



ASLEF **LGBT** Consultative Committee Newsletter

GARY CONN, LGBTCC member from District 2, and his partner, Martin Gurr, both drivers with Virgin West Coast at Edinburgh, had their Civil Partnership on 28th November in Blackpool. Having been together for 9 years, they decided it was time to make it official!

Although the weather was chilly the party was not, and everyone had a fantastic time. There are plans in the summer to maybe hold a further celebration in the warm weather (big hats compulsory)

The LGBTCC wish Gary and Martin a long and happy Civil Partnership and congratulate them on being the first in ASLEF that we have been made aware of.

If you know differently then contact me, Sharon Allen, ASLEF's Equalities Adviser by email on SAllen@aslef.org.uk or by phone on 0207 317 8600

Gary & Martin make honest men of each other



Goodbye to Zoi and a big thank you



RECENTLY our District 1 rep Zoi Kakouris decided to move on from the LGBT Consultative Committee. We were saddened by her decision and felt that it was only right that we gave her a good write up to thank her for all the hard work and efforts that she had contributed to the committee. Zoi has been involved with the committee since its inception back in the early days she has fought tirelessly to help establish the work that the committee has and is doing throughout District 1 and also within the whole union.

Zoi arranged the stall at Brighton Pride every year and is well known on the Brighton 'scene'. She is a 'larger than life' character and became well known at the TUC LGBT conferences – not least when she forgot her words and did a 'twirl round' at the rostrum.

She will be missed by us all, but we wish her well in all that she does in the future and we know that she will always keep an eye out to see what we are up to and help out where she can.

Good Luck Zoi and many, many thanks for all the effort and hard work that you put into making the committee what it is today. We wish you well with all your future endeavours as a full-time seconded Learner Rep, and we are sure that we will see you often in the future.

LGBTCC open meeting held on October 23rd 2007

The guest speaker was Tim Sigworth, Chief Executive of the Albert Kennedy Trust and he was invited by Neil Adams to address the meeting. Here are some of his main points;

- The Albert Kennedy Trust (AKT) supports young people who become homeless because they are LGBT, It was founded in 1989 following the death of Albert Kennedy a 16-year-old gay young person from Salford
- AKT offers supported lodgings with LGBT carers – they also do mentoring and provide support and information
- They have a shortage of LGBT carers in London
- It is estimated that 25% of young homeless people could be LGBT
- AKT are contacted by 2,000 young people a year – 55% of those require emergency support
- 75% of their funding comes from the LGBT community
- They are always looking for people who can provide supported housing and emergency accommodation
- 800,000 children go 'missing' in the UK every year – most turn up but many do not

What ASLEF can do ...

- Advertise their work and see if any of our members would consider volunteering for AKT on their mentoring and caring programme
- Provide resources to print materials for them e.g. their Newsletter
- Ask our branches and members to make financial donations

After taking questions and comments Neil thanked Tim for his interesting and informative talk and made him a small presentation of ASLEF regalia



Tim Sigworth, Chief Executive of the Albert Kennedy Trust receives a presentation from Neil Adams

WORTLEY HALL 19-21 OCTOBER 2007

Although I have been in ASLEF since I joined LUL in 2001, my only involvement with the LGBTCC up until now was sporting a very attractive rainbow badge!

Wortley Hall near Sheffield (also known as "the Workers' Stately Home" is both picturesque and imposing, and is the venue for the school.

Formal as the exterior was, the welcome inside from the organisers and delegates was as warm and relaxed as you could wish for. The rooms at Wortley (all en-suite) continue to undergo refurbishment as income allows, currently ranging from the basic to the gorgeous – which are equivalent to what might be found in the smartest boutique hotel.

FRIDAY During registration and lunch it was obvious that many delegates had attended before and knew each other – but there was no evidence of any "cliquishness" which might be expected because of this and everyone was effortlessly included.

Then it was down to work and, after the inevitable introductions session, we were given inspiring talks by Matt Wrack (FBU General Secretary) and Sharon Allen (ASLEF Equalities Adviser) before separating into our respective unions so that the FBU could conduct a detailed session on their discipline and grievance procedure. However, this proved to be invaluable to me as it gave me the opportunity to find out more about the work of ASLEF's LGBT Consultative Committee and the procedure for submitting motions and rule changes to the Annual Assembly of Delegates (ASLEF's Conference).

After dinner, there was a karaoke session in the bar – and even if, like me, you have all the tone and tunefulness of a crow (not Bob!) I guarantee



JOINT FIRE ASLEF LGBTCC

you will enjoy the performances of others, which were often outstanding (in one way or another).

SATURDAY The whole of Saturday morning was devoted to a trans awareness course delivered by the Gender Advisory Bureau. This was pretty intensive – covering a huge range of topics – and could at best only be considered an introduction. It was certainly thought-provoking, and the general consensus is that it was interesting, informative and very demanding.

After lunch on Saturday Ali Hili from Iraqi LGBT delivered a harrowing account on the plight of LGBT people in Iraq, and the worsening situation there since the "removal" of Saddam Hussein's secular government and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism.

We then divided into groups for closed sessions – where people could openly discuss any issues relating to work, home or anything else. Although some attendees at



THE BRIGADES UNION / LGBT WEEKEND SCHOOL

previous schools thought that this was more productive when carried out as a single group, I can imagine that the sheer number involved could make it difficult to manage.

Saturday evening after dinner saw many of us descending on Sheffield (the locals are probably still dazed and confused!) to partake of some nightclub action. However, restraint apparently won through this year (we're all getting older!) and most people were in bed by a reasonable hour.

SUNDAY The "All different. All equal" session on Sunday was got off to a flying start by everyone walking around the grounds in the crisp sunshine just to ensure any remaining cobwebs from the previous night were blown away. John McGhee of the FBU led the workshop and, although based on the FBU policy, was of interest to all. The final session gave the opportunity for feedback about the school – and then it was time for a lunch before people began

departing for various destinations around the country.

In summary, the whole experience was a positive one for me – meeting new people both from within ASLEF and the FBU, gaining an understanding of the issues and challenges they might face, learning and improving awareness of the specific subjects on the agenda and last but not least understanding more about the role of the ASLEF LGBT Consultative Committee and the hard work they carry out voluntarily on behalf of all of us. I would strongly urge anyone who has not been to the school before to consider doing so next year – it's the 10th anniversary (5th year for ASLEF) and so promises to be something special.

**MARTIN ALLARD
ASLEF MEMBER LUL**

● For details of the work of the Iraqi LGBT or to make a donation, visit www.iraqilgbtuk.blogspot.com.



WELL here we are the 21st century and still we are fighting for equality, facing harassment and abuse not only in the press but also at our place of work. I have to relate this story of mine as I feel it is relevant for today as its been happening recently and not only to myself but another driver based at my depot.

The problem actually started when I came out at work and it became common knowledge throughout my depot. I started to receive torn copies of Gay Times and other gay literature in my pigeon hole. They were placed so all who passed could see, very obvious in its positioning and condition that it was meant to embarrass me and in some way single me out as gay. I just discarded the magazines but it had the effect of making me feel uncomfortable.

However I ignored it, as I felt this was the best thing to do. However, with hindsight it wasn't. Then from my pigeon hole it progressed to graffiti on toilet walls with personal remarks about my sexuality, this further added to my discomfort at work and again I suffered in silence. It wasn't till I was elected to the LGBTCC that I realised that staying silent only compounded the situation I was in and allowed those who bully and harass to get away with it.

At one of our meetings I informed the members of our committee about what had been happening and the support I received was overwhelming - not to mention the advice from both other members and Sharon Allen has been fantastic and helped me face the problems. Since then there has been no further problems with myself facing harassment, however I am very sad to say that another driver at my depot has started to face the same bullying. However, due to my work with the LGBTCC and their advice I have been able to offer help and support to other members.

I suppose what I'm trying to say though my own experience is, don't suffer alone or accept bullying and harassment. Together we can stop it and show those who think its ok to do that it's not and action can, and will be taken.

Take care all and remember we are all here for each other.

**DARRAN BROWN,
LGBTCC MEMBER, DISTRICT 3**

● Keith Norman, ASLEF General Secretary said. 'Homophobia and harassment and victimisation of LGBT people is a crime – and ASLEF takes the matter seriously. If you have experience of this, speak to your District Organiser or confidentially to Sharon Allen, ASLEF's Equalities Adviser.

Committed to sexual equality

The trade union movement represents all working people regardless of their gender, race, religious belief, sexual orientation or disability.

ASLEF believes in fairness at work for everyone and is fully committed to the elimination of discrimination in all its forms, both at work and in the community.

The LGBTCC wishes to ensure that Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered people are fully represented and a voice within the workplace.

The LGBTCC was set up

- to provide support for LGBT people within our workplaces
- identify and deal with issues/problems faced by LGBT people
- highlighting issues of human rights abuse of LGBT people internationally
- provide members with the opportunity to talk/meet with other members.

Any Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Trans person can contact the committee for advice or assistance on a STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL basis by ringing 0207 317 8600 and asking for Sharon Allen.

Get Involved

We are anxious to contact as many lesbian, gay and transgender ASLEF members as we can. We now have a confidential database of LGBT members at head office so that we can get information to you direct.

Should any member require a personal copy of this newsletter and future newsletters, confidential arrangements can be made for a copy to be mailed direct to your home address. Just contact the LGBTCC delegate for your District or Sharon Allen at ASLEF Head Office and we will add your name to our confidential mailing list. This mailing list will be treated in the strictest confidence and no information held on it will be divulged to branches or other members.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



17-18 May 2008

Blackpool Gay Pride

Thursday 17 May 2008

International Day Against Homophobia - IDAHO

24-25 May 2008

Birmingham Gay Pride

Saturday 7 June 2008

South Yorkshire Pride - Sheffield

Saturday 5 July 2008

Pride London - Parade and rally

Saturday 12 July 2008

Oxford Gay Pride

Saturday 26 August 2008

Nottingham Pride

Saturday 2 August 2008

Brighton and Hove Gay Pride

Saturday 23 August 2008

Manchester Gay Pride

District 8 Christmas Social Event

Well the 7th December saw the 2nd social event for District 8's LGBT members which was held at Comptons in Soho. It was yet again another good turnout with about 25 people popping in for a beer or 2 over the night. We also had some members from district 7 come along to join in the fun and as always Neil Adams the District 7 LGBT rep was there holding up the bar. It was nice to see so many people come along for a drink and to have a chat about other things than just work - as the night went on the guys who had work the next day started to leave and as for the rest of us we made our way to G-A-Y night club for a few more beers and show our moves off to the sounds of the 70's and 80's. Yet again, another fab night and watch out for the next social event which I will be setting a date for very soon, so look out at your depots for the posters. Also don't forget everyone is welcome. Ben Wallington, District 8 LGBTCC member.

District LGBT contacts

District 1 Election in progress

District 2 Gary Conn

District 3 Darran Brown

District 4 Susan Greenwell

District 5 Steve Swain

District 6 Angie Butler

District 7 Neil Adams

District 8 Ben Wallington

If you would like to contact your District's LGBTCC Rep, ring Sharon Allen the Equalities Adviser on 0207 317 8600 or by email SAllen@aslef.org.uk

You can also contact Sharon if you want to be added to the confidential LGBT mailing list to receive information that may be of interest to you.

Useful addresses

Broken Rainbow Support for LGBT people experiencing domestic violence
Helpline: 08452 604460
www.broken-rainbow.org.uk

Stonewall National campaigning organisation for LGBT people
Tel: 0207 7881 9440
Email: info@stonewall.org.uk

Press for Change Organisation campaigning for equal rights for transgender people
BM Network, London WC1N 3XX
Email: letters@pfc.org.uk

The Gender Trust UK Charity Helping adults who are transsexuals
Tel: 01273 234024
Email: info@gendertrust.org.uk

Mermaids Support group for children and teenagers with gender identity issues
Helpline: 07020 935066

Terrence Higgins Trust Charity offering information and support on HIV and AIDS
Tel: 0845 1221200
Email: info@tht.org.uk

Gender Advisory Bureau Supporting Trans people
Email: g.a.b@btconnect.com