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LOOKOUT!

March, April, May 2005

Issue 34

Editorial

Christmas
and New Year
resolutions

seem a long way behind us but Spring can be an equally good time to start something new – and just maybe a browse through Lookout is part of that process for you. We all started our lesbian or bi life somewhere; some getting things sorted early, others living a different lifestyle and coming to a decision for change later in life. Whatever age you are or whatever your thoughts on life generally might be, the article below is well worth reading. If you're in a long term relationship you might be interested in the article on the back of the Campions ad.

For new and regular readers alike we have the



usual listings for social get togethers, sports activities & walking groups, contacts for help and a downright frivolity or two. There's also an important announcement about the Women's Café: hopefully those who lodged an email address with us got to hear about the change of venue in time to participate – if not, read on McDuff!

As ever, if you know about something that might interest others or if you would like to make suggestions for regular features please let us know by contacting the email address or by post

Lookoutmag@hotmail.com

C/o The Women's Centre
30 Chaucer Street, Nottingham

New in town?

So you've just arrived in Nottinghamshire, or you've just arrived at the understanding that there's a reason why you fancy Halle Beri – how do you get to know other women?

For listings and information, you've obviously found Lookout. But you can also check out the I'm Free newsletter produced by the Outhouse (tel 0115 911 0545 imfree_editor@hotmail.com) or the local Switchboard (tel 0115 934 4885 or 01623 621515) or get hold of the GAI guide from the Health Shop (0115 947 6868), which gives a yearly updated list of venues and groups.

Once you have your information you may be wondering where to start. Well, this does depend on your interest and your confidence levels. For non scene contact you could try out the various 'social groups'. You'll see we have 3 local walking groups and a badminton group. There are also good listings in the back of other groups that may be of interest.

If you want to go 'out', but not to a club, then probably the monthly Women's Café is your best bet. Newcomers are generally 'adopted' and it's quiet enough to chat to other women. Another good one to look out for is the occasional 'Hidden Talents' night – again with a friendly crowd. There's also SWIFT, a social eating group for singles.

From then on it's the scene, and you probably need some level of confidence (or good mates) to meet other people there. In Nottingham we have our monthly Eternity disco. This is women only, playing Kylie, Barry White, Anastasia. Generally for the over 21's with lots of older women there. Then there's the pubs; the Foresters is the main pub for women – it has karaoke, discos and suits women who like their drink. The other bars are Lord Roberts (mainly older men, lost Broadway clientele and trannies but comfortable seats and not intimidating), AD2 (flashing lights, pretty boys, some good tunes), Central (bar, pool, disco – fair number of women), and NG1 (dancing boys, hen parties, more Kylie).

The Nottingham Women's Centre runs lots of courses but has nothing Lesbian centred there anymore.

We also don't have much in the way of befriending or support groups for the over 25s.

This may all sound a bit disappointing, but I arrived in Nottingham 5 years ago, in my forties and not knowing a soul. Now I know more women here than in 18 years of living in London – so welcome to Lesbian life in Nottingham and good luck! If any other groups would like to write more about their activities, please let us know.

LOOKOUT! Is sponsored by CAMPIONS SOLICITORS

WOMEN'S SPECIAL EVENTS

Libertas

Now to be known as

The York Lesbian Arts Festival

will be back this year from October 26th – 30th October

Tickets go on sale in May through Libertas.

A new website will soon be up at www.ylaf.org.uk to bring you details of the festival.

WOMEN'S REGULAR EVENTS

Women's Café At the BROADWAY cinema Mezz Bar

The Women's Café aims to provide a relaxed, informal venue for women - a chance to catch up with friends and make new ones.

Our thanks go to George at George's Bar for providing a home to us over the last 18mths. George's lease is finishing at the end of January and we hope she finds a new bar in the near future



From February the women café will temporarily move to the Mezz Bar at the Broadway Cinema (Broad Street, Hockley)

The bar is on the first floor (lift access) and they sell alcohol, soft (hot and cold) drinks and food. It is a no smoking bar but you can have a smoke downstairs in the main bar. We will not have sole use of the bar but hopefully there'll be enough of us to make it feel like our space.

The café runs 7.30 - 10pm on the second Tuesday of the month.



WOMEN'S EVENTS NOT HAPPENING AT THE MOMENT

What about another ceilidh?

Sorry folks! The ceilidh band is not available this spring but watch this space in the next edition of Lookout for the date of the autumn women's ceilidh at Nottingham YMCA

Whatever happened to WAG?

We were asking a few months ago what had happened to this group. We have received confirmation that the group has folded due to low attendance and difficulties in getting women to help run it.

Whatever happened to the OUTHOUSE Community Centre?

The outhouse was set up many years ago to provide a community centre for our community. Although they bought a building they could not raise the money to refurbish it so the building was sold and money returned to the funders last year. They've looked at renting a place but have pretty much moved to the conclusion that a LGBT centre or café would not be sustainable. They are currently looking at what happens to the organisation next, it may close down or find a new role.

Send your email address to lookoutmag@hotmail.com to either have your name put on the e-mailing list or let us know about any events that will happen before the next printed version of Lookout! (Next issue out in June, deadline for copy/adverts will be 7th May)

Out & About

The Midlands best all womens night!

eternity

Exclusively for women with women in mind

EVERY LAST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH

@The Rotunda Cafe Bar, Standard Hill, Nottingham

Forthcoming Dates:

26 March 2005

30 April 2005

28 May 2005



And our wicked Eternity members will provide an electric party atmosphere. They never fail to get the party started!

For more info and Membership please visit our website:
WWW.ETERNITYFORWOMEN.CO.UK
or call 07976 820249

HIDDEN TALENTS

The Maze

This home to live music appreciation in all its many guises is to be no longer.

It is destined to become a(nother) residential development.

Cosmic Music, who brought many bands to our attention at The Maze will be moving to Cabaret on Fletcher Gate, although some gigs will continue to use the Rescue Rooms and occasionally Rock City.

Where is this leading? I hear you ask. Well, we've been wondering what will happen to Hidden Talents, that elusive little number

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Walking Groups & other events

SHEFFIELD HIKING DYKES

Sheffield Hiking Dykes is a walking group for lesbians and women questioning their heterosexuality. More information about the group (inc. details of next planning meeting on April 25th) can be obtained by contacting: Deena on 0114 268 6409 or Kate on 0114 221 8426. All walks start at 10.30 am unless otherwise stated. Please bring a packed lunch and drinks for the day. Some of the walks are rocky and rough underfoot and/or climb quite high onto exposed areas so wear suitable footwear and bring a waterproof and something warm to put on.

March 6th - Cutthroat Bridge - 7.5 miles. Meet at the layby (A57) near Cutthroat Bridge. Dark Peak map GR 217 875.

March 20th - Low Bradfield 6-7 miles. Meet by Damflask Reservoir at GR 282 909 Dark Peak map.

April 3rd - The Roaches 9 miles with 5 mile option. Meet at roadside parking area to the north of Upper Hulme GR 004622 White Peak map.

April 17th - Hassop. Meet Monsal Head car park. GR 185715 for a 6 mile walk to Ashford in the Water.

May 8th - Castleton 6.5 miles. Meet in car park GR 149 830.

May 22nd - Bradwell, 11 miles with 5.5 mile option. Meet in the car park behind the supermarket GR 174 815, park anywhere you can find in the village

NOTTINGHAM HIKING DYKES

This is a walking group for female born lesbians only. They walk every month, usually the third Sunday, over 6 to 8 miles starting 10:30. Update on www.nottinghamhd.homestead.com or the Lesbian & Gay Switchboard 0115 934 8485

20th March 6/7 miles, Dimmings Dale nr Alton Towers - meet 10:30 at Ramblers Retreat car park

17th April 6 miles, to Ashford - meet at 10:30 Monsal Head car park GR 185715

15th May 5 Dales Walk - meet 11:00 o/s Tideswell church GR 152758

Derby Walking Women — a friendly group who meet once a month, usually on the first Sunday. Walks are organised to start at 11 am, are about 5 miles over local non-strenuous countryside, have a rest part way round when you can eat your packed lunch or there is usually scope for a drink &/or hot food in a pub or tea room at the end. Next walk will be March 6th meeting at the Visitor Centre car park at Staunton Harold Reservoir. After that it'll be April 3rd & May 8th (details nearer the time from Lookoutmag@hotmail.com)

Miscellaneous Bits & Bobettes

BBC2 Documentary

The BBC is making a programme about people who made heterosexual partnerships only to discover later that they are gay. It will use the experiences of three or four people who have experienced this, and will explore society's changing attitude to same sex relationships. They are keen to talk to anyone who has been, or is presently going through, this experience. If you are interested please contact Benetta Adamson on 020 7482 3217 / 07770 794 883 / badamson@caledonia-tv.com or Faye MacLean on 020 7490 8996 / 07810 891 342 / fmaclean@caledonia-tv.com. Confidentiality is guaranteed.

If you are planning a trip to London fit in a visit to Portrait of a Lady - Frida Kahlo and Lee Miller 50 photographic portraits of Frida by Lee. National Portrait Gallery, St Martins Place, WC2 Feb 3rd - May 30th Tel 020 7312 2463 www.npg.org.uk

One thing you can do as part of Education for All is let your old headteacher know if you were bullied at school. Go to www.stonewall.org.uk from 31st January for details.

CLIMAX

Yorkshire's #1 LGB clubbing experience
11th March

www.sheffieldunion.com Entertainments & click Climax

SPORT

Come to the Gay Games in Chicago

From 15th to the 22nd of July 2006 the 7th gay games will be held in Chicago. The gay games are open to anyone. There are no qualifying events and the competitors range from those who play for fun to World class athletes.

To register visit the Gay Games website at

www.gaygameschicago.org

There will also be an arts festival, music and parties. Chicago itself has the oldest women's music coffee house as well as the largest gay and lesbian library and archive.

The Nottingham Women's Badminton Group are planning to take part in the Gay Games. To find out more, or to join the badminton group ring Rachel on Tel. 982 6952. The badminton group play on a Thursday and Saturday for all standards including beginners. The cost ranges from 60p to £1.20.



Conferences & Campaigns

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual people in Black and Minority Ethnic Communities

In March 2005 Nottingham Lesbian and Gay Switchboard will host a two-part conference which targets black and minority ethnic people within the LGB community. It will examine their experiences, their needs and how they are viewed and treated within their communities and within British society as a whole. We will also look at developing local support networks. The conference is also intended for organisations and groups which support black and minority ethnic people and which feel that they need to learn more about this issue.

Part 1 is on Saturday March 5th and will be for all the people covered by the first paragraph. It will include: a keynote speech by Simon Nelson of the Terrence Higgins Trust and co-founder of the Black Gay Men's Advisory Group; accounts of personal experiences; workshops on Racism and Homophobia, on the Law, on LGB issues within Muslim communities and on lesbian health and mental health issues.

Part 2 is on Saturday March 19th and will be solely for LGB people who are black or from ethnic minorities. Anyone who is interested should leave their details with Switchboard at 7, Mansfield Road, Nottingham, NG1 3FB - or e-mail nottingham@lgswitchboard.fsnet.co.uk or phone 0115 934 8485 Mon-Fri 7-10pm.

Or book online at

www.bcvs.org.uk/lgb-black-minority-conference.htm

Maureen Cooper

This month we launched our first Corporate Equality Index, showcasing the UK's Top 100 employers for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff, which included 12 FTSE 100 companies and 11 government departments. Employers were ranked according to criteria ranging from implementation of an effective equalities policy to having openly gay staff on their board of directors.

Number 1 The British Council emerged as the country's top employer for gay people, with Citigroup, Credit Suisse First Boston, IBM and Manchester City Council in joint second place. All demonstrated a clear commitment to meeting the needs of lesbian and gay staff and customers and have shown that there is excellence in every sector - public, private and voluntary. Since the Index was launched there's been huge interest from a range of organisations across the country wanting to find out more - we're expecting a much increased response rate for the 2006 Index.

If you want to work for one of Britain's 100 most gay-friendly employers have a look at our website - http://www.stonewall.org.uk/stonewall/news/british_council.html?CFID=515720&CFTOKEN=19985523.

HELP

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

Notts LGBT Community Voice (formerly the LGB Forum)

All LGBT people welcome. Tel 0115 911 0545 for details or e-mail: chris@outhouse.org.uk

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 a group for lesbian, gay and bisexual young people up to 21.

Meet at the Health Shop, Hockley, Nottingham every Friday 6pm-8pm. A space to meet other lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

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

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

MORE HELP

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 on offer include

Family Counselling, Sex Therapy, Relationship Education and training courses

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NOTTINGHAM

A date has been agreed

Saturday 23rd July 2005 at the Arboretum.

The organisers hope to build on the success of the last two years and to do this they need your help over the next few months. The old committee has gained a lot of experience of running Pride, and have well organised procedures and contacts but they need new blood. They are looking for people to work on various activities including:

- Children services
- Access
- The stage – booking acts, managing the stage
- Getting lots of stalls there
- Booking bars and food vans
- Booking marquees, loos, setting up
- Sorting licenses
- Fundraising around the scene, sponsorship, funding applications

And probably some things I've forgotten

You don't have to go to loads of meetings, just offer some time to work on one or two activities. There's been a lot of volunteers from men but hardly any women have offered so far so lets make an effort!!

For more information contact Biddi at the Outhouse on Tel 0115 911 0545

& finally.....

Apologies for not returning your call.

Would Judy or Julie who phoned about badminton please ring again as the message you left was a bit unclear and your phone number was not retrievable.

Civil Partnership Bill

Blink and you may have missed this, but on 18th November the Civil Partnership Act 2004 received Royal Assent. So you can do the old 'to death do us part' from about November 2005. The Minister for Equality (yes apparently we have one) says "This is one of the most significant pieces of social legislation the government has introduced. So what is this Civil Partnership? It's intended to give Lesbian and Gay couples the option of making a formal lifelong commitment to each other, similar to civil marriage. It gives rights and protection as well as duties and obligations.

It is meant to ensure:

- Recognition of partner's rights for life insurance
- The ability to succeed a tenancy
- Next of kin rights in hospitals
- Full pension equality
- Recognition if your partner dies without a will
- Access to fatal accident compensation
- Recognition for immigration and nationality purposes

It will also mean:

- A duty to provide reasonable maintenance for your partner and children of the family
- Assessment for child support
- Formal court based process for dissolving the partnership
- The right to be taxed as a couple (after the next finance bill) – is this good or bad? – I haven't the faintest idea!!

So what actually happens?

There's a fair few women in Nottingham who have done this marrying business in a former life, but for those of you who haven't a clue: Civil Partnerships will be formed via a secular registration process, like registry office weddings. The partnership will need to be registered in the presence of a registration officer and two witnesses. You don't need any 'ceremony' if you just want to ensure that you get the legal coverage, but you will have to pay for the registration and comply with the procedures.

If you want a ceremony you can do whatever you like after the registration, be it a do at the Foresters, a party at the council house, or a frolic in the woods.

The legislation does not force religious groups to allow you to marry in their places of worship.

When can I tie the knot?

- well preferably not after the first date! – this is a serious legal agreement. We expect the first registrations will take place in Notts in the autumn. There's no information yet on their web sites but you can keep up to date via your local Council or LGBT Switchboard.

In Nottingham the Registration Office is contactable on 0115 947 5665, email - office.register@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

In the County you can check out:

<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/youandyourcommunity/registrars/registrars-marriages.htm>

Hopefully there will be further guidance nearer the time. We'll need more information on things like 'pre nuptial agreements'.

So what do women think about these changes – are any of you going to be first in line? We'd be interested in hearing what you think about 'one of the most significant pieces of social legislation'

Oh and ex hets – remember you have to divorce your old hubby first!!!

By Mo C (I've written this in good faith – but I'm not a lawyer so this is just a guide!)