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Free Legal Advice
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7 days, 8am-10pm

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Nottingham, NG1 3FH
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LOOKOUT!

March April May 2006

Issue 38

Editorial

It should be time to change the little picture to the one with the daffodils ambitiously popping their heads up under the jubilant rainbow but as we write there are bulletins about 27 inches of snow on the American eastern seaboard. WOW! Received wisdom in climatic matters used to say that what New York had dear old Blighty would have 6 weeks later. So if you're making holiday plans for mid April better make them to stay here if you're into skiing but make it Gran Canaria if you want some winter sunshine.

March heralds the end of the yearly cycle as far as astrologers are concerned. Pisces is the 12th sign and ruler of the 12th house: characteristically dreamy and more concerned with the psyche than the self.



It's inhabitants are the most unworldly, their joint rulers are nebulous Neptune & generous Jupiter making them cool to the point of frostbite yet loving romantics at heart. Their symbol is the depiction of two fishes swimming in opposite directions yet inextricably joined at the hip. Anatomically, they are associated with the feet so you can see it's last, last, last, without exception. What they really need is a kick in the pants & who better to give it to them than headstrong Aries full of the joys of blossoming April and intensive me, me, me syndrome. Spring really will have arrived by then, the clocks will have gone forward and we might actually be getting home after work with a couple of hours of daylight to spare.

Important stuff about Lookout

So, with all this potential for fecundity around; snow-drops, pussy willow catkins, bouncing little baby lambkins how about considering some new purpose in life, some project to keep you busy and all your mates entertained. Surely we're not the only ones who miss Eternity and before that Cellos? A once a month women only disco would be wonderful and/or someone prepared to re-invent the Women's Café.

There are a couple of ideas for one-off events later in the year but don't let that stop anyone from investigating new venues or off the wall ideas. We could also do with some fresh ideas for Lookout itself. You don't even have to commit to regular involvement (although we would dearly love someone in the team who could look after the advertising — just write about something that you have done, feel passionate about, or can recommend. You'll find a couple of examples on page 4 of this issue.

We are currently looking into the possibility of having a web site for Lookout so if you would like to get involved or have some ideas for the format please get in touch.

As you can perhaps imagine, funding Lookout can be a slightly hair raising balancing act and to this end the production team would really appreciate being joined by someone who could spare just a few hours a month to help generate some much needed cash through advertising. This exercise has the added benefit of bringing together women who may be starting out in business with those of us whose jobs hamper our desires to get stuck into those necessary D.I.Y tasks.

Also, if you are in the process of moving, could you add Lookout to your list of people to inform? We regularly get half a dozen or so postal copies returned because people have moved away.

Please, please, please, if you know about something that might interest others or if you would like to make suggestions for regular features or you're changing address, just let us know by emailing

Lookoutmag@hotmail.com

Or write to us

C/o The Women's Centre
30 Chaucer Street, Nottingham

LOOKOUT! Is sponsored by CAMPIONS SOLICITORS

WOMEN'S REGULAR EVENTS & SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

International Women's Day
 Wednesday, March 8th, 2006
 10.30am to 2.30pm

herbal taster treatments mendhi
 nail treatments self defence demo
 arabic belly dance demo & much more

12.00pm Cllr Eunice Campbell
12.15pm Lubna Alvi
 1:00pm Home-Cooked Ethnic Lunch

Used book sale Workshops Tasters
 Career information, Advice & Guidance
 Information Stands

The Women's Centre
 30 Chaucer Street
 Nottingham

Creche for 2- 5 year olds. Please book.



Nottingham Women's Centre
 30 Chaucer Street

All sorts of courses
 Lots of IT choices
 Gardening Nutrition & Food

Self defence Singing

Anger Management Building Self Confidence

Courses start in Marh & April and vary in length
 For more info
 Phone 0115 924 0041 or 947 5212
 Fax: 0115 947 6815
 TEDproject@NottinghamWomensCentre.com
 www.NottinghamWomensCentre.com

Creche/Childcare for 2-5 year olds available

L A F S
Lesbians in Ashfield Friendship & Support

Would you like to meet other women who are lesbian, bisexual or uncertain of their sexuality?
 Come along to this informal group run by lesbians, for a confidential chat, gain information/
 support, make new friends and have fun.

Meet last Wednesday of each month 7.00pm-9.00pm
 At Ashfield Womens Centre, Diamond Avenue, Kirkby in Ashfield
 In a safe, accessible, women only space

To find out more details phone Cheryl or Alison on 01623 473010 (Mon -Fri 9.30am-1.30pm)
 Or leave your name & number confidentially on 07849 798802 & Alison or Cheryl will phone back

Notts Lesbian Book Club

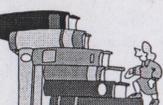
This is a Social Group/Book Club which holds monthly meetings at an evening café venue in Nottingham.

Members take it in turn to choose what book to read.

This Group is open to all women with an interest in good company and page turning.

Contact nottslbc@hotmail.com

Or phone Nicola
 on
 07733 377704

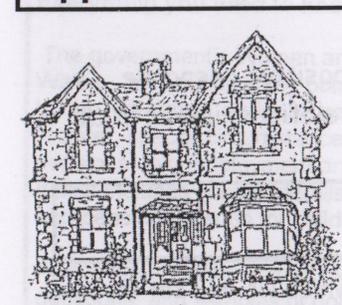



BADMINTON

TO SUIT ALL SKILL LEVELS IS HELD TWICE WEEKLY. AT VICTORIA LEISURE CENTRE ADJACENT TO SNEINTON MARKET. YOU CAN ENJOY A GAME ON A THURSDAY EVENING 9PM-10PM OR ON A SATURDAY MORNING 9AM-11AM. JOIN IN AND DISCOVER A NEW & FRIENDLY GROUP OF WOMEN.

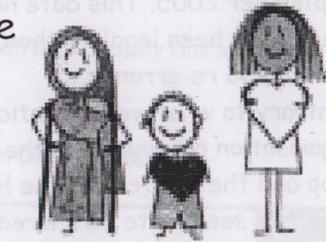
Contact Cate on 07757 326633 or lookoutmag@hotmail.com

Opportunities



A unique opportunity
Job(s) as Joint Co-ordinator
 At the
Women's Holiday Centre - Horton

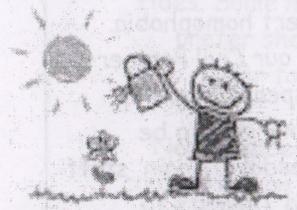
Women required to co-run this busy co-operative holiday centre situated in the Yorkshire Dales for women & children



Contract: maximum of 3 years live-in job
CLOSING DATE for applications 18th March 2006

For an Application Pack please phone: 01729 860 207 or
 E-mail us at 'whc.information@pop3.poptel.org.uk'

See our website for more info:
www.hortonwhc.org.uk



Working towards equal opportunities. Women only need apply.
 This post is exempt under Sex Discrimination Act Section 7.2 (e)

Accommodation

Are you a lesbian looking for safe, affordable housing? Banna Housing Co-op have a 1 bed flat within a lesbian housing co-op. Do you have: Skills, motivation, experience of a co-op? Are you committed to our ethos? Being part of a housing co-op means attending monthly meetings & taking an area of responsibility such as finance, outreach, publicity, fundraising or training. We are committed to equality & diversity issues. At present black women are under-represented in our co-op & are therefore encouraged to apply. Unfortunately the flat available is above ground level & thus is not wheelchair accessible. For further info: 07921 722486 / 07784 072123 / 07974 169484 Closing date to receive applications - Friday 17/3/06 Banna is always on the lookout for new management committee members. If you have a few hours each month to spare & have an interest in lesbian/gay issues please contact Banna on one of the above numbers.

Holiday Home



France
 south Brittany

Typical stone gite in tranquil countryside between Baud and Pluvigner
 Close to forest & just 30 minutes drive to the coast of the picturesque Golfe de Morbihan
 3 bedroomed cottage sleeps 4 comfortably in peaceful location 1 mile from village of Camors. Opportunities for walking, cycling, horse riding, sailing or just relaxing.
 For details: 01332 883136 or 07886 225624

Focus on Civil Partnerships

Two of our regular readers have very kindly written about the very positive response they had to their desire to have a public acknowledgement to their relationship—both at a commitment ceremony and later at their civil partnership.

Our special year

The first part of last year was spent planning our commitment ceremony, which we had set for 8 September 2005. This date had been set as we thought the legalities of same sex partnerships would have been legal by then. But the House of Lords decided differently and it was too difficult to re-arrange.

Contrary to what we had anticipated, it was a wholly positive experience in terms of the organisation ranging from the chauffer to the ceremony venue, the caterer to the bridal wear shop and the printers to the honeymoon venue. Our excitement at being able to celebrate being together seemed to be shared by everyone involved with the arrangements

We had the Commitment ceremony and the reception at the Council House, Market Square, Nottingham. Accompanied by a harpist and a string quartet we had a Reception party for 70 guests. Afterwards we went back to Harts Hotel for the night. The next day we set off for Southampton and our cruise to the Ukraine. On arrival, the P & O honeymoon package was already laid out in the room - flowers, chocolates and chilled champagne. So far no overt homophobia. Three weeks later we got back to England. Back to work and preparations for our Civil Partnership ceremony on Wednesday 21 December. It was set for 10.00am at Shakespeare Registry Office. As we got closer to the date we realised we were to be the first partnership to be registered at Shakespeare Street as the office didn't open until 10 on Wednesdays. Again, staff attitudes were really positive and they were keen to make us welcome. We had 7 guests to witness our registration and the staff even gave us a bottle of champagne to celebrate history in the making!

We then went for a meal before going to Ragdale Hall until Xmas Eve.

On both occasions people seemed to be very happy to share our happiness at being together and being able to celebrate that. We know that this is not always the case.

When our photo appeared on the 'Weddings' page of the Nottingham post, it elicited a few letters to the Editor challenging that decision. The Editor has now agreed to have a separate section for 'Civil Partnerships' to prevent further offence!

Back down to earth eh?

Barclays Bank, ever ready for a spot of free marketing whilst casting their beady fiscal eye around for opportunities to maximising their profits, teamed up with Stonewall to take an 'infoshow' on the road in order to help people find out all they need to know about Civil Partnerships. Well, on the road actually amounted to 4 major gay centres in the whole of the UK, one-day from 5:30 to 7:00pm in central locations in Brighton, London & Manchester were held in February.

Only Birmingham is still available on March 8th.

To book a place or for more info please contact peter.knight@stonewall.org.uk

Personally, I can't help but feel that they weren't going to have time to advise many people in a total of 6 hours for the entire country but I guess it serves as a reminder to check things out before signing up.

Everything you need to know about Civil Partnerships – officially!

The government's Women and Equality Unit has published a series of guides to civil partnership in England and Wales – a flyer listing key points of how to register a partnership, an 8 page booklet summarising issues covered by the legislation, and a 38 page detailed guide. The detailed guide covers what civil partnership is, how to register, special circumstances, immigration, family relationships, social security, tax credits, child support, pensions, tax, employment and tenancy rights, death, when things go wrong, and how to end a civil partnership. It also includes contact details for other organisations for information about finding where to register, tax, benefits and pensions, issues for children, and lesbian and gay support organisations.

There are separate guides for Scotland and Northern Ireland. The Unit's website has a set of frequently asked questions, and samples of documents such as a civil partnership certificate.

The flyer, booklet and guide can be downloaded free in pdf format from the Women and Equality Unit's website at

<http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/civilpartnership/guidance.htm>

or call them on

0207 215 5000, minicom 0207 215 6740, or from the DTI Publications orderline on 0845 015 0010.

Cycling Dykes

We are now planning regular rides on one Saturday and one Thursday each month, as well as meeting up in town monthly for a drink & to plan future rides. Some members of the group prefer longer off-road rides, while others prefer shorter rides along quiet roads or well-made paths, so we try to cater to different preferences by having different types of rides.

New members are always welcome. If you're interested in joining us, please contact Alison on 07773 182724 (voice or text) or email: arussell@ntlworld.com

13 went Mad, in a room for 12, in Amsterdam

All sorts of entertainment was on offer in this vibrant cosmopolitan city. Not sure if it was by chance or design but we were there on the second Saturday of the month, which sports a women only disco for the over 30's – great atmosphere & highly recommended at only 4 euros to get in, although they have a strange drinks policy involving only being able to hand over tokens at the bar which you've previously had to buy on the door. Great for the staff; no faffing with change but considerable potential for "rounding up" on the shorts. Imaginatively called Vrouwen 30+ (women over 30) it was held at COC.

Plenty of other queer listings for all persuasions in the Time Out guide. The hostel was the one located centrally of the two in the city and the weekend package was excellent value for money with extras thrown in. Check out their webi www.stayokay.com or www.hihostels.com - it's the Dutch version of YHA.

Oh yeah, and there's canals and museums and stuff for culture vultures too.

Walking Groups

SHEFFIELD HIKING DYKES

Sheffield Hiking Dykes is a walking group for lesbians and women questioning their heterosexuality. More info can be obtained by contacting: Deena on 0114 268 6409 or Kate on 0114 221 8426. All walks start at 10.30 a.m. unless otherwise stated. Please bring a packed lunch and drinks for the day. Some of the walks are rocky and rough underfoot and/or climb quite high onto exposed areas so wear suitable footwear and bring a waterproof and something warm to put on.

A quick check on the **SHEFFIELD HIKING DYKES WEBSITE** reveals that the last listed walk was Feb 19th. There are details of a Youth Hostel weekend at the end of March in Todmorden and if you are interested you can make contact by email via the website.

NOTTINGHAM HIKING DYKES walk on the 3rd Sunday of the month.

A friendly walking group for female born lesbians(please see below).*

March 19th Bonsall. From Cromford take Via Gellia (B5012). Take right turn up hill to Bonsall. Then turn left up "The Dale". Park outside public loos and opposite village hall. GR 280580. 10.30am

April 23rd (NB it's the 4th Sunday as Easter Sunday is the 3rd Sunday) "Hathersage, meet Surprise view car park. From Hathersage, take the A625 Sheffield road, in two miles, just after passing through a rocky cleft turn left into car park." 11am start. 6 miles ish.

May 21st Bleasby (South of Southwell but north side of river) (707499). Meet at Manor Farm tea shop, between Goverton and Bleasby. Park in field behind the tea shop. An easy 8 miles along River Trent. 11am.

June 18th Meet Grindleford cafe, Grindleford Station GR 251788. 6-8 miles. 11am

Look out for Summer mid week walks - meet 6.15pm for 2 to 3 mile walk then adjourn to the pub for a meal.

Derby Walking Women — a friendly group who meet once a month, usually on the first Sunday. Normally meet at 10:45 for an 11 am start. There's a rest part way round when you can eat your packed lunch or there is usually scope for a drink &/or hot food in a pub or tea room at the end. Next walk will be Sunday March 5th, meeting at

Ilam outside the National Trust gift shop & toilets

10:45 for an 11 o'clock start

A 5 mile walk with nothing too steep & a sandwich stop half way round.

Afterwards it's the NT café or a half mile drive to the Isaac Walton

(Each month's walk is organised by volunteer(s) and full details are given out the month before. The overall co-ordinators can be contacted on 07786 803455 or email lookoutmag@hotmail.com)

North Nottinghamshire Walking Group

This is a friendly group open to all Lesbian and Bi-Sexual Women living in or near North Notts. Walks are held on the second Sunday of each month and are generally 4-8 miles long. The walk organiser suggests that all participants bring appropriate clothing, waterproofs & footwear, and refreshments for each walk.

Sunday March 11th meet at 11am at the Old Reindeer pub Main Street, Edingley GR 664560 for a 5 mile walk over fields with open views and no steep hills.

Contact Julia 07961 847091 or Jenny 07950 84320 for further details.

No long term walk programme, but you can email nnwalkers@yahoo.co.uk for the latest info.

* Following feedback received and debate that followed, the Lookout Team would like to point out that this mission statement "female born lesbians" is that of the walking group concerned and it does not necessarily reflect the opinion of anyone involved with producing this newsletter.

HELP

Nottingham Rape Crisis Centre

If you have been sexually assaulted and need help, information, or someone to talk to phone 0115 941 0440. Confidential, free and independent. Run by women for women

Women's Drug Service

Free and confidential service for women who use, have used or are at risk of using drugs. Tel: 01623 785 444

Outburst! is a group for lesbian, gay and bisexual young people up to 21.

Meet at the Health Shop, Hockley, Nottingham every Friday 6pm-8pm. A space to meet other lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

FLAME (Lesbians with ME support group).

Social & support group for lesbians with ME/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome meets monthly. For more details contact Morag on 0115 916 2672 or email: morag-@ntlworld.com

Broken Rainbow Helpline 020 8539 9507 for lesbians experiencing abuse from their partner.

Nottingham Police LGBT Consultation Group.

Meets every 3 months (usually at the Adams Building in the Lace Market). Representatives from local lesbian/bi groups are welcome. Details via Switchboard or the GAi Project.

Relate Nottinghamshire

The Relate counselling service is available to all adult couples experiencing problems in their central relationship, including gay and lesbian couples. Tel: 0115 950 7836.

Services include Family Counselling, Sex Therapy, Relationship Education and training courses

Nottingham LGBT Consultation Forum

(formerly Notts LGBT Community Voice) (and before that the LGB Forum)

meets every 3 months, and can be contacted via Switchboard (0115 934 8485), the GAi Project (0115 947 6868) or the City Council Action on Diversity Team (phone John Cowings on 0115 915 7244 .

Nottingham Women's Counselling Project

Group Therapy sessions will be run for 8 weeks @ fortnightly intervals. Any woman, including past, present and future clients of the Nottingham Women's Counselling Project are invited to apply by phoning 0115 947 0230 to join or get more info.

Sessions are funded by the lottery and free to participants.

The Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Lesbian & Gay Switchboard can be contacted on :
0115 934 8485 or 01623 621515 Mon-Fri 7pm-10pm
c/o VAC, 7 Mansfield Road, Nottingham. NG1 3FB—Website www.nottslgs.org.uk

You can make contact via email at lookoutmag@hotmail.com to have your name added to the e-mail address list and can elect to be sent an electronic version of Lookout (pdf format) if you prefer. You can also let us know about changes of email or land addresses; send details of future events; suggest topics for discussion or maybe even make an announcement about forthcoming nuptials.

Next issue out at the beginning of June, deadline for copy/adverts will be 7th May 2006