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WE ARE CURRENTLY CLOSED (HOPEFULLY) FOR NOT TOO LONG...

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ALL SOON.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

STAY SAFE.

THE LEGENDS TEAM.

Keep in touch with us online: legendsbrighton.com
OUR COLLECTIVE CHALLENGE

…and how Gscene is responding to support our LGBTQ communities and businesses.

An enormous “hello” and virtual hug from us all at Gscene. Although as events accelerated over the final weeks of March to the predictable and inevitable, the news on Friday 20 March was no less devastating to so many within our communities. At Gscene we want to take this opportunity to share our understanding of our collective difficulties but to also show our unwavering support to you our readers, and also our local businesses and regular advertisers, during this challenging time for us all in Brighton & Hove and across the world.

We now know that our venues will be closed during April and possibly longer, but appreciate what a lifeline these have been for so many of us for so many years, and how they remain such an integral part of who and how we are today. As a result we’ve made some changes to this month’s publication and to those in the immediate months ahead while as a country we meet the challenges of coronavirus/COVID_19.

As the listings for April are now redundant, we’ve decided not to publish these pages this issue. The scene photographs taken in March for all of our usual venues are now included in the Out & About section along with their details and social media contacts. Our local businesses are a vital asset to the whole range of our LGBTQ+ communities and we think it’s vital to support them and ensure continuing awareness with you, their customers.

While some venue adverts with outdated event information had to be withdrawn this issue, other venues have adapted their adverts to include a message to customers with details of any takeaway, online service, etc. Follow your favourite venue’s social media as well as checking Gscene’s website and Facebook page for all their news and up to date information.

For the first time in almost 28 years Gscene will not be published in a physical format. Gscene is delivered to multitudinous pubs, clubs, bars, community centres, libraries, public transport stations and many other venues, which are now closed for the foreseeable future. This was not an easy decision but one we felt vital in order to focus our resources on reaching as broad a readership as possible online.

The online version of the magazine is read by thousands, and will be read by even more thousands this month through our own promotion of the website via Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and links to the magazine on Issuu. If you know people who have never read the online PDF edition of the magazine because they always have the printed copy, please encourage them to access the magazine through one of these channels.

NEW GSCENE FACEBOOK GROUP

We know that many within our communities access the website news stories through the Gscene Facebook page, but we’re also aware that FB algorithms mean that any one post is only seen by a small percentage of those who have ‘liked’ the page, so we’ve created a Gscene LGBTQ+ Communities Group on Facebook. News from the website will appear here, but those who join will also be able to post, to submit videos, vlogs, FB live, create watch parties, comment…

We also have a Zoom subscription which means that we can organise events, or host yours… you just need to join the group and download the free Zoom app.

Let’s use this as an opportunity for our communities to stay connected, keep informed, support one another, and maybe have fun together even when we’re stuck in a room alone. On Facebook please find Gscene LGBTQ+ Communities Group. Join the group, invite FB friends to join and download free Zoom app.

We all wish you the best during these difficult times and assure you that we will continue to be there with and for you to support you and hope that you will do the same for us.

Although the circumstances were quite different, some might say that the LGBTQ communities have been here before. Once again we all need to get through this intact, and work together to rebuild our businesses and communities once we get to the other side. And as many of us in these communities are testament to, there is another side and we will survive.

GSCENE MAGAZINE BECOMES A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

When James Ledward, the founder of and driving force behind Gscene for 28 years, received his devastating diagnosis late last summer his thoughts turned very quickly to the future of the magazine. He was keen that it should continue to grow and flourish as a community resource.

Since his death last October, the remaining members of the small Gscene team, together with our advertisers and contributors, have worked to cover, and try to fill, the James-shaped gaps and to honour his wishes.

To that end we have just heard that we have been successful in converting the limited company to become a Community Interest Company (CIC).

This means that any ‘profit’ must be reinvested into the magazine, or go to a charity – in this case The Brighton Rainbow Fund, which James also created. It also means that the CIC, as a social enterprise, is able to apply for grants, if needed, to support this community resource and allow us to remain at the heart of the LGBTQ+ communities in Brighton & Hove and beyond.

Thank you James.
TRANS PRIDE 2020 CANCELLED

As the city and LGBTQ+ communities reel from the announcements over the last month affecting key community events and milestones in our LGBTQ+ lives it was announced that Trans Pride Brighton 2020 is cancelled.

The Trans Pride Brighton committee said: “It is with great sadness that we must announce that due to the COVID-19 situation the committee has made the decision to cancel Trans Pride Brighton 2020. Members of our trans, non-binary and intersex community are often vulnerable and can have health issues that would put them at more risk from COVID-19 and with this in mind, we must all act as a community to protect every one.

“Even though Trans Pride Brighton is still months away, we feel that making the decision to cancel early will allow people to alter their plans. The whole committee is dedicated to making Trans Pride Brighton 2021 happen and we will use the time to focus on how best to support our community. We appreciate your understanding. Until next year.”

For more info, visit Facebook: TransPrideBrighton/

BRIGHTON FRINGE POSTPONED AND BRIGHTON FESTIVAL CANCELLED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS

Following the announcement by the UK Government urging the general public not to visit pubs, clubs, or theatres and advice from Brighton & Hove City Council, Brighton Fringe has announced that it will be postponing the festival, due to run 1 to 31 May, until September/October 2020. Julian Caddy, Fringe CEO, said: “On behalf of the thousands of people who have invested so much in putting on Brighton Fringe, I’m devastated to say that we’re unable to proceed in May due to the Coronavirus outbreak. I would like to thank you for all the work that you have done and also to thank all our funders, partners, sponsors, patrons, friends and the ticket buying public for your ongoing support, trust and patience at this difficult time.”

Brighton Festival, which was due to take place from 2 to 24 May 2020 and is the largest annual, curated multi-arts festival in England, has been cancelled for the first time in its 53-year history. Due to the scale of the festival and the inclusion of many international artists and touring companies, rescheduling the festival was not feasible. Andrew Comben, chief executive of Brighton Festival, said: “The Festival team is devastated that this incredible programme, led by guest director Lemn Sissay, won’t happen this year and that audiences won’t experience the diversity of artists coming from across the world to our city. Lemn’s vision was to build an ‘Imagine Nation’ at Brighton Festival. It seems to us that we need imagination, creativity and the strength of our community now more than ever. We are exploring what might be the most creative contribution the Festival and its artists can make at this time and we will share more on this when we can.”

 Brighton Festival will be separately contacting ticket holders regarding their bookings with details for processing over the coming weeks.

For more info, visit www.brightonfringe.org and www.brightonfestival.org

BRIGHTON BEAR WEEKEND SUSPENDS BEAR WEEKEND

Brighton Bear Weekend (BBW) sent out a message to advertisers, supporters and attendees to express their disappointment at having to cancel their upcoming events: “We regret to announce that BBW 2020 scheduled to commence on June 18 will NOT now take place as a result of restrictions being put in place to mitigate the epidemic. In common with many other public events, and in the light of the Prime Minister’s statement in March regarding social-distancing and self-isolation, we don’t consider it feasible or sensible to continue with the planned weekend. We’re hugely disappointed at this outcome, especially as it was to be our 10th anniversary weekend, but we have to play our part in protecting our teams and our communities from this virus. The picture is changing daily, and we will continue to review the situation to determine whether we might be able to run the weekend later in the year or instead run various elements from the itinerary over several dates going forward. Our thoughts are with everyone who is or becomes ill as a result of this epidemic and looking forward to seeing everyone happy and healthy when we can reconvene.”

Graham Munday, chair of BBW, added: “It’s hard and feels very weird not just for me and our team, but for all those that support us over the weekend and throughout the year. It’s the right decision, and we see that with other events being cancelled. We will be back, and we will still throw the best bear parties in town.”

Over recent years, BBW has gone from strength to strength, and is now widely recognised as one of the biggest and best bear weekends in the UK, attracting men not just from across Europe, but from all around the world. This is another great loss to the city’s LGBTQ+ scene and fundraising groups this year.

Check www.brightonbearweekend.com or Facebook BrightonBearWeekend/ to stay informed of developments.

MODELS WANTED

We aim to provide the world with images that represent the LGBTQ+ community in a more authentic way. We use real people who identify as queer to create liberating stock photos and custom images for brands and businesses.

If you fancy modelling for us just email info@libertipix.com

WWW.LIBERTIPIX.COM

LEADING LGBTQ+ IMAGES
MINDOUT AND CORONAVIRUS MESSAGE FOR THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY

MindOut Advocacy and Online Support services are open for anyone to get in touch to talk about any aspect of mental health. MindOut has suspended all face-to-face meetings and their peer mentoring, group work and counselling services will not be operating for the time being, in order to comply with advice about how to stop the spread of the virus. MindOut will continue to be there for the many people who are feeling anxious and isolated and are trying to manage huge uncertainty, and although they can’t meet anyone face-to-face for a while, they are committed to providing phone support, advocacy support and online meetings.

If you would like to speak to a MindOut member of staff, email: info@mindout.org.uk or call 01273 234839. MindOut online support service will be open every day, to check opening times, visit: www.mindout.org.uk

These links have some helpful advice and tips:
www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak
www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing
www.samaritans.org/

CLARE PROJECT’S TEMPORARY LINE FOR INFO, UPDATES AND CONTACT

The Clare Project have issued contact details for a temporary line specifically opened with the aim of combating social isolation and community anxieties during the virus outbreak, in addition to providing informal advice and signposting. The Clare Project will continue to offer support by phone and online, but all face-to-face support and events have been temporarily suspended. The TNBI Support Line is open to all trans, non-binary, intersex, and/or gender-questioning/exploring adults based in East Sussex and is anonymous and confidential.

The TNBI Support Line is open Mon, Tues & Fri 1-4pm and Thur 5.30-7.30pm. Call 07464 229395 during opening times or email tcpbrighton@gmail.com. If closed - text, Whatsapp or leave a voicemail for a call back.

For more info, visit: clareproject.org.uk

SWITCHBOARD SERVICES UPDATE

Switchboard, Brighton’s LGBTQ+ support service, issued the following statement about their services for the next few weeks: “In the interests of protecting you, our staff, and volunteers, Switchboard is following the Government advice and cancelling all group meetings and events and supporting our staff to work from home. We don’t want to leave anyone isolated and without support so we’re working to find ways we can continue to offer services using phones and online technology. We’ll be extending our helpline and webchat provision and investigating how we can change the technology we use in order to enable staff and volunteers to do this from home. Please bear with us whilst we get this in place, we’ll let you know as soon as we’re in a position to reinstate and increase this service.

“In the meantime, all of our staff are working from home and available to support you. The staff members who run your usual groups will be in touch and we will keep you up to date on how to contact them and what we can offer as we plan the way forward. Our priority is to ensure that we’re here for everyone who needs us, that we work in ways that ensure you can remain safe, and that our volunteers and staff can also remain safe. Please get in touch with a member of our staff via email if you would like someone to call you – all of their contact details on our website.”

For more info, visit: www.switchboard.org.uk

COVID-19 and HIV

“Look after yourselves and look out for each other. Our best defence against the virus is now minimising social contact, regular hand washing, self-isolating if necessary, and taking care of those most vulnerable and isolated.”

MORE INFO

For info on the virus and answers to FAQs from Dr Michael Brady, visit: www.tth.org.uk

To read his full blog, visit: www.tth.org.uk/news/coronavirus-covid-19
Following government guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19, Lunch Positive, which runs the weekly HIV Friday Lunch Club, monthly 50+ supper group, and food and friendship groups, has temporarily paused regular social gatherings. The charity will resume these regular social and peer-support activities as soon as government advice suggests that such gatherings are again appropriate.

Gary Pargeter, service manager, said: “Lunch Positive is delivered by a team of over 30 amazing volunteers and people have been fast to adapt to need and changing circumstances. The team will continue to provide social and nutritional support in other ways until such time as regular services resume and will undertake two new pieces of work called Lunch Positive In-touch and Lunch Positive Outreach.

“Lunch Positive plays an important role in helping people make connections, socialise, and share peer-support. Over the years, hundreds of friendships have been formed at the lunch club. A new range of resources are being put into place to help people with HIV keep in touch with each other, with the charity, and to continue to be able to share and receive support. These include a regular phone-in, a private Lunch Club members’ Facebook group, an online live support portal, and a regular members’ information mail-out. These will be rolled out over several weeks. People will need to sign up to these on the Lunch Positive website, and the volunteer team will be active in providing support.”

Lunch Positive will still regularly prepare food and outreach to people. It will doorstep deliver supplementary food items to members who are unable to shop, experience financial difficulty, and are staying at home or self isolating because of risk or COVID-19. For people with HIV who are short on food, not confined to their homes and who aren’t in the vulnerable group category, ready prepared and packaged food items will be regularly available for drop-in collection at Dorset Gardens Methodist Church. This is similar to a quick visit to the shop, and following guidelines around social distancing. These outreach approaches will be available for as long as government advice suggests that this type of brief and limited contact is possible. There will also be continued access to the Lunch Positive emergency food pantry for people in financial crisis, additional advice and signposting to city food support. Information on this new outreach food support, including how to sign up, is on the website www.lunchpositive.org, or by calling 07846 464384.

Gary continued: “Naturally we’re saddened to need to temporarily pause our social gatherings. We know that members and volunteers put so much in and take so much from our time together. The support that is shared and the kindness people show whilst together is inspirational. We understand that people may feel a loss whilst we are unable to provide these usual gatherings and want to reassure people that we’re ready and poised to resume ‘usual service’ as very soon as government advice suggests. People with HIV are still welcome to join us at any time, and should visit the website to find out more.

“We also know the time ahead may feel uncertain, isolating and challenging for many people with HIV. We remain active and are still here to support and help. In addition to the practical support, we especially hope that people will keep in touch with each other and with us, and will use the new facilities that are explained on our website and social media to do this. Our team of volunteers have been totally amazing, adapting and enthusiastic about providing these new types of support. So to all our members and people with HIV looking to connect or for support, please visit our website and get in touch with us. We’re here for community, togetherness and support at this important time, and beyond.”

For more info, visit www.lunchpositive.org lunchclubfriends/ email info@lunchpositive.org or call 07846 464384
BRIGHTON PRIDE ISSUE SHORT UPDATE ABOUT PRIDE 2020

Brighton Pride issue a short update about Pride 2020 on March 20, about their ongoing and developing plans for this year’s Brighton & Hove Pride event. They posted this brief update on their Facebook page: “With the current situation regarding COVID-19 changing at a rapid pace, we are currently working on multiple contingency plans for the delivery of a safe and successful event. With August being several months away, we are following government advice and will continue to review and implement plans accordingly.

“We would like to take this opportunity to thank and support the incredibly hard-working NHS and emergency service staff who are always a big and important part of Pride. Brighton & Hove Pride is an essential charity fundraising event for our city and whilst we don’t have a crystal ball, we sincerely hope the summer brings brighter news so that we can all celebrate our wonderful community.

“Best wishes, and stay safe, The Pride team”

For up to date info keep checking: www.brighton-pride.org and @brightonpride/

WHILE BRIGHTON & HOVE LIBRARIES ARE CLOSED YOU CAN USE THEIR ONLINE SERVICES

While all Brighten & Hove libraries have had to close due to the ongoing Coronavirus situation, they do recommend using their online services and apps such as BorrowBox and RBdigital where you can find eBooks, audiobooks, magazines, newspapers and comics, all free to use and with no overdue charges. They also have a huge range of ideas of how to access a range of content and how to use the library from home.

If you’re concerned about your current library book or DVD loan becoming overdue, don’t worry as Brighton & Hove libraries say: “Sorry everyone, but due to the COVID19 situation all Brighton & Hove libraries are closed until further notice. All loans (books, DVDs, etc.) are being extended to June 30, 2020. No new reservations are being taken for the foreseeable future, as we cannot guarantee that we will be able to fulfill them (due to the extended loans).”

USEFUL LINKS

To read newspapers and magazines, visit: www.pressreader.com/catalog
For comics, magazines or audio books, visit: http://brighton.rbdigitalglobal.com
To renew loans, visit: http://brighton-hove.spydus.co.uk
For up to date Brighton & Hove libraries info, follow: @BHLibraries
For more info about Brighton & Hove libraries, visit: http://new.brighton-hove.gov.uk/libraries-leisure-and-arts/libraries

BANANARAMA & TODRICK HALL ADDED TO MAIN STAGE LINE-UP FOR FABULOSO PRIDE IN THE PARK

Brighton & Hove Pride has announced that Bananarama are appearing on the main stage with headliner Maria Carey on Saturday, August 1, and Todrick Hall on the main stage with headliners the Pussycat Dolls on Sunday, August 2 at FABULOSO Pride In The Park!

Pop royalty Bananarama have had a hit-packed career with success in both pop and dance charts which saw them listed in the Guinness World Records for achieving the world’s highest number of chart entries by an all-female group. Between 1982 and 2009, they had 38 singles reach the Top 50 of the UK singles chart and memorable Top 10 hits including I Want You Back, Robert De Niro’s Waiting, Cruel Summer, Really Saying Something, I Heard A Rumour, Venus and Love In The First Degree. Their 2019 album In Stereo went Top 30 in the UK.

American singer-songwriter, actor, director, choreographer and YouTuber Todrick Hall is currently a dance captain on the BBC’s The Greatest Dance and was a semi-finalist on the ninth season of TV’s American Idol. He is resident choreographer and guest judge on RuPaul’s Drag Race USA and has released multiple viral videos including original songs. Todrick starred as Lola in Kinky Boots on Broadway, as Billy Flynn in Chicago on Broadway and in the West End as well as The Color Purple, Memphis, and Waitress on Broadway. In 2019 Todrick won Video for Good VMA as co-executive producer on Taylor Swift’s LGBTQ+ anthem You Need to Calm Down and has choreographed flash mobs for Beyoncé.

2020 is the 30th anniversary of Brighton & Hove Pride culminating in a weekend of campaigning, celebrating and fundraising for LGBTQ+ and community projects in Brighton & Hove. Pride is a celebration of how far we have come but it’s also an ongoing campaign for those marginalised communities at home and abroad who still suffer persecution on a daily basis. Pride’s fundraising events will ensure that vital funds are raised for local LGBTQ+ and community projects.

For up to date information keep checking: www.brighton-pride.org

SATURDAY DANCE TENT LINE-UPS ANNOUNCED FOR PRIDE IN THE PARK

The Men’s Dance Tent has London’s infamous juggernaut BRÜT back for it’s fifth year. BRÜT hosts parties all over Europe, from Madrid and Barcelona to Milan and Rome. The line-up includes: Paul Heron, Ross Jones, Luke Casey Brown (LCB), Amyl, DJ Liam and Gina X

The Pride Dance Big Top is a force to be reckoned with in global nightlife culture, with Glitterbox’s inclusive, uplifting party atmosphere. The line-up includes: Joey Negro, Artwork, Simon Dunmore, Melvo Baptiste, Fat Tony, Hifl Sean and Seamus Haji.

For tickets to all Pride events, visit: www.pride-tickets.org

The Girls’ Dance Tent hosts the hottest female DJ talent in the UK mixing underground deep house and techno with classic hands in the air dance anthems. The line-up includes: Jess Bays, Sami Kuba, Summer Ghemati, Emma Love, JoJo and Wildblood & Queenie.

This year Pride in the Park will offer even more diverse LGBTQ+ artists, DJs and entertainment on Saturday, August 1.

The Pride Dance Tent is a force to be reckoned with in global nightlife culture, with Glitterbox’s inclusive, uplifting party atmosphere. The line-up includes: Joey Negro, Artwork, Simon Dunmore, Melvo Baptiste, Fat Tony, Hifl Sean and Seamus Haji.

For tickets to all Pride events, visit: www.pride-tickets.org
HAIR REPLACEMENT BY OLLIES THE BARBERS

If you’re suffering from hair loss, Ollies the Barbers in Hailsham, a drive of only 30 minutes or so from Brighton, offers the expertise, care and attention to improve your self-esteem with the NEU Hair 4 Men Hair Replacement Systems. Ian Meacher, who has been a barber for more than 25 years, tells Gscene how it works and the great results you can expect.

At Ollies, we have a team of three barbers - me, Connor Neal and Donna Smith. NEU Hair 4 Men is an innovative, non-surgical hair replacement system made with 100% human hair and guaranteed to give you a younger and fresher look.

At Ollies, we’re here to help and look after you through the entire process. We offer a FREE consultation, where my fully trained wife Liz Hibbard will discuss your requirements, your lifestyle, as this will determine the type of base you will need, the process and the costs involved. If you want to proceed, we will colour match your hair and do a glue patch test.

After your consultation we’ll see you again in a week’s time when the transformation begins... We’ll cut your hair into the style you want - a picture may help - and then we explain how to look after your hair system and give you a booklet with top tips and more info.

Every four weeks you’ll need maintenance; the first is completely FREE. Here we remove your hair system, wash and clean it and exfoliate your scalp and cleanse, clipper the hair that has grown and reapply your system and recut. If you look after your hair system, it can last up to six months.

NEU Hair 4 Men normally costs £795 but we are offering it for just £550

For more info, visit www.neuhair4men.co.uk

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**LIONESSES PREPARE TO ROAR**

Already football fans are looking forward to the UEFA Women’s EURO tournament, which will kick off in London on July 7, 2021. England’s Lionesses will soon be joining the other 15 nations, playing 31 matches at venues countrywide, including three at the Brighton & Hove Community Stadium. The first match will be held here on July 12, 2021, with others on July 16 and 21, giving fans an opportunity to see some of the world’s greatest players in action.

Following the hugely successful Women’s World Cup last year, it’s anticipated that hundreds of thousands of fans will attend this tournament, and millions more will be glued to their screens worldwide. Brighton & Hove’s stadium was chosen following a commitment to women’s and girls’ football is increasing all the time, and we are very much looking forward to welcoming some of the continent's finest teams to our stadium.”

Ken Benham, Sussex County FA chief executive, said: “With the countdown underway, excitement builds and we’re just as excited at the Sussex County FA. This is a brilliant opportunity for us to showcase what passionate football people we have in this country. We hope everyone will be out in force to welcome the competition and enjoy having the world’s finest playing on our doorstep.”

Councillor Alan Robins, chair of the council’s tourism, development & culture committee, said: “It’s exciting to have begun the countdown to what will undoubtedly be one of the city’s greatest ever sporting events. We’re proud to be hosting this prestigious tournament and look forward to the once in a lifetime opportunities it will bring for our residents and visitors.”

As a major hosting venue, Brighton & Hove already has an impressive array of sporting events under its belt, including the Rugby World Cup in 2015, stage seven of the Tour of Britain bike race in 2014 and, of course, the annual Brighton Marathon, which is the UK’s largest marathon outside London.

The 2021 UEFA Women’s final will be staged at Wembley Stadium on August 1, England last staged this event in 2005. As one of only eight host cities, Brighton & Hove has lined up volunteering opportunities and a slew of fan events in the run-up to and during the tournament. As well as this there is a legacy programme, to improve access and participation for girls in the sport when the final whistle blows.

Ticket registration and applications to be part of UEFA Women’s EURO 2021 volunteer programme is now open. For more information on tickets and volunteering, visit: www.uefa.com/womenseuro

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**WHITEHAWK ULTRAS**

Stephen Wrench on being an unlikely fan of an unlikely team:

“I’ve never been a full-blooded football fan before. Being gay and watching football didn’t seem compatible. Then I went to my first match at Whitehawk’s home ground, tucked away just beyond East Brighton Park, nestling under the Downs. By the time the Ultras broke into their ritualistic “Homophobia we say no, sexism we say no, racism we say no”, just after a version of Depeche Mode’s “Just Can’t Get Enough”, I was hooked. That was four seasons ago. I’ve been to just about every home match since, and increasingly to away matches too. These have the added bonus of a kit designed by artist David Shrigley featuring the rainbow flag.

It’s been an invigorating tonic in difficult times. I’m long-term HIV positive and a new complication a few years ago sent my mental health into freefall. I became increasingly isolated. And yet I never missed a Whitehawk match. Somehow in that liberated zone, my anxious brain feels able to take a break. The rush of a goal going in beats any anti-depressant. The match doesn’t need to go well for it to be a vintage afternoon. Whitehawk have been relegated twice in two seasons. “It’s just like watching Whitehawk,” sing the Ultras when things are - sometimes inevitably - going badly. But the most important song has the simplest chors. “We say football’s for all/football’s for all/We’re Whitehawk FC/where football’s for all.” It really is. Come and join us. You might just become hooked too.

Whitehawk FC play at The Terrapura Ground, Brighton BN2 5TS. Entrance is £10/£5 concessions. There’s free transport to the remaining matches this season. Register at https://whitehawkfc.ktckts.com/brand/travel

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**MORE INFO**

- For Whitehawk FC, visit: whitehawkfc.com
- For Whitehawk Ultras, visit: www.whitehawkultras.co.uk
- whitehawkultras
- hawksultras

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This isn’t football,” shouted one fan at my unpleased match at Whitehawk FC, “it’s conceptual art.” He wasn’t wrong. If you imagine football to be super-macho, super-homophobic and frankly a bit nasty, think again. Whitehawk FC, Brighton’s alternative football team that’s currently flying high in all the glamour of the Isthmian League South East Division, is none of these. Here’s what Whitehawk is: anti-homophobic, anti-sexist and anti-racist. A little eccentric. A lot of fun. There’s none of the multi-million-pound trappings of the Premier League here, no Ferraris parked in a gated enclosure, no pampered stars with their own entourage. Players here have part-time jobs. The current goalkeeper, James Broadbent, is a teacher in real life.

There are also the Ultras, the hard-core fans with the softest of hearts and the sharpest of wits. “Mister Broadbent,” they sing, “in a class of his own.” To stand among them is to be part of that conceptual art performance. Swearing isn’t permitted. Rainbow hats, scarves and banners are everywhere. Wit and laughter and improvisation are very much encouraged. Drums? Of course. Kazoos? Naturally. Bugle and air raid siren? Of course. A lobster? If you’re very lucky. Fans sing throughout the match. Ah, the match. This is non-league football, where fans move behind the opponent’s goal for each half, the better to cheer as a goal goes in and jeer good-naturedly at the visiting goalkeeper. Unsure of the rules? Don’t know the words to the songs? Trust me, you’ll learn.

I’ve never been a full-blooded football fan before. Being gay and watching football didn’t seem compatible. Then I went to my first match at Whitehawk’s home ground, tucked away just beyond East Brighton Park, nestling under the Downs. By the time the Ultras broke into their ritualistic “Homophobia we say no, sexism we say no, racism we say no”, just after a version of Depeche Mode’s “Just Can’t Get Enough”, I was hooked. That was four seasons ago. I’ve been to just about every home match since, and increasingly to away matches too. These have the added bonus of a kit designed by artist David Shrigley featuring the rainbow flag.

It’s been an invigorating tonic in difficult times. I’m long-term HIV positive and a new complication a few years ago sent my mental health into freefall. I became increasingly isolated. And yet I never missed a Whitehawk match. Somehow in that liberated zone, my anxious brain feels able to take a break. The rush of a goal going in beats any anti-depressant. The match doesn’t need to go well for it to be a vintage afternoon. Whitehawk have been relegated twice in two seasons. “It’s just like watching Whitehawk,” sing the Ultras when things are - sometimes inevitably - going badly. But the most important song has the simplest chors. “We say football’s for all/football’s for all/We’re Whitehawk FC/where football’s for all.” It really is. Come and join us. You might just become hooked too.

Whitehawk FC play at The Terrapura Ground, Brighton BN2 5TS. Entrance is £10/£5 concessions. There’s free transport to the remaining matches this season. Register at https://whitehawkfc.ktckts.com/brand/travel
Welcome to Whitehawk FC, Brighton’s alternative football club, a place where diversity and inclusion are as important as what happens on the pitch. It’s all there on the steps in the main stand:

“LOVE. PEACE. NO RACISM. NO VIOLENCE. NO HOMOPHOBIA”

Join us to experience football as you’ve never known it before.

The ironically named Whitehawk Ultras are the club’s core fan base. Their chants say it all: “We say football is for all”, and “Homophobia We Say No, Sexism We Say No, Racism We Say No”.

This is football as party. Anyone can sing along on the terraces. The music is on drums, kazoos, bells, air raid sirens. At away matches, the team wear a strip featuring the rainbow flag. The Ultras marched at Brighton Pride last year, showing their support for diversity.

COME AND SUPPORT US AT PRIDE AGAIN THIS YEAR!

Whitehawk FC has a unique and quirky atmosphere. We’d be delighted to welcome you!

To register to claim free travel pass visit www.whitehawkfc.com and click on ‘tickets’

The free travel pass is not a match ticket. Match tickets are £10/£5 Concessions: 10 & under FREE

Fri April 10 v Sevenoaks Town k/o 3pm
Sat April 18 v Ashford United k/o 3pm

The Big Lemon Bus leaves from FALMER STATION at 1.45pm for afternoon matches picking up at BRIGHTON UNIVERSITY, LEWES ROAD (+5 mins), BOTTOM OF ELM GROVE (+10 mins) and THE OLD STEINE STOP S (+15 mins). For return, the bus will leave WHITEHAWK FC at 17.30. Times and dates correct at the time of printing. Please check with the Whitehawk F.C. website for all fixtures nearer the time.

Sponsored by Spirit of the Rainbow - supporting diversity and inclusivity
www.spiritoftherainbow.org
The Department of Health & Social Care has announced £16 million will be made available to local authorities in England for the routine commissioning of PrEP, the HIV prevention drug, in 2020.

This announcement also underlines the urgency for the government to release details for local authority public health budget for the delivery of vital sexual health services from April. These sexual health services will be the bedrock for fair and equitable access to PrEP.

The challenges ahead, Ian added: “This isn’t the end of what’s already been a very bumpy road and we will continue to strongly hold the government to account on its promises and timetable to ensure consistency of access for PrEP users. That’s because there must be a seamless transition from the trial and no gap in PrEP provision for those who are accessing it.

“There is also a lot of work to do to ensure PrEP isn’t just seen as something for gay and bisexual men and that its clear benefits reach other groups affected by HIV, including women, trans people and BAME communities. As the country’s leading HIV and sexual health charity, we’re fully committed to playing our role to ensure no-one is left behind when it comes to PrEP because we’re not making real progress if it’s not felt by everyone.”

Deborah Gold, chief executive of NAT (National AIDS Trust), said: “We’re delighted PrEP will finally be freely available to all those who need it in England, with no cap on spaces. This is a milestone moment in a five-year battle National AIDS Trust, along with other organisations and countless activists, has undertaken. This included our 2016 court action against NHS England for failing to consider PrEP and HIV prevention as part of their obligations.

“It’s been clear for a long time that the trial could not meet demand for PrEP, with spaces at some clinics filling up fast. Routine commissioning is needed urgently to increase access and provide much needed certainty to those on the trial.

“While we’re relieved at this announcement, making the medication available is not the end goal – it’s just one part of the struggle. The trial has successfully engaged with gay and bisexual men. However, very few other groups at risk – including women and non-binary people – are accessing places. We risk embedding inequalities from the outset if we fail to grasp this. We urgently need to see investment in engagement and community-based services to ensure no one is left behind.”

It has been confirmed that this money will be on top of the local authority public health grant, through which sexual health services are funded. Local authorities are still awaiting details of their public health allocations for the coming financial year.

Gold added: “With not long to go before the new financial year and in the context of enormous press on our health and social care system right now, it’s extremely difficult for councils to plan their sexual health services.

“We’re very concerned this access will be PrEP being patchy, with some communities struggling to get it at first. Those clinics already involved in the PrEP IMPACT Trial will be more prepared than others to deliver a comprehensive PrEP programme. We will be working with colleagues across the system to support effective planning to reduce access inequality.

“This announcement only covers a one-year period (2020-21) and work must begin immediately to make sure we don’t face further uncertainty in a year’s time. We cannot rest on our laurels, there’s a long way to go until we have a sustainable funding solution that not only covers the cost of PrEP but ensures it reaches every single person who needs it.”

MORE INFO

1 For Terrence Higgins Trust, visit: www.nat.org.uk
2 For PrEP visit: www.iwantprepnow.co.uk
3 For National AIDS Trust, visit: www.nat.org.uk
Real Men. Real Community.

VISIT WWW.SQUIRT.ORG AND CHECK OUT OUR NEW FEATURES:

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... and more!
LONDON HIV/AIDS HOSPITAL THREATENED WITH CLOSURE

The Mildmay, London's only dedicated HIV hospital, faces closure with critics of the decision stating that NHS England is misunderstanding the ongoing needs of people living with HIV.

Steve Wardlaw, prominent LGBTQ+ activist and chairman of Emerald Life, an insurance broker which sources policies for people living with previously uninsurable conditions such as HIV, said: “We should stop referring to the famous visit made by Princess Diana, as it makes the Mildmay sound like a museum relic. It shouldn't be saved because of its historic value, but because it still provides much-needed services for those living with HIV who do develop complications.”

Over the past 30 years, The Mildmay has made great strides in reducing mortality and new infection rates for people living with HIV, particularly within the gay and bisexual male community. The HIV-focused facility was a core part of service provision at the height of the Aids crisis but, as the hospital points out, despite huge improvements in HIV treatment and survival, the needs for HIV services have not gone away. They have simply evolved and in a way are more complex than they were when HIV infection usually meant premature death. Senior NHS doctors say that this type treatment will be required for many years to come.

The Mildmay, which is a charity providing NHS services and not an NHS Trust, says: “MPs and government ministers are considering whether Mildmay’s services can be commissioned directly by NHS England like other specialist services already are, but time is running out fast.” If the facility, which costs around £5 million a year to run, does run out of money, it will have to close.

The hospital adds: “Even though Mildmay costs less per patient than acute NHS hospitals, and our highly-skilled doctors, nurses and therapists are experts in specialist HIV care, desperately sick patients are not being transferred from London’s main NHS hospitals and are blocking beds that are urgently needed for other patients.”

Doctors, patients, MPs and campaigners are calling on the government to grant Mildmay enough funding for at least another year, while new sources of income can be found.

Wardlaw is concerned that, among the headline-grabbing investment statements, closures such as this are unnoticed budget cuts. “The Mildmay provides very specialised neurological services for people living with HIV, and it seems that nowhere in these closure plans is an alternative being discussed. If that is the case, we aren’t losing a treasured memento, we are losing a vital service for some of the most marginalised in society. There is a serious risk that a populist government may take this opportunity to cut services that are seen as niche, as a sleight of hand move.”

In late 2016, The Sussex Beacon faced imminent closure in similar circumstances. In Brighton & Hove there was a local outcry, with thousands signing an online petition and its plight discussed in parliament thanks to all three local MPs. Local businesses and other HIV charities, including Terrence Higgins Trust (THT), stepped in with support and by the end of the following month the Beacon’s finances were once again secured.

The Department of Health has established the HIV Commission, together with THT and the National AIDS Trust, to eliminate new HIV infections by 2030. It remains to be seen if the work taking place at The Mildmay will be part of that journey.

Supporters are invited to sign the petition on the hospital’s website: https://mildmay.org

THT OFFERS FREE ONE-DAY HIV AWARENESS TRAINING COURSES

This training will cover: HIV Facts & Figures
- HIV Awareness (transmission, treatment, myths)
- Understanding the implications of life with HIV (stigma, discrimination, treatment, side effects)
- How best to provide quality of care to people living with HIV
- Case studies of people living with HIV

If you are unable to attend this month’s course, the other dates are: Wednesday, June 17, Tuesday, July 14, or Wednesday, August 19.

The courses fill up fast, so sign up ASAP by leaving a message for Alice Booth specifying the date and time suitable by calling 01273 764200 or emailing alice.booth@tht.org.uk

Free one-day HIV Awareness training courses at THT, 61 Ship Street, Brighton, BN1 1AE on Monday, April 27 (other dates available) from 10am. Free tea & coffee provided.

For more info, visit: www.tht.org.uk

WORLD’S END RAISES £203.03 FOR ALLSORTS YOUTH PROJECT

World’s End, Brighton held an International Women’s Day fundraiser for Allsorts Youth Project last month, raising £203.03 in the process. Hosted by the fabulous Dee Dee, the event was a chance to celebrate community spirit and see some incredible local talent, from poets to singers, including phenomenal acts from the young people at Allsorts.

Allsorts Youth Project said: “A huge well done to our young people who got involved. We had a fab time and all of the performers were inspiring.”

Allsorts Youth Project listens to, supports and connects children & young people under 26 who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or unsure (LGBTU) of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

For more info, visit: www.allsortsyoung.org.uk
More than 200 bowlers representing 26 LGBTQ+ organisations gathered in the Bowlplex at the Marina for the 15th annual Bowling Extravaganza organised by the Brighton LGBTQ+ Sports Society (BLAGSS). To see the venue exclusively used by local LGBTQ+ organisations competing for the trophy was a fantastic sight, said organisers – an ideal time to meet up with old friends and make some new ones.

The event allowed regular bowlers and those who play once a year to come together for a night of fun and team spirit. This year’s winners were Outdoor Lads, followed by Bear-Patrol, and Gay Men’s Chorus in third place. BLAGSS Golf, BLAGSS Bowling/Running and Peer Action occupied 4th, 5th and 6th places.

At this year’s event BLAGSS raised £750 for Lunch Positive as a result of generous contributions from a raffle on the night, with prizes presented from participating teams.

John Moore, BLAGSS chair, said: “This is a fantastic event that brings the local community together. It was not just about taking part as competition was fierce, with Outdoor Lads playing well to defend the title they won last year. We are delighted to support Lunch Positive, which provides valuable services for local people.”

Gary Pargeter, Lunch Positive service manager, said: “Thank you so much to everyone at BLAGSS for staging this wonderful event and for the brilliant funds raised for Lunch Positive. Lunch Positive is a small charity that reaches widely and involves many people with HIV. We help in many ways. This fundraising will directly support our emergency food bank and community food provision for people with HIV.

“This will especially help the development of additional food provision for people with HIV who are insecurely housed, street-homeless, and people experiencing both financial and housing difficulties. These funds raised will have a direct impact on the level of support we provide and the people we reach. We are deeply grateful.”

Next year’s BLAGSS Bowling Extravaganza will take place on Wednesday, February 24, 2021.

BLAGSS bowls every two weeks at the Marina. Come along and join – your first session is free. For more information, visit: www.blagss.org
On Conversion Therapy introduced in Canada

Conversion therapy practices are already illegal in a number of provinces and cities around Canada, including Ontario, Manitoba, Vancouver, Calgary, and Edmonton. The Act to amend the Criminal Code (conversion therapy) goes a step beyond regional bans and proposes nationwide criminalisation of the practices, naming specifically the prohibition of causing minors to undergo conversion therapy at home or abroad, as well as criminalising advertising of and profiting from conversion therapy. If passed, Canada will join Malta, Ecuador, Brazil, and Taiwan, becoming only the fifth country in the world to ban conversion therapy at a national level.

In August 2019, OutRight Action International released the groundbreaking report ‘Harmful Treatment: The Global Reach of So-Called Conversion Therapy,’ showing that, while conversion therapy practices vary across religious, cultural, or traditional contexts and range in their forms of psychological and physical violence, they are prevalent in countries across the globe. They have been condemned by all major psychological, psychiatric, and medical associations, including the World Psychiatric Association and the Canadian Psychological Association, and are recognised to cause deep, lasting trauma on those who are forced, or choose, to undergo them.

Jessica Stern, Executive Director of OutRight Action International, comments: “So-called ‘conversion therapy’ efforts hinge on the belief that cis-gender heterosexuality is the norm, and transgender identities and/or same-sex attraction not only fall outside the norm, but have to be changed, if need be by brutal, inhuman force. By introducing a bill which foresees a nationwide ban, the government of Canada has sent a powerful message – that LGBTQ+ people are not in need of change or cure. I commend the ministers in question for taking this important step, and urge authorities to bolster this effort with measures designed to promote understanding and inclusion of LGBTQ+ people, thus tackling the root causes of these harmful, inhuman practices.”

International attention on so-called conversion therapy has grown in recent months and years. The UN’s Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity is working on a report on the topic due to be issued in June 2020. A nationwide ban is pending in Germany; bans have also been considered in the UK, Ireland, Australia, Chile and elsewhere.

A West End theatre production was left in turmoil when an actress pulled out of a play over its failure to cast a transgender actor in the main role. Kate O’Donnell withdrew from the new stage musical adaptation of Patrick McCabe’s novel ‘Breakfast on Pluto’ after an Irish actor, Fra Fee, was selected to play the leading role of Patrick/Pussy Braden.

O’Donnell, who is herself transgender, was cast as Patrick/Pussy Braden’s mother in the production, due to be staged at the Donmar Warehouse in London and to open in October.

While producers insisted they had tried to find a transgender performer for the role, O’Donnell complained they hadn’t made enough effort and the casting decision prompted outcry on social media, with many calling for the production to be cancelled if a trans performer could not be found.

O’Donnell said to the BBC: “I could not be in a show where a trans woman is once again seen as a man in a dress as this perpetuates the idea that this is what a trans woman is.”

Switzerland is on its way to making discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and sexual identity illegal. A vote on the issue resulted in 56.1% in favour to 36.9% against and looks set to bring Swiss law more in line with that of other European countries. Discrimination because of race or religion is already illegal in the country and this latest vote is seen as a sign that public opinion is more weighted in favour of anti-discrimination than analysts had thought.

Pink Cross Switzerland was quoted by the BBC as saying: “The result proves a strong sign of acceptance for lesbians, gays and bisexuals. After the clear yes, the LGBTQ+ community will use this momentum to achieve the consistent implementation of the penal code and to enforce marriage equality.”

A bill to legalise same-sex marriage is currently on its way through parliament.

The Federation of Gay Games has received a record number of expressions of interest from cities around the globe to be the host of the Gay Games XII in 2026.

The cities are: Brisbane, Australia; São Paulo, Brazil; Toronto, Canada; Munich, Germany; Dublin, Ireland; Guadalajara, Mexico; Amsterdam, Netherlands; Auckland, New Zealand; Lisbon, Portugal; Cape Town, Durban, South Africa; Valencia, Spain; Taipei, Taiwan; Liverpool, UK; Austin, Fort Lauderdale, Minneapolis, New Orleans, San Diego, Seattle, USA.

Dave Killian, Officer of Site Selection, said, “We are extremely delighted to have received this record amount of interest for the Gay Games! The excitement of 20 cities from six continents shows that countries want to not only welcome diverse communities to their cities but also want to be a place of community and connectedness for all people. These are the Games that change the world and the growing interest in participation, hosting and volunteering proves that.”

“We listen closely to our members and take the feedback on the submission process from previous bidders and host cities very seriously. Our goal is to make it easier for the Games to come to cities and we are on the right track for doing that.”

The RFP will be available March 1 and April 30 and will identify the official contenders for host status for Gay Games XII as that is the date that Letters of Intent are due. For more information on the process, including timelines, visit www.gaygameshk2022.com

The Gay Games was conceived by Dr. Tom Waddell, an Olympic decathlete, as a way to empower LGBTQ+ athletes and artists through sport, culture, and fellowship. It was first held in San Francisco in 1982. Gay Games XI will be held in Hong Kong in 2022.

For more info, visit www.gaygameshk2022.com
Stars of the cabaret scene turned out to celebrate Jason Sutton aka Miss Jason’s birthday at Legends in February with nibbles, laughs and a song or two from Davina Sparkle, David Raven aka Maisie Trollette, Jamie Heward, Lola Lasagne, Wain Douglas aka Kara Van Park, Allan Jay and Steven Banks aka Stephanie Von Clitz.

Photos by Jack Lynn
Mainstream media has recently been reporting on puberty blocker use in trans teenagers. Here Dr Sam Hall, GP and trustee for The Clare Project, gets behind the headlines with a studied look at the issue.

Over 80% of respondents said they did not or would not have wanted puberty suppression. Let’s unpack that statistic. This is what we call retrospective data – it does not replace real time info about trans teens right now, but it does give us some idea of numbers and why today’s scaremongering is dangerous. Because, of the 17% who said they would have wanted hormone blockers, only 2.5% actually got them. And that 2.5% were much less likely to think about killing themselves. Moreover, this statistically significant mental health benefit followed them into adulthood. In other words, these kids do better.

Trans people suffer significantly higher rates of suicidal ideation (thinking about suicide), higher rates of attempted suicide, and higher rates of completed suicide than a comparable cisgender population. We know that much of this mental ill health stems from the stigma and suffering that accompanies a trans identity, and we know that, for many, having gender-affirming treatment such as taking cross-sex hormones, and for some, surgery, can relieve these symptoms. This survey also tells us that if puberty suppression is offered to those who desire it, their mental health outcomes in the longer term are significantly better.

So why are we even having this discussion in our national media, in online forums, right now? It does give us some idea of numbers and why today’s scaremongering is dangerous. Because, of the 17% who said they would have wanted hormone blockers, only 2.5% actually got them. And that 2.5% were much less likely to think about killing themselves. Moreover, this statistically significant mental health benefit followed them into adulthood. In other words, these kids do better.

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clear that she was a girl.” She had a fantastically supportive teacher and the school did a lot of preparation, including training all their staff.

Leah has been going to the Tavistock & Portman GIDS (gender identity development service) in London since she was about seven years old. Helen says their thrice yearly visits have felt like an extended assessment of them as a family and of Leah as a person, with a thinly veiled expectation that she will somehow ‘revert’ to identifying as male. But she never did in the first place. To Leah, being a girl is her normality, although she is perhaps increasingly aware of the difference between herself and her close female friends, all of whom have journeyed alongside her through primary and into secondary school, and who are fiercely protective of her when it comes to transphobic remarks, which are still all too common in the ‘playground’.

For the past few years, as puberty approached, Leah has shown signs of anxiety and fear related to the potential changes her body might undergo if nothing were to be done to prevent it. She has been fixated on hormone blockers since she became aware that they were an option, and is now six months into what she sees as absolutely essential treatment in terms of her future wellbeing. She had articulated this to both her parents and the clinicians she sees at the clinic on many occasions, but their reluctance to prescribe was palpable to Helen.

“We felt as though Leah had to prove herself as transgender time and again.”

Rather than being accepted as the girl she is and having her future as a woman facilitated and supported, the attitude from clinicians appears to almost be one of defeat as they finally acquiesced and prescribed the puberty suppressing drugs. This level of negativity from the only provider of children’s services in the UK has to change. If children later change their minds and decide to revert to the gender they were assigned at birth, we need to view this as a rich and varied journey of self-discovery in the context of a society addicted to a gender binary, rather than seeing a pattern of medical error, misdiagnosis or even that horribly judgmental descriptor ‘detransitioner’.

In fact, the blockers are a bit of an anticlimax to Leah. She needed to, and does, feel ‘safe’ from the ravages of a male puberty, most especially the fear of her voice breaking, something she sees as a potentially horrifying consequence of testosterone coursing through her body. Thankfully there has been no sign of this, and now that her puberty is being suppressed she can relax. But no. Helen says Leah is on to the next goal. Breasts. As all her peers start to develop, this slight and elfin-like teenager is ready to become a woman, and there is no doubt in Helen’s mind that taking oestrogen will need to happen sooner rather than later.

This is where Leah and other children like her come unstuck. The T&P clinic is way behind other providers in the world, especially in Europe and the US, where cross-sex hormones are given alongside blockers, to allow these children to develop contemporaneously with their peers. The London clinic will not consider oestrogen until Leah is 16, by which time she will be a long way behind. The idea behind this delay is to make sure the child has enough time to consider the decision and reach an age which is considered more conducive to adult consent. And yet the clinic also says it does not view puberty suppression as a neutral option, one that presses the ‘pause button’, giving kids and their families a break from the distress. It sees it as a positive step leading to certainty about transition. As if the blockers themselves make it more likely that the child will continue to be trans rather than give up and give in, as appears to be their hope. Helen recalls being told that “there is an argument that puberty should be allowed to progress in order to measure the impact of hormones on your child as many young people change their minds after puberty”.

She felt they were suggesting that a good burst of testosterone would “sort Leah out”, and that their hope was in allowing her natal puberty to manifest, and somehow ‘cure’ her. It doesn’t really make sense, in medical terms, or in the light of this attitude, to make these teens wait for their hormones. If the puberty blockers have sealed Leah’s fate, why not get on with the next step? Further studies are needed, and some are underway, but individual children like Leah should not be human guinea pigs in the meantime.

There has been a meteoric rise in trans visibility over the past 10 years, with increasingly vocal advocacy and allyship for a previously hidden and ridiculed population of people. A rise in visibility which has provoked a backlash of overt transphobia, but also sometimes subtle and invisible; the denial of existence and rights is, in large part, what contributes to the high levels of mental ill health. Of course, there is also dysphoria, a deep sense of discomfort, even hatred of one’s body, which in extreme cases may lead to attempts to self-mutilate. Children as young as four have been reported as suicidal.

There is no doubt that enforced gender norms based on genital biology have a large part to play in the distress these children feel. Gender itself is a largely societal construct, a fact that is agreed by people who are otherwise at loggerheads. Trans people are, to some extent, victims of rigidly applied gender norms and social mores, which cannot be broken down fast enough in my opinion. But this will take decades, or possibly even centuries, and in the meantime punishing the victims by denying the best evidence treatment amounts to persecution of the cruelest kind. We are already sacrificial lambs at the altar of gender - don’t torture us as well…

(Names have been changed to protect individual identities)

“The T&P clinic is way behind other providers in the world... where cross-sex hormones are given alongside blockers, to allow these children to develop contemporaneously with their peers”
way. I mean, I try to be as iconic as possible with my work so I’m glad it’s translating. But I’m definitely a baby icon, because the trail has been blazed by some incredible people who’ve gone before me and are truly Icons with a capital I.”

Who are your queer/LGBTQ+ heroes?
“Artistically, John Waters and Divine are huge inspirations. Marsha P Johnson, Liza Minnelli, Freddie Mercury, Sylvester, kd lang, Janelle Monáe, Keith Haring, Elizabeth Taylor… You may have to stop me as the list goes on. I’m here on the shoulders of those who have gone before and will continue to push forwards and be the shoulders for those after. I’d say there’s been a boom [in queer performance], especially the increased visibility of trans and non-binary performers, which is so necessary. Social media has widened access to independent queer performers, which isn’t controlled by mainstream media and gatekeepers who decide what they think is or isn’t popular. This has allowed for way more voices to be heard. As an aside, certain major cultural institutions could do with programming queer work year-round and not just during Pride seasons.”

Sex Education draws upon relationships with your family and past self. What would Harry 2020 say to Harry 2010 and 2000? “Your weirdnesses and quirks will be things that are celebrated when you truly own your power. You are not compatible with hardcore partying – sobriety will be the best thing that ever happens to you. As much as you love your work and career, make time for a personal life and meaningful relationships. Get rid of shame as soon as you can. Don’t wait for the permission to be an artist, take that control and run with your vision – people will catch on eventually. Be kind to yourself, you deserve it.”

You’ve spoken openly about your own journey with alcohol use and you’ve now been sober for some years. Alcohol seems to be an ever-growing part of our LGBT scenes. What would you say to those LGBT Pride organisations who seek out and promote alcohol sponsorship? “I think it’s about Prides acknowledging their wider responsibility to the community, and being aware that if an event or organisation has alcohol sponsorship, do they provide sober spaces as well? Because that would be awesome and I’d love to see it happen. LGBTQ+ people need to be given those choices and that alcohol isn’t just the only way of having a good time. These spaces can be quite full on for people in recovery and who abstain from drinking but still want to protest and celebrate.”

Harry Clayton-Wright is an entertainer, performance artist, international mischief maker, internet provocateur and some time exhibitionist from Blackpool. Hailing from a town synonymous with traditional end of the pier showbusiness, trashy gay bars and drag shows, has clearly left its mark and it is then of no surprise that when not touring the world Harry often makes Brighton his home. Many first became acquainted with Harry performing in Briefs: Close Encounters, which had two sold-out runs in London and has toured all over the world.

Sex Education, Harry’s first solo theatre and multi-media piece, debuted at Brighton Fringe, winning the LGBTQ Award, and it’s this show he has already this year taken to Sydney Mardi Gras and is now touring the UK following its successful Edinburgh Fringe premiere in August 2019. At the Brighton Fringe last year he premiered his series of 14 individual eight-hour performances, The Fortnight – a veritable sequined toolkit of drag, dance, lip sync, live tattooing and a Liza Minnelli homage. Of course.

How does it feel to be Harry Clayton-Wright at the moment? “I’m not going to lie, it feels incredibly awesome. I’m so thrilled that there’s been such love, support and interest in my work and the projects I’ve been part of. I put a lot of time, energy and dedication into my craft, but I love what I’m doing so it doesn’t feel like work. I can only hope that the opportunities keeping coming and I can continue to work with people I respect and admire”.

How does it feel to be thought of as an LGBTQ icon? “I’m beyond thrilled to be thought of that
There has been a significant expansion in sponsorship for Pride events with some criticism from LGBT groups? What say you?
“Rainbow capitalism is dangerous when brands or sponsors are riding on the coattails of the LGBTQ+ community but not backing up their words with actions. It’s important for Pride events to be making sure that sponsors are doing the work and avoiding ones that actively harm some of the most marginalised members of our community.”

In *Sex Education*, you speak both movingly and almost practically about a range of experiences from an upsetting and traumatic sexual encounter to a self-directed approach to sex education. How have these experiences shaped you?
“Sex positivity is incredibly liberating and it’s been such a massive part of my work. The show features an interview with my mum where we finally have the chat about sex, which has unquestionably brought us closer together. I’m so grateful for that. Posting my nudes online has relinquished a lot of the shame I had in relation to my body. Talking about my trauma has been cathartic and important and allowed me to really connect with others. Making sex positive and explicit performance work has provided incredible opportunities, meaningful conversations and empowered and inspired such freedom. Throw sobriety into the mix and I’d say I’m a much better lover too.”

MORE INFO
Keep an eye on Harry’s social media for news of when the *Sex Education* tour resumes

- http://hcw.horse
- harry.claytonwright
- @HClaytonWright
- hclaytonwright

“Social media has widened access to independent queer performers, which isn’t controlled by mainstream media and gatekeepers who decide what they think is or isn’t popular”
For some people being a role model is a full-time job – and as such needs to be taken seriously. As a singer-songwriter with a digital platform that reaches children and their families across the globe, Brighton’s Al Start is fully aware of her responsibilities.

Not that this was the journey she originally envisaged for herself, rather her dream for a long time was “to be k.d. lang”, but in 2008 that all changed.

“I was kind of forced to do it against my will. I had just been touring the UK and the US, released a solo album, came back and I was broke. I thought: ‘How am I ever going to make money from music?’”

So, calling on her previous experience as a playworker, she took a job in a school, where it wasn’t long before a teacher who had seen her lugging her guitar around and going to band practice started asking her to play for the pupils. Al, being what she called “a serious musician”, was resistant to the idea. “I thought: ‘Kindness, respect, being yourself’ – reflect her commitment to helping the kids she performs to develop a positive view of music and lyrics and the confidence to be who they want.

Being quite androgynous, Al is aware of the effect she can have on her audience: “I do their heads in because they don’t know if I’m a boy or a girl.”

And she is happy to challenge the gender stereotypes. “When kids get to about seven they’re trying to work out who they are in relation to everybody else and gender is a crucial part of that.”

Regardless, inclusivity is important to Al, as evidenced by a song called What Makes A Family, which uses the rainbow flag colours to help illustrate how different families can be and that’s how it should be – there are many variations on the nuclear model.

Ultimately, Al’s aim is to: “Write songs that permeate the fabric of childhood in the same way everyone gets together and sings the Happy Birthday song. I would like my songs to be there as a part of family culture.”

And her own role models? Musically she cites Michelle Shocked, Annie Lennox, k.d. lang, Horse McDonald… think there’s a theme there. And her “hair icons” were “the Fonze and John Travolta in Grease” – and that’s the power of role models.

For more info, visit: www.gokidmusic.com / gokidmusic/

This autumn look out for The Go Kid Music Club themed monthly afternoon family shows at The Brunswick, Hove, for art activities, singing, games and stories.

To join Al’s online Family Music Club, School’s Music Club, buy CDs, books, teaching resource packs or tickets to shows and for more info, visit: www.gokidmusic.com or email info@gokidmusic.com or call: 07808 269 780

Follow: facebook / gokidmusic
Much is said about the portrayal of gay characters on TV in the 1970s and '80s being tokenistic, patronising or downright offensive, with John Inman's Mr Humphries from Are You Being Served? oft cited as an example of the worst of it. Such an assessment, though, undermines the infiltrating power of these characters. Right under our repressive, mundane noses, gay people peppered our most relaxing moments and were our living room companions for years. They presented our chat shows and prime-time Saturday night family entertainment. They were light, silly and apparently superficial, but they were mistakenly not recognised as part of the social change which was still, at that time, some years away. But for some a quiet waiting game was simply not good enough.

In a parallel 1970s London, emerging punk musician Tom Robinson became involved in the developing gay scene and soon embraced the politics of gay liberation which linked gay rights to wider concerns of social justice. Inspired by the Sex Pistols, who Robinson had recently seen live, he formed The Tom Robinson Band and within a year the group released the single 2-4-6-8 Motorway and scored a top five hit. The song somewhat cryptically tells the tale of a gay lorry driver on his daily travels, although Robinson's subsequent efforts would be much less oblique. Glad To Be Gay was the lead track from the EP Rising Free and scored Robinson a top 20 chart position, despite the track being banned by the BBC. Glad To Be Gay takes a cynical swipe across the double standards of British life in the 1970s from the perspective of the gay community: “Pictures of naked young women are fun in Titbits and Playboy, page three of The Sun. There’s no nudes in Gay News, our one magazine, but they still find excuses to call it obscene”.

Robinson realised he was gay at the age of 13, when he fell in love with another boy at school. By the time he was 16 he had had a nervous breakdown and attempted suicide. His head teacher had him transferred to a therapeutic community for teens with emotional difficulties in Kent, where he spent six years. It was these early experiences which shaped his lyrical activism: “Lie to your workmates, lie to your folks, put down the queens and tell anti-queer jokes…. Don’t try to kid us that if you’re discreet you’re perfectly safe as you walk down the street.”

Five years later, three gay flatmates in Brixton who were unhappy with the polite, inoffensive nature of gay performers set about taking a more open and outspoken approach. Steve Bronski and Jimmy Somerville, both from Glasgow, along with Larry Steinbachek from Essex, formed Bronski Beat in 1983 and released their seminal album, Age of Consent, in the autumn of 1984. The album cover emblazoned with the provocative title and the politically charged pink triangle set out the band's stall without a hint of ambiguity. The lead single, Smalltown Boy, tells the tale of a young man who leaves his hostile hometown for the friendlier city. This was direct reportage of Somerville’s own experience moving to London in 1980, and his portrayal of the ‘lonely boy’ in the accompanying video depicted a clear narrative of life in 1980s Britain for gay men similar to that Robinson had shared in Glad To Be Gay. Smalltown Boy was a top three smash hit and Bronski Beat, Jimmy Somerville and their gay message was now out in the mainstream.

The album also made the top five of the UK charts and was successful across Europe. The first track on the collection, Why?, was released as the second single and was another top ten hit: “Contempt in your eyes as I turn to kiss his lips, broken I lie all my feelings denied, blood on your fist. Can you tell me why?”. We’re now used to ‘out’ LGBTQ+ actors and pop musicians, but this was 1984. Stories were emerging from the US about a newly discovered ‘gay cancer’, soon renamed Gay Related Immune Deficiency, or GRID. These were not easy times for the gay community and here we had Bronski Beat in the spirit of Tom Robinson before them not only saying “we are gay and we are here”, but look at the damage and unfairness you are inflicting upon us. The final single released from Age Of Consent was a cover of the Gershwin standard Ain’t Necessarily So: “The things that you’re liable to read in the Bible, it ain’t necessarily so”.

There was no let up from their message and delivered with Somerville’s unmistakable machismo shattering falsetto, their protest was clear.
The mere mention of a dentist can be enough to make a lot of people feel a bit faint, but do they pause to think about the broader life of the person willing to spend their career grappling with other people’s oral hygiene? John Schlesinger’s 1976 movie, Marathon Man, has a lot to answer for – it was there that the notion of torture and the dentist’s drill became intrinsically linked in popular culture and probably accounted for an upsweep in benzodiazepine prescriptions for dental patients.

But, of course, when the myth is monstrous the reality is frequently the exact opposite. Take Chris Gull, for example, veteran LGBTQ+ campaigner and chair of the Brighton Rainbow Fund – you’d be hard pressed to meet a more calming presence. As a dentist in Moulsecoomb at the height of the 1980s HIV health crisis he was, for some time, the only one who would see people who had been diagnosed because “there was a lot of fear among health professionals, which meant they were doing things like saying: ‘I’ll see you at the end of the list.’”

In fact, it was his dentistry that led to a lifetime of working to better the lives of LGBTQ+ people as well as to know the organisations supporting people living with HIV and Aids. As a result he joined the Brighton Cares hardship fund in 1992, and chaired it for seven of its 10 years, helping to raise money until the advent of combination therapy meant the fund was no longer needed.

But one thing led to another, and it’s no surprise to hear him cite James Ledward as one of his big role models, given that it was he who, some years ago, invited Chris to join a grants panel to distribute money raised by Pride. Then, 10 years ago saw the advent of the Brighton Rainbow Fund with Chris at the helm and started with money left from fundraising for The Aids Memorial. Chris takes up the tale about the fund that is a part of The Sussex Community Foundation (SCF): “There were five or six of us who gave advice about where to grant applications. We weren’t a separate organisation but as the fundraising grew we were putting 10% to the SCF so we set up as a Community Interest Company in 2014.”

While Pride is the main fundraiser, it isn’t the only one and has no say in how funds are distributed.

“The concept was always to be a central fund. Venues can now safely say they are fundraising because the money is going to where it’s needed. Before that happened venues or fundraising at venues would be lobbied by the organisations and smaller groups with funds would get left out. The Brighton Rainbow Fund is done by application, we have a grants advisory panel for the statutory and voluntary sectors and we can monitor how it’s used.”

The Fund has commissioned a scoping exercise on young LGBTQ+ homelessness in Brighton & Hove with the Albert Kennedy Trust, which found 25% of young homeless people across the nation identified as LGBTQ+, although in Brighton that figure was 33%.

Chris says: “The reason there’s such a disproportion across the nation is that people run away from situations, young people are outed or come out or are found out and it doesn’t go well and they are in a situation of being bullied or leaving home at the age of 18 and Brighton is a mecca. They are particularly vulnerable, often going to chemsex parties. It can be difficult to help them initially because they don’t have a local connection.”

This is an issue close to the heart of Gscene founder James Ledward, after whose death The Ledward Fund was created for people who wanted to contribute to provide emergency accommodation for people in that situation. “Because it isn’t statutory money it can be used for people without a local connection to get them into a safe space until things are working out.”

Indeed, Chris gave a rallying cry at James’ funeral, inviting anyone who could to join in helping those in need. “It’s important for people to get involved from both sides. The LGBTQ+ community is polarised in terms of life experience, in terms of what life has brought them. Some of us have done very well because, historically, we haven’t had families and school fees etc but a lot of people have. The idea that we’re a group of universally well-off pink pound owners isn’t true. Some of us do have that and a lot of us don’t. There are disproportionate levels of depression, loneliness and poverty as well as wealth compared to the nation as a whole.

“We talk about the LGBTQ+ community but it’s actually a series of communities with different needs and experiences, but historically we have also been there for each other.”

But why is he such a keen advocate of voluntary work?

“It’s easy to give a trite answer along the lines of ‘getting satisfaction from helping others’... but it’s more complicated than that. I think that volunteers get back as much as they give, not just with that sense of satisfaction, but in actually being part of a community with shared goals, shared life experiences, and the ability to make positive contributions to our communities, and moving projects forward together.

“Most of us, if we take time to reflect, can recognise that we have some sort of privilege, whether time, money, a skill, experience from a long life, a degree of freedom, and opportunities which we have because of the efforts of those who came before, whether parents, or activists, teachers or friends. “Do we just pull the ladder up and let others fend for themselves? Or do we become the enablers who allow others, who haven’t had those privileges, to climb up with us?”

As to who his icons and role models are: “Maya Angelou, Armistead Maupin, My Oma, My Mum, Alan Rickman, Graham Wilkinson and Father Marcus...”
STAY STRONG
Eric Page catches up with inspirational fitness trainer Carmen Macdonald to talk about how you can become your own best role model.

What inspired you to become a PT?
“About ten years ago I couldn’t walk without excessive pain in my knees. The pain would be so bad that I couldn’t sit with my leg bent and would have to keep it elevated and extended. Being only 25 and collapsing under my bodyweight (I wasn’t overweight) due to the weakness in my knees was a horrible experience. My GP told me that I would just have to accept that I was going to be disabled with pain for the rest of my life and that I might need surgery in the future.

There was no mention of resistance training, band work, anti-inflammatory foods or any of the other tools I use that helped me and my clients. Learning about these made me want to be able to help and inspire others.”

What kind of clients do you work with?
“Committed ones. I take pride in knowing my clients have the best quality in coaching. I’m constantly evolving and learning so I can share new and updated knowledge. I put an emphasis on clients needing to put the time and energy into their workouts and nutrition for them to see the results they desire. We all need to get stronger and strive towards optimum health.”

How important is regular exercise to mental health?
“The most important. My philosophy is this: Strong body > Stronger Mind. You can’t build one without the other, they go hand in hand. Even if you are ‘too tired’ or had a ‘shit day at the office’ you must follow through with your training plan. Why? because training builds resilience. When you push through you are building mental strength, which in turn helps deal with anxiety/depression. With each step you’re more in control. I have clients who I’ve been training for a while who are now looking at reducing their medication with the help of their GP because of their regular weight training.”

What are some key nutritional principals?
“Make sure you eat enough at breakfast and all throughout the day. I regularly see people making the same mistakes, not eating because they aren’t hungry and masking their lack of energy with coffee after coffee.

With a lack of nutritionally dense foods you’re more likely to snack on biscuits, crisps, doughnuts or anything else Janette decides to bring into the office that day. Even if you do manage to dodge Janette’s snack desk, by the time you get home, subconsciously your brain is going into overdrive trying to think of every way it can cram as many calories into the body as fast as possible - and that leads to binging.

“Make sure you’re eating healthy fats, carbs and protein in every meal.”

How does being vegan shape healthy goals?
“As a vegan, one thing I find quite frustrating in the vegan community, is the idea that we don’t need to worry about where we get our protein from. Although most people get more than enough protein in a standard Western diet, when transitioning to a plant-based diet don’t just take foods away (meat and diary), you must replace these foods with other nutritious and more ethical products such as tempeh, tofu, black beans and green lentils, for example.”

You cook with fresh whole foods daily, have you made a chore a pleasure?
“It’s definitely not a pleasure. But not everything in life is meant to be fun. Sometimes you’ve got to suck it up and deal with the boring things in life – it’s called being an adult. I hate adulting, but I know my inner child will thank me for it in the long run and future Carmen is always so happy when I’ve got yummy healthy foods to eat and I’m not buying a sandwich which is going to be high carb and low protein. So the chore becomes the pleasure.”

What positive life changes have your clients experienced since working with you?
“Everyone experiences positive change - mental and physical - when incorporating regular exercise into their lives. I helped a young lady in her 20s regain her period, I’ve helped with recovery of frozen shoulder. I can 100% say than even every client who has come to see me, their confidence has increased. I work with all ages and genders, sexualities. I worked with a trans lady just before her surgery and so her goals were very specific. I felt very honoured to be part of her journey and to help build up her confidence.”

What training support do you offer?
“I give everyone guidance with what kind of cardio and how to go about it when they’re on their own outside of their training sessions with me. This is because my training sessions are strength based, as this is where you’re going to get the most bang for your buck. I’m not going to stand next to you on the treadmill to count down the seconds... yawn... you’ll be constantly challenged, with each session working towards beating your personal best.”

What can a new person expect from working with you?
“They can expect to be lifting weights, to understand perfect form and understand that technique is ever adapting. I like to introduce small changes each week so you don’t feel overwhelmed and so we can see small regular successes, which is every empowering and motivating.”

MORE INFO
Email: carmenlucy.macdonald@gmail.com
@coachedbycarmen
Fauna Fitness - CoachedByCarmen
Carmen runs a heavy metal spin class:
@cyclewithsatan and Cycle With Satan
AFFINITY BAR
129 St James’, Street, BN2 1TH 01273 567935 AffinityGayBar/
www.affinitygaybar.com  Text Alerts: ‘Affinity’ to 88802

AMSTERDAM BAR & KITCHEN
11-12 Marine Parade, BN2 1TL 01273 670976
www.amsterdambrighton.com facebook.amsterdambarbrighton

Regrettably we are now closed until the Government lifts the current restrictions.

We are of course devastated for our customers, staff and performers. Have no doubt we will survive as a bar and look forward to greeting you for what will be an amazing re-opening party when we are on the other side of this crisis.

Keep following us on IG and FB. In the meantime stay safe and thank you for your support and patronage.
BAR 7 CRAWLEY
7 Pegler Way, Crawley, RH11 7AG  01293 511177
www.7crawley.co.uk  bar7crawley/

ALL NEW BULLDOG
31 St James’ Street, Brighton, BN2 1RF  01273 696996
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ALL NEW BULLDOG
31 St James’ Street, Brighton, BN2 1RF  01273 696996
#BulldogBTN  BulldogBrighton/
We are closed - not sure how long for, but I’m sure when this is all over, be it pub, club or restaurant, we can all come back and be a big part of the community once again with the help of members and customers. Please all take care, Mike Edwards (Secretary, Railway Club)

Visiting the Railway Club

www.gscene.com
GScene.Brighton
Gscene

JOIN: Gscene LGBTQ+ Communities Group
LE VILLAGE
2-3 High Street, Brighton, BN2 1RP 01273 681634
Thevillagekemptown/

THE ZONE
33 St James’ Street, BN2 1RF 01273 682249
www.zonebrighton.co.uk www.zonebrighton.co.uk/
THE EDGE & BOX BAR
Compton Walk, SO14 0BH, Southampton 023 8036 6163
www.theedgesouthampton.com EdgeBoxSoton/

HAMPSHIRE BOULEVARD
Hampshire Terrace, Southsea, Portsmouth PO1 2QN 02392 297509 HBnightclub/

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THE EDGE & BOX BAR

HAMPshire BOULEVARD

THE EDGE & BOX BAR
WILDBLOOD & QUEENIE’S APRIL JEWELS
Whatever life is throwing at you there’s nothing that can’t be fixed by a decent bassline and a right proper wiggle. And so it is with our selection of sweet grooves that will bring the smile, whatever the day or night may bring. So however you choose to escape this April make sure you add these 12’s of joy to your life’s soundtrack.

1 NODEN 1976 (Liiftin Record). An absolute belter of a Balearic house tune with lazy loops destined to please, Noden’s Skinner EP delivers all night long and with house and disco duo Ollie Harvey and Dave O’Lear in control to guarantee a brass and bass beauty.

2 RÓISÍN MURPHY Murphy’s Law (Skint). The queen of electronic returns with an early contender for tune of the year. With sultry vocals and a gimme more bassline, Murphy’s Law is one you won’t want to break. And after that 6Music Festival performance who would?

3 BROZ INC Gimme It (4SRDB Records). Ben Men and Rob Malone bring the sunshine to spring with a jubilant slice of percussion-led house to ensure we just can’t get enough of.

4 EKKAH Giving Up On (Alan Dixon remix) (Future Disco). Rapidly joining the list of our fave remixers Alan does the disco proud with this hands in the air rework of Ekkah’s nu-disco house anthem. A Queen Josephine must-play, this is a tune deserving or royal approval.

5 VAGABUNDO CLUB SOCIAL Pambela (Sleazy McQueen remix) (Lovedancing). If ever there was a tune to get the Queens moving this is it as Whiskey Disco and Razor-N-Tape producers J-Kriv and Sleazy McQueen join forces for a feast of filthy disco beats. The perfect backroom 6am soundtrack we just can’t get enough of.

6 PAUL OLDER Sax Francisco (Daje Funk). Wanna disco? Don’t worry about hitting the airport or the 1970s costume shop, just pop this baby in your system and the funked-up sax vibes will carry to disco heaven faster than a lad on a disco heaven faster than a lad on a Time Train. Sax sensational stuff.

7 LASSO D’AMORE Falling Into You (Hot Digits). As the days get lighter and the beachside terraces beckon this Balearic wonder from Lasso D’Amore will transport you to the White Isle within four beats. One that will hook you in, insist you grab your Speedos and keep you dancing till dawn.

8 RALPH SESSION It’s Alright (Half Assed Records). With an EP called It’s A Love Thing you know you’re in for a treat and house hero Ralph Session keeps the ride sweet with his sound selection of dancefloor diamonds. For those who like their house done right.

9 Catch Wildblood and Queenie on 1BTN radio 1st & 3rd Friday of every month 1-4pm 1btn.fm and at Patterns with Horse Meat Disco and Barely Legal & Imogen, Decent at The Tempest, Club Barbra, Syndicate Party and Alfresco Festival. wildbloodandqueenie.com

MY PERFECT 10: MORGAN FABULOUS

1 This merry month, DJ Morgan Fabulous gets all nostalgic with his perfect ten favourite gay anthems and feel good tracks…

1 KYLIE MINOGUE Your Disco Needs You. I grew up listening to Kylie, and her first album was the first one I bought on vinyl. She has so many good songs but in this particular one the bridge is spoken in French meaning “You are never alone! You know what to do! Do not abandon your people! Your disco needs you!” I love this sentiment because where ever you are in the world we are all united on the dancefloor.

2 N-TRANCE Set You Free. The 1990s were such a pivotal decade for me as it’s when I started to really appreciate dance music, and this track just about sums up the ’90s for me.

3 RIHANNA feat Calvin Harris We Found Love (Chuckie Remix). Me and my partner met through a popular hook up app and started dating when this song was released and playing in every bar and club we went to! We thought the lyrics of this track “We found love in a hopeless place” were somewhat appropriate considering the circumstances and we’ve been together ever since. I chose this remix as it’s similar to the original with the build-up and melody but it adds more of a euphoric feel.

4 RUPAUL Call Me Mother. I had to put one of his songs on my list as I’ve been a fan of his music for years. His music is upbeat and inspirational and always cheers me up. It was difficult to choose my favourite but I do love the sassy bass line and rapping in this track.

5 THE WEATHER GIRLS It’s Raining Men. We all have our guilty pleasures so I stand by my choice. I think it is a fun song that makes everyone feel happy.

6 KELLY CLARKSON People Like Us. This is such an underrated and empowering gay anthem! Love the lyrics and the inclusivity of the song, I was so happy when it was featured in the TV show Doom Patrol’s gay/drag queen story arc – it was the perfect song choice.

7 LADY GAGA Born This Way. I don’t think I even need to explain why this song is on here.

8 DONNA SUMMER I Feel Love. This track gives me life! Classic disco and ground breaking electronic music from 1977, what’s not to love?

9 JENNIFER LOPEZ On The Floor. I just love songs about being yourself, expressing yourself on the dance floor and not worrying about what anyone thinks of you. So this is a great song for me.

10 TAYLOR SWIFT You Need to Calm Down. This has positive messages of inclusivity and a star-studded video which I’ve watched more times than I’d like to admit! I like listening to this when I’m travelling.

MORE INFO

Morgan Fabulous usually DJs at Charles Street Tap every week at Fabulous Fridays from 9pm and monthly at The Edge in Southampton – for updates please check MorganFabulous/
**REVIEWS**

1. **DAME ETHEL SMYTH**  
   **Songs and Ballads (Somm Recordings).**  
   Dame Ethel Smyth (1858-1944) achieved success with her larger-scale works – but her smaller-scale repertoire, including a significant number of songs, is largely unknown.

**Lucy Stevens** (contralto), with pianist **Elizabeth Marcus**, aims to put that right with **Songs and Ballads**. Smyth settled in Leipzig to study, and it was there she became known to Clara Schumann, as well as Brahms, Dvořák and Grieg. Apparently, when composer George Henschel presented a couple of Smyth’s songs to Brahms, he wouldn’t believe they were hers, stating that Henschel himself must have composed them – it just wasn’t conceivable that a ‘young lady’ had composed them!

Smyth’s commitment to and involvement with the suffragette movement. She met (and fell in love with) Emmeline Pankhurst, and the second of these songs, **Possession,** is dedicated to her, with the final song, **On the Road: A Marching Tune,** dedicated to Emmeline’s daughter, Christabel.

Possession picks up on ideas of captivity – Smyth was herself imprisoned for two months for throwing a stone through a cabinet minister’s window. The relentless march of the third song builds to an emphatically triumphant climax, with a quotation from Smyth’s own **The March of the Women,** which became the Women’s Social and Political Union’s official anthem. Stevens communicates the passion of these songs, and the final battle cry has a powerful impact.

2. **ED HUGHES**  
   **Sinfonia, Media Vita, Cuckmere: A Portrait** (Divine Art Records msv28597).
   A highlight of the 2018 Brighton Festival was **Cuckmere: A Portrait**, Cesca Eaton’s film depicting a year in the life of the River Cuckmere with live score by Ed Hughes (b.1968), performed by the **Orchestra of Sound and Light**. The recording of that performance has now been released as part of **Time, Space and Change**, bringing together three works by Hughes spread over nearly 30 years of his career. Hughes is Professor of Composition at the University of Sussex, and has a wide-ranging repertoire of compositions to his name, including music for silent films by Sergei Eisenstein and Yasujiro Ozu, opera, orchestral and chamber works. Eaton’s film of the river Cuckmere is incredibly beautiful and Hughes captures this in music that equally contrasts fine detail with an overall relentless trajectory, leading to a satisfying arrival at the conclusion. You can see the video with the music at [vimeo.com/edhughescomposer/cuckmere](https://vimeo.com/edhughescomposer/cuckmere).

3. **DIMITRI ASHKENAZY**  
   **Brahms & Khoury Clarinet Quintets** (Paladin Art Music). Clarinetist Dimitri Ashkenazy is joined by friends Robin Sharp and Mecit Karkoy (violins), Jennifer Anschel (viola) and Gundula Letnner (cello) for a recording of **Brahms’ Clarinet Quintet, Op. 115.** It is one of the works of Brahms’ Indian summer of composition, after he had decided to stop composing, but had fallen in love with the clarinet, inspired by Richard Mühlfeld. It is a masterpiece of nostalgia, sadness and exquisite beauty.

Ashkenazy and friends choose sound tempi in this warm rendition, and Ashkenazy’s tone is tender and rounded, matched with strong ensemble from the string players. There is passion in the turbulent second movement here, however, with appropriate shirliness at the high end. The return of the first movement’s theme at the end of the finale is particularly touching and sensitive. Lebanese composer Houtaf Khoury’s (b.1967) quintet, **Gardens of Love** is a contemplative piece, opening with a beautifully lyrical melody for the clarinet, backed with simple, gentle strings. The harmonies occasionally darken, and then proceedings halt on quiet string chords, as the clarinet’s ornamented lines become more insistent. Intensity builds, and there are moments where the string players break through briefly, but the clarinet essentially takes centre stage here in this highly effective single movement work.

**Media Vita** comes from much earlier in Hughes’ composition career. The harmonic language in this piano trio is dense and Hughes launches straight into motion, with intense, independently moving lines from the three instruments shifting and clashing. The inspiration here was the motet of the same name by John Sheppard (1515-1558), and that influence of English 15th and 16th century composers is picked up once again in the larger scale **Sinfonia** (2018). Here, the six movements variously draw on English folk song, as well as Cooke, Dunstaple, Tallis and Gibbons. In six short movements, Hughes creates a fascinating soundworld with hints of earlier musical traditions within a complex tapestry of modern orchestral colours. The **New Music Players**, under **Nicholas Smith**, bring this to life with great precision and energy.

**CINEMA**

You can see the **Royal Ballet** (Wed 1) in **Tchaikovsky’s Swan Lake** live from the Royal Opera House, and the ROH’s classic double of **Mascagni’s Cavalleria Rusticana** and **Leoncavallo’s Pagliacci**, also live (Tue 21).

Live from the **MET Opera** (Sat 11) is **Puccini’s Tosca**, with Anna Netrebko.

In a range of local cinemas, including: **Duke’s at Komedia**, **Duke of York’s**, **Brighton**, **Cineworld Eastbourne, The Depot**, **Lewes** and the **Connaught Cinema, Worthing**. While cinemas are closed due to Coronavirus please check websites and social media for up dates on screenings.

Reviews, comments and events:  
[www.nicks-classical-notes.blogspot.co.uk](http://www.nicks-classical-notes.blogspot.co.uk)  
[@nickb86uk](http://@nickb86uk)  
[nbclassical@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nbclassical@hotmail.co.uk)
TEN FOR TEN

Nick Boston catches up with tenor Ian Farrell as he celebrates 10 years sober and a new beginning

When tenor Ian Farrell left rehab in 2009, he told a friend: “I want to get back to my hairdressing, see the world and sing.”

After several years working as British Airways cabin crew, he’s now back in hairdressing, so the first two goals were ticked off the list. It felt like the singing was the final part of the jigsaw. Ian joined Brighton Festival Chorus a couple of years ago, but solo singing was his real goal, so rather than waiting for it to happen, he decided to record an album of his favourite tracks to mark 10 years sober in 2019.

Ian was born on the Isle of Wight in 1977, but moved to Cheshire aged seven. His love of singing began in the local church choir then, as a chorister with the Northern Cathedral Singers, he had the experience of singing in cathedrals around the country, including York, Exeter and Coventry.

Music continued to be central through his school years, and he went on to Dartington College of Arts and then London College of Music. All was going extremely well, including performing a lead role in Howard Goodall’s Silas Marner, as well as numerous choral and solo performances in London. In his final year, he won the Worshipful Company of Musicians scholarship and a also a place on the English National Opera’s The Knock, a bridging course for singers entering the profession. He was all set for a Masters, and a glittering career as a singer lay ahead of him.

But this was the point at which things began to unravel for Ian. What had always felt natural and easy had suddenly become a source of pressure. In Ian’s words, he began to “self destruct”, turning his back on singing and living a wild life increasingly fuelled by alcohol.

For a time he continued to hold down jobs, including working for Cameron Mackintosh, but eventually dependency on alcohol caught up with him, and his physical and mental health reached crisis point.

When I met up with Ian, I asked is there was one thing that turned things around for him? “No, it was a combination of things really. I realised the singing was important, and there was stuff I still wanted to do.”

His nephew and niece had an influence too: “I just didn’t want to be the uncle that passed away prematurely. I didn’t want to ultimately fail in anyone’s eyes (let alone mine).” But fundamentally, he says: “I’d just had enough.”

He talked a lot about misconceptions that addiction is about loss of control. “Being an alcoholic on a budget meant I had to be very organised, to know I had enough money for the next drink.” But aside from the mental and physical toll this took on him, keeping up this sense of control became harder and harder to maintain.

Through support from Turning Point, the drugs, alcohol and mental health charity, and periods of rehab, Ian pulled things back from the brink, and stopped drinking for good in 2009. Since then, it’s been about “learning to be me again – a new me, but the old me too.”

So for Ian, this album is clearly very personal, but it’s also hopefully sharing a message that it is possible to come back from a very dark place and find a way forward. As Ian says: “I’ve learned that just because you make mistakes in life, (however monumental) which sometimes lead you down a different path than the one you thought you were going to take, it doesn’t mean that with determination, self belief and a dream, you can’t navigate your way back to your dream or chosen path.”

So to the album. The 10 tracks provide a great showcase for Ian’s powerful voice, in a wide range of musical theatre repertoire and more. The backing tracks are simple, allowing his voice to take centre stage throughout. Ian’s choice of songs clearly has personal resonance, from This is the Moment from Jekyll & Hyde, to the triumph over impossible challenges expressed in The Impossible Dream (Man of La Mancha) and Puccini’s Nessun Dorma. His voice is powerful, and he relishes the big moments, such as the iconic climax of Nessun Dorma, or a passionate final top note in This is the Moment.

But he also brings a sense of simple wonder to Pure Imagination, and Over the Rainbow has a touching simplicity. His philosophy on life shines out in Charlie Chaplin’s Smile, as well as in a heartfelt rendition of You’ll Never Walk Alone. As a personal statement of achievement in getting to where he is now in life, this is impressive, but it should also prove to be a great calling card for whatever comes next for Ian.

MORE INFO

You can download the album for free from Ian’s website at iandavidfarrell.com. And look out for him performing live soon – follow him on @iandavidfarrell.
IAN SHAW/IAIN BALLAMY/JAMIE SAFIR What’s New (Silent Wish Records). Ian Shaw is one of Britain’s most outstanding and ebullient of our stately homos, an out and proud singer with a fine voice and a strong social conscience. His latest set is a return to basics, just him, saxophonist Iain Ballamy and the young in-demand pianist Jamie Safir. The entire set consists of standards and classic songs from the likes of Rogers and Hart, Leonard Bernstein, Duke Ellington, and Bacharach and David. The trio get the best out of every song, Shaw’s almost spoken vocals answered by Ballamy’s breathy, atmospheric tenor lines and Safir’s eminently listenable piano. The choice of songs is interesting, for example, Jimmy Van Heusen’s ‘I’ll Only Miss Him When I Think Of Him’, which takes on a whole new meaning when sung by a man. Likewise, Bacharach and David’s ‘Alfie’, here rescued from its usual clichéd performance by Safir’s colourful contributions. Shaw is not a traditionally sweet singer, and his vocals can be sometimes raw, but he inhabits each song as if it is about him, which makes this fine set all the more endearing.

DELFEOY MARSALIS & THE UPTOWN JAZZ ORCHESTRA Jazz Party (Troubadour Jass). Trombonist Delfeayo Marsalis is one of four musical brothers, the most famous of which is trumpeter Wynton, and a fine musician in his own right. For his latest set, he returns to his New Orleans birthplace with a celebration of his band's near ten-year residency at the city’s Snug Harbor club. Mixing New Orleans favourites with seven originals, the band kicks up a storm of second-line music, jazz, blues, funk and soul, 1950s do-wop, and all-round fun. The arrangements for this big band – 27 musicians in total are listed in the credits – are adventurous and uplifting, slick and sleazy, the three vocalists adding much colour to the mix. Let the jazz party start!

ALBERT AMMONS The Boogie Woogie Man (Retrospective). Boogie woogie piano music enjoyed a short-lived boom, launched by Pine Top Smith in 1928 and ending in the desire for less ebullient music during the traumas of wartime. To play boogie woogie you needed a left hand like God, and that Albert Ammons most certainly had, for that hand played either a walking bass line with alternating notes an octave apart moving crabwise up and down the keyboard, or pairs of notes in repeating patterns, both approaches a driving eight beats to the bar. All the while the right hand pounded out the melody with big block chords and fast runs of notes. Ammons was a tuneful genius, and this generous compilation presents 23 of his finest tracks, either solo or with fellow boogie woogieists Meade Lux Lewis and Pete Johnson. High octane piano-playing indeed!

This month I would like to share with you two shows that I’ve been part of in Salford and London and two concurrent exhibitions closer to home in Hastings which I’m sure will be of interest to you once we are allowed to travel again. Check gallery websites for updates.

TRANSITION GALLERY
110a Lauriston Rd, London, www.transitiongallery.co.uk
PICTURE PALACE (12–6pm, Fri–Sun, until Apr 5) I have a painting included in their farewell show. The exhibition features over 100 artists all of whom have shown at Transition or featured in their magazines at some point in their 17 plus year history. This Last Picture Show will feature small works on paper inspired by films, stars and cinema and includes references as diverse as Psycho, Imitation of Life, The Last Days of Disco, The Cabinet of Dr Caligari, Under the Skin, James Dean, Julianne Moore and Ginger Rogers.

OCEANS APART
OA Studios, 24-26 King St, Salford, www.oceansapart.uk
ENOUGH IS DEFINITELY ENOUGH (until Apr 3). I’m showing an oil and collage on panel painting with nearly 50 contemporary artists who have made new artworks in response to a postcard version of Velázquez’s masterpiece, Las Meninas for the exhibition. The exhibition is curated by Andrew Bracey and forms part of his PhD research at the University of Lincoln. He is exploring how contemporary artists have used and appropriated existing paintings by other artists, through a position of using the metaphor of the parasite and symbiosis in connection with painting.

HAStINGS CONTEMPORARY
Rock-a-Nore Rd, www.hastingscontemporary.org
VICTOR PASMORE: LINE AND SPACE (Apr 4–Jun 28), known notably as a major figure in the international abstract movement, this wide-ranging retrospective is a unique chance to take stock of Pasmore’s incredibly versatile output over his career. He holds a unique place in the canon of British art, from the lyrical landscapes and naturalist work of a young artist attending evening classes at the Central School of Arts & Crafts, early explorations of Fauvism and Impressionism, up to the development of a new pure abstraction.

STEPHEN CHAMBERS: THE COURT OF REDONDA (Apr 4–May 31). Chamber’s monumental work, The Court of Redonda, which was nearly two years in the making, draws on a remarkable seemingly true story of a tiny uninhabited island in the West Indies, which a passing merchant trader had the ambition to claim as his own in 1865 electing himself monarch. Stephen Chambers was elected to the Royal Academy of Art in London in 2005 and was awarded an Honorary Fellowship from Downing College at the University of Cambridge in 2016. The Court of Redonda was shown at the Venice Biennale in 2017.
BOOK REVIEWS BY ERIC PAGE

1. PAUL MENDEZ *Rainbow Milk* (Dialogue Books). This is a debut novel but it reads like a pro. *Rainbow Milk* is an intersectional coming-of-age story, following 19-year-old Jesse McCarthy, brought up as a Jehovah’s Witness with the legacies of the Windrush generation, as he struggles with racial and sexual identities. It’s also a seriously good read about what it means to be black, gay, British, sexual, male, Midlands, you name it. Mendez holds it up to light and peels them layers back. His prose is cool, slippery and cuts clean to the quick. He takes you to places unfamiliar and confusing and with a sentence connects you to the core of the character’s mind. It’s a fast ride in an astonishingly cool car. We follow the stories of ex-boxer Norman Alonso, a determined Jamaican who moved to 1950s Britain with his wife to secure a brighter future. Blighted with illness and racism, they are resilient in the face of hostilities, but know they will need more than just hope to survive. As the millennium turns, Jesse seeks a fresh start in London – escaping from an awkward family and a repressive religious community, he finds himself grappling for a new anchor. He turns to sex work to create new notions of love, fatherhood and spirituality. It’s how Mendez explores the maze of desire, need and honesty which is so ravishingly honest and challenging. He writes a pretty hot erotic narrative, which explodes with urgent desire off the pages, they sizzle. His sensual explorations of flesh and desire are mixed together with withering condemnations of British imperialist ideology, folded in with tender reflections on the heart of this book is family – strange and true like all of them. There’s real warmth in the trans characters in this book, real people, living concrete lives and connecting, supporting and loving each other in a world which sometimes struggles to understand them. The heart of this book is family life, not the changes which happen, but how, at its core, this family - strange and true like all families - keeps itself on an even keel by being honest and unconditionally loving of all its members, just for being them.

2. WILLIAM HUSSEY *Hideous Beauty* (Usborne Publishing). Dylan is forced to come out after his secret relationship with Ellis is exposed on social media, but everyone is really supportive - or appears to be. But Dylan’s and Eli’s happiness is short-lived, following a tragic accident, Dylan begins to realise how little he knows about the boy he loves or those closest to him. Hussey is an award-winning author of books for young adults and this sparkling love story, which is wrapped in a dark textured Gothic mystery, has a really beautiful truth at its core. Even in a cruel world, love can win through and first love is a seriously special thing worth cherishing. It’s this which brings this book up into the light and Hussey has done a great job of making the narrative engaging enough and interesting enough to be able to hold what is quite a shocking narrative, and allow the character to develop as the mystery unfolds. Using the mental tribulations of Dylan as he seeks to understand what happened, deal with his grief and search for some kind of acceptance and his own authentic place in the world. Hussey’s crisp fresh prose is a delight, not a fat word in there, it’s lean, swift and the narrative gallops along at a giddy speed. It’s a thumping great read for younger people and leads us, and Dylan, out of the dark places and into a space which is perhaps more difficult to live in, but makes far more sense in the end.

3. JUSTIN MYERS *The Magnificent Sons* (Plakkus). What a lovely book, Myers’ second novel just unfolded on my lap into something really special. Like a queer picnic filled with lots of lovely tasty bits and pieces, all crafted with care, jostling and shoving, a cacophony of sibling rivalry, poly sexuality, queerness and everyday problems which are shaken out into a narrative which weaves a story of brothers Trick and Jake and how when one comes out it affects how the older, apparently straight brother’s feelings about his life, girlfriend, distant family connections and what it means to be young, queer and black in the UK today. Recommended.

4. SARAH HAGGER-HOLT *Nothing Ever Happens Here* (Usborne Publishing). “This is Littlehaven. Nothing ever happens here.” Izzy’s family is under the spotlight when her dad comes out as Danielle, a trans woman. Izzy is terrified her family will be torn apart. Will her parents break up? And what will people at school say? Izzy’s always been shy, but now all eyes are on her. Can she face her fears and stand up for what’s right? This book is a much needed story - a gentle, perceptive, honest exploitation of transitioning and family life which explores relationships and change in a genuine way. It’s a direct and accessible narrative which inspires discussion and acceptance and allows us to see, from Izzy’s perspective, how her parents’ transition plays out. It’s not sensationalist and gives families an opportunity to understand the everyday feelings explored here. Hagger-Holt’s prose gives us a family struggling against the prejudices of society which sees transition as an issue, problem or threat. Izzy and her parents’ life goes on, shopping, schooling, the ordinary happens all around them. There’s real warmth in the trans characters in this book, real people, living
QUEER THE PIER

Two hundred years of Brighton LGBTQ+ history is explored in the Brighton Museum & Art Gallery’s new exhibition, Queer The Pier. By Eric Page.

1. Queer The Pier, a community curated display, peers into local LGBTQ+ history using objects from the museum collection that have been repurposed and reimagined from the queer perspective. We embark on a mince down the historical pier surrounded by familiar objects which have been reimagined and repurposed with interactive exhibitions that explain, inform and entertain. There’s a dancing music hall puppet with space to put your head through, rejoicing in the life of Vesta Tilley, a male impersonator performer on the pier. It’s made for Twitter and Instagram but also makes a serious point of how Brighton made space for gender performance and unconventional but highly visible LGBTQ+ lives.

A wonderful wooden model where you turn the handle to make it work explores the life of local sea diving performer, Harriet Elphinstone-Dick, who swam from Shoreham harbour to the West Pier regularly in the 1870s. Celebrated in Australia, where she moved with her partner, she’s a well-known figure in Melbourne after opening a famous women’s gym and teaching swimming to thousands of people.

Adrian Devaney, community curator, said: “When we talk about LGBTQ+ history, we talk a lot about the histories we tell, but not always about who tells them, or how. Queer the Pier is important not only because of the past communities it sheds light on, but also because of the present communities it has engaged with and the doors this has opened. To represent a community and a history as multi-faceted, nuanced, and complicated as ours, you need a team and a working method that reflect that. I hope other LGBTQ+ people can see this in our exhibition: not only that we’ve such rich history, but that we tell it best when we tell it together.”

A highlight of the first cabinet is the photo albums Tommy and Betty, lesbian wartime lovers. A collection of personal memorabilia was found in a house clearance sale in Worthing in 2017. It includes an archive of more than 50 years of loving, intimate photos of their life together, all taken on Betty’s Icarex camera. Betty was a professional photographer so captured all the intimate loving details of their lives together, allowing us to see authentic lesbian lives from the last 50 years as they work, celebrate birthdays, go camping and all the everyday things which were not usually captured as folk were keen to preserve their privacy. Betty both took and developed photographs, so this archive of their lives together is a wonder to behold. One of their albums, along with medals and other ephemera is on display.

There’s film footage of Brighton’s conjoined Hilton Twins, Daisy and Violet, born in the Queens Arms in 1908 and immediately put on display. From the 1930s they were taught to dance and play instruments for a life in variety shows. Both twins married gay men and it’s suggested that Violet was a lesbian.

There’s some superb film on loop of Brighton Gay & Lesbian Pride 1992 and Trans Pride 2019. A joy to watch, they show a community coming of age, assertive, strong and vibrant diversity. After failing to find any images of queer people of colour in the archive, photographer Shonay worked with local QTIPoC group to recreate images on Brighton Pier, reinserting QTIPoC lives into the narrative of queer life in the city and leaving a highly visible record of queer black history in Brighton today.

The exhibition does a good job of readdressing the diversity of the LGBTQ+ community, making sure that there’s a broad range of communities and identities on display, not just rich white gays stuff. This gives the exhibition an authentic friendly vibe. You learn as you smile. It’s full of small joyful moments of discovery.

One cabinet is full of costume, clothes and apparel, precious objects, wigs, drag and jackets from across the gender spectrum and showing us how much effort went into making and wearing these fabulous outfits and how they represent not just who but what people were.
progressive social values the city is now famous for. So it's important that visitors and residents understand the role this community has played in Sussex's history – from fostering the progressive arts scene we know today, to continuing the long struggle for equal rights at Trans Pride... queer politics, performance and people have helped shape the city we know today. It's only right that our local museum should also include queer stories – it helps us better understand the place we live in, fostering stronger social values of acceptance and diversity."

Queer The Pier explores Brighton's reputation as a place where people of all genders, sexualities, social classes and ethnic and religious backgrounds have come to seek pleasure, liberation and fulfillment. It's a timely reminder that LGBTQ+ people have always been part of Brighton & Hove's story and celebrates the rich cultural history of Brighton's LGBTQ+ community which has been disregarded for too long.

MORE INFO

Queer The Pier is part of Be Bold, a series of collaborative exhibitions and events, programmed with Brighton & Hove's LGBTQ+ communities.

The exhibition runs for two years and Brighton & Hove residents can visit the museum for free with proof of residence. brightonmuseums.org.uk 🌇 QueerThePier/
The exciting launch of Queer The Pier exhibition on Friday, February 13, at the Brighton Museum & Art Gallery, was superb. A wide range of city queers, dressed to the nines, proudly promenaded though the galleries, danced to deeply sexy tunes from DJ Affy, sipped drinks and furiously, fiercely mingled. These queer evenings are always a huge success, bringing in people from a range of backgrounds to enjoy our cultural spaces in an innovative and relaxing way.

There were two performances from Thick & Tight, the award-winning dance duo who create a mix of dance, mime, theatre and drag, taking influence from a wide range of historical, political, literary and artistic subjects. They sound too clever by half, and they are. Effortless chic from shimmying in fringed cha-cha trousers to an extraordinary double-headed Barbara Cartland pronouncing on love, femininity and poodle care, they delivered seriously queer fun vibes. Lasana Shabazz performed an evocative piece in the main furniture gallery, with his provocative edgy energy and powerful physicality contrasting with the genteel surroundings. Lydia L'Scabies growled her way through a topical version of "Fever," local legend Boogaloo Stu held what appeared to be a séance with crafts and Sea Sharp hosted a community open mic space.

There was some curious and curated opinion on display. Curators, artists, politicians, writers, knitters, coders, parents, sports folk, clinicians, activists, retirees and checkout staff mingled through the displays, everyone delighted in exploring and sharing the museums spaces in such a fun and engaging way. More of this please!

Words & Pics by Eric page
**SUNDAY BLOODY SUNDAY** (BFI bl-ray). John Schlesinger’s 1971 film is a groundbreaking drama which portrays a gay relationship with no plea for tolerance, no coming out and no suicide. Middle-aged doctor Daniel Hirsch (Peter Finch) is sharing the affections of a young artist (Murray Head) with a divorced woman in her 30s (Glenda Jackson). Unfortunately Finch’s character is perfectly decent and perfectly likeable but without being terribly interesting and Head is little more than shallow and flighty in the way he handles his two relationships. Jackson has a bit more range but the register of the film is too low-key: it needs some more anger or bitterness or just some acidic humour. What in 1971 was, according to film historian Amy Simmons ‘as life-changing and exhilarating as penicillin’ is in 2020 slightly less vital. The closing speech addressed directly to the audience is just strange and the movie’s final line, the punchline of an old joke, will baffle many viewers.

**SHOPPING**

1. **Wire Bowls** from £25 (Dowse, 27 Gloucester Road, Brighton)
2. **Sevin Marble Black Soap**, £10 (Hold, 14 Bond Street, Brighton)
3. **Ceramic Brick Vase**, £34 (England at Home, 22b Ship Street, Brighton, 01273 205544)
4. **Cosmos Wall Mask**, £15 (Pussy, 3a Kensington Gardens, Brighton, 01273 604861)
5. **Brazilian White Sage Incense**, £14 (Workshop, 13a Prince Albert Street Brighton, 01273 731340)
6. **Swimwear** from £24.95 (Prowler, 112-113 St James’s Street, Brighton, 01273 603813)
VALENCIA - THE CITY THAT DOESN’T STOP

Brian Butler spends time in Valencia, Spain’s third largest city, and finds its combination of history, traditions and food and drink make it a must-visit location.

Flying down the east coast of Spain towards Valencia you see acres and acres of what appears to be flooded farmland. But these are rice fields, which Valencia needs for its highly popular dish of paella. These are the only rice fields in all of Spain.

This is a very independent community, with its own language similar to but not the same as either Spanish or Catalan, and a free-spirited attitude.

Looking at its famous silk exchange, La Lonja, or its 14th-century cathedral, the Metropolitan Cathedral–Basilica Of The Assumption Of Our Lady Of Valencia, it’s easy to see why this has been a cultural centre for many hundreds of years.

But the city has also kept pace, reinventing its cultural heritage in the modernist Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia, designed by Calatrava, which contains a glorious opera house, with two auditoria with vertiginous sight lines and home to international opera star Placido Domingo’s academy for young talent. A tour of the building, which often includes peeking in on opera rehearsals, is a must.

In the dried-up former path of the River Turia, now diverted elsewhere, is a huge sunken area of plants and trees, cycling and jogging paths. It’s also a very popular gay cruising area.

Back in the city, there are many plazas – squares housing restaurants and bars or architectural gems such as the fountain of the Plaza de la Virgen. While there it’s worth exploring the underground Roman Visigoth and Islamic remains of La Almoina.

The cathedral is worth a visit, especially when there is a choir singing, and it claims to house in a side chapel the original Holy Grail – the chalice used by Jesus at the Last Supper.

If you feel the need to escape the city there are many interesting trips to take - Albufera to the south hosts masterclasses in making paella in a country house, surrounded by orange and olive groves. The chef will let you into many secrets and you even walk away with a certificate. The wine region of Utiel-Requena boasts tours of local wineries, including the Vera de Estenas and the Murviedro, with the original subterranean storage caves still in use.
On the subject of paella, you have to try the Valencian variation, made not with fish but with rabbit and chicken, snails and white beans.

The Central Market, Mercado Central, is a culinary delight with daily fresh supplies of many varieties of fish and shellfish, vast arrays of cheese and ham, Jamon Iberico. It shuts at 3pm daily so an early visit is recommended.

Many bars boast the local speciality, Aqua di Valencia, a kind of Pornstar Martini, made up of orange juice and variants of Cointreau, gin, vodka and cava. It’s pretty lethal and usually about 6-10 Euros.

The restaurants and bars are great for food - not only paella, but entrecôtes, gambas in garlic, shrimp fritters, Iberian ham, croquettes with various fillings, squid, octopus.

I mentioned La Lonja and its unobtrusive entrance belies a fascinating 15th-century building with definite eastern influences. Its amazing twisted columns and vaulted ceiling lead to a placid garden full of orange trees.

There are other treasures to see from street level, including the alabaster-covered ceramics museum, once a private residence. Photograph it from outside either Le Marquis Hotel restaurant or the small Cool bar boasting an image of Audrey Hepburn over its gents’ toilet.

In Ruzafa the gay bar La Boba Y El Gato Rancio is modern, sleek and relaxed. Other gay bars include, Trappezzio, Moratin 7, Bar Cafetin, with its own pianist, and bear bar Bubu.

The street market in El Cabanyal is worth the trip – an up-and-coming area where Brighton’s Rainbow Fund chairman Christopher Gull has established himself. It’s the posh Valencia of the future without doubt. While at the seafront visit the Marina Beach Club with its al fresco food and drink and lots of eye candy.

MORE INFO

- Some eating and drinking recommendations:
  - Bisbe: an indoor and outdoor tapas bar opposite the archbishop’s front door.
  - Lolita’s: smart cocktail bar behind the cathedral.
  - Cafe de Las Horas, off the Plaza de la Virgen: over-the-top bar with operatic music and decor to match, serving a wide range of gins.
  - Xanglot: modern take on Spanish food with a cool interior.
  - Casa Al Mudin: a backstreet artisan restaurant, old charm and great tapas.
  - Taberna Vintara, Plaza de la Reina: my personal favourite, with a wide range of tapas and drinks and the most friendly staff I met.

- I flew from Heathrow by BA but there are also regular easyJet flights from Gatwick.
CRAIG’S THOUGHTS
No Gays Allowed. Still. Or: The Beautiful Game (for some).
By Craig Hanlon-Smith @craigscontinuum

On Wednesday, February 19, 2020 the former Norwich and Nottingham Forest striker Justin Fashanu was inducted into the National Football Museum’s Hall of Fame. As part of the LGBT+ History Month celebrations, the event also coincided with what would have been his 59th birthday. Justin Fashanu was Britain’s first £1m black footballer and won the BBC’s Goal Of The Season award for a memorable game against Liverpool in 1980. He was also the first male English professional footballer to come out as gay while still playing high level competitive football in 1990. No top-level player has come out during their career since. 1990. Thirty years ago. So why didn’t Fashanu’s landmark decision pave the way for others to follow suit?

Fashanu’s niece, Amal, has been instrumental in campaigning against LGBT+ discrimination in football. She helped set up the Justin Fashanu Foundation and both produced and presented the BBC Three documentary Britain’s Gay Footballers in 2012. Of her uncle’s legacy, she said in February: “I don’t understand, even today, how Justin did it - he’s one of the bravest men I’ve ever come across.”

She accepted the Hall of Fame Award on his behalf at the National Football Museum in Manchester and said of the landmark moment: “He’s here now [in the Hall of Fame], you guys have acknowledged him, we all respect him, he’s been given the position he deserves, and for me, that’s all I’ve ever wanted for Justin.” In his day, however, Fashanu had no such advocate. As recently as 2012, his brother, legendary player John Fashanu, father of Amal, said: “My brother wasn’t gay he was just an attention seeker.”

In 1990 the media was firmly gripped in its Aids hysteria and Justin Fashanu told his coming out story to The Sun. They in turn typically sensationalised the narrative citing scandalous gay affairs with sitting MPs, stories Fashanu stated two years later to have been untrue or at least exaggerated. And although he didn’t come out publicly until 1990, it was known throughout the 1980s by professional football clubs that Fashanu was gay. He had little success as a player after 1981 and his transfer fee of £1m from Norwich City to Nottingham Forest was often described by pundits as a waste of money and poor investment.

One week after The Sun broke his exclusive, brother John gave an interview in The Voice criticising his brother’s move and describing Justin as “an outcast”.

Justin was also the subject of an early internet campaign in 1996 when the BBC opened its poll for the Sports Personality of the Year award to email votes for the first time. The online campaign was organised among supporters in an attempt to enable him to win the title but citing the campaign as unfair and ‘against the rules’ the BBC production team excluded votes for Fashanu from the process. He didn’t win.

In 1998 Fashanu was questioned by police in Maryland, USA when a 17-year-old boy accused him of a sexual assault. Although Fashanu stated that the sex had been consensual, he was 20 years older than his accuser and at that time in Maryland, homosexual acts were illegal whether consensual or not. Fashanu had returned to the UK when an arrest warrant was issued in Howard County and although no extradition proceedings were sought, in May of that year Fashanu was found hanged in a garage.

Fashanu left a suicide note that stated although the sex had been consensual, he didn’t believe he would receive a fair trial on account of his homosexuality: “I realised that I had already been presumed guilty. I do not want to give any more embarrassment to my friends and family.”

An inquest held in London on September 9 heard evidence from a Scotland Yard detective that the US made no request for Fashanu to be found or arrested, and the Coroner stated as a matter of court record that he was not a wanted man at the time he hanged himself. The inquest recorded a verdict of suicide.

In 2020 there are still no openly gay male footballers in England’s top four divisions. Speaking to The Independent in 2006, Peter Clayton, then chief executive of the Middlesex FA and a long-serving FA councillor, said on the issue: “The main difficulty at the moment is that players are assets. They have a market value, which clubs might feel could be affected [by coming out]. I think there’s a concern too about the wider price, in terms of negative effects on business. This is my personal view, but there are clubs who think it’s in their interests to counsel players not to come out.”

Despite progressive social change for gay people over the past 20 years this is an industry where challenges clearly remain. For the March issue of Gscene, two straight football players were photographed for the LGBT+ Allies cover. When one of the players informed his agent that he’d be on the cover, his agent pulled the images citing “breach of contract”. Is this coincidence or is it reasonable to suggest that an association with the LGBT community as an ally is too commercially toxic for the player’s future? If this is homophobia, how desperately sad and impossible it is to see a clear path out of such a mire. However much positive and engaging community work a local club instigates, whether non-league or Premier, the industry itself has never embraced the issue as a whole and it seems as though it never will.

I have no doubt that Brighton & Hove Albion will one day appear in the Stonewall top 100 employers index, a process that requires any organisation to pay Stonewall thousands of pounds to fill in the form. Evidence of LGBTQ diversity and awareness will be collated, presented and assessed by Stonewall box-tickers. But what real change has that made for gay people in the sport itself? The evidence speaks for itself.

After coming out, Justin Fashanu was vilified by the press and football going public alike. He was taunted in the tabloids and on the terraces for years. He admitted that he hadn’t been fully prepared for the backlash from both his cultural community and of football, not to mention his family. He said his career has suffered “heavy damage” and although fully fit, no club offered him a full-time contract after the story broke.

Football is homophobic. It was then and is now. Fashanu still remains our only hero from this multi billion pound industry. The one the only.

“The main difficulty at the moment is that players are assets. They have a market value, which clubs might feel could be affected [by coming out]... it’s in their interests to counsel players not to come out”

Peter Clayton, former chief executive of Middlesex FA
I AM AN ICON

Well, maybe I’m not, but what or who is an icon? The word is used too frequently to retain its original meaning; anyone or anything can be iconic in someone’s eyes. The gay world is full of such beings, Oscar Wilde, Elton John, Judy Garland, Tina Turner, Dorothy Parker, Freddie Mercury. The list is endless. Basically they’re all famous people from show business, the arts or even politics, eg Harvey Milk, whose music or writing we admire. Although a gay icon needn’t be gay at all, take James Dean. In fact these people simply excel in whatever they do; the media love to throw the ‘icon’ word at them when in fact all we are doing is admiring them. The word is being overused and so losing some of its value.

Closer to home we have several real gay icons and role models, I refer of course to James Ledward, campaigner and greatly missed editor of this magazine. He hardly ever considered his own feelings when looking out for injustice or simple bad behaviour. Most of James’ achievements are very well documented, but there are many that have slipped under the wire, he was a true icon and hero.

“Closer to home we have several real gay icons and role models, I refer of course to James Ledward, campaigner and greatly missed editor of Gscene”

For me, I have to follow James with my own very personal icon, a man that I can only hope to emulate in small ways every day, that of course is my wonderful husband, Michael Wall, who is also no longer with us. He set some incredible examples both to me in our home life but also to his colleagues at work, I know this now as I’ve been told by his former colleagues of just what an example he set for them.

There are many in Brighton who warrant the accolade, who in small ways set examples to others. One of the many is one of the few straight contributors to this magazine, Duncan Stewart, someone of unfailing integrity and in the classic phrase will really do anything to help others. His work for charity is virtually unknown, and yet he works tirelessly for several extremely deserving causes but he never talks about it.

In fact the world is full of icons and role models who simply go about their lives quietly setting examples of how you should act in today’s world, simple good practice and being nice. If that sounds like being sickeningly good, so be it, there are many who could well stop and think about their own behaviour towards their fellow man.

Google will give you long lists of people it thinks are icons, but for the individual surely it’s just someone that you know, respect and would love to be able to, in some way, follow their example.

So in our own way we are all iconic, maybe you have never thought that way about yourself, but someone close to you really thinks that you are.

Me, an icon?
In those days, if you couldn’t pay for private care, the only way to qualify for state help was to be ‘certified insane’ and put in an asylum.

One of MindOut’s top icons of all time has to be the brilliant Dr Helen Boyle. She was a mental health pioneer who laid the foundations for MindOut, many years later. We continue to be immensely grateful for her work and her foresight.

Helen was way ahead of her time, a feminist physician and psychiatrist. She was Brighton’s first female GP, the first female psychiatrist at the Royal Sussex County Hospital and the first female president of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association (now the Royal College of Psychiatrists).

Born in 1869, she transformed the lives of working class women in Brighton & Hove through her groundbreaking approach to understanding and treating the effects of mental distress. As a young doctor she arrived in Brighton in 1897 having worked in London’s East End which had given her first-hand experience of the mental and physical effects of poverty on women. Determined to provide medical services to women, she set up the Lewes Road Dispensary for Women & Children with Dr Mabel Jones, in the then deprived area of Hanover. They offered free or low-cost treatment to women who couldn’t afford GPs’ charges, provided by and for women only. The Dispensary depended on the help of wealthy female benefactors, many of them suffragettes. Their clinic was a huge success.

Why was mental illness seemingly more common amongst the poor? Was tooth decay one of the causes of mental illness? Were housemaids more prone to mental illness than other servants? Should ‘defectives’ be sterilised to prevent the transmission of corrupted seed to future generations? Were poverty and prostitution the result of wickedness, or were they forms of ‘moral illness’? These were some of the issues raised at meetings of the Lunacy Commission, but the more Helen saw, the more convinced she became that not only was mental illness often an outcome of breadline poverty, but that it could easily be stopped in its tracks if caught early enough. It was, she came to believe, very often preventable.

If ‘nervous disease’ could be identified early enough, Boyle believed, it could be prevented from developing into incurable disability. In this, she was well ahead of her time, and in those days there was no real interest in the prevention of mental illness that might be caused by poverty and social distress.

In those days, if you couldn’t pay for private care, the only way to qualify for state help was to be ‘certified insane’ and put in an asylum. Nothing was done to address the needs of those either not ill enough for the locked ward, or not yet ill enough, a situation which has changed less than might be hoped for in all the years since.

In 1905, Helen secured funding from Lady Chichester of Stanmer House and transformed the Lewes Road Dispensary into the Lady Chichester Hospital for Women & Children with Early Nervous Disease in order to provide essential in-patient care for women in poverty, before they became certifiable. This hospital was also run by women for women.

The Lady Chichester Hospital later moved to Aldrington House in Hove, which remained a mental health day centre for the next 89 years. Dr Helen Boyle went on to be the co-founder of Mind, the National Association for Mental Health.

Helen’s work, continued by Mind, has revolutionised how we view mental health, the politics of mental health, the social and economic causes of mental distress and the empowerment of those in need of support. Without her work, organisations like MindOut would not exist. Looking back, we wonder how much has changed since Helen’s time. At MindOut we’re desperately concerned at the rise in people in economic hardship who are struggling with their mental health. We’re supporting far more people who are hungry, who can’t afford to heat their homes, who have or are about to lose their homes, who are struggling to make ends meet.

Unlike Helen’s times, we do have a NHS which provides mental health services, and we have community groups offering a range of support. But none of these are secure, funding is being reduced considerably, at a time when need is on the increase. These are worrying times for mental health.

If you would like to know more or get involved, please do contact MindOut details below, or visit Mind’s website, www.mind.org.uk.

As for Helen, as well as receiving professional acclaim in the medical sector, she was honoured for her war work in Serbia in 1915. She lived in Pyecombe for the last 17 years of her life with Marguerite du Pre Gore Lindsay, dying aged 88 in 1957. She has a Brighton & Hove bus named after her.

This article has been adapted from a piece written by Stella Purves. Stella was involved with MindOut for many years and sadly died last year.

MINDOUT INFO
MindOut offers a range of confidential, independent, non-judgemental support run by and for LGBTQ+ people with lived experience of mental health issues. Please do contact us with any mental health concern, mental health query or to discuss your experiences of mental health issues.

We offer advice and information, advocacy, peer support group work, peer mentoring, low-cost counselling workshops and courses, online out of hours support and anti-stigma campaigning.

- Call 01273 234839
- or email info@mindout.org.uk
- to access online support, visit www.mindout.org.uk
ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

As I write this piece I look back at all the posts and media coverage that Caroline Flack’s suicide had very rightly gained. All over the internet and mass media, tributes were being paid and messages of “be kind” are all over the place. It is a very sad story and I could not agree more with the ‘be kind’ hashtag. It doesn’t cost anything to be kind and I don’t see the reason why someone has to take their own life before kindness is encouraged.

I do write for Gscene and I do believe in the freedom of speech. What I do not believe in is the freedom of horrible and vile people, using their privilege and public platforms to promote hate and bigotry. If anything, throughout the years, we have learned that hate breeds hate which subsequently promotes violence and always ends up horribly bad.

Why does the mass media give space to people to be horrible and promote hate? Why does someone like Dr Kathleen Stock, a professor of philosophy of the University of Sussex, claiming to be a gender critical feminist, have the right to constantly be in the public eye with her transphobic views, express her bigoted ideas on transgender and non-binary humans?

Why does Julie Bindel, a radical feminist who writes for The Guardian, have a platform to promote her hate speech against the trans and non-binary community?

Would the same space be given to a neo-Nazi journalist to promote their hatred for Jewish people, gays, lesbians and minorities? Or would a man from a patriarchal lobbying group be constantly featured in the papers telling us why he thinks that women should not have the right to vote and should get back in the kitchen and let men rule the world?

How about a racist having their own TV series telling us every day that black people are not equal?

Why does the mass media give space to people to be horrible and promote hate?

My advice for Dr Kathleen Stock, Julie Bindel and any other spreader of bigotry and hate, would be to redirect your time, energy and public platforms to some worthy causes and not simply attack a minority group just because it makes you feel more powerful. Are you claiming to be feminists? Have you already solved the equality issues in this society and have you managed to end the gender pay gap? Have you fought the patriarchal lobbying groups and won the fight?

The answer is a simple no. You are fully aware of the issues that need your attention and what is worth fighting for, but you simply choose to very cowardly attack a minority which will get you more press coverage and make you feel more powerful.

Just like kids in a playground, you don’t stand up to the one that appears to be taller and stronger than you, but instead you choose to bully the one that you perceive to be smaller and weaker just because you are bound to look stronger. But guess what? You are not.

“Why does the mass media give space to people to be horrible and promote hate?”

Isn’t it iconic...?

Growing up, I didn’t have any gay icons to look to because I didn’t come out until I was in my early 30s. I’d been part of an evangelical church since I was 17, so being gay was not an acceptable thing. I battled inwardly with it until I finally got out of the church and woke up to myself. If I wasn’t allowed to be gay whilst I was part of that wondrous institution, then anything associated with gayness was packed full of guilt and feelings that I’d be let God and the world down. So, acknowledging anything vaguely gay was a no no.

“Anything associated with gayness was packed full of guilt and feelings that I’d let God and the world down. So, acknowledging anything vaguely gay was a no no”

It’s true that I loved pop music from a young age and found the seminal works of Bucks Fizz to be of particular gloriousness. I taught myself the dance routine to My Camera Never Lies (still know it) and threw myself around my bedroom to lots of their other classics. So, do they count as gay icons to me? No, not really, because they weren’t around when I finally accepted my sexuality and moved into the World of Gay. For others they may be though.

Same goes for Kylie. I can appreciate her icon status now but growing up she stood more for her music to me than anything else. Do I now live my life based on her teachings and her example? Well, no... but Dancing was a good tune wasn’t it?

Who else did I look to whilst growing up? Victoria Wood (Someone had just poked an éclair through the curtains); Pet Shop Boys (you never phoned when you said you would); and Mike Oldfield (carried away by a moonlight shadow). I liked their output... but are they iconic? Possibly not, to me.

So, when I came out and started pOKing around the gay universe, who did I look to for a role model or a guide? Um, no one really! Have I got these icons around me now to mould and shape me? Again, I’d have to say ‘no’... There’s gay folks I follow on Twitter and Instagram and the usual social doobries, some of them because I like their music or their acting, some because I think they’re quite hot, some because they have iconic status in the gay community and I feel like I should be following them. I don’t quite know why I do this if I’m not that bothered with them.

I guess we all have our own levels of what role models we have. One chap I do follow is Keegan Hirst, the Rugby League player. As I’ve mentioned before I’m a big fan of Rugby League. Keegan doesn’t play for Wigan Warriors who are my team, but I’ll let him off that. He travels the country talking about mental health and getting in tune with your own ups and downs. He’s down to earth, practical in his advice, a gay man doing his thing and helping out others on the way.

Isn’t that iconic? Don’t ya think?
I love the Easter season. At The Village MCC we are celebrating with a special Palm Sunday service that connects us with nature, a queer Seder that connects us to our pre-Christian Jewish heritage, and an Easter service celebrating rebirth.

Of course I love bunnies, chocolate eggs, and a long weekend break, but Easter has come to mean much more than that to me. At the core of Easter I find stories that are as alive and as relevant today as they ever have been. They tell us that it’s often the innocent that suffer the most; that the world is dreadfully unfair (with a few super rich and billions that are desperately poor); that it’s times of crisis that show you who your real friends are; and that love is stronger than death.

I know what it is to be punished for telling the truth - when I came out as a gay man most of my friends and family turned their backs - a few spat at me. I know what it is to lose everything, to have nothing, and to be told that it was my fault. None of it was easy, but then endings and beginnings rarely are.

It’s funny how many people think that being gay and being Christian don’t go together, especially when being LGBTQ+ and spiritual so often do. But I truly thank God that I’m gay. Had I not been gay I may never have had reason to question all the damaging religious beliefs that I grew up with. I may have spent my whole life dancing around a little fundamentalist box and might never have got to stretch my wings and fly. Being gay meant that I had to really explore who I was and be real in my relationships – especially in my relationship with God.

It turned out that being gay was no big deal to God, God loves diversity. It turned out that God was much more interested in the way I respected people, especially those I was intimate with, than what we chose to do between the sheets. It turned out that love is the lens through which you can see reality – everything else is a smokescreen.

Seriously. Look at the world through a religious lens and often all you’ll see is a social protocol masquerading as spirituality. Look at the world through the lens of the Bible, and what you’ll mostly see is a very patriarchal and judgmental view of the world. Look at the world through a political lens and I imagine you’ll see a world of confrontation and compromise. Look at the world through the lens of love and you’ll see reality. All of it. It’s as simple as that.

**“Look at the world through a religious lens and often all you’ll see is a social protocol masquerading as spirituality”**

At Easter, God shows us that love is stronger than anything we might imagine - which means that if something isn’t grounded in love it isn’t grounded in reality. Telling people that God doesn’t adore LGBTQ+ people is simply religious abuse. Saying that God doesn’t approve of same-sex marriage is simply a lie. Saying that God doesn’t approve of love is blasphemy. Look through the lens of love, real self sacrificing love, and you’ll see reality for yourself.

Easter is a reminder that each of us is wanted and loved, each of us is beautiful and perfectly human, each of us is unique and of equal value. Each of us is worth dying for. That’s the message of Easter.

**ICONS IN THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY**

Icons and iconography means so much both historically and in the modern world, in my own head this can be someone from art, music, science, stage and screen, writers of poetry, scripture and to me importantly an influencer on Human Rights. Everyone has their own inkling of what makes an icon or defines iconography and as such I won’t be name dropping any of my own in this piece so as to not distract from my message.

Those who know me will have varying images and thoughts on my personality and traits. As an older openly gay man who has lived with HIV for over 25 years, I can certainly say that science has influenced me because of the medication that has been developed over the years to ensure those with HIV can live long and relatively normal lives.

In my life, my parents were a strong influence on me, although I was always regarded as a rebel avoiding convention but not achieving my desired career for many reasons, in part because of parental intervention, and because of my lack of interest in education at that time.

I was aware of my sexuality in my early years and came out as gay when I was 16. At that time in the early 1970s, career progression could be limited just for that reason alone.

I met a great man when I was 20 who was a poet and importantly for me had a lifestyle that reflected my own aspirations. During the years with Clem I learned more about art, theatre and nature but most importantly self-awareness and feeling at ease with who I was and am. I explored music across the genres, attended exhibitions and started to travel accepting and appreciating that others felt like me. It taught me to follow my heart in terms of feeling the need to learn more about people as whole.

“I learned more about art, theatre and nature but most importantly self-awareness and feeling at ease with who I was and am”

I recently met a man who is a classical musician and now I’m learning more about composers – both alive and dead. I would prefer not to use iconic because art is very much a personal matter but I’ve learnt to keep an open mind to just about everything to do with art, music and writing.

Another thing I also feel is important are local people who influence our overall well-being, health and Brighton in terms of how we are as a city of diversity and acceptance. We have a fantastic hospital who care for us, voluntary organisations who offer activities for anyone of any age, gender or background. I feel I must mention one person who sadly we lost in 2019, James Ledward who founded this magazine and encouraged so many people in Brighton to put the LGBTQ+ community at the top of their priority list and James founded the Brighton Rainbow Fund. Those funds are raised locally and give financial support to small charities and community groups. So whilst not a traditional icon he was a huge personality and a beacon, who encouraged hundreds of LGBTQ+ like me to engage in my own area of community contribution.

To conclude; I’m honoured to have met many inspirational people in my life who have influenced me and leagues of others.
BUMS, BICEPS, AND THE LOT...

I’ve changed my gym, everyone!

Trivial, you might think, but for me this is major! Because the gym is practically gay church isn’t it, and I have worshipped there for years and years. But circumstances and life happening, I had to move house.

At first, fiercely loyal to the old place, I kept on going. I know where everything is, the steam room is cosy when the winter cold makes my bones ache, and the staff are good people. Some of them I’d say hello to on the street, and I’m notoriously reserved as a person.

Plus you just don’t get classes everywhere like those Sally teaches. She makes jokes about lifting the bar up to your bra strap (even if you’re a boy), and she has a better six pack than most the men I know. And that at our age! How do you just walk away from that?

Eventually though, practicality always takes over. It was that little bit further to get home and, besides, the two gyms closer to mine go at half the price.

“So I took the plunge, cancelled my direct debit, and scouted out the competition on the internet. Presented with two very similar options, I picked the one with cleaner carpets on the photos. Okay and also (I walked past) windows. Nobody wants to work out in a basement that smells like feet.

All this is arranged online, they don’t waste money putting some feisty female body builder on reception when a keypad can do the same job. So my first visit was pretty much my first visit. Full of anticipation, I entered, because well, new things are always exciting aren’t they, change phobia or not. Immediately I saw just how much newer everything was! Newer than me to be precise.

Everyone else in this gym is 20 years old! I mean, everyone. A whole building full of fit, 20-year-old straight boys. With bums. And biceps. And the lot. Alright, and a very few old queens prancing around in between. Should I feel awkward, I wondered? They’re probably looking at me, hopefully thinking well done that old geezer still trying to keep it trim. Then again probably not. People in a gym rarely look at anyone but themselves.

The changing rooms are different too. They chastely change under towels and there is very little nudity. (Must inquire at some point whether this is a general heterosexual thing I never noticed cause my last gym was so super gay).

The boyfriend joined shortly after. He’s determined to live a healthier life and, although I’m always sceptical how far his very enthusiastic determination will go, I’m fully supporting him.

So here we are now, two ageing homosexuals side by side on the treadmill, keeping it sporty among the next generation. Mind you one thing must be said, if I’m sweating away I may as well have a good view, so I think I’ll be very happy here.
### LGBT SERVICES

- **ALLSORTS YOUTH PROJECT**
  Drop-in for LGBT or unsure young people under 26
  Tues 5.30–8.30pm 01273 721211 or email info@allsortsyouth.org.uk
  www.allsortsyouth.org.uk

- **BRIGHTON & HOVE POLICE**
  Report all homophobic, biphobic or transphobic incidents to: 24/7 assistance call Police on 101 (emergencies 999)
  Report online at: www.sussex.police.uk
  LGBT team (not 24/7) email: LGBT@sussex.pnn.police.uk
  • LGBT Officers PC James Breeds: Tel: 101 ext 551686
  James.breeds@sussex.pnn.police.uk

- **BRIGHTON & HOVE LGBT SAFETY FORUM**
  Independent LGBT forum working within the communities to address and improve safety and access issues in Brighton & Hove.
  For more info: 01273 675445 or admin@lgbt-help.com or www.lgbt-help.com

- **BRIGHTON & HOVE LGBT SWITCHBOARD**
  • LGBT Older Peoples’ Project
  • LGBT Health Improvement and Engagement Project
  • LGBTQ Disabilities Project
  • Rainbow Café: support for LGBT+ people with Dementia
  • Volunteering opportunities 01273 234 009
  Helpline hours: Wed & Thu, 7–9.30pm; trans-only webchat on Sun 3–5pm: call 01273 204 050 email info@switchboard.org.uk
  webchat.switchboard.org.uk/helpline
  www.switchboard.org.uk/brighton

- **BRIGHTON ONEBODYONEFAITH**
  Formerly The Gay Christian Movement. Contact: Nigel Nash nigelnash@me.com www.onebodyonefaith.org.uk

- **BRIGHTON WOMEN’S CENTRE**
  Info, counselling, drop-in space, support groups
  01273 698032 or visit www.womenscentre.org.uk

- **LESBIAN & GAY AA**
  12-step self-help programme for alcohol addictions:
  Sun, 7.30pm, Chapel Royal, North St, Bhn (side entrance).
  01273 203 343 (general AA line)

- **LGBT COCAINE ANONYMOUS**
  Meeting every Tues 6.30–8pm, 6 Tilbury Pl, Brighton, BN2 1TP
  01273 675445 or visit www.tarainbowhubbrighton.com

- **SOME PEOPLE**
  Social/support group for LGBT or questioning aged 14–19, Tue 5.30–7.30pm, Haslungs. Call/text Catherine Connelly 0797 3255076 or email somepeople@eastsussex.gov.uk

- **TAS – THE ARUN GAY SOCIETY**
  Social Group welcome all in East & West Sussex Areas.
  Call/Text 07593 513171 www.tagsonline.org.uk

- **VICTIM SUPPORT**
  Practical, emotional support for victims of crime
  08453 899 528

- **THE VILLAGE MCC**
  Christian church serving the LGBTQ community. Sundays 6pm, Somerset Day Centre, Kemp Town 07476 667353
  www.thevillagemcc.org.uk

### HIV PREVENTION, CARE & TREATMENT SERVICES

- **AVERT**
  Sussex HIV & AIDS info service 01403 210202 or email confidential@avert.org

- **BRIGHTON & HOVE CAV HIB PROJECT**
  Money, benefits, employment, housing, info, advocacy, appointments.
  Tue-Thur 9am–4pm, Wed 9am–12.30pm
  Brighton & Hove Citizens Advice Bureau, Brighton Town Hall.
  01273 233390 ext 520 or www.brightonhovecav.org.uk

- **CLINIC M**
  Free confidential testing & treatment for STIs including HIV, plus Hep A & B vaccinations.
  Claude Nicole Centre, Sussex County Hospital, on Weds from 5.30pm.
  01273 664 721 or www.brightonsexualhealth.com

- **LAWSON UNIT**
  Medical advice, treatment for HIV+/-, specialist clinics, diet & welfare advice, drug trials.
  01273 664 722

- **MARTIN FISHER FOUNDATION**
  HIV Self testing kits via digital vending machines available from: The Brighton Sauna, Sublime, Prowler, Marlborough Pub and The Rainbow Hub martinfisherfoundation.org

- **SUBSTANCE MISUSE SERVICE**
  Pavilions Partnership. Info, advice, appointments & referrals
  01273 713 900 Drop-in: Richmond House, Richmond Rd, Brighton, Mon–Wed & Fri 10am–4pm, Thur 10am–7pm, Sat 10am–1pm; The Drive, Hove 01273 680714 Mon & Wed 10am–12pm & 1pm–3pm, Tue & Thu 10am–4pm, info & advice only (no assessments), Fri 10am–12pm & 1pm–3pm.
  • Gary Smith (LGBT* Support) 07884 476634 or email gsmith@pavilions.org.uk
  For more info visit website: pavilions.org.uk/services/treatment-recovery-options/

- **SUSSEX BEACON**
  24 hour nursing & medical care, day care
  01273 694222 or www.sussexbeacon.org.uk

- **TERRENCE HIGGINS TRUST SERVICES**
  For more info about these free services go to the THT office, 61 Ship St, Brighton, Mon–Fri, 10am–5pm
  01273 764200 or info.brighton@tht.org.uk
  • Venue Outreach: info on HIV, sexual health, personal safety, safer drug/alcohol use, free condoms/lubricant for men who have sex with men.
  • The Bushes Outreach Service @ Dukes Mound: advice, support, info on HIV & sexual health, and free condoms & lube.
  • Netreach (online/mobile app outreach in Brighton & Hove): info/advice on HIV/sexual health/local services.
  • THT Brighton Outreach workers online on Grindr, Scruff, & Squirt.
  • Condom Male: discreet, confidential service posts free condoms/lube/sexual health info to men who have sex with men without access to East Sussex commercial gay scene.
  • Positive Voices: volunteers who go to organisations to talk about personal experiences of living with HIV.
  • Fastest (HIV testing): walk-in, (no appointment) rapid HIV testing service open to MSM (Men who have sex with Men). Anyone from the African communities; male and female sex workers and anyone who identifies as Trans or non-binary. We now offer rapid 15 minutes results for HIV/Syphilis: Mon 10am–8pm, Tues–Fri 10am–5pm, Thurs 10am–8pm (STI testing available).
  • Sauna Fastest at The Brighton Sauna (HIV testing): walk-in, (no appointment) rapid HIV testing service for men who have sex with men, results in 20 minutes: Wed–Fri 6–8pm (STI testing available).
  • Face2Face: confidential info & advice on sexual health & HIV for men who have sex with men, up to 6 one hour appointments.
  • Specialist Training: wide range of courses for groups/individuals, specific courses to suit needs.
  • Counselling: from qualified counsellors for up to 12 sessions for people living with/affected by HIV.
  • What Next? Thurs eve, 6 week peer support group work programme for newly diagnosed HIV+ gay men.
  • HIV Support Services: info, support & practical advice for people living with/affected by HIV.
  • HIV Welfare Rights Advice: Find out about benefits or benefit changes. Advice line: Tue–Thur 1:30–2:30pm, 1.2–1 appts for advice & workshops on key benefits.

- **TERRENCE HIGGINS EASTBOURNE**
  Web support & info on HIV, sexual health & local services via netreach and myhiv.org.uk.
  • Free condom postal service contact Grace Coughlan on 07584086590 or grace.coughlan@tth.org.uk
  • SEXUAL HEALTH WORTHING
  Free confidential tests & treatment for STIs inc HIV, Hep A & B vaccinations. Worthing based 0845 111345645

### NATIONAL HELPLINES

- **NATIONAL LGB DOMESTIC ABUSE HELPLINE**
  at galop.org.uk and 0800 999 5428

- **SWITCHBOARD**
  0300 330 0630

- **POSITIVELINE (EDDIE SURMAN TRUST)**
  Mon–Fri 11am–1pm, Sat & Sun 4–10pm 0800 1696806

- **MAINLINERS**
  02087 825226

- **NATIONAL AIDS HELPLINE**
  08005 76123

- **NATIONAL DRUGS HELPLINE**
  08007 76600

- **THT AIDS Treatment phoneline**
  08459 470047

- **THT direct**
  0845 1221200