

**FACTS & FINDINGS :**

Sexuality : Heinrick Mann Institute Research findings :

23 % of young gay people leave home due to family pressures and half the gay population are rejected at some time by the family due to their sexual orientation.

37% of all adult Americans have had some form of homosexual relationship.

It is estimated that 10% of gay people are 'out' at work and 40% are 'out' to their friends.

The suicide rate is 2to3 times higher in the gay population than the heterosexual population.

On average men realise they are gay between 14 - 16, and women realise on average between 16- 19".  
%o Rikki Lake : Channel 4.

\*\*\*\*\*

Rape Fact : An article in a Nott'm weekly paper reported, in relation to holiday destinations that 36 British women were raped on the Greek Isles last year. In response holiday operators said that it is due to a misunderstanding of culture and the number is so high because tourism rose by 30% last year ???!

Rape Fact : It wasn't until 1990 that the ruling regarding rape within marriage was reviewed. From 1736 when Chief Justice Hale gave ruling that 'by their mutual matrimonial consent and contract, the wife hath given up herself in this kind to her husband which she cannot retract', his opinion was considered the legal view'.

Health Fact : Nearly as many women as men die each year from heart disease. A vast US study on the protective effects of aspirin was based on 22,071 subjects. They were all men.

Health Findings : Apparently drugs are tested on men because women's hormones make them unrepresentative in clinical trials. But if half the population is unrepresentative, isn't the other half too!

Marriage Facts : In 1993 Norway following Denmark's lead(1989), lesbians can marry and are entitled the same rights as heterosexual

couples. Lesbian couples are still unable though to adopt children or marry in church, but this new Law enables Lesbian couples to be officially recognised, to inherit and be registered the partners next of kin.

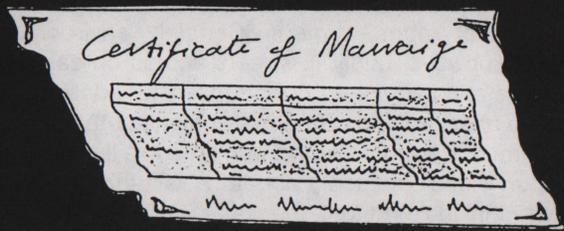
Domestic Violence findings : One third of all social work cases involve domestic violence (Maynard - 1985). Yet woman abuse is rarely addressed in favour of other presenting issues. In 90% of incidents of domestic violence, children are in the same room or next room (Hughes 1991), and approximately 60% of the children are also suffering some form of abuse (Filtcraft and Stark). Domestic Violence is not viewed though as a priority for social work.

Domestic Violence findings : 80% of abused women seek medical help at least once and 40% sought it on a minimum of five separate occasions (Dobash and Dobash).

Book Publication : "Children Living with Violence" - a new book has just been published edited by Becky Morley and Audrey Mullender. Containing papers written by nationally recognised practitioners and 'researchers' - It examines issues around child abuse and the abuse of women and considers issues for different groups of women.

**PLEASE NOTE : This newsletter, is an independent venture and is not financed or given any administrative assistance by any group, agency or organisation.**

**The licence, to love and cherish**



**not to abuse, rape and assault.**

**MEETINGS / EVENTS :**

\* Women's Safety Network - Dec 12th 11am, York House, Mansfield Road Nottingham. Contact : Kathy 702879, Sue 483500 x5462.

\* Women Supporting Women - 7.30 Tuesday Nov 8th, Women's Aid Advice Centre, Women's Centre, 30 Chaucer St, Nottingham, Contact : Linda 691475.

\* Violence Awareness Day - Friday Dec 2nd, Nottingham University.

\* Planning for Safety in Towns Seminar - Wednesday Dec 14th at Nottingham University. Contact : 0602 514883. Concessionary prices and Free places available.

\* Examining the links Between Child Abuse and Domestic Violence Conference - has been moved to Thursday 9th Feb at Denewood Training Centre in Bilborough, Nottingham. Guest Speaker - Liz Kelly. Contact : 0602 426457. Concessionary prices available.

\* The Zero Tolerance Conference : being organised by the City Council, is postponed as no Government speaker would agree to attend. A new date is still to be confirmed.

\* Womenkind Worldwide, National Council of Women, Women's National Commission commemorate the 1994 International Day of Protest Against Violence Against Women, at the House of Commons on Thursday 24th November 6.00-8.00pm. Seats are on a 'first come first served' basis.

\* A play entitled 'The Wound' looking at violence in the family is on tour in Notts between Nov. 28/ and 30th. Venues include : Lowdham, Worksop, Hyson Green.

\* On Nov. 10/11th a Puppet Show about domestic violence is showing at the Old Angel in Nott'm Centre.

*Card*

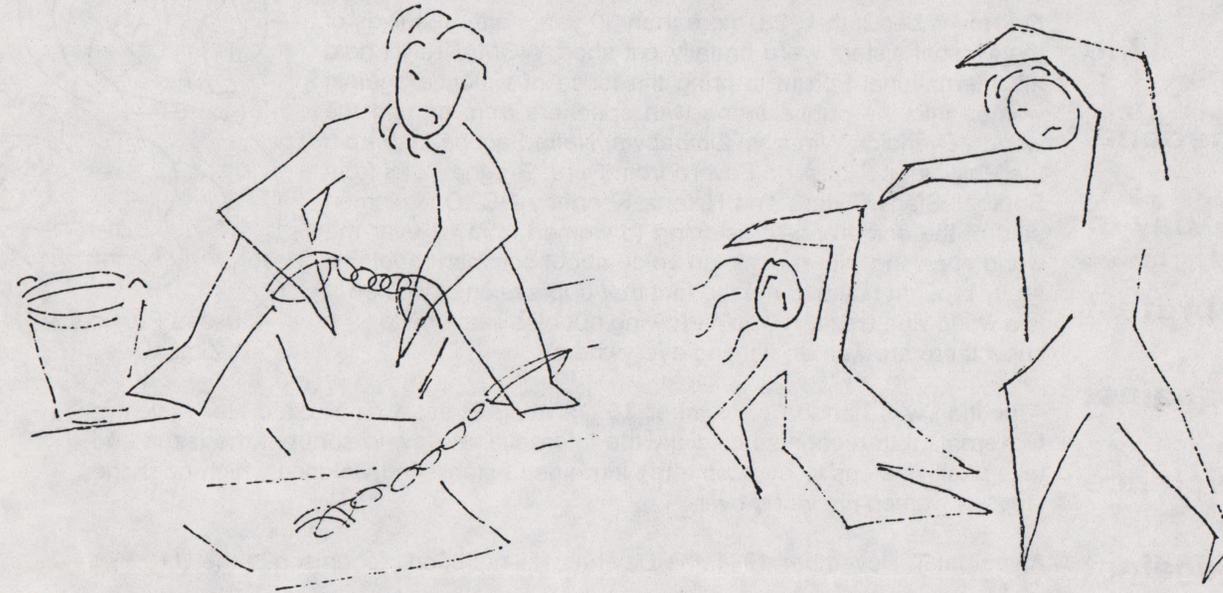
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Issue No 6

November 1994

# WOMEN'S SAFETY

## Newsletter



He was held hostage for 5 years ..... She was 'held captive' for 5 years  
He has been threatened and beaten..... She has been beaten, belittled and raped  
He was treated to a postcard from home..... She was treated to a bunch of flowers  
He never knew what would come next..... She never knew what would come next  
The Government moved heaven and earth..... She had to escape on her own to get him released  
When he was set free everyone said how..... When she left she was blamed for staying amazing he was to have coped so long and seen as inadequate  
Acknowledging the need for time to recover..... She was given tranquillisers and referred for he was given counselling and sympathy psychiatric treatment.  
He is seen as a hero..... She is seen as the problem

**BOTH HAVE SUFFERED PSYCHOLOGICAL TORTURE**

(as defined by Amnesty International to describe the structure of psychological torture and brain washing used on prisoners of war camps in wartime . The categories include; degradation, threats, physical abuse, isolation, total displays of power, occasional indulgences, exhaustion and distorted perspectives.)

*This is a Women's Safety matters newsletter appearing bi-monthly, providing information on women's safety work countrywide, campaigns, projects, training and events; of either statutory, voluntary organisations or individuals working in this area ..... with the purpose of informing, networking and supporting women and ultimately accessing women to resources - 'meant in the broadest sense of the word'. As the newsletter develops it is intended that issue based reports be a feature of each edition.*

Produced and edited by Olwen Edwards. Copyright on editors personal comments not on general text. Contact Address : for your safety events, letters, comments on women's safety, local developments, additions to newsletter mailing list, etc : 7 Darley Avenue, Bobbers Mill, Nottingham, NG7 5NQ, by December 28th.

*DMZ ©*

**1994 DAY OF PROTEST AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (25th November) :**

women  
fight  
back  
to mark  
the  
international  
day of  
protest  
against  
violence  
against  
women  
25 November

"On 25th November 1960 in the Dominican Republic three sisters were abducted, tortured raped then brutally murdered by the military. Women's outrage at this hideous event was channelled into constructive action. The first Latin American and Caribbean feminist meeting in Columbia in 1981 declared November 25th as the International Day to End Violence Against Women. This day has become a landmark, a sign of hope to women throughout the world struggling to bring an end to violence against women.

Violence against women in this country permeates every strata of society. Women are bashed and beaten in their homes more often than on the streets, rape and sexual assaults rate are some of the commonest crimes in the U.K.

On November 25th 1993, more than 30 years after the lives of the Mirabel sisters were brutally cut short WOMANKIND held an International Forum to bring the issue of violence against women into the public arena with speakers from around the world - Everjoice Win from Zimbabwe, Nelia Sancho Liao from the Phillipines, Rossano Favero from Peru, Pragna Patel from Southall Black Sisters and Helena Kennedy QC. One woman said of the conference " listening to women from all over the world speaking with a common voice about common problems really brought home to me the fact that oppression of women is a worldwide issue. It was harrowing but also inspiring to know there are women fighting everywhere".



Musasa Project Zimbabwe

A petition was handed to Number 10 Downing Street, which urged Her Majesty's Government to recognise officially the International Day, to confront the issue and take positive steps to overcome the ingrained established violence which dogs the steps of women the world over.

A year later, November 1994, the Day has still not been recognised in the U.K.

This year WOMANKIND, the National Women's Commission and the National Council of Women are commemorating the day at the House of Commons with a presentation called 'Breaking the Silence'. (See Events listings). They are also distributing petitions, again asking the Government to 'recognise the damage done to society by violence against women and girls, to take steps to ensure a woman's right to freedom from fear of violence and to recognise 25 November as International day of Protest Against Violence Against Women.

WOMANKIND is a development agency dedicated to supporting women in developing countries in their efforts to overcome poverty, ill health to gain education and training to eliminate violence and to gain greater control over their lives." Source : WOMANKIND worldwide.

N.B. Other Counties and areas in the U.K. are also starting to arrange events to coincide with this day. Groups in the Edinburgh area with assistance of the City Council (of Zero Tolerance fame) have arranged events, the London Borough Council of Hammersmith and Fulham have organised a series of events through October and November under the title of 'Year of the Violence Free Family'.



**WOMANKIND  
WORLDWIDE**

**make the world a safer place for women**

**not just talk but action!**

**MALE VIOLENCE TO WOMEN QUESTIONNAIRE :**

Introduction :

Many thanks for those of you who filled in the questionnaire. I appreciate it wasn't easy. One woman wrote to say she had difficulty understanding it let alone filling it in and she had a Social Research degree !. I realise the format could have made this simpler but women did fill it in which enabled me to interpret the findings to some extent. To other queries - I can't answer your questions regarding what type of women filled the questionnaire out, the 100 odd mailing list includes all the City community centres and all the women's safety organisations in the County (I know of) and many voluntary groups beyond. I actually don't think it matters whether women filling the form out are "politically correct" or not. Any woman's experiences are valid ones. Ideally a large number of returns e.g.150+ and a representative group of women (including black,disabled,lesbian,etc) may have proved useful when cross referencing the information but it was a voluntary thing & I have interpreted the information provided from those women who sent forms to me.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to find out some basic information of women's experiences of violence, and also how women had responded in relation to that violence and what effects it had, if any. I thought it may also raise areas or issues that previously had gone unnoticed, which would identify that some women's experiences were not acknowledged and therefore not catered for. Ultimately I hoped the information may dispel a few myths, reiterate what we already know and be used by 'someone' to address women's safety needs 'out there'. I hope this will all become clear in the next few pages.

The personal profile information at the beginning e.g. age, ethnicity,etc, was included to provide a broader picture and may have been useful in raising additional issues and particularly those for specific groups of women, older, black or disabled for example if there had been hundreds of returns. It would have provided a large enough random sample on which to base some 'assumptions' about the violence faced by certain groups of women.

There were **45 returns** and the findings are as follows : (your definitions) :

|               |                   |                       |                              |
|---------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Age range :   | Heterosexual = 25 | With Disabilities = 8 | White/UK/European = 32       |
| 21 to 30 = 19 | Bisexual = 4      | Other = 33            | Black/Dual or Mixed Race = 5 |
| 31 to 40 = 18 | Lesbian = 10      | Unknown = 4           | Irish = 2                    |
| 41 to 50 = 6  | Unknown = 6       |                       | Unknown = 7                  |
| Unknown = 2   |                   |                       |                              |

Older (i.e. 42+) =13%,Gay (lesbians/bisexuals) =31%,Disabled =18%,Minority Ethnic =13%.

These further break down into the following :

|                                 |                                       |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| white heterosexual = 15         | Irish disabled heterosexual = 1       |
| white older heterosexual = 3    | Irish older disabled heterosexual = 1 |
| white disabled heterosexual = 1 | Mixed race heterosexual = 4           |
| white lesbian = 7               | Mixed race disabled lesbian = 1       |
| white disabled lesbian = 2      |                                       |
| white bisexual = 3              |                                       |
| white disabled bisexual = 1     |                                       |

PART 1. Experiences :  
reponses to Questions :

- a. 35 or 80% received threatening or obscene phonecalls 29 at home
- b. 31 or 71% had someone indecently expose themselves 26 on the street
- c. 39 or 89% had indecent or unwelcome comments made
- d. 24 or 55% had been watched or followed
- e. 31 or 71% had worked in a place where pornographic material was on display
- f. 28 or 64% had been subjected to harassment of some form
- g. 21 or 48% had been assaulted by a stranger 19 on the street

- h. 26 or 59% had been assaulted by someone known 21 at home
- i. 19 or 43% had been sexually assaulted all at home
- j. 8 or 18% had been raped 7 were known men, 4 when dark, 3 when day
- k. 26 or 59% had been groped 12 more than once, by both stranger and known man
- l. 23 or 52% been abused by a family member/known man all at 'home', 10 beyond childhood
- m. 20 or 46% had been subjected to racial/disablist/homophobic etc violence
- n. 18 or 41% suffered violence from a partner/ex partner or husband
- o. 25 or 57% suffered emotional cruelty e.g. constant put downs, fear, mind games etc

\* In relation to Qu. m, 12 of the 14 gay women and 5 out of the 6 minority ethnic women ticked this question. In relation to Qu. f., half of the disabled women and 3 out of 4 mixed race women said they had suffered some form of harassment due to their disability or race. One disabled black woman indicated a mixture of both. Two thirds of the lesbians, bisexual and older women had suffered harassment and overall the findings in terms of harassment were disproportionately high in comparison to women who were heterosexual, white and able bodied.

\* In relation to Qu.l, 9 women indicated they had been abused under 18, and 10 women said that it continued after they were 18 years of age i.e. beyond 'childhood'. 5 out of the 14 Lesbian/Bisexual women ticked this question.

\* Three of the forms included details of violence from female partners. The questionnaire was specifically about male violence but a piece on women's violence will be included in the next issue of the newsletter.

\* One respondent wrote "fear of violence is a significant factor which affects women's quality of life, even if they are never 'violently attacked'. I agree, I think I missed an important experience in Part 1 - the fear of violence. I recall a woman saying she'd burst into tears because she was frightened when left waiting for her partner who was late to pick her up. Although 'nothing' happened the fear of what might occur affected her.

\* The total of incidents of violence that 45 women experienced as listed in Part 1 added up to 374. This did not though take into account the number of times each particular experience occurred. e.g. some women ticked Question.a. and 10 in the 'number of times this happened' box. The 'number of times' answers ranged from once to "hundreds of times". There was a predominance of a high number of times in relation to Part 1. Question.a,c,f,l,m,n, and o. Hence the total number of 374 is a baseline figure.

\* The total number of reports to the Police was 22 made by 12 women, 9 of which made charges at some stage, one woman 5 times. One woman did achieve getting an injunction, another woman was told by the Police her children could be taken off of her if she insisted on complaining (this occurred 15 years ago). So out of 374 incidents of which there were a number of occasions where these incidents occurred, only 22 incidents were reported. 33 or 73% of the women responding to the questionnaire had never approached the Police.

\* Approximately 94% of all of the violent/abusive experiences women faced were not reported to the Police and charges were brought on 2.5% of those that were reported.

\* Of the women who reported to the Police, 5 are (white) heterosexuals, 2 are (white) lesbians, 3 are (white) bisexuals, 1 is mixed race and 1 is (white) disabled.

\* Responses on the forms varied from women indicating 2 different experiences of violence to 15 different experiences, no forms were returned with all 'No' responses to Part 1, .....

- w. 8 women reported experiencing between 1 - 4 of the above
- x. 19 women reported experiencing between 5 - 8 of the above
- y. 15 women reported experiencing between 9 - 12 of the above
- z. women reported experiencing between 13 - 15 of the above

All the lesbians fell into a bracket of 8-11 experiences, 3 of the 4 bisexual women had very high scores (over 11), the older women's responses ranged considerably as did the ethnic minority women's experiences. When narrowing the results to the 4 'black' women solely, their responses ranged between 8 - 12. Women facing additional discrimination due to their race, colour, disability, sexuality or age, fell into the following groups:

The z group = 3, The y group = 10, The x group = 9, The w group = 0.

\* The results indicated black and minority ethnic, older, disabled, lesbian, and bisexual women do suffer violence in relation to their race, disability, sexuality and age and of a wide range.

\* The impact of the violence women face clearly made it frightening to go out and face 'unknown' dangers yet this in turn keeps women at home. When this fact is considered next to the fact where the rape, sexual assault/abuse and domestic violence abuse occurs, it hardly makes home a safe place to be.

#### PART 2. Responses (if any) to Experiences:

The findings in the following two parts are not as complete as Part 1, on 10 forms on Part 2 the column wasn't filled in, so the details here come from the other 35 forms. The following lists the action/response women made in relation to the violence they faced (and as a percentage of the 35 responses):

- 12 or 33% women called the Police and 7 made charges
- 5 or 14% women left their jobs / work setting
- 19 or 54% women left a partner
- 8 or 23% women took legal action
- 11 or 32% moved house / or County
- 10 or 29% women installed locks / alarm systems
- 10 or 29% women bought/used personal alarms
- 6 or 17% women now carry a weapon
- 21 or 60% women now avoid going out, at times or alone
- 14 or 40% women took very specific action like hitting back or burning his belongings etc
- 12 or 33% women joined a lobby/campaigning/support group
- 4 or 12% women took self defence classes
- Other: 3 women ran away / avoided further contact, 1 bought a telephone and a car, 1 changed her telephone number, 1 went on training to consider domestic violence, 1 went on a Reclaim the Night March and 1 had to leave college.

\* When cross referencing, 3 of the 8 women raped did not call the Police, of those who did, not all made charges. 5 of the 7 women who made charges were suffering domestic violence and had called the Police at least once.

\* The majority of the women leaving partners was linked to domestic violence / abuse and were the women taking legal action. One woman took legal action regarding harassment on the street, the other 'actions' related to; custody, divorce and in one situation against the Local Authority, where following domestic violence the Social Services had removed the woman's children on grounds that she was an unfit mother being a lesbian.

\* 25% of all of the women responding had been forced to move house / county due to violence.

\* Of the 10 women now using personal alarms 7 of these had been brought/acquired following an assault. Of the 6 women now carrying weapons, 4 of these had previously been raped.

\* 21 women said they now avoided, going out/alone and added additional comments of 'loads of times', 'numerous', 'very wary', 'all the time' in terms of going out.

\* Of the 14 women who said that they had taken direct action, the predominant answer was 'hitting back', and the majority were in relation to 1.n. or 1.o. which were domestic violence experiences, situations which they had since escaped.

#### PART 3. Effects on women:

- 11 women said 'None' or Not applicable from the other 34 and as a percentage of 34:
- 26 or 77% of women became depressed
- 9 or 27% of women became agrophobic
- 23 or 68% women had anxiety / panic attacks
- 22 or 65% of women began drinking or taking drugs
- 7 or 21% of women were hospitalised
- 3 women had a miscarriage or termination
- 1 woman had her children removed
- 6 women were scarred/burnt/mutilated 4 were domestic violence related,
- 13 or 38% of women lost family and friends
- 19 or 56% women suffered mental health problems
- 6 women had bones broken / injuries
- 12 or 35% women attempted suicide 6 - child abuse related, 4 - domestic violence related
- 7 or 21% of women self mutilated or hurt themselves

10 or 30% women were prescribed drugs tranquillisers  
8 or 24% of women sought professional help e.g. counselling

**Women's personal comments :**

" .. When I was 14, gang sexual assault by 6 young men ....stripped me naked, abuse etc", "...children used for sexual harassment when have to meet for 'contact' with ex partner ..", " .. took legal action over divorce proceedings, I ended up paying his costs !", " Partners son breaking in to steal stuff, frightened me, not his intention though ...", "... fingers and 5 males/youths were involved twice, the other yes's happened as a matter of course as they do to most women, L is the one that truly affected me", " ... I don't think its officially recognised but I do think it very commonly affects women's mental health ... ", "At the time I was willing (15-19) but I now believe he was very wrong to approach me at that age.", " did nothing - ran away", " I'm glad questions are being asked about the daily comments made to women on streets etc, .. are a every effective way of monitoring our behaviour", " the last time he tried to grope me was half an hour after my mother had died, I told him to get off, I never saw him again and then he died from a heart attack, I just sobbed .....", " It was recent and I have these feelings and reactions for a period of days/weeks but they are lessening ...", " ran away, changed identity, left kids".

**Editorial :**

Women are subjected to an unacceptable level of violence and abuse in their lives. Rape, physical assault, sexual assault and sexual abuse comes in the main from men that are known occurring within the 'home' setting. These men, often relatives, are 'ordinary men' who other people know and mix with. They are not as presented to us from television, some disturbed stranger who supposedly has uncontrollable urges or hates his mother. Yet women's Fear of violence 'out there', which incidently is three times that of mens fears, stops us going out even when home is predominantly the least safe place. This poses the question if we went out more would we be subjected to more abuse from unknown men on the streets as well as abuse at home. Apart from the abuse women already face from purely being female, if you are disabled, black, lesbian, older, bisexual whatever, then you will certainly face additional violence and abuse. This will also be used to justify the violence inflicted upon you.

I do not think it is suprising that so few incidents of violence have been reported to the Police or charged. Womens reported experiences of the legal system are a good deterrent not to use it because it does not take care of them and invariably blames them for the violence or abuse they have suffered. All women have the right not to be abused and to be treated fairly under the Law regardless of personal history or character. You don't have to like a woman to treat her fairly.

What struck me particularly from Part 1, was in Qu.I. where half the respondents, who said they suffered abuse in childhood said that it had continued after they'd reached 18years of age. Child abuse in all its forms stops being called child abuse at this age - then what is it ?. Clearly women are suffering abuse from beyond their adolescence emerging from a long term experience of abuse at home. How then does it cease to exist i.e. have a name, when its a continuum of abuse.

Women suffer abuse or violence of some form throughout their lives and this awareness of violence as a factor affects their day to day living in some way without having to consciously think about it as such. Violence is such an integral feature in our lives its better for our mental health and wellbeing to put it to the back of our minds than feel we have to endlessly challenge the society and systems that maintain things the way they are. We challenge when we are able to.

Giving different names to aspects of violence we face helps us assist and respond to each womans situation. In a wider context it is important to recognise that these are all expressions of the same thing i.e. the ways in which men abuse women. Although each different experience, like obscene phonecalls or rape or domestic violence are very separate entities in themselves, the overall picture is that the society in which we live, tolerates mens violence to women in whatever way they wish to inflict it and accepts their seeming right to behave that way. By the very nature of the violence and abuse inflicted, it is about control, ... controlling women. Most women do survive male violence and do find their own ways of dealing with the actual experience and its effect but the personal toll is high and women are forced to make major life choices in order to keep themselves (and sometimes their children) safe. Women at this stage are often further abused by the 'services' they approach. Crucial to women's survival of abuse, has been the women's voluntary sector and individual women's ability; to support, to believe women's experiences, not to blame, to listen, not to judge or to criticise, to promote choice and enable women to free themselves and lead freer lives. It remains an outrage that still where women's safety is considered in a legal setting or in terms of statutory services, women inadvertently/deliberately get blamed, its as if there is a need to blame women for the violence they face because no one really want to do anything about the perpetrators of violence. And however much you prove the high levels of violence women face from men, there is a total refusal for this reality and fact to be accepted. Women's safety is still not a priority for services and not integral to political agendas, although with the current focus on crime it has been increasingly difficult for 'the powers that be' to ignore the different experiences of crimes that women face. There really is no excuse for not tackling women's safety !! "

**FREE GAY OAKS :** the refuge movement has been brought to its knees in New Zealand following the arrest of Gay Oaks and a number of refuge workers. Gay Oaks was subjected to violence and abuse for 10 years by her partner and knew that in time he would kill her. One night following a terrible ordeal, she called the local Women's Aid for help. Being workers who listen to what women want, they assisted her in her requests. A year later when the body of her partner was unearthed in a field, Gay Oaks and the refuge workers were arrested. The split in the refuge movement is around the action of the workers. The workers are saying in their defence that women are always imprisoned in domestic violence cases and self defence is rarely accepted instead women have to claim 'diminished responsibility' or as in the US 'battering syndrome' rather than it being seen as simply and solely as self defence. Therefore they assisted and agreed to help bury the body. Others are outraged because this may affect the resourcing and services offered to protect other women and damage the women's movement. Apparently the name of Gays partner was not released for some months - he's called Doug Gardner and he'd been buried.

**BT CHANGES :** BT have introduced a new system to enable people to entrap nuisance callers and find out what number they are ringing from. By buying a 'box thingy' you can press a number on your phone and immediately the number from which the other person on the line is ringing from is displayed on your box. This is course has the effect of allowing someone to find out where you are also - and particularly in situations where women are trying to escape violent men and wish to keep their whereabouts confidential, once any phone number is displayed the numbers will indicate the area fom which the call has been made. There are means by which you can prevent your number being displayed, but you need to remember to do this. Please let me know if experience difficulties with the new system and how, so it can warn or assist others.

**EUROPEAN YEAR AGAINST RACISM and XENOPHOBIA :** is 1995 events are to be arranged around 21st March.

**SUBWAYS :** This is a copy of a letter STRIDE (Safe Travel for Women) sent 8-9-94, to the Nottingham Evening Post, which incidently was not published.

" Once again the Evening Post has sensationalised coverage of a rape attack with headlines of "Subway Savages" and "Dangers Lurk in Seedy Subways", let's not forget rape is committed by ordinary men, and the evidence shows most rapes are carried out by men known to women. Det Insp. Campbells comments that it was 'one of the most violent rapes ever reported in the City' are unhelpful. All rape is violent, psychologically as well as physically and many rapes go unreported for a variety of reasons, some of which were outlined in a report you carried earlier in the year in an interview with the Rape Crisis Centre (April 24 1994). It is not the environment that rapes women!. Certainly environmental features such as subways, badly lit streets and so on can make women feel unsafe and can create opportunities for attacks, but it was two men who attacked and raped the women not the subway. Tackling environmental features alone won't resolve the problem. Finally your report made comments about the fact that the 'victim had clearly been drinking' and that she was in a deserted subway - it is important not to imply blame on the woman who was raped or to imply what she could or could not have done to avoid violence. The blame and condemnation lies entirely with the perpetrators of the rape, not the subway and not with the woman

**SAFETY ADVICE FOR WOMEN DRIVERS :** the AA (Automobile Association) have produced a cassette tape apparently addressing issues regarding women's safety when driving, narrated by Victoria Wood and entitled 'Having a Breakdown'.

The Notts Police have also produced a cassette tape covering similar issues. I believe them to be available from the Community Affairs Dep't at Police HQ contact : 0602 670999.

**GAI GUIDE :** " is a guide intended for all of us who work with lesbians, gays and bisexuals, whether voluntary or professional, to provide information about the many different aspects of our communities". For more inforamtion contact The GAI Guide, The Health Shop, Broad Street, Nottingham, NG1 3AL.

**BREAST CHECKS ARE BACK ! :** according to a Family Circle Magazine article. "Following some confusion earlier this year when the Department of Health queried whether it was worthwhile, experts at the Imperial Canacer Research Fund have come down firmly in favour of regular do-it-yourself checks. They advise women to check their breasts once a month, preferably at the same time each month and to ask their G.P. or Practice Nurse if they're not sure on how to go about it. The Deputy Director of ICRFs breast cancer unit at Guys Hospital points out that 90% of lumps are found by women themselves and that regular DIY checks make it more likely that you'll spot a small benign lump or even cancer before it has spread beyond the breast".

