

CHIMAERA

NEWSLETTER FOR THE NOTTINGHAM GROUP OF CHE

MARCH 1980

PROGRAMME

MARCH

SAT. 1st Extraordinary Session of Conference in Birmingham.

SUN. 2nd National Council in Birmingham.

THUR 6th BUSINESS MEETING at CVS at 8pm.

WED. 12th COFFEE AND GAMES EVENING at Mikes from 8pm.
(19, Thomas Close, St. Ann's) Those of you who are devotees of the London Game may find that it has been slightly modified to make it more appropriate.

MON. 17th DISCUSSION, with our women members we hope, of the Women's Commission Report. This time we have only this topic to discuss, so there can be no question of a second postponement.

THUR 20th BUSINESS MEETING at CVS at 8pm. The bulk of the evening will be devoted to discussion of the Group's proposed constitution.

WED. 26th Disco at the Hearty Goddfellow - Upstairs Lounge from 8.30pm.

FRI. 28th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, CVS Boardroom 7.30pm.
Please make every effort to attend this, the most important meeting in the year for any society or group.

APRIL

THUR 3rd A showing for members of the Group of the Tape/slide kit, together with a discussion with teachers who have actually used the kit locally. The discussion should centre around the reaction of children seeing the kit and work produced as a result of that.
*8pm
C.V.S.*

FRI. 4th RICHARD ALEXANDER, CONSERVATIVE MP FOR NEWARK, will be talking with the group at CVS 8pm. Mr. Alexander's initial response to our approach is quite encouraging and he may well prove to be quite positive in his attitude towards gays and gay rights.
*8p.m.
C.V.S.*

THUR 10th BUSINESS MEETING at CVS at 8pm.

FRI. 11th PARLIAMENT STREET PUB CRAWL (by popular request).
Meet at the Newmarket, Parliament St. (near the Palais) at 7.30pm. We shall be moving on at about 8pm. There are about a dozen pubs along Parliament St., so this will be the real thing this time.

TUES 15th GAY SWITCHBOARD AGM at CVS at 8pm. Another important date, especially for those with any interest in the work of Switchboard.

THUR 17th PROGRAMME MEETING at CVS at 8pm. (This is to decide upon the Group's activities over the next 2 months).

PROGRAMME(Continued)

- FRI. 18th (PROVISIONAL) We hope to have a speaker from the Gay Rights section of the National Council for Civil Liberties to speak to us. CVS at 8pm.
- WED. 23rd DISCO at the HEARTY GOODFELLOW, Upstairs Lounge from 8.30 pm onwards. N.B. This date is the 4th Wednesday in the month, not the 30th.
- THUR 24th BUSINESS MEETING at CVS at 8pm. (Special Comm. Report)
- SAT. 26th VISIT TO TURKISH BATHS at VICTORIA LEISURE CENTRE. Some of us will be meeting in the New Market from 12 noon for a drink and some lunch, moving on to the Centre at about 1 pm.
- WED. 30th COFFEE at TONY'S, flat 4, 19, Pelham Crescent, The Park, (Tel.49137). Will the secret of his cupboard be revealed this time?

MAY

THURS 8th BUSINESS MEETING at CVS at 8pm.

Members interested in the item marked "PROVISIONAL" would do well to ring Switchboard (46881 Monday & Thursday 7-10pm) and confirm that it is in fact proceeding.

On Saturday 19th April, the LINCOLN GROUP will be holding one of their periodic Discos and we are hoping to get up a trip to it. If all goes as planned we shall have the benefits of some crashpads accomodation which will mean we can spend a leisurely day in the town on Sunday as well. Contact Switchboard nearer the time for confirmation and details. Contact Mike if you are interested in going over there.

CHE GROUP OFFICERS

CONVENOR/TREASURER	Mike Raymond (Tel.55196)
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	Tony Barker (Tel.49137)
CAMPAIGN OFFICER	Chris Richardson
GAY LOBBY OFFICER	David Hicks
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	David Edgley (Tel.216447)

For those of you who do not know what CVS stands for, it is the headquarters of Nottingham Council for Voluntary Service, its address is:-

Nottingham CVS,
31a, Mansfield Road,
Nottingham

This is also, of course, the address of Nottingham Gay Switchboard.

THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER IS SATURDAY 26TH APRIL.

HALF-TERM HOLIDAY DIARY

SATURDAY: Read about controversy involving Mark Thatcher's modelling career. A Guardian reader expressed the wish that his family's association with the Durex Company had begun with his grandfather.

SUNDAY: Watched Olympic Skiing. Was interested to hear David Coleman tell us that Gold Medallist Annmarie Moser-Proell "Skis on skis" and "is helped by her stiff outside leg."

MONDAY: Marked exam. papers. Errors on Chemistry exam. papers are just frustratingly inept - other subjects have more diverting mistakes. E.g. From a Home Economics paper - "What is the importance of good posture?"
Answer: "So the cows can graze."

Or, from History papers,

1. Charles V was a poppet of the Pope.
2. Ann Frank was a British Prime Minister.
3. The rockets that the Germans sent over Britain during World War II were called VD bombs.

TUESDAY: Received some contributions for the newsletter. Sorry, Tony, I've lost your bit of paper, but I do remember that it was about the forth coming issue of a book called "John Clarkson and the African Adventure" or perhaps it was "The African Queen".

WEDNESDAY Listened to Gardeners' Question Time. Alan Gemmill was describing a method of heating greenhouses by mixtures of compost which generate their own warmth - a method he was taught at Manchester University by Professor Weiss, who was German. These were known as the "Hot-beds of Weiss."

THURSDAY: Stayed up to watch skating. Britain seems to have a knack of producing medal winning pooves-on-ice. How nice it was to see the flag raised for Robin Cousins and dear old G.B. It put us on the medal table where we belong - three places behind Leichtenstein.

FRIDAY: Listened to repeat of Desert Island Discs. Did you hear the Head of British Rail on this programme. Obviously a case of Peter Parker picked octet tropical records.

SATURDAY: Held small dinner party. Was slightly delayed as one of the guests had to go to the Queen's Medical Centre to have a tube of superglue removed from his thumb.

SUNDAY: Prepare for return to school. We are introducing a new system whereby pupils are divided into six sets for teaching purposes but into seven Tutor Groups for registration. The teaching sets have numbers 1-6, but we had to decide how to designate the Tutor Groups. Finally, my suggestion of colours of the rainbow was adopted, but not before others had proposed the seven Wonders of the World, the Seven Deadly Sins and the Seven Dwarfs. Perhaps parents might have enjoyed finding their child in Lust III, Dopey II or Mausoleum at Halicarnassus IV.

David.

NOTTINGHAM GAY SWITCHBOARD -1979 FIGURES

	1979	1978 comparisons
Total calls received	1,134	659
Male callers	846 (75%)	
Female callers	157 (14%)	
Silent/Hoax calls	133 (12%)	58
Repeat calls	266 (23%)	
Known to be under 21	20 (1.8%)	
Counselling calls	382 (33%)	200
Information calls	619 (55%)	337

Analysis of Information calls:-

General Information	259 (23%)
Social groups	46 (4%)
Accommodation	35 (3%)
Legal	9 (0.8%)
Medical	5 (0.5%)
TV/TS	111 (10%)
Others	144 (12%)

Financial figures will be published at the Switchboard AGM on April 15th and will probably reveal considerable cause for concern for the forthcoming year's operation. This is to me worrying and particularly sad. Sad because so many people find it easy to ignore efforts to raise funds to keep the Switchboard running. The major source of income funds over the last 18 months has been the discos organised monthly at the Hearty Goddfellow by CHE. But in the last 6 months attendances at the discos have been falling steadily. We used to have 40,50 or 60 people attending. Now we are lucky to get 20 and as a result, after deduction of expenses, there is virtually nothing left. And of course if a newcomer comes along she/he finds the whole thing so boring that there is no question of returning - so the decline continues. Why do so few people come? I don't know. What I do know is that the people to whom Switchboard should mean the most are in the majority of absentees. And by that I mean the members of Friend, CHE and the Gay Switchboard Lesbian Group. The three organisations that make up the Switchboard! Let's face it; the majority of people now using CHE facilities (a good number of whom aren't even members - another story to investigate there) have come to CHE via initial Switchboard contact - but they forget. The Lesbian Group arose out of CHE and later evolved around the Switchboard function - but they forget. Without the Switchboard set up Friend would never have got off the ground in Nottingham - but they forget. Lots of non-involved Gay people enjoy the Nottingham scene as a result of information and support received from Switchboard - but they forget.

Or do they? Could it be that they don't care? OK, jump down my throat - shout about your commitments, say and do what you like but please, please, please show that you do care. The figures above show what a need there is for Nottingham Gay Switchboard. Almost double the 'business' of last year and plans to meet the needs of the gay community (of which we are all a part) by extending the service to a third session very soon. That's going to cost even more next year and everyone can help. It's no use sitting back and thinking that Friend will get a Karnival Grant and give it to Switchboard, because they probably won't, so you'll be asked to support their fund raising plans.

It's no good saying that there will be plenty of other people at the monthly CHE Disco because we know that there won't be, so you can fork out 50p (only 35p if you're a CHE member) and come along to the discos and actually enjoy yourselves! You can offer once in a while to grovel around Shades with a collecting box. It's not much fun, but you meet a nice lot of people.

But it does need all of us to do all these things and we can ensure the immediate future of the Switchboard and those 1200 or more fellow gay brothers and sisters who are going to need us next year.

In hopeful anticipation, John Clarkson,
Coordinator, Nottingham Gay Switchboard.

CAMPAIGN REPORT

Our dispute with the Notts County Council and their refusal to allow us to use the Teachers' Centre to show the CHE tape/slide kit is detailed in full in a separate report at the back of Chimaera. No reply has yet been received from James Stone since the report was written and maybe he is having second thoughts about his attitude.

In the last few weeks the NUT has been asked to renew their representations to the Director and some useful material has been received from National CHE about the sales of the kit to date:- 28 to schools and colleges, 18 to area health authorities, 35 to teachers' centres, counselling bodies, education authorities etc.

Our programme of meetings with other organisations is now beginning to build up. Two groups of Samaritans and the Nottingham Trades Council have received speakers from CHE and the Young Liberals are due to receive us on Feb.27th. North and West Nottm.Liberal Associations have expressed interest and have been invited to come to the CVS to meet the group rather than have us go to them. Rushcliffe Liberals have asked for more information, with the possibility of asking for a speaker later on and Carlton Labour Party have asked for someone to address a branch meeting. That still leaves 24 political organisations which have not yet replied to our letters, but other replies may still be on the way.

We have also asked to meet the Notts.Chamber of Commerce, and the Junior Chamber, to discuss issues of discrimination at work similar to those raised at the Trades Council. A reply has been received from the Director of the Chamber of Commerce which will require some thought at the next business meeting, and probably a second approach.

We shall soon be invited to attend the meetings to elect Community Health Councils, so if you're interested and can get a half day off work to attend, let me know. Gays need to know that next-of-kin rights of lovers, visiting rights etc are respected, that psychiatric hospitals are not "averting" us, that doctors are not divulging confidential information on our gayness (see the case of the Leeds student which Mike has written about, and which needs your signatures on a petition).

The next National Council will see the return of the 'rolling programme' so that will mean lots more campaigning to do. Please help us to do it, even if it's only by sending a letter on the Leeds student case to the Area Health Authority,

Good campaigning - Chris Richardson.

LOCAL GROUP NEWS

'Gay News' and the Library In January 1979 we scored a distinct triumph by not only getting 'Gay News' stocked in certain local libraries, but also by selling it to them ourselves. This was undertaken on a year's trial basis, and those who have seen the state it gets into on the display rack cannot doubt the success of its appearance.

The trial period is now over and, as we anticipated during the autumn, the activities of a certain lady who hales from Lincolnshire have made themselves felt, with the result that, along with many other publications, 'Gay News' will not be on the display rack any more. Although we have offered to supply the paper at our own expense, this has been turned down on the grounds that being the sole occupant of the aforesaid, near-redundant rack, will give it undue prominence in the library - not that we would object to that. However, the library have agreed to extend the trial period until the axe falls on 31st March, so the pill is somewhat sweetened.

P.A.C. Submission Our submission was duly sent in to the Policy Advisory Committee on the age of consent, and a copy was sent to national office for their records as well. This drew the following flattering response from Christian Elliott of the Law Reform Campaign:

"Sincere congratulations on the quality of your group's comments on the age of consent; they are the best I have been sent by a CHE group or member."

Of course, he may not have been sent many, but all the same, five merit points to Nottingham CHE!

Nottingham Samaritans On 21st January, Chris, John, Jerry and Mike, paid a visit to Nottingham Samaritans to give them information about CHE, its aims and its work with Gay Switchboard, and to answer their questions. The evening saw no violent controversy (it would have been a bit alarming if it had done) but there were several new Samaritans there who will doubtless have learned some things they didn't know before. One or two of them whom we have come across before commented on the inoffensive nature of the Tape/Slide Kit and expressed surprise over the way the Education Committee had reacted last summer and since. We have been asked to visit again, and as their turnover of operators is fairly steady it will be well worth it from our point of view.

Tenpin Bowling We can't remember who held the champion's title for this in the group before 30th January, but certainly after that date it was Jerry, who clocked up scores of over 100 in each game. Suffice it to say that everyone else did worse than that, although once John decided to adopt a novel finger technique his score improved dramatically.

Feminist Film Weekend An advance notice this. The midland Group Gallery will be the venue for a weekend of feminist films on 8th/9th March. Films being shown include "Dance, Girls, Dance" (Dorothy Azner); "Lion Love" (Agnes Varda); "Loving" (Irwin Kershner); "Taking a Part" (Jan Worth); "Whose Choice, an Egg is not a Chicken" (Newreel); "Jobs for the Girls" (Sheffield Women's Film Group); and "Lesbians" (Jeremy Isaacs). For further details contact Felicity Oppe at the Gallery (tel 582636).

LEEDS CAMPAIGN FOR DEFENCE OF GAY STUDENTS

As those of you who have read GN183 will be aware, this body has been set up to fight the case of Geoff Brighton, a Leeds University student who was refused, on the grounds that he is gay, a medical certificate necessary for him to embark on a postgraduate Certificate of Education course. This is anti-gay discrimination of a staggeringly blatant nature, made all the worse by the fact that the Student Health Centre's doctors concerned admit their ignorance on the subject of homosexuality - their decision is one based on prejudice alone.

The LCDGS has sent out an appeal for support and, yes, money. If this affair is to be given publicity money is needed, and there is always the possibility that there may be legal costs to face. Nottingham CHE intends to give the fullest support that it can and will be making a donation to the Campaign's funds, but there may be some of you out there who want to make a more personal effort over this case. If you can send some money, do so either direct, or send it to us and we'll forward it with our donation. If your job is in any way connected with students, teaching or the medical profession, try and generate discussion at both formal and informal levels, or write to those who may be in a position to influence matters. Also, we have forms for collecting signatures for a petition - if you can get into CVS on a Monday or Thursday evening to sign them, then please do so.

The same issue of GN carries an article by Anthony Grey in which he urges all gays not to leave the fight to CHE and other 'activists', but to pick up their pens and phones and to use them to good effect. His article could hardly have been better timed. The Leeds University Health Centre deserves such a broadside from the gays of this country and their sympathisers as will make its doctors wish they'd paid more attention to their studies. It's up to all of us to give it them.

GAY OUTDOOR CLUB

The activities of this organisation have been mentioned before in these pages, and include hillwalking, swimming, cycling, camping, canal boating and climbing. Peter Lockwood, who is a member of Nottingham CHE, is the contact for the Transpennine section of the Club and he has sent us a list of their planned walking meets between April and September. These are all either on Saturday or Sunday, and the places they are walking in are: Tideswell Dale, the Wirral, Edale, Three Peaks (near Ribbleshead), Hamps Valley, Longdendale, Goyt Valley, Bakewell, Ewden Valley and Pendle. Anyone interested should get more precise details from Mike, or by ringing Peter on Sheffield 740307.

PROPOSED CONSTITUTION

The EGM held in August of last year endorsed the idea of the group adopting a constitution, and in accordance with that Mike, John and Andrew have put their heads together and come up with one. A copy of their proposals is enclosed with this newsletter. The intention is that members can study it prior to the business meeting on March 20th, and that at that meeting amendments can be made to the draft, and the whole thing can then be ratified at the AGM the following week. In this way we should avoid a lot of time being spent on it at the AGM itself. Read through the proposals: if you think that something has been left out, or are unhappy about something that has been put in, then come to the meeting on 20th and say so, or at least contact me before then and I can raise it at the meeting on your behalf.

Mike.