



ASLEF LGBT Representative Committee Newsletter



COLLECTIVE CONFIDENCE IS THE KEY

I know I've said this before, but trade unionists are the last people to recognise their own achievements. It is mainly because we are all aware that there is so much more we need to accomplish before we will secure the free, just, equitable, tolerant society that is the aim of our movement.

But when we look back, the campaigns we have supported to end sex discrimination have achieved much. Apart from the occasional rogue backwoodsmen, bigotry is no longer acceptable in our society. Yet it is not long since it was actually fashionable. Prejudice was the life-blood of many bloated unhappy 'comedians' and homophobic comments went unchallenged. And it was only 32 years ago that it ceased to be a crime to have sexual relations with someone of the same sex. So we are making progress.

We should recognise this as we press on, because to be successful we need to be confident. We are sure of our case – because it is morally and logically indefensible to be prejudiced against somebody because of their sexual preferences. What on earth has that got to do with me?

Now we need to build on that individual confidence to build a movement that demands equality as a right rather than asking for it as a favour. ASLEF is proud of those who have had the courage to lead a movement that has changed opinions and attitudes. To salute their bravery we need to continue to challenge bias and prejudice wherever we encounter it – at work, in the home, in the street.

One thing we know. When we do something collectively, knowing it is right, we will win.

KEITH NORMAN – General Secretary



A colourful carnival that is the Pride of London!

LONDON PRIDE: A CELEBRATION!

This year we were proud again to march at London Pride with our fellow brothers and sisters from other unions.

The day started with a light shower before the march set off but the atmosphere of the soon made the sun shine.

After the march we made our way to Trafalgar Square where we heard a variety of speakers included Harriet Harman. The highlight was when the Conservative MP Jeremy Hunt left the stage after being bombarded with bottles in response to his apology on Section 28!

After Trafalgar Square we enjoyed the rest of the day with the usual 'Pride spirit'. For anyone who has never been to London Pride or any Pride march it would be great to see you next year. It's important that we continue to support these events especially with the rise of the BNP.

OH MY LORD! THEY THINK BEING ANTI-GAY IS FREE SPEECH!

Two years ago the government announced it wanted to introduce a new criminal offence of inciting hatred on the basis of sexual orientation. This was going to be included in the Criminal Justice and Immigration Bill.

Due to lack of parliamentary time, they were forced to accept an amendment to the Bill moved by Lord Waddington, the former Conservative Home Secretary. This is what the amendment said:

'For the avoidance of doubt, the discussion or criticism of sexual conduct or practices or the urging of persons to refrain from or modify such conduct or practices shall not be taken of itself to be threatening or intended to stir up hatred.'

In January this year the government published its Criminal Justice and Immigration Bill with the addition of Clause 61. This clause removed the Waddington 'free speech' amendment and was approved by the House of Commons with a margin of 154.

The introduction of the clause was seen as a granting of parity to lesbians and gay men with other groups who are already protected under hate speech laws.

But it didn't end there. Many religious groups were concerned about the addition of Clause 61 believing that it could be used to accuse them of inciting hatred when expressing religious views on sexuality. So they began a concerted campaign of opposition- and in July this year the unelected and wholly unrepresentative body of the House of Lords voted to retain the amendment by 186 voted to 133.

The Ministry of Justice has labelled the defeat 'disappointing' and ministers say they are seeking to overturn the decision in the House of Commons.

The inclusion of this amendment raises a fundamental question: When society does not allow people to be openly racist - should we afford them the legal opportunity to be openly homophobic?

USEFUL DAYS AT TUC'S LGBT CONFERENCE

THE tenth annual TUC LGBT conference started on 2 July with Bev Miller introducing us to Shelia Bearcroft, TUC President and Brendan Barber, TUC General Secretary, both of whom addressed the conference.

Sheila gave a brief outline of her involvement in the trade union movement before talking about the struggles that trade unions could face if there were a change of government. She wished us well for our conference and hoped that we would make a difference to the working lives of all members - not just LGBT members.

Brendan Barber then gave us an uplifting speech about the way the TUC was proud to be associated with the LGBT conference, assuring us of the continued support of the General Council. He also went on to list the achievements that this conference had made over the last 10 years including work on pensions issues, the Civil Partnership Bill, the Gender Recognition Act and of course the continuing work on the single Equality Bill.

However he warned of the dangers that lie ahead, the violent hate crimes that go on in our society and the changes in political landscape expected next during the few years with the rise of the BNP and other far right ideologies.

ASLEF ELECTION SUCCESS

Maria Exall, Chair of the TUC LGBT Committee, then spoke about what we had achieved over the last decade and what we hope to achieve within the next 10 years, stressing the need for unity as we tackle homophobia in schools and workplaces. She also touched on how well received the motion taken forward from LGBT conference last year on Joel Edwards has been received at the 2008 TUC and the Labour Party Conferences.

I am pleased to say that Susan Greenwell, ASLEF's LGBT Committee Secretary, was elected to the TUC LGBT Committee for her fourth term.

MAIN ISSUES DEBATED

Motions submitted by unions earlier in the year to the TUC LGBT Committee included resolutions on the single Equality Act, equality reps, equality rights, faith and

homophobia, Civil Partnerships, LGBT workers' dignity at work during a recession, sexual orientation monitoring, hate crimes, homophobia in sport and guarding against homophobia in the media.

Other conference speakers included Maria Eagle MP and an open session on the Friday morning featured DCI Gerry Campbell from the Met Police, Lesley Burton from the CPS (Crown Prosecution Service), and Deborah Gold from GALOP. They gave us a brief outline of their roles in dealing with homophobic hate crimes.

The social event on Thursday evening allowed us time to kick back and network with other activists and re-establish our friendships with other trade unions.

TUC CONFERENCE ISSUE

During the Friday session we considered the motion that we would like to go forward from this conference to TUC Congress. The chosen issue was the GMB motion 'Against Racism Against Homophobia'.

It calls on us all to step up the fight against the rise of the BNP after the gains it achieved in the local and European elections.

All in all this conference was another success and will no doubt continue to improve. If it's your districts turn next year I suggest that you get your name down early. If it's not your turn then ask us to



Ben Wallington making a presentation to Ellie Reeves & Vic Codling

LGBT COMMITTEE HOLDS OPEN MEETING

The Open meeting for the LGBT committee was held on 1 July.

Vic Codling from The Gay Police Association gave a presentation on the work of the association and how it was established. At its inception it had 80 members as it was not accepted to be gay and a member of the police force.

Now the association has 4,500 members and actively campaigns for policy change and education within the force.

Ellie Reeves from Thompsons Solicitors also attended the meeting and discussed recent case law on harassment and discrimination.

Both gave very informative presentations and received a gift of thanks from the committee.

get you visitor tickets and come along and learn.

The LGBT TUC conference is always held two days before London Pride so we work hard – and then get to enjoy the parade on Oxford Street and the stage at Trafalgar Square. Afterwards we all say our goodbyes and look forward to next year!

Neil Adams – District 7 LGBT Committee Member



Now in its fourth year, UK Black Pride will be flying the rainbow flag over Regents College on 15 August 2009.

Black Pride is a fantastic pride event in central London. It's open to everyone and celebrates the black LGBT community. There will be the hottest DJs, live performances, a market area, information stalls and much more.

Tickets for the event are available from www.ukblackpride.org.uk



LGBT Conference delegates: Susan Greenwell, Neil Adams, Darran Brown & Ben Wallington

RALLY AGAINST THE BNP

The BNP says it will hold its annual Red, White and Blue Festival on 15-17 August in Codnor, Derbyshire.

The Midlands TUC are linking up with local organisations to hold a rally against this festival on 15 August. Finalised details are yet to be released but keep checking www.tuc.org.uk/tuc/regions_info_midlands.cfm for updated information.



Ben (right) with Collette Gibson (Women's Committee) and Retired Members delegate Ray Jackson

WARM WELCOME FOR A NEW BOY AT ASLEF AAD!

This year's ASLEF annual conference (the AAD) was held in Nottingham and was a very good meeting. I was one of this year's new delegates.

Last year I attended as a visitor so I knew what to expect. For people who don't know AAD is the Annual Assembly of Delegates which is held once a year to talk about what has happened in the last year and to set the ASLEF agenda for the year to come.

The LGBT Representative Committee sent three motions to the AAD these were

- the EC to pursue the implementation of an 24 hour phone line to report hate crime
- setting up a policy for trans members when undergoing transitioning
- calling for the GS to inform branches, district sec's and representative committees of all staff changes at head office (this was the only

one that was not passed by the Assembly).

One important decision from this years AAD was to move from the current head office building in Arkwright Road, Hampstead. The whole of AAD voted 'yes' for this - so watch out for more news on that one.

I got up to talk about the BNP and what they mean to LGBT members and about how we needed to get people out to vote to stop them getting seats in the European Parliament. The whole of AAD listened to what I had to say and were very moved.

I have to say that seeing as this was my first time as a delegate at AAD, I was made to feel very welcome by everyone. When I needed help on what was going on everyone was more than happy to help me. All in all I found AAD very good and I am looking forward to going again if I get the opportunity.

Ben Wallington – Chair - LGBT Committee Chair - and D8 Rep

POLICE WORK FOR EQUALITY

I would like to introduce myself. I am Gemma Clarke, one of the Equality & Diversity Officers for Wiltshire Police and work within the Community Affairs Department at Salisbury Police station.

My main role is to oversee the investigation of all Hate Crime in the South of the Wiltshire. This means I cover from Salisbury up to Marlborough. My role is about being proactive and getting involved within minority groups. This includes offering reassurance and help to anyone being subjected to a Hate Crime, and signposting to outside agencies for on-going support. I engage with many different forums including the gay policing initiative and LGB&T groups.

Wiltshire police has a vision; this is to be the safest county in country. This will partly be achieved by having satisfied communities.

If you would like to speak to me regarding a Hate Crime or would like an informal chat please contact me on 01722 435249 or email me at gemma.clark@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk

(Interviewed by Shaun Lambert-Atkins, LGBT Committee member, District 1)

2011 CENSUS: A MISSED OPPORTUNITY....

The only official government figures on the numbers of lesbian, gay and bi-sexual people living in the UK come from estimates from Treasury actuaries. The figure currently stands at 6% of the adult population.

The next national census is being held on 27 March 2011 and it is a legal requirement for every household to complete. This would be an opportunity to look at the make-up of our society and establish the number of LGBT people within communities. To try and achieve this, trade unions and charities such as Stonewall have been campaigning for a 'sexual orientation' question to be included in the survey.

However the Office of National Statistics has now stated that it is unlikely that a sexual orientation question will be included in the 2011 census. It does not consider the census to be suitable for collecting this information and there are concerns about privacy and the acceptability of the question, even though information gathered on individuals is kept secret for 100 years and only aggregate statistics are published.

The information gathered during a census is used by government to help shape central and local policy and to allocate a £100 billion of public funds each year. By not asking the question LGBT groups are disadvantaged as local authorities and PCT's have no idea of the numbers of LGBT people living in their communities when allocating resources for services.

This topic was raised on several occasions at the recently held LGBT TUC conference. Maria Eagle MP agreed to speak to the ONS regarding omitting the question. We would also call on you to lobby your own MP to push for a sexual orientation question to be included in the 2011 census.

We need a true reflection of communities in the UK.

Lee James – ASLEF Equal Opportunities Administrator

Get Involved

We would like to contact as many lesbian, gay and transgender ASLEF members as we can. To do so we have a confidential database of LGBT members at Head Office so that we can get information to you directly.

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 LGBT committee representative for your district or Lee James at ASLEF Head Office on 020 7317 8600 or Ljames@aslef.org.uk and we will add your name to our mailing list. This mailing list will be treated in the strictest confidence and no information held will be divulged to branches or other members.

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



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2009



PRIDE AROUND THE UK

1 AUGUST 2009

Brighton & Hove Gay Pride Parade

2 AUGUST 2009

Leeds

8 AUGUST 2009

Cornwall

Stoke

Gloucestershire Rainbow Day

9 AUGUST 2009

Wakefield

15 AUGUST 2009

UK Black Pride

Swindon

16 AUGUST 2009

Doncaster

York

21-31 AUGUST 2009

Manchester

22 AUGUST 2009

Lincolnshire

Plymouth

29-30 AUGUST 2009

Cardiff Mardi Gras

5 SEPTEMBER 2009

Leicester

Reading

6 SEPTEMBER 2009

Essex

Scarborough

8 OCTOBER – 8 NOVEMBER 2009

Glasgay, Glasgow

1 – 30 NOVEMBER 2009

Homotopia, Liverpool

LGBT Representative Committee Contact Details

DISTRICT 1

Shaun Lambert-Atkins
07921465963
shaun.aslef@ntlworld.com

DISTRICT 2

Gary Conn
07736036086
gary.conn@virgin.net

DISTRICT 3

Darran Brown
07738285982
softnougat@msn.com

DISTRICT 4

Susan Greenwell (Secretary)
07901977688
susan.greenwell@virgin.net

DISTRICT 5

Vacant

DISTRICT 6

Angie Butler
07818087206
AngandTrac@aol.com

DISTRICT 7

Neil Adams
07879241245
neil_adams35@hotmail.com

DISTRICT 8

Ben Wallington (Chair)
07921336627
benlgbt@googlemail.com

Any lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans person can contact the committee for advice or assistance on a **STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL** basis.