

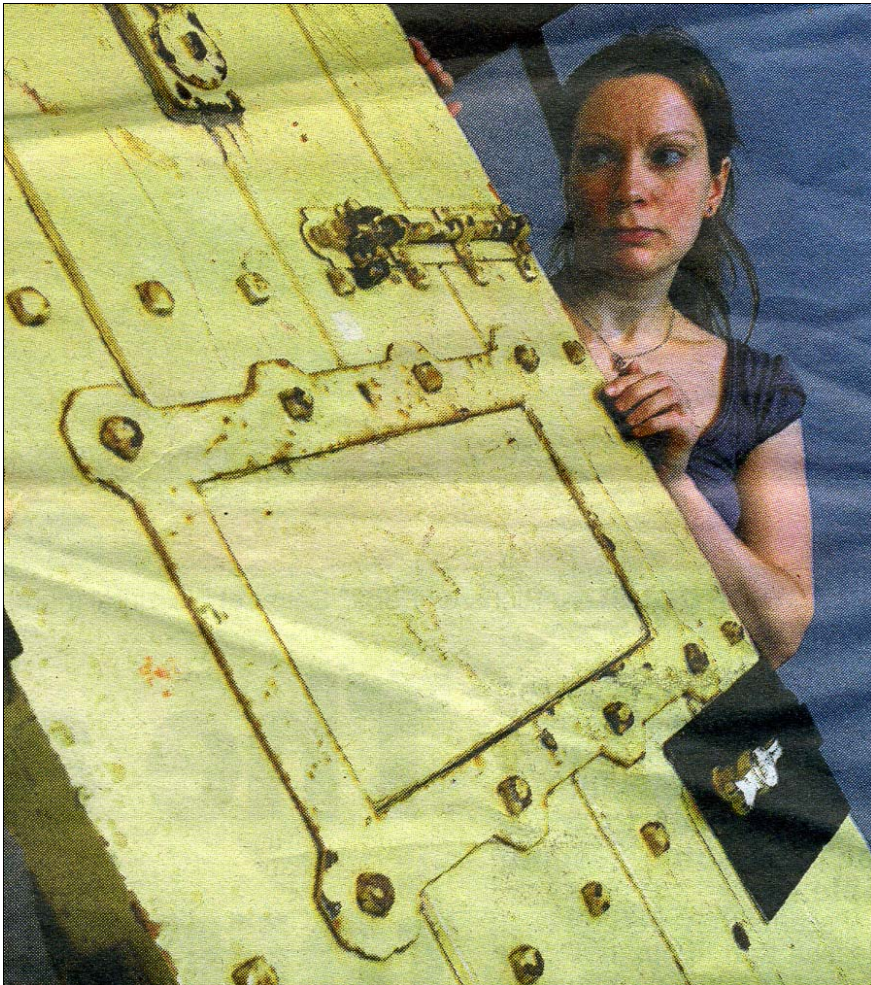
The Police



and
Us

The Galleries of Justice commemorate Oscar Wilde's release from imprisonment

Wilde's cell door is in galleries display



The Exhibition "The Downfall of Oscar Wilde" runs at the Galleries of Justice Museum until the end of March. It marks the 110th anniversary of his release from Reading Gaol.

Greeting visitors as they enter the exhibition will be postcards from celebrities who have written messages of support. They include Sir Ian McKellen, Patrick Stewart, Matt Lucas, Joanna Lumley and Paul Smith.

BEFORE 1967

You never told anyone. You couldn't defend yourself. The police, the law, the church, society, everybody was against you. It was the blackmailer's charter. I was blackmailed and I know a fellow who was blackmailed by two policemen.



Pubs in Chelsea and that area sort of alternated. You would go there one week and the following week you would find it was deserted, because rumour had got round that it was going to be a raided by the Police. Unless you were in close touch, you'd never know where to go because you didn't know where the crowd had dispersed to.

The News of the World was the worst. They used to have witch hunts. A fellow I met was in a party which was raided. They were all taken to prison. It was headlines in the News of the World. When he came out of prison, the Governor said "Watch what you're doing, you don't want to be back in here", to which he replied "I've had more in here than I do outside".



Once your name was in the paper, your job had gone, everything had gone. The only way out if you got caught ... well a lot committed suicide. The Canon told me that a man came to talk to him at the cathedral and said he was gay and his family was against him. The next night he picked up the Evening Post and read that the man had hanged himself.

Very few men dared or had the moral courage to set up home together. Mostly they lived with their parents or got married.



AFTER 1967

The 1967 Sexual Offences Act did not make an immediate difference in the attitude of many police forces.

After 1967 arrests for gay “sex offences” actually rose. Some of these arrests were a direct consequence of anomalies in the 1967 Act i.e. men were arrested because they were having sex with someone who was 19 or 20, or because they had contravened the weird definition of privacy used in the Act.

After 1967

Gay sex still illegal in Scotland and Ulster.

For sex, gay men had to be over 21, for others including lesbians, it was 16.

Gay sex illegal in locked hotel rooms

There was also the paradox that having sex as “consenting male adults in private” was OK, but the process leading up to the sex could still be a crime. This was because “chatting up” someone in a gay bar could be interpreted as “**soliciting for immoral purposes**”.

The latter offence meant that in the 1970s gay venues existed by the grace and favour of the local police force. This wasn't a problem in Nottingham, but in some parts of the country the police were heavy handed; there were instances where police noted the registration numbers of cars parked near gay venues and then went to the owners' homes and questioned them about their activities.



Gay men and lesbians were arrested for causing a “breach of the peace” for kissing in public. This law was “mocked to death”. Hundreds of lesbians and gay men informed the police that they were going along to Trafalgar Square, where, at an appointed time, the men would kiss the men and the women would kiss the women.

The police were invited to arrest everyone.

THE COTTAGE



This is a cottage. It is not a “cottage”.

This *is* a “cottage”.



In the days before gay clubs, bars, groups, internet in many parts of the country the only way that gay men could meet was by hanging around in public lavatories. The process is called “cottaging”. Research indicates that a great many of the men who use “cottages” are bisexual married men who require quick, anonymous sex.

Sex in public lavatories remains illegal, but in the pre 1967 days and for a considerable time afterwards, some police forces spent an excessive amount of time in the loo.

Occasionally, hidden cameras were set up to catch people at it, and agent provocateurs (often called “**Pretty Police**”) waved their willies at gay men and then arrested them if the men responded. These days the Police tend to post notices and issue warnings where persistent “cottaging” occurs and only arrest as a last resort.

Ben Benson's research

Ben Benson was employed by Nottingham City Council's Equal Opportunities Department from 1985 to 1987.

In the mid 1980s, Ben investigated the incidence of arrests for "cottaging" (sex in public lavatories) in Nottingham.

The statistics at first seemed a little strange. On Saturdays either there were several arrests for cottaging or none at all ... nothing in between.

The solution became clear when someone mentioned the key word "football".

On Saturdays when Nottingham Forest played at home, the Police worked at the Forest Ground. On Saturdays when Forest played away, many of the Police spent their time trawling around public lavatories.



Ben Benson

God's Copper

James Anderton is a former British police officer who served as Chief Constable of Greater Manchester from 1975 to 1991.

Anderton frequently courted public controversy with his outspoken views on policing and morality. As a professed Christian he claimed to speak with God regularly and he characterized himself to be an instrument of divine judgment.

He declared that homosexuality should be illegal, and he referred to homosexuals and those with AIDS in the following terms "I see increasing evidence of people swirling about in a human cesspit of their own making... We must ask why homosexuals freely engage in obnoxious practices, knowing the dangers involved."



LGBT Consultation

Locally we have had a Police LGBT Consultation Group since 1999. Those who attend the group's meetings are happy to state that progress has been made in many areas. Examples include:

- ♦ Seeking LGBT community members for involvement in Police training
- ♦ Consulting us over press releases
- ♦ The establishment of an 0800 no. to report homophobic incidents and setting up a mechanism for third party reporting
- ♦ Providing regular analyses of reported homophobic crimes
- ♦ Taking action about inappropriate behaviour of bar staff towards Trans people
- ♦ Communicating to us where there are situations which might put the Community at risk
- ♦ Being seen to be involved in community activities such as the annual Pride Festival (see below)



LGBT in the Police



“Staffordshire Police is the UK’s best employer for LGBT people” says Stonewall

LGBT Police in Nottinghamshire have their own OUTnetwork

The OUTnetwork is Nottinghamshire Police’s lesbian, gay and bisexual support network. The network was established to offer advice and support to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employees.



We also advise the organisation on issues relating to recruitment, retention, training and career progression of all staff. Our group is made up of volunteers, who are officers and staff of various ranks who all identify as gay or bisexual and have a wide range of life experiences.

We recognise that sexuality is private. We know that for some gay or bisexual people, coming ‘out’ is a big step, and we can support them to feel more confident about it. The network also consults widely with the gay community.



outright!

for gays lesbians & bisexuals - free

Pretty Police Exposed

If you go down to the woods today - watch out - you're likely to run into something more dangerous than the Teddy Bear's Picnic...

Nottingham 22/4/97 11.45pm

A reliable & respected community figure has just rung **outright!** with news of illegal police operations in the Nottingham area. At last we got to yell 'hold the front page!', pulling the existing lead story to bring you this late breaking news.

In the wooded area of Colwick Park popular with dog owners, adjacent to the 'Starting Gate' public house, the pretty police are at it again - allegedly.

Several local gay men have now reported plain clothes police using private rather than po-

lice cars and working a two shift system to entrap gays.

Their usual modus operandi is to expose themselves, make sexual propositions then frog-march their victims out of the woods to the waiting cars whenever they're taken up on their offers.

One of our sources reports being approached by 'an attractive young man with his flies open', who asked him, 'what are you into?' Recognising him as one of the people who arrived with the last plain clothes police shift he had no hesitation in tell-

ing the agent provocateur that he 'was into going home after his lunchtime walk'.

We have approached the local Police for their comments, asking why officers are inciting people to break the law and why they are wasting public time and money in carrying out purely cosmetic PR exercises with the gay community.

We also wonder why gay people are paying an average of £45 each every year in council tax to support a police force that abuses us.

Continued back page

...inside!

- virgin births
- transgender debate
- cottaging
- the culture
- mind & body
- out in dublin
- classifieds

& more!

Victims of this latest wave of Police Entrapment are invited to contact outright! in complete confidence 0115 9520770

Pretty Police - continued from Front Page

A spokesperson for the police said that it was true that in response to public complaints the uniformed, especially complaints from women about flashers, the uniformed operation in the area had been stepped up. As this had not had the desired effect and public complaints had increased, they had moved to a covert operation but strongly denied any that any entrapment had taken place. There have been 6 arrests so far, 2 men for indecent exposure, 3 men for gross indecency and 1 man for a sexual assault on a police officer. The officer we spoke to acknowledged that there was no heterosexual equivalent to the offence of gross indecency but said this isn't the fault of the police force - they are there to enforce the law as it stands. The onus for changing the law lies with the voters who have the power bring pressure to bear on their elected representatives for a change in existing legislation.

We are going to be contacting project working around cottaging/cruising issues in the **outright!** region over the coming weeks to check out the state of play and if any individuals want to contact outright! about this issue they can talk to a gay man on 0115 9520770 in complete confidence

Sir Adrian Fulford, High Court Judge, recalls the days of the “pretty police” in a speech at Queen Mary University in 2008.



"In my early days, I defended countless men on gross indecency and importuning charges. And I can vividly recall the raw hostility that came flooding, first in the direction of my clients and pretty quickly, my way when some of the older pin-stripped prosecutors and dinosaur judges realised not only was the defendant gay but horror of horrors also was his barrister," he said.

"To be out as a practitioner in the year 1978, which is the year I was called, was something of a rollercoaster of a ride. Some of my colleagues were fantastic, others were simply gross in their rudeness and prejudices.

"People lost jobs, families were destroyed, lives were broken by the large number of prosecutions of men for such absurdities as allegedly chatting up other men in places such as Old Brompton Rd, thereby 'persistently importuning for an immoral purpose.'

"It sounds quite ludicrous to think of those court cases now. Policemen in supposedly provocative tight t-shirts and jeans, acting effectively as agent-provocateurs along that stretch of road between the Colherne pub and the Brompton cemetery in Earls Court.

"And that was something that was repeated in every town and city, the length and breadth of the country. What a waste of time and money. What warped morality and how unbelievably destructive it was."

Harassment of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender people is a **CRIME**

0800 0 85 85 22

Homophobic Incident Reporting Line



G.534A