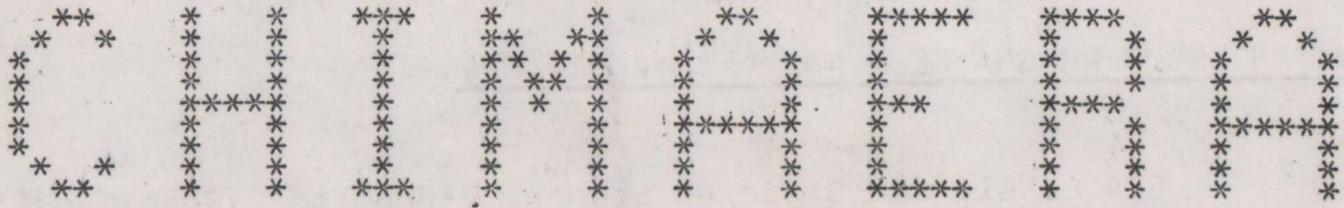


March 79



Newsletter of the Nottingham C.H.E. Group, No. X + 3

March 1979

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The group's A.G.M. will be held on Friday March 30th commencing at 7.30pm prompt.

It is important that all members who have interest in the group attend the meeting. The reason for an A.G.M. is for paid-up members to meet collectively, air their views, decide the future policy of the group, and elect people to do all the necessary jobs for the group in the forthcoming year. If you don't attend, then you have little grounds for objecting to things you dislike later!

In the past year criticism has been levelled at the level of campaigning undertaken, the lack of campaigning done, the futility of many of the social events, the lack of general interest shown by the membership at large, the absence of a committee, and the problems of fundraising (and probably many more things that haven't reached my notice). These are all policy matters that will have to be decided at the A.G.M..

Also there are the group's officers to appoint. Last year we had a convenor, treasurer, membership secretary, campaign officer, women's liason officer, auditor, and a newsletter editor. Do we need the same, or more, or less? (We certainly need a social secretary/organiser if we are to maintain an effective social programme. This too will have to be decided and a member appointed).

So the agenda will look something like this:-

1. Minutes of the last A.G.M. (Published in May '78 Chimaera.)
2. Matters arising therefrom.
3. Reports from retiring officers and statement of accounts.
4. Plans and policy for the forthcoming year.
5. Election of new officers.
6. Any other relevant business.

Please make every effort to attend.

John.

WOMEN'S GROUP FILMSHOW

The women are currently planning a filmshow evening in conjunction with two of the women members of friend.

The film we are planning to show is an American one called "In the Best Interests of the Children". It concerns the problems - legal and social - which are part of the lives of lesbian parents. It is a valuable film for anyone interested in befriending and in gay groups generally, as problems besetting the lives of lesbians are so often ignored or regarded as irrelevant. We would hope, therefore, that the C.H.E. group will come along to the evening.

The proposed date is Wednesday March 21st at 120 Mansfield Road, Nottingham. This is the normal meeting place of the Friend group, so any member should be able to tell you how to find it. If that date is not possible, it will be April 4th or 11th. The starting time has not yet been decided, but we would ask people to be there at 7.30.

The film is costing £18 to hire so there has to be a charge. If it is well supported it means that we will be able to cover costs and hopefully hire more films. If there is time, the film will be followed by a discussion of some kind and coffee will probably be available.

Pat & Hilary.

Confirmed date is April 4th

NOTTINGHAM GROUP PROGRAMME - March to early May

March:

- Tues 6th G.A.N. Gig and Disco at Shades, 9.00pm to 2.00am. Admission 75p in advance, £1.00 at door. Tickets available from Chris, Mike or John. A member of the group was recently attacked and knocked unconscious in a pub when merely wearing an Anti Nazi League badge. We do not know, of course, that this thug was a NF member, but he was a supporter of their policies. We cannot expect them to become more forbearing as they become more powerful, and the example of history is behind us. Hands up those in the group who still think we should not support Anti-Nazi activities!
- Fri 9th to Sun 11th National Council in St Albans. John has details of agenda etc for anyone interested.
- Thurs 15th Business Meeting at C.V.S., 8.00pm. Also, at the same place and time a meeting of the Quest group.
- Sat 17th Pub evening in Mansfield, at the Swan Hotel in the Market Place. Ring Gay Switchboard for transport details.
- Wed 21st (Hopefully) Women's Filmshow. See notes elsewhere for more information. Ring Gay Switchboard for confirmation.
- Thur 22nd Joint C.H.E./Gaysoc meeting to discuss Gay Pride Week activities.
- Wed 28th Disco at the Hearty Good Fellow, upstairs lounge, 8.00pm-11.00pm.
- Fri 30th Annual General Meeting in the C.V.S. Boardroom, 7.30. Please be prompt.

April

- Tues 3rd Gay Switchboard A.G.M. at 120 Mansfield Road. A joint meeting with the Friend group to elect Switchboard Co-ordinator etc. All C.H.E. members invited, especially as afterwards we hope to show the Tyneside Tape/Slide Kit.
- Thur 5th Business Meeting at C.V.S., 8.00pm.
- Wed 11th Coffee Evening at Tony's (Flat 4, 19a Pelham Crescent, The Park). There will be a prize for the best Easter bonnet.
- Wed 18th Coffee and a Quiz at Mike's (19 Thomas Close, St Ann's). Bring along sharpened wits and pencils because there might be another prize going.
- Thur 19th Programme Meeting at C.V.S., 8.00pm
- Wed 25th Disco at the Hearty Good Fellow, upstairs lounge, 8.00pm-11.00pm.

May

- Tues 1st Dinner with the Friend group at the Vernon Arms. Names and money to John please by 25th April at the latest.

The Gay Switchboard number to ring about any of the above events is 46881, on a Monday or Thursday evening between 7.00 and 10.00pm.

LOW-KEY PUZZLE The following instructions can often be seen displayed, but on what?

1. Use Upright.
2. Pull over Guard.
3. Hold Nozzle - Aim.
4. Depress Knob fully and Release.

Think carefully before you answer.

REFLECTIONS I have been looking back over my year of convenorship, and I wondered just what had been done or achieved during the year. At first I thought "Not a lot": no National Conferences to host; no forums organised; no outside battles with County Hall or local newspapers for me. So, what had been done? I glanced through the year's newsletters and my files and started making notes. And I was surprised at just what the group had achieved in a year.

Firstly, I had generated about nine inches of filing containing about 300 letters, and reckon to have made perhaps half as many phone calls. What were they all for? Well, here goes:

- - met and spoken to Nottingham Young Communists, the Chairman of the Social Services Committee, a VD consultant, a solicitor, the Community Health Council, the Bishop of Sherwood, the Police Community Relations Officer (3 times), and the head of the City Vice Squad.
- petitioned the Home Office re the blasphemy laws, the Lord Chancellor re Justice Melford Stevenson, the Greek Embassy on proposed anti-gay laws.
- written to local M.P.'s to support Robin Cook's Scottish Gay Rights Bill and Maureen Colquhoun's Early Day Motion, to the Williams Committee on obscenity, to the Criminal Law Revision Committee on law reform for gays.
- persuaded the local authority to carry "Gay News" in three major libraries (and made a profit from supplying it to them)
- picketed W.H.Smith's for refusing to stock "Gay News", and written and phoned their HQ to protest.
- lobbied all the county's M.P.'s and most of the prospective candidates regularly.
- joined in the activities of the Anti-Nazi League by joining the League, organising a large gay contingent and a street theatre at their Carnival in July, attended most of their meetings, supported their picket of the local National Front office, obtained 400 signatures on a petition against the use of offices in the city by the NF, distributed 1,000 leaflets explaining gay opposition to the NF, supported the formation of a local group of Gays Against Nazis.
- publicised the Tyneside Tape/Slide Kit.
- supported a censure motion against the C.W.S. at local co-op meetings.
- participated in the Gay Pride Week march in London.
- encouraged the University and Polytechnic to form Gaysocs
- attended national councils and the Annual Conference.
- Complained to the Nottingham North Constituency Labour Party about the anti-gay attitudes of their M.P..
- supported the formation of Nottingham Friend.
- strengthened the work and efficiency of Nottingham Gay Switchboard.
- obtained new sources of advertising.
- joined and assisted in the formation of the National Association of Gay Switchboards (N.A.G.S.), attended two of their conferences, and been represented on their Appeals Co-ordination Committee.
- met and talked with Gaycare.
- supported our brothers and sisters in Northern Ireland, raising £28 for them at a benefit disco.
- attended two counselling conferences at County Hall

- obtained representation on the C.V.S. executive committee.
- organised a sponsored slim in aid of switchboard.
- organised a panel of solicitors to help gays in trouble.
- maintained a social programme including: regular mothly discos; 12 discussions; 7 coffee evenings; 6 theatre visits; outings to Cambridge, Newark and Lincoln; 10 pub evenings; 4 dinners; 2 quizzes; 2 games evenings; a play reading; a treasure hunt; a visit to the sauna; 2 abortive visits to ten pin bowling; a trip to Goose Fair; a visit to the Bierfest; and a weekend exchange with Colchester C.H.E. group.

So collectively we've achieved quite a lot, including honourable mentions from head office for our efforts in the May and November recruiting drives and for our campaigning achievements.

But this has been at a cost. We've spent a good deal more than we have earned and occasionally have incurred the wrath of a member who feels we do too much campaigning and not enough social activity and yet more from another who thinks the opposite. But I think that this list shows that we do concentrate on all aspects of our organisation: we've cared, shared and fought. We have a track record that will stand up to any of the 100 or so C.H.E. groups - and will fare a lot better than many - but, as has been so succinctly said to me, we have only one thing in common, our gayness. So obviously we can't please all of us all of the time, but we try to do what we have to. Sometimes it gets very depressing when so much time and effort have been put into the organisation of something that is so poorly supported, and the one hope that I have for improvement is that more people will become more involved in the work we are doing - because it's work that will benefit all of us in the times to come. We shall all reap the rewards of an equal society, so in the forthcoming year let's all campaign to achieve it.

John.

REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING, 8th February

1. It was noted that there had still been no action taken over the matter of collection boxes. Volunteers to do something about it are welcome.
2. The new C.H.E. "Rolling Programme" was announced:
 - a) Promotion of the Tyneside Tape/Slide Kit - leaflets would be sent to secondary schools and community health councils. Chris to make a list.
 - b) Press and Media Contacts - no particular action needed as this was ongoing anyway.
 - c) Monitoring of the Local press - Bob to cover Nottingham papers and Andrew to cover Chad. Martin Fox to be asked to cover Long Eaton Advertiser. Articles etc so collected to be passed to Tony.
 - d) Activities for Gay Pride Week - Chris and Andrew to co-ordinate. (Meeting in fact now arranged for 22nd March - see programme).
 - e) Getting national office number in local phone books - this would probably take two years as a new directory is imminent. John to investigate.
 - f) Affiliation to C.V.S. - already done.
3. A letter of resignation from Chris Cook (auditor) was read out. It was agreed to approach Richard Webster to replace him.
4. A letter from Wimbledon Area Gay Society was read out inviting members to visit them over the weekend of 11/13 May. It was decided that we should write and thank them, anyone interested in taking up their offer should contact John.
5. Ashby-de-la-Zouch Housewives' Register had written to us asking us to send speakers on either March 7th or 14th. Ian and Andrew expressed an interest. Ian to contact them and finalise details.

6. The date for the A.G.M. was fixed for Friday 30th March at 8.00pm if it was to be combined with the Gay Switchboard A.G.M., or at 7.30 if not.
7. It was suggested that members should write to Nottingham News and object to the continuation of the Page 3 pin-up. An advert supporting the paper and one advertising the switchboard had been inserted and these were approved.
8. Chris reported on the group's financial position and pointed out that at the moment expenditure was slightly exceeding income, with 88% of the group's expenditure going on switchboard. A proposal to send a £25 donation to CHE's national advertising fund was deferred until the outcome of the Karnival grant application was known, but it was agreed that £100 of the group's money should be transferred from a current to a deposit account where it would bring in some interest.

CHE MEMBERSHIP CARD MEANS BIG DISCOUNTS

The following traders offer a discount if a current CHE membership card is presented at the time of ordering:

Geoffrey Esquire, 28 King's Road, Wimbledon, London SW9.
Pan Club, Luton, Beds.
Orchard Hotel, 17 Alundale Road, Bournemouth.
Adelaide Bookshop, Cecil Court, London WC2.
Alexus Mail Order, 24 Goodmayes Road, Ilford, Essex.
Lulu's Club, Finborough Road, Earl's Court, London.
SHADES CLUB, STANFORD STREET, NOTTINGHAM.
De Ville's Club, Manchester.
Masquerade Club, Clayton Square, Liverpool.
Festival Club, London.
Gayway, London.
Gemini Club, Huddersfield.
Gigi's Club, Bournemouth.
Mister Moon's Restaurant, Sydenham Road, London SE26.
New Bear's Paw Club, Liverpool.
Penny Lane Disco, Leigh, Lancs.
Speakeasy Club, Newport, Gwent.
Q International Magazine - postal orders only.

CHE would like to make it clear that the above list includes all companies which have offered a discount on production of a CHE membership card. By producing this list, CHE in no way endorses any product or service of any of these companies, nor does CHE take any responsibility for any product produced or sold by the companies included.

However, we should be grateful for any information from members on the quality of the products being offered and on any problems which any member may experience in obtaining the discount as offered.

Further information on additions to or deletions from this list may be obtained by sending an SAE to CHE Discounts, PO Box 427, 69 Corporation Street, Manchester, M60 2EL.

Reprinted from a CHE handout.

NOTTINGHAM FRIEND

I was disconcerted the other day to be informed by a respected gay activist that CHE and Friend have opposing philosophies, CHE trying to change society, while Friend helps gay people to accept. I think he had forgotten just how difficult it was for many of us brought up in an antagonistic environment to accept ourselves. And without self-acceptance and self-respect there is little we can do for freedom; within our community or within society at large. Friend's job is to help gay and bisexual men and women heal the wounds society has inflicted on them: the pangs of anxiety, inadequacy and guilt within themselves. It is not an easy task.

When you think about it, it is less surprising than it seems at first how many of the people who ring the switchboard apparently for information are really calling out for help. A lone woman in Retford, a married man in Heanor, a sixteen-year old in Mansfield - they don't just want the nearest crowd of glum gays round a bar, they want, more often than not, to discover that they're OK themselves. How would you word your enquiry when you know no-one in the world to tell you you're all right, and for most of your life have been listening to people saying that gays are not?

Puberty upwards is our age range, and our callers include those who believe that a 'cure' is the only way out of living with themselves; and those, of all ages, who feel too unattractive, too insecure ever to form a relationship with another girl or guy. Loneliness with all its ramifications looms large. You don't need much aptitude for arithmetic to realise that whether we be one in twenty or one in ten, most gays aren't to be found in bars, clubs or CHE. Some court danger; some go slowly mad at home.

And this is the sort of thing that Friend has set itself the task of coping with as a group of pretty average people who have accepted the need to know themselves in order to help others. How to reach those who need us, despite lack of cash and rebuffs and rejection from those who could help if they would, is one of the subjects of group meetings. But it is just as important for us to share the experience of befriending, to find how we can best help our befriendeds - some of whom ring us frequently, some of whom are regular visitors - and to find out how we can each improve our own ability to help. Each of us has our prejudices, our inadequacies, our off moments - and our strengths. A moment of inattention can deprive someone of a potential lifeline. At least one Friend group has been faced with the burden of a known suicide. No, it is not an easy task.

But we share a belief in its importance. We are slowly forging links with Probation and Social Services. We are setting up meetings for young gays and transvestites, and before long we hope to see a social group for those who are stumbling on gay feet. We like our visitors to find out just how ordinary gay people in general are. It's a shame that most of us who congregate at CVS on a Monday or Thursday night are so much like these other people that we are too shy to chat to strangers or to make them feel at home. That's where everyone can help if only we remember that the frowning stranger in the corner is feeling lost and awkward, perhaps how we once felt ourselves.

Richard.

BRITAIN'S MAJOR NEWSPAPERS - READERS' POLL.

The Times	Read by the people who run the country.
Daily Mirror	Read by the people who think they run the country.
The Guardian	Read by the people who think that they ought to run the country.
Morning Star	Read by the people who think that the country should be run by another country.
Daily Mail	Read by the wives of those who run the country
Financial Times	Read by those who own the country.
Daily Express	Read by those who think the country ought to be run the way it used to be.
Daily Telegraph	Read by those who still think there is a country.
The Sun	Read by those who don't care who runs the country as long as she has big tits.