

CHE broadsheet October 1978

BROADSHEET

W.H. Smith's shuts up shop in Coventry



Gay activist (guess who?) gets a helping hand from your friendly neighbourhood Coventry policepersons outside W.H. Smith's.

Fifty gays demonstrated outside the Coventry branch of W.H. Smith's during a lunchtime break from the CHE Conference. Several impromptu speakers urged the shoppers to boycott the shop and leaflets were distributed. At one point several gays entered the shop in a bid to speak to customers and the management. The scene inside was somewhat reminiscent of a sinking ship as customers retreated uncertainly to the upper floor and a bewildered staff rushed around to placate the chanting gays.

Eventually the police were called and the gay women and men were escorted to the door to cheers from the growing

crowd outside. The doors were barred, a notice put up which stated: "Normal service will be resumed as soon as possible", and the shop was guarded by several policepersons. After several gay songs the crowd returned to the Conference.

This was the first demonstration after the moratorium which Gay Activists Alliance had declared, providing Smith's had agreed to restock Gay News.

Letter to the Editor

From Piers Ritchie

'Catch 22' — that's the situation I, and many others, are in.

Why? Because of the exasperation we feel at this time every year about the CHE Conference. *The cheapest possible way of taking a full part in the conference (unless you know someone who knows someone who can put you up for three nights) is about £17, and that's not including the cost of getting to the conference town in the first place!*

Now believe it or not, some people just cannot shell out that amount of money for three days of what might be described as a change, but hardly as a rest!

At this point I should like to say that this is not another boring attack on Griff, whom I feel does a very competent job at providing what we say we want. So what am I niggling at? What's the 'Catch 22'? Well it's the fact that Griff's guidelines about what sort of conference we want are laid down by the only policy-making body within CHE . . . yes, you've guessed it — the CHE Conference! So if you can't afford to go to Conference, you can't influence the sort of conference CHE has, in terms of expense and sickness, so you still won't be able to go the following year (unless you win the Pools, of course).

So where has all this moaning got us? Well it would be great if those who can afford to go to conference would give a thought to those who can't, and see if it wouldn't be possible to try and change the style of the weekend, and thus make it more fair, better attended, more representative, more productive, less '5-star hotel'-oriented, and above all, less expensive.

Lots of gay love and solidarity.
Piers Ritchie (Brighton CHE)

Broadsheet's future

In future we hope to devote space in BROADSHEET to news of CHE-affiliated organisations — especially NCCL, Anti-Nazi League, National Abortion Campaign, and Age Concern. This arose at Conference out of the Workshop on relations with the gay liberation movement, and the resolution was overwhelming passed.

National Conference by getting him to come and talk to the Group.

And they've also booked Roy Burns and Robert Palmer. It's going to be a busy autumn in Brighton.

Coventry CHE reborn

Following on Saturday's warm welcome to delegates and guests at Conference given by Andrew Armitage on behalf of Coventry's gay community, all looks set fair for the rebirth of the local CHE group. So far the group has got off the ground with a useful nucleus of 12 women and men, with Andrew agreeing to act as provisional Convenor. Anyone interested in joining should contact him on Coventry 26790.

Other groups wishing to donate funds towards the cost of local advertising are asked to make payments direct to Coventry CHE.

Welcome and good luck to Andrew and friends!

Kingston's donation

Kingston CHE group's Check-abroad river disco on 30 August raised £50 to be donated to NIGRA, and £5 to the newly-formed Coventry CHE.

CHE News in brief

Southwark / Lambeth complain

Southwark/Lambeth CHE group have written to the Lord Chancellor expressing their disappointment that no disciplinary action, other than a reprimand, has been taken against Mr Justice Melford Stevenson (BROADSHEET, August), and urging the Lord Chancellor to dismiss him.

Brighton's campaigning programme

An impressive campaigning programme for the autumn has been announced by Brighton CHE. Two national political figures are billed to talk with the group — Andrew Bowden, MP for Kemp Town, and Ian Harvey, former Minister. Brighton have also responded to local Councillor Danny Sheldon and his efforts to cancel next year's CHE