

CHIMAERA

NOTTINGHAM CHE NEWSLETTER

PROGRAMME

NOVEMBER

THUR. 5TH Business Meeting at CVS at 8 pm.

FRI. 13TH Go Swimming at Carlton Forum. Meet first at the Dog and Partridge at 7.00 for a quick departure. Some transport available.

TUES. 17TH Nottingham Gay Switchboard meeting at the Salutation Inn (Maid Marian Way). All those interested, whether Switchboard members or not, are welcome. 7.30 pm.

THUR. 19TH Business/Programme Meeting at CVS at 8 pm.

FRI. 20TH Ice Skating. Meet first at the Dog and Partridge at 7.30pm.

FRI. 27TH Coffee and Games evening at Mike's 19, Thomas Close, St. Ann's (ring 55196 for directions).

For those new to Nottingham or to the local CHE group, the CVS stands for the Council for Voluntary Service. The address is

31a, Mansfield Road, Nottingham.

These premises are also used by Nottingham Gay Switchboard on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 7 until 10 pm. If you need to phone the Switchboard the number is

Nottingham 46881.

NB. There is a late addition to the programme. Ike Cowen, Nottingham CHE's first Convenor and former Executive Council Member will be coming to talk about the early days of CHE on Thursday 12th Nov. at the CVS at 8 pm.

BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

We only had a CHE Newsletter for a few months before someone decided that it ought to have a name. After a request for ideas brought the usual nil response, our then secretary Hilary Stafford called it Chimaera. (as a diphthong devotee of some standing, she decided to retain the 'a'). Ever since then we are regularly asked what it means and, with a bit of luck, this will be the very last time it is explained. Delving into the Funk and Wagnall I find two basic ideas:-

Firstly - a flight of fancy (sometimes a horrible or absurd creation of the imagination.)

Secondly - a three-headed monster (or a three-part monster) of mythical celebrity.



The latter idea was particularly appropriate for some years when we were a hybrid group made of the the CHE groups of Nottingham, Derby and Mansfield.

We have, hopefully, tried to exercise our imaginations at all times - never allowing plagiarism or copyright to stand in our way. Yes, it is true that we're the only CHE newsletter ever to be mentioned in the Times Literary Supplement!

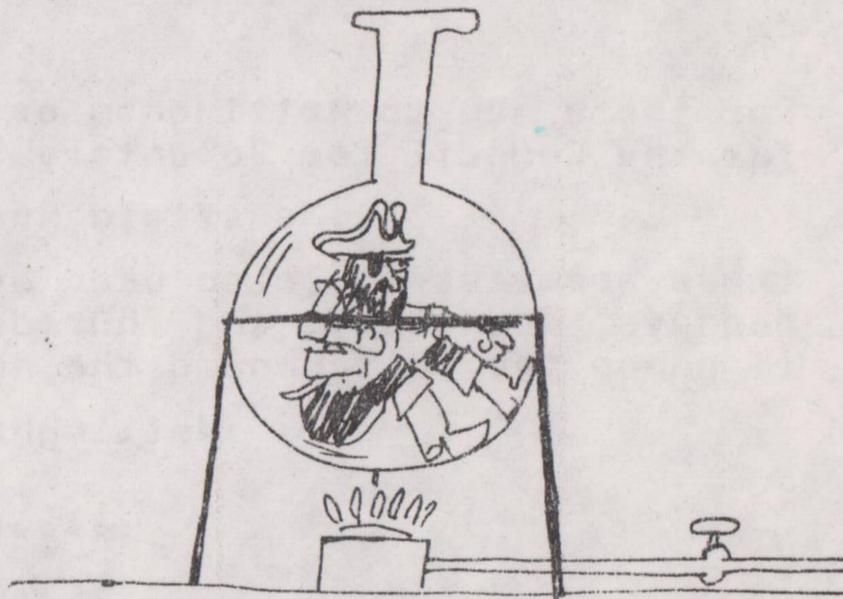
Originally, we reproduced on a rather tatty school spirit duplicator. Then one of our

convenors (Derek Johnson) acquired a cheap paper-shredding gestetner which gave up the ghost after three months. Fortunately, your present editor happened to be passing by a lorry from which a fairly good Roneo machine fell off quite gently. That served us in good stead for several years. We now use a variety of equipment and materials about which the less said the better.

The current edition contains articles from three previous convenors and bits and pieces that have appeared in old editions over the past past ten years. But not all of it is old rubbish dredged up from the past. How about a bit of new rubbish from a book that I have just received called "H₂O and All That".

"Sodium is so dangerous that it isn't handled by human being at all, only by chemistry teachers."

Or "What does that thermometer read?" Answer....Tolstoy.



The Sulphur dioxide is obtained from Heating Iron Pirates.

This edition of Chimaera is brought to you by NOSTALGAY Ltd.

TEN YEARS ON

Can it really be 10 years since I first attended a meeting of gay people in a house just off the Forest? 10 years since I first encountered Ian and David, Peter Lockwood, Richard Webster, Hilary and Heather et al.?

It was only in 1971 that I first contacted CHE, although I had been discovering myself more and more over the few years before then, corresponding with a gay guy in Blackpool who helped me a lot. Then subscribing to Spartacus and finding mention of CHE and writing to Manchester (where the National Office then was). The next step was a letter from Ike Cowen, who visited me at my flat in Beeston (when I hid from him in the kitchen, would you believe?) The next time he called, I received him, and after that met Barrie Hodges, a gay vicar from Ravenshead, who was running a social evening every other Friday on Mount Hooton Road. I would look forward to those evenings - do you remember that gramophone, David? - and in fact I once rushed up to Mount Hooton Road from the Theatre Royal after watching Morecambe and Wise!

It was on November 16th 1971 that a meeting was held at Ike's in Keyworth to discuss the establishment of a CHE group in Nottingham. David Hughes became the first chairman and an early meeting was held at the Roebuck (opposite 31a, Mansfield Road) and later at Mario's Restaurant (The early name of Whispers).

The secretary at that time was a certain R. Hollier.

I thought it would be interesting to include some items from early newsletters (THAT'S what's in my cupboard, Mike!); they give a flavour of the novelty of gay meetings in the city:-

Friday 30th June 1972: a meeting in the Board Room of the YMCA (near the new Victoria Centre). At this meeting Glenys Parry (a member of the CHE executive committee will talk on various subjects including
sexual taboos
role fulfilment conflicts
the concept of non-sexual touch intimacy between hetero-
-sexual men.

Tuesday 1 Aug. 1972: Martin Stafford (who??) will lead a discussion "Should CHE aim to change homosexuals as well as society?" (Martin Stafford was the bete noire of CHE - whatever happened to him?)

From the July 1972 Newsletter: "we now have 40 paid-up members which is quite good for a group which had only been going for about 9 months."

From Sept. 1972 Newsletter: "Membership of Notting group is now 49"

Friday 10th November: "A meeting at the Albert Hall Institute. At this meeting Roger Bradshaw will give a talk about ritual witchcraft today. He is a practising white witch"

Friday 8th December 1972: a film night at St. Michael's Church House in Derby, when a TV programme on Lesbians and another on gay men was shown. I recollect that Bruce Wainwright was projectionist.

TEN YEARS ON

Finally, from the Jan. 1973 Newsletter:

"One thing which is a little disturbing is the tendency of most members to be clique-ish and inward looking. There is no point in bringing along a new member to be met by three or four groups of people chattering amongst themselves who make little effort to involve new people in their conversations. The responsibility of being "the first to speak" rests firmly on the shoulders of the established members of the group, so I hope that each one of you (however shy) bears that in mind when he or she sees a new face at the meetings. Be friendly to people!!"

Some things never change, do they?

The early years of Nottingham CHE seem to have been quite exciting when I look back through the archives. Though I must confess that I was not an active participant; I didn't get to a lot of the meetings (which were shared between the Nottingham and Derby Groups until 1976) but I do recall a Denis Lemon meeting in Derby, a Roger Baker meeting in Nottingham, a meeting on paedophilia at the Albert Hall Institute in 1975, when 4 people were present. And oh! the places where we used to meet: Friends Meetings houses in Nottingham and Derby (often turned by our typists into Friends Meeting House), YMCA (before the Village People got to it!) Albert Hall Institute - jostling between the weight-walkers-anonymous and keep-fitters, Peoples Centre (33, Mansfield Road); the coffee evenings in peoples homes from Clifton to Sneinton, from Beeston to Kirk Langley. And most importantly, the campaigning: talking to Samaritans, students at Universities, colleges of Education, With forms in schools, talking on local radio, talking to local Housewives Registers groups; carrying the CHE banner in marches and street theatre became part of the campaigning later on. I must confess that this campaigning was not my scene. So why did I become joint convenor of Nottingham CHE along with Richard Webster in 1976? God (or Richard) only knows!

Being convenor brought me into contact with members of CHE and increased my self confidence quite a bit. I asked Richard to write a brief note on his time with CHE and this follows. To conclude, I would like to recall an article written by David Edgley in September 1976:-

"We had a phone call at the Peoples' Centre recently from a man who had made enquiries several years ago about how he could meet other gay people and overcome his loneliness. His advisers recommended the gay pubs. He tried them and found that no one spoke to him and he didn't have the courage to speak to anyone else. His contact with the "Gay World" actually increased his sense of isolation. Will we succeed where the gay scene failed? I don't know - but is there anyone else other than CHE who is prepared to try? All members can help by simply talking to new people when they come along to meetings... if you haven't got any money to donate to us; if you can't write gems for the newsletter; if you don't feel that you can get involved in campaigning... you - all of you - can talk."

If nothing else, CHE has helped me over the years to be a more open person than I was in 1971. I've stuck with CHE, and now CHE's stuck with me! I wouldn't have missed it for the world! Over to you Richard.

Tony Barker.

A VIEW FROM WALES

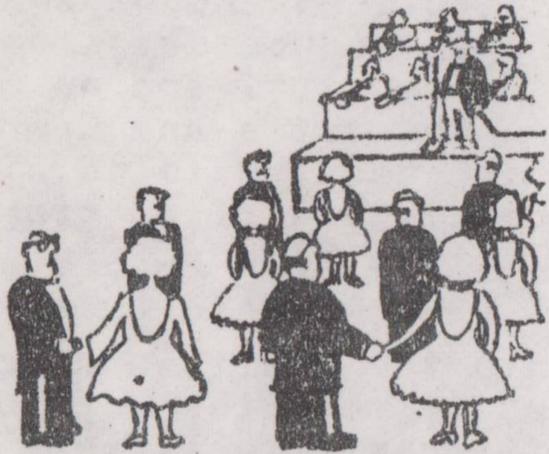
My earliest memories of Nottingham CHE are of standing (because there was no room to sit) at the back of a crowded meeting in Ike's house in Keyworth while Ike explained about constitutions and of another great throng at the YMCA when we all had to introduce ourselves, including a Deputy Director of Education. Heady stuff and no wonder it emboldened me to go CHEing and froing in Newcastle and Cumbria. But when I returned to Nottingham in 1974 it appeared to be a group which held meetings in Nottingham for members who arrived from Derby (Oh! the dismal green of the Albert Hall Institute) and I felt like an uninvited guest dressed in the wrong gear at a most exclusive party.

To find myself suddenly hoist with Tony into the position of convenor might have made me giddy if it weren't that by then the Nottingham group (minus Derby) had shrunk enough to fit comfortably into my living room. I have mixed memories of my two convening years. Too many people were conducting too many private wars within the group for them to be entirely happy and in retrospect I believe it would have been better all round - especially for me - if I had blown my top occasionally instead of displeasing the warriors by trying to keep the peace.

But somehow things got done. We abandoned management by committee and started our affairs with CVS; upstairs at La Chic (no.1) there were some of the most relaxed group meetings I can remember, including one which drew us all together in frustration at the Rev'd Bob Mc..... and another from which I went home with an American, and of course, with Mary Riddell's help we held our famous Forum after which La Chic went bust. To the distress of others, some of us went 'political', enjoyed stretching our hind legs and fancied ourselves as radio starlets, though I never did manage to give my talk on gay trees. We flirted with the police and for a time (what a time ago it seems) thought we had them in our pockets. There was the start of the Switchboard, there was the Nottingham Conference which nearly involved me in fisticuffs at a National Council meeting and, born in strife, there was Nottingham Friend.

In fact there were quite a lot of things happening of the kind which through the past ten years has given CHE in Nottingham a voice out of all proportion to its membership. What wasn't happening, what happens so rarely within CHE, was the caring, sharing which seems to come naturally to the Co-op Bank. No longer the uninvited guest, I derived great confidence and satisfaction from being well and truly 'out' at work, at home, at play. But what about those guests who came once to our meetings and found in-conversation and guarded eyes where they might have anticipated warmth and openness? You think I exaggerate? Ask my lover whose fist introduction to CHE was at a CVS meeting where the long established warrior sitting next to him turned to the guy on his other side and asked calmly "who is that man?" What was wrong with us, I wonder, so fearful of a stranger till we found he - always he, a besetting problem - was into car rallying or Shostakovitch? Well, maybe that has all changed. If not perhaps the next ten years will change it. Whatever happens I hope Nottingham will keep up the campaigning. Each victory, however small, won by a local group sends out ripples, even as far as outer Gwynedd,

Richard Webster (Gwynedd, August 1981)



"And now take your partners for the Gay Gordons . . ."



"When will your mother realize you don't want to be irresistible to women?"



I'M THOR!

tho am I,
but it wath fun
wathn't it?

GROAN CORNER - OR GROWN COARSER

Over the years Chimaera has included among its news items a few jokes to liven the rag. As an added treat (although nothing could beat the anagrams of two issues ago - thank you, Velda Giddey!) I've selected a few of the items which I still think can raise a chuckle or two.

Tony.

First off - a few late arrivals at the ball:-

Mr and Mrs Ube and their pornographic son Blue Dan.

Mr and Mrs Wallcarpet and their son Walter.

Mr and Mrs Ongatwilite and their QC son Justice.

Mr and Mrs It (from Australia) and their English Grandmother Pommie Gran

Mr and Mrs Styrene and their pregnant daughter expanded Polly.

Jesus saves! (But Keegan scored off the rebound)

Tolkien is a filthy hobbit!

Muffin the Mule is no longer an offence!!

"Camp show - equipment on display - all erected inside" (Notice in shop on Carrington Street.

"The coffee is filed under Unmarried Mothers " Bob at the Switchboard.

What do you get when you cross a grapefruit with an aphrodisiac?
a gropefruit.

Cunnilingus is NOT an Irish Airline.

Elephant stew: Cut elephant into bite size pieces. This takes about four months. Add enough brown gravy to cover and cook over a kerosene fire at 465°F. Serves 3,800.

Reports have reached us from France of the woman who put some explosive into her husband's contraceptive - clearly the first French Letter Bomb.

Who wrote the song "In the still of the BANG"
I.R.A. and George Gershwin.

'Brooke Bond Tea, with milk just like mother makes' Notice in Sorrento Cafe.

The Sale of the Century: at YMCA (March 6th). Our mad price - 50p for pouffes (in lots of colours) - Nottingham Evening Post.

The world's largest rupture weighs 18lbs and 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz and is about to go metric. It is in the keeping of the National Truss.

Definitions:-

Castor Oil - a lubricant for Pollux

Clergyman's knee - choirboy's delight

Incest - rolling one's own.

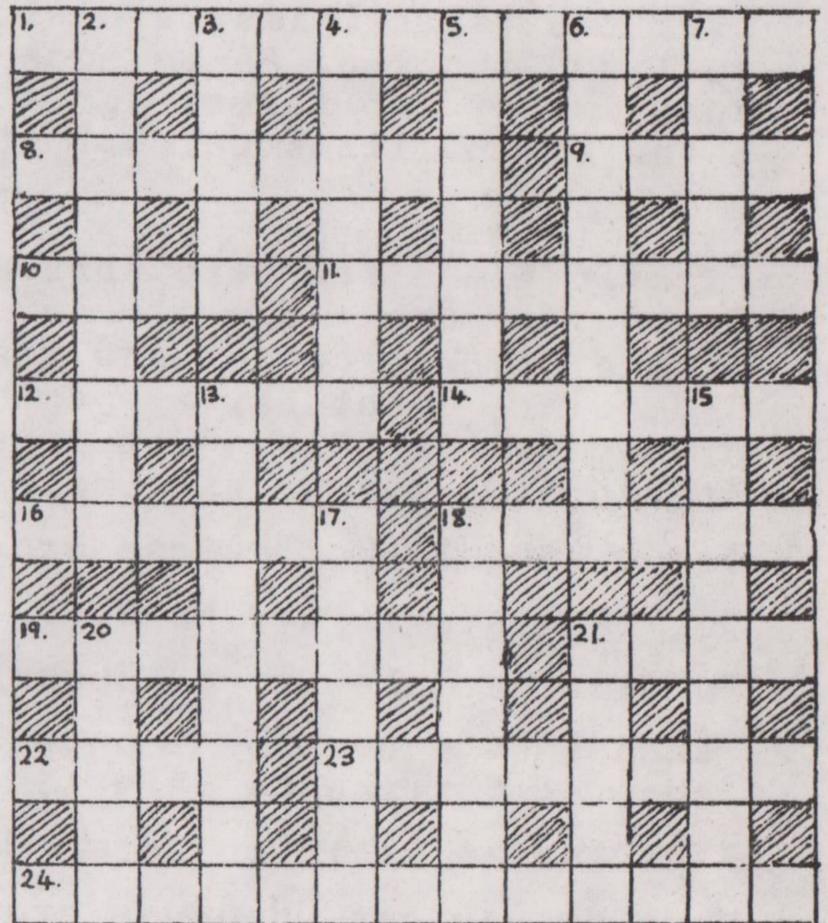
Eunuch - one who never has a ball.

Earwigs - NHS devices used if you lose the hair in your ears.

PRIZE ANNIVERSARY CROSSWORD

CLUES ACROSS

- 1 and 24 An appropriate greeting tenfold (5,8,10,1,1,1)
 8. In charge of 24 (8)
 9. Bear that is without corner (4)
 10. Mental health group - careful (4)
 11. How herds are moved (2,6)
 12. Blind, waning perhaps (6)
 14. Dry on top of the hill in one of Berlin's four (6)
 16. Common to cardsters, conjurers and one night stands (6)
 18. Can get into the race for a small slab (6).
 19. No inhibitions - no rent! (4,4)
 21. Singular local club (4)
 22. Key to the pig house - it's sore (4)
 23. Mel's ruff? No, just scarves (8)
 24. See 1.

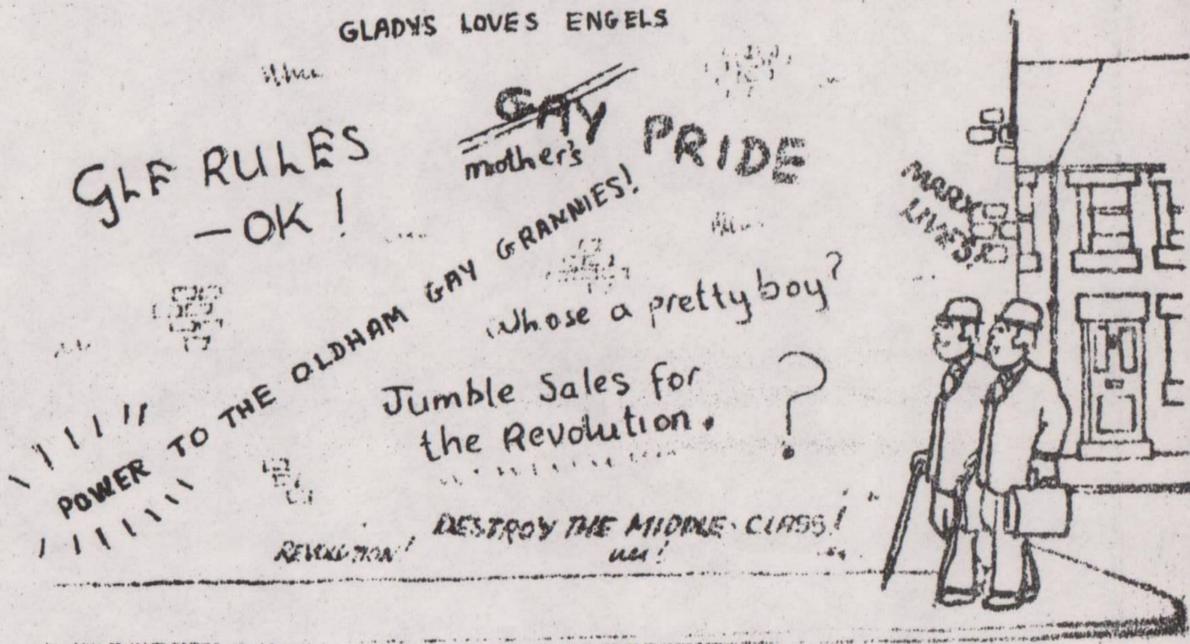
CLUES DOWN

2. A cat in charge of the flight? No, more serious (6,3)
 3. Flagged (5)
 4. Bird strung up to celebrate 1. (7)
 5. Red rose perhaps in church (7)
 6. Hame and bacon mixed up in fine sounding vehicle (6-3)
 7. An adobe hut may be one (5)
 13. A hundred and ten mile north in bad weather (9)
 15. A quarter is the answer (3,6)
 17. Quiet woman perhaps at Goose fair? No. (7)
 18. _____ Night (7)
 20. Proportion (5)
 21. Males in Oregon, USA? (5)

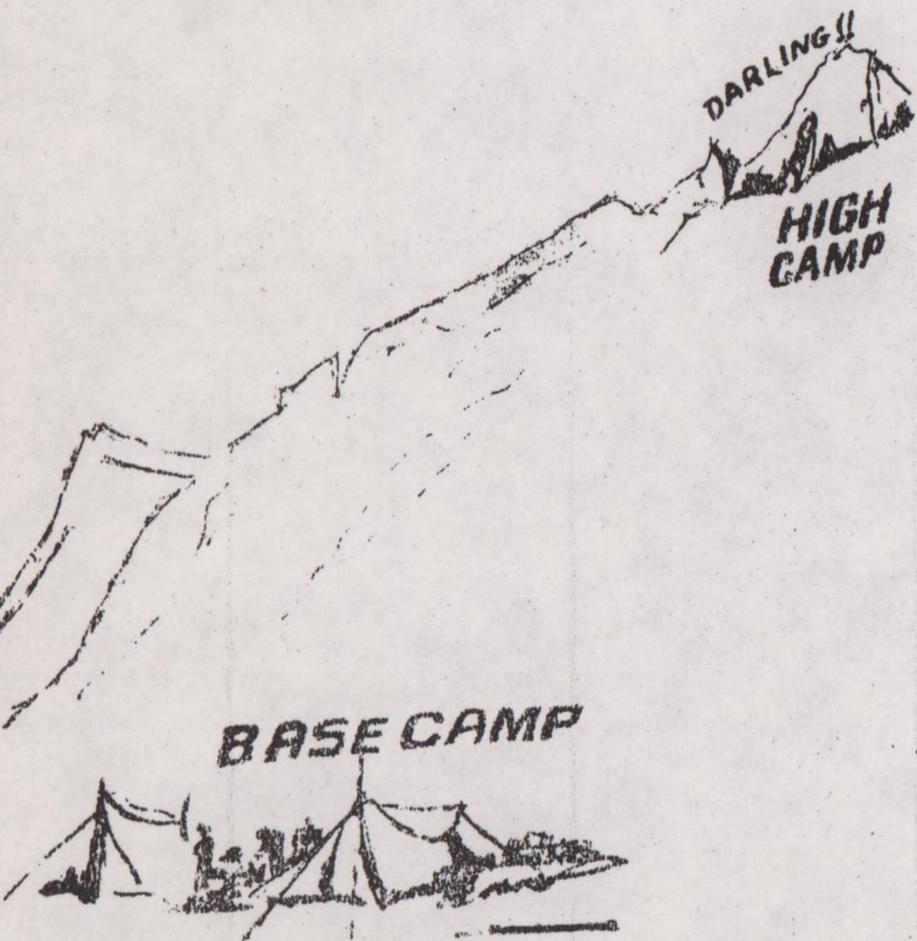
Completed entries should be sent to John Clarkson c/o CVS before 30th November. The first correct solution to be opened will receive a prize.



"You don't often see a real silk lining, these days..."



"Do you realise it's ten years to the day since we wrote all that"



"Now clear off outside and play"