

THE TARTAN SKIRT



Magazine of the
SCOTTISH TV/TS
Group

New Series No. 2
April 1992



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The Magazine of the
Scottish TV/TS Group

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Editor: *Anne Forrester*

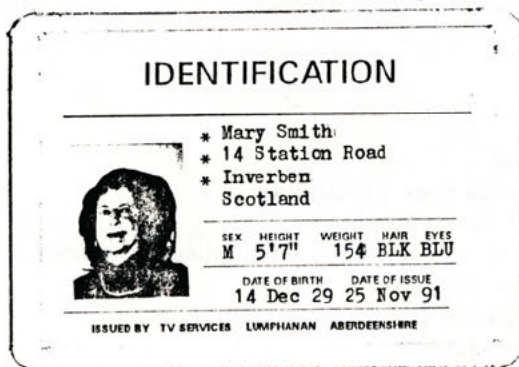
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FOREWORD

You may have heard the saying "When a group of Englishmen abroad get together they form a club; when a group of Scotsmen get together they form an Investment Trust". Whether a similar group of Welshmen would form a choir, or Irishmen a sweepstake, I have not heard, but when a number of crossdressers have already formed an Association it seems axiomatic that sooner or later they will want a Newsletter.

Many, if not most, crossdressers (and much the same applies to TSs) start off by feeling somehow apart from 'ordinary' people, and are unable to express their ideas and feelings on this subject, that is so important to them. When at last they come across an Association specially for them there is much relief. Yes, there *are* countless people who feel just as they do; and here they are, actually getting together ! This is a tremendous breakthrough for them. Yet there remains a significant number of crossdressers who may not be able to get to a Group meeting (or are only seldom able to), and who thus remain outside the mainstream of activity and communication. (Ah, that buzz-word of the last quarter of this century; it will surely continue to affect every facet of human activity for decades to come !).

Apart from the self-evident aspects of communication which a Newsletter provides (e.g. news, views, experiences, help of varying kinds, announcements, *etc*), there may also be entertainment, fiction, articles on aspects of lifestyle relevant to crossdressers, and so on.

However, a Newsletter is something more, giving its readers a sense of 'belonging', and of identification with a Group; and - at last - a feeling for the lone crossdresser

of being *within* a community, after living for so long on the outside. It can be part of being able to accept ones crossdressing, not as a negative quality but as something perfectly wholesome.

At the same time, a Newsletter can act as an ambassador for the Group, conveying something of its inner spirit and *ethos*; and it is from this that outsiders will form their opinions and impressions, and maybe decide whether they wish to become more closely involved.

The previous (original) series of *The Tartan Skirt* performed a useful service in its day, having been created by the late Ruby not long after the Scottish TV/TS Group was formed some eight years ago. However, it did become unduly inward looking, self-involved, and developed a strongly satirical element, all of which I think diminished its popularity, and may have contributed to its demise. Given the limitations of what we are about, we should be able to laugh *at ourselves* and *with each other* - but not *at each other*. We have enough of that in the big wide world, and are gradually learning not to take ourselves too seriously. Yet satire can have a sharp and destructive cutting edge, perhaps better reserved for the columns of *Private Eye*.

I am a great believer in the emergence of the right person at the right time, and this belief has been confirmed yet again with this new series of *The Tartan Skirt*, published under the Editorship of Anne Forrester.

To judge from the first edition of the new series our new Editor (? Editress) seems to have brought to the resurrection of this title just about all the qualities needed, not only to initiate it but to ensure its continued success. Talk about the Phoenix arising from the ashes: some ashes, some Phoenix ! I am sure that all our members and readers will join me in offering our congratulations to Anne, and in wishing her well in its future continuation and development. She really deserves our support, so please be sure that she gets it.

Vanessa

WHY DO WE NEED GROUPS ?

by Anne Forrester

As most of you who read this know, there are quite a number of "TV groups" of one sort or another around the country - organisations where members of the gender community can come together. For the most part these groups comprise cross-dressers, with a small number of (almost exclusively pre-op) TS girls, and a few 'real girls' - wives, partners and friends of male-to-female cross-dressers. However, it is not often that anyone stops to ask the purpose of these groups. Just what are (or should be) their aims and objectives ?

Basically, there would seem to be four main reasons why cross-dressers (in particular) might wish to be part of a 'group'. First - and perhaps most obvious to those who are already active members of a "TV/TS group" - there is the opportunity to dress without worrying about who else is around or what others are thinking; and coming close behind this is the opportunity for social contact with others of like interests. Then there are others who are seeking practical help with their dressing - how to improve their makeup, hair styling, deportment, speech, *etc.* Finally there is the serious - and important - function of acting as a point of contact, and perhaps of counselling, for the lone (and lonely) 'closet cross-dresser' who can barely come to terms with his own interests and feelings, and who often feels as though he must be the only man in the world who wishes to wear womens' clothes. (Of course, for a few the underlying reason for their cross-dressing may be sexual - a form of fetishism - and they may see a TV/TS group as an opportunity to meet others of like mind - in other words, as a sort of sexual contact club; although most gender groups avoid such activities).

Probably most gender groups provide a combination of the first two functions - an opportunity to dress and to meet socially with other cross-dressers - with a touch of the third (instruction in makeup, etc). Equally probably, it is likely that most groups do not take sufficiently seriously the other function of acting as a support group with a counselling function. Of course, it will be argued that counselling is a skilled procedure that requires special training and skills, as well as an intrinsic sympathy for the 'client's' problem; and this is especially so where a married man has a marital difficulty resulting from his dressing, or where his partner herself is looking for reassurance or counselling. Organisations such as WOBS (*Women of the Beaumont Society*) and Relate (formerly *The Marriage Guidance Council*) offer help in such instances; although the former is not widely known to potential 'clients', and the latter knows all too little about the phenomenon - and thus of the problem.

Naturally, those of us who have already come to terms with (what the 'professionals' call) our 'gender dysphoria' have the necessary sympathy and understanding, but rarely will we have the training and skills in counselling. Some groups are fortunate enough to have the help of trained social workers or psychiatrists who are able to provide professional help to new contacts, but most are not so fortunate and have to fall back on their own resources - in other words, the native wit and experience of their more experienced members.

Fortunately, it is here that our community is richest in its own resources. The reasons for cross-dressing are probably as many as there are cross-dressers, but we all have one motive in common - we generally like women, and try to emulate their better characteristics: and the one unvarying characteristic of all real women is their innate sympathy and caring for others. If we are truly trying to be feminine in our actions as well as our appearance - as I believe the majority of us are - then in dealing with nervous and worried 'closet cross-dressers' who are looking for advice, help, support, or whatever else we

can offer, we should use the feminine attributes of love and caring so that, above all, we present a sympathetic and welcoming face to the newcomer.

It is reckoned that as many as one in a hundred men cross-dress at some time or other in their lives. All right, so only a very small minority of those go on and do so regularly, openly, or completely (the so-called "*whole girl look*"). That means that there are an awful lot of frustrated 'sisters' out there who are too scared of their own feelings to come to terms with them. Many of these would dearly love to 'come out' if only they knew that they are not alone, and who knew how to set about it.

OK, so the social gathering is important to those of us who have already come to terms with ourselves - but if we truly wish to 'be' feminine we must not turn our backs on the most truly feminine characteristic of all - caring for others. Support and counselling are vital for the growth and development of our community - and without a true 'community of sisters' we shall never have any opportunity at all of convincing society at large that we are anything but a small deviant minority of perverts. *You* all know that is not true, but unless we can convince others of the fact we shall continue to be a 'persecuted minority'.

In that respect, as a community we are in a position not unlike that of the early Christian church - and we shall continue to be a 'persecuted minority' for as long as we are misunderstood. What we need are converts ! No, I am not suggesting that we should go out and try to persuade our macho friends and colleagues to put on dresses and high heels. It is by helping and supporting the huge hidden population of frustrated cross-dressers, and bringing them *into* our community, that we will enlarge that community, and so strengthen it.

What we do is neither wrong nor does it harm anyone, yet we are a long way from achieving acceptance from society at large - let alone from the law. Our American sisters are trying to establish a '*Bill of Gender Rights*'

(see elsewhere in this issue). Society - and politics - being what they are in this country it is unlikely that we shall see anything comparable here within the lifetime of most of us. Meantime we would be well-advised not to ignore the support and counselling of our 'sisters under the skin' who are not yet inside our community. As a 'species' our own survival may well depend on it !

****oooOOOooo****

So is support of those still 'in the closet' one of the most important functions of a TV/TS group ? Or is the social scene more important ? Why do we need the groups - or do we need them at all ? Let's be hearing from you.

SEX OR SILVER ?

Would you *give up* sex for money ? In a survey in five major cities across the USA a surprising 57 *per cent* of respondents said that they would give it up for six months in exchange for a payment of \$ 5000. While 64 *per cent* of the women surveyed said that they would forgo sex in exchange for a payment, only 50 *per cent* of men would. However, Americans seem to find marriage more rewarding than the single state. Some 84 *per cent* of single women, but only 64 *per cent* of single men, would have accepted the money. Married people were less willing, however, with only 44 *per cent* of married women and 36 *per cent* of married men prepared to take the cash.

Some comments were revealing - but perhaps none more than that of the single girl from Philadelphia who said "I'll say yes for the money - but I'd be very grumpy after two months" !

A BILL OF GENDER RIGHTS

Unlike Britain, which has no written constitution, our American sisters do have a Constitution to turn to, which guarantees them certain civil rights and liberties. Nevertheless, in practice they suffer much the same persecution as we do when seeking to exercise their right to live their own preferred lifestyles. One of a number of attempts to correct this situation is a proposal for a Bill of Gender Rights, and the following is abstracted from a circular letter sent last year to all American Transgender Support Groups, by JoAnn Roberts of Pennsylvania:-

"The Declaration of Independence says 'We hold all these truths to be self-evident, all men are created equal...' In reality, it is self-evident that neither all men nor all people are created equal. Rather, all people should be treated *equally*; no one should be denied the opportunity to live, work or play simply because they are different. Different does not mean deficient. Different does not mean less capable. Different does not mean less moral. Different does not mean less ethical. Nor does different mean less honorable. Different simply means not exactly like the next person.

The intent of the US Constitution is to guarantee equal treatment under the law, and the role of the Constitution is to protect minorities from the majority when the majority is clearly and patently wrong. It is *wrong* to think that one's physical sex (and therefore one's sex role) is more important than one's intellectual or physical capabilities. Under this logic women are 'inferior', homosexuals are

'inferior', and all transgendered people are 'inferior' to the average white American male.

It is time for the transgender community to take a strong stand against all gender-based discrimination simply because some people are different and simply because some people do not fit into current social norms of gender roles. It is time the gender-based community articulate this stand in words that clearly define exactly what their gender rights are. It is time to stand alongside other minority rights movements to declare these gender rights as follows:

The Right to Choose a Gender Role

Every human being has within themselves an idea of who they are and what they are capable of achieving. That identity and capability shall not be limited by a person's physical sex, nor by what any society may deem as 'masculine' or 'feminine' behavior. It is fundamental, then, that each individual has the right to chose a gender role that is comfortable for them, regardless of their genetic sex or sex role.

Therefore no person shall be denied their Human and Civil Rights on the basis that their chosen gender role or perceived gender role is not congruent with their genetic sex or sex role.

The Right To Freely Express a Gender Role

Given that each individual has the right to chose a gender role, it then follows that each individual has the right to freely express that gender role in any manner that does not infringe on the freedom of another individual.

Therefore no person shall be denied their Human and Civil Rights on the basis that a private or public expression of their chosen gender role or perceived gender role is not congruent with their genetic sex or sex role.

The Right To Make One's Body Congruent With Gender Role

Given that each individual has the right to chose a gender role, it then follows that each individual has the right to change their body or alter its physiology so it better fits their

chosen gender role. These changes may be cosmetically, chemically or surgically induced, provided these changes are supervised by the appropriate licensed professional and the individual accepts sole responsibility for their actions in this regard.

Therefore no person shall be denied their Human or Civil Rights on the basis that they changed or wish to change their body, cosmetically, chemically, surgically or any combination of these, to better fit their chosen gender role.

The Right To Sexual Expression Congruent With Gender Role

Given that each individual has the right to chose a gender role, it then follows that each individual has the right to express their sexuality within their chosen gender role.

Therefore no person shall be denied their Human and Civil Rights on the basis of sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation. Further, no individual shall be denied their Human and Civil Rights for expressing their chosen gender role through private sexual acts between consenting adults".

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A 'Bill of Gender Rights' such as this may be too vague, and not meet the situation in British law, where acting outside the role perceived as appropriate to ones genetic sex is only illegal in the event of a complaint being laid by a third person (who may be e.g. a woman offended by the sight of a cross-dresser, or even a 'stropky' police officer). However, transsexuals are certainly open to having their human and civil rights denied by the law which, in the European context as well as in Britain, refuses to recognise de jure a change of sex which has been accomplished de facto by hormone treatment and reassignment surgery.

*Do we need a 'Bill of Gender Rights' of our own, to establish our right to dress or to live as we wish without the interference of the law ? Or do we just need a legal right to privacy ?
Now read on !*

A BILL OF GENDER RIGHTS - OR A RIGHT TO PRIVACY ?

Virtually alone in Europe, Britain is a country which, while proclaiming itself a democracy - that is, a government of the people *for the people* - has no law to protect its citizens from intrusion into their privacy. 'Trial by media' has become too frequent an event, and the popular ("gutter" ?) press seems to prosper mainly by exploiting other peoples' misfortunes and weaknesses, and exposing them to public view. If you are unlucky enough to be involved in any incident - however trivial - which these people deem to be 'newsworthy', then you will find *all* the details spread over the next day's papers. Have you noticed how even simple 'news items' involve publication of *all* your private details ? "Mary Bloggs, 34-year old housewife and mother of two, of 23 Station Road, Invermuchty, was knocked over yesterday while crossing the road in front of her local supermarket". Of what possible importance can it be to x-thousand readers of the paper to know that that Mary Jones is 34 years old (rather than 30, 32, 36 or 38 ?), that she is a 'housewife' or that she is a 'mother of two'; or to know precisely where she lives (so that potential burglars may raid her house while she is in hospital ?). Why does the rest of the world need to be told these personal details ? Surely the fact of the accident is news enough.

Of course, it is even worse if you happen to be involved in any 'newsworthy' incident while out dressed. Just imagine all your friends, relations and workmates reading: "Joseph Bloggs, a 34-year old transvestite business executive and father of three, of 23 Station Road, Invermuchty, was knocked over yesterday while dressed in womens' clothes" and while crossing the road in front of his local supermarket. And the 'headline' announcing what would almost certainly be a front-page report would

probably be along the lines of *Transvestite Business Man Exposed in Invermuchty*. Could you ever face them all again ? And what possible good has it done for the paper to print personal details which are of no possible importance to anyone else but you ?

Too often we hear the tired old cry from 'the media' that "*the public have a right to know*". I most strongly deny that. The public only have a 'right' to know anything which affects them; they do *NOT* have a right to know the personal details of an individual's private life, especially when publication of these details will be embarrassing - and possibly damaging - to that person's private and business life.

Unfortunately, it does not stop at embarrassment. 'The media' are frequently guilty of blatant character assassination, when it comes to what they consider to be 'titillating' details of an individual's sexual or lifestyle interests. Only say that a person is 'gay', or that he or she has some particular 'deviant' sexual interest, and a newspaper can effectively commit character assassination without risk of recrimination. Carolyn Cossie (the model 'Tula') and Stephanie Anne Lloyd are cases in point. Because they were not only transsexuals, but were also successful in their chosen careers, they were hounded and crucified by the press so that each of them was driven from their jobs and their families, persecuted as though they were guilty of some heinous crime, and never allowed simply to get on with their lives.

From reporters climbing up drainpipes to photograph politicians in their hospital sick-beds, to half-truth 'knife jobs' on transsexuals and cross-dressers, 'the media' have shown themselves to be unscrupulous and untrustworthy. Yet in Britain - supposedly a 'land of the free' - there is no law to stop this persecution. Any newspaper can print pretty well anything it likes about anyone; and unless your name is Robert Maxwell (or you have a bank balance, and a thick skin, comparable with his) you have no redress at law. (You must be aware of the saying that there is one law for the rich - who can afford to pay their own bills, and one for the poor - who receive legal aid: nowadays there is no law at all that is affordable for anyone in between).

If you really think that a '*Gender Bill of Rights*', such as our

American sisters are seeking, is a bit too far distant a possibility, why not campaign for something that is more immediately possible? Other European countries have privacy laws which protect the privacy of all individuals except where their actions are contrary to the public good (e.g. when convicted of a crime of violence, etc). Why should Britain be any different? And why should British citizens have no protection against the gutter press?

You can campaign for a privacy law without any reference to gender issues: privacy is a right of all citizens, regardless of cause. Politicians are very alert to public sensibilities these days, especially if they do not offend specific party susceptibilities. As a community why do we not 'go for it'? It is my belief that a privacy law would do more for the safety of our community - and for each of us as individuals - than any number of 'Bills of Gender Rights'!

Anne Forrester

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*Well, what do you think? Why not write and let us know.*

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## HAVE YOU HEARD?

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Sandra MacRae, a lawyer who is a male-to-female transsexual, is to contest the Glasgow Provan seat at the forthcoming General Election as an SNP candidate, 18 years after the last of her bids for this seat, as a man. This is believed to be the first time that any party has put forward what *The Sun* described as "a sex-change candidate". Without discrimination, we must all wish her good luck. It's about time there was somebody at Westminster who understands the gender community well enough to be able to speak about it from knowledge rather than ignorance.

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## SELF-PROTECTION AND SELF-DEFENCE

FOR THE GENETIC MALE, WHILE IN THE  
FEMALE ROLE

by Dianna ■ and Tomye Kelly

Edited from *The TV-TS Tapestry*, Issue 58

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The gentle, erotic, click-click sound of my high heels on the sidewalk was music to my ears. At last I was free of the bonds of maleness. I was free to be the woman I had always felt I should be, free and out in the world at last! My skirt swaying against my legs, my hair moving in the gentle breezes, caressing my shoulders and neck, how perfect it all seemed! Despite the cover of darkness and the very late hour, the joy inside me was overwhelming. The light from the street lamp cast its shadow - of a woman in a skirt. Suddenly, however, a new sound entered my mind, jolting me from my reverie. Footsteps! Heavy footsteps behind me, drawing closer quickly. A glance to my side revealed a second shadow, as I moved into the darkness away from the street lamp. Fear shot its icy blade through my body. There was no way back to the security of my car except past this intruder; there was no way to run in these heels and skirt. I scanned the houses for some sign of life, where I could seek help. But this was not a familiar neighbourhood, and it was very late. And then I felt his hand on my shoulder and his gruff voice saying "Don't do anything to make me hurt you, lady. Just come with me; we're going to have some fun, baby"! There were two of them, seeming very macho, and they had been drinking. What was going to happen to me next? Even if the police were to intercede, how



would *they* treat me ? How could I ever face the world again, knowing that I had allowed this to happen ?

### The concept of 'learned fear'

The reality of the woman's world is very different from that of the male world. Women learn very early - often as they grow up - that their rules and reality are very different from those of men. Women know that they are vulnerable to attack and to physical abuse. Women know that many men consider them to be only objects of pleasure and admiration, to be conquered, used, displayed, and possibly discarded like any other possession or trophy. Most males in the gender community have the very mistaken idea that their male experience and knowledge will give them an edge when in the female role. Unfortunately, this is not true.

Living in the world as a woman means accepting life under the terms that most women live with, one of which is a sense of 'learned fear'. This is an attitude which comes not from terror but from respect for the situation. A general example of the concept of learned fear is the automobile driving skills that nearly everyone uses whenever the roads get icy and/or snow-packed. Knowing that the potential for a mishap or accident is much greater you slow down and pay more attention to the other drivers around you: you plan ahead to cover any situation of surprise that might occur. Basically, you are much more careful because you have seen the twisted results of other people's carelessness. This additional care is a 'learned fear' - one of those attitudes towards life that most women have adopted; particularly those who (whether by choice or necessity) need to be outside after dark.

Women know and recognise their vulnerability, and know that female hormones reduce their power and speed, compared to men. Women learn very early in life that their personal appearance can be considered - even by the police and by their friends - to be an 'attractive nui-

sance'. Women learn very early in life that they must live under the constant potential, the ever-present threat, of being a target for rape, even under the best of conditions, even by men known to and trusted by them. Women also know that some of the clothing they wear limits their mobility, especially tight skirts, high heels, floor-length skirts, etc. Decisions on when and where to dress like this, however, are measured against the perceived level of threat in the neighbourhood where she will be going, as well as those neighbourhoods she must pass through to reach her destination. If you dress like a hooker, and go through a part of town where hookers hang out, you should expect to be approached and/or followed (even in your car), as a hooker would. You should expect to be propositioned, and possibly attacked, as hookers sometimes are by the 'customers'.

The very best method of protection for yourself, while in the female role, is to act like real woman act; to understand, acknowledge and adopt the principles of 'learned fear'. Your best defence as a woman is prevention of a situation which could get out of hand. For example, you should only park your car in a safe, well-lighted place; and "safe" means a place where there are other people for you to walk with and who can see you. There is safety in numbers. Avoid walking alone after dark. Try always to have someone - possibly another woman - with you. Especially after dark, and in any crowds, carry your purse or handbag so that it is well protected; don't sling it carelessly over a shoulder or hold it loosely in your hand. Actresses in movies may carry their handbags casually, but they are not at risk of being assaulted or of having their bag snatched while being filmed !

### Avoiding danger

The whole concept of danger is different within the woman's world. For example, women are likely to perceive a man who is a 'flasher' as a danger, whereas men generally consider him to be no more than a nuisance.

A significant part of being a woman is caring about



others. Women go out of their way to raise alarms to protect others. This may be by returning to a building to warn others of a danger, whereas a man would most likely sense a danger, plan his own 'escape', and go on his way. Genetic/born males can't - or won't - scream; holler or shout, maybe, but not scream. This may be instinct, or it may be physiological.

If you must be out dressed, after dark, walk purposefully and don't 'saunter' aimlessly: sauntering implies vulnerability. If you appear to a casual observer to have no particular destination that observer will know that time is on his side and will protect him should he choose to attack you. Know where you are going, and go directly there !

Use your peripheral vision to be aware of people - especially males - who are in close proximity to you. Do not turn your head to see, any more than you have to. Most men, especially those who might want to approach you, will interpret your gaze (or even a glance) as a 'come hither' look. This is stupid, but unfortunately true in most cases, and is one reason why women will very rarely look around (for example) while they are stopped at traffic lights. Actually, if you take the time to be really observant you will notice that at night most women stop their cars somewhat behind or ahead of any other cars which are stopped. This makes it much harder for a man to stare at them, in order to get them to look back. Returning a glance can be construed as a come-on. True, men sometimes glance or stare at other men at a traffic light, but this is part of a power game in which most women, realistically, can not participate.

Before leaving the safety of any building - home, store, restaurant, etc - by day or night, have your car door key identified and ready *in your hand* ! (This also applies to your house door key when leaving your car). Carrying the proper key, ready to use, will vastly increase your personal safety; if you are approached you won't lose precious time fumbling through your bag looking for a key, and a potential attacker will know that you can escape more

easily. Besides, if you observe 'real' women closely you will see that nearly all of them carry their keys this way; and so you are much more likely to be seen as a 'normal' woman. It is advisable, also, to look inside your car before you get in, to ensure that there is not an attacker hiding inside. When you enter the car, lock the door immediately as you close it behind you.

Whenever you drive anywhere - especially after dark - pre-select your destination, times and conditions of travel; set criteria for your trip and stick to them. Driving aimlessly can put you at as much risk as walking aimlessly; you increase your potential for attack if it appears that you will not be missed soon.

Just as when you are driving on icy streets, you need to pre-plan an 'escape' in case problems occur, and this is especially true if your route takes you through a neighbourhood that has a reputation for being troublesome.

Recognise that if you are abducted by a male intending rape, etc, you will be in much more danger than a genetic woman. When the attacker discovers that you are not physically a woman he will likely become extremely enraged, and may try to mutilate or even kill you.

### The dangers of a 'male' response

Your living and functioning in the female role can easily be compromised by your (male) self-sufficiency. The level of self-help you use can cause you to be 'read', which will seriously jeopardise any hope of outside help. Your chosen level of self-help may, indeed, *increase* the possibility that you will be attacked. For example, if you have car trouble while out in the female role, your first instinct is likely to be to fix the problem (assuming that you can) rather than face another person while in the female role. Because you rarely see a real woman repairing her car by the roadside this activity may cause considerable suspicion; and again, any potential attacker will know that you (as a female) have no means of escape. If you stay in the car, with the doors locked and the emergency flashers



on, a potential attacker has no way of knowing whether help (or police) have been called and will arrive very soon to help you.

But (you protest) you have learned how to fight and to protect yourself. All the years you spent trying to be a stereotypical male, to hide your 'secret' - in the armed forces, learning Karate, etc - taught you how to fight ! However, in the female role this experience is nearly useless. You have never practised Judo, Karate, or any of the other arts of self-defence, while in the female role: you have never tried the moves in heels and/or a skirt. Besides, men and women use different styles if it becomes necessary to fight physically. Men slug with their fists, using the weight of their bodies. Females kick, slap, scratch, go for the face. The next time you 'dress up' with long fingernails, try making a fist. Notice where your nails will go if you punch someone; they will shred the palm of your own hand ! As a part of learning to fight as a man you should also have learned that a significant factor in any struggle is the mental belief that you will win. A male who attacks a female - or someone in the female role - has a decided advantage, because in his mind he *knows* he can subdue any woman.

As a genetic/born woman your first impulse, if you were attacked or felt that an attack was imminent, would be to sound an alarm, to protect others or to get their attention. You would scream, call for help, or quickly use a telephone, depending upon the situation. But, more importantly, within the concept of 'learned fear' a woman would have identified her own potential weapons *before* they were needed. For example, she could use her fingernails, a lighted cigarette, her high heels, her voice, fingers, teeth, and especially the key in her hand. Because a man, in general, is stronger in a physical struggle a woman will go for extreme damage such as attacking the eyes or face, going after chunks of skin.

However, you should avoid attacking the groin unless you are *sure* of total success. This manoeuvre will backfire if you fail, and probably cause your attacker to hurt you

even more.

Although it would seem that in self-defence any style that stops your attacker is best, this is not necessarily true for the male who is living - or just 'out' - in the female role. If you become involved in a physical struggle, and your fighting style is male, you will be 'read' by onlookers, or anyone who might have been coming to the aid of the 'woman' being attacked. These people may then 'turn' on you and help your attacker, assuming that *you* are the attacker since you are 'in costume'; or that you are a 'goddam faggot' who deserves a beating anyway, regardless of the situation.

You must also know and acknowledge that there are penalties for breaking the usual rules covering personal safety, and that others - including your friends - will chastise you for your carelessness if you are hurt while breaking these rules.

### And in summary...

Being a woman is much more complicated than just wearing make-up and dresses. In order to survive successfully in the world as a woman you must study and learn the attitudes and realities of the womans' world. The first and most important step is to understand the concept of 'learned fear'. Understanding these concepts, and living within them, will allow you to explore much of the remainder of womens' reality - and in safety.

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*(This article, which appeared originally in the December 1989 issue of the GIC Newsletter, published by the Denver Gender Identity Center of Colorado, was written from material developed for a training course designed to help male-to-female gender-conflicted people to learn what the world of women is really like, and to learn how to 'survive', live in and participate in the world as women do. The series was presented by Dianna ■, a professional adult trainer and course developer, under the auspices of the Gender Identity Center of Colorado, Inc.)*



And from another source...

Chicago Womens' Karate has produced this useful diagram of hints on how to tackle an attacker. Produced as a t-shirt the illustration has had wide publicity amongst the gay community as well as womens' groups. Having read the preceding article, you may also feel that it is not without merit for crossdressers threatened by predatory men while out dressed. However, **be warned**. If you use any of these measures they had better be very successful, and you would then be well advised to run - fast. Otherwise you will find you have one very angry assailant to deal with !



## A GENDER INFORMATION SERVICE

A useful service for people new to the cross-dressing scene has recently become available. Undoubtedly, one of the most difficult things for those who are new to crossdressing is to get simple and objective information about the condition - and how to come to terms with, and survive, it.

The Gender Information Service is attempting to do just this with a series of *Bulletins*. The first gives a list of helpful booklets and books, and details of where they can be obtained. The second gives a list of the representative bodies, main groups and societies, and telephone help-lines which are available. The third *Bulletin* will give information about specialist shopping facilities for cross-dressers, and helpful hints for getting served in ordinary shops without embarrassment. There will also be a series called 'Coming to terms with Transvestism'. (Pity about the use of *that* word, though !)

These *Bulletins* are written assuming no previous knowledge of cross-dressing, and they are intended to be of most benefit to those in the early stages of adjusting to the condition. They could also be useful for showing to (e.g.) relatives, neighbours, medical advisors, etc.

Anyone who feels they could use the information in these *Bulletins* should send a stamped self-addressed envelope (9" x 6") to: **G.I.S., PO Box 10, Bramhall, Stockport, SK7 2QF.**

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## THE CHEVALIER D'EON

by Vanessa [REDACTED]

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Some of you will no doubt have heard of the Chevalier, whose longer title is, I believe, the Chevalier d'Eon de Beaumont, after whom the Beaumont Society is named. He lived in the eighteenth century and seemed to spend a considerable part of his quite public life cross-dressed. How much of this he spent in London I do not know, although he is said to have been buried in St Pancras.

I should not imagine that many bystander comments about him survive today, but I came across one in a delightful book entitled *The Diary of a Young Lady of Fashion in the Year 1764-1765*, by Miss Cleone Knox of Castle Kearney, Co. Down. Miss Knox - who was born in 1744 - made a Grand Tour of England and the Continent by stage coach. I have included entries on either side of the relevant one in order to show her style of writing. (We are in a London which would be the size of a reasonable market town of today, and set in countryside).

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June 11th. Haymaking party. Amongst Guests: Lord M., Mr. Sutcliffe, Lord Tavistock and his pretty betrothed, Lady E. Keppell, Madame de Guerchey, Lady Mary Duncan and so on. Lord M---rd very attentive to La Belle Irlandaise as he pleases to call me. Unluckily the weather broke and the rain spoiled our Sweet Bucolic Simplicity,

soaking Pet Lambs, Muslin Frocks, and making us into a mob of drowned Rats.

June 13th. Mr Sutcliffe visits me nearly every morning at my toilette with books. Sits and glares like an idiot. Lost another £30 at piquet the other day. My father's face will be grim when I inform him of this.

June 15th. Lady H. is the greatest Rake in town. Her minauderies are intolerable.

*June 16th. Breakfast with Lady Temple. All the Polite World present. Coffee, chocolate, biscuits, cream, buttered toasts, tea, and Scandal. Mr Sutcliffe took me to Bathoe in the Strand for Italian books. **Pointed out to me Chevalier d'Eon, a strange looking Wretch. They tell the most curious tales of him. Some swear he is really a Female in disguise.***

June 18th. I spend half the day at the Hairdresser's now. My head has not been opened for over a Fortnight, and this is positively the longest time I will go in this hot weather, though some Ladies keep their Heads unopened till they are Intolerable to themselves and everyone else. The dresser informed me that one lady from motives of thrift went so long a time that her head when opened was found to contain a Nest of Mice ! We are to attend a grand Ball to-night at the Duchess of Queensbury. She is a Whimsical clever woman.

~~~~~

This last entry holds a useful tip for those of us who, unlike Cleone, require a wig. If you have not worn it for some while, and do not keep it in a mouse-proof box (or alternatively, you wear it in bed), do watch out for uninvited guests !

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## BEST-BUY CLOTHING

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Where do you go for your female clothing ? It is a fair bet that most crossdressers venture from time to time into one or other of the charity shops that are now to be found in most cities, and many smaller towns. These can certainly be one of the best places to buy your outer clothing - and sometimes even your lingerie and footwear. Staff (almost always unpaid volunteers) are not interested in whether you are buying gender-suitable clothing, but will happily take your money without passing comment. Prices are generally low enough that you can afford to make a few mistakes through not being able to try items on and while experimenting with different colours and styles. The quality of the clothing can be very high indeed, and you can often get larger sizes that are not easily obtained 'off the rack' in the chain stores. However, standards do vary, and a brief guide from one who works in one of the better of these shops to some of the types of shop, and what you may expect to find, may be of help.

Charity shops are run basically to raise funds for the charities concerned, and the items that they sell are nearly all donated by members of the public, or occasionally by some of the larger stores. How they are dealt with varies, however. Some of the more 'down market' shops put any and everything into the shop, often without washing or ironing, stacking everything onto the racks until there is scarcely space to see what they contain. They will rarely indicate sizes, and buttons, fasteners, etc, are often missing. The better 'up market' shops, on the other hand, sort everything carefully and only put on the racks items in first class condition that are clean,

pressed, and have all their buttons, etc, in place; and they do not over-crowd the racks. They will also mark everything with size as well as price.

Sadly, even some of the better-known shops do not always do things well. *Oxfam*, for instance, rarely marks sizes and (in Edinburgh, at least) seems to have a policy of sorting items by colour rather than size, so that a rack may contain all red skirts while another contains all blue blouses, etc - but none of the hangers (and not all of the price tags) indicates a size. This is *not* helpful to the male buyer of female clothes (nor even to the discerning female !).

Probably the best shops are those run by the *Cancer Research Campaign* and the *Imperial Cancer Research Fund*, each of which has a national policy of clean and spacious shops, properly sorted items with size and price indicated clearly on every item, and well-trained staff working to strict guidelines of conduct and customer service. *Oxfam*, the *Sue Rider Foundation* and some of the hospice shops are generally well stocked with clean and good quality clothes, but tend to have less satisfactory display and less well-trained staff. Going further 'down market' one finds shops run by the *PDSA*, *RSSPCC*, *Save the Children Fund*, and a number of church-related organisations. These shops often contain good items at very reasonable prices, but you usually have to search for these amongst a tightly-packed log-jam of rather tatty items, and neither cleanliness nor tidiness of the garments can always be relied on.

When picking clothing from a charity shop it is best to look for the better-known makers. Labels from *Marks & Spencer*, *Country Casuals*, *Laura Ashley*, etc, give total confidence in quality, while with labels from *British Home Stores*, *Littlewoods*, *Etam*, *C & A*, *Dorothy Perkins*, *Happit*, etc, one knows what one is getting. If the label has been removed you may well feel suspicious. However, some women automatically chop out *all* non-designer labels, and even the size tag of everything they buy. When these unlabelled items get into the charity



shops the better of these will carefully measure them and indicate the size on their own price tag - the others may or may not, and even if they do the measurements may or may not be reliable.

Naturally, one of the best things about charity shops is the price range. Normally you should expect to pay up to £ 2.50 for a blouse or a sweater or cardigan, £ 3.50 for a dress, a skirt or a pair of slacks, £ 4.50 for a jacket or a suit, and up to £ 5.00 for a good coat. Shoes cost around £ 2.00 a pair, and hats no more than a pound or two. Belts and lingerie items (generally limited to slips and bras, with the occasional suspender belt) usually cost less than £ 1.00 each, and nighties around £ 2.00.

If you are looking for a particular item - or are just a 'shopaholic' - you should aim to do the round of the charity shops in your area at least once a week. New items come in every day, and the better shops turn over any unsold stock by rotation, at least once a month. However, be advised. If you see something you like, buy it. If you go away and come back even five minutes later, it may be gone - and there will not be another in stock. Some shops - for example those of the *Cancer Research Campaign* - will reserve items for you for up to 48 hours, and (like *Marks & Spencer*) may also allow a refund without question on any item returned in good condition within 48 hours, together with your receipt. Other charity shops neither reserve stock nor take returns. Check the policy of the shops in your area.

Obviously the charity itself may determine which shops you patronise - but do enquire what proportion of the takings go to the stated purpose. The *Cancer Research Campaign* puts 96p in every £ 1.00 taken to cancer research (and actually funds a third of all such research in the UK). This is a quite exceptionally high proportion, and you may be surprised at the considerable 'management costs' of some well-known charities.

If you can afford to do all your *femme* shopping in the big chain stores, good luck - but you will spend a lot more

than you need, especially if you are building up a basic wardrobe. Given a little time and perseverance you will find just as good a selection at a fraction of the price in the charity shops. Why not try them?

A.F.

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## TROUBLE WITH SHOES ?


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If you have trouble finding smart and comfortable shoes, try calling in at main branches of Saxe's and asking for (or picking up) their Tall & Small brochure. This illustrates all the shoes in this range, with indications of the sizes available for "non-average size feet". Alternatively, why not send for a mail-order catalogue from J.D.Williams (PO Box 123, 53 Dale Street, Manchester M60 1UH). This contains "a wide choice of stylish and comfortable footwear in five width fittings", as well as other attractive clothing, at attractive prices.

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## DO YOUR SHOES FIT ?

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| WHICH WIDTH FITTING DO YOU NEED?                                                      |            |                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <b>C</b>   | <b>STANDARD</b><br>For slim to medium width feet             |
|                                                                                       | <b>D</b>   | <b>MEDIUM</b><br>For a medium or average foot width          |
|                                                                                       | <b>E</b>   | <b>WIDE</b><br>For a slightly wider than average fitting     |
|                                                                                       | <b>EE</b>  | <b>EXTRA WIDE</b><br>For extra width fitting                 |
|                                                                                       | <b>EEE</b> | <b>ULTRA WIDE</b><br>For extra widths that need special care |



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## HANDY HINTS

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Fed up with runs in your nylons ? Try soaking them in salt. The American Morton Salt Co. claims that soaking stockings and tights in salt water for three hours makes them more resistant to runs and snags.

First, hand-wash the nylons as usual and allow them to drip dry. Now soak them for three hours in a solution of two cups of salt in a gallon of water, and again drip dry.

Why not try it ? You have nothing to lose but your 'ladders'.

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If you want your eyeshadow to stay on all day - or even all night - try putting foundation cream on your eyelids, powder over it, and *then* apply your shadow.

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And for long-lasting lipstick, after outlining your lips with a lip pencil (to prevent 'bleeding'), first apply a layer of lipstick and then blot it with a tissue. Powder over this and then apply a second coat of lipstick. (*If you are dining out, expecting to be kissed, or are merely paranoid, you can repeat this several times*).

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## FASHION HINTS FOR 1992

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Well girls, are you wondering what to wear this year ? Amongst a list of fashion 'ins' and 'outs' for 1992 compiled recently by a Canadian fashion writer, items considered 'in' included very short shorts, girdles, platform soles, suspenders, colour-matched tights, bright red lipstick (and bright red hair), thigh-high boots, fishnet stockings, see-through tops, and hats and gloves. On a recent visit to Paris (which included a fashion show) my own observation was that current fashion centres around red and black outfits ("*rouge et noir*"), with mini mini-skirts (on women of all ages) and super-glossy opaque black tights (at up to £ 30 a pair !). *C'est magnifique* !

However, prepare to be disappointed. According to recent issues of several womens' magazines the main 1992 trend in womens' fashion in Britain is **menswear**. *Cosmopolitan*, for example, said quite openly that "cross-dressing is back on the catwalks. The girls...will be raiding men's wear to turn hermaphrodite...Once again, they are out to wear the trousers - and the jackets, shirts, trilbies and ties". A few weeks earlier under *Best*'s headline "One of the Boys" it was said that "It's a fact - women just love menswear", and advised women to "Raid your man's wardrobe", and showed pictures including a woman wearing a man's pinstripe suite. The same week in *Bella*, under the heading "Borrowed from the Boys", women were advised to "Plan a raid on your man's wardrobe" and told that "Mannish, dandy styles are big fashion news at the moment, so take the opportunity to save on clothes bills by sharing with willing male members of the family". Each of these magazines carried full-colour spreads of women dressed in clothes designed




and made for men, from suits, tweed sports jackets, shirts, collars and ties to trilbies.

What puzzles me is how it is quite openly regarded as acceptable - indeed, fashionably desirable - for women consciously to cross-dress and wear clothing made for the opposite sex (the real thing - not just imitations of it), while men are open to all sorts of condemnation, and even possible arrest, if seen to be doing the same. Whatever happened to the concept of a law against sex-discrimination ? Perhaps, after all, Oscar Wilde was right when he said *"Fashion is what one wears oneself. What is unfashionable is what other people wear"* !

A.F.

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## HOW OTHERS SEE US

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Even if they don't understand or like us very much, you must have noticed how fascinated the media - not to mention the general public - are by transsexuals and crossdressers. However, unlike the generally condemning attitude of the newspapers, who seek out and hound members of the gender community with a prurient interest that never seems to flag, it is interesting to note how many of the womens' magazines regularly feature articles about particular transsexuals - and, less often, crossdressers - who are apparently willing to 'come out of the closet' and sell their stories.

Unlike the daily - and especially the Sunday - papers, the womens' magazines seem to print articles on this subject which are generally very sympathetic. This is good news for us all (and perhaps it is also a good way for some transsexuals to help pay for their very expensive treatment - hormones and electrolysis, not to mention re-assignment surgery. The following is a summary of just some of the articles that have appeared in the last year or so.

**Why can't I be Mrs Mopp ?** This article in *Bella* was the story of Elaine (previously Ernie), a pre-op TS who had suffered a great deal of job discrimination, although she only wanted to continue in her work as a hospital cleaner. Her employers had at first accepted her as what she was, and had even provided separate toilet facilities for her, but when the domestic work went out to contract



she lost her job because of her new employers' unreasonable insistence that she dress and behave as a man.

**At last I'm at peace with myself**, also appearing in *Bella*, told a happier story, that of Stephanie (formerly Steven). Stephanie is an attractive young post-op TS who was previously a married electrical technician with two young sons. Her story puts across clearly the mental and physical agony that a TS can experience, but she was exceptionally fortunate in having a loving and supportive wife and parents. Now divorced and working as a part-time glamour model, as well as in the job for which she was originally trained, Stephanie comes across as a warm and loving individual who has made the transition with exceptional success.

**Being different is my only crime** is a less happy story, which appeared in *Take a Break*. This anonymous post-op TS had experienced a difficult childhood and had eventually 'taken the plunge' and lived full-time as a woman while waiting five years for re-assignment surgery. The surgery was successful and she got a job as a bus driver. However, three years later a tabloid newspaper tracked her down and published a sensational piece that caused her to be reviled by her workmates and neighbours, and to lose her job and her home. She is understandably very bitter.

**I'm happy for the first time**, appearing in *Bella*, was another sympathetically told tale of a successful pre-op TS. Former soldier and mercenary, Michael became Michaela after a life spent vainly trying to overcome his deep feelings by undertaking an excessively macho lifestyle. An unsuccessful marriage - albeit lasting 20 years and resulting in three sons - eventually ended and Michaela began living full-time as a woman. His sons took the news surprisingly well, and Michaela now lives in the country and runs a rescue centre for hawks. At 54 "I'm happy, really happy now for the first time" she says.

**I enjoy being a girl** appeared in *Take a Break* and is the story of Helen, formerly Allan, a young and attractive

post-op TS. This is another story of a difficult childhood in Britain, although when she began dressing full-time in the female role "at the hair salon where she worked Helen was immediately accepted and the girls taught her to use make-up. The only one who shunned her was her estranged father - although he has since come round". After emigrating to Australia, where she had her re-assignment surgery, Helen married, although she later found out that under Australian law - as in Britain - the marriage ceremony was illegal. She now works as an electrolysis specialist, and despite the problem with the legality of her (happy) marriage says "I haven't a problem any more. It's a problem I had which has been solved".

Under the heading **Double lives** a report in *Bella* on the theme that *Some people aren't what they seem* included a piece on Glenn (now Carolyne), a 51 year old radio DJ who for many years "at home wore dresses, high heels and make-up". He was blessed with an understanding wife, and a son who said that although he would always love him as his father, found that "Carolyne is a much nicer person". They had to move home frequently to keep the secret, until a colleague 'exposed' him to the local press. Fortunately most people stood by him. Eventually he was divorced and underwent re-assignment surgery. Unfortunately, the rest of Carolyne's story is not recorded.

An exceptionally well-informed factual piece about cross-dressing followed an article in *Woman* entitled **Could YOU stay married to a man who dressed as a WOMAN?** The main story was of Norman, a paratrooper whose cross-dressing was known to his wife before they married. She said "I was a widow when we met: if you ask yourself whether it's worse to be lonely, or married to a transvestite, then the whole thing is put into perspective". This extraordinary woman - now a regional organiser for *Women of the Beaumont Society* - and her four children have clearly put their love and support above 'what people think'. Norman (as Norma) explains his crossdressing in fascinating detail, sufficient for readers to realise that this is nothing threatening or harmful, and with quite



exceptional sympathy for readers' feelings. The associated editorial material - obviously written with help from the Beaumont Society - is a model of factual clarity and sympathy for the gender community. If only all media stories on these lines were as good !

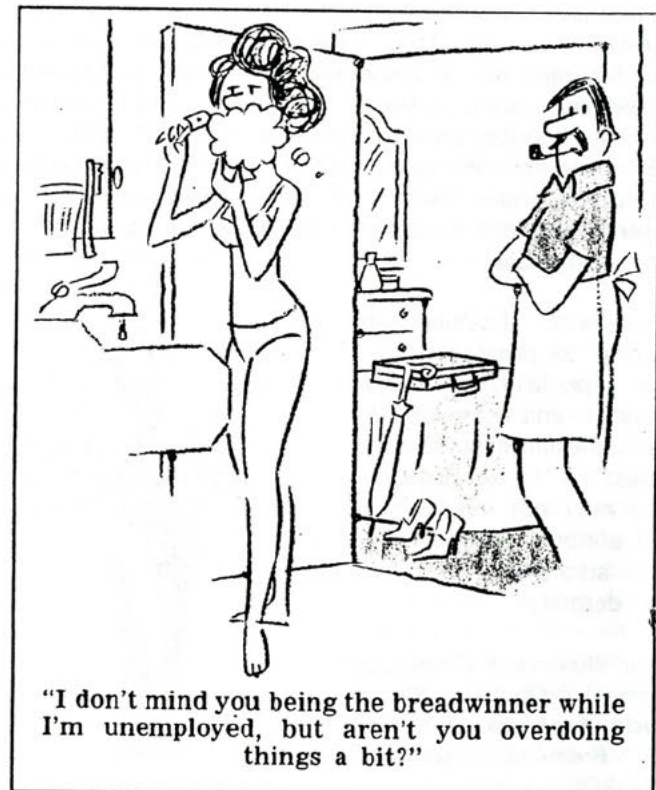
An unusual story in *Bella* called *Come to tea*, which illustrates who our real friends are, was that of a suburban housewife who holds perfectly respectable afternoon ladies' tea parties - although unknown to her husband and her neighbours her guests are all crossdressers. She has a dozen or so 'regulars' including a lecturer, an accountant and a bank clerk. The tea parties are absolutely 'straight', with no 'hanky panky'. She says "It's not only my guests who like dressing up. My tea parties give me a chance to look glamorous. I may be middle aged but I enjoy a bit of fun, too". If only there were more around like her !

Finally, even BBC Radio 2 got in on the act in January, when the late-evening show by 'The Jamesons' featured Pamela White, a transsexual who had been a cross-dresser for most of his life before having gender reassignment surgery when he had turned 60 and had been married for many years and had six children. Very bravely Pamela described in touching detail her life both before and after the surgery, and cleared up most of the popular misconceptions about the differences between crossdressers and transsexuals; and the false belief that being either necessarily implies being homosexual. She expressed herself as well-satisfied with her surgery (which cost her £ 5165, as the NHS waiting list was too long in view of her age) and her new life, and said how supportive her Somerset neighbours had been. It was a pleasure to hear this subject given so much air-time (around half-an-hour), and the very sympathetic and supportive attitude of Derek - and especially of Ellen - Jameson throughout the interview. They also offered to pass on to Pamela any enquiries or other correspondence.

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*So there it is. Underlying all these items is a feeling of sympathy from the womens' world that is sadly missing from the mostly male-dominated daily and Sunday press. If we want to know who our real friends are, it seems that we must look even more to the ladies.*

A.F.





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## HAVING TROUBLE DRESSING NICELY ?

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Finding ultra-feminine clothing for the larger figure is not always easy. However, **Showgrade Fashion** now provide a comprehensive mail order - including a made-to-measure - service. Their catalogue includes a range of very feminine day, evening and underwear, using mostly glossy poly-satin, taffeta, lycra, etc. Their made-to-measure service provides quotations for designs from their standard catalogue, together with material samples for you to chose from. And, considering the quality of material and the attractive designs available, prices are very reasonable.

**Showgrade Fashion** is seeking to provide a service especially for cross-dressers, and is seeking to reach the large number of 'closet' crossdressers who may not even know that support groups exist. They also guarantee strict confidentiality.

Their illustrated Catalogue costs £ 2.00 from **Showgrade Fashions, PO Box 10, Bramhall, Stockport SK7 2QF.**



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## HAVE YOU READ ?

### Some Books Reviewed

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*The Gender Paradox* by Jed Bland. Published by The Derby TV/TS Group, Belper, Derby. 1991. £ 7.50.

It is not often that one comes across a book that so completely covers all the problems, thoughts and experiences of crossdressers and transsexuals. Sub-titled *What it Means to be a Transvestite* this paperback book is written by a crossdresser who has seen - and experienced - it all, and who has been a counsellor and friend to many others who have had to face up within themselves to what they are.

From the opening sentence ("*I am a transvestite.*") to the list of reference material at the end, this book is a complete guide to the pressures and problems that we all face. Written in a clear and readable manner the first-hand experience, and the understanding, of the author show clearly through every chapter. Perhaps more importantly, just about every myth and misunderstanding about the gender community is tackled and laid to rest, and it is full of good advice. ("*The main thing is for no-one to be hurt, emotionally or physically*"). It is also an eminently quotable book. (Two examples: "*there is a difference between what I feel I am, and what I feel I am supposed to be*"; and "*I am not a label. I am a person*"). If I have any quibble at all with this book it is that the author still uses the perjorative term 'transvestite' throughout his text, and does not sufficiently note how through ignorance the term itself brings down upon us such a high proportion of society's disapproval. Also, I do



feel that his sub-title may not sufficiently attract TSs - for the book does very seriously tackle their problems, and in some depth. However, I have no doubt that **this book should be made compulsory reading for all who may have to advise or counsel crossdressers or transsexuals.** It should also be read by every single member of our own community.

A.F.

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*Stephanie: a Girl in a Million. (The Autobiography of a Transsexual)* by Stephanie Anne Lloyd. London: Ebury Press. 1991. £ 12.99

Stephanie Anne Lloyd is certainly one of the most notable - nay, notorious - of British transsexuals. On account of her chain of Transformation shops, and the Albany Clinic, her name is probably known to just about every cross-dresser and TS in the country. This is her story and, like that of Carolyn Cossie (reviewed in the last issue) it is basically a story of someone who has been persecuted and hounded by 'the media' on account of being what she is. However, Stephanie is basically what our American sisters would call 'a tough cookie'.

Brought up as a Jehovah's Witness in a strictly religious household, and known as something of a Cassanova as a young man, Keith Michael Hull became a successful business man and company Director with a wife and three children. After 14 years of marriage, however, he reached the point of suicide due to the gnawing feelings within him. He sought and obtained reassignment surgery and then, due to the sensationalist attention of the Press, Stephanie's life fell apart. She lost her job, her family, and her financial security. In desperation she turned to prostitution before setting herself up in legitimate (if not conventional) business again and marrying a wealthy business man (although not in the eyes of British law).

Her undoubted difficulties drove Stephanie into means of getting back on her feet that few of us would choose - and few transsexuals have chosen - and her business activities have since landed her in (thankfully a female) prison. Somehow a less sympathetic character than Carolyn Cossie, despite the difficulties and problems that 'the media' caused for her, Stephanie Anne Lloyd's story is nevertheless a fascinating one that will be of great interest to all members of the gender community. For my own taste rather too much of the book is devoted to her early male life, but it is nevertheless recommended.

A.F.

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## BREAST IMPLANTS - AGAIN

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Despite newspaper headlines such as "Breast Implants Spark Panic" the 'scare situation' started in America has so far had little effect here. Although Canada and France hastily followed the American rush to ban the use of silicone implants pending further investigations into their safety, the British Department of Health has not considered the 'evidence' available sufficient to follow the rush. Even in America not everyone is convinced. One recent survey showed that of 3111 women who had received cosmetic breast implants (as opposed to implants following cancer) only 21 had developed tumours compared with an expected total of 36. One surgeon commented that "This is below the national average in the US for the incidence of breast cancer, so I am trying to reassure all my patients that they have very little to fear". (NB. A few of the notable beauties reported to have had cosmetic implants include the actress Jane Fonda, David Bowie's model girlfriend Iman - claimed by some to be the most beautiful woman in the world - and singer Dolly Parton !).



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## DO-IT-YOURSELF

### MAKE YOUR OWN EARRINGS

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by Julia Gordon

You don't necessarily have to buy earrings for your non-pierced ears - you can make your own.

**What you need:**

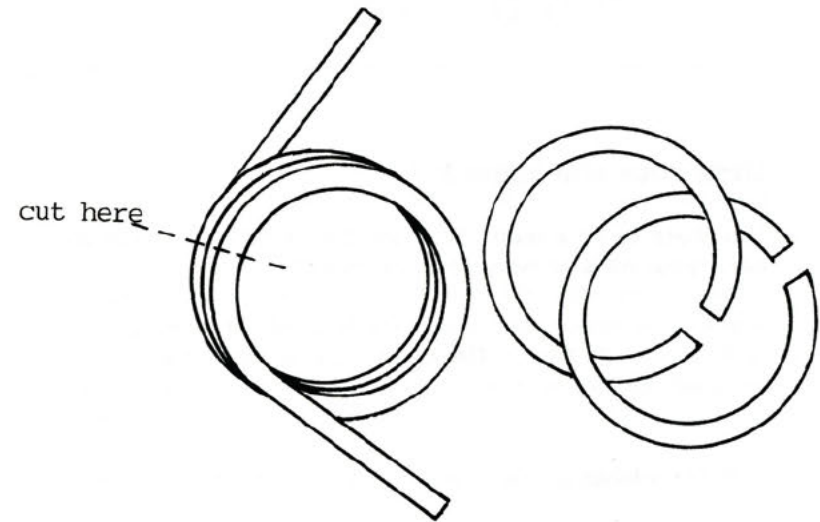
- A length of brazing rod
- Small hacksaw
- Emery board
- Metal polish (e.g. Brasso or Duraglit)
- 5-minute Epoxy adhesive
- Nail buffer (optional)

**What you do:** Find a steel cylinder or bar of about 1" to 1 1/2" diameter and wrap the brazing rod around it several times, then use a small hacksaw with a fine-toothed blade to separate the hoops (see Diagram).

Open up the hoops slightly to allow you to smooth off the ends with the emery board (and ideally follow this up with a nail buffer for a really smooth finish). Twist the brass hoops back into alignment and polish them with the metal polish. Thoroughly wash the earrings and allow them to dry before coating the ends with a small dab of epoxy adhesive. (This will prevent your ear lobe becoming discoloured by contact with the metal).

To wear the earrings, adjust the gap by trial and error until by gently opening the hoop it can be worked on to the lobe of the ear at its thinnest point. Position it before allowing it to return to its original shape. The pressure the hoop now exerts on the ear lobe should be adequate to keep it in place. The pain (and aren't we girls all a little

bit masochistic in our pursuit of femininity ?) will soon disappear.



*Julia makes jewelry herself, and if you have any queries they will be passed on if addressed to her c/o The Editor of The Tartan Skirt, at the address on the Contents page.*

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## WORRIED ?

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Need to relax ? Why not wander into your local Chemist's and pick up a copy of the leaflet *A Woman's Guide to a Worry-Free Life*. Its useful hints on relaxation exercises and healthy eating are well worth trying.



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## QUOTES OF THE MONTH

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### Little does she know !

"I'd hate to be a man - how terrible never to be able to paint your nails or wear stillets again"

*Rosemary Ford - Bruce Forsythe's  
Generation Game Assistant*

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### She SHOULD know !

"There are no ugly women...only lazy ones"

*Helena Rubenstein*

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### She DOES know !

"Sex appeal is 50 per cent what you've got, and 50 per cent what people think you've got"

*Sophia Loren*

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## WHO'S TOO OLD ?

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In case you thought that you were too old to appear glamorous, just think of some of the most beautiful women around.

Linda Evans, Britt Ekland, Tammy Wynette and Stefanie Powers will all turn 50 this year. Tina Turner is a grandmother at 53. And Angie Dickinson, who is rumoured to be going to appear nude in a *Playboy* centrefold this year, is an amazing 60.

*You see ? You don't have to be a spring chicken to look good.*

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## AND WHO'S TOO LARGE ?

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Wish you were a few sizes smaller ? Don't bother. Comfort yourself with the knowledge that when she made the film *Some like it hot*, Marilyn Monroe needed a size 16 dress. Buxom is beautiful !

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## PRACTICAL 'UNDERDRESSING'

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*Following the article on 'Underdressing' (i.e. wearing female lingerie beneath your everyday 'male' clothing) in the last issue, here are two practical suggestions.*

If you don't want to go as far as wearing stockings and a suspender belt beneath your everyday clothing, or are worried about the thought of (obviously female) tights showing at your ankles, especially when you sit down and (automatically) hitch up your trouser legs - or simply don't like the thought of pulling socks on over tights - why not try wearing the opaque tights which are now so fashionable with the ladies ? Black or grey 40 denier 'opaque' tights are virtually indistinguishable at the ankles from ordinary socks. And if it turns cold then 70 denier tights are as good as 'long Johns' for keeping you warm; and a great deal better looking. Who knows, even your wife or girl friend might not find this too difficult to accept.

In the warmer weather you might also find black or grey 40 denier 'Pop socks' ('Knee-highs') a more comfortable - and acceptable - alternative to your usual male socks. (Did you know that even the Speaker of the House of Commons wears these with his ceremonial dress ?).

I've been wearing opaque tights in winter and 'Pop socks' in summer, while in male dress, for the last year or so. No-one at work or at home has noticed; and I've certainly *felt* a whole lot better !

A.F.

\*\*\*OOO\*\*\*

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## CORRESPONDENCE COLUMN

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*Dear Anne*

*I read with interest your article "What's In a Name" (Issue 1) and agree wholeheartedly with your views on the need to look afresh at the vocabulary. 'Image' and 'Public Relations' are, of necessity, becoming more important as our expectations are raised, and whether we like it or not the language we use **does** influence how others see us. **We** know who we are, and as long as we choose to avoid contact with society it is of no real consequence what we call ourselves. But those of us who wish to 'be all we want to be', and be accepted for that, had better arm ourselves with the best weapons available. It has been my own experience that in referring to myself as a crossdresser (when obliged to 'educate' others to my way of life), I have not felt any loss of self-respect, nor felt that I prejudiced my case for respect for others. Incidentally, I have never found it necessary to abbreviate the term - this is one habit I can live without.*

*Yours truly  
Julia Gordon  
(Inverness)*

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Is there anything in this issue that you would like to comment on or that 'gets you going' ? Anything you would just like to 'get off your chest' ? Let's be hearing from you. 'Letters to the Editor' are always welcome - address on the Contents page.

A NEW GROUP IN ABERDEEN

Although there has hitherto been little activity for cross-dressers north of the Tay there is certainly a demand for a Gender Group in the north. Now 3G (the Grampian Gender Group) will meet that need.

The first meeting - attended by seven individuals coming from as far apart as Brechin to Inverness - was held on Saturday 21 March, when it was agreed that future meetings will be held on the third Saturday of each month, at 1 pm for 2 pm. The new group has been fortunate in obtaining safe, secure and comfortable modern premises with adequate car parking, and adjacent to a number of bus routes. There are good changing facilities and refreshments will be available. It is intended that a programme of talks, demonstrations, videos, etc. will be arranged, and meetings will be open to any member of the gender community willing to observe the Group's guidelines as to conduct (similar to those prevailing in most other Groups) - and of course this includes members of other gender groups or societies who may find themselves in or near Aberdeen.

Unusually, the new group also has a professional counselling service, available through the goodwill of a friendly (real girl) social worker who is a trained counsellor and has particular knowledge of our problems. Friendly relations have also been established with the Aberdeen Gay Switchboard, who have already referred a number of enquiries from 'closet' cross-dressers and transsexuals.

For further information contact Anne Forrester (address on the Contents page), or phone 03398 83695.

WHERE ELSE TO GO

The following is a listing of gender Groups, with contact telephone numbers. If you are expecting to attend a Group for the first time it would be wise to contact the organisers first. (NB. Organisers: please tell the Editor of The Tartan Skirt about any changes to these details).

ABERDEEN. Grampian Gender Group ("3G"). Open to members of other Groups. Third Saturday of each month (except December), 1 pm for 2 pm. £ 2.00. Changing facilities or arrive dressed. Wives & partners welcome. Details: Anne Forrester, 03398 [REDACTED].

BELFAST. Belfast Butterfly Club. Open meetings, 3rd Tues each month, 1pm for 2 pm. Details: 0232 [REDACTED].

BENFLEET (Essex). Trans-Essex. Open meetings 2nd Fri each month. Details: 0268 [REDACTED] (7-11 pm).

BIRMINGHAM. Midland Connexion. 1st Tues each month from 10.30 pm. Details: 021 [REDACTED].

BIRMINGHAM. Central TS Support Group. 3rd Fri each month 7 pm. Details: 021 [REDACTED].

BLACKHEATH (W. Midlands). St Michael's TV/TS Group. Open meetings Tues/Wed 7-10 pm, Thurs 5-10.30 pm, Sat 11am-5pm. Details: 021 [REDACTED].

BLACKPOOL. Open meetings Fri evening. Accommodation available. Details: Margaret [REDACTED], 0253 [REDACTED].

BRIGHTON. Sensible TVs/TSs welcome any time at Juggler Public House, 21 Western Rd. Special TV nights every Wed. Details: 0273 [REDACTED].

BRISTOL. 4th Sat each month, Trinity Rd Library. Details: 0793 [REDACTED] or 0934 [REDACTED].

CAMBRIDGE. 2nd Sat each month, 6pm. Details: Judy, 0223 [REDACTED].

COVENTRY. Cov-Trans. 2nd & last Fri each month, from 8 pm. Changing facilities, refreshments & storage facilities. Wives & partners welcome. Details: Julie or Maureen, 0203 [REDACTED].

DARLINGTON. Open meetings, last Sat each month. Wives & partners welcome. Changing facilities or arrived dressed. £ 2.50. Details Mavis or Norman, 0325 [REDACTED].

DERBY. TV/TS Group. Transnet. Details: 0246 [REDACTED].

EDINBURGH. Scottish TV/TS Group. Last Sat each month (except Dec), 1 pm for 2 pm. £ 1.50. Changing facilities or arrive dressed. Wives & partners welcome. Details: 031 [REDACTED] (7.30-10.00 pm).

GLASGOW. Open meetings, 2nd Tues each month, from 7 pm. Details: 041 [REDACTED].

HULL. Open meetings. Details: Helen [REDACTED], 0482 [REDACTED].

LEEDS. West Yorkshire Group. 1st & 3rd Thurs each month, 8 pm. Changing facilities. Details: Norma & Mavis, 0325 [REDACTED].

LEICESTER. Chameleon Group. Open meetings 2nd Sat & 3rd Fri each month 7.30-11 pm. £ 2.50. Partners welcome, £ 1.25. Details: (ask for Chameleon Group and speak to Jolene), 0533 [REDACTED].

LIVERPOOL. The Liverbirds. Every Fri from 7.30. Members £1, others £2. Changing facilities & refreshments. Details: Annabelle, 051 638 9332.

LONDON, Shoreditch. TV/TS Group. Open meetings every Fri/Sat/Sun, from 8 pm. Changing facilities & refreshments. Group members £4, others £8. Details: 071 [REDACTED].

LONDON, Winchmore Hill. Open meetings with Anne [REDACTED]. 2nd Wed each month. No smoking, phone beforehand. Changing facilities. Details: 081 [REDACTED].

LUTON. 3rd Sun each month. Details 0582 [REDACTED].

MALVERN. 3rd Thurs each month 7.30-11 pm. Changing facilities. Details: Janet, 0684 [REDACTED].

MANCHESTER. Northern Concord. Every Wed at Rembrandt Hotel, 7.30-12.00. Changing facilities, licensed bar, meals. Members £2, others £3. Accomodation available. Reservations: 061 [REDACTED].

NOTTINGHAM. Open meetings every Thurs 7-11 pm. Bar & changing facilities. £ 1.50. Details: 0602 [REDACTED] (8-11 pm).

SHEFFIELD. Details: Martine Rose, 0742 [REDACTED].

SWINDON. Transvestite Forum. Open meetings 2nd Sat each month. Toothill Farm Community Centre, Bodiam Drive, Toothill, Swindon. Helpline: 0793 [REDACTED].



AND FINALLY !

Have you heard ?

Who's a pretty girl, then ? As a joke Dolly Parton once entered a 'Dolly Parton look-alike contest in Los Angeles - and finished second to a man in 'drag' !

Oh Horror ! A Glaswegian was recently put on probation in Dublin for "offending public decency". He was wearing a black corset, fishnet tights, high heels and a G-string - to advertise a new production of *The Rocky Horror Show*.

Fashion (1). A window display of wedding gowns in Warrington recently appeared under the legend **Executive Menswear**. They should be so lucky !

Fashion (2). Nick Strange, a 28-year-old Cornish decorator, was so upset when his fiancée called off their wedding that he went through a mock marriage ceremony with his best man. Wearing a sleeveless white wedding dress and hobnailed boots the 17-stone bride nearly gave his 'groom' a rupture when he tried to carry him over the threshold.

Don't be catty ! An Edinburgh veterinary surgeon recently issued a record of feline vaccination that showed the cat's sex as *Male* - and the name as *Prudence*. Transsexual cats now ? Even the Edinburgh Tomcats are confused.

The bare truth about bedtime. In a survey, *Forum* magazine reported that 43% of girls sleep 'raw', compared with only 38% of men. A quarter of men would like their partners to wear black stockings and suspenders in bed, and a quarter of girls would like their men to wear pyjamas - although only 8% do so.

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