



SIBYLS LOGO - ROBYN GOLDEN - HANW 28 MAY 2018



SIBYLS NEWS

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Christmas 2018

Dear Sibyls

For trans people 2018 was another tale of steps both forward and back: we had the consultation on the reform of the Gender Recognition Act and await the outcome. It seems there were more than 100,000 responses. The issue continues to arouse strong feelings. Jay Walmsley has again made her views known (see below) very clearly. Others will disagree at least as passionately. The media on the whole is not sympathetic to us. The snide ridicule journalists feel free to engage in at the expense of trans people is corrosive and undermining. I have cancelled my own subscription to the Sunday Times. The Church of England still agonises over LGBT issues generally but at least there are some outstanding examples of trans priests. And the CofE has approved services of blessing to mark a person's transition. The Catholic

Church, which of course has no women or trans priests (though plenty of gay ones), issued an innocuous tweet of support to trans people on 20 November and incurred the usual opprobrium from those who view trans people through the lense of “gender ideology”. ITV showed the drama series “Butterfly” which dealt quite sensitively and intelligently with the difficult issue of a trans child approaching puberty. The treatment of such children perhaps excites the strongest feelings and most divides opinion – our Chair, Debbie Hayton, appeared on a Channel 4 programme to give her view of the matter. Many will disagree with her. It is good we are having the debate. At Christmas, the child we think of is the one born in the stable at Bethlehem, poor, defenceless, dependent and vulnerable. May that child, new-born baby and cosmic Christ and king, be in your hearts and with your loved ones this Christmas.

Pauline pauline.fleck@btinternet.com

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THE SIBYLS

Christian Spirituality Group for Gender Variant People

c/o 10, Ffordd Las, Rhyl, LL18 2DY

www.sibyls.co.uk E-mail: enquiries@sibyls.co.uk

The Sibyls is a UK-based confidential Christian spirituality group for transgender people, their partners and their supporters. It offers companionship along the journey, and information/advocacy to churches.

Sibyls seek to fulfil the two great commandments of Jesus: To love God and love one another. To achieve this we provide opportunities to meet in safe and friendly establishments. We promote the freedom to talk, to learn, to pray and to seek God's will.

If you are having difficulties reconciling your faith with being transgendered or are concerned about acceptance in your church then maybe Sibyls is what you have been looking for. It could be that you just need to talk with fellow Christians who understand what it is to be transgendered, or simply wish to be yourself as you worship in fellowship and in a safe environment.

If you are looking for an accepting church, it may be useful to visit our website, where there is a resource for this. Go to the Resources page on <http://www.gndr.org.uk/sibyls5/indexmain.htm> Click on the "Pastoral" and then on the "Churches" tab. This is being updated, but has useful links. Especially supportive are the MCC Churches.

We like to know of churches which welcome transgender people. Also if you would like more information to give to your church please do contact us.

We welcome new members, young and old. There is no membership fee or annual subscription, and no commitment, except confidentiality. Your details are held in total confidence and will not be given to any other members without your permission.

Sibyls' Website - www.sibyls.co.uk

Dates and information on future events are posted on the website. A full range of resources is also available. Click on the "Resources" tab on the right of the top banner on the website to access these.

Please note that the members' section of the website is no longer password protected although the older newsletters have been archived and still protected.

Facebook Groups

Two Facebook Groups are available to enable Sibyls and other trans Christians to communicate and express and exchange views and news. They are the Sibyls Members Group and TranschristianUK. Do join up if you are not already members.

Forthcoming Events

EUROPEAN FORUM OF LGBT CHRISTIAN GROUPS - Elaine Sommers

The Forum Board members met recently with the Planning Team for our next conference, which will be held in London in June 2019.

The venue will be Goodenough College, in the heart of the city, and we had the opportunity to inspect the facilities; they were very impressive.

The Trans pre-conference starts on Wednesday 26 June and the main conference the following day, ending on Sunday 30 June.

As the Sibyls are now a member group of the Forum, next year's conference will be an ideal opportunity to become more acquainted with the organisation, and to meet with people from all over the European continent. Being 'on our doorstep', we in the UK have the advantage of being able to keep travel costs to a minimum (compare the 2020 conference, which will be held in Budapest!).

To find out more, go to:

<https://www.euroforumlgbtchristians.eu/conferences/2019-london/253-uk-lgbt-christians-to-host-brexit-year-annual-conference-2019>

I should also mention the Agape Fund, which raises money to provide scholarships for delegates from countries where incomes are lower, or for students and younger people who have minimal financial resources. To learn more about Agape, and to make an online donation, go to:

<https://www.euroforumlgbtchristians.eu/donate/agape-fund>

It is my hope and prayer that we get a good attendance from Sibyls members at the London conference. We really do need more trans people getting involved with the Forum's vision and work and this will be a golden opportunity to do it. Bookings will open at the end of January. Keep an eye on the website. Please write to me if you have any questions about the conference.

Elaine Sommers (Co-President) elainesommers007@yahoo.co.uk

SIBYLS RESIDENTIAL WEEKEND – 27 to 29 September 2019. The venue is Purley Chase Centre in Warwickshire. The cost for full board is only £125. There will be further information about the weekend nearer the time. Because of the Euro Forum conference, it is proposed to have only one Sibyls weekend next year

REGIONAL MEETINGS

The Sibyls committee very much wishes to respond to the desire of members to meet up with other Sibyls who live in their area or within reasonable travelling distance. London and South East members already have the option of regular meetings. In the new year we will be contacting members in other parts of the country to ask them if they wish to meet other Sibyls in their area and the regional organiser for that area will make the arrangements for the meeting. We can include everyone in this except those living in the North West and North Wales for which we need someone to offer to take on the role of regional organiser. If any one is able to do this, would they please contact Pauline (pauline.fleck@btinternet.com).

SIBYLS LONDON EVENING MEETINGS 2019

2019 London Evening Meetings

7 February, 11 April, 13 June, 6 August, 10 October, 12 December 2019

6:00 p.m. at St Anne's Church, Dean Street, Soho.

THESE EVENTS ARE OPEN TO ALL TRANS PEOPLE,
TO THEIR FRIENDS, SPOUSES AND SUPPORTERS

YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE A MEMBER OF THE SIBYLS TO COME

Meet on the Second Thursday of every second month for a Service at St Anne's Church, followed by a meal together

Come in whatever role is convenient at the time

During the intercessions we normally pray for those we know and also on behalf of others who would like our prayers. If you would like your name, or the name of someone you know to be included on the prayer list, please email me. Include any details you think appropriate. You can email us privately at sibylslink@gmail.com. (If you would like your request for prayers to be made available to the whole group, the Sibyls members can of course email the Sibyls email group and/or Sibyls Members facebook group instead)

These meetings are very good; gentle lovely evenings with a service which is always thoughtful, peaceful and healing, followed by a good meal in congenial surroundings

Details: 6:00 service at St Anne's, 55 Dean Street, Soho W1D 6AF, 50 metres up on the left from Shaftesbury Avenue (it doesn't look like a church but it is), and from about 6.30 a gathering at a Soho restaurant.

You can just turn up on the evening: however it would also be helpful to get some idea of numbers in advance. If you do know you are coming, please email me at sibylslink@gmail.com. We normally decide on the restaurant to go to at the end of the service. If you are late please ring 07596 197 665.

You will be welcome
Susan Gilchrist

The Gender of God

A reflection by Elaine Sommers

Recently I have begun to encounter 'inclusive language' in churches, especially those which are trying to make their liturgies, prayers and songs more accessible to people. In one church I visited I asked why they had completely stopped referring to God as 'Father'. Their explanation was a little surprising. I was told that some of the congregation had experienced physical or sexual abuse from their own fathers, and that calling God 'Father' might cause them distress. I wasn't convinced by this line of thinking, wondering if there might be others who had been abused by their mothers, or sisters or brothers. On that principle, they would have to exclude those words as well. Would it not be better to help those people deal with their childhood traumas with counselling, prayer, etc?

In recent years, many hymn books have been revised to alter much loved verses and make them more gender balanced. 'Good Christian men rejoice', 'Pleased as man with man to dwell', 'I will make you fishers of men' - these well known lines have all been subject to the revisionist's hammer. I welcome such changes, provided that the new versions' scanning and emphasis remain intact.

But these examples deal with the gender of humanity. What about gender references to God? This is where things become a bit trickier. The Bible clearly describes the Father, and yet there are many references to the caring and nurturing aspects of God. The world in biblical times was very patriarchal, but many Christians today use this as a reason to be patriarchal now. 'Because it's biblical' they say! So, women should not be ordained and a husband should be the head of the family.

Like most of us, I was brought up to understand that God is Father. I said the Lord's Prayer at home and in church, and no one ever referred to God as Mother. But I have slowly come round to the notion that to see God only as male is to limit the divine nature of the Godhead. Why can't we see God as male *and* female, or even above and beyond gender altogether? And how would such a concept translate into our language in worship? Whilst I still find it a little unnatural to refer to God as 'She', that is probably because I've had a lifetime of thinking of God as male. Am I prepared to broaden my understanding of God to include both male and female aspects, accepting that such descriptions will still fall short of the true nature of the Divine?

As a transgender person, I have a slightly different and more complex understanding than most people of what gender is. Before I dared to tell anyone about my identity, people only saw me as male, and that was how I presented. What they didn't know was that I also had a strong female side, which I describe as 'the other side of the coin'. I have been aware of this male and female duality since my pre-teen years, but it was only in later life that I dared to go public and express both sides of my identity. Now, when I meet people, they usually react in one of two ways. They either assume that I am going to transition to female, or they think that I have taken up a strange dressing-up hobby, which is best kept out of sight, and most definitely *not* brought into church. Both of these views present a rather binary concept of gender and leave no consideration for the way I identify.

Learning to accept who I am has been a tortuous and painful process, but now that I have been able to do so, I have been able to flourish as the authentic me. I have also been able to understand God in a new way, the Creator who is beyond our human imagining.

ABC agrees with Elaine:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2018/11/21/god-gender-neutral-archbishop-canterbury/>

Is calling God “he” the cause of toxin masculinity? Rev Josie Harper thinks so....

<https://viamedia.news/2018/10/08/toxic-masculinity-our-use-of-pronouns/>

Colin Coward’s view of the “masculine God”:

<http://www.unadulteratedlove.net/blog/2018/10/9/the-myth-of-the-masculine-god>

SELF IDENTIFICATION

Jay Walmsley

Perhaps mistakenly I used Susan’s article as a basis to open my piece. It might have been better to let it stand alone.

My point is that legal status confers rights and obligations and because of its importance, should only be granted on the basis of proper evidence.

If you wish to claim the benefits of marriage, you have to prove that you were validly married. If you wish to claim UK citizenship you may be required to prove it. If you want a British passport, you can’t just ask for one; you have to provide evidence with your claim. And so it goes on; claims for recognition of status must be backed up by good evidence.

What gives anyone the right to claim to have changed gender without proof or evidence?

As things stand, if you want to change gender, there is nothing to stop you. All you have to do is conform to the requirements of the Gender Recognition Act, satisfy the Panel and it’s done. Not difficult. This provides good evidence to back your claim and satisfies society (well, most of it) that your claim is valid. The system works.

Simply stating that you have changed gender is not good enough and I cannot see how anyone can possibly agree to it. Women have justifiable deep- seated fears of rape and of male violence. In more than a quarter of a century of working with transgender people, I have met some, not many but some, who were sexual predators and/or enjoyed violence. Self-identification affords perfect cover for such violent people.

The argument is often heard that there are loads of transgender people walking around “cross-dressed” and there is no problem. Mostly true but should there be a problem, and there have been, legal status provides the basis for the police to act.

I also warned that self-identification would be dangerous for existing transsexuals and it’s proving true. The campaign for self-identification has at times been violent,

intolerant and vicious. The word one hears is “toxic”. That doesn’t go down well with the general public.

Sadly the perception seems to be growing that if that’s the way transsexuals behave, they don’t deserve help. It is bringing us all into disrepute.

Interestingly the realisation has dawned that if self-identification would be right for some, then why not for all? Man/woman, black/white, old/young, that nationality/ this nationality, human/animal. Well why not? If one group can do it, why not another? Be what you want. Is this what campaigners are seeking?

The absurdity of self-identification was neatly summed up in a recent article in The Sunday Times headed “I’m identifying as a young, black, trans Chihuahua, and the truth can go whistle.”

How self-declaration works in Ireland:

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/jan/15/monumental-change-ireland-transformed-transgender-rights>

Transgender Day of Remembrance (New Ways Ministry)

As we mark the [Transgender Day of Remembrance](#) (TDOR) today, we remember these victims and the hundreds of other trans people who suffer lethal violence worldwide. But memorializing is not enough. We must let their “dangerous memories” speak loudly, and by doing so be orient us towards a world where trans equality is our reality.

The concept of “dangerous memories” was first proposed in relation to Jesus by the German theologian Johann Baptist Metz, who found Christian theology inadequate after witnessing the Holocaust. Metz firmly rejected claims that “history is written by the victors,” arguing instead that history is defined by the “dangerous memories” of history’s victims. Cultivated within oppressed communities, these memories are subversive and liberating. Communities remember the suffering they experienced by recalling these dangerous memories, and they do this by remembering within a framework of creativity and opportunity which affirms that a new reality beyond death is possible. Dangerous memories are sparks for the fires of justice to move forward (For an introductory explainer on “dangerous memories” , click [here](#) for a post from *Daily Theology*.)

The murders of Diamond, Cathalina, and of so many trans people are dangerous memories that we recall today with candlelit vigils and prayer services. So, too, are their lives. Like the dangerous memories of Christ’s death and life that we celebrate in the Paschal Mystery, TDOR is a moment of both deep grief and anticipatory hope. Our faith is in the promise from God that the hate which struck down Sasha and Shantee is not final and that a new reality is possible. In choosing to live authentically, often at great cost, trans and gender non-conforming folks like

Londonn and Vicky have embodied the “already/not yet” nature of our salvation. Courageous authenticity is a sign of God’s reign in our world, and yet we do not live in a society where such authenticity is celebrated. Indeed, courage is needed precisely because being authentic risks so much. God’s promise does not easily quicken or lessen the suffering to which victims are subjected.

This Transgender Day of Remembrance, let our memorials be subversive by recalling victims as dangerous memories. Let them define not only how past history is written but how we will define history in the future. For those of us who remain, especially cisgender (non-transgender) allies, let us ask ourselves how in the next year we will actively seek a world in which people of all gender identities are not only safe and free, but celebrated.

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2018/11/19/transgender-day-of-remembrance-report-violence/>

Alternative view of TGDOR:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDfBu3wZXu0>

Cautious tweet from Catholic bishops stirs controversy:

<https://www.newwaysministry.org/2018/11/30/catholic-bishops-transgender-tweet-causes-controversy/>

Reform of GRA:

House of Commons debate on reform of GRA (on day after TGDOR):

https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-11-21/debates/BE06C5D4-E549-4F94-87B1-9B77F32EA155/Self-IdentificationOfGender?fbclid=IwAR0LKq_SAZ2r06BRKJzFGMN6065ffMea2kmyVCum3SBHct04gvyda9WPjgk

Over 100,000 responses to consultation. Govt to soon publish call for evidence on intersex and non-binary people:

https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-11-21/debates/BE06C5D4-E549-4F94-87B1-9B77F32EA155/Self-IdentificationOfGender?fbclid=IwAR0LKq_SAZ2r06BRKJzFGMN6065ffMea2kmyVCum3SBHct04gvyda9WPjgk

Good article by Erika Baker with input from Tina Beardsley on GRA reform:

<https://viamedia.news/2018/10/26/gender-recognition-act-whose-lives-are-actually-at-risk/?fbclid=IwAR25jIQadVqF768W71x12tEwPntrefjP9bweMroISSjFhddYhFA4UD6g7SI>

Two views of reform of GRA:

<https://theconversation.com/what-would-changes-to-the-gender-recognition-act-mean-two-legal-views-103204>

Debbie Hayton debates reform of GRA on Newsnight:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_wzzzG0Md0&feature=share

CofE response to GRA consultation:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/Gender%20Recognition%20Act%20consultation%20response.pdf>

Hilfield – for the last time? - PF

Towards the end of September, we once more assembled at Hilfield Franciscan Friary in Dorset for a residential weekend. The relatively few who attended reflected the fact that this location, welcoming, peaceful and hospitable though it is, is simply too inaccessible for most members so this being our last weekend there, it was a bitter-sweet occasion.

I drove from Leeds with a car loaded with food for the weekend, a huge pot of sweet potato and butternut squash soup dangerously close to overflowing nestled in front of the passenger seat. The food I think, if not a highlight, was adequate, the only crisis coming when I managed to set fire to the top layer of pastry of one of the vegan pies but I just about salvaged it before the smoke alarm went off.

My role for the weekend was more Martha than Mary but the latter role was occupied splendidly by others including our invited guest, Colin Coward, who led some very challenging discussions about the degree to which some of Christ's closest followers might from the very beginning have misunderstood or misrepresented some of his teaching and messages with some rather disastrous results (e.g. in the area of gender and sexuality) that we see perpetuated in some churches up to the present day. It was really thought-provoking and stimulating stuff.

We were also addressed by Brother Kentigern from the Hilfield community. We had been told prior to his talk to he was suffering from terminal bowel cancer. He referred to it himself with remarkable candour, humour and lack of self-pity, mentioning that from time to time his stoma might produce rude and inappropriate noises. When this happened he was the first to smile and chortle. He was an inspiration.

Also inspiring was the Rev Diana Johnson who led our Eucharist on Sunday morning. These intimate, almost domestic affairs always strike me as a model of what the Eucharist should be for everyone everywhere but so often is not. It is marvellous that the CofE is being so blessed and enriched by the gifts of its trans priests.

So we left Hilfield probably for the last time. I will cherish very happy memories of the place and people but I am looking forward to the delights of Purley Chase in Warwickshire next year

A Constitution for the Sibyls

Susan Gilchrist

For many years the Sibyls has been run as an informal organisation consisting of a group of members, without any structure in place. In recent years, that informality has led to increasing difficulties, as legislation, financial requirements, legal protection, insurance requirements and safeguarding issues increase.

As an organisation which needs to protect the confidentiality of its members, provisions for dealing with breaches in confidentiality also need to be put in place. The turnover of the Sibyls is too small for it to be appropriate to formally register as a charity: however having a constitution which clearly defines its objectives in the required way, should enable it to apply to the Inland Revenue so that donations to the Sibyls which are eligible for gift aid may be made.

The constitution which has now been written and legally checked (by a QC) can be downloaded by clicking on the link below

<http://sibyls.gndr.org.uk/documents/WebCon.pdf> or by following the link on the Sibyls website.

This is not a step which has been taken lightly by the Sibyls and it has been resisted for some time. The constitution has been written in a way that seeks to make its regulation as light as possible. If anyone has any objections to the constitution, please make them known to Susan as soon as possible.

Growing an Inclusive Church (cont.)

Amy

I'd arranged to spend a Sunday with my local Baptist Minister (Oakham Baptist) (in effect diversity training) at two Anglican churches in Nottingham. For a Non-conformist Minister there was some displacement happening, without adding me to the mix.

At the end of August, I arrived at my local Baptist Minister's house at silly o'clock in the morning, ready to take Mr Minister (and possibly Mrs Minister too) for an Amy day in Nottingham, aiming to "take in" two morning services, a pub lunch and maybe a local tourist attraction after lunch.

I'd agonised for days over whether to wear legs, slacks or jeans. I'd even managed to stress my long-suffering other half, who doesn't want to get involved with this part of our lives. The weather decided for me. One day of heavy rain in a period of dry weather.

Both Mrs and Mr Minister were in a short period of sabbatical 'time out'.

As I walked in the door, all my (unspoken) questions were answered at once as Mrs Minister came downstairs in jeans and sneakers. We were both from the same demographic. Could have been sisters. So, she was coming too. Plus, nobody was freaking out. Apart from the early hour, all seemed normal. As I drove us to Nottingham, we had plenty of time to talk, mostly trans matters. We met Helen at

gone 8am and had time for a natter and a drink before going to the first service at 'her' church, Christchurch. Helen did sound, and the peeps at Christchurch have met me before, so it was Mrs and Mr Minister who were welcomed as strangers. Everything was pretty much normal as mince. I had to pry Mr Minister away from talking to the person who had been leading worship (Baptist terminology) as well as from tea and biscuits in order to get us all over in a timely manner to St Barnabas for the second service. With the rains sweeping in we got wet and we arrived just after the service had started. Again, we were made welcome. A time after the service for drinks and biscuits as we spread ourselves around the church family and introduced ourselves.

I'd suggested lunch in an older style pub with eating benches, and we squeezed the four of us into the last few seats in a very full room. The conversations around us frequently 'dropped off'. As we were still talking trans matters, I'm guessing it was an interesting/different topic. We'd earlier decided that after eating I'd drop Helen off at home and we'd go straight back home. It was a very wet afternoon.

My 'driver' here is to help ensure that the local Baptist church will welcome any trans people walking through the doors, indeed, will become an inclusive church. Trans people are normal people. I hope that along with Helen that I managed to demonstrate this. I've been asked to invite Helen over to the local Baptist Church. *Watch this space.*

Now that the sabbatical period is over, I'm currently booking another early door 'Spoon breakfast meet with Mr Minister to talk through some concerns of mine. We'll be discussing theology as well as practical stuff. I'm guessing it will take more than one breakfast, but once the conversation is started it can continue.

The niggles include things like splitting the church congregation along gender lines for antiphonal singing. There was no reason for this, as far as I could see, it could have as easily have been this half and that half. I don't often get the black dog of gender incongruity in my life, but I got within the skin of an apple of walking out. I've been told already that this has been addressed.

Also, the EA statement of faith has recently made its way onto the church website. It's an overall good, 'Jelly statement of faith, but it is transphobic in one place that I've seen. If I was looking up the church on-line to see if it was likely to be trans friendly church, I'd give it a miss because of this single statement. Others may not. Wish me well here. If the Baptist church has signed up to this statement of faith, it will be more of a challenge.

An Alpha course has just completed, and I'm concerned that the church will try and 'change' any incoming families to conform to the lives and lifestyles of those already in the church, rather than just loving them and making them welcome. This is where the real test of whether the Baptist church is an inclusive church will start. I'm assured that Oakham Baptist is an accepting church. *Watch this space.*

I've booked a coffee with a mum from a local family with a (newly out) trans son. When I was told about her child (in confidence), I outed myself to her. As you do.

She was taken aback, but as we know each other, it seemed a natural thing to do.
Watch this space.

There is a Christmas outreach event (An Incredible Christmas) in the local central public hall. It will be the first time that I'll have gone to the Baptist church wearing leggings and a wig. Peeps are encouraged to dress as superheroes. I was torn between going as the invisible woman, captain underpants or Super Mario. I'm making my own unique take on Super Mario. But worry not, there will not be a cape. Yes, *watch this space too.* Hmm, I might even include a pik. Might.

More Perils of Pauline

PF

One of the things I actually rather liked about growing up as a boy was playing football. Girls didn't in those days (the FA didn't sanction football for women until 1971). While the boys played football, the girls had sewing lessons at school. I didn't envy them (though now I wish I had learned to sew). I am noted for my extreme modesty but I have to admit I was pretty good at footie. I was picked for a trial to play for my county (South Northumberland) and scored five goals. I was not quite able to reproduce that success playing for the County team and I suppose it is true that I actually peaked in a football sense at the age of 10 or 11 and it has been somewhat of a downhill trajectory since. The boys' grammar school I attended played only rugby. Shudder. I still enjoyed playing football whenever I could and played for my college team at Uni (only a coincidence that my brother captained the team). And when I started work in a local security office in Glasgow, my footballing talent gained me credibility and impressed colleagues otherwise inclined to be quite suspicious and sceptical. However, football in Glasgow was a somewhat different game to that which I had known, played in a fair but ferocious spirit on rock-hard pitches. So to allow my body to heal I stopped playing. That was some 40 years ago and I haven't played since.....until September this year.

I have been pleased to see women's football becoming so popular and successful. When I saw a flyer seeking recruits for a women's team and welcoming all women, including trans, non-binary and gender fluid, I thought....should I? A few weeks later I duly turned up for a training session. I was thinking, they may be younger and fitter and stronger, but surely with my skill and guile and experience....they were indeed young. And fit. And strong. And skilful. And very serious, determined and committed. We did half an hour of preliminary physical training involving running and then at intervals sprinting around a circuit many times. Then onto the flood-lit astro-turf where we lay on the ground in pairs, waited for the ball to be thrown in front of us and raced to get to it first and score. Usually the ball was in the net practically before I had struggled to my feet. There were a number of fiendish variations on this exercise, each more exhausting and embarrassing than the last. Finally we divided into attackers trying to score and defenders trying to stop them. By this time my chief thought was not so much how to avoid further embarrassment and humiliation as simply survival – I feared that I would end up being carried off the field by stretcher bearers barely alive if I was lucky. I skulked in goal for as long as I could, watching

balls fly past me into the net....the girls were very kind, even the one I barged into and sent crashing to the ground. A week later I was still stiff and sore and assessing how permanent the damage to mind and body was likely to be. I have just been detached from my heart monitor and get the results in the new year.

Lessons (hopefully) learned: I am getting quite old. There are things I can no longer do. Football is a game for the young and fit. Women play it very well. It was very very stupid of me. I can see that in some misguided way I was seeking to integrate two parts of my life that unfortunately lie far too many decades apart. But I am so pleased that girls now have the same opportunities as boys to excel in a sport that consoled me a lot in my youth.

Jupiter flies the flag for trans people:



Butterfly

<https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2018/oct/09/itv-butterfly-how-anna-friel-new-drama-depicts-the-transitioning-experience>

Good review of Butterfly:

<https://www.newstatesman.com/culture/tv-radio/2018/10/forget-pink-dresses-what-matters-most-itv-s-drama-butterfly>

The true story that inspired Butterfly:

<https://www.yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk/news/health/mum-of-leeds-transgender-woman-who-inspired-itv-s-butterfly-opens-up-about-daughter-s-suicide-attempts-after-bullying-1-9413085?fbclid=IwAR1kkRK6rxIzkHNoz4ozJHpDqlvZeM1Mn93ODCu1jjO8l7NJq7ItM5X24Jo>

Article by Susie Green of Mermaids on girl guides and her trans daughter:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/oct/04/transphobia-daughter-guides-inclusivity-girlguiding-transgender-girls>

A biblical approach to Butterfly:

<https://transgenderchristianhuman.com/2018/10/30/butterfly-or-prophet-a-review/?fbclid=IwAR1JfKIC448AEOEDnCk8Zr4H27VPEzvpfgT969qCWN0JRfcXP-JdpUgt1Jw>

Risks/benefits analysis of transitioning of children:

https://www.vox.com/2018/10/22/18009020/transgender-children-teens-transition-detransition-puberty-blocking-medication?fbclid=IwAR242OEsLFZ3CIFZYBHZLENEGM6emGJ5TP2q_7Y9zFa4PIFd2UtOIIoVzkU

Debbie on TV and comment on programme:

<https://challengingjourneys.wordpress.com/2018/11/22/the-media-its-time-to-talk/?fbclid=IwAR0I1v2UQBeS0UdZbJqBudl40iDyaulWqBayJmY94uZDKJNphs1sraqnLAc>

Article by Debbie Hayton in Spectator:

<https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2018/11/the-rush-to-diagnose-trans-children-serves-no-one/?fbclid=IwAR3EQ7ThKE2WG0RaT4IOy8CL1o4is356MztFz-MCP2pLRDfTiopeTioj4kQ>

When this was posted on FB, it elicited strongly opposed views from those for whom the experience of puberty had been horrific in the extreme.

More comment (highly critical):

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2018/11/22/channel-4-trans-kids-criticised-trans-campaigners/>

Transitioning experiences:

Does transitioning always make you happier?

<https://medium.com/@florence.ashley/my-happy-vulva-comments-on-andrea-long-chus-controversial-essay-70e2dfbecd79?fbclid=IwAR12v26Vsla2W0M8Ntaiv-S8Eqf47fHSCwn1SpQ1lKU3Vy06ssFkVZ9p7qQ>

Blind trans woman:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2018/12/03/blind-trans-woman/>

Excellent article on transitioning later in life:

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/nov/17/age-nothing-do-with-it-transition-later-life-transgender?fbclid=IwAR3N6sbxOIne2yFyfmrjEd3zLCYkFsSOnW64jaqbpZN9QyLhLJb3kJv3Uo>

Trans twins come out together:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2018/10/20/transgender-twins-us-came-out-together-their-story/>

Trans girl and trans woman discuss growing up decades apart:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2018/11/02/trans-woman-girl-growing-up-decades/rans>

Thoughts on “Coming out” from a trans man (not a unicorn or vampire):

<https://transgenderchristianhuman.com/2018/10/11/come-out-come-out/>

What my trans husband taught me about resurrection:

https://medium.com/@drakec/what-my-transgender-husband-taught-me-about-resurrection-e49ac56c0ea9?fbclid=IwAR3-4F2GmHODvksaRTuLHG2byAjHuWM-FLUxJjVy2giSJe-Qs_HgH-80DbA

Are Trans Women Women?

<https://medium.com/@juliaserano/debunking-trans-women-are-not-women-arguments-85fd5ab0e19c>

Article in Spectator by Debbie Hayton:

<https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2018/10/not-all-transsexuals-think-trans-women-are-women/>

Physiological basis for being trans?

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2018/10/04/sex-hormones-transgender-science-genes-cisgender/>

Reality of being trans:

<https://tomsimsblog.wordpress.com/2018/01/02/what-you-need-to-know-about-transgender-rights/?fbclid=IwAR3E9B8za17Cb330FhmhjnYseKJtFMbEQ7p5eKJkAZDog6FrHO31rbq6bTI>

Trans Prisoners

Debbie Hayton urges caution on treatment of transgender prisoners:

<https://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/resources/gender-recognition-must-be-grounded-objective-evidence>

Jenny-Anne Bishop quoted in Guardian report on Karen White case:

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/oct/11/karen-white-how-manipulative-and-controlling-offender-attacked-again-transgender-prison>

Trans Theology/Religion

CofE advice on marking transition in church:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-46516299?fbclid=IwAR28d4vriRmM_GISTDiR_tFdglJZKjS4mJMINGWP_9ni_Og7ASf7apylsN0

Radio Interview on CofE guidance

with Tina Beardsley (Tina's bit starts 10 mins in):

https://www.premierchristianradio.com/Shows/Weekday/The-News-Hour/Episodes/The-News-Hour1143?fbclid=IwAR1NTkHgxMCWIC6MAIEBI5VXDapsZ53tx5T_JrHX3IEVC1cOnWui-yNiCFM

Should churches teach meditation/mindfulness? Colin Coward thinks so:

http://www.unadulteratedlove.net/blog/2018/11/30/teaching-meditation-or-mindfulness-in-the-cofe?fbclid=IwAR2VSEkZBFtJwzTq-Fm0v1UY-BebwMws_pFXL9ZCb-ZDYgqZestQTJWAW_I

What the Torah and Talmud teach us about calling trans people by their names:

<https://www.tabletmag.com/scroll/263885/what-the-torah-and-talmud-teach-us-about-calling-transgender-people-by-their-names>

Nice piece on Rev Sarah Jones, Cardiff trans priest:

https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/church-wales-newest-vicar-church-15476827?fbclid=IwAR0LummRN-WGFLTglRjpv9zfBcg-eZyqOFJI0OpJoNdkLvqtt0lkd_Oy-Xg

Good review on Evangelical Alliances document on trans people:

<https://www.christiantoday.com/article/review-the-evangelical-alliances-transformed-transgender-resourceexecute1/131084.htm>

How *theology* on sexuality and gender complementarity has hardened into *ideology*:

<https://www.newwaysministry.org/2018/09/28/theology-or-ideology-parsing-vatican-thinking-on-sex-and-sexuality/>

Rachel Mann forms deanery of 12 inclusive churches in Manchester:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-manchester-45629226/manchester-transgender-vicar-leads-church-diversity-push?SThisFB>

Will USA bishops help Trump erase transgender people?

<https://www.newwaysministry.org/2018/11/01/will-the-u-s-bishops-help-donald-trump-erase-transgender-people/>

Riposte from affirming evangelical bishop on same-sex marriage:

<https://viamedia.news/2018/10/16/same-sex-marriage-scripture-affirming-evangelical-response-part-1/>

Further riposte (with interesting thoughts on how bible texts should be read):

<https://viamedia.news/2018/10/18/same-sex-marriage-scripture-an-affirming-evangelical-response-part-3/>

Statement from LGBTI Mission:

<https://lgbtmission.org.uk/2018/10/17/lgbt-mission-calls-for-leaders-to-speak-up/>

Responses to Angela Tilby's Church Times article:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=2420787954815249&set=p.2420787954815249&type=3&theater>

Clothe Yourself with Love: Good sense from diocese of Oxford:

https://blogs.oxford.anglican.org/clothe-yourself-with-love/?fbclid=IwAR3wLqF3kGhr0gp4LIsElj-7AutpygiOXx4-0faFvWrXl5CwPDvluBnt_sg

“Why being transgender is not a sin” (obvious really but well argued):

<https://baptistnews.com/article/why-being-transgender-is-not-a-sin/?fbclid=IwAR1kykMZfcGIIXWRyicvbJhJy3M5qHmIJL3-Wcyoj6ltMOMrpwjDYOWs2o#.WhPpZ2vIX>

Love letter to trans people from a trans priest:

<https://www.queertheology.com/transgender-priest-community-love-letter/?fbclid=IwAR1s-8mJTRi9Nh-wmuEslgPejR77X5C1mTep292NU6xMpsGVx5F1YU4QWTO>

Miscellaneous

Paris Lees: Trans people won't be erased:

https://www.vogue.co.uk/article/paris-lees-on-stepping-out-of-the-shadows-and-the-radical-shift-in-trans-visibility?fbclid=IwAR0mfgaPhnWFlZyCpRI3AddiBwnsNM5YmZPiGQJpREZraiWbpyR_TDsm6x4

Ever lengthening waiting lists for NHS treatment for trans people:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2018/11/23/transgender-healthcare-uk-backlogs-nhs/>

Corrosive drip of ridicule in Sunday Times:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2018/11/12/rod-liddle-transgender-black-chihuahua/>

Amazon aids transition:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-46153007>

Hard life for trans and intersex Sidney in Kenya:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2018/09/18/meet-the-activists-fighting-for-transgender-rights-in-kenya/>

80% of women world-wide say trans women should have equal rights:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2018/09/29/trans-women-equal-rights-thomas-reuters/>

Young people increasingly seeing gender as a spectrum rather than binary:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2018/10/01/non-binary-number-students-skyrocketed/>

Extraordinary review by Michelle O'Brien of book on evangelical approach to intersex condition:

<https://impactmagazine.us/2018/10/review-intersex-in-christ-by-jennifer-anne-cox/>

Big increase in trans-related hate crimes:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2018/10/16/anti-transgender-hate-crime-reports-up-third-year/>

Should rituals of transgender inclusion move on from pronouns? And is there a new gender binary between transgender and cisgender obscuring the messy reality of cisgender lives? Interesting piece by Jen Manion:

<http://www.publicseminar.org/2018/11/the-performance-of-transgender-inclusion/?fbclid=IwAR0vIlMdZe1zIPKrrLStq1NRcKVxmEfNbtxo3RxVx7Z-VJc1pMmyVC6frZA>

US Scientists reject pseudo-science of Trump's plans:

<https://not-binary.org/statement/?fbclid=IwAR3bRHxwsOTTMdrzVaNstAV7IDgDimK5a8mA1kBBPkxeQgSmTc5RbQuQPqc>

Much better news from USA (or at least from Alaska):

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2018/11/06/trans-politician-kathy-ottersten-alaska-elected/>

Extraordinary story of Roberta Cowell:

https://jalopnik.com/fighter-pilot-racing-driver-and-prisoner-of-war-the-1828235092?fbclid=IwAR3IQIYHScDr_VxYoQgNbY5M45pawMvnyq5OLEhK-G6zRh4iobU4bJ2ktLO

Dr Who

Queer inspiration from Doctor Who:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2018/10/06/doctor-who-gay-lgbt-queer-jodie-whittaker/>

Some people thought the pregnant man in a Dr Who episode was transgender propaganda and got upset:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2018/11/05/doctor-who-pregnant-man-transgender-propaganda/>

Trans Talk PF

United around our one thing in common, we talked of
Hormones, waiting lists, coming- out, hair removal, partners, children –
The usual staples of trans talk. Mainly watching, I slowly
Warmed to them. Proud of stubble he'd grown,
A young trans guy needed advice on a smear test.
An older trans woman couldn't hide her face,
Her voice, the way she sat, her pride.
A young couple had children, broke up,
Got together again while she grew her hair
Until she could decently and with dignity transition.
A woman needed to erase obsolete tatoos.
My heart opened to them all. They were my people.