out! icon
doris day

world aids day celebrations
tying the knot in numbers
growing old alone
come out & play
african voices
asexuality
Welcome to out! northeast, the region’s favourite LGBT read. Another jam-packed issue free for you to enjoy!

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aly rhodes

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out! northeast is the northeast’s premier LGBT news and lifestyle magazine.

out@outnortheast.com
Hello again folks and welcome to the latest edition of out! northeast. Let’s have a look at what’s in store for you this time round.

Firstly, there are tickets to see Britney Spears up for grabs! So make sure you get your entries in sharp because the gig’s not far off. Good luck!

Bare with us if you’re under 30 as we’ve chosen a proper old timer for this month’s out! northeast icon. Doris Day made her debut in the 1940s but has recently shot into the UK charts with her latest album of brand new material! Yes, you heard me correctly. Go see for yourself.

Also in this issue... there’s news of local lad Karl Mullen who makes it onto TV’s newest talent show, and from Pride Radio about their latest lesbian offerings. We look at the latest UK stats on civil partnerships. There’s a brief Manchester Pride round-up, and details of parties north and south of the region to celebrate World AIDS Day.

We also look at how the personalisation agenda will affect us. And there’s some interesting research from Stonewall about being LGBT and ageing, and from Pink Therapy on asexuality. We’ve also got a little on what it’s like to be LGBT in Africa and a couple of personal stories from trans women.

There’s information on the Come Out & Play LGBT human rights conference recently held in Cardiff, a plea from out! law to save legal aid, and feedback from Northumbria Healthcare’s visit to Northern Pride. The emergency services tell us about their Pride breakfast. And of course, you get our very much appreciated community and scene listings, and much more besides.

Thanks again to all of our volunteer contributors and distributors - out! northeast simply wouldn’t happen without you. You are fantastic! Don’t you agree readers?

Ok, I hope you guys enjoy the read. Please get in touch to let’s know what you think or if you’d like to help out!

Aly
karl goes cruising!

A brand new ‘X-Factor’ style reality show burst onto our screens last month. ‘Show Boaters’ takes place on a luxurious cruise ship in the Caribbean following ten hopefuls on their quest to become the next big headlining act.

Openly gay local lad Karl Mullen from Sunderland fancied his chances at being the next Jane McDonald and from thousands of applicants, was chosen to compete on the show.

Karl has always dreamt of being on the stage but has dealt with rejection and heartache on his journey because of his weight. In 2003 he was offered a place at stage school but was told if he turned up on the first day at 22 stone he would be let go.

Karl found the determination to lose the weight. And did attend stage school. He said, “My self confidence was at an all time low. I decided to get back into performing and shape up to get back on the audition circuit. I can’t believe my first audition back I landed a place in the final ten!”

Each week the contestants are separated into two teams. And although they are competing against each other, they have to work together to create, rehearse and perform a full show for the ship’s passengers.

After being entertained by both teams’ routines, passengers decide which show they enjoyed the most. The losing team then face the judges, who decide which two contestants’ careers have sunk into the ocean as they are bid bon voyage.

Away from the glitz and glamour there’s no time for sunbathing and drinking cocktails. The contestants are woken at 5am for a boot camp style workout and must join the ship’s crew performing duties like, working in the kitchens and looking after the cruisers. The team whose routine crashes into an iceberg will be given the worst tasks - which include scrubbing the decks!

Karl told out! northeast to expect plenty of drama as “with contestants living, working and competing with each other - not always seeing eye to eye - there’ll be a lot of laughs as well as fireworks”.

Karl’s sexuality and his weight were targets for bullies when he was younger, but eventually this spurred him on to work harder. He advises people in a similar situation to “Never give up on your dreams, ignore the bullies and believe in yourself”.

Follow Karl’s journey on ‘Show Boaters’, Sky 1, Tuesdays at 8pm.

win tickets! britney’s in town

Pop diva Britney Spears plays Newcastle’s Metro Radio Arena on Thursday 3 November as part of her critically acclaimed Femme Fatale world tour. And we’ve got 2 pairs of tickets to give away!

Want them? All you have to do is email your name and number to out@outnortheast.com for a lucky dip chance to win. Remember to put ‘Britney Tickets’ as the subject. Better be quick though as the closing date is Thursday 20 October.

Spears has captivated audiences around the world with her live shows and she has prepared an extraordinary show here. According to Rolling Stone, ‘The night belonged to Britney... possibly her flashiest, fastest moving, and most entertaining production yet’.

Spears has sold more than 70 million albums worldwide since her debut in 1999. How could we forget Baby One More Time and Oops! I Did It Again?

Tickets are £55 - if you don’t fancy your chances in our competition. For bookings - 0844 493 6666 or in person at the Metro Radio Arena box office.
It all began at 10am with the aroma of warm breakfast butties, a rainbow of fresh fruit, and plenty of tea and coffee on tap. Rutherford Hall, Northumbria University was the venue for the event which presented a great opportunity - near the start of the pride march - to network and raise awareness of LGBT issues which often go unnoticed in organisations.

Despite the poor weather, there was a good attendance across all three emergency services and their partner agencies. And a chance to catch up before each of the service leaders and chair of the Gay Police Association, took to the floor.

Chief fire officer Iain Bathgate of Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, welcomed everyone and gave the opening speech saying, “We are committed to continuing to support and encourage equality and diversity despite challenging budget cuts. And we are delighted to continue to support events like Pride - which help us reach out to the diverse communities we serve”.

Chief constable Sue Sim of Northumbria Police reiterated Mr Bathgate’s sentiments, adding “We want to increase trust and confidence within LGBT communities, provide continued support for our staff and officers, and improve on the positive work that has been carried out to date. Participating in events like today will help us to change the perception of the police service and, as we move forward, such engagement, support and promotion of equality will continue to be one of our main priorities”.

Tony Dell, chair of the North East Ambulance Service, closed the leaders speeches by expressing his delight with the turnout at the launch of such an important event for the ambulance service - in joining the other emergency services to support LGBT people. He said, “The combined power of the three emergency services when we work together is very impressive. We at NEAS will continue to place a high priority on all aspects of equality and diversity and look forward to working together at similar events”.

Claire Lawson, chair of Northumbria Police’s Gay Police Association, thanked the three emergency services for their support. A particularly poignant statement she made was that, “For everyone who dares to step forward and come out at work, there are many more in the shadows who feel unable to take that step for fear of retribution from their colleagues”.

Some of the feedback was very positive, like “An excellent networking opportunity to expand contacts and learn about new opportunities for improving service provision” and many people “pleased to hear the commitment of senior leaders to equality issues in the public service”.

Following the breakfast, staff and officers marched through the streets of Newcastle as part of a colourful pride parade, to the pink picnic in Leazes Park, where each of the services had community stalls.

To find out more about all three emergency services, please visit www.northumbria.police.uk, www.twfire.gov.uk, and www.neambulance.nhs.uk.
**something for the women**

Online radio station Pride Radio North East is looking to attract more lesbian and bisexual women listeners with a new interactive show labelled Loose Lesbians and a brand new weekly Women's Hour.

Loose Lesbians offers listeners an opportunity to voice their opinions on a variety of current debates. The show will be hosted by four local lesbians Carrie, Mary, Dot and Sam - who will be very familiar to Pride Radio fans. They hope to engage in lively topics and chat about lesbian and bisexual women's (LBi) lives in the north east.

The monthly show will include a number of special guests joining the lesbian presenters to help promote positive aspects of LBi life, local events, and work going on within the lgbtq community.

Exploring important topics such as domestic violence and sexual health but also encouraging fun, informal chat as they discuss, 'why are so many lesbians vegetarian?', 'what is it about sensible shoes?', 'what is a lesbian identity?', 'which dykon does it for you?' and get your requests in.

Also new to the fold is Women's Hour, a brand new weekly show for Pride Radio that celebrates lesbian and bisexual bands and artists from around the world. There's a whole hour filled with a great mix of well known talented musicians like Joan Armatrading, Indigo Girls, Melissa Etheridge and Horse to name but a few, and LBi music produced locally by bands such as Brandi Carlile, The Murmurs, Erin McKeown and Le Tigre.

The girls hope to unpick current lgbtq news as it happens. They want to get LBi women involved - listening and speaking out! ‘Loose Lesbians’ will air on the first Monday of every month. Live and interactive 7-9pm so get yourself tuned in to www.priderno.co.uk.

**tying the knot in numbers**

Primarily a civil partnership is seen as a declaration to your partner and the world, that you’re in a committed relationship. So how many of us are taking the plunge?

There are of course other reasons than romance to tie the knot, such as pension and property rights, and tax incentives. Prior to civil partnerships, same-sex couples had to rely on preparing a will to ensure that their estate was left to their partner when they died. These are often contested by blood relatives and have always been a big worry for committed same-sex couples.

Since the Civil Partnership Act came into force in December 2005, gay couples can if they wish, have their relationship recognised by the state and for the most part, all of these worries are settled.

This July the Government Office for National Statistics released figures for 2010. And the total number of civil partnerships formed in the UK since the Civil Partnership Act came into force is 46,622.

Numbers peaked with a staggering 16,106 in 2006. Perhaps reflecting the fact that many same-sex couples in long-standing relationships took advantage of the opportunity to formalise their relationship as soon as legislation was in place.

In total 6,385 civil partnerships were formed in the UK in 2010. The average age of men was 40 years and for women it’s 38.

Beyond civil partnerships, ‘gay marriage’ is now on the agenda to give gay couples full equality with their heterosexual counterparts. However there is still much political and religious opposition. For more information about that, see the Equal Love campaign www.equallove.org.uk.

The localities with the largest numbers of civil partnerships were unsurprisingly, Brighton and Hove (129 male, 97 female). And the London borough of Westminster (154 male, 68 female) - both areas have large gay communities. But how did the north east perform?

The region, which includes Teesside, Durham and Darlington, Tyne and Wear, and Northumberland - had 179 civil partnerships formed during 2010 - 68 male and 111 female. The highest number is in Tyne and Wear with 79, which includes the region’s adopted capital Newcastle with 31. The same number as the whole of County Durham and Northumberland combined.

Nationally there were more females than males tying the knot, and perhaps consequentially, more female dissolutions. 2010 saw a massive 41% increase to 509 dissolutions, compared with 2009’s 351. This means that proportionally, ‘it’s all over’ for many more of us than it is for our straight friends. Watch this space!
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being trans at work

Living and working in the north east of England is not, some would say, the same as living anywhere else in the country. And, it’s that much harder when those in question happen to be transgender - like me!

With higher than average unemployment, increasing child poverty and a high reliance on public sector employment, the region sets a challenge for many to achieve their dreams.

I was born and raised in Darlington at the end of the 60s, outwardly I lived a life that to many was the same as everyone else’s. Reasonably steady home life, school, college, work then marriage. But all this was a mask that I had created to hide who I really was. It wasn’t until I was nearly 30, tired, unhappy, divorced and for many years too frightened to admit that I am trans!

Coming out as transgender to my family, friends and work colleagues was a complete paradox to me. Thinking about it now, I was convinced my life would end. That ‘the world would simply stop spinning’ and despite being a UNISON rep, I feared I’d be fired on the spot.

In spite of it all, I did it anyway. That’s the thing about how it feels to be trans - my life was not worth living - and I simply could not go on living a lie!

My family for the most part, embraced and supported me. Friends, as in life, come and go and that’s ok. Some did, and I miss them but I have made new friendships that I cherish.

What about work? Well work was quite simply incredible. As I write this article I am still employed by Darlington Borough Council two decades since I started - as I knew in my heart I would be. My role as recycling officer is a public one, dealing with community groups, residents and schools.

The support I got from colleagues, human resources and others, helped me to move forward. Sure there were slip-ups and challenges along the way but in the end I made it. And I am very proud. But I am also aware that I am one of the lucky ones!

Throughout my transition I want to pay particular thanks to the staff of UNISON Northern and its members. They work at the forefront of LGBT campaigning. I know this because for the last six years I have been involved.

At November’s LGBT conference in Glasgow, there is a motion calling for more to be done for trans people facing transphobia in recruitment. We need to place trans equality on the agenda so that employers respect us all. I will work with UNISON to support this initiative. It’s hard enough in the current economic climate to get a job. We should not face discrimination whilst we are trying!

If you’d like to contact Phillipa Scarffon who wrote this article, please contact Alison at UNISON Northern headquarters - 0191 245 0843.

The Personalisation agenda is a major shift in the way health and social care providers approach service delivery and development. Direct Payments and Personal Budgets which are central parts of the Personalisation agenda are both affected. Direct Payments are cash payments given to service users in lieu of community care services that they have been assessed as needing. And Personal Budgets are an allocation of funding to service users after assessment.

But it’s not just about the cash. Personalisation means that people become more involved in how services are designed so that they receive support most suited to them. This can range from, engaging with local community resources, through to provision of intensive individual support packages. Which means that our local LGBT community organisations, groups and networks have a role to play in its future development.

I don’t know about you but when I came out - and my family veered between ok and weird - I came to terms with most of my issues with the help of local LGBT groups - usually run by volunteers. They provided invaluable services and social networks and some have become the cornerstones of our communities. You will be aware of northeast organisations that carry out this work today - many of them under threat from government cuts.

We need to think carefully about how we respond, and raise our awareness of how the Personalisation agenda can benefit LGBT people seeking real choice in how they are cared for, now and as we age. We need to educate ourselves around how we can use personal health budgets to have the services we want.

Current providers around the north east are extremely well positioned to shape future mainstream services to better meet local needs. But LGBT services must stop burying its collective head in the sand. Instead of finding reasons to remain ‘precious’ or ‘in competition’ with each other - especially at a time when a reduced pot has to go a long way.

We need to think about building strong partnerships.

We are already expert in providing these services, so by teaming up with our LGBT allies, we can collectively provide services that are not only truly fit for purpose, but that the Department of Health will want to commission - from us! Because we’re better for the collaboration.

To get all the knowledge in one fell swoop, go to the LGBT Consortium’s free personalisation seminar on 23 November at the Baltic in Gateshead. The full day event begins at 10.30am, lunch and refreshments are provided. To find out more or book places in advance, call Dettie on 020 7064 6504 or email dettie.gould@lgbtconsortium.org.uk.
If you're interested in making the world more LGBT-friendly, we'd love you to bring your skills to the table.

mail@lgbtfed.com

The Fed works to unite LGBT individuals, groups, organisations and communities across the northeast.

We undertake research and develop self-sustaining activities that aim to change attitudes and behaviours towards LGBT people.

We hold regular meetings for information sharing, support + socialising, and organise LGBT events.

If you’re interested in making the world more LGBT-friendly, we’d love you to bring your skills to the table.

mail@lgbtfed.com

As the glitter settles and the bunting comes down, Manchester bids farewell to its 21st pride.

With great fringe events like It’s a Gay Knockout, Queer to Stay, a Pride exhibition at The Lowry art gallery, comedy from the hilarious Zoe Lyons, a free screening of The Kids Are All Right, a vintage tea party, pink dog show, sports, and a LGBT family fun day, there was plenty to do leading up to the Big Weekend.

On Saturday the parade - with almost a hundred floats - led by Aussie 'trolley dolly' Pam Ann (pictured), kicked off the weekend, where Alexandra Burke, Pixie Lott, Sugababes, Blue and Heather Peace, gave it their all for the masses in and around Manchester’s world renowned gay village.

On Sunday afternoon Sackville Gardens became the Women’s Stage, where some great new female talent was showcased. The weekend culminated on Monday evening with a sea of candles in tribute to loved ones lost to HIV and AIDS, in the deeply touching George House Trust candlelit vigil.

Since 2003, an impressive £895k has been raised for local HIV and LGBT organisations by Manchester Pride. Sadly, this year sees the departure of the much loved Jackie Crozier, who was festival director for the last six years. Good luck for the future Jackie!
unequal pairings

The government’s consultation on gay marriage will take place next March, but talks will explicitly exclude same-sex religious marriages.

“It is perplexing that the minister for equality Lynne Featherstone wants to maintain the discriminatory laws that prohibit gay couples from having a religious marriage and heterosexual couples from having a civil partnership. She sounds more like the minister for inequality”, said Peter Tatchell, human rights campaigner.

He went on to say that Ms Featherstone is wrong to rule out in advance any discussion... How can the equality minister support this discrimination? Especially when some religions such as the Quakers, Unitarians and Liberal Judaism want to conduct same-sex marriages. Featherstone says they will not be allowed to do so. Sign the petition at equallove.org.uk/petition.

are you being heard?

As part of an ongoing commitment to equality, South Tyneside Homes would like to get people from different backgrounds involved in a regular focus group.

They are setting up a panel of customers to provide advice, information and views about South Tyneside Homes’ approach to housing, customer service and equality. And are particularly interested to hear from lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. The panel will be made up of a number of people representing diverse groups who will act as a sounding board on a range of issues from practical service improvements to policies and wider strategic decisions.

All it entails is spending a couple of hours every two months giving views and opinions from your perspective. No experience is necessary, just a willingness to get involved and make things better. If you live in South Tyneside and are interested in getting involved, please get in touch with Mark Johns, equality and improvement manager - 0191 426 8396, email mark.johns@southtynsidehomes.org.uk.

South Tyneside Homes have recently put together a pride report. If you would like a copy please ask Mark.

durham’s christian maze

“The only thing harder than being a gay person in the church is being a Christian in the gay community.”

The above quote was made by someone at a Durham University LGBT association talk, during Q-week last year. It was also the spark for the creation of Maze, a group of LGBT Christians who meet monthly in central Durham.

Their meetings typically begin with people bringing food to the table to share. Much tea and coffee is consumed as they catch up and welcome new people before things move on to worship - which generally involves music, prose and the odd candle.

During the evening the group studies a passage of the Bible or watches a film and discusses how it can help develop faith. It’s referred to as building discipleship.

In the group, lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgender people, whose ages range from about 20 to 70, advocate a range of approaches to being gay and Christian.

Maze also welcomes people interested in exploring the Christian faith, and those who, because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, feel uncomfortable within a traditional church setting.

If you’re interested in going along to a meeting or would like further information please get in touch with Sally Rush by email sallytfcrush@btinternet.com.

reggae tolerance

If you love reggae but can’t stand the misogyny and homophobia that has crept into many of its lyrics over the last couple of decades, then check out an album by Mista Majah P called Tolerance. The album was released last year and every song is in support of equality for LGBT people. While some have accused Mista Majah P, a straight man, of looking for pink votes, he should be credited for his efforts. It is certainly worth a listen.

- you will probably find yourself singing along...
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- make your mortgage more affordable.

Call 0191 433 3994

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We want to make Gateshead an even better place to live! To do this we’re trying to make sure everybody who lives here enjoys the experience. We are particularly keen to encourage LGBT people who could benefit from our services to get in touch. Here’s how we can help...

**Housing Options**

If you’re homeless or think you might be soon we can give you help and advice to improve your circumstances.

There's a drop-in service Mon, Tues and Thurs 9am-12 noon, and advice over the phone.

Call 0191 433 3000

Out of hours 0191 477 0844

housingadvice@gateshead.gov.uk

**Domestic Abuse**

If you’re experiencing, or have experienced domestic abuse – being controlled physically, sexually, emotionally or financially within an intimate relationship - we can provide practical and emotional support.

Call 0191 433 2622
domesticabusesupport@gateshead.gov.uk

**Single Gateway**

If you’ve been excluded from the housing register perhaps because you’re under 18, or have offended or misused substances, we can help you find...

- the right support for you
- a suitable property in Gateshead.

Call 0191 433 2643

floralillie@gateshead.gov.uk

**Tenancy Support**

If you’re a tenant in Gateshead* or would like to be, we can help you to...

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- access education, training and work

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youngpersonssupportservice@gateshead.gov.uk

Over 25s
Call 0191 433 2731

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*We can help some home owners.

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- negotiate with people you owe money to
- deal with budgeting and benefit assessments
- make your mortgage more affordable.

Call 0191 433 3994

housingadvice@gateshead.gov.uk

**Refugee Move On**

If you’re a refugee and would like to live longterm in Gateshead we can help you to...

- live independently and integrate with the local community
- gain access to health services, work and employment
- get benefit, income and general budgeting advice.

Call 0191 433 3016

moveonservice@gateshead.gov.uk

If you are LGBT and would like help with any of the above issues, let us help make your experience of living in Gateshead a positive one.

We want you to FEEL AT HOME

If you’d like to learn more about South Tyneside Homes’ approach, or help us to improve services for lesbian, gay or bisexual people, contact Mark Johns on 0191 426 8396 or email mark.johns@southtynesidehomes.org.uk

South Tyneside Homes
Working in partnership with South Tyneside Council

Living in Gateshead?

Allow us to assist you

*We can help some home owners.
The ball provides an opportunity to celebrate the lives of millions of people worldwide who have been affected by HIV, and the huge advances that have been made in the global fight against the AIDS virus. Building on the success of the masquerade ball which marked the occasion in the north east last year, the Eyes Open steering group cordially invite you to their latest offering, the RED Ball. The Moulin Rouge themed evening will take place in one of the plushest places in Newcastle, the Assembly Rooms, so dust off your gladrags!

Tickets are £29.50 per person - each table accommodates a party of 10. You'll get a 3 course dinner and an evening of fun and fundraising until 1am. All profits will be used to develop future World Aids Day events in the region.

This year there's a new World AIDS Day annual feature - the Paske Prize - awarded for innovative work that increases awareness and/or reduces onward transmission of HIV. It's all about communication, so potential winners can use any medium capable of conveying a message - writing, 2 or 3 dimensional art, theatre, education, multi- or social-media, music, networking and much more. If you would like to submit a piece of work or nominate someone else's, get in touch - 0191 277 2048.

It's Moulin Rouge at the Assembly Rooms on Thursday 1 December in celebration of World AIDS Day. The ball provides an opportunity to celebrate the lives of millions of people worldwide who have been affected by HIV, and the huge advances that have been made in the global fight against the AIDS virus.

Middlesbrough's first event supporting World Aids Day will be hosted by SuperGay on Saturday 3 December.

There will be a masquerade ball at award winning venue the Hub, at Teesside University Students Union, Southfield Road. Tickets cost £5 and include a buffet, live stage acts, prizes and surprises.

If you don't want the walk down Albert Road in all your finery, Teesside University, sponsors of the event, have kindly agreed to provide a bus to transport people from the rail and bus stations. For those of you driving, there's free on-site parking.

A SuperGay spokesperson said "We haven't had an event in support of World Aids Day in Middlesbrough before. We thought it would be great to have one and at the same time, raise awareness of SuperGay 2012". He went on to say "A lot of people will know that we had to cancel this year's event because of lack of resources. With almost no personnel, we couldn't put on the kind of event that Middlesbrough deserves and has come to love. The ball is our way of reminding people that we're still here, "come and get involved and help make 2012 the event we all want it to be!" 

Ticket queries to martin@supergaymiddlesbrough.com
rapid hiv testing in darlington

Teesside Positive Action has just launched a new 1-hour HIV rapid testing clinic in Darlington. Bringing the total number of clinics across the region to five.

The clinics are unique in bringing the much needed rapid testing service right to the heart of the community. This service already exists in Middlesbrough, Stockton, Durham city, Chester-le Street, and now Darlington. “This is good news in terms of our own development work as it underpins our ethos of working towards a positive future”, said Mike Kay, TPA service manager. “The clinics make testing a priority in the northeast, of which the whole team at TPA are very proud. The simple finger jab test is free and confidential and includes pre and post-test consultation”, he added.

If you would like further details please call in to TPA at 15 Baker Street, Middlesbrough, phone 01642 254 598 or email@teessidepositiveaction.org.uk

continued ban on gay men giving blood

The government’s decision this month to lift the lifetime ban on gay men donating blood, and replace it with a 12 month deferral period has been received with mixed feelings - because it is still a ban say activists, LGBT groups and some politicians.

Restrictions were introduced in the 1980s at the height of a media and moral panic in the UK about AIDS being a ‘gay disease’. These hypersensitive fears of HIV contamination have been questioned on ethical and medical grounds and ministers have at last accepted medical advice - that a blanket ban is not justified.

The recent change means that men who have had oral or anal sex with men in the past 12 months will still not be allowed to give blood. However there is no mention of straight women who partake in the same practices.

Lib Dem’s Dij Davies was prevented from donating blood to his mother when she needed a transfusion simply because he is gay. He said, “there is no reason why men who practise safe sex, should be prevented from giving blood. It stigmatises male same sex contact by perpetuating the myth they can’t be trusted in matters of sexual health”.

The one year ban will come into force in England, Scotland and Wales on 7 November.

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For advice on civil partnerships

OFFICES IN NEWCASTLE & SUNDERLAND
Lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Britain are far more likely to end up living alone and have less contact with family in later life than heterosexual people, according to new research just published by Stonewall.

The Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People in Later Life research raises significant questions for how Britain responds to the needs of its one million lesbian, gay and bisexual people over the age of 55. Over 2k older people were polled by YouGov - 1036 lesbian, gay or bisexual people and 1050 heterosexual.

Ben Summerskill, Stonewall chief executive, said “This pioneering research confirms what many lgb people know anecdotally. Hundreds of thousands are growing older lacking family and support structures that straight people frequently take for granted, often because they have been estranged from their families. We’re also facing a care time bomb of institutional ignorance about how to serve our community properly”.

The research demonstrates that older gay and bisexual men are around three times more likely to be single over 55 than heterosexual men. And while almost nine in ten heterosexual older people have children who may offer care and support in later life, this figure is just over a quarter of gay and bisexual men and just under a half of lesbian and bisexual women.

Lesbian, gay and bisexual people are also only half as likely to regularly see members of their biological family. Less than a quarter see family members at least once a week, compared with more than half of heterosexual people.

This reduced network of support means older lgb people are more likely to rely on formal social care. And almost twice as likely to rely on GPs and social services than heterosexual people, yet 60% are not confident that social care services will meet their needs. “Gay people make a £40bn contribution every year to the cost of our public services”, said Ben Summerskill. “Quite rightly, they want the services they pay for to meet their needs”.

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People in Later Life contains wide-ranging recommendations for bodies such as the Department of Health and the Care Quality Commission as well as for frontline services. Some of the statistics will bring tears to your eyes as a picture is painted that applies to so many of us. We might think we’re so different but we’re all in the same boat - and the boat is not in good shape.

For more information contact James Lawrence on 020 7593 1857.

More than 120 people, including senior ministers, the leader of the opposition and supporters from Britain, Europe, Africa, the Caribbean and elsewhere attended a reception in September to mark the launch of Kaleidoscope, a new international organisation to support gay men and lesbians around the world who face prejudice and discrimination.

Bisi Alimi, a refugee from Kenya was threatened with death because of his sexuality, said “I am tired of international organisations coming to Africa to tell us what to do. Kaleidoscope is coming to Africa to say, what do you want us to do? and that is the most important thing. Please support Kaleidoscope. We have a vision, but without you we might not be able to reach it”.

Lance Price, director of Kaleidoscope, said “The task we face is daunting but we draw strength from the fact where there has been change in the past. The process starts with brave individuals who are prepared to stand up and be counted, who start to challenge the society that made them feel isolated and scared. We want to help. Simple as that”.

Others attending the reception included, Andrew Mitchell secretary of state for international development, Lynne Featherstone equality minister, Angus Robertson leader of SNP at Westminster, Hilary Benn, shadow leader of the House, Paul Gambaccini and Amy Lamé.
come out & play

1st international summit in the UK for LGBT human rights

At a time when human rights and equality legislation are under scrutiny, Cardiff played host to a gathering of professionals from around the globe, working to further rights for LGBT people. Initiated by social enterprise the LGBT Excellence Centre, the conference ran from 31 August to 2 September. It attracted over 70 speakers and 350 participants, with a series of events under the ‘Come Out & Play’ umbrella.

‘Come Out & Play’ is supported by policy makers and celebrities from around the UK who are standing together to call for an end to the inequalities and discrimination that people face due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

CEO of the LGBT Excellence Centre, Federico Podeschi said ‘Come Out & Play has provided an opportunity for policy makers, politicians, business people and organisations across all sectors to connect with experts from around the world in order to develop deeper understanding and achieve greater equality’.

Attendee and speaker at the event, gay activist and human rights campaigner Peter Tatchell stated that “Nearly all of Britain’s anti-gay laws have been repealed in the last decade but there are still bans on same-sex marriage and on gay blood donors. These discriminations must be repealed, to ensure full equal rights”.

Mr Podeschi added, “We are calling for governments across the globe to develop a greater understanding of LGBT human rights through the implementation of the ‘Yogyakarta Principles’ (pronounced Jog-jakarta) - which have been produced for this exact purpose. These principles, along with initiatives such as the Rainbow Mark accreditation that we award, allows organisations and businesses to deliver support to a segment of the community that is largely misunderstood - and whose needs are still not met”.

Sarah Walters, Welsh lesbian writer said “Conferences like this are a wonderful way of building on current successes and enabling further change”.

Home secretary and minister for women and equalities, Theresa May said, “In March, the government published its Moving Forward report where we outlined steps to tackle homophobic and transphobic bullying, encourage the reporting of hate crimes and investigate how legislation can develop on equal civil marriage. However, while we celebrate the real progress towards equality in recent years, we must not be complacent”.

Peter Tatchell stated that “Over the coming years, we will continue to work with partners to reduce the incidence of domestic and sexual violence and reduce homophobic, transphobic, disability-related and religiously motivated bullying and hate crime”.

Throughout the conference - which also included the 6th annual LGBT health summit (held in Gateshead in 2009) - the LGBT Excellence Centre streamed many of the debates and workshops live - see lgbtec.org.uk/page/come-out-play-2011-2. The innovative use of a built-in social network and Twitter enabled people from other parts of the world to interact with the conference.

New York Times bestselling author and former NBA basketball player John Amaechi urged policy makers and the media to listen to the LGBT community, saying “There are still people living in countries where being LGBT is not only challenging, but criminalised and punished, sometimes with the death penalty”.

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Organisers intend ‘Come Out & Play’ to become an annual opportunity to demonstrate social transformation on an international scale.

To make sure you don’t miss out on next year’s event or if you simply want to stay informed, register online www.lgbtec.org.uk or follow @lgbtec on Twitter using #ComeOutandPlay.

Around the world intersex individuals are subjected to inhumane and degrading surgical and hormonal procedures without their consent, at the discretion of doctors and outside legal regulation. This is done to ‘normalise’ genitals and bodies in order to fit intersex people onto either side of the sex binary. This medicalisation of intersex individuals results in gross human rights violations and abuse of integrity and personal dignity.

The forum agreed to demands that will firstly, put an end to ‘normalising’ practices such as genital surgeries, psychological and other medical treatments, including infanticide and selective abortion. Secondly, that the fully informed consent of the intersex individual is compulsory in all medical practices and protocols. And thirdly, that they will create and facilitate supportive, safe and celebratory environments for intersex people, their friends, and their families.

This newly established informal network that was facilitated and sponsored by ILGA (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association) and its European Region, ILGA-Europe. It will campaign for the respect of intersex people’s human rights on international, regional and national levels. The next meeting is expected towards the end of 2012.

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Doris Day

Her first hit came in 1945 when ‘Sentimental Journey’ became an anthem for troops during World War II and ensured her status as a forces’ sweetheart.

Doris had no ambitions to become an actress but was persuaded by her agent to audition, and landed the lead role in ‘Romance on the High Seas’ in 1948 which was an instant hit. She went on to appear in 38 more films, including all-time favourites such as ‘Pillow Talk’ (1959) and the wonderful ‘Calamity Jane’ (1953), as well as recording 28 albums along the way.

Ms Day has often cited ‘Calamity Jane’ as her personal favourite. The movie included the barn-dancing Deadwood Stage (Whip-crack-away, whip-crack-away, whip-crack awaaaaay!). It also secured her status as a gay icon for the character she played, and for the Oscar-winning hit ‘Secret Love’ which went on to become an anthem for gays around the world.

Although she has not performed for decades, Doris has starred alongside many of Hollywood’s greatest leading men. In particular, as we all know, she had great on-screen chemistry with Rock Hudson.

Rock ‘n’ Doris first starred together in the Oscar winning ‘Pillow Talk’ in 1959 after which they did a further two movies together. The pair were also good friends off-screen. In fact Rock’s final tv appearance was on the Doris Day tv special in 1985. Sadly, he died two months later of what was then, a mysterious new virus called AIDS. A heartbroken Doris insisted she never knew he was gay, but added, if there is a heaven he will be there, as he was such a wonderful and kind person.

By the time the swinging sixties arrived, Day was dubbed a ‘safe-sex symbol’. Although she has always insisted she’s no angel and did not cultivate her squeaky clean image, she won the hearts of millions with her wholesome, all-American girl next door façade.

Scattered with affairs and nervous breakdowns her personal life hasn’t been quite so successful. She’s been married four times and of them she’s been physically beaten, abandoned and ripped off. When her third husband died in 1968, she found that he and her lawyer had squandered her earnings, leaving her bankrupt.

She didn’t take it lying down though. With the support of her son, she sued her former lawyer and was eventually awarded a civil judgement of over $20m. Throughout, she reluctantly worked on the Doris Day Show and when her contract ended in 1973, retired from show business.

This left Doris free to focus on her true passion, animal welfare - rescuing and rehoming thousands of abused and neglected animals.

After co-founding ‘Actors and Others for Animals’ she set up her own organisation, the Doris Day Animal
Daydoris icon...
doris day

League and later the Doris Day Animal Foundation. The League became a lobbying group which has successfully pushed through legislation to protect and prevent abuse of animals. It went on to merge with the Humane Society of the United States and through that merger, many laws have been passed and many are still pending.

Earlier this year she donated $250k to open the Doris Day Horse Rescue and Adoption Center. And during hurricane Katrina, she airlifted more than 100 pets to safety and reunited them with their owners, ahhhh!

Doris has always been concerned with animal welfare. On the set of The Man Who Knew Too Much (1956), the film that produced the Doris Day singalong Que Sera, Sera (Whatever Will Be, Will Be), she complained to Alfred Hitchcock that the animals weren’t being cared for properly and demanded better treatment for them. Hitchcock agreed, and from that point forward, the ‘No animals were harmed during the making of this movie’ endorsement, is due to the kindheartedness of Doris Day.

Her tireless work for animal rights led to her being awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2004. But an intense fear of flying prevented her from collecting the award in person. And from accepting my offer to come visit for tea in Gateshead sometime. ;)

Today, Doris lives a life out of the spotlight in Carmel, California where she is an active member of her community, and still much involved with animal welfare work.

I don’t think there will be any question as to where the proceeds of her new album will be going.

I once stumbled upon a fan forum, where someone posed the question, ‘Why is Doris Day a gay icon?’ many theories were presented but the one that stood out for me was, ‘It’s because the gays have such fabulous taste’. Enough said, I think. We love you Doris Day and our secret love’s not so secret anymore.

by Shelley Connor
disappearing from under our noses

Earlier this year I was in Kuala Lumpur working on a United Nations initiative called CEDAW (the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women). Whilst there, the abolition of legal aid in the UK for domestic abuse, civil partnership dissolution, access to children, debt and welfare advice, were at the forefront of my mind.

The CEDAW convention is often referred to as the Women’s Bill of Rights as it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for action to end such discrimination. Although the UK has been a signatory of the convention since the 1980s, hardly anybody in Britain has ever heard of it.

The conference in Malaysia brought together human rights lawyers from around the world with the intention of encouraging them to use CEDAW in court cases in their home nations. I must confess that whilst there, I loved being hailed across a crowded room as ‘Miss UK’.

As luck would have it, just as we are about to see the decimation of legal aid - and by extension our access to enforcing our human rights - the UK government has reported to CEDAW.

I have voiced previously that I was surprised to see that no mention was made of the impact that abolishing legal aid for many types of non-criminal court actions - including those to do with access to your own children, divorce, or civil partnership dissolutions. If or when this happens, much of the housing, employment and education law that is currently available for access under legal aid will simply disappear.

What is really annoying is that for the vast majority of people in the UK, this is happening under the radar. People won’t realise that their access to legal aid is gone until they need it. I have been banging away about this on any platform I can find to let people know that legal aid is going to end Kaput!

The government tells us that they have to save money, and can’t remove access to legal aid from the criminal side of the justice system. They see family disputes as something that people should be able to deal with by representing themselves in court - without the benefit of knowledge of the law. It’s Victorian!

How does that work if you are a full-time parent and your partner is the one with the money? If your partner decides to end the relationship, keep the children and tell you that they no longer want to see you. Wouldn’t you get legal aid to fight for the children at least? Well, no you wouldn’t. If you, out of desperation to see your children, make an application to the court and find yourself facing your former partner’s barrister or even QC, would you get legal aid to help you then? Well... no you wouldn’t.

A common misunderstanding for those who are aware of the changes is that the government will provide legal aid for people who have experienced domestic violence. In actual fact they will not.

If you are one of the very few people who have taken your partner to court in the last 12 months and actually had them convicted of domestic violence - in the criminal or family court - then and only then, will you get legal aid.

I currently have a caseload of approximately 300. The vast majority of them involve people who have experienced abuse within a personal relationship. And given the difficulty of proving domestic abuse, only 2 or possibly 3 of those people will actually win their cases - and thus be awarded legal aid. Hard luck for the other 99% who in future, may well need legal help to sort out their family matters but without aid, they will no doubt go without their human right to be represented.

Debt and welfare benefits advice is another area impacted by these cuts. Imagine you were wrongly accused of owing money and had a judgement debt against you. You would not get legal aid to help you fight it. Even against extortionate debt collection companies.

The Legal Aid Bill is going to impact on everybody - straight, gay, young, old, male or female. Access to our human rights are being taken away! It isn’t too late to do something about it. But please be quick as the bill is going through the committee stage at the Houses of Parliament.

Ken Clarke was recently quoted in the Evening Chronicle as saying that he expected people to make an awful lot more fuss about this and he feels he is getting off lightly. Don’t let him! Lobby your MP, go online and write to the Public Bills Committee. Let them know how you feel about it. The government must be held to account.

Many of us will be writing shadow reports to the UN CEDAW committee. I am personally encouraged by the Southall Black Sisters who have already successfully challenged the government over legal aid on one aspect of the bill.

Once we have lost these rights my friends, we will not get them back again so don’t let the government take them away in the first place. ■
by cris mccurley
Cris is a partner specialising in family law at north east firm Ben Hoare Bell
This is the story of how we came to make a short film showcasing nine very personal stories told by lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans people from several African countries.

With homosexuality punishable by imprisonment or worse in many African states, the film highlights the hostility these people face in their day-to-day lives. It gives a voice to their stories that we hope will be heard around the world.

My wife Pernille and I run a small non-governmental organisation (ngo) based in Denmark called Q-Factor, which focuses on promoting lgbt equality through business. We attend many forums as they are great places to network with other people and learn. With this intent, we packed our bags and headed to Johannesburg for a roundtable discussion on planning the first African lgbt business and human rights forum.

We expected it to be a fairly standard trip for us, jump on a plane, taxi to a hotel, meetings at corporate headquarters over several days with other professionals. However, it ended up being a trip that completely changed my perspective – and my priorities.

The meeting was held in bog-standard corporate surroundings and people arrived from various local ngos and businesses. As discussions began on the content of the forum, one woman introduced herself and her motivation for starting her own ngo. She had lost her partner to brutal punishments imposed with the consent of governments around Africa on lgbt people. I grappled with my thoughts as I tried to figure out what we could do. I’d heard it all before: It’s why we are here. Right?

After a full day of discussion, we met with some attendees for dinner at a local restaurant. Pernille and I talked lightheartedly about our experiences living in Denmark, attending pride, going to gay clubs in Copenhagen.

The girls across the table – native South Africans – start talking about a lesbian club they frequented in the suburbs of Johannesburg. They tell us it’s not open any more because too many women were attacked. I can feel the lump again in my throat as we’re told, “Really, those girls should have known better. If you walk by yourself at night, you’re going to be raped. It is as simple as that”.

I can’t find the words to say what I want to say. It doesn’t have to be like that. In Denmark as is the case in much of the ‘western world’, you can walk around at 3am without fear of being attacked or violated. But these people are so used to the violence, so used to the discrimination, so diminished by their own society that they blame themselves for the horrific crimes committed against them.

Thinking about what these women go through on a daily basis, I decided we needed to get these stories out. People should hear what’s happening in these African societies where lgbt people are marginalised and brutalised. It was then that the seed for the SOS: Sharing Our Stories film was planted and I knew it had to grow.

When we returned to Denmark, I began reaching out to my contacts in Africa to gather video stories from people living all over the continent, focusing mostly in central and west Africa. In the end we received nine stories from lgbt people – men and women who tell their stories candidly. The result is a very moving exposition of lgbt oppression still very much alive in Africa today.

These people had the courage to tell us about the inhumane personal circumstances they find themselves in. We have simply amplified their voices in the hope that they will echo around the world.

out! northeast readers, we implore you to check out SOS: Sharing Our Stories online at ‘www.vimeo.com/qfactor/sos-sharing-our-stories’ in the hope that you will not only feel compassion but will take action.

Tell your friends, suggest a screening at your local lgbt group, tweet about it, post it on facebook, show the world you support equality for all lgbt people worldwide. The world can be changed little by little. It starts in localities, including yours. And we all have a part to play.

by becky steckhahn-strohmer

Becky is co-founder director at Q-Factor, Denmark. She manages international projects and is responsible for developing and maintaining international relations. bs@qfactor.dk
news on your views

Ok people, cast your minds back to that wonderful ‘sunny’ day in July when the streets of Newcastle were full of happy shiny LGBT people, celebrating their very existence at Northern Pride. Listen up if you’d like to know some of the main issues you raised with us.

Remember ambling around the market place and coming across a small yet vibrant stall at the end of one of the rows where a group of NHS and local authority staff from Northumberland sought your views on their services in exchange for a handful of freebies? Amazingly the pottery thimbles and hessian 5-a-day fruit bags were the most popular items. Not sure what kind of trend we’re setting there, but often where we go, our heterosexual friends follow - oh dear!

Well, despite the constant rain we are pleased to say that over 200 people stopped by to say hello and 45 of you completed our questionnaire. So we thought it was only polite to give you a bit of feedback.

Many of you were really positive about your experiences with NHS and local authority services and were pleased that we had come to pride to ask for your views. There were however some people who thought we could do better. Here’s what they told us:

- Don’t automatically assume people are heterosexual
- Use terms like partner alongside wife/husband - face to face and in literature
- Think about how you record transgender when collecting staff/service user data
- Show gay family images in literature
- Improve awareness of LGBT culture/issues by training staff
- Improve local authority housing options for LGBT people
- Include LGBT voices/representatives in policy/decision making
- Work more with local LGBT groups
- Engage with more service users at events like this.

Well, it’s early days but I can already say that we have made some progress on your suggestions.

As you will know, we already have a staff network group - see adjacent advert - this group now advises on new and emerging policies from a LGBT perspective.

We have already produced information for support staff encouraging them to come out, which will feature in staff induction training. And we are working on a resource to help managers support their LGBT staff more effectively.

We have already begun to share our feedback with local LGBT agencies and will continue to share information about further developments as they happen. Please get in touch with me if you would like to know more on 01670 394 431 or email patrick.price@nct.nhs.uk

Meantime we hope we see you there again next year but with better weather... Hmmm, better get on to that thimble company. Until next time... 

Patrick is Health Improvement and Stonewall lead for Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

As part of a commitment to improve the working experiences of LGBT employees, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust has set up a staff network group.

The group is for LGBT staff and their supporters within the Trust, and Northumberland County Council.

We meet regularly to develop activities and support for LGBT staff at work. The meetings are informal and focused on delivering tangible outcomes for staff.

If you would like to be involved or receive updates on our work contact Patrick Price

01670 394 431
patrick.price@nct.nhs.uk

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Stonewall Working Group
I am a qualified counsellor, who works mostly with LGBT clients, and am passionate about community and sexuality. In 2009 I enrolled on the first ever Certificate in Sexual Minority Therapy provided by Pink Therapy, accredited by the University of Middlesex. This full-on training reframes the LGBT acronym into GSM (gender and sexual minorities), a much more encompassing concept.

Dominic Davies who devised and runs the course interviewed me to find out which GSM I knew nothing about, and I was asked to research and present my findings on asexuality. A little disappointed at what I thought was an uninteresting subject and full of preconceived ideas, I embarked on the task of investigating one of society’s last remaining taboos.

The lack of literature online or in print was disconcerting. Although I did come across AVEN a forum where asexuals connect and post personal experiences. Contacting them was fruitless. With hindsight my request was probably perceived as voyeuristic, indecent or critical, even if my approach was clearly non-pathologising.

Circumstances led me to a self-identified asexual who agreed to be interviewed. I quickly drafted a questionnaire and emailed it over, excited to receive some insight about this very discreet population. Unbeknown to me, the questionnaire was passed on to friends of my contact who posted it in libraries, intranets, and in surgeries. To my amazement I soon received 310 responses from asexual people around the world. Many of them were very candid and still move me today. I have shifted my thinking on the subject and am now motivated to support this population who get no support or understanding from religion, parents, institutions, doctors or mental health professionals. My findings showed that: 78% have been oppressed or discriminated against because of their asexuality. 74% feel their asexuality is not respected. 64% have to justify their ‘lifestyle’. 71% feel they (at least) generate curiosity.

The average age of respondents is 37 years, which challenges sexual ageism. In fact most people who contacted me realised in their early teens they had no penchant for sex. 52% of respondents were men. Challenging sexist prejudices around women’s lack of drive and men’s obsession with sex. 62% of men and 53% of women surveyed don’t actually engage in sexual intercourse at all. Yet 43% are in amorous or romantic relationships, raising questions around the importance of sex in maintaining relationships. Of these, 60% have a sexually active partner. Here I discovered arrangements around open relationships, polyamory, sex in saunas and avoidance, and their implications on the couple psychologically and socially.

If we could support asexuality in a non-pathologising way it may help us reconsider our understanding of intimacy, gender, relationship, sexuality and sexual orientation.

One interesting finding was that asexual men were attracted in equal proportions (25%) to men, women, both or neither. Whereas asexual women were largely attracted to the opposite (41%), or neither gender (33%). Maybe there’s room for a new vocabulary – homo-asexual, bi-asexual, etc...

Gay, lesbian and bisexual people have been able to come out and gain some recognition and acceptance, by claiming the right to express their sexual preference. We have been accused of ‘flaunting it’. Perhaps we did and maybe it worked. So why are asexuals forced to live in closets and internalise shame? They are suffering in silence, with no proper community to raise their voice, other than an anonymous online forum.

Most asexuals either don’t have sex (that’s not to say they haven’t tried it). They may have very little or infrequent sex, or they may prefer to have sex on their own. Their asexuality has nothing to do with gender, age, preference, culture or faith. Physiologically and psychologically, tests show no abnormalities – apart from the duress they find themselves under from others. Let’s give these people a break.

Why do we still discriminate against those who have a different sexuality to us? Who decides what is the right amount of sex? When is it too much, when is it too little? Can we maintain relationships without sex? Does the absence of sex exclude intimacy between human beings?

by olivier cormier-otaño

Olivier is MBACP Accred. Advanced Accredited Sexual minority therapist olivier.counselling@hotmail.com www.oliviercounselling.co.uk

1. www.pinktherapy.com
2. Asexuality Visibility and Education Network

out! northeast / issue 28 / outnortheast.com
a life worth living

I work as a local government officer, have a family, a daughter that I love and some adorable grandchildren. I go to church on Sundays, have a good circle of friends and enjoy a fairly active social life. I sit on a few committees and do my shopping at Asda. Quite ordinary you might think.

Life for me began in Slough when my mother, Mrs Myers, gave birth to a bouncing baby boy. However, I discovered as I grew up that this wasn’t quite the full story.

I knew I was quite different to other boys. Unique! And I very quickly realised that what you see is not always what you get. There’s the troubled childhood, difficult teenage years, adolescence, abject loneliness.

Then I read about a woman called April Ashley who’d undergone sex by the media, in 1961. And I discovered as I grew up that this wasn’t quite the full story.

As far as marriage and children go, it’s the usual pattern. Met the girl of my dreams, got married and had a daughter who is the love of my life.

I thought I was cured but the truth usually has a way of coming out. And it did. My wife told me she didn’t want another sister and that I should see a psychiatrist. So I did.

After initial visits to the psychiatrist, and to my family doctor - who was fascinated - I was dispatched to Charing Cross gender clinic in London. Time with my consultant was a real challenge, but an experience I came to appreciate. A second opinion was sought from an absolute star of a doctor who got me started on hormonal treatment and referred me to my local gender clinic.

My parents were originally from Jarrow, to which we returned as I approached school age. In the 90s I headed back down south to work, then back up to the north east in 2005 to start my new life.

I was by this time in the very capable hands of the Hedley Board clinic and was referred to head of speech and language therapy at the RVI in Newcastle, who has turned out to be a real friend, life coach and mentor. She is simply the most wonderful person you could ever wish to help you transition.

In 2008, following the prescribed ‘real life test’ I eventually arrived at the Nuffield Hospital in Leicester for gender reassignment surgery.

In what seemed like a heartbeat, a woman called Alexandra was born. So now, to add to the confusion, I’m not quite sure if I’m a native of Slough, Jarrow or Leicester? The surgeon was terrific. At one meeting he quipped he’d have me peeling like a horse and anyone who knows me will testify that I am a real mare!

Despite being scared to death about restarting work as Alexandra, I have to say that I received absolutely fabulous support from the management at South Tyneside council. Human Resources even assigned an officer to work with me during the transition. She too has become a firm friend as well as being a fantastic work colleague.

On my first day back, I entered my office to find a huge bouquet of flowers. And during the day I received bottles of wine, chocolates, jewellery, cosmetics, and an Avon catalogue from a colleague who now has me as one of her best customers.

I am also a trade union activist with UNISON, and again, the support and friendship I received has been unbelievable. I am a member of the local government Standing Orders Committee, and hold officer positions at branch and regional level. All of the professional bodies to which I am affiliated, have accepted the revised version of me without question.

No one has gone through, or is in the process of transition will know that it is tough. The mental, emotional and physical journeys takes a great deal of courage, effort and determination. And often things don’t always go as well as they have done for me so far.

In many ways I am lucky as my family have also shown me immense support and lots of love. My daughter has been a rock. I love it when we’re shopping and she says, “you are not wearing that!” to which I usually respond, “does my bum look big in this?”

Don’t get me wrong, I have come up against it at times but throughout my journey I have met some truly wonderful people. As well as those I’ve already mentioned, there are many individuals in all areas of my life who make everything a whole lot better. I’d like to thank you individually but the editor wouldn’t give me another page. I want you all to know that you make my life, without doubt, a life worth living!

The future - well who knows? But if my journey so far is anything to go by, the road ahead is certainly worth travelling.

by alexandra myers
resistance training
with weights

training techniques

Last issue we focused on the basics of resistance training and covered most of what you need to know when embarking on an exercise routine.

This issue we will cover some of the more advanced training techniques that can be used as you become more experienced. They are all effective, but experiment and, according to your goal, find the one that works best for you.

by keith ward

Keith is a personal trainer and fitness instructor, who teaches exercise classes at No Limits Gym in Hexham. He has also run weight management classes for Rosemary Conley Diet & Fitness Clubs.

drop sets
Drop sets are one of the best techniques for achieving muscle overload, whether your goal is to build mass or to tone and define. Choose the first weight for an exercise with the aim of reaching maximum overload by the end of the set. By which time you should have completely fatigued the muscle - unable to do another repetition. Without resting you drop the weight to about 75% of the initial weight and perform another set of the same number of reps.

Drop sets work on the principle that when you overload the muscle you effectively render 25% of the muscle unusable without rest. By reducing the weight by 25% you balance out that loss of power! Furthermore you can overload the muscle by doing a conventional set. This technique can be used for any resistance exercise and in any muscle group.

pyramid sets
A high intensity technique in which you perform a series of sets, each one with heavier weights but lower repetitions, until you reach a point where you can't increase the weight - even with lower reps. So decrease the weight but increase the reps. A pyramid set might look like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>set 1</th>
<th>set 2</th>
<th>set 3</th>
<th>set 4</th>
<th>set 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 reps</td>
<td>8 reps</td>
<td>6 reps</td>
<td>10 reps</td>
<td>12 reps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50kg</td>
<td>60kg</td>
<td>70kg</td>
<td>50kg</td>
<td>40kg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

super setting
This technique is very time efficient and intense as you don't need to stop for rest periods. You work opposing muscles in quick succession so, for example, you might work the tricep then the bicep. As you work one side of the body the other side rests and vice versa. An arms super set might look like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>set 1</th>
<th>set 2</th>
<th>set 3</th>
<th>set 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 reps</td>
<td>7 reps</td>
<td>7 reps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>straight arm to 90 degrees</td>
<td>half-way to full curl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trying a new training technique is a good way to introduce variety into your training routine and ensure that you challenge the muscles in different ways. Give them all a go, you might find that perfect technique!

matrix training
This technique works on the basis that you can target and overload different parts of the muscle at various points in the range of movement. So, a bicep curl for instance can be divided into two half stage movements: from start to 90 degrees and then from halfway to full curl. You then work the full range once you have pre-exhausted the two small ranges. A bicep matrix training sequence would look like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>set 1</th>
<th>set 2</th>
<th>set 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 reps</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to full curl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most effective combinations for this technique are; chest and back, fronts and backs of thighs, biceps and triceps.
Join **COUNT ME IN.**

and sign up to this simple five-point action plan:

- I will know my HIV status.
- I will not assume I know someone else’s HIV status.
- I will take personal responsibility for using condoms.
- I will value myself and my health.
- I will stay informed about HIV and how it’s spread.

If all of us follow this plan, we can stop HIV in our community.

**TOGETHER WE CAN STOP THE SPREAD OF HIV**

It’s time to stand up and be counted...

Join us today at:

[www.youcancountmein.org.uk](http://www.youcancountmein.org.uk)

to meet the guys who have joined and to find out how you can be part of it.
What better way to slip away to happier times of the 50s and 60s? So roll your sleeves up, put your hanky on your head, reveal those knobbly knees and get your tickets for a show that is sure to warm the cockles of your heart.

Watch out also for the wonderful Eva Cassidy musical Over the Rainbow, at the Playhouse Wednesday 12 October.

Yeh we all jig about to I will Follow Him and other tunes from the film. Alas! You will not hear those tunes here. At first I was a little disappointed, but having heard them, I guarantee you, you will uplift! When disco diva Deloris (Cynthia - Wow! What a voice - Erivo), witnessess a murder, she is taken into custody somewhere she won't be found. Disguised as a nun in a convent, she makes the wrong impression. But soon finds herself welcomed by the soulful sisters!

It's packed with great songs. If you're gay. I mean really gay. You should have booked months ago. See ya there!

**newcastle theatre royal**

**sleeping beauty**

Tues 29 Nov 2011 - Sat 21 Jan 2012

Ticket sales for the Royal's Sleeping Beauty, have once again exceeded expectations long before the show opens - with over 3k more tickets already sold, than this time last year. So get a move on if you want to see it! I'm all booked up darlings. Hailed as the best pantomime in Britain, Clive Webb, Danny Adams and queen of all dames Chris Hayward, play principal leads in this grand fairytale. And look out, Chris has more costume changes than Diana Ross in full diva mode. Special effects geniuses 'The Twins' are back with wow factor!

Sworn to secrecy at our preview... be prepared to be amazed. I predict several audience-jaw-dropping-moments!

A new music score is being finalized to add more magic to the spectacle. And to top it all, the grand old lady of Grey Street, fully refurbished, will be sparkling in all her finery. This is the panto to see this year. Get a move on I said, tickets are selling fast.

**the sage gateshead**

**hooray for hollywood**

John Wilson & his orchestra celebrates the movie musicals

Mon 5 December 2011

Ooh how Fabulous was to see this on tv when the proms were on. I nearly had a little wee when I found out about this. In ‘Hooray for Hollywood’, John Wilson, his orchestra and a cast of singers, celebrate the golden era of Hollywood musicals from the 1930s through to the 1960s.

John Wilson reconstructs beautifully, orchestrations from 42nd Street, Top Hat, Guys and Dolls, A Star is Born, Hello Dolly and many more. Guests include Annalene Beechey, Kim Criswell and Matthew Ford.

Take care for now and don't get the willies up ya for Halloween.

Mwah x

opheliaB.com

balls mansions
David Guetta has taken some inspiration from his French counterparts and is hitting up a Daft Punk vibe on this new track! It’s not lower case amazing it’s caps lock AMAZING!

Guetta is only the hottest DJ on the scene today and he’s making effective use of his friends in high places, churning out rad music. ‘Without You’ is a light, hands-in-the-air song lamenting a heavy subject and Usher’s vocals are incredible but if you’re single don’t listen to this tune because it’ll make you feel lonely! Sad face!

Bingo Players (Paul Baumer & Maarten Hoogstraten) have done it again. Cry (Just A Little) has everything you could ask for in a dance tune. It’s got an unbelievably catchy groove. This track should fly up the charts.

The video is disappointing though, the two fat ladies you would normally associate with bingo are nowhere to be seen!

If you loved Eric Prydz’s Call On Me then you’ll love this! Brenda Russell’s 2000 version of Piano In The Dark has been touched up and 2011 is now owning it! When I think of letting go, I know, I, I, I know, I, I, I know Brenda will love it!

Bingo Players (Paul Baumer & Maarten Hoogstraten) have done it again. Cry (Just A Little) has everything you could ask for in a dance tune. It’s got an unbelievably catchy groove. This track should fly up the charts.

The video is disappointing though, the two fat ladies you would normally associate with bingo are nowhere to be seen!

Laidback Luke is one of the world’s biggest DJ’s and his remix of Katy Perry’s TGIF is still rocking my show big time. He is responsible for some pretty big dance hits. In 2009 he remixed Robin S’ 1993 classic ‘Show Me Love’ with Swedish House Mafia’s Steve Angello.

Natural Disaster’ is the third single from Example’s No 1 album and omg it’s AMAZING. It’s so hedonistic I want a Jaeger Bomb immediately I hear it and I’ll buy you one too because you’ll need it! The guy in the video is #hot and no I don’t mean Example.

Una is pregnant. YAY! I am actually more excited about this than I was about Beyoncé being pregnant because if we’re lucky there’ll be another ginger on the planet. Lol! Long live gingers! We rock!

The 3rd single from The Saturdays’ new album is ‘Heart Takes Over’ written by Ina Wroldsen and Steve Mac. It starts like a ballad and then it goes into this crazy pitbull/afrojack style bounce and it’s so cool. Maybe more cool than All Fired Up! I hope Una gets her baby bump out in the video along with a cheeky wink! Excited Face!
GADD Youth
Group for 16-25 yrs.
www.gayadvisedarlington.co.uk
01325 355 551
Gay Advice Sunderland
Advice, support, counselling + training in central Sunderland. Safe + friendly space with personal advisors available for welfare + educational needs. Mon-Thurs 10-11.
gayadvicesunderland@hotmail.com
0191 510 1006
GAP
For all gay / bi young men 16-19. Meets weekly. Safe space to discuss coming out, gay men and the law, HIV, safer sex, relationships. Also social activities. 0191 233 1333 (Mesmac)
Gay & Bi Men’s Service
Support, info & advice in Durham. 07825 401 987 (Colin)
Gay & Lesbian
Alcoholics Anonymous
01670 354 576 (Tony - from 10pm)
Gay Men Tyneside
Social alternatives to the gay scene for gay / bi men 20+. Wednesday evenings in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere.
info@gay-men-tyneside.org.uk
www.gay-men-tyneside.org.uk
07857 837 319
Gay Outdoor Club
National organisation with regional and specialist groups - camping, cycling, swimming. Walks organised for many weekends in the UK and abroad.
www.goc.org.uk
Gay Police Association
Northumbria branch offers lgbt police officers, special constables and staff opportunities to network, mentor + support.
gpa@northumbria.pnn.police.uk
0191 233 1333
Gay & Lesbian
Law, safer sex, and relationship difficulties. 1-2-1 support + advice on topics such as the law, safer sex, and relationship difficulties. 01914835606 (Tony)
Gay & Bi Men’s Service
www解放(性)(与)权益.org.uk
0191 233 1333 (Mesmac)
HIV+ Men’s Group
Discreet service for HIV+ gay and bi men, meets weekly in central Newcastle. Offering support and social activities.
0191 233 1333 (Mesmac)
ID Young Trans
Meet others with similar issues in safe spaces. Confidence building activities for young trans people 16-29 yrs. Opportunities to exchange info + seek support. Monthly.
gayadvisedarlington.co.uk
07826 872 756 (Billigen)
01325 313 888 (Deb)
Iraqi LGBT
Raise public awareness and support refugees leaving Iraq because of persecution based on sexual orientation + gender identity. http://iraqilgbt.org.uk
L Birds
For women in Hartlepool aged 21+ Self esteem, confidence building + sexual health advice. Get involved in arts + crafts, or just socialise and meet new friends. Thurs 7-9pm
sarahhargabrielles@gmail.com
www.hartgables.org.uk
wb ‘Hart Gables LGBT’
01429 236 790
LBi Teesside
All LB bi women welcome.
mail@lgbtfed.com
Lesbian & Gay Parents
Coffee Group
For lesbian and gay parents, parents-to-be, or those considering parenthood. Meet for coffee and chats about all things paren related in Middlesbrough.
missingbrokeymile@gmail.com
Lesbifriends North East
Face to face support and friendship.
lesbifriendsne.live.co.uk
www.lesbifriendsne.btik.com
Lesbifriends North East ‘Out’
07773 558 776
LesBi-Sexy & Healthy
Website for LB women covering health, wellbeing + sex.
heidi.hansen@newcastle.gov.uk
www.lesbisexyandhealthy.co.uk
0191 277 2048
LGBT Middlesbrough
Development and activities-support for lgbt community in Middlesbrough
lesley.duggan@nvdw.org.uk
www.lbwm.co.uk
01642 803 607 (Lesley)
M-Tags
(M)borough Trans And Gay Soc Lgbt 18+ social group in Middlesbrough. Meets Anne’s Bar + quiz nights, day trips, fund-raisers + more. 7-9pm, 1st + 3rd Thurs every month.
m-tags@hotmail.co.uk
wb ‘M-TAGS’ (in groups)
07840 318 146
Married Men’s Support
2-1-1 support + advice on topics such as the law, safer sex, and relationship difficulties.
www解放(性)(与)权益.org.uk
www解放(性)(与)权益.org.uk
0191 233 1333 (Mesmac)
Maze
Independent ecumenical group in Durham. Meets monthly to celebrate + develop lgbt Christian fellowship through worship, music, art, discussion, meditation + food.
sally@crushtinternet.com or dsj.austin@hotmail.com
ARCH - Hate Crime Tyne + Wear
Report hate crime. If you or someone you know has been the victim of homophobic harassment in Tyne + Wear 2-4pm.
0800 032 32 88
(_Newcastle + North Tyneside - freephone)
0800 077 83 78 (Sunderland - freephone)
0191 433 2648 (Gateshead-local rate)
www.arch.org.uk
0191 232 2855
Club T @ GADD
TS + TV info, socialising + advice. 1-2-1 support. Open to students from other local units and colleges, and non-students.
0191 374 1772
Dykehikes
Walks for lesbians 18+ in + around north east.
0191 383 9750 (Clare)
Eastwood Women and Girls
Group for girls and women. Young lesbian one-to-one support available.
0191 273 4942
The Fed
Bringing together lgbt organisations to act as one regionwide lgbt voice. Regular meetings across region + volunteer opportunities.
mail@lgbtfed.com
Friday Men’s Group
Gay and bi men meet Friday evenings in Darlington, 7-9.30pm.
admin@gayadvisedarlington.co.uk
01325 355 551
Gay Advice Sunderland
Advice, support, counselling + training in central Sunderland. Safe + friendly space with personal advisors available for welfare + educational needs. Mon-Thurs 10-11.
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www.lesbifriendsne.btik.com
Lesbifriends North East ‘Out’
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Independent ecumenical group in Durham. Meets monthly to celebrate + develop lgbt Christian fellowship through worship, music, art, discussion, meditation + food.
sally@crushtinternet.com or dsj.austin@hotmail.com
a -z community listings

MESMAC North East
Promotes sexual and mental health. Offers HIV counselling, general support and support groups for gay / bi men.
0191 233 1333 (Newcastle)

Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) Newcastle
An inclusive church founded in LGBT community. Be yourself. Know God. Service 6.30pm St James’ URC, Northumberland Rd.
contact@mccnewcastle.org.uk
www.mccnewcastle.org.uk
FB ‘MCC Newcastle UK’
0191 5770 543 407

Monday Night Mix
@ Hart Garbles, Hartlepool. Participants determine evening’s activities. All welcome.
hartgarbles@gmail.com
www.hartgarbles.org.uk
01429 236 790 (Alan)

Morpeth LGBT Support
For bright nightly meetings.
07799 598 843

NAZ HIV & AIDS
National sexual health + HIV prevention, and support services for South Asian gay and bisexual men. Bengal, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Tamil and Urdu spoken.
0208 741 1879 (m-f 9.30-5.30pm)

NEOLN
Social group for lesbians aged 14+ across the northeast. Meets 3rd Sundays + more.
contact@neoln.co.uk
www.neoln.btck.co.uk
07539 489 214

Newcastle College LGBT Soc
Student-only LGBT group meets Mondays 6:30-7:30pm. Contact LGBT officer c/o J Union, Parisons Building.
0191 200 4525

Newcastle Council Tenants
Informal group for LGBT council tenant and leaseholders in Newcastle. Give your views on how we can improve services.
getinvolved@ynh.org.uk
0191 278 4391

Newcastle Panthers
Newcastle’s first proud all-gay football team. twins: new players.
newcastlepanthers@hotmail.co.uk
07528 038 981 (Russell)

Newcastle Ravens
For players + supporters of gay-friendly rugby. Meets Mondays 7.30pm at the Novo pitch, Benton, Newcastle.
info@newcastleravens.co.uk
www.newcastleravens.co.uk

Newcastle University
LGBT Society
Meets during term time only. Contact LGBT officers via Students’ Union.
lgbtsociety@newcastle.ac.uk
www.newcastleravens.co.uk
0191 239 3936

North East Gay Asylum Group
Helps support and open up social opportunities to North East asylum seekers.
neagag99@yahoo.com
07749 401 616

North East LGBT Parenting Group
Informal group for LGBT parents, or thinking of becoming parents.
mall溟@arwhite.co.uk
07837 608 564 (Anna)

NE Young Lesbian + Bi Women’s Group
Aged 16-25, lesbian, bi, or questioning. Talk in confidence. Meet weekly in central Ncl Issue-based group work + social activities.
07560 896 121

Northern Proud Voices
North east LGBT + friends choir. Meets Thursdays 7.30-9.15pm at St James URC. Ncl
northernproudfvoices@ymail.com
@ ‘Northern Proud Voices’
0191 296 3445

Northern Region Gender Dysphoria Service
Outpatient service for transsexual young people. Experience gender discomfort in the NE + N Cumbria. Provides assessment, psychosexual therapy, voice therapy + referrals for surgical treatment. GP referral required.
dawn.tiernan@ntv.nhs.uk
0191 569 9401

(9am-9pm Mon + Fri: 9am-5pm Tuesday. Answerphone at other times)

Northumbria University
LGBT Forum
0191 227 3737 (Students’ Union)

Northumbria College LGBT
Meets Wednesday afternoons for socialising and support - in conjunction with Trinity + Changermakers.
07790 885 171

Northumberland Young People
Support + social activities across county.
debswalker@trinityyouth.org.uk
www.tyrainbow.org.uk
01670 531 843 (office)

out! northeast
Free news, lifestyle and listings magazine for the north east LGBT communities.
out@outnortheast.com
www.outnortheast.com

Outpost
Support, advice, info + accommodation for young LGBT people aged 16-25.
admin@outpostproject.org
www.outpostproject.org
0191 281 0099

Parents Enquiry NE
Advice and support group (meets every 2 months) for parents of LGBT child.
pepstrings@supanet.com
www.parentsenqgey.co.uk
0191 455 2868 (Joan)
01642 370 230 (Jill) after 6pm

PLUS+
Group for young LGBT people under 25 yrs. Tuesdays 6-8pm in central Gateshead.
pam.douglas@stow.nhs.uk
0800 422 0200 (Press Option 5)

Positive Living
Support services for HIV+ people, partners, family and carers in Darlington / Durham.
admin@gayavidedarlington.com
01325 252 522

Pride Radio
Gay radio for the north east. Listen 24/7 via www.pridera.co.uk, iTunes Radio (in the Electronica section) + on smartphones through Tune In Radio.
info@pridera.co.uk
www.pridera.co.uk

R2B
Facilitated user-led LGBT youth group in Hartlepool on Wednesdays evening. Confidential non-judgemental 1-2-1 available.
ronnine.hartgables@google.com

REACH
Offers help to men + women who’ve been raped or sexually assaulted, and were aged 16 or over when the assault occurred.
reach@northumbria.pnn.police.uk
www.reachcentres.co.uk
0191 221 9222 (Newcastle)
0191 565 3725 (Sunderland)

True Vision
Hate Crime Teesside
Confidential incident reporting in Teesside. leesley.duggan@nmdva.uk.org
www.reportahatecrime.co.uk
0800 138 1625 (9pm)
01642 803 607 (Leesley)

Room4Durham
Meets every Tuesday 7-8pm for coffee + a chat. Then on to the Black Horse (top of Front St, Chester-le-Street). Family + friends welcome.
room4durham@gmail.com
07502 388 841 (lesbian)
07984 097 876 (gay man)

South Tyneside LGBT Group
lgbt@tce.ac.uk

STaG
Confidential sexuality + safer sex advice + info for gay & bisexual men in Gateshead + 5 Tyne + Tyneside. Scene alternatives, access to safer sex resources. Mondays from 7.30pm in central Gateshead.
stag@stow.nhs.uk
0800 422 0200

Street Level
Support group for HIV/AIDS affected people, partners, family + carers. Women-only sessions available.
0191 455 3027

Sunderland LGBT Society
Meets Wednesday evenings 7.30pm at the Bonded Warehouse.
su.lgbt-officer@sunderland.ac.uk
0191 514 5512

Teesside Positive Action
Support group for HIV/AIDS affected people, partners, family & carers. Also complementary therapies + education.
01642 254 598

Teesside Trans
@ Hart Garbles. Social support, activities + more. Meets Tuesdays 7-9pm.
01429 236 790

Teesside Uni LGBT Society
lgbt@tees-su.org.uk
01642 342 234 (lgbt officer)

TeesTrans
Listening ear, emotional + practical support for transgender, cross dresser + intersex people.
teestrans@sky.com
http://teestrans.blogspot.co.uk

TG North
Info, advice + support for transgender people in Tyneside, Northumberland, Durham areas. The group also aims to combat prejudice amongst the general population. Meets 1st Friday of month in Tynside.
jamieblamkenna@yahoo.co.uk
07716 775 102

Tipping The Pages
LB book/film group meets regularly in eateries in Newcastle area.
@ ‘tipping the pages’

TUC LGBT Network
Confidential help + support for LGBT people at work. Non-union members welcome. Meets Newcastle, 1st Friday each month.
tuc.org.uk/equality

Tynesyde Rape Crisis Centre
Info, support + counselling for women + girls who have experienced sexual violence. Also training, education + outreach.
tynesidercc.org.uk
0191 222 0272 (enquiries)
0191 232 9858 (helpline Tues+Thurs 6-8.30pm)

UNISON LGBT
Regional LGBT union members meet in Newcastle.
www.union.org.uk/out
0191 245 0806

WeAr Out!
Transgender group for all ages. Meets at TWA office, Bridge St, Sunderland for socialising + support + help + support 6-9.30pm, 2nd + 4th Mondays of each month.
info@trinityyouth.org.uk
www.trinityyouth.org.uk
07771 091 219 (10am-7pm all days)

Women4Women
Social group for LGBT women in northeast. Meets regularly in Newcastle.
women4womenuk@hotmail.com
www.women4womenuk.net
FB ‘womenforwomen northeast’
07772 718 232

Wow (Women On Women)
Based in Darlington, covering County Durham + North Yorkshire. Support, guidance, access to social activities + more. Meets Tuesdays 7-9pm.
07939 946 645
01325 462 418 (Sandy)

Out! Northeast / issue 28 / outnortheast.com
southern scene queen

Welcome to the autumn edition of your regular scene update from Middlesbrough and Darlington.

As most of you will know this time of year we say a big pink hello to all the new students in the region. And because of this, a lot of the venues in the area are gearing themselves up for some massive freshers bonanzas! So watch out for those won’t you. Meantime, here’s a quick rundown of what’s been happening and what’s coming up.

Over in Middlesbrough Blu & Basement threw a party to be proud of at their very own lgbt celebration of ‘Middlesbrough Pride 2011’. Queens from all over the north east flocked to this Satur-Gay spectacular to see live performances from some of the biggest drag names in the area. Drag legends Duchess Davinya and Honey Lingus graced the outdoor arena stage alongside X-Factor’s own Rachel Adedaji, who performed a medley of camp classics and her new upcoming single ‘Follow the DJ’!

Look out for Pop Boudoir’s Halloween cabaret special on 30 October and the annual drag ball 27 November. Penni’s pub quiz @ Blu is on 27 October and 24 November. Satur-Gay’s masquerade ball is 12 November and Tees valley pink awards 13 November.

Just around the corner from Blu, Carry On Campin’ host Olivia Del Rio and Digital DJ Chris Hayton joined forces as The Oak brought you ‘Carnival Rio’. This rainbow flagged street party spectacular lasted until the early hours of Sunday morning and showed the Middlesbrough community that we know how to party.

At Annie’s bar, Miss Jackie Daniels welcomed a plethora of artists to the stage with a cracking cabaret.

The Crown are gearing themselves up for a huge freshers’ party to welcome the new LGBT community, with a long list of amazing events, and guest appearances on Tuesdays!

Keep your eyes open for the Middlesbrough heat of Mr Gay UK at Satur-Gay on 8 October from 11pm.

Just down the rainbow highway to Darlington, Gaylicious at Joe’s Bar celebrated its 5th birthday! Following the festivities, Gaylicious and Pick & Mix at Harveys’ drag djs Gina Tonic & Paige Turner pulled up their tights, slapped on the pink war paint and set the records spinning.

Tess Tickle & The Dragettes over at Retro are finishing up their summer show and getting things ready for their winter spectacular coming soon!

As always Avalon are keeping things fresh with drinks offers and guest djs. Pick & Mix has recently welcomed Daisy Diamond back to the decks with her secret disco in Paige Turner’s absence, supported by one of Darlington’s much loved djs, Mr Matt Nevin!

Seen & Inside have recently welcomed Blu’s own Penni Tration to the dj box as she pressed play with a guest appearance in the conservatory! Resident dj Michelle Mattison keeps all the girls smiling in Seen and at Inside Out’s main room from 12am.

Darlington’s Mr Gay UK takes place at Joe’s Bar and Pick & Mix at Harveys. There’s an after party at Inside Out on Monday 10 October 2011 at 8pm.

Well m’dears that’s all for this issue, remember to add me on Facebook for more information on what’s happening in and around the scene! Don’t be jealous of my boogie!

Much love
Detox

by anita detox

out! takes...

darlington

(mondays only)

avalon
8 blackwellgate - 01325 469 977
mon - 8pm – midnight - release - guest djs
lindsey stephenson + gina tonic

b'teased @paddy o’shea’s
24 duke street - 01325 465 807
mon - 8pm - 4am - drag-a-oke - dj baby bear, violet brat, miss v, jackie daniels & guests
midnight cabaret - saline sheets, leena wellback, winner the spinner + guests

the golden cock
12 tubwell row - 07818 507 460
mon - 11am - 2am

inside out
beaumont street west
mon - midnight - 3.30am

joe’s bar
imperial bte, grange rd - 01325 464 642
monday - 7pm - midnight

pick & mix @ harvey’s
mon - 9pm - 2am - 2 rooms
djs matt nevin paige turner + guests

the quays
5 tubwell row - 01325 464 448
lgbt friendly all week with food served
sun - 12 noon - 3pm + mon-sat - 11am - 4pm
dj deszure first monday of each month

EVEN EVERY MONDAY NIGHT FROM 8PM TO 10.30PM IS

the quays
imperial bte, grange rd - 01325 464 642

queer

MODERN LIVELY BAR | RELAXED DINING |
HOME COOKED FOOD | REAL ALES |
LIBRARY FRIENDLY ALL WEEK |
FIVE DRINKS MON TO SAT HERES How

THE PERFECT PLACE TO START YOUR NIGHT!

retro
8 blackwellgate - 01325 469 977
mon - 8pm – midnight - campastic cabaret
miss less tickle + the dragettes

seen
beaumont street
mon - 10pm - 2am - does your mother know - dj michelle, ian bell + guests

st mary’s
raby terrace
mon - 8pm - 1am - karaoke with dj mike

tick me pink @ hogarth’s
market place - 01325 488 231
mon - 8pm - midnight - monthly gay night - live djs + drag hosts
### middlesbrough

#### annie’s bar
97 thethorpe road. 01642 564 735
Mon - 4pm - 11pm free pool
Tues - 8pm - late karaoke - chubbs
Wed - Thurs - 4 - midnight
Fri - 4pm - midnight - karaoke - peter
Sat - 8pm - midnight - jackie daniels
Sun - 8pm - midnight - sheila blige
Monthly appearances from kevin l

#### bijou @ harveys
Thethorpe road
Thurs (monthly) 9pm - 2am £1 entry
Avant garde night - drag dj ava divine

### newcastle

#### @one
1 marlborough cres. 0191 260 3841
4pm - 11pm

#### the bank
12 scotswood rd. 0191 230 3863
every day - 12 noon - 2am
Sun - greta - then ophelia balls
Then - raunchie rusty
Mon, thurs, fri, sat - from 9pm
cabaret - raunchie rusty
Tues - 5pm - 2am
Topkatz karaoke - miss kitty

#### boulevard
3-9 churchill street. 0191 250 7068
cabaret, dance + comedy

#### the dog
15 westmorland road. 0191 221 0775
Sun - thurs - 1pm - 23.30am
Fri - sat - 1pm - 3am
Pout with dj matt nevin
Sat - 8pm - midnight - o-jumpers £4
Satur-gay pre-party with dj matt nevin
Sun - free entry - 8pm - 3am
Poul with dj matt nevin
Sat - 8pm - midnight - o-jumpers £4
Satur-gay pre-party with dj matt nevin
Sun - free entry - 8pm - 3am
Pop boudoir with duchess daviya, daisy diamond + guests

#### basement
Albert road. 01642 220 040
Sat - 4pm - 3.30am
£6 / £4 o-jump before 1pm
Satur-gay - tees valley’s biggest gay nite

#### the crown
143 linthorpe road. 01642 255 311
Tues - 10pm - 2am free entry - basecamp

#### the oak
23 newport road. 01642 219 748
Tues - 9pm - late - free entry
Carry on campin’ - olivia del rio
Wed - 9 - late - free entry - q one - dj aaron
Fri - 9pm - 2am - rouge - dj james
Sat - 9pm - 23.30am - free entry
gay weekender - dj chris
Sun - 8pm - 2am - free entry
drag dj anita dolex - drinks roulette.

#### heaven’s above @ the yard
2 scotswood road. 0191 232 2037
Thurs - Mon 8.30pm - 2am

#### the loft
4 - 10 scotswood road. 0191 261 5348
Fri & Sat 8pm - 2am

#### secrets
78 scotswood road. 0191 272 5293
Mon - Thurs - 11am - 12.30am
Fri - 11am - 3am
Sat - 12noon - 3am
Sun - 2pm - 12.30am

### sunderland

#### arizona @the point
The point - holmeside. 0191 580 8680
Tues - from 8pm 11pm late
Mwah - ophelia balls + the lush crew

#### the black bull
309 high street west. 0191 567 5702
Tues - 7pm - late
Karaoke - jackie daniels + guests

#### chase
1-3 park lane. 0191 567 0753
Tues - 7pm - 1am - miss kitty + guests

#### diva
galen building - greenlce. 0191 567 0760
Tues - 11.30pm - 11am
Viva la diva - frenchy kiss

#### lola’s
17 vine place. 0191 564 1535
Tues - 8pm - 3am - the adventures of lola with dj gerard purvis

#### luma
15 - 17 derwent street. 0191 514 5111
Tues - 9pm - late
Luma-licious - vicky paris

#### rush
21 vine place. 0191 514 3800
Tues - from 8pm - 11pm - dj skippy

#### tatioke
12-14 westmoreland road. 0191 261 6824
Fri - Sat - 1pm - 3am
Sun - Thurs - 1pm - 12.30am

#### the black bull
309 high street west. 0191 567 5702
Tues - 7pm - late
Karaoke - jackie daniels + guests

#### chase
1-3 park lane. 0191 567 0753
Tues - 7pm - 1am - miss kitty + guests

### scene alternatives

#### casa bellini burlesque
Burlesque at The People’s Theatre. Heaton.
www.casabellini@burlesque.co.uk

#### lesbilicious comedy
Semi-regular comedy night for lesbian/bisexual women + their friends in Newcastle. Next night 27 October with Sageela Kersh, Lady Garden + Jen Brister at Liquid next to the Laing art gallery. Tickets £13 + booking fee (£10 before 13 October). For more info see www.lesbilicious.co.uk

#### milk
Funky house night for lesbians and their friends. Relaxed + friendly atmosphere. Sexy beats 8pm - 3am. Venue varies.

#### poke
Alternative lgbt music night in Newcastle. 8.30pm - 2am (£2 entry after 9pm) Facebook ‘poke newcastle’ or email funky-milk@live.co.uk

#### rock ‘n’ doris
Regular music and disco nights for lesbians, gay men and friends. Facebook ‘rock’n’doris’.

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If your life depends on it, contact venues direct as information changes frequently.
out! takes...
**aries**

21 March–April 19

You’re not in the mood for taking any prisoners at the moment, so those who cross you had better beware! Indecisiveness has recently become your pet hate, and someone’s silly dallying is set to incur your wrath. It does though mean you are highly focussed on completing your various tasks, but you’ll find that you function better in your own company rather than with others. This might cause one or two problems with colleagues at work or friends and relatives who all want a slice of your time. Be firm and stick to your guns and you’ll get the job done.

**taurus**

20 April–May 20

If you’re looking for love right now then plenty of opportunities will come knocking at your door very soon. A stranger is going to make an immediate impression on you, and the instant attraction could well be mutual. This could be the spark of a highly intense relationship that will grow stronger and more passionate as time passes. If you’re in a relationship, then sparks of passion could well be re-ignited, and you’ll find a stronger connection. You might even start making plans for a romantic getaway to spice things up even more!

**gemini**

21 May–June 20

An older member of the family might start to cause some unexpected problems, which could well rub you up the wrong way. Then again, a relationship with another older friend or acquaintance might take a turn for the better. Any problems you have are likely to get sorted out only after prolonged debate and discussion, so get set for some long evenings without any TV! Things should sort themselves out in the end though. Financially you might have hit a bit of a rough patch, but a lucky break might alter that soon.

**leo**

23 July–August 22

Financial pressures from every angle are taking centre stage at the moment, in spite of your best efforts at frugality. Any social activities will just seem to cost you an arm and a leg. Take extra care before opening your wallet if you are spending time with those who enjoy the finer things in life. If things do get out of hand you will be the first to beat yourself up over the extravagance. Perhaps you should just hide in a darkened room for a few weeks until the money worries have blown over!

**virgo**

23 August–September 22

If you are about to embark on a new project then your people skills will need to be at their sharpest. You will see the benefits instantly if you can charm a few key people. You’ll find too that your energy levels are very high, so putting in extra hours to get this idea off the ground won’t be a problem at all. Problem solving will come as second nature and colleagues will soon be looking to you for inspiration. With some hard work this new venture will go swimmingly, and you’ll be ready to take on the world!

**libra**

23 September–October 22

Some smalliggles are likely to be really playing on your mind, to the point of driving you mad! Your disheartened mood won’t have gone unnoticed though, and you might find yourself plagued with offers of support from well-meaning friends. Now, although it really may be time to call for help, just one well-chosen friend should be able to offer some sensible advice that will set you straight and restore your sanity. If you allow everyone to try and solve your problems then it will simply add to the confusion and mess up your head even more!

**sagittarius**

22 November–December 21

Try not to allow yourself to become distracted by trivial issues at work. Consider all the options before you dive in and try to prevent a potential disaster. You’ll find that by taking a balanced view you’ll be the first to beat yourself up over the wrong thing. If you have any money worries check for yourself, and be careful who you assume anything has or hasn’t been done - so it could prove fruitful!

**capricorn**

22 December–January 19

You might be going through a period of low self esteem - a problem if you’re looking to find your perfect partner. You might not even be aware when someone has eyes for you! At work, your confidence could have been hit by a project that went wrong and you’re desperately in need of a pick-me-up. Steer clear of the boss for a while, but talk to colleagues and tell them how you feel - you’ll be surprised just how understanding people can be, and your mood will lift even more when a work right out is planned!

**aquarius**

20 January–February 18

If you are setting up a joint financial venture then be cautious. Ensure everything is done properly and nothing is missed. Don’t assume anything has or hasn’t been done - check for yourself, and be careful who you trust - it might come back to bite you on the bum! If you have any money worries domestically then now is a good time to try and tackle them head on - draw up a budget, plan out your spending and stick to it! Asking the boss for a pay rise might not be a bad idea - your charm is working overtime at least - so it could prove fruitful.

**cancer**

21 June–July 22

Your familial ties are always strong, but sometimes less scrupulous relatives might try and take advantage of you. Be warned about any family member whose behaviour towards you changes in the next few weeks - they may have an ulterior motive. There has never been a more important time to assert yourself, and put a little comfortable distance between you and needy friends and relatives. At home, you and your partner will have some differences to iron out, and so your attentions will need to be focused in this area of your life right now.

**scorpio**

23 October–November 21

Your focus is on getting the jobs on your to-do list done, and to achieve this you’ve resolved to do it alone. Be careful how you exclude people who simply want to help. Change is in the air and you are keen to move forward, but not everyone will embrace this mood, and you might find yourself having to take time out to convince people of the benefits of a change in direction. You might find that your creative energies are better spent in a new leisure pursuit, where people are a little more open minded.

**pisces**

19 February–March 20

You have found someone you can trust with your secrets, and they have been a real support to you lately. You will be keen to demonstrate your gratitude - just don’t go overboard or they might get completely the wrong idea! But do let them know how much you value their friendship. Your whole mood will be lifted by having a new buddy, and your faith in lasting friendships will have been restored. Socially, you’ll feel more comfortable talking to friends and everyone will notice that you appear more confident and relaxed.
Boulevard on the Newcastle scene, celebrates its first birthday in November. Their amazing cast includes the glamorous face of Northern Pride, Miss Rory as host and compere, and drag legend Betty Legs Diamond, leads the cabaret and choreography.

We sent Ryan Houston to meet them, here’s what they had to say.

**What first got you involved in performing and drag?**

**Miss Rory (MR):** For me it happened by pure mistake. I met Gretta LaMore a Newcastle scene legend and she pushed me into putting a dress on and performing.

**Betty Legs Diamond (BLD):** I’ve been on the West End since I was 12. When I first started, the money for touring drag queens wasn’t good so I decided to put an act together. I went to a club and said book me. If I don’t get a standing ovation then you get a free show. They agreed and at the end of show they paid.

**Betty what inspires your choreography?**

**Betty Legs Diamond (BLD):** For me Boulevard has a certain intimacy and I can interact and get something from the audience.

**What would you say to people who say drag is just a man in a dress?**

**MR:** To many people it is. There’s a guy in a dress playing music behind a dj box in a club. But that kind of act certainly doesn’t last long. There’s a huge difference between a performer and a drag act.

**BLD:** Everyone has their own opinion. The main problem is that people tend to see a really poor act and we all get tarnished with the same brush.

**Betty if you had the chance to do things differently, would you?**

**I really don’t think I would change, there’s such a brilliant team here and I’ve been able to work with some amazing people like Miss Rory, who I honestly believe will be the next Lily Savage. And it’s just a brilliant thing to do, no night is ever the same.**

**What’s up next Miss Rory?**

The summer show runs until 30 October so plenty of time for readers to come and enjoy themselves. There’s a special performance on Halloween, 31 October, and our Christmas show, 17 November 2011 until 15 January 2012.

For more information visit www.boulevardnewcastle.co.uk
Unified Pride

If you work in public or community services, join local lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members to stamp out discrimination and campaign for change.

As part of UNISON you:
- can tackle discrimination
- are less likely to be sacked
- have access to free legal services
- have better working conditions
- could earn more.

To find out more call Alison
(LGBT Northern Region Lead)
on 0191 245 0843
or email: a.chappell@unison.co.uk
www.unison.org.uk/our

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