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THE TARTAN SKIRT



Magazine of the
SCOTTISH TV/TS
Group

New Series No. 3
July 1992



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THE TARTAN SKIRT

The Magazine of the
Scottish TV/TS Group

Editor: Anne Forrester

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TO "DO NO HARM" TO OTHERS

by Anne Forrester

One of the main complaints of the crossdresser whose 'secret' is discovered is that he is misunderstood, castigated and persecuted for a perfectly harmless pursuit that concerns himself alone and does no harm to others. Of course, as a generalisation this is perfectly true. What clothes we choose to wear should be a matter solely for ourselves, and however 'different', or even outrageous, they might be this should not really concern others. Personally I would never dream of going out dressed in ragged jeans with the knees out, topped by a fringed leather jacket, and wearing sunglasses even at night-time: but if others wish to do so, good luck to them, it's none of my business. (Similarly, I guess that those who adopt these styles would never think of wearing a suit with collar and tie, as I do when out on business. "To each his own" !).

However, there are two occasions when we really should think carefully about that rider in my opening statement that crossdressing should cause "no harm to others", because (apart from the occasional legal fiction concerning 'conduct likely to cause a breach of the peace') there are two distinct situations when our dressing could harm others.

The most obvious problem is when we have a partner who does not know of our interest, and who might accidentally find out. While there are a surprising number of women whose caring and nurturing natures cause them to look sympathetically on such harmless foibles (and indeed, even find flattering the implied admiration of women in those who seek to emulate them), most married women who discover a long-hidden secret of any sort on the part of their spouse will feel betrayed in that she was not trusted

with such an intimate aspect of her partner's life. She may also feel threatened by this new and different personality. After all, she married a man, not another woman, and one can only hope that she can come to terms with a mixture of 'husband and lover' with 'sister and best friend'. Happily, I have met - and know of - a number of women who have come to terms with the situation in exactly that manner. Their husbands are fortunate indeed. Many a woman, however, is likely to take the only way that she sees out of the problem, and simply leave home.

Generally, there is no simple answer to this problem. Ideally, any crossdresser contemplating marriage - or any other long-term arrangement with a woman - should make sure that she knows of, and accepts, his dressing before the relationship gets under way. This is not easy, and may well lead to an early ending of a promising partnership, but it is much less traumatic than leaving it until later - when it may well be too late.

The other situation is quite different, and is part of the crossdresser's relationship with his sisters in this community. Not all of us want the same thing. While some merely wish to experiment with occasional items of underwear, others like to dress up in the full 'glamour' image - micro-mini skirts, 5" heels, skimpy tops, and heavy make-up - even though this may not go well with a 6'4" 14-stone muscular body, and dark black stubble even after a close shave. Many, however, wish simply to sink into the woodwork when dressed, and to pass in public with no fuss. (Incidentally, there is a world of difference between being read - which inevitably happens to us all at some time or other - and passing, which is going about in public without causing any fuss or outcry, and which some of us do manage to do quite regularly).

Now each of these levels of activity (and any other in between) is perfectly legitimate, and there is no problem in anyone indulging in their own level of dressing - in private. And there's the nub. If a hefty, muscular and hairy man appears in public dressed like a female teenage rock addict he knows he will be ridiculed - or worse - so usually he

doesn't. However, others who are not *quite* so obviously men dressed in drag simply do not try too hard when copying the 'whole girl' look, but nevertheless then venture out in public. They may possibly get away with it themselves, but this is when they do come close to harming others - those of their sisters who really do try to pass well.

If a not-very-convincing crossdresser appears in public - especially at places where he knows (or suspects) that others of his sisters are to be found - he is exposing them to potential ridicule and hassle, as well as himself. For example, at any large crossdressing convention it is usually well understood that when going out shopping or for a meal, in order to pass in public with no fuss **the ideal group consists of one**, with a group of two just about possible if they are both *very* passable and behave with the *utmost* decorum. Otherwise, not only will the group get read, they may well fail to pass. Similarly, a solitary crossdresser who is passing well is certain to be compromised if approached by another who is not trying too hard, and is not too concerned for himself. And our community needs a confrontation, be it with irate supermarket managers or with gangs of trouble-seeking youths - not to mention the ensuing publicity - like a fish needs a bicycle.

No, this is not just about embarrassment - although the lack of consideration in this form of causing (even unintentional) 'harm to others' is bad enough - but it is about the credibility of our community; and the eventual chance of our being allowed to get on with our own interests without suffering the gender-phobia that is already far too evident around us.

As long ago as the fifth century BC, Hippocrates (speaking to doctors) taught that one should "make a habit of two things - to help, or at least to do no harm". It seems an excellent aphorism for the crossdresser today. If we can help one another, then we should go out of our way to do so; but otherwise we should go to even greater lengths to ensure that we cause one another no harm - even unintentionally. ■

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR CROSSDRESSERS

by Jane Ellen Fairfax

Reprinted from *TV Tapestry*, Issue 55

Thy femininity is a sacred part of thee;
thou shalt not bow down before the strange god
Macho, or the false god *Guilt*.

Thou shalt not speak ill of a crossdressing sister or her
organisation.

Remember thou the confidences of thy sister, and keep
them holy.

Honour thy spouse, for she is thy loving support.

Thou shalt not kill thy masculinity or thy femininity; both
are gifts of the Lord to thy soul.

Thou shalt not commit a double standard.

Thou shalt not steal thy soul's appreciation of beauty in art,
music, nature and literature, for these are the petal
of femininity.

Thou shalt bear thyself as a lady at all times.

Thou shalt covet every chance to nurture and help those in
need.

Thou shalt covet every chance to learn and to teach, for
with understanding abide toleration and love. ■

SELF-PROTECTION

WHILE IN THE FEMALE ROLE

From *Eat The Law*, A Student Guide to Dundee

The following advice to young women is equally valuable to crossdressers who go out in the female role. Remember, if you are at all convincing you are just as vulnerable as the women you emulate - and there are a lot of trouble-seeking and predatory males out there.

If there is no alternative to walking home by yourself:

- * Keep to well lit busy roads.
- * Don't take short cuts through parks, etc.
- * Walk in the middle of the pavement - hugging the hedges gives a false sense of security.
- * Walk facing oncoming traffic to avoid kerb crawlers.
- * Don't be afraid to surrender your bag rather than risk a personal injury.
- * Carry a personal rape alarm to scare off attackers - you'd be surprised how effective they are.
- * Have your keys ready before you reach your front door (*or your car*) to avoid nervous fumbling.
- * Don't walk late at night alone: only do it if there really isn't another alternative. ■

Phew ! What a pong

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

PARLIAMO AMERICANO ?

A crossdresser's *American-English* wordlist

It was Winston Churchill who described Britain's relationship with America as being that of "Two nations divided by a single language". Generally, however, we manage to understand one another reasonably well; but from time to time jargon will rear its ugly head and get in the way of mutual understanding. So, whether or not you are likely to get to *Fantasia Fair*, *Coming Together*, *The Texas Tea Party*, *Be All*, or any of the other great American gender events, or if you simply wish to understand some of their excellent gender magazines, the following few definitions of terms used in the American gender community are offered as an aid to trans-Atlantic understanding.

Bigenderist (Bigenderal). A term suggested by Dr Virginia Prince to describe crossdressers. (By analogy with *Bisexual* but indicating a dual gender role, rather than a dual sexual proclivity).

Boy clothes. Your everyday male gear.

Genderland. An increasingly popular informal term to describe the community of crossdressers, transgenderists and transsexuals.

G.G.. Abbreviation for Genetic Girl - a person we would refer to as an R.G. (Real Girl).

New Man. Refers to a post-operative female to male transsexual.

New Woman. Refers to a post-operative male to female transsexual.

Pumps. An open-fronted style of shoe that we might refer to as 'Court shoes'.

She-male. Refers to a pre-operative transsexual who, apart from retaining male genitalia, is to all appearances a (usually very attractive) woman. However, the term is usually pejorative and used to refer to one who uses this appearance to practise as a prostitute or as a model for pornographic magazines.

Significant Others. Refers to the spouses, partners, siblings, parents and children of members of the gender community, whose lives may be affected by the proclivities of the crossdresser, transgenderist or transsexual. (This term is also used in America in other contexts - for example, the near relatives of persons suffering from a serious physical or mental disease or handicap).

SOs. Abbreviation for *Significant Others*.

Transgenderist. Indicates a crossdresser who lives virtually full-time in his/her chosen gender role but has stopped short of re-assignment surgery. A sort of 'half-way house' between a crossdresser and a transsexual.

Tri-ess. The Society for the Second Self (SSS - get it ?). A large nation-wide support society for heterosexual crossdressers and their families. (The policy of Tri-ess to exclude transsexuals from its ranks has caused a great deal of dissatisfaction in some circles, and some of its officers are working hard to get this particular ruling relaxed).

A.F. ■

---oooOOOooo---

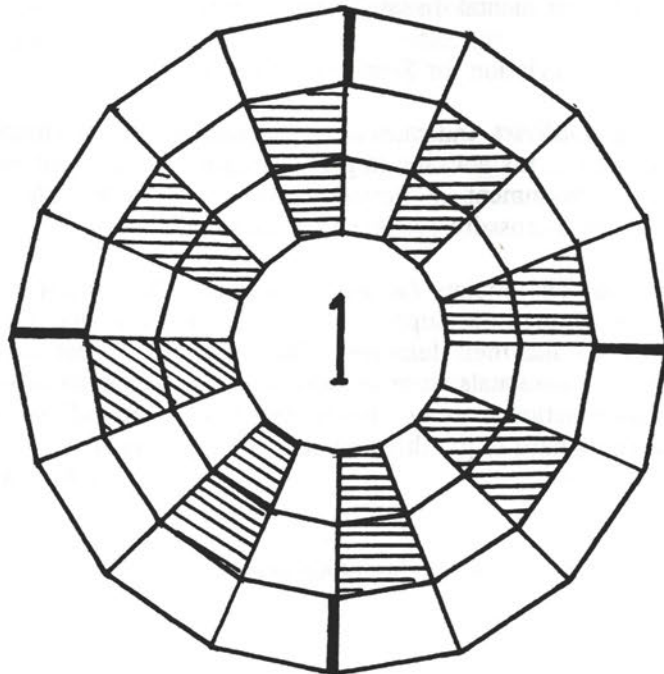
CROSS DATES

A QUIZ WITH A DIFFERENCE

by Anne (St Andrews)

OK, so it's coffee-break time. Why not try this quiz with a difference, and see how good you are at remembering dates. Please follow the instructions carefully.

The answers to questions 1 to 8 each start at the hub of the 'dartboard'. Fill in the answer to question 1 vertically and then do the rest, working sequentially in a clockwise direction. The answers to questions 9 to 12 go around the outer edge of the circle, starting at 12 o'clock, and all the dates must be consistent at the intersections. Good luck !



Questions

In which year did the following events take place ?:

1. British MPs were paid for the first time
2. Old age pensions were introduced in Britain
3. Trade Unions were legalised in Britain
4. Mount Everest was climbed for the first time
5. The Open University first went on air
6. The first British Labour government took office
7. The Irish Free State was set up
8. Third class rail travel was abolished in Britain
9. The Manchester Ship Canal was opened
10. The Munich peace agreement was signed by Britain, France, Germany and Italy
11. The British school leaving age was raised to 15
12. A television ban on cigarette advertising was introduced in Britain

When you have finished (or have given up) turn to page 50 for the answers ■

SHEER ENVY

"She is the man I would have liked to be"

*Gerard Depardieu, on
Catherine Deneuve
(former French Premier)*

---oooOOOooo---

FIRST TIME

1. A story with a happy ending

by Susan [REDACTED] (Glasgow)

I am writing this two days after my first Group meeting (at which, by the way, I first got this magazine). The meeting itself was probably no different from any that you have been to yourself, so I'll concentrate on telling you what happened *after* I had been there.

As you know, getting organised to go out is no different for us than for any other girls. I 'didn't have a thing to wear' so I started to buy some new clothes, as having lost quite a lot of weight most of my skirts were too slack. Anyway, I bought 'the blouse'. As this was by far the prettiest thing I had ever bought I was not prepared to throw it into a poly-bag and hide it away in the outside cellar, so I hung it up in my wardrobe, not really caring if it was found or not as my wife knew about my crossdressing, although she did nothing either to help or to hinder. Anyway, the meeting was only three days away so it wouldn't be there long. Needless to say, it was found. Some comments were made, she agreed it was a lovely blouse, and I hung it back up.

On the week of the Club meeting I started to get my things ready, carefully packing everything into a holdall. I had taken three days holiday so had plenty of time, as my wife works during the day. On the night of the meeting I told her I was going with some workmates for a night out. She didn't believe that story, but said nothing.

Later that night, after I had come home, you could have cut the atmosphere with a knife. I was bursting to tell someone about my night but couldn't, so I was becoming frustrated. The next morning things were worse. She said that she didn't like being lied to, but I still didn't know whether to tell her or not. On the drive to her work I asked where she thought I had been the previous night, and got three possible answers: another woman, a man (she had noticed that the blouse was gone), or the Club. When I told her it was the Club it was as if a great weight had been lifted. She started talking again as if she was pleased that it was *only* the Club. Anyway, things soon got back to *better* than normal.

Later, that night, I asked if she wanted to see my clothes. At first she said no, but later said "OK, give me a laugh". I brought them out of the cellar, and when asked if that was where I kept them answered "Where else?". However, she didn't want me to keep them there as they would get damp, and the end result was that I got my own drawer with everything laid out neat and tidy. Best of all, she gave me a lovely pink jersey, a coat, pearl necklace, a watch, and a blouse that I really liked.

Yes, things are really looking up. I realise that having someone to whom I can tell my feelings makes a difference, and I thank God that I've got a wife who, although maybe she does not totally understand, at least makes the effort to come half way.

OOO

2. First night fiasco

by Karen Scott (Glasgow)

As I write this it's March 12th, the rain is lashing down outside, I'm admiring my new cream shoes in the mirror and wondering which of my skirts will go with them, and I'm contemplating attending my first Edinburgh meeting at

the end of the month. I've just re-read Julia's piece in the January *Tartan Skirt* describing her own public debut, and I'm feeling a wee bit envious - especially when I reflect on my own first attempt at going public a few days ago. This didn't turn out as planned at all. In fact it was fairly disastrous, but I thought I'd tell you about it anyway.

Having lived in Glasgow for only two years I was surprised to discover that the city seemed to have no organised activities for crossdressers. However, just before Christmas I found out that there was going to be a meeting of individuals interested in getting a Group going again. This seemed to be initiated largely by members of the Gay Switchboard, who were getting dozens of calls from crossdressers yet had nothing much to offer in the way of help or contacts.

I had never had any personal contact with other crossdressers so I was fairly apprehensive about attending. After arriving at the meeting place I walked around the block a few times, re-tied my shoelaces on the pavement opposite and hung around for several minutes before eventually finding the resolve to enter the building and ring the bell. And I'm thinking that if I'm this nervous while wearing my everyday gear, what would I be like *en femme* ?

Well, that initial meeting wasn't as bad as I'd feared - it was worse. It seemed to consist of half a dozen rather sad and timid men (me included) rambling on about tea and coffee, the weather, the premises, *etc* - in fact, anything except what had brought them together in the first place. Not very encouraging, but thanks to the initiative of one or two we managed to arrange to meet again in February.

By the time February came around I thought I had made a lot of progress privately, but what a transformation when I attended the Group meeting ! As well as the six or seven still in trousers (like me), there were at least as many confident and well-dressed women of varying shapes and sizes. This was more like it. The atmosphere was far more relaxed, plans for possible future events were discussed, and I resolved that I would become 'one of the girls' at the March meeting.

Now the prospect of going furtively out with a suitcase and getting changed in the company of strange men did not appeal to me at all, so I made the bold decision to arrive fully dressed. The first part went smoothly enough - a discreet and confident exit and walk around the corner to where I'd parked the car. Heart fluttering a bit but fairly well under control, even though I was half an hour late. Now I understand why it takes so long for women to get ready to go out - there's so much to do !

Driving into town was no problem, managed to park OK in a fairly quiet street, so confidence was growing as I approached the meeting venue. No hanging about this time, I want to get inside quickly. Then a note of doubt creeps in - shouldn't there be a light on upstairs, where the meeting was last time ? Or maybe the room is at the back. I can't remember.

Inside the entrance hall now, but can't see any notice about the meeting and there's no-one to be seen. Surely I haven't got the wrong date ? Then a man I've never seen before appears at the end of the corridor, sees me and starts heading my way. OK, panic take over - you're in control. I certainly don't want to have to have a conversation with a stranger.

I'm back out on the street and clicking across the road as fast as my medium-sized heels will carry me with dignity. Am I being followed ? Don't know, but don't look around. Reach car OK, fumble for keys in handbag, then I'm inside and surely safe. Take a deep breath now and calm down. All I have to do is drive off. But I glance left and sure enough, there's a face at the car window and a hand knocking on it. I realise I can't drive straight off, I'll have to reverse first - shouldn't have parked so close to the car in front. Instead, without any conscious decision I find that I'm winding down the window to discover why I've been followed. "Are you looking for the meeting ? It's through the back tonight. There's been some problem with the key". All I can manage to reply is "Uh-huh". A flood of relief, but still I'm uncertain. What if it's a different meet-

ing altogether ? After all, I've no idea who the chap is. No, don't be silly, I can't be that convincing so it must be OK.

Take a few extra seconds to recover composure, touch up lipstick and hair, and slowly, calmly get out, lock up and re-trace steps. It took me long enough to get ready so I'm not giving up now. I've got to get this over with. So I approach the door again, step briskly inside, then suddenly another man I've never seen before is heading towards me and saying something as he rushes past. "There's no meeting tonight, sorry. Someone forgot the key". OK, that's it for me, enough is enough. I'm back in the car and driving away within seconds, thinking it's not going to be easy for hesitant newcomers to attend Glasgow meetings until we can find some better arrangements. Or perhaps I was just unlucky. Minutes later I feel relieved to get home safely, but the relief is tinged with disappointment. All that carefully applied eyeliner is not going to impress anyone tonight I'm afraid.

So now, two days later, I can smile at my panic, the rain has relented, I've changed my skirt and I'm pleased that it goes well with my new shoes, but I've still not made my first proper outing. Maybe I will make it to Edinburgh this month, maybe I won't. Surely it can't be worse than what I've already been through. Yes Julia, I still envy you: but not for long, I hope. I'm not going to give up now. I've come too far to go back in the closet !

*Are you looking for a venue for your own 'first time out' ?
For details phone: for Aberdeen (3G - The Grampian
Gender Group) 03398 [redacted]; for Edinburgh (Scottish
TV/TS Group) 031 [redacted] (7.30-10.00 pm); for Glasgow
(Crosslynx) 041 [redacted]*

---oooOOOooo---

A LITTLE POETRY

Dark demon, locked up inside,
Keeps a secret that I hide.
It's one that I would like to share
But it's one that I could not dare.

People fear what they don't know,
They don't try to understand
What drives me to be what I am;
A woman, instead of a man.

I don't wear any outrageous clothes,
I'm as ordinary as I can be,
Neat hair, clean nails, not too much on the face,
Nothing that would look out of place.

I don't want to be an outrageous Gay
And get funny looks from men,
For what I am is real to me:
Wouldn't hide myself from them.

If people could understand how I feel,
And how I wish it could be,
I could then project what I really am,
And not just what they see.

There's one who tries to understand.
Don't mean to hurt her, so
She sees me as only she can,
And I still love her so !

Susan [redacted]
(Glasgow) [redacted]

WHAT'S IN A NAME ?

EVEN IF IT IS 'RESPECTABLE'

by Anne Forrester

In an earlier issue of *The Tartan Skirt* (January 1992) I pondered on some of the names by which crossdressers are known, and for a variety of reasons came to the conclusion that I would not personally use the terms 'Transvestite', 'TV' or 'Trannie'. However, there is another expression that is creeping into use that also worries me, the more so as it is being used in very respectable circles to describe the condition not only of transsexuals, for whom it was first coined, but for the whole community of crossdressers, transgenderists and transsexuals, without distinction. That expression is **Gender Dysphoria**.

The expression has recently been adopted as part of the title of the Gender Dysphoria Trust International (formerly known as SHAFT - the Self Help Association For Transsexuals). However, apart from its use in respect of transsexuals (who will have their own views on its suitability) it is worrying that it has also been adopted as the title for a series of annual conferences held by The Beaumont Trust under the heading *International Gender Dysphoria Conference* (the next of which will take place at Manchester University in September). These conferences are advertised as covering subjects including 'Gender Dysphoria, Transsexualism, *Transvestism*' (that word again !), and *related matters*. It is also appearing increasingly as a 'catch-all' term, especially favoured by the medical and para-medical professions (who seem to like labelling us all as 'suffering' from 'a condition'), useful for 'pigeon-holeing' anyone who is a member of the gender community - meaning anyone from the man who occasionally wears an odd item of

female underwear, through you and I to the fully-fledged post-operative TS.

All right, so it all sounds very respectable, and far removed from the 'Rocky Horror Show' image that the media usually portray and that we would all like to shed. So why do I find the term 'Gender Dysphoria' objectionable as a label for crossdressing ? Well, I suppose it all comes back to the wall plaque in a colleague's office that says "*Facts are not unimportant, but it is by perceptions that we are judged*". And the public perception of that word 'Dysphoria' is that it refers to a disease !

Of course, that perception isn't all that wrong. You won't find 'Dysphoria' in most household Dictionaries, but the large (20 volume) *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the word as "*Malaise, discomfort, hard to bear. A state or condition marked by feelings of unease or (mental) discomfort*". It goes on to give examples, including "*dissatisfaction, restlessness, suffering*"; "*when the people feel shamed*"; "*a dysphoric feeling.. may be called guilt*"; and suggests that "*The social euphoria, or well-being, has been turned into a state of dysphoria*".

Now, do you still feel that you have a dysphoria ?

Of course, crossdressers and transsexuals do have much in common. In each case the individual feels happier and more content with a form of dress and lifestyle other than that in which they were born and brought up. Thereafter they differ: the crossdresser is content to adopt the opposite dress and lifestyle on a (more or less) occasional basis, as a relief from his everyday life, while the transsexual feels impelled to seek a permanent change of gender to support a full-time change in lifestyle. (And in passing it is worth noting that even some of the more notable transsexuals have difficulty in recognising what motivates crossdressers. In a recent television interview Carolyn Cossie said that "a transvestite is a man who likes to dress in female clothes and gets turned on by it". This may well be true of some crossdressers, but it is certainly not true of the majority, and I would have hoped that Carolyn would know better).

It is certainly true that some (although, amongst those I have met, not all) transsexuals do have "feelings of unease", and may well feel that their condition is "hard to bear"; but it is equally certainly true that most crossdressers do **NOT** regard what they do as a "*malaise*", nor do they feel that they should "*feel shamed*". In other words, while the term 'gender dysphoria' may well describe a medical condition afflicting some few individuals who are uncertain about, or unhappy with, their *sexuality*, it does not describe the feelings of our community towards their preferred *gender role*, and does the majority of cross-dressers a disservice in labelling them as having a medical condition of which they should (apparently) be ashamed.

I suppose that this all brings us back to the point I made in my earlier discourse on 'What's in a name?' Do we really *need* a word to describe what crossdressers are and what we do, when it is only dressing to please ourselves and adopting a lifestyle in which we feel comfortable?

One rather tempting term that has recently been suggested (by Dr Virginia Prince) to describe crossdressers is *bigen-derist*, or *bigenderal* - by analogy with bisexual but indicating someone who enjoys a dual gender role rather than a dual sexual proclivity. In its favour, perhaps this does stress the point of what we *are* rather than just what we *do*. However, will not the great gender-phobic public out there - not to mention the media - simply grab the term as a synonym for *bisexual*, regardless of what we know to be the difference? I'm afraid that past experience suggests that this is exactly what will happen.

So is it fair - or even possible - to pick on any single term that attempts to sum up **all** of us in the gender community? Should we even try? Because I feel happier wearing a skirt than trousers, enjoy wearing makeup and perfume, and like my looks as a 'woman' more than my (distinctly unattractive) male appearance, I am not suffering from a "*malaise*" - far less from "mental discomfort". At the same time I do not think that I am doing anything different in principle from the man who wears a *toupee* to cover his

bald patch, or a sweater because it's less trouble than a collar and tie. (Or even a woman who wears trousers and sports jacket because 'it's fashionable'). So why label me as having a 'disorder', but not them? I think I must come back to Jed Bland's statement in *The Gender Paradox*. "**I am not a label. I am a person**".

(And, in case you are still in any doubt about what the terms mean, just remember that **SEX IS WHAT IS BETWEEN YOUR LEGS; GENDER IS WHAT IS BETWEEN YOUR EARS**!) ■

OOO

WELCOME TO CHESHIRE



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SAGA OF THE KEYS

We are two girls from Glasgow
Who drove to Edinburgh town.
We've come to meet some friends
Who've come from all around.
It's when we got to our meeting
Things didn't go quite right.
Linda got into a 'tizzie',
Her nerves became quite tight

"I'm sure I brought them with me"
Is what I heard her say,
"Then where the heck are they ?
They couldn't just walk away".
Now I am a non-smoker -
Wouldn't see a cigarette in my way -
But when Linda lost her weeds
It quite loused up her day

In due course the meeting was over,
And to the *Laughing Duck* we went.
When we got back to the car
Linda then found her friends.
A few drinks and some time later
I asked her for the keys.
A hairbrush from the car was needed -
For cosmetic reasons you see.

Now it was my turn to panic
For the keys could not be found.
She looked in her coat and handbag,
And everywhere around.

A vision flashed before me
Of us homeward bound
With our skirts hitched up and flagging a lift.
These keys **had** to be found

I then went out to the car
To see if they were inside,
And found them on the driver's door:
My joy I could not hide.
So that was our saga,
It's one that I can tell.
The keys now stay in my handbag;
My nerves, though, are 'shot to Hell'

Susan [REDACTED]
(Glasgow) [REDACTED]

HANDY HINTS

For pierced ears

If you have pierced ears and sometimes find it difficult to get earrings through the holes, dab a little petroleum jelly on the end of the pin or wire of the earring, and they'll slip through first time.

Runs in your nylons ?

If you tend to ladder your stockings or tights when putting them on, try keeping them in the fridge: it's said to prevent those runs. (But you had better have a good excuse ready if your wife or family don't know about 'her', and decide they need the milk, or whatever). ■

COSMETIC SURGERY

Ever thought about cosmetic surgery? Do you fancy having a facelift, a nose job - or even 'boob job'? Well, have you also thought how much hard cash you would have to save up - assuming you don't have a 'tame' surgeon who will do it on the National Health Service? Just in case you are still interested, the following Table summarises the details and price ranges quoted by four leading private clinics in London which specialise in cosmetic surgery, performed by properly qualified plastic surgeons. In each case there is also an initial consultation fee, which ranges between £ 30 and £ 45. Thankfully, medical procedures do not attract VAT so, apart from your fares (and the discomfort), this is 'all' it will cost.

Operation	Common Description	Anaesthetic	Cost (£)
Rhytidectomy	'Face lift'	General	2400-3500
Blepharoplasty	'Eyelid surgery'	Local	1300-2100
Rhinoplasty	'Nose job'	General	2100
Augmentation mammoplasty	'Boob job'	General	2300-2500
Mastopexy	'Breast uplift'	General	2400-2500
Liposuction	'Fat suction'	Local	900-2000

FEMINIST CORNER

Can you blame them for getting upset?

Not all of these quotations are outdated: there are still an awful lot of men out there who think this way today. But we know better (don't we?).

"Botany has lately become a fashionable amusement with the ladies. But how the study of the sexual systems of plants can accord with female modesty, I am not able to comprehend". *Richard Polwheel (1760-1838)*

"It is important that young females should possess some employment by which they might obtain a livelihood in case they should be reduced to the necessity of supporting themselves". *Lydia Howard Sigourney (1791-1865)*.

"It is man's place to rule, and a woman's to yield. He must be held up as the head of the house, and it is her duty to bend so uncomplainingly to his wishes, that the rest of the household will follow her example, and treat him with the due respect his sex demands". *Sarah Ann Sewell (1870s)*.

"The chief distinction in the intellectual powers of the two sexes is shown by man attaining to a higher eminence, in whatever he takes up, than woman can attain - whether requiring deep thought, reason, or imagination, or merely the use of the senses and hands" *Charles Darwin (1809-82)*.

"The labor of women in the house, certainly, enables men to produce more wealth than they otherwise could, and in this way women are economic factors in society. But so are horses". *Charlotte Perkin Gilman (1860-1935)*. ■

---oooOOOooo---

THE FIFTH ANNUAL

Harmony Weekend

SCARBOROUGH

Friday 30th October - Sunday 1st November 1992

A social weekend organised by Martine Rose for members of all TV/IS groups with the aim of fostering inter-group friendship and harmony.

We take over an hotel completely for the weekend (the same as used for previous 'Harmony Weekends') so there are no other guests to worry about if you are not used to 'dressing' in public. The friendly hotel staff are well used to us and indeed greatly look forward to welcoming us back again.

The Hotel is of an excellent standard with most rooms having private toilet and bath/shower facilities and all rooms having a tea/coffee making tray, telephone, radio and colour television with an in-house video system. The Hotel is situated within easy walking distance of the centre of Scarborough and is close to the South Cliff (with footpaths and funicular down to the beach).

The cost of the weekend is only £79 (sharing) which includes two nights bed and full English breakfast, a lavish buffet on the Friday evening, a four course dinner on the Saturday evening followed by a fashion show and disco. Lunches are not included but snacks are available at the bar (which is fully licensed).

Guests may arrive any time from the Friday afternoon onwards. The buffet will be served around 7.30pm but food will be available until late for those who arrive late. Rooms should be vacated by midday on the Sunday but guests may stay around the hotel until later and have lunch at the bar.

Following the dinner on Saturday afternoon there will be a show featuring fashions by *Feline*. This will be followed by a lively disco until late. Other events which may be arranged will be announced later.

Through most of the weekend there will also be:

Vicky's Wig Boutique – a superb collection of wigs and expert personal fittings.

Feline – a good selection of clothes, shoes, etc. at very reasonable prices.

Rose's – *Repartee* magazine and *Martine Rose's 'Boobs'* will be on sale.

Martine Rose, P.O. Box 339, Sheffield S1 3SX

Harmony
Weekend

BOOKING FORM

	Deposit	Balance	Total	No. of Persons
Full weekend (sharing)	£30	£49	£79
Full weekend (single not sharing)	£38	£49	£87
Saturday only (sharing)	£20	£24.50	£44.50
Saturday only (single not sharing)	£25	£24.50	£49.50

The deposit (which should be sent with this booking form) covers evening meals, disco, the single room supplement (if applicable) and administration charges. In the event of a cancellation before 1st October, the deposit less £10 may be refunded but not for later cancellations.

The balance (which should be paid directly to the hotel upon leaving) covers bed and breakfast.

PLEASE NOTE: The sharing rate applies even if you are coming alone but are willing to share with another (we will allocate someone to share with you).

Type of bedroom preferred:

Single / Double / Twin / Triple (double + single) / Family (4 single) / Don't mind *

Smoker / non-smoker*

*Please delete as required

As there are very few single rooms available, we may not be able to accept your booking unless you are willing to share. Even if you are coming alone, it will be most helpful if you indicate you are willing to share with another. Not only will this be cheaper for you, it could allow someone else to attend the weekend who might otherwise have to be turned away if we allocate a room with more than one bed to yourself alone.

Name(s) by which you wish to be known

Group/Society/wife/friend

-
-
-
-

Name and Address for mail

.....

..... Postcode

Telephone Number (in case we need to contact you)

All information given will be treated as strictly confidential. The hotel will only receive the name(s) by which you wish to be known and a room allocation.

Please make cheques or Postal Orders payable to 'Harmony Weekend' (please only send the deposit at this stage). Please send the deposit with this form and a stamped, self addressed envelope (for Confirmation of booking) to:


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DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS !

(or ANNE IN GENDERLAND)

- A VISIT TO THE 1992 IFGE
CONVENTION IN HOUSTON

by Anne Forrester

This year's meeting of the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) was held in Houston, Texas, in early April - and as is often the case north America showed how variable a climate it can produce. There had been 2" of rain on the Sunday that I arrived, and the rest of the week was described by the local Television channel as 'pleasant spring weather' - thick early morning fog gave way each day to clear blue skies and temperatures in the mid 80s, with around 95% relative humidity. "Spring weather" ? Well, they do boast that everything in Texas is larger than life !

The meeting was attended by a large cross-section of the gender community - crossdressers, transgenderists, transsexuals, partners (and a few even brought along their children), psychologists and therapists, doctors, lawyers and ministers of religion: in fact, just about everyone with an interest in our community. For the first time there was even a quite sizeable group of female-to-male TSs.

The working sessions fell into two broad categories. There were a number of what might be termed 'political' sessions, devoted to discussing just where the IFGE is going, talking about finances, public relations, organisation, and so on. Other sessions concentrated on such practical matters as how to speak like a woman, and how to talk about our community to the outside world (the buzz word is "Out-reach"), as well as informative talks on subjects as diverse

as electrolysis and the legal problems facing transsexuals; although as I was one of the two reporters for the convention *Newsletter* it was not possible to get to them all. However, the two 'Open evenings', to which the local public, therapists, ministers (and even the Press) were invited, were especially enjoyable. It is really good when our community can put itself across to the public in this way.

Naturally, there was also a marvelous social element to the gathering. It was lovely meeting again with old friends, and making new ones, and the chance to dine out in small (and occasionally large) groups with ones sisters was marvelous. Shopping *en femme* is always a pleasure, although as this was a working convention there was not too much spare time to spend investigating the area (and as Houston is the fifth largest city in north America this would in any case have been a major undertaking). Nevertheless, most of us did manage to get out to the local shopping malls (one of which - The Galleria - is the second largest in north America: the largest is 'down the road' in Dallas. Remember, I did say that in Texas everything is BIG !). Indeed, the unofficial motto of the convention seemed to be "Shop 'til you drop", and most of us came home with at least a new dress or two. (Indeed, one memorable moment of my own week was trying on a dress in the changing rooms of a large department store; and did I have fun struggling with the zip single-handed ! Incidentally, I also came home with my ears newly pierced).

The Hilton Southwest Hotel, which was the home of the convention, proved extremely hospitable, with a very welcoming staff - including one English waitress in the dining room, who was keen to exchange news each day on the General Election that was going on at home. (I had thought how nice it would be to escape it, but television coverage of the American Presidential elections proved to be almost as bad). The catering staff were great, and we enjoyed some excellent luncheon talks from a number of first class speakers, including one very elegant lady who turned out to be a TS who had once been a Roman Catholic priest ! The week ended with a most moving ecumenical church service, at which people of all faiths (and none)

joined together in prayer. During the prayers for those suffering from AIDS one of our dear sisters announced that she was herself suffering from the disease, and afterwards we all spontaneously went up and hugged her and wished her well; in retrospect, a truly inspiring example of the love and caring which is so typical of our community.

After the final brunch some of us stayed on for a day or two, and I rented a car and drove south to the Johnson Space Center, near Galveston. (Am I the first British cross-dresser to have got in to NASA's Mission Control Center while *en femme* ?). As I had been warned, the traffic around Houston is ferocious; six lane highways, they drive on the 'wrong' side of the road, and take no prisoners !

Several of my sisters from Canada and the States flew home *en femme*, but sadly I had to change back into my boy clothes for the 5500 mile 21 hour flight home *via* Detroit, Boston and London. Long overnight flights and the thought of customs, immigration and security checks have held me back from crossing the Atlantic dressed *en femme* - so far. One day, maybe ! Meantime I'm looking forward to New England in the Fall. In other words, I've already booked my ticket to Boston for Fantasia Fair in October. ■



VOICES IN MY CLOSET

by Sharon Ann Stuart

Reprinted from *Houston 92 Newsletter*, 8 April 1992

It was last Saturday morning when I entered my walk-in closet and told them we were going to Houston for the IFGE 'Coming Together, Working Together' meeting. 'Them', you ask - who are 'Them'? Why, my dresses of course.

Perhaps you recall back in the seventies, when people discovered they could talk to plants. Well, I was fourteen years old in 1955 when I discovered you could talk to dresses. And not only that - dresses could talk back. Ah, 1955 - that was the year my mother bought the off-white chiffon cocktail dress with the full layered skirt. She had the waist altered to fit her middle-aged figure, and on the way home from the dressmaker she made a point of warning me. "This is a very nice and expensive dress, and I don't want you to touch it" mother said, with just a hint of menace in her voice.

Mother's warning was not without purpose. You see she was talking to a 14-year-old boy who had been raiding her closets and dresser drawers for female attire since the age of four. By the time I was five I was a confirmed transvestite, and went on to become a notorious clothes criminal. No dress, however humble - let alone a cocktail dress that was "very nice and very expensive" - was safe in the same house with me. Sure enough, less than 24 hours later, mother's warning notwithstanding, there I was slipping that size eight cocktail dress over my head and trying to tug it into place around my size twelve torso.

Mother had announced a short trip to the grocery store for some necessities and I had wasted no time 'dressnapping' that cocktail frock from its hanger in mother's closet. Alas, the zipper jammed halfway up the middle of my back, and mother's return from the grocery store was imminent. I was trapped in that dress, unable to get in or out of it without moving that zipper. Frantically I struggled to free myself. Like a circus contortionist I wriggled and squirmed and arched my back, all to no avail. Nothing seemed to budge that stubborn zipper. I uttered a curse under my breath, and that is when it happened. The dress talked.

"Really, there's no need for profanity, you frightful boy" the voice said, speaking in the measured, dulcet tones of a refined lady. "You're going to hurt me and tear my fabric if you don't stop struggling". I fell upon the bed in disbelief. My eyes scanned the room for a person - that voice had to have a body; but there was no one there. It was the cocktail dress talking to me.

"You can talk", I stammered. "How can a dress talk?". "Of course I can talk you little ninny. All dresses can talk. We just don't do it much. They teach us at the factory to be seen and not heard". "Well, please help me to get your zipper unstuck" I said. "If Mom catches me wearing you I'll be in deep dutch for the next year".

"You should have thought of that before you took me off the hanger", the dress admonished me. "They warned us at the factory about you transvestites, but I never dreamed it would actually happen to me. Now look here, young man, if you promise never to try me on again I just *might* be able to relax enough to get my zipper moving. Ah, there - try it now". The zipper mysteriously slithered downward, and in a trice I was free and the talking cocktail dress was back on its hanger and none the worse for wear. That is how I discovered talking dresses, and dresses and I have been talking ever since.

And so last Saturday, when I walked into my own closet and broke the news to 'them' about Houston, the whole

closet erupted into an excited chorus of dress babble. "Oh please Sharon Ann, take me to Houston. I'm so bored being on this hanger" said the white linen. "Remember me, I'm just back from the dry cleaner" called the green coat dress, a veteran of the recent Texas 'T' Party. "I can make you look very sexy" said a slithery black velvet evening dress, speaking in Chinese with a translation by one of the bilingual dresses. "You could wear me to the Tiffany Awards Banquet" an old stand-by evening gown countered. "Remember all the good times we've had in the past".

"I loved Denver last year. Did you say we were staying at a Hilton Hotel ?" a chatty green skirt suit wanted to know. "Take me please, oh please take me" shrilled a prissy polka-dotted cotton frock with a lace collar. "It's going to be hot in Houston, and I'm so light and airy". "I guess you won't be wanting us winter numbers" a red sweater dress said sadly. "I guess I'll just have to wait for Fantasia Fair, or the Fall Harvest in Kansas City". "I'd just love a trip to Houston" cooed a soft polyester print, "and I promise not to wrinkle even if you fold me up and put me in the suitcase".

"There's only so much room in the luggage" I explained when they had quieted down. "We're flying, not driving. I know you will understand if I can't take all of you. The ones who can't go this time will get another chance, I promise. You know how much I love all of you. You are *all* my favorites".

It was difficult to make those choices. Spring outfits took precedence, and several summer outfits made the cut. The skirt suits sent three representatives. A sweater and skirt combo were selected, in case the weather turned cooler. Two evening dresses made the trip in their own special garment bag, one new and one an old friend. The prissy polka-dotted cotton frock was put aside, however, and hung limply in the back of the closet, pouting silently. There were more than enough outfits to wear in Houston over the week-long stay.

That night, as I lay in bed, I could hear someone softly sobbing. The sound seemed to be coming from my closet. I went to see, and sure enough it was the little polka-dotted frock crying. She really is a very sensitive dress and just does not handle rejection well at all. "I ought to take you straight to the Salvation Army" I told her in mock anger as I squeezed her into the garment bag with the two evening gowns, who barely stirred in their sleep.

The next morning I made a last-minute run to Macy's for pantyhose. On the way past the Misses Better Dresses Department I heard the sweet musical voice of a flower print sun dress beckoning to me. "Oh won't you purchase me and take me off this horrid rack ? I'm 25% off and a size fourteen. I'll make you feel so pretty. Quick now, get out your credit card. No need to try me on. I'm sure you can wear me". How could I resist ?

When I introduced my latest acquisition to the dress bag there was some grumbling from the skirt suits, who are a little stuck up, but otherwise the new dress made friends easily...and when I return from Houston there will be yet *another* voice coming from my closet ! ■

DID YOU KNOW ?

So you love putting on your makeup ? Well, you're in good historical company. Archaeologists have discovered that Inca girls used to pluck their eyebrows, dye their hair, powder their faces, and carry their beauty kits with them in special handbags. And that was in the 14th and 15th centuries ! ■

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BRA SIZE CONVERSION

Just in case you travel abroad - or come across foreign makes here - you may care to note these conversions

UK	32	34	36	38	40
Euro	70	75	80	85	90
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NB: *The ABCD cup sizing system is universal*

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MUSIC, MUSIC, MUSIC

1. AND IN ANOTHER WORLD...

by Karen Scott

Two apparently unconnected events coincided to inspire me to contribute to *The Tartan Skirt*. I rarely watch 'Rapido' (a fairly appalling music programme on BBC 2), and I'd never previously read either *The Tartan Skirt* or *Cross Talk* (Manchester's CD magazine), yet one evening last month I happened to be doing both at the same time. The connection ? Well, *Cross Talk* number 15 had included a piece called 'Subliminal Serenades', which listed several mutilated popular song titles with supposedly subliminal cross-dressing messages ("Goodbye Sam, Hello Samantha", etc). All a lot of humorous nonsense, of course.

Meanwhile, on 'Rapido' there were snippets of a song with a clear and persistent refrain: "And in another world he can wear a dress". As well as including this Top-10 hit by *The Wonder Stuff*, Rapido featured a bedraggled bunch called *Daisy Chainsaw*, three of whom seemed to be wearing dresses on stage, yet only one was female (pity about the music). There was also some film of an odd Swedish outfit called *Army of Lovers*, who admitted that their music was less important to them than their high-heels and makeup. And I'd only switched on because I thought there was going to be an item about Kinky Gerlinsky's club (turned out I'd got the wrong programme).

Anyway, *The Wonder Stuff* song ("Welcome to the Cheap Seats") and the *Cross Talk* article set me thinking of other popular songs with explicit crossdressing themes. Some are very well known, others less so. I wonder how many of them you can recognise from these lyrics (answers later):

1. Plucked her eyebrows on the way
Shaved her legs and then he was a she
2. On the wall hung a tall mirror
Distorted view to see through baby blue
3. Girls will be boys and boys will be girls
It's a crazy mixed-up shook up world
4. Your knees begin to sag
You're caught up playing dominoes in drag
5. I wear high heels, I skip and jump
I like to press wild flowers
6. I remember a girl called Johnny
Who changed her name
When she discovered her choice
Was to change or be changed
7. It's hard to be true when they point and stare at you
Conditioned to portray the mask of masculinity
Another blend of different shading
I am what I am, I don't give a damn
8. Gowns lovely made out of lace
And all those things that you do to your face
You're a slick little girl

There must be many others - why not write and tell us about them ? "Dressing Up" by *The Cure* has a pretty tune but I can't make out any of the words, while Iggy Pop had a song with the memorable line "I'm sick of hanging around with old transvestites", but the song itself was less memorable; I can't remember what it was.

Iggy's friend, David Bowie, made no secret of his inclinations, but many of his songs are ambiguous to the point of meaninglessness (to me anyway). He had some good tunes and titles, though - "Changes", "Oh you pretty things", "Aladdin Sane", etc. Incidentally, look out for the CD (i.e.

compact disk - not crossdresser - Ed) re-issue of his "Man Who Sold the World" - like the original LP cover it shows him reclining in a very fetching blue evening gown. I seem to recall him once claiming that he wore "mens' dresses" which were specially designed and made for him (no bra or breasts required). Aren't some people strange ? (I'm afraid I'm digressing into gossip. Better get back to the answers to the song lyrics):

1. Walk on the Wild Side (*Lou Reed*)
2. Arnold Layne (*Pink Floyd*)
3. Lola (*Kinks*)
4. Madame George (*Van Morison*)
5. Lumberjack Song (*Monty Python*)
6. A Girl Called Johnny (*Waterboys*)
7. Man Enough to be a Woman (*Wayne County and the Electric Chairs*)
8. Make Up (*Lou Reed*)

Well, how did you get on ? Women's magazines generally have a key to tell you what your score means, so here goes:

- 8 Well done Jayne County! What are you doing these days ?
- 6-7 OK Supergirl, stop painting your nails and start writing to *The Tartan Skirt* about all the other crossdressing songs you obviously know about.
- 4-5 Congratulations, you're a smart, socially aware young woman. Pity that your musical taste has not caught up with your fashion sense.
- 2-3 Looks like you spent more on clothes than records when you were a growing girl. Either that, or too many Martinis have messed up your memory.
- 1 Evidently you have the refined musical tastes appropriate to your mature years, so perhaps it's about time you stopped wearing a mini-skirt: especially if you're a lumberjack.
- 0 So was it the wigs or the robes that made you want to become a high-court judge ? I suppose you've never heard of "A Boy Named Sue" either. Johnny who ?

Even the judges amongst you are probably wondering how I could have left out the greatest crossdressing song of all time. Don't worry, I haven't forgotten the song that towers above all others in terms of style, wit, grace and melody. Yes, I'm talking about our own proud Scottish anthem: "*Let the wind blow high, let the wind blow low, through the streets in my skirt I'll go. All the lassies say Hello, Donald where's your trousers ?*".

I'm sure we can all identify with that one. Maybe the old ones are the best after all.

2. HOW TO 'HANDEL' CROSS DRESSING

by Anne Forrester

Well, I suppose that is all right for you youngsters who actually call this Pop stuff "Music" ! Me, well although I'm not a High Court Judge (yet !), I was brought up in the days when "Music" meant melody+harmony, put together and played or sung (not shouted - and with every word distinguishable) at a volume that didn't require earplugs as the mandatory accessory to ones earrings. (Now there's a thought. Perhaps Julia could design some one-piece ear-ring-plugs for us more mature ladies - then we could actually go past a Disco without suffering permanent hearing impairment).

Now, having got some of my jaundiced views on 'Pop' off my 38B chest, what can we find for those crossdressers who appreciate 'real' music ? To be fair, there are few examples of gender-specific lyrics in the classics, and rather more instances of gender confusion amongst the characters in some operas and ballets. For example, there is

Simone, the 'pantomime Dame' character in Lanchberry's ballet *La fille mal gardee* (based on the music of Ferdinard Herold) - but that's pure drag, and scarcely crossdressing.

More interestingly, Mozart made quite a thing in *The Marriage of Figaro* with the character of Cherubino, a young page-boy (generally played by a girl !) who, as part of a plot devised by Figaro, puts on one of his master's wife's dresses and passes himself off as a girl with a view to entrapping his amorous master. Less well known is Handel's opera *Xerxes*, which has been described as being "rife with gender confusions". Originally a role for a castrato (well, that's one way to go down the TS route), the male Xerxes is now generally played by a female mezzo-soprano (pantomime 'principal girl' style, so that the storyline starts to look like an exercise in Lesbian seduction !), and the story is then complicated by the arrival of Amastria, this time a female character who arrives disguised as a male soldier seeking revenge on Xerxes. (Remember, female to male crossdressing was not uncommon in the 18th century).

Even Victorian light opera is not immune: Gilbert and Sullivan's *Princess Ida* is a case in point. Part of the particularly convoluted plot sees Hilarion, Cyril and Florian, three very macho males, seeking to get into the premises of an all-girls University by putting on robes left behind by the girls, and trying to pass themselves off - not very convincingly - as female students.

Of course, as we all know, on the stage anything goes. Crossdressing was only ever really accepted by the great British public in Elizabethan times, when female parts on the stage were *always* played by men or boys. Just imagine 'being' Juliet, Desdemona, Ophelia, Titania - or even Lady Macbeth ! Those Elizabethan dresses, with layers of lace and petticoats, and long sweeping skirts, must have been quite wonderful. Both Tchaikowsky and Prokofiev turned *Romeo and Juliet* into an opera, and Verdi tackled both *Macbeth* and *Othello*. How are your voices, girls ? Anyone for a Shakespearian opera ? ■

BELIEVE IT OR NOT !

In Honduras a man who was killed in a bar brawl was found to be six months pregnant ! His wife, to whom he had been married for nine years, was said to be astounded. She said that she realised that their sex life had been a little bit unusual, but she had never suspected a thing. ■

THE WAY WE WERE

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

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

THE NEW "SCANTIES"

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



HANDY HINTS

For your nails

For cracking, breaking or splitting finger nails, massage a small amount of olive oil into them nightly and a 15 minute soak in warm olive oil once a week. This promotes strong, healthy nails. Before using nail enamel, wipe each nail with a small amount of enamel remover first. (*Reprinted, with permission, from Dyscourse, Vol 4 No. 1*).

Face and body hair

A skin softener (e.g. Olive oil, Vaseline Intensive Care Lotion) used regularly can effect a marginal improvement in hairline and, as hair treated this way grows finer, is not only good for feminising body hair but also makes facial hair easier to deal with, making shaves smoother.

(*Reprinted, with permission, from Dyscourse, Vol 4 No. 1*).

Avoid snagging your tights

Do your rough male hands tend to snag your tights or stockings when putting them on ? Try wearing a pair of Debenhams' inexpensive nylon gloves - you will save their cost several times over in your savings on hosiery.

and

If your tights snag on patches of rough skin on your feet, try rubbing these smooth with a Boots' pumice stone when you are in the bath or shower. It is both cheap and effective. ■

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HAVE YOU READ ?

Some Books Reviewed

Brain Sex: the Real Difference Between Men and Women by Anne Moir and David Jessel. London: Mandarin. 1991. £ 4.99 (Paperback)

Have you ever wondered just *why* crossdressers and transsexuals are what they are ? I guess I have heard more discussions at various Group meetings about this problem than anything else. Usually the debate centres around the "nature or nurture" argument (*i.e.* heredity or environment ?), and there is always talk of genes and hormones; but always the discussion ends in uncertainty. At last, however, there is a book that appears to provide a convincing answer.

The authors' thesis - based on the research of many scientists from around the world - is extremely readable, but is too long and detailed to summarise accurately. Briefly it is based on the theory that during pregnancy, at a time when biologists have already shown that male and female fetuses are essentially undifferentiated, some genetic males are exposed to excess amounts of female hormone (and *vice versa*), and that this affects what might be called the "wiring" of the brain - that is, the way in which the brain works - so that although genetically male, and subsequently developing male genitalia, these individuals have a predominantly female mental approach to life (hence the book's title, *Brain Sex*). In other words, while sex is determined genetically at conception, gender is determined in the womb.

This theory explains so much. Why some men are drawn to cross-dress from very early on in life; why crossdressing is

not a 'disease' or 'condition' that can be 'cured'; why most crossdressers (like most women) are altogether nicer, more caring and less aggressive individuals than men generally; and, not least, why men and women each excel in different spheres in life.

Over the years I have reviewed several hundreds of books for a number of publications, but never before have I been in the position of saying that this is a book that you really *must* read for yourself; both because it is really too detailed to summarise in a review but also - and mainly - because its message is so important that it really is not to be missed. It explains so much that is so important to the gender community that if you could only ever read one book on the subject in your lifetime, I strongly believe that this should be it.

Anne Forrester

~~~~~  
X *You Just Don't Understand* by Deborah Tannen. London: Virago. 1991. £ 5.99 (Paperback)

I first heard of this book, then not long published, while attending the IFGE Convention in Colorado last year, and bought it in a bookstore in Denver. It has since become available in Britain, and is to my mind one of the most important books ever to tackle the subject of how men and women communicate with one another - or, more frequently, fail to do so. It certainly explained, instantly, the problems that my own wife and I had experienced in recent years.

Deborah Tannen, a Professor of Linguistics at Georgetown University, has studied the conversational styles of men and women, and concludes - with remarkable illustrations to prove her point - that these are so different as to constitute virtually different languages (Male Genderish and Female Genderish ?). Mens' conversation tends to be direct and to the point, whereas womens' is indirect, so that while a man will say directly what he thinks a woman will hint at it



indirectly; men tend to 'lecture' others when speaking to them, whereas women exchange viewpoints; men will wait for one another to pause before making their own contribution to a conversation, whereas women tend to 'talk over' one another - and expect others to do the same; men rarely make eye contact while talking while women almost invariably do so - and consequently 'read the mind' of the other person to a far greater extent; men deal with facts, women deal with instincts. One could continue *ad infinitum* listing these differences in conversational style.

The importance of this book is twofold. Firstly it helps one to understand much more clearly what women mean when they communicate - and all too often we fail to do so - while at the same time helping our own communication with them. Secondly it offers a realistic role model of conversational style for the crossdresser or transsexual who seeks to pass convincingly as a woman, even when engaged in conversation. Together with *Brain Sex* (reviewed above), this is one of the most important books around today. It is thoroughly and unreservedly recommended

A.F. ■



## SO WHO IS "NORMAL" ?

Society tends to condemn and persecute those who it does not understand, just because they *are* different and do not conform to *their* norms. Probably few of those who are so intolerant of others realise just how many of those around them do *not* conform to their own ideas of what is 'normal'. For example, did you know that:

- \* About 50% of people (both men and women) have been sexually attracted to someone of the same sex;
- \* Just under half (47%) of women in Britain wear clothes which are traditional masculine attire (that is up to **50 times** more than men who do the same !);
- \* Nearly 40% of all men have had sex with another man at some point in their lives, and one in three women have had a lesbian experience;
- \* Around 15% of all men and women are bisexual for all or part of their lives;
- \* At least 10% of people are **exclusively** lesbian or gay;
- \* At least one *per cent*, and probably nearer 10 *per cent*, of all men cross dress (at least partly) at some time in their lives - which means that there must be somewhere **between 52,000 and half a million of us in Scotland**;
- \* There are at present some 1500 *post-op* transsexuals living in Britain.

So who does that leave ? And where are all the so-called 'normal' people - including the 'morally righteous' and the 'rednecks' - who so arrogantly and pompously condemn others for living their own lives in their own way ? Or **could it just be that *they* are the minority** ? If so, perhaps this is a very good reason why the rest of us should keep on working together. We don't necessarily have to *do* the same as others - ***just respect one another's right to do it.***

A.F. ■

## GOING TO FRANCE ?

A crossdresser's *French-English* wordlist

|                               |                    |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Habillement</i>            | Clothing           |
| <i>Mode</i>                   | Fashion            |
| <i>Taille</i>                 | Size               |
| <i>Couleur</i>                | Colour             |
| <i>Tissus</i>                 | Material           |
| <i>Un chemisier</i>           | A blouse           |
| <i>Un tricot</i>              | A jersey           |
| <i>Un pull</i>                | A pullover         |
| <i>Une jupe</i>               | A skirt            |
| <i>Une robe</i>               | A dress            |
| <i>Une robe de soir</i>       | An evening dress   |
| <i>Une chemise de nuit</i>    | A nightdress       |
| <i>Un jupon</i>               | An underslip       |
| <i>Un soutien-gorge</i>       | A brassiere        |
| <i>Un slip</i>                | Briefs/panties     |
| <i>Une gaine</i>              | A girdle           |
| <i>Une gaine-culotte</i>      | A panty girdle     |
| <i>Les collants</i>           | Tights             |
| <i>Les bas</i>                | Stockings          |
| <i>Un veste</i>               | A jacket           |
| <i>Un pantalon</i>            | A pair of trousers |
| <i>Les jeans</i>              | Jeans              |
| <i>Une ceinture</i>           | A belt             |
| <i>Les Gants</i>              | Gloves             |
| <i>Un sac à main</i>          | A handbag          |
| <i>Travesti</i>               | A transvestite     |
| <i>Les seins</i>              | The breasts        |
| <i>Garnitures periodiques</i> | Sanitary towels    |
| <i>Dames</i>                  | Ladies             |
| <i>Hommes</i>                 | Men ■              |

## QUOTES OF THE MONTH

"I want you to take a moment and look at the person sitting to your right and left. I would like you to answer five simple questions about these people: (1) What is their nationality ? Are they White, Black, Hispanic, Asian ? Does it matter ? (2) What are they wearing ? Are they attired in a dress, skirt, pants, gown, shorts ? Does it matter ? (3) Are they heterosexual, gay, asexual or indeterminate ? Does it matter ? (4) Are they female or male ? Does it matter ? (5) Are they human beings just like you ? **If you can answer yes to this last question, then the future does look brighter for all of us**".

*Tiffany*

(Reprinted from *Tapestry*, Issue 60)

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"The biggest block we put on finding happiness for ourselves is the fear of taking responsibility for our own lives, fear of change, fear of confronting the unspoken rules that we have absorbed from parents, teachers or society. 'But in living there are no experts'. You can waste your life waiting for some invisible entry to give you permission to follow your own ideas about what you want to be. 'Our understanding of ourselves is our own truth, our only certainty in a world of uncertainty' ".

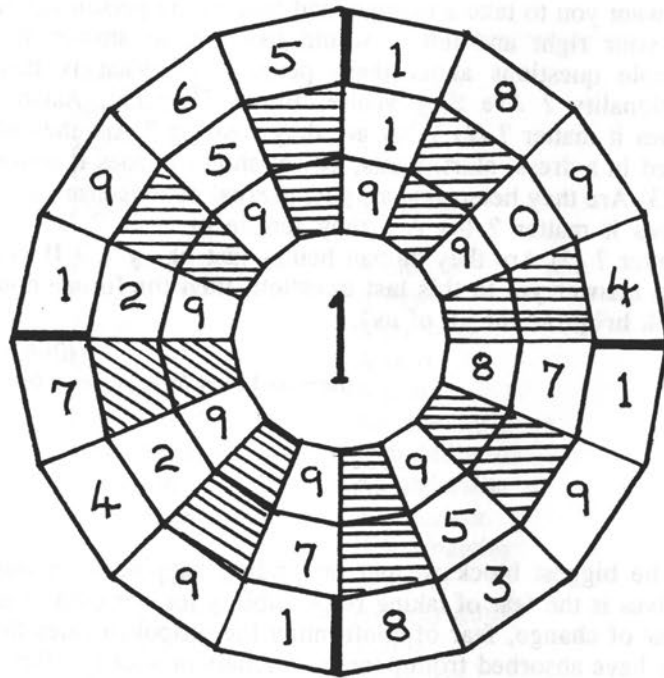
*Dorothy Rowe*

cited in *Cosmopolitan*,  
March 1992 ■

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## Answers to the quiz on page 10



"No-one would ever choose a dress they could only see inside a cellophane bag, but women buy their hosiery that way all the time"

*Jane Garner, in Dan Air's  
In Flight magazine* ■

Have you heard ?

**Hard luck, Sandra.** Commiserations to Sandra MacRae, the male-to-female transsexual who contested the Glasgow (Provan) seat at the General Election. She was unlucky in this, her first attempt since her 'sex change'.

***Call me Madam.*** After 734 years the House of Commons now has a woman Speaker. Former chorus girl Betty Boothroyd, when asked what she should be called, brought the House down by saying "*Call me Madam*". She does not wear a wig when on duty, and as the Speaker's traditional wig is made of horsehair, who can blame her ? (Whether she wears the same 'knee high' black nylons with her 'uniform' as did her male predecessor is not known !).

***What ignorance !*** Victoria Gillick, the well-known campaigner on 'religious' grounds for what she sees as 'Christian morality', displayed a quite phenomenal ignorance when appearing on the Jamesons' late night show on Radio 2 recently. Expressing her disgust with Gays she claimed that homosexuality was "all about sodomy and bestiality". I wonder if she knows what 'bestiality' means. It is certainly *not* the same as homosexuality ? Or is it simply that she has never come across the Biblical injunction to "*love one another*" ? I don't recall it going on to say "*except those of your own sex*", do you ?



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