

brighton ourstory..

BUSY, BUSY, BUSY

In this its third year, LGBT History Month really took off and our knowledge and expertise were much in demand throughout February. In particular, we were glad to participate in events organised by Allsorts Youth Group, Sussex University LGBT Group and the Museum of London. We held our own Bona Books exhibition at the Jubilee Library, which was also a contribution to Winter Pride and we are grateful to Pride in Brighton & Hove for their support. Our Friends' event complemented the exhibition with delightful readings by Charlie and Simon from some of the very bona books in the Ourstory Library.

Following hot on the heels of a busy February came International Women's Day and a happy band of Ourstory women flew the lesbian flag with a photographic display of the 1977 IWD march in Brighton. Not long after that, a flurry of students from Sussex University arrived at the archive, to do research for their dissertations.

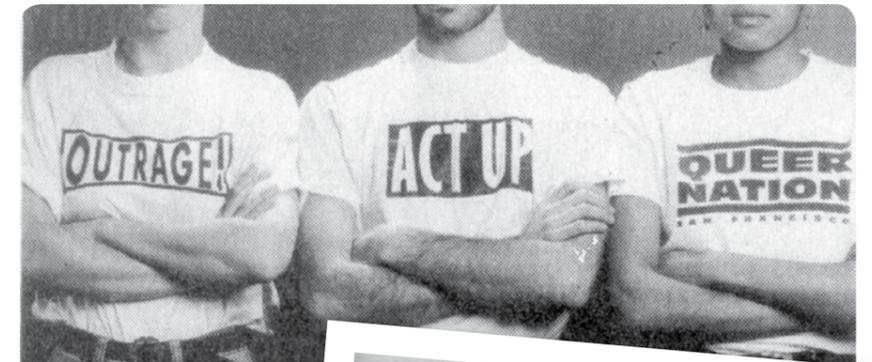
Everyone who helps us financially or with their time and talents enables all this activity to go on. We'd like to thank all those who responded to our plea in the last newsletter by sending increased donations and setting up standing orders – and Sir Ian McKellen for his "small encouragement".

We are hoping that Lottery funds will also be forthcoming to see us through the next few years

– the £20,000 legacy we received seven years ago, which has been paying half the rent, has now run out and we're living on our wits – so fingers crossed.

TV TREAT FOR PRIDE

This year we are celebrating Pride with a nostalgic look at the ground-breaking Channel 4 series, *Out On Tuesday* and *Out*. These programmes from the 1980s and '90s were the first to openly explore gay and lesbian issues and culture within a weekly show. They have never been matched for their visual impact, their celebratory tone or for cocking a snook at the Establishment.



Images taken from *Out On Tuesday* and *Out*

The shows reflected a broad diversity of lesbian and gay experience and the magazine format covered many topics including politics, religion, film, books and much more. Features on radical drag queens in Germany and

a gay postman in the deep south sat side-by-side with items on gay parenting, pets and lesbian footballers.

Ourstory is proud to present an evening of highlights from the series followed by a discussion with producers involved in the making of the programmes. Come to the Jubilee Library at 6.30pm on Tuesday, 31st July for a glass of wine and a nice sit down in front of the telly. Admission free but we might pass a hat round.

And if you like the look of what you see you can drop in to the Ourstory tent at Preston



Park on Pride Day, Saturday, 4th August where we'll be screening episodes from the series all day.

Thanks to Pride in Brighton & Hove and Brighton & Hove City Council for funding these events.

SWING YOUR PARTNER!

To help put some cash in the bank, we're holding a fundraising Barn Dance as part of Pride this year – live band, caller, bar, half-time food – Friday, 3rd August. See leaflet for more details or ring 01273 206655.

SEX, TELEPHONES AND NANCY-BOYS: SOME RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Julie Burchill could have been invented as an ornament for Brighton's streets; she boasts an end-of-the-pier quality which sits very happily with our town. Now in *Made in Brighton*, co-authored with Daniel Raven, she dissects our mores with customary splendour. We were pleased to see that large parts of the chapter 'Putting the Sex into Sussex' are drawn from the Ourstory website. Please Julie, could we have an acknowledgement in the paperback?

Another Old Brightonian has produced a brace of titles for the new Snake River Press. Simon Watney's *20 Sussex Churches* and *Bloomsbury in Sussex* showcase some gentler, more ruminative aspects of the county. His description of telephoning Charleston farmhouse, with 'its uniquely far-away-

sounding yet at the same time intimate ringing tone, as if one were getting through to another world of long-ago', is particularly treasurely.

Finally, Matt Cook's *A Gay History of Britain: Love and sex between men since the middle ages* is an excellent synthesis of recent work on British gay history, its cover illustrated with our very own Banksy of the kissing coppers on Frederick Place. Brightonians might find some passages strangely familiar - there are 18 citations from Ourstory's *Daring Hearts* which seems to have become an indispensable text in the field - and readers of Cook and Harry Cocks's independent titles will find some overlap here and there, but many nuggets are new; who knew that the *Empire News* was 'sickened' by the nancy boys camping on Brighton's esplanade in 1919?

NEW IN THE ARCHIVE...

Following our announcement that we were opening a library, crates more books have arrived! Thanks to Sue, George, Alan, Hazel and Val for these. Hazel tucked into her crate some slides of the Royal College of Nursing's lesbian group and a Gay Trivia game, while Val came up with a cassette tape of Divine. Alan also gave us a Gay Community Organisation poetry-reading script. From Elaine: a boxed set of Noel Coward songs; from Andy: thirteen videos; from Ted a book review; from Sarah some 1960s photos of Sandie; from Hove Library another pile of old *DIVAS* and from Patrick an unpublished obituary of Phill Grainger. Nina continues to look out for press cuttings for us and Hove Library are now passing on their old copies of *The Argus*. Thank-you all - and a particularly huge thank-you to Karen for taking cuttings from *The Argus* for over five years. Anyone interested in replacing her, please get in touch.



Royal College of Nursing Annual Congress, Metropole Hotel, 1988

'GREAT FUN IT WAS IN THOSE DAYS'

PHILL GRAINGER 1924-2006

We were sad to hear of the death last October of another Brighton old-timer, the club-owner Phill Grainger.

He was born in London into a theatrical family, his father working as general manager for the impresario de Courville. 'We had a lot of gay people working for us, there seemed to be more gay actors then. My mother, she loved the gay boys.' He made his professional debut at 11 in 'Babes in the Wood' at the Streatham Hill Theatre.

He served in the navy during the Second World War, enjoying the shipside gay life. 'When you've got a lot of men together it's bound to happen isn't it? In a more jovial sort of way - I don't really do this thing but just for a laugh I might.' He was invalided out in 1943 after his ship was capsized in the Mediterranean and joined ENSA, entertaining the troops in Gibraltar and Africa.

During home leave a gay cousin in the Royal Marines had opened Phil's eyes to the extent of the gay world in London, escorting him to the Coffee An', the Golden Guitar and the Cafe Anglais. 'Great fun it was in those days. It was more exciting, because it was illegal, I suppose.'



Phill Grainger

After the war he toured the variety theatres with his partner and a girlfriend as the MacMurray Three, an adagio dance act - 'one's life was spent searching out different cottages around the country' - before settling in Brighton in the late Fifties where he ran a series of three gay bars: Tony's and the Spotted Dog in Middle

Street, and Harrison's on the seafloor.

Later he took over the Queen of Clubs from Ray Jacobs ('that was mostly run

for the benefit of the girls') and then the Pink Elephant in both London and Brighton.

Phil continued to work as a film and television extra long into his retirement. He is survived by his partner of 35 years, Stuart.

It was more exciting because it was illegal



Frances Wolseley



Students at Ragged Lands, military-style, 1916

WOMEN for the LAND.
A Public Meeting
will be held at the
HOVE TOWN HALL,
on
Wednesday, July 18th,
at 3.30 p.m.
SPEAKER:
The VISCOUNTESS WOLSELEY
(Organizing Secretary, East Sussex Women's War Agricultural Committee)



Mrs Peete (Mary) Musgrave in gardening gear

KIMONO, SIX-INCH HEELS AND DYED HAIR

Ah, Hove! Famous for many things but not, perhaps, as the home of Britain's first gay drug scandal. In January 1913 an inquest was opened into the death by a massive veronal overdose of Hugh Eric Trevanion. The police court at Hove Town Hall was packed with fashionable ladies and the national papers were full of the details of 'The Hove Poison Mystery'. Was it suicide or was it murder?

Trevanion, a wealthy man of 27, lived at 10 Grand Avenue Mansions with his paid companion, Albert Roe, a 35-year-old former ship's officer from Swansea. They had met aboard a liner during a cruise to Ceylon in 1906 and, after travelling together to some of the great gay destinations of the time - Egypt, Sicily and Paris - they settled to a quiet life in Hove. Trevanion knew Roe as The Bear and Roe knew Trevanion as The Boy. They shared a bed in one of three bedrooms in a luxury flat with a staff of four: a butler, a cook, a chauffeur and a doctor to tend to Trevanion who had been delicate since childhood.

All went merrily until the summer of 1912 when Roe announced that he wanted to leave to get married. Trevanion, an habitual user of the narcotics veronal and morphine which were then freely available from any

chemist, responded with a series of theatrical overdoses, recovering three times as Roe rushed to his bedside, but succumbing at last in September. His will settled the remains of the Trevanion fortune upon Roe, disinheriting his estranged mother and younger brothers, who were soon on the warpath, demanding an exhumation and full inquiry.

The inquest occupied a full seven days, providing a rich harvest of salacious details for the newspapers. A pathologist revealed that the skin around the corpse's anus was unusually loose, indicative of a 'habit far worse than that of drug-taking' reported the Daily Sketch of January 28. The court heard of Trevanion's peroxidized hair, his painted face, his diamond rings, his gold and brass bangles. His

days, it was said, were spent drinking hock and lounging with Roe in his 'den', dressed in silk nightshirt, a kimono and six-inch white kid heels.

The jury, to applause from the court, announced an open verdict. After legal challenges to the will by Trevanion's family were quashed, Roe inherited £56,000.

Britain's first gay drug scandal



Hugh Trevanion



Albert Roe



LOVE AMONG THE LETTUCES

Standing alone in the garden of Ragged Lands, her School for Lady Gardeners near Glynde, Viscountess Frances Wolseley contemplated the air-ship, with its visible gun emplacement, floating above the Downs - a defence against attack by German Zeppelins. The night was inky black but illuminated periodically by the Newhaven search light sweeping across the countryside. She could hear the sound of distant cannon-fire. It was 1917 and she wondered if the First World War would ever end. Lady Wolseley was the Ministry of Agriculture's Organising Secretary for Sussex, recruiting and supervising women to do the vital work of food production while farm labourers fought in the trenches.

Much preferred the company of women

fifteen stifling years as a society lady. Her jealous mother had kept her on a tight reign, chaperoning her on an endless round of balls, luncheons, dinners and parties hoping she might one day meet a man she wanted to marry. Frances, however had had other ideas and much preferred the company of women - a predilection which caused two profound rifts with her parents, so painful that influential friends had eventually rallied round and helped her expand the school as a means to independence. Most significantly, her dear friends from London, the Misses Lawrence, helped her financially in doing up a cottage she could share with Miss Turner, the school's head gardener. In 1917, Frances was being assisted in her Ministry of Agriculture work by Mrs Peete Musgrave, the wife of an army captain away at war. Mrs Musgrave lived in Ditchling with

her six terriers. Work sometimes demanded that Frances stay over with her, so that they could be off in her little car early in the morning, visiting the farmers of Sussex. After the war, Frances recorded in her Life and Letters that, "From being partners at work, we fast saw the time approaching when we should through our strengthening friendship, become life partners, and towards the autumn we kept at the back of our minds a hope that some day we might, when we had shaken ourselves free of all warfare and officialdom, set up a small-holding, where we could reside together even on the return of Captain Musgrave, for his wife thought that having once felt the enchantment of military life under such auspices as he had with General Maude, that he would continue to hold an army position."

Early in 1918, they took a lease on Massetts Place, Scayne's Hill and lived together tending their livestock for eight years during which time Frances' widowed mother died, leaving her nothing of the family fortune and she added to her many distinctions the presidency of the Sussex County Goat Club. From Massetts they moved to Ardingly where they occupied adjoining houses until Frances' death in 1936.

- Thanks go to Zoe Lubowiecka and other staff at Hove Library for carting about the many charming scrapbooks from which this article was compiled and to Zoe for her informative talk on Frances Wolseley, during Adult Learners' Week.
- Wolseley Collection photographs by permission Brighton and Hove city libraries

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