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## Welcome to your September Newsletter.

I became a member of GayWest in November 2009 and by the summer of 2010 I was on the committee, my role being Rainbow Café host & café co-ordinator. The job entailed welcoming people when they came to the café, opening up and setting up for the café and organising supplies and asking members nicely if they would like to be a server for the morning session. This role I have carried out to this day, and very pleased to do so.

In September 2013 I was asked if I could take on the Chairman's role for the group, which I was honoured to do. I did not expect that I would still be chairman in 2023.

So I believe that it is time for some fresh blood at the helm and have decided to stand down this year from the role and the GW committee.

I will of course still be a member and will support the new committee and help to make it a smooth transfer of information and maybe a we bit of GW knowledge to the newly elected Chairman after this years A G M.

It has been an honour to have been the Chairman for the group over the past 10 years and I have enjoyed it very much, most of the time. In this time there has been some changes and challenges that I as chairman had to make and that the committee as a group had to make. Sometimes not easy and many times challenging but I know I can say that the GayWest team all worked hard and maintained the core of what GayWest is all about.

During this time GayWest has improved and developed a modern and up to date profile with its website, Facebook and other social media accounts. The group has kept its publications such as Magazines and now the newsletter. The groups membership has been steady at around 100 with many joining via our website.

The group has also made many friends in organisations such as Bristol Age UK and their sub groups Bristol aging better and there Fab cafes which include the LGBT+ fab cafes in St Werburghs and Bedminster areas. Many of you are also aware of our support for some local prisons and their GBT organisations within the prison environment. GayWest have given support to those leaving HM Prisons, back into society and in return they have supported us and we have received generous donations over the years. One of my last roles as chair will be receiving a cheque for GayWest from Leyhill Prison after supporting them at there pride event back in June this year.

Continued....

Of course the one thing that every member of the group will tell you is GayWest is unique in that it runs its own “ Rainbow Café “ in Bath. Supported by Bath Age UK who we pay rent to for our time at their centre on Saturday mornings, which I believe we have used since 1995. Only one time of six months did we not have a café on these mornings and you may have guessed when. This was our most challenging time Yes 2020, a year we would all prefer to forget I think. After a lot of emails government rule checking and phone calls, risk assessments, piles of form filling ,we did open the café for a limited number of 15 booked in advance on a monthly basis and then up to 30 in 2021 until finally opening fully again in July 2021.The most challenging time for all of us and the same with the committee and members of GayWest. Thankfully we are still here to tell the tale!

So I would like to thank all members of GayWest for allowing me to be their chairman these past 10 years and look forward to many more years being a member of the group.

PS Without gaywest I would never have met my husband of 8 years. I’m still evaluating this!

**Colin**

## **The GayWest website and how to use it.**

As chairman I have also been responsible for the GW website. This includes updating on a regular basis and notify our website providers of any issues, these do crop up occasionally.

The website is a great asset for the group, as I mentioned above many people have joined and also pay their membership fees via the site.

### **How to use as a member.**

All members have been issued with a membership number unique to them. The website is accessed by using this number, plus the password given to you at the same time.

So open the site and from the home page go to login. This will bring up a login page on the screen. In the box at the top you put in your membership number and in the one below your password that you have been given. Then click login and there is a small square box that you can tick so your Desktop, laptop , mobile or what ever you use will remember your info the next time you login.

There are 3 protected sections on the website that you will need to do this for access, the Gallery, the publications and the News & Events pages. The gallery has photos going back over the years including many archives, of members and GayWest.

The About us, Links and become a member / payments are available to everyone without logging in, this way.

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These can be viewed separately, downloaded and printed out.

The news and events can be all read and the same as above. Publications are there from 2015 when the site was built so you can read online or copy and paste, print out and download all the GW magazines and newsletters from early 2015. So plenty to read on a rainy day.

The website also stores in a secure area all the details of the GayWest members, we Adhere to The Data Protection regulations, and is only available to the membership secretary, What is known as WordPress which is the system in which all items on the website are created in for the site. The links page has the website links to many LGBT organisations, such as Gay outdoor club, Weymouth gay group, Out stories , and many more.

So if you have not logged on recently now's the time to do so.

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

Is this one of our members do you think?



## Mobile clinic travels from ear to ear

A Downend based audiologist has started a mobile business in response to the long waiting times for NHS services. The audiologist worked for the NHS for more than 25 years. The mobile service was started a year ago to help with the increasing challenges people are now having accessing services to get assessment and treatment for hearing problems. Many GP practices have also had to withdraw the provision of irrigation for ear wax management .

The mobile unit visits Downend, Longwell green, Hanham. Saltford, and Keynsham.

Treatments include Local ear care, Hearing support, Ear wax removal, Hearing tests. Free wax test.

**Book online [www.hearoiic.co.uk](http://www.hearoiic.co.uk) or call 01179109079**

## GayWest Social evening Wednesday September 13th

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



## Sneezeweed - (Helenium)

So called sneezeweed as the leaves use to be dried, crushed and used as snuff. By sneezing it was thought that it drove out evil spirits.

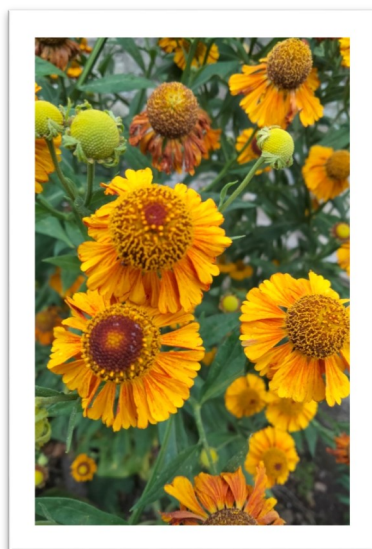
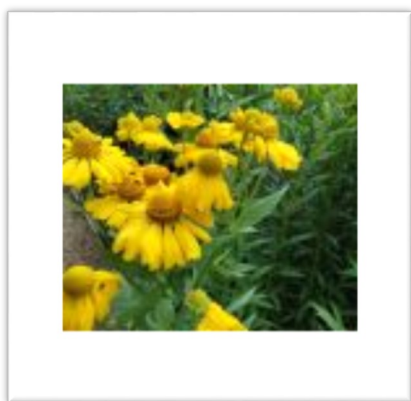
A genus of around 40 species of hardy annuals and herbaceous perennials. These plants are usually free flowering and make good cut flower for the house.

You can plant Helenium's anytime as long as the soil is not frozen. They should be planted in a full sun position and staking maybe required for taller plants such as Helenium Chipper field orange.

With a few of the varieties the constant removal of old flowers can result in repeat flowering, I have known mature clumps of Helenium Sahins early to still be in flower in November (providing almost 4 months of flowers) If you continue to remove the old or dead flowers.

Split or divide Helenium's in March - April as the plant starts to regrow.

Young growth can be susceptible to slugs and snail but otherwise these plants a pretty trouble free.



From your GayWest Gardening Coach.... [www.gardening-coach.co.uk](http://www.gardening-coach.co.uk)

or email to [gardencoach2022@gmail.com](mailto:gardencoach2022@gmail.com)

## Erlestoke Pride event.

The 16th of August was a glorious warm and sunny August day, not that many at the moment, so it made the journey to Erlestoke prison, near Devizes a pleasant ride through some amazing country lanes. The prison is on the edge of Salisbury plane and a good way from any large town.

Jim and myself were guests to their pride event on behalf of GayWest which has supported Erlestoke gay community group for a number of years now. As the weather was so fine the event was held in a garden area with a lovely pergola ,decorated with rainbow flags and bunting and seating areas with the mature trees providing good shade.

The event was well attended with, cake (Homemade) coffee and teas and squashes on hand. There was also an art event in which plaster moulds of fish could be decorated, this we found out was part of an art course the inmates can do. One of the inmates was also providing us with some singing and guitar playing. The whole event was pleasant and went very well.

We took along some GayWest lanyards ,wrist bands and fliers . The lanyards were very popular and flew off the table. It would be lovely to have had some photos of the pride event but cameras, mobile phones etc. are not allowed.

So it was a pleasant day out.

We have one more prison visit, while I am still chair of GayWest this being on September 12th to be presented with a donation to the group from funds raised by those at Leyhill prison when we attended their pride event back in June.

GayWest has been supporting the gay community groups in these prisons for quite a few years now and some inmates who have been released were members of our group but now have moved on to rebuild their lives. We are still InTouch with them today.

**Colin**