



lesbian
gay
bisexual
trans
history
month

FEBRUARY 2009



“You’ll be His, you’ll be His, you’ll be History!”

**The voice of lesbian, gay, bisexual
and trans PCS members**

Happy New Year
This will be brief,
as I am trying to
catch up on
masses of work
following my very

enjoyable Christmas and New
Year in Australia – it was not
easy returning from 4 weeks
of sunshine to the wet and
cold.

2008 was another good year
for Proud with a successful
seminar in Leeds and two
training events attracting a lot
of new faces. The year did
not go without a few
challenges but we did achieve
required outcomes at Annual
Delegates Conference and on
the subject of PCS Monitoring.

2009 will, I am sure, present
us with more challenges, but
we are well equipped to tackle
anything that comes our way
head on – I couldn't ask for a
more committed and
dedicated group of individuals
than those on our National
Committee. Our first AGM for
almost 18 months will be
happening on the 27th March
and I hope to see many of you
there.

Jeff Grist PCS Proud Chair

Before we know it, we will be
into Pride season again –
please offer support to your
Regional/Country Reps at
events they will be organising
on behalf of PCS and Proud.

Yet again, it looks as though I
will be unable to make PCS
Annual Delegates Conference
again this year as it clashed
with the TUC Disability
Conference, which I have to
attend as a member of the
TUC Disability Committee. I
will be around at the start of
the week for Group
Conferences, so look forward
to seeing many of you then.

Finally, I wish you all a good
2009 and hope that it will be
the year that sees the return
of a proper summer!!

Jeff

Happy New Year!
So a rotund, white bearded man passed amongst us giving boys and girls what we wanted over the festive season. *Right after* the Ghost of Karl Marx had destroyed the fabric of the Capitalist machine we had Xmas, which was OK as usual.

Should we be in any doubt, in the month of LGBT History, that LGBT rights are progressed by radical politics then we need only muse on the fact that it's just a few short decades since we had a right-wing government that actually prohibited positive teaching on LGBT issues? Capitalist production, with its reliance on the 'conventional family', religion and the suppression of individuality, will never be a fertile ground for liberation.

"I was lucky enough to see with my own eyes the recent stock-market crash, a rabble of dead money that went sliding off into the sea."
Federico Garcia Lorca-
Mind how you go.
Geoff

Martine McGarry & Geoff Webb - Editors

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Ditto!
I hope one and all are fully recovered from the hangovers, if not from the credit card bills, yet and 2009 is YOUR year.

We have lots of things to get us through the bleak winter (or shall be the optimist and class it as spring?). And lots of chances to get involved with Proud, through its various mediums – see piece from Dave P about getting logged onto the Proud Forum.

As ever, I am going to 'encourage' you to get writing and send in your articles... I may even resort to chocolate bribes soon!

Until next time
Martine

Fancy yourself as a designer?
Proud is holding a competition to design a T-shirt dealing with the not always helpful effect of religion on LGBT discrimination.
Entries to the usual address
Cut off date for entries:
27th March 2009
Prize:
The first shirt off the press!

LGBT HISTORY MONTH –FEBRUARY

JEFF'S HISTORY

In writing my piece for the Proud Archive, I did consider exploring psychology and the many other things that make us who we are, but decided to relate this to my personal experience and growth during my time with Proud.

It all started many years ago when I noticed and advert in PCS View for a PCS LGBT Seminar which was being held in Glasgow. Although I had been active within my Branch on very local and general issues, Proud was a mystery to me as I had never heard of the group. After much thought, I decided to bite the bullet and apply. This may come as a surprise to those who know me today, but at this time, I was relatively shy, had minimum ambition and relatively ignorant of LGBT politics and campaigning.

Well, my application was successful and I was off to Glasgow – I did not know anyone else who was going and had only had minimal contact from some chap called Brian Shaw, who seemed quite nice and supportive. I arrived in Glasgow and went straight to the bar for a large whiskey (not a vodka drinker in those days) to try and calm my nerves. Whilst there, I noticed another guy sat on his own, who looked as nervous and frightened as I felt, so after what seemed like ages, I plucked up the courage to talk to him. As luck would have it, he too was a seminar virgin who was feeling the same apprehension as I was. We quickly formed a very supportive bond and Jon and I were virtually inseparable the whole weekend. This made things a lot easier. Together we found it much easier to interact with others and join in with activities – both during the seminar and socially. Although everyone was very friendly, there were some very strong, opinionated and quite scary individuals there – not something I had really experienced before in this kind of environment. One of these scary people turned out to be one of the kindest and supportive people I have ever met – I know you will be surprised to hear that this 'scary person' was Wash, who has been not only an inspiration to me, but one of the best friends I have ever had the honour of knowing. I must also thank Jon for his friendship and support in Glasgow as our experience was a big influencing factor in why I am where I am today. Post seminar, someone else who attended decided to spread some very nasty and malicious rumours to Jon's partner about us. Understandingly distressed, Jon told me about this and, inspired

from what I had heard at the seminar, I decided, probably the first time in my life, to do something about it. As I said, this was the first time that I had stood up for myself (and in doing so, Jon and his partner), my newly found confidence allowed me to challenge and not give up until I was satisfied that this would not happen to anyone else in the future – I guess my first ‘campaign’ as, I guess, an ‘activist’.

At this time, Proud was looking for a Regional rep in the South West, and Brian never gave up badgering me until I agreed to cover it until the upcoming AGM. This was the start of many years and various positions on the Proud Committee. Within no time at all, I was hooked. I was part of something important, something that could make a difference with a bunch of dedicated and passionate individuals who gave me support, inspiration and hope. I attended events, courses, seminars – in fact anything that would increase my knowledge, confidence and access to like minded people. Along with a number of other influencing factors – losing friends, workplace issues, being queer bashed, health issues and more recently losing both of my parents, I grew into a person who would and could not sit back and accept what was given to me – I became a strong, confident individual who could never make do, who could never sit back and see others suffer if there was something I could do to help. I realised that I was not liked by everyone, but that was OK, I was going to be true to myself and what I believe in, I was not afraid to stand up, challenge and be counted. I became someone that I liked and, to be honest, was proud of.

As well as being the South West Regional Rep, I have also held the positions of Proud Vice Chair, Proud Training Officer and Proud Chair. I have been a member of the TUC Disability Committee, Chair of the Regional TUC LGBT Group and a number of other positions in community groups and third sector organisations. I am certain that all of this has only been possible because of the opportunities and knowledge that Proud has offered me. I am also certain that the same opportunities and personal development assisted in my career progression and Group activity within PCS.

I have met some wonderful and inspirational people through Proud and made many true friends. However, this is the real world, and I have also had dealings with some very destructive, selfish and negative individuals, but luckily not that many and my development

through Proud enabled me to deal with them confidently and professionally.

I am truly thankful to those past and present who made Proud what it was and what it is today. I feel honoured to be part of such a supportive and caring family. I have only mentioned a few individuals by name, but there are many more who have played their part in me becoming the person I am today – I thank you all.

Finally, anyone who is LGBT and feels that they need support or help in personal development, being involved in Proud may give you the opportunities and encouragement you are looking for. You don't have to be on the National Committee, or stand up and shout for the cause – just being a member may be all you need and I would encourage you to do what I did, 'bite the bullet' and make the first move – I am confident that you won't regret it.

Jeff Grist

LGBT HISTORY MONTH –FEBRUARY

WASH'S HISTORY

The first union LGBT group I attended was in National Union of Civil and Public Servants (a predecessor of PCS). I was also involved in Gay Liberation Front and the in feminist movement.

When the Public Services, Tax and Commerce Union (PTC) was formed with merger of NUCPS and IRSF I first met June Davison and Brian Shaw both still close friends.

With their encouragement and a few other votes I became chair of the new lesbian, gay and bisexual group and it wasn't long before we named ourselves Proud.

I remember the national conferences and our lunch time meetings presenting little scenarios of life about being out at work. The acting was terrible but it was more fun than speeches.

Although PTC was short lived as a union it was here that the first Proud seminars and training courses were forged. PCS gave Proud a new lease of life with thousands more reps and members to educate and train. The group moved from the edges of the union into the heart of the union's structures. We supported motions for national conference helped set up group structures but most importantly Brian Shaw and I wrote and arranged seminars, training events exclusively for LGBT members of PCS, as well as

training courses for reps and members to be delivered in the regions

For the first 5 or 6 years I was chair and Brian Shaw was secretary. When he left PCS I stood for his seat on the national LGBT committee a position I still hold. One of the key successes of Proud has been to deliver the training and see the confidence of LGBT members in PCS challenge and change policy. Proud members have been instrumental in writing motions setting up group LGBT structures.

In my early years I started many a speech "As an out lesbian" which was important then as now to keep the Proud profile high.

I remained Chair for a year after Brian left but felt ready for a new challenge. Standing down as Chair and being elected as Secretary certainly was that but the new chair Jeff Grist and I formed a solid close working relationship and now I count him as a very good friend.

In 2007 I decided time to stand down from the senior roles and I have taken on the Co-Organiser role, which is another challenge but one I am enjoying.

Outside PCS I am the chair of the Midlands LGBT network and secretary of the Midlands women's committee. I have helped organise PROUD attendance at Prides around the UK in particular the Midlands over the last 10 years. Last year I organised the first joint TUC and PCS International Day Against Homophobia event.

Proud has been a most important part of my life my family, a home from home, supporting me when things were not so good.

I have made many friends and even though with all "families" we have not always pulled in the same direction but I would not have missed any of it.

So many people I could thank but that can wait till 2010! PCS Proud goes from strength to strength and I have been privileged to serve the LGBT community within PCS. I thank them and all in PCS who have supported me over the last 10 years.

Wash (AKA Yvonne Washbourne)

DAVE PLUMMER

PROUD WEBMASTER

How To Use The PCS Proud Forum

The PCS Proud forum is a way of keeping in touch with each other, discussing things which are in the news, having a bit of a laugh, finding out what's going on in your region, letting people know what's going on in your region and getting to know each other. Really, it's what you want it to be and what you make it.

Registering

Registering is a piece of cake. Underneath the PCS Proud logo at the top of the forum's front page there's a bit that says 'Welcome Guest, please log in or register.'

Click on the word 'register', choose a username, add your email address, choose a password and complete the visual verification, read the user agreement and, if you agree, click 'I Agree' (if you do) and then 'Register.'

You will receive an email confirming your registration but your account will still have to be approved by a forum administrator. Hopefully this

shouldn't take long. In most cases it will take no more than a few hours.

As the forum is for PCS Proud members only please register using a .gsi email address if possible: this helps us confirm that you are a PCS Proud member.

Don't worry if you can't use a .gsi address: we know that many people don't have one and that different departments have different IT policies. If you do use a .gsi address you can change to a personal email address once your registration has been approved?

Using the forum

The forum might look complicated but is actually pretty straightforward. It is divided into different areas, such as the 'General Chat' and 'Regional and Country Forums'.

These are further divided in to different subjects and within those subjects are the individual conversations.

It's good to talk

To participate in a conversation you just go to the last post, underneath which you'll find a row of buttons to the right including a 'Reply' button. When you click on it a panel will appear for you to type in. It looks complicated but you can ignore most of the options.

Type what you want to type (within reason!) in the big box in the middle then, using the buttons underneath, you can spell check it, preview it and post it.

It really is that simple!

There is much more functionality available, such as the ability to quote other people's posts, add smileys, use Bulletin Board Code (BBC) etc but none of this is necessary to chip in a join the PCS Proud online community.

We'll see you there.

Dave

Rules of the Blog

Note that it is impossible for the staff or the owners of this forum to confirm the validity of posts. Please remember that we do not actively monitor the posted messages, and as such, are not responsible for the content contained within. We do not warrant the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information presented. The posted messages express the views of the author, and not necessarily the views of this forum, its staff, its subsidiaries, or this forum's owner. Anyone who feels that a posted message is objectionable is encouraged to notify an administrator or moderator of this forum immediately. The staff and the owner of this forum reserve the right to remove objectionable content, within a reasonable time frame, if they determine that removal is necessary. This is a manual process, however, please realise that they may not be able to remove or edit particular messages immediately. This policy applies to member profile information as well.

(In other words *play nicely!*
Ed)

There is a perception that because gay and black people are in a minority, they understand each others standpoint regarding prejudices. You would therefore think that you would not find prejudice against black people by other gay people, or *vice-versa*. Sadly, this is not true.

The black community should remember that homophobia is as bad as racism.

How much more difficult is it for a person who is black AND gay, living in the black community?

The discrimination can be even worse if you are part of an Asian descent. There'll be a quota within the gay community who will sleep with you, but not have a relationship with you because of your ethnicity. This attitude devalues you as a person.

Coming from a mixed culture background can leave you with many identity questions; What is my culture and where can I be accepted?

'Chances of Love'-

Jay Bedford, Black Members Joint Rep

There are also people who treat other cultures as if they were an exotic (I'll come back to that word later) dish on a menu and won't mix their continents!

What's this seasons colour?

Sometimes you feel like a fashion item that is in or out of style; like a guy that told me he was "into black" years ago. What does that actually mean?

Is finding people of different backgrounds like puberty?

A stage you have to go through in order to grow up? If that is the case then these people have not grown up yet.

I suppose it could be similar to gay men going out with women, having sex with them and then realising that they are gay. Those who are gay and have children and have had to leave their marriage and tell the

wife or husband but they're gay, would properly understand the hurt that has on the relationship.

Going into a relationship with somebody of different ethnic background and breaking up with them because of their background or culture can have the same affects of deep hurt for those people.

It is not just of rejection of the person but it can feel like rejection of the race, colour or creed and this hurt can go much deeper.

We talk about identity and we understand how hard it is to 'come out' but for people of other cultures, colours or creeds, there are other layers of identity which they must come to terms with, in addition to being gay.

Being 'exotic' dates back to the Victorian period. During the Victorian empire, English men saw women of different ethnic backgrounds. Victorian women 'of class' did not have sex that often; it was something that happened in relation to having children and wasn't to be discussed. Men often went to prostitutes to have the kind of sex they wanted.

Many men went to Africa as soldiers to protect the empire, but they were introduced to a different culture that was so different to home. Black women and men hardly wore clothing. What was forbidden in Victorian times was now allowed. The women in Africa were very different and celebrated sex compared to their Victorian counterparts.

Many men would join in the forces to go abroad and taste the 'forbidden fruit'.

Later on, the black African dance troupe came to England to perform in shows. The men were barely covered and wore the outfits they would wear in by native country. This kind of nudity was acceptable as it was

done in the name of art and theatre; as a result many women flocked to see the shows and have sex with the artists! The reports of their escapades led to hostility from the white men in the community.

A series of insults build up about black men. These included; "They are beasts in the bedroom." This implied that black men were not people but animals. Other insults included;

"being of low intelligence",
"being slow"
and being
"beneath white men"
(aka inferior).

This image has lasted throughout the centuries. It has taken many years before mixed relationships between heterosexual sexual couples became acceptable. How long will it take for mixed relationships between gay men and women to also be acceptable? This prejudice comes from all white, black and Asian communities

So what is the answer?

Maybe I should try and accept and love myself and others without restraint.

To accept other people for who they are – not to judge people by their size, disability, traditions, colour, sexuality, gender or background.

To set an example of love and to remind all people what can be achieved when you accept people for who they are.

On the gay scene, there seems to be insensitivity about colour.

Gay people know how hard it is to be accepted, but they forget it is much harder to be accepted if you are also of another culture, colour, creed, religion and background.

People of minority groups should learn to be aware and to do to others and treat others the way they are being treated, and reject people because they are different. It is something I hope we will all learn soon, so that we will be marching on the same road together in harmony against all kinds of discrimination, fighting for a better world.

**“Love Thy Neighbour –
what people of faith
really think about
homosexuality”
Ruth Hunt and Gill
Valentine for Stonewall**

The Report’s introduction is written by Ben Summerskill, in which he pronounces “Faith leaders in modern Britain often point to a claimed tension between religion and equality for gay people. It has even been suggested that lesbian and gay people and people of faith do not and cannot get along. At Stonewall we have long been sceptical about such claims...” He continues “Mindful that some of the most vocal opposition to gay equality in recent years has come from religious leaders, Stonewall commissioned a series of focus groups to talk to people of faith themselves” Summerskill states that the Report is intended to show that knowing, socialising and working with others reduces negative ideas about difference, which is a core principle of community cohesion.

To read the report, email the Proud Editors or visit www.stonewall.org.uk

DJ Spooky outrage

There has been a row about the BBC TV show that contained slurs against lesbians, as it was stated that only 13 complaints had been received.

The Radio 5 Live DJ, known as Spooky, was commenting on the lesbian relationship between actress Lindsay Lohan and DJ Sam Ronson. Spoooney stated;

“Let the munters and mingers get each other. That’s cool because nobody wants them”. DJ Spooky continued with his abuse stating; “when they’re hot and fit – Hollywood superstars – they should be saved for the guys”.

Cited:

<http://www.pinknews.co.uk/news/articles/2005-10282.html>

People can go onto BBC homepage and follow ‘complaints’ for an email connection to put their views to Spooky’s comments

Thanks to Laurie Smith (Assistant Secretary, CWU Central London Branch)

Yvonne Washbourne (Proud Organiser) and Peter Purton (TUC, LGBT) for highlighting that issue for us.

We will be counted!

We were made aware in December that the Office for National Statistics (ONS) is going to include a question on sexual identity, to give a clearer picture of the LGB population. Inclusion should help public sector bodies such as the NHS and councils to plan services in a more efficient and targeted way.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is continuing to work on its own project to find ways of improving measurement of the LGB population. The EHRC is also calling on the ONS to include a question on sexual identity in the 2011 Census alongside other groups.

**Go to:
www.
Equality
Human
Rights
.com
for further details**

PCS Proud Seminar 2008, "Over the Rainbow?"

In November, the PCS LGBT community asked ourselves, "Are we now over the rainbow: Are all the issues we have faced now behind us?"

The resounding answer was NO!

The main topics we discussed were the rise in STDs and in particular HIV & AIDS in younger members of the LGBT community, and the need to improve monitoring of all equality strands.

Since the infamous tombstone adverts of the early 80's were dropped, there seems to have been a loss of focus on STDs within the UK; In fact one young delegate commented that they had never seen an advert about AIDS other than affecting people in Africa. There is now an air of complacency around AIDS, and while the treatments have much improved since the 80's they are still far from a cure. We have discussed how the LGBT community have led the way in tackling STDs, by providing education and giving away free condoms in pubs and at events, and how recently this was so successful that statistics showed more straight women to be infected than gay men. This of course led onto discussions about how the straight community could be persuaded to be as proactive as the LGBT.

It is now such a common part of our lives to provide equality monitoring, that we rarely think twice about it, but how often does the equality section of a form ask you for your sexual orientation, or sexual identification. We have discussed in some detail efforts to get these questions added to the census, and compulsory monitoring for employers to ensure that employment is proportional to the population. We have also discussed that although monitoring on other areas such as disability, gender, ethnicity and/or religion have been around for many years, there seem only to have been limited efforts to actually resolve the issues these surveys have found, so monitoring will probably be just the first hurdle.

For more information & to join PCS Proud: <http://www.pcsproud.org.uk>

Steve Cotton

Breaking the Cycle - The strategy to improve lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans lives in the North West - is launched with the full support of the Manchester Council (February 09). The strategy is a first for the North West and is a comprehensive document that highlights the damaging sequence that LGBT people and communities face. It provides practical recommendations that can help the estimated 612,000 LGBT's in the North West. The Lesbian and Gay Foundation (LGF) are quoted as saying;

"The strategy will play a key role in informing the policies and practices of regional and local organisations over the next 5 years and beyond. The practical recommendations made in the strategy should be adopted by organisations to help them engage with, and increase and improve provision for, the LGB&T communities which they serve; making the North West an exemplar of best practice."

If you would like more information about this strategy or to any other NW LGBT issues, please contact/visit www.lgf.org.uk - Submitted by David Greenall (NW Regional Rep)

Over the Rainbow?

With the ongoing issues of characters such as Joel Edwards, it is essential that reflect upon where we have been, how far we have come and how far there is to go.

During the seminar, Sue Bond (Vice President, PCS) was the introductory key note speaker and introduced the Proud review and the issues of monitoring, EHRC, and gave an excellent analogy of discrimination with its roots being ignorance, fascism, bullying, harassment, bigotry & homophobia.

Terence Higgins Trust provided a presentation; we were given an Aids and HIV overview and issues for employment. HIV and AIDS have been covered under the DDA since Dec 05 and employees are covered for HIV from the **point of diagnosis** – questions posed included, what are ‘reasonable adjustments’ for HIV and AIDS?

Adjustments may include medication, counselling, medical intervention - To make any adjustments, the employer obviously has to be advised of the ‘disability’ – the employee (and their manager) need management support, understanding and to assured of confidentiality.

For copies of the ‘Negotiating Guide: Tackling HIV discrimination at work’, contact our equality department by: equality@pcs.org.uk
Call 020 7801 2683
or visit www.pcs.org.uk/equality

Kim Burridge (Director of Learning and Organising Services, PCS) talked about ‘lifelong learning, through rep education and member development. The National Organising Strategy’ and the need to increase involvement in under represented groups was discussed. This can be done through raising

awareness of harassment and bullying through courses for reps, lay tutor courses and encouragement of under represented groups to be trained as lay tutors.

Sue Pemberton (Training and Development Officer, EHRC) talked about Sexual Orientation Regs and outlined what discrimination is and the different forms it takes and which areas are exempt from the regs.

Mark Chisham (Young Members Chair, PCS) talked about young members ‘coming out’ and the challenges this posed; including some young members being made homeless by homophobic parents. See **The Schools OUT Student Tool Kit** and Speakers in Schools projects

Tony Conway (NEC, PCS) discussed encouraging motions for branches and developing people through their branches. Tony asked ‘how do we get the message across and support each other?’ The main response was to get LGBT to the top of the agenda and the solutions coming from within Proud itself; inclusive and democratic. The equality strands need to be developed further as well as an understanding of homo and trans phobia’s so we are able to eradicate it.

Joanna Rowland Stewart (Trans Rep) conducted a presentation for Trans Memorial Day (23 November 2008) and we held a one minute silence. We were advised that over 400 trans people (worldwide and that we know of) have been killed or committed suicide in 2008 because of their trans status. Jo told us about the Stonewall riots, which were instigated by an incident in Compton Place Café, when police tried to arrest trans people it became a riot.

Pat Campbell (Equality monitoring and Head of Safety, PCS) talked about monitoring sexual orientation with the membership survey and raised the issue of explanation of the terms for sexuality (including asexual), the amount of space this would take on a form! Pat encouraged people to go onto 'my membership' on the PCS website and update their own sexuality status information. Pat advised that PCS are leading the way on monitoring within the Unions, so Proud has a lot to be proud of! She reiterated the fact that things can't change if we don't know the numbers of LGBT within any workforce – it is essential to monitor, so individual needs can be addressed.

Wash, Proud Organiser and TUC LGBT Committee member talked about LGBT issues within the TUC committee and that there's is equality legislation but there is still a lot of work to be done; we were reminded, that is isn't just about getting legislation passed but winning the 'hearts and minds' of our co-workers, friends, family and supporting campaigns, including the struggle for our LGBT friends abroad.

Key themes of the seminar included:

- Influence in the wider TU movement – vital and vocal groups.
- Promote the benefits of equality monitoring.
- Submit letters and articles for the Proud magazine.
- Participate on the Proud Forum website
- Support PCS National Campaign.
- Practice safe sex
- Become a TU rep
- Attend training events
- Create links with EHRC
- Work with other under represented groups
- Nurture young members

Remember to reflect upon Trans memorial day (20 Nov)
Engage with Proud

It was another really enjoyable and informative seminar, so remember to get your names down for Nov 09

Martine (Editor)

HIV and Aids Seminar

At the recent LGBT seminar run by Proud on behalf of PCS one of the sessions covered HIV/Aids.

The delegates were asked to consider what have been the effects on the LGBT community of HIV/Aids, what behavioural changes they have experienced and what they think the future will hold.

From the replies the following has been surmised;
The impact on the LGBT community has been positive and negative;
Negative impacts include the obvious loss of some great and good people. There have been the negative responses from society of the 'gay' disease.

However, there are many positive impacts that, as a community, we have experienced. As a community, we took ownership of the HIV/Aids crisis in the 80's and have continued to lead in sharing knowledge and educating society about the disease. We have taken on the 'safe sex message' and spread this across society. Condom is not a dirty word anymore.

There have also been external impacts on the community such as the impact different organisations have exerted, for example the lead that the Terrence

Higgins Trust have taken on HIV/Aids issues.

There is also the influence that the community has exerted on our law makers;

With HIV/Aids being covered by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) from the point of diagnosis...

...not from when the symptoms begin to have an adverse effect on day to day living.

There have been medical advances with antiviral therapies; the advances which have been made in medicine are astounding! Science has learnt more about HIV in such a short time than we have ever learnt about any other organism.

We have also passed the safe sex message to the 'hetero world' and this has led to a more open society when it comes to talking about sex.

We have helped to combat the ignorance around HIV/Aids across society and most importantly amongst the young, giving young people knowledge of LGBT issues other than HIV/Aids.

We have had some excellent role models and high profile patronage, with the Princess of Wales and Elton John, for example.

What delegates thought about the future included

- The continued broadening of the safer sex message for all of society not just for LGBT's along with the promotion of regular sex health checks.
- Modern media should be used with the use of the internet and mobile phones to 'spread the word'.

- Social network sites should carry adverts for the safe sex message as standard.
- Joint working with other unions on the education angle as this is an area in which unions excel.
- Education should also be pushed in women's groups, both in and out of the union.

Finally the message that there is still no cure should be reiterated.

The complacency that has evolved in some parts of our community should be eradicated with education and with promotion of the safe sex message.

Thanks to Dorion Griffiths (Disability Rep) for this article.

Joel Edwards update

Those remembered our last mag will remember the infamous Joel Edwards issue

The Evangelical Mr Edwards' believes that being LGBT is a lifestyle choice, that same sex relationships are sinful, and that civil partnerships do not deserve to be treated the same as marriage.

Union officers are urged write to the Harriet Harman to point out the anomaly between the EHRC's role as promoter of equality for all groups and the appointment of a commissioner whose public statements have demonstrated that they don't support equality for LGBT's. Unions are encouraged to write to both the Minister for Equality, Harriet Harman QC, MP, at the Government Equalities Office, Ashdown House, 123 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6DE; and Trevor Phillips, Chair, Equality & Human Rights Commission, Arndale House, Arndale Centre, Manchester M4 3EQ.

Thanks to Peter Purton for the reminder article

Equality and Human Rights Commission Specialist Advice Line for Advisors

An experienced advice line is available to help advisors in Trade Unions, Citizens Advice Bureaux and employment rights advisors on all aspects of personal cases including; sexual discrimination/trans/equal pay), age and disability discrimination, race/religion/belief discrimination adviserline@equalityhumanrights.com
09:30 – 12:30 Tues – Thursday
Sexual discrimination and sexual orientation, call 0161 829 8403
Disability discrimination and age discrimination, call 0161 829 8303
Race discrimination or religion and/or belief discrimination, call 0203 1107 0302

New LGB Youth Group in Bath

LGB youth group (aged 11 – 25) are wanted to build a youth group, based in the Bath area. The aim is to socialise with other LGB young people in the area, get involved with a variety of fun activities and useful workshops in a non-judgmental and supportive environment.

The project is supported by the organization EACH (Educational Action Challenging Homophobia) and run by Youth Workers. This youth project will be a new group so they need some interested people to get it started, as there is nothing like this in the area already. It's relaxed and a chance to meet and talk about and plan what we want from the group. For further details please send their Development Worker, Jenny Drew, an e-mail: development@eachaction.org.uk

New website for gay men

Terrance Higgins Trust (THT) have launched a new website for gay men recently diagnosed with HIV. The website is called "what next"-and includes diaries and video clips, personal experiences and offers help and advice.

Go to www.tht.org.uk/whatnext

Thanks to Jeff Grist for providing Eddystone Trust Newsletter, Nov/Dec 2008 (which included the website advert)

London Gay Theatre Club

A new club which organises trips to see west end shows has been set up.

You can get yourself a seat for the show and have the opportunity to mingle and socialise with other gay networks. There are also opportunities for something a little bit special afterwards, namely a post-show soiree in the theatre or guest lists for another special venue afterwards to have a few more drink with new friends may be possible...

The events are available at www.Londongaytheatreclub.co.uk

(Proud received the about information via an email highlighting its services and though our readers would be interested. Proud has organisational involvement and holds no responsibility for the products and services it offers – ED)

Exactly why your vote does count - By Geoff Webb

"The best way to avoid a BNP member being elected to the London Assembly is to make sure that as many people as possible vote for all the other parties" stated the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party and Minister for Women, Harriet Harman. Its not often you will catch me quoting Harriet Harman in such an approving manner but as the Eastern Region Make Your Vote Count Co-ordinator (MYVC) I am part of a national team part of whose remit is to achieve just that end.

It's important to note the context in which those comments were made. Nicholas Eriksen had been a BNP candidate for the Greater London Authority until the following comments were discovered on a blog by him:

"Rape is simply sex. Women enjoy sex, so rape cannot be such a terrible ordeal. To suggest that rape, when conducted without violence, is a serious crime is like suggesting that force-feeding a woman chocolate cake is a heinous offence."

When these comments came to light Mr Eriksen acted "swiftly and honourably" (his words) and withdrew his candidacy. It's a measure of the depths of appalling moral depravity that we are dealing with in the BNP

The parties views on race are well known of course. You can only be a member of the party if you are white and that is clearly reflected in their plans for this country, plans that don't even begin to reflect the infinite and rich variety of this country enjoyed by the rest of us in every aspect of our daily lives. It can be trickier pinning down their views on LGBT issues. The latest manifesto is light on LGBT policy however it is clear that the party opposed the introduction of Civil Partnerships and that material put out by the party, statements by members and activists and material on the party's website, suggest that LGBT people are no more welcome in the BNP's future than members of ethnic minorities.

One member of the party which did *not* feel it incumbent of him to resign "swiftly and honourably" after comments he made following the bombing of the Admiral Duncan was one Nick Griffin. Griffin wrote, "The TV footage of dozens of 'gay' demonstrators flaunting their perversion in front of the world's journalists showed just why so many ordinary people find these creatures so repulsive".

So register to vote. Please register to vote both in the European Elections (online at direct.gov.uk) and, if this affects you, in the County Council Elections. If you feel that you want to give more to this campaign why not volunteer to help out in the MYVC campaign via your branch or equality network? MYVC co-ordinators will be looking for PCS members to assist the campaign by writing to candidates, attending candidates question time, leafleting and perhaps getting involved in social and musical events. They will not be looking just for current activists but for PCS members who currently do not have a role in the union but who can offer time and enthusiasm to a key campaign.

Its not just about who we don't vote for. We will be asking politicians where they stand on a variety of progressive issues relating to; work, welfare taxation and investing in public services in a way which produces benefits both for the employees and which delivers services at an acceptable quality, fairly and equally. Issues, incidentally, on which the BNP has nothing of value to say whatsoever.

(Sources BBC Live News, 2 April 2008, Hope Not Hate Website, 'The Case for Civil and Public Services' Siefert and Ironside 2005)
By Geoff Webb - MYVC Eastern Co-ordinator,
myvceastern@pcs.org.uk

Lesbian, know thyself!

Just for fun, match the 'label' of the Lesbian (letter) with the description (number):

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 feminine lesbian or wears make-up | a drag king |
| 2 lesbian yuppies | b chapstick lesbian |
| 3 a woman dressed as a man | c dykon |
| 4 lesbian into sports | d lipstick lesbian |
| 5 a lesbian icon | e luppies |

Answers on a postcard to...no not really...

Answers: 

LETTERS AND RESPONSES

Religion and Sexuality

I read with interest the question on the subject of God, which Jay had raised in the last Proud mag and would like to offer some commentary on the subject.

The Old and the New Testament were written against a particular cultural background and it was modelled on a heterosexual, environment, which was prevalent then. Males were the key member of the family and this extended into the church as a whole. We need to bear in mind that God chose to begin speak to his people and without taking into consideration the culture at that time, our efforts to understand God, would be thwarted. Some parts of the

Christian Church said that they could never accept women Priests because all the disciples of Jesus were male.

Surprisingly we are able to find traces, of positive, aspects of sexuality within the Old Testament, though we understand that this was limited to platonic love on the part of David and Jonathan, but no less meaningful.

Within the confines of the Old Testament, it demonstrates, the profound love that is possible between people of the same sex. This love which was evident between David and Jonathan did not have any adverse affect on their ability to serve God the fact that they had such strong love

enabled David to be successful, in all of his mission. Indeed, within scripture we learn that God was with David, despite David's love for Jonathan, which we now see as being properly timeless.

It is true to say that the love that existed maybe some 12,000 years ago between David and Jonathan is indeed ageless. From this we may conclude that it is possible to love someone of the same sex and maintain your faith, since such deep and profound love could and can only have come from God.

I am not in a position nor would it be sensible on my part to advocate that all gay persons have a meaningful relationship with

God.
Indeed, I remember some 3-4 years ago, wondering around Westminster Cathedral, with a close gay friend. His concept was far removed from the environment of the Church; to the extent that his only concern when he saw the Altar was that it would make a brilliant turntable stand, in a gay nightclub!

Gays in the Church

Jay spoke of the discrimination and cruelty that many people in our society face. Such evil can also be found within the Church itself.

We are often made aware of those gay couples that have not been accepted in their Church, simply because of their sexuality. An example of which

includes the very public humiliation of the selected Bishop of Reading, the Reverend Doctor Jeffery John who was unable to take up his appointment due to opposition by right wingers in the Church because they would not accept an openly gay Bishop.

Such public and blatant discrimination would never be tolerated within industry today. So, we in the wider areas of society, be it within our immediate places of work, within local or national government and much further a field we will come upon much setbacks, heartaches, cruelty, treachery and hatred. Yet it is sometimes through these

difficulties and indeed from the very bottom of despair, that as individuals we are possibly best able to recognise the reality of God in our lives.

Let it not be said or concluded from these pages, that suffering is the only way by which we may understand God's will and purpose. Looking back, we will remember those moments when we have met with joy, love and happiness. In these moments of profound joy, we may recognise God's company regardless of our sexuality. Therefore whether in sorrow or joy, our Lord may choose any of these to reveal his presence within us.

**Robert Henry
(Proud member,
HMRC)**

What's On Guide

What's on	Where its on	When its on
February		
<p>SPECTRUM – HOME OFFICE LGBT.</p> <p>The month's events include various quizzes, displays including an LGBT History timeline, history of Stonewall, video displays and more. For further info contact Jan Middleton.</p>	<p>3rd and 4th floors</p> <p>Millburngate House</p> <p>Durham</p>	<p>Throughout February</p>
<p>Pride in Our Legacy 2</p> <p>Mix of talk, performance, music and art from a range of LGBT artists who live and work in London. Includes LB (host) from UK Black Pride , Bourgeoise and Maurice, Stav B, David Mills, Russell Harris in Company of One , DJ Qurra (Club Kali and Dum Dum) , Short film by Stuart Ireson</p> <p>Speakers include Angela Eagle MP, Frances O'Grady, TUC, Amnesty International UK</p> <p>Free bar – free food – free admission</p>	<p>Congress House</p> <p>Great Russell Street</p> <p>London WC1B 3LS</p> <p>Places are very limited so email your RSVP ASAP to:</p> <p>sertucevents@tuc.org.uk</p>	<p>19:00 – 22:00</p> <p>Thursday 26th February</p>
<p>SPECTRUM</p> <p>An action packed, informative and fun lunch time event with quizzes, displays and prizes. Lunch provided. For more info contact Sandra Whitehouse.</p>	<p>Chadwick House</p> <p>Solihull</p>	<p>12:00 – 14:00</p> <p>Thursday 26th February</p>
<p>SPECTRUM - A social called Cherish Night. For further info contact Jan Middleton.</p>	<p>Slug and Lettuce</p> <p>Durham</p>	<p>20:00 – 23:00</p> <p>Thursday 26th February</p>

<p>SPECTRUM Breakfast buffet and an artist's exhibition of LGBT history since the 1940's, and guest speakers throughout the day.</p> <p>Lunch provided. For more info contact Stephanie Aitken.</p>	<p>Festival Court 3 200 Brand Street Glasgow</p>	<p>10:00 – 15:00 Friday 27th February</p>
<p>University & College Union LGBT History Month Conference</p> <p>Guest speaker is Allan Horsfall.</p> <p>Histories of LGBT, BME and the impact of HIV over time within the LGBT communities.</p> <p>Free event</p>	<p>Event at Manchester Metropolitan University</p> <p>All Saints Building Manchester M15 6BH</p> <p>Application forms to University and College Union, Equality Unit 27 Britannia Street LONDON, WC1X 9JP Or email pbartlett@ucu.org.uk</p>	<p>10:30 – 16:00 Saturday 28th February</p>
<p>March</p>		
<p>War on Want – star studded comedy gig supporting work fighting global poverty and exploitation</p>	<p>Shepherds Bush Empire London</p> <p>For more details, go to: www.waronwant.org.uk</p>	<p>Thursday 5th March</p>
<p>Sugar & Spice health and wellbeing weekend event.</p> <p>Taster sessions: belly dancing, car maintenance, self defense and song writing with Claire Mooney</p> <p>Workshops with specific LB themes, including: sexual health, nutrition, smoking cessation and issues facing</p>	<p>Saturday March 7 (11.30am - 9pm) Lesbian and Gay Foundation Princess House, 105-107 Princess Street, Manchester, M1 6DD</p> <p>Sunday March 8 (1pm - 5pm) Manchester Town Hall Albert Square,</p>	<p>Various times depending upon event over Saturday 7th March and Sunday 8th March</p>

<p>asylum seekers.</p> <p>A creative craft room...free holistic therapies...films and exhibitions...stalls and a comedy night</p>	<p>Manchester, M60 2LA</p> <p>Vanilla Bar (Doors 7pm, Stage time 7.30pm, £5) 39-41 Richmond Street Manchester M1 3WB</p> <p>For more details, contact Annie Emery on 0161 835 8024 or email: women@lgf.org.uk</p>	
Final agenda and motions for Proud AGM to be in by...	Proud AGM Preparation	Sunday 8 th March
WOMEN'S DAY	Look out for events	Sunday 8 th March
Show - Priscilla Queen of the Desert	Palace Theatre, London	19:30 Tuesday 17 th March
Proud AGM	PCS Headquarters 160 Falcon Road Clapham SW11 2LN	Friday 27 th March
April		
<p>Proud Stage 2</p> <p>LGBT advanced training</p> <p>Members of Proud can find out more about how PCS Proud is involved with the union and how members of Proud can affect change within the union and wider society.</p>	<p>Birmingham</p> <p>See Marcus Ford (Training Officer) or PCS website for more details</p>	22 nd – 24 th April
May		
Register vote to defeat BNP at European Parliament ballot box	www.aboutmyvote.co.uk www.pcs.org.uk/myvc	Voter register deadline 19 th May
June		
The European Parliament election to decide who will govern Europe	<p>UNITED KINGDOM</p> <p>Look out for "Make Your Vote Count" campaigns</p>	Thursday 4 th June