

**When Paper  
Was A Thing**

# Nottingham Prints

**Zine But Not  
Forgotten**

## **Sharing your stories: NAFA Newsletters & Unity NAFA**

**By Bea Watling – September 2019**

I was a part of a group of people in Nottingham editing/writing/publishing these mags. I'm pretty proud of it, though one of the many things I resent about fascists is how many of my weekends they take-up. Lots of people helped us to get it printed and distributed, not least a local trade union office, who gave us a lot of support.

In the early/mid 90s we saw a worrying resurgence of Nazi and fascist groups, both in the UK and the rest of Europe. Grassroots anti-fascism and anti-racism is the best way to organise against these fuckers. They need to know that they're not welcome in our communities and workplaces.

I like to think we made a small contribution to combating them. The local Nazis were a sad bunch, but at times worryingly violent and divisive, too. They're parasitic, feeding off people's legitimate fears about a lack of decent jobs, housing, public services, crime, etc. It's tempting to think the boot boys have gone away, but far-right terrorism is a very real threat today, even if the authorities like to play it down.

Anyway, a local perspective on their activities is important. It's good to get news out on what's going off on your doorstep, and you need a vehicle to get that information out. And to receive it. We got a lot of support from people, often from areas some like to write-off. It's one thing to be an anti-fascist from, say, Forest Fields or Sherwood spouting off (like me), but you're in a whole different ball-game if you're doing it in Mansfield or Sutton or Clifton.

I hope there were some who saw our mag and thought, "Yeah, good to know there's other people out there who think like me", or better still, "You

know, I've never thought about it before like that, but they've got a good point".

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## Sharing your stories: From *Chimera* to *Outright*

**By Richard McCance & Chris Richardson – March 2019**

Until the early 1980s there were no known local LGBTQ+ publications circulating in Nottinghamshire apart from membership magazines, such as Nottingham CHE's *Chimaera*.

The first regular publication was *GEM – Gay East Midlands*, initiated by Colin Clews in Nottingham in early 1983, which ran to nine editions from June 1983 to March 1984. This was a high-quality production of sixteen pages professionally typeset and printed, which circulated in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire, mainly to gay bars, clubs and friendly shops, and sold for 20p a copy.

After its demise it was followed by *GEM – Gay Freeby*, a four page A4 duplicated freesheet also produced by the Gay East Midlands Collective in 1984 of which only two editions appear to have been published.

*[Editor's note] We have been unable to find a copy of Gay Freeby #01. If anyone happens to have/come across one, please do get in touch!*

There followed a publication gap until February 1985 when *Gay Nottingham* #01 was produced as a single sheet, double sided A4, folded to A5, duplicated at 118 Workshop, Mansfield Road. This was put together by Richard McCance and continued in this format for six editions.

From October, 1985 it appeared as an A3 folded, four page format, doubling in size to eight pages from #23, in February 1987. The final edition, #28, appeared in July 1987.

In August 1987, *Gay Nottingham* reappeared as the first edition of *Metro Gay*, the renaming taking account of the expanded circulation area in



Leicestershire. The final edition of *Metro Gay*, #26, was published in December, 1989.

In February 1990, the first issue of *Outright* appeared. Richard McCance was now joined by Simon Wilkinson who became the founder members of Naff Co-operative Ltd, a worker co-op in which Richard and Simon were the unpaid worker volunteers. *Outright* was professionally printed by Anvil Press, a worker co-op in Derby. From September 1991 Simon Wilkinson retired from *Outright* and Chris Richardson joined. From April 1993 most issues of *Outright* expanded from eight to twelve pages. In 1995 Simon Smalley joined the Naff Co-operative. In December 1995 the largest edition to date ran to sixteen pages, which became the norm in 1996, rising to 20 pages in November 1996. By this time circulation had risen from the original 1,000 to 4,500 per month and reached outlets in Sheffield, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire.

In early 1997 Richard, Chris and Simon, burned out by the time and work demands of *Outright*, wanted to retire and pass on the magazine to new people. From March 1997 it was produced by new co-op members, the final edition appearing in October 1997.

Sadly there followed a gap in local LGBTQ+ publications but in 1998 the GAI Project and Nottingham Lesbian and Gay Switchboard began the production of *QB – Queer Bulletin*, which continues to this day in 2019 and is now the longest running LGBTQ+ publication in the East Midlands.

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## Sharing your stories: Nottingham CND

**By Ross Bradshaw – July 2019**

Nottingham Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament revived with an argument. It did not lead to war, but it had its heated moments. A few of us had already set up Nottingham CND, but as people poured into the peace movement some felt that it would be better to join up with END (European Nuclear Disarmament), Ken Coates' set up which linked the revived peace movement with human rights campaigners in the former Soviet bloc. Others felt it would be a mistake to join a national organisation that had its own history and had, arguably, failed.

The outcome was "Nottingham for Nuclear Disarmament", an independent group that would form its own policies and take the best from the other organisations.

And it grew and grew. In the centre, at its height, were three people – Tony Claydon (a Quaker), Ann Kestambaum (END/Labour Party) and me (then an anarchist). Sometimes we joked that if we could agree on something, with our diverse views, we were pretty sure to carry the organisation with us. Pete Zabulis had the problem of keeping the organisation afloat as treasurer.

But the structure, thanks to Dan Plesch (ex-Nottingham) and the setup he helped create in Bristol, which we followed, was decentralised in the extreme.

Typically some activists in an area would show *The War Game* by Peter Watkins, a film about the impact of a nuclear war that the BBC had commissioned but never shown, one of our speakers' group would give a speech and, most likely, people would then set up a neighbourhood group. This led to Sherwood CND, Forest Fields Peace Group, Beeson Anti-Nuclear Group and a couple of dozen others, including one group that drew its membership from one street - Raleigh Street. And there was a women's group (Women Opposed to the Nuclear Threat), a branch of the Medical Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons, and Christian CND, all doing their own thing, but coming together for the big demonstrations. Our banners were often appropriate to the neighbourhood group - Sneinton's featured the Windmill.

Where are they now? Search your attic!

Our resources group published the pamphlet *Facts Against the Bomb*, but the two publications that did most to mobilise people were the Government's absurd *Protect and Survive*, which purported to tell us how to survive nuclear war, and the answer by EP Thompson, *Protest and Survive*, published locally by Spokesman which sold by the thousands.

Our structure meant that people really did do their own thing. So some people, some groups, supported peace camps - the one set up by Nottingham people, by our wonderful hippy fringe, was at Lakenheath - others took part in nonviolent direct action at Molesworth and Greenham Common, and, famously in Chilwell, where hundreds of Nottingham people broke into the grounds of Chilwell Barracks. Some people went to gaol, some people organised Peace Festivals.

Ah, Peace Festivals. These usually attracted several thousand people. One year, on the Embankment, it

included a Children's Peace Festivals. Another year it clashed with a National Union of Miners rally on the Forest - so we ran buses between the two events and shared speakers. These peace festivals, all outdoors, lasted for ten years and, after a break, relaunched as the Green Festival, which is still with us.

There was opposition of course. The Peace Festivals sites had to be guarded against fascists and at the University of Nottingham one of the pro-nuclear/Conservative groups put out an anti-Semitic leaflet attacking Harry Fessler. Harry was a German Jewish refugee who had become a Quaker and was prominent in the University staff anti-nuclear group. Our street stall volunteers occasionally had people shout "Get back to Russia" at them.

Of course we did demonstrations. One local one was led by some giant puppets made by Pat Shammon. When this passed the Victoria Centre area people stopped, shocked and silenced. And we went to the big London demonstrations where EP Thompson said "I want you to, I want you to feel your strength!". One year we ran a train down, complete with catering and a children's coach. The next, we ran two trains down. I can date the first of these – Saturday 24 October 1981, as the previous evening a group of us was buzzing round town collecting stuff for our children's coach. Every household we visited was watching Nicholas Humphrey's Bronowski Memorial Lecture *Four Minutes to Midnight* on BBC TV.

Of course there were arguments – vote Labour or not, direct action or not – but our decentralised structure meant that those who mostly wanted to work through the Labour movement were welcome to do so, and those who wanted to sit down en masse, or destroy a fence, or blockade Ronald Reagan (which led to lots of arrests of Nottingham people) were free to canvass support and DO stuff, rather than continue to argue for the best way forward. Pete Strauss was perhaps the most prominent in the direct action groupings locally. And Dorry Lake was always to hand to sort out a musical accompaniment to our demonstrations.

Lots of brief memories... a coach to Glastonbury Festival; a street stewards' scheme for delivery of our newsletters; a "March Across the Sky" when every neighbourhood group set off fireworks in their own area; the day when street after street had window posters put up overnight declaring Nottingham a "Nuclear Free Zone" (John Waller organised that); the Minister of Defence, Michael Heseltine, visiting Nottingham and the most respectable of us, Sylvia Parsons, came out of our demonstration to shake his hand, smiling (he thought she was one of his supporters) - and never let it go until she had given him a lecture; blockading Molesworth in the snow...

Some of us marched in mainland Europe, a few marched across Europe.

We still have nuclear weapons, but Bruce Kent, the leader of CND, would always remind us that it took many years for women to win the vote, and for Black people and their supporters to get rid of slavery, and that the peace movement might well stop "the war after next" – though we failed to stop the Falklands War – perhaps because we were slow in realising that Margaret Thatcher's personal adventure would become a war.

We don't know the impact of what we do. But nuclear war did not happen - at times it really looked as if it would, and there are no nuclear missiles at Greenham any more. And a lot of CNDers from the old days are down with the kids in Extinction Rebellion.

But even if we made no changes, we bore witness, we said (before the phrase became common) "not in our name". And we had a good time doing it.

I've met nobody who regretted their years in CND (oh, and the name did change to Nottingham CND at some stage).

We can say that.

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## Sharing your stories: *Citywise*

**By Stuart – March 2019**

I shared a house with Juris Jostens and another guy, both members of the *Citywise* collective at the time and they used to put the mag together on the kitchen table.

Juris was a lovely 21 year old Latvian anarchist, who was also a fantastic pianist who died tragically very young. Dropped down dead playing football one Sunday morning. He was expecting his first child, who was born a month later.

I'd also helped him get a serious pot of money out of the County Council for a new musical composition which he'd just started work on.

Very sad but very fond memories.

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