

They were a bit, ken, 'thon wey'

Brian Dempsey

GGLC

Come all ye persons of goodwill,
From Newton Mearns to Maryhill,
Rattle the chains and launch the boat
And get it properly afloat.

I bash this poem against the bow,
Name it G.G.L.C., and endow
Its future cruise with benedictions,
Sailing past all feuds and frictions.
Come all ye lovers and affairs,
Singles, discrete souls, and bears,
Straightest of straights, bentest of
bents,

Carbolic scrub, Armani scents,
Doc Martens girls, minikilt boys,
Buyers of exotic toys,
Opera queens, ballet queens,
And all the hesitant in-betweens,
Trendsetters and anoraks,

Underdogs looking for whacks,
Indomitably spring-heeled dykes
Sweeping up on mountain bikes,
Jessies with attitude, closet cases,
Solicitors with bright red braces,
Levis with a coloured hanky
To signal the right hanky-panky,
Lurex and Spandex and other ex-es
To mix the senses and the sexes,
But if you should prefer a suit
We'll certainly no pit ye oot,
For this is where we all can meet
Down by the river in Dixon Street,
And the Broomielaw rolls on to the sea
With the happy cargo of G.G.L.C.

Poem by Edwin Morgan on the
opening of the Glasgow Gay and
Lesbian Centre, 4 November 1995.

Part 1

Although Scotland possesses some incredibly rich sources for lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transsexual (lgbt) history, this is a sadly neglected aspect of our national history. Worthy of study in their own right, such sources also have the potential to inform Scottish social history in general.

Outwith Scotland, there is an enormous amount of theoretical writing on the history of lgbt people, and this first article will only give a brief indication of the issues. Much of this theoretical work is exciting and innovative, especially that closely linked to substantive social history, but some, admittedly, seems deliberately abstruse and even sterile.

The big theoretical issue in lgbt studies is 'social constructionism' versus 'essentialism'. Social constructionism is generally traced back to Mary McIntosh's 1968 article 'The Homosexual Role' and is often associated with the French philosopher Michel Foucault and his 1976 book *The History of Sexuality* (vol.i). Social constructionists, who argue that elements of our personal identities like race, sex, gender, and sexual orientation and their expression are not somehow 'natural', inherent, and determined by biology but are contingent upon the societies in which we live, consider that there are serious dangers in using a fixed category to describe people of different cultures. Even the term 'sexual orientation' is problematised and while it may be used informally it is perhaps better to speak of same-sex sexual desires, behaviours and identities.

For social constructionists, an interesting example of which is Jonathan Ned Katz's *The Invention of Heterosexuality*, it does not make sense, or at least it does not help us

Traditionally Scottish

LGBT History Month celebrates
the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual
and transgender people who have
shaped our Scottish heritage.

www.lgbthistory.org.uk

**LGBT history month
SCOTLAND**

Poster publicising the 'LGBT History Month - Scotland' indicating a growing interest in lgbt history.

understand much, to say that, for example, Hadrian was either a gay or bisexual man, or that Sappho was a lesbian, when life in their cultures was so fundamentally different to ours. Equally, it often does not help, even in our globalised world, to apply a single category 'gay man' to someone who lives in an open, marriage-like relationship with another man and who socialises and works in a 'gay positive' atmosphere, as well as to a married family man who may at times have sex with other men but rejects any 'gay identity'.

Essentialists, on the other hand, argue that sexuality and its expression is innate, perhaps even genetic, and that although people living in different cultures and subcultures will develop different ways of being and expressing themselves we can use categories like 'lesbian' or 'bisexual' across cultural divides – Sappho was not only 'a right-on woman' but, if only there was enough evidence, it would be meaningful to say that she was a lesbian. The leading critic of social constructionism, though he would reject the simplistic and 'contemptuous' label of

essentialist, is the historian Rictor Norton: www.rictornorton.co.uk/

Good starting points for understanding the 'social constructionism v essentialism' argument are the essays in *Forms of Desire* edited by Edward Stein and *Which Homosexuality?*, edited by Dennis Altman. More recently, gay studies has had the benefit of rather difficult 'queer critical theory' through the work of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and others. 'Queer' in this context is affirmative and reflects a rejection of such concepts as fixed identities and binaries like male/female and gay/straight.

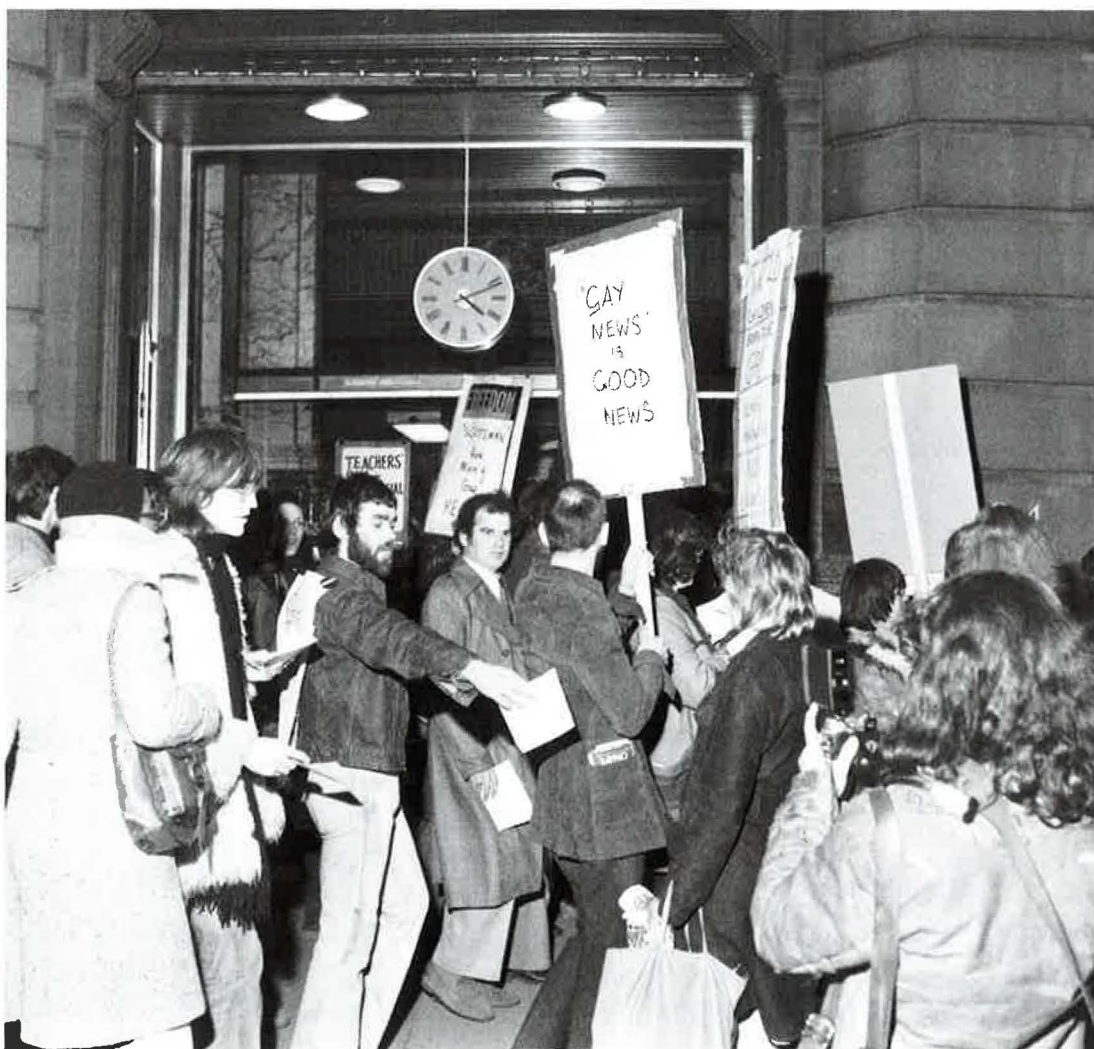
Other issues in LGBT history, some of which are explored in David Halperin's *How to Do the History of Homosexuality*, are familiar to all historians: whose experiences were deemed important enough to be recorded and preserved; how typical of the wider population were the relatively few lives we can glimpse; how can we understand lives lived in such different social, religious and economic contexts to our own; should we seek to understand these lives in their own terms or in ours; how should we

handle sensitive information we uncover about individuals and what responsibilities do we have to avoid plundering past lives for our own ends?

A major new source for social historians, whether specifically looking at LGBT lives or more widely, is the growing number of oral history projects in many countries. For Scotland the most significant sources are Bob Cant's *Footsteps and Witnesses* and the websites www.ourstory.org.uk and <http://livingmemory.org.uk/remem-berwhen>. Oral history certainly offers a way to capture the experiences of those generally marginalised or silenced but also raises issues about how reliable are conclusions based on such evidence. Some of these complexities are discussed in a recent article by Nan Boyd, 'Who is the Subject; Queer Theory Meets Oral History'.

Where is the LGBT history of Scotland?

One of the most basic and rewarding ways of exploring LGBT history is the production of lists and biographies of



Demonstration outside The Scotsman Offices 1974.

(Scotsman licensed via www.scran.ac.uk)

famous or infamous people like Eleanor Roosevelt, Radclyffe Hall, Sappho, Alexander the Great, St Aelred of Rievaulx, King James VI, Oscar Wilde, and Sir Hector Macdonald. They, depending on your approach, were either lesbian or gay or bisexual, or else were people who probably had an attraction to persons of the same sex, or were 'queer', whatever their personal sexual identity.

Admittedly this is not perhaps the most sophisticated of research approaches but it can be a useful starting point and is validating for those marginalised and denigrated by the society in which they live. Nor is it easy to uncover, let alone evaluate, evidence of same-sex attraction even among those whose lives are known in detail. There are strong presumptions that everyone is heterosexual (heterocentrism) and of course many people who felt other than 'normal' nonetheless married, either to provide a smokescreen or in an attempt to become 'normal'. Even when people are widely known to be gay or lesbian within their own circle any evidence of their same-sex attraction may be lacking after they die or may, indeed, be destroyed by family.

It should also be remembered that, despite our intrusive media, most people did not know that the Scots Makar, Edwin Morgan, was gay until he 'came out' on his seventieth birthday in 1990. While the decision to be public about a personal life is a matter for the individual, it is beneficial for LGBT people and society as a whole to see the contributions people of different backgrounds and persuasions are making to our country, and for that to be recorded for future students of Scotland's culture and society. We would have lost something important if Morgan had not been prepared to be open about his sexuality, as he himself has admitted,

It was something I wanted to write about from quite early on. Even if it wasn't being spoken about openly, I was able to draw sustenance from it [...] It took a long time for me to risk being unguarded; it depended on changes in society, changes in the law, changes in the people I knew. But I had a kind of confidence that I would be able to be open eventually - and meanwhile it was so much a part of my own life and character that it was bound to be a part of the poetry. (*The Guardian*, 26 January 2008)



James VI. Can we apply modern concepts of "gay" and "bisexual" to figures from the past? (National Galleries of Scotland licensed via www.scran.ac.uk)



Scots Makar Edwin Morgan, who "came out" on his seventieth birthday (Gerry McCann/licenced via www.scran.ac.uk)

Lesbians and bisexual women in Scotland

Women-loving women are particularly difficult to find in the Scottish records. The artist Joan Eardley is listed on various websites as being a famous lesbian - in the sense of someone who was famous and was also a lesbian - though there appears to be little evidence cited and no trace of this supposed orientation in the note on Eardley in the recent *Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women* (BDSW). Disappointingly, 'lesbian' is not even a category in the thematic index of the BDSW, with a mere eleven names under the more vague heading of 'sexuality'. Only one of these women, Jackie Foster (1926-1998), is posi-

tively identified as a lesbian with Maud Galt (fl.1648/9) and Pirie and Woods (see below) "accused" of lesbianism. In the entry on the cross-dressing writer Mary Diana Dods (c.1790-c.1830) a same-sex relationship is implied though the nature of the relationship is not made clear.

But Scotland can lay claim to two of the most famous reputed lesbians in history in Jane Pirie and Marianne Woods, whose story was made famous as the inspiration for Lillian Hellman's 1934 play 'The Children's Hour'. The young ladies briefly ran a small residential school in Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh, for upper-class girls but their careers were destroyed in 1810 when Lady Helen Cumming Gordon removed her teenaged grand daughter from the school and spread the child's accusation among the parents of the other students that the teachers had engaged in sexual intimacy together. Pirie and Woods sued for defamation and the destruction of their livelihood and, while they won their case, Cumming Gordon's wealth and tactics ensured that there was a long delay while the case went all the way to the House of Lords. Their story is examined at length in Lillian Faderman's somewhat idiosyncratic 1983 book *Scotch Verdict*.

The treatment of this case by the criminologist William Roughead in his 1931 book *Bad Companions*, presumably the source for Hellman's play, is also interesting as it tells us something about lesbianism at the time of the case and also at the time Roughead was writing. In the first instance his references to the child, Jane Cumming, are shockingly racist: she was, among other things, a 'dusky damsel from the East' being born illegitimately and the product of a relationship between Cumming Gordon's deceased son and an Indian woman. But the main point of interest is the attempt by the legal establishment to silence the scandal at the time of the case. Roughead tells of how court hearings were conducted in private with no official record being preserved and only a limited number of sets of trial papers being issued for the use of the court. These sets of papers were ordered to be destroyed upon the conclusion of the case - a process Roughead describes as a 'judicial holocaust'. He then describes how, 100 years later, he came to buy a set of the papers that had been secretly retained

INTERNATIONAL GAY RIGHTS CONGRESS 1974



The first international gay rights conference after Stonewall was organised in Scotland and led to the founding of the International Lesbian and Gay Association/ILGA

**Sessional Papers Agenda
Workshop Papers Notes
Social Calendar Letters**

DECEMBER 18-22

by one of the advocates in the trial.

As a criminologist and legal historian Roughead felt a duty to disclose what he had discovered, even if it meant,

[...] violating the secrecy in which this ancient scandal is enshrouded, and reviving for an ignorant, and presumably innocent, generation the shocking facts which their forebears blushed to envisage and did their best to stifle.

Having told the story of the school and the withdrawal of the child, Roughead finally got round to dealing with the accusation,

[...] and now [...] I am compelled reluctantly to indicate the purport of the black girl's blacker charge. Briefly, and with as little offence as may be, it was that these two gentlewomen had conceived for one another an inordinate affection, which they did not scruple wantonly to display in the very presence of their pupils.

This is as explicit as Roughead gets but even so he went to some lengths

to stave off possible criticism of treating of the subject at all,

I admit that at first sight the subject may appear prohibitive; but I have ripely pondered the matter, and having considerable experience in the negotiation of thin ice, I flatter myself I can execute my delicate task without disaster to the writer or detriment to the reader. Of the legal interest and sociological value of the essay I am bold to think there can be no question. If Mrs Grundy does not like the performance, it is open to the dame to lump it. And I hereby formally give her notice that ladies are not admitted. Should she disregard the warning, it is at her proper peril. Shut the door.

Finally, and worryingly for would-be historians of LGBT lives, Roughead firmly stated that he related the story of Pirie and Woods only because he was convinced that the accusation was false. Had he thought it true then he too would have silenced the record.

So the difficult experiences of Jane Pirie and Marianne Woods and the treatment of their story can tell us a

great deal about a range of matters. The social and economic relations of early 19th century Edinburgh are glimpsed as are elements of educational provision at least for the better off. The effectiveness of the mere accusation in disrupting the lives of the two teachers should be noted as should the strenuous efforts to eradicate the case from history, efforts which so easily could have succeeded and raise the question of how many other instances have been expunged from the record books. There is clearly an element of knowing exactly what lesbianism (probably termed tribadism at the time) was, strangely combined with a fear that allowing its existence to be mentioned in public would risk some damage to society. Although the subject had to be handled with extreme care in the 1930s it is interesting that it was handled at all and, although Roughead considered his audience both 'ignorant' and 'presumably innocent', he felt they would recognise lesbianism even when it was referred to only vaguely. Were Jane Pirie and Marianne Woods lesbians? The jury is still out.

Gay or bisexual men in Scotland

A rare example of evidence of a working class gay man's life relates to James Brown, a Glasgow tailor who died in Dore, near Sheffield, in March 1893. Brown was an active member of the Socialist League and became part of Edward Carpenter's circle of socialists, bound together by links of comradeship love reminiscent of the American gay poet Walt Whitman. Brown was probably sexually involved with fellow socialists Bob Muirhead and, perhaps, Dan McCulloch. Brown's personal and political papers, extant at his death, have not been located. However, his published poetry speaks of the 'love that dare not speak its name'.

Another poet whose life is rather more extensively recorded is Father John Gray, first rector of the Sir Robert Lorimer designed St Peter's in Falcon Avenue, Edinburgh. It was no coincidence that Gray was appointed to this new church by the Catholic Church as the buildings and the land they were built on were paid for by Gray's lover Marc-André Raffalovich. Gray and Raffalovich had been part of the Oscar Wilde circle, converting to Catholicism as several other gay men did in the wake of the panic occa-

The Case For

Homosexual Law

Reform In Scotland

INFORMATION

Scotland remains one of the few countries in Europe where homosexual acts are still illegal in all circumstances.

The following resolution was proposed by the Scottish Minorities Group at the Annual General Meeting of the Scottish Council for Civil Liberties, and adopted as S.C.C.L. policy.

EQUALITY FOR HOMOSEXUALS

This A.G.M. notes the continuing social and legal inequalities of the homosexual in Scotland and recommends to the Executive Committee and Parliamentary Civil Liberties Group to press for sound legal reforms for an early removal of remaining discrimination.

At the request of the Scottish Council for Civil Liberties, the Executive Committee of the Scottish Minorities Group, prepared a memorandum (which is printed overleaf) outlining the reasons for the above resolution and the action required.

SCOTTISH MINORITIES GROUP, 214 Clyde Street, Glasgow, C.1.

Scottish Minorities Group leaflet recording support of Scottish Council for Civil Liberties/SCCL's support for decriminalisation, mid-1970s

sioned by Wilde's conviction for same-sex sexual activity in 1895. The young Gray was often said to be the model for Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray*, and indeed he initially encouraged the idea, though this cannot be correct as the two men did not meet until shortly after the novel was published. Wilde financially underwrote publication of Gray's compilation of poems *Silverpoints* and George Bernard Shaw described Gray as one of Oscar's 'more abject' disciples. Perhaps because of this Raffalovich was never on good terms with Wilde.

Anti-Catholicism and homophobia came together in the speeches of John Cormack of Protestant Action. In the March/April 1985 edition of the magazine *Gay Scotland*, John McIntyre wrote,

As a schoolboy [in 1932] I stood listening to the speakers at the Mound in Edinburgh's Princes Street, and it was there I heard John Cormack [...] thundering

denunciations of the sins of the 'Scarlet Woman', the Roman Catholic Church. Only recently aware of my own homosexuality, I listened fearfully as he revealed the presence of a 'Sodomistic Catholic Clique' in Edinburgh. It was many years later [...] I realised that Cormack was probably referring to Canon John Grey [sic] of St Peter's Church and his friend Andre Raffalovitch.

In 1870, in contrast to the silence that had been imposed on the Pirie and Woods case some fifty years earlier, Scottish newspapers carried frequent and substantial articles on the trials of Ernest Boulton and Frederick William Park, who were accused of the,

[...] extraordinary charge [...] of dressing in women's attire, and frequenting certain places of amusement in London, with intent to commit a felony' (*The Scotsman*, 7

May 1870, 'The charge against men of dressing in women's clothes').

The felony the men were suspected of committing was buggery (the English equivalent to a charge of sodomy) though ultimately they were acquitted by a jury. Frederick, when dressed, was known to her friends as Fanny, and Ernest was introduced sometimes as Lady Arthur Clinton and at other times as Stella, Star of the Strand. Boulton's presumed lover, Lord Arthur Pelham Clinton, MP, died, possibly at his own hand but officially 'from exhaustion resulting from scarlet fever', before he could stand trial.

The Scottish angle arose through letters discovered by police in the rooms of one John Safford Fiske, American Consul at Leith. It transpired that Boulton and Park had met Fiske, who lodged at 136 George Street, Edinburgh, in 1868 through a mutual friend, a clerk in the surveyor's department of the Post Office, Louis Charles Hurt. Fiske fell head over heels in love with Boulton and wrote him incriminating letters,

Edinburgh, 18th April 1870

My Darling Ernie, - I am looking for Louis [Hurt] tonight, and wishing as I do a hundred times each day that you were to be here. [...] I have a heart full of love and longing; and my photographs, my four little notes, and my memory are all that I have of you. [...] Believe me, darling, a word of remembrance from you can never come amiss, only the sooner it comes the better. 'Hope deferred' - you know the saying. Adventures do turn up, even in Edinburgh. Perhaps you would envy me for five whole minutes if I were to tell you of one that I've had since you left; but I will keep it for your own ear when very likely you try after the same happiness.

While Fiske's letters do not amount to proof of sexual activity between the two men, their effeminate and gushing tone can hardly have left much doubt in the minds of the police and prosecutors as to their import. Certainly the newspaper reports of the trial, often under the heading of 'Charge of Personating Women', were clearly understood by the public to relate to sodomy though same-sex



Wendy Alexander yesterday: "This action will help to overcome intolerance"

Holyrood leads way on repeal of Section 28

By A SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

MOVES in Scotland to scrap legislation that bans councils from promoting homosexuality were widely welcomed yesterday, with an expectation that similar moves will soon be made south of the border.

Wendy Alexander, Holyrood's Communities Minister, formally announced that legislation banning councils from promoting homosexuality is to be repealed in Scotland.

The minister told an audience at Glasgow University that Section 2a of the Local Government Act 1986, commonly known as Section 28, was flawed and driven by discrimination.

The announcement was welcomed by gay rights groups, opposition politicians and trades unions. But it was condemned by Phil Gallie, Scottish Tory home affairs spokesman, and given only a cautious welcome by the Roman Catholic Church.

Ms Alexander said: "We are

committed to ending a climate in which homophobia can thrive. The present system is flawed. It makes a legal distinction between teaching about homosexuality and teaching about other contentious topics such as drugs and abortion."

"The Scottish Executive believes that to repeal this section of the legislation would be of assistance to schools and teachers in their endeavour to provide rounded and comprehensive health and sex education. This action will help to overcome the prejudice and intolerance we still know exists in our society against lesbian and gay communities."

The minister also said there was no justification for a different age of consent for gay men. The First Minister, Donald Dewar, said: "I suspect movement south of the border may be very close behind. That's entirely a matter for them."

"It would be very obscure and strange indeed if someone

was to say to me the criticism of this was that as a devoted parliament we take our own decision and moved slightly faster than the rest of the UK."

Alec Dreary, convener of the gay and lesbian rights group Outright, said: "The Parliament has said it wants a socially inclusive society. The removal of this obstacle will help to make that possible. Sex education can be dealt with in terms of equality and all relationships looked at by educators."

Michael Matheson, Scottish National Party Shadow Deputy Justice and Equality Minister, gave his party's backing. But Mr Gallie said: "We don't believe that there is any place for the promotion of sex in schools, never mind homosexuality."

Roman Catholic Church spokesman Monsignor Tom Connelly said: "We do hope that the consultative document will mention education and not simply instruction."

sexual activity was not mentioned. For example, in June 1870, James Young of Arbroath accused his neighbour, John Kidd, of sodomy, and stated that he had pointed Kidd out to a police officer saying he had, 'committed a case of sodomy; or the same that Park and Boulton were lying for'. Later, in Kidd's hearing, Young, had 'made a remark to a person passing the door [...] that they "need not go far for Park and Boulton", referring to the English fellows charged with abominable con-

duct', which led to the threat of a defamation action.

Transgender/transsexuals in Scotland

Although the historian Robert Lyndesay of Pitscottie (c.1532–c.1586) must be treated with caution as a source, his recording of a 1460 case of a transsexual or hermaphrodite man does, at the very least, tell us something of attitudes and beliefs at the

Section 28

Section 28 promotes bullying
Section 28 hurts young people

Get rid of it now!

Section 28 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1986 states that local authorities must not "intentionally promote the teaching in any school or other institution of the superiority of one race or religion over another."

Too many of our young people feel that they are different and that they are being discriminated against because of their sexual orientation. Some are bullied and some are harassed.

63% of schools in England and Wales say they have homophobic bullying in their schools. 6% have policies to say that it is wrong.

Dear Mr Galbraith,

Scottish schools should be supportive and challenging places of education and not places where young people live in fear of discrimination and violence.

Please repeal Section 28.

Name:

Address:

Sam Galbraith MSP
Minister for Education
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Section 28

Outright Scotland, 58A Broughton Street, Edinburgh, EH1 3SA

Printing: J. D. Smith, Edinburgh, 1999

(above) 'Outright Scotland' campaign leaflet calling for repeal of homophobic legislation.

(left) Newspaper article reporting on the new Scottish Parliament's lead on opposing Section 28.

time Lyndsay produced his *History of Scotland*. Lyndesay writes, in a rather peculiar style about the portentous signs seen immediately before the death of James II in 1460, including 'the comit that appeirit' and of 'the skarht yat was born of baith the kyn-dis maile and female',

It is said that thair was maney marvellis about that tyme quhilk pronosticat the kingis deid. [...] In the yeir preceeding thair was ane bairn borne quhilk had baith the kyndis of maill and famell callit in our language, karthe [scratche/scarcht] in quhome mans nature did prevaill bot because the dispositioun and protraitour [portraiture] of body did represent ane woman, in ane mans house in Lythgow and assotiatit in beding with the good mans dochter of the house and maid her to consaue ane child quhilk being devoullgat throw the contrie and the matrounis wnderstanding this damesell dessawith in this matter and being offendit that the monstrous creatur sould sett him self fourtht as ane woman beand ane werie man, they gat him accusit and convickt in iudgement for to be burieit quick for his schamfull behavieour.

Jumping forward several centuries, the Orcadian Isabel Gunn seems to have been driven by economic need rather than sexual desire when she adopted men's clothes in order to get a job with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1806. The firm only employed men so Isabel signed on to work as 'John Fubister' but her secret was discovered when she had to admit to feeling indisposed when in the act of giving birth.

We are perhaps on firmer ground with 1870 case from Dundee. On Saturday 14 May 1870 the *Weekly News* reported, under the headline 'Two Young Women Larking It In Men's Clothes', and again making reference to the Park and Boulton case, that,

At the Police Court, Dundee, on Wednesday a most ludicrous and melancholy scene presented itself. Mary Robertson, Dundee – a plump, ruddy girl, apparently about twenty years of age – and Elizabeth Guthrie, from Aberdeen – a tall, slender woman, apparently a few years her senior – presented themselves in the dock to answer to a charge of disorderly conduct. They were both dressed in men's clothes. [Robertson's] [...] whole get-up would have been worthy of the gentlemen who at present are causing such a *furor* by their dressing in the garb of the sex the prisoners were concealing. [...] They had been apprehended that morning between two and three o'clock in Constitution Road, where they were making a loud noise, and disturbing the lieges. Both panels pleaded guilty. They were defended by a woman, named Mary Ward, who rose in the body of the Court, and stated that they were only guilty of being in men's clothes – nothing more! [...] Both prisoners were fined 10s. They paid the fine, and left the Court along with their *Ward* and they were followed along the street amidst the laughter and cheers of a large crowd, in which they themselves heartily joined.

It is not clear if the 'nothing more' refers to the possible theft of the clothing or perhaps prostitution or same-sex activity.

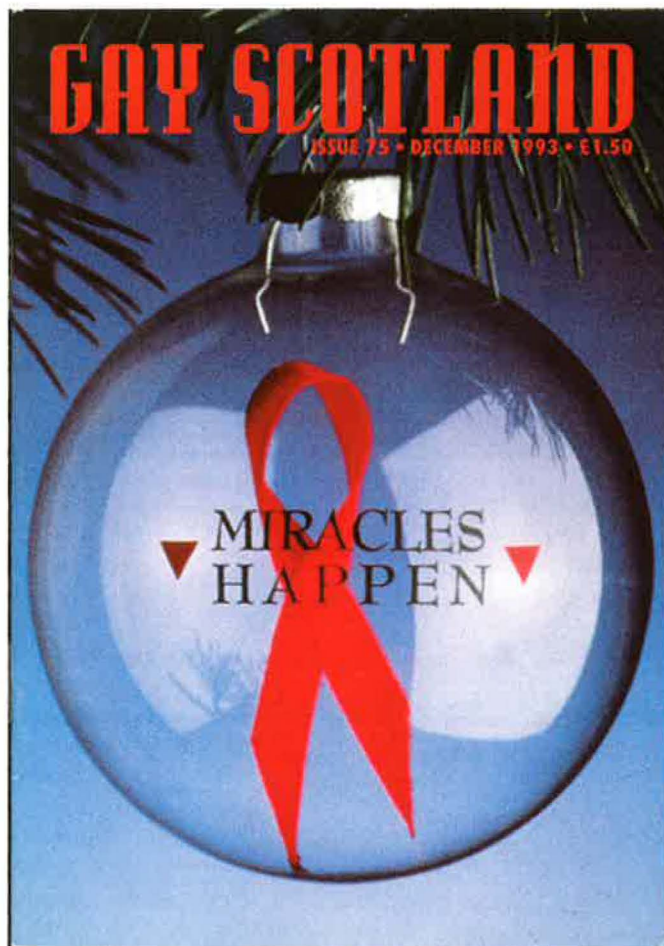
A relatively recent case of an inter-sex person (or hermaphrodite) is reported in Angus Campbell's article on a 1968 'gender recognition' court case. The question to be determined was whether one Ewan Forbes-Sem-

The correctness of this legal process was put to the test when, in 1965, Lord Sempill died without male issue. The baronetcy of Forbes of Craigievar descended only through male heirs: Ewan was closer in line than another nephew of the deceased, but was Ewan really male? Until 2004 the law was that a person could not 'change' their sex if they were born unequivocally male or female but, basing his deliberations on 17th century legal writers, the judge concluded that in the case of a true hermaphrodite it is the predominant sex that prevails. As that was male in this case, then it had been legally correct to change the sex on Ewan's birth certificate from female to male. Although some members of the family were confused by the process there was little comment in the newspapers of the time (though there was disquiet at the fact that the entire proceedings were held *in camera*, ie without access being given to the public or the press) and Forbes-Sempill appears to have been respected in the community until his death in 1991.

Themes

The individual lives of lgbt people explored briefly above are intended to indicate something of the range of experiences that might be looked for and offer a 'way in' to further research.

Another approach is to explore the lives of lgbt people and the contributions they have made to Scottish society. One such example is the different organisations lgbt people have created over the last forty years. A good starting point might be my own pamphlets *Thon Wey* and *Pink Papers* (<http://www.linsert.org/>), though transsexual and bisexual groups are admittedly under-represented in those publications. As well as the main national political organisation Out-right Scotland (previously the Scottish Minorities Group and then the Scottish Homosexual Rights Group), there have been a number of local lgbt groups and, latterly, groups like Equality Network and Stonewall Scotland. Other fruitful areas of research could be student 'gaysoqs'



Cover of *Gay Scotland* magazine 1993. As elsewhere, the initial response to the AIDS crisis came from lesbians and gay men rather than public services

pill could inherit a considerable estate as the oldest male heir despite having been registered at birth and having lived the first half of his life as a girl. Born into the influential Forbes-Sempill family of Craigievar and Fintray, Ewan had been registered as Elizabeth and lived for the first forty years of his life as a female. Having gathered medical evidence to show that he was, in fact, predominantly male and then being prescribed testosterone treatment, in 1952 Elizabeth successfully petitioned the Sheriff Court to have the sex which was registered on his birth certificate changed from female to male.

and youth groups generally, lgbt self-organised groups within political parties and trade unions, and within religious bodies.

Another theme that is being explored by Roger Davidson is the treatment of lgbt people by the medical professions. In many cases those with same-sex desires faced condemnation and were pressured into deny-

ing and a hugely hostile atmosphere created by homophobic tabloid newspapers and the government. Despite all these problems, SAM, and other organisations including Phace West and Body Positive, successfully put tens of thousands of hours of volunteer community work into supporting individuals and changing attitudes. It is to be hoped that the papers of these

they were radically under-funded and relied totally on volunteer input. However, they provided a safe venue for thousands of people and the space in which gay switchboards and other community organisations could safely develop.

Many clubs and pubs are mentioned in Bob Cant's *Footsteps and Witnesses*. As well as the busy central-belt commercial venues like Glasgow's Waterloo and Vintners pubs and Edinburgh's Kenilworth pub and Fire Island disco, Dundee's Gauger gets a mention, as does Kirkcaldy's Victoria Arms. The magazine *Gay Scotland* carried a regular guide to social venues which, in the mid 1980s, included Bogie's Bar in Greenock, 'mainly straight but popular with local gays', and Kilmarnock's Kay Park Tavern 'popular, young crowd, mainly straight'. In 1987 'Agatha' wrote a brief reminiscence of earlier Edinburgh haunts, including the Black Bull and Fairlies on Leith Walk ('Fairlies was a wonderful place for meeting sailors of all nationalities' during WWII) as well as the Shakespeare, Paddy's, the White Cockade, the Ivanhoe, the Old Hundred, and the 'gay café' Crawfords in Frederick Street.



60 Broughton Street – The LGBT Centre in Edinburgh, an important public statement since 1975.

ing their feelings, often through cruel aversion 'therapy'. Transgendered people often faced (and face) challenges accessing proper medical support whether in relation to their gender dysphasia or in unrelated medical matters. Isolation and hostile treatment could lead to great stress and even mental health problems and since the only 'gay' people medical studies were people seeking medical help (or sometimes those in prison) it was inevitable that same-sex desire would be pathologised as an illness – it was a central demand of the Gay Liberation Front that homosexuality be removed from the psychiatric profession's list of mental conditions.

The materials making up the history of the impact of AIDS on people living in Scotland has yet to be collected. The first national organisation to address the issue, Scottish Aids Monitor (SAM), had an at times tumultuous existence affected, as it was, by infighting, lack of proper fund-

organisations are being preserved.

A further focus for research might be social activities. This could include the 'gay' pubs and clubs that developed in the 1980s, the community-organised discos which predated the development of the commercial pub and club 'scene' and the lgbt community centres. One of the first aims of the lesbian and gay groups that formed in the late 1960s or early 1970s was to break down the isolation that many people experienced. To this end, many organised discos, often in university or student run venues (the first was The Cobweb, in George Square, Edinburgh). Space for meetings and socialising was also quickly secured (23 George Street, Edinburgh; 214 Clyde Street, Glasgow). The history of the Edinburgh 'gay centre' at 60 Broughton Street and the three Glasgow centres (534 Sauchiehall Street, 11 Dixon Street, and 84 Bell Street) has at times descended into farce, largely because

To be continued

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Further Reading

Bob Cant (ed.), *Footsteps and Witnesses; Lesbian and gay lifestyles from Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2008).

Edward Stein (ed.), *Forms of Desire: sexual orientation and the social constructionist controversy* (London, 1990).

Stephen M. Barber and David L. Clark (eds.), *Regarding Sedgwick: essays on queer culture and critical theory* (London, 2002).

Steven Seidman (ed.), *Queer Theory/Sociology* (Cambridge, 1996).

Nan Boyd, 'Who is the Subject; Queer Theory Meets Oral History', in *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 2008, 177-89.