

Bournemouth 2011

OUTtalk



IN THIS ISSUE...

LGBT and English Defence League

Will there be a gay marriage?

Bournemouth Map and Guide

© OUTtalk 2011

OUTtalk is the newsletter of the Communication Workers Union's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Advisory Committee. The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the union, the committee or the editorial team. If you have any items you would like published in the newsletter, please send them to:

CWU, Equal Opportunities Department, 150 The Broadway, Wimbledon, London SW19 1RX or email: equality@cwu.org

Edited by Duncan Strivens.

www.cwu.org 020 8971 7200

03228 Published by the Communication Workers Union 2011

ED'S TALK

Here we are again back in Bournemouth and our latest edition of *OUTtalk*.

The LGBTAC are planning both a fringe meeting and social night out on Tuesday evening, after conference has finished, please visit the equal opportunities stand and pick up a flyer for full details.

In this edition

Front Cover: Maria Exall, Billy Hayes, Angela Eagle MP, Linda Roy and TUC General Secretary; Brendon Barber join forces to launch this years Homophobia V Football campaign.

A number of photos throughout the publication were taken by Laurie Smith at the TUC March and Rally for an Alternative, on March 26th 2011. The march was attended by members of committee and friends, joining the rest of the CWU.

Page 3: Maria asks the question, will there ever be gay marriage in the UK?

Pages 4 & 5: Guest writer Gary Williams brings us up to speed with world events

Page 6: Merlin Reader joined the committee this year, and writes for the first time in *OUTtalk*, on the disturbing facts of LGBT factions within the English Defence League (EDL).

Page 7: Our National Equality Officer: Linda Roy explains how she is seeking to extend the equality agenda in the CWU.

Page 8: Laurie also writes about services to LGBT people and the implications to the Bed and Breakfast industry.



Page 9: James Dovey describes his first visit to our LGBT conference, which was held in London last year.

Pages 10 & 11: Fevzi and Dave update us on the progress of tackling homophobia in sport.

Back Cover: Going Green, I've recycled my last years LGBT guide to Bournemouth

Useful dates for your diary

Limited visitors tickets to this year's TUC LGBT conference which is 30th to 31st June 2011 are available for the equal opportunities department, costs have to be funded by your own branch, e-mail equality@cwu.org for details.

The provisional date and venue of this year's CWU LGBT conference is Saturday 12th November 2011 in Birmingham, keep and eye out for the LTB.

Have a good Conference...
Duncan Strivens Editor

The CWU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Advisory Committee 2011

Chair
Vice Chair
OUTtalk Editor
E-mail

Dave Daniel
Duncan Strivens
Duncan Strivens
equality@cwu.org

Dave Daniel
Karl Edwards
Michelle laidlaw
Merlin Reader

POSTAL
Grampian & Shetland Amal
Leeds No.1 Amal
Harrow & District
Mount Pleasant

Maria Exall
Lesley McLean
Karen Rose

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
Greater London Combined
Romford Amal
South Wales

John Irwin
Linda Kietz

CLERICAL
Manchester Clerical
West London

Laurie Smith
Duncan Strivens
Rob McCracken

ENGINEERING
Greater London Combined
London South East Branch
Capital

Linda Roy
Fevzi Hussein

HEAD OFFICE
National Equality Officer
Equality Department

WILL THERE BE GAY MARRIAGE?

There has been much wild speculation in the press about whether there will be legislation to introduce "Gay Marriage" in the UK. To work out what may happen in the future it is useful to start by explaining how the current legislation applies to same sex couples. Since 2005, when Civil Partnerships (CPs) were introduced, same sex couples have been entitled to exactly the same legal rights and financial privileges as heterosexual people who have a Civil Marriage. However the law and regulations concerning religious marriage ceremonies are untouched by the CP legislation. This is because the previous Labour Government wanted to give equal rights to lesbian and gay couples but wanted to avoid a fight with religious leaders on the matter.

However the most recent legislation on this issue, Labour peer Lord Ali's amendment to the 2010 Equality Act, allows Civil Partnerships to take place in religious buildings and is due to be enacted soon. However it is unlikely this will "force" any religious denomination to do this if they don't want to. At the moment only the Quakers, the Unitarian Church and the Metropolitan Community Church have said they will. There are many people who attend other Churches and places of worship who would also like to be able to have Civil Partnership 'blessings' but their religious leaders are all resisting the change. There needs to be progressive change within these religious organisations to take things forward.

The current Coalition Government are making a virtue out of necessity by announcing a review of Civil Partnerships and Marriage legislation on the back of their implementation of the Lord Ali amendment, which has already been passed under the Labour Government. Cameron's Tories have decided, for the present, that they will not roll back the progressive LGBT legislation brought in by Labour because it has proved popular. However the vast majority of the Tory Party in Parliament opposed the legislative changes in 1990s and 2000s so we should be aware that though Theresa May makes positive noises on LGBT rights it is unlikely they would be prepared to push ahead with anything contentious. There does not appear to be any serious intent to legislate on changes to the CP/marriage legislation other than the Ali amendment in this present parliamentary session.

Despite the equal status of CPs and marriage there are a couple of anomalies resulting from the current legislation – one concerns public sector pensions and the other the situation for trans people. Although CPs and marriage both give access to public sector pension schemes, partners in CPs have access based on the model for widowers, not widows, and hence only have rights from 1988. This means that same sex partners (and heterosexual widowers) whose partners have longer pension contributions lose out. This is a subject of legal challenge in the European Court though



when the CP legislation was brought in this anomaly was accepted by unions in the public sector at the time.

The situation for trans people who wish to enter a Civil Partnership is the same as for everyone else. A problem occurs when someone who is already married transitions to another gender. In order to gain the same rights a trans person who is already married has to divorce their wife/husband and then enter a CP with them. This is ridiculous, and it is also deeply distressing and inhuman. There must be a better way.

The only difference between the Civil Marriage and Civil Partnership legislation concerns the definition of consummation! This is not defined in Civil Partnership legislation, whereas it is in marriage – marriage being a sexual contract. Many people see this aspect of marriage legislation as outdated and would welcome Civil Partnerships being available to all couples whether straight or LGB. However to achieve this would mean taking on the political power of the Churches which, at present, want to keep a strict divide between heterosexual commitment in marriage and any commitment made by same sex couples. It is all a bit pathetic really as both marriage and Civil partnerships give you the same rights. What's in a name?

Since 2005 the families and friends of many LGBT couples have happily celebrated with them their love and commitment – and this has changed our society for the better. Soon many LGBT people will be able to celebrate their partnerships in a Church setting. We are on our way to a broader and more diverse understanding of the nature of human love, something that benefits us as LGBT people and society as a whole.

Maria Exall Greater London Combined

TUC MARCH FOR AN ALTERNATIVE

On Saturday 26th March the streets of London were filled with hundreds of thousands of people in the biggest protest yet against the Con-Dem Coalition's slash and burn cuts. Women, men and children from across Britain made their voices heard proclaiming their opposition to the government's vindictive cuts programme.

Setting off from Embankment, trade union members and their families, were joined by youth groups, pensioner organisations, women's groups, individuals and collectives. Banners from LGBT sections in the NUS, RMT, CWU and others were proudly, if slowly, carried towards Hyde Park to demonstrate the opposition to cuts that will devastate charities and support groups for LGBT people. It's days like that which make you proud to be a member of the trade union movement and illustrates how widespread the Tory assault on the people is.

Gary Williams Solent



IDAHO UPDATE

Uganda

Reports from Uganda say the country's anti-homosexuality bill has been dropped. The legislation would have reinforced Uganda's current laws against gay sex but it has been reported that the government has intervened. However it appears another bill is being considered that would cover much of the provisions in the anti-homosexuality bill. MP David Bahati, original sponsor of the bill, said he had been assured by that debate would still go ahead.

Spain

On March 20th the Mayor of Barcelona dedicated a granite triangle framed in pink in the city's central Ciutadella Park where the Catalan Parliament is located. The triangular slab has an inscription in Catalan that reads, "In memory of the gays, lesbians and transexual persons who have suffered persecution and repression throughout history, Barcelona 2011." "This is a necessary monument to remember the discrimination, repression, humiliation, persecution, attacks, and assassinations that the LGTB community suffered for centuries and very especially during the Franco dictatorship," said Antonio Guirado, secretary general of the Catalanian LGBT umbrella group Gay Lesbian Coordinator. "It is an act of justice and reparation but also will become a permanent symbol of the commitment of the city of Barcelona in the fight against homophobia."

Barcelona is the third Spanish city to publicly recognise LGBT people. The city of Gijón is creating a park called "June 28th, Gay Pride Day" alongside the Montevil soccer field. And in La Coruña a street is to be renamed after the late gay activist Tomás Fábregas, who emigrated to the U.S. at age 21 and was active in the fight against the U.S. ban on HIV-positive foreign visitors and immigrants, which was finally repealed in 2009.



Under the dictatorship of General Franco thousands of people suffered for being gay. Franco's government sent gay people to mental hospitals, known as "correction camps", tortured, imprisoned and otherwise persecuted them. Many homosexuals were prevented from working because of their "criminal" records, meaning they never contributed enough money to receive more than the minimum state pension. With echoes of the Nazi atrocities against gays, they were given electric shocks in the belief that this would rid them of their urges, as the nationalist, Catholic ideals of the Franco regime considered homosexuals a threat to the "macho" Spanish male.

Jail terms of up to three years were imposed under laws covering "public scandal" or "social danger". Lower middle class or working-class gays without powerful friends in the regime to protect them were the main victims. For others, the situation was different and it was reported that it was not uncommon to hear homosexuals from the upper classes and the aristocracy speak about the Franco period as a great time.

Even after Franco died, persecution of gays continued. They could be jailed until 1979. And although thousands of political and other prisoners were pardoned in 1976, gay people were made to serve their sentences. In 2001, Spain finally pledged to wipe clean the criminal records of gays convicted under Franco.

The present Socialist government legalised same-sex weddings and gay adoption in 2005, against opposition from the conservative opposition and the Roman Catholic Church. In November 2006 Zapatero's government passed a law that allows transgendered persons to register under their preferred sex in public documents without undergoing prior surgical change. The law on assisted reproduction was also amended in 2006: children born within a lesbian marriage for in vitro fertilisation treatment can be legally recognized by the non-biological mother. Soon after the same-sex marriage bill became law, a member of the Guardia Civil, a military police force, married his lifelong partner, prompting the organization to allow same-sex partners to cohabit in the barracks, the first police force in Europe to accommodate a same-sex partner in a military installation. In 2007 the government were set to offer a one-time payment of approximately \$17,000 and a \$1,000 monthly pension to the gays that were imprisoned and tortured.

Homophobia

Whilst encountering homophobia is in some ways expected when it comes to villages and small towns around the UK, in cities like London with its diverse make up and prominent gay communities, such attacks would seem less likely. In fact the reverse appears to be true.

Whilst staying in London last month as a delegate to the CWU Black Workers conference my partner and I went out in the evening for a few drinks. On walking back to our hotel we were followed and subjected to homophobic abuse by a group of young men. They eventually walked off as we neared the London Eye. Whilst intimidating in itself neither of us was physically harmed but it was a

stark reminder that such prejudice can happen anywhere and that homophobia is still seen as acceptable by some, regardless of their age.

In February new figures showed that reported anti-gay hate incidents in London had risen by 28 per cent in the last four years. In the same month a gay man was stabbed in north London, one teenager has been charged with grievous bodily harm with intent and three other suspects – aged 16, 17 and 18 – are on bail. Their victim was attacked in the early hours of the morning as he walked near Camden Lock Bridge with two friends after a night out in gay pub The Black Cap. Police say the victim was asked if he was gay by one of the men, who he ignored. Minutes later, one of the group returned and stabbed him in the leg and chest. The victim is understood to be recovering well.

Despite every advance in LGBT rights, physical violence, 'gay bashing' remains a real threat and verbal abuse continues to be a typical experience for LGBT people, at work, in school or college, in the street or even in their own homes. So much work remains to be done. I hope the LGBT Advisory Committee will continue in the work they do but I would urge branches to also consider how they can help to educate and explain to members the issues. All too often the impact language can have is overlooked, calling someone or something 'gay' may not seem important, but it reinforces the belief it is okay to use pejorative terms and that it is somehow acceptable. It isn't.

Gary Williams

Solent



LGBT IN THE ENGLISH DEFENCE LEAGUE?



The English Defence League have a record of violence where they have organised unopposed. They claim to be anti 'muslim extremism', but in practice when they get together any non-white people are liable to be attacked. A Sikh temple was attacked during their march in Dudley last year – although a Sikh EDL member (one of very few) claims it was a Hindu temple, and that 'older EDL members know the difference between Sikhs and Muslims'. Which shows their basic racism, and the fact that this apologist doesn't mind racist attacks on Hindus as well as Muslims.

The EDL claim to have an LGBT section. However, this rings a bit hollow when one of them is beaten up in a homophobic attack by other EDL members after talking to them in a pub, then posts his account on one of the discussion pages.

There is an attempt, unfortunately aided by many in the Liberal establishment, to portray muslims as more homophobic than non-muslims. However, recent court cases in the UK where LGBT people have been refused services have been defended by Christians (fortunately without much success) and often largely funded by Christian organisations.

An article by the commentator Johann Hari in February claimed that muslims were more homophobic, and that Tower Hamlets in East London (with a large muslim population) had the highest increase in homophobic attacks in London, which isn't true. A much higher rise, and overall total, was recorded in nearby Islington (71 to 73 in TH, 81 to 132 in Islington, Met Police figures). This is not to say there are no attacks, and these are unacceptable, but to fail to put the facts into context is plain islamophobia. This type of scapegoating is something LGBT people should be wary of

the equating of 'gay male' with 'sexual abuser' (or 'deviant') was 'common sense' for a long time in the UK.

Whilst many people with bigoted views justify them as religious beliefs, the pressure to be 'normal' is not specific to any religion. The mainstream newspapers that bemoan the 'breakup' of the 'traditional family' are not printed by religious organisations. These papers have often been critical of legal decisions not to allow discrimination against LGBT people. The notorious "No asylum if you're Gay" type headlines in the Mail, Express and Star last year are bigoted – yes, racist – yes, edited, published and sold throughout the country by 'Islamist organisations'? Er, no.

Yet blaming immigrants or any minority for society's problems has always been convenient for those who run society in times of economic crisis. It can appear easier for ordinary people in difficult circumstances to go along with this – it isn't possible for workers to create jobs or housing in this society, unless we are paid to by the landowners, industrialists and developers. Coming together to force them to build houses and create good jobs is a way of breaking down these barriers. I faced homophobic abuse from my colleagues when I was outed in a previous job, but when I was sacked everyone supported me, I got my job back and the abuse died down.

The EDL, and some liberal commentators, seek to blame one group of oppressed people in the UK – Muslims – for the oppression of LGBT people. We need to stand together to fight all oppression.

Merlin Reader
Mount Pleasant

SERVICES AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF SOME



In the middle of January a case of discrimination in the provision of goods and services to a Gay couple, found that indeed the law had been broken when the B&B owners refused the gay couple a bed.

Now the facts of the case have been well aired, much speculation, (denied by the couple), about it being a deliberate attempt to entrap the B&B owners has been mooted, and a lot of mud has been thrown into the water generally. So what is the real situation and what are the implications?

In the 1960s there were a whole load of hotels, jobs, clubs and the like which would not permit black or other ethnic groups to have equal access to work or accommodation and this was deplored. We could have a whole discussion around the politics of this but at the end of it all, we had the first race relations acts and society has, for the most part, moved on. Though we know there are still racists out there, and indeed perhaps on the increase, we would not possibly countenance the open flaunting of such views in signage such as "No Blacks" or "No Irish" in 2011.

This is very useful, as I well remember a situation I was in when I wanted to travel to see the Eden Project in Cornwall with my then partner. Looking for a place to stay we found there were no local "chain hotels" in the area and so we were forced into looking at small, privately run affairs, like the one involved in the above case. So I had to come out on the phone to the people running the hotel or risk experiencing the same situation that couple did, only in those days it was still legal to discriminate! I was lucky, my hotel owners were not bigots, and we were welcomed, and had a very nice stay; but there was no guarantee of that.

I've often heard it said by folk that they don't care about people being gay, but wish we would stop going on about it, or forcing it down their throat; well this law actually does mean I don't have to talk to people about being gay or imply what might or might not go on in a bed inside a hotel room!

We are told by the religious side of the argument, again and again, like a mantra, until we start to believe it, that their rights are being infringed, that it's a "battle of rights", and the law keeps coming down on the side of their enemy and they are suffering, becoming the victims, and being marginalised.

In fact they are not. Their right to rent a room in a hotel or B&B is not under threat, they have no less right to go to church, they are not being made to share their accommodation with a gay couple even, as some have tried to suggest. They have every right to exclude gay people from that accommodation as do all bigots. The fact is, every Hotel or B&B I've stayed in in the last 50 years has at least one or more "Private" signs separating the "public" areas of their hotel from that private flat or rooms.

If on the other hand you are renting out only a room, and are sharing kitchen/bathroom and other facilities then you have a lodger, not a hotel guest, and you can discriminate; and indeed even in 2011 still discriminate against "blacks, Irish and gypsies" as well; exactly as though we were still in the 1950s!

So why should hotel owners have to allow LGBT people access to their hotel? Because that's the price you pay for running a service, a hotel in our fair society, just as you have to allow people to stay regardless of race, as you should have to allow people to stay in such a hotel regardless of their religion: and that is the equivalent right, not a right to be prejudiced!

Anything else is madness – or are we saying it should be ok to exclude people of a different race if your (obscure) religion said so. Or ok to run an unhygienic kitchen if your religion said you should not kill cockroaches etc because all life is sacred? No, if you choose to run a public business you have to abide by the laws on how you should run it, and that includes not discriminating – if you don't like that, go and earn money some other way.

We have already seen people, all financed by Christian lobbyists such as the Christian Institute, trying to exclude "Christian" adoption agencies from the law, take cases to Employment Tribunals claiming the Christian involved should have the right to choose who they marry, or council in their relationships, and now hoteliers claiming they should be able to choose who they graciously allow to stay in their commercial hotel.

Where next? Well recently the BBC reported the case of a podiatrist who refused to treat gay people in Peterborough!

It is one of the fears of LGBT people that as the government outsources or privatises services to save money that this will increasingly be taken on by groups with a "religious ethic" and

E BED AND BREAKFAST

then those cases we have seen thus far, will seem like the tip of the iceberg.

Now here I do have to starkly put this before people start saying I hate all Christians or some other equal nonsense. My view is very clear, I am an atheist I do not believe in god and have not since I was 10 and started to think for myself, and I have never felt the need to believe in a god since. However I do believe that Jesus existed and that a lot of good has been done, and continues to be done, in his name by people who do believe. However, I will not allow the fact that there are good and loving people doing this work stop me from condemning those who use his name to proclaim evil and prejudice.

Homophobic crime in London is on the increase, in March 2009 a man was murdered in Bickley, another was beaten up and killed in Trafalgar Square in the September, in February this year a gay man was stabbed in Camden, these things don't just happen, the perpetrators are egged on by the hate and prejudice they see around them. The last voices these people heard were hatred and condemnation of them for their sexuality. We hope that the reported increase in homophobic violence is just people being more confident to report it; but the murders are worrying.

And one final thought. I do find it ironic that a group formed to follow the philosophy of a man who told people to only throw stones when they were without sin, who told people to love one another and who was born in a stable because there was no room at the inn, should think it a good idea to exclude people from their hospitality in his name!

Laurie Smith

Greater London Combined



Photo of Laurie by Simon Alford

2010 LGBT CONFERENCE: **JAMES DOVEY**



James Dovey and Lesley McLean

Firstly I'd like to thank the LGBT Committee for the warm welcome I received at this year's conference. I met some amazing people on the day and also got the chance to catch up with some CWU faces that I haven't seen for a while. Being my first conference I was somewhat hesitant to say the least! I've been to pride events in the past which have normally involved copious amounts of drinking and not a lot else.

Conference gave me the opportunity to listen to issues facing other members, learn a significant amount about workplace equality for LGBT people and look at how, as a manager, I could implement this in my own working environment.

The guest speakers were second to none and couldn't be faulted, from rights for sex workers to bisexuality; I was on the edge of my seat with anticipation and literally hanging onto their every word.

I owe a personal thank you to Lesley McLean, NEC Member, for the invitation to conference, for her continued support and for generally being someone to talk to when it seems the rest of the world is on your back!

I look forward to returning next year and meeting many more faces.

*** James, 21, is a CWU member who lives in Essex, and works as a Member Relations Manager for Esporta Health Clubs.**

ARE THE SANDS OF TIME SHIFTING AT LAST?



The last time we wrote to update you all on the work of the group in relation to Tackling Homophobia in Sport, there have been some quite amazing developments. Here is a brief update for you...

CWU's Campaign to have a day of action:

I think unfortunately we have had to throw in the towel in terms of doing something with the GFSN [Gay Football Supporters Network] as they have had real problems getting their structures up and running. However, it is not all bad news on this one, as we have teamed up with the Justin Campaign and we are aiming to do something on the weekend of the 7th May 2011, hopefully around various grounds in the United Kingdom. Watch this space.



Homophobia V Football Campaign:

On the 16th February 2011, Linda Roy, Billy Hayes and Brendon Barber joined forces with Lindsey England to launch this year's Homophobia V Football campaign. Supportive statements were also received from the FA and UEFA. There is still a huge problem with homophobia in football – so much so that it makes for a very intimidating environment for footballers to come out.



Sepp Blatter number uno ***T:

Sepp Blatter has put his foot in it again. When you get the head of world football making disparaging comments about gay people what chance have gay footballers got of being accepted in their choice of work? When the venue of the 2022 World Cup was confirmed as Qatar, it did not take long for questions to begin circulating as to Qatar's tolerance levels towards issues such as alcohol consumption and their attitude towards the LGBT community. When the question was posed to Sepp Blatter: "What about the laws on homosexuality in Qatar?" Blatter replied: "Gay people will have to refrain from sex while they are in Qatar!" His comments

drew a sharp response from LGBT activists who were all universal in their calls for his resignation. Unfortunately he is still in post as I write this article!



Anton Hysen comes out:

This is the really big news. Even though no-one will have heard of Anton, it was welcome news recently when he announced he had had enough of being secretive about his sexuality and was coming out. Anton is a professional footballer who plays in the Swedish 2nd Division with Utsiktens BK defender was quoted as saying "It is completely strange, isn't it? It's all f***d up. Where the hell are all the others? No one is coming out." He is the first Swedish footballer to come out and only the 2nd ever to come out at all. The first being Justin Fashanu. His father was a star with the Liverpool team in the 80s and it was good to see such open support being given to his son. To read an article on Anton coming out please use the following link [NB. Please be aware that there is reference to the 'F' word in the article]. <http://www.autostraddle.com/on-anton-hysen-coming-outand-why-this-is-a-bfd-even-if-you-hate-soccer-80119/>

So, as you can see there has been a very busy period of developments since we last wrote on the *Homophobia V Sport* ticket. I sincerely hope that the decision of Anton will spur more young gay footballers to come out. There is no room for Homophobia in Football – there is no room for Homophobia in society.

Adios amigos!

Fevzi Hussein



TORMENTED CYCLING HERO GRAEME OBREE

Tackling homophobia in sport has long been one of the priorities of the LGBTAC (see the update by Fevzi), so obviously we were excited when in December 2009 Gareth Thomas announced publicly that he was gay. This was a very brave move by Gareth – not only the first gay man in a major team sport to come out of the closet, but that team sport was rugby with one of the most macho images imaginable.

The scenario played out as if it had been scripted by us – Gareth came across as an incredibly likeable chap, articulate and down-to-earth, the reactions from media and fans were almost 100% positive and it looked as if at last we might be in for a flood of gay sportsmen coming out.

Well, there wasn't exactly a torrent but in a fairly short period of time we saw England Wicketkeeper Steven Davies become the first active professional cricketer to come out, and Graeme Obree Scottish cycling champion came out in, of all places, *The Sun*.

The facts in each case were very different. The 24 year old Davies received widespread positive publicity, received support from his England team-mates and management and in interviews came across as very comfortable with who he was – and happy to say so in public. To come out had been tough, as it is for all of us, but his experiences seem to have been comparatively painless.

On the other hand the 45 year-old Obree, who has twice won the World individual pursuit title and also twice broken the World hour record, received little publicity. Type "Obree" into a search engine and the initial results contain nothing to suggest he is gay. Even his own website only refers to "an important announcement" and contains a link to the *Scottish Sun*, which shows the sensational way in which the news was presented:

"TORMENTED cycling hero Graeme Obree has told how he was once so distraught at realising he was gay he wished he was DEAD. World record racer Obree, 45, today finally reveals his secret torment to the public after years of agonising over his sexuality".

It goes on to report on how the married father twice attempted suicide as he struggled to accept his sexual orientation.

Obree's experience, not only of being gay but also the process of coming out, seems to have been deeply traumatic and a far cry from that of Steven Davies. More recently, as also discussed in Fevzi's article, Anton Hysen became the first Swedish footballer at a high level to come out. His father is the former Liverpool defender Glenn Hysen (which may partly explain the high profile the news received in the UK) who gave the opening speech of the 2007 Pride Festival in



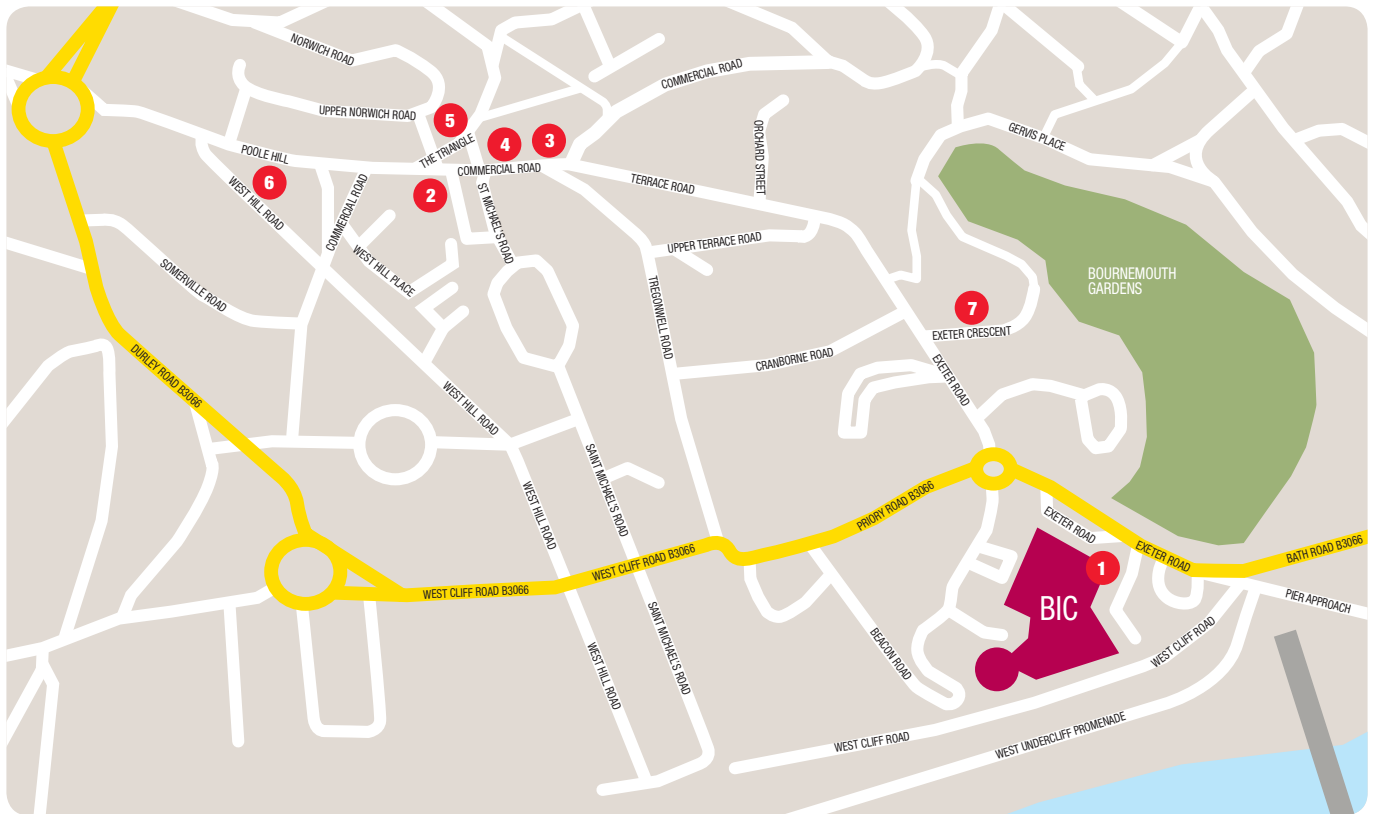
Stockholm. Hysen has been widely praised for his decision to come out but there has, inevitably, even in Sweden, been some adverse reaction. Swedish channel four had to pull their online article on Hysen because of the amount of abuse the player was getting.

So, all in all it's starting to look like professional sportsmen (and it is men) are finally making the move to saying "it's ok to be gay in sport". Although it is harder for people of Graeme Obree's generation it is surely a sign of the progress we've made that for younger people it's much less of a deal. Remember that the only previous professional soccer player to come out was Justin Fashanu and we're all aware of the tragic outcome in that case.

It is to be hoped that the example set by the likes of Gareth (one of the subjects of the pull-ups produced by the Equality Department), Graeme, Steven and Anton, and the reaction to their coming out, will inspire the many other gay sportspeople to take that final step. I'll leave the last words to the 20 year-old Anton Hysen:

"Me coming out may have a bearing on my career [but that is a risk I am prepared to take]. There are people who can't deal with homosexuals. A club may be interested to sign me but then the coach finds out that I am gay and doesn't want to sign me anymore. That could happen, but then it is their problem. I may not play in the top flight but I still want to show that it isn't such a big deal. I am a footballer – and I am gay. If I perform as a footballer, then I don't think it matters if I like boys or girls".

Dave Daniel
Grampian & Shetland Amal



LGBT BOURNEMOUTH 2011

1 Bournemouth International Centre

It launched in 2008 and has become a firm favourite with the locals ever since. They have some great drink promotions, live acts and 2 bars and 2 dance floors with some top local DJs.

2 The Branksome

has become one of Bournemouth's most well known gay venues. With a large beer garden (the only one in Bournemouth town centre), 3 bars and regular entertainment, The Branksome is popular every day and night of the week. Weekly cabaret, competitions, drinks promotions and theme nights.

3 The Bakers Arms

is a long standing gay pub in the Triangle area. Steve, Mike and the staff will make you welcome. It's popular with a mixed crowd and a warm welcome is assured. A great place to unwind after the beach, shopping & to meet up with friends for a drink or two. Food is served from noon until 4pm daily, until 5pm on Saturdays and on Sundays they offer a traditional roast lunch from 12noon-4pm.

4 2930 The Triangle

37 is Bournemouth's largest gay club. It launched in 2008 and has become a firm favourite with the locals ever since. They have some great drink promotions, live acts and 2 bars and 2 dance floors with some top local DJs.

5 The Xchange

is one of the longest running gay pubs/clubs on the South Coast. It has had a number of incarnations in it's time including 'telephone bar' and 'wine bar'. However after a recent refit it's now a great looking gay bar and club. It has a large bar and an extended dance floor with a great sound system, it's a popular venue and it's not unusual to see queues at the weekend.

EDITOR'S RECOMMENDED REAL ALE PUBS



6 The Goat & Tricycle Pub,

27-29 Westhill Road, Bournemouth. Although not a 'gay' venue The Goat and Tricycle is very gay friendly pub. It's a traditional real ale pub, with a huge range of hand pulled real ales including the Wadworth classics which are always available and there are up to 11 Guest ales which change every 2-3 days, so there is always plenty of variety to choose from. Situated in Westhill Road which is about 400 yards from Bournemouth town centre in an area known as The Triangle, they also serve a range of home cooked food.

7 The Moon in the Square

4-8 Exeter Road Bournemouth. A favourite JD Wetherspoon's pub amongst CWU Delegates. A short walk from the BIC

