

THE TARTAN SKIRT



Magazine of the
SCOTTISH TV/TS
Group

New Series No. 1
January 1992

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EDITORIAL

by Anne Forrester

Some of you new girls may not have heard of *The Tartan Skirt* - or if you have, you may never have seen a copy. Some of you other girls who have been around the Scottish TV/TS group a little longer may have wondered what ever became of it.

Well, after a period of some two years of non-appearance, once again you all have a magazine of your own. It is hoped that the new series of *The Tartan Skirt* will appear three or four times a year and will contain all sorts of material that will interest, amuse (and maybe even inform) you. However, whether this pious hope will become reality depends on you. Yes, dear, I do mean YOU. You see, without contributions, no periodical can hope to survive. All right, there are a number of newspaper items and so on that we can report, the editor can write an item or two herself, and from time to time we can get permission to reproduce items from other publications within the gender community (NB: get used to that term, you'll see a lot more of it from now on - it means 'us', and I shall use it often). However, this will not be enough on its own: we need material from you.

As far as editorial policy is concerned, we aim to provide material of interest to cross dressers, transsexuals, and their partners and friends (what our American sisters so charmingly call "significant others"). However, in one respect the policy is the same now as it was for the original series: we shall "absolutely

refuse to publish any sexy or sexually orientated material". Well, let's face it, pornography is available from any newsagent these days. Let's try to be a bit more respectable, eh? Apart from that, let's be hearing from you, whether your contributions are directly concerned with the gender scene or not. How about some nice short, simple and tasty recipes, for instance; and crossword puzzles, poems and well-drawn cartoons are always welcome. We are also happy to publish advertisements, both of the "Sale and Wanted" variety (free to members of the Scottish TV/TS Group) and from interested businesses (to whom we offer very reasonable rates).

So how do you get your hands on this wonderful new attraction? Copies of *The Tartan Skirt* will be on sale at the monthly meetings of the Group in Edinburgh, and for those who can not reckon to make it every month, copies can be sent by post (in a plain brown envelope, addressed in whatever way you prefer) for a small extra charge to cover the packing and postage. (Sorry. We are definitely not in the business of subsidising the Post Office). However, it would help if we had some idea of the likely demand for *The Tartan Skirt*, and if any of you care to place a regular order - preferably with payment in advance - this would also help. (And a word to all you other groups out there. How about a subscription for - or by - your own members?).

Right, girls. *The Tartan Skirt* can only be what you help to make it. Let's be hearing from you. Please send all contributions, subscription orders and advertisements to:

The Editor, *The Tartan Skirt*
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WHAT'S IN A NAME ?

by Anne Forrester

Right, so if you ever get up sufficient courage (or are sufficiently brazen) to tell your relations, friends or neighbours what you are or what you do, how do you describe your favourite pastime? The odds are that you will say that you are a transvestite - or, if you can't bring yourself to use the word outright, you will say "I'm TV" - and leave them either guessing or asking for more details. The term "transvestite" - and its shortened version "TV" - is almost universally used in Britain, although in America it is definitely on the way out. Indeed, one eminent speaker at the recent Fantasia Fair in Provincetown said that she wanted to see the term effectively banned. I agree; and the reason is simple. In the minds of 99% of the population the word "transvestite" has only one connotation - the Rocky Horror show. A transvestite is thought of as being queer, weird and laughable - and generally fair game for open abuse.

Now there is nothing at all wrong with the word "transvestite" as a piece of language. It derives from two Latin words, "trans", meaning across, and "vestio" meaning clothing. Hence a trans-vestite is simply one who dresses across the usual norms of gender. Unfortunately, as we constantly see in other walks of life, the meaning of words tends to change with time, and society comes to read quite different things into words which once meant something entirely different. For example, "gay" used to mean simply happy, cheerful, joyous. Use the word today and it has only one meaning to most people: homosexual. Whether

we like it or not, "transvestite" may well mean "cross-dresser" to you; to nearly everyone else it simply means "a weirdo man in fishnet tights".

So what should we call ourselves? Well, perhaps we should first think whether we should call ourselves anything at all. Because I sometimes go out dressed in (male) highland dress of kilt, sporran and the associated items, I don't call myself anything particular when I do so. Similarly, a London businessman going to work in a striped suit and bowler hat does not think of himself as a separate species, just because of the style of his dress. He is simply a person, like anyone else. So why should I call myself something different when I go shopping in Princes Street wearing a dress, nylons and high heels? There is a good case for refusing to refer to ourselves as anything other than people, and for taking the attitude that what we choose to wear is our own business. If my kilt crosses to the right and is worn with a sporran and kilt hose, or to the left and is worn with tights and high heels, should not differentiate me any more than if I choose between wearing a black business suit with collar and tie, or a sweat shirt and jeans.

Unfortunately, society being what it is, most of us do need some sort of label to describe our preferred mode of dress - but why must we insist on using the emotive "transvestite" tag? (Indeed, why must we sometimes be totally 'twee' and refer to ourselves - as do many English members of the sisterhood - as "Trannies"? Calling ourselves "TV", as though we were simply wooden boxes with blank square faces is bad enough; calling ourselves "Trannies", as though we were little portable sound machines is worse).

American practise is largely to use the term "cross dresser", and this certainly sounds much more dignified to me than "transvestite" - and it is no longer, and much more descriptive. Nevertheless I have heard

it criticised by some of our British sisters as being difficult to abbreviate, as "CD" has the connotation of a compact disk. This is nonsense, of course, as both "TV" and "Trannie" have similar connotations with audio/visual entertainment equipment. In any case, why this compulsion to abbreviate everything? A fisherman does not feel it necessary to call himself a "fishie", nor does a tax inspector call himself a "TI". Perhaps "cross dresser" is a little too explicit for some of us - after all, it certainly leaves no room for doubt about what we do. But then, if we must identify ourselves as different from the other nine tenths of the population, why be coy about it?

Another American usage that I like is simply to refer to oneself as part of the gender community, although this covers a much broader spectrum than simply cross-dressing. The gender community includes both pre- and post-operative transsexuals as well as the category of transgender individuals (those who live full-time in the opposite gender role, while neither wishing nor seeking re-assignment surgery). Perhaps this is too much of a mouthful if we simply want a single word title, but it certainly has a much more dignified aura than "transvestite".

Perhaps this last point is the most important. At the moment, members of our community are a very much misunderstood and vilified segment of society. Like our gay friends, we are a persecuted minority. So-called 'straight' individuals dislike, and even fear us, simply because we are different; and woe-betide the non-convincing cross-dresser who ventures out and is 'read' by a gang of youths. 'Queer-bashing' is still in fashion, and easily extends to 'transvestite-bashing'. If we are ever to shift public opinion from suspicion and dislike to at least a little tolerance - let alone approval - then we must surely begin by seeing ourselves as rather more dignified than something out of the Rocky Horror show, and as more serious than the

Dame Edna Everedge experience. If we can not at least call ourselves by something more dignified than either calls up that image, or else belittles ourselves as 'twee' little "trannies" then perhaps we don't deserve to be taken seriously, and allowed to get on with doing our own thing.

One of the many American weekends for the gender community is called "Be all" - short for "Be all you want to be". Well, I want to be myself, without being laughed at, threatened with arrest every time I go out, or with being 'bashed' if I am read. OK, cross dressing is fun and satisfying, but if I can't take myself a little bit seriously when talking about it, then I don't deserve to be taken seriously and allowed to get on with it, by others. Personally, I have given up referring to myself as "a TV" (and I never did refer to myself either as "a transvestite", or - worse - "a tranny"). If anyone asks, I am a member of the gender community. If they want to know what that means, I will explain it as best I can. Preferably, I will just say that I prefer to be what I want to be - and as long as I am not hurting anyone else, it should surely be nobody else's business.

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Well, folks, what do you think ? Are you fed up with being called a "Trannie", or do you think that it sounds great - or doesn't it matter ? Why not write in with your views ? One of the marks of a successful periodical is a lively Correspondence column, so let's be hearing from you.

WORRIED ? YOU NEEDN'T BE

Worried about your weight, your age, or your feminine appearance ? You needn't be. Some of the world's most beautiful women have recently revealed their own approaches to such problems. In a recent television interview Anita Eckburg - now (unbelievably) approaching 50 - told Wogan that she has never even owned a pair of bathroom scales. She has two pairs of jeans, one an ordinary fit and the other a tight fit. When she can't get into the tight pair then she knows it's time to diet and/or exercise. Simple, isn't it ?

Gina Lollobrigida, at 64, can still be regarded as well in the running for the title of 'the world's most beautiful woman', which she held in the 1950s and 1960s. Her secret ? Well, it seems that it is all in the attitude. She says that she dresses not for herself but for 'them'; "If you dress ugly, you act ugly". And she always makes up most carefully. "Make up exists to help us to look more beautiful" she says - so why not use it, carefully ? Perhaps most importantly, when asked what she regards as the most important quality in a woman she picked out neither physical beauty nor a perfect body. "It is personality, which is simply another word for character".

So there you have it. Take a tip from the real women who really know. Looking attractive is no more than having an attractive personality, and taking extra care with your appearance. Simple, isn't it ?

(And no. None of us could hope to come even *near* to the appearance of either of these two ladies).

GETTING STARTED

*Two girls give their own impressions
of 'coming out'*

A Vote of thanks

by Julia (Inverness)

I would like to think that I would in any case have managed somehow to show my appreciation for the way I was accepted into the Group, without fuss, when I first came to a meeting in February 1991. When it was suggested by one of the Group that perhaps I could record my experiences of that day, as this might in some way help others like myself, I was very thankful for this opportunity to put back a little, in return for gaining so much.

I had reached a stage in my life when I knew it was important to me to meet other cross-dressers and, by pure chance, while digging around for evidence of the Beaumont Society (sorry Vanessa, but your organisation could do with raising its profile a little in the north) I was given the telephone number of a girl who was able to inform me about the Scottish TV/TS Group in Edinburgh, and give me details of their meetings. *Dorothy, how can I begin to thank you for being the right person, in the right place, at the right time?*

I had a valid reason for getting away for a couple of days on my own, so I packed my bags (acutely aware that I simply *didn't have a thing to wear!*) and drove down on the Friday to stay overnight in Glasgow with my father. I didn't sleep well that night, whether due to apprehension about the next day, or just the noise of a city at night, to which I'm unaccustomed, I don't know. However, as I surfaced on the Saturday morning I felt quite calm: almost resigned to my fate!

I travelled through to Edinburgh by train, in plenty of time, to find my way to St. Combe Street. The building itself was quite easily identified from some way off by the presence of two persons engaged in conversation on the pavement outside, while various items of hand luggage lay close by. We were all early arrivals and in the course of exchanging pleasantries I was quickly and painlessly sounded out. (Thank you, Kay. Your skill and professionalism in this area do you credit). Before long Kathy appeared with the keys to open up, and in we went.

Although I had been told it was not at all necessary to change for my visit, I had made up my mind to get dressed for the meeting; and without my having to ask, all the information I needed was supplied to enable me to do this with the greatest of ease. (The only problem arose when I realised I had forgotten to pack a full-length mirror!).

Those of you who have gone through this before will know how I sat down amongst you. At this time I could not even allow the intense pain in my knee (which I had banged on the underside of the table as I sat down) to make a similar dent in the grin on the inside of my face. *Thank you ALL* for your sympathetic consideration of my circumstances, pretending you hadn't even noticed me come in. I

could have asked for nothing more. The prospect of a cup of coffee proved an irresistible temptation and I found myself staggering to my feet again to tread an ungainly path over my handbag to the cups. I made a mental note that I would *really* have to practice moving about more gracefully. (Whatever did I do with that video recording of *My Fair Lady*?).

Some way through the proceedings I began to feel that slow, relentless onset of **PANIC**, as I realised that the meeting would come to an end at some point; and I had foolishly made bold my intention of joining some of the Group in *The Laughing Duck* thereafter. However, I had come a long way (in more senses than one), and was determined to play my part by remaining dressed. Before I had thought of more than about fifty insurmountable problems it was all taken out of my hands by the implacable Dorothy, who simply told me what I was to do, in such a way as to render further discussion totally futile.

Now, being dressed in the privacy of ones own home was one thing; to be dressed in the company of others like myself was another thing; but to step outside into the mainstream of humanity, dressed *en femme*, was unlike anything I had ever imagined. But that one experience told me I had finally 'come home'.

The next few hours, spent between *The Laughing Duck* and *The French Connection*, must rank amongst the happiest I had so far known. Here, I must thank the barman in *The French Connection* for the Coke he served me. Over and above the obligatory ice he had added a little green plastic stirrer and a bendy straw. It was all too much...! When the time came to visit the Ladies - this time to change back to my male attire - I was overflowing with confidence;

so much so that I was only a little unnerved when, with my tights lowered to my ankles, Dorothy appeared in the doorway to inform me that there was "absolutely nothing to worry about"!

The next day I was abruptly reminded that the higher we climb the further we have to fall. I fell a long way and came down with a bump - but this time I was left still clutching an apple. That will give me the strength to climb again another day. My thanks to every girl who, by being themselves, helped me to know myself. And, lastly, thank God for making it so.

****oooOOOooo****

How I Started Cross-dressing

by Ivy (Dunfermline)

It began as long ago as 1950 when I was in hospital. We held a fancy dress party and I was persuaded to dress as a chorus girl. The lady patients dressed me from head to toe, including make-up, as this was the start. I did not do anything more about it for many years, although I often thought about it. I did not dress again until the late 1960s, and then it was only underwear to start with, progressing to full dressing later and then to the use of make-up, wearing a wig, and so on.

It was while reading an old copy of *Forum* magazine that I found the phone number of the London TV/TS

Group. I called them and asked if they knew of a Group in Scotland, and they put me in touch. I think I have progressed well since then. My next step will be to go out dressed - which I hope will not be long now. When I do, I will let you all know how I get on.

****00000000****

OK girls. Have you got a tale to tell - your first time out or your first Group meeting; your first time using public transport (or a Ladies public loo) while dressed; or the time that you were definitely 'read' by someone who knows you? Why not write about it, and let the rest of us in on it? Send your stories - preferably typed or word-processed, but handwriting will do as long as it is legible - to the Editor (for the address, see page 4).

CORRESPONDENCE COLUMN

Dear Anne...

No, this month there just isn't any correspondence; which is a pity. It would be so nice to hear from you. Perhaps you have thoughts about some of the subjects in this issue of The Tartan Skirt; maybe you have ideas about some of the things we should be talking about; or have you got some advice to offer to other members of our community? Perhaps you would just like to say "Hello" to your sisters. In any case, please let us hear from you, so that this column will actually contain something next time. You will find the Editor's address on page 4.

Yours truly
'Hopeful'

UNDERDRESS FOR SUCCESS

by Marlene Ball

Reprinted from *The TV-TS Tapestry*, Issue 58

I'm an active and dedicated cross-dresser. I have accepted myself for what I am, and crossed that most difficult hurdle of all - I like me! I really like the feminine me. Oh, I'm not beautiful: I'm a size 14-16 [N.B. British size 16-18 - Ed], my tummy's too big, my fanny's too flat, my legs are too bony, and my nose is too big. My only truly positive feminine feature is a "fleshy" chest that can fill a 34C bra without reinforcement. Still, I like me.

I don't know what percentage of me is female. I don't suppose it really matters. I *do* know it's a large part of me, and has been for as long as I can remember. For a lot of years I didn't like myself for what I was. What a waste of emotions that was! Like the saying goes - I am what I am. At long last I accept the woman in me. I'm really starting to work on being all I can be.

As part of my commitment to my feminine self, I decided to be feminine whenever I felt like it. This was pretty often. I quickly learned that it encompassed *all* of my personal time alone and it was frustrating every time I had to "change back" into my fully masculine role. The "change back" was necessary every time I had to interface with other people, with the exception of the few other crossdressers I met along the way. I am not a TS; I know that for certain. There *are* times when I really enjoy my masculine role.

Yet unquestionably my dominant personality is female. My personal commitment to myself - to be all I can - simply couldn't be met in the real world without going "public" - an unacceptable alternative to me.

While it's certainly nothing new to most crossdressers, I discovered for myself five years ago the way to bridge the masculine/feminine gap. I express my feminine self *underneath* my everyday male clothes. I call this "underdressing". In my life it has made a big difference, any risks being far outweighed by the rewards. I have discovered that many CDs are afraid to underdress, but the few who I have "converted" seem highly pleased with the practice. My recent conversion of Tina is the catalyst for this article.

I've known Tina for a year. A month ago she invited me to dinner on a week night. I came directly from work and arrived, suitcase in hand, in my grey business suit. She too was still in masculine clothing, having arrived home only a few minutes before I got there. We decided that we didn't need privacy and proceeded to change together in her bedroom. Tina was in a state of disbelief as I removed the last of my masculine vestments, revealing my normal array of underfashions - matching Lejaby bra/panties/garter-belt, stockings and camisole.

In answer to her question, I explained that I dress like that every work day, have for five years, have never had any problems, and find the practice exceedingly enjoyable. Tina's logical barrage of questions all revolved around the same theme - "Aren't you afraid of discovery?". I responded that I could think of very few circumstances under which I would be found out.

To be honest, I was "discovered" on two separate occasions over the last five years. The first time was when sudden illness necessitated a trip to my doctor. I had on male undies, but discovered too late that the

marks on my chest were quite obviously made by a brassiere. The attending nurse expressed curiosity. I confessed to being a crossdresser and she simply whispered with a smile, "Don't wear your bra so tight". The doctor said nothing.

The second incident occurred at an impromptu after-work office gathering at local drinking establishment. I met a very attractive woman and asked her to slow-dance. It was a calculated risk, and one that I probably should have avoided. But I really did want to dance with this lovely creature, and the men's room didn't provide the privacy needed to get my bra off. Almost immediately her hand discovered my bra clasp. Before she said a word, I said, "If you'll permit me, I'd like to explain that". She did, and I did, and we had an enjoyable evening. I don't think she ever revealed my secret.

My own introduction to underdressing was through a friend who had practiced it for many years. He shared with me about *his* experience being discovered. He was in a serious auto accident and ended up in the emergency ward with a broken neck. His attending physician removed his bra and panties and reassured him that he was by no means the first male emergency room patient to be so attired.

The cautions that go along with underdressing are simple. Keep well covered. If you work in a suit and wear a bra, always wear a vest or sweater under your jacket. If you don't wear a jacket, it may be too risky to wear a bra, but you may be able to get away with a camisole. Just about everybody can at least wear panties, and probably stockings.

This week I received a letter from Tina containing two ads. The first was for Hanes *Her Way* bras and panties and read: "Beneath my work clothes I wear something a little special - a Hanes *Her Way* satin and

lace bra". The other ad read, over a picture of a lovely woman in a gorgeous *My Favorite Fantasy* bra: "The Hidden Side of the girl in the grey flannel suit".

Tina's letter read in part, "These ads made me think about you. I wish I could express how wonderful it feels to be a full-time woman. Thank you so much for acquainting me with, and talking me into, wearing lingerie under my male attire. No matter what I'm involved in now, I can know that I'm feminine underneath".

****oooOOOooo****

QUOTATIONS OF THE MONTH

"I don't have a problem. If you have a problem, that's your problem. Please don't make your problem, my problem".

Yvonne Cook

"I know what MY problem is. What's YOURS?"

On a wall plaque

HAVE YOU READ ?

Some Books Reviewed

Transformations: Crossdressers and Those Who Love Them by Mariette Pathy Allen. New York: E.P.Dutton. (A Division of Penguin Books, USA, Inc.), 2 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016, USA. (ISBN 0-525-24820-X). 1989. US \$ 24.95

Amongst the American gender community Mariette Pathy Allen is one of the best known, and best loved, of the sympathetic 'real girls'. She is a highly successful New York photographer whose work has been exhibited not only in the USA but also in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris. She also happens to know and enjoy the company of very many crossdressers and transsexuals. She is present at most of the major American gender events, and has taken very many wonderful photographs of our sisters in the community, both in the studio and in informal settings. This 'coffee table' book is a compendium of some of the best of these.

Apart from her very obvious professional skills, the key to Mariette's success in photographing crossdressers is her profound empathy with them as people. In a recent newspaper interview she said of her book that "It takes away the usual stereotypes and puts people in the daylight of everyday life". Her book shows a number of crossdressers, sometimes in both

their male and their female role, sometimes with their wives, partners, children and parents, and always with sympathy and understanding. I have had the pleasure of meeting most of her subjects included in this book, and also the privilege of modelling for her myself, and can testify that Mariette has a totally unique and beautiful way of bringing out the character and the humanity of her subjects, and of portraying cross-dressing with total sympathy.

This book is large enough to be a potential embarrassment if you don't wish your family and friends to know of your interest - but, much more importantly, it is beautifully enough compiled and produced to be a prized and admired book to display in any home - and maybe the gentlest and best possible way to introduce the subject of crossdressing into conversation with your friends and loved ones.

This has to be the ultimate picture album for all cross-dressers. You may well have to ask your bookseller to order it for you specially (and quoting the ISBN number at the top of this review will help him), but it is worth every effort to obtain, and every penny of its price.

(N.B. Mariette Pathy Allen also had a superb portfolio of eleven dye-transfer prints of photographs which appear in this book, intended for display in Art Galleries. These portfolios cost US \$ 9000 each, and anyone who is interested in helping to raise funds for the purchase of one for donation to a gallery should contact the Editor, who has further details).

Anne Forrester

****oooOOOooo****

My Story. by Carolyn Cossey. London: Faber & Faber. 1991. 225 pages. £ 14.99

Probably the best-known transsexual at the present time, Carolyn Cossey astounded the public when it became known that she was Tula, the outstandingly beautiful model and actress who had been one of the James Bond girls and who had featured in the widely praised advertisements for Smirnoff vodka, riding a sea-serpent beneath the caption "Well, they said anything could happen". It had. What was not widely known was that Tula had been born a man, and was a transsexual. Sadly, in recent times she has become even more widely known on account of her - so far, unsuccessful - court battles to establish her right to be treated as a woman in law.

Carolyn's autobiography is one of the most moving books I have ever read. The sheer bigotry of so many of the people who learned her secret, and the sadistic pursuit and persecution of her by the 'popular' Press, are enough to make anyone weep tears of sheer rage and frustration, as well as sadness and sympathy. Indeed, after reading this it is hard not to feel one's own hatred for the perpetual cry of the Press regarding "the public's right to know".

Carolyn was born in Norfolk in 1954, the second son of country folk, and was brought up, together with his brother and younger sister, in conventional surroundings. Her story tells of a troubled childhood, a difficult period coming to terms with her true sexuality while working in London, and her early career as a show girl, in London and Paris. Following her successful gender re-assignment surgery her subsequent career as an outstandingly beautiful model and actress was highly successful - until the Press caught up with her.

The story of her marriage - destroyed, like her career, by a Press 'exposure' - and her later attempts on behalf of all transsexuals to gain proper legal recognition, is uncommonly moving. It seems incredible that the British legal system allows a person to have gender re-assignment under the National Health Service, but then denies the individual the right to legal protection in their new sex. Thanks to Carolyn's legal battles it is now widely known that although now a woman, a post-operative transsexual in this country has no right to marry, no legal redress against rape, and if sent to prison would have to serve a sentence in a male prison. In America, in all but a few States a transsexual may even be issued with a revised birth certificate, and certainly suffers no such legal harassment as occurs here. What is even more incredible is that when Carolyn took her case to the European Court it also upheld the British legal stance. It seems that for transsexuals in Europe there really is no justice.

This is a book that every member of the gender community should read. Cross-dressers suffer their own pain at the hands of a bigoted and uncaring society. It is good that we should all realise the much deeper pain that can be inflicted on our transsexual sisters, and that we should offer them all the love and support that society at large so callously refuses them.

Carolyn Cossey's story is recommended without reservation. The book itself is well illustrated, beautifully produced and excellent value for money. If you can't afford to buy a copy, get it from your library - but don't fail to read it.

Anne Forrester

****oooOOOooo****

Amazons and Military Maids. by Julie Wheelwright.
London: Pandora. 1989. 205 pages. £ 12.95

In complete contrast to the two books reviewed above, the subject of this unusual book is described in its sub-title - *Women who Dressed as Men in Pursuit of Life, Liberty and Happiness.*

It is not widely realised - even within the gender community - that the phenomenon of transsexualism is neither new, nor confined to male-to-female gender changes. In times gone by the only way that a woman could gain any degree of independence and break out of the gender stereotype was often to dress as a man and seek to enlist in the army, the navy, or on a merchant ship; as the author puts it, "It is clear, however, that women expressed a desire not for the physical acquisition of a male body but for a male social identity". What is surprising is not that this was so (given the more rigid stereotyping of the times), but that it apparently so often succeeded.

In this study (based on the author's MA History thesis at the University of Sussex), the story of a number of the more notable and successful cross-dressers from the 19th and early 20th centuries, in Europe and in North America. From common seaman and Civil War soldier to Generals in the Napoleonic and Serbian armies, from obvious 'women in trousers' to totally convincing 'males', the tales are sometimes strange and frequently sad, as only a few of those studied had any real success or happiness in their male role.

Unfortunately the author's style does not make for easy reading, the tales being mixed up in no very clear order. Individuals keep popping up in different chapters devoted to different themes, and there is no coherent story of each individual. However, the book is well illustrated and there are a number of unusual

and interesting photographs (55 in all!), which make it worth while. I would not buy it at its cover price, but I did get a copy cheaply in a 'remainder' bookshop, and if you can not do likewise it might be worth asking at your local library. I would describe this book as 'interesting' rather than 'important'.

Anne Forrester

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BREAST IMPLANTS

Some crossdressers, as well as most transsexuals, have at some time considered the possibility of having breast implants. However, recent research has cast some doubt upon their safety, and this was highlighted in a recent *World in Action* programme on Granada Television.

Around 100,000 women have so far had breast implants in Britain, as well as two and a half million in the USA. However, American and Canadian scientists have linked a range of illnesses to silicone implants, apparently due to continual seepage of very small amounts of silicone into the body. Manufacturers of the implants have claimed that there is no evidence that this silicone causes harm, but the American Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) has disagreed and is now considering taking all silicone implants off the market unless better evidence of safety is produced.

The FDA is also requiring manufacturers to produce new client advisory pamphlets, which must be given to those considering breast implants. The *World in Action* programme particularly highlighted risks apparently associated with a certain type of implant which has a 'roughened' outer skin, which is claimed to feel more natural when implanted. The programme caused some alarm amongst those who saw it and who have had, or are considering having, implants, but the medical evidence would seem to be that in the vast majority of cases implants do not cause harm; although unless they are inserted by reputable and experienced plastic surgeons the cosmetic effect may

either be disappointing, or it may not be long-lasting. In any event, implants may need to be replaced after a number of years. Naturally, no mention was made of the use of implants by male-to-female transsexuals or crossdressers, but there is no reason to doubt that any problems affecting women would apply equally to men.

In this country there are a number of private plastic surgery clinics which - amongst other operations - undertake breast enhancement procedures. Not all of these would accept a male patient without referral from another medical practitioner - but not all of those who would be sufficiently reputable to be worth the risk!

The principle of the operation is that the implant - basically a plastic sac of silicone - is inserted through a small incision below the natural breast, so that it lies between the muscle wall and the natural breast tissue. The operation involves a general anaesthetic and a stay of a day and a night in the clinic. Dressings have to be worn for around 10 days and may need to be changed during this period. Nor is the operation cheap. One (highly reputable) London clinic currently quotes a fee of £ 2500, which covers all operating expenses and nursing care, the general anaesthetic, and the stay in the clinic together with all meals and aftercare. The good news is that being a medical procedure, the fee is exempt from VAT.

Depending on the effects of their hormone treatments, transsexuals may well feel that breast implants are a necessary part of their reassignment surgery. Crossdressers will probably be better advised to stick with padding in their bra (whether or not weighted) - which is certainly safer - and is bound to be much less expensive!

SOME FACTS ABOUT WOMEN

Do you ever wonder what life is *really* like for a woman? As crossdressers we understand something about discrimination - but we often don't appreciate that even today, real women don't have anything like the same chances in life as we do, as the following statistics published by the Equal Opportunities Commission in 1990 show:

Of the total population of Great Britain, 51.3% are females and 48.7 are males.

So they outnumber us, but -

While amongst single families only 1% consists of a lone father, 12% consist of lone mothers.

Which means an awful lot of lonely women.

And in higher education, although 18,300 women graduated in languages compared to 7600 men, when it came to engineering and technology it was 3000 women against 24,500 men, while in business and financial studies it was 3700 women and 5,500 men.

So women have far less chances in the higher paid careers.

And when it came to earnings, the average for women was only 74.9% that of men.

So you still want to be a woman?

A LITTLE POETRY

TRANSGENDER

She loves the feel of nylon and silk,
The flow of skirts about her knee,

The softer, sweeter things of life
That typify true femininity,

The loving, caring nature
And woman's instinctive empathy.

For though she knows men rule the world,
Deep down inside she holds a key.

She knows womens' true superiority
Is lack of anger and aggression,

With love and caring sympathy
For mankind everywhere.

And knowing this explains why she
Takes joy in being a woman,

And loves all she does that's womanly.
And insists she must be feminine.

Yet o:

For 's.13' w... genetic '1'.
Trapped in a male body: a woman's p...sonality.

Anne Forrester

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N.B. This poem was recently selected as a semi-finalist entry in the 1991 North American Open Poetry Contest, and will appear in the forthcoming poetry anthology In a Different Light, to be published in America by The National Library of Poetry.

SHE SHOULD KNOW !

" I'm both male and female - that's my whole performance. I don't want to be cute and pretty "

Tina Turner

COMING TOGETHER - DENVER 1991

A FIRST-TIME VISITOR'S IMPRESSION

by Anne Forrester

Although I had visited the USA previously I had never before been to the Rockies, nor to a major gender Convention. I was clearly the poorer for having missed out on both counts; and it was with real anticipation that I travelled to the 'Coming Together' Convention of the International Federation for Gender Education (IFGE) in Denver, Colorado, in April 1991. Of course, arriving in Denver on the preceding Friday I was a bit bushed after a 25-hour door-to-door journey, backwards across eight time zones; but the Regency Hotel was a pleasant and welcoming landfall.

As I was early for the Convention I spent Saturday exploring Denver and found myself enjoying the hottest April day on record - somewhere in the mid 80s. (A few days later there were four inches of snow in the city: and I thought our highland weather was fickle!). However, this did give me the excuse for buying a new summer dress and some white shoes, despite the problem of converting American to British sizes. (My British size 16 is an American 14, which sounds nice; but my size 8 shoes are American 10s, which does not!). Sunday there was still no sign of the Convention registration so I rented a car and took off for the Rockie Mountain National Park, in male dress so that I had the opportunity of getting some photographs with me in them, that I could actually show to the folks back home.

Monday saw an early start for a pre-Convention ski trip. Now although I live in skiing country myself, I am too fond of my own skin to indulge in this particular form of masochism, but I went along for the ride anyway. The rather motley band of male, 'female' (and some frankly androgynous) types seemed to enjoy the skiing, however, and they obviously included a few experts. Our Convention 'tour guide' (a friendly TS called Jennifer) and I meantime roamed the local village in between blizzards until 'our gang' appeared off the slopes for lunch, with most unmaidenly flushing of the cheeks and varying degrees of remaining stamina. Nevertheless most of them managed another few hours skiing in the afternoon. The day certainly was a good start to what was to prove a fabulous week which, in retrospect, is hard to follow logically. So many things were happening and there were so many marvellous people around.

Between formal sessions, the guest luncheon speakers - from medicine woman to gender reassignment surgeon - were all excellent, and the lunches themselves were great social events. It was so lovely to dine with a group of real 'ladies', and perhaps this was the nicest part of all. The sheer joy of being able to open up ones heart and soul to sympathetic and understanding ladies, just as genetic girls do so naturally in their everyday lives - including the genuine laughter and the emotional tears of real joy - meant that apart from having the time of my life I learned more about myself during this week than I would have believed possible. I sometimes think that the main motive for most crossdressers to emulate women can be summed up in one word - envy. A week such as this meant that by effectively 'becoming' a woman for a week it was possible to sink into the role virtually completely, and turn that envy into reality; and believe me, it's wonderful. Another outstanding aspect of the Convention was the way in which all members of the

gender community became just that - a complete community, with crossdressers, transgenderists, transsexuals and real girls all coming together in such a close and loving way that I felt that I had at last found my real (extended) family!

There were very many moments that were pure emotion. The awards and presentations were real tear-jerking events, with not a dry eye in the house, and there were moments when we simply hugged one another in sheer joy. Isn't it strange how men can normally not let out their emotions, while women do so naturally; and when we 'become' women we can let ourselves go and indulge in all the wonderful tactile and emotional experiences that society's stereotyping normally denies us.

Shopping and dining out *en femme* in an atmosphere as relaxed as that which we enjoyed in Denver, and with a marvelously accepting hotel staff to come home to, was wonderful. The staff, indeed, had not known what to expect, but they all treated us like real ladies. One of the personal high spots of my own week was when leaving my room one morning, the chambermaid came in and remarked how much she liked my perfume. A girl does so appreciate these little courtesies! It was also pleasing to see one of the girls from the Hotel's reception desk coming along to one of the open evenings, when the Denver public were invited in to see and hear all about us. I just wish we could hold such an 'open evening' in Britain, to let the rest of the world know that we are no different from any other group of people; just nicer than most. It was also great to see a group of High School pupils visit one morning, complete with video camera to take back their impressions to their class. Their friendly comments and obvious joy to find that we were nothing to be feared, and were just a nice bunch of girls, were just great.

Needless to say the social events were also marvelous. An evening party around the swimming pool produced a remarkable show of swimsuits - and the ability to wear them to the best advantage (although the TS girls had an obvious advantage here). Some of the gorgeous figures left me totally envious (and how on earth did some of the crossdressers manage to keep their wigs on while in the water?). The final banquet was also fabulous. The chance to dress up in ones best ball gown, receive a corsage on arrival, and then share the evening with so many lovely ladies, made it the social high spot of the week; which ended with an emotionally moving interdenominational religious service on the Sunday. This is a community that can boast its own Christian pastors, as well as doctors, lawyers, and even a genuine Indian Chief.

The day following the Convention, while awaiting my return flight, I went out and rented a car, *en femme*, and explored some more of the Rockies, eating out and using the rest rooms for which I was "gender dressed and identified" (as the Hotel management had so beautifully put it). Unlike the American versions, British drivers' licences do not carry photographs and make no mention of gender, but mine does carry my obviously male name. Nevertheless the Hertz staff received it from my female hand without batting an eyelid. Wonderful.

Altogether it was a fabulous week, in which I made many new and wonderful friends from amongst all sorts of ladies (in the best old-fashioned sense of the word) - crossdressers, transsexuals and real girls from all over the United States and Canada. I learned a lot about myself, and largely cleared my mind about how I wanted to progress in this wonderful, if sadly misunderstood, gender world of ours. I shall carry the memory of this Convention with me always. But it will not be my last. That is a promise.

GREETINGS FROM A REAL GIRL

by Dorothy Gray (Edinburgh)

Firstly, good luck with this publication, and secondly "thank you" to all of you 'girls' who attend the Edinburgh meetings and the Linden dinner evenings, for allowing me into your 'world'.

At the mature age of 40 I was introduced to the Scottish TV/TS Group in Edinburgh to give a perfume demonstration, which was followed by a trip to *The Laughing Duck*. During the years that followed I have spent many happy hours in your company and - I must add - have the greatest respect for all of you because basically, despite a lot of opposition, you are all "doing your own thing".

I would like to think that in a small way I have contributed something to the Group. Since my initial offer of accomodation Anne from St.Andrews has become a regular guest, followed closely by Julia from Inverness, who also kindly looked after my flat - complete with two cats - during my recent stay in hospital.

In the early days with the Group my son was still living at home, and I mentioned to him the possibility of having the odd (sorry, wrong word: *occasional*) 'TV guest' at our home. After considerable thought he said "Mum, it is my considered opinion that people should wear what they like; but he then added "the only problem being, we already have two TVs. How many

TVs will we end up with - **AND NO LICENCE** ! I might also add that since that initial statement he has enjoyed the company of all my visitors, loves it when the flat is like a dressing room, and accepts a whole new meaning of the word 'condom' (= *false boobs*) !. **False hair, false boobs, false hip pads; but indeed, warm hearts !**

Wishing you all the very best for the coming year.

Dorothy.

****oooOOOooo****

Most members of the Group will be aware that Dorothy has suffered from ill health recently and has had a spell in hospital, followed by a lengthy and uncomfortable convalescence. We all wish her the very best, and a speedy return to full health.

HOW WOULD YOU KNOW ?

Three women are walking down the street. How can you tell which one is the cross-dresser ?

She's the one wearing the prettiest dress.

At a meeting of a typical TV/TS group, how do you know which woman in the room is the 'real girl' ?

She's the one who is listening.

DO YOU KNOW YOUR SIZE ?

As you all know, womens' clothes are sized differently to mens'. For reference, here is a guide how to measure yourself, and then what you should look for:

Bra size is found by measuring round your body immediately beneath the lowest point of your breasts. To find your bra size, if the measurement is an even figure add 4", and if an odd figure add 5".

To find the cup size measure around the fullest part of the bust (wearing false boobs, if you normally do). The cup size is the difference between this figure and the bra size, according to the following formula. If the two measurements are the same the cup size is **A**; if the bust size is 1" greater then it is **B**; if it is 2" greater the cup size is **C**; if 3" greater it is **D**; and if it is 4" greater you need a **DD** cup.

Waist. Measure this at your natural waistline.

Hips should be measured at the broadest point, normally about 8" down from your natural waistline.

Skirt and dress lengths are difficult to measure without help. Try fixing a bulldog clip to the end of your tape measure. Standing in front of a full-length mirror hold the end of the tape at your natural waistline (for a skirt) or at the centre of your shoulder (for a dress), so that you can read the length off the tape, in the mirror. Do *not* be tempted to bend over to read it; no matter how careful you are you will inevitably get a false reading that way.

You can now check your size from the following Table, noting that sizes increase in twos (*i.e.* 8-10-12, *etc.*). However, you may find that you need different sizes above and below the waist. For example, you may need a size 16 blouse but an 18 skirt. In this case, it may be easier to stick to separates, as dresses which fit in one place may not do so in another. (Alternatively, you could always try wearing different size false boobs!).

SIZE:

<i>British</i>							
8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22
<i>American</i>							
-	8	10	12	14	16	18	20
<i>European</i>							
-	40	42	44	46	48	50	52

TO FIT:

<i>Bust</i>							
30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44
<i>Waist</i>							
23	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
<i>Hips</i>							
32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46

Note: American "Young Miss" sizes are different, and include half sizes.

Shoe sizes also differ as between British, American and European codings - and you will often find all or any of the different sizes marked in new shoes.

SIZE:

British

6 7 8 9 10

American

7 1/2 7 1/2 8 1/2 9 1/2 10 1/2

European

39 1/2 40 1/2 42 43 44 1/2

****ooo000ooo****

YOU KNOW YOU'RE GETTING PARANOID
ABOUT OLD AGE WHEN YOU START
CHECKING YOUR WIG FOR GRAY HAIRS!



RUTH'S ROVINGS

by Ruth Stewart

During the autumn of 1991 Ruth's feet scarcely touched the ground as she travelled from one gender event to another. Here are some of her jottings, recording her 'progress':

Scarborough 1991. This event took place during the last weekend in September, at the Southlands Hotel. Numbers seemed slightly down on previous years - possibly due to the forthcoming 25th Anniversary celebrations of the Beaumont Society in November, but the present recession may also have been a factor, with people having less money to spend. However, as always, all who were there did enjoy themselves.

First of all a vote of thanks must go to Martine Rose for her excellent organisation, with the weekend well supported by members of Rose's Club (including 'Yours Truly'). However, many other groups were represented, including our own Scottish TV/TS Group. Apart from myself there were Sheila and Stephanie Gail from the Orkneys, this being her first time at Scarborough. She was probably the most travelled person there: there's dedication for you!

Many other Groups were present, of course - the Beaumont Society, Northern Concord, Transsex, etc, but I must give a special mention to a Group that has always existed but now has a new name, a strong decisive leadership, and a more positive approach.

They are making good headway in Northern Ireland. BBC TV - yes BBC TV were at Scarborough watching our every move. To be more precise the Belfast Butterfly Club's President Linda Marshall, and Treasurer Sharon. In an exclusive interview for *The Tartan Skirt* with Linda Marshall I understand that various events have been arranged for the Belfast Group. Dr Richard Ekins of the University of Ulster has already given a lecture on TV-related books, papers, magazines and memorabilia, and Mary Welsh, President of the Dublin-based Friends of Eon, will address a future meeting. Parties have been arranged in various members houses outwith normal meeting nights. Of all the most unlikely places in Belfast, Northern Ireland, the TV scene is jumping, thanks to Linda Marshall and her dynamic committee. The best of luck to them.

The Friday night at Scarborough was the usual get-together and I saw some familiar faces again Babs, Debbie, Ruth, Shirley, and Jill Mariner. I then learned that the fashion show which had been planned for the next day had been cancelled due to the sad death of Madeline, of *Rag Doll*. However, *Feline* had stepped in and offered to do the show, but unfortunately they had then suffered a break-in to their shop on the preceding Wednesday, and show was again cancelled. So, late on Friday night Jean Donaldson of *Vice Versa* was asking for volunteers to put the fashion show on again.

John Walker of *Feline* was to be in Scarborough on the Saturday with what was left of his stock, and between himself and Jean Donaldson was hoping to organise something, and 'Yours Truly' volunteered (silly girl!) for rehearsals at 2 pm on Saturday afternoon. As nothing had been planned for the Saturday morning at the Hotel, after breakfast a mass exodus of crossdressers hit Scarborough's main shopping Centre. Linda, Sharon, Jill Mariner and I decided to go shopping. In a shopping precinct I was presented

with a free *Index* catalogue by a sales girl who even called me Madam, and Sharon was stopped by a woman with a clip board, who proceeded to ask her questions about armaments!

In Debenhams we went for morning coffee, having looked through the ladies fashion section (where anything that I liked was too small). The weather was as can be expected when shopping - raining, what else?

Saturday afternoon there was a rehearsal for the show, based on a theme of fashions from the 1920s to the 1990s, and into the future. Together with four others I was to represent the 1940s. My partner was Susan from Liverpool, and we were to dance to the music of Glen Miller, wearing dresses of the period.

Each decade was also represented by a star of the time. The star of the 1980s was Madonna - ME, impersonating her to the tape of '*Like a virgin, for the very first time*'. That's what I call type casting! All the stars were there, including Dolly Parton (Diadonna) and Barbara Streisand (Jill Mariner - I liked the nose job). I must also mention Liz, who was in the 1920s doing the Charleston in a frilly kind of 'Ra-Ra' dress of the period. The finale was Kathy of Rose's Club, doing the Time Warp from *The Rocky Horror Show*, with all the participants taking part. I hope the audience was entertained. I know that all who took part did their best, and had a great time. Thanks to John Walker and Jean Donaldson for all their help.

The Fashion Show was followed by the usual, and we danced the night away, many staying in the bar till the wee small hours, talking with friends we only meet a few times a year on special occasions like this. Well, till next year at Scarborough, this is 'Madonna' signing off. (Oops, sorry. *Ruth Stewart*).

An interlude. Before and after going to Scarborough I stayed with Chris and Ray, about 20 miles from Manchester - a place where I have always found a pleasant and relaxing atmosphere, and where I have met many crossdressers and TSs. I must make special mention here of two people in particular, who were invited for dinner one night. Josie is in her 80s and Helen Clayton in her 70s. These two 'youngsters' could teach us all a thing or two. Who said you stopped dressing at 60?

It was non-stop traffic at Chris and Rays', as I also met Angie, who stayed most of the week and who reminds me of that song '*Angie baby, you're a special lady*'. On the Tuesday evening we also met Joan from north Wales, Joanne from Leicester, and Sandra.

On Wednesday night it was off to Manchester, to the Rembrandt Hotel ('The Rem'), the home of the Northern Concord, and again met many old (and new) friends. Sarah and Mary of the mini skirts, who welcome strangers and newcomers and collect the money - your work is appreciated by all. Here I met Ann and Helen for the first time, and discovered that Helen would be staying at Chris and Rays' the next night.

For the first time I actually visited some night spots around The Rem. First we went to *Napolean's*, just across from the Rem. The disco upstairs was a crescendo of noise, above which you could hardly hear yourself think, so after a short stay we went on to *Follies*, thanks to a lift in Michelle's car. *Follies* seems to be a rather nice place, with plenty of room and a disco at the back which has more floor space than is usual around this area. Here I met up with Helen and Clayton (of the previous week), dancing the night away. Okay for a 70 year young! Finally, 2 a.m. saw us leaving *Follies* and taking a 5 minute walk back to The

Rem, where Chris' car was parked, and then go home.

For those who do not know this area, The Rembrandt is in Sackville Street, and round about are *Napolean's* (as I mentioned), the *Union Bar*, and *New York, New York*. *Follies* is further away, and as the famous *Dickens* is nowhere near this area you would have to ask for it. (NB. Some of these places have drag acts on the Wednesday night). Also a word of warning for the unwary: you are in a mini red light district.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch. Thursday saw Debbie come and change, and stay for dinner. Also Helen (whom I had met the previous night at The Rem) came for an overnight stay, as did Sally Rawlands. I had expected to see Sally in a schoolgirl gym slip, but she seemed quite respectable in her mini skirt. I think the gymslip had been Raymond's little joke. At dinner there was the usual bright, brilliant and witty conversation.

I was happy to meet (for the first time in a year) Jill Sylvester. What a vast difference in appearance - and all for the better. If the name rings a bell you may well have read about her in *The Mail On Sunday* (13 October 1991), the magazine section having had an article on transsexuals, four male to female (of which Jill was one), and one female to male.

My stay soon came to an end and I left reluctantly, although would be coming back after in two weeks time.

Colwyn Bay 91. This event took place during the last weekend of October 1991. Like Scarborough this year, numbers were again down, with the Beaumont Society's 25th anniversary taking the blame - but to be fair, recession and unemployment do not help.

I believe this was Janette Summers' last time orga-

nising this twice-a-year event, and thanks are in order for all the hard work she has put in over previous years. We hope she will still be at Colwyn Bay in future, having a more relaxing time.

Even with the lower numbers there were crossdressers here for the first time, some of them with their wives. I hope all enjoyed themselves. The range of skirts and dresses was fantastic, from minis to ball gowns, and everything in between.

During Saturday morning and afternoon many went on shopping trips around Colwyn Bay, and further afield. I went on my own to Colwyn Bay shopping Centre, where I had seen an offer of a free nightdress (worth £ 7.99) for every dressing gown bought. However, I did not like any of the nightdresses.

A little discussion here on the merits of going out dressed alone. My point of view is that any courage I have gained for received going out alone was by first going out with other crossdressers, in a group. I know that others oppose this, saying that groups attract attention. I suppose this may be true, but until now nobody has said anything. Maybe I have been lucky. However, this leads me on to my departure from Colwyn Bay on the Sunday, when I decided to go back to Chris and Ray dressed.

Thanks to a lift from a couple who were at Colwyn Bay for the first time (I hope they will forgive me, I forget their names, but thanks anyway), I got to Chester. From there I took a train to Chris and Ray's place. This being a Sunday the station and the train were not too busy. The highlight of the journey for me was when the ticket collector on the train asked for my ticket and said 'thanks, love'. I could have kissed him - well, almost!

Having arrived back at Ray's I had a bonus. I went with Ray to pick up Chris at Liverpool airport, where she was arriving after a short holiday. The simple things in life give such pleasure when dressed.

The rest of the week was the usual run-of-the-mill. I was happy to see Jill Sylvester and Joanne from Leicester once more. Karen, who I had not met before, dropped in one night - always surprises here. Wednesday, as usual, was Northern Concord night at The Rem. This was no ordinary night, however - it never is when the Irish hit town. The reason was the Beaumont Society's 25th Anniversary on the Friday to Sunday of this week. Linda Marshall was already there, and later on Mary Welsh, President of the Friends of Eon, arrived with a party of 10 to 12. I met Dorothy and Pat, with whom Sheila and myself had stayed last year, and was glad to see Sandra, Kathy, Marianne and others. They were not dressed, and this caused me some confusion later in the week.

Later that night it was off to *Follies* once more, where we danced the night away. Someone I met at The Rem that night was Debbie, and a special thank you here for her offer of a lift to The Beeches Hotel on Friday, for the Beaumont Society's 25th Anniversary.

Thursday saw the Irish go to Chester, and Mary Welsh, Sandra and Crystal dropped in at Chris and Rays' on their way back to Manchester. I learned that the Friends of Eon have two rooms near the centre of Dublin, where members can go and change and wander around Dublin. However, some changes may come about in the near future. I will keep you all informed when I hear anything. Theresa had also arrived for an overnight stay - someone else going to The Beeches on the Friday.

Friday arrived. Debbie was due to arrive at noon to

pick me up, and Theresa would follow us to Rotherham. Before then a very interesting person arrived. Kathy, a TS whom I call 'the sugaring lady'. Kathy is from the good old USA, and having taken appropriate courses is qualified to practise sugaring, which is a technique for removing body hair. Kathy now stays in this country and hopes to set up a practice in the Manchester and Bristol areas. Debbie duly arrived wearing a cute little black pillbox hat with black netting, which suited her.

On the journey to Rotherham the only incident of any note was a funeral outside a village church, where the hearse blocked the road and we were held up for 5-10 minutes. We finally reached the Beeches Hotel, and what the receptionist thought of it all who knows. It's all in a days work, I suppose.

Beaumont Society - Silver Jubilee 1966-1991.

This meeting was held at the Beeches Hotel in Rotherham on the weekend of Friday 1st to Sunday 3rd November 1991, and was 'the big one' of the year. Did it live up to expectations? In my humble opinion the answer was yes. The hotel was fully booked, over 200 staying there for the weekend.

Before getting to my thoughts about this weekend let me reflect on the Beaumont Society - the oldest TV/TS organisation in Britain. I know that some of you reading this article are not members, and may have heard various views, both good and bad. However, contact by the Society with the media has helped the cause of the TV/TS. If you are not the outgoing type there is still a place for you in the Beaumont Society, whatever your lifestyle. *(That's the plug over - however, I could have said that the Beaumont Society needs you !)*

As we arrived Janette Scott, the President, and Elena Stacy, Editor of *The Beaumont Bulletin*, were there to

welcome everyone.

I shared a room (No 1, of course !) with Maureen, who actually had met Virginia Prince all of 20 years ago: not many can claim that !

Friday night was a buffet, followed by a disco. The Irish had arrived again, in full force, while from Scotland it was nice to see Jane from Inverness. (We had met earlier in the year at Weston-super-Mare), from Edinburgh there were Carolyn, Barbara and Laura, and Glasgow was represented by Sheila, Sara McGowan and myself.

Saturday morning and afternoon saw many depart *en femme* for a shopping trip to the Meadow Hall shopping centre (said to be the largest such under cover Centre in Europe), a few miles down the M1. For those Beaumont Society members not going out there was the Society's Annual General Meeting

Saturday night was the Beaumont's 5th Anniversary dinner, with not a spare seat anywhere. There were 200 staying at the hotel, and others coming for the dinner swelled the numbers. After the meal speeches, which were short and to the point - some even amusing - were made by Janette Scott (President of the Beaumont Society), Mary Walsh (Friends of Eon) and Jenny Baker (Northern Concord). One interesting person who spoke was Alice Purnell, one of the original 12 who had been at the first meeting which saw the Beaumont Society's formation back in 1966.

Of special interest to the Scots was the presentation of a cheque for £ 100 from the Scottish TV/TS Group to the Women of the Beaumont Society (WOBS). This had been organised by Vanessa, who was unable to be there in person, but from whom a letter was read out. Janette Scott, as President of the

Beaumont Society, presented the cheque to Mavis of WOBS. A photograph was taken of the presentation and this will appear in *The Beaumont Bulletin*. We in Scotland should be justifiably proud.

Women of the Beaumont Society is in some ways a misleading name. Firstly, WOBS is independent of the Beaumont Society. Women, yes, but not an army of them - there are only three; but three hard-working and dedicated women who answer the helplines, take calls from wives, girl-friends and many others connected with crossdressers and transsexuals with problems. Being realistic, problem situations do not always end happily. For the WOBS Mavis, Di and especially Chris, however, a quotation (not exactly how Churchill said it, but sincerely meant): '*Never have so many owed so much to so few*'.

After the dinner there was a cabaret provided by Jean Donaldson - and excellent it was too - followed by the invariable disco, and many dancing the night away. Sunday breakfast saw many strange male faces as we were about to disperse to all parts of the country.

So Ruth's roving finally came to an end - for now. A hectic 5-6 week period. Next year there's Weston, the Costume Ball in Manchester, and... Stop!

That's all for now, folks. See you soon.

Ruth

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HERE IS THE NEWS FROM THE BBC

A new TV station has been started in Belfast, with ambitious plans to rival the entertainment output of the British Broadcasting Corporation.

The Belfast Butterfly Club, with so far just a couple of dozen members, has already cast aside the caterpillar life style of the former Belfast TV/TS Group which it has replaced. At its first General Meeting in September 1991 the Club appointed an Executive Committee to put its affairs on a more business-like footing, though it remains a voluntary self-help Group to support crossdressers, transsexuals and their partners, with advice and information.

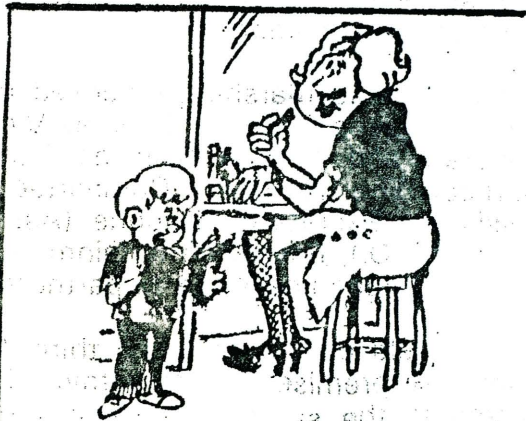
Club President Linda Marshall is backed by a strong line-up which includes Joanne Coyle as Vice-president and Treasurer, and Sharon Blair as Secretary and Liaison Officer. The rest of the Committee consists of Tania (Assistant Secretary), Daphne (Assistant Treasurer), Kate (P.R.O.), Rachel (Entertainment and Catering Officer) and June and Anne as partners' liaison.

Meetings are held on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at premises in downtown Belfast, but other events in the second and fourth weeks have been added to the busy schedule, with the emphasis very much on enjoyment.

A photographic evening, quiz night and group discussions have been supplemented in the programme by guest speakers from the University of Ulster's Transgender Archive and the local Gender Identity clinic.

there have been trips to visit the Friends of Eon in Dublin; to the Harmony Weekend in Scarborough, and the Beaumont Society's Silver Jubilee in Sheffield, as well as nearer home to the local gay pub. Added to this have been regular parties at members' homes, and the New Year promises to be an even busier time with a make-up demonstration, Miss TV Northern Ireland contest, restaurant outings, literary evening, charades, treasure hunt and barbecue, plus lots more parties to look forward to.

The Belfast Butterfly Club can be contacted by writing to PO Box 44, Belfast BT1 1SH, Northern Ireland, or telephone 0232-322023 on the first and third Tuesday of the month between 7.30 and 10.00 pm.



**"Dad, what's a TRANS-
VES-TITE?"**

SOME DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

1992

February

Saturday 8th. The Costume Ball. Manchester Town Hall. Tickets £ 15. Apply to Northern Concord, PO Box 258, Manchester M60 1LN

March

Friday 13th - Sunday 15th. Colwyn Bay Weekend. Details from Edelweiss Hotel. Phone 0492-532314

April

Friday 3rd - Sunday 5th. Weston Weekend. Details from Virginia Pedlar. Phone 0980-622314

Monday 6th - Sunday 12th. Coming Together - Working Together Convention. Houston, Texas. Details from International Federation for Gender Education, PO BOX 367, Wayland, MA 01778, USA

September

Friday 11th - Sunday 13th. Second International Gender Dysphoria Conference, at University of Manchester. Details from The Beaumont Trust, BM Charity, London WC1N 3XX

October

Friday 16th - Sunday 25th. Eighteenth Annual Fantasia Fair. Provincetown, Massachusetts. Details from Outreach Institute, 405 Western Avenue, Suite 345, South Portland, ME 04106, USA

AND FINALLY !

Have you heard ?

Poor Stephanie. Last November Stephanie Anne Lloyd - founder and owner of the *Transformation* shops and one of the best known British transsexuals - was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment for selling pornographic videos by mail order. At least the law showed some compassion: she will serve her sentence in a womans' prison. (Interestingly, the controversial Judge Pickles has described this sentence as "much too severe", and called for her immediate release).

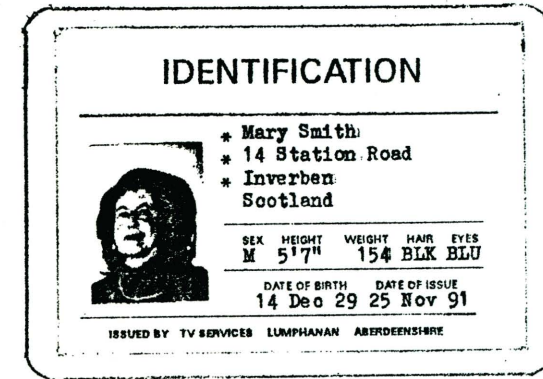
A series of 'firsts'. At the meeting in Edinburgh on 30 November last there were a number of welcome 'firsts'. For the first time (at least for a long time) we had present: *three real girls* (welcome ladies, it was lovely to see you all); *three first-time attenders* (welcome sisters - we hope you will all come back as regulars); *three people from the north-east* (welcome girls - we'll get that Aberdeen sub-group off the ground yet !); and *two prominenti from the Beaumont Society* - no less than their President, Janette Scott, and the Editor of *The Beaumont Bulletin*, Eleanor Stacey (welcome ladies, and haste ye back - soon). If we go on at this rate we'll be needing larger premises.

And those Linden dinners. The pre-Christmas dinner at the Linden Hotel on 29 November was a great success, with a good turnout to meet our guests from the Beaumont Society (see previous item), with at least two of the girls sporting the tartan. The dinners are proving popular and by the time you read this there will have been another on 24 January. If you do not receive notice of these events, drop a note to the Editor with a contact name and address ('plain brown wrappers' only are used), and you will be added to Vanessa's circulation list.

And if it's not too late - a Happy New Year to you all

LAMINATED ID CARDS

for your female identity



Send your details, as on the above example, together with a photograph not above 1" x 1 1/4" and a stamped self-addressed envelope,

with a cheque for £ 3.00 to:

*ADF Editorial Services
Tullochvenus House
Lumphanan
Aberdeenshire
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Complete confidentiality guaranteed

