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LOOKOUT!

Sept Oct Nov 2007

Issue 44

Editorial

A couple of readers have emailed to mention a website www.somethingsocial.co.uk. They have been to the monthly eat out social (trying a different restaurant each month) on 2 occasions and really enjoyed it - great food great company (both times they were the only girls!!) and £1 per head goes to the LGB switchboard. September's event will be Le Mistral in Nottingham. We were intrigued & started to 'google'. It was nearly the best kept secret in the region as they'd called it something special but we persevered and tried via the LGB switchboard site and came up trumps.

A little aside here—I was unimpressed by my workplace (a local authority) internet search for the Switchboard resulting in a blocked message that bumbles on about me being protected from an alternative lifestyle site....and this from an organisation that has been bragging about its commitment to equality by recently becoming one of Stone-wall's Diversity Champions. Exactly what they had to do to achieve this accolade goodness only knows but it doesn't seem to extend beyond allowing an LGBT group to exist on the premises.

Anyway—this is what the Switchboard says about Something Social:-

Switchboard gets regular and valuable support from the local Something Social network of social groups. Something Social organises a variety of non-scene social events and provides a chance to make new friends in a relaxing environment. Sunday Social - a quarterly event with deals on food and drinks + competitions in a friendly atmosphere; Badminton Social; Arts Social for those interested in the theatre, cinema, music, exhibitions etc; Eat-out Social; Tardis Social - for Dr. Who/Torchwood fans; Murder Social - an occasional murder mystery evening; Real Ale Social.

See full details for all these under Something Social at www.somethingsocial.co.uk

The Switchboard site itself is full of useful info and well worth a visit although we were a wee bit miffed not to find any mention of Lookout despite its 10 year credentials! An email has been sent to try and rectify this oversight.

They offer training for anyone interested in becoming a volunteer, usually commencing each autumn. Full details of what's expected can be found at www.nottslgs.btik.com

Matters Arising

We didn't get any response at all to our request a couple of issues ago seeking interested parties to represent either Black Lesbians or Bi-sexual Women in Nottingham so we propose to ask the Women's Centre staff to "return to sender" any mail for these two groups. Similarly with mail for the Lesbian Line—it'll have to go back.

Copies of the bi-monthly American magazine Lesbian Connections available.

Contact lookoutmag@hotmail.com

LOOKOUT! Is sponsored by CAMPIONS SOLICITORS

WOMEN'S REGULAR EVENTS & SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

PINK!

PINK! Nottingham's Fabulous Women-Only night is First Saturday of every month at the luxury Champagne and Cocktail lounge of 'China China'

Two rooms, bar, dancefloor, flat screen TV's with favourite lesbian viewing, you can dance the night away, catch up with old friends or meet new ones at this welcoming and stylish event.

The fun starts at 8pm and goes on til very late
Find out more information from www.purple.uk.com and check out the photos of previous PINK! nights at www.myspace.com/purpleloft
Any questions? Email: enquiries@purple.uk.com

Entry is £5
China China, Chapel Bar,
Nottingham, NG1 6JQ

Appeal for participants

Please think carefully about adding your support to the various social and sporting activities that people devote a lot of time and energy into promoting. They are a valuable source of friendship links and they won't always necessarily be there next month. Sadly the owner of Shades in Derby is no longer prepared to let us have the place without charging a room hire fee, due to a low turnout in June. We had 5 cracking evenings prior to that but clearly it was only ever going to appeal to about 40 women—that's less than 10% of the total readership.

Don't forget there is no PINK in September see you all at there in October



BADMINTON

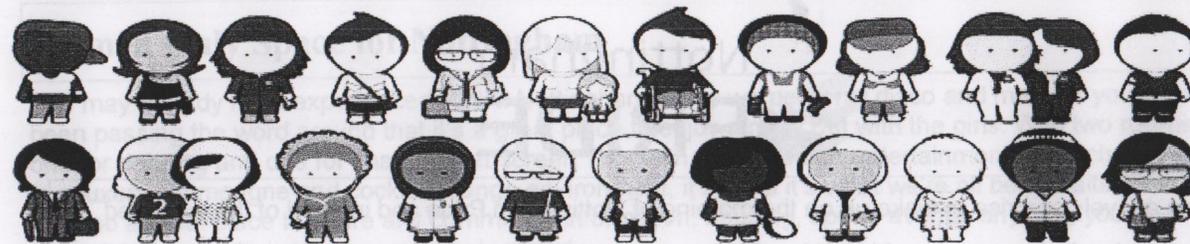
TO SUIT ALL SKILL LEVELS
HELD IN NOTTINGHAM
AT VICTORIA LEISURE CENTRE
ADJACENT TO SNEINTON
MARKET.
YOU CAN ENJOY A GAME ON
THURSDAY EVENING 9PM-10PM
&/or SATURDAY MORNING
9AM-11AM.

GOOD SOURCE OF EXERCISE PLUS LOTS OF
SPIN OFF SOCIAL ACTIVITIES WITH THIS
FRIENDLY GROUP OF WOMEN

For more details

Contact Cate on 07757 326633
or lookoutmag@hotmail.com

News, articles, forthcoming events, sporting fixtures, clubs, groups, health issues, opinions, stories, and any miscellaneous items of interest for the next issue of Lookout to lookoutmag@hotmail.com by November 7th please



Your health. Your say.

Stonewall are running a national questionnaire asking lesbians, bi-women and women who sleep with women about their health and wellbeing. The questionnaire takes about 15 minutes to do, and includes some quite personal and sensitive questions as well as links to sources of information and advice. The questionnaire is online at http://www.stonewall.org.uk/campaigns/lesbian_health_survey/default.asp, or paper versions are available either by emailing health@stonewall.org.uk with your address or calling 020 7593 1850. The survey will be open until the end of October. It is anonymous and confidential, and Stonewall gives advice about protecting privacy online - though there's the chance to enter a prize draw for £100 if you don't mind them having your e-mail address. Why are Stonewall conducting this survey? - they say: "Not a lot is known about the health of lesbians and bisexual women. Sometimes the doctors get it right. Sometimes they don't. The aim of this survey is to ensure that your healthcare needs and experiences will be better understood, rather than ignored. This is the first survey of its kind in the UK - by taking part you'll be making a real difference."

Health Issues at a slight tangent

My mate and I are starting a level 2 BSL - British Sign Language - class in September. I started signing a few years ago cos I had a close friend who is profoundly deaf and wanted to be able to communicate better. I also found she got left out at parties etc cos people found it hard to concentrate on speaking clearly when there was a group. I interpreted for her a few times and even went on a residential course as her friend/interpreter as she wouldn't have found it easy to take part without (I had a great time too). I've even found being able to sign a little bit useful for myself too as I can sign across to my friends when out in a busy pub eg "get me a pint please" or " look who's just come in!"
Unfortunately my deaf friend moved a long way away and though we keep in touch by text I don't see her often enough to keep my signing up to scratch. I'm going back to the classroom in the hope that this time I will take the exam and maybe in the future take it a bit further and get into interpreting properly. You never know I might even be able to ditch the day job! My pal who has a baby now and is not keen to go back to her old job, also wants to see if there might be a new career with the deaf community.
So the reason I'm telling you all this is that we really need some friendly deaf women who might be up for helping us to practice our signing - we're a bit rusty now but we promise to work hard at it.
If you can elp us out with our project maybe you could text me, Judi, on 0775 3625385. I would like to assure anyone who might be thinking about it that this could be just a one off - after all we might not get on with each other - and we are not expecting someone to give up lots of time or put in huge efforts for us. I could tell you that we are both lovely friendly women but that's up to others to decide really. If it helps to get an idea of us we are 35 and 50, black and white, working full time and on maternity leave, live in Sherwood and Basford in Nottingham. We would be chuffed to hear from anyone who might be able to help us practice even occasionally or introduce us to other deaf people.



It was a lovely surprise to wake up on the morning of Nottingham Pride and instead of the expected rain and clouds, to see sunny blue skies. The new committee who had never organised a Pride before had been panicking about the weather, sure that they would have to cancel the event. So the good weather was relief all round. Pride kicked off at 12pm as usual with a few people milling about the stalls and bandstand. But by 2pm the park was heaving with people wandering about the park and lying on the grass enjoying the sun. There was a range of singers and bands starting with Nottingham based Patsy who belted out the opening and closing songs on the bandstand and tried with varying success to get people up to dance. Other singers and bands included Al Start, Paul Cowden, a boy band CODE5, the Caribbean All Stars Steel Band which sounded great under the sunny skies, and my personal favourite GeEKgiRL who sang songs that sounded like a melodic blend of punk and country syle music. MC Pariss a witty and glamorous Leicester Drag Queen compered the acts in the music tent. Pariss's past appearances on television include The Trisha Show, Sky1's 'Guilty', Channel 5's 'My Secret', and ITV's 'Dial a Date Ibiza 99'. The other 'celebrity' at this year's Pride was Pippa Fulton a Fame Academy finalist. There seemed to be more stalls than ever, from the usual fundraising stalls such as the Switchboard to stalls selling sex toys and romantic gifts. Nottingham City Council were there getting people's views on how the Council could improve its provision of services for the LGB community whilst handing out pieces of wedding cake - I didn't really get the connection but still enjoyed the cake. The stall selling massages looked tempting although you had to be self confident to relax lying on a table and getting a massage whilst curious people stared at you as they walked past. The beer tent was as popular as ever although the more thrifty came loaded up with their own drink and in a few cases tempting looking picnics. However, as usual the best bit of the day was bumping into old friends, avoiding ex lovers and lying in the sun talking to friends with the sound of music in the background. After Pride finished we had a choice of things to do in the evening! The Foresters pub was open as usual with their £1 entry fee going straight to the Pride committee to cover the costs of this free event. Or alternatively you could go to listen and dance to Bananarama and Axe Girl. Whatever you did, I hope you all enjoyed this great event.

ANNIE LENNOX



This picture may be completely lost on the printed version of Lookout but in case you hadn't heard Annie Lennox has a new album out on 2nd October called Songs of Mass Destruction.

Go to www.annielennox.com to hear the first single Dark Road

You can get an emailed version of Lookout in glorious colour by emailing lookoutmag@hotmail.com

Women Only Space for Nottingham

You may already have experienced PINK! Nottingham's only women-only disco and many of you have been passing the word around that it's a great place to enjoy a night out with the girls. With two rooms, one for dancing and one for chatting, flat screen TV's with great lesbian entertainment to watch and all in a luxury champagne and cocktail lounge environment, it seems it's what we're all been waiting for. It's also a great place to share any community information, housing, sports events, anything you like that might be of interest to a women-only crowd.

It's always a challenge getting something new off the ground and PINK! has been no exception but the organisers have been listening to feedback and at the last event (in August) the music was spot on, the atmosphere was electric and everyone mixed, chatted and danced til late on. There was also quite a reaction to the idea of theme nights, some of the themes and the fact that entry would be £1 more on those nights seemed to meet with a reluctance to attend. So, in this respect also, the organisers have listened and are now sticking to a standard format of £5 entry and no additional entertainment. Those of you who weren't keen on the pole dancing idea can rest assured it won't now be happening. The one theme night which will remain but without any extra charge is the **Drag King Night on November 3rd**, and if you've never experienced one of these, you don't know what you're missing - it can be funny, empowering and quite sexy too!

Numbers were low in August, partly we think because of a clash with the Riverside festival and lots of folks off on their holidays and so it was great to see things still went with a bang.

This did mean, however, that the event is still running at a loss and another low turnout could mean the end of the road for this much appreciated environment.

The September PINK! had to be cancelled due to an existing booking at the venue which means the next opportunity to experience this unique and friendly disco is the first Saturday in October, that's **Saturday October 6th, 8 til late**. Let's hope there'll be more support to make this an event that will go on and on.

If you have any questions, drop Purple an email at enquiries@Purple.uk.com

Calling All Lesbian Writers

A new and different kind of writing group is starting up in Nottingham on September 18th. Tired of the usual homogenised groups, we thought we'd mix it up a little. The group is open to all lesbians who write - poets, dramatists, fiction writers, bloggers and kitchen table scribblers. Our vision is one of a group which aims to break down the barriers and social constructs which hold us back from using our voice.

Our aim is to explore our own creativity and the diversity of Lesbian experience. We don't have a clear map yet as the project is at the embryonic stage. We are hoping for an organic exchange of ideas, that will invigorating each other's creative processes and stimulate new and exciting work. With this in mind we propose using the internet to exchange and critique each other's work if desired and using meetings to share ideas and writing in a safe and supportive environment.

We hope the freshness of this group will create new work both from writers who are not currently producing and perhaps for successful writers who wish to re-invigorate their writing. Ideally, we want to work towards compiling and publishing an anthology of work in the future.

This journey will be shaped by all those who participate, working towards establishing a group that reflects the multiplicity of the lesbian community and takes us on an expansive journey. For further information, please contact sandyhopton@lycos.com

Aspiring writers are welcome to submit articles for publication to
lookoutmag@hotmail.com

Without the input we get from women in and around Nottingham & Derby
this newsletter wouldn't survive

Walking Groups

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

16th September 7 and a half miles. Park at the Laxton Visitor Centre SK 724671- the visitor centre car park is behind the Dovecote Inn.

21st October Thorpe in Derbyshire, 8 miles (or 4 miles). Start/Parking. Peak National Park car park, Thorpe, on the Tissington Trail, grid ref 165504.

18th November Meet outside the Peacock Inn, Rowsley, (A6) (GR255658).

16th December Meet in the centre of Crich (WC, shop etc) Off the A610 near Ambergate. GR350541

Details of these and further walks from

Lesbian and Gay Switchboard 0115 9348485 or www.nottinghamhd.homestead.com



Derby Walking Women

Sunday 2nd September Meet at The Tavern, Tansley on the A615 Alfreton to Matlock road. 11:00 start for this 4.5 mile walk. It's hilly but the views are worth it. Please use the far end of the pub car park.

Later the same day it will be the annual free concert and fireworks in Darley Park, Derby (Walks are normally on the first Sunday of the month, each 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.

Sun 8th September Laxton GR724667 meet near the church on the main street about 300 yds from The Dovecote village pub for an 11 o'clock start on this 6 mile walk.

Sun 14th October Eaton GR713780 meet near the hump back bridge in the village where you'll have to park along the main street. 11 am for a 5 mile walk.

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.

SHEFFIELD HIKING DYKES

September 2nd Hathersage: 7 miles Meet at Bamford station car park, grid ref. 208826. Pleasant easy walk from Bamford towards Hathersage.

September 16th — Curbar and Frogatt edges: 7.5 miles Meet by the Bridge Inn, opposite the church, Calver, grid ref. 248744.

September 30th — Longnor and Hollinsclough via Chrome and Hollins Hills: 8m Meet in the village square car park in Longnor, where there's a cafe, pub and toilets, grid ref. 089650

October 7th — Millers Dale: 8 miles Meet at Millers Dale car park, grid ref. SK 137733

October 21st — Holmesfield — 8 miles Meet at the car park behind the church in Holmesfield GR SK320777

A full & varied programme of walks throughout the year, for further details check out their web-site or phone Sheila (0114 2580211) or Deena (0114 2686409)



HELP GROUPS

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 an LGBT group for young people aged 11 to 25. Meet at Base 51 every Monday from 5:30 to 8pm.

Contact details
07940 761160
0115 915 882

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.

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

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

Please feel free to send us updates to this list.

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).

NEW! A safe space / clinic for women who have sex with women. "Tipping the Velvet" started 6th August 1st Monday of every month at The Health Shop, 12 Broad Street, Hockley, Nottingham 5:30 to 8pm
For further information contact 0115 947 5414

Venture in to Derbyshire for a breath of fresh air

Sue Allanson is a sculptor living in Derbyshire and has a forthcoming exhibition at the ever expanding Wirksworth festival on 8th-9th September 10.00-5.00. If you've never been before and are interested in art and creativity it's a must. There are usually over 100 artists exhibiting in local people's houses and gardens.

Sue carves women in stone and sees her work as a integration of her spirituality, sexuality and creativity. She carves directly onto the stone without drawings, so setting aside her own pre-conceived notions in order to find the essence of the stone through the creative process. Her work is for sale at the festival, prices range from £150- £350. She also undertakes commissions. Check out www.sueallanson.co.uk.

If you cannot make the festival you can view her work at her studio by appointment 01629 826446

The Wirksworth Festival this year runs from September 7th-23rd and will feature performance, visual arts, music, workshops, drama, comedy, architecture, dance & film. There's such a lot happening the best thing to do is to check out their web site at www.wirksworthfestival.co.uk