



Birmingham **LGBT**

**News from the Ageing Better
LGBT Hub
December 2017**



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If you would like to receive these newsletters electronically, please get in touch and I will add you to the emailing list.

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Ageing Better LGBT Hub

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Ageing Better LGBT Hub

is run by and from

Birmingham LGBT.

**The Ageing Better in
Birmingham programme**

is managed by BVSC

and funded by Big

Lottery Fund

Birmingham LGBT Christmas Day Party



Birmingham LGBT is proud to announce that, following on from last year's successful event, it will be holding its fifth annual Christmas Day party for the LGBT community.

Steph Keeble, Director at Birmingham LGBT, states that: "Christmas can be a difficult time for many LGBT people who may be estranged from their birth families. It is traditionally a very heteronormative festival with a big focus on family. For many LGBT people, the concept of family is different and it may be that their family of choice is their community. With this in mind, Birmingham LGBT will open for a community Christmas celebration on Christmas day – everyone is welcome."

Held at the LGBT Centre, between 2- 7pm on 25th December 2017, the event will include food, drink and presents. The event is provided free of charge, thanks to generous donations from community members.

If you would like to attend, please get in touch with Cecily Stevenson

(cecilystevenson@blgbt.org) or call 0121 643 0821, so we have an indication of numbers.

We can also help with transport to and from the centre within Birmingham if required.

LGBT Hub News

Postcards With A Purpose

**– December 2017 to April 2018 – Birmingham
Museum & Art Gallery**



The 'Postcards With A Purpose' exhibit – part of Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery's 'Coming Out' exhibition – has already started to interest the public. Visitors to the exhibition are invited to write any questions and comments on postcards, and members of the LGBT community will answer them; the questions and answers will become an exhibit in themselves.

The current crop of postcards include the following questions and comments:

- **Where did you go on first dates?**
- **Do you think the LGBT community is making the most of the freedom it has now?**
- **Did you have one night stands?**
- **Why do some people change their views of you after you come out?**
- **I have only recently come out as gender fluid after insisting that I was only a sis gendered woman – due to not feeling “trans” enough. What actually happened was that the trans and non binary crowd were very welcoming and that the idea of not being “enough” only came from perceptions outside the community.**
- **What emotion do you associate queer childhood with?**
- **I was bullied by homophobic people when I came out, even my friends bullied me so I had low self-confidence. Why do some people not accept others when they come out?**
- **Its beyond belief that in our recent past we could not celebrate love openly.**

Be part of Postcards With A Purpose

If you are a gay or bi man who was affected by the 1967 Act which partially decriminalised homosexuality, or you lived through the 50s and 60s and would like to share your experiences of being lesbian, gay, bi and/or trans in this era of changing rights and discrimination, would you like to take part?

We would like to hear your responses to these questions.

If you are interested, please get in touch with **Maria Hughes** by calling **0121 648 0821** or emailing **mariahughes@blgbt.org**

Active Citizenship and Community Organising Training

Saturday 13th January, 9.30am – 4.00pm

Birmingham LGBT Centre, 38-40 Holloway Circus, Birmingham B1 1EQ

"Excellent trainer – related very closely to activities in everyday life. Thank you!!"

"[I am now] More likely to consider setting up a community group."

Active citizenship is about taking steps or taking on a role within your community which improves life not just for yourself but for others. Community organising develops the capacity of people with shared interests and goals to use their passion and energy effectively and collectively to create positive change. Funded by Ageing Better, there will be an emphasis on older LGBTs but the ideas, knowledge and skills that you will develop through the training can be applied in a variety of community activities and contexts.

This workshop will look at examples from the participants' and the trainer's own experiences, in order to develop our understanding of successful citizen-led community actions. It will provide insight into how the right combination of elements such as motivation, resources, information, allies, networking and activities can result in successful outcomes. It will introduce a variety of inclusive and empowering practical methods which can promote and facilitate effective community organisation and activism. There will be an opportunity to develop action plans around specific community issues or ideas brought to the group by participants.

Lunch is provided.

If you are interested in attending, please contact Maria Hughes on 0121 643 0821 or email mariahughes@blgbt.org.

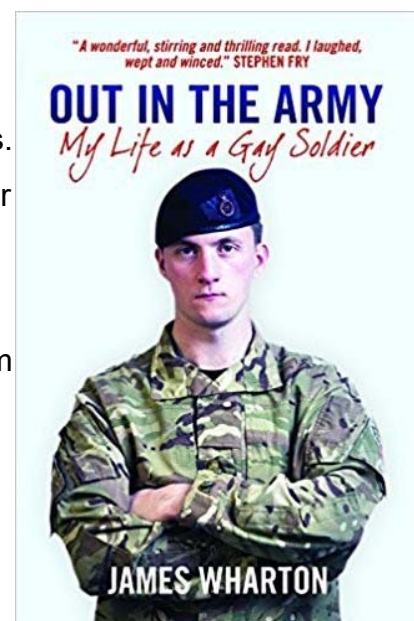
If you are interested, please get in touch with **Maria Hughes** by calling **0121 648 0821** or emailing mariahughes@blgbt.org

Ageing Better Group Feedback

Bards & Books meet the author

At the November meeting of Bards and Books, we were delighted that the author of our scheduled book for that month was able to join us. James Wharton, author of “Out in the Army: My Life as a Gay Soldier”, is about to become [Wellbeing]. The November meeting marked the fourth birthday of the group and this was celebrated by a cake provided by Jonathan Haden, the first chairperson of Bards and Books. The cake was cut as part of a buffet lunch shared by Bards and Books members and by members of Rainbow Bridge, in the café area.

After dealing with the group’s administration issues and some preliminary discussion of the book, we were joined by the author who was therefore able to answer members’ questions. A very interesting discussion followed which developed further many aspects of what is described in the book, for example, his reasons for writing the book, about being gay in the army and why he thought he experienced relatively little antagonism from fellow soldiers, particularly given the army’s history in relation to LGBT issues. He was asked about the problems around adjusting to life outside the army when previously the army had controlled every aspect of a soldier’s life. James commented that he did not feel that the army did enough to support ex-soldiers and there was some discussion of this view.



Members commented to James that they had found his account to be very frank. The session with James closed with members sharing why the LGBT centre was important to them, which James asked about as he is moving into his new role.

Bards & Books will meet next on January 8th 2018 (as the first Monday is New Year's Day) to discuss "Carol" by Patricia Highsmith – might be found as "The Price of Salt" (the original title) under the pseudonym Claire Morgan. This is about the relationship between a naïve shop assistant and a wealthy married woman – it explores the problem of lesbian relationships in 1950s Manhattan but with an unexpected ending in lesbian fiction of the time.

Get in touch to find out more: bardsandbooks@gmail.com

Ideas Board

This is a round-up of ideas we've been sent over 2017:

Women's Group: 'Queer WI' – this is now a group: **Queer Women's Skill Share (QWSS)**. Contact midlandsqwss@gmail.com to find out more!

A watercolour classes group - if you attended the Pink Sou'westers watercolour class event and you'd like to continue painting as a group, please get in touch with Maria (see contact details below)

Introduction to Ballet for the over-50s

Hospital Visitors for LGBT patients

Stress busting

Vinyl Record Club

Cards Games & Games 'Night'

A 'Coming Out' group

An ex-military LGBT veterans group

Are you interested in any of these ideas? Do you have an idea of a group or activity you'd like to take part in? Get in touch with your ideas! You might be inspired to set one up yourself, with financial and practical support from the Ageing Better LGBT Hub (see below).

Get in touch: **Maria** on **0121 648 0821** or **mariahughes@blgbt.org**

Ageing Better Fund

Have you been inspired by the activities you've seen in this newsletter?

If you need resources to run group activities, you can apply to the Ageing Better Fund.

Unlike the requirements of a lot of other small funds, the group doesn't need to be 'formally constituted' or have a bank account. What it does need is a good idea which is costed out and the support of three or four people aged 50 or over who agree they would take part in the funded events.

Contact Maria to discuss what you need to complete the application.

Forthcoming deadlines for applications to the Ageing Better Fund:

- Thursday 4th January
- Wednesday 14th February
- Monday 12th March

You can also find out more about the Ageing Better Fund here:

<https://www.ageingbetterinbirmingham.co.uk/fund>

Opportunities in the Community

Activate

Birmingham LGBT Centre hosts a series of weekly fitness classes and we would love you to join us for them. Classes are suitable for all levels of fitness.

Pilates take place on Wednesday mornings at 8.

There are three **yoga** classes: Tuesdays at 11am and Fridays at 5:30pm for beginners, Fridays at 6:45pm for improvers.

Boxercise is on Sundays at 2:30pm.

And our Monday **whole body workout session** starts at 6pm.

These classes are taught by experienced professional instructors and take place in our on site private fitness studio, 'the Vault'.

You don't have to book in advance or commit to coming regularly and the classes are free. It's a good idea to turn up a little early the first time.

There are a few changes to the timetable around the bank holidays – you can see these on our website <http://blgbt.org/festivefitness>, ask us by email, activate@blgbt.org or follow us on Twitter <https://twitter.com/birminghamlgbt> (which is also good for any unavoidable last-minute changes to classes which occasionally occur).

All activities are suitable for all abilities, but if you have a disability or any concern which might affect your participation, or any questions at all, you can get in touch on activate@blgbt.org

Why wait for New Year's resolutions – get ahead of the game by starting good habits in December!



Yoga is a great way to nurture your body, mind and breath, offering far more than just a physical work out. Anna's beginner classes (Tuesdays 11am, Fridays 5:30pm) offer an introduction into the different components of yoga and her progression group (Fridays 6:45pm)

supports those who already have some experience of yoga to continue to develop their practice.

Get Involved



**stay updated
get involved**

LGBT+ Independent Reference Group

West Midlands Police LGBT+ Network is in the process of establishing an independent reference group and we're looking for expressions of interest from residents across the West Midlands area who may want to take part.

The purpose of the reference group primarily will be to:

- Provide two-way dialogue between members of the LGBT+ community and the police service
- Share details of changes to policing under the WMP2020 programme
- Mobilise and enable active citizens to work in partnership with the police and other agencies to tackle the issues that concern the LGBT+ community
- Provide transparency around cases of hate crime and same sex domestic abuse (where appropriate and sanitised) either to identify learning or share good news stories.

At this stage we are simply seeking expressions of interest, so please don't feel that a reply is committing you to anything at this stage. This is a purely voluntary role, and it's

envisaged that meetings will take place quarterly and in the evenings at various locations around the West Midlands.

Please contact **Gary Stack** on **0345 113 5000 Ext. 801 1618** or **lgbt@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk** with any questions.

Get involved in an LGBT+ and dementia project

The Innovation Team at Alzheimer's Society are leading a project on LGBT+ and dementia and are looking to engage with people affected by dementia within LGBT+ communities. This would involve helping to prioritise which of the key areas of need and challenges to focus on, and then to look at designing solutions together from February 2018.

If you would like to be involved or know of anyone who would be interested, please get in touch with **Natasha Howard** in the Innovation Team (Research and Development) at Alzheimer's Society on **natasha.howard@alzheimers.org.uk** or via phone (**Landline: 020 7423 3512 and Mobile: 07710380004**).

The last word . . .



Remember - you don't have to be alone at Christmas. Come and join us at Birmingham LGBT Centre.

"There are millions of people in this country who are suffering right now, forgotten by society and rejected by their families right at the time they need them most.

As you grow up you learn that life isn't a gravy advert, sadly."

taken from: **The Christmas my family rejected me**, by Paris Lees

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/dec/24/christmas-family-rejected-me>