GCN
Issue 330 • June 2017 • Free



Wonder Queers
How Wonder Woman influenced a gay generation

Beautiful Ones
Electro popsters, Hurts and their shocking queer video

Tiocfaidh Ár Grá
Cúpla focal with Ros na Rún's latest gay resident

TWO YEARS ON...

Did the marriage referendum change Ireland?

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QUEER MUSICIANS, MOVIES, TV STARS AND EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED IN LGBT IRELAND SINCE THE REFERENDUM... GET STUCK IN!



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Ahead of our exciting relaunch, we look back at the design evolution of GCN through the years.



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World of Wonder

As the movie is finally released, an old-school *Wonder Woman* fanatic explains what Diana Prince and her alter ego meant to him growing up gay in the '70s.

GCN

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EDITOR'S LETTER

IN THE POST-MARRIAGE EQUALITY ERA, GCN WILL BE RADICALLY CHANGING NEXT MONTH, BUT ONE THING WILL ALWAYS REMAIN INTACT...

@finneganba
#MyGCN

This time two years ago we published a special commemorative issue of GCN with a triple gatefold cover, a take on *Vanity Fair's* annual Hollywood issue, featuring the key players in achieving marriage equality in Ireland, which was put together to be published immediately after the referendum. I asked the people on the cover to pose with the slightest of smiles, with their heads held high – that way we could either rejoice in the victory of the Yes campaign, or in the face of rejection at the polls, say we stood proud and would fight another day.

The result on May 23, 2015 was so clear-cut, so early on; it now seems strange that up until the moment the referendum was won, we all feared the worst. It's also hard to really remember how visceral the experience was, how it brought up so much about our shared and individual histories, our experiences of homophobia and oppression, the sense of otherness every LGBT person has struggled with since time immemorial, and our previously fixed invisibility in Irish society. On one level during the referendum it felt we were being welcomed into the fold, as straight people showed their acceptance wearing Yes badges and calling themselves allies, and on another we felt more vilified, visible and vulnerable than we ever had.

Publishing that issue of GCN felt like the end of an era. For ten years or more, while we'd reported on every issue facing LGBTs in Ireland, GCN's core focus was always marriage equality. Every organisation and individual involved in the growing campaign had written in our pages, I'd written countless editorials about the complexities of the fight, and I'd quizzed ministers, TDs, heads of NGO's, union leaders, Presidents and Taoisigh, about achieving LGBT equality in the form of same-sex marriage. Now that it was won, I was wondered if we'd lose our focus.

Between then and now, however, there has been much to focus on, as our 'State of the Queer Nation' feature on page 26 clearly sets out, but at the same time we've long felt like it was time for GCN to enter the post-marriage equality age in a more substantial way. We also felt it was time to refresh the brand, to give it new life. However, we didn't want to make any radical changes too quickly, and we especially didn't want to do anything without consulting you, our readers.

To that end we conducted two major consultations, firstly as part of the Burning Issues 2 survey in 2016, and then in our biggest readership survey ever, earlier this year. Taking the findings from those questionnaires, and from special focus groups we held, we've spent the last few months rebranding and redesigning both in print and online, and we'll be launching the new GCN next month, as the Dublin Pride festival gets underway on June 16.

There are major changes ahead, and we hope you like them as much as we do, but one thing remains intact, our mission statement to be an information service and support for Ireland's LGBT community. Published by a voluntary body, the National LGBT Federation, and distributed to our readers free of charge, GCN is not-for profit, and as such is unique not only to Irish publishing, but to LGBT magazines across the world. Since its inception it has striven to be a central hub for a community that is non-geographical, and which gathers in disparate ways.

What this means is that while our readers are not all in living in one area like most communities, nor do they gather in one specific place, they can find and adhere to a sense of their community in our pages. We're what might be called the Irish LGBT mothership.

Over my years as editor I have taken many phonecalls and received many letters and emails from people who rely on GCN as a kind of lifeline. When the recession hit in 2009 and we were in financial trouble, through our GCN Forever campaign I learned how much this little magazine is treasured. People would drop into our office with cash, a fiver, a tenner or more, telling us how much GCN meant to them, and that meant a huge amount to us. It reaffirmed for us, the GCN staff and the members of our publishing board, just why we do what we do.

You may be reading this issue in a gay bar, surrounded by people who are part of what you might understand as a gay community, but there are many more who are reading it in much more limited circumstances. We may be in the post-marriage equality era, but as the *Burning Issues 2* report found last year, there is still much isolation for LGBTs across Ireland, whether it be due to location, age or social circumstances. There is still much of the vulnerability that arose during the referendum campaign.

People may be able to find information online, and they may be able to talk to each other, but the print version of GCN is a kind of touchstone, a physical manifestation that appears every month without fail and is part of our lives in a less fleeting way, underpinning the vibrancy, diversity, cohesiveness and actual existence of our community. Come June 16, GCN will be a different beast in many ways, but it will remain that touchstone and lifeline. We look forward to sharing the exciting new changes with you. Until then, I hope you enjoy this last issue of GCN as you've known it for eight years.





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BELONG TO CALL FOR STAND UP! DONATIONS



Left to right: Peter Daffy (HSBC), Carol Anne O' Brien (BeLonG To), Alan Duffy, CEO of sponsor HSBC Ireland, Moninne Griffith, Executive Director of BeLonG To and Kate Hassey (HSBC)

Last month HSBC Ireland staff were treated to a sneak preview of BeLonG To's upcoming Stand Up 2017 videos, reports **Rob Buchanan**.

A preview of a video campaign for the annual BeLonG To Stand Up! LGBT Awareness Week was hosted in May by HSBC Ireland CEO Alan Duffy for staff and other corporate and individual donors as a thank-you to those whose generosity will help make the anti-LGBT bullying campaign a success later this year.

Speaking at the event, BeLonG To Executive Director Moninne Griffith reminded the audience that whilst the battle for marriage equality may have been won, the challenges BeLonG To face in helping young LGBT people continue.

"Stand Up! LGBT Awareness Week directly tackles homophobic and transphobic bullying by increasing awareness, friendship and support for LGBT students by other students," she said. "Young people's reaction to marriage equality was incredible. BeLonG To has seen 100 pecent increases in young people coming out.

"The youth of Ireland played a crucial role in the referendum, not only those of voting age but on their influence on family and friends.

"This power for progress is at the heart of what the Stand Up! Campaign is all about. It encourages and empowers teachers, parents and youth workers to engage young people in fun and educational activities. It builds bonds of trust and empathy whilst increasing awareness of the dangerous, destructive and all too often fatal results of homophobic or transphobic bullying."

Teachers, parents, youth workers or student allies can contact BeLonG To to get directly involved in the 2017 Stand Up! LGBT Awareness week programme. Others who wish to offer support can do so by donating money. As little as €5 can print 12 information booklets, €21 can provide an anti-bullying pack for teachers, €47 can pay one-to-one counselling sessions, and €100 can facilitate a half-day LGBT youth space each month in a rural area.

For more information on BeLonG To's Stand Up! campaign, visit belongto.org

IRISH AIDS DAY EXHIBIT

To coincide with Irish Aids Day on June 15, an art exhibition featuring some of Ireland's leading artists will aim to highlight the human side of HIV. The show, *All Together Human*, is organised by artist Will St Leger and will feature the works of 15 celebrated artists such as MASER, Jim Fitzpatrick and Sean Hillen, along with popular illustrators Aoife Dooley, Fuchsia MacAree and Friz.

"I want the show's title to sum up theme of this exhibition," says St Leger. "Across our social, religious, economic and geographical differences, HIV – the human immunodeficiency virus – affects us as people. We are altogether human in our weaknesses and strengths, our failures and achievements, our rage and joyfulness; all together human, in solidarity, defiance and hope."

One of the pieces in the show will be by Hazel Coonagh, from her attendant photography project, 'Human', which is being shared on social media in June.

The exhibition is at Filmbase, Dublin, where all the artwork will be sold by silent auction. Proceeds will be going to the Dublin chapter of international HIV/AIDS activist group, ACT UP, a campaign for a more effective response from government and community organisations to curb the increase in new diagnoses of HIV among gay and bisexual men. Provisional figures from Ireland's Health Protection Surveillance Centre show more new HIV diagnoses were reported in 2016 than in any previous year, making the group's mission more urgent than ever.



'All Together Human' exhibition opens for one day only on Irish AIDS Day, Thursday June 15 at Filmbase, Curved Street, Dublin, 6pm until 10pm. Artworks will be sold by silent auction in aid of ACT UP Dublin



SECRETS OF HYPNOSIS

"Can everybody be hypnotised?" "Does hypnosis really work?" If Paul Hurley had a euro for every time he's been asked these questions, he'd be a very rich man indeed. The answer to both questions, he says, is a resounding "yes".

"The real surprise to many, however, is when they hear that not only does my work involve taking people *out* of hypnosis, but that they have *already* been hypnotised in the first place, without them even knowing it." he adds.

Hurley has been working as a hypnotist for the past 17 years, and is the author of two books, *Think And Be Slim* and *The Power Of Depression*. During this time, he's successfully used hypnosis to help clients lose weight, stop smoking, manage stress, eliminate depression and remove phobias. Yet, he maintains, all of these problems are merely different symptoms of the very same thing: fear.

"We are born with only two fears," Hurley says. "The first is a fear of loud noises; the second is a fear of falling. Beyond this, every other fear is programmed into our brains at a very young age."

So how have you already been hypnotised? "Our parents have an extremely powerful hypnotic effect on us when we are young," Hurley explains. "As a young child, you automatically believe everything your parents tell you because you trust them unconditionally and have yet to develop your ability to think critically. Many parents unwittingly pass on their limiting beliefs to their children, having picked them up from their parents. Such beliefs are stored deep in the subconscious mind, and until changed, have a huge effect on our habits, actions and eventual lives."



According to Hurley, because hypnosis involves direct communication with the subconscious mind, it enables people to make powerful and permanent positive changes in their lives. "During hypnosis, the analytical, logical and rational parts of your conscious mind are all temporarily relaxed," he says. "This allows your subconscious mind to benefit from new insights, discoveries and perspectives. Everything starts in the mind on an unconscious level and this is exactly why you get powerful results with hypnosis.

Paul Hurley is a hypnotist based in Dublin. To find out more, go to www.callpaul.ie

Dublin City Council
LGBT Inclusion Strategy
2017 – 2020

The Lord Mayor of Dublin, Brendan Carr proudly launched Dublin City Council's LGBT Employee Inclusion Strategy on 11th May 2017.

This strategic plan focuses on three objectives:

To facilitate Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Visibility in Dublin City Council

To promote and strengthen LGBT Inclusion at all levels in the City Council

To provide Education & Awareness on LGBT-related issues

Dublin City Council is an inclusive employer that is welcoming of its LGBT employees.

We wish GCN's readers all the best as you celebrate the 2nd anniversary of YES and approach PRIDE season.

LGBT

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www.dublincity.ie

TEN THINGS TO DO IN JUNE

JUNE 3 - 5 FORBIDDEN FRUIT
Orbital, Giggs, Aphex Twin and tons more queer-loved performers converge upon Kilmainham's Royal Hospital this month, forbiddenfruit.ie

JUNE 6 AGNES OBEL
Expect haunting, beautiful melodies from Danish singer songwriter Agnes at the Olympia Theatre, ticketmaster.ie

JUNE 9 - 11 BARE IN THE WOODS
Ireland's latest 'boutique' music festival, with performances by Rubberbandits, Right Said Fred and loads more, at Garryhinch Woods, Portarlington, bareinthewoods.ie

JUNE 17 -18
JENNY GREENE & THE RTÉ ORCHESTRA
2FM's Greene (pictured) brings her deadly Dance Anthems show to Live at the Marquee, Cork, ticketmaster.ie

JUNE 15 – 18
TASTE OF DUBLIN
Four days of epicurian excellence at Dublin's annual food festival at the Iveagh Gardens, tickets from €15, dubin.tastefestivals.com



JUNE 15 ALL TOGETHER HUMAN
An exhibition for Irish Aids Day featuring leading artists including MASER, Aoife Dooley and Will St Leger, highlighting the human side of HIV at Filmbase, Dublin., 6pm.

JUNE 18 – 24 DUBLIN PRIDE
This year's theme is 'find your inner hero', so get cracking! Details of events will be out at the end of May, stay glued to dublinpride.ie

JUNE 20 ELTON JOHN
Elder statesman Elton will plays on (and on) at Live at the Marquee, Cork, ticketmaster.ie

JUNE 23- 25 SEA SESSIONS
Bundoran's own boutique music festival is back with sets from Wyvern Lingo, Primal Scream, Shit Robot and lots more, seasessions.com

JUNE 23 – 25 BODY & SOUL
Hippy-ish music festival with performances from Mykki Blanco, Austra and Elaine Mai (interview on page 22), among others, bodyandsoul.ie



ART OF RESISTANCE

In the midst of the ongoing brutalisation of gay men in the Russian republic of Chechnya, Stephen Fry has dubbed queer, Cork-based artist Stephen Doyle's work: "part of a tragically necessary resistance movement". Doyle, who recently visited Moscow and met LGBT people in their homes, has incorporated his experiences there into his work.

His new exhibition at C.I.T. Crawford College of Art and Design, seeks to interpret how the queer community is viewed, how perspective can be tainted by society's homophobic undertones. His portraits of Russian LGBTs who have experienced violence, imprisonment, unemployment and abandonment from family and friends, are altered by being observed with the use of opposing mirrors.

"The presence of these queer identities in the work signals a defiance to the mainstream and an embrace of difference, uniqueness, and self-determination," Doyle says. "It's a recognition of their existence."

Doyle's work will be on display at C.C.A.D's graduate exhibition, this year at Sharman Crawford Street, opening on June 9 at 6pm and the guest speaker for the evening will be Rory O'Neill, aka Panti.

TOP OR BOTTOM

EuroThousands
Our Douze Points *Eurovision* party raised a whopping €2,200 for GCN Forever! Thanks for all the love, guys.



Sinead O'Connor
Shinners announces plans to give 30 years worth of "gorgeous" make-up and clothing to trans youth. Good for her!



Dustin & Tom
Dustin Lance Black and Olympic toy boy Tom Daley got hitched last month. Congrats!





VERS
Charlie Flanagan
Minister for Foreign Affairs Charlie Flanagan joins the international outcry against the gay purge in Chechnya. Great, but what now?

Ashers Bakery
Ashers Bakery posted profits of over a million in 2016, despite their totally crêpe behaviour in refusing to bake a cake supporting marriage equality the year before. Boo!

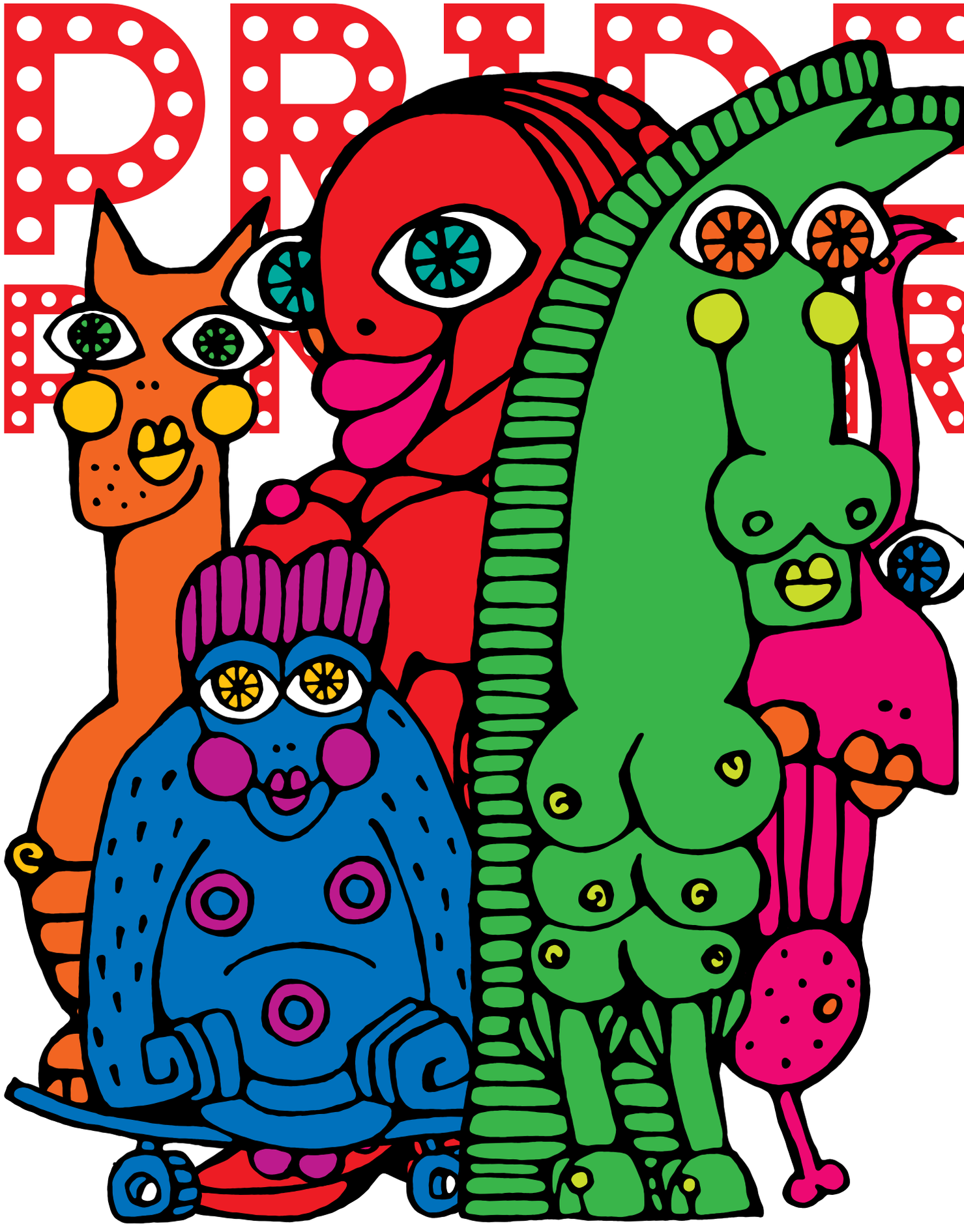


Russia
Five LGBT activists were detained in Moscow after attempting to submit a petition of 2 million signatures to the Russian government protesting the treatment of gays in Chechnya. A court appearance is scheduled for May 29.



Blasphemy Law
The blasphemy complaint against Stephen Fry may have been dismissed, but why is the law even still on the books?





ALL DAY STREET PARTY

PANTIBAR SAT 24 JUN



Lady Gaga surprises fans with a return to her more pop beginnings on new single, **The Cure**. The production feels derivative of current pop sounds, but a strong chorus and Gaga's delivery make it a charming bubblegum hit. **Harry Styles** (pictured) makes a bold start as a solo artist on **Sign of the Times**, a stadium sized earworm that is a little bit Rolling Stones, a little bit Elton John, and every inch a hit.

Lana Del Rey teams up again with **The Weeknd** on **Lust for Life**, a swooning melodramatic indie-pop number that recalls the sheen of her early hits. Irish star **Soulé** brings the heat once again on new track **Troublemaker**; a mid-tempo ear-worm with an undeniable groove, it's smart, well delivered pop from a star on the rise.

Lea Michele built a fan following as a part of TV musical *Glee* and on second album **Places** she attempts to marry Broadway style vocals with moody, down-tempo pop ballads. It's an uneven affair; for all Michele's vocal flair the songs are middling and frequently oversung.

Kendrick Lamar continues to be one of music's most prolific talents on new album **Damn**. An exhilarating ride that's both intensely personal and unafraid to touch political topics, it's a hip-hop masterclass that will win over even the most casual listener.

Steps make a grab for their glittery pop throne after something of a break on **Tears on the Dancefloor**. While pop has shifted in sound somewhat, Steps unashamedly bring their cheesy but charming sound up to date with aplomb. If escapism, big choruses and campy thrills are your bag, this is the album for you.



Goldfrapp mesh both their electro pop sound and their folk-pop sensibilities on **Silver Eye**. A canny mix of their many influences, fans will find plenty to love here.



THE GAGA COMPROMISE?

Lady Gaga has been busy this year putting the focus largely on her performance chops. Her Super Bowl halftime show distilled her pop essence neatly into 13 minutes, while she's also been filming her role in Bradley Cooper's (!) remake of *A Star Is Born* ahead of a new world tour this year.



Her recent headline shows at music festival Coachella were suitably Gaga-esque, running through both big hits and fan favourite album cuts. What surprised many though was the unveiling of a new single 'The Cure', a stylistic departure from the sounds of recent album *Joanne*.

'The Cure' feels ready for the sound of radio right now, a pop hook with a mid-tempo tropical twist in the production. For an artist who has both scored huge hits but also seems wary of pushing herself through the pop machine, it's odd to see Gaga dull her edges this way. And yet it's also her most easy-to-enjoy single in years, no vocal histrionics, no awkward lyric touches, just a pure-pop earworm that has more than a whiff of summer.

If Gaga wants to compromise then at least it's easy on the ears, but is it what she really wants to do?



VS



POP COMEBACK CRUNCH!

RED CORNER:
MICHELLE BRANCH

Michelle Branch had a successful career as a young songwriter doing radio-friendly pop rock in the early 2000s. After label woes and legal wrangling it's taken her 14 years to release a third album. Thankfully the smart songwriting and charm of *Hopeless Romantic* were worth the wait. The title track is a slow-burn ode that updates Branch's sound with aplomb, while with cuts like 'Fault Line' she shows her pop *nous* on choruses that stick with you after one listen. An enjoyable collection of sophisticated pop-rock, here's hoping the next effort doesn't involve such a long wait. **8/10**

GREEN CORNER:
NELLY FURTADO

Nelly Furtado has always been a pop star capable of trying her hand at many genres. Her break-through hits blended pop, folk and R'n'B rhythms, while she turned herself into a chart superstar with party starters like Maneater. Furtado has struggled to maintain chart momentum since then but on *The Ride* she finds a new indie-pop groove that suits her. Released on her own label and written largely with indie producer John Congleton, Furtado serves up songs that feel both familiar and more mature than previous efforts. While the pace lags at times, it seems Nelly's regained her spark. **7/10**

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Hot Reels...

Mid-June we see the release of **Churchill** (June 16). There have been some wonderful on-screen representations of Churchy in recent times (Timothy Spall in *The Kings Speech* and Jon Lithgow in Netflix's *The Crown* spring to mind), and this month Brian Cox becomes the latest to pick up the bowler hat and cigar.

Here's a little-known fun fact about Churchill: he was extremely bad with money. Like, *Greek-government-circa-2010* bad with money. By 1938, his taste for fine cigars, race horses and 'silk undergarments' had all but bankrupted him, but by the time he left office in 1945 he was a wealthy man. You see, Winston was as fine a hustler as he was a statesman, and had no qualms about using his personal brand to make it rain. Imagine the ruthless drive of a lavish Kardashian wrapped up in the body of a chain-smoking bulldog: that's Churchy.

But I digress. Churchill is set in June 1944, just as the Allied Forces are on the verge of the Normandy landings. A nervous Churchill fears that the disastrous events of Gallipoli will be repeated if the invasion fails, taking his career and the lives of countless soldiers with it.

But can Churchill put down the Harrods catalogue long enough to keep the Gerrys at bay? The fact that you're reading this in English, not German, might be a bit of a spoiler, but what better way to mark the 73rd anniversary of the D Day landings than by watching the original Hannibal Lector (Cox) pretend to be Winston Churchill for a few hours?

Who's your favourite movie actor called Chris? Pine? Pratt? It's Hemsworth isn't it? Mine is Captain America himself, Chris Evans (pictured right), even though he loses points for having the same name as the British comedian Chris Evans (ew). Anyway, Evans' tries on a gentler persona this month in **Gifted** (June 16), where the only enemies to be battled are the ones that come from raising your prematurely deceased sister's intellectually gifted child – uncertainty, interference from social services, not knowing how to tie a pony tail, etc.



Chris Evans and adorable child prop in 'Gifted'

The story follows simple but inconspicuously handsome boat mechanic Frank (Evans) who's been raising his precocious niece Mary, a six year-old mathematics prodigy. When Frank realises he is just too darn simple and handsome to home-school the mini Carol Vorderman, he ships her off to the local school to learn how to do more maths and probably, some cyber bullying. But Mary's gift draws the attention of school administrators (and her estranged grandmother) who all want to push her to greater heights. Soon, there's a custody battle and Frank is forced to make some difficult decisions about what the best thing is for his beloved niece. Boo! You should probably bring tissues to this one.

Finally this month, **Hampstead Heath** (June 23), in which an American (Diane Keaton) falls in love with a dishevelled park-dweller played by Brendan Gleeson. Keaton plays a widow who must have been married to an internet billionaire, since she can afford property in Hampstead. One day she spys beardy Brendan exiting the pond next to the shack he lives in, like an Aldi Mr Darcy, and is instantly smitten. So, when wicked property developers try buy the land so they can knock up some luxury apartments, Keaton's character enlists the help of all her charming, rich mates who pool their money, buy out the property developers and drown Gleeson in the pond as soon possible, before knocking up their own prestige living spaces. Just kidding! Or maybe I'm not. There's only one way to find out.

Ciara Mc Grattan

777

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★★★★
"THE SUPERHERO MOVIE OF THE YEAR"
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WARNER BROS. PICTURES PRESENTS
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SCREENPLAY BY ALLAN HEINBERG PRODUCED BY CHARLES ROVEN, p.g.a. DEBORAH SNYDER, p.g.a. ZACK SNYDER, p.g.a. RICHARD SUCKLE, p.g.a. DIRECTED BY PATTY JENKINS
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Not so long ago I interviewed the author Juno Dawson, who mentioned something that really stuck with me. She said that as regards the LGBT spectrum, it was almost as if, from a rights and visibility point of view, the world worked through the acronym 'almost in that order'.

Having read CN Lester's new book **Trans Like Me** (Virago, €15.99), I know what Dawson means. It's not that 'L' necessarily came before 'B', or that 'G' came after 'L', it's that 'T' has always been at the end. Last, catching-up. Whereas the gay rights movement in this part of the world has seemingly fought its biggest battle and won, this book makes no bones about the fact that there remains a hugely long road ahead for those still labouring at the end of the acronym.

Trans Like Me is a multi-faceted read, not surprising given the broad spectrum of individuals and identities it seeks (and needs) to speak for. It opens with 'The Production of Ignorance', a passionate, if not downright furious, look at how trans people are framed in the modern media landscape, a landscape which routinely includes harassment, abuse, and invasive questions that wouldn't be asked of anyone else.

There's a whistle-stop history of trans people and culture, from Rolandino Ronchaia in the mid-14th century, via the castrati and Lili Elbe of *The Danish Girl*, to modern-day media darling Caitlyn Jenner of whom Lester writes pithily: "Jenner is, most likely, the most powerful trans woman in the world. Think of what she could do, if she wanted to."



CN Lester: reinforcing the message that so many amongst us struggle

Throughout, there is a ferocious internal scream around the countless frustrations and injustices that trans people encounter nowadays, not to mention the airbrushing from the past of much of trans history. Lester mentions the expectation of good behaviour required from trans people, just so they can use the appropriate public bathrooms, how hormones and chemicals are okay for chronic illnesses and their treatment, but not for trans people whose physical and mental health might be at risk; how we constantly talk about 'mindfulness' and 'being whole' yet, when it comes to trans people, seek to separate out mind and body.

Lester speaks of the UK's anonymous Gender Recognition Committee, which gets to decide whether you get to be truly who you say you are; you can be asked to live as your 'acquired gender' for up to two years without hormones before this committee grants you the right (or otherwise) to change your gender on your birth certificate. (Ireland gets its due in relation to our own progressive Gender Recognition Act, which was passed in 2015 and allows trans people to self-identify.)

Despite the above, *Trans Like Me* is by no means a cultural polemic. Lester, who prefers the pronoun 'they', chronicles their own internal battles; they mention how they felt trapped in their body, yet not their whole body, not their hands or voice. The subtleties of their own account are incredibly moving and only serve to reinforce the message that so many amongst us struggle, and will continue to do so.

Matthew Todd's 2016 book *Straight Jacket* was a rallying cry to gay men to get their houses in order and, in the same way, *Trans Like Me* is a similarly a clarion call, but to us all. At a time when 41 percent of trans people have attempted suicide, where 78 percent of gender non-conforming children are harassed at school, and where 20 percent of people have experienced homelessness as a direct result of being trans, it behoves us to support and engage fully with the issues and prejudice facing the trans community, and this book is the perfect place to start.

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TORYN GLAVIN

@torynglavin
#TransLife

TRANS WOMEN ARE OFTEN ACCUSED OF DRESSING AGE-INAPPROPRIATELY, BUT THERE'S A STRANGE AND SOMETIMES LIBERATING RELATIONSHIP WITH AGE THAT TRANSITIONING BRINGS



Clothes are ageless. Your clothes are your clothes, but there are certain societal expectations as to what we will wear depending on our age, and these norms don't seem to translate to any great degree to trans people.

Age itself is a weird topic for trans people, especially those of us who can and choose to transition. By the nature of our transitions we're often unreadable when it comes to how old we are, or aren't. Due to the physical effects hormones have and the atypical bodies we are born with, trans women tend to look much older while trans men have an uncanny ability to somehow age backwards, an ability which I'm in no way jealous of.

This can lead to some interesting dynamics. My boyfriend is almost two years older than me, but the trans optical illusion makes it seem that our age difference is much wider and in the opposite direction. Equally I'm seen as a motherly figure to many within my community, despite only being 22 myself. There's a strange unreadable quality to trans people that confuses people on a great many fronts.

In recent months I've begun to feel more and more like an adult. It's something trans people will often comment on, this strange unseen impact that our transition has on our development. Many of us did not get to experience the youth which we desired. We were forced to conform to something which we didn't identify with. Transitioning is an incredibly liberating time. Finally, you get to live the way you've always wanted. You get to live a true and authentic life.

When I was first transitioning, I was invited to a dinner with all of my work colleagues; a huge event with around 200 people. It was to be the first time I dressed the way I wanted to around them. So of course, I had to rebel. I was like a teenager getting her first taste of fashion freedom. I wore a navy skater dress covered in tiny zebras, black jeans and black converse. To tie the whole look together I had to wear the black lipstick given to me by a close friend for my recent 21st birthday. To put it bluntly, I stood out.

A colleague caught me to question the lipstick. She had a number of grown children and took an immediate liking to me. She was a real Dubliner, incredibly down to earth, so the trans thing didn't faze her for a second. However, she could not abide the black lipstick. She continued to tell me how I was a pretty girl and should throw out the black lipstick. I was grown up now, why was I wearing it? She was worried for me, the CEO of the organisation was there and to say he was less than enthusiastic about my transition would be an understatement. Angela worried, I think, that I'd be judged.

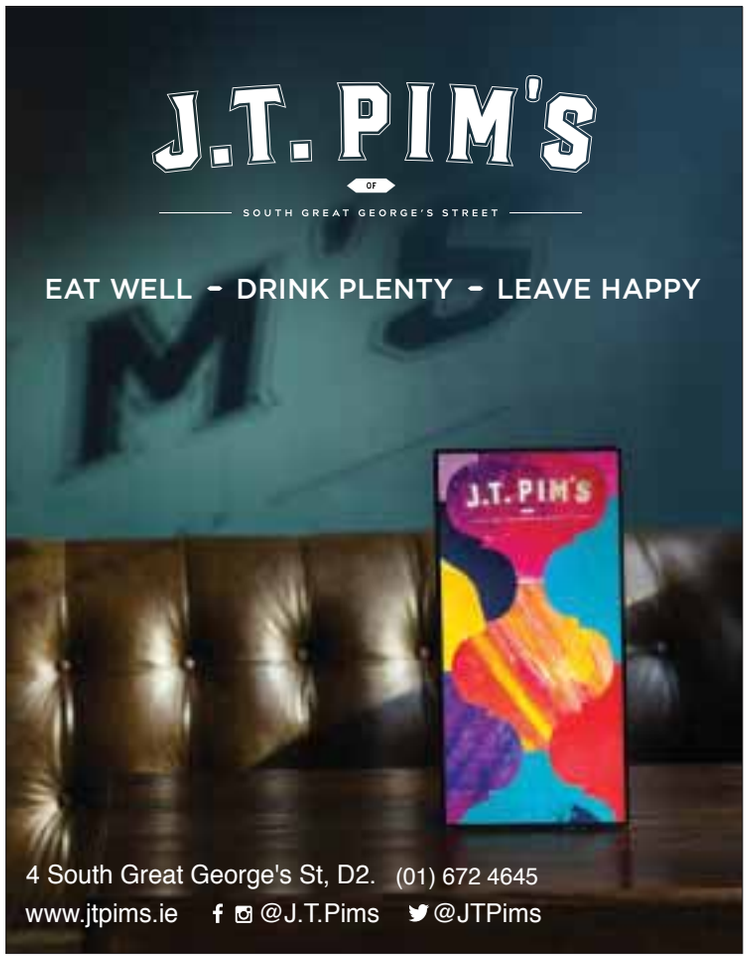
"I'd never have the chance to walk across the school canteen with my super-cool blue eyeshadow, or my skirt that was way shorter than was allowed, or my hair in a power high pony."

It was flattering that she cared, and it meant a lot to feel I had someone really in my corner, but I had to make that statement. I had to experience that act of rebellion. I'd never have the chance to walk across the school canteen with my super-cool blue eyeshadow, or my skirt that was way shorter than was allowed, or my hair in a power high pony. I'd really missed that rebellious stage in my life. I'd had my awkward teenage stage, obviously, but never on my own terms. The black lipstick was a 'fuck you' to the world. Was the world listening? Probably not. Did the world care? No. But for me it was an important milestone, and I made sure to walk right past the CEO on more than a few occasions.

Trans people don't need you to approve of what they wear. They don't care. They're having fun and for once they're being free. They're experimenting and figuring out who they are. Give them that space and save your judgement.

Too much of the time society tells us how to act and what is or isn't appropriate. My advice to trans allies is to support your trans friends and family. Don't try and police their expression. Don't 'look out for them' if you need to do it in such an oppressive way. Get caught up in that wave of rebellion and freedom, and celebrate with them.

To trans people, just be you. You've spent too long worrying and pretending. Show the world who you are and do it with confidence. Whatever style you choose, whoever you happen to be, you are worthy. Don't worry about 'age appropriate'. Don't worry about gender appropriate. Just be happy and comfortable. The rest will fall into place.





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I KNOW THIS MUCH IS TRUE

Actor and roving BBC reporter **Seán Ó Baoill** plays bad boy Adam on TG4's Irish language soap, *Ros na Rún*, which broadcast the first ever gay kiss on Irish TV 21 years ago. After three years of getting up to all sorts of no-good shenanigans, this season sees Adam struggling to come to terms his homosexuality. It's a story that can't have a happy ending, Ó Baoill, who is also gay and grew up in the Gaeltacht, says.

Irish is my first language. I grew up in the Gaeltacht area of Donegal and I had a love for drama from a young age. I acted with amateur groups at home and in school, and that continued until I went to college to Dublin and joined the drama society there. All the work I do in acting or producing or presenting, I do it through the Irish language, and that's very important to me. It's great that I have the opportunity to do that 12 months of the year.

Ros na Rún was a staple in our house when I was growing up, At the back of my head it was always a goal to get a part on the show. I did audition a few years back, but I didn't succeed. And then I attended a workshop and got in through the back door that way.

I was completely starstruck my first day on set, because I'd grown up with so many of the characters. *Ros na Rún* is as good as any soap you'd see on British television. The writers are not afraid to shy away from issues that are current and relative, which might give way to discussion.

Ros na Rún films from August to mid-February, so it's a six-month cycle for the actors. I work freelance otherwise. I'm doing a radio series for the BBC at the moment, working for an independent production company called Below The Radar TV, as a roving reporter on an Irish language production.

I had no idea my character would turn out to be gay. I was brought in three years ago as a bad boy, to stir up some trouble in Ros na Rún. Adam was very angry, though, and I always knew there was no way he was so frustrated without some other story being behind it, something troubling him. We're finding out this season what that is.

It's a very difficult time for the character. He's having a relationship with a girl, who hasn't a clue that he's gay. His mother, who saw him kissing another man, isn't one bit happy about it. She threatened to throw him out and cut off all ties with him. He's struggling and turning to drink a lot. He can only hide it for so long.

Actors always draw from their own experiences. I'm gay also, and I grew up in in a rural area with a small community, where everybody knew everything about everybody and had an opinion about it. The only difference with my own experience is that I had good support; I had a strong family unit that showed me love and helped me.

Still, I remember my own inner struggle with being gay. It can be the hardest part. Apart from your family and community, the first thing you have to do is accept it yourself.

People might ask why we're doing this storyline, sure don't we have equality now? That's true, we do, but there's also still a lot to do. There was a certain percentage of the country that didn't agree with marriage equality for one reason or the other, and I think there's still homophobia in rural areas. These storylines are important to give people an insight into the inner struggles gay people face.

Adam won't be able to keep the secret for much longer. He has Padraic on his case now, who recognises something in him. Padraic, who is also gay, is trying to support him, but Adam has pent-up anger, and that is going to come out. It's not going to be a happy ending. Somebody is going to end up hurt.

When you're playing a character for so long, he becomes part of you. It's kind of like they're your best friend. It's the same with other characters around you. I feel very sorry for Fia, because she hasn't got a clue that Adam is gay. I feel sorry for Adam too. In a lot of ways he's completely alone. Even reading the scripts, at times it's difficult. It's hard to read for me because it brings me back to a time when I was having similar struggles. He just needs love and acceptance, and he's not getting that at the moment.

Ros na Rún airs on TG4 on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8.30pm, and is available on the TG4 player, tg4.ie



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It's hard to read the scripts sometimes, because it brings me back to a time when I was having similar struggles.



everybody's hurts

The latest video from electro-pop darlings, Hurts, tells a devastating story of queer-bashing and revenge, but amidst the bloodshed there's a message of hope that's reaching far and wide, according to one half of the duo, Theo Hutchcraft. Words by **John Clarke**.



"You can see in our fans that there's a spark of beauty they might be holding back because of the social situations they're in."

The video for 'Beautiful Things', the latest single from British electro-pop duo, Hurts, is a devastating tale of anti-LGBT violence that features a strange sense of redemption amid bloodshed. It's catapulted Hurts into a new arena, doubling their YouTube hits to 1.5million so far, and reaching out to an audience that hadn't heard of them before.

"The reaction has been overwhelming," says one half of Hurts, Theo Hutchcraft (pictured left), calling from London. "A lot of people have either felt the message or taken something empowering away from it. It speaks up for some people."

The video, which traces in reverse a night out for a drag queen that ends after she's brutally attacked by a gang of thugs, is a disturbing watch, possibly more so because of the stadium-sized pop song underpinning it.

"The song is about being yourself, being proud of who you are," Hutchcraft, who plays the main part, says. "When we were writing it, I wanted the message to be enforced in a similarly powerful way and I thought the best way to do it was to show how important personal liberty is, to show people the reality for a lot of people in the world who aren't allowed to be themselves, and constantly live in fear of being themselves. I find it so distressing that there are so many people out there that are oppressed and frightened into holding it all in."

The choice to tell the story in reverse, with its acts of violence at the start, was there from the beginning for both Hutchcraft and his Hurts partner, Adam Anderson. "We wanted it to end in a positive way," Hutchcraft explains. "We wanted it to end showing how, in those enviornments where people can be themselves, there's a lot of love and positivity. It comes back around to the song, which slots into place at the end.

"Because of the way the story in the video pans out, it shows in a kind of more explicit way that people who have to fight to be themselves are strong, and that inside all of those people is somebody who will get up once they're knocked down. At the start or the end of the video, however you look at it, there's a bit of redemption for the character."

Although 'Beautiful Ones' has attracted a brand new cohort of LGBT fans, Hurts have had a strong queer following since their debut album, *Happiness* dropped in 2010. It's rooted in their look, which mixes a dandy aesthetic with nostalgia for queer-loved '80s acts like Depeche Mode, Pet Shop Boys and Tears for Fears, and songs that are steeped in melodrama, despite their clean synth-driven sound. According to Hutchcraft there's another kind of identification going on behind the scenes.

"We speak to our fans and we know that a lot of them are outsiders. You can see in them that there's a spark of beauty they might be holding back because of the social situations they're in. We identify with that. Not only as a band do we feel like outsiders sometimes, but those are the people in our lives, the people we love."

Despite the interaction with a passionate global fanbase, which has slavishly followed their every move for eight years, Hurts retain an air of mystery, something cultivated by their minimalist image. Always perfectly turned out, without a hair out of place, and never seen smiling in their videos or photoshoots, it's hard to grab onto any real sense of who Hutchcraft and Anderson are behind the image they very deliberately project.

"We're just two working class guys who grew up in the North of England on council estates, who like having a laugh," Hutchcraft says. "At the start we'd be interviewed by people who expected us to be miserable. I think we're quick to break people's expectations down."

He laughs out loud when I ask if he ever wears sweatpants, but doesn't answer directly. "The visual element is part of who we are, something we want to express. We take pride in it; it's an extension of who we are."

The pair take great pride in their videos too, and from the first single, 'Wonderful Life', each is one has been a super-slick quality film in its own right.

"There's always something extra to say with a song. They're so important to us, the videos. We've been lucky enough to work with great directors who brought our ideas to life, and we've pushed ourselves with what we wanted to achieve. From the beginning it was always crucial to the music."

As the hits rack up for the 'Beautiful Ones' video, the Hurts fanbase is rapidly expanding. Hutchcraft prefers the term 'community'.

"We love being part of that community where people seem to be driven to support us," he says. "I think the passion we put into the music is reflected back to us. That sort of level of passion and devotion is what's made us able to do this for so long, and we love it. We put a lot of emotion into our music, which gives people a connection that's hard to break."

Mai Days



The lead single from electronica musician Elaine Mai's new EP is steeped in childhood memories of summers in the Sligo seaside town of Enniscrone. It's electronic music with heart, she tells **Ciara McGrattan**. Photo by **Mattia Pelizzari**

The Colour of the Night, released last month, is electro-ambient artist Elaine Mai's eagerly-anticipated EP. The lead single, 'Enniscrone', dropped in December of last year and fans (which include influential music blogger Nialler9) have been patiently awaiting more electro goodness from the Mayo-native ever since.

'Enniscone', a hazy instrumental track, has an accompanying video that takes in a tour of the Sligo seaside town's rambling sand dunes and picturesque, rustic scenery. Mai's cousin passed away as she was writing the song and the loss underpins the track's summery soundscape and landscape.

"Everything we did as kids was pretty much tied to that place, all these really happy memories," she says. "I was writing that song at the time and I was like, that is *so* what this is about. So the song is dedicated to him and it's really a celebration of all of the amazing fun we had there when we were kids growing up. It's a bit sad in that way, but it's not meant to be sad – it's meant to be a joyous celebration."

After the release of 'Enniscrone', various personal circumstances forced the delay of the EP, until last month ("I just needed to take a bit of time, so that's what I did"). In the interim, fans had to be content with Mai's remix of Liza Flume's 'Sheets', something that came about as result of mutual desire to collaborate.

"I really love her voice and and always wanted to work with her in some guise," says Mai. "I talked about working on a remix with her, so she sent me the vocals for 'Sheets' and I loved it."

The Colour of the Night contains a spit-fire collaboration with Dublin's hip-hop bodhran basher, Temper-Mental MissElayneous, on the excellent 'Praise in the Cliche,' but Mai picks Björk as her number-one dream collaborator, saying, "she just looks at music in a completely different way" – something critics have said of Mai herself on occasion.

Although collaboration is something Mai enjoys, she is more comfortable being a solo performer after years of being in choirs, and later bands. "I think doing it by myself is probably what I enjoy the most. It gives you a real sense of autonomy. Not like I feel like I can't depend on other people, but you're not stressed or worried about other people. I kind of like the fact that if something goes wrong it's your fault, it's no one else's; but if it's really good, and goes really well, then it's all yours as well."

However, being comfortable alone on stage is something that took some getting used to for the shy Mai. She admits to getting nervous before every performance, but says that removing herself from the venue ahead of time mitigates some of the nervous tension. She used to be worse, though. "When I started playing first, friends of mine would say, 'you're going to have to relax a bit, you look really stiff'. If something went wrong I would be like 'Sorry! God, that's terrible!'"

Despite the nerves, she assures me that she has never been tempted to don Daft Punk-style head gear to remove her even further from the stresses of performance. "I just don't think I could pull that off," she laughs. "I think it's kind of nice to be just as I am. I've never really worn anything crazy, and I don't wear a whole heap of make-up or anything like that, so in a way that makes it a bit more raw. You're just going up by yourself and doing your thing."

Is it easier to keep the focus on the music instead of one's appearance as an electronic musician than it is in other genres of music, I ask? It seems hard to imagine any scenario where the front-woman would ever be permitted to just get on with it, without obssesive attention paid to her phyisque, weight, outfits etc.

"It's not something I really thought about to be honest. I suppose for me personally, it's not that I don't care what people think – I *do* care what people think, I think everybody does in some way – but it's just that I think it would be really disingenuous of me personally to get up and wear something crazy, or to do my hair up or something. I'm not that kind of person. I'd rather just wear stuff that I'm comfortable in. Like the last thing that I want to be is uncomfortable on stage," she says, before swiftly adding, "I mean I make an effort to wear a nice shirt that's ironed!"

"All of my tracks are about something, they have a purpose, they're reminiscent of something or they're telling a story."

After some prodding, I manage to get Mai to describe her 'sound' for me, despite the inherent risk of sounding like "an asshole".

"I'd probably say it's electronic music with a bit of heart. All the tracks I write and all the melody stuff usually comes from some kind of vocal hook or a harmony thing in my head, which is what I did when I was originally back playing guitar and messing around with the loop pedal. All of my tracks are about something, they have a purpose, they're reminiscent of something or they're telling a story and I think that that's really important in electronic music because it can be a bit paint-by-numbers if you're not injecting life into it."

Those hoping to catch Mai's live show will have a chance to do so during festival season, but a proper tour won't be forthcoming until later this year. "I'll be playing Body and Soul," she says. "I enjoy playing festivals. I always have a lot of fun. It's just a really good vibe, people are kind of up for it. People are open to giving you a chance."

Aren't festival crowds also just as 'up for' throwing half empty cans of beer at you?

"Depends on the festival," laughs the supremely easy-going Mai. "It's the risk you take."

Elaine Mai plays Body & Soul (June 23-25) The Colour of the Night is available digitally now



GCN EVOLUTION

In 1988 Ireland got a second TV channel, the Molly Malone statue was unveiled on Grafton Street, David Norris won his case against the Irish government at the European Court of Human Rights (which ruled the existence of laws in Ireland criminalising consensual gay sex to be illegal) and Ireland hosted the *Eurovision Song Contest* for the third time. And from a little office at the top of the Hirschfield Centre in Dublin's Temple Bar, GCN was published for the very first time, with the mission of becoming central to the evolution of Ireland's gay community. Almost three decades later, as we get ready for a whole new era of GCN, we trace the story of its design over the years.



FEBRUARY **1988** ISSUE 1

With a radical look created Niall Sweeney, (who would go on to become the designer behind iconic queer Irish brands, Alternative Miss Ireland, Powderbubble and Pantibar) the very first issue of *Gay Community News* was marked by its attention to white space, with its masthead and headlines running down the side of the pages, rather than on top. Edited by Tonie Walsh and Catherine Glendon, it featured articles about cross-dressing, Ireland's ongoing criminalisation of sexual conduct between men, and a quiz about what rights readers enjoyed, or mostly didn't, as gay and lesbian citizens of Ireland.

AUGUST **1988** ISSUE 7

Seven issues in, and *Gay Community News* got a new look, also designed by Niall Sweeney. With the word 'gay' clearly picked out in a black box in the cover's top left-hand corner, we were out and proud. The cover story was about the singer Sylvester, who was critically ill with Aids-related complications (he died in December 1988), while the centre pages held a report on a lesbian and gay Kiss-In at Dáil Eireann. There were articles on a leather and denim night in Dublin (at which the DJ, Albert O, "couldn't mix for nuts"), and the precarious future of the popular Sides nightclub as its premises went up for sale.





NOVEMBER **1989** ISSUE 13

Just over a year later, designer Annabel Konig reimagined the brand, with the word 'gay' expanding to become a logo in itself. "The next few months will be critical for lesbians and gay men in this country," the front-page opinion declared, as GLEN launched the Campaign for Homosexual Law Reform. Elsewhere there was a feature about the film *Torch Song Trilogy* and a round-up of international gay news.

FEBRUARY **1992** ISSUE 37

'Holy Homophobia!' shouted the cover headline of the new *Gay Community News*, beneath which appeared a story about the ban on Irish lesbians and gay men marching in the New York City St Patrick's Day Parade. Designed by Sandy Campbell and Richard Prenderville, the new look and feel aimed to reflect a broadsheet newspaper, with plenty of news, views and reviews beneath snappy headlines, all edited by Francis Thackaberry.





DECEMBER **1996** ISSUE 91

For the first time *Gay Community News* moved in the direction of a magazine, with a specially commissioned full-colour cover photo (by Niall Sweeny and Eamonn Doyle), at the centre of which sat Panti, in her first ever cover-shoot. Inside there was a feature about a kiss-in at the Turk's Head on Parliament Street (formerly the gay Parliament Inn), which had instigated a door policy banning gay people, and there was a special three-page section for women called 'Lesbian Life'.



JUNE **1999** ISSUE 118

With a major design overhaul and new branding from Maurice Farrell, *Gay Community News* was abbreviated to GCN for the first time. Although still printed on newsprint, the overall look, with it's rounded masthead logo and interior feature design veered more towards magazine. Editor Aengus Carroll wrote that he hoped "the paper will be more readable and accessible," while inside there was reporting and opinion on the nail bomb attack on the gay Admiral Duncan pub in London's Soho district, in which three people died and 70 were injured. There was also discussion of the new phenomenon of chat rooms on the Internet.



DECEMBER **1999** ISSUE 124

GCN went glossy for the first time, to celebrate the turn of the millennium, with editor Michael Cronin behind the wheel. The page-count jumped to 68, and it was packed with news and features, including a tribute to Quentin Crisp who had just passed away, aged 90, reports on an attack on gay bar, The Crow's Nest in Belfast, and a feature about a new campaign about disclosing your HIV status to your partner.



JULY **2003** ISSUE 165

With complete rebranding and new design, courtesy of Fionán Healy, GCN went full colour, and changed format too. The new size was 'magaloid', a cross between magazine and tabloid, and the drive was to keep a sense of the GCN readers had known for 15 years, while offering a new product entirely. The mix of politics and community was retained, with a new emphasis on cover stars, interviews and lifestyle content. The inaugural cover star, Irish gay porn king, Aiden Shaw, caused some controversy, lots of new columnists were introduced, including a HIV 'Positive Thinking' column from longtime activist Noel Walsh, while the interior celebrated the people who ushered in decriminalisation ten years previously.



SEPTEMBER **2009** ISSUE 237

"GCN may have changed, but fundamentally it's the same as it was the very first time it was published," declared editor Brian Finnegan as a new design and branding was launched, designed again by Fionán Healy. A major readership survey informed the new design, the size was smaller so it was easier to carry, the colours popped, and there were new sections including food reviews, fashion and grooming advice, and a rolling back-page opinion, the first of which featured Una Mullally asking why the mainstream Irish media was reluctant to engage with the fight for marriage equality.



JULY **2017** ISSUE 331

After eight years in the current format, a huge readership survey that asked you what you wanted from GCN, which continues to be integral to LGBT Ireland almost 30 years on, we'll be presenting an exciting new brand identity and design, both in print and online next month. Our launch will take place in Pantibar on June 16, at the start of the Pride celebrations, and everyone's invited. We're very excited about the changes we've made. We hope you like them too!

STATE OF THE QUEER NATION



It's been two years since the Irish people voted by 62 percent to include same-sex marriage in the country's constitution, a moment when it seemed Ireland had emerged from the dark days of Catholic oppression and we were on course for a new, liberal, egalitarian society, in which the rights and welfare of LGBTs would be enshrined. But is it coming to fruition?

This month, as we celebrate that historic day for the Irish LGBT community, we take a look at how Ireland continues to shape up – and not – as a world leader for social change.



TRANS RIGHTS

In 2015, Ireland became only the fourth country in the world (after Argentina, Denmark and Malta) to pass legislation which allows trans people to obtain recognition on the basis of "self-determination". Applicants for gender recognition need only confirm that they understand "the consequences of the application" and are seeking state acknowledgement of their own "free will."

However, trans people under 16 are completely excluded, while those 16 and 17 years need two doctors, parental consent and a court order to apply.

This month, Sinn Féin TD Fintan Warfield introduced a Gender Recognition (Amendment) Bill to the Seanad that seeks to extend the right to self-determination to trans people aged 16 and 17 years to self-declare their gender identity. The legislation would also open a legal pathway to trans people under 16 years of age.

Minister for Social Protection Leo Varadkar, said that a review of the 2015 Gender Recognition Act would begin in September and would be completed and presented to the Oireachtas no later than September 2018.

Warfield, who is a member of the LGBT community, said that with his bill, which the Government will not oppose at second stage, "the State will truly recognise the existence of trans young people, acknowledging that one does not just turn trans on turning 16 years of age".



REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

In April of this year, members of the Citizen's Assembly voted 51-38 that the 8th Amendment in the Irish constitution, "should be replaced with a constitutional provision that explicitly authorises the Oireachtas to legislate to address termination of pregnancy, any rights of the unborn, and any rights of the pregnant woman." The assembly also voted that abortion should be available in Ireland without restriction.

A cross-party committee on abortion is in the process of being set up, which will be tasked with considering the recommendations of the Citizen's Assembly. Táinaiste Frances Fitzgerald said an abortion referendum should be held as soon as possible, but Fine Gael leadership contender Simon Coveney has said he does not fully support the recommendations of the Citizen's Assembly, while his main leadership rival, Minister for Social Protection Leo Varadkar, declined to comment on the specific recommendations.

This month there were major protests against the ownership of the new National Maternity Hospital being given to the religious order the Sisters of Charity. The €300 million hospital is due to be built on their land in Dublin 4.

Amid the protests, master of the Holles Street hospital, Dr Peter Boylan resigned from the board of the National Maternity Hospital. He wrote in the *Irish Times*: "Modern maternity and gynaecological care encompasses contraception, sterilisation, IVF, gender reassignment surgery and abortion, as well as the usual day-to-day activities of a busy maternity hospital.

"Are we seriously expected to believe that if the hospital goes ahead according to the proposed arrangement it will be the only maternity hospital in the world owned by the Catholic Church, and run by a company owned by the Catholic Church, that will allow these procedures? This stretches credibility to breaking point. Indeed it would seem to be naive."

Health Minister Simon Harris, however, said the need for a new hospital should outweigh any concerns members of the public had over the site's links to the Catholic Church.



MARRIAGE EQUALITY & NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland is currently the only part of the UK without same-sex marriage because the ultra-conservative Democratic Unionist Party has employed peace process powers known as 'petitions of concern' to block all progress of legislation in Stormont.

Following a devolved assembly election earlier this year, the DUP is required to form a new power-sharing government with second-largest party, Sinn Féin – but talks have repeatedly stalled, and now there's a postponement until after the June snap election called by UK Prime Minister, Teresa May.

Former DUP minister Jim Wells said that Sinn Féin's insistence on same-sex marriage is a "red line" for his party that would prevent a power-sharing government being formed, adding that "Peter will not marry Paul in Northern Ireland."

At a meeting in Limerick this month Church of Ireland General Synod members voted down a proposal to soften its attitude to same-sex unions. Almost every speaker against the motion was from Northern Ireland with Rev Trevor Johnston of Connor diocese describing the motion as "impossible" adding that "inbuilt into it is discrimination against those who didn't act on their same sex attraction".

LGBT STRATEGIES

Ireland is to become the first country in the world to carry out a national LGBT youth strategy, which aims to address the challenges faced by young members of Ireland's LGBT community.

In April, Children's Minister Katherine Zappone launched an online questionnaire for the strategy, urging young people around Ireland to share their views. The programme plans to consult young people between the age of 15-24 about all aspects of their lives so as to provide key recommendations in certain policy areas.

Last month, Dublin City Council (DCC) officially launched their LGBT Inclusion Strategy. The Strategy is comprised of a three-pronged approach: facilitating LGBT visibility in DCC, promoting and strengthening LGBT inclusion at all levels in the City Council and providing education and awareness on LGBT-related issues.

As part of the first element, Facilitating LGBT Visibility, DCC plan to ensure the public can access LGBT literature through a range of channels including the Library. Specifically mentioning GCN, DCC will ensure that the LGBT publication will be available in all library branches on a monthly basis.

HIV & HEALTH

More than 500 new cases of HIV were diagnosed in 2016, the highest rate since records began. Nearly half of the new HIV cases resulted from sex between men, and over half were people born outside of Ireland, but who came here in recent years. So far this year, there have been 183 new HIV cases and if this trend continues, 2017 will surpass last year's figure.

Last July a group of gay men formed ACT UP Dublin to campaign for the government and the Health Service Executive to offer PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) pills, also known as Truvada, to those who are at risk of exposure to HIV. Although it has been approved in Europe, PrEP is currently not availble through the Irish health system.

The largest PrEP study to date (McCormack, *et al, The Lancet*, 2016), showed an 86 percent reduction in incidence of HIV infection amongst those taking the drug.

A ban on MSM giving blood was lifted in January of this year. The Irish Blood Transfusion Board replaced it with a 12-month deferal, so if a man who has ever had anal or oral sex with another man wishes to give blood he must abstain from such activities for a period of a year.

In 2016, GLEN, in association with BeLonG To and TCD, launched the LGBT Ireland Report, national study of the mental health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in Ireland. Fifty-six percent of LGBT teens aged 14-18 in the study said they had self-harmed while 70 percent of this age group had seriously thought of ending their own life.

The report found that school continues to be a



very difficult place for many young LGBT people. Only one-in-five feel they belong completely in their school, while less than half feel they have received positive affirmation of their identity.

Only one-in-three of the 2,200 respondents felt safe showing affection or holding hands with a partner in public. Some 15 percent said they would never do either.

EDUCATION

In the *Burning Issues 2* report (produced by GCN's publishers, the National LGBT Federation), which surveyed over 2,600 people last year to find the issues most important to Ireland's LGBT community, 96 percent of respondents said that the Irish education system should be reformed so that no child is excluded for their religion or non-religion. Research carried out in 2015 by Equate, an NGO lobbying for the secularisation of Irish schools, found that 84 percent of the general Irish population agreed with this general statement. Currently in Ireland 93 percent of schools are run by the Catholic Church.

In January of this year, Minister for Education, John Bruton announced plans to remove the baptismal barrier, but it remains to be seen whether it will be a complete ban on religious schools using religion as a factor in admissions.

According to Michael Barron, Director of Equate: "How identity is taught in schools, and particularly sexual identity, is coloured by the religious ethos of the school. As long as we have a Catholic Church that maintains gay people are intrinsically disordered, it's going to be an issue around how sexual health and sexual intimacy are taught."



ASYLUM SEEKERS

In 2015 the BeLonG To LGBT youth organisation lost funding for its LGBT Asylum Seekers and Refugees Project, which organised a group comprised of asylum seekers and refugees from around the country. Most of the group's members were under Direct Provision (DP), the government's 'cashless' system of handling asylum seekers whose claims are mired in endless processing.

Many LGBT asylum seekers have suffered huge trauma and have arrived in Ireland completely alone. In DP they in the vulnerable postion of being shunned by other members of the community because of their declared sexual or gender orientation, or are afraid to come out because they are vulnerable to attack.

The campaign to end Direct Provision continues, but there are currently no state or NGO supports for LGBT asylum seekers in the system.

PENSIONS

David Parris, a retired Trinity College Dublin lecturer is currently being denied a survivor's pension for his husband because they were unable to be married before Mr Parris had turned 60. Other LGBTs are being excluded because of a rule in their pension scheme that they be married before they retired in order to get a survivor pension for their husband or wife. The government is currrently blocking older LGBT people who have lost out on a survivor pension from bringing a complaint to the Workplace Relations Commission.

In April, Senator Ivana Bacik introduced a private member's Pensions Equality Bill to the Seanad, which would have the effect of making an exception for gay and lesbian couples who were unable to get married because of the prevailing marriage equality legislation.

The government, however, is now ready to put a provision for pensions equality for LGBT couples in the Social Welfare and Pensions Bill 2017. However, it contains a condition that a complaint for discrimination must have been, in the past, laid before a circuit court, which will effectively invalidate the claims of the majority of the couples the provision seeks to address.



THE BURNING ISSUES

In June 2016, GCN's publishers, the National LGBT Federation, released findings from Burning Issues 2, a national survey of over 2,600 LGBT people and ten nation-wide focus groups in seven cities and towns across the Republic of Ireland. The full report is available at nxf.ie

The key findings of the consultation require the Government to:

- Introduce hate crimes legislation to protect minority groups in Ireland as the prevention of bullying and violence is the key concern of the LGBT community.
- End the lifetime blood donation ban on gay and bisexual men and ensure that all health services are LGBT inclusive and in particular mental health services.
- Integrate LGBT inclusion within the ministerial brief of the Minister for Regional Development, Rural Affairs, Arts and the Gaeltacht to ensure the needs of LGBT rural people are central to rural policy. More than 85% of LGBT people in rural areas do not have enough community supports or services or opportunities to socialise.
- Campaign for marriage equality in Northern Ireland.
- Introduce mandatory LGBT equality and awareness training for all public service providers in education, health, social care, elderly care and parental support services.
- Amend the Gender Recognition Act so it covers transgender young people and provides for the legal recognition of non-binary and intersex people.

DogsTrust

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RACHEL MATHEWS-MCKAY

@RAMathewsMckay

#YesEquality

JUST TWO YEARS ON FROM THE MARRIAGE EQUALITY REFERENDUM, IT'S IRELAND'S DUTY TO UPHOLD OUR EVOLVING SENSE OF HUMANITY AS THE WORLD EVOLVES IN OTHER DIRECTIONS



Recently I travelled to London wearing my Glória, Dublin Lesbian and Gay Choir hat, where we performed with Diversity Choir, an LGBT choir year celebrating 25 years this year. Often at events abroad, or in other parts of Ireland, Glória's presence represents more than the songs we sing, but also the values of inclusivity and diversity that we champion, like singing ambassadors.

In the lead-up to, and since, the London concert our social media feeds have been buzzing with excitement, and a fair bit of it has come from members of the Irish LGBT diaspora, delighted to have had a bit of Ireland visiting and celebrating with them. It has been really interesting to hear some of the feedback, which taps into a homesick *grá* for Ireland and all things Irish. It's that longing that any of us who have ever lived away have felt, the same feeling that keeps the Rose of Tralee festival going, Irish clubs across the world filled, and St Patrick's Day parades flowing.

A few drinks into the night, after our high-octane performance, I spoke to an older man who told me how appreciative he felt that we had come over to share a bit of home. He had left Ireland at 12 years of age and was doing well for himself, and while money was no longer an issue and he could go back and forth as often as he liked, there was a sadness and a disconnection that continued to be part of his experience. He remembered the oppressive, religious, rural Ireland that made being gay impossible and the decision he had to make; that if he was going to be a successful person, and a content 'out' person, he would have to leave and make a life elsewhere. We talked about how progressive and liberal Ireland was becoming and how much easier it was going to be for young people to define themselves

On this occasion I was chatting to a well settled, successful businessman who just happened to have emigrated to the UK, but it wouldn't take you long to stroll around London and stumble across deeply unhappy, lost and forgotten Irish people.

So many of the diaspora stories, official bodies of research and academic explorations around people leaving Ireland over the centuries focus on the economic and political elements of emigration. There's so little exploring the sociological reasons, in particular very few LGBT stories recording the lives of those who fled in search of freer existences. TV personality Graham Norton or Dublin-born author Emma Donoghue have shared some of their positive experiences, but they are exceptions amongst the scant and sad stories.

I am sure there are many of us who personally knew or still know people who left Ireland on account of their sexuality and their desperate desire to explore life more freely. I still have family members who live in the UK and America, not just because they left to build their careers, but because they grew up in an Ireland when having a same-sex girlfriend or boyfriend meant clandestine, secret rendezvous' and skulking around in search of safe spaces.

There are interesting times ahead of us in modern Ireland, as we appear to be steaming ahead with our equality agendas, still determined to push for further social and economic rights, despite a slow exit from a hard and long economic recession and in the face of uncertainties brought about by Brexit. This year the Government introduced long overdue and historic measures recognising the ethnic status of our Traveller community. It has also recently been announced that Ireland is to become the first country to carry out a national government-backed LGBT Youth Strategy, launching an online questionnaire to be followed by a series of regional meetings aimed at addressing the challenges specifically faced by those emerging as LGBT young people.

Between the findings of this initiative and other recent and important surveys, including the LGBTIreland mental health report, the wider-scoped *Burning Issues 2* report and a number of smaller ones, all gathering up-to-date information and creating a clearer picture of modern Ireland's LGBT lives and our emerging needs, we are on course to build a sustainable and well-supported community.

Now that Article 50 has been signed and Theresa May has made it clear that Britain will no longer be subject to the protection or influence of the European Courts of Human Rights or other European judicial mechanisms, perhaps human and civil rights matters will be compromised in the UK. In that light, Ireland may find itself taking the lead by example. Despite the election of Emmanuel Macron in France, it's not clear how world politics are going to play out, or how secure any of the world's economies are. The most powerful man in the world right now, after all, is Donald Trump.

In Ireland we are slowly but surely evolving from narrow and damaging expectations that once restricted our lives, away from the shadows Irish LGBT immigrants once ran from. It's our duty as a country that voted for LGBT equality just two years ago, to uphold our evolving sense of humanity as the world evolves in other directions.

RICHARD FAIRBRASS ON...

In 1991, Richard Fairbrass (pictured right) and his brother Fred, aka Right Said Fred, went to number one in 32 countries with the song, 'I'm Too Sexy'. Fairbrass came out as gay at the time, inciting much ire in the UK press, but according to Richard himself, gay men didn't quite believe him. Nine albums later and still performing, he says he still has trouble fitting in with the gay label.





… 'overnight success'

We had been gigging for about 13 years before 'I'm Too Sexy' came out in 1991, so we were hardly an overnight success. I remember in the early stages, going out shopping and people staring at me. It was all just a bit weird and vaguely embarrassing. It's only recently that I've gotten used to it. I enjoy it now; people are generally very nice.

… 'I'm Too Sexy'

Early songs are a little bit like early boyfriends – you value them and you can remember them, but you don't want to necessarily repeat the experience. I love 'I'm Too Sexy', but I have absolutely no interest in spending my life trying to re-cultivate that thing.

… hindsight

It was all a bit weird, looking back. We basically did what we were told. The single was climbing the charts and they'd say go on Noel Edmund's show and wave, and we would. It's only in the last five or ten years that Fred and I have taken a much firmer grip on how we want to sound and what we want to do.

… fitting in

I never feel like I've fitted in with being gay. Gay clubs and that gay label never really suited me. I met my partner Stuart in 1982 and we were together for 28 years before he passed away. It didn't feel gay or straight; it was what it was.

… coming out

Coming out was tricky; the band becoming successful forced the decision upon me. My Dad had passed away, but Mum was still around and she didn't know. It was a difficult time. I had stuff scrawled on my car, people would spit at me; Stuart got beaten up in the street. Back in those days, particularly because of HIV and Aids, there was an awful lot of ignorance and fear around.

… being out in the public eye

When the band hit, I think it was a very difficult time for Stuart. He became HIV positive in 1983, so we'd lived with that for most of the '80s, and had kept ourselves to ourselves. I was very public, and very out, and he was dealing with HIV and felt compromised, I'm sure. I was so busy being famous and all that nonsense that I didn't give him and his situation enough thought.

… a gay following

When we first broke we had a whole lot of gay venues booked, but we had to cancel them because I think a lot of gay guys thought I was a straight bloke taking the piss. I've had three or four gay fan letters in my life. Our appeal over the years has generally spoken to a core family audience, mums and dads and kids.

… image

The whole Right Said Fred image was accidental. Fred and I had been weight training at the gym anyway, and had been for four or five years prior to the single coming out, we'd shaved our heads a year before. It was a very gay look, but I didn't know it at the time. I'm pretty clueless about these things. I didn't know Freddie Mercury was gay until he died.

"Early songs are a little bit like early boyfriends – you value them and you can remember them, but you don't want to necessarily repeat the experience. "

… the most memorable moment

We rented a bluebird Pontiac convertible sports car when we were in America. Fred and I were driving around LA with the top down, under blue skies, and I turned on the radio. I happened to hit on the American top 40 and the DJ was saying, "'This is America's number one song, Right Said Fred, 'I'm Too Sexy'." I remember thinking, that is pretty cool.

… the new album

The reviews are the best we've had in years, and they're from people who would normally be taking pot-shots at us. It's driven by the songs. Once we got two or three together and we liked them, and we thought it was beginning to sound cool, we said let's just keep going until we've got an album's worth. It took about a year to write the songs and a year to record it.

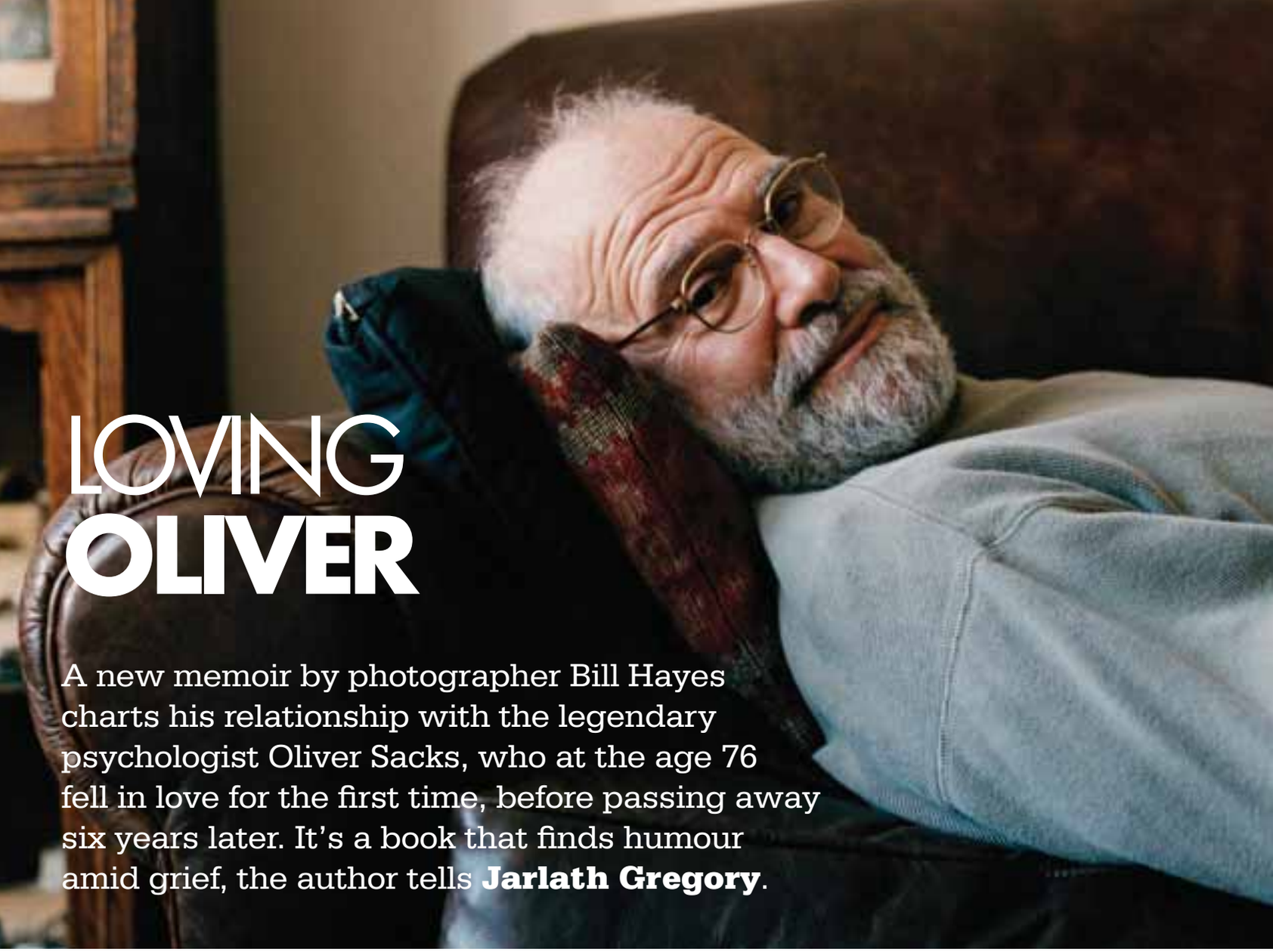
… the love life

It's a little less busy than I'd like it to be. But I'm lazy. I was with Stuart for 28 years and when he died in 2010 I thought I'd move on and find someone else. But you don't, that's how it is. When someone dies, they're kind of with you all the time, so it's a much slower process.

… the years since 'I'm Too Sexy'.

I've never done any work other than being in the band; I'm unemployable in every other field, I think. We're lucky enough to have pipeline money, so we get paid twice a year for back catalogue, which is really great. We'd be richer now if we hadn't done anything since 1995. We ploughed tens of thousands of pounds into what we do. What else would we do, sit at home with more money and watch the telly? Life is too short for that.

Right Said Fred will be at Bare in the Woods, June 9-11, Garryhinch Woods, Portarlington, barefestival.com. Their new album, 'Exactly', is out now, www.rightsaidfred.com



LOVING OLIVER

A new memoir by photographer Bill Hayes charts his relationship with the legendary psychologist Oliver Sacks, who at the age 76 fell in love for the first time, before passing away six years later. It's a book that finds humour amid grief, the author tells **Jarlath Gregory**.

I'm not quite sure what to expect when I arrive at the hotel to meet Bill Hayes. From his memoir, I know that he's American, older, and not very tall, but which Bill Hayes will I meet? The erudite journalist and author with a love of art and culture, the streetwise photographer whose Polaroids intersperse the narrative of his new book, or the chatty conversationalist who captured the heart of one of the foremost popular psychologists of our time? I find a dapper, charming, middle-aged man with a twinkle in his eye, unfazed by finding himself at the end of a promotional tour of major European capitals, equally happy to discuss the grief at the heart of his memoir, ask where to find the best gay bars in town, or break off mid-interview to help the flustered waiter replace our chairs.

Bill Hayes was recovering from the loss of his partner, Steve, when he moved to New York at the age of 48, with only the vaguest plan of how to get by. In the memoir *Insomniac City*, he recounts his everyday adventures in the city, but also charts his unexpected relationship with the well-known neuroscientist, Oliver Sacks, author of bestselling psychology books *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* and *Musicophilia*. There is humour and pathos in the memoir, as the reader is drawn into Bill's romance with an older man who has been closeted and celibate for decades. As Bill says of Oliver in the book: "He was without a doubt the most unusual person I had ever known, and before long I found myself not just falling in love with O; it was something more, something I had never experienced before. I adored him."

Insomniac City reads as a love letter to New York City as well as a love story about you and Oliver. Can you explain how you and Oliver came to meet?

Nine years ago, when I was living in San Francisco, I got a letter in the mail, hand-written from Oliver Sacks. Of course, I knew his work. In the letter, he told me he'd read my book *The Anatomist*, which had come out a few months before. It's about *Gray's Anatomy*, the classic medical text, and he simply wrote to say he'd enjoyed it. It was a very cordial letter. I was surprised and flattered of course, and I wrote a letter back. He wrote a letter back to me, and we had a little correspondence.

On a trip to New York we had lunch together, and it was very collegial, though there was a certain spark. Fast-forward a year later, I made the move to New York City. This did not have to do with Oliver. I'd had been living in San Francisco 25 years. I'd had a partner of 17 years who had HIV/Aids, but had been saved by medication. I say all this because it came as a complete surprise when he died unexpectedly one morning of a heart attack at 43. It was shattering and traumatic. It took time to get re-grounded and ready to move forward.

I didn't know very many people and once I moved to New York, and Oliver and I started seeing each other, at first as colleagues and friends, but very quickly it turned into a romance. *Insomniac City* is about New York, which in many ways is the main character in the book, and my relationship with Oliver up until his death in August 2015. It's also about my reinvention of myself as a photographer. I bought a camera right before I moved and was drawn to



taking photographs of people on the street.

It's also about this eminent figure, Oliver Sacks, finding love and coming out later in life. That's a fairly unusual story in terms of what we're used to in popular culture.

I do think it's unusual. Since the release of my book in the US, one of the remarkable things for me has been the engagement with readers, particularly through social media, which has changed since my last book was published. I have heard from a couple of older men who told me they came out in late age. In fact, a couple days ago I heard from a man in his early 70s who'd been married twice, the last time for 37 years, and had just came out to his entire family after his wife died of Alzheimer's. He found great inspiration in the book.

At one point, you express your surprise that a 22-year-old man has a husband. Do you find yourself surprised by how far gay rights have come, or more surprised that young gay people want to settle down?

Both, really. I am surprised by how far it's come. I didn't envision what we have. When I was with Steve in San Francisco it was a very big deal when domestic partnerships were made legal. We went to City Hall and got a domestic partnership, but it was definitely a step below marriage.

I am surprised how much younger gay men embrace marriage. It's not something I'm opposed to in any way; it's just not part of my thinking. I'm from a different generation, I guess. It's often marriage with monogamy and following a different norm from the one I thought of as being part of gay culture.

At first you were amazed that Oliver lived a celibate life for a long time before you met. Do you think that's indicative of Oliver as an individual, or more indicative of a man of his age and background?

He was very shy and not one to go out to bars. As Oliver wrote in his autobiography, he knew he was gay as a teenager and came out to his parents at 18, I think. He was raised in a very traditional Jewish household. His mother especially was horrified and essentially cursed him, saying, 'You are an abomination,' and wished he'd never been born. This was very scarring for him.

He did have some early trysts and romances, had his heart broken, but then essentially closed that door. He devoted his life to his practice, his patients, and of course his amazing books. He lived a very solitary life, almost a monk-like existence. He never expected to fall in love, never expected to have a relationship. But as chance would have it, we met. There were some challenges in the beginning because he was not out and he was a public figure, whereas I had come out at 24, moved to San Francisco in 1985, written about being gay, had lived my entire life as an out gay man. That got easier over time.

Although the book is often very sad, there's a lot of yearning, hope and happiness in it too. In contrast to the image of a young woman reading a self-help book on the subway in the book, do you think *Insomniac City* offers philosophical advice on how to live well?

I think so. I would hope so. The memoir is book-ended with two traumatic experiences. It opens with Steve's death and closes with Oliver's death, and yet I don't think it's a book about grief. Both death and grief and loss are part of life as I understand it. I moved to San Francisco in 1985, into a flat in the Castro, right as the Aids epidemic was exploding. I saw and helped many friends who died or became sick at young ages. It was such a different time. So scary. But death as part of life became part of my understanding of what it is to live. The focus on life and openness to living in this book is how I've lived my whole life, especially since Steve's death. The openness I show to my neighbours, however different they might be, whether it's Ali at the smoke shop, or a go-go boy, or a very elderly woman, is something I hope people can find inspiring – that one can connect with one's neighbours, or speak up for those who might not have a voice.

You wrote the book shortly after Oliver's death. Did it offer some sort of closure for your grief?

I'm often asked if it was cathartic to write the book, and to me, the word cathartic suggests that the grief is erased, and it hasn't done that. I still think about him a lot. I miss him a lot. But there is something unifying about writing the book and making something beautiful out of it. I very much wanted to make a beautiful book, one that had the funny and comic and playful parts of our life, as well as the sad, for the reader to smile and chuckle as well as shed a tear.

My life with Oliver was so much fun. He was essentially such a cheerful person, almost boyishly curious about the world. I wanted to capture that and give a feeling for what life in New York City is like – the photographs of people coming and going is meant to give a sense of what it feels like to live there.

Would Oliver like to be remembered, and if so, how?

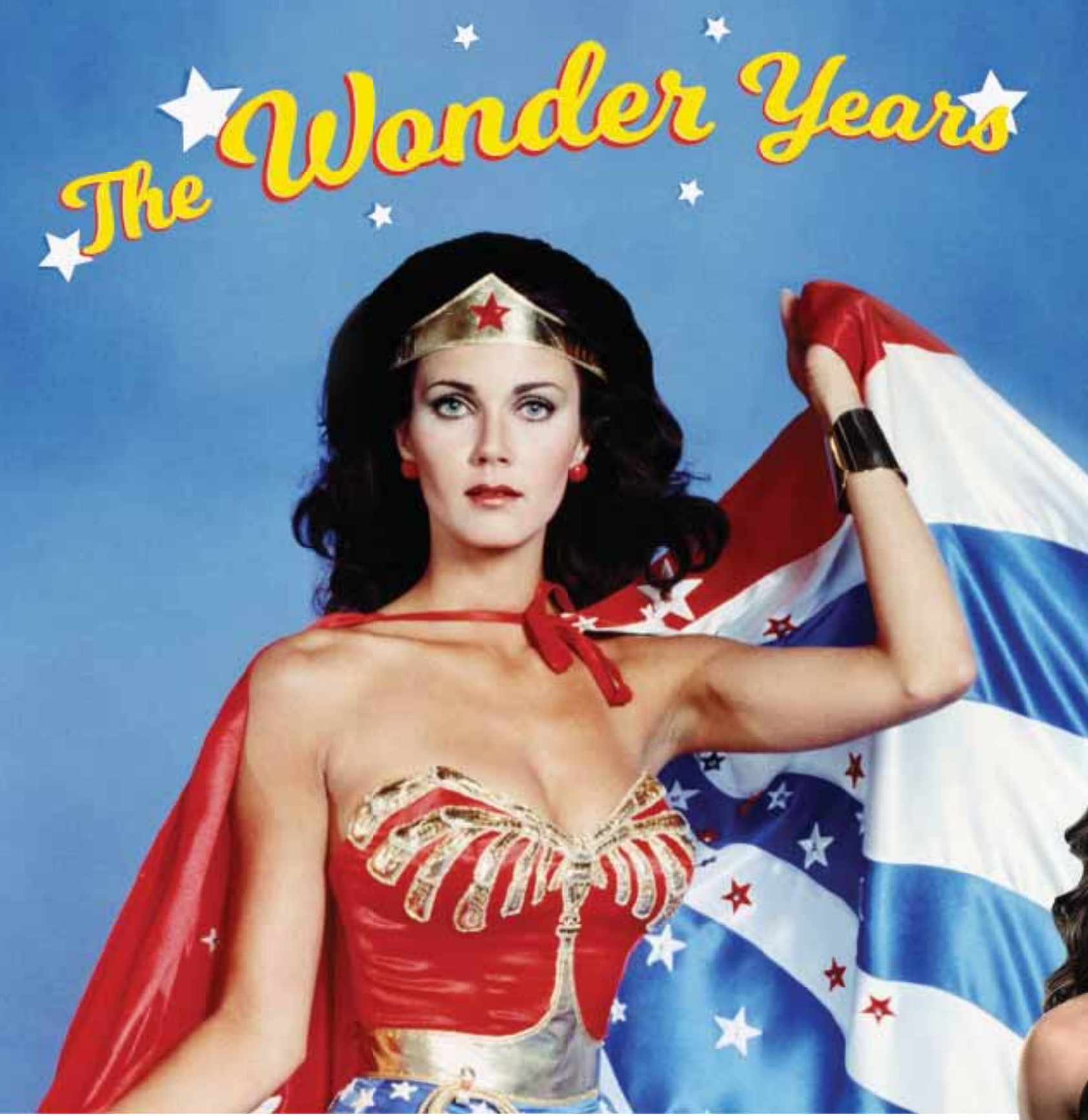
I think absolutely, and I think he is remembered and beloved, and would have been had I wrote this memoir or not. Because of his amazing legacy of expanding our notions of neurodiversity, recognising, identifying, empathising with conditions like autism, Tourette's, Parkinson's, savant syndromes, all the things he explored – blindness, colour blindness, the culture of the deaf, that humanity. He was certainly beloved and lot of that love has come my way since his death, which is lovely. I also hoped to capture his playfulness and his brilliance. I couldn't help but be struck by the brilliant things that came out of his mouth. I kept a journal of that even before we became involved, and I kept that journal up until his death.

Any plans for the future?

Right now I'm completing my next book, which is a book solely of my street photography. It will be out early next year. The new book will be both black and white and colour, it'll have a little bit of text, sort of the inverse of *Insomniac City* – it'll have its own narrative, like a dreamy walk through Manhattan without regard to time or season, and it's called *How New York Breaks Your Heart*. I'll do another book after that, a history of exercise called *Sweat*, which will be more like my previous books – a history with personal memoir. I'm very excited about it.

Insomniac City is published by Bloomsbury, €16.89

The Wonder Years



As a long-awaited *Wonder Woman* movie spins into cinemas, longtime super-fan of the original '70s TV show, **Jon Weir** says he wouldn't be the gay man he is today without Diana Prince and her star-spangled, kick-ass alter ego.

I only wrote to *Jim'll Fix It* once. I asked him to turn me into Wonder Woman.

He didn't, of course. The world may have been ready for her, but it wasn't ready for me, a ten year-old stick insect of a kid, to appear clad in star-spangled knickers on BBC One. They did turn a girl into Wonder Woman and she used her 'super powers' to clean her bedroom at super speed. I remember hissing at the TV in envy.

A long time has passed since then and Wonder Woman has remained mostly as invisible to TV and movie audiences as her famous invisible plane. We finally got a brief glimpse of her much-anticipated big screen debut in last year's testosterone punching match *Batman v Superman,* where she stole the show with barely 15 minutes screen time. But Wonder Woman finally spins into her own solo feature in June, played again by Israeli model and actress Gal Gadot. As the most important superhero movie of recent years, and backed by a tidal wave of hype, there's a lot riding on the film. Female superhero movies have traditionally tanked at the box office but I'm willing this one to succeed because I owe Wonder Woman a lot. I doubt I'd be the gay man I am without her.

The character has long been a feminist role model but it was her most famous incarnation in her '70s TV show, brought to life by the beautiful Lynda Carter and a gloriously campy theme tune, that revealed her as a true LGBT icon and cemented her queer appeal for me. Growing up in a grey, Northern town in England where I was teased and bullied for my tiny frame, or my disinterest in sports, I never felt special or extraordinary. I was in permanent super-hero alter-ego mode; unimportant and underestimated like Diana Prince, the alter-ego of Wonder Woman (utilising that old super hero trick of a simple pair of glasses). The day I saw the *Wonder Woman* TV show, and its most iconic sequence, dubbed the 'wonder spin', my life was changed. I'd spin around when no one was looking, hoping that in a flash of light I'd become someone stronger and more glamorous. Wonder Woman's transformation was transformative to me as that young gay kid. I know it was the same for so many others. Watching as a golden explosion changes her from her dowdy, unassuming persona into a vision of stars, stripes and huge hair sent a shiver down my spine and a smile to my face. It still has the same effect on me and today it's not difficult to see that famous quick-change spin (invented by Carter herself) as the ultimate 'coming out of the closet', the reveal of the true powers and beauty she was usually forced to hide from the world.

But Wonder Woman has never been about her looks and despite the risqué costume the producers squeezed Carter into, Wonder Woman's greatest attributes were not her physical ones.

Hailing from an island of Amazon women, her real weapons were equality, compassion, love and truth, ideals the LGBT community have always embraced. She was invented in 1941 by psychologist William Moulton Marston who wanted a feminist hero to counter the violent male comic book heroes of the day. Marston was a supporter of women's rights and Wonder Woman's origins were heavily influenced by his keen interest in feminist values. He developed an early version of what became known as the polygraph test, aka the lie detector, and this certainly influenced Wonder Woman's most famous accessory, the lasso of truth. He also gave her bracelets on her wrists to block bullets. And on top all that she was an actual butt-kicking princess way before Leia or Xena.

It's no wonder this little 10-year-old queer kid wanted to be her. In many ways I'm still that 10-year-old-kid, and drop that lasso around me, I'd probably tell you I still want to be her too. These days I channel my *Wonder Woman* love into collecting: my spare room at home holds my *Wonder Woman* collection, an array of dolls, action figures, toys, books, comics and vintage memorabilia. Much of it is centred on Lynda Carter's version of the character and the enduring legacy of both her and the show means fans have more merchandise to buy than ever before. It's a great, if expensive time, to be a *Wonder Woman* fan. (It's also the first time I can ever remember it being cool to say that out loud.) I was lucky enough to meet Lynda many years ago in London after one of her musical shows. They say never meet you heroes, advice I'm glad I ignored because the memory of those moments with her is the best part of my entire collection.

"Wonder Woman's transformation was transformative to me as that young gay kid. I know it was the same for so many others."

In many ways, Gadot's Wonder Woman is very different to Carter's: she's swapped her bathing suit for more practical battle-armour and flat heels, and added a shield and sword to her armoury. She's also a little more hard-edged, having tired of the human race and its violence. The movie follows her mission to 'man's world' as she leaves her idyllic island home for the trenches of WW1, deep into the dark heart of the conflict. It's a more modern twist on the character, bolstered by big-budget action that the TV show could never have hoped to pull off, but still owes much to Carter's trail-blazing casting. Gadot grasps the character and her core values as much as Carter ever did.

So while it's Gadot's face we'll be associating with *Wonder Woman* for some time to come, if it weren't for Lynda Carter and her iconic interpretation, it's not a stretch to think Wonder Woman could have disappeared from the collective culture over the decades. While for some she was just a sexy poster on their bedroom wall, Carter's Wonder Woman was a gay icon when many of us were too young to understand what that meant, or that we needed one. Today, Lynda is a vocal supporter of the LGBT community but back in the '80s, as I sat glued to my TV every Saturday afternoon, she unknowingly helped me to realise that being your true self, super powers or not, was pretty cool.

A new generation of kids are about to discover the reason Wonder Woman has been around for 75 years and counting. And what if, when they come home from the cinema, they decide to try that famous spin for themselves, just in case something magic happens? The truth is, though I'm no longer that little boy who wrote to *Jim'll Fix It,* I'll still be spinning with them.

Because it never hurts to wonder.

'Wonder Woman' opens nationwide on June 1



When Jon met Lynda

ANDY KANE

@andyapples

#NakedPics

IN A WORLD OF HOOK-UP APPS, THE SHARING OF NAKED SELFIES HAS BECOME A NORM, BUT ONCE A PICTURE IS ONLINE, IT'S THERE FOREVER.



Learning to be open and honest about who we are is a cornerstone experience of being LGB or T, and a recurring theme in many of our lives. To come out of the closet, firstly we have to be in it, so we know what it's like to keep secrets. We also know how to adapt to better fit in, to protect ourselves by remaining hidden in plain sight.

My life has been a process of peeling away layers to reveal myself. It hasn't always been easy, but I continue to try and reveal deeper aspects of my being as I attempt to communicate my truth. I do this by being open with loved ones, even when it is painful to be vulnerable. I have done this with my sexuality by being honest with people about my queer experience, especially when that revelation threatens to colour someone's judgement. And I do it with my body every time I unlock my private album on Scruff.

Through the evolution of technology, the naked selfie has become a part of our world, almost second nature; a part of the conversation. Individually we can be shamed, but the more of us that are open with our bodies the less power others will have over us. Nudity allows us all to see what we have in common. Our skin is truthful. We are all similar underneath or clothes, even more so under the skin. We store our emotions in our bodies and revealing ourselves physically, for me at least, helps me to feel that I am being recognised for who I am.

When I come across a friend's nudes on Tumblr (put there by choice, might I add, for there are many of us who share images of ourselves willingly), I don't see it as a negative. I feel proud of people who are unafraid to reveal themselves and who use their physical bodies as a tool to do so. Though I prefer webcam over still photography, I have regularly shown my body to the world. While some consider it perverse to show off, for me it's an act of political transgression in the face of an orthodox society.

All this being said, I still hold back. Though I'm comfortable with my body and even show off in the digital world, the fear that it could come back to haunt me is real. Revealing too much is always scary, but the Internet is potentially forever and once an image is out there, it is almost impossible to control. For me, however, the answer isn't hiding ourselves, but rather deconstructing the shame associated with showing ourselves.

In the last few years I've struggled with revealing myself. Thinking back on my childhood I was always willing to be the clown, the first to put my hand up when no one else was willing to risk a wrong answer. From the age of ten I made a conscious decision not to be embarrassed, to force myself beyond such feelings so that I could make the most of my life. Then a couple of years ago someone who I care deeply for called me an embarrassment to my face. It broke me down. It scuppered all the work I had done to build up my confidence over the years. I felt like I had sent them a picture of my naked body and they had lorded it over me, used it to take my power.

"I began to feel exposed, afraid that I had been misunderstood – maybe I should have been embarrassed for myself the whole time?"

For the first time it occurred to me that while resolutely refusing to be embarrassed, I may have actually been making a damn fool out of myself and simply refusing to see it. Suddenly it was as though a dam broke and 20 years of shame came cascading down over me. I began to feel exposed, afraid that I had been absolutely misunderstood – maybe I should have been embarrassed for myself the whole time? I may have been happy to show off my body, but suddenly I was afraid to show people who I was as a person.

So how do I make sure that I am as comfortable being emotionally vulnerable as I am being uninhibited elsewhere in my life? As much as it matters to be to be radically slutty, it is just as important to be emotionally honest and real about who I am, as well as being supportive and inclusive of others who are bravely vulnerable.

Self-acceptance plays out in all areas of the self. My goal is to be completely open about who I am, emotionally, physically, spiritually and sexually. Honesty allows me to be truly in control of myself.

HIV LAID BARE

#GETTHEBAREFACTS

BAREBACKING

SOME MEN ENJOY DOING IT

IF YOU DO

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Man2Man.ie

NIBBLES & NUGGETS

Amid controversy about the Restaurant Association of Ireland Awards' all-male judging panel, big congrats to **Danni Barry** (pictured below), head chef at **Deanes Eipic** in Belfast. The country's only Michelin-starred female chef, she was named Best Chef 2017; you go, girl! Ross Lewis's **Chapter One** scooped the **Best Restaurant** award, while Dublin restaurant **Forest & Marcy** won the awards for Best Newcomer and Best Emerging Irish Cuisine. Forest & Marcy's head chef, **Ciaran Sweeney**, was also named best chef in Dublin.

As part of a year-long series of cooking workshops and masterclasses by Ireland's leading chefs and food producers at **Cliff Academy at Lyons** in Kildare, Donegal native, Chef Sean Smith will be sharing his knowledge, tips and tricks to sourcing and preparing the finest seafood ingredients on Sunday June 11. To book a place at the event, contact Cliff at Lyons now on (01) 630 3500 or reception@cliffatlyons.ie, and make sure you mention any dietary requirements you have, because you will most certainly be eating.

In a city crammed with coffee shops, it's hard to stand-out, but **Container Coffee** on James' Street is doing just that. Founded by gorgeous Gordon Hickey, it does what it says on the tin, in that it's a coffee shop in a freight container. The specialty coffee is Cloud Picker, and while there's only seating for ten, it's an experience all of its own.

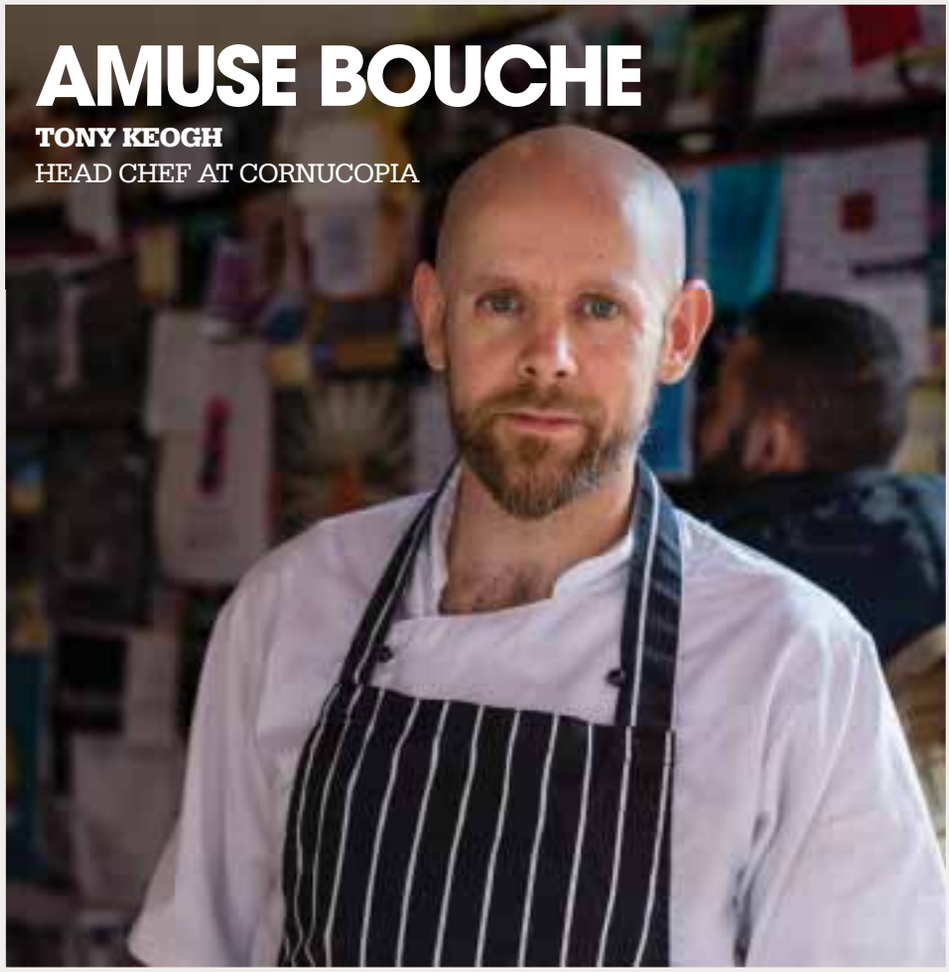
Taste of Dublin is back with a bang at The Iveagh Gardens from June 15 to 18 (dublin.tastefestivals.com), with three days of deliciousness featurng a host of chefs inclujding Paul Kelly, the aformentioned Ciaran Sweeney of Forest & Marcy, Darina Allen, and Irish boy made good, Mr Stuart O'Keefe, from American TV show, *Private Chefs of Beverly Hills*. He can be our private chef anytime!



We've had a sneak sample of the menu at massive new eatery **Roberta's** in Temple Bar, and we can tell you it's adventurously delish, and if head chef Troy Watson's menu doesn't blow you away, the décor with its marvellous marble floor and exposed brickwork will. Part of a development which will feature fabulous new food hall, Dollard & Co, and a new steakhouse, we're delighted it's just around the corner from GCN towers!

AMUSE BOUCHE

TONY KEOGH
HEAD CHEF AT CORNUCOPIA



Tony Keogh has been working as a chef for the past 20 years, with 16 of them spent in Dublin's oldest vegetarian restaurant, Cornucopia. Owned by Deirdre O'Mara Mc Cafferty, who along with David Norris was one of the founding members of Ireland's first gay rights organisation, the SLM in 1973, Cornucopia has been serving up great food on Dublin's Wicklow Street since 1986.

1. The gayest thing about your restaurant?
Our wonderful Czech chef, David – he's the queen of the kitchen!

2. Your ideal party of five, living or dead?
Mahatma Gandhi, Miyoko Schinner, Charles Bukowski, Terrence McKenna and Irvine Welsh. If anything, the conversations would be very interesting.

3. Your favourite place to eat, other than your own, in Dublin?
Dublin is definitely upping its game in the food stakes these last few years. My favourite place at the moment by a long shot would have to be Veginity. I love their style, their food is fantastic and the fact you can bring your own wine is a plus.

4. If you weren't a chef what would you be doing?
I would be a psychologist, for sure. In fact in running a busy kitchen, a degree in psychology would be a definite bonus.

5. What/Who or Where is rocking your world in restaurants right now?
Berlin is where it is happening at the moment food-wise, for me. There are over 60 vegan restaurants that have popped up in the last seven or eight years. In terms of chefs, I tend to drift, but at the moment it is Rich Landau. I really like his simple yet refined approach to cooking plant-based food.

6. What does the future hold for dining?
As the population grows, our present approach to food production will have to change significantly and rapidly, otherwise we will be in hot water very quickly. People, particularly younger people, are becoming much more aware of this and of what they are eating. These trends have the meat and dairy industries running scared. So these industries will need to diversify to survive and I think that this will happen sooner rather than later. More and more farmers are moving away from dairy and are switching to arable production.

Cornucopia, 19-20 Wicklow St, Dublin 2, www.cornucopia.ie

Pic by Babs Daly



The Big Dish...

Although Featherblade on Dublin's Dawson Street has a very limited menu, the flavours on offer are anything but, as **James Kavanagh** discovered.

The first thing you notice about Featherblade, the Dawson Street steakhouse named after the cut of meat that comes from the shoulder blade of the cow, is how un-fussy it is. It's a bit like the Bunsen (my all-time favourite burger joint) set-up; the prices are very fair and the service is prompt. The staff don't linger or waffle on about the menu; you're in and out, but left very satisfied.

Like Bunsen, Featherblade offers a very small menu, which suits me perfectly – I like a selection with few items that change often. Featherblade only ever has two types steaks on offer – a 9oz feather blade and then a 9oz 'special' steak, which changes every couple of weeks. The special is usually a marinated steak with additional flavouring.

The feather blade cut is one that is favoured by those 'in the know' in food world. It's also held in a slightly sacred regard, as only two cuts can come from the shoulder blades of one cow. It's small, but full of sweet, nutty flavour. Cooked as rare as can be, it melts in the mouth and is super tender.

I went for the special, which was marinated hangar steak. My waiter told me it had been hung for several weeks, then marinated and slightly smoked. It was bloody delicious, incredibly lean, with a deep, earthy flavour. My boyfriend got the feather blade, as it's a tried and tested win with him. Like my meat, his was tender and a joy to eat. We got three sauces to go with our plates – béarnaise, garlic and herb and whiskey peppercorn. Anytime I get steak, I always get what one might consider too much sauce, but in my opinion too much is just the right amount when you're dealing with steak; you need lashings and as many variants as you can get.

The whiskey peppercorn was the best, it's little kick worked well with both our steaks. The sides are stars of the show too. We ordered beef dripping chips (which are not unlike Super Miss Sue's chips) and charred broccoli. I got 'charred broccoli' from a well-known and respected Indian takeaway the other week and it arrived like you'd hate it to arrive, cold, too crunchy, wet and smelling like sulphur. Featherblade did so much better and served it my favourite way – tenderstem and tasting a little smoky.

Dinner for two, with drinks, came to a modest €46. If you end up going, make sure you use the bathroom, they play interesting podcasts in the loos. I found myself listening to one about the French Revolution while endlessly washing my hands.

Featherblade, 51 Dawson Street, Dublin 2, featherblade.ie, (01) 679 8814

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DUBLIN & THE EAST

MONDAYS

- Dundalk Outcomers Women's Night 8-10pm. T: 042 932 9816 or www.outcomers.org
- AA meeting on Monday evenings, 8pm at Outhouse, Capel Street.
- Personal Development Course runs at Outhouse, Capel Street. E: pdc@ghn.ie for bookings and information.

TUESDAYS

- The Emerald Warriors training every Tuesday & Thursday at 7pm in Suttonians Rugby Club, Sutton. Beginners welcome, www.ewrfc.ie.
- Personal Development Course for Men. Six-week courses. To book your place contact GMHP on (01) 873 4952 or E: gmhpoutreach@eircom.net
- Bi Irish social group for Bisexuals and friends . For info email E:dublinbisexualgroup@gmail.com
- Gloria LGB Choir, meets every Tuesday 7.30-9.30pm E: info@gloria.ie T: 087 648 0012, www.gloria.ie
- Dundalk Outcomers Men's Night 8-10pm. T: 042 932 9816 or www.outcomers.org
- Dublin Devils FC, soccer club for gay men, all levels welcome.7pm in the Phoenix Park. www.dublindevilsfc.com
- BeLonG To over-18s groups (18-23)meets 6-8pm @Belong To
- NA meeting at Outhouse, Capel Street, 7.30-9pm.

WEDNESDAYS

- Friendly Gay Book Club meet at Outhouse 8pm on the first Wednesday of every month
- Rainbow Recovery LGBT AA group, 6.30pm Friends Meeting House, Eustace Street, Temple Bar
- Over 18's BeLonG To Youth Group, meets every second Wed at 7pm, 13 Parliament St, D1, (01) 670 6223, www.belongto.org
- IndividualiTy, peer support for trans people aged 14-23, meets Wed at 5.30-7.30pm, 13 Parliament St, D1, (01) 670 6223
- Dublin Front Runners running club for gay men and women, all levels. Meet every Weds 7.30pm. www.dublinfrontrunners.ie. E: dublinfrontrunners@gmail.com
- Amach Wicklow - Gay and lesbian group meets in Ashford on the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 9pm E: amachwicklow@gmail,com
- Transgendered Peer Support group, bi-monthly from 7.30-9.30. For info: E: info@outhouse, T: 018734999
- Garda Advice, weekly free and confidential service, from 7-9pm. For info: E: info@outhouse, T: 018734999
- Girls' night In: social Group for LGBTQ women Outhouse 105 Capel Street, 7-9.30pm. E: girlsnightinouthouse@gmail.com
- GOLD group for over 50s, meets Weds evening 5-7pm

Coda dependents anonymous 8:15-9:30, Carnelite Community Centre

THURSDAYS

- The Phoenix Tigers, Dublin's lesbian soccer team train at YMCA Sports Centre, Aungier Street from 8-9pm. New players welcome E: phoenixtigersirl@gmail.com
- The Lady Birds group LGBTyoung women aged 14- 23, every Thursday 6-8pm at BeLonG To, 13 Parliament St, D1, (01) 670 6223, belongto.org
- LOOK: Loving Our Out Parents, support group for parents and family members meets 1st Thursday of the month, 8pm at BeLonG To, 13 Parliament Street, Dublin 1. Ph: 087 253 7699
- N.A. meeting in Outhouse, 8pm. T: 873 4999
- AIM Young Adult Night at Dundalk Outcomers. For 18-25 year olds only, 8-10pm. T: 042 932 9816 or www.outcomers.org
- First Out is a confidential discussion group for women exploring their sexuality. First Thursday of each month in Outhouse at 7.30pm. Outhouse: 01 873 4999
- The Emerald Warriors training every Tuesday & Thursday at 7pm in Suttonians Rugby Club, Sutton. Beginners welcome, no experience necessary, www.ewrfc.ie.
- Acting Out: Drama group for men & women in the theatre space in Outhouse 7.30-9.30pm. For more info: E: info@outhouse.com T: 01 873 4999

FRIDAYS

- OUThouse Senior Men's Group(OSMG) meets Friday at OUThouse library 7-9.30pm.
- AIM Youth Group at Dundalk Outcomers. For 14-17 year olds only, 4-6pm. T: 042 932 9816 or www.outcomers.org
- Dining Out social club for gay men meets 2nd Friday of the month. W: diningoutireland.org , T: 087 286 3349
- Alcoholics Anonymous - LGBT AA meeting, 8pm, Outhouse.
- First Friday of the month: coffee morning for LGBTQIA parents. Meets Cafe @Outhouse, 11-1pm. E; familymatterslgbt@gmail.com

Coda dependents anonymous 8:15-9:30, Carnelite Community Centre

SATURDAYS

- LGBT Alcoholics Anonymous 7.30, Friends Meeting House, Temple Bar
- Dublin Front Runners: running club for gay men and women, all levels. Meet every Sat 10am, www.dublinfrontrunners.ie
- Dining Out social club for gay men meets 2nd Friday and last Saturday of the month. W: meetup.com/gay-Dining-Out-Ireland, E:info@diningout.org, T: 087 286 3349
- Dublin Devils FC - soccer club for men, all levels welcome. Training Tues evenings in Phibsboro, Weds evening in Pearse Street and YMCA on Saturday afternoons. W: dublindevilsfc.com, T: 089 474 0448
- The Dublin Gay Music Group is a gathering of gay men who meet each Saturday afternoon to listen to recordings of classical music. An outlet for enthusiasts of classical & operatic music, the focus is on musical appreciation. New members welcome. W: info.dublinmusicgroup.com
- Bears Upstairs , Bear night on the last Saturday of the month, with a live DJ, Buffet & Raffle. W: www.dublinbears.ie
- Film Qlub meets the third Saturday of the Month in New Theatre, Temple Bar @2pm. E:filmqlub@gmail.com , W: www.filmqlub.com
- Gay Youth Wexford, ages 14-23, meets Saturdays 4-6pm. See Facebook.com/gayyouthwexford1
- Dining Out social club for gay men meets last Saturday of the month. W: diningoutireland.org , T: 087 286 3349

SUNDAYS

- LGBT AA group Meets in OUThouse, Capel Street at 6.30pm.
- BeLonG To group for LGBT young people aged 14-23 in a safe & fun environment. Meets every Sunday at 3-6pm in Outhouse, 105 Capel St, D2, (01) 670 6233, www.belongto.org
- Out & About Hillwalking Group meet at National Concert Hall Earlsfort Terrace 10am for a Wicklow Mountain hike. www.gay-hiking.org

Coda dependents anonymous 2:00-3:30, Carnelite Community Centre

COMMUNITY CENTRES

- Outhouse, 105 Capel Street, Dublin 1 T: (01) 873 4999.www.outhouse.ie. Cafe hours: Mon-Fri 1pm-9.30pm, Sat 1pm-5.30pm, closed Sundays Office hours: Mon-Fri 10-6pm, Building hours; Mon-Fri 1-9.30pm, Sat 1pm-5.30pm, closed to generl public Sundays
- Dublin AIDS Alliance at Eriu Centre, 53 Parnell Sq, D1 T: (01) 873 3799 www.dublinaidsalliance.com
- Dundalk Outcomers, 8 Roden Place Dundalk T: 042 932 9816 www.outcomers.org

OTHER GROUPS

- Drogheda LGBT group meets second week of the month at Barbican community centre,7-9pm. T: 083 4842064
- ASTI GLB Network for second level teachers working in school. Meet monthly in ASTI head office. T: 087 629 7727. E: gayandlesbiannetwork@asti.ie
- Irish Queer Archive. Open by appointment only. E: irishqueerarchive@ireland.com
- OUT2TENNIS is Ireland's GLBT tennis network. For details of our tournaments etc., visit us on Facebook or at www.out2tennis.com.
- Changing Attitude Ireland. LGBT Christian group. W: www changingattitudeireland.org
- LGBT group for primary teachers in Ireland, North and South. The group has the offical sanction of the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO). Contact lgbt@INTO.ie or T: 087 695 2839.
- Gay Book Group, first Wednesday of every month at Outhouse. http://groups.google.com/group/dgrg
- The Married Men's Support Group meet once a month. Contact Gay Switchboard Dublin on 01 872 1055 for details.
- Labour LGBT E: lgbt@labour.ie. www.labour.ie
- LGBT BookClub second Weds of the month North Dublin. E: integrationofficer@gmail.com
- Sunrise LGBT Kildare (adult group). E: sunrise.lgbt@gmail.com, T: 085 829 8237. F: Facebook.com/sunrise.lgbt.kildare
- Gay Bray Social Group for LGB persons in the Bray area. E: gaybray@gmail.com
- Wet & Wild LGBT outdoor pursuits club, monthly activites, E:wetandwild@gmail.com
- G Force , Garda LGB Employee Support Network. E: contact@g-force.ie
- LGBT Lawyers Association. Info from: www.lgln.ie
- Older Wiser Lesbian social group meets for dining out etc. Learn more at www.meetup.com/older-wiser-lesbians/

- Running Amach: Social networking site for LGBTQ women in Ireland. W: meetup.com/dublin-lgbtq-womens-social-networking-club

HEALTH HELP

- Gay Men's Health Service (GMHS) HSE, Free sexual health services for MSM and Trans people. Baggot St Hospital, 18 Upper Baggot St, Dublin 4 Walk-ins: Tues-Weds, 5-6.30pm. P: 01 6699553. W: gmhs.ie
- GMHS Free counselling service at Outhouse. Call: 01 8734932
- Gay Health Network (GHN) T: (01) 873 4952 E: info@gayhealthnetwork.ie, www.ghn.ie
- Man2Man.ie: sexual health information in 9 languages.
- St. James' GUIDE Clinic T:(01) 416 2315 or (01) 416 2316
- Transgender Equality Network (TENI) advice, help and support T: 01 873 3575, E: info@teni.ie or www.teni.ie
- Drugs/HIV Helpline 1800 459 459 10am-5pm everyday
- BeLonG To Drugs Outreach. Support for young people around drugs and alcohol T: Gillian (01) 670 6223/087 328 3668, www.belongto.org, e:info@belongto.org
- Outhouse (information, referral support) Drop-In/ Telephone: 01 8734999., Mon-Fir 10am-6pm, info@outhouse.ie

HELPLINES

- National LGBT Helpline 1890 929 539, Monday to Thurs, 6.30-9pm, Friday 4-9pm, Sat & Sun, 4-6pm, www.lgbt.ie
- Gay Switchboard Dublin (GSD) 01 872 1055, Mon-Fri 6.30-9pm, Sat-Sun 4-6pm, W:gayswitchboard.ie
- Dublin Lesbian Line: Mon and Thurs 6.30-9pm, (01) 872 9911
- BeLonG To Youth Project, supporting and resourcing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people aged 14-23 T: 01 670 6223; E: info@belongto.org; www.belongto.org
- Greenbow LGB deaf group E: deafgreenbowlgbt@yahoo.ie www.greenbowdeaf.com
- Transgender Equality Network (TENI) advice, help ,support T: 01 873 3575, E: info@teni.ie or www.teni ie
- LOOK (Loving Our Out Kids)Parents Support Group. Ph: 0872537699, www.lovingouroutkids.org , E: info@lovingouroutkids.org
- Outhouse (information, referral support) Drop-In/ Telephone: 01 8734999., Mon-Fir 10am-6pm, info@outhouse.ie
- TransparenCI: support group for parents of trans children. Contact Vanessa (085) 147 7166.

STUDENT LGBT SOCIETIES

- National Union of Students in Ireland, LGB Rights Campaign - Contact Laura Harmon, LGBT Officer, E: lgbt@usi.ie, T: (01) 709 9300
- National College of Ireland LGBT Soc, E: nci.lgbt@gmail.com, W: ncilgbt@wordpress.com
- National College of Art & Design LGBT, ncadlgbt@gmail.com
- Trinity College Dublin: lgbisoc@csc.tcd.ie:
- University College Dublin : lgbt.society@ucd.ie
- Dublin City University : dculgbt@gmail.com
- Dún Laoghaire IADT : iadtlgbt@hotmail.com
- Dublin Institute of Technology: facebook.com/ditlgbt, lgbt@socs.dit.ie
- NUI Maynooth: NUIMLGBT lgbt@nuimsu.com
- Tallaght IT: supres@it-tallaght.ie
- Institue of Technology, Blanchardstown. E: colourssoc@gmail.com

GARDA ELO/LGBT OFFICERS

- Pearse Street - Sergeant Brendan Walsh 01 666 9000
- Store Street - Sergeant Karl Mackle 01 666 8000
- Kevin Street - Sergeant Will Dempsey 01 666 9700
- Kilmainham - Garda Mark Bolger 01 666 8000
- Bridewell - Garda James Cruise 01 666 8200
- Mountjoy - Garda Catriona Brody 01 666 8601
- Crumlin - Garda Ray Moloney 01 666 6200
- Tallaght - Garda Sinead Hennigan 01 666 6020
- Donnybrook - Garda Niall Burke 01 666 9200
- Swords - Garda Margaret Coyle 01 666 4700
- Blackrock - Garda Niamh Colfer 01 666 5200
- Blanchardstown - Sergeant Vincent Connolly 01 666 7000
- Ballyfermot -Garda Ronan Allen 01 666 7200
- Clondalkin -Garda Maeve McBride 01 666 7600
- Dundrum - Garda Robert McNulty 01 666 5600
- Finglas -Garda Yvonne Finnegan 01 666 7500
- Cabinteely - Garda Angelene Conefry 01 666 5400
- Dun Laoghaire - Garda Sean Greene 01 666 5000
- Santry -Garda Laura Garland 01 666 4000
- Malahide -Garda Paul Culton 01 666 4600
- Coolock - Sergeant David Campbell 01 666 4220
- Lusk - Garda Karl McManus 01 843 7222
- Kildare- Sergeant Conor Morris (Kilcock) 01 675 7390
- Kilkenny - Garda Caroline O'Malley 056 777 5000
- Carlow - Sergeant Declan Callan 059 913 6620
- Wicklow - Garda Tom O'Dwyer (Bray) 01 666 5300
- Drogheda - Garda Keith Dempsey 041 987 4240
- Dundalk - Garda Paul Connolly 042 938 8400
- Community Policing Unit, Pearse Street Garda Station, Pearse Street, Dublin 2, T: 01-6669030, E: Pearse_street_community@garda.ie

CORK, KERRY & THE SOUTH

MONDAYS

- Shannon Parent & Friend support group from 7-8.30 in Shannon Resource Centre, Rineanna View. T: (061) 707600 or email rainbow@redribbonproject.com
- Transpire: Queer, trans, inter and allies group, runs first Mon of the month at 6.30pm atGOSSH, Redwood Place, 18 Davis St, Limerick. E: info@Gossh.ie

TUESDAYS

- Ladies Badminton @ LINC, Contact Linc: 021 0480 8600. E: info@linc.ie
- LGBT YA group, ages 18-24, meets every Tues 5.30-7pm at GOSSH, Redwood Place, 18 Davis St, Limerick. E: info@Gossh.ie
- The Outlet, LGBT social group, every Tues 7.30-9pm aat GOSSH, Redwood Place, 18 Davis St, Limerick. E: info@Gossh.ie
- Kerry Youth Pride LGBT Support , ages 14-21, meets 7-9.30 at KDYS, Denny St, Tralee, Co Kerry.
- LINC library @ 11A White St., Cork. From 11-3pm , E: info@linc.ie

WEDNESDAYS

- UP Cork Youth Group (16-23 y.o.) meet each week at 6pm. For venue info, mail: youthworker@gayprojectcork.com
- Last Weds of the month, parental support group for parents of LGBT children meets 8-9.30pm at Clare Local Development Company, Kilrush Road, Ennis. Contact: (061) 310101, Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30pm.
- In4Lunch, every Weds 12.30-1.30 at LINC, 11A White St., Cork. E: info@linc.ie, T: 021 480 8600
  New Parish Office, Station Road, Ennis. Call 085 2850 107, E: lgbt@gossh.ie
- LINC library @ 11A White St., Cork. From 11-3pm , E: info@linc.ie

THURSDAYS

- LATE LINC. LINC drop-in opens late until 8pm. Call 021 480 8600 or email info@linc.ie for info
- Peer Support Group, facilitated group for women new to the community at LINC, runs every second Thursday 6-7pm, info@linc.ie
- UP Cork Youth Group (16-23 y.o) meets at 6pm. For venue info, call 021 480 8600, or email: youthworker@gayprojectcork.com
- LINC library @ 11A White St., Cork. From 11-8pm , E: info@linc.ie, T: 021 480 8600

FRIDAYS

- Live and Let Live, Gay-friendly Alcoholics Anonymous in Cork City, 8-9pm, contact facilitator Sonia at 086 881 6725 for more info

SATURDAYS

- Sexual Health group for under 18s, 11-12.30am at GOSSH, Redwood Place, 18 Davis St, Limerick. E: info@Gossh.ie
- POS+ Meets 2nd Saturday of the month, confidential group for men affected by HIV. Call in confidence: 085 744 3484
- North Kerry/West Limerick LGBT, Listowel Family Resource Centre each Saturday night, Call Bridie, 086 855 6431

SUNDAYS

- Rainbow Ramblers, meets first Sun of the month. E: rainbow.ramblers.cork@gmail.com for more info or contact Doc: 087 678 3726
- ChillOUT group for LBGTs aged 14-21. Meets Sundays 3-6pm at the Urban Youth Cafe, Manor St, Waterford. E: chillout@wstcys.ie
  Gender Blender group for trans and questioning youths aged 14-21. Meets Sundays 1pm, Urban Youth Cafe, Manor Street. Facebook.com/GenderBlenderWaterford

COMMUNITY CENTRES

- LINC resource centre for LBT women, 11A White St., Cork. Opening times: Tues-Weds 11-3pm , Thurs 11-8pm, closed Fridays.
- Cork Gay Project for GB Men, Dunlaoi, 8 North Mall, Cork, T: (021) 4278 470, www.gayprojectcork.com

OTHER GROUPS

- Choral Con Fusion, Cork's LGBTS choir. Visit: choralconfusion.com
- Kerry Book & Film club. Meets monthly, new members welcome. E: kerrybookandfilmclub@gmail.com

- Cork Hombres Connect- visit Meetup.com/Groups/Cork
- Positive Positive: confidential support group for HIV GB men in Munster area, T: 085 834 3939, www.posposmunster.com
- Out4Tennis Cork, for men and women, www.outinireland.net
- Waterford Gay Parents group. E: waterfordgayparents@gmail.com
- sOUTh LGBT Waterford, support, social events and personal development for LGBTs, 086 214 7633
- LGBT Social & sporting group meets monthly in Tralee. Contact Maureen, (085)8821480 for details.
- WinK: Meet-up group for LGBT women in Kerry, dedicated to creating a fun, safe community space. Meetup.com/WinK-Women-inKerry

HEALTH HELP

- STD Clinic at Victoria Hospital., Cork Apt Necessary. Mon, Tues, Thurs 9.30-11.45am and Wed 2.30-4.30pm T: (021) 496 6844
- STD Clinic at Waterford Regional Hospital Mon-Fri, 9am-12.45pm, 2pm-4pm . Appointment only. Ph: 051 842646

HELPLINES

- National LGBT Helpline 1890 929 539, Monday to Thurs, 6.30-9pm, Friday 4-9pm, Sat & Sun, 4-6pm, www.lgbt.ie
- AIDS Helpline (021) 427 6676 10am-5pm Mon-Fri & 7-9pm Tues
- NA Helpline (021) 427 8411 8pm-10pm Mon - Fri
- AA Helpline (021) 450 0481 8pm-10pm every night
- Lesbian Line 0214318318, Weds 7-9pm email: info@linc.ie, www.linc.ie

STUDENT LGBT SOCIETIES

- University College Cork meet weekly W: www.ucclgbt.com E: lgbt@uccsocieties.ie
- CIT LGBT soc, meets every Wed at 8pm E: lgbtcit@gmail.com for details
- Waterford IT LGBT Society, E: witlgbt1@gmail.com
- Tralee IT: LGBT@students.ittralee.ie
- Limerick Institute of Technology LGBT soc. E: litisout@gmail.com
- University of Limerick, E: outinul@gmail.com

GARDA ELO/LGBT OFFICERS

- Cork City - Sergeant John O'Connor (Anglesea St) 021 452 2069
- Cork North - Garda Clodagh Fitzgerald (Glanmire) 021 490 8530
- Cork West - Garda Aidan Moynihan (Clonakilty) 021 023 882 1570
- Limerick - Garda Elizabeth Galvin (Henry Street) 061 212400
- Kerry - Sergeant David O'Connor 064 663 1222
- Waterford - Garda Sinead Donoghue 051 305 300
- Wexford - Garda Sean Lee 053 916 5200

GALWAY, THE WEST & NORTH WEST

MONDAYS

- LGBT choir west/northwest, meets 7-9pm. P: 085 1762641 for details

TUESDAYS

- 'I'm Out Here' informal meet up every Tuesday in Sligo at 10pm. Text 087 986 2400 for details
- GoBLeT LGBT social group meets in Ballina, Co Mayo. For more info call or text 089 4454 708

THURSDAYS

- LGBTinC (Cavan) meets first &third Thursday of the month at The Bridge Street Centre, Cavan. 8-10pm.

FRIDAYS

- OUTWEST Bi-monthly social group. T: 087 972 5586, W: outwest.ie, E: info@outwest.ie
- shOUT! LGBT Youth Group meets every Friday (ages 18-21), 6.30-8.30 e: shout@youthworkgalway.ie, p: 087 773 8529

SATURDAYS

- shOUT! LGBT Youth Group meets every Saturday (ages 14-17) 12-1.30pm, Youth Work Ireland Offices,41-43 Prospect Hill. w:lgbtyouthgalway.com, e: shout@youthworkgalway.ie, p: 0877738529

COMMUNITY CENTRES

- Rainbow @ Red Ribbon Project (now called GSSOH), Redwood House,9 Cecil St, Limerick.Drop-in: Mon-Fri: 9.30+5.30 (closed 1-2.15pm). T: 061 314354, E: rainbow@redribbonproject.com

OTHER GROUPS

- ShOUT! Parent group meets 2nd Sunday of every month, 2.30-4.00 at Youth Work Ireland Offices, 41-43 Prospect Hill. Tel: 087 7738529
- Over The Rainbow Drama Group, Sligo. Facebook.com/overtherainbowdramagroup
- SHEnanigans LBT social group in the West. E:shenaniganswest@gmail.com , W: meetup.com/shenanigans
- AMACH!LGBT Galway, w: www.amachlgbt.com, e: info@amachlgbtcom, T: 0860694747
- GOSSIP Trans Group: E: gossipgalway@gmail.com
- LGBT Pavee -Gay Traveller Group. W: www.lgbtpavee.com
- OUTwest, W:outwest.ie, E: info@outwest.ie, T:087 9725586
- LGBT Navan group: various meets for differeing age ranges. Email: youth@outcomers.org for full details.
  Smily LGBT Youth Group, weekly drop-in for 14-23 year-olds. Safe space where LGBTs can be themselves. T: 089 4820330, 071 9144150 E: smilyyouthlgbt@gmail.com, Facebook.com/smily.LGBT>northwest

HEALTH HELP

- AIDS West T: (091) 562 213 E: info@aidswest.ie, www.aidswest.ie
- Red Ribbon Project (061) 314 354
- LGB Alcoholics Anonymous(Galway & Midlands area) every Saturday, 7.30pm. Call Denis (087 295 6233) or Paddy (087 250 7580) for details.

HELPLINES

- National LGBT Helpline, wherever you are, help is just a phonecall away at 1890 929 539, Monday to Friday, 7pm to 9pm, www.lgbt.ie
- Clare Area Lesbian Information Line. To find out what's going on in Clare Tel: 087 949 4725 E:clarelesinfo4@eircom.net
- Clare Womens Network, meets fortnightly E:clarewomen@eircom.net
- Red Ribbon Project (now GSSOH): (061) 314 354, Helpline : (061) 316661, www.gssoh. ie.Mon 2.15-5pm,Tues-Fri 9.30am-5.00pm
- NW Lesbian Line (071) 914 7905 Tuesdays 8-10pm
- OUTWEST Gay Helpline. Chat in confidence 0949372479, Thursdays 8-10pm

STUDENT LGBT SOCIETIES

- Mary Immaculate College, Limerick LGBT Meet once a week, details by email to: maryilgbt@hotmail.com
- Sligo IT. E: itslgbt@gmail.com
- GMIT LGBT and Equality Society. E: GMITequality@hotmail.com
- NUI Galway GIGsoc: W: su.nuigalway.ie, E: gigsoc@soc.nuigalway.ie

GARDA ELO/LGBT OFFICERS

- Clare /Shannon- Garda Barry Doherty, 061 365900
- Clare /Ennis- Garda Denis Collins, 065 684 8100
- Galway - Garda Claire Burke 091 538079
- Mayo - Garda Michael Toland (Castlebar) 094 903 8200
- Sligo - Garda Caroline Bruen 071 915 7000
- Leitrim - Garda Josephine Kirrane (Manorhamilton) 071 982 0620
- Donegal - Garda Cliona Moore (Letterkenny) 074 916 7100

THE MIDLANDS

GROUPS

- AA for the LGB community in the Midlands area call 087 912 2685 or 087 679 8495 for details
- Longford LGBT, meets Weds @ 8pm. T: 0863022161, E: longford_lgbt@hotmail.com, W: Facebook: Longford LGBT
- LGBTinC meets first and third Thursday of the month in The Bridge Street Centre, Cavan from 8-10 pm.
- Dundalk Outcomers, Couch House, Roden House, Dundalk. T: 042 9339816, E: info@outcomers.org
  Drogheda LGBTQ group meets Thursdays, 8-9.30 at Barbican Centre, Williams Street, Drogheda

GARDA ELO/LGBT OFFICERS

- Athlone - Sergeant Andrew Haran 090 649 8550
- Cavan - Garda Jerome Forde 049 433 5302
- Longford- Garda Una Brady 043 335 0570
- Meath - Garda Sandra O'Leary (Navan) 046 907 9930
- Monaghan - Sergeant Rose M. Mcgirl 047 77200
- Mullingar - Garda Neill Donellan 044 938 4000
- Portlaoise - Sergeant John Healy 057 867 4122
- Roscommon- Garda Fergal O'Donnell (Boyle) 071 966 4620
- Tipperary - Garda Shaun Brosnan (Clonmel) 052617 7640
- Tullamore - Sergeant Thomas Duffy 057 932 7052



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Ph: 086 6000014
Email: martinrice618@gmail.com
Website: martinrice.ie

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Are you currently struggling to find or stay in a relationship?

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A high priority for many among the LGBT community is to find a therapist who knows and understands your experiences, as therapy works best when you feel free to talk about everything that is concerning you.

To make an appointment with Sarah
Ph: 086 3083934 Email: sarah.gilligan@gmail.com
www.sarahgilligan.ie Capable Minds, 18 Capel Street, D1

DEAR DR. RAY

I HAVEN'T HAD A RELATIONSHIP FOR SEVEN YEARS BECAUSE I AM UNABLE TO BE EITHER TOP OR BOTTOM FOR ANAL SEX



Dear Dr Ray,

I'm a 34-year-old man and for the past seven years I have avoided getting into a relationship because I find it extremely painful to be the receptive partner when having anal sex, and I cannot hold an erection if I'm expected to be the active partner.

I was in a long-term relationship in my 20s, and the sex was good, mainly because there was no fucking involved. Unfortunately, I realised he wasn't the person I wanted to spend my life with.

With anyone I've met since, there seems to be no patience for anything that doesn't end with fucking. I find myself less and less confident about going to bed with guys, in case I can't perform. Any of the guys I've chatted to on apps want to know early on if I'm top or bottom. If I reply that I prefer other sexual activities, I don't hear from them again.

I don't really know if you'll have any answers for me, but I really would love to have a relationship, and I don't really know where to take it from here.

Yours, Ken

Dear Ken,

Gay men have been synonymous with anal sex since Adam and Steve. Religions, laws, social customs have always focused on the criminal perversity of sodomy over the act of two men's love. Yet, statistically, still the primary question gay men ask on apps is 'top or bottom?', a regulating binary which demeans the complexities of human, especially gay male sexuality.

It is why I kick against such lazy, easy app marketplace 'encounters', where humans are reduced to photoshopped products and 250 characters. I prize there being much more to people than an image, labels, categories, and two sentences. The older rituals of cruising, dating, wooing face-to-face were much more scary, exciting, real. The anxiety of rejection or a sexual misstep were alive in the tension, the thrill. No app can photoshop that desire.

So, what is with your prescriptions around anal sex? You say you find it extremely painful to be the receptive partner, what does this mean exactly? How often have you tried? When last? With whom? I want to emphasise that you should never engage in sexual acts you don't desire, but because anal sex is such an organic hotbed of desire and intense pleasure for a man, I would hate for you to miss out because of fear.

The mind is the absolute gateway to sexual pleasure. Through judgements it can shut people out, through self-consciousness or inhibitions it can shut you down; through engagement and arousal the mind can open us fully to any experience. The physiological/biological rules are universal, that every man has a pleasure zone five to eight centimeters inside his anus. The psychological rules are individual. The mind is the organ to be engaged and aroused first and always. It is not that you are not into anal sex that is the issue, it is that your mind is so negatively set against it. Free your mind, the rest will follow.

I think, Ken, in avoiding relationships for seven years, you have been avoiding something of your own desire. In the rejecting, reductive world out there, be wary of rejecting and reducing your self. You may never, perhaps, get what it is you want or deserve, but you should always own and know your own desires.

If you know what it is you want, deserve and need, then be mindful of where and how you look for it. None of us can change modern cultural commodifications of sex, of 'dating'; but we can decide or choose if we are part of this problem or an alternative question or solution. If you want things to be different, then be different, make changes yourself. Speak to men, stop messaging them. Listen to your self and get listened to.

Ray

Ray is a psychoanalytic psychotherapist specialising in individual and relationship counselling. Call him on 086 828 0033 or email your problem to ray@gcn.ie

RelationTips

EIGHT THINGS ABOUT ANAL SEX

1. Exclusive to men is a 'g-spot' mound of pleasurable nerve-endings 5 to 8 centimetres inside the anus, behind the prostate, which is the ground zero of all male orgasms.

2. Anal sex is not as dirty as you think/fear. The anus and lower rectum actually contain little faecal material. But as comfort is key, even the act of showering relaxes concerns.

3. No-one starts jogging by running a marathon. Take it patiently, and in stages, using the tongue especially to awaken nerve endings before moving onto fingers or specific anal sex toys. Relax and use lots of water-based lubricant.

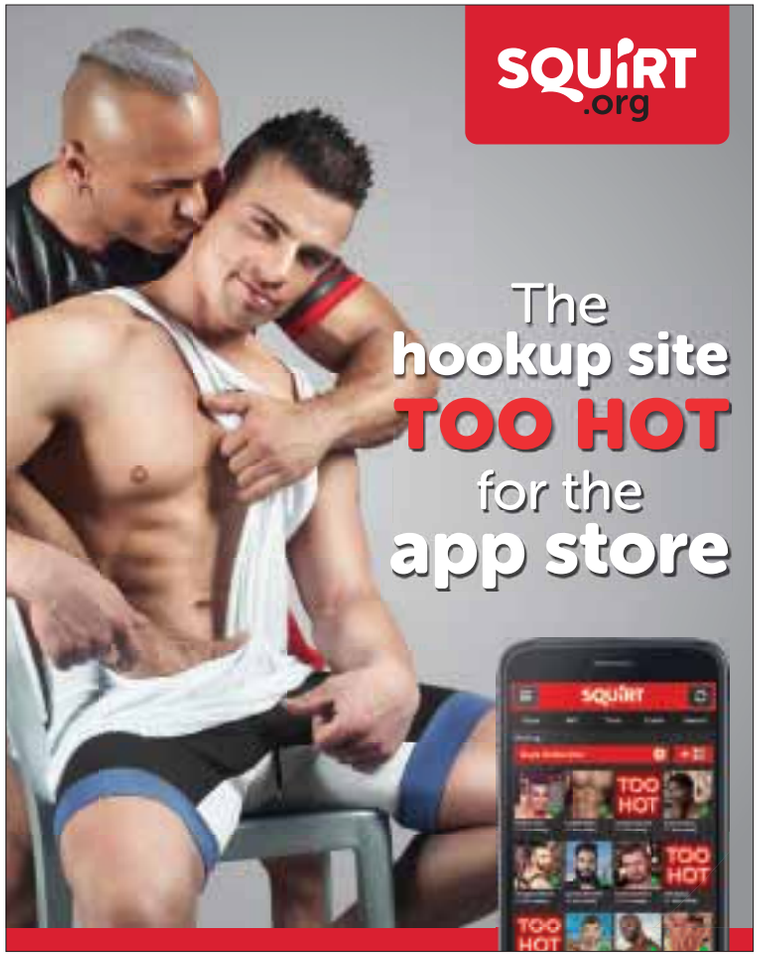
4. Don't be deep! Err on the shallow side to stimulate the pleasure nerve-endings focused around the anal rim, which also helps relax the 'bottom' knowing they aren't going to be 'hurt'.

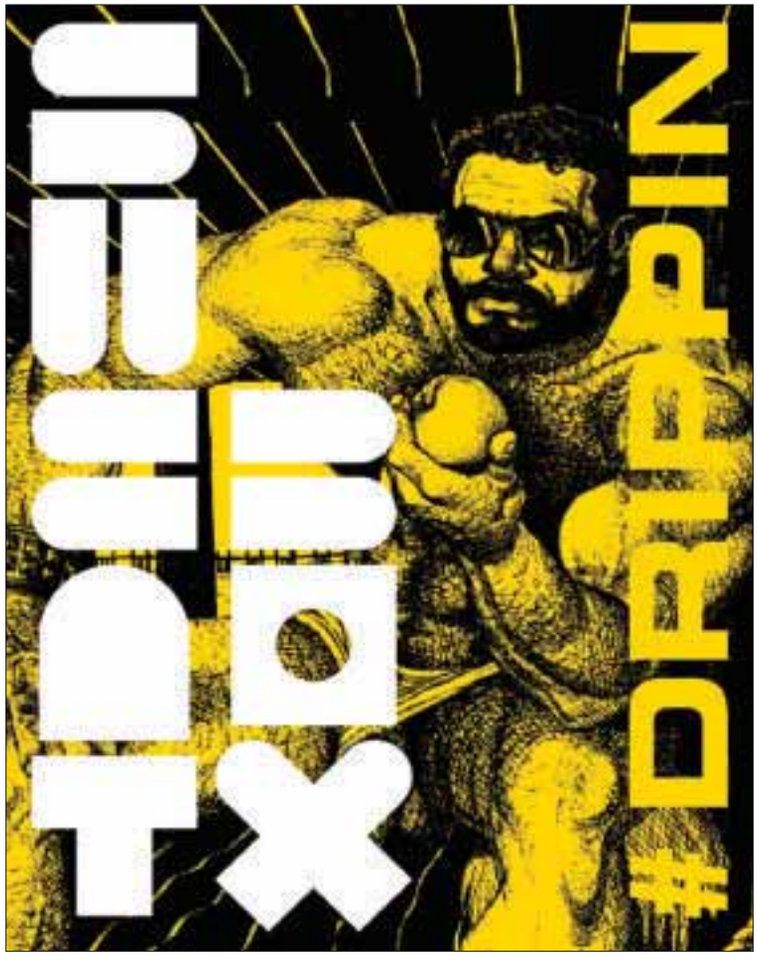
5. Remember it is more the mind you are trying to relax than the sphincter, so distract and enhance through other stimulations: licking, nipple-play, kissing - whatever feels best.

6. Avoid rapid-fire motion. There's a decided difference between the fantasy of being fucked hard and the reality.

7. Communication is everything. The only way to know what works and what doesn't is to tune into your own body and your partner's, and be totally honest and vocal.

8. The prostate can be indirectly stimulated externally through massaging the perineum the space between your scrotum and your ass. Sometimes knocking on the door to see whose within can be more inviting than breaking and entering.





Having Sex?



GONORRHOEA

HAVE YOU TESTED?

Gonorrhoea is a sexually transmitted infection(STI).

Use condoms for oral, anal and vaginal sex.

Don't share sex toys and always change condoms and gloves.

Get regular STI check-ups: blood test, urine sample, throat & anal swab.

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www.man2man.ie



Man2Man.ie

STEPHEN MEYLER

#HIVIreland

WHAT EFFECT WOULD SCAREMONGERING ABOUT RISING HIV RATES HAVE ON OUR HARD-WON RIGHTS AND THE DAILY ACCEPTANCE AND VISIBILITY WE ENJOY?



A six percent year-on-year increase in the number of HIV infections (512 new cases recorded in 2016), as well as a ten percent jump in other STIs, is depressing news. Half of that number is made up of men who have sex with men. So, another batch of mostly young, mostly gay men take on a lifetime of anti-retroviral drugs, that for many will mean they have the same life expectancy as the general, HIV-negative population.

Wait a sec – doesn't sound that bad, does it? The drugs get better and have fewer side-effects all the time – one of them, Truvada, can even stop you getting HIV in the first place – and taken properly, you'll live as long as anyone else. No wonder the younger gays are throwing out the condoms at all their chemsex orgies.

It's difficult for older people, who experienced the wasting away and death of many bright and beautiful gay men in the 1980s, '90s and even the '00s to accept what looks like reckless behaviour by the younger generation. Even if we understand that for some young ones, HIV is perceived as a different disease now, an easily handled life sentence rather than a long or short stay on death row, we still worry about the return of 'gay plague' headlines in the media. What effect would that scaremongering have on our hard-won rights and the less tangible, daily acceptance and visibility we all enjoy? What about the potential effect of resurgent HIV on the treatment of gays in places like Chechnya and Saudi Arabia?

In the face of their own experience with the first HIV epidemic and homophobia, the natural reaction of many older gays is to blame the younger generation for their fecklessness. A recent opinion piece in the *Irish Times* seemed to be doing this. The author, Derek Byrne, who is described as a journalist "who lectures on HIV and sexual health transmission" (sic), said that the drugs are still dangerous and that Truvada made people less responsible for their own sexual health. In his opinion, the only long-term way to deal with the current rise in gay HIV numbers was ongoing support for the tried and tested methods of education and widespread condom use. He did allow that a dramatic decline in new HIV cases among gay men in the chemsex capital of London might be down to widespread necking of cheap internet Truvada, as studies by UK HIV organisations suggest.

Other natural reactions are at play here. HIV is not the same as it was, even a short ten years ago. You *can* take a pill that has been proven to reduce your chances of getting HIV from bareback sex from high to very low. The newest drug combinations are as safe as the many approved medications we drop thoughtlessly all the time. All of these factors are now in play when it comes to deciding sexual behaviour.

"No wonder the younger gays are throwing out the condoms at all chemsex orgies they're having."

Making people feel guilty, especially a group of people for whom guilt is often intricately associated with homophobia, is not going to work. It didn't work when HIV was lethal and it won't work now.

Besides, HIV still creates fear, prejudice and shame among most gays, those chemsex orgies are likely a minority activity, and there is an argument that the six percent increase is at least partially imported, as a significant number of the new Irish cases were people who had moved to Ireland after a HIV diagnosis elsewhere.

Some of the older generation are influential opinion-formers with access to the people in government who make health policy decisions. You hope they have been able to put their own experience of the first HIV epidemic aside, so they can assess in an objective way this new, different challenge.

Surely, one change they should be trying to make happen is with regard to Truvada. It's still a very expensive drug and it's only effective at preventing HIV transmission during unsafe sex if it's taken properly. Knocking one back during prinks isn't good enough and of course, it won't stop you getting syphilis, gonorrhoea, herpes, HPV etc. That said, if it's available here and affordable, then correctly used Truvada will reduce HIV rates. This alone surely makes it an essential component of the response to that six percent increase.

There are other dangers for all gay people here. It's very possible that the homophobes – see them out there in the long grass – will jump on higher HIV rates to rehash their cryptically hateful narratives; think how easily they might change (or create) public opinion about the recent softening of rules on gays donating blood, for instance. Encouraging a perception of feckless disregard for our own health could easily translate into unease about reproductive rights, adoption or fostering. And what about a young trans person's right to choose their gender identity, perhaps by medical means? Public opinion in these areas, already shades greyer than the 'easy' ones like marriage equality or employment protections, isn't fixed, and nothing changes it more effectively than some concerned, reasonable-sounding voices smoothing the way for an irrational fear becoming a state policy.

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