

NOGSOG NEWS

SOCIAL PROGRAMME

DECEMBER

- Tues. 7th Nottingham Gay Switchboard Meeting. 7.30pm in the room on the left at the back of the Salutation Inn. These meetings are open to anyone, whether or not they work on the Switchboard.
- Fri. 10th A Games Evening at Mike's - 19, Thomas Close, St. Ann's, Nottingham. 8pm.
- Thur. 16th A Party at the CVS from 8-10pm. Bring food and drink.
- Mon. 20th Programme meeting at the CVS to discuss and plan January's social programme. 8pm.

JANUARY

- Fri. 7th We intend to go out for a meal, but the venue has still to be decided (though it should not be too dear). Ideas to and eventually, information from Patrick.
- Wed. 12th Video night at Andy's, 1, Burnham Lodge, Bestwood Park Drive West, Rise Park. There will be a charge of 25p for coffee. Start at 8pm prompt.

We are intending to arrange some Badminton at the Victoria Leisure Centre, but this can only be booked a few days in advance, so you will have to find out details from Switchboard, though the intended dates are around the middle of December, either on a Tuesday or a Friday.

Some other "possibles" for the Christmas period are that one of our members may be having a party and that another may have an "open house" for anyone who cares to turn up; again the details should be available from Switchboard nearer to Christmas.

For those new to the group or to Nottingham the CVS stands for the Council for Voluntary Service and its premises are at 31a, Mansfield Road Nottingham. They are open every Monday and Thursday from 7-10pm (except Bank Holidays). If you want to find out any information from Nottingham Gay Switchboard (which also uses the same premises) then phone 46714 between 7-10pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

NOGSOG "25" CLUB

It has been agreed that NOGSOG should try a re-run of a fundraising idea used by CHE in the days when it was committed to giving financial support to Gay Switchboard - as NOGSOG itself now is. This is the "25 Club" - so called because ideally it will have 25 members.

How does it work? For 6 months each participant will pay in £1 per month, payable as a lump sum at the start of the lottery. There will be 5 monthly draws for a cash prize in which the winner will at least regain his/her original stake, and one bumper draw for a larger cash prize. Once a participant has won one of the monthly draws, his/her name will be excluded from subsequent ones, but everyone will be eligible for the bumper draw, which may take place at the end of the 6 months or during that period if a suitably festive occasion arises.

Participation is not limited to NOGSOG members - friends and family, whether gay or not, are equally welcome to join in. (In the past at least 2 of the monthly draws were won by outsiders). Nor is there any reason why two (or more - it's legal) people should not make a joint effort. The split of any prize money can be decided by them in any way they choose.

What may you gain? This table shows just what prize money can be expected, depending on the number of people taking part. The more people who can be persuaded to help Switchboard in this way, the more everyone may gain - not least in terms of those who contact the Switchboard.

No. of Members	Monthly Prize	Bumper Prize	For Gay Switchboard	No. of Members	Monthly Prize	Bumper Prize	For Gay Switchboard
25	£10	£25	£75	17	£7	£17	£50
24	£10	£24	£70	16	£7	£16	£45
23	£9	£23	£70	15	£7	£15	£40
22	£9	£22	£65	14	£7	£14	£35
21	£9	£21	£60	13	£6	£13	£35
20	£8	£20	£60	12	£6	£12	£30
19	£8	£19	£55	11	£6	£11	£25
18	£8	£18	£50	10	£6	£10	£20

How do you join? Just see Mike Raymond and give him £6 - what could be easier? We hope to start in January, so you've got until the end of December to dig into pockets. (Why not pay for a friend as a Christmas present?) Draws will take place at an 'official' NOGSOG meeting i.e. one of the Sunday ones or a Programme meeting and winners names will be made known in the Newsletter immediately following.

Last year Switchboard answered over 1400 calls, and the total for this year will probably be at about the same level. Many of those callers wanted and got help or moral support. Some of them are now members of NOGSOG - indeed most NOGSOG members have come to us through the Switchboard. This is one way, and a cheap one, that we can do a bit more than just say "Thank you".

BITS AND PIECES

I seldom read the Sunday Supplements with any care. Perhaps I should; I might find similar nuggets of information to these two from the Observer.

The Pidgin-English word for "Eclipse" is "Kerosene-lamp-him-b'long-Jesus-Christ-him-bugger-up-finish-altogether".

In the world of Cocktails a "Screwdriver" is Orange Juice plus Vodka, a "Harvey Wallbanger" contains the liqueur Galiano and so a cocktail made of sloe gin, orange juice, Galiano and Southern Comfort is a "Slow Comfortable Screw Against the Wall".

History is normally the most fertile ground for schoolboy howlers, but I have recently come across some compiled from Music Exams. Are you acquainted with Handel's coronation anthem "Zorba the Greek", Shosky's 1812, Mary Janos by Kodak or Mrs Butterfly by Bikini? Is there any doubt that the most famous English composer is Benjamin of Britten? Nogsoggers are not alone in getting their Wagner into a muddle (see page 6); "Wogart's" familiar Ride of the Valkyries has also been known as the Ride of the Vultures, the Ride of the Vivaldis and the Fly of the Voldukeries. If you have your field glasses at hand I'm sure that you would be able to identify a "spotted minim" and a "dotted croquet" and the "trumpist" amongst the brass section. A little to one side of our "trumpist" you will notice the lowest woodwind instrument the "baboon".

Buffalo Bill



Glad to be gay – but still nervous about admitting it

"It's very, very hard for a gay teacher to 'come out' to the kids," said Geoff Hardy. "They see it as a weak point they can use against you. You've got to have a lot of self-confidence to do it, and be prepared to deal with abuse."

Geoff Hardy has just declared himself gay at Thomas Tallis comprehensive in London. It was not so hard this time, for it is a step he has taken before in three other schools.

At his last school, Abbey Wood comprehensive, he worked out an agreement with the head so that any "downright abuse" was met with suspension. That made him less vulnerable and changed the attitude of pupils.

The difficulties for homosexual staff in school were well aired at last Saturday's National Gays in Education Conference. It was a small gathering, with around 30 participants, but some had travelled from as far afield as Tyneside and Liverpool. The London teachers were elated by recent signs of progress – the Inner London Education Authority recently made a public commitment to gay rights – and their mood encouraged colleagues from the northern bastions of *macho* rule, where to be open about being gay might still mean a dismissal.

Even in the trendy South East, however, caution is called for. "I want to go on paying my mortgage," said a Kent teacher who felt that coming out had to be a gradual process, certainly not "a badge-wearing, flag-waving thing".

It is, after all, just eight years since John Warburton was sacked by ILEA and banned from its schools because he refused to promise that he would not discuss homosexuality with pupils. And he was only reinstated early this year.

Now written into ILEA teachers' contracts is a clause on sexual orientation, which means that they cannot be discriminated against on the grounds that they are gay. The Gay Teachers' Group can now organize openly and advertise its meetings through the same official networks that other teachers' groups use.

There are no illusions that attitudes have changed overnight. "We've got a paper policy, but it will take a lot of time and effort before it really works," said one of the organizers. "There's a lot of resistance, even at high levels within the authority."

But ILEA's policy declaration is seen as a very important move. And it has paved the way for some unprecedented initiatives. Last month Labour MP Frank Dobson had a discussion with the Gay Teachers' Group on how the Labour Party might handle gay rights in the educational field.

Mrs Wynne Hart, ILEA's Inspector for Health Education, also accepted an invitation to speak to them last month on "Homosexuality in the Curriculum", the first time anyone from the employers' side (rather than the political) in ILEA had agreed to a meeting. The group felt it had been a very significant meeting, since Mrs Hart had agreed that the needs of gay pupils should be recognized, and welcomed their cooperation in curriculum development.

"I think that any material on sex-

The Gay Life television series broadcast last year was not shown outside the London area. Gays in Liverpool were told the North West was not ready for it.

uality should include information on all aspects of sexuality" said Ms Hazel Slavin, ILEA advisory teacher on health education, who was at the conference to introduce a session on teaching materials. "But just giving information to people doesn't change attitudes. It's clear from all the work we've done in health education that saying things like 'one in eight people...' means nothing. Kids have an image and you must do some kind of values

clarification exercise with them."

Teachers felt that other areas of the curriculum could benefit from a more positive approach to homosexuality. Most obvious were history and literature, where text books often alluded to homosexuality in a derogatory way.

A dozen young people are currently involved in the Gay Youth Video Project which has a £2,500 grant from the Greater London Arts Association to produce a video on young gays in schools. Several of them came to the conference to hear teachers' ideas on the project which is being supported by the Royal Court Theatre.

Andy Lipman, one of the project's coordinators, said: "We'll be breaking the silence and aiming to do something about the invisibility of young gays. But it's no good just presenting their lives and problems. We have to break down other people's assumptions."

In general, the attitudes pupils, parents and colleagues have towards

gay teachers do differ dramatically between London and the rest of the country. The *Gay Life* television series broadcast last year was not shown outside the London Weekend Television area. Gays in Liverpool, said one, were told that the North West was not ready for it.

In Liverpool, however, there is a gay teachers' group. Gay teachers there are collaborating with the university in organizing some public seminars on homosexuality as part of a programme of educating people away from the stereotypes.

Many gays feel that some unions, such as the National Union of Teachers, need to change their attitudes too. The National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education has had a policy of supporting gay rights since 1976 but the NUT has not followed suit. Indeed it has provoked a lot of anger from gay teachers by deciding to hold its next annual conference in Jersey where homosexuality is still regarded as a criminal offence.

Ulster's gay news

THE STRANGERS' gallery in the House of Commons was unusually full at midnight last Monday as MPs trooped back from the division lobby. When the voting figures on the issue before the House were announced, a cheer went up and one man's cry rang clearly around the chamber. "About time," he shouted exultantly.

The Commons had just approved, by 168 votes to 21, the Homosexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 1982, the first reform of the draconian laws against male homosexuality there since 1861, when the death penalty for sex between men was replaced by life imprisonment.

The order, introduced by the government at the insistence of the European Court of Human Rights, takes effect on December 9, bringing Northern Ireland into line with mainland Britain. One man among the reformists crowding the gallery had a special reason for celebration. For Jeffrey Dudgeon, a 31-year-old Belfast clerk, it was a triumphant end to a saga that began in January 1976 with mass arrests of organisers of Northern Ireland's small but noisy gay rights movement.

Dudgeon fought back by lodging a complaint under the European Convention on Human Rights. From then on, the issue was a hot potato.

In July 1977, Northern Ireland's advisory commission on human rights recommended reform and Merlyn Rees, then Labour's Northern Ireland Secretary, agreed to recommend this to Parliament. The Rev Ian Paisley responded with a "Save Ulster from Sodomy" campaign.

In late 1978, James Callaghan's shaky government dropped the liberalising order altogether in return for crucial support from Paisley and the Ulster Unionists. Paisley's campaign was strengthened when Northern Ireland's Catholic hierarchy weighed in on his side.

On the mainland, the Campaign for Homosexual Equality, the Scottish Homosexual Rights Group, the National Council for Civil Liberties and other reforming groups stepped up the

campaign. But the Thatcher government opposed them, notably on the grounds that the political and religious composition of Northern Ireland made it a special case.

In October last year, the government lost before a court of 21 international judges at Strasbourg. They found that the 1976 police action and the total ban on male homosexual acts, regardless of age or mutual consent, violated Dudgeon's rights.

The government now had little choice but to act. With as good a grace as could be mustered in the circumstances, the Northern Ireland secretary, James Prior, withstood Paisley's fulminations on Monday and urged MPs to support "a long overdue change in the law."

Paisley's prediction that the gay lobby would be encouraged to seek further reform is justified. There is a growing body of opinion in the Commons that the reforms pioneered by Leo Abse in 1967 did not go far enough. The Sexual Offences Act did not legalise sex between men; it merely decriminalised most homosexual acts as long as they were strictly in private (not, for instance, in a hotel); and between no more than two men aged 21 or more. Male homosexuality is still prohibited in the Merchant Navy and in the armed services (a ban that also applies to lesbians, who are otherwise virtually ignored in criminal law). Gay rights supporters are pressing particularly for parity with the heterosexual age of consent, currently 16.

The Dudgeon case will have repercussions south of the Irish border, where the total ban on sex between men, inherited from the British, still stands. The National Gay Federation is already setting out on the long legal journey to Strasbourg.

Male homosexuality remains completely illegal in the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. Yesterday, Peter Ashman of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality in London said the campaign was prepared to sponsor complaints to Strasbourg unless the government acted first.

Harry Coen

Gay 'dependants' may get health insurance

From Christopher Reed
in San Francisco

LIVE-in lovers of homosexuals who work for the city of San Francisco may soon have the same health insurance and other benefits granted to dependent husbands and wives of heterosexual employees.

A committee of the city council of what is called the gay capital of the world unani-

mously approved the measure and it is likely to have a majority on the full city council. Homosexuals in San Francisco are estimated at 20 per cent of the vote, and local politicians are usually eager to gain their support.

The new entitlements would also allow the employee to take sickness or bereavement leave for his or her domestic partner.

The lover would be recognised by city officials from a sworn statement by the employee. Any break-up would be recorded by filing a statement of dissolution with the town clerk and six months would have to lapse before registering another relationship.

The gay benefits proposal was made by a city councillor, Mr Harry Britt, homosexual

and formerly a married Methodist minister.

Some administrators of the health insurance, which gives city workers extra low cost medical care, oppose the new plan. They believe it would be open to abuse and difficult to check. Supporters say the number of people involved would be only about 3,000 and they would be mostly young and healthy.

City officials also approved a \$5,500 settlement for the former lover of Mr Harvey Milk, the homosexual city councillor shot dead in 1978 by a fellow councillor who also murdered the mayor. The former lover, who was a partner with Mr Milk in his camera shop and had lived with him for five years, was a partial dependant, a pensions board ruled.

Sir,—I see (November 5) that the Monopolies and Mergers Commission has ruled that Durex operates its monopoly position against the public interest. Is this the over-sensitive side of capitalism, or insensitive cover up, or purely a protectionist policy?—
Colin Brinton.
Essex.

TIMMEY'S PEOPLE

Following a long and boring Sunday meeting discussing the political and campaigning issues which preoccupied the Doc, Jerry was volubly complaining of a stiff arm. Jerry also expounded on his fantasy of S/M Jack Russell terriers in studs and black leather harnesses.

Have you noticed that Tim uses blacking on his pumps?

According to MR, Vincent has issued a denial that the crane which picked him up was the Tog Mor. And wasn't Vincent looking well at Part Two after the Friend Conference. Probably the result of not being out for six months.

What did John mean when he said "I've got something I didn't know I'd got"? Definitely nothing to do with Stuart (innocent lad) who still thinks that herpes is a wig. Again, what did John mean when - talking of Mike - he said "You know he sits on things"?

Isn't it amazing what knowledge comes out of this country's schools of medicine? TW, obviously a person of taste, assures me that the bacteria in yogurt is the same as that in a woman's vagina. Should Sainsburys be told.

At Chris' recent quiz some of the wrong answers were more memorable than the correct ones:- Bismarck's nickname was not "Three Eyes" and Orinoco and Great Uncle Bulgaria were not characters from an opera by Wagner (Die Wömbel, from Der Ring des Wimbledöngen). I found the best question in one of Chris' magazines..... "What's small, red and throbs?" The answer is a Honda QR50 child's motor bike.

Who said of whom "He never cruises. Occasionally steams." It certainly didn't refer to the original Tramp Steamer Alan Furness. Overheard at Part Two: a haggard, weary queen sagged towards the bar one Sunday night and asked for "Just a Tonic please". I know the feeling; once I could scintillate.... now I can only sin 'til half past two.

Who are the Warlock and the Wizard (Please tell your typist, I merely type this junk)?

Finally, it's time for a quiz from Noggin the Nog.

What do we call:-

a) Canine sadism b) A grope with a tinted gentleman c) A cat trapped in the toilet and d) A tickly cough.

Answers:-

Floggin the Dog, Snoggin the Wog, Moggin the Bog and Froggin the Throat.

Anne Drop-Off