few days. We hit it off pretty quickly. The conversation flowed easily. She was gorgeous and clever, one of those 'I can't believe she's talking to me' things.

We decided to meet for dinner at a hole-in-the-wall bar with a first-class gastropub menu. She was even more attractive in person, even more engaging. I was totally engrossed by her self-assuredness and charm. One of those people who exudes that aura of complete calm and control. I can't remember one lull in the conversation. We ordered beers and elk burgers and chatted until the bar crowd thinned to the last few people (it was a week night, must clear out early).

I didn't want the night to end, so I suggested going for a walk over the nearby bridge. We walked for the next two hours, talking the entire time. It rained, and we kept walking - even after the stem of my cheap umbrella snapped in half - chatting with rain dripping down our faces.

I was shocked at how natural it all felt, how naturally it came. There was never a moment where I thought, 'This is with a girl. This is weird.' It just felt right. Effortless. By the time we got back to our cars — drenched — we had been out together for nearly five hours. We hugged goodbye. I was on Cloud Nine the entire drive home. Her text later that night saying she 'had a blast' was the cherry on top. It was the best first date I've ever been on. Wow.

Ha Ha Ha



Bristol Age UK LGBT+ Fab Café

Why not pop in for a chat and coffee or tea at this regular Thursday morning Fab Café.

From 10am –12pm

Situated in the St. Werburghs Community Centre.

Horley Road, St. Werburghs, Bristol BS2 9TJ

Many members from GayWest attend

GayWest Social evening Wednesday August 9th

Join us for our social evening at

“ **The Lodekka**” Tramway Rd, Brislington, Bristol, BS4 3DS

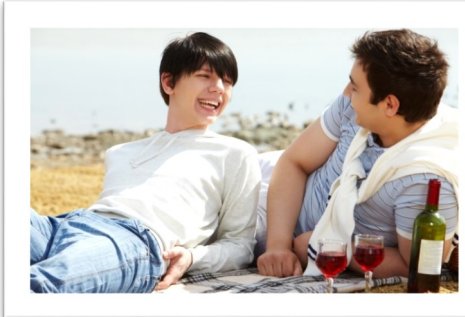
Meet from 8pm for a chat, a laugh and to put the world to rights.

The venue is part of the Hungry Horse chain and the food is good and reasonably priced.



True stories

This is the story of my first time and, as many first times on anything, it didn't go well because of my inexperience. Many say they knew they were gay their whole lives, not my case. I had no idea. If somebody would tell me I was gay before that day, I would have given them a middle finger. But I was wrong and now I am glad to discover how wrong I was. It all started one day when I was hunting for women online, one of my favourite pastimes back then and I tried to hit on what I thought it was a girl



Her nickname was "nena27cd", I will remember that nickname till I die. I just spoke a little bit with her and then I asked about the meaning of the "cd" on her nickname and then she told me – crossdresser.

I was a bit shocked at first because even though I have never been homophobic. It quite surprised me to know she was not a girl but since I was enjoying the chat with her, I didn't mind and kept chatting with him. After a while he asked me to meet him in person, since we were in the same city. I politely rejected but added him on my Skype. The thing was that since that day I could not think about something else. Meeting a guy? No way. No way? Why not? And after a few days I decided to talk to him again and agree to meet him in her place. We didn't have much time to stay together because he had to go to work and I got lost on the way so I arrived really late. I must confess I was nervous like hell at the time, but he really made his best to make me feel comfortable and I really felt good. I felt so good that I wanted to meet him again another day with more time, and so we did.

The second time we were together he was really sweet and caring and treated me as no girl ever did in my life. I felt comfortable, loved and cared about. And what did I do in return? Not contacting with him in a week. I was a jerk, the jerk I always was. Of course, and with all due reason he sent me to hell and didn't return my messages anymore. Since that day my life completely changed. I have met more guys since then but I will always remember him because he was the first one and also the one who changed me because now I am not a completely straight man anymore, and hopefully not a jerk either.

Source: <https://meaws.com/blogs/my-first-time-unforgettable-experience-for-the-rest-of-my-life/> »

Leyhill Pride 2023

On the afternoon of 30th June four of us from GayWest attended the Prisons pride event taking place in their community hall. We had a stall there with our usual items on display, the arm bands and lanyards went very well. The organisers put on a good afternoon with a live band of residents, also a karaoke event. There was tea and coffee and cakes. The downside was when I was asked to say a few words about GayWest, it livened up again after that. We have been to Leyhill's prides since 2015 and they have always been interesting. Leyhill has supported GayWest over this time with donations to the group collected from these events and the Christmas ones that we have attended.

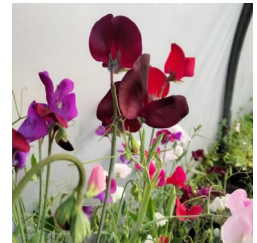
Our association with them have helped those leaving Leyhill to get back into society after their time there and some have become members of Gaywest in the past.

Fragrant Peas,

From humble beginnings of buying a packet mixed sweet pea seeds, you get days of sweet-scented flowers in your garden and in your house.

Native to Sicily, southern Italy and the Aegean islands. Its an annual climbing plant and can reach up to 2 meters.

Buy seed of sweet peas in late February and sow into individual cells in a cold frame or green house. Once germinated and grown three leaves pinch out the tops and this will allow the plants to branch making more stems. Once the Peas have branched, carefully pot them up in to larger containers. In mid to end of May plant out on a wigwam of bamboo canes or trellis.



A few things to remember when growing sweet peas,

They like a humus rich root run. So put some good garden compost or any organic matter in the soil under the roots before planting.

They also like lots of water, this promotes good growth and lots of flowers.

Pick sweet peas regularly, encourages more flowers. Remove seed pods as this stops flowering.

Enjoy the fragrance of them in your house and Garden.

From your GayWest Gardening Coach.... www.gardening-coach.co.uk

or email to gardencoach2022@gmail.com

