

THE TARTAN SKIRT



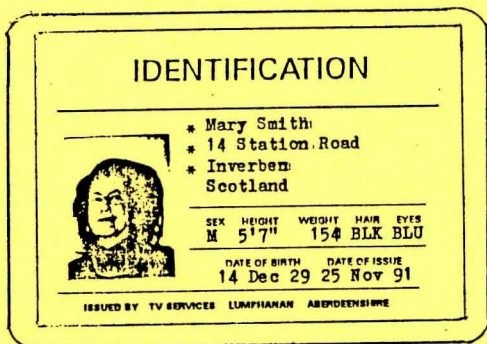
Magazine of the
SCOTTISH TV/TS
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New Series No. 4
October 1992

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THE TARTAN SKIRT

The Magazine of the
Scottish TV/TS Group

Editor: *Anne Forrester*

New Series No. 4

October 1992

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HELLO, GIRLS !

Well, as this issue completes the first year of publication of the New Series of *The Tartan Skirt* I thought it would be a good chance to sit back and look around, rather than introduce a discussion on any profound subject.

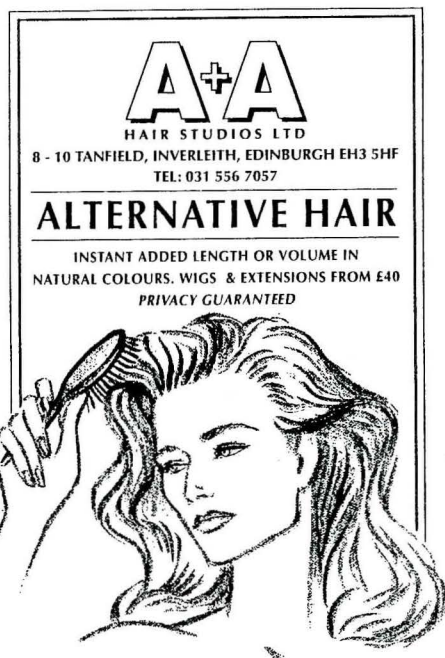
There's no doubt that 1992 has seen a number of improvements for crossdressers, especially in Scotland. We now have three flourishing social and support groups running (in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen) and have been able to welcome the newly re-vitalised Group in Northern Ireland, the Belfast Butterfly Club. Also, you now have this magazine, of course. It has been good to see how many new sisters we have found who have ventured sufficiently out of the closet to join our meetings, and we have also found considerable support from some trade houses who find our custom welcome and our lifestyles totally acceptable. There have been a number of quite reasonable radio and television discussions of gender identity problems during the past year, and even some well-informed and supportive articles in the womens' magazines.

On the down side we have, for the time being, lost our venue for the Friday evening dinner parties in Edinburgh. We have also seen just how viciously the media can persecute anyone whose story they think will sell newspapers. So far it has mainly been politicians and royalty who have suffered from these jackals of the press, but if there is nothing for the muck-rakers to dig out in these areas, in the absence of any privacy laws in this country, as a community as well as individuals we have even more to fear from any press attention at all.

For the future, the more of our sisters who are able to go out and about and to pass without notice, the more we are

eventually likely to be accepted by society in general - but it is essential that we all, by appearance or actions, do not draw attention to ourselves. It would also be nice to receive more submissions to *The Tartan Skirt* from any of you girls who would like to put pen to paper (or, preferably, fingers to keyboard). We are not particularly looking for fiction but practical advice and information, stories of your own experiences, poems, quizzes, recipes, snippets of news from other publications, *etc*, are all very welcome. Let's be hearing from you. After all, it's *your* lifestyle we are talking about.

Anne Forrester ■



LADIES ONLY ?

WHERE TO GO FOR A PEE

by Anne Forrester

Probably the greatest difficulty facing the crossdresser venturing out in public - and often the first thing that others ask about when the subject of crossdressing crops up - is what do you do when going out 'dressed' and you face 'a call of nature'. Essentially, of course, you have one of three options. You can risk going into a Ladies lavatory, with the ever-present risk of discovery, indignation and possible arrest; or you can go into a Gents lavatory - and if you do that in high heels, nylons and a skirt you really are asking for trouble; or you can simply wet your knickers - and that's scarcely likely to appeal to you. So what do you do ?

Well, you can of course take a few obvious precautions. Unless you are fairly sure that you can pass, don't venture out for too long at a time, away from the safety of your own bathroom. Last thing before you shut the door behind you when leaving home, empty your bladder, and then restrict your fluid intake to virtually nil while you are out. Of course, it isn't always as easy as that. If you are out for the evening (or even the whole day) you are virtually certain to need to 'spend a penny' at some point; and if you are over middle age you will in any case be finding that calls of nature come around with increasing frequency. The end result is that sooner or later it will be necessary to go through the door labelled **LADIES**; and when that day comes you should be prepared for what lies behind that door, and how you should behave if you expect to come out again without any hassle.

Where to go

The first problem is where to go. If you are out driving in the country then you can always stop and pop behind a bush; but apart from being undignified this is much less than convenient in skirts. Or you could keep a suitable wide-mouth bottle in your car, which would avoid the need to get out - as long as you can find a convenient quiet place to stop for the purpose. The Ladies' toilets in most Gay bars and hotels are usually no problem, but otherwise probably the 'safest' toilets are those in hotels, cafes and restaurants, and sometimes in Department Stores (where they are usually tucked away on the top floor) as these are much less heavily used and you have a better chance of having the place to yourself. Indeed, it is often possible to walk into these places solely to use the toilet. Also, in hotels the guests will probably use toilets in their own rooms - or at least on their own floor - so reducing the possible *clientele* in those downstairs. If you are using a cafe or coffee shop and are having any refreshment, go to the toilet as you leave, so that if you are 'read' there will be much less chance of you being challenged than if you return to your table and sit down again.

Public toilets can be a problem, as they are often poorly maintained, situated in unpleasant surroundings, and can be heavily used. However, the better of these will often have an attendant collecting a charge at the door. If you must use one of these toilets - and they are often the ones kept most pleasantly clean - then hand over your 10p, smile at the attendant (who is probably more interested in her latest 'Mills and Boon' than in you) and walk straight in.

Once inside

Generally speaking, ladies' toilets are much cleaner and tidier than mens', and also much better equipped. You will find one or more toilet cubicles and, except in the most basic of public conveniences, there will inevitably be plenty of wash basins, paper towels (and/or hot-air hand dryers), 'work surfaces' and mirrors. When you go into a cubicle and shut the door behind you, you come up against the first

of four major differences in toilet practise that come from the basic anatomical differences between the sexes. Women sit down to urinate, and as most cubicles have a space at the bottom of the door so that others can see your feet and ankles, you should forget the male way of urinating and do likewise. Turn around, lift the back of your skirts, drop your panties and be seated. The second anatomical difference is that the position of a woman's urethra means that her urine flows straight down into the bowl with a splashing noise; yours won't. If there are other women around the lack of sound just might trigger their curiosity, so use a hand to direct your own flow into the bowl below. Also, while men tend to urinate in a steady stream sounding like water being squirted, womens 'wee' sounds more like water being poured from a jug, and often comes in separate 'spurts'. Finally, as womens' urine flows from an outlet inside the lips of the vagina, she will need to wipe herself with a piece of toilet paper - and the sound of this being taken from the dispenser is also normal, so use toilet paper yourself and don't disappoint any listeners.

When you are finished you will need to stand up to pull up your panties, straighten out your slip and let your skirt hang down free. When you come out of the cubicle the fourth anatomical difference comes into play. As womens' urine comes from an internal outlet, and she has used her fingers to wipe this, she will *always* wash her hands before leaving whereas men, who simply handle the outer skin of their penis, rarely do so. Don't be tempted to rush for the door and escape as quickly as possible. Wash and dry your hands, use the mirror to touch up your makeup, pat your hair into place and leave quietly and calmly. Don't hang around unnecessarily, but keep your cool and *don't* dash out as if all the hounds of hell were after you. If there are other women present don't seek eye contact but don't obviously avoid it: smile if someone looks directly at you, speak only if spoken to (and you are *very* confident with your voice), and above all, **don't panic**

Putting it in context

It is not illegal for you to enter a Ladies toilet, and the law

is broken only if someone complains, in which case you could be charged with causing a breach of the peace. Consequently you should not go through that door unless it becomes *absolutely* necessary. However, if you do 'get caught short' and have to venture in, make sure that you know - and do - precisely what a woman would do. Act with total propriety, and *never* do anything that in any way draws attention to yourself. Be discreet, and all will most probably be well. ■

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CROSSDRESSING AND THE LAW

WHAT TO DO IF YOU GO OUT DRESSED AND RUN INTO TROUBLE

Dressing in the clothes of the opposite sex - or in any other way that you like and that does not offend public decency - is not itself illegal. Despite the worries of most crossdressers, neither going out dressed in a woman's clothes, nor even going into a ladies' toilet (as long as it is for the obvious reason, and you behave with discretion and decorum), constitutes an offence. Indeed, even if you are 'read' by a police officer (and some of us have even had the pleasure of being called 'Madam' by one), he or she is most unlikely to take any notice; the police have far more serious matters to concern them than 'flushing out' or giving trouble to crossdressers

However, if by your appearance or your behaviour you cause offence to others - or even cause them to be annoyed or embarrassed - and a complaint is made to the police, they are bound to act and you may find yourself arrested on a charge of behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace, or even of causing an actual breach of the peace. In practice, unless you have been extremely indiscreet (or stupid, or breaking the law by shoplifting, for example), whether such a charge would 'stick' - or even land you in court - is doubtful; but the mental stress, embarrassment to you and your family, and the possible effects on your subsequent private and social life can be fairly awful.

The obvious advice is that unless you are reasonably convincing, extremely discreet in your behaviour, and confident that you can carry it off, you should not venture

out dressed. If you do, and then find yourself in trouble, the following advice (adapted from that issued to the Gay community by the SHRG) should help you to know your rights, and to avoid any possible unnecessary unpleasantness.

If you agree to assist the police or you are arrested there are basic rules which the police must follow:

1. Street detention. If the police suspect that you have committed or are committing an offence they can detain you in the street. They must tell you why you have been stopped and warn you that failure to answer their questions is an offence punishable by a fine not exceeding £400. You must provide your name and address (your real ones - do not try to pass off a *femme* name that is not legally supportable), and it is probably less trouble also to give your date of birth. You do not have to answer any further questions. It is better to remain silent unless your explanation is straightforward (*e.g.* if wrongly accused of shoplifting, and you can produce your receipt). The police have no power of search except where the alleged offence involves possession of an offensive weapon. The best advice is to be polite and 'keep your head'.

2. Police questioning. If you are detained you do not have to answer any questions apart from providing your name and address. The police must inform you of your right to remain silent, and they must not use force or unfair pressure (such as taunts about your dressing, lifestyle or your appearance) to get answers to their questions. You must not be made to stand during interviews. The police can detain you for up to six hours and thereafter must either charge you or release you. If you are released without being charged the police can not detain you again for the same reason.

3. The caution. A caution need only be given if the purpose of the questions is to get evidence which may be used later in Court. If you are arrested, or when an interview is about to begin, or if there is a short break in an interview, the police must give a caution. This reminds you

of your right not to answer questions. If you are not 'under arrest' but are 'helping the police with their enquiries' you should have been given a caution which should also remind you of your legal right to leave the police station if you wish.

4. Statements. You should *not* give a statement unless there is a straightforward explanation. It is always better to get legal advice before giving a statement.

5. Detainee's rights. You must be told why you are being held and what offence you are suspected of having committed. The police must allow you to inform a solicitor and a relative or close friend of your whereabouts, although they need not do this immediately.

6. Record of detention. If you are arrested and detained a custody record must be kept detailing your treatment while in police custody. You are not entitled to a copy but your solicitor can see it.

7. Arrest and charge. If the police decide to charge you they must caution you. You should either reply "Not guilty" or make no comment.

Once you have been charged the police can not question you any further. The police must inform you of your right to see a solicitor (phone your own solicitor, or you may find a sympathetic one through your local Lesbian and Gay Switchboard). The police should also allow you to contact a friend or relative.

Following your arrest and charging you will be dealt with in one of three ways, depending on the gravity of the alleged offence:

1. Release to await Citation for Court appearance;
2. Release on the signing of a statutory undertaking to appear in a specified Court on a specified date
3. Remand in custody for Court appearance within 24 hours (48 hours at weekends or public holidays).

8. Bail. Police bail does not exist in Scotland and application for bail, if required, would normally be made when you first appear in court. However, for most minor offences bail will not be required and you will simply be told to appear at the next Diet (Court sitting).

9. Fingerprinting and photographing. If the police believe you have committed an offence or you are charged with a recordable offence (most non-trivial offences) your fingerprints can be taken. In the event of acquittal your fingerprints must be destroyed. In particular, your fingerprints must be destroyed in the event of there being no prosecution or if you are put on a probation order.

Similar rules apply to photographing a person, with the exception that the police do not have the legal right to use force to take your photograph.

10. Searching. If you are detained or arrested the police may search you on arrival at the police station.

Finally. It is wise to know your rights in the event of running into trouble with the police. It is even wiser to ensure that you do not run into such trouble. When going out dressed, at all times be discrete; do nothing to attract attention to yourself; do not knowingly break the law; if driving, follow the law and the Highway Code to the letter; and **at all times take care to do nothing that may give even the hint of offence to anyone.** ■

Still trying to achieve that 40D bust ? It is recorded that a Mrs Ida Maitland had a bust measurement of 152" ! Eat your heart out. ■

POLICE ATTITUDES SURVEY

Information is being collected for a survey on relations between crossdressers and the police. As you know, there is considerable government emphasis on the *Citizens' Charter*, which requires that all citizens shall be treated courteously and efficiently by officialdom. We are therefore entitled to press the point that crossdressers should be treated as law-abiding citizens who are entitled to the same service from the police as are any other citizens.

The results of this survey may be submitted to the Home Office in order to improve the information and training given to the police on this subject. The organiser of the survey would like to hear from readers who have had any difficulty with the police *because they were dressed*. This may have happened (for example) if you were stopped while driving. Obviously, if you were committing a driving (or other) offence at the time, then of itself this is not of interest. However, if the police made any discourteous reference to the way you were dressed, or you felt that they treated you less courteously or efficiently *because* you were dressed, then that *is* of interest. The organiser is not just looking for bad news. If you have had an experience in which the police were particularly helpful or supportive, then this would also be helpful in obtaining a true picture.

It is important to include a note of when and where the incident occurred, and which constabulary was involved. This information will not be passed on in any way that could reveal your identity, and all information given will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Replies can be sent c/o the Editor of *The Tartan Skirt* (address on page 2) and should be marked "Attitudes Survey" for onward transmission. Please say if you would like a copy of the results of the survey. ■

THE CROSSDRESSER'S TOP TEN

TEN LISTS OF THE THREE BEST - AND WORST - THINGS ABOUT BEING A CROSSDRESSER

So what is life like for a crossdresser ? Why not check out these ten lists of some of the three best and three worst aspects of genderland, and see if you agree.

1. The three best things that can be said to you when someone finds out

1. Oh, is that all ? (by your wife)
2. Good on you (by your workmates)
3. I wish I had the guts to do it (by your best friend)

2. The three worst things that can be said to you when someone finds out

1. You poofster !
2. What kind of pervert are you ?
3. Get out of here. *Now !* (by your wife).

3. The three most likely people to be sympathetic when they find out

1. Any gender Support Group
2. Any Gay switchboard or helpline
3. Any woman - except your wife

4. The three least likely people to be sympathetic when they find out

1. Any 'macho' man (he secretly envies you)
2. Any religious fanatic or biblical fundamentalist (he has forgotten the bit about "love thy neighbour as thyself")
3. Your wife (she'll either resent your not having trusted her enough to have told her before, or your pinching her clothes - or both)

5. The three most likely questions you may be asked when someone finds out (with some suggested answers)

1. Why on earth do you do it ? ("Because. And why do you wear trousers ?")
2. Which toilet do you use ? ("What do you think would happen if I went into the Gents dressed like this ?")
3. What have you got in there ? [pointing to your chest]. ("Why not use one hand to feel it - and the other to protect your big mouth ?")

6. The three nicest things about dressing

1. Looking in the mirror and seeing a woman smiling back at you
2. Being called 'Madam' by a male salesman, waiter, bartender, or - best of all - policeman
3. Being the person you really want to be

7. The three worst things about dressing

1. Having to shave to within an inch of your life whenever you want to go out
2. Experiencing what it is like to be a second-class citizen
3. Taking it all apart when it's time to change back into a pumpkin

8. The three nicest things that might happen to you while you are dressed

1. Having doors held open for you and men give up their seat on a bus or train (preferably with an admiring glance or passing compliment on your looks)
2. Having someone give you flowers (preferably, your wife !)
3. Being told how good you look by a woman (preferably a complete stranger !)

9. The three worst things that might happen to you while you are dressed

1. When driving, being pulled over by the police for speeding
2. Being 'read' by a gang of drunken youths
3. Having your wife walk in on you if she doesn't know about it

10. Three tricky situations

1. Needing the toilet when there isn't one within reach
2. Being fondled or having your bottom pinched by a 'groper' in a crowded public place
3. Being chatted up by a man with a glint in his eye

AND FINALLY:

Three attributes of a crossdresser

1. *You are a shopaholic*
2. *You like women*
3. *Sooner or later you become a feminist* ■

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VIVE LE DIFFERENCE

We all know that men and women are different - but how different ? Dr John Gray, a psychologist, obviously thinks it's as though they come from different planets. However, in his recent book *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus* he claims that "we do harm to deny these differences rather than accept them". If you want to live and experience a female lifestyle then perhaps you should be aware of what these differences are, so that you can suppress your masculine urges and behave appropriately. Amongst other things Dr Gray notes that:

- When conversing, women are more trusting and look people in the eye, while men are not and look anywhere other than at the speaker.

- When they have a problem, women have a need to be listened to, while men stop listening and just look for solutions.

- Men don't like the feeling of being controlled and want to be accepted just the way they are, but women always try to change others - especially their partners - and to help them become better, more responsible people.

- When faced with stress, men withdraw to a private place and want to be alone, but women always need to share their feelings with family and friends.

You'll be pleased to know that, despite their differences, Dr Gray feels that men and women can still be happy together ! ■

NYLONS

Although many of us prefer to wear stockings, many more wear tights. Either way, when buying 'nylons' we face a terminology that is not always clear. Indeed, few people know that the word *nylon* itself is an acronym, representing the two cities in which the fibre was first developed - New York and LONDON. However, here are explanations of some of the other terms that you will find in the advertising and on the packaging. Unfortunately, nobody has yet thought out a way to explain the weird names given to colours. 'Haze', 'Honey', 'Mink', *etc* are all shades of very pale brown - but just *which* shade is in the lap of the gods and the minds of the makers; and 'nearly black' or 'barely black' may either be a very dark brown or a darkish grey. However, other terms can be explained.

Basically, there are two types of hosiery - stockings and tights - but each of these also comes in two types. Stockings may be conventional (*i.e.* supported by suspenders), or 'hold-up', with an elasticated band around the top that grips the thigh. Tights, also may be conventional - a combined panty and stocking legs - or stocking tights (also known as 'body-free'), which have large spaces at the sides, front and back, so that they resemble a one-piece combined suspender belt and stockings. Yet another type has an open gusset (*i.e.* a hole in the space between the legs) for extra ventilation. Beyond all this, however, there are the mysteries of the material.

Denier is a measure of the yarn's thickness, the higher the denier number being the thicker and more opaque the hosiery. For example, 15 denier is 'average' for everyday wear; 40 and 70 denier are definitely opaque (and useful if

you have to cover up hairs on your legs), while 10 denier is a nice fine gauge for evening wear. For an even finer appearance some stockings and tights are available in 7, and even 5, denier.

Sheerness refers to a combination of the denier, the way the hosiery is knitted, and the make-up of the yarn (and it may also be affected by the height and size of the wearer). For a more sheer appearance and a good sheen, look out for hosiery made with 'high torque' yarns, which have the durability of 15 denier but an appearance more like that of 10 denier - although the stretch and recovery properties are limited.

Micromesh is a relatively cheap fine diagonal mesh with a slightly raised pattern. The hosiery feels rough, snags easily and ladders upwards, and tends to lose shape after several wearings.

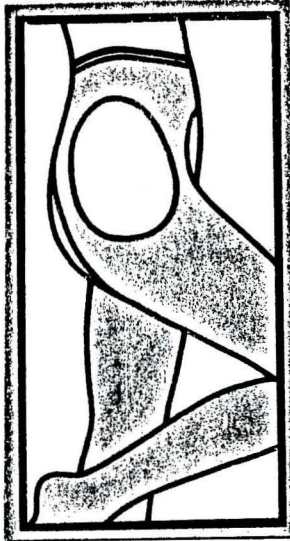
Smooth plain knit is a sheer smooth finish that clings to the shape of the leg. It is less likely to snag than micromesh, but ladders in both directions.

Run resist is harsher to the touch than micromesh and less sheer. If snagged it forms holes rather than ladders.

Support tights exert a gentle pressure on the leg, greatest at the ankle, and decreasing from the knee and thigh. They support the veins laying just below the skin's surface, preventing them from becoming over-full and stretched. They are useful if you are on your feet for long periods or are overweight (or pregnant !). The **Support factor** is a number acting as a guide to the amount of support provided: 6-8 for tired legs; 9-11 for minor problems; 12+ for more severe problems.

Lycra is the trade name of an elastane fibre made by Du Pont, which is added to nylon to improve comfort and fit and usually comprises between 10 and 12 *per cent* of the material. It does not produce any visual effects, nor does it alter the final appearance, but it does make more a much nicer feel and better fit.

And finally, don't forget to shop around. Some stores (*e.g.* Debenhams and House of Fraser) have their own brands, which can be excellent, and some manufacturers produce different grades of their products for sale in different outlets. Even the 'average' 15 denier nylons can vary enormously in price between the stand in the supermarket and those in the more 'up-market' department stores. ■



A TIGHT FIT ?

If you wear tights rather than stockings, it is quite likely that you often grumble that so-called 'one size' tights don't always fit well - especially if you are larger (or smaller) than the 'average' woman. In fact, the phrase 'one size tights' does seem to be rather misleading. Last year the Good Housekeeping Institute tested 14 brands of "one-size"

tights - 11 with Lycra and three without - and found that *only two of these were actually the same size as one another* ! Surprisingly, there is no British Standard for the sizing of tights, and some manufacturers even vary the "one size" between their own different brands.

Eighteen (female) testers, who between them represented nine different hip and height measurements, looked especially for snugly fitting legs of the right length; the right length from crotch to waist, with no drooping; a comfortable waistband that stayed in place; and a smooth even-coloured finish. Apart from three brands which were 10 denier, all the brands tested were 15 denier.

Overall, the best-liked tights were Elbeo 10 denier with Lycra which, despite being the most expensive, were well liked for comfort, fit and feel by slim and short and large and tall testers alike.

In most case the smaller testers noticed wrinkling at the ankles and knees, which was not helped by the inclusion of lycra. (The brands that wrinkled least were Aristoc, Charnos, Elbeo, Marks & Spencer and Tesco). However, Lycra did seem to improve the fit and felt more comfortable with the medium, tall and larger size of tester. It was found that price was no guarantee of comfort, and that with the exception of Elbeo the testers were generally disappointed with most of the higher priced tights, the best value seeming to be those costing around 99p (although since then prices have gone up, and £ 1.20 seems to be an average 'low' price today). Appearance varied considerably, and testers especially disliked horizontal stripes in Berkshire tights and patchy colour in those from Pretty Polly and Tesco.

Of course, not all of the commonly available brands were tested - and not all of those that were would be automatic first choices for most of us. However, the message seems to be that you should be *very* careful when buying tights if you want a pair that will fit well and both feel and look good. Try several makes and brands before deciding which to go for on a regular basis. Or maybe you should just stick to stockings ! ■

DID YOU KNOW ?

Maybe he should join us

A nineteen-year old Swedish *au-pair* was threatened with being deported from Britain - because he is a man. Apparently immigration authorities define an *au-pair* as 'an unmarried female between 17 and 27 years old'. Now that's sexism !

Confused about your sex ?

You may have heard the saying that "sex is what's between your legs, while gender is what's between your ears". Did you know that the ovaries of the barnacle are in its head ? Confused ? So is the barnacle.

It's enough to drive you hairless

During his lifetime the average man shaves about 30 yards of whiskers off his face. Ever thought about electrolysis ?

So you think you're thick skinned ?

Worried that your skin isn't youthful enough ? You needn't be. Every day you shed more than 4% of all your skin cells, and every 25 days your skin renews itself completely. So you actually get that brand-new look about 14 times each year - and it's FREE !

Pong !

Do you use Eau de Cologne ? If so, do you realise that it was first invented as a protection against the plague ?

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'BORN AGAIN' WOMEN ?

by Anne Forrester

At almost any gathering of crossdressers it is almost certain that one recurring topic of conversation when the girls get in a huddle will be "why do we do it ?" Just what it is that motivates crossdressers so strongly is the subject of almost as many theories as there are crossdressers discussing it. Generally, however, there are two main reasons put forward as to why our gender preference tends to differ from our genetic sex.

Firstly, of course, there is the theory of nurture rather than nature - that is, we have been exposed to feminising tendencies during childhood - living in a family of women (mother and sisters) maybe, or having been dressed like a girl by a mother or aunt who really wanted a sweet little "sugar and spice" girl rather than a rough-tough "frogs and snails and puppy dogs tails" boy. On the other hand there is also the theory expounded so brilliantly in the book *Brain Sex*, that the nervous supply to our brain was 'wired up' in a female manner as a result of us being exposed to abnormal levels of female hormones while we were still in the womb. Of course, there are other suggestions often put forward - we do it 'for sexual kicks' (nearly always wrong) or simply because it makes us feel good (in which case, why does it ?), or perhaps to escape from the tough competitive world in which men usually live their daily lives (and that could certainly be a good reason). However, I wonder if there is not a further reason, one that I have rarely heard mentioned.

Despite a generally much more tolerant and broadminded outlook on life these days, people do not generally like talking of things that are 'beyond human understanding',

and so the subject of reincarnation is rarely discussed. However, there is a growing body of evidence that is hard to controvert and that suggests that a number of honest, well-educated and intelligent people have had experiences that can only be explained in terms of their having 'been here before'. Most people, indeed, have moments of *deja vu*, when they suddenly seem to be experiencing a place or an occasion that they have experienced before. Some of these experiences come about while asleep and dreaming, while other have surfaced under hypnosis, and yet others have been exposed through the activities of spiritual mediums; but all of the cases recording realistic or verifiable experiences that could not have come from the individual's own knowledge or subconscious awareness of past events have defied rational explanation. Indeed, some few people have undergone 'past life experiences' in such considerable detail that they can be explained in no other terms than a knowledge based on past *personal* experience.

Professor Archie Roy, head of the Department of Physics at Glasgow University and President of the Society for Psychological Research, says that although the number of adequately recorded cases of past life experiences suggestive of reincarnation are relatively small, they are growing. He says that most of such experiences seem to end in violence - the death of a loved one, or of ones previous self, for example - and that one possible reason for the individual's reincarnation may be that the soul has entered another body in a 'future' time in the hope of a 'happier ending'.

Experiences of past lives often suggest vastly differing times and social circumstances. For example, under hypnosis one Yorkshire housewife has recollections of lives as the wife of a Roman soldier - including a knowledge of Latin that she had never studied - and also of seeing her own father being drawn and quartered during a life in Tunbridge Wells in the Middle Ages; and a Staffordshire man has detailed recollections of life as a pyramid caretaker in ancient Egypt. One academic (and successful) broadcaster and lecturer has suggested that "Accepting that reincarnation happens can be useful. It helps you understand the 'monkeys on your back': you enter this life with your

weaknesses and talents. Then you can make sure they're not wasted".

Surprisingly, there are very few examples of anyone claiming 'past life experiences' in the opposite sex, but just think: if there really is anything in the theory of reincarnation (and millions of Buddhists - and in Japan, Jainists - throughout the world believe in it implicitly), then surely many of us who have lived one human life may 'come back' - for whatever reason - in the opposite sex. If this is so, what more natural than that some sub-conscious knowledge of a female past comes back to 'haunt' our male present, predisposing us to the feminine life that we have already lived, and to which we may subconsciously wish to return? And which of us in our community, if given the chance to start all over again, would not chose to be born a woman rather than a man? (Answers - with reasons - on a small postcard, please).

Now I don't claim to be an expert in the psychic, nor even to understand just how 'reincarnation' might work. I did once read a theory suggesting that human souls are all really some type of 'demi-god' living in a timeless state and, almost as a game, 'coming down' and spending a few brief moments out of eternity (albeit a human lifetime) in various circumstances by way of experience, before returning to their divine contemplation of the Universe. Believe it or not as you please (and anyone with a conventional Christian or Islamic upbringing is almost bound to dismiss it out of hand). However, there is no doubting that, as Shakespeare said, "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy". Scoff if you must, but unless you can produce positive proof to the contrary, at least admit the reincarnation theory as yet another possible reason to explain just why we do it - or, at least, feel so good while *en femme*. Personally, I should like to think that I might come back to a *future* 'incarnation' in the female role - and maybe it would not be for the first time ! ■

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QUOTES OF THE MONTH

Got big hips ?

"When your hips are bigger than your age, you've really got a problem"

Nina Myskow
In *Love, Sex and the Pursuit of Chocolate*

Looking good

"On a good day I can look rather fetching. To achieve 'rather fetching' I have to work at it. I must blow-dry my hair - with my head hanging upside down I must pluck each stray eyebrow hair. I must encase my legs in shiny black ankle-enhancing stockings. I must choose my clothes with the cunning of a military strategist to avoid appearing top-heavy, bottom-heavy or pinheaded. Sometimes I rebel...(but) I always snap back eventually. The need to be a sex object overtakes me"

Cynthia Heimel
In *Playboy* magazine

Be prepared !

"I always carry my passport in my handbag: it'll always get you further than a toothbrush and pair of clean knickers. If you carry those as well, you really are ready for anything"

Nina Myskow
In *Love, Sex and the Pursuit of Chocolate*

HAVE YOU READ ?

Some Books Reviewed

Vested Interests: Cross Dressing and Cultural Anxiety by Marjorie Garber. London: Routledge. 1992. £ 25.00

Marjorie Garber (a 'real girl') is Professor of English and Director of the Center for Literary and Cultural Studies at Harvard University - and if you think that makes her an unlikely author for a book about crossdressing then think again. I have heard Professor Garber speak on this subject, and she really does know what she's talking about - although whether you will agree with all her theories may be another matter. From Shakespeare to Mark Twain, Oscar Wilde to Peter Pan, and Elvis to Madonna, she has drawn her examples to produce a one-and-a-quarter inch thick book of 443 pages serious discussion on the role and position of costume, and the crossdresser, in society.

The illustrations range from a sixteenth century etching of a courtesan wearing breeches under her skirt to a 1977 illustration of the 'imitation man look' for the woman executive (collar and tie, 'fedora' hat, and all !). Scenes from films such as *Tootsie* and *Some like it hot* appear alongside pictures from the theatre of the great actress Sarah Bernhardt appearing as the Prince Hamlet and Laurence Olivier as Katherina in *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Garber's thesis is basically to question what clothing has to do with sexuality, how dress codes contribute to the organisation of society, and whether 'passing' as a man or woman relates to racial 'passing'; and to relate this to the very many references to the phenomenon in literature.

Oh yes, this is a very serious and academic study, with 52 pages of reference notes to prove it: but it is also an entertaining book, with many eminently 'quotable' passages and much little-known information. (For example, did you know that until the early years of this century, pink was the colour associated with little boys and blue with girls?). And think on this comment about public toilets: "the words 'men' and 'women' or 'ladies' and 'gentlemen' have been replaced by signs showing a figure dressed in male clothes - trousers - and a figure dressed in female clothes - a skirt or dress. Yet no one (except perhaps transvestites and transsexuals) interprets these signs literally...A woman in pants would not ordinarily go through the door marked with a figure in pants, nor would a priest in a soutane or a Hare Krishna advocate in robes head for the door with the skirt". (Of course, she could also have cited the Scotsman in his kilt!).

Not a cheap book, but one of absorbing interest to all those who take the question of gender identity seriously. And it will surely give each of us a lot of ammunition for whenever we have to 'justify' ourselves, or cite precedents for what we do. As one of the book's illustrations shows, even a former colonial governor of New York and New Jersey dressed in women's clothes, arguing that "I represent a woman (*Queen Anne*) and ought in all respects to represent her as faithfully as I can". As subjects of a later Queen, if challenged perhaps we should all try the same argument.

A.F.

Body Language by Jane Lyle. London: Hamlyn. 1990.
£ 12.95

In order to 'pass' as a woman it is not sufficient merely to dress and make up convincingly (although without that, we may as well stay at home). Women behave differently to men, and whether they are moving about or merely sitting still listening to the menfolk holding forth, there are a thousand and one nuances of action and behaviour that send out subliminal messages to others - messages that can clear-

ly indicate the maleness or femaleness of the individual. Consequently, any guidance regarding the nature of the appropriate body language must be of value to the cross-dresser hoping to 'pass' in public.

This well-illustrated book tackles the whole subject in a very readable manner, from the basic language of posture, territory and friendship, through the value of the smile (a basic requirement when *en femme*), the ways to tell when someone is (or is not) being honest and telling the truth, to the thorny question of male and female attractiveness and the 'gender signals', described as "the physical differences between males and females which enable us to tell each other apart".

A very practical and useful guide for the experienced (and the not so experienced) crossdresser. Whether you want to attract admirers, or merely to pass unnoticed, you can not fail to benefit from this book.

A.F.

The Antique Collector by Glynn Hughes. London: Sceptre 1991. £ 5.99 (pbk).

If you are looking for some fiction, this is a well-written novel, daringly centred around a cross-gender character, and which was short-listed for the Whitbread Novel of the Year award. Jack Shuttleworth, a music hall drag artist, looks back over the previous 40 years of his life from the setting of 1915. He is abandoned as a baby, to spend a childhood brought up in a remote Yorkshire workhouse. He is then adopted by an affectionate and loving surrogate mother, Mary Shuttleworth, who had lost her own child. His upbringing is at the root of his problems, for it is spent largely in the company of women, and he was encouraged as an entertainer during those days.

Much of the book is set in the grim mill towns of Yorkshire and Lancashire, with which the author is obviously familiar and of which he paints a vivid picture. Jack never really

achieves in any significant way his dream of music hall stardom but instead is taken up, successively, by two wealthy and elderly benefactors who indulge him in his passion for silks and crinolines.

Though both patrons are theatre enthusiasts the more spiritual Mr Palmer contrasts with the finer and kinder Garrick Dodds. It is the latter who keeps Jack (or Cornelia as he becomes) off the stage as he realises that he is too gentle and eager-to-please for the rough and tumble of the music hall.

The death of Garrick Dodds brings the arrival of his sister and her lawyer, who both cheat Jack out of his inheritance and coin the unfortunate phrase 'antique collector'. Jack eventually takes to the road, travelling around in a gypsy caravan, and the book ends with the hero (or heroine) evading the clutches of the first World War recruiting sergeants.

Emma ■

THE WAY WE WERE

We take an affectionate look at the past through the pages of *Woman's Weekly*

The big squeeze: In 1927, feminine curves were less fashionable than boyish looks—flat chest, narrow hips and cropped locks.

THE NEW "SCANTIES"

HERE is another ingenious undie model for making one look slight and willowy. It is the new "scanties", consisting of corselet, brassiere and knickers all in one. The brassiere is fitted with darts and joins by a band to the corselet which is shaped with seams and has inlets of elastic, while to the lower edge is joined knickers with a strap between the legs. In cotton broche, and lawn or schappe, the whole thing would be easily washable. The fastening is down the side.



SILENT SCREAMS

I'm crying, but there are no tears,
The pain is in my mind.
I carry it with me more each day,
It's getting harder to hide.
Sometimes I feel I'm all alone.
It makes me feel so sad,
For I know I struggle to keep it hidden.
The woman instead of the man.

I want the strength to take the step,
That step that's one beyond.
But then I think of family and friends
And the pain that's theirs when I'm gone.
So who is going to listen ?
Who can understand ?
The silent screams of the woman
Trapped within the man.

I would like now to find an answer
To sooth my troubled brow,
But I think the answer is in the past;
Age is the barrier now.
To take that step needs courage,
And I've so much to lose.
The life I have, to the one I want:
Which one would *you* choose ?

Susan Hunter ■

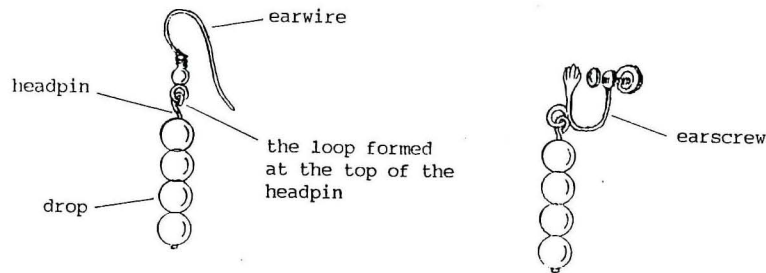
ALL (?) ABOUT EARRINGS

1. 'ERE, JUST A MINUTE

by Julia Gordon

Do you hunt through every display of fashion earrings, knowing that the only pair you are going to find with clip-on fastenings will be totally gross? Do you curse silently as you try to come to terms with the fact that all those beautiful earrings you would love to wear are only suitable for pierced ears? It need take only a minute and a pair of earscrews to change this unsatisfactory situation.

First of all, notice how the 'dangly' bits of drop earrings are connected to the ear wire by a small metal loop formed at the top of the headpin.



Twist the end of this loop to one side to open it so that the drop can be removed from the ear wire, using a small pair

of round-nosed pliers (or tweezers - at a pinch) to achieve this. Attach the drop to the earscrew in the same way, and then close the loop to finish.

A pair of earscrews can be sent to you if you let me have a SAE and three first class stamps. Please forward to Julia Gordon, c/o The Editor, *The Tartan Skirt* (address on contents page), and let me know whether you require gold- or silver-plated earscrews. ■

2. SO WHY NOT GET YOUR EARS PIERCED ?

by Anne Forrester

Most crossdressers sooner or later reach the stage where they would just love to wear pierced earrings. There is always a much better selection of earrings available in this format, and in any case they don't pinch and it really does feel good just to know that your ears are pierced. Of course, what stops most of us is the everyday social problem of turning up at home, and then at work, wearing earrings. One earring is often socially acceptable - especially amongst the younger generation - but two tend to raise eyebrows and may produce suspicion from your family, and possibly some ribaldry from your workmates. So what does ear piercing involve? And how can you deal with the associated problems?

Getting them pierced

Firstly the operation itself. This is really a virtually painless non-event, although you should always have it done professionally. Most jewellers pierce ears for a very nominal sum; you can expect to pay around £6 to £8, and that will include simple gold stud earrings. *Never be tempted to have your ears pierced by an amateur, or other than in a*

respectable jeweller's shop. Stories about the risk of contracting hepatitis (or even HIV) at the hands of an amateur or inexperienced operator are not entirely scaremongering. A reputable operator will *always* wear gloves, disinfect the skin of your earlobe, and use a 'gun' which fires pre-sterilised studs into your ears. Under these conditions the risk of picking up something nasty are non-existent. At many jewellers, however, unless you turn up *en femme* you may have to make it clear that you want **both** ears pierced; they are normally used to piercing only one for men and two for women. (If this embarrasses you, you can always explain that you haven't made up your mind which ear you want to wear your earring in, and will be able to decide when you have had the chance to try both !).

The operator will first mark your earlobes with a felt pen, to determine the position of the holes and to ensure that they match as between the two ears, and then after swabbing the surface will place the 'gun' against the mark. You feel a brief slight sting and the earstud is in place. You will then have to leave it in place for at least six weeks, swabbing it with a special disinfectant cleanser and rotating the stud a few times twice a day. Occasionally you may experience a *very* slight trickle of blood during the first day or so, but that is usually all. Local infection is *very* rare but if you do feel any irritation or a burning pain at the site then you should immediately see your doctor.

For the first six weeks you must keep the studs in place, after which you will be able to take them out and replace them with ordinary earrings. However, you should keep an earring of one sort or another in place all the time for at least the first six months, and during this time should not wear wire hook earrings or any very heavy drop earrings. After that, the world is (or at least, your ears are) your oyster(s).

Explaining it away

So how do you explain it to the world ? Well, there are several ways of tackling this. Of course, you could simply

brazen it out and claim that you are following the hippy culture. More likely to raise a sympathetic laugh is the suggestion that you are following the traditional seafarer's habit of always carrying with you enough gold to pay for your funeral if you should die away from home.

Generally, however, you will need a more serious story to tell, so why not try the excuse of acupuncture ? It is fairly well known that acupuncture - you know, stick a needle in one part of your body to cure a pain or problem in another - really does work. (I personally know a doctor who has seen patients undergoing major internal surgery in China with only acupuncture as an anaesthetic, and clearly feeling no discomfort or pain. He now uses it successfully in his own practice in Aberdeen !).

Two fairly well-known applications of acupuncture relate to overcoming cravings - helping you to lose weight by dieting, or to stop smoking. Another application is the relief of stomach upsets. In each case it is said that ear piercing helps, on the acupuncture principle (and if none of these reasons apply, you could always come up with a similar tale for something that does affect you). Of course, to get the effect you are supposed to rotate the ear studs at various times during the day - and this will in any case help to keep the holes patent.

If you can invoke one of these reasons in your own case you will be very unlucky if it is not accepted as a perfectly valid reason for having your ears pierced. Of course your family may initially be sceptical, and at first you may have to put up with a little good natured ribbing from work-mates, but the acupuncture explanation is virtually never questioned and the whole thing is generally forgotten within a day or so. Indeed, you will be surprised at how few people ever comment at all, especially if you normally wear a discrete small ball stud in gold or silver, or a tiny pearl, when in your male guise.

Believe me, it looks good, the feeling is great, and you can

wear the earrings you really like when 'she' comes out to play. Why not go for it ? (And see the next item). ■

3. AND HOW COMMON ARE PIERCED EARS ?

We all know that clip-on earrings are less than completely satisfactory, and although many crossdressers would like to have their ears pierced there is a general feeling that to do so would make you stand out as one of a very tiny minority indeed. Nobody seems ever to have published any exact figures, however, so a study was made of over 2000 men and women checked at random in the streets of Aberdeen, Edinburgh and London. Successive passers-by were checked and only those, both of whose ears could be clearly observed, were included (*i.e.* excluding individuals who kept their heads turned so that only one ear could be seen, and women whose ears were covered by hair, headscarves, *etc.*). Subjects included men and women of all ethnic groups, but excluding those apparently of school age or below.

It was found that 38% of all adults were wearing earrings. Of 1015 men, 95 (9.4%) wore one earring and 12 (1.2%) wore two. By contrast, of 1000 women 658 (66%) either wore earrings or clearly had their ears pierced.

Make of this what you will. Clearly, if two thirds of women and ten and a half *percent* of men have their ears pierced, having yours done would mean you were joining a significant number of other people in this country.

A.F. ■

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JOIN O.W.W.S.M.M.

or HOW TO STOP PEOPLE THINKING YOU'RE A
MAN IN A DRESS

by Linda Buten

(Reprinted from the *Crossport Newsletter*)

Do you enjoy playing the role of a girl, woman, lady, or even Bimbo ? Do you want to mingle in the crowd without anyone suspecting your true sex ? Would you enjoy trips to the ladies restroom, or better, the locker room ? These and many other questions can be answered "Yes", and you too can become an elite member of the O.W.W.S.M.M., if you act now. Just what do these letters stand for you ask ? Why, the **Organisation for Women Who are Sometimes Mistaken for Men**, of course. Let's examine some of the advantages of belonging to this prestigious group, over existing choices.

So you want to go shopping while at the Texas 'T' Party. Until now your choices were to brave it alone or go with Cynthia Philips. Now just because she *is* the real thing doesn't mean this will be a pleasant adventure. I bet she doesn't even take you to one shoe store that sells shoes in a size 13 with a 6-inch heel. I can see it now. She'll try to talk you out of that short mini-skirt you want so badly, or that low cut top to show off the boobs you've worked so hard to create.

It would be nice to hope that people would look at the group of you and, seeing Cynthia first, say "The girl in front is cute, but her friends sure are big and ugly". At least you'd pass. But that's not the case. Instead they'll say "I wonder if that girl knows there's a pack of transvestites foillowing her ?".

Yes folks, you're gonna stand out like a sore thumb. People will giggle and laugh, names will be called, and you may even be denied use of the womens' bathroom and changing room. Are you going out to shop or to entertain stangers ?

Well now, thanks to Linda, the group known as the **Organisation for Women Who are Sometimes Mistaken for Men** has been founded. The idea is so simple it's amazing that no one has come up with it till now. Instead of trying to get all crossdressers to look and pass as everyday women you reverse the logic, and try to get the group to stand out in the crowd. There's no better way than to have everyone wear a large badge with *O.W.W.S.M.M.* across it. In smaller print one can spell out the meaning of the letters, and your name. Anyone who spots you will read the badge and say "If I looked like that I'd join, too".

Now, some examples of what may happen to a member of *O.W.W.S.M.M.* who plans a full day of shopping.

You are in need of a makeover so you approach the cosmetics counter. The sales lady sees your 5 o'clock shadow, but she also sees the name of your group. Her fears are calmed as she realises that you are not some perverted old man but a real woman, just like her, who has had to put up with some problem facial hair. You are treated with dignity and respect and you walk away feeling great with your new face.

You stop in the wig department. You want to try on the platinum blond showgirl wig you saw in the window. As you expose your bald head a shriek is heard from across the room: "Eeek, a man". But your sales lady knows the other patron has made a terrible mistake because she saw your *O.W.W.S.M.M.* badge as you entered. The other person has been asked to leave and you are given a 50% discount on your purchase.

You want to be fitted with a new bra. In the lingerie department a cute blond takes you back for a private fitting. She has seen your badge and she subconscious-

ly assumes you have some abnormal hormone imbalance. Now, when she sees you with your top off she won't be asking embarrassing questions like "I see you have no boobs" or "Gee, you have quite a few hairs on your chest". You are given consideration and courtesy as you make your selections.

You choose a mini dress of your liking and you approach the petite sales lady as to where the dressing rooms are. Even though you're almost seven feet tall, 325 pounds and have a voice like a bassoon, the helpful clerk sees your badge and directs you accordingly. In case you still see some doubt in her eyes you may throw in something like "Could you also direct me to the Stayfree Maxi Pads". This should ease her mind.

Yes folks, if you come shopping with us you can look or dress anyway you wish and no one will suspect a thing. Sure, there may be some whispers, but they'll be saying things like "If I hadn't seen the badge myself I too would have mistaken those ladies for men". In fact, the badge works so well that if you buy something for your wife you'll have a hard time convincing the sales person that you're not a lesbian ! ■



NAME THAT GIRL !

An important part of taking on a female identity means using a female name. Aren't we lucky, girls ? Unlike 'real' women we can actually choose our own name, and need not be saddled with names like 'Daisy' or 'Agatha' unless we want to. (I once knew a lady called Poppy Higgins !). Of course, many crossdressers simply take a female version of their own name - Eric becomes Erica and so on. Some already have fairly androgenous (or at least easily altered) names - e.g. Hilary, Francis/Frances, etc, but most have to start from scratch; and choosing a name can lead to a lot of heart searching. If it's of any help, the following are the ten most popular girls names appearing last year in the birth announcement columns of *The Times*.

1 Emily	6 Lucy
2 Katherine	7 Hannah
3 Charlotte	8 Alice
4 Olivia	9 Georgina
5 Sophie	10 Emma

However, the following list of the top ten names chosen by crossdressers who are members of Rose's Club (published in *Repartee* No 10) is rather different.

1 Sue/Suzy/Susan/Suzanne	=4 Jackie/Jacqui/Jacky
=2 Chrissie/Christine/Christina	=4 Jane/Jayne
=2 Michelle	=4 Jenny/Jennifer
=4 Angela/Angie	=4 Karen/Karyn
=4 Debbie/Debra/Deborah	=4 Sandra/Sandy

Of course, if you want to date yourself, this is all too easy. (I once met someone called Mafeking Pretoria Jones - guess what ? She was born just after the relief of Mafeking in 1900 !). The following list (taken from a womans' maga-

zine) shows how you can sometimes tell a more modern girl's age by her name

1950s ('Jivers')	Priscilla, Gillian, Rita, Jackie
1960s ('Hip chicks')	Wendy, Jennifer, Susan, Janet, Jayney
1970s ('Swingers')	Carly, Phoenix, Scarlet, Siouxie
1980s ('Materialists')	Caroline,
1990s ('Let's be different')	Grace, Winona, Kylie,

If you are still looking for a name and want any more ideas why not get a copy of the *Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names* ? This fascinating book will give you a choice of several hundred names, from Abigail to Zoe, together with their derivations and meanings. (For example, did you know that Zoe is an ancient Egyptian Jewish translation of Eve - the name of the *first* woman ?). Whatever you decide upon, it is always wise to choose a name and then stick with it. Chopping and changing only confuses the rest of us - and we have enough to be confused about as it is. (And although my own name doesn't appear in any of the above lists, it was top of *The Times* list for 1949; and I like it, so there !)

Anne ■

Smile !

"If your life is lived butter side down, you must try to view it sunnyside up. It's a question of making the best of the bad bits"

Nina Myskow
*In Love, Sex and the
Pursuit of Chocolate* ■

CORRESPONDENCE COLUMN

Dear Anne

Thank you for sending my first copy of The Tartan Skirt so promptly. I have enjoyed reading it immensely, especially your own contribution 'Why do we need Groups ?' (April 1992, p5). I suppose I could be described as one of the 'fearful confused outsiders, looking in' people, who has had a need to cross dress since 9 years old, but who fought the need tooth and nail - denied its existence, etc. I am sure you know the story !

I've been a passive member of the Beaumont Society this past two years or so and sometimes visit one of the Groups. I had hoped to find what you described - care, understanding, identification, acceptance. Perhaps my own backward, fearful and introverted attitudes are at fault, but I still feel an outsider looking in. I'm 56 now, married for 33 years and with four grown-up children and five grandchildren, and am beginning to despair of ever finding acceptance of myself, and some measure of peace.

You may feel free to print this if you think someone out there like me may benefit, and find the courage to get in touch.

Yours truly
Rosemary

If anyone would like to write to Rosemary, letters sent c/o the Editor (address on page 2) will be forwarded. ■

HAND BAG ?

by Anne Forrester

At some time or other most men wonder what on earth women keep in their handbags - and indeed, many women are uncertain what theirs may contain at any one time. Of course, crossdressers may think that we know, but despite our (supposed) superior male logic we are often as disorganised about this as most women. However, there are certain priorities when deciding what we need, and the following lists offer some suggestions for various levels of capacity.

The basic contents.

You should always carry at least the following essentials:

- Your house or flat keys
- Money (for safety, around £10 in assorted notes and coins)
- A small packet of Kleenex tissues
- Basic makeup 'touch-ups' (powder compact with mirror, lipstick, cotton buds)
- Hair brush and/or Afro comb

Also, as appropriate :

- Car keys
- Spectacles or contact lenses
- Sun glasses
- Nail varnish (for touch-up)

Desirable extras.

These will often become essentials if you are going to be out and about for any length of time:

- Small hair spray (apart from its obvious use, this makes a valuable defensive weapon if you are threatened - and in law it is not classed as carrying an offensive weapon)
- Makeup extras (eye shadow, mascara, eyebrow pencil, lip liner)
- Credit cards (preferably in your *femme* name)
- Note book and pen
- Your diary
- Miniature sewing kit (needle and thread, spare buttons, safety pins; often given away free and found in hotel bedrooms)
- Tube of hand cream

Gilding the lilly.

A few items to add "artistic versimilitude" in case your handbag is searched by a security check when entering some public buildings:

- An I.D. card for your *femme* identity (available from ADF Editorial Services - see adverts in *The Tartan Skirt*)
- A letter addressed to you in your *femme* persona. (Write one to your *femme* self from your male self, post it to yourself, then open, unfold and re-fold it before putting it back in your bag)
- A few till receipts for nylons, lingerie, etc
- A photo of your male self (or of any male friend or relative), inscribed on the back "To (*your femme name*) with love from (*your male name*)"
- A few photos of young children - your own or anyone elses
- The two basic forms of protection against hepatitis and AIDS - a packet each of waterproof elastic dressings (*Elastoplast* or *Bandaid*) and condoms !

And the conclusion ?

Well, it's a waste of time getting yourself one of those neat-looking 'clutch bags' that slip under your arm. You'll never get everything in. The bigger the better; and then you'll find that the umpteenth corollary of Murphy's law applies - the contents of your handbag will always expand to require ten *per cent* more than its capacity ! ■



AND HERE IS THE NEWS...

Recognising gender problems in children. Britain's first gender identity development clinic has recently been set up in London by child psychiatrist Dr Domenico Di Ceglie. He aims to provide a climate in which children, parents and teachers can begin to talk about gender identity problems in the young, rather than pretending that they don't exist. Dr Di Ceglie stresses that he is not trying to cure such children but to understand them. He says that parents can not necessarily change their children's gender identity problems, but they can help their child by listening. And we will all say 'Amen' to that ! The Gender Identity Development Clinic is at the Dept. of Child Psychiatry, St George's Hospital, Tooting, London, Tel 081 672 4291.

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**No, it's not television.** The latest publication to attract your attention is the *ITV Magazine*, published by the BBC. Confused ? Don't be. *ITV Magazine* is the newly-launched Irish Transvestite Magazine, the journal of the Belfast Butterfly Club and the first such publication to come from Ireland. Bound in a cover of 'Irish green' it is strictly for the gender community rather than devotees of the haunted fish tank. Good wishes to Editor Linda Marshall and Deputy Editor Sharon Blair. Priced at £ 3.50 plus 50p postage and packing, the *ITV Magazine* is available from the Belfast Butterfly Club, PO Box 210, Belfast BT1 1BG, N.Ireland. ■

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## NEWS FROM THE SCOTTISH GROUPS

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**ABERDEEN.** The Grampian Gender Group - 3G - has been meeting regularly since March, and we have been fortunate enough to have the use of comfortable modern premises, with excellent changing facilities and even a private car park. Numbers have varied but we have now contacted a number of crossdressers in the north and north-east who previously had no contact with our community, and we have members coming from as far apart as Inverness and St Andrews (and all points in between), as well as occasional visitors from 'down south' (that's right, the Forth and Clyde valley areas !).

We have had demonstrations of subjects as diverse as false boobs and books on gender topics, and have been producing informative 'Fact Sheets' most months (*copies available from ADF Editorial Services on receipt of a stamped self-addressed envelope plus a loose 28p stamp*). A demonstration by A & A wigs is planned for November and we have a number of videos - varying from serious looks at makeup and cosmetic surgery, to *Tootsie* and *Some Like it Hot* - for instruction and entertainment during the winter months. Visitors from other Groups are always welcome. Phone 03398 83695 for details of meetings.

**EDINBURGH.** Numbers at the Edinburgh meetings have varied, but an excellent turn-out in July gave us the opportunity to meet again with Janet Scott and Elaine Stacey of the Beaumont Society. Sadly, we no longer have the use of the Linden Hotel's small dining room for the Friday dinners that had become so popular, but some of the Group have been meeting in Maggie Rae's club or in *The Laughing Duck* for pre- and post-meeting socialising.

News of next year's gender weekend, to be held in the Edinburgh Hilton National Hotel will be found elsewhere in this issue, and it is hoped that this will become the first of a regular fixture in the calendar. Congratulations and thanks to Sarah for working so hard to get this off the ground. Please support this weekend - it is the first time that Scotland has mounted such an event, and although we hope to see many friends and visitors from the south (and even further afield), we hope to see as many members of the three Scottish Groups in attendance as possible.

**GLASGOW.** The Glasgow group, re-started last December, has been meeting regularly and attendances have been very good, confirming that there was a need for a Group in the West of Scotland.

Following an informal meeting in December 1991, including representatives from the Gay Switchboard and the local Council, three meetings were arranged for February, March and April, and attendances at these were good - even with a slight 'hickup' in March when someone forgot the key for the rooms. However, standing in the hallway what did we do but form a committee ?

We hope to set up a helpline. This could be a slow process, but we already have four volunteers. A competition for a new name for the group was won by Susan Hunter with the name **CROSSLYNX** to replace our former name of *Transclyde*, Susan receiving a £ 5 Boots voucher (no doubt to be spent on makeup and other goodies). At recent meetings it was nice to see Sheila back in circulation after her recent operation (no, not *that* operation !).

Finally, anybody interested in coming to the group should please check with the SLGS helpline (041 221 8372) as although we have been meeting on the second Tuesday of the month, this may change, as may the venue. ■

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## ABBREVIATIONS

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by *Stephanie & Anne* (No, not Lloyd !)

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We all use abbreviations, but do we always know what they mean ? Does 'A.A.' refer to the Automobile Association, or to Alcoholics Anonymous ? Here are some thoughts on what we may *think* some common abbreviations mean - and what they *might* mean for our community.

*From the world of audio-visual entertainment:*

|     |                                                              |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| TV  | TransVestite                                                 |
| CD  | CrossDresser                                                 |
| BBC | Big-Boobed Crossdresser<br>(or Belfast Butterfly Club)       |
| ITV | Incongruous Transvestite<br>(or Irish Transvestite Magazine) |

*From the world of politics*

|     |                                    |
|-----|------------------------------------|
| MP  | Makeup Practice                    |
| MEP | Makeup <i>En-femme</i> Preparation |
| PM  | Preferably Male                    |
| EC  | Extraordinary Crossdresser         |
| IMF | Intention to be More Feminine      |

*From the world of motoring*

|     |                                                     |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------|
| AA  | Anticipating Androgeny                              |
| RAC | Really Awful Crossdresser<br>(or Read And Caught ?) |
| GTI | Gender Transient - Indecisive ?                     |
| MG  | Magnificent Genderism                               |
| cc  | Crossdressers' Clubs                                |

*From the world of computing*

|     |                                  |
|-----|----------------------------------|
| CPU | Crossdresser Partially Undressed |
| RAM | Random Access Masculinity        |
| ROM | Randomly Organised Male          |

*From the world of the armed forces*

|     |                          |
|-----|--------------------------|
| RAF | Random Access Femininity |
| RN  | Reality ? No thanks !    |
| HMS | Hetero- Male Sexist      |
| SAS | Soft And Silky           |

*From the world of public corporations*

|             |                                   |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| BR          | Brave Re-assignment               |
| BT          | Butch Transsexual                 |
| British GAS | British Gender Assignment Society |

*From the world of Airlines*

|     |                         |
|-----|-------------------------|
| BA  | Bulky Appearance        |
| TWA | Transsexual With Appeal |
| KLM | Kinky Little Mini       |

*From the world of shopping*

|         |                                               |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------|
| BHS     | Breast and Hormone Store                      |
| C & A   | Crossdressed and 'Appy                        |
| HARRODS | Happy And Really Relaxed Over-Dressed Swinger |

*From the world of 'labels'*

|     |                       |
|-----|-----------------------|
| Mr  | Masculinity Rejected  |
| Mrs | Male Role Surrendered |
| Ms  | Masculinity Suspect   |

*And finally, if someone needs HELP!*

|     |                                |
|-----|--------------------------------|
| SOS | Socially Offensive Sexuality ■ |
|-----|--------------------------------|

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