



The Lavender Letter

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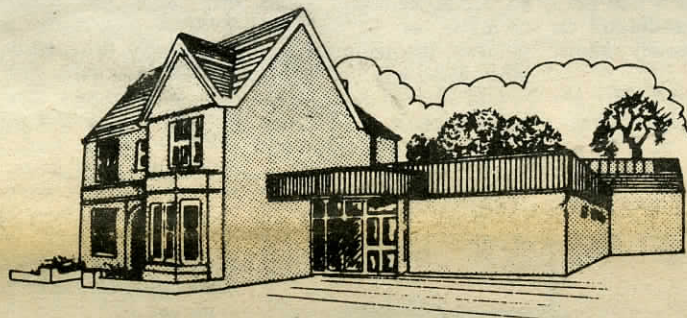
For Lesbians and Homosexual Men

Issue 2. November 19th 1982

Plans at a standstill

Plans for a super new gay club in Southampton that would include squash courts have this week come to a grinding halt.

The man behind the ambitious scheme, the man who has successfully managed Southampton's Magnum Club for a number of years, Stuart, told Lavender Letter this week that: 'Everything is at a standstill.'



Problems

Stuart admitted that there were problems with the new club and that a midnight licence on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays was among them. But, he would not elaborate any further.

"Until such time as I've got them sorted out I'm going to have to hold on," he said.

Anger

The club used to be Southampton City Council's staff social club but it was sold after attempts to make it less of a financial

burden on the City's rate-payers by bringing in more entertainment and longer hours had angered nearby residents.

The neighbourhood is one of central Southampton's most exclusive and dominated by the City's most prestigious hotel.

Disco

Stuart's advertising for the new club, presently owned by an Indian family, claimed that as well as squash courts with all facilities there is a, snooker room, lounge bar with

pool tables and the "most up-to-date ultra modern disco in the South".

He also announced that the club's opening was planned for mid-December, but it now appears that this will be unlikely.

Rumours

Rumours flying round Southampton also suggested that Stuart had been enquiring about a club in St Mary's Street, quarter of a mile South of the Magnum.

"No, I'm not looking

into that," Stuart told Lavender Letter.

Top

The Magnum has long been about the top gay club and disco in Hampshire, attracting people from all over the County and developing a good reputation for a warm welcome, reasonable prices and good cabarets.

Even so, it looks as if rumour could still surround the opening of Stuart's new enterprise for the time-being. But, as he himself says: "Things are being seen to."

Remembrance Sunday a personal view

Remembrance Sunday is a day that gays and lesbians should treat seriously, despite criticism in the recent past. Here's one personal view why...

Joe is dead. He had no grave. For him, eternity lies not next-door-but-one, where I knew him, but somewhere in the depths of the South Atlantic.

His was a life laid down earlier this year in the war of the Falklands.

I didn't know him too well. We'd seen each other only occasionally over the last few years. But I know one thing now. Joe died for me. Just as many others have died for me before.

Remembrance means many different things to many people. To me, it means a chance to say a quiet, often tearful, thank-you to those who gave up their liberty of their life so I might have the liberty of being gay.

Without them, we may be living in a society where it would be impossible to come out, to enjoy the luxury of gay pubs, clubs and discos, to even be able to openly, commercially, publish a newspaper like the Lavender Letter.

I cannot come to terms with my own reactions to war. I abhor it. But I cannot feel anything but respect for those who have been maimed and who must live many of their three score years and ten without hand, leg or foot.

They have gone through pain. They continue to live in anguish. For me. And, for every gay.

It's all too easy to take peace for granted. It's all too easy for us to forget that the six years of war between 1939 and 1945 have provided a liberty that we must be grateful for.

Yes, Sunday was a day for reflection. And, so I believe, for gays to say as loud as anyone - 'We will remember them...'

Switchboards Benefit

A three-hour concert, featuring everything from traditional cabaret to heavy rock, is to be staged by gay performers at The Albany Empire, Douglas Way, New Cross, London, on December 8.

One of the organisers, Eric Presland, likens the event to "a gay version of the Secret Policeman's Ball".

"We're still trying to edit the whole thing down

to three hours", he said on Tuesday (16).

The concert, a benefit for both London Gay Switchboard and Lesbian Line, is expected to raise between £700 and £1,000, and will be the largest single gay benefit concert ever held in London.

Names like Tom Robinson, Chris Ransome, Gay Sweatshop and Joanne Richler should ensure a full house of 400 or more.

GAYN Records, who will be taping the concert, hope to make this the first of many albums, and Channel 4 television has also expressed interest.

The concert, called 'Coming out-Ready or Not', starts at 8 p.m. Tickets cost £3 waged, £2 unwaged, and can be obtained in advance from the Albany (01-691-3333) and Gay's the Word (01-278-7654).



Television's most long suffering searcher for stardom, gets a chance to stand up and be appreciated on Monday.

Su ("Please can I be a yellowcoat, Mr Fairbrother?") Pollard, who plays Peggy the chalet

maid in the BBC TV series Hi-de-Hi is the guest speaker at next Monday's meeting of the London CHE Monday group.

The group meets as usual at the Chepstow in Chepstow Place, Notting Hill at 7.30 p.m.

And, so we can use the picture supplied by the Beeb free, we've got to give the series a plug and say that you can see Su up to her usual antics on Sunday evenings on BBC 1 at 7.15 p.m. Ta, Auntie!



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Letters to the Editor

Curb Soliciting

Dear Lavender Letter,

The Legal Profession in Britain should be curbed. From a sensible point of view it is a bad thing. The fact that we allow grown men in long, curly wigs and flowing gowns can only undermine the integrity of Justice at the end of the day. But I do have enormous individual sympathy for men, such as Sir David Napley, who spend much of their time in social encounters with these people. I see it as ALMOST sensible.

Soliciting is, of course, a doubtful occupation at the best of times, but seems to be scientifically explained in most cases by an excess of avarice coupled with the slow development of scruples. Regular injections of principle can work wonders.

On the other hand, if you've got a good formula, why change it?

B. Kennedy
London.

Champagne is winging its way to B. Kennedy at this moment. Don't forget that the best letter to the editor each week wins a bottle of bubbly.

Lavender Letter, P.O. Box 203, Brighton
BN1 5QB.

Happy & Gay

Dear Lavender Letter,
Congratulations on your first edition.

My name is Paula and I'm 18.

Write to us about your problems Vera said. Sorry to disappoint you, but I haven't any (not to do with growing up gay anyway).

I haven't lost friends, had trouble with my parents or been beaten up (am I normal?)

Since no straight person has ever hurt me over my sexuality I often prefer them to gays as friends, as I have been given a hard time by gay women (usually hung up and alcoholic women).

Being young and gay does not necessarily mean being isolated, paranoid or suicidal.

Perhaps if people didn't stay closeted they would not become afraid, introverted or bitter.

Yours sincerely,
Paula
London.

Editor's reply . . .
Oh Dear! Paula!

Lesbians . . . "Usually hung up and alcoholic . . ." Who have you been mixing with? Yes, we do want news, views, etc . . . No, gay isn't synonymous with problems—but even in 1982 people are still isolated, either through fear or geography, or sexual orientation. In an ideal world people shouldn't stay closeted—but, in an ideal world no-one is insulted, oppressed or discriminated against (with all the consequences that brings—loss of jobs, of custody of children, etc.) because of their sexuality!

Hope you continue to read us—and let us know of the happy times you have—what goes on in your area.

Humour

Dear Lavender Letter,
Thanks for your paper. I think it's great and will certainly take off. Please keep up the humour and lots more of it—this is what we all need to brighten our lives.

Lots of good luck,
Norman,
London
NW6.

Lesbians where?

Dear Lavender Letter,
I was interested to read your article 'Resounding silence from Lesbians'. I have only recently come to realise that I am attracted to women, but despite using contacts like Gay News and Gay Switchboard, and visiting gay pubs etc in the Portsmouth area, I have met very few other gay women.

There are no women's groups in the area and few women go to the mixed pubs and discos. There must be other lesbians in the area—where are you all?!!

Pam, Portsmouth

Portsmouth lesbians stand up to be counted!

The address: Lavender Letter Letters, PO Box 203, Brighton, BN1 5QB.

Stand up for your rights. Gay Lobby is a pressure group within CHE which is seeking gay people willing to commit themselves to writing to MP's and parliamentary candidates in their constituency about Gay Rights.

Contact: Gay Lobby, c/o CHE, 274 Upper Street, London N1 2UA.

Village Modern Ballet Gays on Tour Unite



If you are gay and live in a hamlet or village, your lot is peculiar from the word go. To stay, you have to appear to conform. It is lonely and often miserable. Rural Solidarity, a league of country men, was founded in 1980 to change all that. The isolation was broken by a gay letter-net—a male pen-pal scheme entirely box number.

Rural Solidarity has well over a hundred members throughout the English shires; and runs rural postal counselling for men as well as co-operating with other rural groups and enterprises; many friendships have resulted, but there is still a need for more members for darts teams or for the suggested market-town pub nights.

More members and associate members, are urgently needed in all the areas, in order to enable people to get the social side going. If you know anyone who lives in the country, do please tell them.

Current subscription is £5. Long-term aim is the creation of seven gay villages, throughout England. Who will help? We would like to hear from rural organisers of other groups. Yokels, unite and fight!

WRITE: D. J. Forward, P O Box 78, Ferndown, Wimborne, Dorset BH22 8NN.

Dances of Change, a show by the Extemporary Dance Theatre at the Gardner Arts Centre, Sussex University, last Saturday (Nov. 13th), was witty, warm and full of modern influences.

Using music from Grace Jones to Rickie Lee Jones, they kept the audience amused, especially with their lively re-creation of cafe life in Naples. The six men and women dancers are also actors and musicians—They took up accordions and brass to accompany each other.

In the Italian scene, one of five short ballets, some dancers watched television while others took their turn in the spotlight. The whole show was imaginative and well-performed.

The Extemporary began in 1975 with a group of graduates from the London School of Contemporary Dance and in 1978, under the direction of Paul

Taras, became the first contemporary dance group to receive an annual grant from the Arts Council.

Since then, they have been experimenting with all forms of theatre and dance forms, which has culminated in their present repertoire.

Here are some of the venues where you can catch their act:

Nov. 25—Rainham School for Girls, Kent.
26-27th—Hilderstone Arts Centre, Broadstairs, Kent.
Dec. 1-2nd—Nonington College, Kent.
Jan 18-19th—Christ's Hospital Arts Centre, Horsham, Sussex.
Feb. 8-10th—Surrey University, Guildford, Surrey.
March 8-9th—Wyvern Theatre, Swindon, Wilts.
11-12th—Brewhouse Theatre, Taunton, Somerset.
17-19th—Sherman Theatre, Cardiff.

Monument plan

Dutch gays are seeking contributions to help them erect a monument to gay and lesbian people and to their liberation.

The monument, based on the pink triangle, is to be set up on the Keizersgracht Canal in Amsterdam.

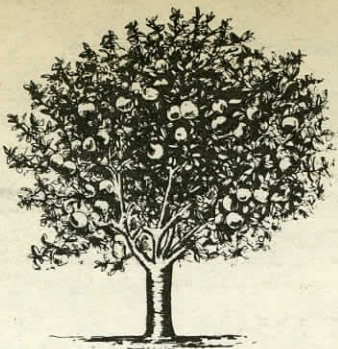
If you would like to help, send money to Pieter Koenders, Sticing Homomument, Eerste Weteringplantsoen 4, 1017 Sj Amsterdam.

G.Y.M. Brighton

The first meeting of the Brighton and Hove Gay Youth Group will be held at 3 p.m. on Sunday December 5th at the Lansdowne Centre, 58 Lansdowne Place, Hove.

Anyone under 26 will be welcome. Video, coffee and a discussion all will be laid on.

Meanwhile, GY nationally is having small labels printed to spread the word on books, notice boards and other places where gay young people may see them. They will read: "For real information about being gay contact Britain's only lesbian and gay youth organisation. Gay Youth Movement, BM GYM London WC 1".



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A selection of fresh vegetables is included in the price
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Woops literals

Whoops! Yes, we do realise that it's not going to look good in our second issue to say sorry for the first—but the number of typesetting errors that we've discovered make us feel that we had to say something.

So, here's issue two—with new typesetters and we hope, despite the odd lysdexic writetypor or two, fewer errors!



The Lavender Letter

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Welcome at Magnum

A long established club in Southampton, the MAGNUM, has a lot to offer on these fast approaching chilly Winter evenings.

Monday, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, you can warm your cockles in the lounge bar, listen to music and generally enjoy the pleasant ambience and company.

Thursdays and Fridays sees the start of the weekend with things hotting up under the friendly eye of the resident DJ.

On Saturdays, members and their friends have a choice of three bars, one of which offers the ultimate in new lighting systems – helicopter lights, etc. . . . and disco all make for an exciting night out. In between the two larger bars is a smaller, more intimate bar where disco dancers can recover their stamina, or the less energetic can relax and converse in these congenial surroundings.

There is also a small kitchen serving fast food – a feature sadly lacking in many of the clubs today.

The club is open 10 p.m. until 2.30 a.m. and is closed on Sundays. Membership is £8.00 annually, with extremely inexpensive door charges. Lookout for the next big Cabaret on December 2nd. Also coming to Magnum is close zone, the travelling clothing shops, well-known in London discos.

Gay pensions

Health insurance and other benefits granted to married couples may soon be extended to the live-in lovers of people who work for the City of San Francisco.

The proposal from a gay councillor was adopted unanimously by a City council committee – and it could allow the employee to take sickness or bereavement leave for his or her domestic partner.

The City would register relationships – and any separations to stop any abuse of the plan.

San Francisco is the recognised gay capital of the world – and politicians there are anxious to court the support of the gay's estimated 20 per cent share of the vote.

Sylvester Singer and DJ

The svelte, sexy Sylvester of the publicity pix might not be as slim as he was, but that didn't stop him from topping his week-long series of three UK appearances with a great show in Brighton.

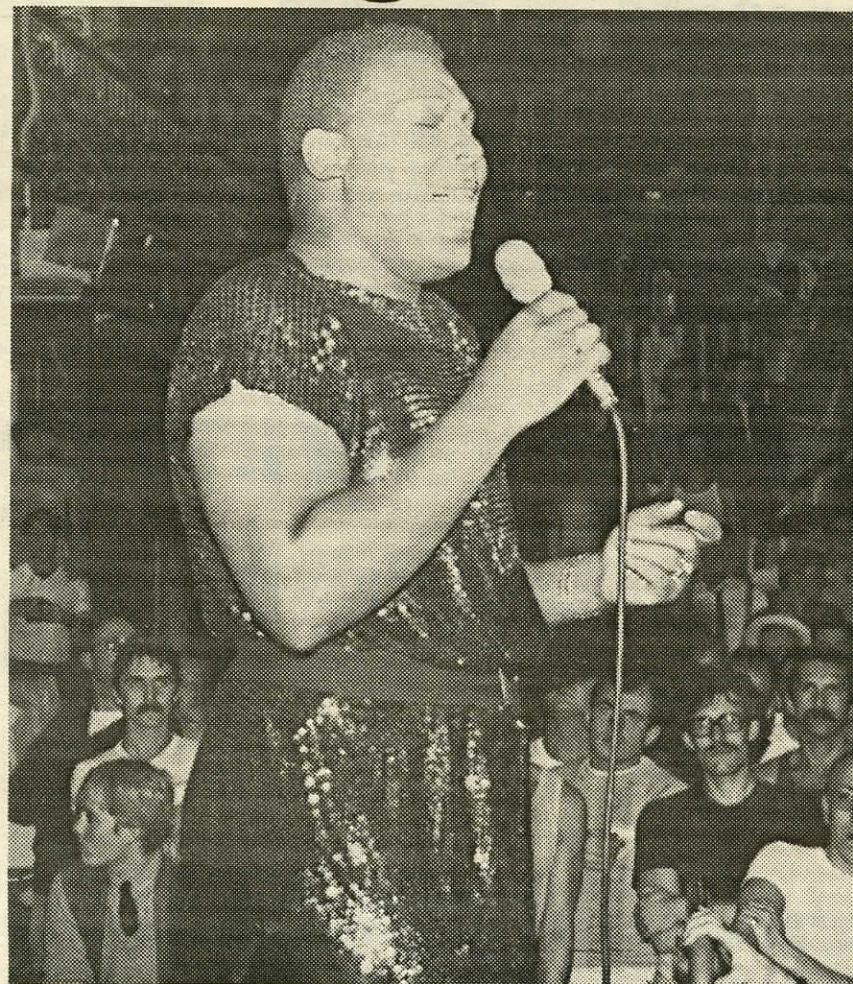
Sylvester had climaxed his UK visit with a concert performance at Heaven on Thursday – but with his usual friendly rivalry, Nicky Price had booked the act described as 'The Queen of Disco' for a show at Brighton Bolts.

And, (sorry, Heaven) he'd also turned up at Bolts in London on the Saturday. There, he'd made Norman Scott redundant for half an hour to become a deejay for the first time.

But Norman (The Hype) Scott certainly earned his money on the Sunday, working the South Coast Sunday-nighters into a typical frenzy before the show started.

Energy seemed to be the key. Writing this 24 hours later, I wonder where it came from (answers on a postcard please) – but the efforts of both performer and audience had to be seen to be believed.

With Scotties (Pass the tissues) hype, and Sylvester's live rendition, by the third time I was asked "Do I wanna funk?" I was forced to answer that I'd have loved to, but I didn't really feel like doing it again without a drink, thank you.



Crammed onto the Bolts dance floor, bopping away as high as a kite, Sylvester gave me an evening to remember. I know that he did some of his best numbers, half a dozen in all, I think. And, I know that when he returned to 'Wanna Funk' as an encore, the stage was crowded as everyone joined in – shouting the chorus and, in some cases, answers to the question too . . .

The short selection of songs proved that Sylvester certainly has got the style and the talent not only to put across the raunchy disco numbers but the more slushy, romantic numbers too. In the style of slower Gladys Knight and Aretha Franklin, he's certainly good value. It certainly helped to have someone close to hold onto for his two slower numbers.

Excitement, emotion, drama, – yes, you couldn't beat it. And, if it brings a reporter from another gay paper all the way from London, well, it was bound to be good anyway.

Much as I enjoyed Sunday night at Bolts, I know

now that I'd have liked to have been at Heaven too.

Both Nicky Price of Bolts and David Inches on Heaven deserve all credit for their investment in putting on their respective Sylvester shows. I just hope they can top it. Thanks, gents, and keep the good times going.



Question:- Who's bitchy, rude and unsympathetic?

Answer:- Vera. Read her every issue.

Anti herpes drug

Campaign, the advertising industry's weekly trade magazine, has reported this week that a new drug for intravenous treatment of herpes infections has gone on sale in Washington DC.

Campaign says that the drug, made by Burroughs Wellcome, has been given the go-ahead by the Food and Drug Administration.

They go on to say that this new product, expected to be available only in hospitals at first, will be used to treat patients whose "immune systems" have been weakened by chemotherapy.

The drug, they say, is an intravenous form of Zovirax.

Manhattan members

Manhattans membership for 1983 is going to cost £15.

Organiser Mike Platt told the Lavender Letter this week that all memberships would become renewable on December 31.

But, he added, that anyone who renewed before that date would only have to pay £12.50.

New members will also have to pay £15 in the new year.

Mike says that members will still get free entry between Tuesdays and Thursdays – but they'll have to pay another £1.50 a time to get in on Friday and Saturday evenings.

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DEAR VERA

Audacious, witty, downright rude but never sympathetic, that's our Vera. Write to Vera with your problems but don't expect her to help. Changers for the best or most outrageous problem each issue (printable please). Lavender Letter, P.O. Box 203, Brighton BN1 5QB

Dear Vera,
My problem is I have an overbearing lesbian boss who is very aggressive and is always shouting at me. She keeps reducing me to tears in front of the others in the office. I like my job and don't want to leave. What should I do? SIMON
Vera - "Grovel, dear, grovel".

Dear Vera,
I have tried hard to conform but somehow now I feel that life has passed me by. I look enviously at friends who have settled down and accepted their lot. What should I do about it? SARAH
Vera - "Buy a semi in Milton Keynes."

Dear Vera,
I am a successful scientist with a good job. However, when I get into my single bed on Saturday evenings, I often feel that I'd exchange my doctorate for a cuddle. Can you advise? LYNN
Vera - "Pooh Bear and a vibrator?"

Dear Vera,
My mother knows I am gay and gets on well with my lover. But every time I start to discuss the more personal side of my gayness, she tells me that she knows more about being gay than I do. What do you think? STEPHANIE
Vera - "Ask yourself - Is mummy a closet dyke? How does she get on with Mrs Jones next door?"

Dear Vera,
I have fallen in love with this nice guy but he has acute personal freshness problem. How can I approach him about this sensitive subject? Vera - "I suggest that you confine your meetings to the local sauna."

Dear Vera,
I have to go away on business often and when I go I usually ring home in the evening, only to find that my lover is out.

She is always doing contact ads in personal columns and yet she says she loves me but likes the occasional 'fling'. What do you think? Vera: Which do you prefer, a hint or a sledgehammer dear.

Dear Vera,
My girlfriend and I make love often but every time she orgasms she ricks her back and then spends the next day in pain. We don't want to give up sex but neither do we want her to be in pain. Can you advise? AMANDA
Vera - "How about a stiff gin (or seven) and a shot of morphine beforehand?"

Hi V,
I have been with my lover for the past 18 months and we have a wonderful relationship. Sexually, however, it is confined as he is totally passive. Sometimes I feel that I want to be taken. Can you advise? Vera - "Tie yourself to the bed, dear, perhaps he'll take the hint."

Editors Note:
Seriously though folks, if you have a problem but don't know who to get in touch with ring us or write and we can give you details of who to contact in confidence of course.

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Talk to us

Brothers and Sisters is the name of a London social club which caters for gays who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The club, which organises social events like coach trips and parties, meets on the first Friday of the month at 8 p.m. in the upstairs bar of the Westminster Arms, 9 Storeys Gate, London SW1.

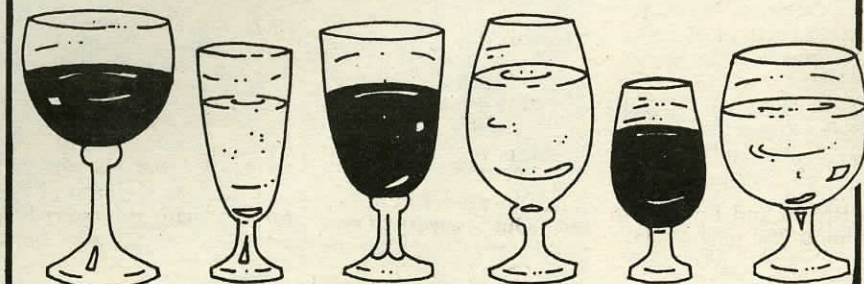
minster Arms, 9 Storeys Gate, London SW1.

Yearly membership costs £5, with reductions for country members, pensioners or overseas visitors, and it entitles you to discount for admission to various gay clubs throughout the country. Copies of Brothers and

Sisters' newsletter are available (enclose SAE) from St. Anne's, Poundfield Road, Crowborough, East Sussex.

Provided they get enough support, Brothers and Sisters hope to organise a trip to the 1985 Deaf Olympics in Los Angeles, with visits to places like San Francisco.

Wine test



Does your local gay pub, wine bar, club or disco give wine drinkers good value for money? That's a question that Jon Homes of the Consumers' Association has been trying to answer.

If, like me, you enjoy a glass of wine, then like me you've probably always taken for granted that when you pay your money you get a set quantity of wine.

After all if you ask for a pint of beer you get a pint of beer or if you like the odd short then you get the set sixth or fifth of a gill - bars have to tell you which you're getting, but with wine it's quite a different story.

According to a Consumers' Association survey for Which? magazine, we tipplers aren't getting a very good deal. Whether we're ordering a glass of plonk down at the local pub or enjoying a drop of the good stuff in a trendy wine bar or with a restaurant

meal, the amount of wine we actually get is 'left very much to chance', says their report.

Which? inspectors went and bought 50 glasses of wine from various establishments and they found that because there isn't a standard measure for wine, the amount you got could be anything from 100ml to 200ml and that you could pay anything from 45p to 85p or more for a single glass of wine.

What's more the amount of wine you got didn't seem to be linked to the amount of money you paid - Which found Soave for as little as 50p for 160ml or as much as 70p for 140ml. A 125ml glass of Baton white table

wine varied from 45p to 57p.

The Consumers' Association called on the Government earlier this year to legislate for wine to be sold in standard quantities and MPs also raised the matter in the House of Commons, but the Government replied that there hadn't been enough complaints from the public to justify legislation.

So next time you order a glass of wine and you feel the amount you've been served is a bit mean do something about it. What you can do is to write to the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Department of Trade, 1 Victoria Street, London SW1, giving details of what you got for your money.

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Leather guys test glass

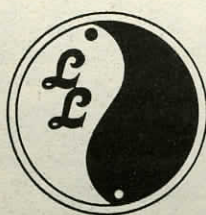
Office windows nearly took a battering at the back of the Princess of Prussia in Prescott Street when London leather group Spadeagle celebrated Guy Fawkes night with their usual panache.

With guests from other clubs around the country and a barbecue to boot, it was an evening that everyone enjoyed.

Super raffles prizes, highly alcoholic, and a large crowd filled a pub already contracted because of redecorations.

Home again

Down in the West Country, gays are once again gathering at the Acorn, Magdalen St, Exeter, after several months of being 'homeless'.



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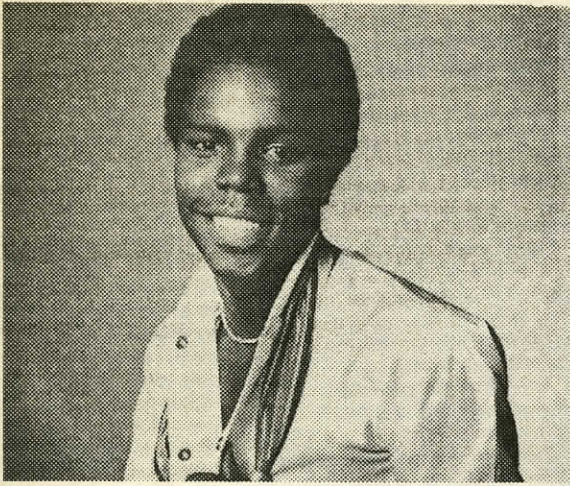
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Budding star



Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, so it is said – so Manhattan in Brighton has started bringing budding stars to the club during the week.

The talented young black singer Spencer Jones launched the idea there last week with a performance of his first single – just released – called 'How High.'

And, two days later, Spencer was back at Manhattan again – for a Saturday night show too.

Ob-la-di

He has only been in this country for four and a half months, but in that time he has found one of the top pop managers to represent him – Alan Whitehead – who used to play with Ob-la-di group Marmalade.

And, his connection with Alan, which started an appearance at Gullivers in London, has led to a contract for another single and an album in the next few months, all as part of

an initial one-year recording contract?

Bristol

Spencer is currently living in Brighton. He is making regular weekend appearances at Kings Country Club in Eastbourne. And, he has been to Bristol and London to promote the new single.

Spencer was recognised as the number one young singer at home in the Bahamas, where he starred in the Miss Bahamas beauty pageant (as part of the cabaret!)

Acclaim

His school teacher Pauline Baker put him in for a major talent show and while still 19, she brought Spencer to the UK.

With a warm Manhattan reception for his first single 'How High,' and growing acclaim around the country, it looks as if Spencer Jones could be a name that everyone knows before long.

Party time

Manhattans are holding a special Christmas party for members on Tuesday December 14.

With buffet thrown in, doors will open at 9 p.m. and all guests will have free entry.

"Guests", says organiser Mike Platt, "will have to pay £2."

And, Manhattans are also organising a special after-Christmas cabaret on Monday December 27.

The Gay Christian Movement is worried about the "growing loss of energy" in Gay Liberation circles generally.

"There is no doubt that a slow erosion of the Gay Liberation Movement will, in the end radically threaten the very existence of GCM," they say in their November news letter. "Our recovery of part of the vision might equally arrest and halve such an erosion," it adds.

The position of Gay Christians as gay people within the churches "is not yet secured. Discrimination and prejudice continue to operate."

Urging members to re-examine their reasons for joining GCM, the editor says: "I suspect we are an extremely diverse body, both politically and emotionally."

A movement is not a static organisation and gay Christians should be constantly seeking the "liberation of the whole of humanity according to the purposes of God."

Press watch

The Conservative Group for Homosexual Equality have been honoured with a mention in Simon Hoggart's "On the House" column in Punch.

Okay, I know it was a couple of weeks ago, but the piece has only just come to my attention – and that's why I'm commenting about it now . . .

Hoggart finds gays and Conservatism slightly unusual bedfellows – but does acknowledge that the group consider themselves Conservative first.

At the Brighton Conference, Hoggart reports, a proposal from the group to bring the age of homosexual consent down to 16 was met with a terse comment from their chairman – former MP Ian Harvey.

As he puts it, "If you go for that with no reservations, then they'll say 'Up yours', or words to that effect."

CM

Lazer hazer

Hard water is to blame for the recent disappearance of the lasers from Brighton Bolts.

Bolts impresario Nicky Price told Lavender Letter that the water-cooled lasers were furring up too quickly causing the tubes, costing £10,000 each, to blow.

And, he said, attempts to replace the area's tap water with a closed-circuit distilled water system has also run into heat exchange problems.

But, Nicky is hopeful that the teething problems with that £6,000 system can be quickly ironed out.

"It just wasn't good enough," he said.

The lasers have also been out of action at Bolts in London too. Voltage problems have meant they've had to go for repair as well.

Alternative glamour



Anyone "into false tits and tired blue gags" will come away disappointed from a Cover Versions show, warn the duo's Sugar and Yvette.

Instead, they say, they are right in tune with 1983 and offer you the "other side of glamour," harnessed to "irresistible dance rhythms."

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one of their forthcoming dates:

Thursday Nov. 18 – Bath – Underground.

Friday 19 – Swansea – Palace.

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Thursday 25 – Bristol – Oasis.

Friday 26 – Southampton – Magnum.

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Coffee time

Eastbourne CHE are holding a coffee evening on Saturday November 27 at Len's in Cooden. More details on Cooden 2035.

And, they're also planning a Christmas dinner on December 11 at the Manor Barn in Bexhill.

The organisers say the last bookings - to 49 Cambridge Gardens, Hastings - must be in by November 30. Tickets are £6.50 and its all part of the activities of the 1066 Gay Community.

Older gays

Author Martyn Taylor is writing a book on older gay people based on their memories of gay life before, during and just after the last war.

The book will contain interviews with gay people from a wide variety of jobs and experiences.

If you are over 65 and would like to be involved, write to Martyn at 9 Heavitree Park, Exeter, Devon.

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New Club opening in Southampton

This Saturday (November 20) sees the launch of a new leather and denim club in Southampton.

Local businessman Steve Allen has decided after observing the leather scene over the last two years that a club is needed in the central South and that people appear to be ready to get away from the over-commercialised scene.

Steve, who's been running his own business for the past eight years, says that his new club, within a few minutes of Southampton City Centre, will not affect the rest of the City's commercial gay scene.

Travel

He believes that people will be travelling from as far afield as Brighton and London to visit the club's new premises.

Indeed, in the last few weeks, after a series of advertisements in Gay News, he now has 150 paid-up members.

During the past few weeks, groups of up to 30 at a time have been meeting in people's homes, but this weekend sees the opening of the club's new headquarters.

"They'll be permanent," Steve explains.

Need

"We'll start by opening one night a week and when we prove that there's a need we'll start opening more often."

Steve told Lavender Letter that he did not intend to run the new club

as a commercial venture. "I'm financing it for six months," he admits, "but I don't want to make a profit out of it."

Code

Steve will close the club's membership at 400 - but there'll still be a strict leather and denim dress code.

He's also hoping members will be able to provide accommodation for visitors from outside the immediate Southampton area.

The idea will be more like the leather and denim clubs and private bars in the States and on the Continent.

The club's new head-

quarters are housed in what used to be a basement workshop.

Initially, the club will be inviting members to bring along their own beer, along the lines of a can party, until proper bar facilities can be arranged.

Memberships

The first memberships until April 1 cost just £5 and are available now - but after that, says Steve, the rate will be £12 a year.

Entrance will cost £2 - but everyone will get a £1 voucher back towards any food and drink they may buy later.

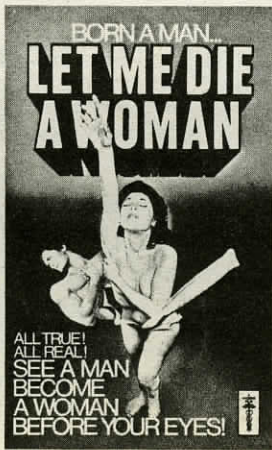
More information is available from Steve on Southampton (0703) 786877.

Transexual movie

With an advertisement that seeks to promote the sensational and press background material that manages to combine the scientific with the commercially intriguing, the film "Let me die a woman", coming to Brighton's Continental Cinema in Kemptown soon, seems to be little more than a "keyhole" look at the world of transsexuals.

The film's "scientific and medical adviser", Dr Leo Woolman seems to have laid himself open for a sensation-seeking, popular-press approach to the world of the transsexual - reading between the lines of the double-spaces press handout about the film.

"Dr Woolman is seen



examining and demonstrating the functioning parts of transsexuals before and after the operation," it says.

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Camp-fest



Brighton's campest bean-feast of the year, the annual Beau Arts ball, will be taking place at Manhattans on January 24th - a Monday.

The ball which started originally as a 42 Club panto started at Brighton's Corn Exchange - but this year has transferred to the new club.

Tickets will cost £5 and, says Manhattan's organiser Mike Platt, "they're very strict on dress - it's either fancy or formal."

The price includes a buffet - and, says Mike, "tickets are now on sale either from Manhattans or the Argus office in North Road."

Best possible taste

John Lahr, author of 'Coward the Playwright' delayed his trip to the United States for a day to speak on Noel Coward to members of Intergroup at the Golders Green Unitarian Rooms. As a result he arrived in Los Angeles and was jet-lagged at a reading of his play 'Accidental Death of an Anarchist', being put on there in January.

John Lahr believed that Noel Coward was his only abiding interest, his only project. He developed the 'Coward Look' and marketed it; he invented

'Cowardspeak' and used it on stage and on off; he sacrificed his life for his persona and made his way to the very centre of London Society, with charm.

For Coward, charm was a virtue and so was its own reward. He always was charming. "Charm needs constant vigilance", he said "you have to watch yourself. I have taken great care of my public face". His characters were all enactments of charm and they were based on the Coward image.

Coward was an 'upstart'. In the days before the concept of 'talentocracy' was known he rose from being the son of a piano salesman to be the most famous and most sought-after man of his generation; the man whom Gielgud imitated; the man who, on his 70th birthday could write in his diary that he had luncheon with the Queen Mother, the Queen had asked him if he would accept a knighthood and "otherwise the day was uneventful".

Coward was homosex-

ual, but very discreet believing that, if it were generally known, many doors would be closed to him. He told Cecil Beaton - a flamboyant character if there ever was one - that he always took a ruthless look at himself in the mirror before he went out, he studied his facade and dressed quietly. "A polo jumper or an unfortunate tie exposes one to danger" he said. However, those in the know read coded references to homosexuality between the lines of his plays.

Durex against public

Sorry straights, but all those London Rubber Company contraceptives that you're using are being produced "against the public interest!"

It doesn't mean that the Government is stepping in to make some revolutionary new sexual legislation - it's just that the Monopolies Commission don't like the size of the company's market.

They say that they could put prices up too much because they control between 90 and 95 per cent of the market.

Durex it's too much? (Ouch!).

Tim's tasteful too

Eroticism seems to have been outmoded by blatant pornography these days - but it is still alive and well and living in Chichester.

This graceful Sussex city provides a home as well as more orthodox subjects for local artist Tim Oliver.

Tim's art is mainly for relaxation. His main work is in the rôle of one of the most important backstage men at the Festival Theatre - looking after the sound.

During the 10 years that he has worked there, Tim has settled down into his painting and drawing.

Unsettled

He says that he painted at school but during two years in which "I did any job I could find," and two years at the Theatre Royal in Windsor, he found it impossible.

"I was unsettled - and

it's then that I can't sit down and paint," he says.

Intensity

During the time he has been in Chichester, Tim has sold about 20 of his paintings of the City's beautiful buildings and surroundings.

"They're all watercolours," he explains, "but they do have a depth and intensity because I build them up in layers."

Many of Tim's studies of Chichester have an abstract layout - but they do keep faithfully to the design and character of his subject.

Poster

It was his skill with these that led to a request for a

poster for a shorts party at The Bush.

"It just went on from there," Tim explains.

Erotic

Now, as well as being the pub's regular poster artist, providing examples of his work for each of their special events, he has gone on to his gently erotic work...

And, going on from the posters, examples of Tim's work now decorate the walls of one of the bars.

Tim has also done a number of pieces on commission - and no doubt he will be going on to do even more in the future.

Benefit Concert

Mutations Disco are hosting a benefit concert for the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp next Friday, Nov. 26th, organised by Gay CND.

Mutations is held every Friday at the Pied Bull, 1 Liverpool Road, Islington, N1, from 8.30-11 p.m.

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Hide no more

Hiding your true sexual identity for the purposes of work may soon be a thing of the past, if the new gay rights officer for the National Council for Civil Liberties has her way.

Ms. Ann-Marie Bradley's first major project in her new job is to help prepare an amendment to the new Employment Protection Bill.

The amendment, if successful, would effectively make it illegal to sack anyone on the grounds of their sexual orientation. It would also be used as a strengthener for the Sex Discrimination Act.

"At the moment I am trying to get various MP's and trade unions to sponsor it," says Ms. Bradley, a former English and Sociology student at Kent University.

At a preliminary meeting 18 months ago, some 40 MP's promised their support for the amendment. Next time Ms. Bradley hopes for a lot more.

"It depends how forceful we are. I intend to be very forceful," she said.

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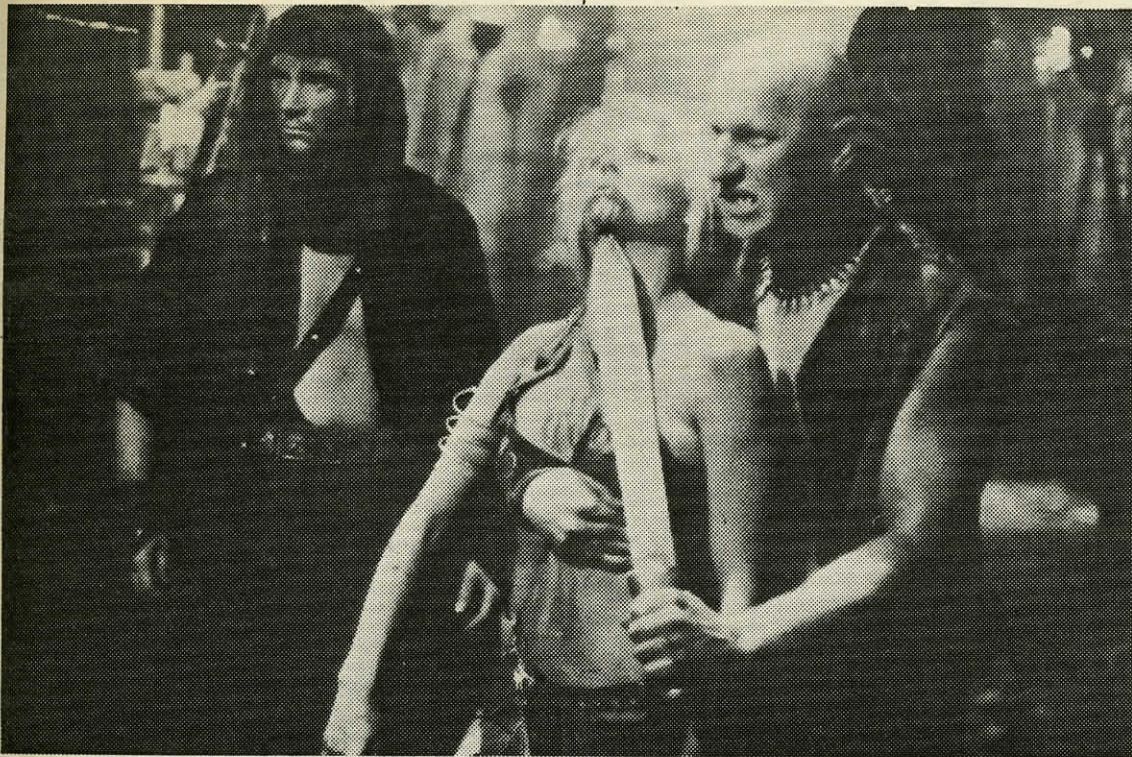
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Taking the Mick?

Horrific effects, sado-masochistic eroticism, the hunky hero, the monster, the omnipotent weapon, the dark baddie and the eventual triumph of good-over-evil are all essential ingredients for the latest epic-cum-adventure-cum-horror movie called 'The Sword and the Sorcerer.'

Everything that possibly could be seems to have been pumped into a thin, hero-worshipping plot, that features some quite attractive male and female bodies but gives their mouths poor and predictable dialogue.

Imagine Captain Kremmen going on the crusades in the brutal 13th century – and you will get some idea what it is going to be like.

It is one of those films where you feel like heckling – telling the supposedly intelligent leading char-

acters not to be so bloody stupid – and get on with the storyline.

It is extremely difficult to tell whether the director is being serious with his treatment of the storyline or whether he is being very tongue-in-cheek and taking the proverbial out of the traditional moral tale.

But, the storyline doesn't matter too much.

Don't take the plot too seriously. Enjoy the good looking goodies and some of the horrific effects of the baddies.

Don't worry about the set-piece tableaux in the torture chamber. Just laugh.

If you are stuck at a loose end or you want a laugh for the video, then you could do worse than go for the 'Sword and the Sorcerer.'

The drummer didn't make it

The drummer couldn't make it, he got caught up with the traffic. But that didn't stop Jay McShann's Kansas Express roaring along right on time at Brighton Jazz Club.

They started with Moten's Swing, bandleader Benny Moten's theme, which always conjures up those wide-open Kansas City days of the '30s when Jay McShann, Basie, Joe Williams and a whole host of other 'Blue Devils' were setting fire to the prairies with their jumping blues.

He may be drawing his pension, but big Jay can still growl a blues or play boogie piano with the best of them. His smile and his music are ageless.

Playing to a devoted lunchtime audience downstairs at the Royal Escape, Jay couldn't have wished for better sidemen, compensating as they had to for the lack of drums. Most of the load fell on British bassman Spike Heatley, who worked so hard and came up with exciting,

fluid, almost guitar-like solos, particularly on numbers like the old blues "Don't You Wanna Man Like Me."

Jim Galloway, on soprano and tenor sax, always looked relaxed and confident. He really hit top form on tunes like Ellington's "I Got It Bad (and that ain't good)", pouring out long, high notes from his soprano.

And what a treat to have Benny Carter along on tenor. Surely one of the very best tenor players in the world, he was also the frontman on Sunday, charming the audience with his wry courtesy.

His playing, too, was impeccable, combining great harmonic sense with a staggering technique, especially on featured numbers like "Body and Soul." He also shone on the faster, jumping blues, loosing off some soaring, flowing lines that drove the other along with the sheer swing of it.

But in the end you came back to Jay McShann. Sitting there, his sheer, physical size seeming to force his will on the piano, you realise that this man is one of the very last kings of jazz and blues. That was always his music, and he still loves it and plays it incomparably. 'Hope he comes back soon.

Heaven? Devine

Heaven have announced that their next major personal appearance will be by Divine on Thursday December 2.

Heaven's promotions manager Kevin Millings told Lavender Letter that she will be appearing in an evening that starts at 9.30 p.m. and for which entrance will cost £4.

And, they're hoping that the outrageous star of the Pink Flamingoes will be a great hit in Villiers Street too.

The mention or appearance or likeness of any person or organisation in articles or advertising in the Lavender Letter is not to be taken as any indication of the sexual, social or political orientation of such persons or organisations.

GAY SWITCHBOARD
01-837 7324

Lively morals

What should be a lively discussion takes place on November 30 at the Bow Room, St. Stephen's Church, High St, Exeter, when local moralist Dr. Adrian Rogers is the visiting speaker. The meeting, which starts at 8 p.m. is expected to touch on many contentious issues, apart from homosexuality.

Cavaliers meet Roundheads

Religious divisions come crashing to the ground next Friday in Golders Green when the Jewish Gay Group have a member of the Gay Christian Movement as guest speaker at their Chavura, a Sabbath eve service.

The group, for gay men and lesbians, meets next Friday, November 26, at the Alyth Youth and Community Centre in Alyth Gardens, Finchley Road, NW11, close to Golders Green Tube.

Richard Kirker, secretary of the GCM, will be talking about the movement's work – and the service will be followed by a light vegetarian meal for which everyone is invited to bring some food.

More information about the group is available from Timothy Goddard, BMJGG, London WC1N 3XX...

The Gay Gourmet

This column is written with the intention of providing a guide to the restaurants, cafes, bistros etc. . . . in and around the south.

The intention is to show, where possible, how well one can eat out for a reasonable sum in congenial surroundings. Of course, from time to time we will inevitably come across establishments which do not come up to scratch. These will be given the "DIRTY NAPKIN AWARD."

One such place is Fortes, in the Square, Bournemouth, where my companion and I unsuspectingly ventured for breakfast early one morning.

We each ordered double-egg on toast and tomatoes, plus two black coffees. Total price: £3.22.

We took our seats and waited . . . and waited . . . we observed the toast being made and . . . waited. Ten minutes later we spotted the eggs hitting the griddle.

Finally, after about a 20 minute wait, it arrived – or, rather, it was unceremoniously plonked in front of us. Twenty seconds later my companion leaped up and stormed towards the counter. She asked if it was usual to serve toast cold and without butter. The answer was a shrug of the shoulders.

By this time I had turned over one of my eggs (as is my wont) and discovered that I had been served part of the griddle too – that is, unsavoury black specks clinging on to the eggs!

Having by this time established that my chicory was masquerading under the guise of coffee, I, too, decided that breakfast was over and joined her at the counter where we both asked for our money back.

To be fair, the girl behind the counter did offer us something to replace what we had (or had'nt) had, but we declined, our appetites unforgiving.

Dirty eggs on cold, dry toast, half a tomato, indifferent coffee – definitely the outstanding candidate for the Dirty Napkin Award.

We recovered our money and made a hasty departure, but not before I had confronted the manager and suggested that he advise his staff to clean the griddle before cooking on it. After a half-hearted apology from him, we left.

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Compiled by Norman Scott:

1. It's Raining Men—The Weather Girls (US 12")
2. In the Name of Love—Sharon Redd (New re-mix, US 12")
3. Der Amboss (The Anvil)—Visage (German Prom. 12")
4. Thunder and Lightning—Risqué (Dutch 12")
5. Do You Wanna Funk—Sylvester (UK 12")
6. I Feel Love—Donna Summer (New re-mix 12")
7. Mirror Man—Human League (UK 12")
8. Dirty Talk—Kleine MBO (UK 12")
9. I'm Not In Love—Sherrie Payne (US 12")
10. Mind Warp—Patrick Cowley (US LP)

BOLTS one to watch—She Has a Way—Bobby O (US 12")

BEST SELLERS

Best sellers this week at Gay's the Word bookshop,
66 Marchmont St., WCL.

1. Everyday Matters—Sheba Feminist Press (£3.50)
2. A Boy's Own Story—Edmund White (Dutton £9.95)
3. Spray It Loud—Jill Posener (RKP £2.95)
4. Frustration—Claire Bereteche (Methuen £3.95)
5. Yesterday and Today—Paul Cadmus (Miami University £9.50)
6. Couplings—Richard Hall (Grey Fox Press £3.95)
7. Sapphistry—Pat Califia (Naiad £4.50)
8. A Comfortable Corner—Vincent Virga (Avon £2.75)
9. Below the Belt and Other Stories—Phil Andros (Perineum £4.30)
10. The Women Writers' Calendar—(Crossing Press £3.95)

CLASSICAL RECORDS

Classical Records, Compiled by Select Records, Duke St., Brighton

1. Requiem—Faure
2. Carmina Burana—Karl Orff
3. Les Gymnopédies—Satie
4. Guitar Concerto—Rodrigo
5. Piano Concerto No. 21—Mozart

Dusty Springfield is back with a brand-new album, and you can order it now through Lavender Letter!

The LP, featuring some of the best American session musicians around, is called "White Heat" and retails for £5.99. The cassette costs £6.29 plus 50p p&p. Delivery will be within 28 days of receipt of the order.

Records International, who are handling the record, have so far been involved in arranging licensing deals for independent American record companies and promoting their artists within the UK. These include Mary Wilson (of the Supremes), Carla Thomas, Kenny Moore and Scherrie Payne.

In January, International are starting a record/cassette mailing service geared to the UK gay market. To start with, the company hopes to boast up to 200 titles by artists such as Holly Near, Chris Williamson, Robyn Archer, Tom Robinson and Sylvester.

A review of Dusty's new album will appear in the next LL.

DUSTY SPRINGFIELD



WHITEHEAT

TOP TEN BOOKS

Top Ten Books at Sisterwrite Bookshop, 190 Upper St, N1

1. Spare Rib Diary 1983—(Spare Rib £2.75)
2. The Joy of Lesbian Sex—Dr Emily L. Sisley and Bertha Harris (Freeside £6.80)
3. Relatively Norma—Anna Livia (Only Women Press £2.95)
4. Nice Jewish Girls, A Lesbian Anthology—Evelyn Torton Beck (Persephone £5.55)
5. Ambitious Women—B E Wilson (Spinsters Ink £4.90)
6. Made From This Earth—Susan Griffin (Women's Press £4.95)
7. Zami, A New Way of Spelling My Name—Audre Lorde (Persephone £5.15)
8. Father-daughter Incest—J Lewis Herman (Harvard £5.60)
9. Bread and Roses—Women's Poetry in the 19th and 20th Centuries (Virago £4.95)
10. Double Yoke—Buchi Emecheta (Ogwagwa Asor £3)

DISCO CHART

Disco chart from Simon Scott of Benjy's

1. Der Amboss—(The Anvil) Visage (German 12")
2. It's Raining Men—The Weather Girls (US 12")
3. I'm Not In Love—Scherrie Payne (US 12")
4. Thunder and Lightning—Risqué (Dutch 12")
5. Make My Feet Wanna Dance—Motion (Canadian 12")
6. Drums on Fire—Gazuzu (Euro 12")
7. Dirty Talk (re-mix) Situation (re-mix)—Hot Tracks (DJ 12")
8. Nipple To The Bottle—Grace Jones (UK LP)
9. In and Out—Willie Hutch (UK 12")
10. Mind Warp—Patrick Cowley (12")

Supertramp— play it again Sam



Oh dear. Try as I will to be kind about the new Supertramp album, it's exactly the same as all the others, only this time there is only one real song in the whole collection.

Admittedly, I listened to it fairly early in the morning, but it really did nearly send me back to sleep again. There must be something about California which makes quite competent musicians produce such irrelevant, self-indulgent records.

There are nine tracks, written by Rick Davies and Roger Hodgson, and it must be said they are all well engineered, if not well written. 'Crazy' for example, is that same old 'take a look at my girl-

friend' stuff again, with the piano trying to thump over the melodic deficiencies. Same thing again with a very mediocre song called 'Bonnie'.

'My Kind of Lady' is ersatz doo-wop and goes on too long, which brings us to 'C'est Le Bon', which is, in fact, quite bon. Apart from the line about seeing himself ending up in a monastery, it's a strong song. Plenty of melody, plenty of effective vocal lines.

It really is a disappointing record. It sounds as though a combination of getting older and living in California has struck the death knell for this once-vibrant band.

Ring Brighton (0273) 564573 and ask for Francesqua or write to Lavender Letter, P.O. Box 203, Brighton BN1 5QR.

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