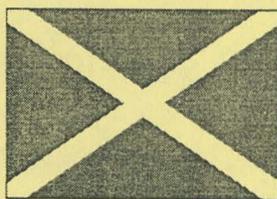
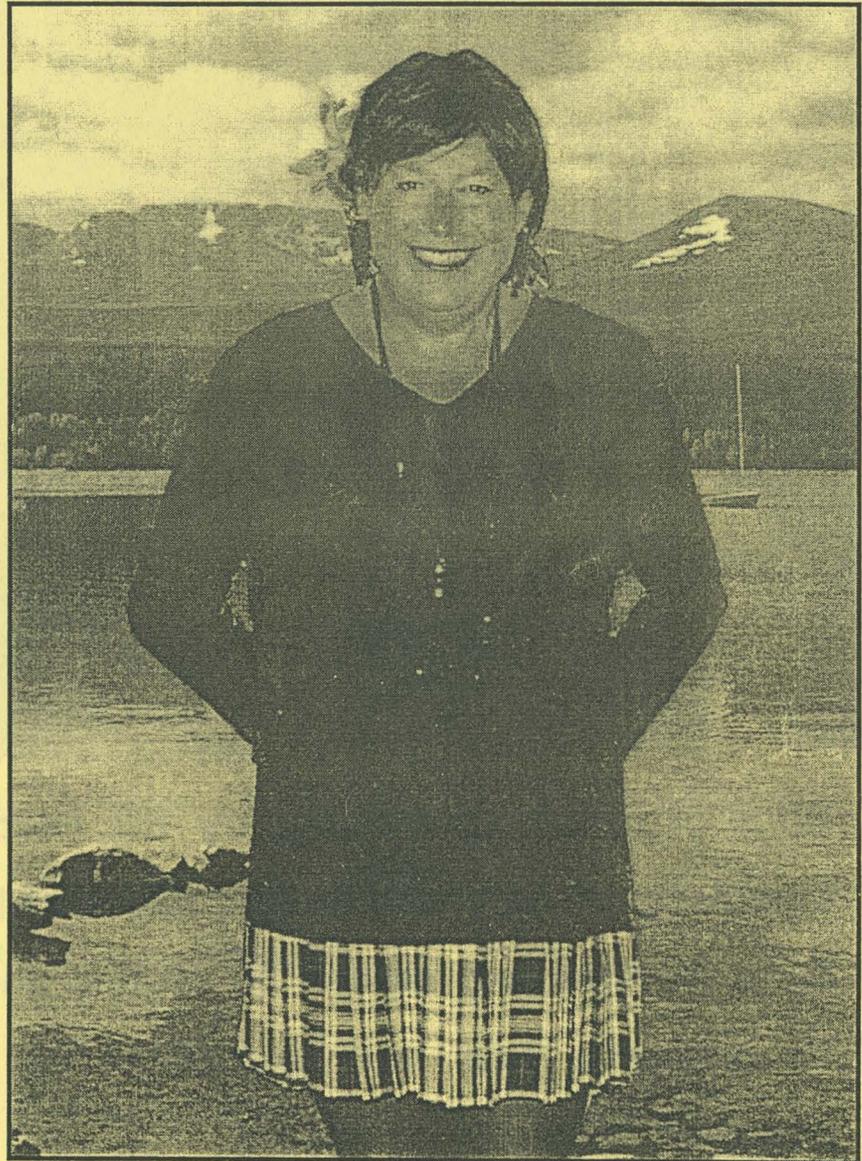


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the Tartan Skirt

Volume 7, Number 5
Winter 1999

The
Magazine
Of The
Scottish
Transgender
Community



ISSN 0968-4042

£2

YOUR ALTERNATIVE HAIR.....



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The TARTAN SKIRT is the magazine of the Scottish Transgender Community brought to you through the efforts of members of the community and the support and encouragement of Reach Out Highland.

We are proud to acknowledge the generosity of all concerned who selflessly contribute to these pages giving freely of their time, expertise and experience.

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All items are published in good faith. No responsibility is accepted by the Tartan Skirt for items or services featured or advertised.

cover: Danielle

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Transfiguration by Zab.

*It's happened to all of us -
we've seen the ideal dress
but it just doesn't fit!*

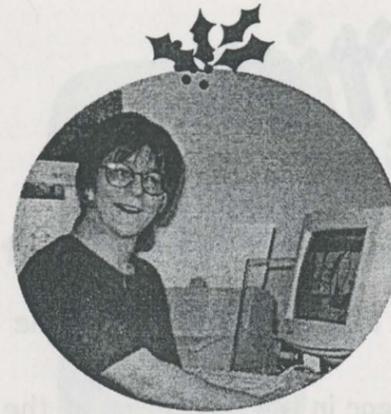
*Maybe the sleeves are too short,
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looking back...

Cultural difference, above all else, has legitimised and excused intolerance of others throughout history - wars fought over religious beliefs, violence inflicted by one race upon another because of skin colour, women oppressed by lower status.

If we recognise any of this, it is because we have come to regard intolerance as an obstacle in the evolutionary path of the human spirit.

And as we moved forward we found it helped to put legislation in place that would support changes in attitude. Now, at the end of the twentieth century, the debate is centred upon how society values sexual orientation and gender identity.

If we think that respect for all persons, that extending equality of opportunity to everyone, are goals worthy of the highest expression of our humanity then, as a nation, we must also act in ways that support this belief.

looking around...

At the present time, if my transgender status invites physical and verbal abuse, harassment, discrimination in employment, if it impairs access to services and competent healthcare, or if it denies relationship rights given to others, it is because society does not send the message with a very loud voice that it either respects or values my right to freely express my gender *as I interpret this*.

The harm inflicted by society upon transgender persons is not

Editorial

A Christmas Wish

... as we approach the new millennium

necessarily intentional. Like so much of intolerance, it is often a consequence of not seeing something clearly for what it is. The damage done, however, takes the form of an assault upon the individual's sense of self, a denial of personal identity which undermines self-confidence and inhibits personal achievement. For example:-

Society expects to be extended a friendly, caring and courteous service in its places of commerce and service, and complains when such good practice is lacking. When an individual's transgender status causes them to be declined that respectful attention the objection is seen as residing with the provider of the service, rather than with the individual concerned.

Society can acknowledge that people are discriminated against in the workplace because of their gender, but when it is required to look at the way people are treated because of *assumed* gender, the best it has come up with is a piece of 'protective' legislation based on a small number of individuals' contentions with their employers, which further discriminates on the basis of whether or not a surgical procedure has been performed on their employee.

Society gives the medical profession permission to treat its individual members according to their medical needs, and is rightly concerned when this appears to fail or where there is a lack of consistency between Health Authorities. The level of healthcare afforded the transgender person is notoriously unpredictable and inconsistent, driven as it is, by the profession's interest in reassignment surgery on the one hand, and public outcry on the other. Consequently, many individuals are afraid to ask for help and in so doing fail to have either their emotional or

physical healthcare needs addressed in any meaningful way.

Society acknowledges relationships between its individual members by surrounding these with laws which protect the individuals' rights in the event of changes in these relationships, whether through separation, divorce or death. The denial of these rights because of self-identified gender gives rise to a deep sense of injustice when, for example, it leads to the imposition of divorce, or the denial of access to one's children. The insistence upon the use of the birth certificate as evidence of the truth of one's identity is clearly flawed for transgender persons, reflecting as it does merely an opinion made upon a new born baby. And the refusal to allow the death certificate to reflect the individual's sense of who they were in life is often the final insult.

looking forward...

If Scottish society wishes to condemn the intolerance shown to transgender people then recognition of transgender status, the *free expression of a self-identified gender identity*, in anti-discrimination legislation is essential. In choosing this option society would state clearly and unequivocally that it no longer considered it acceptable to refuse to acknowledge and extend to transgender persons the same rights as others. Bringing awareness of the transgender situation to the lawmakers of this country must be seen as an important step towards fair treatment for *all* of Scotland's people in the new millennium.

This is my wish for everyone as we check in with that age-old message of Peace on Earth and Goodwill to All Men. (That includes us too!)

Julia Gordon

Caption Competition



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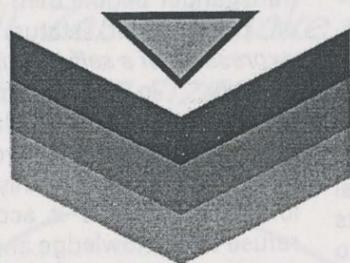
All you have to do is think of a funny caption for the picture and send it in. The winning entry will appear in the next issue of the magazine.

Closing date for entries: 31st January 2000

Sorry! There were no printable entries for the last competition!

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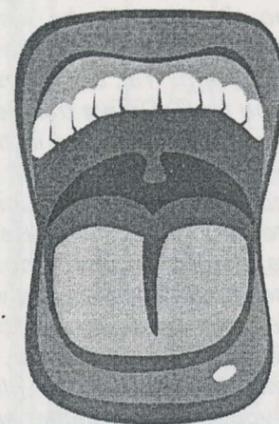
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Speak Out!

*Use these pages to express your views and opinions,
your anger or frustration... or to ask for help.*

Dear Julia,

Having read your editorial in the summer issue of that excellent magazine "The Tartan Skirt", I felt compelled to respond to some of the comments you wrote, both as a serving police officer and also as a transsexual.

One point I will completely agree with you about is that there is a very large canteen culture, especially within the Scottish Police force. This sadly extends to the higher echelons and is and will continue to be a large problem for the transgender community. The hierarchy in all the Scottish Forces would not know what to do if someone like myself "came out" and declared that they were going to have a sex change. In fact it is so archaic within my force that several officers who are gay approached senior officers and stated they wished to tell all regarding their sexuality. This was met with horror by the senior ranks, who feared a gay backlash from other officers and the official answer given was "The time is not right." One must ask oneself, when will the time be right? If that is the response given to gay officers, imagine the response to a transsexual.

Unlike some English forces where serving officers like Tony Ashton of West Mercia police, who has been allowed to leave her force on her pension then been employed as a civilian worker, or another officer who left Kent police to have a sex change and the Chief Constable was on record stating she could be re-employed as a WPC. As yet Scottish

forces have not proven themselves to be transgender friendly. Instances like those would never happen in the Scottish Police service. This was only shown too well in the case of Lynsay Watson from the British Transport Police, who was forced out of her job. That, sadly, is the style of the Scottish Police service.

But, Julia, I digress and apologise. With regard to your own unfortunate incident, yes the officer in question did make a very large error, and that is putting it mildly. As you said, he should have noted statements from all and any witnesses prior to charging anyone. With regard to you being pressurised into revealing your previous name and birth sex, let me explain to you and your readers for their future benefit.

The police, and this is irrespective of whether you think you have committed any wrongdoing or not, if arresting a person have the power to require that person to give the following details about themselves: name, age, date of birth, place of birth and home address. If, having been arrested you refuse to give those details, then you commit a further offence and would be kept in custody until you tell. Also, if a police officer suspects a person of having committed an offence for whatever reason then that officer can require you to provide those details as above. Again, if you refuse then you commit an offence and will invariably be arrested.

However, nowhere in any Act does it specify that you have to state your gender although if arrested you

would be required to state it for the purpose of being searched.

To try and clarify the situation further, I spoke with a Depute Fiscal regarding the Act and he stated that it is a very "fuzzy" area in respect of a transsexual giving full details. Firstly in Scotland, unlike England, you do not have to change your name by deed poll. You can call yourself anything you wish as long as by doing so you are not committing a criminal offence. This would be by using an assumed name for fraud or giving a false name to the police in an effort to pervert the course of justice. He felt that the police would be justified in asking a person's birth name to establish that the person was not wanted under their birth name.

I know what you are going to say and totally agree with you, but I am afraid this would seem to be the establishment answer, although the Depute Fiscal would not let me quote him because, as he said, it is a very "fuzzy and gray" area.

We can only hope that the question is asked in a sensitive way and if not the only recourse is, as you did, to complain to the relevant Chief Constable regarding the individual officer.

With regard to your comments about making it simpler to sack/prosecute police officers, it is here that I must strongly disagree with you.

Firstly, you must remember that 90% of the time complaints against the police are made by hardened

criminals who will make a complaint against arresting officers in an attempt to have their own charges dropped.

I myself have worked in the cell area when the defence solicitors arrive. The first question they ask is not "Are you guilty?", but "Do you wish to make a complaint against the police?" This is done in the knowledge that they will write a letter to the respective Chief Constable and bill Legal Aid for £60, irrespective of whether the complaint is valid or not. The officer involved, however, then has the problem of disciplinary proceedings hanging over him for several months.

The reason the Police Federation is, as you said, so appalling is not because they wish to protect the "bad apples" - and I agree, they are there within all forces - but to protect the decent, honest officers who try to do a difficult and dangerous job. Surely they are entitled to the same standard of proof as you or anyone else is when in court. Also remember that if an officer is found not guilty in court, unlike others he then faces separate disciplinary procedures where he can still be fined by his Chief Constable just for having been in court. Please remember that if an officer is sacked from the force he loses his pension rights, which could be a considerable amount.

Julia, I am not trying to win a sympathy vote from either yourself or your readers but I know only too well from bitter experience that the easiest way to be complained about is by simply issuing a parking ticket. This was given to a "respectable" female driver, who then proceeded to concoct a tissue of lies, all in an effort to have the ticket cancelled. The fact that I was innocent and then under enquiry for several months was of no consequence to her. She just wanted the ticket cancelled.

This is the reason that the Police Federation fights so hard for the right of a fair trial for their officers - not so that the bad apples will be protected but that the officers who do try to do a fair job do not lose it because of a malicious complaint which a Chief

Constable decides to pursue because it is cheaper for him to employ a new recruit when he has sacked an officer with 28 years' service and saved money on the pension.

Having said all that, Julia, I agreed with you when you say there are lazy, incompetent, racist officers within the Scottish Police Force, but please do not judge all of us by the example that you met on that fateful night.

I'm sure not all journalists wish to be tarred with the same "Sun" tabloid brush of journalism.

If there is any change to be made, it must be made at a higher level than individual forces. Rather than training new recruits to Northern Constabulary, this should be done at the Scottish Police College where all forces send their recruits. Only then would we achieve uniformity towards the transgender community in Scotland.

Also efforts must be made to clarify this "fuzzy, gray" area in the law regarding the rights of the transgender community in respect of searches by the police and the giving of personal details. Perhaps a letter from yourselves to ACPO Scotland would get the ball rolling.

Food for thought, Julia.

C.M.

Dear Tartan Skirt,

I read a letter in a TV magazine the other day where the gal was bemoaning the fact that she had turned forty. Oh, if she had only done the brazen things that YOUNG trannies get up to those days! She looked with longing at their uninhibited exhibitions. Now it was too late. She had missed the boat. Now in middle age she was 'past it'.

I laughed my head off. Past it? Had she never heard that life begins at forty? There I am, ready to give up my back teeth - that is if I had back teeth - to be forty again. Oh, to be young... YOUNG and carefree! Fancy wearing these gorgeous size 14s, showing off that slim waist, not needing to use Polyfilla before you slap on foundation cream!

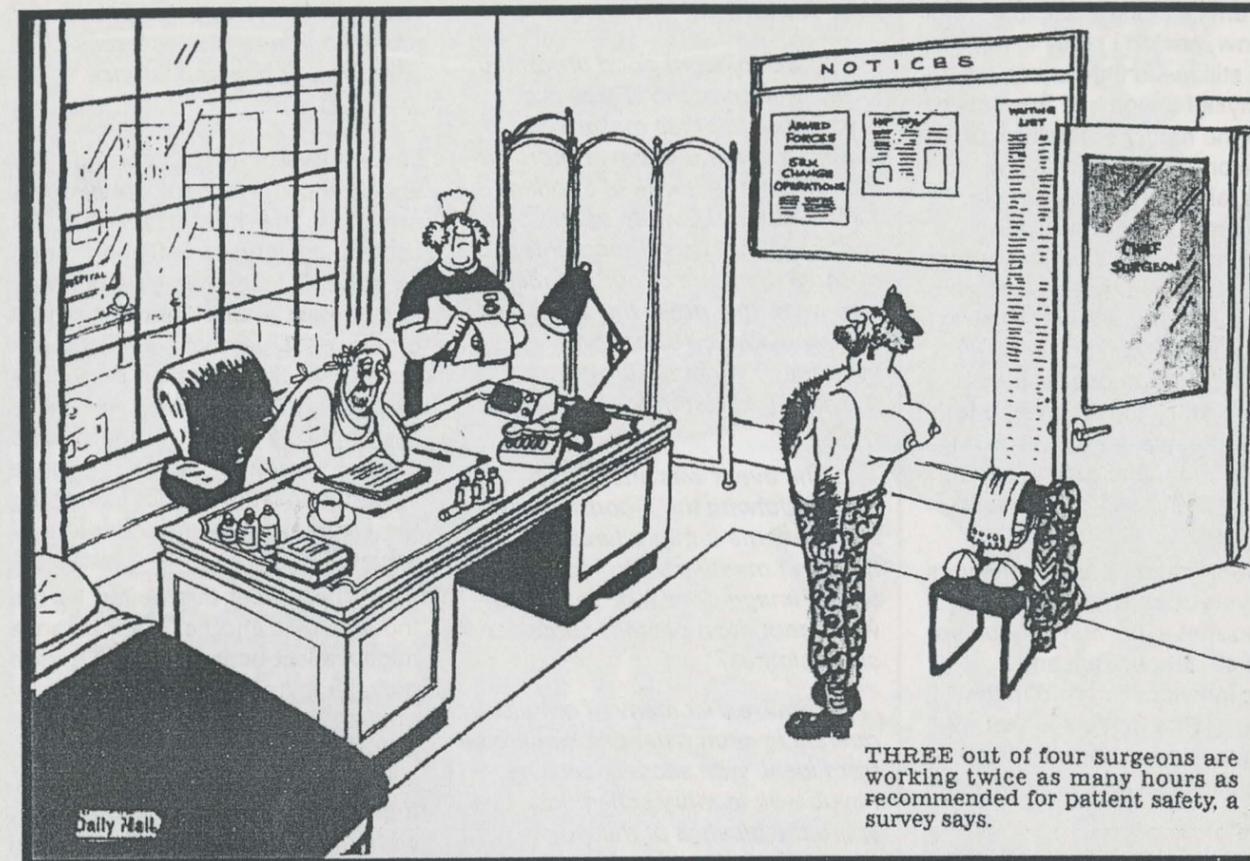
Too old at forty! What is the gal talking about? Now if she were really getting on a bit she might have reason for concern. Yet, are you not as old as you feel? Do we trannies, who are no longer classified in the 'bimbo brigade', not have a right to enjoy minis and undies and long luscious stockings and frilly blouses? Then there are the falsies. I don't mean those wobbly woggles that we stick under the blouses, but the finger nails and the eyelashes. I adore eyelashes, even if the glue does stick your eyelids together and they make you squint. And finger nails! So many adorable colours. You have to keep looking in the mirror, of course, to appreciate the beauty of the eyelashes, but you can admire nails as you sit in the boudoir while stroking your skirt down, or adjusting the pleats, or inching it up a trifle to check that the suspender clips are still intact.

Now I want to let you into my secret, the sort of thing that a girl should never indulge, that which her mother told her must be kept confidential. And I, the shameless slut, am about to reveal all. Such is the price of vanity! In the last edition of *The Tartan Skirt* my ambition was realised. I can now die a happy tranny. What was so special? Well, I appeared on the cover. Yes, I was the cover girl. OK, you say. So what? Plenty of gals appear on the cover, so what's the big deal? The 'deal' which made me so excited... delighted.. ecstatic... was the fact that I am an OAP! Did Julia realise that she had put a 'golden oldie' (and rather tarnished gold at that) on the cover? I think she had an inkling, but not that I was that old. Mark you it was not easy to get accepted. I sent our editor a few shots. Too naughty! So I sent some more. Not in tartan! Then - finally - SUCCESS.

So, if a rather jaded cross dresser, aged (let me whisper it) 68, can be a cover girl then surely you young bimbos out there can do better.

Too old at forty? Nonsense! You can enjoy being a saucy little thing - in your own imagination - regardless of your age.

Alexandrina



THREE out of four surgeons are working twice as many hours as recommended for patient safety, a survey says.

'If you worked the hours that I do, you'd make the occasional mistake too. Now what is it? Stitches too tight?'

Dear Tartan Skirt,

For years I have considered myself a transsexual, openly or secretly. A badge I wore, but not a box I hid in. I wondered what I'd call myself after surgery. Am I now a woman? Am I a female transsexual? Am I a MTF post-op TS? Or am I a person? Perhaps these personal observations may help spark some thoughts in others...

Does the name describe what shape you are or what is in your head? Is the name essential as a tool to help you make your own journey easier and mark the stages, if stages there are? Is it something others call us? Is it something useful to 'the gender community' to identify our struggles?

The name Transsexual, or Transgendered, or T-people, suggests a crossing or a transition. But from what to what? Traditionally it has been seen as a swap or journey from one sex or gender to another sex or gender (whether temporarily

or permanent). This doesn't seem helpful to me.

Now that I've made some miles along whatever road I'm on, it seems to me the journey is not after all primarily a physical one. This may seem odd, from one who recently has had gender reassignment surgery, but I have always known it was not my only goal, but more a step towards a goal.

The place I was before - unhappy, locked into false male myths, a socially unsuccessful person - was one of defensiveness, anxiety and weakness. Since 1995, my journey has been a revelation of truth and a building up of self. A growth, of trust in me and of reliance on others - be they friends and family, fellow travellers or medical professionals. A knowledge that I couldn't make the journey if I didn't know myself and I couldn't do it by myself.

My body is now different, which I am very pleased with. But the

biggest change is in between my ears, not in between my legs. Before the physical changes could satisfy my need for rightness and completion, I had to feel that rightness in my head and in my heart. This is a Zen type of thing - learning to fire the arrow before it leaves the bow; a 'visualisation' of where you want to be before you leave home. Now that I have come some way and I can turn to look behind me, I can see my goals since childhood were always balance, truth and self-awareness... a healing of the geological fault that ran right through my psyche.

The GRS is the icing on the cake. The cake that took so long to bake is full of rich and good ingredients. A cake cooked fast and hot will burn. A slow cake in a cool oven fills a house with wonderful aromas of sweetness. ... (though had I had a miserable journey full of obstacles, I might not feel so generous).

So, am I still a transsexual? I don't know, nor do I really care; though I still feel a little uneasy at calling myself a woman. It seems to diminish the reality of the lives of genetic women and seems only a little less false than when people called me male. I am becoming me, as much I can be, whatever that is called. I believe that anyone who thinks that surgery will make them instantly a better person or somehow credit them with the lifetime's history they hankered for is kidding themselves. I will never have a girlhood, and can never invent a past and still be true to my own life history.

I doubt if there are any answers that fit everyone – thank goodness! I've never met a 'normal' person yet – we are all rare, unique and precious individuals. And in the long run, all that matters is that we are all respected and embraced for what we each are and what we each can offer.

Sheila [REDACTED]

Dear Tartan Skirt,

The subject of good grooming is always important. There is a saying that "clothes maketh (wo)man and this is never more so than when one is one of Scotland's T-folk. Recently, when attending a special event I was disappointed to observe that one of our number was wearing a dress that appeared to bear evidence of not only yesterday's dinner but several previous gastronomic sorties as well!

The event was attended by people outwith the T-community and for some it might have been their first meeting with T-folk. What sort of image does it project when we cannot even present ourselves in clean clothes?

I realise that many of our sisters operate in circumstances that are far from ideal, with secrecy causing havoc with laundry schedules. I will spare the blushes of the lady

concerned, however, she lives alone and there was no excuse for a less than clean appearance.

S

[When we are critical of the appearance of others are we not repeating the hurtful act that we accuse society of inflicting upon ourselves? When we give our own appearance a value and insist that others observe that value, do we not repeat the mistakes of society that bring us here? When we make assumptions about others and judge them upon these assumptions, are we not exercising the same arrogance we deplore of society?

When I feel threatened by the thought that another's appearance might reflect badly on how I myself may be perceived (or judged) by others, I am reminded of the journey within myself to self-awareness. a place which allows me to trust who I am, totally, without reference to another. Julia]

Dear Julia,

I am replying to a letter in the Autumn issue of the Tartan Skirt, from Jim. I suspect he was a Beaumont member when he wrote about the row in the Beaumont Society over its constitution. He never said what the final outcome was. This happened over twelve years ago and the word heterosexual was removed allowing transgender and gender gifted of any sexual orientation to join. They probably did before but never told anyone.

The Beaumont Society has no bars on anyone joining and that includes married couples and partners. We lead where others follow. We even have our magazine audio-taped for our registered blind members. We have our own information helpline, our WOBS helpline for women by women, we give talks on transgenderism to all sorts of organisations. Anyone wanting to know more, give me a phone on 0141-[REDACTED]

Ruth Stewart
Scottish Regional Organiser
The Beaumont Society

Of all the Gin Joints in all the towns, in all the world ... she walks into mine!



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HIV AND AIDS - LIVING YOUR LIFE BY CHOICE, NOT CHANCE.

When the subject of HIV infection and AIDS comes up, it's unlikely to attract much willing attention from people other than those infected or affected by it. For many of us it can be frightening to contemplate, conjuring up such terrifying images that we make ourselves more comfortable by denying it has anything to do with the way we live our own lives.

And yet it is impossible to remain untouched by it when we are moved to share the loss felt by the mother deprived of her child, infected through her own bloodstream, or the confusion over the announcement of the untimely death of a hero whose life was lived in the glare of publicity and in the shadow of drug abuse, or the news that the rate of HIV infection is still on the increase.

In deciding how to live our lives as safely and as fully as possible, informed choice is the wisdom we apply. The following has been adapted from training material used by the sexual health charity REACH OUT Highland to raise basic HIV and AIDS awareness. Try it for yourself and check your understanding against the information which follows it.

Julia Gordon

HIV and AIDS – How Much Do You Know?

- What do the letters H-I-V stand for?
- Roughly how many people in Scotland had tested positive for HIV by March 1999?
 - 290
 - 2,900
 - 29,000
- You can tell if someone has been infected with HIV. TRUE or FALSE?
- How would you describe HIV to someone in lay terms?
- Which of the following situations might put you at risk of becoming infected with HIV?
 - kissing
 - toilet seats
 - unprotected sex
 - injecting drugs
 - blood transfusions
 - as an unborn child, from your mother
- You think you may have put yourself at risk of HIV infection. How can you be sure?
- Where would you go to be tested for HIV?
- If you had a positive HIV test, who must you tell?
 - your GP
 - your employer
 - your partner
 - your insurance company
 - your travel agent
 - all of the above
 - none of the above
- HIV is a particularly strong and resilient virus. TRUE or FALSE?
- The virus is present in certain monkeys in Africa from which it spread into the human population. TRUE or FALSE?
- There is only a single type of HIV virus. TRUE or FALSE?
- Do you know how the virus works?
- Which of the following can be used to treat HIV infection?
 - vaccination
 - antibiotics
 - drugs
 - there is no treatment
- How soon after becoming infected with HIV can AIDS develop?
 - One week
 - 6 months
 - 8 years
 - 15 years
- What do the letters A-I-D-S stand for?
- How would you describe AIDS to someone in lay terms?
- AIDS is a new disease not seen before the 1980s. TRUE or FALSE?
- AIDS is a collection of existing infections and diseases. TRUE or FALSE?

- AIDS is untreatable. TRUE or FALSE?
- Worldwide, how many new cases of HIV infection might be expected each day?
 - 16,000
 - 240,000
 - 800
 - 2,000
- On average, an AIDS diagnosis means a person has how long to live?
 - 3 months
 - 20 months
 - 5 years
 - 12 years
- We all have an HIV status. TRUE or FALSE?

Now check your understanding of HIV and AIDS.

- H-I-V stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus.
- A total of 2,922 persons had tested positive by 31st March 1999, in Scotland. Of these, approximately 40% acquired the virus as a result of intravenous drug use, 33% as a result of sexual intercourse between men, and 18% as a result of sexual intercourse between men and women. The remainder is made up mainly of transmission via blood products and from mother to child.
- Beyond a brief flu-like episode following infection, and therefore likely to have been ignored, people can have HIV for many years and show no symptoms. During the time they are infected they are capable of passing the virus on to others.
- HIV is a virus (see illustration) which attacks the immune system, the body's defence against infections and diseases, eventually weakening this to such an extent that the person succumbs to life-threatening illnesses.
- HIV is not contagious, that is, it cannot be passed on by social contact such as kissing, shaking hands, sharing cups and cutlery, or using the same toilet. But, present in body fluids, it can be transmitted in the following ways:-

Having unprotected penetrative sex when the penis enters either the vagina or anus without a condom. (The risk from oral sex is very much lower.)

Infected blood or blood products when these enter the blood stream. (All blood for transfusion in the UK and other developed countries is screened.)

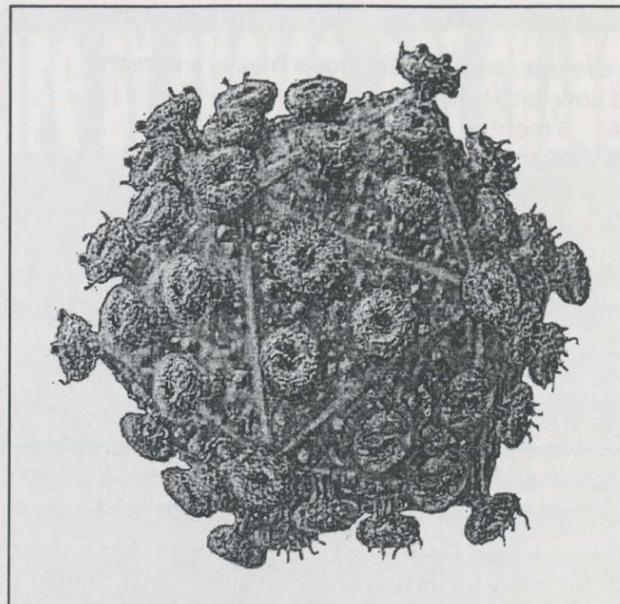
Sharing needles or syringes when injecting drugs.

Transmission from an HIV infected mother to her child, before and during birth, and through breastfeeding. (Not all children born to HIV+ mothers become infected, however.)

- To find out whether or not you have HIV a blood test must be carried out. This works by detecting the presence of antibodies that the body's immune system produces as a response to the infection. However, since it takes a while for these to appear in the blood, any test carried out immediately after infection has occurred will likely give a negative result. It is necessary to wait three months before testing in order to allow sufficient antibodies to be present to give a reliable result. This 'window period', as it's referred to, can be a very anxious time for someone who thinks they may have been infected. During this time, pre- and post-test counselling can offer the opportunity to consider the implications of a positive result.
- Your GP can arrange an HIV test. Information about this will be recorded on your medical record with possible implications for health insurance, etc. In Scotland, anonymous testing may be carried out at GUM clinics and by voluntary agencies working in areas of sexual health or gay men's health. (Further information regarding testing in your area may be obtained by contacting the National AIDS Helpline on 0800-567123.)
- You are not obliged to tell anyone the result of an HIV test. However, suddenly adopting safer sex methods within a relationship could be difficult to explain to your partner, and the need to take frequent daily medication during your working day could be difficult to hide from colleagues. Insurance companies are unlikely to extend life cover when you try to take out a mortgage, and some countries (USA and others) will not admit anyone who is HIV positive. A positive HIV test doesn't just affect your life expectancy - *it affects your whole way of living.*
- In a moist environment, such as blood left on the inside of an injecting needle, the HIV virus may survive for several hours. Once it's protective body fluid dries, however, the virus is unlikely to survive much longer than about 20 minutes.
- All the evidence points to the likelihood of the HIV virus having passed from monkeys to humans via blood contact or as food.

IT'S NOT ABOUT HIGH RISK GROUPS - IT'S ABOUT HIGH RISK BEHAVIOUR

Illustration: The Human Immunodeficiency Virus



11. There are two main strains of HIV virus, HIV1 and HIV2. These are found in different parts of the world and each gives rise to many different sub-types. Because different strains and sub-types of HIV respond differently to drug treatments, it is important for HIV positive persons to adhere to safer sex practices, etc. in order to reduce the possibility of becoming further infected by strains of the virus other than the ones they already have. This ability to easily change its genetic form (mutate) has made it difficult to develop an effective vaccine - while a sub-type is still HIV, it may no longer be recognised as such by the vaccine.
12. All viruses are very primitive forms of life, so primitive that they can only reproduce themselves by utilising the cellular chemistry of the host organism. When the virus enters the human body it attacks cells of the immune system that are normally present in blood (T-helper lymphocytes). It does this by attaching itself to the cell and turning it into a factory to produce many more copies of the virus which, in turn, attack more T-cells. Left untreated, ten billion new virus particles are made each day. Eventually, as the number of T-cells diminishes, the body's capacity to fight off infections and diseases is fatally compromised.
13. HIV infection cannot be cured but it can be treated with drugs that are capable of prolonging the length of time the individual lives free of symptoms. Drugs such as Retrovir, Viramune, Ritonavir, and others, work by interrupting the viral replication process at different stages. The use of several different drugs that act on different points of the chain offers the best outcome at the present time. Such combination therapy is very costly (£6,000 - £7,000), however, and involves a high level of compliance in adhering to the drug regime. As a consequence, some individuals will not be given therapy. The unemployed, the homeless, those with alcohol and drug dependency, for example, will fail to accrue sufficient 'points' to qualify for treatment.
14. Most people with HIV enjoy long periods of good health during which time there is likely to be minimal contact with health professionals for health monitoring and checking on the efficacy of treatments. This stage of the infection may last for 8 to 10 years on average, but can vary from as little as one to as much as 20 years before symptoms of an AIDS-defining illness appear.
15. A-I-D-S stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.
16. AIDS is a stage reached in HIV infection when the immune system has become so badly damaged that certain infections and diseases appear. It is not a disease in its own right.
17. AIDS was first used as a term in 1981, although it had probably been overlooked for considerably longer.
18. As the immune system loses its effectiveness as a result of declining numbers of T-cells, the HIV positive person becomes prone to 'opportunistic' infections and cancers. There are over thirty important opportunistic infections (some more common than others), tumours, cancers and complications for people with HIV. The following are some of the most talked about at the moment:

bacterial infections such as Mycobacterium tuberculosis

fungal infections such as Candida albicans, Cryptococcus neoformans, Pneumocystis carinii

protozoal infections such as Toxoplasmosis

viral infections such as Cytomegalovirus (CMV), Herpes simplex (HSV)

19. The treatment of certain HIV-related illnesses by conventional medicine is certainly an option and some people will turn to complementary therapies in addition to orthodox treatments, but AIDS cannot be cured.
20. From the onset of an AIDS-defining illness, death normally occurs within two years.
21. The correct answer is the first one. There are likely to be approximately 16,000 people newly infected with HIV today.
22. True. We are all HIV positive or HIV negative, and since we cannot yet change the outcome of HIV infection a personal approach to prevention is still the only option.

End



Equality Network

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Equality Network News - October 1999

Scottish Parliament starts work on LGBT Equality

The Scottish Parliament's Equal Opportunities Committee has started work by establishing a sub-committee to focus specifically on sexual orientation issues, which should include LGB and T issues. Three other sub-committees will work on race, gender and disability. The Equal Opportunities Committee is one of the two largest committees of the Parliament, consisting of 13 MSPs, and its sexual orientation sub-committee, officially known as a "reporter's group", will be convened by Nora Radcliffe, the Liberal Democrat MSP for Gordon.

Earlier this month, the Equality Network gave a presentation to the Equal Ops Committee. We welcomed the establishment of the Committee and its sexual orientation reporter's group, both developments that we had called for last year while the Parliament's structure was being debated.

We proposed that the sexual orientation reporter's group should establish a strongly consultative mode of working, meeting regularly with people from across Scotland's diverse LGBT communities. We hope that this will develop over the next two or three months.

One of the roles of the Equal Ops Committee will be to examine every Bill produced by the Scottish Executive, and every set of policy proposals (so-called green and white papers), for their impact on equal opportunities. The Committee will then produce a public report addressed to the Executive, and in the case of Bills, for the Committee in charge of the Bill in Parliament.

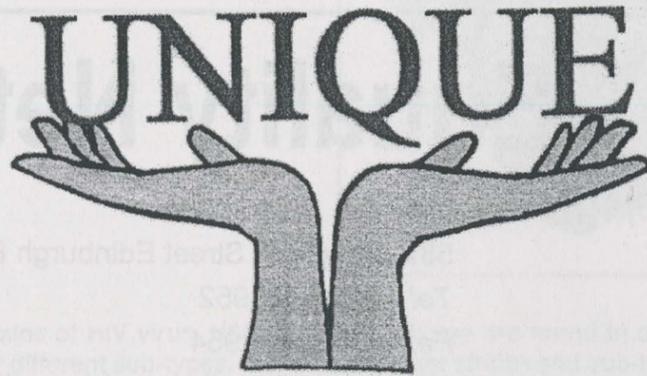
In this way, any negative equal ops implications can be highlighted and hopefully put right before policies and Bills become Law. The Equality Network has so far submitted to the Equal Ops Committee briefings on the effects on LGBT people of two Bills proposed by the Executive: the Improvement in Scottish Education Bill and the Adults with Incapacity Bill. More details of these can be had from the Equality Network and copies of the full briefings will shortly be available on our website.

Another function of the Equal Ops Committee will be to identify failings in the existing law and to propose changes. The Committee has already questioned Jackie Baillie, Equality Minister, about section 28, and we hope will call clearly for the repeal of the section as soon as possible.

Equality Network campaigns to remove the inequalities facing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the laws and institutions of Scotland

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The London Experience

by Susan [REDACTED]



*Each year
I like to fit
in a trip to
London and
experience life
in the big city.*

*This also
gives me the
chance to
experience life
'en femme'*

To ensure the success of a trip away some forward planning is necessary and this one was to be no exception. The hotel was arranged well in advance and the train duly booked. This time I would be travelling by sleeper train both ways following earlier trial runs, except this time there would be a difference. From the time I set foot in London until the time I left I would be in the female role.

I was intending to travel by 'Caledonian Solo' where, for a supplement, you can enjoy sole occupancy of a standard sleeper cabin. However, due to a special offer it was bizarrely cheaper to travel first class where you automatically get a single cabin. There was therefore no reason not to pamper myself by travelling first class and there was the added bonus of a more substantial breakfast.

Once on the train it was a case of sorting out a few things for the morning, packing away my few male clothes, then to bed. Whilst not enjoying the best night's sleep, I awoke reasonably rested and ready for breakfast,

which signalled its arrival with a knock on the door by the steward. With sustenance obtained I was ready to get prepared for the first of seven days 'en femme'. The train was drifting along quite slowly through flat countryside so it was no problem dressing and applying a little make up before arrival at Euston Station shortly after 7.30am. The cabin did not have to be vacated until 8am so final details could be completed with the train at rest.

With a deep breath I left my cabin and stepped onto the platform at Euston. Wearing jeans, T-shirt, black jacket and 'sensible' shoes I aimed to blend inconspicuously into the crowds. This was it, go for it girl! Heading for the escalator, I soon

descended into the tube system. At one point there being no escalator and having to descend some steep stairs, a very helpful gentleman offered to assist with my case, which although having wheels is always a struggle on stairs. Ah, the benefits in being a woman, I could get used to this!

The trip across London took rather longer than expected, due to it being the rush hour and there being some sort of signal failure on the Victoria Line miles away. Arrival in Earls Court could not come soon enough and I was glad to reach the cool air above ground. A short walk took me to the Beaver Hotel, passing the well known and (in)famous

Philbeach Hotel on the way. I have always found

the staff at the Beaver Hotel to be very accepting of T-folk and on arrival found that today was to be no exception. Richard welcomed me at reception and soon I was checked in and heading up to my room, using the new lift which had been installed since my last visit.

Once in my room and unpacked, I headed out into the big city. The holiday had begun! I had picked up several interesting leaflets at reception and decided to go for an open topped bus trip to see some of the sights. Setting off by tube, I headed for Piccadilly Circus where many of the possible routes converged. Arriving around midday, I did not have to wait long for a bus to arrive and soon settled into a seat on the top deck.

After a short wait the bus departed and I was able to sit back and enjoy my high level view of London, venturing as far as docklands after a change of route. As I am somewhat challenged on the follicle front, I was soon to be glad that my wig was a good fit and securely attached to my head with toupee tape (a sort of double sided sellotape).

After a splendid afternoon's sightseeing, I was in need of sustenance by the time I returned to Earls Court. I chose a pleasant bistro called 'Ballans West' (the original Ballans being in Soho), where I had dined on a previous trip. I was pleased to be welcomed by one of the waiters who recognised me from last year. Duly provisioned and after a bath I was ready to hit the town, or perhaps not, but nevertheless determined to go out. Heading for the bar at the Philbeach Hotel I soon met up with other T-folk, some of whom were heading later on to 'Ted's', a nearby club which welcomes TV's & TS's. I agreed to join them and thereafter enjoyed a pleasant evening, albeit declining the advances of one gent who was evidently a keen *Tranny Chaser*. (Males who are attracted to TV's & TS's.)

Friday dawned a beautiful sunny morning and I set off on foot for Trendco, a wig supplier, declining to be cooped up in the tube. I had only travelled a few hundred yards and was already feeling the heat when a minor deluge hit me from above. Evidently someone was being rather over enthusiastic watering his or her window box! Fortunately with it being so warm I was almost glad of the cooling spray and within a few minutes was completely dry. I had arranged to see the same assistant at Trendco as last time and purchased an identical piece to that which I was wearing, albeit in a slightly different shade, to act as a back up. Some shopping on Kensington High Street followed, then lunch in a BHS restaurant. Soon I needed to head back to the hotel as I had to freshen up prior to an appointment with the well known Dr Reid. On leaving the consultation, whom did I bump into but one of the Aberdeen girls who was accompanying a friend on her visit. It's a small world is it not?

The Pride march took place on Saturday and social events afterwards



swallowed up the entire day. A trip to Kew gardens provided a pleasant outing on Sunday. Kew is well worth a visit with its fantastic displays both outdoors and inside the huge glasshouses, some dating from the Victorian age. On Sunday evening I took up Janett Scott's invitation to attend the monthly London meeting of the Beaumont Society. There I was made welcome and they were surprised to have a visitor from so far away. The offer of a lift back to my hotel was gratefully received, it being too late for a lone female to be taking the tube and the trip home would have involved an expensive taxi journey. The weekend was over but I still had three days to look forward to.

One of the leaflets I had picked up on arrival was of guided walking tours of London and famous attractions in the surrounding area and these I would strongly recommend. I decided to join a tour going to Windsor Castle and duly headed off for Waterloo Station, the designated starting point. On arrival at Windsor the guide took the group (comprised mainly of Americans) over the river to Eton, after which we had lunch before reconvening for the afternoon's tour of the castle. The evening saw a visit to the Philbeach Hotel, where it was 'Loose Ladies' night, a regular TV/TS event. Needless to say the *Tranny Chasers* were again in attendance and one guy was not easily going to take

no for an answer!

The next day, I fulfilled a long held ambition to visit the Imperial War Museum, having on previous trips visited the Cabinet War Rooms and the Second World War Cruiser, HMS Belfast that is moored on the Thames. On arrival, I was slightly concerned that several school parties were in attendance. I quickly relaxed as they seemed unaware of me and I was able to enjoy my visit. I lunched in the museum café and the afternoon passed so quickly I was concerned that I might miss some of the exhibition rooms. I did, however, manage to fit nearly everything in and left as the museum closed at 6pm.

Soon Wednesday dawned, my last day and I was determined to make the most of it. I again headed for Waterloo Station, to join a trip to Richmond and Hampton Court Palace. A tour of the historic and picturesque town of Richmond was followed by a cruise up the Thames to Hampton Court. A guided tour of the palace took place in the afternoon after which we were left to our own devices before heading back to London by train.

Once back in Earls Court I did some last minute shopping before eating, then returned to the Hotel to collect my luggage. Soon it was time to head off across London by tube in time to catch the sleeper train from Euston at 9.30pm. Arriving on the

platform the stewardess checked my ticket and queried that she had a booking in a male name. On admitting that it was me, she was surprised, but was great about it and said it was no problem and I duly boarded the train. Before long it was time to depart and soon the train was heading out of Euston to begin the journey north. Before retiring for the night I unpacked my male clothes ready for the morning. I was sorry that my time 'en femme' was nearly over and it was going to be strange returning to the male role after a taste of life on the other side.

I slept well, awaking only when the stewardess knocked on the door at around 5.30am to deliver breakfast. She informed me that there was a slight delay due to a derailment but that we would only be around twenty minutes late. Arriving at the station I was met by a relative who had kindly offered to collect me. He asked if I had enjoyed myself. I replied that I had, but that nothing exciting had happened. How little he knew!

End

BBC Broadcast

British Broadcasting Corporation

Room 7021

Television Centre

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Minicom 0181 [REDACTED]

From Equal Opportunities, Broadcast

The Diversity Database

Would you like to take part in BBC programmes?

The BBC is looking for people who would like to be part of a Diversity Database. We would like to hear from people who want to participate as possible contributors, contestants or members of studio audiences, or who have expertise which they are willing to share. **Please note that this is not an employment opportunity with the BBC, merely a chance to take part in our output.**

The information below tells you a bit more about the project. If you are interested, please complete the accompanying form and return it, plus any extra information which you would like included, to the address below.

What is the Diversity Database?

The Diversity Database has been developed by the BBC Broadcast Equality Unit with support from BBC Production. Its aim is to help programme makers reflect the full diversity of UK society by introducing a wide range of new faces and voices to them. It provides programme makers in BBC Broadcast and Production with a central resource of contributors and experts who have either a minority or specialist interest on mainstream issues or expertise in a minority or specialist field.

How it works

The contacts on the Database are all willing to take part in BBC programmes, perhaps as spokespersons or panel members, as the focus of a story or as members of a studio audience. To keep the information fully confidential, the Database is password-protected and only BBC programme makers have access to it. Guideline pages have also been prepared to help users. It was launched throughout the BBC last Autumn.

More contacts

We are adding to the Database all the time. At the moment we are especially interested in hearing from lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people - and from related organisations. Please pass on these details to any others who might be interested.

Do please join! Return your completed form to:

Pat Davers, Diversity Database

Room 4136

BBC Broadcasting House

Queen Margaret Drive

GLASGOW G12 8DG

Fax: 0141 [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]



within

The Head Gardener Sebastian Coe Health Club

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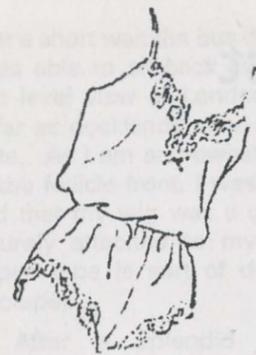
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Lingering in Lingerie,

Shillyshallying in Shoes,



and Meandering in Make-up...



I adore shopping.

It's probably one of my most feminine characteristics. However, to make it totally blissful I have to shop alone and it must be unhurried, whether I am actually looking for something in particular or just browsing. It goes without saying, I hope, that I mean "femme" shopping. The other sort can be fitted in at odd moments and those are not very often.

Except for the occasional trip up the West End at Christmas, where I take pleasure in going "en femme" - I do virtually all of my tranny purchasing dressed in the *straight* mode, as I find it more satisfying, and enjoy the remarks and responses accordingly. I visit all sorts of outlets, from the lower end of the market, to the upper, and never feel uncomfortable. I vary my attitude and approach according to the surroundings, from commiserating with the Indian trader in the market about trading conditions, to joking with the girls in *New Look*, *Mark One* and *Bay Trading* that they keep producing gorgeous little numbers that I *simply* must have and that they will have me penniless! With those in *Top Shop* and *Miss Selfridge* I tell them that they must hide all the size 14s when they see me coming; in department stores like *Allders*,

Debenhams and *Selfridges* I usually manage to have a laugh with at least some of the assistants. One of the girls in my local *Mark One* even tells me when they have something she thinks will fit me and is pretty sure what I will like in the *Sophie* range, which is supposed to be for young teenagers up to 14, but lots of bigger girls buy them too. After all, young girls are getting bigger, which I expect you have noticed, and no doubt manufacturers have also. I've even managed to have a lighthearted chat with several of those rather superior assistants in the designer salons in *Bond Street* and *South Audley Street* - not that I ever buy anything from them!

Geraldine, the *Elizabeth Arden* Consultant in my local *Boots*, is a gem and keeps me up-to-date with all the latest make-up news. We have long conversations, even if I'm not buying anything. I get all her family news and she wants to know what venues I've been to lately and if there are any photos. As if there would be!

I recently returned from four weeks abroad, which also meant five weeks of non-femininity. I had a sugaring appointment made for the day after my return so on said day I



trotted up to see *Martin* at *The Sugar Shop* in *Paddington*, and felt a lot better after the session. On from there to *Oxford Street*, and there the long weeks of torture were duly wiped out by a shopping spree. I went into *Clockhouse* and went wild. Yes, I know what you are going to say about *C&A*, and I don't care. I like lots of what *Clockhouse* produces and they have some super little strappy summer numbers in there. It was quiet at the time and this drop dead gorgeous little Asian girl assistant asked if I'd like a basket, as I seemed to be in "quantity mood". I agreed and she went off looking for one. In the end we both went on the hunt and I finally found the whole store's supply in the *Gent's Dept.* Typical men! We have a few laughs and when I finally decided that enough was enough I made my way to the counter duly laden. Now their baskets are a bit like a fishing keep net and tend to bounce up and down a bit so we had another laugh over that. What did I have? Now, will you promise not to tell? Well, it ended up as five strappy summer short dresses and five pairs of matching briefs. Yes, I know it was a bit extravagant but you cannot take it with you and we are only young once! This lovely check-out chick made the comment that I was certainly going to make someone really happy, and I

agreed. She was not really surprised when she heard they were all for me and said that she had noticed I had obviously enjoyed so much the choosing and decision making - not rushing or saying "that will do". She wished me lots of luck in wearing them all and hoped to see me again sometime. Things like that make it all worthwhile.

Recently in *Edmonton, Alberta*, I visited a lingerie shop called *Silk & Satin* and got a super reception there too - again, no pressure to buy or made to feel out of place. We chatted about styles and differences between *UK* and *North America*. I lingered among the displays, handling and admiring the items and settled on a lovely silky strappy chemise with a little floral pattern on the bodice. We discussed its merits and decided it could be a slip or a nightie or a dress. The assistant asked how I would wear it and I replied that for me it was definitely a dress and she wished me well with it. Did I have some photos to show her? What do you take me for ... of course I did! In the same shopping mall there was a shop called *Luv N' Stuff* which had some fun gear. If you do get to *Edmonton* then the mall is worth a

visit - and you must visit "The Dragon". No, it's not a demon shop assistant, but a "real" dragon which spits fire. Yes I know it's hammy, but very impressive. I'm not really a mall person but when abroad one does different things. No? Well, I do.

In *Vancouver* it's "La Vie en Rose" on *Robson* for lingerie and "Sirens" and "Bryans" in the *Pacific Mall* for those sexy little dresses. I don't know who wears them in *Western Canada*, as girls of all ages always seem to wear jeans, slacks and trouser suits. When it's hot they go in shorts (and some really shouldn't). Hardly a mini or a dress of any sorts to be seen on the streets, but they are there in the shops. Perhaps plane loads of *UK* trannies go over on shopping trips.

I have only one problem with clothes shopping. I need loads more wardrobe space and several more chests of drawers. Roll on the big *Ernie* win, or the *Lottery*, or the *Pools*. I suppose it could be a rich millionaire who wants a tranny companion, but no doubt there would be strings attached. He'd probably want to borrow my clothes!

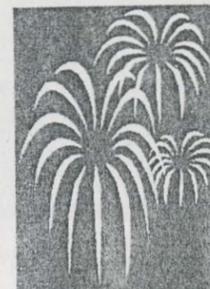
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Telephone 01606 [redacted] for details



EUROFANTASIA 2000 - update

As reported in the Summer Issue of the *Tartan Skirt*, *Holland* will be the host country for the next *Eurofantasia* to be held in the *Millennium*. The dates have been confirmed as 28th August to 4th September. The decision has also been made to hold it in *Amstel*.

So just what is *Eurofantasia*? It's reckoned to be the biggest transgender event in *Europe*. A week of meeting like-minded people, having fun and making new friends. There are also talks, lectures and workshops on different topics of interest to the transgender community and arranged visits to places of interest.

Further information can be obtained from *Janett Scott* of the *Beaumont Society* at 01582- [redacted]. A deposit of £30 is required when booking and all payments are required in *Dutch Guilders*. This can be arranged through your bank or by *International Money Order*.

To make your way there, either book a flight to *Schiphol Airport*, take the train to *Amstel* and then a taxi to the hotel. Or, take a car ferry to *Ostend, Calais* or *Rotterdam Europort* and drive from there to *Amstel*.

Places are already filling up so you may be well advised to think about booking soon. See you there!

Ruth Stewart

Our Forgotten History

BATTAKES AND THE PLEBEIAN TRIBUNE

Based on an account recorded in *Cybele and Attis: The Myth and the Cult* by M. J. Vermaseren. (pg. 99), citing ancient historians Diodorus Siculus and Plutarch.

Laura Darlene Lansberry

A hundred years after the arrival of the Goddess Cybele in Italy, during the rule of Marius (103 B.C.E.), Battakes, Archigalla ('male' high priestess) set out for Rome. The Holy City of Pessinus was being vandalized by small gangs of marauding barbarians and Battakes hoped to secure assistance in dealing with this problem from (he)r Roman patrons.

Giving (he)r address from the rostra in the Roman Senate, Battakes was dressed in (he)r finest raiment. (S)he wore a long red stola embroidered with golden flowers, precious gems adorned (he)r fingers, and around (he)r neck hung a necklace accommodating a temple-shaped amulet etched with images of Cybele standing between Hermes and Zeus; a head taller than they, the Goddess was blessing them. Also Battakes wore a golden crown, in appearance nearly identical to the miter bishops would wear in a future time. Exquisitely waved, (he)r hair framed (he)r delicately painted face. The audience was deeply impressed by (he)r oriental splendor.

As (s)he spoke (he)r words were sonorous and as Rome was engaged in another of its



interminable wars Battakes promised. "In the Punic wars the Goddess was the benefactor of Rome. Her presence was with every soldier, strengthening their arms, multiplying their strength, and thus insuring victory. Still Cybele rides in every chariot, carries every arrow to its target, directs every sword to deadly cause. Rome will be victorious and reign supreme once more and, until Rome deserts the Goddess, she will reign above all other nations." The senators hastened to promise yet another temple to Cybele pledging that the Mother



of the Gods would always have a home in Rome.

Battakes answered, "In the passage of time Rome will turn her face away from Magna Mater, and when she does it will signal the fall of the Roman State. Even now there are

factions besieging the Mother's Holy City of Pessinus. We ask that legions be sent to safeguard the sacred precincts against plunder and terror by those who defame our practices."

A certain plebeian tribune, by name A. Pompeius, with a small band of his friends, raised a cry against Battakes. Approaching (he)r they jeered at the resplendent figure of Battakes. "You are repugnant to us. You lay with other men. You adorn yourselves as women in the guise of priestesses. You're no more than beggars, scavenging from the gain of others: giving nothing in return. We would banish all of you from Rome. Begone, get yourself from this place before we do you harm."

"I will go," (s)he answered, "but the Goddess will cast her gaze on you. You will come to regret

the words you spoke this day."

Battakes left the rostra and returned to (he)r apartments in the temple on the Palatine. Then it came to pass, on the following day, that A. Pompeius took to his bed with a fever. A few days later he was dead.

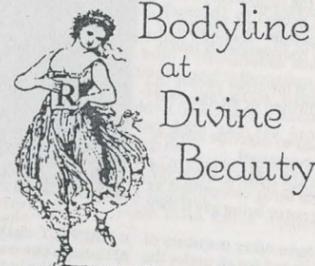
In (he)r ceremonial departure speech Battakes spoke of a new wind, ugly and cruel, blowing across the land. As (s)he spoke the awe and respect of the audience was immense. "Today the Goddess walks in our hearts and Rome is supreme. Someday, too soon, Rome will withdraw her love from the Great Mother. She will cast aspersions on her priestesses, rebuking and reproaching us. In that day a new god shall ascend over Rome, a wrathful god, a god of hate and war, a god who demands the end of

our Lady of Dindymus and all who follow her. Our temples will be burned, we will be cast out, murdered in our beds and then, Rome too will fall. Her splendor shall turn to ashes."

Then, (he)r mission accomplished, Battakes took (he)r leave returning to (he)r responsibilities in Pessinus.

Two years later, Roman law changed to allow certain classes of citizens, if they should desire, to transform themselves in the manner of oriental Gallae. One hundred and forty years later, Claudius removed all restrictions on Roman citizens wishing to dedicate themselves to the service of Cybele. And then, later still, came the "one true" God, and his followers who destroyed everything that stood in their path.

End



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THE COURIER DELIVERS

ACROSS THE GREAT DIVIDE

Support group needs new centre to help people like Andrea



CATH and Andrea relax in their garden. The couple are key members of the West Lothian Transgender Support group.

WHEN John Kerr has friends round for coffee it's with a difference.

For the 39-year-old caretaker is also the leader of the West Lothian Transgender Support Group.

For two Saturdays of every month he opens his home to its 40 members who come along and discuss their situations and socialise with each other.

Now the group is growing so fast, John is looking for a location to open the first transgender drop-in centre in West Lothian.

John said: "I started the support group nearly three years ago when I realised that there was a need for a good help group for transvestites and transsexuals.

"All the other meetings were very formal and only lasted for an hour. Mine is in my home in Livingston and starts early in the evening and very often goes on until well into the morning.

"But now the only problem is space. I have more than 40 members of the group not to mention the people who correspond — we really need a bigger location which could ideally provide a drop-in type situation."

The group has recently been awarded with a grant for £300 from West Lothian Council to buy publicity materials and to help promote the support it offers.

John added: "It's a difficult subject to approach because most people can't see past the image of men in women's clothing but being transgender is much more than that.

"We want to provide a service for other people in our situation without being ridiculed or attacked for the way we feel."

The term transgender is used to describe anyone who is either transvestite or transsexual.

John said: "We encourage the use of the word transgender rather than people being categorised as being a transvestite if they are not or being gay if they are transsexual.

"I am a transvestite and I have other members of the group who are transsexuals but we all prefer the name transgender." John's name has been changed to protect his identity.

The number to call for more information on the West Lothian Transgender Support Group is 07808 564 626.

The group is open to transsexuals, transvestites and their friends and family.

Report by Lindsay Gould



HAPPILY cutting their wedding cake are Andrea and Cath Brown. Although the couple have been married for more than 10 years the pair renewed their vows during one of the meetings of the West Lothian Transgender Support Group.

Cross-gender group grant

A SUPPORT group for transvestites and transsexuals received a £300 grant from West Lothian Council.

West Lothian Transgender Support Group applied for the money to help produce stationery and publicity material.

The organisation, which also aims to provide a support framework for family and friends of transsexuals and transvestites, is seeking additional funding from various sources in a bid to expand its services.

One possible venture the group is looking into is establishing a drop-in centre in West Lothian.

It's All Happening In Livingston!

If you live and cross dress in West Lothian, you will surely be aware of efforts being made to establish a drop-in centre for the local transgender community. Donna Jamieson who facilitates the West Lothian Transgender Support Group has been working tirelessly to raise funding and find premises to make this a reality.

Recently, she has been successful in locating suitable premises within Crofthead Community Education Centre, thanks to West Lothian Council who have also agreed to cover the cost of renting this. The centre opened for the first time on 28th September and will stay open for two days each week. Donna hopes to organise an open day with various stalls,

workshops around such issues of interest to the transgender community as Equal Opportunities and policing, and the possible participation of healthcare professions. The Group has also placed a grant application to the West Lothian Health Fund Committee at St. John's Hospital for a further £5,000. Details of the progress made with this venture will be posted in the Tartan Skirt as they become available.

Anyone wishing to speak to Donna about this or other transgender matters should contact the group on their new telephone number 0780-8564626.

Julia Gordon

We are real people too

ANDREA Brown has been attending the West Lothian Transgender Support Group for two years.

She is one of its main spokeswomen and is keen to have her story told in a bid to make people more aware of transgender issues. Here, in her own words, is Andrea's story.

I HAVE been going along to John's group since not long after it first started.

I'm transsexual and I'm waiting for my operation at the moment. The group has been a tremendous source of support and information for me. There are times when I wouldn't have made it through without John and the group helping me.

Now I'm glad to say that I can be of some help to other people in my position.

I was male, called Andrew,

but always knew how uncomfortable I felt. At first I started experimenting with cross-dressing but the more I heard about being transsexual the more I realised that I was a woman.

I know it sounds clichéd but it was a case of a woman trapped in a man's body.

I underwent therapy — which you have to do — before I could be considered for a sex-change operation. So currently although I have a new passport with Andrea on it and have officially changed my name I'm still technically a male,

although the hormone treatment has meant that I'm developing into a woman already and without going into too much detail, none of the male parts function anymore.

Probably the part that most people find hardest to deal with when I tell them about my life is

the fact that I'm married.

I'm not going to lie about it. Cath did have a really tough time coming to terms with my decision to change sex but I told her that I still loved her and want to stay married and that if it was going to change things then I wouldn't go ahead with it.

Thankfully she understands now and we still love each other as much as ever. In fact we actually renewed our marriage vows recently and my 17-year-old daughter, from a previous marriage, was there too.

And although I don't have too much contact with my own family now, Cath's family have been great.

When her dad asked her recently if she was happy, she said yes, and that she and I were living as lesbians.

Her parents completely accepted that and have made

me very welcome as their daughter-in-law.

I suppose what I really want to say is that transsexuals and transvestites are real people too. For some reason, although it is becoming more acceptable to be gay, transgenderism is still a taboo subject.

It is a very hard, upsetting and physically draining process to go through when you come to the realisation that you are not the sex you should be and instead of being ridiculed, we need support.

That's why I'm saying all this. Latest figures released state that around 20 per cent of the UK population, that's one in five people, are transgender.

It's about time the stigma was removed and help was given.

Let's hope West Lothian does get its own drop-in centre.

My Love To Thee I Pledge..

Andrea approached me a while back to see if Irene, my wife, and myself would be agreeable to them holding a small ceremony at my home to renew their vows to one another. Of course we were totally delighted to consent to this.

It was decided to invite a total of 34 people, members of the group, and others from further afield, as well as Andrea and Cath's family and friends. Twenty four in all managed to make it along on Saturday, 7th August, and the day was made even more special by the fact that Andrea's Daughter, Elle, who was visiting at the time and who had just been told of Andrea's situation, decided to extend her visit to take in the ceremony.

With family and friends gathered in our living room, and Elle playing the part of bridesmaid, Irene from the Edinburgh group, together with myself, conducted the ceremony. There was much emotion and feeling from everyone in the room. One of the guests, through a flood of tears, said how much she really admired Andrea and Cath for what they were doing, standing by each other and professing their love, and that in her opinion this was real love.

Everone had such a great time, plenty of fizz, loads of food and much dancing into the wee small hours of the morning.

Donna

A DAY IN THE LIFE...

Sheila Currie

Some weeks ago, in August, I was lying in a hospital, looking out across the River Thames towards the glossy lights of the City of London. Recovering from surgery and tethered to the bed by tubes and weakness. Tired but not sore. Lucid, once I'd got off the morphine, considering my life and wanting to get home.

A quiet time to think amongst the scurrying of daily workers and the tourist boats, listening for changes in my head and trying to feel for changes down below amongst the tubes and padding. How did I feel? Was I different?

I've had most of my life to get used to the sense of wrongness and to think about the possibility of this moment. I've had two plus years to learn the new me taking shape within the public eye, and just the awkwardness of seeing wrong bits and the knowledge that the little stones were pouring testosterone unwanted through my system that the purple pills were working hard against.

I had a long time to get used to the idea of surgery as a cutting-away of unwanted parts. Intellectually and emotionally I knew I didn't want the dangly bits, but it is often easier to identify that which you don't want than to know exactly what you *do* want. Sometimes you have to clear away the old before the new can be more clearly seen...

So I approached first sight of my new 'arrangements' with some caution. Would I be disappointed? Would I think, "What have I done?" Would I weep sweet tears of happiness and gratitude? Would I feel strong and empowered or would I just feel sick?

What I was faced with, in my make-up mirror, what I saw was not the normal female parts. Swollen, held apart by stitching, tubed by catheter, surrounded by clear-felled

stubble hillsides where before was curly jungle. So transition is not a simple one from working male parts (however despised or unwanted) and wounded female bits. But it was a lovely feeling, lying on my tummy, feeling that flatness where before were lumps and bumps; knowing that it's done and I will never be the same again....

...now weeks later, home. To friends and flowers and offers of housework. Regular dilations, douches, salty baths and care when sitting down on hard seats. And every day it just seems natural and not at all a major act. Sometimes I'm so busy I forget I've had it done, which may seem odd, as how it's been a big event to plan for in this year's calendar. But it never was the most important thing in my life.

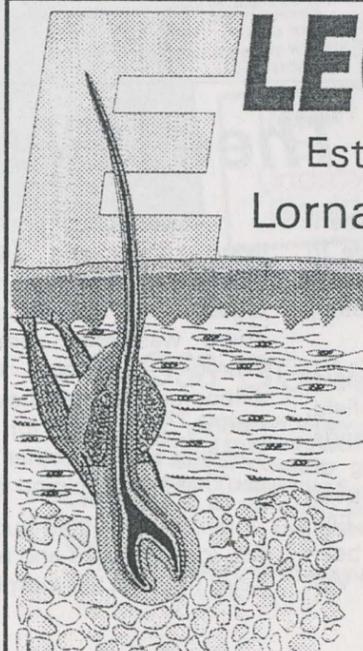
For me, it's been the easiest of transitions - I don't know why I've had it easy. Partly, my attitude perhaps. The world too has moved some way forward since the days of scary stories as the norm. The only

scary time has been the first big moment when I dropped the heavy letter to my GP through the post-box mouth and stepped across that threshold from private knowledge into public action. That was four years ago but it feels more like a hectic week. So much has happened, but the time it took was right - for me, for all my friends, my family, my work, to get adjusted to the future.

And now the future? No more tight and horrid stretchy pants to hide it all away. A sense of glow, of rightness. An empowerment that comes from hearing and obeying gut-felt knowledge. Being able to take my son swimming, to make the right sounds when I pee, feeling free to try on clothes in shops. Not worrying, because the conflict's gone.

No huge dramas then, but just a perfect sense of easy breaths, of small steps taken well, of gentle balance...

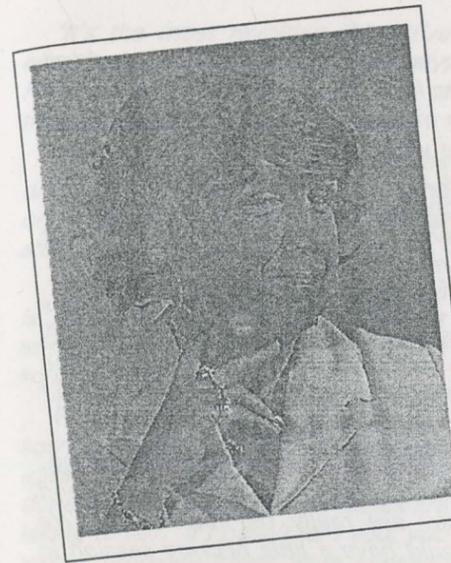
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Hair-Dresser by Alexandrina

door.

They sat in a back room, boxes stacked neatly on the floor and an aroma of twenty different hair conditioners pervading the atmosphere.

Miss Rebecca McAlistair, proprietor of *Chic Marcel's* hair saloon, rubbed the palms of her hands together as she eyed the male candidate. 'Larry Nicol, did you say?' She did not wait on a reply. 'I know that we are not allowed to discriminate on the grounds of sex these days, but I must say that I do prefer girl assistants. Our lady customers are rather staid....' She corrected herself quickly. '...rather conservative in their outlook.'

Larry bit his lip anxiously. Dare he say it? Would the women - quite a sophisticated and good-looking one have a seizure if he admitted to it? He tried to bring the subject up gradually.

'I'm really very keen to start in hairdressing, Miss McAlistair. Say I were ... er ... to pretend to be a girl, would that make a difference?'

'Pretend? How could you pretend that?'

'Maybe I could dress as a girl ... wear a wig ... you know.' His voice trailed away.

The proprietress sat silent for a few minutes. Her eyes narrowed. 'Now, that might be ... a possibility.' She got up, took out three of the boxes and opened one of them. She produced a blonde wig. 'Try this on.'

Larry could not believe his luck. He fumbled with the wig as if he had never worn one before. Miss McAlistair helped him, stood back and appraised the effect. She sighed. 'You could get away with it in appearance, but how about your voice.'

That was not a question to which she expected an answer. She asked him to repeat several phrases, such

as: *Would Madame like a conditioner?* Then she sat silent for several more nerve-racking minutes for Larry.

'Very well,' she said finally. 'I shall give you a try. You will be Lorraine and you will provide your own clothes - female ones. I shall lend you this wig ... LEND IT, remember.'

Larry was so delighted that he almost forgot to ask about wages. When she told him he knew why there had not been a rush of applicants at the door. At least he would have no problem in supplying female clothing. He could even have supplied his own wig.

The woman smiled, apparently pleased at his acceptance of the onerous conditions. 'We are all very friendly at *Chic Marcel's*. I am Rebecca and we shall call you Lorraine, of course.'

'Of course ... Rebecca.'

'And you will have to practise your speaking before Monday. Try to put on a slight French accent and that may disguise your male voice.'

'Yes, madame.'

The woman nodded her head in contentment, two finger tips from her hands placed together on her chin.

As Larry walked back to his small flat, he felt both excitement and concern in a stomach-churning mixture. He would be working alongside that stunning girl and he would be dressed in favourite attire.

But he had never ventured out of the closet before, not even once. Now he was being thrown in at the deep end. Well, he conjectured, maybe it's better that way. Now I shall just have to go out dressed. There's no going back now.

Lorraine arrived and was introduced to the other assistants. They were Sharon Thomson, rather a sour faced character, and Chloe

Gordon, the source of Lorraine's fascination.

Chloe gave a brief *Hiya*, then returned to preparing her workplace for the first customer. Sharon looked at the new apprentice more critically. Lorraine felt she had been rumbled already.

Rebecca gave the new girl instructions on washing hair, sweeping the floor and other dogsbody duties. Lorraine was happy for she could now be close to Chloe. That girl was apparently not long out of her own apprenticeship. She smiled sweetly at Lorraine while explaining about shampoos and Lorraine was in wonderland.

In fact, the new girl was so entranced by Chloe's proximity that she made a number of mistakes which brought the wrath of Sharon Thomson upon her. Sharon was an assistant of many years' experience - and stood no nonsense from a young apprentice. The new girl would have to be taught how to behave in a high class establishment - quickly and positively.

Lorraine was not too upset by Sharon's sharp tongue nor the admonitions of the boss, Rebecca McAlister. She was too happy to be there with Chloe and, of course, dressed in a trim sweater and skirt with wig as supplied by the salon. How would she be able to have a little time with Chloe on her own? The opportunity came at lunch break.

Chic Marcel's did not close for lunch despite the majority of customers coming by appointment. Miss McAlister felt that it was better for business to keep open. So the staff staggered the lunch hour. Lorraine was worried. As both she and Chloe were juniors she thought she might be paired with either Rebecca or Sharon. Fortunately, those two had become accustomed to going for lunch late; if they were a minute or two returning after two o'clock it didn't matter too much as Chloe was there.

So Lorraine was allowed to go off at 12 o'clock along with Chloe.

'I've brought sandwiches,' said Chloe. 'Fancy going down to the beach for our snack?'

Fancy going to the beach? Lorraine was ecstatic. She had not brought a packed lunch, not knowing what

would happen at lunchtime, but now dashed into a bakers for a carry-out.

The sun shone brightly casting a glorious shimmer on the water and making Lorraine feel quite romantic. Pity I'm dressed, she thought. I can hardly declare my affection or she'll think I'm lesbian.

'You speak with a bit of a French accent,' said Chloe.

Lorraine had not thought out how she would deal with such questions. 'Yes, my mother was French,' she blurted out, then realised she was getting deeper into hot water. I should tell the truth. She munched into her tuna-filled roll and thought about it.

But being a girl means that I can go with Chloe for lunch. No problem. She might be put off with a fellow. Larry would have made her shy.

'You don't want to worry too much about Sharon,' said Chloe, taking a swig of Coke from a bottle. 'She's always a bit narky, especially on a Monday morning. She was married, but her husband left her after just a couple of years.'

'Gosh, that must have been terrible for her.'

'Yes, and she's never forgiven him since. In fact she thinks all men are rats.' Chloe pushed her long black hair away from her eyes as the wind blew it about. 'Just as well you're not a lad or she would have made life hell for you.'

Lorraine gulped.

They ate the remainder of their lunch in silence, Lorraine snatching glances at the adorable creature by her side. She would put up with a lot of bickering from Sharon just to have an hour with Chloe.

'Do you ... er ... have a boyfriend, Chloe?'

'Not really. There's a hunk who keeps pestering me, wanting to take me out to the pub and so on, but it's not my scene.' She kicked a pebble with her shoe to show her indifference to the hunk. 'How about you?'

'Oh, I ... er ... haven't got ... anyone on the go just now. What do you like yourself? You know, what would you like a fellow to do if he asked you out?'

'That's easy. I'd like him to take me down here and we would walk hand in hand in the moonlight. Then we could

go to a cafe for coffee and we could sit and look into each other's eyes. Then he might come back to my house and we would listen to music. You know the sort - slow, romantic stuff.' Chloe sighed at the thought. 'But blokes never seem to be interested in the romantic side.'

Lorraine sighed in unison. 'That's just what I would like too, Chloe.' A nasty thought crossed her mind. 'You said you would take him back to your house. Would you ... you know ...'

'Stay the night?' Chloe laughed. 'No way, gal I live with my parents and they are really old fashioned. We could have a little necking session in the lounge but my father would throw him out before 11. You wouldn't let a fella sleep with you, would you?'

'No way, gal,' Lorraine answered truthfully.

Lorraine settled into the routine well and revelled in being able to dress each day. She had only a small range of garments, all acquired from charity shops, as she had had no job before starting work at *Chic Marcel's*. Each day she accompanied Chloe down to the beach for their snack lunch and they became increasingly friendly. Chloe would confide some of her 'intimate secrets' which made Lorraine anxious. She found that she had to be careful or she would give away her true identity.

Both she and Rebecca McAlister should have realised that the pretence could not last. On Friday, after she had been a week at the salon, Lorraine came back from lunch with Chloe. They could hear Rebecca and Sharon talking in raised voices, with obviously no customer in the shop.

'I think it's absolutely disgusting,' shouted Sharon. 'You should have told me, Rebecca, long before this.'

Rebecca muttered some reply as the two entered cautiously.

'Well, you had better tell Cloe,' said Sharon through clenched teeth.

It only took the proprietress of the salon a few minutes to 'out' Lorraine. The girl looked down at the floor, ashamed at the revelation and worried about Sharon's seething attitude.

'Well, you certainly fooled me,' said Chloe.

'It's the most revolting thing I've ever heard,' hissed Sharon. 'Really, Rebecca, you'll have to get rid of ... of this thing.'

Rebecca sighed. 'That may be difficult, now that I've taken Lorraine on. Sex discrimination, and all that stuff.'

'Well either he, she ... or whatever it is ... goes, or I go.' Sharon crossed her arms defiantly, looking Rebecca square in the eyes.

Rebecca sank down on a chair. 'I'm sorry, Sharon, I don't want to cause an upset in the salon. But Lorraine has done well this week and our ladies are taking to her. If I hadn't told you, you would probably never have guessed that Lorraine was really a boy.'

Chloe had been standing quietly in a corner while the others fought it out. Now she coughed to gain attention. 'Why don't we think about it over the weekend?' She turned and smiled to Lorraine whose heart missed a beat.

Wow! She is gorgeous! thought Lorraine for the hundredth time.

'I'm not working beside a queer,' Sharon spat. She went over to the rack, picked her coat and handbag off it and marched out the door.

Lorraine walked over to Rebecca and put her hand on Rebecca's shoulder. 'I'm sorry, Miss McAlister.

It would be better for me to go. I know you rely a lot on Sharon.'

Rebecca looked up at Lorraine, worry creasing her forehead. 'She is indeed a very good hairdresser, my dear, but she does cause a lot of upset at times.' She glanced over to Chloe.

'Yes, Rebecca,' agreed Chloe. 'We've lost more than one customer through her tantrums.'

'Perhaps this has been for the best, Chloe. And I won't need to pay Sharon's wages if she's gone.'

The conversation was interrupted by the arrival of a customer.

'Good afternoon, Mrs Simmons,' said Rebecca as if everything at *Chic Marcel's* was sweetness and light. 'Come now, girls, back to work.'

Chloe attended to Mrs Simmons while Lorraine got on with her cleaning tasks.

At closing time Rebecca was unusually quiet. 'Have a good weekend ... girls.'

They both went out with a mumbled, 'Thanks. Same to you. See you Monday.'

Chloe and Lorraine felt awkward as they walked away from the salon. 'You don't think the same as Sharon, do you, Chloe?'

Chloe screwed her mouth to the side. 'Not really. But I think you did deceive me, asking me about boyfriends and so on.'

'I'm sorry.' Lorraine was miserable. Her love of Chloe made her try desperately to compensate for her deception. 'Maybe I could take you out for a meal ... or something.' Her voice trailed as she saw Chloe screw her face up again.

'I know you pass as a girl pretty well, Lorraine. But I don't know if I could go out with a ...'

'Pervert?'

'Oh, I know you're not perverted, Lorraine. But I wonder what people would say if they saw me going out with a fellow who was not a fellow at all ... and looked like my sister.'

'We got on well when we had our lunches together. Did you think of me as a pal then?'

Chloe sighed. 'I suppose I did.'

'Well, surely we could be good pals. Does it really matter how I dress?'

'Perhaps not, but I don't know if I'm with a bloke or a female.'

'Does it matter ... if we like each other?' Lorraine looked askance at her companion. 'You do ... like me, don't you?'

'Yes, I do like you, Lorraine.'

They walked on for a few more yards until they came to the corner where their ways separated.

'Would you like to meet Larry?' Lorraine asked shyly.

'OK.'

'How about if Larry came round this evening and asked you to walk with him down to the beach so that you and he could see the moonlight on the water?'

Chloe smiled. 'OK.'

'Right. I'll come round to your house about 7.'

'OK. See you ... I mean, I'll see Larry ... then.'

She turned and walked up the slope. Lorraine stood and watched her go, admiring again her shapely legs. She gave a sigh of contentment and her step was brisk as her stilettoes clicked merrily on the paving slabs.

End

DRUGS BUST!



Smuggler Hector Pirri, 35, was arrested after trying to walk through customs at Glasgow Airport with two balloons full of cocaine. Mr. Pirri put the drug into balloons, disguised himself as a woman, and wore the balloons as breasts. 'Once they were covered they were extremely realistic,' he enthused.

Initially all went well, with the sultry smuggler being waived through customs without a second look. Unfortunately, however, a sniffer dog got a whiff of his bosoms. Leaping up it bit into one of them and caused it to explode in a big puff of powder. 'From now on we shall be forced to feel all suspicious breasts,' smirked one customs officer.



Healing Yourself

Listen to peoples' conversations and you will find them full of anecdotes about how awful their lives are; usually the topics will range from their illnesses, to the terrible things that have befallen them. The following information does not set out to devalue the experiences people have had but seeks to comment on the fact that if all we ever do is talk about our hurts and wounds, we help each other to stay stuck. In other words, we never give ourselves a chance to heal and then we wonder "why me?"

So why do people engage in such practice? What is it that keeps them stuck? Well, first and foremost, they are unwilling, or feel unable, to forgive – themselves or others. They define their life by their wounds and believe that illness is a long and painful process – even though they may protest otherwise.

They also hold some pretty limiting beliefs, though are unlikely to be aware of them. For example,

THEY BELIEVE...

- serious illness cannot be fully healed
- only chemical medicine has the answers
- doctors know best – (they don't, they only know what they only know!)
- illness is the result of things others have done to them – it's all the other's fault
- they had nothing to do with the creation of the illness
- they are being punished for something they did wrong
- turning to therapy means admitting to being inadequate
- any illness has nothing to do with their emotions or psychological state
- doing a deal with God is essential
- to be healthy means to be alone – once I'm well I have nothing to talk about
- to feel pain means to be destroyed by it – pain is a sign of healing
- illness is caused by negativity
- true change is not possible

THEY ALSO BELIEVE...

- illness is the result of negativity – but this creates in them a sense of them being wrong
- illness must be down to karma – I deserved it
- allopathic medicine negates the power and effectiveness of holistic medicine
- meditation and nutrition are enough to help heal
- illness must be rooted in childhood because childhood was so painful

ANOTHER MODEL SAYS THE REASONS WE DON'T HEAL ARE DOWN TO OUR

- laziness
- ignorance
- lack of self responsibility

Foremost, **force yourself to forgive** - it is only *you* that is getting hurt, whilst those you need to forgive are getting on with their lives, probably having a fantastic time. The word **force** is significant!

Re-define what you mean by healing - to most people it means being 'perfectly healed'. Healing is about day-to-day mindfulness and right action over what ails you.

Accept the situation and work with it - stop asking "Why me?" - that just keeps you stuck.

Ask yourself rather "Why am I here? What is my life's purpose?"

Set goals, dreams, aspirations - anything unrelated to the dis-ease.

Except for perhaps the death of a relative, **tell only three people about your dis-ease** (once each)

and *stop going on about it*. The more energy you give it, the more it will stay with you.

Come into the present moment - don't put energy into your wounds by thinking about them, by focussing on what may have caused them, by being in the past or fretting about the future.

DEVELOP A HEALTHY BELIEF SYSTEM AROUND HEALING

Your healing is your responsibility – and no one else's.

You are part of a Universal system of life and all that *IS* life, supports life.

There may be a symbolic meaning in your illness, a suggestion that you need to slow down, change direction, etc. Think of your illness as a metaphor.

Healing is a process, a journey - it is not a fixed perfect point in time when you can say "I've ticked the box and that's it!"

Your spirit is stronger than your physical body – mind over matter *does* work.

There are lessons you need to learn as you travel through your healing journey.

Your illness may be a way of receiving a new spiritual direction.

What matters is not the past but the choices you give yourself today – there are no wrong choices.

Accept that you are constantly receiving guidance towards the meaning and purpose of life – but is your television set turned on and tuned in to receive the guidance!

Time is an illusion and has no power in the healing process. Neither does age.

Learn to say "no" – manage your time differently.

Ask yourself regularly, "Am I investing my time in the people and things that matter most to me, both for healing and for living a meaningful life?"

Convert the knowledge about healing into action – it is a present time function.

Develop will power – you'll need it.

Cultivate a practice of grace and gratitude.

Healing is about living *with*, rather than always solving.

Create a new vocabulary of healing for yourself, rather than negativity, wounds and hurts.

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PHENOMENAL WOMAN

by Maya Angelou



Pretty women wonder where my secret lies
I'm not cute or built to suit a model's fashion size
But when I start to tell them, they think I'm telling lies.
I say,
It's in the reach of my arms, The span of my hips
The stride of my steps, The curl of my lips.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally
Phenomenal woman, that's me.

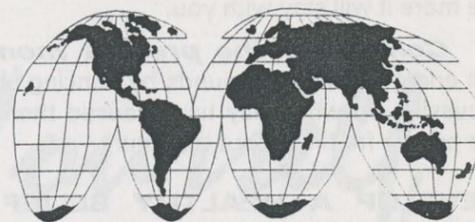
I walk into a room just as cool as you please
And to a man the fellows stand or fall down on their knees
Then they swarm around me, a hive of honey bees.
I say,
It's the fire in my eyes and the flash of my teeth
The swing of my waist and the joy in my feet.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally
Phenomenal woman, that's me.

Men themselves have wondered what they see in me
They try so much but they can't touch my inner mystery.
When I try to show them they say they still can't see.
I say,
It's in the arch of my back, the sun of my smile
The ride of my breasts, the grace of my style.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally
Phenomenal woman, that's me.

Now you understand just why my head's not bowed
I don't shout or jump about or have to talk real loud
When you see me passing it ought to make you proud.
I say,
It's in the click of my heels, the bend of my hair
The palm of my hand, the need for my care.
Cause I'm a woman
Phenomenally
Phenomenal woman, that's me.

NEWS

From Around The World...



UNITED KINGDOM

Beastly Treatment For Beauty Student

While the reverend Dian Parry was working towards gender reassignment surgery, she had been attending a Health and Beauty course at Swansea College. After complaining that she was being treated differently from the other students, she found herself suspended by the college. "I was never allowed to practice my beauty tips on others, I always had to use my wife and never thought it was fair," she said. Swansea College denied staff had treated Dian differently. A spokesperson said, "The student was suspended for other reasons." Dian has written to the Welsh Office complaining about sex discrimination.

Reverend Parry informed his flock of his gender identity situation a year ago. His wife of 39 years Anita has been Dian's model during the beauty course. "She's been wonderful," says Dian, who says the hardest thing was telling the couple's three children about her decision to seek reassignment treatment.

Congratulations!

David Willis and Janeen Newham became man and wife on July 11th this year in a civil ceremony in Copenhagen's City Hall in Denmark. David's 14 year old daughter from a previous marriage was their bridesmaid. The Lincolnshire couple followed the ceremony with a quiet celebration at a nearby hotel.

Because David was born Danielle and Janeen was born John, in a UK ceremony David would have been

required to take Janeen to be his lawful wedded husband, and Janeen would have had to take David to be her lawful wedded wife! Their marriage is recognised, however, in this country under EU law since, according to the Danish wedding certificate, a man and a woman were wed. They had a private blessing in their local church after returning home.

Suspicious Death In Sheffield

Detecives are investigating the suspicious death of a transsexual in Sheffield. Officers were called to a flat in the early hours of July 30th where they found the body of what they first thought to be a woman, but now understand to be a transsexual. A man has been questioned in connection with the incident. Police were also trying to trace relatives of the victim, who was in her 50s and who has not yet been formally identified. One South Yorkshire officer described the investigation as "Extremely bizarre." A CID spokeman said, "We were alerted by a call from a member of the public. At this stage we are not sure exactly what has gone off."

Try, Try, Try Again!

Lynsay Watson of Kirkaldy in Fife, had been working as a student nurse at Dundee University's School of Nursing when it was discovered that she had been born a man. She was then told to undergo psychiatric treatment or leave.

In a letter from the Chief Executive of resources at the National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting it was explained that

"a person wishing to have gender details logged which did not match their birth certificate was required to make this known for the protection of the public." "Lynsay had not met this requirement." Lynsay said she had no alternative but to leave and is now considering taking legal action against the National Board for Nursing.

Suspended then sacked from her job in the British Transport Police two years ago, she saw a career in nursing as a fresh start. She is now considering going back to full-time education, but added, "I don't think I will ever have a career until the law in this country changes."

Sheffield Health Authority Backs Down

The decision has been taken by Sheffield Health Authority to review its policy of carrying out 'one or two' gender reassignment operations a year, in order to clear the backlog of transsexuals on its waiting lists. The action has been prompted by media interest following the outcry arising from the possible delay of 15 years for Krystyna Haywood to have her reassignment surgery.

The decision marks a major breakthrough for Ms. Haywood who has campaigned tirelessly for her own and other transsexuals' cases. She now hopes that her success will force the NHS to reconsider its policy on transsexuals on a national basis and end the long waiting times faced by many people.

Time, Gentlemen - Please!

A male to female transsexual who alleged she was barred from a public house in Manchester because she was



dressed as a woman, has won £2,500 compensation. Anne Ring, 56, whose case was backed by the Equal Opportunities Commission, had claimed she had been the victim of unlawful sex discrimination. Had the case gone to trial it would have tested whether the employment regulations relating to discrimination on the grounds of 'gender reassignment' that came into force in May, also cover the provision of goods and services. Miss Ring, who is undergoing treatment for gender dysphoria, brought her case against Keith Gardner, manager of the Kingsway in Manchester, and the brewers, Joseph Holt. She said she was pleased with the settlement but sorry the case had not gone to court to set a precedent. Another similar claim by Miss Ring against another pub is to be settled soon.

Police Act To Combat Homophobic Crime

Following the formation of the Racial and Violent Crimes Task Force in the wake of the bomb attack on the Admiral Duncan pub, Scotland yard is to set up another squad within this to fight homophobic crime in London. Senior police officers are understood to be alarmed at the level of anti-gay reaction that the bombing provoked. In the immediate aftermath of the attack in which three people died, the Stonewall switchboard was flooded

with abusive calls supporting the bombing. Leaders of the gay community met with top ranking police to discuss improving relations between the Met and the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities.

SPAIN

Archbishop Accepts Andalusian Action On Sex Changes

The Archbishop of Seville, Mgr. Carlos Amigo Vallejo, gave his support to the Government of Andalusia's decision to provide gender reassignment Surgery within it's Health service. He acknowledged the legitimacy of treatment for what he accepts as a 'disease'. The declaration by such an important official within the catholic Church is seen as going some way to providing moral support at a time when public opinion is being informed about the psychological, medical and surgical care of transsexuals.

ITALY

WORLD PRIDE to take place in Rome in 2000

The first WORLD PRIDE, a historic event, will take place in Rome from July 1-9, 2000. For the first time in 2000 years, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgendered and heterosexual people from around the world will march through the streets of Rome in peaceful celebration. Various cultural and political events are planned for the week and a Pride Park is to be specially created for this historic event. Measuring more than 10,000 square metres, it will provide a space for concerts, restaurants, parties, etc. with recreational facilities such as swimming pools, as well as fitness and sporting activities. A 'virtual Pride Park' will be available on the web shortly.

Imma Battaglia, a political activist and president of Circolo Mario Mieli said, "The lessons of history and politics drive us to pursue the battle to safeguard civil rights in the world."

We wish to continue the struggle to enable everyone around the world to express her/himself without oppression and repression as a result of one's sexual preferences, identity or orientation."

For additional information send an e-mail request to

AUSTRALIA

IOC Puts Sex Testing On Hold

The International Olympics Committee has backed down over plans to introduce controversial sex tests at next year's Games in Sydney following a revolt by athletes and the world's most powerful sporting federations. They threatened to disrupt preparations by boycotting the IOC's 'gender verification procedures' if mass screening were to be carried out. However, although sex testing will be suspended, the IOC has described the move as an 'experiment' with no guarantees that it will become a permanent arrangement. In addition, a 'flying squad' of specially-selected Olympic medical experts, including a team of gynaecologists, will be in Australia to target individual athletes if they are deemed suspicious.

HONOLULU

Canoeist Finds Herself Up The Creek Without A Paddle

When Lianne Taft, who describes herself as a transsexual woman, got involved in Hawaiian canoe racing and wanted to enter the State canoe competition, she was told her driver's license was not acceptable proof of her gender and she was asked to submit her birth certificate. Taft is reluctant to discuss her transsexual progress and claims that the new rule demanding the birth certificate will exclude her from participation in competitions.

Michael Tongg, president of the Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association commented, "By no means are we

saying that she cannot paddle, however, the association has received complaints about Taft." "I have a lot of women paddlers who say it's unfair for a man to paddle against women."

CANADA

Role Reversal For Prison Guard!

Though Claude-Marc Bardier is legally a man, he would rather serve his prison sentence amongst women. The moustached Bardier used to be a woman before officially changing his gender and name in 1988. Sentenced in August to 26 months detention, the disgraced prison guard was found guilty of terrorising colleagues by intimidation and assault so they would quit and he could get a full-time job. Judge Claude Melancon recommended that Bardier, who retains his female genitalia, be sent to a women's prison for his own safety.

A Bleeding Liberty!

An official of the Canadian Blood Services announced in Winnipeg that transsexuals are to be added to its list of groups who may not donate blood. Dr. Graham Sher, vice-president of medical, scientific and clinical management for the service said, "The selection process is gender specific. A lot of questions relate to one's sexual background. It's going to be difficult to screen [a transsexual] because they might give one answer based on their previous gender and a different answer based on their current gender."

The move followed the case of Holly Bertram who tried to donate blood in April. When she told the nurse she had recently had gender reassignment surgery, staff were unsure how to handle the situation and told her someone would get in touch. No one over did. Ms. Bertram, who had been giving blood for years, said Dr. Sher's decision was out-dated.

It's The Sort Of Thing That Gives Us Girls A Bad Name!

The so-called Unisex Bandit, the crossdresser suspected of 34 bank robberies in four Canadian provinces, pleaded guilty in Ontario in September this year to holding up Belleville's Bank of Nova Scotia. The arrest of transgender Christine White (also known as Anatoli Ivan Misura), 49, of Edmonton, Alberta, followed a dramatic car chase that reached speeds of 140mph. White's ability to change her gender presentation made her seem to vanish after leaving the crime scene and caused countless confused eyewitness reports.

MEXICA

Can't Be Both, Says Cardinal

A procession of gays, lesbians, transvestites and transsexuals has been organised for the end of September. It is proposed to march through Mexico City to the basilica of the virgin of Guadalupe, the country's Catholic patron saint. Cardinal Roberto Rivera of Mexico City's archbishop's office said, "To present this pilgrimage as part of one of many that are being organised across the world makes it clear that rather than an act of devotion this is a manipulative strategy."

TRINIDAD

Hell And Damnation Brigade Fail To Make Impact

Pastor Fred Whelps of Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kansas, and his followers staged a peaceful demonstration against Trinidad surgeon Dr. Stanley Biber. The Westboro group is known throughout the United States for its protests of anything and everything related to homosexual activity. It turned its attention this July to Trinidad because of Dr. Biber's interest in gender

reassignment surgery. Protesting in cordoned-off areas designated by the Trinidad Police Department, and carrying signs that called Dr. Biber "Dr. Sin", Whelps referred to Trinidad as the 'anteroom to Hell', 'the capital of transgenderism'. "Every fag in the world pines to be more of a woman," Phelps said. "It's a monstrous sin against God what Biber is doing... what fags are doing." Dr. Biber said earlier that he intended to ignore the Westboro Baptist Church protest and was encouraging everyone else to do the same. It seems the majority of the Trinidad community agreed.

UNITED STATES

San Francisco Police Officers' Contribution To Hate Crimes

A report by Community United Against Violence has shown that police officers were responsible for 38 of the 563 incidents reported against LGBT people in San Francisco in 1997. Of these, 15 were incidents reported by transgender folk. The apparent increase is being attributed to 'citizen complaints' and 'public safety issues', although police codes are clearly being breached. A spokesperson for the organisation said, "Fear of retaliation and prior bad experiences with social services and other non-profit making agencies means that TG/TS folk often do not report hate crimes."

Seattle Leading The Way In Gender Inclusiveness

Seattle has long banned discrimination in employment and services because of race, sexual orientation, religion and age. Now the same protection has been extended to the transgendered - those whose gender appearance does not reflect their birth sex and who may or may not have subsequently altered their bodies physically.

not have subsequently altered their bodies physically.

While 'transsexuals' and 'transvestites' were already covered by the city code because of inclusion within the sexual orientation clause, it was felt that people should be given additional protection from discrimination because of their 'gender identity'. It is hoped that the legislation will encourage people to become educated about gender identity.

The legislation will not, however, allow people to cross dress at work, or permit all genders to use the same toilets - employers will have the right to ask for documentation from a doctor or a healthcare professional that the person has assumed a different gender. It is unclear how many people locally will benefit from the expanded protection of rights, nor is the extent of gender identity discrimination known - "Most of it [the harassment and discrimination] has been unreported because people have been afraid," said City Councilwoman Tina Podlodowski.

KIA KO'd By A Single Complaint

A nationally-aired commercial was pulled after a single phone call and a follow-up letter from the New York-based Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD).

Here's the commercial's setup: Guy drives his KIA car all the way across the country, encountering downpours and other adverse conditions on the way. At the end of his journey, he's surprised to notice another man driving alongside him. The man is wearing a dress, and he blows our hero a kiss. Thus, notes the type at the bottom of the screen, the Korean-made car was able to endure "57 acts of nature ... and one freak of nature."

In a letter to Kia's US headquarters in Irvine, California, GLAAD's Executive Director Joan M. Garry told the company, "It seems pretty clear that labelling someone a 'freak' does more than just make a joke: it passes judgement, it perpetuates stereotypes, and in this case, it stigmatises an entire group of people. Transgender persons [those who want to, or have, changed genders] are among the most frequent victims of bias-motivated crimes."

Rick Weisehan, KIA's national ad manager said, "Our intent was never to malign anyone. We don't want to alienate any potential customer."

THAILAND

Teachers Told To Toe The Line

Continuing a worrying trend of repressive measures being introduced by the Thai Government against the expression of a traditional transgender element within its society, it has been announced by the Education Ministry that male students at the Rajabhat Institute, Thailand's system of teacher training colleges, will no longer be permitted to dress as women. This could affect as many as 50 male students who attend classes wearing skirts. The Education Minister Somsak Prisananatakul described them as 'sexually deviant' and

The contribution made by Press for Change News list is gratefully acknowledged by the Tartan Skirt.

The question is not, to whom do I talk, but who listens?

OF LOVE...

A human being is part of a whole, called by us the 'Universe', a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest - a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circles of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.

Albert Einstein
'Ideas and Opinions'

OF JOY...

The happiness which we receive from ourselves is greater than that which we obtain from our surroundings. The world in which a man lives shapes itself chiefly by the way in which he looks at it.

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860)
'The World as Will and Idea'



OF TRUTH...

The body has a mind of its own!

Deepak Chopra
'Quantum Healing'

ACCORDING TO A RECENT SURVEY IN SUNDAY BUSINESS MAGAZINE,
NINE OUT OF TEN MEN FANTASIZE ABOUT BEING A WOMAN!



A U U DAY AT THE RACES

Carolyn visits Royal Ascot



After attending most of the trannie events up and down the country, I finally managed to scrape together the money (and the courage) to take on the 'ultimate trannie challenge' - Royal Ascot!

For some years Linda [redacted], who provides a dressing service in London, has been organising an annual outing to this most prestigious meeting, so I contacted her and she told me there were still a few places left for the big day. I sent off my £140 pounds in March which left me plenty of time to get my outfit sorted. As it turned out, I needed it.

Ascot is all about hats, so I started from there. I looked at the very many hats now coming back into stores, but £150 for a decent one was out of the question. I therefore contacted a couple of hat hire companies, 'Chic Burnets' and 'Grass Hatters', both in Edinburgh. I decided on the former as the proprietrix, Mrs Grieve worked from home in the district of Colinton, less conspicuous. I arranged an appointment, letting her know I was a crossdresser, and went along one evening. She was most helpful and I eventually decided on a navy blue hat with a large self coloured bow. I paid the nominal deposit to reserve it for the 16th June and thought "that's the hat out of the way."

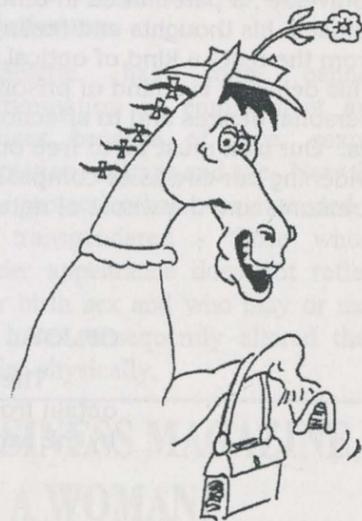
A few days later I was in B.H.S. when I saw a hat I thought would be even better! I bought it as it was at the sale price of £25, less than the cost of hiring the other hat. I quickly phoned Mrs Grieve, apologised for cancelling the hire, and she graciously returned my deposit.

It was now almost May and the need to come up with the rest of my wardrobe was becoming more pressing. I consulted with my designer cum dressmaker Loraine Walker at Hide and Sleek, eventually shopping in John Lewis for a blue/

grey crepe outfit which complimented the dark blue hat. Six or so fittings later everything was ready, including a hat with a wide self-coloured hat band and large bow, and a beautiful leather clutch bag. Thanks Loraine! All the above was completed the day before I 'trannied' down to London (£30 return from Edinburgh if you book well in advance).

I arrived in London in the afternoon and shopped for some accessories in and around Soho, in particular Berwick Street, which is lined with lots of interesting fabric and jewellery shops. 'Mini Diamonds' was my favourite. Then on to Wapping to meet my fellow mad hatters! I was really relieved when I had completed my journey as travelling with a large hat box and even larger rucksack doesn't win you many friends on the London Underground at rush hour!

I arrived at Linda's to find a party in full swing with lots of lovely food and drink. I got to know the other 'ladies' and sorted out my accommodation. Linda has a modern terraced house with three or so bedrooms. There were *seventeen* of us staying the night! Peace and quiet



eventually descended around 1.30 am.

Guests began to rise from 4.30 am and I managed to endure the racket until 6.30 am when competition for the bathroom, hot water and mirrors was at its fiercest. Pandemonium is an understatement. Eventually, somehow, all of us were showered, made up, dressed and breakfasted by 8.30 am. As we waited for the stretched limosine to whisk us off to Ascot we were joined by others, Vicki Lee (of the Trannie Guide), a freelance photographer and Paula Pure, a drag artist.

Soon clear of the West End traffic jams, we sped along the M4 to finally roll over the grassy surface of number 8 car park as staff stood with trays of champagne and Pimms to greet our arrival. Most welcome. We had a great position, with a mini marquee set up by Linda and her helpers before we arrived. Smoked salmon and caviar was quickly followed with more champagne as we were admired by the gathering picnickers.

We were greeted enthusiastically by all around and posed for lots of photographs with different people, constantly bombarded with questions. The weather was glorious - 28°C - too hot for many of us as we sought the shade of the awning for lunch. Poached salmon, lots of dishes with pasta and salads, etc., wine, beer and still more champagne flowing copiously.

The clicking of cameras stopped as the royal procession drew near. Along with thousands of other picnickers we made our way, by means of a tunnel under the race track, to the grandstands and paddock area. All the while I fielded questions and chatted with punters as we squeezed through the turnstiles and into the enclosure. They tell me there were horses - but I didn't see much of the racing as we were snapped and constantly complimented by the "You're much better at this than we are", etcetera, bathing in the welcome attention from all quarters. I do think we did manage to outshine some of the

ladies, possibly even some of the celebs we saw, including Buzz Aldrin and his wife, and Shirley Bassey.

Like the stingy Scot I am, I didn't bet on any horse. I eventually returned to the car park, 'skint', tired and emotional, to crash out in one of the limos. After a while, however, I did recover in time for the strawberries and cream, again with more champagne.

As Linda and her team prepared for the departure, I said my farewells to the friends I'd made amongst the race-goers and then it was goodbye to the colourful scene in time, hopefully, to miss the rush for London. Crawling slowly through the city, we found ourselves once more in Wapping, absolutely shattered! We soon recovered though, changing into something more comfortable for another party which went on into the evening, again with more than enough food and drink, as we recalled the events of the day at the races.

What a Day!

The Tartan Skirt Interview

Ruth Stewart talking to Yvonne Sinclair at the Royal Seabank Hotel in Blackpool.

March 1999.



Ruth Yvonne, you were a prominent figure in the 1980s, well known because of your connection with the London TV/TS Group. Can I begin by asking if you were responsible for getting this group up and running?

Yvonne Well, actually, I didn't start the group. The group had been started by a gay counselling organisation called London Friends in the early 70s. People met at 274 Upper Street in Islington, and I started going along in 1972 as a friend of a person who felt they were transsexual and who was seeking help. But there came a point when London Friends were considering discontinuing the group because of lack of support, so I said I would take over the organisation for a month and see what happened. I did this in October 1972 and kept going till July 1988. I suppose I didn't do too badly. Nobody elected me, it was just taken for granted that I'd be there every Friday, Saturday and Sunday – and I was.

In 1982 we decided to introduce membership because we knew that London Friends would be vacating the premises in 1984 and we thought that if we could build up a fund of money we could either rent, lease or buy premises that would allow the group to continue. We thought the only people who would be interested were those who lived within reach of London but we were amazed to get members from all over, even as far away as the Shetland Isles! That particular individual wanted to belong to something that existed to help others like them and this was the only

way they could find to do it.

Ruth As you were recruiting so many people from all around the country, what do you think the secret of your success was?

Yvonne At the time we introduced membership we were getting to be quite well known on the London scene and had good attendance because there was little else available for people. The first TV/TS helpline was instigated by us and was run by myself and two or three other individuals who could come in through the day to answer the phone. And we took pride in our ability to reply to letters by return when it took weeks, if not months, for a response elsewhere. Having meetings three days a week helped and when we moved to French Place, this Centre was open seven days a week plus three evenings.

Ruth I believe you had some celebrities coming along?

Yvonne A now famous comedian was one of the first members of the group. Then there was the transsexual magician, and I remember the television announcer I accompanied to Charing X Hospital whose hand I held during the days following her operation, and of course there were a number of other well known personalities who have chosen to remain hidden in respect of their cross dressing.

Ruth You were also involved with the Glad Rag, weren't you?

Yvonne The Glad Rag magazine

started off as two sheets of A4 paper typed up by a TV called Andrea. It had a little cartoon story at the end called '274 Squadron'. The characters belonged to a helicopter crew and were both transvestites. So many people wanted a copy we started to charge 10 pence. Two years later it was a little A4 magazine with articles people had written dealing with transvestism and transsexualism, as well as humour and fiction. Christine Jane Wilson became the editor and as she owned a little printer, she would also print them up. Unfortunately, she withdrew when it was decided to hand the printing over to someone else who was able to provide an improved format. I think Christine saw the Glad Rag as her baby and resented having it taken away from her. Anyway, not many people realise how the name itself came about. In the beginning we called it the 'Greater London Area Drag' and this gradually evolved into the GLAD rag! Regrettably, it went to the wall like so many other enterprises - like the group itself.

Ruth Christine, the editor, was the same person who drew the cartoons,

wasn't she?

Yvonne Yes. She produced a number of cartoons, wonderfully drawn, but she confessed to me that she couldn't draw a face without great big Mickey Mouse eyes. These became her 'trademark' and you'll still recognise her work in various other magazines today that she contributes to.

Ruth You mentioned that the group 'went to the wall'. What happened to bring that about?

Yvonne I'd have to say there was growing conflict over the way the group was being run. There were those who had different ideas about how

it should be managed and following a dispute with the committee I resigned in 1988. The group continued until 1993 before it eventually folded. For a while I took things easy and just enjoyed the social scene. In 1991 I started providing a cross dressing service and this lasted about two years. After the group closed down in 1993 I spent another three years trying to get another group off the ground but with the commercial scene offering so much more to people, it never gained enough support to keep it going.

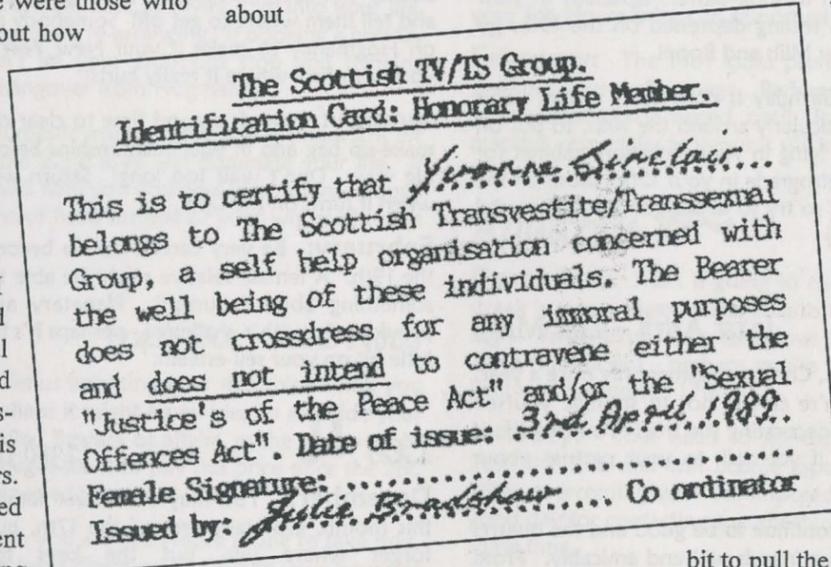
Ruth Didn't you work for Axfords, the corset manufacturers, at one time?

Yvonne Yes. Two or three months after I had resigned from the group Mike Hamond from Axford's contacted me. They used to stock the Glad Rag. Mike had been assisted by another person who had become ill, leaving him struggling to cope with a booming mail order business and the shop itself. He asked me if I could help and I worked for him for two years until the lease on the shop ran out. By the time he moved to Brighton and opened up there he had decided to concentrate more on corsetry than clothing since competition for the latter was becoming stronger as more

and more shops catering for the cross dresser opened up. His corsets have been very successful. I still get a card at Christmas and an occasional phone call.

Ruth I believe you were made an honorary life member of the Scottish TV/TS Group. Can you tell me how that came about?

Yvonne Well, I met Ruby Todd I think in the late seventies or early eighties – you'll know her as the person who started up the Tartan Skirt – when she visited London and came along to the group. She had never gone out dressed before and couldn't stop talking about



her experience, about how everybody had treated her as a woman. And of course, she was amazed at the bargains to be had in Petticoat Lane! Anyway, when she returned to Edinburgh she started sending me copies of the Tartan Skirt. There was one year in particular, at Christmas I recall, when I got a little card inside the magazine informing me I had been made an honorary member of the Scottish TV/TS Group. Sadly, about a year later, Ruby died. I remember there was a lot of talk about the circumstances of her death. With her high profile, appearing on television as she did, and of course being a magistrate, maybe she was recognised by someone she had sent down, who discovered where she lived... She died in a fire on New Year's Eve. It was terribly sad.

Ruth Returning to the present, Yvonne, what are your thoughts on the

transgender scene today?

Yvonne It's wonderful. I remember being targeted on numerous occasions in the seventies by the national Front and other groups who, shall we say, didn't see eye to eye with what we were about, and now that the gay community are more welcoming of us we have safe clubs and pubs we can go to. Take "Funny Girls" here in Blackpool, for example. This is a cabaret based on the French 'Carousel' of the 40s and 50s. But there are lots of venues now where we can go without fear of harassment, where we can just enjoy ourselves with a drink, or have a dance. Yes, the scene has come on a long way, due largely to the efforts of a handful of individuals.

Ruth And do you, yourself, have any ambitions to become involved again with the scene?

Yvonne No. None at all. I'm only interested now in enjoying what others are doing, like this function. I'm seventy-one this year and feel I've done my

bit to pull the scene up by its bra straps! My days of group involvement are over, but if somebody phones me looking for a bit of help or advice, I'm only too happy to give it. I used to get letters which I called "P" letters. "I came home, I went upstairs, I had a bath, I went and put my undies on, I put my frock on, I put my make-up on, I went downstairs, I drew the curtains, I turned the television on and sat there in fear." It's the last bit that always got me. That was always the problem. I'd encourage anyone who can to put down on paper what I call their "Boys Own Adventures In Skirts", no matter how rough these are, and send them in to your magazine, because there are those who feel unable to move forward on their own but who can find the will to try from reading about the experiences of others.

Ruth Thank you very much, Yvonne Sinclair.

End

Unveiling the Mystery of the Stars

with Seòras MacTheàrlaich

Aries ♈ (21st March - 20th April)

December: After some upsets around the 19th you can look forward to the Full Moon on the 22nd, though you have to take care not to be too selfish - your stubbornness is more than enough for everyone! Treat yourself to those shoes you always wanted on the 28th!

January: You might think nothing is coming together until the 14th when things begin to look better, especially in your relationships. Rather than feeling depressed on the 19th, go swimming - or read the new Mills and Boon!

February: Yes, your Birthday is coming up again. This could be a good time, particularly around the 10th, to put on the facial mask that's been lying in your bathroom cabinet for ages. Mercury is turning retrograde in your 12th House on the 22nd until the 15th March, so try to avoid going into hospital during these 3 weeks!

Taurus ♉ (21st April - 21st May)

December: Calm down, Christmas comes only once a year. You'll survive again if you're careful not to strangle yourself with the fairy lights when decorating the tree! Your sex life is improving too, especially if you talk to your partner about your desires.

January: The sex will continue to be good and the quarrel you had with some of your friends will end amicably. From the 12th you'll also start to get control again of your life, though it does you no good to wear those high heels when the pavements are completely frozen over!!!

February: The New Moon on the 5th will help you finalise any travel plans. From the 22nd someone close to you will stab you in your back but you'll have the strength and social grace to remain uninjured! If somebody asks you to marry them on the 24th, beware, their sense of reality might not correspond to yours!!!

Gemini ♊ (22nd May - 21st June)

December: Yes, it's frightening! You suddenly start enjoying doing the housework and going to the gym, but rest assured, it's only a phase! Prospects for the relationship close to your heart don't look so grim any more. Relax and enjoy, and don't forget to talk! And on the 25th try to convince your beloved not to eat that Christmas pudding you inherited from her 20 years ago!

January: You only have yourself to blame for that massive hangover, but hey, Hogmanay without whisky is like a fish without a bicycle! On the 21st try not to be drawn into an argument with your brothers or sisters!

February: Enjoy the Full Moon on the 19th, why not invite

some friends over for dinner? From the 22nd onwards avoid making any big plans regarding your career before the middle of the month, when Mercury turns again.

Cancer ♋ (22nd June - 22nd July)

December: OK, we're used to you being very emotional, but this year's Yuletide will see you going completely overboard! But as it's just once a year, ignore the moaning Minnies and tell them where to get off! Somebody may tell you porkies on Hogmanay so make it your New Year's resolution to put your high heel where it really hurts!

January: Now is a good time to clear out the mess in your make-up bag and in your relationships before this hits you in a big way. Don't wait too long! Saturn will help you do this when it turns on the 12th.

February: Be very careful not to become too nostalgic on the 19th. A female relative might be able to help you to learn something about yourself! Planetary aspects on the 14th provide you with a challenge - perhaps it's time again to work a little bit on your self-esteem.

Leo ♌ (23rd July - 23rd Aug.)

December: You may rediscover familiar sexual pleasures this month, especially around the 17th, but be careful not to forget where you put the keys for the handcuffs! Communications flow freely - isn't the telephone wonderful - now your Mum doesn't have to come round in person to bring you her season's greetings!

January: Don't keep the turkey too long or you're going to have some serious stomach problems by the end of the month. Be prudent with your finances, especially on the 16th!

February: The Full Moon will make you quite sensitive. When will you learn that it's OK to show your true emotions instead of being a ham-acting diva? Your luck is going to improve around the 20th, but to maintain it you have to do something instead of just sitting back!

Virgo ♍ (24th Aug. - 22nd Sept.)

December: Everything might become a little bit too much for you in the run-up to the festive season. Your over-analytical mind is in danger of overheating, especially on the 14th (Do I have all the presents? Are they really suitable?), but by the end of the month you can relax and enjoy some quality time with those close to you.

January: The month kicks off a little bit wobbly, but you may find romance when you least expect it. Be careful, as you might experience nervous strain when Mercury enters your sixth house on the 19th. And no, Prozac isn't really an answer to all

your worries!

February: On the 4th, things will relax a little bit. Just be yourself around the Full Moon on the 19th and celebrate yourself. Check your frock before going out on the 28th otherwise you could be embarrassed on that date you've been long anticipating! Sort things out before Mercury turns retrograde on the 22nd!!!

Libra ♎ (23rd Sept. - 23rd Oct.)

December: The full moon on the 22nd helps you reveal your emotional side. Cook your favourite meal to surprise your loved one. Just enjoy, and don't be paranoid! Be careful not to lose touch with reality on the 8th or your tears will ruin your mascara!

January: This is the ideal time to invite love into your life, and also to do some furniture re-arranging. If booking a holiday around the 21st, don't let your emotions stop you thinking clearly. (Is it still the hangover from Hogmanay?)

February: Your domestic environment is very important for you right now. On the 22nd love will dominate your life. If you are creative, this will help you find new inspiration - though wearing your cat on your head instead of your wig might raise a few eyebrows!

Scorpio ♏ (24th Oct. - 22nd Nov.)

December: With Venus transiting your sign this month, you will be irresistible! Perhaps it might be an idea to set aside your sting, at least for a while. Beware of affairs, as the truth *will be known* - though you might want to pay this price since the 2nd and 11th promise unexpected pleasures!

January: This month you are even more prone to take risks. Luckily for you, Saturn turns direct on the 21st in your house of relationships, and that should encourage support from those close to you. Around the 6th you might consider broadening your horizons a little, and *do* buy that book on how to put on make-up!

February: Your family will be important this month. On the 28th, planetary aspects promise a good period which will last for a couple of weeks, though you will have to pay attention to what you say and to whom!

Sagittarius ♐ (23rd Nov. - 21st Dec.)

December: Happy Birthday! You have a wonderful excuse for having a party. The 8th and 11th are ideal for doing so! You might offend somebody by being too possessive around the 22nd - best remember to be your charming self. With your ruling planet Jupiter turning direct on the 21st you will feel as if nothing could get in your way during the next few weeks.

January: You long for a holiday abroad - India might suit you. (Aren't those saris charming?) If you are looking for romance you might find it on the 22nd, especially since Venus is transiting your sign this month!

February: Roses are red and violets are blue - in case you've forgotten! You might be very jealous this month so try

developing some trust. Jupiter is entering your house of work and health on the 15th and will stay here for the next six months so enjoy your job and good health - apart from the risk of gaining some excess weight!

Capricorn ♑ (22nd Dec. - 20th Jan.)

December: The Full Moon on the 22nd promises romance - but only if you let it come into your life! Make sure you don't shut the world out as Mercury is transiting your 12th house. Your ruler Saturn is still retrograde in your 5th house, but you only have to endure this until the 13th of next month, when you can whole-heartedly embrace pleasure again.

January: Birthdays! One step closer to another face-lift! This month promises an up-turn in your fortunes, especially as Venus also enters your sign on the 25th. The Full Moon in your 8th House brings an opportunity for sexual fulfilment!

February: The 14th looks promising. Open yourself up and lose your stuffy image. Perhaps now is the time to swap your mousey-grey tweed outfit for an alluring little black number - especially as Venus is still transiting your sign!

Aquarius ♒ (21st Jan. - 18th Feb.)

December: Mars is going to encourage that independent streak in you and you'll feel able to tell the world "*I am who I am*". You'll experience total love with your partner on the 22nd (full moon) - perhaps you're trying to make up for the fight you had on the 17th?

January: Your need to self-express is going to increase from the 19th and will become especially intense around the 28th, overcoming your self-imposed isolation. The 26th is a good day for contacting somebody you haven't seen for quite some time.

February: Stop thinking about death, and just enjoy your birthday! The 6th promises to be a good day, though it might be freezing outside. Avoid bitchiness around the full moon on the 19th and concentrate on the person closest to your heart!

Pisces ♓ (19th Feb. - 20th March)

December: Your life continues to hover on the verge of a nervous breakdown - just stay realistic and be honest with yourself, especially on the 19th. Venus in your 9th house opens the door for enjoyable encounters and perhaps even a long pleasurable trip!

January: Your energy will be rejuvenated with Mars entering your 1st house on the 4th. You have a public holiday to enjoy so do something you haven't done for ages! On the 21st it's time to clear the table and have an honest and open talk, otherwise you will fall into deep brooding! ("I can't forgive myself for not telling her those red shoes didn't go with her green frock!")

February: Jupiter is entering your 3rd house on the 15th, helping to broaden your horizons, and an exciting period of growth is starting - it won't be long before you can embrace life fully again! Yes, life really is worth living so stop being depressed on the New Moon (5th) and start celebrating!

CONTRIBUTOR'S GUIDELINES

The Tartan Skirt welcomes letters and articles of interest to the transgender community for inclusion in the magazine. Material considered malicious or disrespectful of the views of others, however, will not be accepted for publication.

Please submit material which is clearly legible, typed or stored on a 3.5 inch disk for use with Microsoft Word for Windows 95.

Don't forget to sign your manuscript (can't use it otherwise), but a request for anonymity will be fully respected.

Please enclose photographs with your name and address on the back, and a stamped addressed envelope if you wish them to be returned to you.

All materials are sent on the understanding that the Tartan Skirt cannot be held liable for their safe custody or return.

The Editor reserves the right to amend in any way deemed appropriate, any letter or article submitted for publication.

No minority interest group associated with the transgender community will be denied a voice within the pages of the Tartan Skirt - so illuminate, educate and entertain with your experiences as a unique individual.

Remember, even if you don't get published, writing is great therapy!

NOTICE BOARD

Interested in telling your story to a group of Women's magazines? And get paid for it! Call Ann Toole on 0161- [redacted] or 0976- [redacted]. Their aim is to highlight our difficulties and help in the struggle for legal recognition. They say that any interview would be told sensitively and accurately and would only be printed with the full consent of the individual.

erratum... Please note the telephone number for the Jaime advert in the Autumn Issue should have appeared as 01506- [redacted] Sorry!

Please Note: Deadline for all advertising and submissions for the Spring 2000 Issue of the Tartan Skirt is:

15th January 2000

Travelling South? Then send for a copy and find out what's on below the M4!

The Eonist Digest & Hour-Glass Journal

The regular magazine for TV/TS people in the South. The Eonist supports the Beaumont Society and Rose members.



Includes: Up to date news and views. Specialist articles for those interested in corsetry. Beauty hints. Supplier Gazette. Venues/contact guide. Suppliers to the TV/TS community with names/addresses of interest to all cross-dressers. Fact and fiction. And much more....

For a sample issue send 5 first class stamps to:-
The Eonist, PO Box 11, Swanmore, Hants SO32 2ZU

The Tartan Skirt Personals

Absolutely **FREE ADVERTISING** for members of the transgender community wishing to meet others, swap items, find things, etc. **FREE** to advertise and now **FREE** to respond to advertisers. Simply send the Tartan Skirt your reply in a stamped addressed envelope and we will forward it to the advertiser for you free of charge.

Box No. 001
Attractive TV with varied interests and large wardrobe seeks couples and singles for fun and games.

Box No 002
Zoe (35), very convincing TV, looking to meet other TVs for friendship or adult fun. I enjoy going out or sharing dress up nights indoors. Correspondence also welcome. Can travel or accommodate. SAE please. Photo appreciated. Glasgow

Box No. 003
Donna, lady artist, seeks to correspond with and meet discreet bi-TV or gent to enjoy occasional fun times.

Box No. 004
TV adores directorie knickers, corsetry and silky apparel, wishes to meet others with same or similar interests.

Box No. 005
Katy, attractive TV would like to meet singles, couples and other TVs to help her dress up (or down!) in satin and lace. Daytime only. Can accommodate. Inverness

Box No. 006
Essex Girl with large collection of TV magazines would like to swap them with girls North of the Border.

Box No. 007
Bi-TV, slim, convincing, long-legged, seeks correspondence, possible meet with singles, couples, females. Job allows travel. SAE ensures reply. Anywhere

Box No. 008
Nicole, BI-TV, 30, 5'10", slim and attractive seeks professional male to treat me like a lady. Can travel anywhere but not accommodate. Glasgow

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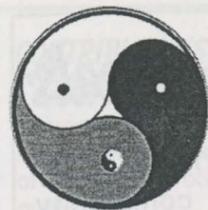


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Call now: 01506 [redacted] West Lothian, Central Scotland
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GENDYS

A network for those troubled by their gender identity, and their loved and loving ones, those who were troubled in the past and who care, and a forum for professional and lay people.

For further information, write to:

Gendys Network
BM Gendys
London WC1N 3XX

or to the Scottish representative:

Sue Robb
[Redacted]
Strathcarron
Ross-shire IV54 8YR



You Can Help Make Pride Scotland Today

Whether it's volunteering with one of our working groups, helping raise money or staffing our offices in Edinburgh or Glasgow. It takes all kinds of people with all levels of experience to make Pride Scotland a success. Contact us today to find out how you can be a part of it:

Keith Cowan, Human Resources Director

Pride Scotland

58a Broughton Street and 11 Dixon Street
Edinburgh EH1 3SA Glasgow G1 4AL
Tel/Fax: 0131 [Redacted] Tel: 0141 [Redacted]
Fax: 0141 [Redacted]

The Beaumont Society



The Beaumont Society is a nationwide self-help organisation for people who cross dress or who are transsexual. The Society has many open social meetings around the country and offers a good quality quarterly magazine, a Bulletin for members only, a confidential mail-box system and access to the Beaumont Society library.

Further details can be obtained from:

The Beaumont Society,
27, Old Gloucester Street,
London WC1N 3XX

Telephone information line - 01582 [Redacted]
Web site - <http://members.aol.com/Bmontsoc>
E mail - [Redacted]

SEXUAL FREEDOM SOCIETY

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60, The Pleasance
Edinburgh EH8 9TJ
<http://www.ed.ac.uk/~sfs>
[Redacted]

Please let me know of any organisation or helpline you think should be included in the Directory. Thanks - Ed.

The Tartan Skirt Directory

Scottish Support Group Network National Helplines and Agencies

CROSSLYNX TV/TS GROUP

Meetings are held in Glasgow on the second Wednesday of the month
Tel: 0141- [Redacted] Monday, 7.30 - 9.30
or write to: CROSSLYNX
c/o SLGS
PO Box 38
Glasgow G2 2QF

GRAMPIAN GENDER GROUP

Meetings are held in Aberdeen on the third Saturday of the month
Contact: Gillian
Tel: 01224- [Redacted]
Mondays and Tuesdays, 6.30 - 9.30 pm
or write to: Grampian Gender Group
PO Box 18201
Aberdeen AB21 9YF

HIGHLAND T-GROUP

Meetings are held in Inverness on the first Saturday of the month.
Contact: Julia Gordon
Tel: 01463 [Redacted]
Fax: 01463 [Redacted]
E-mail: [Redacted]
or write to: Highland T-Group
c/o Reach Out Highland
34 Waterloo Place
Inverness IV1 1NB

SCOTTISH TV/TS GROUP

Meetings are held in Edinburgh on the last Saturday of the month
Contact: Agnes
Tel: 0131- [Redacted]

WEST LOTHIAN TRANSGENDER SUPPORT GROUP

Meetings are held on Tuesdays from 1 till 4 pm and on Fridays from 6.30 till 9.30 pm at:
Crofthead Farm Community Education
Centre
Templar Rise
Dedridge
Livingston
Contact: John
Tel: 0780- [Redacted]

THE BEAUMONT SOCIETY

Tel: 01582- [Redacted]
E mail - [Redacted]
Website - <http://members.aol.com/Bmontsoc>

THE BEAUMONT TRUST

Tel: 07000- [Redacted] (10am - 10pm)

EQUALITY NETWORK

Tel: 07020- [Redacted]
Email - [Redacted]
Website - <http://www.diversity.org.uk/>

THE GENDER TRUST

Tel: 07000- [Redacted] (10am - 10pm)

THE IMPOTENCE ASSOCIATION

Tel: 0181- [Redacted]

NATIONAL AIDS HELPLINE

Tel: 0800- [Redacted] (24 hour free service)

PRESS FOR CHANGE

BM Network
London WC1N 3XX
Email - [Redacted]
Website - <http://www.pfc.org.uk/>

PRIDE SCOTLAND

Tel: 0131- [Redacted]
Email - [Redacted]
Website - <http://www.pridescotland.org/>

RANK OUTSIDERS

National Helpline
Tel: 0171- [Redacted] (Wednesday 7-9pm)
Scotland Coordinator
Tel: 01463- [Redacted] 0839- [Redacted]

THE SAMARITANS

Tel: 0345- [Redacted] (24 hours service)

COUNSELLING HELPLINE

Tel: 0131- [Redacted] (Monday to Friday, 10am- 12 noon)
Tel: 0141 [Redacted] (Wednesday, 10am-12 noon)
Tel: 0138 [Redacted] (Thursday, 2-4pm)

WOMEN OF THE BEAUMONT SOCIETY (WOBS)

Tel: 01389- [Redacted] (7 - 11pm)

the Tartan Skirt

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Make sure of your copy of the Tartan Skirt!

I enclose a cheque/PO for £2.50 (inc. postage) for the next issue of the Tartan Skirt (Spring 2000)

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Back Issues of the Tartan Skirt are available for only £1.50 per magazine (incl. postage)

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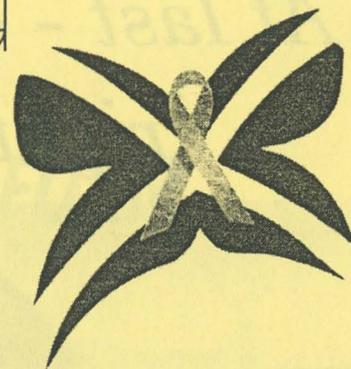
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