



CAMDEN
ISSUE

NUMBER
13



Camden is a very large North London borough with nearly 1/4 million people of varying social class, race, and ethnic group. As in all central London boroughs, there is a large floating population of young single people, many of them gay. Camden G.L.F. started in Camden simply because people who felt strongly about local groups lived there.

It isn't exactly a gay ghetto like Earls Court but it does include well known gay haunts and a few gay pubs - no doubt you have all heard of Hampstead Heath. Most gay people who live in Camden have to go elsewhere for their social life - there are no clubs for gay people and the pubs are very straight.

Our group was meant to be a response to this local area, the majority of our aims and actions are orientated towards providing an alternative for gay people in the area. This is not just on a social level, which we recognise as being of prime importance, but on a level which creates a gay consciousness and pride, so leading, we hope, to a new gay lifestyle and sense of community.

This issue, as it is produced by Camden, is mainly about Camden, both inside our group and outside. In this article we're just talking about the social scene and what we are trying to do to improve it.

We have two quite well known gay pubs - the Black Cap in Camden High St. and the William IV in Hampstead High St. The Black Cap specialises in drag, and the people who go there tend to be more working-class, as Camden Town is a working-class area. William IV is just the opposite. No drag, very respectable, polite conversation, lots of middle-class gays and a heavy atmosphere to those of us who have experienced greater freedom. Both these pubs, despite their class differences, are highly exploitative of gay people. GLF has been thrown out of both for leafletting and selling Come Together. Because gay people have hardly anywhere else to go to the landlords charge higher prices than usual for drinks - the same old story.

Trying to present an alternative to this scene has many problems. For a start we would like to put on regular dances as West London group is doing, also weekly discos, but Camden council blacklisted GLF because of an incident at an earlier GLF dance. And we haven't yet managed to find a pub or hall that would let us hold a disco. In a way this has given us time for thought about the nature of the dances and discos put on before by GLF. We still use straight music and dance styles, but we hope to learn from past mistakes. When we do get our dances together we'll be using lots of theatre and gay dance styles - it won't be a straight event.

Because we could not put on a disco of our own, we started going to a straight disco next door to the hall where we meet in Kentish Town, after the Thursday meetings. It was frequented by black and white working-class young people. Immediately, GLF's mainly middle-class base became apparent: they were hostile and violently aggressive, and most of us

didn't know how to cope with it. We provoked this reaction by kissing and dancing close. This brought out their hidden fears about their masculinity, and their reactions included ridicule, throwing beer, and punching - we couldn't start to talk to them. Eventually the manager asked us not to kiss and dance close. Some of us were into going back and confronting them, although the sisters refused to participate. However, as those who were into confrontation didn't know how to react to violence, we stopped going.

Since then we have held a Bizarre, and are having weekly gay days in parks in north-west London. We're selling our newssheet regularly to gay pubs, and have just started a coffee stall on the Heath (see centre pages). This is a result of a feeling that we must get out more to the gay community around us - out of our own ghetto.

ABOUT
US

People started Camden G.L.F. because they found the big Wednesday meetings heavy, aggressive, untidy, and not productive at any personal or strategic results. It seemed to reflect a tension between the old roles of the aggressive politico, and the together love-maker. We decided at the planning meetings in November that the group should be of about a hundred people, splitting up into more local groups as G.L.F. grew in size. We also talked about money and what our relationship should be with the whole G.L.F. movement. We felt we should be autonomous and as much related to the locality as possible. We found a meeting place in Kentish Town and leafleted near by in the shopping streets on Saturdays. This brought quite a number of new people into Camden G.L.F., although there were many who had been to the bigger Wednesday meetings, and it took sometime for everybody to feel a separate Camden identity. Camden seemed to learn from the Wednesday meetings that a leadership structure was to be avoided, so we always broke down into small groups after begin together in one big discussion group, then getting together again at the end. We hoped that by doing this new members would quickly become involved in the meet-

CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE....

being what gay is

The differences between gay people and straight people are important, and maybe we haven't made enough of them in our campaigns against oppression. For one thing, the whole idea of woman relating to woman and man to man shows a positive and good alternative to the way men and women relate to each other. We have within our grasp a chance of more equal relationships with each other than they have. In a society where difference in sex means difference in education, upbringing, clothing etc. it also means a difference in sexual needs, because emotional and sexual needs are to a large extent caused by the experience of upbringing, education, etc. So a situation exists where we grow up seeing a world which is and always has been run by men, where the word MAN means people, where women take on men's names in marriage, where it is said quite regularly that women's sexual needs are less important and less urgent than those of men. Men are dominant and dominating, and deep down believe that they are the only important people. So they rule in most situations, and women, in their frustration, with less importance, less weight, less orgasms, less everything, are forced into a role of nagging and bitching to get what they need, and then men say 'women run everything, they nag and go on all the time till they get what they want'.

WE really are different, and we can be very much more different. As a gay man, I cannot say too much about women relating to each other sexually, because I do not know as much about it as they do, but it seems that they would be aware of each others emotional and sexual needs - they have the same ones and they will not be having to relate to someone who thinks they are more important, and who expresses the thought. Also, men relating to men won't be able to impose that trip on each other. Firstly, the fact that gay men don't want to enter into relationships with women shows that they might have a less inflated idea of their own importance. Whatever it shows, it is certain that it is more easily possible for us to relate equally to each other, because there is no previously decided order as to which member of the couple is superior to the other.

But before this alternative becomes truly possible to us, let alone everyone else, we must recognise the difference between ourselves and

straight people, and give it greater importance. The differences between them and us must become us, not just remain inside us. And it is impossible for them to become us when we hide our gayness from most of society. To hide our gayness means to take on the behaviour and roles, clothing and apparent thinking of straights. Because to conceal being gay does not just involve saying you're straight - it means behaving in such a way as to make people unlikely to think otherwise.

How can we honestly be proud of our gayness and build a gay alternative, when we accept the values that make us unable to tell straight people that we are gay? If their values are wrong, then only we can make them change, and we can only do that if they can witness what we are. In our society men have privileges that gay men are not always allowed to share in, so some gay men feel tied to the straight life that they are living, in order to hang on to their privileges. But we can only be F R E E and G A Y if we can decide to give up the privileges of the people who are in fact the problem. If being gay in our work situations means being thrown out, then maybe that's the break from a life in which we compromise our gayness to suit someone else's wrong values. If we keep the game up, we bludgeon our gayness, be straight to the outside world, and only gay when we are hidden in bed.

It's not enough to say 'I'm a homosexual' and carry on behaving straight; that is not doing anything towards building our alternative, as it is saying that being homosexual doesn't necessarily mean being different from straights, and the alternative we offer can only be built out of the differences. The social behaviour, style, clothes, culture of straight men were devised to bolster up or express the role they play. We cannot behave like them and begin to talk about building equal relationships with each other. Why should the norms that they created imprison us. Coming out means breaking away from that. Coming out means being what gay is.

Men whose behaviour and mannerisms are always noticeably gay are the most put down, because they are showing that they don't care about not being proper men, and it is this they're put down for.



Batting eyelids

Standing in front of the bathroom mirror, my left-hand holding down my left eye-lid, (which is quivering nervously), as with the little finger of my right hand I try, (and I mean try), to apply eye shadow. The colour is deep aqua; and now there is a smudge of it on the eye-lid. It certainly doesn't have the 'Nova' or 'Vogue' sophistication about it - but who cares? The mere 'fun' of putting it on, the contortions of the face - just to put make-up on - but it really is fun, and it really is liberating. With eye-shadow the only trouble is that you can trip, into the colours, so, after trying deep aqua you have to try green, and yellow, and orange, and white. And after half-an-hour of putting it on, and then taking it off, you end up with deep aqua again, and a pair of sore eye-lids. But it looks so pretty, especially when you stand there batting your eye-lids.

The make-up being completed it's time to go. (A warning, if you become too vain about it all you will be late for meetings since you will be only half satisfied with the first application) Tripping off down the road you feel good and strong, and liberated. Why? Because you are beginning to express your personality spontaneously because you need less to rely on the masculine image. Because you are on the road to freedom, albeit in a small way; freedom of the oppressiveness of needing to be a masculine symbol when you are not. And anyway it's fun - so you really should try it sometime.



On Saturday night I felt pissed-off, and suddenly thought of going to the party in drag. Fantastic! Carol's long blue woolen dress, buttons down the front to mid-thigh, then swinging open. Clinging very sensual. Tights over underpants - no, pants off - half-hour into the party, tights off; free-and-easy. Pendant and bracelet; bit of blue eye-shadow, hair brushed back abit. Really nice feeling - I wasn't a 'man' or a 'woman', just me in a comfortable, sensual dress - some of the role-playing really dropped away. I am a person loving and loved.

It was nice. Can't wait till the next time.

segregation of the species

brotherhood

Having only been twice to the GLF meetings, I can not claim to know very much about the GLF in general. I was surprised however at the small number of women present at the Camden meetings, and was told that the women held their own meetings and that there used to be a mixed meeting on Wednesdays at Powis Gardens, but that the women had split from that. I was also told that some of the men were in favour of holding meetings just amongst themselves. I was unable to obtain any information on why the men didn't particularly want women in their group.

Whatever women feel about men and whatever they feel about us shouldn't come into play here. We are all homosexual and as far as hetero's are concerned a lot of perverts, queers and who are in need of psychiatric help have father or mother complexes and are the dregs of human society. We are all oppressed and we have to convince the fine upstanding citizens of the world that they must accept us and that we should have the same rights as they have. Both sexes have to accept us, but how can they when we can't even tolerate a couple of hours per week in each others' company?

I accept that we are different, apart from the obvious physical differences. We think differently, act, speak and see things differently, but this shouldn't cause a split. Our differences should be put to use so that we can come to a greater understanding of each other and discuss our problems from both points of view. Can we not forget our sexes? I hasten to add that only as far as the meetings are concerned. Even if the need is to be exclusively with one's own sex would it not be a good idea if from time to time we visit each others' groups? I feel at ease with either and I don't see men as a threat to my femininity, or feel that I have to be excessively "butch" in order to cope with the situation. Neither do I feel that the men think that they have to be ultra-feminine whilst they are in our company. Let's "Come Together" UNITED WE STAND, DIVIDED we know

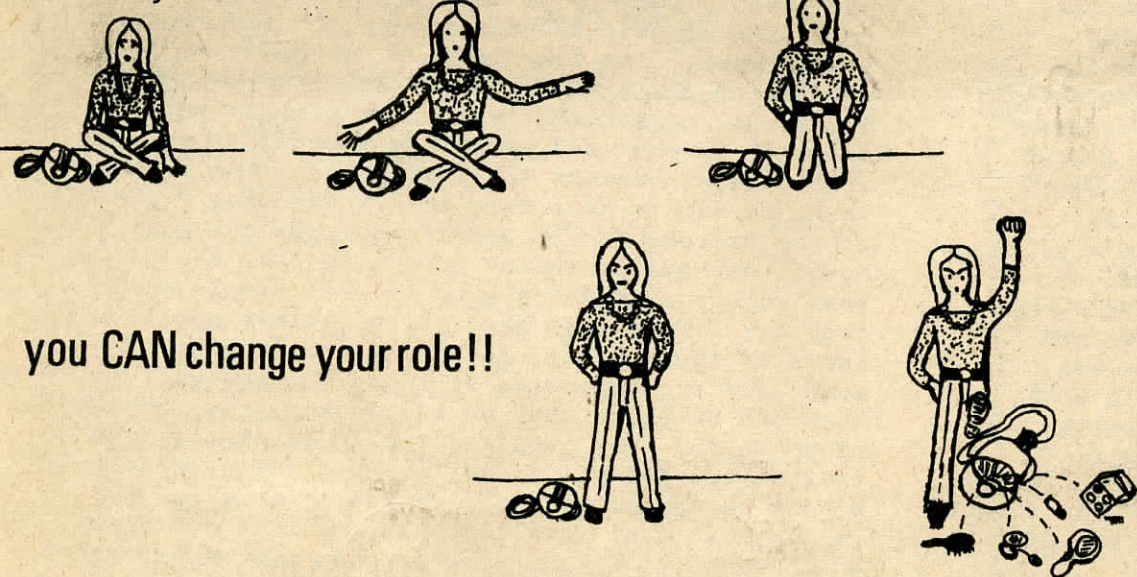
Diana

Two Brother's Views

Even though the great many brothers, and even a number of sisters, think it a bad thing that the gay women split from the men - and were probably really hurt by all those bad vibrations - we feel that it was the only possible thing that could have happened.

Now, gay women have their own separate organisation and can get on with their own specific struggle, because even though we gay males and females are both oppressed by straights for being gay, lesbians are oppressed by men too for being women. So the split, though a heavy thing to experience, is a good thing and generally strengthens the gay movement.

Now gay women and gay men can relate together on a more principled basis of mutual independence, without the men laying their trip onto the women.



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The main problem that we faced in GLF was how difficult the men and women found it to relate to each other. Now that the women have left to get their own thing together, the problem that now confronts us is how can we as men learn to relate properly to each other. Some of the brothers from Camden got together to talk about this. Obviously, the discussion drew a lot from our own personal experiences. The difficulty that many of us experienced in our relationships was that we still tended to relate in terms of the two roles given us by society. Even though we realise that 'butch' and 'fem' role-playing is a bad thing as it restricts the total development and expression of our potentialities as people, we still find it too hard to break out of these limiting relationships.

We discovered that we all were troubled by by our tendency to separate our minds from our bodies - a way of behaving that everyone in this society is conditioned to info. Some of the 'fem' men confessed that while they could open up sexually to 'butch' men, they could only really open up mentally to 'fem' friends, to whom they couldn't relate sexually. They were worried that they were letting themselves be as oppressed as straight women are, by allowing their 'butch' men to make decisions for them. And when they took steps to prevent this from happening, they were only opening up less to their lovers. Men who fell into the 'butch' role said that since coming into GLF they had been made aware of how they were oppressing others by their dominating manner. They recognised that they had to become more passive and of those present all were trying to adopt more 'fem' behaviour.

This led to another problem - with many of the men in various GLF groups trying to be less assertive, too many of us were passive and so not enough was being done. 'Fem' men had to become more assertive (rather than aggressive) in order to counteract this and to develop their own personalities. We were all aiming for a happy medium between passivity and assertiveness/self-confidence.

Because we are all gay men and therefore capable of loving each other, we should find it easier to open up to each other. This is a straight-male-dominated society, straight men not have had their feelings and ways of self-expression challenged as all gay men (especially fem) have. Gay men therefore tend to be more aware because they have been forced to question themselves and their lives. The 'gay mind' is therefore likely to be more open than the 'straight mind', (or should be!) Thus the struggle to relate to each other should be easier for us as gay men than it is for straights.

We do have love on our side to develop a collective consciousness and it was obvious from the discussion that we were all anxious to relate honestly and totally to each other even if we find it difficult at the moment. Collectivism is the only way forward, for while we still cannot cope with each other, we won't be able to cope with and overcome the oppression from straight sexist society. At the same time, we mustn't isolate ourselves from that society by getting into each other so much that we lose contact with the reality of the outside world. But we can only progress in stages and our problem at this point in time is relating to each other. Often, too, we can learn to do this by trying harder to relate to our non-GLF gay brothers who are still in the ghetto - which will be a way of coping with the necessity of getting through to them. We only have ourselves, and nobody else is going to solve our problems for us.



The social segregation of gay people and children from each other is part of both groups' oppression, particularly that of children.

The successful induction of children into participation in the ludicrous demands of male supremacy and the class oppression of capitalism is engineered by their encagement in the gender role structure of the family, and their 9-to-5 imprisonment in the school.

Gay people are an overt threat to the internalisation of gender roles, because we subvert the worship of butch/fem heterosexuality. We are probably also a covert threat to the success of capitalism in so far as we subvert the patriarchal authoritarianism which is the common substance of both family and capitalist organisation.

The word 'pederast' sums up very well society's attitude to children, and is central to their oppression. If we tried rationally to discuss the idea of sex between adults and children, we would find ourselves hindered by the complete absence or inadequacy of any words in our language to talk about it. Indeed, there is also a complete absence of any words for talking about sex between children, which is perhaps the clearest indication of our blatant denial of their authentic sexuality. The only word we have - 'pederast' - is a word about what adults do to children. It denies that kids might seduce adults, or that kids might make love at all. (The term 'latent sexuality' is used to draw attention away from the fact that people have beaten the daylight out of their kids for enjoying their own bodies.)

Similarly, in the broader ideological oppression of kids, everything the child does is said to be play, fantasy, unreal. It is never valid, positive and self-authentic, i.e. good in itself, but only reasonable as a child's shadowy and diminutive attempt at what an adult can do. The whole notion of childhood is, of course, an effort to make kids powerless against adult male supremacy by dividing them off and disauthenticating them from adult credence. The immediate reason for this is, of course, that parents are forced to regard and treat their kids as part of the property for which they are responsible - as a commodity in with the household budget, but not as persons.



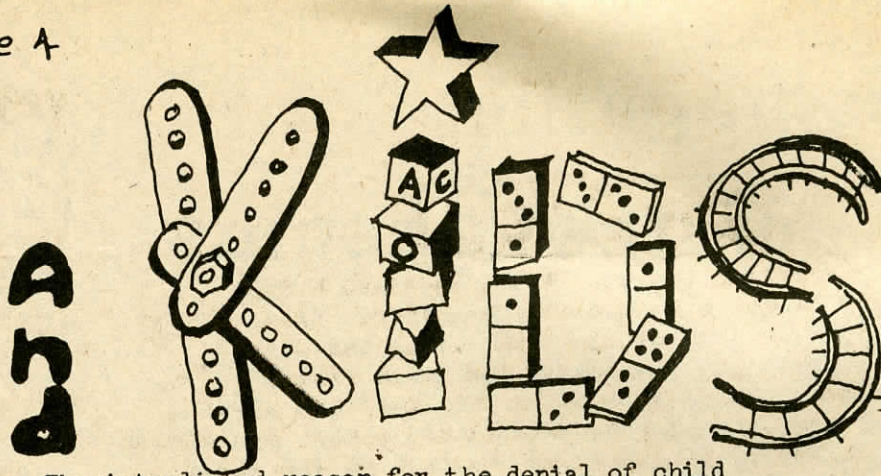
This is their quote:

"We are trying as a group of people to recognise people's need of people and ... we hope the survival of humanity will develop."

So what did they do? Listen, Square World of muscular manliness:

A mother of four young children had a miscarriage. She was not a member of GLF. She had to be rushed to hospital. The members of the Bounds Green Commune went to the rescue. They took the four children to their commune (the youngest still in nappies and the eldest was eight years old). In the Commune, the kids received the loving care exceeding any gentle "taking into care" by a local authority might have produced. Most certainly, the love exceeded the Square World's indifference, the people so critical of our brothers and sisters. The Square World did nothing.

The kids loved it. They were washed, bathed, nappies changed, taken out. Two, the youngest, were to be seen beautifully laundered at the Regents Park Gay Day on the 16th April. The writer was so impressed and surprised by this scene, this happy group seated on the grass suitably covered, that he dropped the massive clanger: "Are they a married couple?" "Difficult", was the reply: "They are both fellers." The bright feather boa had helped to cloud the vision of this writer...



The interlinked reason for the denial of child sexuality is that for adults to accept that kids can really enjoy sex would be an admission against the legitimization of the pompous male supremacy of adulthood.

It is, however, a function of adult society's corruption and exploitation of kids, and its unwillingness to treat them as independently valid persons, that the whole area of child-adult and child-child sex is confined with secrecy, fear and guilt to situations in which force and compulsion, and corruption, are made possible. If kids, and kids and adults, were encouraged freely to enjoy themselves sexually, the necessity for such force in the already corrupt milieu of society would vanish. But neither this great freedom, nor the freedom of kids to learn real things in real situations, as opposed to quasi-learning in school, could come about without the collapse of adult and male supremacy.

By setting up gay communes with facilities for children, gay people could offer kids the first step in their liberation from the trap of the sexist society in which we struggle. And by doing so we could also assist women, thereby freed from the total imprisonment of motherhood, in their struggle for their own liberation. It would also offer to gay people participation in raising kids, from which we have always been debarred.

Paul B.

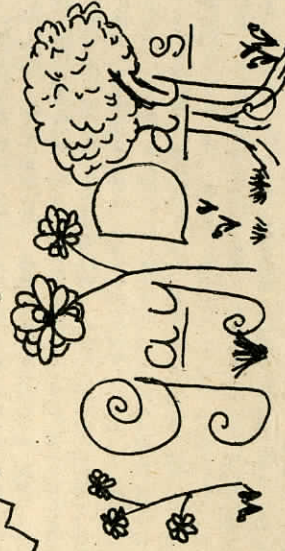
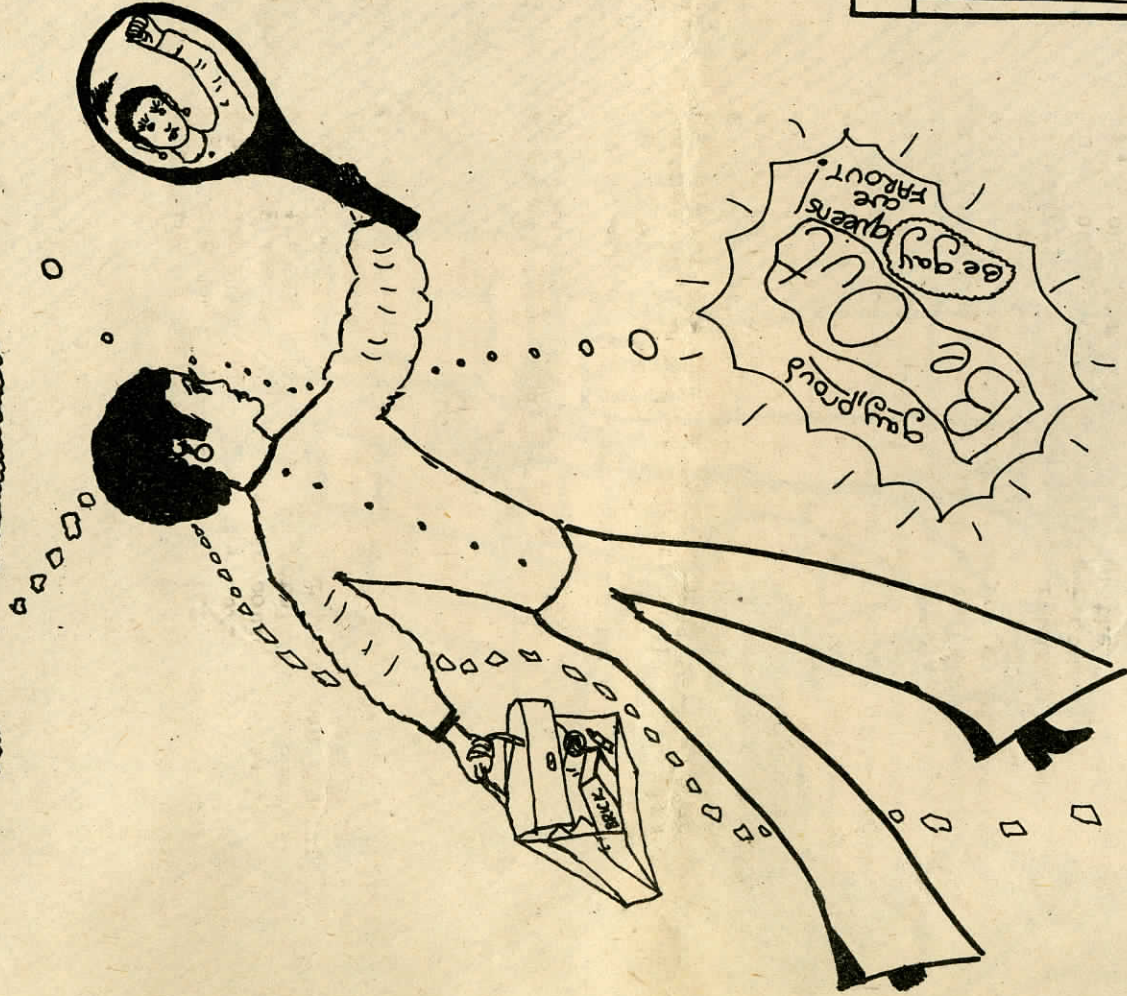
social working

I am a social worker who joined the GLF a few months ago. I always used to feel not a little annoyed when some GLF members would criticize so many of the people with whom I work and so much of the work that I do - until I began to question it myself. I thought I was doing a good job, helping other people, deprived people to overcome their deprivation and become normal members of society. My "clients" are children, children from broken homes, children of deviant behaviour, children with whom I had to make relationships and assign to approved schools, children's homes or whatever, on the basis of what I had learnt about them from my six weeks friendship. People thought I was doing an interesting, worthwhile, and rewarding job. It does indeed have its rewards - some have said to me, "you're the only person in the world I've been able to talk to" (from a fourteen old girl). "At least you understand us" - a 15 yr old girl. "I love you" (a six year old boy). But what did I do with that trust and that love? I betrayed it, not because I wanted to but because I had no choice, for I am only an individual in a huge machine designed to turn out a particular sort of individual accepting a position that society has assigned him to.

So what? Well, only this. Many people, in GLF, think that I'm in a good job. I'm not. It is a job used by society to keep people down and by conditioning them to accept this, to perpetuate the process. It's like being a policeman or a teacher or any other sort of social worker. Many individual policeman, teacher or social workers are well intentioned, and well meaning. The institutions defeat their intentions and destroy them. We aim to help more not by becoming a part of the process but by getting out, by changing ourselves, by liberating ourselves from the notion that we are superior enough to tell people what they are fit for. We must rid ourselves of all ideas of superiority, authority, conformity. We must live the rejection of these values. Only then can we think that we can do any good. So all of us in GLF must question the value of the jobs that we are doing - no matter what value society places on these jobs, for we must create our own values, not just intellectually, but in reality. Do we come out in our jobs or come out of our jobs?

Gay Pride!

Several years ago in the Southern U.S.A. I taught with a black co-worker. This person was not black in colour but of a very light complexion and could easily have passed as a white. I could not understand why this person did not accept the opportunity of avoiding the problems he was going to encounter and use his 'whiteness' for all the advantages it would have given him. Now that I have joined G.L.F. and am coming out I am beginning to appreciate and understand why he did not pretend to be white. He was proud of his heritage and of his blackness, and of himself. Since I am no longer ashamed of my homosexuality, I am developing gay pride. Hopefully, with this pride I am learning to understand to relate to every person, not in the stereotyped manner that society demanded and that I accepted, but as myself, GAY and PROUD of it.



are about being OUT,
being Gay!
showing LOVE
GAY LOVE DAYS:

April	June
Finsbury Park..... 30th	& 4th
May	
Parliament Hill	7th & 11th
Alexandra Park	18th
Clapham Common	14th (by the bandstand)
Waterlow Park	21st & 25th
Primrose Hill	28th & 2nd July

WE WERE ALWAYS OUT

We were the contorted face of all of you and you were our good quiet uncle tom brothers. In being queens, unmistakably, we have always been the everyday confrontation with the gender role. We gave up our personal humanity for Reality based on Plastic: Gucci and Revlon. Our comedy was a very total refusal of control of our souls, wherever they may hide now. We died for that truth.

But you, homosexual men, and women, you are the splitting image of the Man - male and female - who puts us all down. When I hear you speak of your dear parents, I am angry. You refuse to reject their controls honestly, deny them obedience, passivity, confront their goddam decaying fantasy world. Strike your fucking parents; they and their, you and your trashy sensibility are my oppressors, and that contrived lifestyle pushes us all into a dark corner. The way-it-is is based comfortably on our every Yessir, our every letting the control myth pass without speaking up.

Every easy lying silence is a vicious and selfish act.

If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem. You are an uncle tom and a pig, and you have nothing real to lose, except our disgust at you.

You must kill the old society within yourself and your own life, or it will take you with it in its endless grey cage. You are a free agent, and slavery exists only in your head. You and only you, perpetuate our past and make our present.

the GHETTO question

The meaning of liberation is a universal one, so how can we justify 'gay' liberation? I am talking about the ghetto question. Is it worth writing about general liberation subjects in a gay paper, such as COME TOGETHER, or looked at the other way, should C.F. be about gayness? I think it depends on the stage of liberation one is at. Personally, at one stage I had to develop gay pride to counteract my gay shame. Just like 'black is beautiful', so 'gay is good', manifestly, not exactly true. Sometimes beautiful or good, sometimes not. However, we don't start off from neutral. Already, before we open our mouths, black is ugly and gay bad, its the oppression both outside and introjected, I mean the self-oppression that makes us feel (not think, please) bad about the aspects of ourselves that are not acceptable to the society that condemns. If we are taught that valuation, we too must condemn ourselves or risk rejection, an unpleasant psychological experience to someone who isn't too secure. The gay pride must be developed and used politically to help overcome the shame and develop a togetherness that will make the insecurity/rejection thing seem like a bad dream. Then the stage of overemphasis on gay gay can be carried through to self-liberation as a whole person and the perspective can wide. At least, that's how its happening for me.

Mike

MIDNITE ON HAMPS

Mike

We went to Hampstead Heath at the dead of night to meet our brothers who use the area for cruising. We brought our stove and saucepan and made some coffee and then gave it out to everyone who wanted a drink and a talk. The Heath is used for completely anonymous sex, people cruise each other and have sex, preferably without speaking at all. One of the brothers we spoke to said that was the main attraction of the place. Hunter instincts were aroused and people were there looking specifically for the "animal sex" with no personal complications. He said that the people who were there all went to the pubs and clubs if they wanted more personal contact and that the Heath was a special place for a special purpose. He said the police were "very tolerant" - they only came there to prevent trouble from the queer-bashers. He thought that what we were doing was "good works" that like all "do-gooders" we would merely destroy a pattern without providing anything positive to replace it.

Our intention in going to the Heath had been to make contact with people who were too scared to come out, or even to go to the pubs and clubs, and for whom this impersonal anonymous sex was not a free choice, but the only possible outlet for their needs. We had thought we would be able to offer them an alternative to the secrecy and isolation which we had associated with the Heath. If what we had been told was true, then we were in fact being heavy missionaries and by implication putting down and alienating brothers there.

I was worried by this, and also fascinated with the ritual of the place and I wandered off away from our group and joined in with the cruising in another part of the woods. It was very strange, scary and exciting, a sort of stalking game with a lot of special patterns. I ended up sitting under a tree with someone and we started talking, which was breaking the rules. The reaction this time was very different. We talked about ourselves and other things. We were there for nearly an hour until we had to leave. He told me that it was the first time he had talked to someone there and he wanted to come to our meetings next week. I found that I had been thinking in terms of us (GLF) and them (cruisers) and then I cast myself in the role of a missionary. Spreading the "good word" about liberation. It was only when I left our group and started cruising myself that I could stop thinking in terms of categories of "us and them" and start relating honestly.

I think we should go back there and, providing we don't break up the scene by weight of numbers, but settle away from the main cruising areas and go there individually, we shall be able to add something, without destroying what is already there. We can learn, too.

Tony

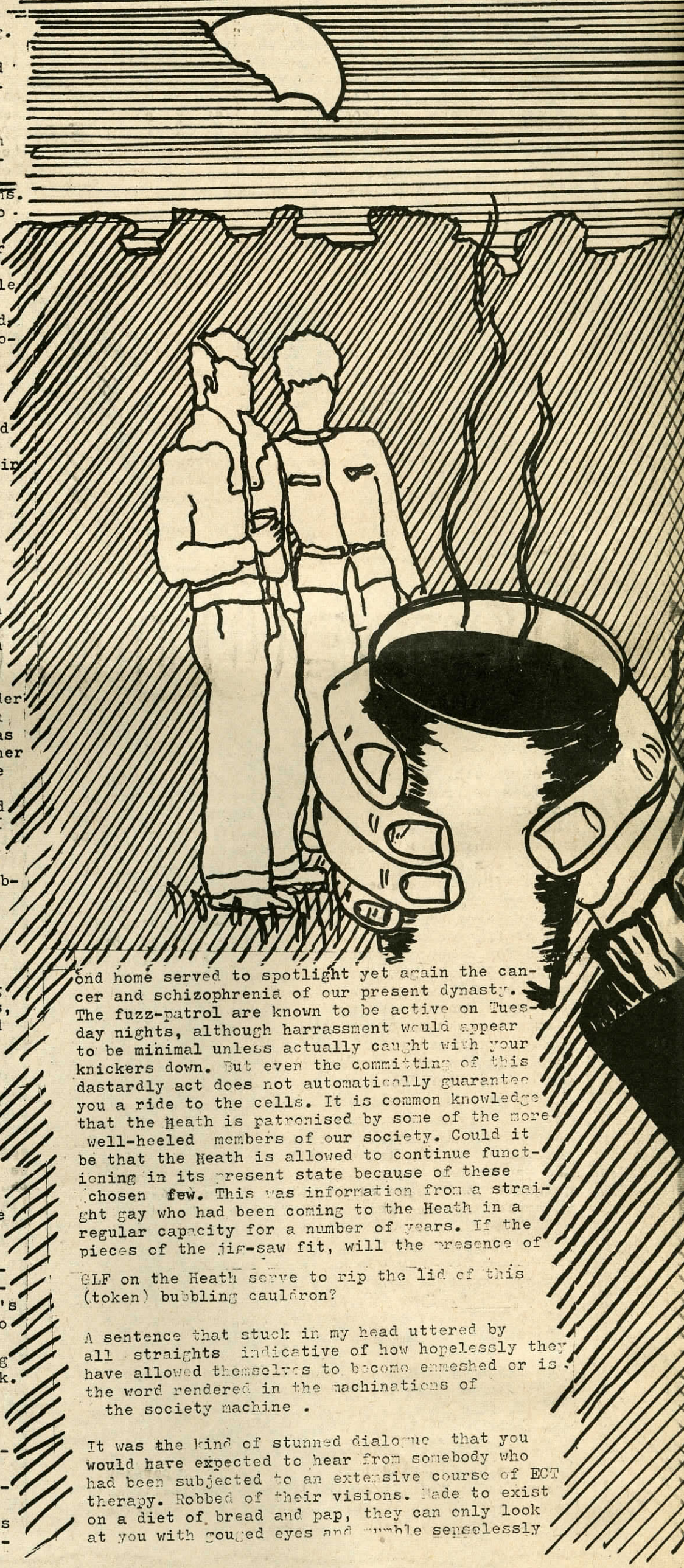
After setting up the primus-stove (well done primus-stove) the milk, I mean the coffee of human kindness began to flow from GLF bones. The tow-path hotted up between the bewitching hour of twelve and one, and a regular stream of what at first appeared to be shadows or ghosts materialised into our flesh-and-blood straight brothers. Almost all of the silent strollers (and it's the Bergman Silence if you have never been on to the Heath at this time of night before, makes it all seem so eerie and, I'm sure, sexually exciting for some) accepted the invitation of a hot drink. Some staying longer than others, each depending on his head... desires.

A concrete and very tangible fear voiced by almost everyone who depends to a large extent on the Heath for their sex was, would the unexpected arrival of GLF break up a good scene? Reference to the diverse cross-section of straights who come to the Heath and look upon it as a sec-

ond home served to spotlight yet again the cancer and schizophrenia of our present dynasty. The fuzz-patrol are known to be active on Tuesday nights, although harrassment would appear to be minimal unless actually caught with your knickers down. But even the committing of this dastardly act does not automatically guarantee you a ride to the cells. It is common knowledge that the Heath is patronised by some of the more well-heeled members of our society. Could it be that the Heath is allowed to continue functioning in its present state because of these chosen few. This was information from a straight gay who had been coming to the Heath in a regular capacity for a number of years. If the pieces of the jig-saw fit, will the presence of GLF on the Heath serve to rip the lid of this (token) bubbling cauldron?

A sentence that stuck in my head uttered by all straights indicative of how hopelessly they have allowed themselves to become enmeshed or is the word rendered in the machinations of the society machine.

It was the kind of stunned dialogue that you would have expected to hear from somebody who had been subjected to an extensive course of ECT therapy. Robbed of their visions. Made to exist on a diet of bread and pap, they can only look at you with gouged eyes and mumble senselessly



STEAD HEATH

"that's the score." If the Heath is to become a regular stomping scene for gossip with straight gays and communal GLF coffee, a rota-system would seem like a good idea. No less than a dozen GLF people at any given time (when going out onto the Heath) on duty. The old theory that there's safety in numbers has from past GLF history proven to be sound. If my brothers should be harrassed at any time while on duty from fuzz or thugs the only comfort I can derive at this present time is that the jolly exchanges should be of equal

proportions. Hoping that in the future, the exchanges will be of garlands and not the senseless spilling of blood. Will it be the straight gays themselves who will become actively militant by the presence of GLF. Information that most straight gays pick up would seem to be negligible, their sources being "Time Out" and similar mags. Which would appear to indicate how schismatic their heads are in terms of the vibes that brothers and sisters in GLF take for granted. How heavily will our presence be felt, who can say? I continue to look to GLF for the strength and a sane way to evolve. All my love, Tony

Andrew -

I thought before we went that we were going to look like patronising supergays, saying "You don't really want to cruise in this dismal place, come and talk to us instead". I thought we would just spoil the scene. But when our friendly candles were lit, people slowly drifted in and seemed glad to join us. I didn't feel that we were imposing anything on them wrongly. We need not be afraid of presenting a false appearance of do-gooding, but should go out and demonstrate that it is possible for gay people to come together instead of being just isolated competitive individuals in a hostile world.

Micky -

Trees don't look like trees - not at night on the Heath. It was a bit spooky, but the atmospherics gave the cruisers a strangely exotic and erotic quality. It was furtive, yet when we, Camden GLF, arrived and started to boil the water for coffee people gradually came over and the scene began to warm up. Earlier we had decided to leaflet two gay pubs in the Borough and to finish up on the Hampstead Heath, where the nightly activities occur. We went in a spirit of love with our camping Gaz, tea bags and Long-Life milk cartons. Next week we'll remember to bring our gay buns and music.

Time Out : Cop Out

Pauline -

On March 4th, about 50 members occupied the Time Out offices to protest about the blatant sexism and ban on Gay ads. The whole scene was organized by Camden and although it was the intention to disrupt production of that week's edition we were too late. The office was empty for two or three minor members of the staff, who were bewildered at the occupation.

Two or three of us phoned up the other members of the staff, including the Editor, and invited them round for discussion about our grievances. The time being 7.30-8pm, some of them were on their way home or were out. Among those who did turn up were Tony and Chris Bunyan, who are in charge of Agit Prop. A long discussion ensued where it emerged that, although the majority of the staff were sympathetic to GLF, there was a banister employed by the owners who censored articles and ads. This censorship is disgusting for a magazine which claims to support the underground movement, and is doubly so in that the censorship is very arbitrary. They also said that some of their regular advertisers objected to Gay ads and needed the sexism in their copy. It was suggested that some of us attended their next editorial meeting which is held every Tuesday at 5pm. 5 members of GLF did attend this meeting & eventually managed to obtain a general promise that in future Gay ads would be included & every attempt would be made to reduce the amount of sexist ads. That Time Out are trying to help is apparent in that they have been Gay ads in subsequent issues.

Once again it has been shown that sometimes we have to be violent & vocal to obtain a hearing for GLF.

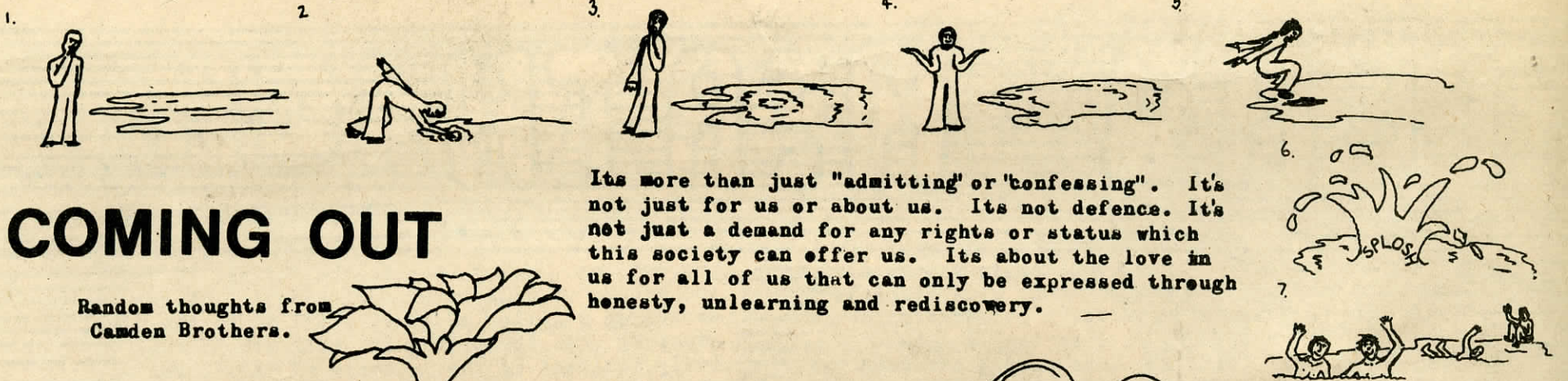
Tim -

Time Out started life as a magazine reporting events in London. It carved a niche for itself as it managed to report these details in an accurate and readable way. When it increased its

editorial space to include news items as well as these facts, it was obvious that it had a ready made audience. It was treated as part of the alternative press by many of its readers because it claimed to get at the truth that was obscured by the establishment press. GLF, like many other organisations that are attempting to liberate oppressed groups, was duped into thinking that Time Out was interested in what GLF was doing, not just in the copy value of the news, and so treated Time Out as a friend. We were fooled into believing that they would help us fight the oppression that gay people face. What we found out was that they were stabbing us in the back by maintaining the liberal facade that we were trying to smash. We thought they were into revolution, whereas they were selling it out.

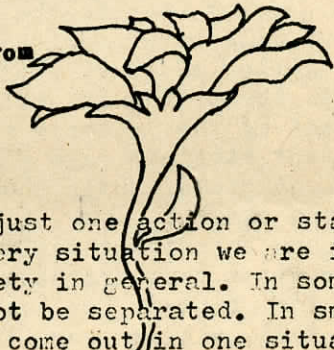
The reason we went along to their office was because we did not realise how much this was true. We still thought that, after being sold out on sexism and gay ads, they were helping us. By going there, we realised that they were supporting our oppression as much as any straight paper; that they were in fact doing more damage by camouflaging their reactionary opinion under a facade of liberalism - and all liberalism is a facade. We realised that we could not trust them, as we can't trust the BBC or ITV. Faced with us denouncing them as we did, they reacted first by rejecting us, and later by making concessions.

They said that the reason why they could not print gay ads was that the printers and Smiths would refuse to print/distribute the paper; i.e. they were more interested in selling the paper than in its content. The compromised by saying they would try and be more consistent in their rejection/acceptance of gay ads, and cut down on sexist ads, but they needed the revenue if they were to expand. They would try and work more collectively if they could, but it was so difficult with such a large staff...they would try...but they would promise no miracles. We now realise where we stand with them. They will try.



COMING OUT

Random thoughts from
Camden Brothers.



Coming out is not just one action or statement. It is different in every situation we are in: work, friends, family, society in general. In some cases these situations cannot be separated. In smaller tight communities, to come out in one situation is to have to come out in all of them. Each situation is different in terms of how difficult it is to come out, and the rewards which it gives you and others. To have to face all of them at once takes more courage than I had.

I come from Manchester and live in London. This means that I could split the process of coming out and deal with it piece by piece as I gained courage and strength from G.L.F. The first and easiest step was coming out to society in general. Wearing a badge, kissing and openly relating to other men in public came surprisingly easily, after years of hiding my feelings. The rewards were a greater sureness of myself, more honesty, more awareness of my situation. Coming out with my straight friends was also beautiful. The friends I had really related to faced what my gayness meant, not only to me, but also to themselves. We can now think and talk to each other about the whole range of ways in which we relate to each other and we are learning from each other fast as the games which we were playing become exposed.

The work situation I dodged by leaving. The oppression there was so great that my being gay was only a part of the situation.

Which leaves the family. Because they are in Manchester, and I am in London, it does not seem an immediate problem. But this is an evasion. I am scared of coming out at home. I feel that it will hurt and upset them, and whilst I know that their oppression hurts me, I cannot see the point of confronting them unless I can make it also a positive thing. I am not sure enough of them, or my ability to explain, to be certain that they will gain anything in terms of a new understanding, people and the importance of being free in your own head. Straight people are generally so ignorant of the nature of sexual role-playing and oppression that their usual response is to control their immediate response of horror, fear, pity, and impose a superficial acceptance on themselves. They only later work out what it means to them and come back to talk about this.

With my family, I feel that this process will take so long because I am changing so much and the whole of my life is now completely opposed to theirs. My parents have an unhappy marriage in which they have retreated from each other and now only communicate through their children. One sister is happily married and has a child, and that is her life. Another sister is about to marry. I can see the whole process of her oppression as a woman closing her up and destroying her identity, before it had a chance to become established.

I feel that when I come out, I have to confront and challenge this whole structure. We still have love but the lines of communication are so thin and confused because of the 'family game'. I feel I have to both fight all that they believe in and live by, and yet preserve and develop the love. It puts me in the role of judge and jury and that is why I have felt so unsure. My own certainty has to be strong enough to see that struggle through.

Through the collective awareness of G.L.F., which is becoming more than just a pat phrase, but a real strength on which we can all draw, I am reaching this point. I am feeling more and more that I want to take on my family, and that it can have positive results for all of us.

Mike.

It's more than just "admitting" or "confessing". It's not just for us or about us. It's not defence. It's not just a demand for any rights or status which this society can offer us. It's about the love in us for all of us that can only be expressed through honesty, unlearning and rediscovery.

I told the people I worked with I was going to a GLF dance. One of the women warned me that she knew what went on at gay dances: nasty old men touching up healthy young boys, so I should go with a gang.

'But I'm Gay'
Amazement and silence throughout the office. They are still civil with me but we never meet socially.

It might hurt them - well let it: it might make them think about their attitudes.

You might get hostility, anger and fear - it's difficult to justify being proud in the face of all this. But the only alternative is the ghetto and we know that doesn't work.

Since the age of seventeen I have never told anybody "I am gay". I have just let people know when I've been having a scene with someone. If they were close enough I saw that they met my guy. I cannot see any reason to apply a label to my sexual behaviour. I dig guys - I do not belong to a category. Some guys like girls bigger than themselves (and vice versa); We don't give them a special label.

A Happy Beginning
sequel to 'Letter from a Welsh Brother'

I came out to my parents 8 months ago, when the situation was forced upon me. My parents found a G.L.F. leaflet in my pocket and demanded an explanation. So they got one.

I wrote about their reactions in C.T. soon after that happened. Since then, I have moved from Cardiff to London, as the situation became intolerable (if-we-all-ignore-it-it-will-go-away).

Now, if I am faced with an insecure situation, I think - God? What have I done? - but then thinking about it, and the sheer hypocrisy of my life then, I know that my coming out, even though it resulted in leaving home, has been much for the better.

All that has recently become so remote, that when I talk about it it's like talking about what happened to someone else. In effect I have experienced a rebirth, and am having to work out a lot of things the hard way. Not just accepting what I am told, but thinking about it and working things out in my head before I form my opinions about them. And learning to be able to reject an idea later, even if something is real to me now, I must be able to re-form it later. Continuous revolution?

Like the first birth it is painful at times, but to see the light at the end of the tunnel, and to know that at the end lies a positive glowing LIFE makes it worthwhile.

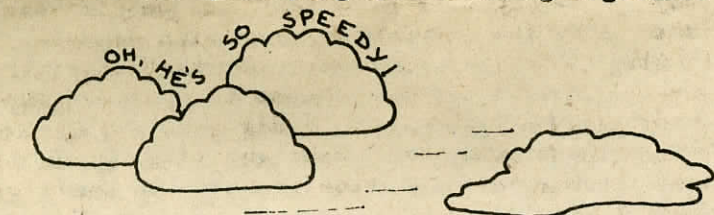


coming out

A brother from Camden suggested the possibility of a GLF at his college about 10 weeks ago. It started off really well with a group of about 10. But in a very concrete way it has not got off the ground. I was half-way to coming out, as well as accepting the fact that I am gay, and the first meetings have really helped. At the same time I went to Camden GLF and after a few difficult weeks I've managed to get involved in GLF people and activities. Now that I've come-out to my gayness it really has helped me to understand and confront my problems, like not being able to communicate with people who I like, or to a group of people which I could not cope with. Until now, I haven't seemed to progress in any way, but things are getting a lot better and I feel more sure of myself.

Possibly, however, this has been an individual experience of those meetings. For instance, two brothers who live together and are not in touch with any of the gay scene, but who are quite left in their politics, have been unable to come out. The college meetings developed into really good talks, the group getting closer and more together. We talked quite truthfully and this helped the group to form within itself, all of us gradually opening up to each other, our individual problems and how we thought they could be solved. We realised that it was all one problem - oppression, because we could not belong to either of the sexes. This is as far as we got; I feel that this is the basis for coming-out. There was a genuine feeling of love.

The rest of the group have not come out. Once when we were giving out leaflets in the refectory the two brothers shied away from us. This hurt a lot and I feel that they really felt it as much as we. I know that it's very difficult coming out, but really it's the only way and it can be done by relying on our being together.

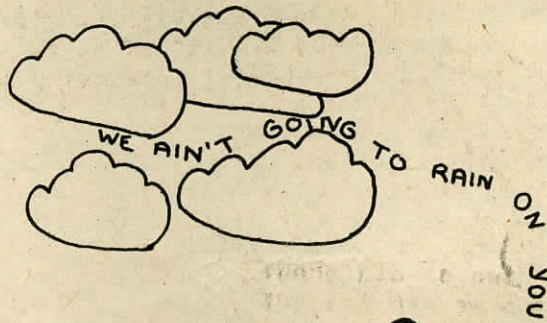


AWARENESS

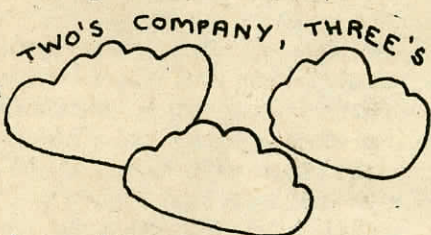
I joined an awareness group because a boyfriend I liked, but somehow found difficult to talk to in the glare of the Wednesday meetings, suggested that I should. I wanted to get to know him, and through him to enter and investigate the GLF. Also I wanted to talk about myself to others people talking about themselves, something which in the straight gay world is more or less forbidden. Conversation with strangers is almost impossible within 'do I like him? Does he like me?' syndrome, and conversation with friends and acquaintances is too often inhibited by the secret fear of boring them. Talking to people in the straight gay world reminds me of the way I talk when driving a car. My eyes and mind are on the road.

The others in the group, I found out later, had joined for the same sort of reasons. We were mostly new to GLF and so could not learn much about it from each other. Instead, with sidelong glances at the Wednesday meetings and the manifesto we had to re-invent gay liberation, for, and by, ourselves.

The random way in which the group was formed, through the office, had the effect of bringing together 11 people who, had they relied on their own social radar would probably have never met. The fact that we work as a group, that we are able to excite, move, absorb and love each other, is a revelation to some of us of how constricting and superficial our initial judgements of people often are.



WE JUST GROWED



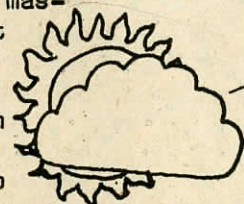
grow grow

Like you really can get
pissed off
when they
say you're not really real
just dizzy
or ephemeral
as if you were mist
that could be blown away
by a whisper
And when no-one takes you for
what you are
because you might just
show them their vicious lies
by your very existence
you well up inside
and sometimes your welling up
makes you
slit your wrists
overdose on sleepers
give in to junk
sometimes your welling-up
just bursts out
so that you feel
brave enough to flounce
and screech and be
a queen
and say fuck you
and wear your slap
just as she wears it
plus her clothes
and when your inside queen
comes out
your energy
can be channelled into
other yous
and against them
but our way
isn't yet the gun
our way at this time
must be the other yous
'cause only then
can we build
our way
only then
are we strong enough
to bury
their evil
and start
to grow — Aubrey

At the moment, after two months of weekly meetings, things are still very pleasant and easy. This worries some of us who feel that awareness should be tough going most of the time. Despite our confessions and intimate revelations we are still too polite, like strangers on a train, hesitating to hurt as well as simply lacking motive. Confession by itself is too easy. As yet we lack the nerve for confrontation. However, we are beginning to be aware of the ways in which the subliminal ground rule of social intercourse steer us away from pain and embarrassment and consciously trying to break those rules.

We recognise that the strongest networks of self-control and self-oppression are the most deeply buried, the ones that it is almost impossible to see, because they are what we see with. Our masculinity and oppression of women are rooted at this level.

At the moment our politeness prevents us from judging each other as a group. Members say what they think of each other but there is no group view. Yet already the meetings have changed some of us. One of us is giving up his job, another finds, suddenly, paying for sex impossible. The group did not tell them to do these things; it simply provided a context in which these problems could be discussed, thus accelerating the decisions. It is almost like the oracle at Delphi. You come with a question and appear to get no meaningful answer, yet somehow after an evening of rambling conversation and encounter games, the answer is there.



The Myth of Sexual Detraction

After reading Nick's 'The Myth of Sexual Attraction' in the last Come Together, I really fused my mind. I've decided to spare the child and spoil the rod, for his article is typical of a type of thinking, sneered at by intelligent conservatives as intellectual rat-baffism, and perhaps rightly so. He wishes death for sexism and long-life for personal love, and who would quarrel with this? After all it's a truism avowed by left and right. Obvious questions therefore arise: what does he mean? How is this to be done? Alas, as I shall presently show, my gay brother is not only unsure of his meaning, he suggests the impossible as answer for a non-problem.

Before I proceed, I must note that there is no malice whatsoever, personal or otherwise intended in this criticism. I don't know Nick and in my case there are enough problems in liberation without bitching amongst ourselves. But I love truth and hate untruth and have suffered enough prejudices that I must question what I believe to be wrong. Our aim can be achieved through nothing less than truthfulness and there is no other way of doing this except by the frank exchange of ideas. When all is said and done, disagreement is the true sign of liberation and life. For Nick, to destroy sexism we must 'destroy the idea of sexual attraction' on which it rests because it is an 'hallucination', a 'result of long conditioning'. This is an anecdote, not an antidote!

The simple reason that we are made that way whether we bloody like it or not. We may give up fucking as we may give up eating but lust and hunger remain.

Perhaps Nick is suggesting the destruction, not of sexual attraction per se, but of choosy sexual attraction - you know, the I'd-kick-Tom-out-of-bed mentality. Unhappily this again is a non-solution because, we being what we are, some of us are not as pretty as others. That we are different from each other is not a problem but a glorious fact of life. It is the alternative that would be a problem and a hell of a boring one at that.

Nick forgets that sexual attraction in a real situation means nothing if it doesn't mean that one is attracted to a particular person.

Let me clarify: to fancy Tom is not necessarily to have an aversion to Tim or Tutenkhamen, because I can fancy three people at once. But it certainly doesn't mean that whenever I fancy Tim or Tut or whoever, I must fancy all equally. This is not sexist because it is natural. Ironically, to suggest otherwise is to opt for inhuman, mechanical and debauched sex. The line-up for such a person's bed would be mind-boggling.

Furthermore, this sexual attraction bit, Nick baby, is no 'result of conditioning'. Using Midnight Cowboy merely as an example, you are not going to tell me that there is something wrong with me if I fancy Joe rather than Ratsco. Surely, I would need some conditioning to fancy the latter. My point is obvious: I'm not suggesting that fancying is never the result of conditioning, unless we use 'conditioning' in a self-emptying sense in which everything we do is conditioned, and hence there is no point made. After all, the onus is on you, Nick, to show that his ideal man of minus sexual attraction (isn't he making a choice already) isn't conditioned!

Nick thoroughly misunderstands sexual attraction. True, it may be expressed through "hero/heroine worship that does not see people as real people", but then there's no problem, for the victim of such a problem will soon see there is no perfection this side of the bed-sheets - he will find that his Romeo has bad breath and a fucking black mole on his left bum-cheek. Rather the problem is for Nick's argument. How does it hold if, after our sweet Valentine has seen his his 'hero's' warts, and 'still finds him sexually attractive'? Nick forgets that this fancying is sometimes no 'hallucination', otherwise some of the GLF awareness groups would be one huge mirage. He forgets that a person may be attracted to another with both eyes widely open, seeing faults and liking them because we have different tastes. In matters of taste there is no argument. If you like frog's legs and I like pigs trots, who is to say that you have better taste? If I prefer red to blue is this a hang-up? Must I try to like all colours equally or prefer none? This is no less true in matters of sexual taste. If a guy likes big cocks, good luck to him, for others may prefer cute littlies. That complete happiness is not one hell of a big cock will dawn on him one day, either because he runs out of them or they run out on him, or because he runs out of other equally or more beautiful things such as - dare we say it - lasting love!

This reminds me of one of Nick's other fallacies. He writes that after we have rid ourselves of sexism we can then 'start summing up people in mental and emotional, rather than physi-

cal terms'. O joy, O rapture, now that we've got rid of one form of discrimination we replace it with two. Is it now the turn of the dull and lacid to be thrown out of bed? Give me back my pretty boys (or butch men - each to his own), for the vision of endless I. . . tasts (God help you if you're black) and drama conditions before bedtime is too much for me. If I'm going to discriminate, fuck refined discrimination, let me do it the easiest way.

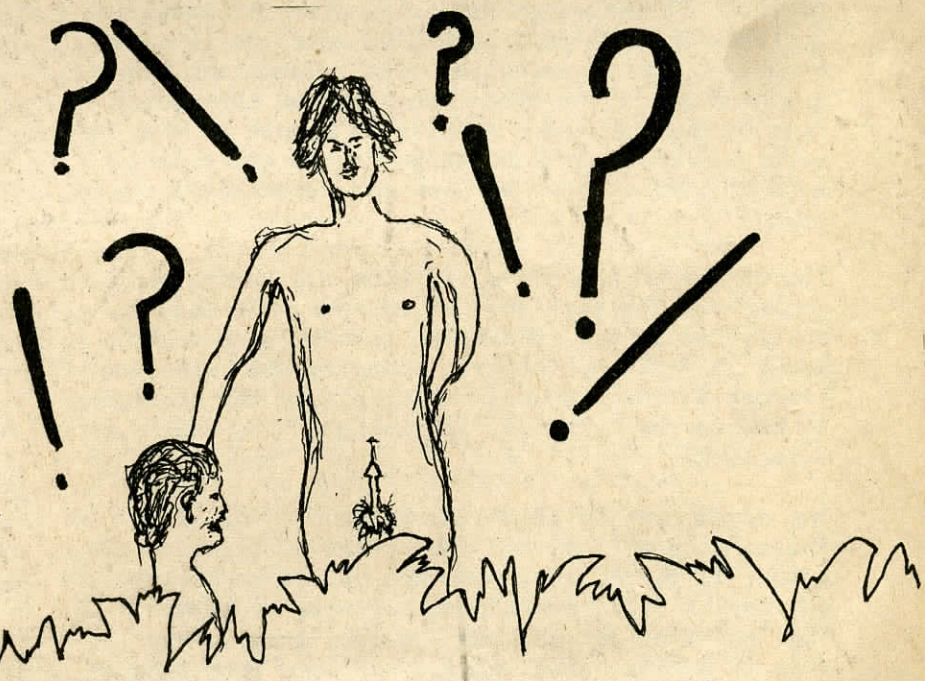
To commit such an obvious contradiction is understandable inasmuch as Nick's own notion of personal love is deficient. This is hinted at by his useful, but half-truthful substitution of physical for sexual. It is true that a person can't be sexually attracted but not physically attracted to another, but sexual attraction may involve a lot more than physical attraction. For instance, it may be emotional as well as mental. In his flow of ideas Nick seems to deny the latter. Little wonder that he identifies the non-sexist with the person who is not "thinking in terms either of endless fixations, or no fixations, but simply in terms of giving love wherever it's needed to whoever needs it." Such a person, if ever he exists, will certainly be non-sexist. But whoever makes such an assertion is anything but. For what else is implied in Nick's juxtapositioning of ideas but that 1) those who play the field cannot love properly or sincerely and 2) those in permanent relationships cannot love others. This is obviously bullshit unless love is identified with sex. Who is calling who a sexist?

Again, let's get out of the pink cloud-cuckoo fairyland and be realistic. In down to earth flesh and blood living, if you don't want an endless fixation, to borrow Nick's phrases, you want a throw-away commodity. If one is not thinking in terms of a permanent relationship, one is certainly open to passing relationships - a midway is unthinkable, let alone practical. The truth is that people are often open to passing relationships (unless they're fooling themselves) until they stumble across an endless fixation. To vouch for neither is to end up a hermit or everyone else (if you'll pardon the expression).

Normally we fuck around until we fall in love. To hint that romantic love is dead is pure woman's magazine 1980, if not old hat now, will soon be. I've fallen in love with a person, I doubt if I'll fall in love with a community - after all a commune has only a mental reality over and above the sum of people in it. Hence to fall in love with it is to fall in love with a mental entity. Who then is for personal love?

To love one person is not to say that one is not sexually attracted to others. To do so is hypocritical, just as to pretend that one is attracted sexually to all equally, or worse still, to none, is inverted hypocrisy. Anyway, if I'm going to be hypocritical, I may as well be a straight one rather than an inverted one; it's less complicated. That a hundred other guys are more attractive than my lover means nothing, because stones in the hand (if you'll pardon the mixed up proverb) are worth any bird in the bush, but also because the hundred other guys may find me quite repulsive.

But alas, there is too little space to develop and support these ideas fully. Enough it is to say that liberation is love, and you cannot love all unless you love one. Even Jesus Christ (freaks of that name excuse me) had his favourite disciple. Enough it is to say that love is not 'to bed or not to bed', but rather to be free to say not only 'yes' but also 'no', to be natural, to be non-sexist.



Fiona's Day Out

Arthur Blessit was back, so some of us from Camden GLF went to meet him at the rally he was holding in Trafalgar Square.

I went with Gerald and Fiona who is five years old. On the way we stopped off at the office to pick up the GLF banner, so we were late as usual.

Assembling the banner in front of the National Gallery we got amused and frightened glances from passers by. A raucous voice singing hymns was blaring out of amplifiers across the square, and just finished as we came down the steps, the black and white banner flapping in the breeze. Figures detached themselves from the crowd and brothers came towards us, rallying to our symbol.

There were about 15 of us altogether, and we wandered about, peeling off the Jesus Freaks' stickers, like swatting off mosquitoes. We had just missed Arthur, the man himself, but the crowd were still swaying and talking to itself.

Ever had a devil cast out from you? We did. The usual kind of nuts were there, complete with

doomsday placards.

But with some people we had intelligent discussions - on ego-destruction, love, cosmic forces, morality, F.O.L., etc, but the end result was that although they didn't mind our being gay, and being gay wasn't a sin, practising our gayness was, and we would not be admitted to the kingdom of heaven.

We all rushed up to the L.S.E. at 40'clock to catch the end of the think-in.

Fiona said she enjoyed herself, and she wanted to go the next time the Jesus Freaks were there! I felt rather pleased with myself at managing not to dry up when faced by hostile people, but the end result was not positive. We had tried to spread the good word, but had not gained any converts. I am afraid that their souls are condemned to eternal hell on earth. May the collective consciousness of the Life Culture have pity on them, for they are doomed.

Mark

teachers

A group of us went to talk to students at a big teachers' training college at Winchester. I got into a small group where everyone said they agreed with us about sexism. At the end of the evening, however, one guy asked me "What do you really think about women?" I didn't see what he meant at first, then guessed he was using the word 'women' to mean 'sex', implicitly assuming I made the same connection. He explained that he meant to ask "Why are you gay?", so I asked him why he was straight. Then I noticed that he had only asked me these questions when the group had broken up and there were only men left in it. Apparently he could only talk about sex to other men, as 'man to man'. Even though he heard me talk all evening about being gay, it had not really penetrated that I didn't see women in the same way - i.e. sexist way - as himself.

This guy only noticed I existed when I challenged his sexist assumption that as men we could be open to each other only when women were excluded. It made very clear how the struggle against sexism is inseparable from GLF's demands for gay people's rights.

Andrew

American beauty

Bridge the gap
across the ocean
the foamy foam way,
that nightmare crossing
depths beneath
the fear of fathoms,
to see the far
I love.

Paul of beauty,
Paul of freedom,
Paul of infinite,
unbounded,
controls my soul,
my spirit,
my roots,
my branches,
my life.

Life is love,
I love you,
love you forever,
forever is always,
for my life
my span,

My time on earth,
before the turning
of the heart,
of the head,
of the body,
into dust.
But the love survives,
survives in others,
people,
friends,
lovers,
Paul:
Realise endurance,
endurance of love.
It endures above war,
above death,
above matter
When the world has gone,
when the sun
had been put out,
love will still endure.
Love will still endure.
LOVE WILL STILL ENDURE.

? organisation?

To have or not to have. That is the question that has to be answered in GLF with regard to the need for an effective organisation. Like Hamlet, I feel that this hesitation and heart-searching will eventually prove fatal to GLF.

It is no use saying that GLF is what anyone wants to make of it, for there are an awful lot of people, men and women, who are too shy and do not wish to make any decisions. In consequence, unless there are people or the wish to form a hierarchy (no matter how loose), there will be very little achieved with regard to finance, premises, information and other policy matters.

As yet there is no valid answer that has been given to me for the argument against having say a loose committee to effect any decisions made at any meetings. The committee could be of twelve members, six being chosen every six months, thus ensuring a continuity. They could co-ordinate all the activities, even co-opting others to help, decided upon at the meetings.

I know that the argument against any hierarchy is that only a few people would be involved, and that the others would be discouraged from participation. But at the moment there are ten to twelve people who take the lead at the meetings and they tend to organise any activities for the whole group. Thus we have in effect a pseudo-committee without the advantages that come from having an elected one. There will always be shepherds and sheep, and there is no use pretending that this will change overnight.

Pauline

knickers!

When I first got into drag, if I put on a dress I would feel it change my character, I would become much more fem in the straight sense of the word, camping around like mad, and slipping into a submissive mood. But after a bit I found that I would get into women's clothing to relax. A long dress swishes around you, making you light and breezy. A smock is wonderfully freeing, almost like being naked, no clinging feeling on your body. A mini-skirt is leg-liberating, more comfortable than wearing knickers, a feeling almost of walking on stilts, your legs elongating, swinging around as you walk. A midi is just a skirt, something you wear to change your mood.

How to Make a Newspaper

Any GLF group with half a dozen active people can produce their own paper. It takes no special journalistic or technical skills. We set aside a weekend and two other days to work on this Come Together. At one time there were 20 people around, but mostly just 6 to 8. During this time most of the articles were written, and all typing, artwork and paste-up done. You don't need any leaders. All decisions are made by the people there at the time.

Here are some technical hints:

- 1) This paper was printed by the photolitho method. That means that you yourselves lay out the copy exactly as you want the finished product to look, and it is reproduced photographically.
- 2) Copy generally includes words, photos and drawings. Words can be typed on an ordinary typewriter (as here), preferably with a new black ribbon. For added professionalism, use an IBM typesetter (try your local underground paper). Decide in advance on column widths. Headings can be done in Lettraset, or drawn. Use black ink, preferably Indian.
- 3) Paste copy onto white card, at least double page size, using Cow gum. Draw page outline in very pale blue. Leave at least $\frac{1}{2}$ " margin around each page, except centre spread. Page size must be established with printers in advance. Remember that consecutive pages are not generally next to each other, e.g.

12 1 2 11 10 3

Last minute drawing can be done directly on card. Photos should not be pasted down. Keep separate and mark photos and appropriate spaces.

- 4) This issue cost £ for 4000 copies. 8 pages would have been £75, including folding. This printer can only fold two sheets.

"About Us" — continued

ing, although there was always the problem of reconciling our wish to welcome all gay people what ever views they bought with them, with our need to maintain our own political awareness and to present newcomers with an alternative to the ghetto.

In a big discussion about new premises, some three months after the beginning, the Wednesday meeting syndrome started to re-appear with votes being taken and clapping after 'speeches'. Everybody, especially the newcomers, was alienated by this heavy atmosphere, so it was decided to try starting the meetings in small groups, but getting together into one big discussion at the end. However, without a common topic which would formally have a risen naturally out of the big generally discussion, the small groups lost all sense of urgency no one liking to impose an arbitrary topic on their group. As a result, enthusiasm and activity dropped; in particular new people were confused about what was supposed to be going on.

In fact we soon got fed-up with this inactivity, and after a big rap on legal change, we decided that what we wanted to involve ourselves in was local, not legal action. We began to direct our energy outwards, in the pubs, on Hampstead heath, and introducing this issue of Come Together.

We have had to find out for ourselves how to make our meetings and actions trully collective. The fear of setting up leaders has inhibited our attempts to attack oppression. But in the Camden meetings it has been much easier than it was at the big Wednesday meetings for people to meet each other, make friends and join in the small groups. Perhaps this is because our meetings have been of less than a hundred people, mostly living closely to each other in North London. We hope that this will last as we become more active.

GLF DAY GROUP — WOMEN'S GLF — LSE GLF —

**COME TOGETHER
in**

Birmingham

ON

MAY 5th, 6th, 7th
at

BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY

NATIONAL THINK-IN, DISCO, and
Birmingham's first GLF PEOPLES'
DANCE (Digbeth Civic Hall, Sat.
6 May, 7 - 11.45).

**COME ALONG
LOVE YOUR GAY
SISTERS AND
BROTHERS!**

Rather unwillingly, we decided to call this issue 'no.13'. We do not accept that 'Come Together 12' was an authentic edition of the GLF paper, as it was put out by a few unauthorised individuals in defiance of the think-in of March 15th, purely as their own ego-trip. But to have called this 'no.12' would have only confused people.

EAST LONDON GLF — KILBURN GLF — SOUTH LONDON GLF — EALING GLF — NOTTING HILL GLF — TRANSVESTITES & TRANSEXUALS GROUP

HARROW GLF — WEST LONDON GLF — CAMDEN GLF

GLF BENEFIT CONCERT ... WHO WILL HELP ?	
ALL TYPES OF ENTERTAINERS	
DRAG	DANCERS
MUSICIANS	
SISTERS	BROTHERS
RING 485.4546	



Addresses and Meetings:

Women's GLF, 22 Gt. Windmill St., London W.1.
tel.: 437-6118.
Camden GLF, 5 Caledonian Rd., London N.1.
tel.: 837-7174.
Women's GLF meets Wednesdays, St. Anne's House,
57 Dean St., London W.1. (7.30 p.m.)
Camden GLF meets Thursdays, Foresters' Hall,
5 Highgate Rd., N.W.5. (7.30 p.m.)
More addresses on p.3, or from GLF office,
5 Caledonian Rd. (as above).



The blossoming of London GLF