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THE TARTAN SKIRT

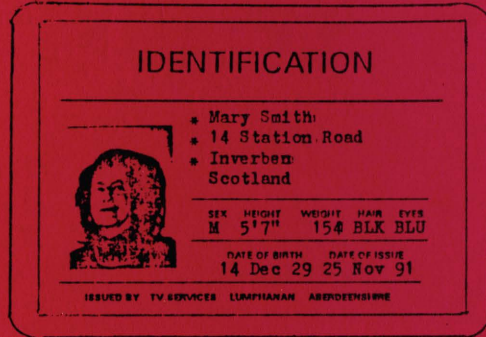


Magazine of the
SCOTTISH TV/TS
Groups

New Series No. 8
October 1993

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THE TARTAN SKIRT

The Magazine of the Scottish TV/TS Groups

Editor: *Anne Forrester*

New Series No. 8

October 1993

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WE'RE BACK TO THOSE LABELS AGAIN !

by Anne Forrester

All right, here's a nice little question for you. If you call yourself a transsexual, a transgenderist, or a crossdresser (or even a transvestite - heaven forbid), then what term do you use to describe a person who was born and brought up entirely as a female ? The chances are that you will use an adjective and a noun, and that if you are in Britain you will refer to her as 'real girl' ('RG' for short), while if you are American then you will probably say 'genetic girl' ('GG' for short). So let's think about that for a bit, shall we ?

Most regular readers of *The Tartan Skirt* will know that I have a bee in my bonnet about 'that' word *transvestite*, and will not use it if it can possibly be avoided. My reasons are basically that it has become pejorative - that is, it is generally used in an insulting manner by those who don't understand the gender community and who don't stop to think about what they are saying. Well, in the same way I think that the gender community itself uses the terms 'real girl' and 'genetic girl' without thinking. So let us ponder for a moment on what it is that we are doing when we use these terms, because I believe that they are also insulting - even if unintentionally - to the women we are describing.

First let us look at the adjective. In Britain we tend to laugh at 'GG' because of the old nursery image of 'gee-gee' as a baby's word for a horse. Of course, our American sisters do not have that kind of hang-up to confuse the issue, and the 'genetic' part of 'genetic girl' can not be criticised, as it does very accurately define the difference between a female who is one as a result of her genes, and one who is that way because of her gender preference.

However, by implication the British use of the adjective 'real' when we mean 'genetic' is definitely insulting to all transsexuals. Do we actually intend to say that a woman is not 'real' unless she has female genes? If sex is what is between the legs and gender is what's between the ears, then whether a person is a woman because of her sex or because of her gender should make no difference to what she is called - in either case she is a woman. Just ask any transsexual (especially a post-op TS who is living a fully integrated female life) and she will be pretty upset - not to say insulted - if you suggest that she is not a 'real' woman'. So let's agree that **'genetic'** is a better adjective than 'real'.

Now what about the noun? Well, here I believe that both British and American usage has got it wildly wrong. Ask any of your female friends (whether genetic or not) if they actually *like* being called a 'girl'. The odds are that most of them will not. After all, a girl is commonly defined as a *young* female, usually below the age of puberty. After puberty - or after re-assignment surgery - when the body has taken on its full female shape and characteristics the individual is properly called a **woman**. To be called a 'girl' is widely seen amongst women today (and especially by feminists) as at best patronising, and at worst an insulting way to address a grown-up person who is a **woman**.

So where does that leave us? Well, if we really need a term to differentiate those who were born women from those who either 1) have had their anatomy and body chemistry corrected to that of their true (female) gender identity, or 2) whose inner personality is best expressed in a female guise without undergoing re-assignment surgery (*i.e.* crossdressers and transgenderists), perhaps we should drop both the 'real' and the 'girl' from our 'RG' and 'GG' labelling and simply refer to **women**, of whom many of our friends and loved ones are **genetic women**.

And if you really *must* abbreviate everything (and I'm darned if I can understand why we always should - do you



also call your bank manager a 'BM', or your window cleaner a 'WC'?), then 'GW' (*i.e.* 'genetic woman') will neither bring nursery images to mind, nor even remind you of audio-visual equipment in the same way that CD, TV (and even that horribly 'twee' term 'trannie') do.

But do we really need labels at all? Personally, I doubt it, for as Jed Bland said in his book *The Gender Paradox*, "I am not a label, I am a person": and that is true of all women, genetic or otherwise. ♀



DID YOU KNOW ?

If you think that your 28" waist is slim, think again. In the 17th century Louis XIV's queen, Catherine de Medici, not only succeeded in reducing hers to a mere 13", but ordered that all women at the French court should do likewise! And even as recently as in the mid-1800s it was considered that a desirable waist measurement for a lady should be around 17-21". ♥

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES

TO SUCCEED AS A TRANSSEXUAL ?

by Clair Sands*

1. To succeed in the transition from male to female you need around £10,000 to spare, over a 3-year period.
2. You need natural feminine facial features before you start, and all your own hair.
3. You need a degree of persistence equivalent to that of taking a University degree.
4. If you are a failure as a man you will certainly fail as a woman.
5. Spending the money you do have on electrolysis, if you have a dark shadow, is more important than saving for the final operation.
6. Changing overnight, or too soon, can cause serious psychological problems.
7. Don't become obsessed with 'being a TS', and try not to play the stereotypical woman. Be yourself and get on with your life.
8. If wearing miniskirts and fishnets *etc* is important to you, think very carefully about your motivation for changing.
9. Over 50% of full-time TSs are unemployed.
10. You have about a 1% chance of making a successful woman. (Based on initial consultations).

* From an article in the *Beaumont Magazine*, 1993; 1: 52-3

LOOKING LIKE A LADY

LEARNING MAKEUP TECHNIQUES

1. Preparing the canvas and painting the background

by Anne Forrester

In an earlier article in *The Tartan Skirt* ('Acting like a lady', April 1993) I suggested that creating a realistic and successful image consists of four 'C' factors: Costume, Camouflage, Cooing and Carriage - in other words dressing, makeup, voice and deportment. In the last two issues we have considered deportment and voice production, now let us get down to the basics and think about the camouflage. (All right, perhaps makeup sounds a bit better, but camouflage is what it is really all about; hiding our imperfections and making ourselves look better and - preferably - more feminine than nature intended).

Now for many (if not most) of you this will all be old hat; but not everyone has had the opportunity to practise over a long period of time, or to receive instruction in makeup techniques, and the beginners amongst us deserve all the help that we can offer them. The only way to learn any art-form is by practise - and the best way with makeup is to try it; then wash it all off and start again, and so on until you have got the effect you want. Remember, all of this stuff comes off quite easily, so don't be afraid to experiment. Apart from the makeup itself and a few brushes, *etc* with which to apply it, all that you need is a couple of towels (and possible a kitchen roll to prevent them becoming too stained before going into the wash), a pack of cotton buds ('Q-tips'), and a box of tissues.

So where do we begin ? Well, makeup (or camouflage for that matter) is basically an art form - and every artist must begin at the beginning, with a suitable canvas (or work surface). Let's face it, few male faces are really good bases for an art job, and unless you have been undergoing a considerable amount of electrolysis (in which case the makeup bit will be old hat anyway), the place to start is with that beard.

De-fuzzing the face

Some guys are blessed with sparse and fair facial hair, but mostly we will be dealing with a dark growth that shows itself even immediately after your everyday shave; so let us begin with that shave.

In order to get rid of as much stubble as possible - and to leave a surface that will remain reasonably stubble-free all day (and possible all evening, too) you need to shave twice. If you normally use an electric razor - and most young men are brought up on them these days - then by all means use it for the first round of facial haymaking, but being careful to get as close a shave as possible. (You may find that a foil-type of razor gives much smoother shaves than a rotary one. If you are going out to buy a new electric razor do try a Braun - they normally leave a very smooth surface indeed). After this first shave, let your face 'settle' for at least 10-15 minutes before the second shave; go and have a cup of tea or coffee.

For the second shave you really must use a blade - and the choice of razor may be critical. Especially if you normally use an electric razor, a really close shave with a blade can leave you with a sore face, not to mention numerous small nips and cuts. To minimise these you should choose your weapons carefully. Firstly, select a shaving foam (and foams are better than creams) that is formulated for sensitive skins. (You might try Palmolive Shave Foam for Sensi-

tive Skin, which is good and readily available. Even if your face is not especially sensitive, these foams will help give a smoother shave).

When it comes to choosing a razor, you will again do best with one made for sensitive skins - after all, you are looking for a much closer shave than is usual. Wilkinson's 'Protector' is hard to beat for a razor with disposable blades; for disposable razors you could try the Bic 'Lady Shaver' or Wilkinson's 'Twin Swivel'. (The best that I have found is Gillette's 'Daisy Plus', although it seems only to be available in America at present).

For your second shave first wash your face and then, using plenty of shaving foam and keeping the razor wet, shave *against the grain* of your beard, starting at the cheeks and moving in turn to the chin and upper lip. You will probably have to go over the chin several times in different directions - and don't forget to move the razor upwards from below, working your way all along your chin. Finally, don't forget your neck and the area beneath and just behind your ears - this can show when wearing many wig styles. Above all, don't rely on your mirror to tell you if you have cleared an area; feel it carefully with your finger tips (again rubbing against the grain), and don't be satisfied until you can feel nothing but smooth skin with no trace of stubble. Finally, wash and dry your face, slap on some toner (it doesn't need to be an expensive 'male cosmetics' brand, just use Boot's ordinary Skin Freshener), then let it dry and again 'settle' for at least 10 or 15 minutes. (This is when you can start to select and lay out your makeup and clothes).

As a general rule you will be best applying your makeup before you get dressed. However, if you wish to put on your underwear and then apply makeup before putting on the outer layer of clothing this will be what many women do. In this case - or if you dress completely first - you will be wise to put on a loose gown, or wrap a towel around

yourself, to catch any spilled makeup; and powder, in particular, can get everywhere and stain anything ! If you leave your outer clothing until after you are made up then be very careful when putting on a dress or sweater that you keep it clear of your face as you pull it over your head, or you will both stain the garment and smudge your carefully applied makeup. Finally, you will be well advised to leave off your wig until last, as it is very difficult to apply makeup right to the edges of your face without making a mess of the wig or leaving a 'tide mark' at the edge. In any case, putting a wig on over a fully made up face gives an instant transformation from 'man with makeup on' to 'woman' ! The transformation is almost like magic.

Now for the base

Just as when painting a house you need an undercoat before putting on the top coat, so also with your facial camouflage. Begin by rubbing in a foundation cream. These come in several shades, but choose one that matches your skin tone or, preferably, one that is a shade or two lighter. The best way to match up any facial cosmetics when shopping is on the back of your hand. The skin tone here is very similar to that of your face, and it is both more hygienic and easier to try it here in order to see what you are doing (and getting) you will find that most women do exactly that. It is also easier to try a colour without drawing attention to yourself.

The best way to apply foundation, as with some other makeup items that we shall discuss, is with a cosmetic sponge. These are fine-textured plastic sponges sold in any chemist's shop, and come either as wedges or as round disc-shaped pads. Moisten the sponge under the warm tap, wring it out and then apply foundation with your fingers in stripes down your cheeks and across your chin, nose and upper lip. Then, using the sponge, smooth it in to give an even overall coverage.

When the foundation has sunk in, the best bet if you have a dark '5 o'clock shadow' (or even if you know that you will have one within a few hours) is to use a cover-up. Although there are others on the market, far and away the best is Max Factor's 'Pan Stick'. Looking like a tubby lipstick in its case, Pan Stick (like foundation) comes in a range of shades and you will need to determine which is right for your skin tone. Again, streak the Pan Stick down your cheeks and across your chin, nose and upper lip, and then smooth it in with a dampened cosmetic sponge. (For this, it is better to use a different sponge to that which you use for any other cosmetic, as it can be difficult to remove from the sponge and will then 'carry over').

Finally, to give your canvas a suitable surface for what is to follow pat on some translucent face powder from a tub of loose powder. (Those little compacts of pressed powder are of no use for anything other than the odd 'touch up' while you are out and about).

Voila ! You now have a prepared canvas upon which to begin your work of art.

Blusher and shader

If you were around in the 1940s and 1950s you may well have heard your mother talking about 'rouge'. Well, blusher is just the modern name for the same thing - and it is probably the worst-applied of all the facial adornments. Blusher tends to be reddish in colour and shader varies between a brownish tint to a pale coffee colour - otherwise they are much the same as the good old rouge. The whole point of using these colours is twofold. Firstly, you can cover up a multitude of sins, but more importantly you can 'shape' your face to emphasise some parts and to make others sink into the background. (Now do you see why I refer to it as camouflage ?). From here on there are two basic rules that you must never forget. *Firstly*, most cosme-

tics that you put onto your prepared canvas are best applied with a brush - and for that, you need a suitable sized brush of good quality; cheapies are just a waste of time and money. *Secondly*, there is one golden rule that over-rides all others. **Too little is better than too much.** It is always easy to add a little of any cosmetic if you have under-done it; it is almost impossible to remove too much, short of washing it all off and starting again.

As with all other cosmetics you will have to choose the right shades of blusher and shader, and this is often only possible by trial and error. Basically, start off by trying colours a shade or two lighter than you imagine you will need. **Don't overdo it.** First brush on shader where you wish to emphasise hollows - over the hollows in your cheeks for example - and over-prominent features that you wish to minimise, such as the tip of your chin and your nose. Then, again using a brush, apply blusher in a streak running down from a point on the cheek bone just in front of your ear, to a point about an inch below the outer edges of your eyes, just above the hollow of your cheek. Now take another dampened cosmetic sponge and carefully blend the blusher into the shader and into the surrounding areas between the upper area of the cheekbones and the outer edges of your eyes. The aim is to produce an even blending of colours; if you can see the blusher as a discrete area of red then you have not done it properly. The last thing that you should end up with is a 'blob' of red on each cheek; this looks much too much like a clown's style of makeup, although sadly it is too often seen on younger women who have not bothered to learn the proper techniques of makeup (? from their mothers).

Well, that's all we have space for this time round. In the next issue we shall consider the eyes, lips, nails - and then getting it all off again. ☺

COLOUR AND IMAGE

by Garry Morrissey

Have you ever wondered about making sure that you choose the right colours for your clothing and makeup ? Well, here a Colour and Image consultant tells you how he sets about it and how he can help you.

Following more than a decade of research and development the Colour Alliance system of colour analysis has been developed, and each colour consultation using this system has made a unique difference to people from every walk of life as they have learned to enhance their own natural looks by applying the correct principles of colour to their makeup and wardrobe selections.

The colour analysis system utilises computer technology to eliminate the margin of human error from colour analysis, while at the same time providing great variety and flexibility in selecting the right colours for each individual. The result is a colour palette unique to each individual and specifically designed to complement their natural colouring with accuracy and precision. No other colour system can match this highly personalised approach.

So how does Colour Alliance work ? Well, the Image Consultant matches coded colour chips to your skin, hair and eye colours. The information is then entered into the computer, which produces the details which enable the consultant to offer a range of individualised services.

Firstly the system makes selecting makeup colours simple and easy, and not only will the way you apply them enhance your appearance but the whole experience is a great pleasure.

Secondly, after taking a few basic details from you the Image Consultant produces a portfolio which contains over 50 illustrated pages, computer-created individually just for you, from which you will see styles that flatter your shape and create the illusion of a well-proportioned body, and receive body-slimming colour advice. You also receive advice on how to build your basic wardrobe - and you can create a multitude of fantastic looks with only a very few garments. Last, but not least, you will receive advice on co-ordinating and accessorising, even right down to choosing the best spectacle frames !

Thirdly, an important part of your total image is your hair or wig. Is it styled correctly to enhance your face shape ? Is it in your most attractive colour range ? Your portfolio will help you to select the best style and hair colour with confidence. Because it is computer-assisted the colour analysis utilises the world's largest data bank of naturally-occurring combinations of skin, hair and eye colours; and from these data you can be advised on the most naturally beautiful hair or wig possibilities. You are also given recommendations on the best browns, blacks, reds and blonde shades, as well as the highlights and/or lowlights which will add natural life to your hair. Even professional hair colourists have had amazing results using this system.

Have you ever purchased clothing, makeup or a wig, and when you returned home discovered that it didn't suit you ? Well, these are expensive, frustrating and time-consuming mistakes. Just imagine how much time and money you can save, and how much uncertainty you can avoid, by taking professional advice from an Image Consultant. ♥

N.B. Garry Morrissey offers a full service to the gender community, either individually or in groups, and guarantees complete confidentiality.

DID YOU KNOW ?

Large ladies, take note

If you are a bit overweight, please don't describe yourself as a 'large lady', or even a 'Duchess': they're the names for sizes of roofing tile.

That's a fat lot of good

No doubt you have heard of liposuction, the plastic operation in which surgeons suck off surplus body fat from the tissues. Well, last year in America they claim to have liposuctioned more than 235,000 lb of fat from womens' bodies. That is roughly equivalent to the weight of 19 six-ton bull elephants !

COLOUR WORKS

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YOU ARE OLD, FATHER WILLIAM

With apologies to Lewis Carroll

"You are old, Father William, the young man said,
And your hairs are no longer hairy.
You now wear a wig and you paint your lips red,
Don't you think, at your age, this is scary?"

"In my youth", Father William replied to his son,
"I fear I became very *femme*,
And now that I know I'm no longer alone,
Why, I dress up again and again".

"You are old" said the youth, "as I mentioned before,
And have grown most uncommonly kind.
Yet everyone says you were once such a bore.
Do you think that you're losing your mind?"

"In my youth" said the sage, as he shook his blond hair,
"I never had time for compassion,
But as I grew older I learned how to care,
While I practised at makeup and fashion".

"You are old" said the youth, "and it has to be said
That you used to be tougher than leather,
But you cried in the church when your daughter was wed.
Is it something to do with the weather?"

"In my youth" said his father "I lived in the bar,
And argued each night with my wife.
Now we run the support group (we go in the car),
And lead a far gentler life".

"You are old" said the youth, "One would hardly suppose
That any would find this amazing,
But you look very good in your dress, heels and hose,
Tell me, what is the special occasion?"

"Less of the old" she replied with a grin,
"I'm off to the party" quoth she.
There's no need to stay up until I come in,
I'll let myself in with a key".

Karen Barclay

(Reprinted from TV-TS Tapestry, No. 62)

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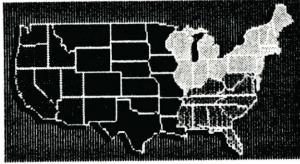
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FROM ACROSS THE POND



- A LETTER FROM AMERICA

By *Bonnie Allen*

Hello everyone! A new article will be appearing in *The Tartan Skirt* - a *potpourri* of gossip, information and general news from the United States. Your editor for this article, and overall 'Girl Friday', is Bonnie Allen; that's me ! This introductory article will center around who I am and my background in this world of ours. I hope you enjoy the future articles, and if you have any questions about information provided within them please send them to the editor of *The Tartan Skirt*, or to myself at the address at the end of this article. Feel free to provide input or feedback to me. I hope you enjoy the information and gossip within these articles, as they are intended to give you an insight on what is going on "Across the Pond" in the United States.....

Who is this Bonnie Allen?... What does she do?...

... Well I'll tell you! Bonnie is transgendered and has played a role in life for 40-plus years that she is totally uncomfortable with and truly hates very much. The role is that of a person who has the physical appearance of a man and must play the role of a man in order to conform to society's wishes and rules, for the sake of survival, but who in reality is a woman through and through. All my life I have wished that a miracle would happen and I would wake up one morning to a new life as a woman in society. I have not given up on my miracle and I have realized that life is too short to allow other people to run my life. Bonnie is

beginning to break the bonds of society and is working toward her miracle. I could bore you with my life history - about when I first knew I was different - but there is no need, for almost everyone in our small (but ever-growing) community has travelled the same road through their life. I will tell you how I finally came out and realized that I am my own person and I am the one that counts; and it is my feelings and wishes that count the most in my life.

About five years ago I finally made a decision to do something with my life and make it more fulfilling for me; but how to go about it was the question I kept asking myself, and I kept floundering on. Along came a general-interest television program called "Evening Magazine", which was broadcast over a local station in Philadelphia, Pa., and one of its segments was devoted to an organization of people who were called "transvestites". Well, of course my ears perked up and I thought I'd better listen to this. The program discussed an organization called "Renaissance", which is a support group for people in the transgendered community. At the end of the segment the telephone number was displayed on the television screen.

I immediately called the number, although I was little apprehensive about making this call because I had never told anyone who I really was. Well, two hours later I finally was able to leave a message on an answering machine and left my number, hoping to receive a return call. The next evening I did indeed receive a call, and that started me on my way. I will always be grateful to the **Renaissance Education Association** for being there for me when I needed someone.

From the day that I viewed that television program I have devoted my time to becoming the woman that I really am. The road has been bumpy, but I have met more true friends than I ever thought could exist, and I have become happier with my life than I ever thought I could be. I have become involved with the Renaissance organization and have given my time to helping other people in our community and

getting involved. I have set goals for myself to complete toward my miracle, which will be a re-birth of the true woman that I am. My ultimate goal is to live full-time as a woman, and hopefully one day to become a total woman through surgery. That goal is my 'miracle re-birth'. No matter what happens though, I will never regret what I have done and will always be extremely grateful and happy to have met so many wonderful people, and made so many wonderful friendships.

Some of the information that I will share with you in future editions of *The Tartan Skirt* are based on the experiences I have had, and will have, working toward my 'miracle re-birth'. I hope you enjoy the articles, and I hope that some of my experiences - good or bad - help you in your own everyday life.

Remember, happiness is what you make it. You make your own destiny and you - and only you - must account for your life. I have always said that *"I did not ask for this, God made me this way and he had a purpose for doing it, so I will live my life as God made me, and I only need answer to God for how I have lived my life."*

Please feel free to send mail to Bonnie Allen at the following address:

Bonnie Allen
385 Chadwyck Circle
Harleysville, Pa. 19438
USA

CHOOSE YOUR BRA

or GOSSARD FIGHTS BACK !



Probably the best known of all uplift bras, the long-time best-selling Wonderbra, has become the object of a 'fight to the death' war between two of the largest manufacturers of lingerie - Gossard and Playtex.

Gossard, makers of the original Wonderbra (which currently sells at a rate of more than 1.5 million a year) has lost its licence to make this biggest seller of all lingerie items. Apparently the licence actually belongs to a giant American conglomerate, Sara Lee, which in 1991 bought up Gossard's rival, Playtex; and Sara Lee has now reclaimed the licence. However, if you rely on the **Wonderbra** to give you the shape and uplift that no other bra can give, despair ye not. From next January the bra which launched a million cleavages will be sold by Playtex under the slogan *"The one and only Wonderbra"*.

And there's more !

Playtex, not taking this laying down, will fight back with its own rival to be marketed as the **Ultrabra**. Using "new lace, new motifs, new colours - navy, pearl and raspberry as well as black and white" the new Ultrabra will have "three types of look - the plunge bra for classic cleavage, the balconette bra which gives a higher, rounded, bosomy look, and a bodyshaper which can be worn under a jacket".

Opinions in the trade are divided as to which firm's bra will win this uplifting new battle of the bulge. One Wonderbra wearer said that "if Playtex are going to produce exactly the same design then I'll go to their counter rather than Gossard's", and a lingerie buyer for the House of Fraser suggested that "If a woman really wants the Wonderbra then it's irrelevant to her who makes it. On the other hand the fashion and style director for *Harpers and Queen* suggested that "Women talk about the Wonderbra when they just want any underwired push-up bra. I think they'll buy whatever they set eyes on first".

Well, you pays your money and you takes your choice. It will be interesting to see whether it makes any difference to *you* when looking for that extra lift to your spirits (not to mention your bosom). One thing is for certain. Uplift is here to stay ! ♥



"Have you something that makes mountains out of molehills?"

LETTER FROM A LADY

by Christine

(For those who don't know her, Christine is genetic woman who is a very dear friend to, and tireless helper for, the Grampian Gender Group in Aberdeen).

Dear Friends

I have been promising Anne an article for a long time, but didn't get around to it. (Actually I had lost my "round tuit", but I discovered it the other day so here goes).

My name is Christine, I am a genetic woman and for over 10 years I have been a friend of people with gender difficulties. (What difficulties I hear you scoff. **PATIENCE**. Read on.

I have a very muddled background. From 1982 I was working with a variety of voluntary Groups, from single parents and women with post-natal depression to Vietnamese families. At this time a close family friend attempted suicide; he felt his life was not worth living as he had a terrible 'affliction' which would not go away. He finally revealed to me that his 'affliction' was that he enjoyed wearing womens' clothing. I was very relieved that this was all, and felt that there must be somewhere where he could be helped to understand his difficulties and begin to enjoy his life. **I WAS WRONG !**

Because of his suicide attempt he was admitted to the local Psychiatric Hospital, where they dismissed his 'real' difficulties as something he should forget about, and they treated him for depression. I tried the local library and counsel-

ling agencies for information or supportive help but they all looked at me with suspicion. (It would have been quite amusing if only the situation had not been so desperate). Eventually I stumbled on the Beaumont Society's address and contacted them. I was horrified to discover that there was no support network in this part of Scotland, and any other support nation-wide was so covert it was difficult for individuals to get immediate help. I was given the number of WOBS (*Women of the Beaumont Society - Ed.*) and the number of their 'local' representative in Edinburgh (120 miles away), and I volunteered to become a supportive listening ear in this part of Scotland.

After a few years, a divorce and a job change I thought "what the hell", I would try to get some training and qualifications and get a highly paid job as a Social Worker. I completed an A.C.C.E.S.S. course at Aberdeen University and attempted a C.Q.S.W. course at Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology. After two long and arduous years of gnashing teeth, hair pulling and turning grey I re-discovered my dining table from under the pile of books, my children re-discovered that they had a mother who could converse normally, and I became a *bona fide* Social Worker.

About eighteen months ago I got a phone call from Anne, asking me if I was interested in helping her to set up a Group for crossdressers and transsexuals in the Aberdeen area. I was delighted to offer my services in any way possible, and the rest is history.



The large salary I was looking for has so far eluded me, I have even more grey hair (I wish I had a wig !), and my wilful children are now unruly adolescents. My eccentricities are expanding by the day and my appetite is making sure my

waistline is catching up ! Still, life is too short to worry about mundane matters; let's get on with living life to the full.

]Seriously, folks. I have made some very dear friends and I have a great deal of admiration and respect for you all, and am humbled by the courage and tenacity I have witnessed within the Group. There is so much prejudice in this world, but deep down we are all humans who need love and respect regardless of our gender or how we want to live our lives. I would dearly like to thank you all for accepting me as 'one of the girls', and offer my full support in helping each of you to achieve your true self.

Christine ☺

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Fleet Street morons

"Much has been said and written by the Fleet Street morons about transvestites and transsexuals. Most of it is garbage but let's not underestimate their influence. It is dangerous garbage. There are actually people who believe what they read in the newspaper, see on television or view in the cinema. Their opinions are formed by what they read and see, whether we like it or not. The media has a lot to answer for. Why do they get it so consistently wrong ? Why do they continue to present to a gullible public what we know to be false ?"

Anon
In *ITV Magazine*
Issue 1

HAVE YOU HEARD ?

Transvestite jailed

A man who dressed as a woman to carry out sex attacks on a 12-year old girl was jailed for a total of seven years yesterday. Glen Meiner, 42, of Brixton, south London, a transvestite for 25 years, forced the girl to pose repeatedly in front of a camera while he indecently assaulted her, Southwark Crown Court was told.

(News item in *The Independent*, 14 August 1993)

Now do you understand why I so intensely dislike the word "Transvestite", when headlines over items such as this is the image that is consistently portrayed by the media ? ■

DID YOU KNOW ?

Good old days ?

King Henry VIII of England, a notable ladies' man, was especially popular with his ladies-in-waiting. He gave them an allowance of two loaves, a joint of beef and a gallon of ale each day - and that was just for breakfast !

TAFFETA

The Lifestyle Magazine for Transvestites and those who Love them

fUN

parties, places to see and be seen in

fROCKS

the heights and depths of fashion more frocks than you dreamt of!

fOUNDATIONS

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THE TALE OF ISABELLA GUNN

There are not many stories of Scottish female-to-male crossdressers, but Isabella Gunn may be the best known. An Orkney woman, Isabella Gunn wanted desperately to escape the drudgery and monotony of her life on a croft and to see something of the world. However, at the beginning of the 19th century women were not encouraged to leave the fireside, let alone to 'do their own thing', so young Isabella took the only way out and put on man's clothing. Under the assumed name of Johnny Fubister she signed on with the Hudson's Bay Company in Canada as a fur trapper, for the princely sum of £ 8 a year. Young 'Johnny Fubister' found life as a trapper with the Company - which prided itself on its 'men only' policy - even more rigorous than that at home on a croft; but she successfully fooled both the Company and most of her fellow trappers.

The life of a fur trapper was very hard, with starvation, attack by animals and Indians, and the possibility of drowning, as constant companions. Canada was a common destination for emigre Scots, and many Orcadians found their way there. 'Johnny Fubister' went to the wilderness of Manitoba, and in the worst of Arctic conditions proved 'himself' as good a 'man' as any. Few of the other trappers knew of 'Johnny's' real identity, but at least one must have done so for eventually she became pregnant by an Orkney man, John Scarth - who immediately abandoned her and refused thereafter to accept his responsibilities. Nevertheless, 'Johnny' carried on trapping while several months pregnant until at Christmas 1807, after a fairly heavy bout of drinking and revelling, she complained of not feeling well, and about an hour later gave birth to a healthy baby boy.

The Hudson's Bay Company were certainly not inclined to retain their young trapper, despite 'his' widely acknowledged competence, and they sent Isabella Gunn - fur trapper, voyager and explorer - back to base to wash the men's laundry, despite testimony from her fellow trappers that she "worked at anything and well, like the rest of the men". Finally she was shipped back to Orkney where, as an unwed mother, she suffered the disgrace meted out to women in that situation at the time and had to eke out a poor existence knitting stockings until her death in 1861, when she was buried as a pauper.

Following her death Isabella Gunn became something of a folk heroine, with ballads, songs and poems written about her - albeit too late to help her, however. As one Canadian has written about her recently, "We may wonder at the harsh treatment she received, but we may also question that our society has improved much since then. Maybe we are just more sophisticated in our hypocrisy". ■



'Mary Jane Wilson?
You're going to have to
watch it, Mary Jane!'

WHO I AM

Some people look, some people stare,
There are people who just couldn't care.
People wonder what I might be;
I'll tell them that it's only me.

I'm no pretty plastic girl
Who's impervious to pain.
Hurt my feelings and I'll cry;
I'm human just the same.

Fear and elation ride this road together
When we walk about the town.
Maybe they wouldn't notice me
If I walk with my head kept down.

Oh no! There's a friend I know from work.
I think I'm going to die.
But all he did was smile at me
And then walked right on by.

I see myself in a mirror and think
"Girl, you don't look half bad".
Then a real girl walks on by
And I begin to feel real sad.

What she does comes naturally
To a girl with so much flare,
And I wish so much to be like her.
Her joy is the pain I bear.

People may think that it's funny
Trying to be a woman in a world run by men.
But when you see the injustice that's in it
How can what I do be harmful to them ?

So I'll give an olive branch to the world
And hope that it will see
That I am but a harmless girl
Who wants to be all that I can be.

Susan Hunter ■

THE WAY WE WERE

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

In 1922 there was no substitute for real silk—or for
dressmaking know-how

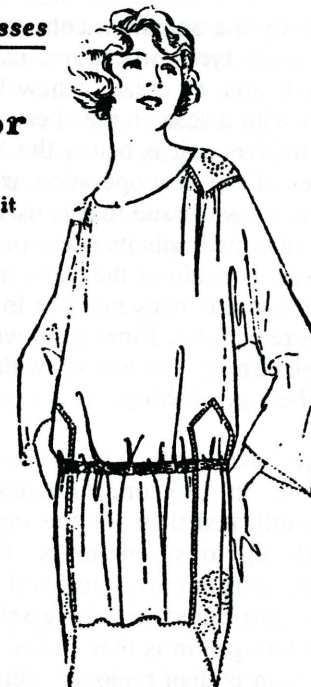
My Sewing Room Successes

How to Make this Jumper for 17s. 6d.

Which is only half the amount it
would cost to buy ready-made

THE girl who can afford to buy really-truly lovely silk jumpers is lucky; the girl who cannot afford to buy them, and resorts to inferior and cheap substitutes, is foolish. If she is wise, she will save up and buy *one* good jumper, instead of three cheap ones; but if she is both wise and sensible, she will devote her spare time to sewing, buy her own good material, and make the jumper herself.

I have heard girls declare, "I am no good at sewing; simply can't sew a stitch. Every spare penny I get goes on buying my clothes." Really, I have no patience with these girls, for every one of them must have had some elementary training in needlework when they were at school; and the present-day dress-making does not demand extravagant workmanship.



WILL BREAST IMPLANTS BECOME OBSOLETE ?

The whole question of breast implants was thrown into confusion a couple of years ago when American legislation banned the use of silicone implants on alleged safety grounds - although British experts were not impressed and declared them safe. Now it seems that the whole debate about silicone may be shunted into a siding as a new technique for breast reconstruction (and therefore also potentially for breast enhancement) is being introduced.

Briefly the operation consists of what has been described as a 'spare tyre' procedure, using fat and skin from the stomach area to create a new breast. Although the patient is left with a scar on the chest, the scar on the tummy is usually hidden as it is below the 'bikini line'. The major advantages of the new operation are said to be that as it is the patient's own tissue that is used the new breast is not rejected as silicone implants occasionally are. Also, because the new breast is made of the same material as 'real' breasts it stays soft (unlike many silicone implants) and looks and feels like the real thing. Finally, as well as gaining a new breast the patient may also end up with a flatter tummy - and that has to be a good thing.

The operation, which is currently on offer by plastic surgeons in London, Glasgow and Exeter, is much more complicated than for the insertion of simple implants, and lasts up to seven hours. For the not-too-squeamish, the procedure involves removal of a patch of fat and skin, plus the associated blood vessels, from the tummy. The surrounding skin is then pulled together and sewn up. A circle of skin is then removed from the chest and the skin and fat from the tummy is re-shaped into a breast and sewn on,

being kept 'alive' by connection of the blood vessels to those in the armpit. A new nipple is either created by cutting and pulling together the skin in the middle of the breast, or an artificial nipple is stuck on. (Three cheers for Superglue !). An areola (the surrounding area of darker skin) may be created by taking a skin graft from another part of the body and then tattooing it to the right colour.



The operation was obviously designed in the first instance for women who have lost a breast as a result of other surgery, and is said to work best for broad-shouldered, plump women and not to be suitable for small-breasted thin women or those who have scars on their tummies from other operations. How it would work with broad-shouldered small-breasted men - or even whether surgeons would be prepared to undertake such surgery on transsexuals (or, indeed, any genetic males) - is not clear. Certainly such surgery would have to be obtained outwith the National Health Service, and would be very expensive.

Given the fairly major nature of the surgery - not to mention the probable cost - most transsexuals and transgenderists will probably either continue to rely on hormone-induced home-grown breasts or will stick with implants. ▼▼

---oooOOOooo---

Seen on a car's bumper sticker:

I'M TRANSGENDERED - AND I VOTE

VIVE LE DIFFERENCE

We all know that there are differences between the sexes: indeed, it sometimes seems that we might almost be different species. (Although in recent times the 'unisex' style of dress, combined with the way that some men wear long hair while some women have theirs cropped short does make the difference less externally obvious than it was in the age of the crinoline and top hat). Now, however, we have some more scientific proof of the differences. Three Swiss scientists have just completed a six-year study, with 70 observers recording details of 2602 adults. Doing what, you may ask? You may well ask. They were recording the way in which men and women carry books and other documents.

It seems that there are five positions for carrying books and other papers: cradled in one arm against the front of the body; in two arms in front of the body; held at the side, gripped from the top with the arm straight; at the side gripped from below with the arm bent; and at the side, gripped from below with the arm straight. The important observation, however, is that the first two are characteristically female behaviour while the others are characteristically male. It also seems that the differences start to be noticed from about primary school age, and are most marked in adolescence. (Although whether this is because it is in adolescence that most people in an academic environment are to be seen carrying books is not clear).

There are arguments as to whether the differences are the result of differences in anatomy, being to do with the different the shape of the male and the female pelvis, or to musculature and due to the strength of the arm and the weight of the books. It also appears that while the way in which men carry things is the same as was observed in a

study in America 15 years ago, the pattern with women in Switzerland today is different.

It seems to me, however, that the scientists have been unable to see the wood for the trees. It is well known by anyone who has studied differences in male and female behaviour and body language that women generally adopt a 'closed' attitude in their deportment, and will usually stand with their arms held in front of them in a protective manner, while men adopt a more 'open' attitude and stand with their arms at their side or behind them. (Similarly, women generally sit with their legs together or crossed and their hands in their laps, while men often sit with their legs apart and their arms spread across the arms or back of the chair).

The Swiss scientists draw one main conclusion from their observations: "If a person is a man then he carries on the side, but if a person carries on the side then that person is not necessarily a man". Brilliant! But maybe we can all learn a little from this, and add the mode of carrying things to our knowledge of how women tend to behave, and so improve our own female deportment. ☺

FEMINIST CORNER

Can you blame them for getting upset ?

"The wave of feminism which swept Britain after 1918 caused widespread unemployment, a general trade depression, and an alarming decline in our birthrate...As soon as Hitlerism has been defeated the combined forces of various men's organisations will launch their campaign against a menace just as threatening to Britain as Hitlerism - Feminism". *Leaflet issued in 1942 by the National Men's Defence League.*

DO YOU STILL WANT TO BE A WOMAN ?

Despite an employment situation that makes people ever more afraid of losing their jobs, there was an increase of 50% in the number of women who made complaints last year of discrimination against their employers. According to the Equal Opportunities Commission there were 13,000 such complaints, mostly about part-time working, 'casualisation' and low pay. The Commission said that discrimination against women in areas such as recruitment, dismissal, sexual harassment, equal pay, access to training and promotion, pensions and maternity leave is still rife.

Now if you are TS - or even contemplating going down that route - you will not have to worry about the last of these items, but the others are certainly very pertinent and are problems that you may expect to face. Don't fool yourselves. A woman's life is not *always* all that it's cracked up to be - and no matter how keen we may be to live as women, each of us has to earn a living long after the hormones and the surgery are paid for !

BUT THERE'S HOPE FOR YOU YET !

Did you see the recent news item from Australia ? One of their macho male lifeguards, by name Damian Taylor, beat seven girls in the finals to win the *Miss Wintersun 1993* beauty contest. That's right; a man won a beauty contest.

It was obviously well-worth his while - despite any ribbing he may get from his mates - as the prizes included a Pacific cruise; and now he apparently has his sights set on the Miss Australia contest as well !

According to the contest chairman, "In these days of equal opportunity we had no option but to accept his nomination". Well, equal opportunity is one thing but as Damian is not TS, did not appear *en femme*, and apparently "won the quiz, deportment, general knowledge and a whole lot of other things" the mind can only boggle at what he might have looked like in a bikini. From the newspaper photographs he is just an average-looking muscular guy, and certainly no match in the beauty stakes for the other finalists among whom he was pictured.

So how come that a MAN can win a title as a MISS - apparently without even trying to look like one ? Surely if the Aussies can do it so can we; so come on girls, who's for the *Miss Great Britain* title ? Put on your best suit and collar and tie and you too may become a beauty queen. (Well, it's got to be quicker, easier and cheaper than trying to beat the girls on looks alone). ☺



RECIPE TIME

Why not try this appetising recipe for

CARAMEL SHORTBREAD ?

We all have a sweet tooth - whether we admit it or not - and this recipe will give you the perfect accompaniment for your cup of tea or coffee.

For the shortbread you will need:

9 oz plain flour
6 oz margarine
3 oz caster sugar

And for the topping you will need:

6 oz margarine
4 oz caster sugar
One 14 oz can of sweetened condensed milk
1 tablespoonful of Golden Syrup
A few drops of vanilla flavouring
6 oz of chocolate



Mix the flour and sugar for the shortbread and rub in the margarine. Tip the mixture into a Swiss Roll tin (11" x 7") and press down evenly. Bake this for 20-25 minutes at 160°C/Gas mark 3, then leave it in the tin until cold.

For the topping, melt the margarine, the sugar and the syrup together in a saucepan. Add the tin of condensed milk and the vanilla flavouring and bring the mixture to the

boil, stirring continuously. Pour it over the shortbread base and leave until cold, then melt the chocolate and pour it over the caramel. Leave it to set and then mark and cut into bars. Lovely !

Vanessa (Inverness)

And for a cheap and cheerful snack meal try

THE MISER'S FEAST

You will only need:

A few peeled potatoes
A large onion, peeled and sliced
A few rashers of bacon
A little salt
and
Some water

Cover the bottom of a saucepan with the peeled potatoes and the sliced onion and sprinkle all over with salt. Cover with water to a depth of 1/2" to 3/4" and bring to the boil. Cover the potatoes and onion with rashers of bacon (*NB* smoked bacon is best). Replace the lid and allow to simmer until the potatoes are cooked (about 20 minutes), when most of the water will have been absorbed.

You can vary the amounts of the ingredients to suit the number of servings you want, but use no more water than will be nearly absorbed during the cooking. Particularly nice if served with fresh crusty bread.

Quick and easy, cheap and cheerful, and very welcome on a chilly autumn or winter day.

Anne ☺

---oooOOOooo---



HAVE YOU READ ?

Some Books Reviewed

The Cinderella Complex - Women's Hidden fear of Independence by Colette Dowling. London: Fontana. 1982. ISBN 0-00-636481-0. £ 3.99 pbk.

This is certainly *not* a text book for cross-genderists; but it is an interesting sidelight on why so many women behave in the way that they do. The author sums up 'the Cinderella Complex' in the following words: "I found that what I really wanted was to be taken care of. It was not just a question of having someone else pay the bills. I wanted full-time emotional protection, a buffer between me and the world...The fear is that if we really stand on our feet, we'll end up stranded - unwomanly, unlovely, unloved".

First published eleven years ago this book has actually become a well-known thesis for the feminist movement, and seeks to help women understand just *why* so many of them seem to sink beneath the bonds of any relationship that they form with a man, and lose both their own independence and their will to succeed in their own right.

While this book describes - and seeks to explain - a feminine stereotype that you will certainly recognise, it is in no way a type that you will wish to emulate. In fact it is very sad to see how so many women lose so much of their personality as a result of their quick establishment of so great a dependence on the men in their life that they lose their own independence - and often self-respect - as individuals. Perhaps all women who suffer from a Cinderella complex (not to mention their partners) should take the

book reviewed below (*Men are from Mars: Women are from Venus*) as compulsory reading in order to help them sort out their sad lives.

A.F.



Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus by John Gray. London: Thorsons (an imprint of Harper Collins). 1992. ISBN 0-7225-2840-X. £ 7.99 pbk.

If you ever wondered why it is that men and women think and act in such different ways, this book will give you the answer - which is summed up in the title: we come from different worlds ! John Gray's incredibly perceptive insight into the differences between men and women is based on the theory that we are really quite different species. "*Once upon a time Martians and Venusians met, fell in love, and had happy relationships together because they respected and accepted their differences. Then they came to Earth and amnesia set in: they forgot they were from different planets*". And that is the metaphor upon which the book is based.

There is no doubt that if you have ever had differences with your wife or girl friend (and who hasn't ?) you will recognise the different ways of looking at things that have caused

those problems. Men and women *are* different and there is no use denying it. This book aims to explain the differences and show how, as Martians, by understanding the Venusian language you can 'get into the skin' of the way that women think and act.

And here is the unexpected value of this book. Although it is written to help men and women sort out their own relationships (and this aspect alone will make it of value to everyone), it also shows exactly *how* women think, act and react in a wide range of circumstances - and this must be of value to any genderist who is really seeking to 'live' the part that they act out. Indeed, especially for the transsexual and transgenderist who aims to 'be' female, rather than simply to dress the part, this may be one of the most important books that you ever read. Genetically you may be a Martian (and this analogy is used continuously throughout the book), but if you want to become a Venusian - let alone just understand them - then you need to know how people think and act on Venus: and this book tells you !

Although a little repetitive in parts, *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus* is a landmark in understanding between the sexes, and a reference source for the differences between the genders. The book's sub-title - *A Practical Guide for Improving Communication and Getting What You Want in Your Relationships* - is factually correct, but understates its scope and value. Personally I would have chosen something on the lines of *A Practical Guide to Understanding How Men and Women Really Think and Act*. As such it is invaluable. Thoroughly recommended.

A.F.



SO YOU *STILL* WANT TO BE A WOMAN ?

Did you know that working women encounter excessive stress for some or all of the following reasons ?

- ♀ Sex discrimination - either in job recruitment (which keeps you unemployed), or when seeking promotion (which keeps you at the bottom of the heap).
- ♀ Being a 'token woman' - which means that tremendous pressure is put on you to perform that much better than anyone else.
- ♀ Work relationships - may be difficult to establish because of prejudiced attitudes. Older men, especially those who have non-career wives, may find it difficult to accept a woman as a colleague; younger men may not like having a woman in a position of authority over them; and other women (particularly clerical and secretarial staff) may object to working for a female boss.
- ♀ Sexual harassment - always a problem, and often difficult to prove
- ♀ And then there is the dual role - and all the problems it brings of combining a career with a home or family life of your own.

And that is for genetic women. How much worse for anyone who is transsexual or transgendered !

AN EN FEMME HOLIDAY IN SCOTLAND

by Wendy

From the age of 7 or 8 I have felt a satisfaction in dressing in my younger sister's clothes, and there has been a growing interest in cross-dressing as the years have passed by. I am now in my early 60s, living in Sussex, and a little over a year ago I went to my first 'changeaway'. Since then I have become more adventurous and have been out for the day 'dressed' (with an escort on three occasions). From the changeaway place in Brighton I have ventured out alone for short walks, and on a few occasions have been read. My attitude has always been to carry on regardless and to ignore those who recognised that I was a man.

It has been a dream of mine to live as a woman for a period of several days at least, but with a wife who is horrified at the thought of men cross-dressing, and who doesn't know that I have this hobby, the whole idea seemed quite impossible to fulfil, but a year ago I started making plans for a fortnight away on my own. My wife and I had previously had a self-catering holiday in Caithness and this was where I planned to stay - over 700 miles from the Sussex village where I live. I decided on a fortnight in May "climbing mountains in Scotland"; and as my wife likes neither climbing nor long journeys by road this seemed a perfect opportunity to get away on my own.

As I could not do the whole journey in a day I arranged to stay at various places *en route*. After a stop in Merseyside with a friend who doesn't know about Wendy I visited a Cheshire friend where I could become Wendy. This lady helped me to dress and make up and we then went out for



lunch and some shopping. Next day I had breakfast as Wendy but had to change back for my journey to Fort William, where I spent two nights in a Guest House in my male guise. However, on the morning that I left I found a place on a minor road to change into skirt, top, wig and shoes, with a little lipstick as the only makeup. Travelling south from Tomintoul it began to snow quite hard as I went over the mountains and I had a picnic lunch in a heavy snowstorm (in the middle of May !) before pressing on to stay with a friend in Aberdeenshire who lives as a lady for most of the time. It was lovely to arrive dressed, to be greeted with a hug, not to have to worry about being 'discovered' by anyone, and to sleep in my own nightie.

The next day was the first in my life when I woke in a nightie and was to spend the whole day as a woman. It was lovely. My friend and I went into Aberdeen for the monthly meeting of the Grampian Gender Group, and on the way did some shopping in a supermarket. At the meeting it was great to chat with the girls, some of whom had come very long distances.

The next day I breakfasted as Wendy but had to change to drive to Caithness in order to arrive as a man, as this was how I had booked the chalet. I learned that it had been mid-day on the previous day before the snow plough had cleared the road from Tomintoul, and as I headed north I could see snow pushed back against the sides of the road. When I arrived at my destination I said nothing about being *en femme* for the week as the owner lived only 200 yards away. I soon got Wendy's things hanging up in a wardrobe instead of being crumpled in their usual bags, and as soon as I could become Wendy again I made my first meal as a lady and made out a shopping list ready for the next day.

The following morning, after breakfast as Wendy I had to become a man again in order to pick up a car I had arranged to hire in place of my transit van (a trannie in a Transit !), as I wanted something a bit more ladylike for the rest of my holiday *en femme*. Next, I had to get some washing done - normally not easy with a wife who does not know about my dressing - so I went to a launderette in Thurso. On my return I changed into skirt and blouse and a wig I had bought in Cheshire. It was lovely to feel the nylon brush against my legs as I walked. I went on some of the minor roads and used ladies' toilets whenever I found one. The mountains looked really beautiful and with the snow on the tops and the vast area of gorse in bloom on the lower slopes the place looked magnificent.

I came across the ruins of a Highland clearance village that had been destroyed in 1819, five families being ejected as their cottages were knocked down by their landlord. I was glad I had low-heeled shoes on to walk up the grassy slopes leading to the ruins of the cottages. Back at the chalet I made a meal and then it was good to relax and watch the *other* TV.



The next day I wore a blue blouse with skirt and tights to go into Wick for shopping. Three teenage girls behind me in the queue at Woolworths were giggling uncontrollably, but I ignored them and if they read me they were the only ones to show it during my whole holiday.

On the narrow Highland roads it is common to find sheep and lambs wandering around, and in the afternoon I was driving around a very twisty place when a little lamb dashed out in front of me. I braked and missed him but he went straight into a car coming from the opposite direction. I stopped and got out just as the lamb expired in the arms of the driver. I didn't say anything but looked and returned to my car and drove off. I expect the men thought that I was just another squeamish woman !

Needing some petrol I went to a garage where I had difficulty with the locking fuel cap, and this 'helpless female' was then helped on her way with a nice smile from the attendant. The following morning it was 10 o'clock before I got out, as makeup takes me so long to do properly. Wearing a short black skirt and flowery blouse, with a cardigan, I felt how good it is to be able to change ones outfit frequently, unlike the dull uniform clothes that men wear.



Needing more petrol I again had difficulty with the fuel cap and was again helped by the man at the garage, who wanted to stop and chat so that it took me a while to get away to my first stop at Dunrobin Castle, seat of the Earls and Dukes of Sutherland. This is an impressive place - just like a fairy tale castle - and I bought a guide at the door in order to have something to occupy my hands. At the top of the staircase a lady on duty said "It's this way, Madam" - which was the first time I had been called Madam, and I thought "If only she knew". In the gift shop I bought some mementos for my family and then had a snack in the Café, where some of the staff were having lunch. It was a chilly day so I went to the car for my jacket before taking a stroll in the gardens. As Wendy's male half is a professional gardener she was pleased to see the wonderful way they look after those gardens.

Driving into Dornoch I bought another item in a gift shop and then visited the Cathedral before having my tea in a café. On the way home I visited a croft museum at Laidhay and signed myself in the visitors' book as Wendy. After calling at the chalet I went on to Wick, and then on to John o'Groats, from where I phoned my wife before going home *via* Dunnet Head, the most northerly point of mainland Scotland.

The next day Wendy had to disappear as the petrol filler cap on the car had to be fixed - and it had been a man who

had hired the car. I then went on to Inverness where I bought a blouse for my wife and some things for Wendy before returning to the chalet where Wendy was very pleased with what I had bought her !

The following day - my last in the north of Scotland as Wendy - I returned to Dunrobin castle to get some postcards. The lady selling admission tickets was reluctant to let me in just to the gift shop but a man who had seen me the other day in the castle's café said "Yes, she was here two days ago: I remember her". So I was let in, bought my postcards, used the ladies' toilet and then went on to Golspie where I had a pot of tea, wrote one of my postcards and posted it. I had lunch in a lay-by on the way to Lairg, where I went for a walk. In Ullapool I visited a museum and in a Highland woollen shop tried on a wrap-around skirt in a pale blue tartan, although I didn't buy it.

The next morning I breakfasted as Wendy before changing and returning the hired car. After lunch in a Wick restaurant I became Wendy again before going for my last trip in the north. The weather had been very mixed for my holiday and this day it was raining. I had a light tea at a place with a tea shop added to a museum of local flora and fauna, with an adjoining field with a herd of deer grazing in it.

I left the next day, driving to Edinburgh in my male role, to stay in a hotel where crossdressers are welcome. The next morning I appeared as Wendy and made my way to the dining room where for the first time I had a hotel meal as Wendy. After breakfast I loaded up and made my way *via* the Glasgow area, arriving at my Cheshire friend's house where they thought it was a real lady who had arrived. I slept well that night, but it was as a man that I arrived home the next day in Sussex.

The owner of the chalet later wrote to say that I would be very welcome to return and who knows, maybe I will be able to manage something like it on another occasion. ♦

A SCOTTISH WEEKEND

A REPORT

by Ruth Stewart

A short break that came with little publicity took place over the weekend of Friday 13 to Sunday 15 August at Mabie House Hotel, near Dumfries. Friday the thirteenth and 13 people to arrive - not a bit unlucky, and on the Saturday the numbers were swelled by visitors to 20. All three gender Groups in Scotland were represented, from the north of Scotland to the Borders and the hotel was fully booked.

Mabie House is situated in beautiful wooded surroundings with spacious lawns in front of the house where afternoon tea may be taken - if the rain stays away. You are in Mabie Forest Reserve, and a more relaxing atmosphere for a quiet weekend one could not find.

So what is there to do ? Well I will only mention some of the things a few of the girls did: a visit to Dumfries; a ride to the Solway Firth coast; a visit to Sweetheart Abbey and Shambellie House (more of which later); or go for a walk in the woods and get lost. And that is what six of us did - or at least five, as one dropped out before she was lost (lucky girl !). About 200 metres from the hotel there is the start of six marked walks into the woods, varying in length from half an hour to two and a half hours. We went on the Red half-hour walk, *en femme* - and it took us two hours after we missed a marker. Indeed, red did seem an appropriate colour because we were certainly red when we arrived back at the hotel.

When leaving on the Sunday I visited Shambellie House Museum of costume, which is only 3 miles from Mabie. It

is a museum that am sure would interest many of us, the delicate fabrics and intricate patterns on the womens' dresses of the Victorian and Edwardian periods being something to behold. Amongst the exhibits were a summer wedding reception scene from about 1912, with a black silk chiffon and machine-embroidered lace dress and a brown silk dress and jacket. In a bedroom scene showing a lady and her maid sorting out clothes for a holiday in the late 1920s there is a selection of outer and underwear and accessories, draped on the bed ready to pack. In another room depicting a scene in the 1860s the ladies are all wearing the full skirts of the mid-Victorian period, when the hooped petticoat was at its fullest.

There was also a yellow and mauve shot-silk dress from around 1860, with bonnet to match, a flame moire dress from about 1863 from the Countess of Galloway's collection, and I could go on and on. Better still - go and see it for yourself. (However, I must mention a little boy's sailor suit from 1900, given to the museum by a Mrs Ruth Elizabeth Stewart which caught my eye. No, she is no relation).

Thanks, Kathy, for organising a great weekend. ■

AND FOR OUR NON-SCOTTISH READERS

A Traditional Scottish Toast

*May the best ye've ever seen
Be the worst ye'll ever see
May a moose ne'er leave yer girkal
Wi' a tear drap in his e'e
May ye aye keep hale an' he'rty
Till ye're auld eneuch tae dee
May ye aye be jist as happy
As we wish ye aye tae be*

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