



GGLCommunity News

Winter 2014

40th Annual Dinner Reports

All the news and views!

DIARY OF EVENTS

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



Hi,

How many “Chairman’s Letters” I have written over the past 20 years – close to a hundred I think. Where does the time go? To think at the beginning I was writing about how difficult it was to just keep the doors open, repealing Section 28, Edwin Currie proposing to reduce the age of consent to 16 (vote defeated), Derek Jarman died of AIDS, the Admiral Duncan in Soho was bombed. Not a good time for LGBT equality and it certainly wasn’t ‘popular’ to have a “gay friend”.

What a joy to see the changes – lowering the age of consent, Civil Partnership, now equal marriage. Increasingly Gay and Lesbian people are more integrated at work, and in in general society – but that is the problem. We should be integrated and the same as everyone else as a matter of course. Not expect equality to be handed out like some benign gift.

Britain was intolerant many centuries ago. We thought that was bad. Many countries still act as a Police State. They treat anyone they consider to be different with hate, despair, beating, dragged off in the night, hanged just because of their sexuality.

There is still a long way to go and while we are travelling that path there will be a need for a group like ours.

40 years down – we don’t know how many left?

Thank you to all those who have ever played a part in helping the group. These are the people who helped bring the equality we have today. It all starts with one person – could that be you?

Michael x

Chair

GGLC – Going Forward

Discussion Night – January 22nd

Every organisation needs to look at itself from time to time. It needs to be aware of where it came from, where it is now and if any changes need to be made.

There is no doubt that during its time as a CHE group and after that it has certainly played its part in the achievements we enjoy today. Now, as a social group forty years on, we are still successful. We are a friendly and supportive group and we all benefit from each other.

The group is healthy financially thanks to our excellent treasurer backed up by a strong team – the committee – and the support of the membership.

Membership remains strong.

Therefore, it is from a position of strength that a discussion evening has been organised early in the new year to seek the views of members as to how you wish the group to go forward. Do you wish to carry on as at present? Do you want more activities outside of the Thursday evenings? Should we be more involved in the general community? What activities do you want that we do not have already? Should we speak out more when other LGBT people suffer because of their sexuality and gender both here and abroad? These are just a few questions. You may have more. Come and debate as we enter our next phase following the 40th anniversary dinner. The discussion will be chaired by Howard, our vice chair.

The Person of the Year Award

As with other years, we could have found worthy candidates. This year, no names were forthcoming from the membership, which perhaps is fate. The committee decided that no one has achieved more outstanding support for the Gloucestershire Gay Community, than the GGLC itself. As this was our 40th Anniversary it was thought to be most fitting.

We therefore decided to award the cup to ourselves. It turned out to be a very popular decision! The cup will go for engraving and then be available at our weekly meetings

Mx

Wonderful Donation!

News from Rob, during the dinner, Roger P has donated his collection of old pictures from the first annual dinner. Hopefully we will see these at one of the future meetings, a fantastic historical record!

Thank You

I feel it is fate to try and list all those that helped, for fear of missing someone out in error, but I must say a huge appreciation particularly to Peter and Alan who did so much. Without them we would not have enjoyed such a brilliant, organized evening. On the day there were a staunch group of supporters, Meg, (Maggie), Julie, Chris and Howard who worked so hard getting everything ready. Mike and Rob not only helped on the day, but worked hard with the raffle tickets, Mike also helped Howard and I clearing up on Sunday.

Of course, all of you who joined in on Preparation Night beforehand. Also, thanks to those who acted as Table Hosts, the evening of the dinner.

It made such a difference and was fun working together

Mx

National AIDS Helplines

“You can ask what you want to ask”

0800567123

Older LGBT Network

A steering group has been set up to oversee the establishment of a national older LGBT organisation.

The proposed organisation will represent the voices of older LGBT people with Government, LGBT Advocacy and Aging Advocacy organisations and service providers. It will also serve as a hub for other LGBT projects, both local and national, thus creating a national network of older LGBT communities in the UK.

For further information, contact Howard through our Group.

NORTH SOMERSET LGBT FORUM

This group is a voluntary forum whose aims are to provide a voice for the LGBT Community of North Somerset and to be the “go” organisation for the LGBT for their community. They are looking at social activities and celebration of LGBT life and ideas of what the community would like to see happening, particularly in and around Weston Super Mare. If you can help or are interested please get in touch with Nigel at nigel.nslgbtforum@gmail.com

Just after my wife had given birth, I asked the Doctor, 'How soon do you think we will be able to have sex'? He winked at me and said 'I'm off duty in ten minutes. Meet me in the car park'

Visit to Westons Cider Mill

On September 24th, Howard, Peter, Chris, Mike & Michael visited the Westons Cider Mill in Much Marcle which is near Ledbury.

In 1880, Henry Weston joined the Herefordshire cider-making community and began a legacy of tradition and quality. Making cider and perry from his own fruit, collected from his own orchards, Henry contributed to the annual pattern of life in the country. In fact, there was always a barrel of cider in the cellar for the family to use - and a hogshead in the cider house for the farm workers. Who, at the start of each day all year round, brought their wooden 'costrels' to the cider house to be filled with the days allowance.

Today it is still a family run business on an international scale. Despite the recession, 1,200 more workers have been taken on in the last year and the size of the mill has doubled since it started. This is information given by our tour guide who took us round the mill.

It was fascinating to see how the cider I get from the supermarket was produced and got there.

We had samples of various ciders following the tour and I helped those driving by finishing off theirs.

It was a lovely day and before we left we had lunch seated outside the shop.

It was well worth the visit which I recommend to others.

Howard

Raffle

The Raffle takes place the last Thursday of the month. Don't forget to bring your money and all donations for prizes gratefully accepted.

This is one of the few fund raising events for our group

.GLOUCESTERSHIRE ARCHIVES

The archives are still looking to expand their LGBTQ collection, particularly lesbian and transgender. If you have any material, thoughts, stories contact Michael at the Group or e-mail sam.bairstow@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Swindon Gay Alliance

Is looking for new members to join them in creating an alternative social scene in Swindon and the surrounding areas. Interested in taking part?

Check out Swindon Gay Alliance Facebook page, or contact them through lgbtinlibraries.blogspot.co.uk

This is the Speech I gave at our 40th Anniversary Dinner. It is reprinted here for those who could not attend that night. Sorry it is in capitals, but I needed it in larger print to read it on the night. Like the old song – my eyes are dim!

Chairman's Speech

Comedian Jack Whitehall said he treats homophobia like arachnophobia. He's not afraid of gays or spiders but if he had one in his bath he would scream

The group cannot function, and never has done, without those who give up their valuable time effort into running and organizing the group. There is a long list of those who over the past 40 years have served on the committee – many here tonight. To those of you on that list can you stand please.

Ladies and gentleman these are just some of the men and women who have helped us achieve the equality we have today. Thank you

In 1967 homosexuality was a crime, in 1969 it was not. In 1974 when this group started it was still not safe to gather together if you were gay. The first public meeting of the group, with the then Bishop of Gloucester, received a surprise visit from the police. They didn't come to pray with the bishop.

The group achieved many wonderful things over the years - start of the Friend Line, supporting social services programmes for young LGBT people kicked out of home, working with the Samaritans and age concern. Throughout the group continued to meet weekly, providing speakers, social events and supporting its members. It has lasted 40 years – two lifetimes in the gay world!

40 years on we have equal marriage, the right to adopt children and life is so much better. Brilliant, great. What next. As a more elderly said to me the other week, "you gays are never satisfied" – I'm not sure in what context she meant that? But can I walk down Westgate Street hand in hand with my same sex husband without fear? Can we stand at the cross new years eve and snog like all the other couples? Not yet – but it is getting closer. The younger generation have been brought up with equality and for them it is not such a big deal.

The GGLC has survived and supported four decades of changes. Will we still be needed in the future?

Many thousands of men and women still spend their lives "keeping a secret", isolated, lonely, frightened to be themselves. There is still time for them to enjoy life. Perhaps their little secret isn't worth keeping any more. We are one of the few groups left who offer support, reliability and friendship with no ties, no age barriers.

There are those who mock us – because our age group is more mature. But I didn't hear them complain when they were lonely or needed us. It's the older

ones who lived through the difficult times and faced the daily abuse, who achieved the freedom we have now.

There are more people coming out to us than ever before. More people living a life they thought would never happen

We have earned our part in local history. It's worth striving to keep the group going that little bit longer. We will know when we are not needed any more. So, to those who think we are never satisfied, sorry, we might be gay but we're here to stay and yes we do want more –so get over it

Thank you.

Michael C-H

P.S. Some of you may have noticed that the speech is not all in capitals—this is due to the Editor's sneaky knowledge of Word's abilities, and dislike of things written all in capitals!

Official List of Dignitaries – 40th Annual Dinner

Dame Janet Trotter D.B.E. Lord Lieutenant

Lise Noakes, Sheriff and Deputy Mayor of Gloucester with the Sheriff's Lady,
Her sister Jackie Smith

Jenny Eastwood, Editor of the Citizen with her husband Mark Hawthorne
(County Council)

Pam Tracey

John Knowles (Entertainer)

Richard Graham M.P.

Simon and Sandra Wheeler, Mayor and Mayoress of Cheltenham

Peter Bungard, Chief Executive of Gloucestershire County Council

Max Colbourn Mayor of Cinderford

Lynda Thomas Town Clerk of Cinderford

Barbara Clayton

Mike and Ann Dean, Mayor and Mayoress of Tewkesbury

Martin Horwood M.P.

Colin and Jim from Gaywest

(There were 3 dignitaries who accepted our invitation but did not turn up on the night.)

We were also delighted to entertain founder members of the GGLC:-

Robert Garbolinski, David Prosser, Dr. Roger Pawson, Mark White, Denys Young.

My brother came out of the closet today. I knew I should have used a better lock.

CHAIRMAN'S PLATE

I am both humbled and proud to have served as chair of this prestigious group through some of its 40 years. For decades members of this group have supported each other and warmly welcomed others into its fold.

“The Person of the Year” award is our small way of recognising outstanding contribution to the gay community and over the years many worthy candidates have been so recognized. You cannot choose everyone and sometimes with several worthy candidates . You can only pick one.

In my 10th year of being Chair, I started the Chairman's Plate as a token of my appreciation of what the group had given to me. Trouble is I've been here so long it's costing me a fortune!! The aim of the award is both a personal recognition of the person and that we, as a group, are part of the wider community.

It was going to be one plate, but narrowing it down to two has been difficult enough.

The first recipient is a long standing member of the GGLC although many members may not realise that. This same can be said of the rest of his life – people don't realise what goes on beneath that sober exterior. A quietly spoken, helpful, generous man who has dedicated many years of his life to a organization helping LGBT people, their friends and families. He richly deserves this recognition . Ladies and gentleman I give you the recipient of the Chairman's Plate 2014 - Mr Ian Vesty

The achievements of my second awardee tend to get overlooked because of what his work is, rather than him as an individual. He is supportive of all communities in Gloucestershire , gay or straight and is always helping people going through a troubled time in their lives. He is kind, generous to his own detriment and many of his acts of charity go unacknowledged. There is more i could say about this man but for now ladies and gentlemen, may I present the second recipient of the Chairman's Plate 2014 - Mr John Huggins

Gay Outdoor Club

The national website has changed to <http://www.goc.org.uk> so all you out-doors types log on and see what you could be getting involved in!

Gloucestershire Pride AGM 2014

I represented the GGLC at the Gloucestershire Pride AGM.

It was heartening to be told that a deficit from the previous year had been turned into a small surplus for Pride 2015. It is also good that this is still a free event so donations are much appreciated. Please contribute to the collections held on the day.

There are vacancies on the committee but anyone who wishes to go on are advised they would be expected to take up an area of work.

Volunteers/stewards are also needed.

Please let me know if you are interested in being on the committee or being a volunteer and I will advise the organisers.

Howard Vice Chair

We received the most touching letter from Dame Janet. It is handwritten – the handwriting is beautiful but unfortunately does not scan well. I have reproduced the body of the letter below:

Dear Michael,

It was a great delight to share with you and the GGLC the dinner to mark the 40th Anniversary of the group.

It was an enjoyable occasion: the room was decorated beautifully, the meal was delicious and your hosting arrangements were memorable; thank you!

The Group has been tenacious and courageous over the past 40 years. The event made me think particularly of that complex journey.

I am grateful to you and colleagues for your warm hospitality, for the lovely posie and for memories of a special landmark in the life of Gloucestershire.

All good wishes, As ever, Janet

Change of Address

Please note we no longer have the PO Box, as it was getting more expensive to run every year. The new address for post only is on the back of the Newsletter.

We also no longer have the mobile phone that was on at the Group meetings.

Thanks, Graham, Editor

PICNIC 3rd August 2014

After several years of wet and cold weather, the day of the picnic dawned warm and dry. This encouraged a good turn out of Picnickers, travelling as far away as Bristol and Tewkesbury. We also had the company of several four legged friends enjoying Cannop Ponds.

The star of the afternoon was Meg's grandson Callum who made sure everyone kept to the rules when we played various games! Some of us just enjoyed sitting with a cuppa, chatting and enjoying the sunshine.

In no time it seemed the flags and bunting were taken down and it was time to go home.

Alan

The Annual Dinner

Well, I was going to do a big write-up of our 40th Birthday Annual Dinner, but there is already quite a bit in this issue about it, so I decided to keep it short and sweet! The entrance was wonderful with the flame effects either side of the door, and... a red carpet! It set the scene for what I thought was a wonderful evening. There were a few comments about the food—I enjoyed it! The entertainment was subtle and, entertaining! I loved the gentle music by Peter, it enhanced the atmosphere without being obtrusive, well done! I did hear one comment that when the photographer left, he was outside with all his equipment and no one was looking after him. True, that could have been handled better. However, if that was the only hiccup, then overall the evening was well organised and greatly enjoyed.

I hope you all had as good a time as I did!

The Editor

Young People's Social Group

Last July, Gay-Glos started a new group for young people in the 14 to 18 age range. It is for those who are gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered or who are in the process of exploring their sexual identity, and offers a safe place to meet and chat.

They meet during the daytime on Saturdays (possibly every other week) in Gloucester, and may be able to help with transport costs if needed.

To contact them, you can visit the Gay-Glos website at www.gay-glos.org, send an email to youth@gay-glos.org or leave a message on 01452 306800 and they will call you back.

Sean O'Neill

It is with sadness that we pass on the news that Sean O'Neill died on the 20th October.

The last eighteen months had seen him in poorer health although he still managed his beloved garden. The end was very quick and he died in Frenchy Hospital with family around him.

The funeral was on Friday 31st October at the Catholic Church in Newent, followed by burial at Greenfield Green Burial Site, Staunton and a funeral tea back at Naunton. The funeral was very well attended with family from Ireland and many friends. I represented the Group and also friends of Sean I knew were away. I made a donation on behalf of the GGLC.

Sean did not come to our Thursday night meetings very often, but occasionally he would host a garden party for the group. Sean opened his garden as part of the National Garden Scheme so it was special for us to have a private viewing complete with scones, cream and cake. They were always very special afternoons and remembered with affection.

Thank you Sean.

Michael

Pink Paper

The Pink Paper has very much vanished from physical sight, though the Committee has tried to get copies for the Group. It is available on-line at <http://www.pinkpaper.com/>, and this may be the best way to access it now.

Gay & Lesbian Humanist Association (GALHA) http://www.galha.org/	Lesbian & Gay Christian Movement Alan 0117 982 1512 http://www.lgcm.org.uk/	Jewish Lesbian & Gay Help Line Mon & Thurs 020 7706 3123
Gay Bereavement Project Helpline: 020 7403 5969 Tuesday 7.30pm to 9.30pm	Beaumont Society (Transgender Issues) http://www.beaumontsociety.org.uk/	Transvestite Help Line Rita 0117 951 4481
Gay Girls of Gloucestershire 07561 067888 http://www.gaygirlsofgloucestershire.co.uk	Gay Men's Project West of England 0117 955 1000 Wiltshire and Swindon 01793 695 300	Living Springs Metropolitan Community Church, Bath Rev. Kieren Bourne 01380 870226

Events Write-up

Three months of varied activities saw our Annual Picnic actually take place this year at Cannop Ponds (full report else where in the newsletter). Our usual Rounders Sunday was once again thoroughly enjoyed. Other activities included a multi choice general knowledge quiz hosted by Peter; a Treasure Hunt with suitable cryptic clues provided by Graham; a very entertaining BeeGees night arranged by Alan. I missed the 78 Revolutions evening hosted by Graham but very enjoyable I am informed. The scheduled Beetle Drive was postponed to a future date as only a handful of members were able to attend on that evening.

Ian Lloyd Oswell made a welcome return to the group with a fascinating look back at his life and illustrations of the intricate and beautiful carvings and other wooden items he has produced over the years. Ian reminded me that he actually worked on the alcove in our house!

Several members were able to make the trip to Weston's Cider – informative and very enjoyable (full report on page). “I Can't think Straight” kindly arranged by Chris and Julie was our film of the month – very entertaining. Some very odd public information films were unearthed by our members for our Film Shorts evening – Graham was once again the technical director.

It was all hands on deck for the Annual Dinner preparation evening with place cards to be completed with menu details; table centre pieces to be assembled and general last minute “tweaking” of arrangements for our 40th Birthday Celebration at the New County. Many thanks to every one for their efforts in helping to arrange this event.

Peter C

My wife called up the stairs “The son's come out”. I rushed downstairs in shorts and flip flops to find my son, Dan, standing , hand in hand with his best friend.

The Westgate

Gloucester's only LGBT venue

Open Sunday noon-2am, Monday/Tuesday 11am-2am

Wednesday-Friday 11am-3am, Saturday 11am-5am!

Food served until 4pm Sun-Thurs, ^pm Fri-Sat

My reflections on the evening

By the time the evening arrived we were pretty shattered. It had been months in the planning and the last week was frantic with activity. Outside, looking at the silk flames dancing, it made quite an impressive entrance. It was quite a relief there was nothing else we could do and just wait for the evening to begin.

Although nerve wracking, the whole evening went much better than I could have hoped for. To hear the buzz around the room, laughing, applauding, greeting old and new friends – it was wonderful and worth all the work. The room looked superb with the lighting, flowers (thanks Maggie), balloons, tables laid and everyone looking so smart and happy. As well as setting the scene, our musician for the night (Peter of Enlightenment) did us proud and we are pleased to have a record of the evening. Ken Sellars of Cheltenham Camera Club kindly volunteered to take the photo's . (See the Gallery on the Website if you missed our slide show)

It was such a surprise to hear Howard recognize my 20 years as Chair, with the presentation of lovely flowers and shield. Thanks to those involved in the organization and those who donated. It really is appreciated. The words from Dame Janet and the standing ovation is something I will treasure for the rest of my life. Thank you.

It was a a delight meeting again with our founder members who regaled stories of the , as it turns out, rather steamy past!

A great evening, celebrated in style. We received so many comments on what a great evening it was, people want to come back. We'll leave that to the next team so no pressure there then!

Again thank you.

Michael

Membership update

We have 61 members which is 3 up on the previous newsletter report Summer/Autumn 2014. We have 2 new members Graham T and Bande D. A very warm welcome to you both.

Membership numbers are holding up well although we always gain a few and lose a few over time.

Rob P. Membership Secretary

The Nature of Relationships

During the Annual Dinner Romeo and I were sat with Bill, Alan and Ray, and also with a member of the Group I did not know and his two guests, including a Glaswegian with whom I spered during the evening. One of the interesting points of discussion was the nature of Romeo and my relationships. He could not believe we had been together for fourteen years, and as on such occasions Romeo is naturally diffident and I take the fore, he gained the impression there was a power imbalance. I fully understand how he got that impression! What he did not see is how much more sociable than me Romeo is when at the Group among people he knows, or at the Filipino dos, when I take the back seat (yes, me, I do at times!).

Still, it set me to thinking on the nature of relationships, how they differ, and how they may appear to other people.

Looking around the Group, I am struck by two things, the first is how many of our members are in long standing relationships, relationships that have stood the test of time way beyond the average for traditional marriages, and many formed before such things were even legal. That is commitment. The second is how different they all are. Some have aspects I don't understand, but that doesn't matter, they work for the persons involved and that is all that is important.

Viva la difference!
The Editor

FORTHCOMING

November

13th William R
19th Shayan K

December

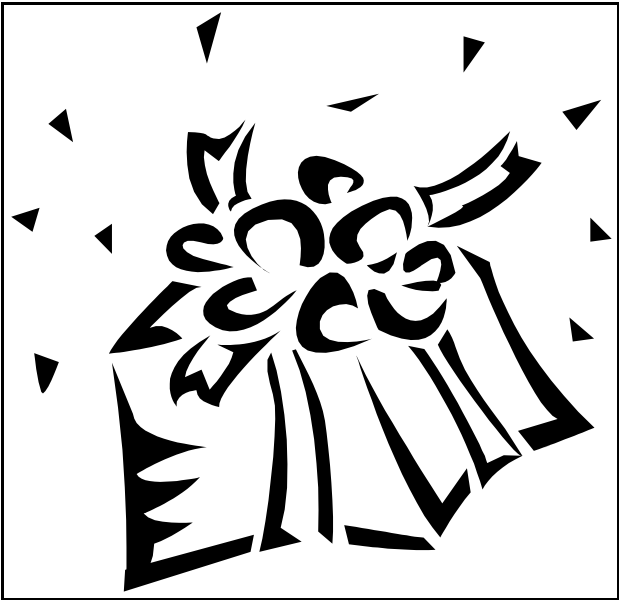
9th Howard H
9th Robert N
13th John W
20th Bande D
27th Carol L
30th Janet H

January

7th David L
25th Chris D
27th Julie S
29th John J
31st Tony R

February

6th Graham V
13th Ian H
22nd Kenneth A



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU ALL



GGLC's SOCIAL CALENDAR DIARY OF EVENTS

November

- 20th Canadian Rockies – slide show Michael and Alan
27th Coffee, Chat and Raffle

December

- 4th Health Promotion Evening with Jonathan B.
11th Group Christmas Party
18th Christmas Music presented by Julie
25th No Meeting

January

- 1st No Meeting
8th Post Christmas Catch-up
15th Wrapped Auction
22nd Future of the Group—Discussion
29th Coffee, Chat and Raffle

February

- 5th Talk—A Trip to India
12th Love Your Neighbour -Michael CH (Game!)
19th Pancake Night—Alan
26th Coffee, Chat and Raffle

Advanced Warnings and Notes!

Christmas is coming! Be good, or if you can't be good, have fun!

The diary is subject to change due to changes in circumstances, whimsy, Editor's insanity and attacks by weasels..

GGLC

GGLC

GGLC

GLOUCESTERSHIRE
GAY & LESBIAN
COMMUNITY

50 Knowles Road,
Gloucester GL1 4TP

07050 627273

www.gglc-glos.co.uk
info@gglc-glos.co.uk

CONTACTING THE GGLC

Gloucestershire Gay & Lesbian Community meets most Thursdays, from 8pm, in Gloucester city centre. A warm welcome is assured for everyone. For further details or directions please phone 07050 627273 or write to :-

The Secretary, GGLC, c/o 50 Knowles Road,
Gloucester GL1 4TP. (postal only)

We also have our own website www.gglc.co.uk and the email address is info@gglc.co.uk - several new members have contacted the Group this way!

LOCAL 'HAUNT'

The Westgate, Gloucester
www.TheWestgateOnline.co.uk

Haunts is now Haunt... any ideas anyone?



Some of the information on the bars and discos may be wrong—
new places may be opening—anyone with the latest news,
please let us know.