

QLGF

Newsletter of the Quaker Lesbian and Gay Fellowship

No. 108, February 2005

Living with integrity?

*QLGF Spring Gathering -
Lancashire College, Chorley
22nd - 24th April 2005*

QLGF Gatherings offer friendship, entertainment, challenge, worship, thought and fun in an environment that is uniquely LGBT and Quaker. This April we return to Lancashire College, Chorley, home of some of the largest desserts ever served at a QLGF Gathering, a warm and friendly venue in the north that we will have all to ourselves.

The theme is a challenge for most of us. Living with integrity - work, spirituality and sexuality. How do we live our lives to take account of these different aspects? We're asking for volunteers to kick off the discussion.

Here is Fox on how the life becomes the message. *"Be patterns, be examples in all*



countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one." But what can we say?

The booking form is enclosed. Bursary assistance is available so no-one should feel unable to come through financial need. If

you are reading this and you are not a member of the fellowship - that is easily remedied!

There will be as ever time for special groups, fellowship, chat... and dessert. We hope to see you soon. Please be aware the college is a slightly smaller venue that many we use, residential places are slightly fewer than normal, so book early!

www.qlgf.org.uk

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Dates for your Diary

LGBTQ etcetcetc London Friends. Westminster FMH, 8 Hop Gardens off St Martins Lane, 5-7pm, 9th April.

QLGF Spring Gathering. 22nd - 24th April 2005 at Lancashire College, Chorley, Lancashire - a gathering combining South and North.

Britain Yearly Meeting York. July 30th to August 6th 2005

Editorial -

In a message to teachers and parents everywhere, Stonewall says that if a school tolerates homophobic bullying, then it is a school where any child can be bullied. What starts with names may end in fists, or knives - and yet the bully is often at the hard end of violence or contempt in their own life. Peace has to be more than an armed truce in the playground as anywhere else.

Children may be bullied because they are different in many different ways. Many adults expect and tolerate bullying of children, but then they accept and tolerate many behaviours towards children they would never accept towards themselves.

As our rights as LGBT adults slowly advance, we can look around the world for more causes to support. (India, Africa, to name but two.) Or we can look in our own backyard. A world where bullying was dealt with, with respect to all involved; a world where no parent had to hide the truth from their child. Let it be so.

The Editors

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The newsletter of the Quaker Lesbian and Gay Fellowship is published four times a year. Editorial queries, suggestions, comments, letters and contributions are most welcome: send to Stephen and Sarah at 78 Upsdell Avenue, London N13 6JL. stephen@coxdodgson.freeserve.co.uk. All other communications with the Fellowship, including admin problems with the newsletter, changes of address, etc to Ruth, the National Contact, at 46 the Avenue, Starbeck, Harrogate, HG1 4QD. qlgfcontact@btclick.com.

Editors usually initial their contributions, the editors are Stephen (SC), Sarah (SD) and Nick (production and design guru - NJ). Editorials are the opinion of the editors, not the committee or Fellowship. Material is presumably the opinion of the person who wrote it, and cannot be assumed to be anyone else's. If you are reading this and you are not a member, why not join? Individual Quaker Meetings can also join as Supporting Meetings.

Ordinary membership:

Standard Rate: 12 Months: January - December: Single - £15; Double: £28; Reduced Rate Single - £7.50; Double: £14 (If joining after the 1st July, half the above prices apply)

Supporting meeting membership: £10

Christmas celebration at Harrogate

This was organised at Harrogate FMH by the LGCM and John H of QLGf. However John was unable to be there due to his brother's wedding, (fairly good excuse John!) So I was asked to help in the organisation, I had to say 'no' to big time help due to time commitments, as we were trying to get some Quakerish input into the event I suggested asking the Elders of our Meeting for their support. They accepted without hesitation and so 2 elders attended as well, neither were gay themselves, but coincidentally both had gay offspring.

I arrived to help welcome and set up when the LGCM organisers arrived. It was the first time they had used our Meeting house and were pleased with the accommodation and the warm feeling that is present, those who came to the national gathering a couple of years ago will testify to this.

I was asked to read a poem, I managed it although sight reading is not my forte, and the 2 elders were also given something to read, and asked to give a short introduction to Quaker worship. Each member was asked to read something during the 45 min celebration. It ran rather like a service and included accompanied and unaccompanied (not much carol music in the FMH!) carols. In all 12 people were there, coming from all over the north of England and 1 from Scotland!!!! The readings were from the Bible with poems from both secular and non-secular sources. The form of service began with the annunciation to the exit from Bethlehem with the infant Christ.



As a rule I don't enjoy non-Quaker services, finding the room for silence short and too guided. However there were a couple of periods for contemplation, during which I was called to minister. Also there was a guided meditation and visualisation which was quite novel!

After the close of worship I was asked to explain Quakerism and Quaker worship. We were able to ask questions about the LGCM meetings which were a mixture of worship and social gatherings. The eclectic worship allowed those of different Christian backgrounds to be included. I had taken along QLGf material and old newsletters, publications, packs and membership forms.

The bring and share meal afterwards was really pleasant, even though the elders had to leave early and so I was questioned on Quaker theology(!?) and experience. My daughter appeared after a while from a shopping trip in town and was drawn quite naturally into the conversations, finding the, often, profound discussion about our faith journies, experiences and theology uplifting and interesting.

We finished the event after tea and left having learnt about each other and our faiths and practices. I feel that outreach for both Quakers and QLGf had happened and was valuable for me and the other participants.

I should like to include the following poem which one of the participants read, we used it in our all age worship the following day.

Ron Klug wrote, "*Joseph's Lullaby*," which appeared in the *Decision* Magazine of December 1973. In this poem he has Joseph speaking to the infant Jesus. It is the expression of sheer joy.

Sleep now, little one. I will watch while you and your mother sleep.

I wish I could do more.

This straw is not good enough for you.

Back in Nazareth I'll make a proper bed for you

of seasoned wood, smooth, strong, well-pegged,

A bed fit for a carpenter's son.

Just wait till we get back to Nazareth.

I'll teach you everything I know.

You'll learn to choose the cedarwood, eucalyptus and fir.

You'll learn to use the drawshave, axe and saw.

Your arms will grow strong, your hands rough--like these.

You will bear the pungent smell of new wood

and wear shavings and sawdust in your hair.

You'll be a man whose life centers on hammer and nails and wood.

But for now, sleep, little Jesus, sleep.

www.lesandhelga.com/sermons/1999/122098.html

Sierra Leone: Lesbian Rights Activist Brutally Murdered

FannyAnn Eddy, courageous lesbian rights activist known across Africa, and founder of the Sierra Leone Lesbian and Gay Association, has been brutally murdered (Sept 28th). In December it was reported that Sierra Leone police held a man on suspicion of the crime.



Eddy founded the Association in 2002 and addressed the UN Human Rights Commission in April 2004. Her speech is below.

“FannyAnn Eddy was a person of extraordinary bravery and integrity, who literally put her life on the line for human rights,” said Scott Long, director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights Project at Human Rights Watch. ***“Again and again, within her country’s borders and beyond, she drew attention to the harassment, discrimination and violence lesbian and gay people face in Sierra Leone. Now, she has been murdered in the offices of the organization she founded, and there is grave concern that she herself has become a victim of hatred.”***

(FannyAnn Eddy’s speech to the UN Human Rights Commission)

“I would like to use this opportunity to bring to your attention the dangers vulnerable groups and individuals face not only in my beloved country, Sierra Leone, but throughout Africa.

My focus of interest is the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community, which most African leaders do not like to address. In fact, many African leaders do not want to even

acknowledge that we exist. Their denial has many disastrous results for our community.

We do exist. But because of the denial of our existence, we live in constant fear: fear of the police and officials with the power to arrest and detain us simply because of our sexual orientation. For instance, recently a young gay man was arrested in Freetown for being dressed as a woman. He was held in detention for a full week without any charge being brought. Though I personally was able to argue with the authorities to release him, most people like him would have been held indefinitely because there are very few of us who are able to speak up.

We live in fear that our families will disown us, as it is not unusual for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people to be forced out of their family homes when their identity becomes known. Many people who are forced from their homes because of their sexual orientation or gender identity are young with nowhere else to go, and thus become homeless, have no food, and resort to sex work in order to survive.

We live in fear within our communities, where we face

constant harassment and violence from neighbours and others. Their homophobic attacks go unpunished by authorities, further encouraging their discriminatory and violent treatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

When African leaders use culture, tradition, religion and societal norms to deny our existence they send a message that tolerates discrimination, violence and overall indignity.

This denial has especially disastrous results in the context of HIV/AIDS. According to a recent research study published in December 2003 by the Sierra Leone Lesbian and Gay Association in collaboration with Health Way Sierra Leone, 90% of men who have sex with men also have sex with women, either their wives or girlfriends. Of that group, 85% said that they do not use condoms.

Clearly the message of sexual education and transmission of HIV is not delivered to these men in Sierra Leone. It is clear that many men get married not because that is what their inner being desires, but because that is what society demands—because they live in a society which forces them to fear for their freedom or their lives because of their sexual orientation. The silence surrounding them - the refusal to acknowledge their existence or address their health care needs—endangers not only them but their wives and girlfriends.

Yet, despite all of the difficulties we face, I have faith that the acknowledgement by

The Plot Against America - Philip Roth

the Commission of the inherent dignity and respect due to lesbian, gay people can lead to greater respect for our human rights.

As evidenced by the liberation struggle in South Africa, where the constitution bars discrimination based on sexual orientation, respect for human rights can transform society. It can lead people to understand that in the end, we are all human and all entitled to respect and dignity.



Silence creates vulnerability. You, members of the Commission on Human Rights, can break the silence. You can acknowledge that we exist, throughout Africa and on every continent, and that human rights violations based on sexual orientation or gender identity are committed every day.

You can help us combat those violations and achieve our full rights and freedoms, in every society, including my beloved Sierra Leone."

Eds add that a web search noted that a new report from police in Sierra Leone states that contrary to original reports, forensic examination has shown that FannyAnn was not sexually assaulted and that she died by strangulation.

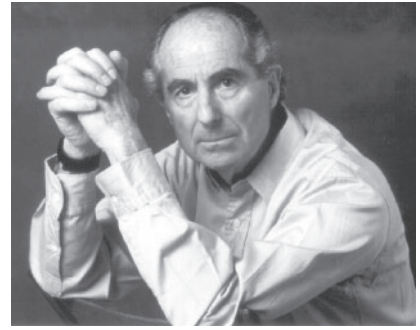
Philip Roth is one of those great authors I have always ignored (apart from four pages of *Portnoy's Complaint*, before I gave up). However, his latest novel is based on an intriguing premise.

What would have happened if America's Republicans had nominated Charles Lindberg for President in 1940? Could the all-American charismatic aviation hero, anti-Semite and admirer of Hitler, have beaten Roosevelt, by convincing Americans they could stay out of the war?

Roth assumes so, and follows the slow slide of the US into tyranny through what happens to a small group of hardworking Jewish families in Newark, NJ. Flee, resist, accommodate, keep your head down ... But since we do not know exactly where Roth is taking us, we don't know what is over-reaction to the unfolding tale.



To read Isherwood's Berlin novels or *The Handmaid's Tale* throws up the same questions. How can you tell when your



society is sliding into fascism? How strong are the unspoken conventions which keep us fairly free and how will they bend under pressure?

How will we react when put to the test? Fight or flight? And a certain amount of healthy paranoia about these things is useful when you belong to a minority likely to be found undesirable by any fascist state. (If I can say so, it is a very Jewish book. Blacks and civil rights get a few passing mentions and there is a mention of a 'fairy'. But it is pretty much about what it means for the Jews.)

It conveys the America of the Thirties and Forties well... gives a sense of why FDR was venerated by many... and is gripping until perhaps the last couple of chapters, which somehow disappointed.

But whether publishing a novel about Republican Fascism, and lauding FDR, is a sly political commentary on Bush... and what lies behind the smiles of some of his supporters... who can say? **SC**

Quotes

"What is freedom of expression? Without freedom to offend, it ceases to exist."

Salman Rushdie

The calling of a cuckoo - not just an autobiography

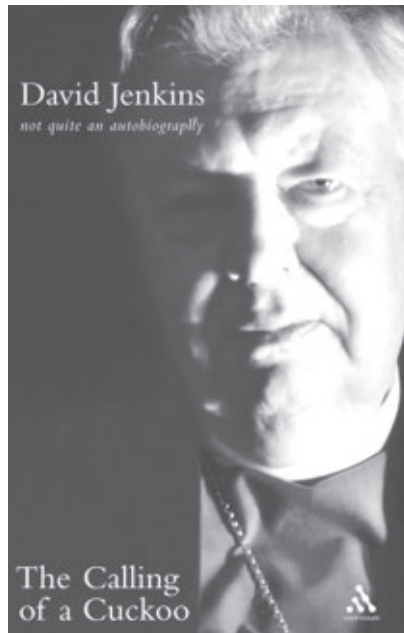
David Jenkins, former Bishop of Durham

This book is partly an autobiography, heavily concentrating on the handful of times David Jenkins hit the headlines, partly a manifesto for the future of his faith. It does put his side of the story, sometimes playfully, sometimes with sharp wit. Jenkins is likeable, occasionally annoying.

His central metaphor is that the life of faith is a pilgrimage, where we worship, work and question together, where no strand of Christian thought can ever pretend to have the whole answer. But you can also see his academic side... Jenkins often treated the world and the mass media like the seminar room, where you can throw out a few paradoxes and sit back and watch the fun. He was frequently naïve (his word), sometimes under-briefed, and rarely, alas, part of some organised liberal conspiracy to change the church.

A quote on homosexuality gives the style: ***"It is hard to conceive of a more emotive mix than one which combines questions about the legitimate use of the Bible and the proper use of one's genitals."***

Jenkins dared to use his enthronement sermon to suggest that Christianity might have something to say about the miners strike - and was vilified as a result. (What he had to say was very middle of the road, much more the centrist 'option for the poor' than endorsement of the class struggle.) He was constantly perplexed that his opportunity to speak to the nation about his faith brought thousands of supportive letters



(from outside the church or its margins) but primarily criticism from within it. Those who disagreed with him thought that attacking him was more important than reaching out to the millions to whom the church seems totally irrelevant.

Again and again he returns to his themes, that the institutions have become inward looking and backward looking, that the church is not just about the hyper-religious, that we can trust God with a bit of doubt and debate.

Certainty is neither Christian nor Biblical - the Bible is the story of those wrestling with uncertainty. David Jenkins was after all the only bishop in the last twenty years who could get the Resurrection into the papers, and indeed, famously, debated ***'in all the pubs of Rosyth'***.

DJ was the Bishop who said ***'controversial things'***. As I wasn't very theologically minded when it all happened, it was interesting to read what he actually said and now believes.

He has no time for the Virgin Birth, but clearly believes in the Resurrection. (He believes God acted decisively in history to allow Jesus to survive death... so arguments about whether the body got up and walked seem a side issue.) He never described the Resurrection as a conjuring trick with bones.

He appears to think in a Trinitarian way. It is hard to say where he stands on all the other miracles. Sometimes he has the professional theologian's ability to be cloudy without even using long or technical words.

So where is he now? His faith in God was somewhat challenged by ***'the certainty wallahs'*** but is now re-energised. The two chapters on his core personal faith and some thoughts on the world post September 11th are interesting, though I'd want to argue with some of his conclusions.



He says all faiths have to understand the profound changes of the last four hundred years, where human knowledge and potential have so vastly expanded. He sets out the irony that this expansion has seen great tendencies to reduce the scope and glory of human beings, say to the operation of ***'selfish'*** genes, or as mere makers of price transactions in a market.

He's also down on the church he failed to change.

"I found myself more and more

forced to the conclusion that the Church of England, in its current quarrelsome and institutionally obsolescent state is just not fit or able to share, spread and serve the Christian gospel of the future which is offered to humanity by the God of the Bible, who is the God known in and through Jesus Christ and the God active in the Holy Spirit."

But few of us have the

resources or aptitude for a purely solitary pilgrimage. The institutions and the traditions provide support and challenge and spiritual resources, whether this is Anglicanism, Judaism or the Society of Friends.

They also tend to become fossilised, and obsessed with internal process, and they are no more immune from human

failures and stumbles than anything else.

From a comfortable retirement David Jenkins can write books and perhaps contribute to a debate. What is the future for the institutions of faith though, or us without them? I am already re-reading the book and finding much to debate.

SC

A cure for homosexuality - a new low?

The British Medical Journal airs new, and appalling, allegations of crimes under apartheid. From 1969 to 1987, psychiatrists of the South African Defence Force were involved in brutal attempts to 'cure' homosexual conscripts. (There was universal conscription for whites after 1967.)

Threatened with prosecution if they did not comply, gay conscripts were admitted to a psychiatric ward, where the genuinely mentally ill were lumped together with gays, political prisoners, drug users and conscientious objectors. Originally focused on men, lesbians were later also admitted.

You will not be surprised to hear that 'treatment' included aversion therapy, that it did not work, and that suicides during and after treatment were common.

What takes this to new levels of brutality and stupidity is, the BMJ alleges, that approximately 900 gay men and lesbians were given gender reassignment surgery against their will. The

article points out that this is the only known example of this surgery being carried out in a military hospital. Those attacked in this way were given new identity documents, discharged from the military and told to cut themselves off from family and friends. Apparently the doctors involved considered that if people wanted to sleep with their own sex, then they needed to be gender-reassigned.



Dr Strangelove: Aubrey Levine conducted bizarre experiments on gays and lesbians while he was a colonel in the military

Even for this period the ignorance and confusion between homosexuality and trans-

sexualism was remarkable. To be clear the gay conscripts didn't want to change sex. Nor was it done well... the surgery was not always completed and expensive hormone regimes were needed to maintain appearance. Even by Western standards at the time this was professional and ethical misconduct of cosmic proportions.

Rumours of this particular crime against humanity circulated for years but were only confirmed by the Truth & Reconciliation Commission.

In 1995 the Medical Association of South Africa issued a public apology for past wrongdoings. However, according to the BMJ *"the South African Society of Psychiatrists does not concede that major abuses were perpetuated from within its ranks."* The author calls for the offenders to be brought to justice and says psychiatry in South Africa remains compromised. It ranks with the abuse of medicine in the Nazi era, and the psychiatric abuse of political dissidents in the Soviet Union.

SC

It's Official: Lesbian couples raise well-adjusted teenagers

Teenagers raised by lesbian mothers show no developmental differences compared to those brought up by heterosexual parents, according to a large national study from the US.

Previous research has focused mainly on younger children and found no significant disparities in child welfare between same-sex and heterosexual families. But few studies have been done on adolescents, who some researchers think may be more prone to - or conscious of - discrimination against their families. Others have speculated whether a teens' own sexuality is affected by that of their parents.

"There's been this debate about whether being raised by single-sex couples is good or bad for children," says Stephen Russell, a sociologist at the University of Arizona in Tucson, US. ***"We would call into question suggestions that growing up with single-sex parents is somehow problematic."***

12,000 interviews

Russell and colleagues Charlotte Patterson and Jennifer Wainright at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, US, came to this conclusion after sifting through interviews from 1995 with about 12,000 US teenagers and their families. The teens were part of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, the largest and most comprehensive study of the age group in the US.

"This is the best available evidence to date about how adolescent children fare in families with single-sex parents," Russell said.

The researchers found 44 teens being raised by two women in a ***'marriage-like'*** relationship. Only six teens reported living with two gay men, so male single-sex families were excluded from the study. Each teen studied was matched with a counterpart from a heterosexual family, who shared the same sex, age, ethnicity, adoption status and family income, among other factors.



Same-sex attractions

The researchers found no differences between the two groups in terms of depression, anxiety, self-esteem and school grades. Exactly the same proportion of both groups also reported having had sex (34%). But while a previous study suggested children of gay parents were more likely to consider homosexual relationships, this study was unable to provide such information because so few teens reported same-sex attractions and romances.

The single most important predictor of the teens' well being, the study showed, was

their relationship with parents - regardless of family type. ***"What's really important is the quality of the relationship,"*** Russell told New Scientist.

As a result, the authors write that their findings ***"provide no justification for limitations on child custody or visitation by lesbian mothers"*** and ***"do not support the idea that lesbian and gay adults are less likely than others to provide good adoptive or foster homes."*** Russell says future studies could see how the same group of teens fared in young adulthood.

Child Development
(vol 75, p 1886) 15 Nov 2004
Maggie McKee: NewScientist.com

Quotes ...

"Girls who put out are tramps. Girls who don't are ladies. This is, however, a rather archaic usage of the word. Should one of you boys happen upon a girl who doesn't put out, do not jump to the conclusion that you have found a lady. What you have probably found is a Lesbian."

Fran Lebowitz

"You would think that those who are always talking about family values would want to create an environment of permanent relationships for people of the same sex. But they're not advocating family values. They're advocating their values. ... I still get this * full-time ... They just are haters, period."***

Former San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown to The Advocate.

Acknowledging that it has no authority to speak on behalf of its affiliated meetings, the Central Committee of Friends General Conference saw its way clear to approve a powerful minute on our experience with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer Friends. One hundred and fifty Friends attended the four day annual sessions of FGC's Central Committee [October 2004]. Everyone of our affiliated yearly Meetings from Alaska and Canada to Florida, plus three un-affiliated but unprogrammed yearly meetings - Pacific, North Pacific and Iowa Conservative were well represented.

"Our experience has been that spiritual gifts are not distributed with regard to sexual orientation or gender identity. Our experience



has been that our Gatherings and Central Committee work have been immeasurably enriched over the years by the full participation and Spirit-guided leadership of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender queer Friends. We will never go back to silencing these voices or suppressing these gifts. Our experience confirms that we are all equal before God, as God made us, and we feel blessed to be

engaged in the work of FGC together."

Eds note: there are various broad groups of North American Friends, FGC is the one containing more liberal and unprogrammed meetings. This is from the newsletter of FLGBTQC - Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns.

Who are Christian Voice?

Who are Christian Voice, the outfit which organised the protest against Jerry Springer the Opera? Accepting a variety of views is possible on that musical outing, here are some quotes from the ChristianVoice website.

"This Briefing Paper is written to support the current preference for male heirs in the succession to the Crown. From a Biblical and Constitutional perspective we argue that any departure from the status quo would prejudice the legitimacy of the monarchy."

"In India today, most human sacrifice is carried out in secret to appease Kali, another form of the

goddess Parvathi." (from Diwali - a Parent's Guide. Which argues schools should not celebrate Diwali and parents should withdraw their children if the schools do.)

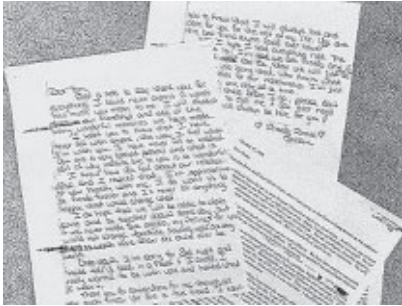


"What does your local Chief Constable say about 'Gay Pride' and 'gay rights'? We list below replies from the police to a letter

from the National Director of Christian Voice dated 08/07/2003 to all the Chief Constables of England and Wales. The letter complained about policemen and women marching in full uniform in the London Gay Pride March 26/07/2003 and urged Chief Constables to stop actively recruiting homosexuals."

Their last public demonstration seems to have been an outing to Bournemouth to celebrate the life of a homophobic evangelical street preacher.

Your Letters



Dear Stephen and Sarah,
We download an article every week from the Glasgow Herald written by Ron Ferguson. He is a retired minister of the Church of Scotland. We got to know him when he was at the Cathedral in Kirkwall, Orkney. He has now retired to Orkney. The 23rd of December article was titled *'Please don't call me a Christian.'*

It concluded as follows:

"In all the Christmas messages to reach the electronic croft, I was particularly touched by a Franciscan blessing:

'May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half truths and superficial relationships, so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people, so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and to turn their pain to joy.

May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done.'

It was sent to me by a Christian same-sex couple who have been together for more than 30 years, and whose commitment puts me to shame. Of course, in the year of Our Lord 2004, they have to live without a church blessing, while those who bless nuclear warheads in the name of the prince of peace have seats at the high table. 'Christianity'? Thanks, but no thanks."

*Robert and Susan
(who know the editors well and who have just subscribed to QLGF!)*

Married lesbians shock India

Two women, a Sikh and a Hindu, have shocked conservative India by leaving their family homes, marrying in an unofficial Hindu ceremony, and now proclaiming their intention to live together.

They have threatened to kill themselves if their families do not accept the union. The scandal has shocked the Sikh city of Amritsar and led to widespread debate about the possibility of same sex unions.

The women have managed to disobey their families, marry across the religious divide, and be lesbians, which is quite a lot of taboos for one elopement.

The London Times reports: Raju Singh, 25, a Sikh, and Mala Kumar, 18, a Hindu, had long talked about getting married, but their families never believed that they were serious, regarding

their affections as a girlish crush. That was until the two women disappeared from their families a fortnight ago and then telephoned to tell them that they had married.



Tanuja Chauhan and Jaya Verma: another couple whose marriage upset locals

The families were stunned. *"We were shocked when we came to know that they had fled. We were aghast when they informed us that they had got married. Is this what we call kalyug?"*

Raju's mother, Ranjit said, referring to the Hindu apocalypse. Both families

complained to the police, asking them to arrest the recalcitrant pair. India does not recognise lesbian marriage (and the *'wedding'* appears to have no religious authority).

The women were detained but a magistrate has ruled that no laws have been broken, and that they must be freed. Male homosexual acts are illegal in India under colonial law but the law is silent on lesbianism. The spirit of Queen Victoria reigns it seems.

The women are now campaigning for legalisation of same sex marriage. According to the Times, Raju has declared herself unconcerned by society's scorn. *"If you start worrying about what other people think then you can never get on with your own life,"* she said.

Non-geographical membership ruled out?

A discussion paper on the processes of Quaker membership (available from the Britain Yearly Meeting website) proposes that membership should continue to be purely geographically based. The working party looking at membership issues had considered membership for some individuals being held nationally or by some other group. However they found little evidence of demand for

this, and also expressed concern as to whether meaningful oversight or mutual commitment could be expressed by such an arrangement. They did say that other Quaker networks (such as special interest groups like QLGF) could perhaps be involved in processes of membership.

The group was not asked to look at whether we need membership or what member-

ship meant. However they do propose a shift from thinking about the process to the principles, which should allow Monthly Meetings more freedom in how they consider applications. There is more emphasis on seeing involvement with Quakers as a process which requires support throughout, - (rather focussing in on writing that letter.)

SC

More joy in heaven...?

Sparks are set to fly at the next meeting of the British Humanist Association, following the revelation of a leading atheist, Professor Anthony Flew, that he does believe in God after all.

"I am a member of various humanist and secular groups and do not intend to resign from them. If they want to expel me, good luck to them"he tells me. ***"The matters***



about which they campaign seem to me of no importance."

Over to the BHA. ***"Professor Flew is a member of our humanist philosopher group. If he came to***

the next meeting, I think there would be a rather lively discussion. I don't think any other member would agree with him."

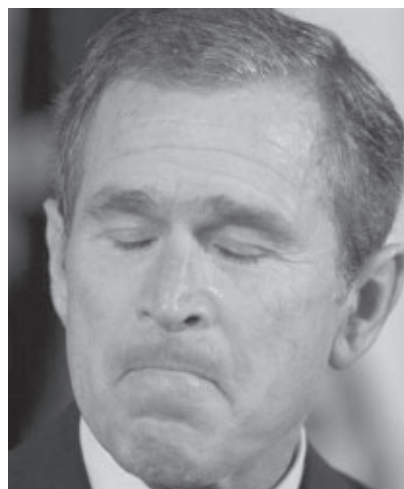
Independent

An interview with Professor Flew appeared in the Winter 2004 issue of "Philosophia Christi" and is downloadable at: <http://www.biola.edu/antonyflew/flew-interview.pdf>

What does Bush actually think?

"I don't think we should deny couples rights to a civil union, a legal arrangement, if that is what a state chooses to do. I view the definition of marriage different from legal arrangements that enable people to have rights. And I strongly believe that marriage should be defined as a union between a man and a woman. Now, having said that, states ought to have the right to pass laws that enable people to have rights like others."

Quoted by Wayne Besen in the Winter 2004 ***Gay & Lesbian Humanist***, who shows that Bush opposes hate crime legislation,



supports Texas' sodomy laws and called for a federal amendment to the constitution banning same sex marriage.

This is a really interesting

position (scary if held by such a powerful person.) He does not object to any civil rights for lesbian and gay couples provided they are confined within a state, and provided it is not called marriage. Do his 40 million evangelical backers realise that he cannot, therefore, really, believe that gay relationships are morally wrong?

However Bush seems a model of lucid good sense compared with some of the people elected on the Republican ticket...

Hampstead Monthly Meeting: Civil Partnership Act 2004

Background

In 1999, Friends House Meeting agreed a document setting out procedures for Meetings for Commitment for people who were excluded from marrying in meeting for legal reasons. These procedures were endorsed by Hampstead Monthly Meeting.

In 2001, the QL Committee on Eldership & Oversight published Committed Relationships. This booklet viewed committed same-sex relationships in the context of Quaker Faith & Practice and our testimony to equality and encouraged meetings to offer Meetings for Commitment when the relationship has been tested for clearness in the usual way.

Committed Relationships makes clear that where two people in a committed relationship are eligible to marry, they should consider this their first option because of the legal advantages marriage provides.

In November 2004, the Civil Partnership Act was given royal assent by the Queen. It will take effect in about 12 months time.

Same-sex couples in a committed relationship who choose to register, will gain equality with married couples, in such areas as:

- Inheritance of property and tenancy
- Inheritance tax exemption
- Inheritance of pension rights
- Next-of-kin status (important for hospital treatment and visiting rights)
- Immigration rights for non-British partners
- Equal treatment for Social Security benefits

When this Bill was debated in the House of Lords, Baroness Scotland said:



"In preparing for this Bill, I was struck by the following words of Martin Luther King: 'Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice. Justice at its best is love correcting everything that stands against love'."

The Civil Partnership Act will allow same-sex couples to register their commitment in a Registry Office, in the same way as opposite-sex couples can register their marriage there. As the law stands, it will not allow same-sex couples to register their commitment in a church or meeting for worship, as opposite-sex couples can.

Concern

- I hope we might wish to offer registration in a meeting for worship to same-sex couples, as we do for opposite-sex couples, so they can make their commitment before God and in the care of the meeting.
- I hope we might bring this concern to the attention of BYM.
- Chapter 16 of Quaker Faith & Practice and Committed Relationships should be revised to reflect the change in the law.

*Dugan C
5 January 2005*

Canadian Civil Marriage Act

Selected parts of the address by Prime Minister Paul Martin. February 16, 2005

I rise today in support of Bill C-38, the Civil Marriage Act. I rise in support of a Canada in which liberties are safeguarded, rights are protected and the people of this land are treated as equals under the law ...

This bill protects minority rights. This bill affirms the Charter guarantee of religious freedom. It is that straightforward, Mr. Speaker, and it is that important ...

The facts are plain: Religious leaders who preside over marriage ceremonies must and will be guided by what they believe. If they do not wish to celebrate marriages for same-sex couples, that is their right. The Supreme Court says so. And the Charter says so ...

When we as a nation protect minority rights, we are protecting our multicultural nature. We are reinforcing the Canada we value.

We are saying, proudly and unflinchingly, that defending rights - not just those that happen to apply to us, not just that everyone approves of, but all fundamental rights - is at the very soul of what it means to be a Canadian.

Full text at: http://www.parl.gc.ca/38/1/parlbus/chambus/house/debates/058_2005-02-16/HAN058-E.htm#SOB-1132346

In a packed programme tonight ...

Stories which are worthy of a look:

The Spanish Catholic Bishops have come out for the condom as a way of fighting AIDS.



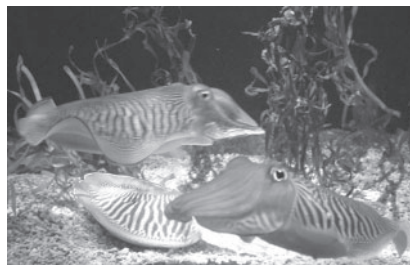
This is in direct contradiction to the official Vatican line which is not only that condoms are sinful but that the HIV virus can magically pass through the condom, and that therefore they don't work (a view not held by any serious scientist.) Spain's Federation of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transsexuals welcomed the new thinking as '*absolutely inevitable*' and hoped the Catholic Church elsewhere would follow suit.



There is a gay-majority High School in New York, to which students persistently bullied for their sexuality can transfer. There is a debate about whether this is creating a ghetto or a realistic response to the problem. Should make the prom interesting. This report includes the (believable and positive) claim of an average coming out age of 15 as opposed to 25 ten years ago.



Italy is to unveil a memorial to homosexual victims of the Holocaust. The black plaque surmounted by a pink triangle, near the site of the only concentration camp in Italy, is the first public recognition of the issue. The local council turned down the idea in 2003 but unanimously endorsed it this year. According to Rudiger Lautman, professor of sociology, at the University of Bremen, gays were supposedly only sent to concentration camps to be '*re-educated*', but in practice, were treated so brutally two-thirds of them died.



On a lighter note, cross-dressing cuttlefish. "*Diminutive Giant Australian Cuttlefish males have taken to pretending to be female to elbow out larger love rivals, science magazine Nature has revealed*", according to BBC Online.

Smaller males cannot cut it by directly confronting the big macho '*jock*' cuttlefish. But by changing their colour and hiding their '*masculine fourth arms*', they can sneak up on females and uh make their move. Unless the big males make a move on them ... which happens quite a lot.

The first transsexuals will have their applications to change sex legally considered this year. Procedures have been announced, with the first six months being a fast track process for those who have lived at least six years in their preferred sex. The major flaw is perhaps the c. 100 transsexuals who will have to decide between divorcing their current partner, and legal recognition of their status. The Act requires the prevention of same sex marriage even against the wishes of the parties involved, a proposal Quakers have opposed. Civil partnership is however available.

(The Talmud provided for a whole category of marriages that were not permitted, but if one happened, the marriage could not be annulled, to protect the partners and their children.)

From various US car bumper stickers ...

- *My sexual orientation? Horizontal, usually.*
- *I can't even think straight.*
- *Let's get one thing straight, I'm not.*
- *Closets are for clothes.*
- *Homophobia is a social disease.*
- *Pink Sheep of the Family*
- *Equal rights are not special rights.*
- *Straight But Not Narrow*
- *I'm not a lesbian but my girlfriend is.*
- *Gender is a sex toy.*

Quote ...

The closet is an awful place to die.
Author Unknown

One hundred per cent straight?

Why does society make us we feel obliged to be 100% heterosexual? Why are we taught that we should not indeed, must not have any feelings for our own sex? The worst thing about this is that in making people feel odd, unloved and unwanted in having feelings for their own sex, the trap is set for those who don't feel 100% heterosexual to feel that they are apart and should repress their feelings to *'act like everyone else'*.

There are some who play the *'Quentin Crisp role'* and have an eccentric camp life-style, but why should people have to be one extreme or the other? I have seen very nice lads decide to adopt a very camp gay lifestyle, which I sensed was due to their feelings of rejection by their families for the lad's uncertainty over who or what they fancied. The advice to *'keep an open mind'* seems wise as being forced to make a choice before you are mature enough to know what you want is likely to lead to future doubts. A career choice made at school can be bitterly regretted in later life, ditto being shoe-horned into someone else's idea of what your sexual identity should be. It is a very personal choice. Why should it be forced on anyone?

This has the effect of making young people who feel uncertain about their sexuality feel that they are outside of society. The result is that they repress their emotions for fear that they are *'wrong'* or they strive to prove that they are *'normal'* and strive to fake feelings that they do not possess. The result is repression that causes feelings to build up



in an emotionally dangerous way both for the individual and for their role in society. They can end up in false relationships that satisfy neither partner and result in great distress for both.

An option is that the individual feels totally rejected by society and finds an alternative gay society and seeks to find support and solace there, or they simply remain loners with little support which is unlikely to make them feel happy or well-balanced. Completely gay friends have told me that though gay society is supportive in many ways, that as individuals they feel under pressure to be promiscuous and take risks (and suffer some very painful acts that they don't enjoy) in order to find friendship/relationships. The choice of being alone or risk feeling/being abused is not a happy one.

Is the problem that society does not allow for the fact that we all are to a greater or lesser degree bisexual? (though we are conditioned not to admit it even to ourselves). Once we allow ourselves the benefit of choice we can the judge our own

feelings. If we are frank with ourselves and with each other a more realistic and healthy set of relationships can occur. When we stop play-acting to pretend that we are really like the 100% heterosexual, matchmen depicted in the media and start behaving like people that can be equally be attracted (and appalled!) by both sexes, then we can start understanding ourselves and having a sensible dialogue with each other. I admit that when I was younger and felt attracted to another male I felt so guilty that I avoided that person and even acted aggressively to them, as I felt that to allow my self to admit to the attraction, let alone to admit it to the other person was stepping on the slippery road to Hell and social exclusion. Later in life it has become clear to me that being as frank as you can with people without infringing on their *'taboos'* is the best way to attain acceptance. If people know what it is you are interested in, they are less likely to imagine you are seeking something else. Going around feeling and looking guilty about liking people is sure to fail to make potential friends avoid you.

We tend to be conditioned into saying conventional things about sexuality, just to conform and fear to say differently would be to be denigrated, rejected and perhaps abused. I must admit to doing this just to feel *'accepted'* and on hindsight I have realised that I have said this to gay friends who may have been hurt by it and by doing and I failed to be a true friend to them by striving to appear to be *'straight'* when I

know that I am a mixture. The result of this is that this does make for a satisfactory relationship with either gender.

As long as people feel under pressure to behave like the juvenile lead characters in a Disney film, or John Wayne, or James Bond, or the equivalent female roles, they are going to have difficulty in being honest with themselves and their potential partners. No true relationship can occur when people are not being honest with each other.

It would be a brave person to admit to being gay if working on a building site, or in a similar macho environment.

The opening of my mind came to me when working in the theatre with dozens of young people who were very forthright with little pretence. Many of them were gay or bisexual and just working and talking with them without the usual *'filter'* of convention and prejudice was very enlightening. Accepting and respecting people as they are without trying to pigeonhole them within narrow conventional boundaries made for very good working relationships and friendship as well. The breakthrough for me was when one of the lads gave me a kiss on a New Years Party and I felt that doing anything other than accepting it as a compliment would have been unkind. Previously I would have felt obliged to be defensive and reject affection and sabotage the relationship, for no reason than I had conditioned myself to act as *'straight'* people would.

The Bible is often quoted as a source for justification for any kind of non-heterosexual behaviour. Catholics are taught that God did not write or compile the Bible; it is a compilation of human writings, much of it based on oral tradition and as such it is prone to every human weakness, including bigotry. When any writings are quoted it is useful to consider whether you hear the voice of God or that of some intolerant writer/translator. Christ requirement to, *"Love your neighbour as you love yourself"* does condone the idea that it is fine for males to fight each other, but not to be affectionate, which is the convention taught in some schools. That idea seems crazy to me, as aggressive behaviour does not form any part of Quaker/Christian belief.

- Striving to perceive what is right requires that we hold each other in some loving relationship. This must ask us to be neither dour and intolerant, nor so lax that anything is tolerated. It is a cause for concern the crazy things that people, particularly the young, are encouraged to do for *'a good time'*.
- The idea that anyone has the right to exploit another is abhorrent.
- We need to be sensitive to the needs of others and putting anyone under pressure to conform is a form of abuse, unless the persons are likely to do harm to them.

- Discouraging loving relationships is very much against Biblical teaching. The encouragement to *"greet your brother with a loving kiss"* is surely intended to mean more than *"kiss your relatives"*. In Arabic and Latin countries, men kissing in public are accepted without embarrassment; unlike in the UK and America. Women have much greater freedom in freely expressing affection for each other. Why the inequality?

Things are changing. Men on building sites are more likely to discuss how they feel and several have declared that their female partners are the dominant influence in the relationship. Welders have admitted to having a feminine side, even in jest - this is a sign of change.

Let us hope that in time society will accept that there is not a single, standard, one size-fits-all type of sexuality. The idea that everything other than *'standard sexuality'* is unacceptable and should be discouraged in every way is dangerous nonsense. Kinsey (the author of the famous Kinsey Report on sexuality) studied insect wildlife and claimed that each insect is an individual and a human being is far more complex, so why expect standardisation? In a society where being *'an individualist'* is considered to be a virtue why should we have Orwellian *'Mind Police'* (internal or external) for sexuality?

John W

News from local groups

Glad Friends is a group of women and men who are in tune with the Quaker way and who see themselves as:



- Gay
- Lesbian
- And/or of
- Diverse Sexuality

The group has been meeting now for over 3 years. We are an open group in the sense that people are free to come and go as their lives change and develop - at present the membership is 18 (12 women and 6 men).

Members come from across Sussex, between Bognor Regis in the west and Hastings in the east. We meet in different members' homes, on the 2nd Sunday of the month at 3p.m., with between 8-12 attending any one meeting. Whoever is hosting the meeting chooses a theme and sends out the invitations. Although each meeting is unique, we have developed a pattern (or ritual) of including a period of silence, sharing of personal news, focussing on a topic and tea & cake. The atmosphere is informal, relaxed and mutually supportive.

As a group we planned and hosted a very successful QLGf southern gathering in October 2003 on the theme '*Towards a Lesbian and Gay Theology*'. About 20 people attended from all over the South, from Plymouth to Canterbury. This event was a nice focus for the group and we

were given good support from Littlehampton Friends.

To give an idea of the range of topics we have discussed in our regular monthly meetings, the following are some of the more recent themes chosen by members:

- Rituals
- Friendship
- Spiritual Reflections
- Use of Silence
- Cats, soccer, sex and chocolate
- Being gay at Christmas
- Serious and silly seasonal songs

The meeting which focussed on Sex, Chocolate, etc. discussed an extract from William Bloom's book on '*The Endorphin Effect*' in which he argues that people have their own way of connecting with a deep spiritual sense of '*God*' or the '*Universal Mystery*'. This may not be by classical spiritual practices such as prayer and meditation but through personal sense of connection with the wonder of life - from stroking a cat or playing soccer through to making love or eating chocolate. This provoked an interesting discussion of the different ways that individual group members experience connection with their spirituality.

The meeting on Friendship was in a member's garden on a lovely sunny day. We talked about the different expectations we have of friendship, how it may survive when a sexual relationship ends, or last throughout our lives in varying degrees of intensity, as we

become coupled or single. We shared some very personal experiences in a safe and caring atmosphere.

'*Silly and serious seasonal songs*' was small and cosy on a dark December afternoon. We started with some solemn and uplifting music, progressed to some favourite nostalgic carols, to hilarious handbells, which set us off in fits of giggles, ending with Christmas Number Ones we have loved and hated!

The group has a lovely ebb and flow, each meeting having its unique composition and atmosphere. Anyone tempted to start a local group do give us a call if you want some help.

Mary 01243- 842686 Richard
01903- 730405

Britain Yearly Meeting: York July 30th to August 6th 2005

If you are considering joining this event then QLGf will be there too!

There will be the usual '*stall*' and social meetings. As a bonus we are offering to sleep together too!!!! OK, not in THAT sense; a few of us on the committee have already decided to throw our lot in together as a self catering group asking for ensuite bedrooms to be close together to enable this.

So if you would like to '*live*' with us for the week then, on your booking form, ask to be placed near to the QLGf committee, a named person can be myself Sue Clarke.

So go on, give it a whirl book for BYM and meet a gay Ffriend!

Open and Honest- GLAD responds

A lively discussion at the February meeting of Glad Friends, was sparked off by Elizabeth Angas' thought-provoking article (*An Open and Honest Gay?*) in the December 04 QLGF Newsletter.

In our small (but perfectly formed!) group - on this occasion, three lesbians and one gay man - we uncovered and explored several areas of common concern regarding the pros and cons of disclosure in the context of what is still basically a homophobic society.

Trust, and **Self-acceptance** were two words which kept recurring in relation to the three examples put forward by Angas.

With regard to the crossing patrol interview, one member of the group wondered, now that Angas' job application had been accepted, what her legal position would be were someone to **'out'** her.

In a second important strand of her life, Angas' work as a spiritual healer/autogenics therapist sometimes involved a hands-on element, tuning into a person's **'aura'** - an act which, although not necessarily entailing actual touch, demands a certain level of physical and emotional intimacy. Should she not become **"more open and honest"** about her true self?

Our group shared a general dislike of the idea of **'hiding'** behind a mask of **neutrality**, which Angas deemed to be the **professional** or **correct** stance. One group member, a former therapist, believed in being open right from the first session, and would always make a point of disclosing her sexuality



to prospective clients at the outset, to avoid any subsequent confusion. If Angas belonged to a professional association, it was suggested, she should seek advice first.

Perhaps the most socially delicate of the three examples given, and the one most open to misinterpretation, was the sketching of small children on the beach. On the one hand, it seems tragic - and an indictment of today's society, with its media saturation coverage of what at times seems almost an epidemic of paedophilia - that such an apparently innocuous pastime is liable to be misconstrued. One member referred to a recent decision, at Chichester Monthly Meeting, to omit children's names and addresses from the Book of Members - a sign of the times?

Regarding Angas' particular misgivings, we felt that there was a need to take reality **'on board'**. In any case, and apart from any possible connotations of paedophilia, drawing (or, indeed, photographing) complete strangers may be perceived as somewhat intrusive. There is the

belief in certain cultures that taking photographs steals the soul (sic).

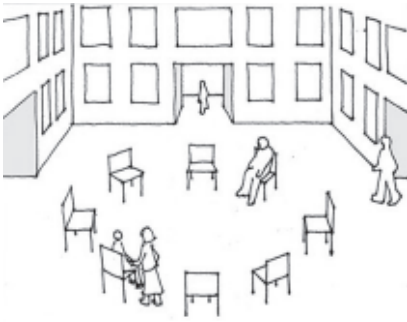
I was reminded of the time, during a holiday in France, when I **'happened on'** an ideal (as I saw it) **'photo-opportunity'**: two men engaged in voluble, animated conversation in the bar of a remote village. But I desisted, not wishing to invade their **'space'**.

We all agreed that there were other possibilities, alternatives, available to those wishing to utilise artistic gifts and abilities. One could perhaps approach friends with children and/or grandchildren, and seek permission to sketch them. Or, in the case of strangers, one could simply ask the parents if they would mind, and offer to send them a copy of the drawing.

It's about, on the one hand, the importance of showing respect, courtesy, consideration, and on the other, being more open and upfront in our dealings with people: qualities which may be seen as applicable to many different situations and experiences in all our lives.

VG

News from the Committee



'Friend' aims to be interesting

Judy Kirby, the new editor of the Friend is looking for engaging stories that all Friends can relate to, written in a lively and accessible style, possibly including humour. She's on a mission to make the Friend interesting and relevant, and to raise the standard of writing for it.

One issue I discussed with her is forthcoming Civil Partnerships, and the way this is leading quite a few couples to also seek a Meeting for Commitment. Are you preparing to *'register'* your partnership under the new law or celebrate your relationship through a Meeting for Worship...? She would consider taking two articles (with photos?) from two different couples to make into a celebratory two page spread. As someone with press/journalistic background I'd be happy to discuss this with you beforehand, and give you some advice about the pros and cons of doing it.

We also discussed the Gender Recognition Act, and she would love a first person account of someone's journey towards their true gender.

Much of the Friend's wetness on some of our issues may well just come down to us not

writing for it, or not writing well for it. Please contact us if you have ideas. Our newsletter is all very well but it would be good if we could get some coverage outside QLG. Indeed, the committee would even be willing to see us lose the odd excellent article to the Friend, as this would not be *'preaching to the choir'*.

Speakers Corner

We are trying to get our speakers act together, to answer calls from internal Quaker and external groups - everything from a Quaker Link Group through to conferences etc. Can anyone interested contact Stephen and Sarah in the first instance. We'd like some information about interests and experience; for example, we'd rather send someone to speak to teenagers who had some experience of this and ideally who wasn't too far past their age! What resources would you need if you did this? Hugh, our Liaison Person, says he always has to start his external talks with an explanation about Quakerism, because of misconceptions... so you need to be comfortable doing that.

Assuming we have volunteers, ideas to get more opportunities also welcome.

Pride

We will try to repeat the success of the last two years for London Pride of a short outdoor Meeting for Worship beforehand, then marching under the Quaker banner, alongside our friends in the

other religious groups if we can. Taking stalls in the hyper-expensive and commercialised festival does not appeal but we had a very nice picnic two years ago. Those who felt moved handed out leaflets which was breaking some rule or other but tough.

Are Friends doing anything for other Prides?

Again Stephen and Sarah are coordinating until they can find someone else to...

London 'Queer Today, Gone Tomorrow' Friends

Following the laying down of London Queer Friends Mark One, Hugh and Stephen are convening a meeting to discuss needs of LGBTQetcetc Friends in London. Westminster Friends Meeting House, 8 Hop Gardens off St Martins Lane, 5-7pm, 9th April. Westminster FMH is very central and easily reached by tube (Leicester Sq); train (Charing Cross) or buses to Trafalgar Square. There will be tea and biscuits. Neither Hugh nor Stephen is going to volunteer to organise a new group but we are willing to facilitate the first meeting.

Supporting Meetings

At the time of writing we have 32 PMs and Young Friends General Meeting as Supporting Meetings (greatly exceeding our expectations.) We also know other meetings are considering the issue. (Has your meeting done so?)

It's a new idea and we would like to hear from our Supporting Meetings what they

want from it. We know at least two publically display our newsletter in their literature racks (good!)

***Some questions we've heard
Why don't authors and correspondents sign their full names?***

The QLGF newsletter is put on the website and may be read by anyone... and the Internet can be searched for specific names. furthermore, we hope the newsletter will be shown around meetings and displayed for information. Following a well argued complaint, we have decided to use the full name only where we have permission to do so. NB The editors are not as efficient in asking as they could be, and therefore probably rather more articles appear with initials etc. than is actually

necessary. SC and SD would prefer to be using their full names but SD's work situation prevents this.

There is a world of difference being out to family, friends, meeting and work, and being on the Internet as a lesbian single mother, or cross-dressing bisexual, or whatever the article might be about.

Why does my newsletter come with a loose outer cover?

We produce slightly different versions for meetings and organisations, and the actual members of the group. The back page contains contact details that would be inappropriate for display in a meeting house (which might be used by many different groups.) For example, occasionally, women offering

women-only accommodation have received offensive phone-calls from men, (hopefully not Quakers but you couldn't guarantee that), where the newsletter has been inappropriately displayed. The *'public'* version of the newsletter is intended to be safe for general display.

Can I join? Can we show the meeting's newsletter to people?

Yes and yes. We welcome members and we have never in our 30+ years of existence asked people what sexual identity or gender identity they might have. Anyone who broadly supports our aims is welcome. We've had three straight people join recently because they liked the newsletter and support what we say.

Support for young LGB homeless people

Hi, my name is Alex Kemp and I work for an organisation called The Albert Kennedy Trust.

We operate in Manchester, London and Brighton and work with young people who have suffered homophobia that has resulted in their becoming homeless. We provide these young people with a safe place to live in our carers homes for a year or so and work with them towards independence. As well as ensuring they have somewhere safe to live, we ensure that they are placed in lesbian or gay households to enforce a positive image of gay life. As our young people have suffered so much, usually as a direct result

**last
night I
was
queer
bashed
again.**



of their sexuality, they often have very negative associations with their sexuality. Our carers act as lesbian or gay *'role models'* for these young people.

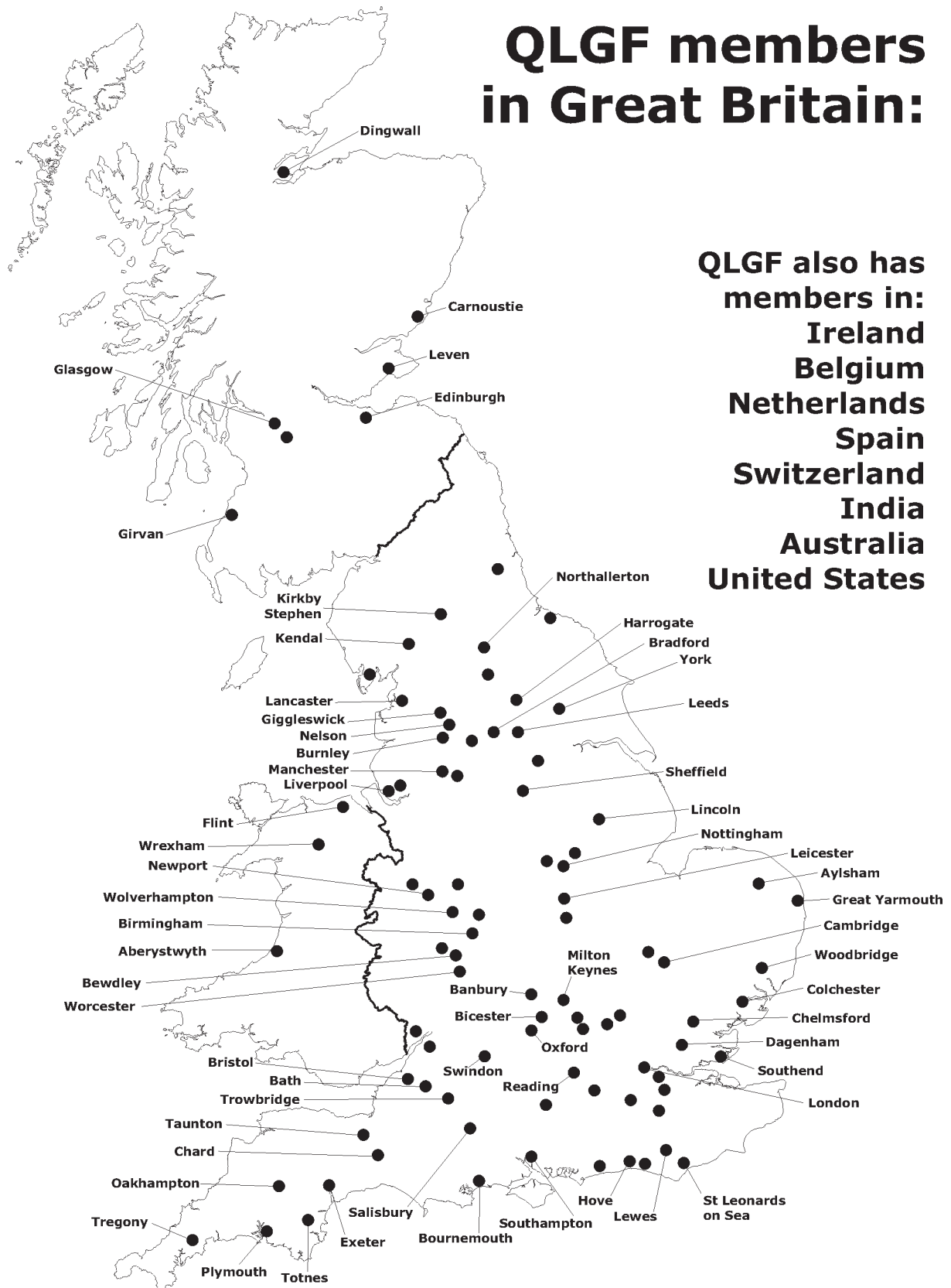
We are currently very short of carers and mentors, particularly in the Manchester area. I wondered whether or not you

would be in a position to put me in touch with the appropriate person that can allow me to talk to your members about whether or not they would be in a position to help out. As a Trust, we are dependant on the goodwill of the lesbian and gay community and the opportunity to speak to your members about whether or not they can provide this worthwhile service to our community would be much appreciated. Kind regards,

Alex

***Editors add: we can put people interested in such a meeting in touch with this chap.
<http://www.akt.org.uk/>***

QLGF members in Great Britain:



QLGF also has
members in:
Ireland
Belgium
Netherlands
Spain
Switzerland
India
Australia
United States

*Note:
If there are any inaccuracies, or omissions in this map, please let the
editors know so that we can correct it for future editions.*