

"OH MY GOD! YOU'RE A GIRL!"

I can't begin to imagine what it must feel like to be automatically assumed to be female. I am a woman who is almost never mistaken for a woman. When my lover and I parade hand-in-hand down the city streets, the stares are frankly rude and thoughts almost audible. We can't be women because we look too much like men. If we're men and holding hands we must be gay. If we're gay and flaunting it in broad daylight - !! As their minds whirr and click we tend to spring apart. Survival tactics, not a cop out.

When I'm alone I am an adolescent boy; I walk into an unfamiliar pub and the bar staff range against me: "Sorry mate, we can't serve you." Leaving a shop a group of women snort: "Wouldn't mind getting his trousers down!" When I go into men's changing rooms no-one notices. Walking home the women working on the corner shout across - "Wanna do some business?"

It's a strange feeling, being a woman with all the attendant disadvantages, unwittingly permitted the male viewpoint. Men clustering outside the Women's toilets embarrassed into a shuffling camaraderie before that unknown world. Women watching me nervously until I cross the road and cease to follow them. Being spoken to first in restaurants, and always presented with the bill. Addressed with the friendliness of (assumed) shared knowledge rather than endless sexual innuendo. There are bizarre contradictions; walking about at night I feel perfectly safe because I am assumed to be male. And yet, statistically, young men are by far the highest group at risk from attack (perhaps because they are the only ones out at night, beating each other up!), so I'm actually more at risk than if I looked more 'feminine'.

Once, when I was a child, I announced at the dinner table that "when I am an old man...". My parents burst out laughing before I could finish my sentence. The mistake was theirs; to the world out here, holding me up against a series of stereotypes in an attempt to fit me into a category, I must be male: I am so obviously not female.

At school, when people accused me of looking like a boy, I argued that as I was a girl, I could not look like a boy. The argument remains true today. If I still "look like a boy" and am a woman, then it is the definition of "being a boy" that is at fault, not me. There are no such things as men's or women's clothes - only clothes that men or women conventionally wear.

My friends, anxious to reassure me, confirm that I am "not butch - more ANDROGYNOUS". But they are wrong; androgyny has yet to be invented. As it stands at present it is a euphemism for middle-class butch women who, according to the proscriptions of the Lesbian Thought Police, should know better than to want to be men. As if it were that simple.

In time of course, my experience of being male will vanish. As my hair goes grey, my wrinkles proliferate and my body fills out I will cease to look like a boy. In the meantime, indignant women will continue to chase me out of the Ladies.

LIZ MILLWARD

I WAS ABOUT TO CHAT YOU UP!"

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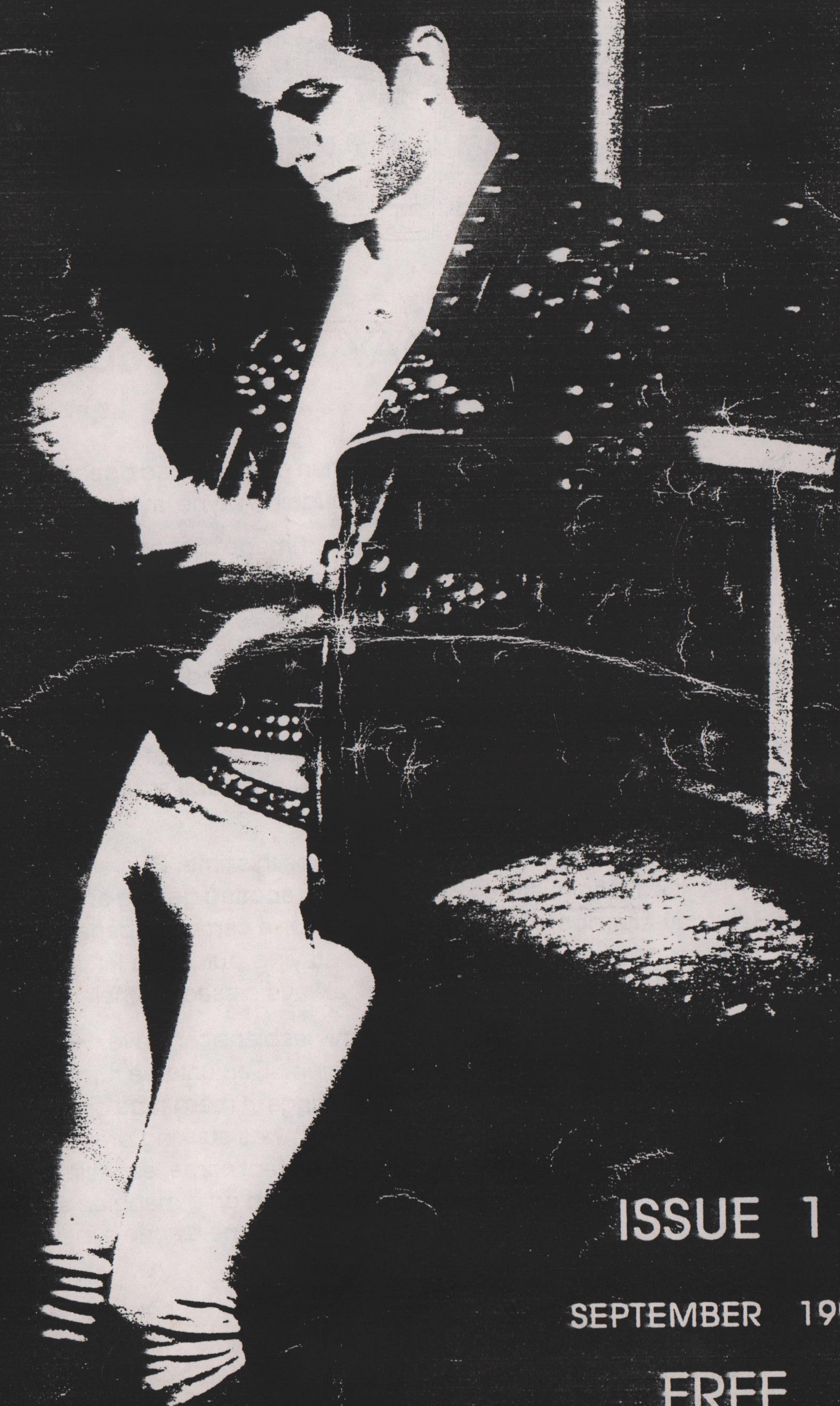
OUTLAWS

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LESBIAN & GAY GROUP

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BACKLASH

Welcome to 'OUTLAWS', a new, Nottingham-based periodical for lesbians and gay men. Above all, we want to include what you want, otherwise you won't read it, so if there's anything you crave that's halfway legal then get in touch. Ideas for future issues already include lesbian SM, a pampered pets page, tattoos & piercing, safersex advice for lesbians as well as all the views that're fit to print (and most of those that aren't!)



EPISODE 1: SATURDAY NIGHT, SUNDAY MORNING

BY FRED FANDANGO

It was one of those Sunday mornings when one dreaded opening the curtains. Shards of brilliant light were piercing the muggy depths of the boudoir. Wayne lay there groaning familiar "Never agains".

Dragging himself to the mirror a dishevelled image blinked back. Definitely one too many Southern Comforts were had at Mister Frenzie's Bop Bar. Shirley Temple curls which appeared to have been plugged into the National Grid hung down over his face. It was high time to shave off the Shredded Wheat image! Wayne wondered just how many other dizzy queens were suffering in the Dale at this moment. At least he didn't have anyone demanding to do the deed right now which was a small mercy. "Pull yourself together gell!". He had to get his shit together for Josie's and Freed's vegan BBQ, '2pm prompt'.

Life at number 37 was a little more lively. Hyper-slag Pete was making Mike's door handle vibrate. This always happened due to some quirk in the architectural structure of the house. At least it gave the other house-mates the 'Do Not Disturb' warning.

Mike and Pagraid mused over who it would be this time. Padraig decided to offer 2-1 on that blonde flat-top from the 'It's It' denim store. Pete had been spotted getting an unusual load of personal attention there on Saturday afternoon. Mike still held out for a certain Lebanese student that Pete had the hots for. One thing for certain, Mike and Pat were staying put in the kitchen until the proof surfaced. The Cheshire Cat grins and the chorus of "Hello" always pissed off their chummy house-mate.

Freed felt a strong affinity with cats that only lesbians can have. However, opening cans of 'Moggie-Nosh' did provoke a certain deep seated revulsion. Can cats be turned into vegans was the perennial question. Peering through the tangle of plant cuttings in marg tubs on the window sill, Killer ('Killer', pah! Why did she ever let Josie get away with that one?) was stalking prey in the long grass at the bottom of the garden. Perhaps, thought Freed, Killer is a rather apt name, especially as she remembered the fateful spring morning in 1989 when she stepped bare-footed on a mangled starling that Killer had brought in as a game prize. Freed resigned herself to the fact that one-to-one's, bells around the throat (hands too) and threats had no effect on this creature.

"There's no point getting maudlin - in less than three hours time the back garden will be full of lesbians and gays basking in the reverie that only the Dale's 'Hostess with the Mostest' could facilitate". This thought pepped Freed up a bit, followed by the inevitable mild panic state of 'what if's...'. Where was that Josie? She needed her here, now, to help with the coleslaw.

At number 49 an argument was brewing. "I don't want to go to that Laura Ashley event at Freed and Josie's", asserted Nat. "I just know what Freed will be like. If she starts to put on her airs and graces I'm going to ask her to barbeque me a quarter-pounder!".

Jean knew what all this was really about. Nat had relatively little against Freed but was narked that the Harley Davidson was not up to this Sunday's Dykes on Bikes cruise to Skegness. If Nat could get Bull-Dyke (nickname) up the stairs to the bedroom she would do. "Thank God for spirals", thought Jean.

Eflinis strutted out of the mini-mart with a can of isotonic feeling great. Cliches and analogies about Black men and body building abounded but he was happy and proud of his hobby and - although he rarely admitted it - got a kick out of the admiring glances. It was only mid-day but he had already pumped iron for two hours; a couple of hours getting ready whilst singing along to ABBA and he would be in flirt mode. The ice-cool facade began to crumble as he thought of that guy in the ripped jeans who had just moved into the neighbourhood and had been casually (?) invited to the BBQ.

Turning into 'where-it's-at' street, Eflinis glanced up at Kevin's window. Mid-day, curtains tightly shut, yet the warblings of Morrisey were clearly audible. This was a bad sign. Kevin had the personality (somewhere under all that confusion) and looks to get on well. What thwarted him though was an inherent depressive psyche and a painful shyness. For some reason Eflinis liked this guy even though he was hard work. Stopping outside Kevin's house, Eflinis decided to call in. "He'll come to the BBQ even if I have to drag him there".

The Lambrusco flowed, clouds of acrid vege-burger smoke filled the air, and everyone seemed to be having a wail of a time. Freed darted about like a frenzied matriarch. "Stop being so responsible for everyone", moaned Josie, "Just calm down!".

Over by the music deck trouble was brewing. It was k d Lang versus Kylie. Wayne was frantically waving a Kylie tape whilst two women tenaciously clung to the stereo. If a compromise could be achieved it would be a major diplomatic coup. The Shredded Wheat brigade huffed off to the booze table to discuss strategy; k d was safe leaving moonstruck women to dream about her Elvis-like teasing.

A pair of spectacles perched at the end of a rather long nose peered over the Homebase fencing. It was Mrs Jenkins, the neighbourhood homophobe. She nearly fell off the kitchen stool on which she precariously wobbled, at the sight of two be-leathered women snogging beside the honeysuckle.

"George! George! Come quick! Those haymaysexuals are at it again!!"

What will happen next?

Tune into OUTLAWS 2 for the next rivetting instalment of 'Down in the Dale'.

DAVID ELIZABETH

BRINGING YOU



BETTER LIVING

Although I was born in the West Riding, where the Pennines dip towards the Vale of York, my childhood was strangely Hovis-free. Sunday teas were often pink, tinned ham and salad with white bread sandwiches, thickly 'battered' with margarine, stained scarlet by juicy beetroot. Beetroot's one of those vegetables that seems forever damned to be pickled, admitted to only by grannies and children. No self-respecting foodie would ever open a jar of baby beets - except perhaps in mistake for quails eggs in raspberry vinegar.

Strangely enough, the humble beet au naturel is versatile and cheap with a subtlety of flavour that surpasses most other vegetables. So don't shudder when I suggest beetroot soup - or Borscht. Like so many of the best things from Russia, it's simple, it's elegant - and it's still red. So here goes...

Take four large beetroot - about 2lbs - and boil whole and unpeeled until tender - around an hour. Cool under running water, and, using your thumbs, rub off the skins out of harm's way into the kitchen sink. Finely sieve or puree the beets and add two pints of strong beef stock - ideally it should be real stock, but if that's not practicable, gulp, and use some of the better quality cubes - but please, not OXO. Taste, season with salt and freshly ground black pepper and simmer for ten minutes.

And now you have your choice - in winter add chopped, cooked, real frankfurters and serve hot, with soured cream. But at low temperatures all it leaves behind is other soups ... dissolve some gelatine in a little hot water, stir into the soup and chill. As the late summer evenings dim to dusk, serve it jellied and icy cold with a spoonful of cream and a dusting of ground cloves. Light some candles, hand round glasses of icy Stolichnaya or ruby plum Slivovitz and imagine you're eating Borscht in Moscow before the Revolution.



'I THOUGHT FELLATIO WAS

"I thought fellatio was a Beethoven opera until I discovered the pink oboe"

The 1990 SIGMA report - a study on the social and sexual lifestyles of gay and bisexual men by gay men - reveals the startling statistic that 0.00% of us practice auto-fellation. So, who wants to gobble a Ford Fiesta I hear you ask? But seriously though, this leaves the 80% of us that still like to suck cocks (fellatio is a bit of a mouthful!) with the problem of finding someone to do it with, and then doing it safely. In my experience, of all the sexual activities we might choose to engage in, the safety of oral sex in relation to HIV seems to cause the most anxiety and confusion. In an attempt to put some minds at rest, below is a blow by blow account of our current state of knowledge.

More regular and widespread than anal sex, oral sex has always been a popular activity amongst gay men generally occupying a regular space in our repertoire, be it as an intimate expression of trust and closeness, an unmissable part of foreplay, an end in itself or even the preferred and simplest form of 'quickie'. Swallowing (at 17 calories a shot, once considered by some as an essential part of a calorie controlled diet) has until recently been more a matter of taste (or mishap) than obligation, and is seldom a blow job's Raison d'être.

The advent of AIDS and HIV - the virus that causes AIDS - in the early 80's, and the formulation of early safe sex guidelines seemed to threaten all this. As gay men we seemed faced with uncertainty and the possibility of self-censoring our own sex lives, willingly collaborating with those whose social and political agendas loathe any sexual expression on our part. It is the origin and impact of these guidelines and the numerous changes that they go through that is the source of much confusion - one minute it's safe, the next minute it's not; So who's telling the truth?

The fact is both bits of information were correct, given what was known at the time. In the early 80's it became clear that HIV infection was through sex, but exactly which sort of sex was unclear. The exchange of body fluids like cum, blood and spit seemed the most likely so the first safer sex guidelines, in a desperate attempt to stem the growing epidemic, urged a STOP of ANY exchange until further information on risk was available. Thus we were discouraged from oral sex as well as anal sex, and even deep

A BEETHOVEN OPERA UNTIL I DISCOVERED THE PINK OBOE'

kissing to avoid contracting the virus. Since then we've come to understand much more about the virus's transmission, and relative risk has re-evaluated in the light of this information.

We now know that the virus is very fragile and dies quickly outside the body, that it needs access to our bloodstream, and that it needs to be present in some concentration to pose more than a theoretical risk, so although it is present in small quantities in saliva (spit) we would need to swallow a gallon of it to be in danger of anything more than throwing up. Most sexual activities other than screwing without a condom have moved down the scale of potential risk, and this is true of oral sex.

It would be wrong to suggest that oral sex is risk free, but so far only a dozen cases of HIV infection world-wide have been thought to be due to oral sex, and then other co-risk factors appear to have been present, such as open sores on the cock or in the mouth. So as long as these other factors are not present, the risk is understood to be minimal. The risk is increased if you take your partners cum in your mouth, but even then is thought to be low. If this does happen it may be safer to swallow than spit it out because the acid in your stomach is too hostile an environment for HIV to survive. Spitting may force it past the gums where it could get into tiny abrasions or cuts. To cut down on the risk from your gums simply follow the old dental guidelines of brushing your teeth AFTER meals. In other words don't brush your teeth before sex as this often causes slight bleeding.

If you want to be completely safe during oral sex, there's a wide range of flavoured condoms, or even plain ones that you can dip into your favourite sauce or pudding and suck 'till your heart's content. This has the added advantage of protecting you from other possible infections that you can get from sucking, such as hepatitis, gonorrhoea and herpes.

For many of us the idea of sucking rubber is most unappetizing - and most of us didn't get into fellatio because we like the taste of mint, but until the invention of the knob flavoured condom, we must negotiate and weigh up for ourselves the relative low risk of sucking, against the possible loss of pleasure of blowing on rubber. Having said this, most authorities now seem to agree that while low risk doesn't mean no risk, with sensible sucking you're safer.

Ashley Fletcher is the Gay Men's health and outreach worker with:

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'OPENING THE CLOSET'

Andy Griffiths

"The determination of historians to document social hostility to homosexuality...has sometimes led them to obscure the richness of the gay culture suppressed; the popular myth that homosexual life...before the 1969 rebellion consisted of nothing but repression and isolation, opprobrium and closetry..." (p.4)

A famous image in the history textbooks I encountered at school was of a group of Nazis producing a bonfire of books by Jewish writers. Though never explicitly captioned so, this belief was fostered by the photo invariably appearing in chapters on the holocaust. In fact it depicts the burning of the Magnus Hirschfeld library at the Institute of Sexology (May 1933) in which the most complete collection of European writings on sexual diversity were lost forever. In terms of queer culture the equivalent of the burning of the library at Alexandria.

The deception may not have been intentionally homophobic but it is the tip of the iceberg of the way in which we are treated by history. Reclaiming our history from heterosexual exploitation is a fundamental necessity if we are to understand who we were, are, and might be. Otherwise we are destined to remain the invisible or marginalised creatures heterosexuality has determined to be our role.

If outing is arguably a means of reasserting our knowledge that lesbians and gay men are everywhere, **HIDDEN FROM HISTORY** is essential evidence that we were equally a significant presence in the past. For too long we have been edited from official histories, scapegoated or misrepresented. This wide-ranging collection of essays is the beginning of the struggle to reclaim what we have lost.

It is impossible given the space to do justice to its scope, but issues covered include lesbian sexuality in the medieval period, black homosexualities in Jazz Age Harlem, "The Birth of the Queen", cross-dressing women, butch/femme roleplaying and sodomy in the Dutch Republic. It is very much a shopping basket collection designed to show the diversity of responses to our sexuality through the lens of specific national cultures at specific historical moments, and is none the worse for this approach.

Slightly imbalanced towards male contributions, the book covers Ancient to Modern, from Plato to Harvey Milk, from communist Cuba to early China, although the Eurocentric/American dominance in developing lesbian and gay studies is still in evidence.

It's easy to dip into, a source of little known facts to challenge accepted interpretation, but never sacrifices the political overview to our survival strategies just to be entertaining. Did Kaiser Wilhelm's involvement in a gay sex 'scandal' accelerate the start of World War 1? Why did Jewish lesbian Gertrude Stein survive in occupied France? What is lesbian and gay history? What is a mine marriage? What happened to homosexuality after the Russian Revolution?

Rarely oversimplified, this book manages to be entertaining and scholarly in addressing debates around our identities, and at under £9 for 579 pages is essential reading for anyone who believes our history did not commence with Stonewall. If the test of a good book is the way it gets borrowed and fails to be returned (as mine has) I'd nail it to the bookshelf, or better still, buy two copies.

HIDDEN FROM HISTORY: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past. eds. Duberman, Vincinus, Chauncey.
Published Penguin 1991.

OUTED BY OUTLAWS



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'GLORIA WAS SICK IN THE TRANSIT VAN ON MONDAY'

Greg WOODS
is a
poet
and
critic

I've got two subjects on my mind at the moment. Outing and 'Return to the Blue Lagoon'. Let me start with the movie, since I haven't yet recovered from it.

This sequel to the 1980 film 'The Blue Lagoon' (which made more than \$100 million at the box office) would be deeply offensive--to straights as well as to the rest of us--if one could take it at all seriously. Both films are adverts for straight sex, but of a kind which couldn't possibly exist within modern society. As the posters say, 'The story of natural love continues'.

Milla Jovovich and Brian Krause have taken over where, a decade ago, Brooke Shields and Christopher Aitken left off. The plot is not hard to follow. Two children, Richard and Lilli, end up on a Pacific island after being set adrift from a cholera-ridden ship. Their paradise is an escape from disease. By implication, so is the natural love that develops between them.

I went to the film the afternoon it opened. The cinema was packed with pubescent girls and their tubs of popcorn. When Richard reached puberty and the child actor playing him was replaced by the teeny Brian Krause, the whole audience swooned. So as not to poop the party, I joined in. I haven't felt like that since, on 'Neighbours', Scott Robinson went walkabout in the outback and came back reincarnated as Jason Donovan.

Now, our Brian is quite cute, with that slightly goofy look of the all-American boy. Nice armpits. Perfect for his role, he is almost totally innocent of acting ability. Even in their tailored loin cloths, both he and Milla Jovovitch look as if they would be more comfortable at a drive-in, drinking or snorting coke and then making out in the back seat of a parental automobile.

According to the magazine *Young Americans*, a kind of popcornography for the starstruck pre-teens, Brian had to lose 20 pounds before he could play this role, and to keep his weight down during filming he had to take a daily six-mile run. Poor love! All that, just to look natural. Bring back puppy-fat, I say. Interestingly, my favourite teen mag *My Guy* refused to take Brian seriously when they interviewed him. He wanted to talk about how 'classical' the first Blue Lagoon film was, and how loving the Fijians are. But *My Guy* only wanted to know if he ever fell out of his loincloth while filming. (I beg your pardon? Oh no, hey, that woulda been embarrassing.) Swoon.

Anyway, what do the makers of the movie mean by 'natural love'? That's simple. Reproductive heterosexual intercourse within marriage. There are no used condoms in the surf of this Paradise. Even in the absence of priests and registrars, it is deemed natural to swear vows and exchange wedding rings. (Monkeys, I daresay, do it all the time.) The film ends with Richard and Lilli lolloping in the surf with their baby, the proof of the pudding.

I can't help wondering how many unnatural lovers were involved in this hetero crapaganda. It takes a lot of people to make a movie and they can't all be straight. How many of the film's hairdressers, grips and best boys were pervies under the skin?

Which brings me back to the subject of outing. A group of lunatics in the States have started outing men who wear toupees. This really is breath-takingly nasty. I belong to a generation of mento whom hair meant everything. We loved the way older people hated it. In the days before I hung up my loons, I had hair down to my waist. A flat-mate once tied me to the fridge door with it. Oh, happy days.

Since then, though, I've gone bald, more or less. Many a comb and bathplug has been tragically clogged with my tresses. Sic transit gloria hunniford. But while baldness itself is perfectly respectable--even, since Yul Brynner, positively sexy--the sudden stripping of a hidden egghead is still seen as an extreme humiliation in our culture. Hence the toupee wearers and the practice of outing them. Why restrict ourselves to the already bald?

I'm reminded of the French women who collaborated with the Nazis during the Occupation. Remember those newsreel films of them, after the Liberation being shaved and mocked in the streets? What a horrific but wonderful idea. Imagine the same thing happening to Anita Bryant. Or Margaret Thatcher. Or Michael Heseltine.

Simply naming our enemies, whether gay or straight, is too genteel for them. They deserve something more malicious by far. Me, I'm busy stropping my cutthroat for a blue rinse.

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