

CHIMAERA

NEWSLETTER FOR THE NOTTINGHAM GROUP OF CHE - MAY 1979

I ought to begin with a plea on behalf of the Ecology Party; more than 70 square miles of Scandinavia have been deforested to bring you this newsletter, so make sure that you read it. Particularly - read the Programme. Several people have recently said "If I'd known that was happening I would have gone along to it," when in fact the event was printed quite clearly in their programme. This time, however, read your programme in conjunction with the orange sheet which is inserted between pages 2 and 3. This gives details of Gay Pride Week - June 23rd to June 30th. During this period a large number of interesting events are being organised. The Group's programme only gives the briefest outline of what's happening and the details must be obtained from the orange sheet and can be checked by phoning Nottingham Gay Switchboard.

The only other thing to say is that the DEADLINE for the next newsletter will be FRIDAY JUNE 22nd.

David.

CONTENTS

Programme	page 2
Business meeting report: 5.4.79.....	pages 3-4
Swastickle	page 5
Friend	page 6
Nottingham CHE Group AGM	pages 7-9
This month's competition	page 9
Enthüllet den Gral!	page 10
Homosexuality - a fact of (whose) life	pages 11-12
Paedophobia	page 13
Page fourteen is Rubbish Page	page 14
The Adventures of Tasty McPherson	pages 15-17
Gay Switchboard AGM	page 17

PROGRAMME

MAY

- THURS. MAY 10TH BUSINESS MEETING at CVS at 8 pm.
- THURS. MAY 17TH PUB EVENING at the TOLL HOUSE BAR from 7.30 pm.
The Pub, which is next to the Co-Op on Parliament St. (Under City Gate) is under new gay management.
- FRI. MAY 18TH PUB EVENING for members in the MANSFIELD AREA and those who would like to join them, at the GENERAL HAVELOCK PUB, Skegby Rd., Annesley Woodhouse, from 8pm.
- MON. MAY 21ST C [REDACTED] G: a talk/discussion
o [REDACTED] Carol of the Women's
G [REDACTED]
- WED. MAY 23rd DISCO at the HEARTY GOODFELLOW 8-11pm (UPSTAIRS)

JUNE

- FRI. JUNE 1ST 'COCKTAILS ON THE BALCONY' (if you bring your own bottles - otherwise coffee at Jan and Ruth's)
From 8.30 pm at 15, Newcastle Drive, The Park.
- THURS. JUNE 7TH PUB EVENING at the TOLL HOUSE BAR (see above) 7.30pm
- SUN. JUNE 10TH 'NIGHTHAWKS' is being shown at the ODEON.
Those interested in going should find out the time of the Last Complete Performance from the local press and meet 30 minutes before that time in the TOLL HOUSE BAR.
- THUR. JUNE 14TH PROGRAMME MEETING (i.e. to work out what we want to do over the next 2 months) at 8 pm at the CVS.
- SAT. JUNE 16TH NATIONAL COUNCIL at COLCHESTER.
- MON. JUNE 18TH JOINT CHE/WOMEN'S GROUP MEETING on the subject of 'growing up gay' at 7.30pm at the CVS:
- THUR. JUNE 21ST BUSINESS MEETING at 8 pm at the CVS.
- JUNE 23RD to JUNE 30TH IS GAY PRIDE WEEK

- SAT. JUNE 23RD DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION IN THE CITY.
- SUN. JUNE 24TH PICNIC ON THE CASTLE GREEN at 3pm.
- MON. JUNE 25TH QUEST ON RADIO NOTTINGHAM (To be confirmed)
- TUE. JUNE 26TH DISCO AT SHADES 9.30pm-2 pm
- WED. JUNE 27TH GAY FILM AT NOTTINGHAM FILM THEATRE, BROAD ST.
- THUR. JUNE 28TH OPEN FORUM "HOMOSEXUALITY - A FACT OF LIFE" AT THE TEACHER'S CENTRE CRANMER ST.
- FRI. JUNE 29TH COLLECTION OF ORIGINAL WRITING BY WOMEN'S GROUP AT CVS
- SAT. JUNE 30TH COACHES FOR THE NATIONAL CARNIVAL IN LONDON
LEAVE VICTORIA CENTRE CLOCK TOWER at 8 am.
-

SEE ORANGE SHEET AND, IF IN DOUBT, RING GAY SWITCHBOARD FOR MORE
DETAIL.

GAY PRIDE WEEK '79

June 23-30th will see the biggest festival of gay events ever held in Europe. This is the 5th annual Gay Pride Week and the 10th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots which can be seen as the birth of the Gay rights Movement. A broad programme of social, cultural and political events all over the country, will end with a National Carnival in Hyde Park on Sat. June 30th.

The theme of STONEWALL '79 has been chosen to represent the stone wall of oppression and discrimination still felt by gay men and women, by taking the events at the Stonewall Bar in New York '69 as a pointer, to mark 10 years of the emergence of a strong public demand for their rights by gay communities all over the world.

In Nottingham 8 organisations have come together to organise events. They are CHE, Friend, Gay Switchboard, Nottingham Lesbian Group, Gays Against the Nazis, Quest, Nottingham University Gaysoc and Shades Nightclub. The programme of events is:-

-
- SAT JUNE 23 Distribution of information in the City
- SUN JUNE 24 LICENTIOUS FANCY DRESS PICNIC on the Castle Green.
Come how you like at 3pm (Bring your own food).
- SUN JUNE 24 QUEST on RADIO NOTTINGHAM.
- MON JUNE 25 To be arranged.
- TUE JUNE 26 GAY PRIDE DISCO at SHADES Stanford St. 9.30-2pm.
Tickets from CHE or any other member group 50p in advance or 75p at the door.
- WED JUNE 27 'WORD IS OUT' at Nottingham Film Theatre, Broad St.,
at 7.30pm. Tickets £1 from GAN or any member group.
- THUR JUNE 28 OPEN FORUM - "HOMOSEXUALITY - a fact of life".
Speakers, discussion, workshops and a showing of the CHE tape/slide kit. Registration (in advance via Friend) 50p inc. of coffee. At the Teachers' Centre Cranmer St.
- FRI JUNE 29 NOTTINGHAM LESBIAN GROUP present a collection of original writing at the CVS while they are womaning the Switchboard.
- SAT JUNE 30 COACHES FOR THE NATIONAL CARNIVAL leave Victoria Centre (clock tower) at 8am returning from London at approx. midnight. Seats must be booked in advance - £3 from GAN or any member group.
-

Also shops are being approached for special window displays and it is hoped that local press will give full coverage and maybe special programmes on the radio.

NOTTINGHAM GAY SWITCHBOARD will extend its usual service (Mon. & Thurs. 7-10pm) to Wednesday, Tuesday and Friday 7.30-8.30pm with full details of all events. PHONE NOTTINGHAM 46881.

GAY PRIDE WEEK BROCHURES will be available shortly at 5p each or FREE to anyone buying a ticket for any event.

The first of these is the...
The second is the...
The third is the...
The fourth is the...
The fifth is the...
The sixth is the...
The seventh is the...
The eighth is the...
The ninth is the...
The tenth is the...

The eleventh is the...
The twelfth is the...
The thirteenth is the...
The fourteenth is the...
The fifteenth is the...
The sixteenth is the...
The seventeenth is the...
The eighteenth is the...
The nineteenth is the...
The twentieth is the...

The twenty-first is the...
The twenty-second is the...
The twenty-third is the...
The twenty-fourth is the...
The twenty-fifth is the...
The twenty-sixth is the...
The twenty-seventh is the...
The twenty-eighth is the...
The twenty-ninth is the...
The thirtieth is the...

The thirty-first is the...
The thirty-second is the...
The thirty-third is the...
The thirty-fourth is the...
The thirty-fifth is the...
The thirty-sixth is the...
The thirty-seventh is the...
The thirty-eighth is the...
The thirty-ninth is the...
The fortieth is the...

The forty-first is the...
The forty-second is the...
The forty-third is the...
The forty-fourth is the...
The forty-fifth is the...
The forty-sixth is the...
The forty-seventh is the...
The forty-eighth is the...
The forty-ninth is the...
The fiftieth is the...

The fifty-first is the...
The fifty-second is the...
The fifty-third is the...
The fifty-fourth is the...
The fifty-fifth is the...
The fifty-sixth is the...
The fifty-seventh is the...
The fifty-eighth is the...
The fifty-ninth is the...
The sixtieth is the...

The sixty-first is the...
The sixty-second is the...
The sixty-third is the...
The sixty-fourth is the...
The sixty-fifth is the...
The sixty-sixth is the...
The sixty-seventh is the...
The sixty-eighth is the...
The sixty-ninth is the...
The seventieth is the...

The seventy-first is the...
The seventy-second is the...
The seventy-third is the...
The seventy-fourth is the...
The seventy-fifth is the...
The seventy-sixth is the...
The seventy-seventh is the...
The seventy-eighth is the...
The seventy-ninth is the...
The eightieth is the...

The eighty-first is the...
The eighty-second is the...
The eighty-third is the...
The eighty-fourth is the...
The eighty-fifth is the...
The eighty-sixth is the...
The eighty-seventh is the...
The eighty-eighth is the...
The eighty-ninth is the...
The ninetieth is the...

The ninety-first is the...
The ninety-second is the...
The ninety-third is the...
The ninety-fourth is the...
The ninety-fifth is the...
The ninety-sixth is the...
The ninety-seventh is the...
The ninety-eighth is the...
The ninety-ninth is the...
The hundredth is the...

 BUSINESS MEETING REPORT: 5.4.79.

1. The question of collection boxes in Shades and the Hearty Goodfellow was discussed at the Gay Switchboard AGM and volunteers offered to take boxes round.
2. Professor Smith was unable to talk to the group as a member of the Criminal Law Revision Committee, but it was agreed to write and ask him to speak to us as an individual.
3. Gay Pride Week - the CHE AGM voted £20 to GPW Collective.
 - Friend is enquiring of the Broad Marsh Centre for permission to hold an exhibition.
 - the June Switchboard Benefit Disco will be held at Shades. John Clarkson to arrange this.
 - an open forum to show and discuss the Tyneside tape/slide kit was agreed for June 28th. CHE would organise this with Richard Webtser - anyone with ideas of who to invite is asked to contact Richard or any CHE Officer.
 - the Lesbian group would hold an event on Friday June 29th.
4. The signatories to the CHE bank account were agreed as Joint convenors, Treasurer and Membership Secretary.
5. The question of membership research, as mandated at AGM, was deferred until the next business meeting.
6. CHE was mandated by AGM to advertise on its own behalf. It was agreed to place ads. in Nottm. News and Mansfield CHAD once a month in each, for a 3 month trial period May-July, in those weeks where Gay Switchboard ads. were not appearing, and to insert 'Ask for CHE information' to overcome the difficulty of access to phones on the Switchboard, whose number we will continue to use.
7. It was decided that Gay Pride Week Programmes, CHE Info Calendars new CHE Leaflets and special membership offers would be delivered (at least in the Victoria Centre) after the elections.
8. Hilary Stafford is the CHE signatory to the Gay Switchboard account.
9. CHE agreed at the Gay Switchboard AGM to pay half the cost of room hire at CVS, Friend is to pay the other half. This would be made as a grant to Gay Switchboard. It was agreed to pay £6-50 per quarter starting from April 1st.
10. It was agreed to make a donation of £5 to CVS for recent use of rooms.
11. Elections for Social Organiser, Caring Officer and Auditor for the CHE Group were held over to this meeting from the AGM. Pat McLernon and Ruth Thompson agreed to take on the first 2 posts respectively as a part of the convenor's role. The election of Auditor was deferred until such a time as the audit becomes necessary i.e. Feb. 1980.
12. The Contact members in Gay News will be altered to read as follows:-
 - CHE c/o 31a, Mansfield Road or Tel
 - Ian & David Nottm. 216447 or Ruth and Jan Nottm 42913
 - Women's Group: Tel. Pat & Hilary Mansfield 755000
 and this last number should also be reinstated under Mansfield.

 BUSINESS MEETING REPORT: 5.4.79

13. It was agreed that CHE along with all other local gay organisations applied to be included in the Evening Post Citizen's Guide.

14. The Treasurer will order the Tyneside Tape/slide Kit for the CHE group as agreed at the AGM.

15. Frank Kelly Defence fund - it was agreed that we wait until the position is cleared before giving any support.

16. All members asked to write to the General Secretary of NAS/UWT, Swan Cast, Waterhouse St., Hemel Hempstead, Herts in relation to his remark in a trade union publication about the Tape/slide kit - disgusting, should be destroyed etc.

17. It was agreed that we re-affiliate to the Anti-Nazi League, but to the local rather than national group. Fee £5.

18. Ruth will enquire of the Gay Lobby Officer if he requires any help over canvassing of candidates at the forthcoming elections. If it was possible it was agreed that a list should be produced giving candidates views about gay rights and all members urged to ask candidates for their views at public and private meetings.

Follow-up to date: Neither Broad Marsh nor Victoria Centre have space for an exhibition for Gay Pride Week.

The questions members have been asked by National CHE to put to candidates are:-

Do you agree that homosexuals should not be treated differently from anyone else?

What are your views on the proposal that the age of consent for gay men should be reduced from 21 to 16 to bring it into line with that for the rest of the population?

Do you believe that the Sex Discrimination Act should be amended to offer the same rights to homosexuals as to others?

Two items from Gay News which members may want to follow up:-

Law Commission on Blasphemy laws - W.A.B. Forbes QC, one of the commissioners, has made a public appeal for members of the press and public to express their views about the present legal position and possible reform. Write to W.A.B. Forbes, Conquest House, 37-38, John St., Theobalds Road, London WC1.

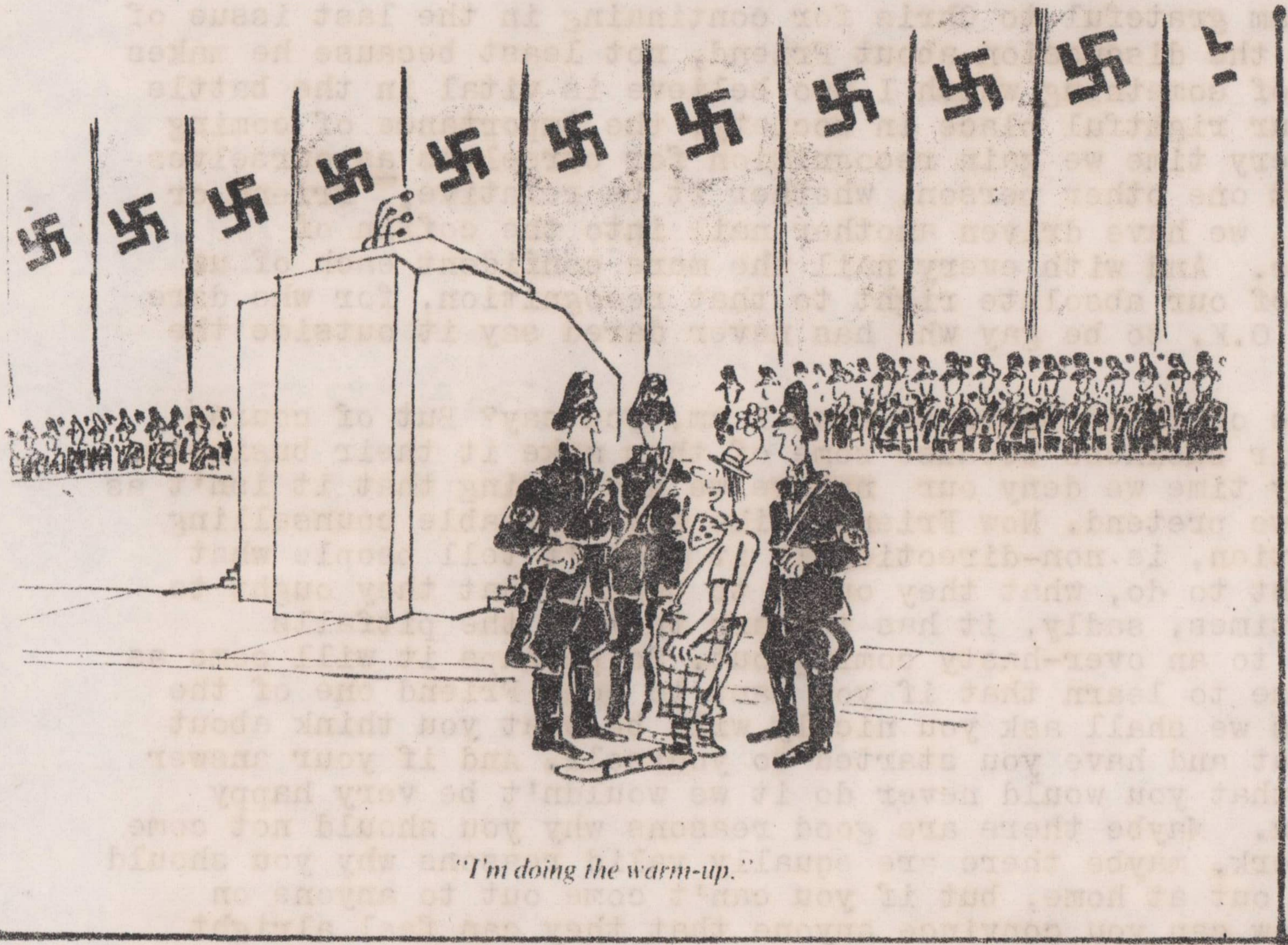
Streatham CHE want help in compiling a register of anti-gay books, published in Britain since 1967. They anticipate four main sections:- Medical, Popular, Scientific Reference Works and Novels. They will be grateful for any help, information, suggestions of titles, loans of books, advice etc.

Write to -

Sue Bradley,
Campaign Secretary,
Streatham CHE,
c/o 35 Lysias Road,
Balham,
London SW12.

I notice that I have forgotten to make mention in the Programme of something that is not exactly a group meeting, but at which anyone who is interested is welcome to attend. This is the beginning of the investigation into CHE membership over the last five years. We will be looking at why people join, why they leave or why they stay.

SWASTICKLE



FRIEND

I am grateful to Chris for continuing in the last issue of Chimaera the discussion about Friend, not least because he makes a point of something which I too believe is vital in the battle to win our rightful place in society: the importance of coming out. Every time we gain recognition for ourselves as ourselves from just one other person, whether it be relative, friend or workmate, we have driven another nail into the coffin of prejudice. And with every nail the more confident each of us becomes of our absolute right to that recognition, for who dare say it's O.K. to be gay who has never dared say it outside the closet?

None of their business what I am, you say? But of course it's their business because some of them make it their business. And every time we deny our nature we are saying that it isn't as O.K. as we pretend. Now Friend, like any reputable counselling organisation, is non-directional: it doesn't tell people what they ought to do, what they ought to think, what they ought to be. Sometimes, sadly, it has to warn them of the pitfalls attached to an over-hasty coming out. So perhaps it will come as a surprise to learn that if you want to join Friend one of the questions we shall ask you nicely will be what you think about coming out and have you started to yourself. And if your answer implies that you would never do it we wouldn't be very happy about you. Maybe there are good reasons why you should not come out at work, maybe there are equally valid reasons why you should not come out at home, but if you can't come out to anyone on earth, how can you convince anyone that they can feel alright within themselves?

Friend is non-directional but not that non-directional. There's no place in Friend for people who cannot feel at ease when looking at themselves in heterosexual society's distorting mirror, for it is only by feeling O.K. ourselves that we can make others feel O.K. too.

Don't blame some of us for not being political beings also. Some people aren't made that way and we find our most difficult question to prospective members comes when we discuss the political importance of befriending. A befriender has to seek to dispel the myths, a befriender has to undermine the closet; and though we say it very softly, a befriender is more s-bv-rs-v- than a hell of a lot of CHE members would care to be.

Richard.

From the OBSERVER Horoscope for April:

April 12th: people wearing the label 'friend' treat you to their insistent opinions about you and your life.

 MINUTES OF NOTTINGHAM CHE A.G.M.

The A.G.M. was held on Friday March 30th 1979 at Nottingham CVS. There were 15 members present when the meeting opened at 7.33 pm with J.Clarkson in the chair. M.Quarrier of the National Executive and a friend were present as observers.

Minutes of the previous A.G.M. These were read and passed by the meeting.

Convenor's Report The bulk of this was contained in the March Newsletter, but the Convenor ran through the outline. In addition to the year's achievements given in the Newsletter, we had also been in contact with a local member of the Criminal Law Revision in the hope that he would come and speak to the group. The convenor closed by mentioning that the group's activities had drawn a letter of congratulation from National Office and D.Edgley felt that it was pleasant that what we were doing was at last being recognised.

Treasurer's Report (Balance sheet given in the April Newsletter). The treasurer, at the request of some members itemised some of the entries on the balance sheet more fully. The report was accepted.

Membership Secretary's Report As of March 23rd the group had 56 members, 42 of which had joined directly in Nottingham. There had been 21 new members during the year, mainly during the May and November membership drives. There were 5 women members. During the course of the discussion it was suggested that newsletters and broadsheets should be posted out to those group members who had not called at CVS and picked them up after about 7 to 10 days. The report was accepted.

Campaign Officer's Report Most of the group's campaigning had been covered by the Convenor's remarks and the Campaign Officer could only add work done on the lobbying of MPs. The group was responsible for all 10 Nottinghamshire MPs and also that for Ilkeston in Derbyshire. All had been contacted: 3 were generally against law reform; 2 were generally in favour; the remainder came somewhere in between. Nearly all, however, were against any relaxation of the law with regard to the armed forces. The Campaign Officer paid tribute to the campaigning work carried out by J.Clarkson and C.Richardson and the group's general lack of support for campaigning was commented upon.

Women's Liaison Officer's Report The Women's Group met each Monday and indulged in a variety of social activities, including fundraising. They had contacts with Gay Switchboard, but had not made contact with any of the other women's groups in the city. They had supported GSB Discos the NOOL Conference, the Midland Group Gallery's Women's Festival; they had got Shades to re-open the ladies' toilets; they had advertised at the Polytechnic with a view to forming an informal Gaysoc; their subscription library was much used by women members; although they had had to abandon their projected disco, they were planning a filmshow. It was generally agreed by the meeting that more liaison with men was still needed. The report was accepted.

 NOTTINGHAM CHE A.G.M. (Continued)

Future Policy and Plans The Convenor suggested the following:-

- the group should be strengthened by further recruitment, especially of women. Considering our catchment area, the number of members was small.
- social activities: support for these averaged 4 or 5 members in recent weeks. Greater support from members was needed in deciding the social programme.
- caring: the group was obliged to appoint a Caring Officer.
- Gay Switchboard: this topic produced some heated discussion. Several members expressed concern over CHE's financial support of the switchboard without any tangible return; others also felt that the switchboard was dominated by the Friend Group which seemed determined to keep itself isolated, a view on which Friend members present were apparently unable to give any reassurance. The discussion gave rise to the following proposal (Pr.C.Richardson; Sec.I.Corfield) "That Nottingham CHE conducts an examination of the reasons why former Nottingham CHE members have resigned or not renewed membership during the past five years and what are the reasons for people who have been brought into contact with Nottingham CHE not joining Nottingham CHE over the last five years." There was an amendment (Pr.P.McLernon; Sec.A.Stow) "That we also find out why people have joined". This was accepted by the movers of the motion and the whole was carried unanimously. The matter to be referred to the next business meeting.

Future Campaigning It was pointed out that not all campaigning activities required banner waving and marching, and it was hoped that attendance at business meetings would improve. The following were raised:

- Gay Pride Week: C.Richardson gave a resume of the activities which the GPW Committee hoped would take place. Those which directly concerned CHE were a photographic exhibition to be mounted in the library; a special disco to be held in Shades on the Tuesday night; an open air picnic on the Sunday afternoon; a forum organised jointly with Friend built around the Tyneside CHE Tape/Slide kit; a general contact with the media. It was added that the Lesbian Group would contribute a street theatre and that the library exhibition would be impossible as the Library did not put on displays for any groups. It was generally agreed to support Gay Pride Week and the Proposal (Pr.C.Richardson Sec:M.Raymond) that CHE contribute £20 to GPW funds was carried by 9 votes to 3.
- General Election: it was agreed to make this a priority in campaigning.
- Gay Centre Project: J.Clarkson outlined the idea for the establishment of a Gay Centre in the City, probably in conjunction with the Pavilion Club and hopefully for the provision of a Gay Community Officer under the STEP scheme. The consensus of the group was that these moves should be supported.
- Gay Switchboard: It was agreed by 6 votes to 3 that the group should continue to run discos monthly to give the Switchboard financial support.
- Social Programme: a proposal by C.Richardson that the social programme be abandoned, just leaving CVS meetings on a Monday and Thursday did not find a seconder. Instead it was unanimously decided to hold at least one specific meeting per month in addition to the discos.

 NOTTINGHAM CHE A.G.M. (Continued)

- Women: it was agreed to improve recruitment and to try to effect closer links between women and men.
- Advertising: it was agreed that CHE should advertise locally as CHE.
- A Proposal (Pr.I.Corfield; Sec.H.Stafford) "That CHE withdraw co-operation with the Gay Switchboard" was defeated by 8 votes to 3 with 5 abstentions.

Election of Officers J.Clarkson was proposed as Convenor by C.Richardson and D.Cordon. H.Stafford and A.Hibbert then proposed that the group should have two joint convenors. When voted upon by the meeting there were 6 votes for and 6 votes against the proposal with 2 abstentions. Rather than give a casting vote, J.Clarkson vacated the chair to M.Quarrier and when a second vote was taken the proposal was carried by 8 votes to 6. J.Clarkson then withdrew his candidature for the post of convenor. The following officers were elected or agreed upon by the meeting:

Joint Convenors	R.Thompson and P.McLernon.
Treasurer	M.Raymond.
Membership Sec.	T.Barker.
Campaign Officer	C.Richardson.
Gay Lobby Officer	A.Hibbert.
Newsletter Editor	D.Edgley.
Women's Liaison	I.Corfield.

During the course of the election for the post of Newsletter Editor, it was agreed that the newsletter should be restored to its former bi-monthly format. The posts of Caring Officer, Social Secretary and Auditor were left unfilled for the time being.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks proposed by C.Richardson for the work done by the retiring convenor and it ended at 10.35.

 THIS MONTH'S COMPETITION

Over the past few weeks, months or, in some cases, years some people in Nottingham CHE or on the fringe of the group have on occasion been referred to by nickname or descriptive title. Can you fit a name to the following:-

The Queen Mary
 The Monk
 Microbore
 The Blunt Instrument
 The Ayatollah Fabis
 Buzby
 The Bard of Herbert Road
 The Arthur Fryman of the Nottingham Gay Scene
 Pillory

Answers will most definitely NOT be given in the next edition of Chimaera.

R.I.Eckerslyke.

This Easter I went to see a performance of Parsifal; the musical side was nearly perfect, but the technicalities of production and lighting turned the opera into Monty Salvat and the Holy Grail, or even St. Allbran and the Holy Gruel. It reinforced the ever present operatic problem of 'suspension of disbelief' and how easily the desired state of awe can tumble into absurdity. We didn't experience the sublime chaos of a performance of Lohengrin where the mechanism towing the swan which carries the hero went into involuntary overdrive and left Lohengrin without his transport. On that occasion, Lauritz Melchior strolled to the front of the stage and asked whether anyone in the audience could tell him the time of the next swan. Caruso didn't wait for technical hitches to prompt a practical joke; when singing in La Boheme with Nellie Melba he waited until reaching 'Your tiny hand is frozen' and then gave her the desired central heating by pressing a warm frankfurter sausage into her palm.

At least in this Parsifal all the singers were of an appropriate size, age, shape and sex for their parts - with Peter Hoffman (Parsifal) carrying a youthful glamour whether in his black 'Star Wars' armour, or in medieval underwear or even when bearing a stuffed swan. (Parsifal was Lohengrin's dad and the swan fixation seemed to run in the family). One could hardly say the same of Covent Garden's current Siegfried - Jean Cox dressed as a geriatric Robin Hood, who would have been described by Ernest Newman as an amphora (Amphora: a two-handled, big-bellied vessel, usually of clay, with a neck and mouth proportioned to size, sometimes resting firmly on a foot, but often ending in a blunt point.) I hear that the New York Met's recent production of Norma, starring 22 stone 'chaste goddess' Rita Hunter, has been rechristened 'Enorma'.

Sometimes the absurdities are only revealed when you follow the performance with a translation of the libretto. Puccini's La Fanciulla del West contains an apparently passionate duet which in English seems to revolve around such phrases as 'You're squashing my roses,' 'Have you read any good books lately?' and 'Would you like a cream biscuit?'. I sometimes reflect on how I might cope on a European tour armed only with an operatic vocabulary. What could be more useful in reprimanding the chef of some Trattoria than a few epithets from Tosca, which render as 'Ah, dog! Ah, fiend! Ah, lizard face! - to the gallows!'

There is much to be said for performing all operas in their original language, or better still in Serbo-Croatian, then with a bit of luck one will not be able to understand what is going on and some of the more blatant contradictions will be nullified. For instance, in Zandonai's Francesca da Rimini the heroine enters during a battle scene and exclaims 'Let me stay and hear the twanging of the bows', but the thought inspired by the usual Venus de Kilo soprano is that she might be more accurate in singing 'Let me bow and hear the twanging of my stays.'

 HOMOSEXUALITY - A FACT OF (WHOSE) LIFE

By now a lot of you will have heard about, if not actually seen, the much-praised tape/slide kit aimed at schools to redress the balance of misinformation about homosexuality. The kit is called: Homosexuality - a fact of life.

The group will soon own its own copy; it will certainly be of use in the group's future 'campaigning' programme i.e. when talking to other organisations as we have in the past. One thing surprises me though about the tape/slide kit itself - how on earth it came to be accepted as the 'final' version of some years work by the Tyneside group. Some of us have seen it a couple of times now and things that did not feel 'right' the first time round are becoming a lot clearer. I think therefore the kit will be useful, so long as we keep a critical mind as to its contents. To me personally it smacked of compromise, because of its intended audience. The old 'we mustn't frighten the horses' mentality: a watering down to make it acceptable to schools - who aren't flocking to accept it anyway, not in any shape or form.

The production is indeed neat to look at. The cartoons are well drawn etc., etc., but to me it betrayed the gay scenes own prejudices:

Lesbians

Stereotypical gays

You know; those people who open their mouths and make a lot of noise - the gays who are only too obvious.

The kit is overly concerned with how you can't tell a gay from anyone else. If we ever get to that point then truly we are lost! We are different; that difference can be 'inside' or 'outside' or both. The difference, as if it needs saying, is that we love members of our own sex; what it means in terms of potential lifestyles and change to this society is phenomenal. We aren't "just like heterosexuals - except for our choice of lover". If that were indeed the case then there wouldn't be any need for the level of oppression that we all experience - there wouldn't be a felt need to hide, to have our own bars, organisations etc. Gays, straights and everyone would live comfortably side by side; and we don't. Any hint that we are as 'respectable' or 'ordinary' as heterosexuals is firmly rejected by THEM; while gays spend their time trying to prove themselves to be worthy members of this society - indistinguishable from your Mr and Mrs Average Straight - they do the 'obvious' gay a grave disservice.

The kit itself ignored the butch lesbian completely and parodied the stereotypical 'fairy' image of the male gay; yet it was the latter who have given the gay movement its symbol of celebration - Stonewall. Continually bullied and humiliated by the police - light years away from closet-comfort of the straight gay - it was they who fought back in the open. They gave the gay movement the necessary impetus and most important of all the basic philosophy of gay pride. Not a compromise, an explanation or an apology. Simply a statement of fact: "We are." The important thing that this tape/slide kit lacks is that.

 HOMOSEXUALITY - A FACT OF (WHOSE) LIFE

Instead of being accepting of all the different people that make up the gay community - warts an' all - it presents a false image of how some gays would like us all to appear. VARIOUS, but not OBVIOUS. Thankfully, we don't.

When it comes to lesbians the kit shows the usual level of ignorance that we have come to expect. Need I say it? Jane and Sue had no problems; they had each other. The only hint of problems for lesbians was the moan from her mother about how she should have a boyfriend. I seem to remember things as being a lot harder with my folks. Once again the emphasis was on the males difficulties with his mates, the problem of the consent laws, his loneliness, his difficulty in deciding whether to conform or be hisself, so on and so forth. Well girls it all comes down to being the second sex again - verging on irrelevancy. What I would like to know is how Jane and Sue met to have everything going for them while poor David anguished alone! Come off it. Any lesbian could tell you about her so-called 'problem free' life. And how brother!

Finally, what pissed off Pat. You see 'Dave' found a newspaper - rang Friend - to be told by the phone befriender that he might not be gay after all (that still puzzles me). When he got introduced to his local CHE group all his troubles were over - smiles and badges all round. EEEEEEEK! I mean isn't that a bit of oversimplification even for a teenager? If any teenager sees this part of the kit and believes it she/he is in for a disappointment. Again it is putting forward an ideal of how some gays would like it to be. It simply isn't the truth. Most papers don't carry ads for Friend; coming to CHE is not the end of peoples problems - for a lot of people it is the beginning of a hell of a lot more! and as for the poor lesbian who believes she is going to join a group of men and women - well we all know better than that don't we? The numbers of women who have disappeared after one attendance at a CHE meeting must be quite incredible by now. As one well known lesbian in CHE put it: "CHE groups are a necessary evil." They haven't got better to all accounts in years.

I seriously hope that the kit will be modified - and tell teenagers the whole truth. These facts of life are a twee bit misleading!

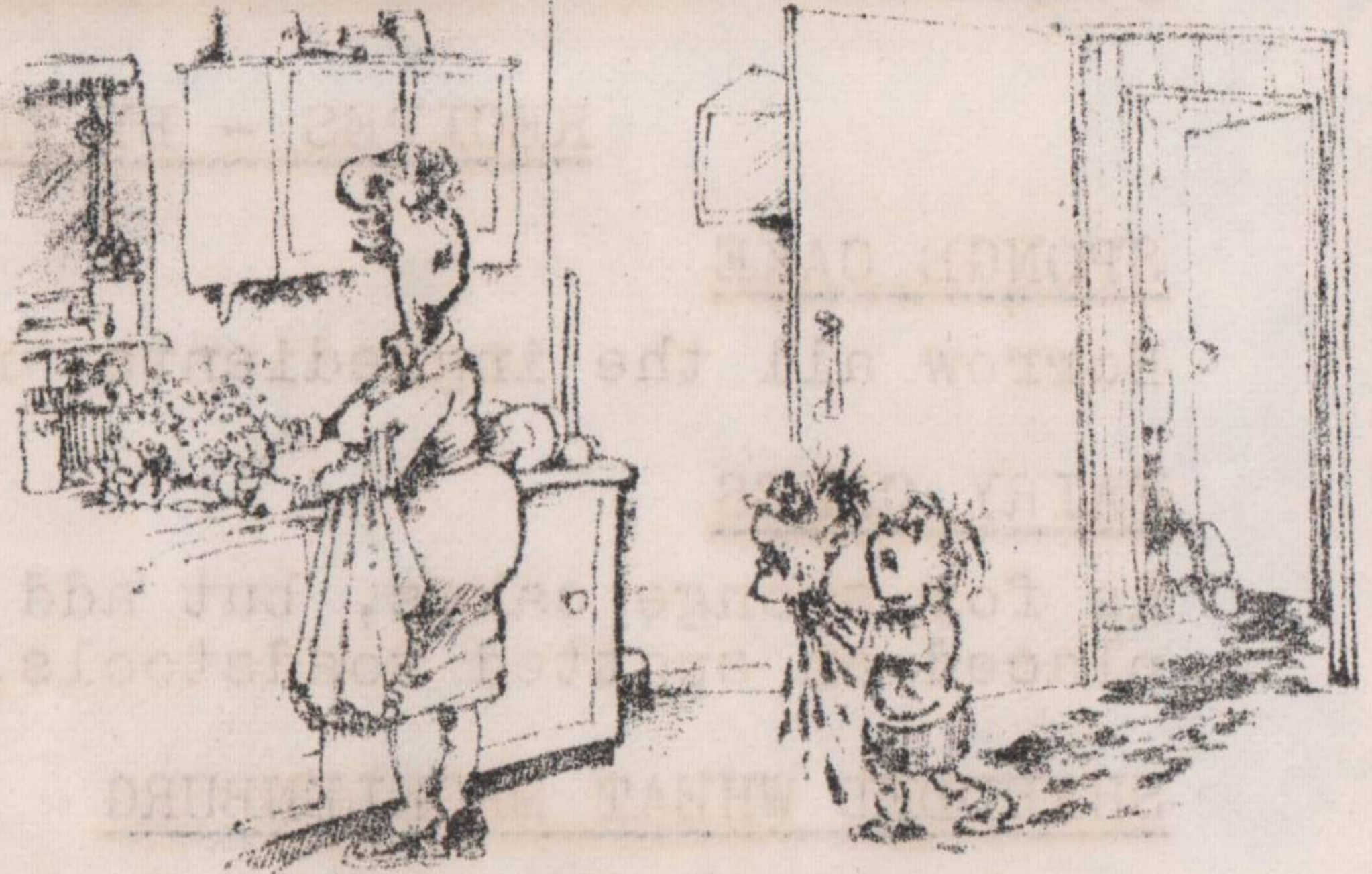
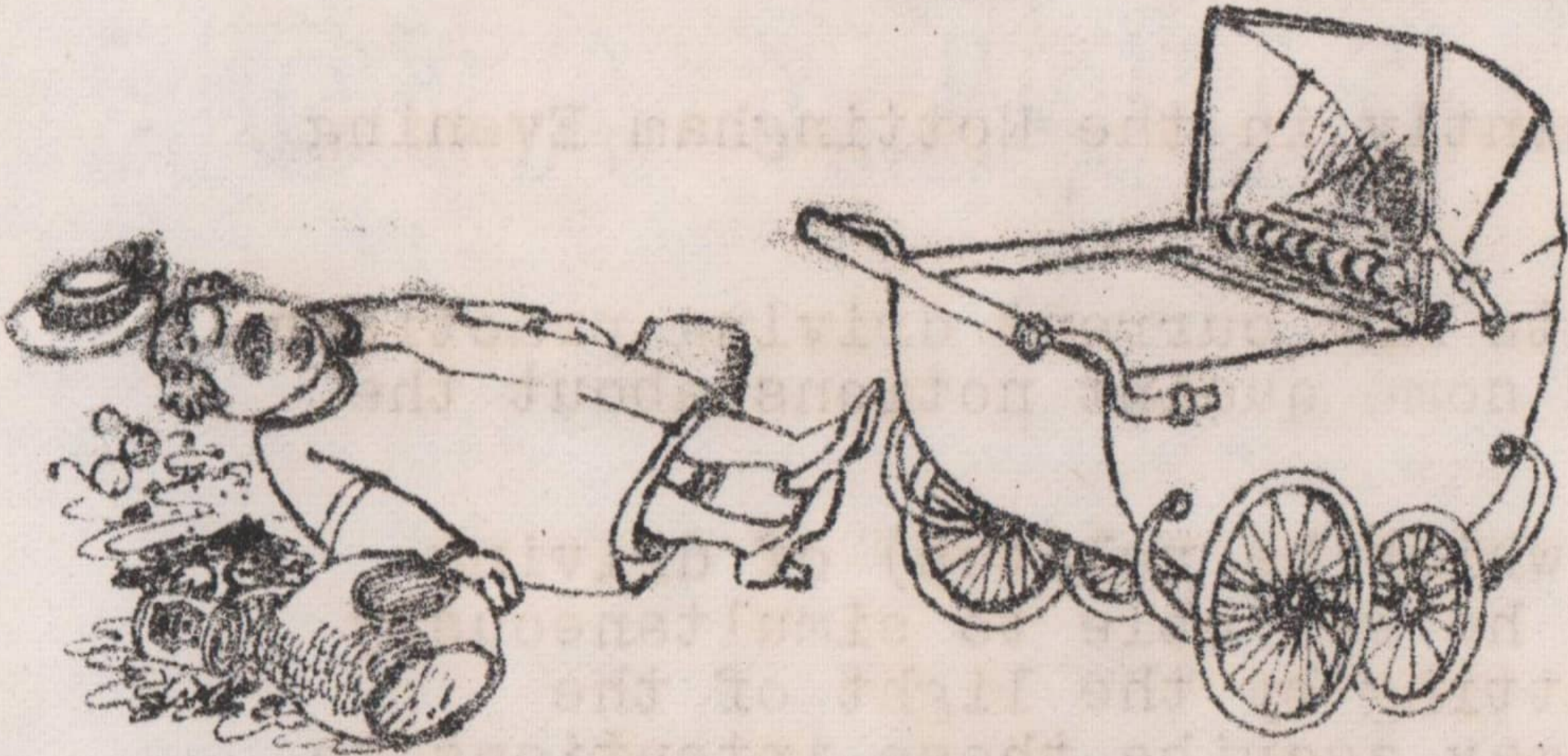
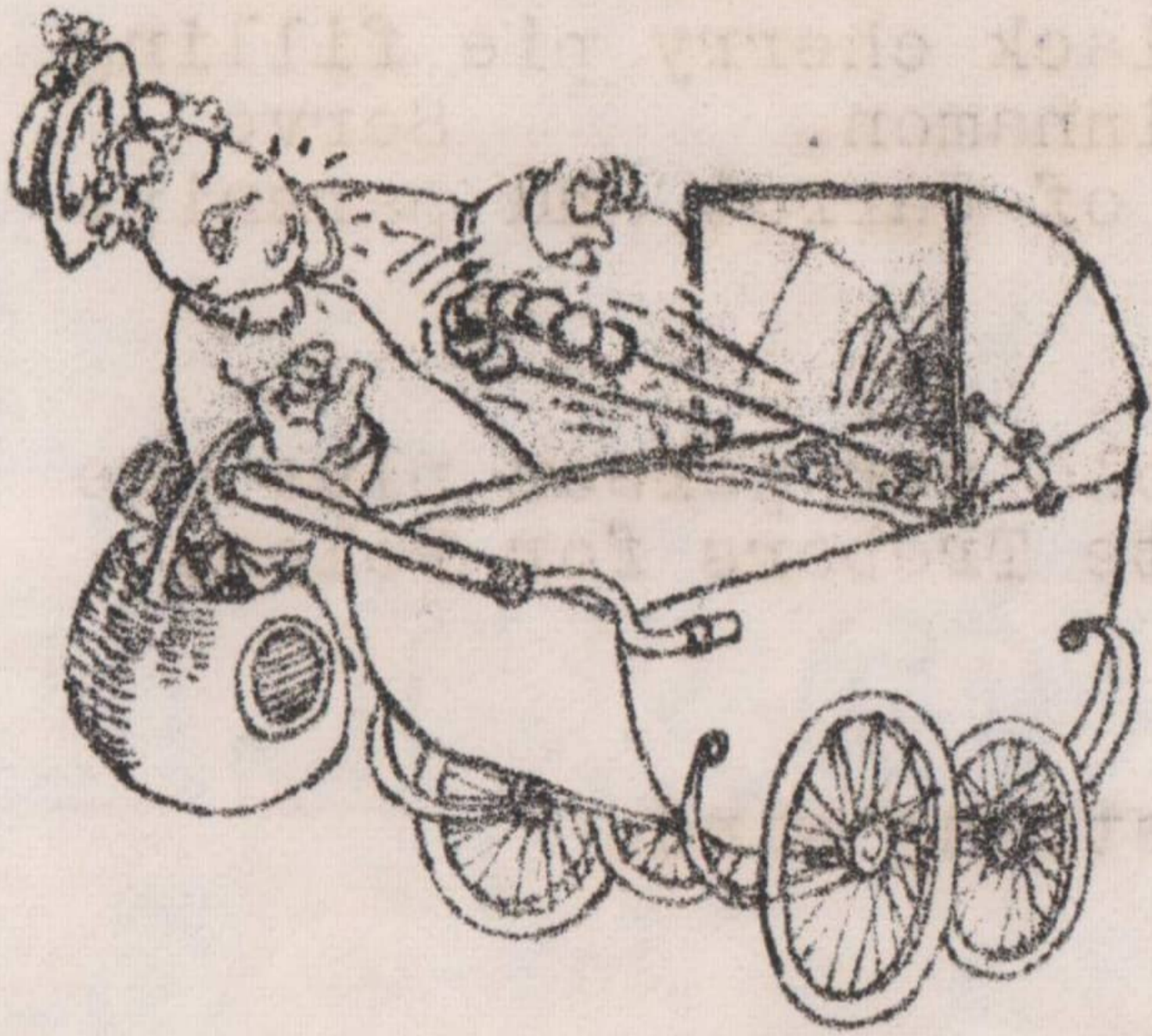
Hilary.

CONSERVATIVE CORNER

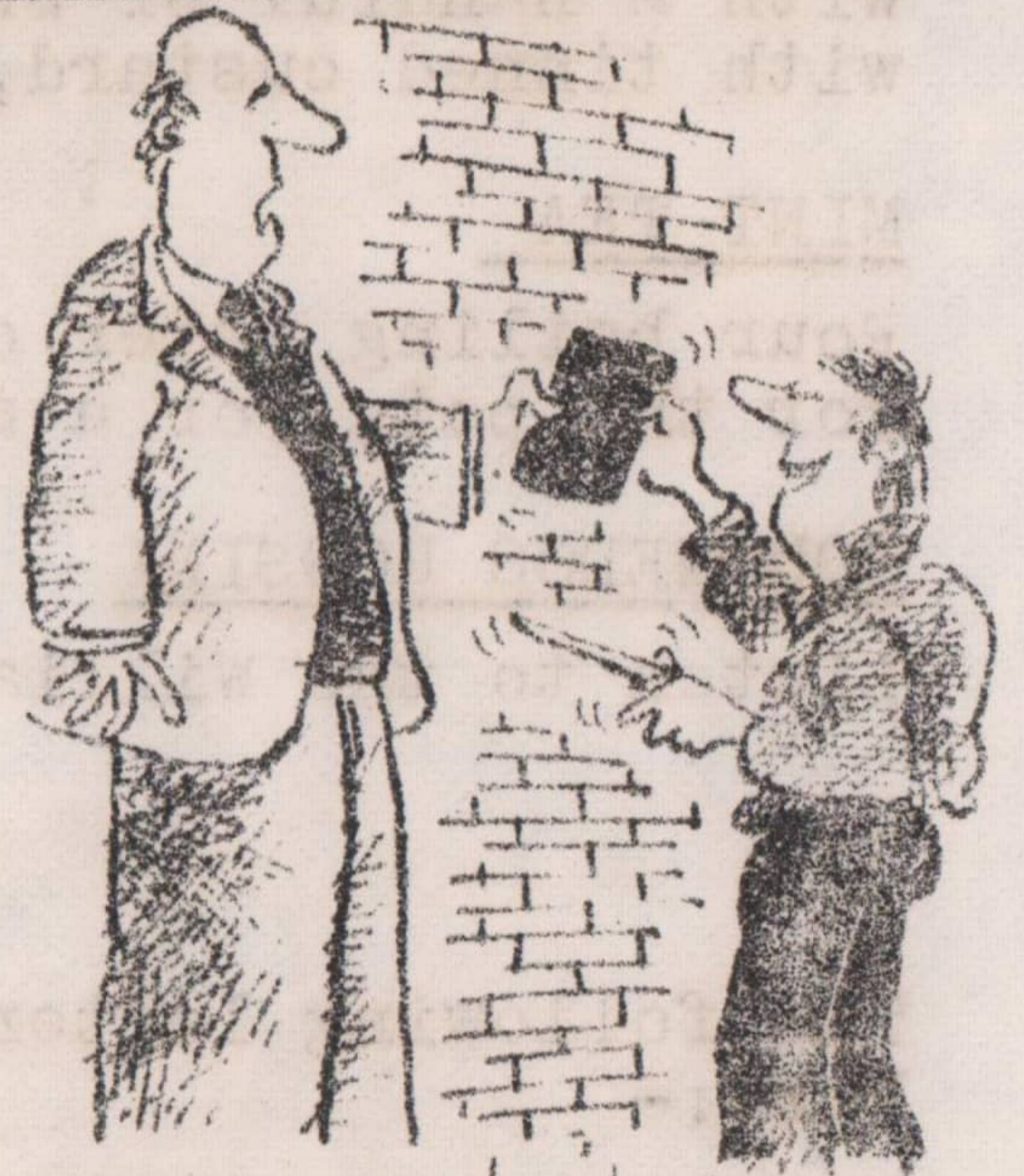
Margaret Thatcher- she was only a grocer's daughter, but she taught Sir Geoffrey Howe.

"Norman St. John Stevas - the thinking woman's Larry Grayson."
(from The Guardian)

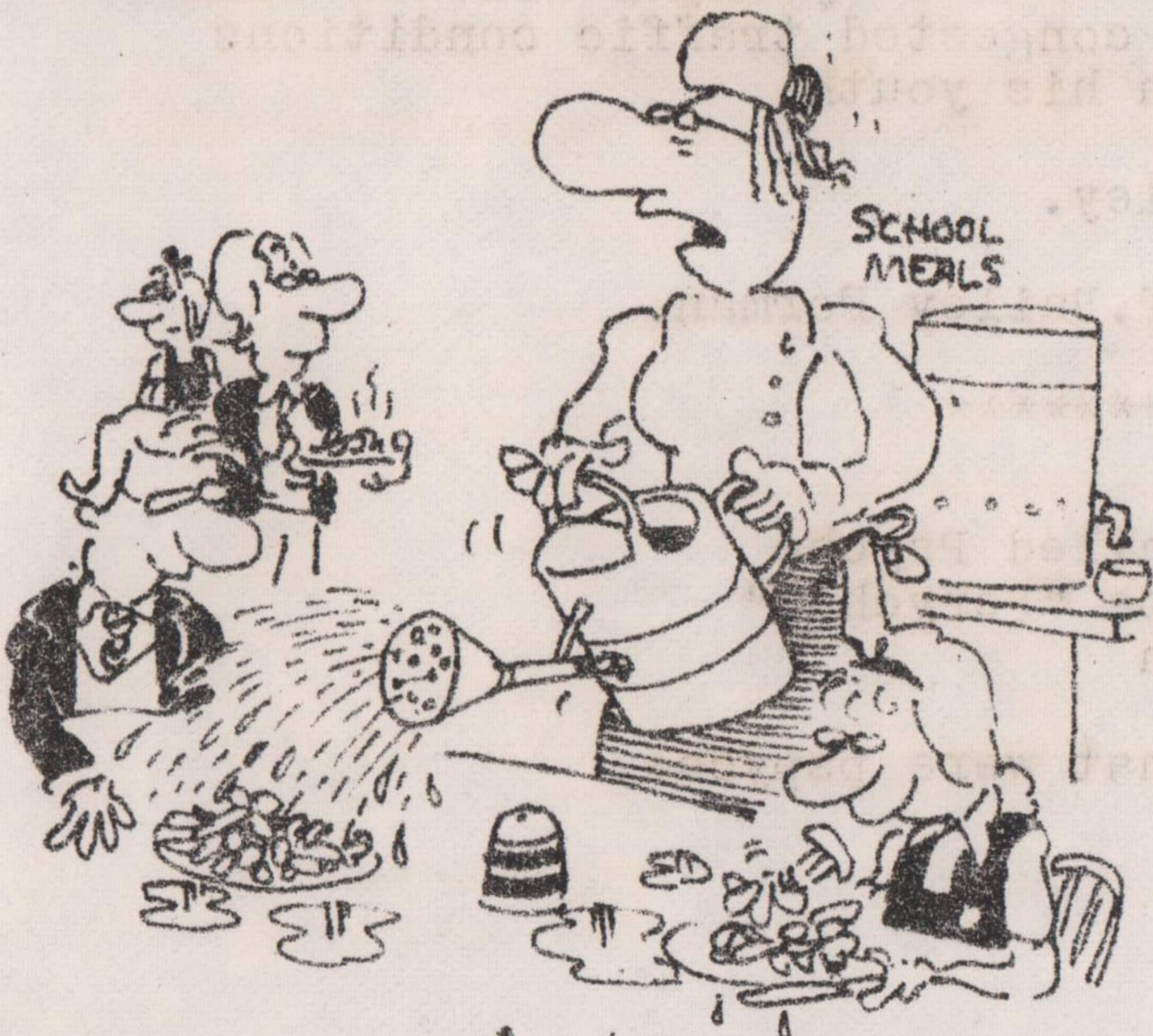
PAEDOPHOBIA



"Daddy's cut himself shaving again"



"Think of it as your contribution to the 'International Year of the Child', mate!"



"Anyone else want vinegar on their chips?"



"You're not having any more sweets until you go and put your teeth in"

PAGE FOURTEEN IS RUBBISH PAGE

RECIPES - BY THE HIGH SPEED GASTROGnome

SPONGE CAKE

Borrow all the ingredients and proceed in the usual manner.

FAIRY CAKES

As for sponge cakes, but add wings when cool. Look attractive placed on spotted toadstools.

SHREDDED WHEAT MECKLENBURG

Gently poach the shredded wheat in the usual manner. For the Mecklenburg sauce, mix together a tin of black cherry pie filling with a handful of sultanas and a tsp of cinnamon. Serve with tinned custard, decorated with strips of carrot and parsnip.

MINT TEA

Pour boiling water over Polos. Use one Polo per person plus one for the pot. For a stronger tea, substitute Trebors for Polos.

TOURNEDOS ROSSINI

Listen to the William Tell Overture in a strong wind.

The following letter appeared recently in the Nottingham Evening Post:-

"In his letter about car lights and current driving practices, Jim Marshall seems to have gained some quaint notions about the functions of car headlights.

Possibly in his experience (which he relates) of driving a horse and cart by candle light, he was able to simultaneously read his newspaper and do his knitting by the light of the following vehicle; but though he may ascribe these intentions to modern motorists, I can assure him that we younger drivers find such feats quite difficult in the congested traffic conditions which obviously did not prevail in his youth,

Martin B. Foaley.

Martin B. Foaley is an anagram of T. Bailey Forman.

There was a young lady called Psyche
 Who was heard to ejaculate "Pcryche!"
 For when riding her pbych
 She ran over a ptych
 And fell on some rails that were pspyche.

 THE ADVENTURES OF TASTY McPHERSON: PART II

Tasty McPherson lumbered into the pub and deposited the crate of empty bottles.

"Hang on to the money, Sid, I'll take another crate back with me."

"Right on then."

Sid replaced the empties with full bottles and lifted the crate back onto the counter.

"You'll need some help with that - it's heavy. That friend of yours, Ralph - he's in the lounge."

"Well I suppose he could....."

TP fetched Ralph from the bar and hustled him round to the flat, his arms full of beer.

"Do you always leave your door open, TP?" he wheezed and whined as they reached the top of the stairs.

"Only when I'm coming back soon, dear."

"Where do you want them, then?"

"By the sink, dear. Thanks, Ralph. I'm locking up now. I'm off to see Jo and Liz. Let me buy you a drink for being so helpful.?"

"No. I'd rather not, love. Bill will be waiting for his dinner and I'm out rather late. I'll walk with you and we can have a little chat.

He put his arm through hers and they set off. The doorways and stairs were taken in single file as they were unable to accommodate them both. Ralph made some - he thought - amusing remark about TP's waistline and TP muttered something about mincing queens, as they trolled down the street. They soon parted, amicably.

TP walked straight in through the half open doorway of their flat. Jo was struggling with a wine cork which refused to come out of the bottle; Liz was cursing and swearing in the kitchen.

"Hello lovers - I need a woman." TP bounced into the nearest chair.

"Hello TP," Jo spat through gritted teeth. "How's George, have they caught up with him yet?"

"Not yet, but they will if I do any work tomorrow."

Liz emerged red-faced from the kitchen. "Hello Fatty," she giggled, ducking the cushion which flew across the room. "Did I hear you say that you wanted a woman?"

"Yes."

"Well, Priscilla's coming over later. Before you explode, TP, listen. She says she can never find your, and I quote, disgusting hole, so she'll see you here. Somebody, bloody fools if you ask me, wants to publish that novel of yours; yes the lesbian one....."

Before she could finish TP had bounded out of the chair and was whirling her around the room; crashing into Jo as she finally managed to part cork and wine bottle. Fortunately little was spilled on to the floor and the three friends celebrated with the remainder, passing the bottle ceremoniously round to each in turn.

"Money!" TP's eyes glinted. "I'll have money?"

"I thought GN was paying you for the serial?"

"Yes - but it's not enough to live on. To tell the truth, I've been rather broke recently."

"Oh, we know," Liz sighed, "We budget for feeding three now."

"I'll pay it all back," TP retaliated, "and I'll get another bottle of wine now for us to - well - have a good night with. Is it alright to put it on your account until...." She winked and blundered out to the off licence.

 THE ADVENTURES OF TASTY McPHERSON:PART II

Priscilla, she insisted on the full name, was TP's agent and quite a celebrity in feminist circles; her opinions sought on TV, a regular feature in a monthly journal and son. A tall sophisticated woman, intelligent and more natural than her appearance would suggest. She departed after a noisy, friendly dinner, forcing a promise from TP that the writer would put in an appearance at her office the following Monday afternoon to sort out the publishing of her novel.

"Well it's Friday, my dears," TP began, "are we going out?"

"You're broke, remember?"

"So I am."

"I think I'll go to bed," Jo yawned.

"I'll go with you," suggested TP.

"OK, then."

Liz laughed at TP's face as it registered sex, shock, disbelief, desire and propriety in quick succession.

"Let's all go," she said.

"Hang on a minute," TP protested. "I know that"

"O shut up and get your clothes off!"

Saturday morning dawned, reached noon, the day continued until tea time, before the three lovers emerged unaware of the events that threatened their quiet lives.

DC Smith had had a very uncomfortable night trying to track down by phone either the writer of the murder story, or anyone in the Gay News Office.

When eventually he returned home he felt he couldn't tell his wife about the latest case; they had not been married long and his wife was very keen on the sexual side of the partnership. He sometimes found it difficult to keep his end up. Last night, however, he felt very proud of himself as he kept things going for nearly an hour before collapsing under his own orgasm and his wife's weight. He was still savouring the experience as he turned into Oxford Street on that Saturday afternoon.

He was required to walk as much as possible as police funds would not stretch to providing for DC's out on wild 'pooft' chases as the D.I. had put it. So it was with the memory of this minor nocturnal success very much on his mind, at least, that the disturbance in the road, while it interested him, bypassed that part of his mind which was trained by the police. After all no virile young man would be initially outraged by the sight of ten pairs of breasts waving towards him.

The DUM, for it was they, complete with banners bearing the legends: Lesbians are women. Lesbians are mothers; sisters; daughters; We demand our rights. Lesbian and are here; and so on, marched en masse along the centre of Oxford Street. As a political demonstration it actually achieved very little; as a display of sexuality, it was a great success. It was unfortunate that the point was missed by the press; those who bothered to report the event treated it very much in the same manner as they had done 'streaking'. DUM were not downhearted because the same papers that did them no harm had something much more serious for them to consider.

 THE ADVENTURES OF TASTY McPHERSON: PART II

Tasty was back in the flat that evening, reeling from the experiences of the previous night. She took out her note books and filing system, made notes and stored them for future reference. An idea was forming for a new story - to be developed if the present venture met with any success. She was deep in thought and beer bottles when Bill and Ralph arrived. They had just enough time to say their hellos when the heavy feet of DC Smith and PC Lakin crunched to a halt before the door. It was a minute before the knock came - TP staring at her side and the two policemen encouraging each other to knock on the other.

After the formalities, TP was taken to Snotte Green Police Station; a car had been provided. She left Bill and Ralph to lock up the flat; they understood that it was something to do with George's story, but neither were very sure.

The duty sergeant was gazing lovingly at his own personal vision when the screech of brakes interrupted him. He reluctantly withdrew his attention from the ample lady to watch the arrival. He looked at TP, back to the vision in the window, again at TP and to the petrifying amazement of everyone who saw it, he collapsed in a faint over the enquiries counter.

(to be continued)

Pat.

 NOTTINGHAM GAY SWITCHBOARD AGM

At the AGM of Nottingham Gay Switchboard on 3.4.79, the following items were agreed:-

1. To request CHE to continue the administration of the Switchboard account until the end of April.
2. That a bank account for the Switchboard should be opened at the Co-operative Bank and that there should be three signatories; the Switchboard Co-ordinator, a signatory from Friend and another one from CHE.
3. That the cost of room hire at CVS be shared 50/50 between CHE and Friend and is paid by Switchboard.
4. That Switchboard considers extending its service to a third night.

John Clarkson was elected as Switchboard Co-ordinator and Bob Tunnicliffe was elected as Switchboard Manager.

Date of next meeting: 17 July 1979 at 7.30pm.