PRIDE SCOTIA
SAT 15th JUNE

Vanity von Glow
Miss Cilla Slack
Michelle McManus
The Gallery
Gay Blackpool
Grindr

Edinburgh Castle Esplanade in July
Watching the Church of Scotland’s General Assembly at play has always been a somewhat amusing if solitary pastime.

In past times, the embarrassment caused by Commissioners being dragged by police from Edinburgh’s public lavatories became so great that those which catered to cottagers were conveniently “closed for repairs” for Assembly Week. Now, of course, the Pink Triangle openly benefits from the Kirk’s annual talking shop – as do online services which facilitate hook-ups like Grindr, Fitlads and Gaydar.

Back on The Mound, the annual stab-in-the-back-fest continues much as before despite the new open plan stripped pine ecclesiastical furniture and the abolition of the traditional Playpen.

This year, the Assembly once again couldn’t decide just how nice or nasty they should be about LGBT ministers and the flocks who wish to provide them grazing space.

Given a choice of Deliverances that would have taken a definite viewpoint on the matter, the retiring Moderator’s Imaginary Friend prompted him to successfully promote a Cunning Measure that will put off a decision for yet a few more years – by which time the Kirk will have lost more members and have become an even greater irrelevance to the Scot in the street.

For Kirk Members on either side of the debate, it must be a scunner to see such a lack of clarity – and to find the prospect of seeing through a glass less dimly scampering further into the distance each year. From the rest of us, I discern a great thumping sense of boredom.

If the Achiltibuie Thimble Collecting Society was having a similar debate about opening its committee to LGBT people, those of us in the Queer Liberation business would make a few supportive waves in the vague direction of the West Highlands. But many would really be thinking: why can’t they go and join the LGBT-friendly Ullapool and District Thimble Collectors or take up basket weaving instead? Such thoughts would be unworthy – equality should be our goal in all aspects of life no matter how seemingly trivial.

But we do have to prioritise our campaigns. And there are considerably greater evils in the world affecting LGBT people than the internal discipline of a decaying church and its diminishing membership.

Queerbashing is still an everyday occurrence in our land. In other countries, LGBT voices are silenced with the support of government and judiciary (frequently egged on by faith communities who have spent too much time listening to their own particular Imaginary Friends).

In too many countries it is our lives that are ended. Which rather puts into perspective the Slight Stushie on The Mound!
Vanity von Glow performs live at her piano every Sunday in London’s West End at Soho Cabaret Bar Green Carnation, and enjoys a monthly residency at West Five Piano Lounge in West London. All of the artists interviewed for this feature can be found on their official Facebook and Twitter pages. Vanity von Glow can be found online at www.vanityvonglow.co.uk
... but the songstress is adamant she wants to take to the stage in her home country. ‘Make me an offer Scotland’ she begs pathetically, hugging my leg. I kick her off for fear of catching something unpleasant and probe her about her expectations as a performer in London, and what she hopes to achieve by clinging to her ridiculous chosen career. ‘I just want to learn from all the fab drag queens around me and just keep on working in London and all over until I am getting onto the stage in my Zimmer frame! It will be CAMP!’

While Silver, Mary and myself represent Scotland as far as London cabaret goes, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, there is one well-muscled masculine upstart making a name for himself on the club scene too! Hailing from Aberdeen but with ten years living in Glasgow under his belt, nightclub host Andrew Moore left Scotland after he had ‘done it all, got a degree, had boyfriends and wanted something new.’ Now Andrew, once a reedy nothing-special has transformed himself into a hard-partying Adonis with a killer body and celebrity phonebook. Taking on the coveted role of a paid party-goer, Andrew is performing his duties as a socialite almost as well as I once did in my native Vulgaria. Fingers crossed there is no Sapphic uprising in London to force Andrew out on his ear, as his ascent in London nightlife society has landed him hosting gigs in cool hangouts such as DISH at East Bloc, internationally renowned Room Service, Blocheds, Society and ‘Dup és Den Presents…’

When asked what he hopes to gain from this mercurial industry, and his time in London as a whole 28 yea rold Andrew speaks excitedly and with the optimism of a much younger person. ‘London has been great to me over the last year and there is definitely much more opportunity down here than in Scotland. Things have happened for me that I didn’t even plan and I’m excited to see what another year will bring.’ With his nightclub credentials firmly intact, I ask Andrew if he would consider getting behind the DJ decks and being involved in nights from the more creative angle, as I once did with Scotland’s C U Next Tuesday. ‘I would like to try my hand at being a DJ and even putting on one of my own nights.’ Well then it’s settled! Andrew will run a night, and I’ll give out sexual favours in the toilets for alcohol.

That is if I find time in my own busy schedule! It’s no easy task being a tabloid darling, and my own performance demands take their toll! Having burned to a crisp performing live in the hot sun of Gran Canaria for Gaypride Maspalomas, I can look forward to slightly cooler international engagements later in the year. I will be performing in Amsterdam, Gothenburg, and Stockholm as part of my international schedule, as well as shows across London and England. By peculiar happenstance I have found something of a following in chilly Scandinavia, perhaps due to my European connections in Vulgaria. Obviously the Swedish Glöw Wörms have immaculate taste, and recent pop culture analysts have predicted my further rise to worldwide acclaim could surpass that of Abba.

But what better way to kick off the summer than to spend a day in my beloved Scotland! Nowhere else in the world are audiences quite as verbal, enthused, ready to party, or as likely to buy you a drink! I returned to Glasgow two weeks ago to perform at a private party in Bearsden and am ashamed to admit my orifices are still recovering from the endless cocktails the welcoming Scots poured into each and every one of them. Make sure you have a wonderful Pride in Edinburgh whatever you do on the day – I’ll be fighting off the romantic advances of Scott Agnew on the main stage from around 2pm. Until then!
It's shaping up to be a fantastic Pride with everyone getting involved

One place that won't be getting involved with Pride is the Blue Moon Café – it has closed and been sold for use as a Thai Restaurant.

Don't forget CC Blooms will also be open for the big day itself and will walk into the night. For those looking to get involved in the community on Pride Day and beyond check out Gay Men’s Health and the LGBT Centre for Health and Wellbeing at www.lgbthealth.org.uk and www.gmhc.org.uk for info on their Pride Day activities and beyond.

Lastly but not least for those aged 25 and under LGBT Youth Scotland will be getting involved on Pride Day and its Youth Zone.

Speaking of the day itself, the Pride March will assemble from 11.30am outside the Scottish Parliament and will move off up the Royal Mile at 12 noon. The march then follows for half an hour or so outside the City Chambers where there will be speeches by invited guests. The Order of Perpetual Indulgence will also be holding a Black Veil of one of their number as well as co-ordinating the usual minute of silence and minute of noise in remembrance of those who are no longer with us. After that, the March will proceed along George IV Bridge to Bristo Square where there will be an outdoor stage with top entertainment. Pride organisers have also managed to secure Tavistock Row House, in addition to licensed bars and full catering facilities, the following to be present:

- Health and Community Fair
- An indoor stage at entertainment Sports Bar with on large screen TV’s
- Afternoon Club with all your favourite scene DJs
- Unlicensed Tea Dance hosted by the Order of Perpetual Indulgence

Well there we have it, it’s shaping up to be a fantastic Pride with everyone getting involved. I do hope you will join us: Pride is a vitally important to the LGBT community - it continues to ensure our visibility and demonstrates that we can continue to march even though there those in the world that can’t. By joining together for one day in celebration we can demonstrate that we will continue to challenge phobia in all its forms. We won’t be judged because of who we love. Love is for everyone and for one beautiful and hopefully sunny day we can stand together with our friends or those we love and say we have just been. Let the rainbow shine! Whatever you choose to do in the coming month, Have fun and stay safe! Happy Pride!

See you out there!

Brett Herriot

edinburgh
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For full details on all Edinburgh venues and emporia see the inside back page.

For the most comprehensive up to date listings go to scotsgay.co.uk/listings/venues

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PLANET's third birthday bash!

How did you get started performing?

It was originally only meant to be a laugh and a one off but fun. About twelve years ago when I worked in Habana and Di's quite a few nights as DJ Johnboy, we had a drag entertainer who came monthly called Stephanie Sparkles (she is still a good friend of mine to this day). She had a sex change and decided to go up entertaining and suggested that she would dress me up for a fundraiser we had arranged for World AIDS Day. I reluctantly did it for a laugh and as I was using already enjoyed it and was able to do and say more as Cilla and be more outrageous than normal. It was a successful night and I continued to do fundraisers and the odd thing as Cilla to put an edge on whatever we were doing to be a little bit different. I had enjoyed Miss Cilla bray in the old Flying Handbag in Blackpool and found her style and Humour hilarious and ideal for me to model Cilla on. I also saw the drag DJ's Stella and Folly in the Mardi Gras so I started to drag DJ Blackpool style. In my opinion Cilla was not really anything special in Habana - I mostly worked as DJ Johnboy there if I was Dizing and I suppose with the encouragement from the Ladyboys of Bangkok heyday and showing me how to have a bit of fun I ended up doing it if I was honest I got caught up in the whole thing and felt I had to do it rather than had a passion for it. I eventually got a new full time job from the scene and when I was not Dizing anymore I really missed it. In the end, friends that knew CC Bloom on the time wanted me to get Levelising as a party bar with Cilla on an opposed to John and I reluctantly accepted the job. After a few gigs, it became a very busy night upstairs and when I saw how busy it got I started to enjoy being Cilla and from then on as John as DJ became in the shadow of Cilla

Who inspires you?

I was inspired by the Ladyboys of Bangkok as I had developed a very close friendship with all the cast members. I used to meet them in the afternoons and at night after the show we would go sightseeing, shopping, eating and all that stuff and do this to day. I look up to them on the stage as the true professionals that they are. They completely astonished me with their amazing talent, as you all know on many occasions they can perform a song on stage and are even better than the star they are impersonating. What completely blew me away was when I got to know them individually and realising they were normal, in some cases quiet, shy individuals and that they had a true passion for their chosen art. I could see that every time they would put on their make up a true star was being born and transforming in front of my very eyes. That shy person turning into a confident and fantastic performer. The best example was a very quiet tired person called Fawedra Shinnarvankul better known as Kyle in the show in 2005 with Can't Get You Out My Head. The moment she stepped onto the stage she blossomed, she turned into a very raucous, seductive performer she completely blew you away and seduced you as you watched in amazement. Miss Lilly is one of the best performers I have ever seen in my life. She returned here last year again, having been one of the originals from around 15 years ago and she is exactly like Fawedra in her natural personality but to say she enters the stage when she is in is an understatement. She did Cher, Shania Twain, and a major number a few years back This is My Life and brought a tear to everyone's eye as she put too much emotion into the song you really did believe she was singing it live. As a Drag Queen through, Jojo and Olly (and in years gone by Eddie and June) I have seen many comedy performers to have been in the show so I have watched and learned a lot from them and if I am doing a show I notice that I have been transformed into Jojo or Olly in a lot of ways I have been close friends since he started to visit the UK around 2000 in the show. He spent a lot of time with me in the early days coaching me with make up skills and when I visit Thailand I always show Jojo and Olly to the drag dressmakers and make up shops that they all use. As Jojo and Olly are two of the best and very famous Comedy Drag performers in Bangkok I could not have been forewarned of the greatest people to grace the stage in the UK or not the world.

How did you get involved with PLANET?

Well I have to say Personality is the most attractive or hottest thing about a person but at Planet I am blessed with all of the staff and friends there having both qualities. I do not want to offend anyone but I say I would front the runners are Ross the model who is very seductive and flirtatious to the customers, We've got the new recruit Frankie who lovers to seduce with his erotic, flamboyant dancing and cheeky smile and charm! Then there are Jordan, Cameron and new boy Anis and they say it's always the quiet ones that surprise you!

Have you ever ‘gone home’ with an audience member?

Well Cilla is not a sexually motivated person as it does nothing for me. Many people reading this will laugh and disagree as part of Cilla's charm and act is the art of seduction and luring you into a false sense of security then pouncing on you and bringing you into her aura. Cilla has lost her virginity 2 years ago after a night working in GHQ, there was a beautiful Caribbean guy who was in a show at the festival and was in GHQ with a friend of mine. He was a tad worse for wear and thought Cilla was a female (or so claimed to get away with Lewd with her after the club shut) I stayed dressed in case he really didn't know and when we got back to mine there was an explosion of lust. (LMFAN). In the morning I was shocked when I realised what I had done, I got up to go for a drink of water and saw tights, earrings, glove , tits, wig....you name it all over the place and then it soon became clear who he actually was. We went for round two after I took my make up off and then chatted. We realised that we had had very; very mutual friends and it remained top secret. I later in the month ran away with a got the met at the Edinburgh Festival and left the show he was in. Let put it this way: most of the cast in the show that he had this last section / act in wanted him. He was straight, never showed any interest in any of them so no one ever suspected he was curious or would swing and come on. Let's face it, any one of TUBOBK are far more desirable than Cilla, I was lucky to be in the right place at the right time and was on the wrong side of a bottle of vodka. It was a one off and I suppose it was more the devestation that made me put that much as as not a thing I would repeat as rule.

How did you get involved with Pride Scotia?

I love to help and give something back to the scene that I have now been a part of for so long. I believe that the people that work so hard (and you've got to remember that they do for free) needs in the venues to pull together and help raise funds and awareness to make the event a success for our community as a whole. When Pride Scotia first started, I drove as Cilla a mini bus to Glasgow to bucket shake and in every venue I have worked in I have encouraged and instigated the fundraisers to help raise funds to support the hard work of John and his team.

What is the future for PLANET?

Well Planet will continue to evolve and move with the times and keep up to date with the needs of our community. We will keep building in the venue to ensure it doesn't grow tired and continues to be an exciting place to visit. People are looking for an enjoyable experience every time so we aim to make sure we excel always. We have big plans ahead and as we keep saying.....IT'S CUALMIN!!!

What is the future for Cilla?

I always plan to go on my voice - re-trained, get dancing lessons and put a show together but being realistic I just never get the time. Cilla is kind of on the back burner for now apart from when she makes an appearance every Fri.
Here we go with the Jun update from this corner of Scotland.

News from GMH on a new group, Cheerz Updates and more.

A new group is starting up in Aberdeen for Gay and Bisexual Men in the Grampian area called ‘Prime Time’. This will be an informal and friendly social group for gay and bisexual men aged up and over and give you a chance to meet in a relaxed and safe space and NOT in a pub! You can share ideas, concerns or views that you may have about issues affecting older gay and bisexual men and will also give you an opportunity to meet new people and join in any future planning activities. The first meeting will be on Sat 8th Jun from 2-4.30pm. For more information, please call Aberdeen (01224) 930355 or E-mail: colin.mckay@gmh.org.uk

GMH is open 11am-3pm Mon-Fri at 246 George Street where you can pop in for a coffee, chat and pick up sexual health supplies too.

Cheerz would like to thank everyone that came along to the Pride Scotia/GMH fundraiser on Fri 24th May raising money towards the annual Pride Scotia in Edinburgh and for Gay Men’s Health in the Grampian area. A few of you have noticed the absence of DJ Ross Barony, I can assure you he disappeared to America to take part in Ru Paul’s drag race but is up the town at Cheerz sister venue Cotton Club playing less camp and more dance and current tracks. Cheerz is also looking for your ideas for appearances and events, get in touch via Facebook or twitter @cheerztweet with your ideas but in the meantime they have some great drag artistes lined up for late Jun/early Jul with the fabulous Miss Jason who has played all over the UK for the past 13 years and making her debut in Aberdeen at Cheerz on Fri 21st Jun so pop along and show her how welcoming we are in this wee corner of Scotland. One of my personal favourite Drag Artistes the international Miss Rose Garden will be appearing on 5th Jul at Cheerz a wee late birthday present for me... Steve get the veuve on ice.

The uni LGBT societies have quietened down at the minute as students head home for summer and take part in exams but I have been assured by both groups that they have a load of fun, frolics and surprises up their sleeves for the new year... look out for ABFAB and RGU LGBT+ on Facebook and twitter for more information.

A unique opportunity to spend an intimate evening with one of the world’s best loved and most captivating performers. Ruthie Henshall and her band will take you on a musical journey through her extraordinary career, from working with Lionel Bart to playing in Chicago on Broadway and from starring in Les Miserables to receiving her Olivier award. This brand new and personal show is your chance to hear Ruthie’s story in her own words as well as some of the defining songs of her life, on stage and off. The evening draws from a broad range of genres, right through from the great American songbook to contemporary tunes significant to Ruthie now. The show comes to the Aberdeen Arts Centre on Fri 7th Jun with tickets available from www.boxofficeaberdeen.com

That’s it from me for another month... the next column you read I’ll be preparing to turn 29 for the 4th time! Remember if you have any news, views, photos or gossip to get in touch at the usual address or tweet me @andiabz

PICS CREDITS: Aidan Jones Photography
It was great to see the LGBT Youth Group for 16-25s featured in the Inverness Courier recently. They meet every Tue from 7-9pm at the Bike Shed in Grant Street. Contact Kim Haines on 07974 968353 or E-mail: kim.haines@lgbtyouth.org.uk. Trained staff can also offer one to one support and practical advice in a private setting.

LGBT Moray has a new venue for its social gatherings on the third Sat of each month. They now meet at the Mosset Tavern in Forres from 10:30am. The pub has a great selection of food, plus the advantage of a pool table and dart board. The group also has a social night on the first Tue of each month from 7:30pm at the Muckle Cross Pub in Elgin.

Rachel Hughes is the new project manager at the Inverness office of Waverley Care Highland which specialises in blood-borne virus testing, HIV support, training and information. Contact them about their postal scheme offering free condoms and lube. E-mail: highland@waverleycare.org or text 07519 708296.

Aces at Miami Nightclub (High Street, Inverness) is aiming to get a drag queen for the next LGBT night on Tue 4th June. Doors open at 9pm. Free entry. Over 18’s only.

Highland Rainbow Folk are looking for new volunteers aged over 50 who would like to talk about their lives and experiences in presentations to raise awareness of older LGBT people. The group meets once a month in Inverness and has already provided sessions to staff at Age Scotland, NHS Highland and Highland Council. E-mail: Tony at highlandrainbowfolk@gmail.com

Highland Councillor Alex MacLeod spoke out on International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO) saying: “Teachers must be encouraged to report absolutely every instance of homophobic activity, however small it may seem. Only then can councillors make really effective policy to support LGBT young people. More needs to be done to tackle homophobia and I look forward to working with the council towards a more tolerant Highland Region.”

Keep an eye on www.gay-ness.org.uk for upcoming events and groups up here in the North.
Michelle McManus at the Musical

Michelle McManus at the Musicals runs from 29th-25th Aug at the New Town Bar, Edinburgh. Tickets £10 available now from the Fringe Box Office or from the venue - festivals@newtownerbar.co.uk

NEXT MONTH

We catch up with Stephen Martin at The New Town Bar and find out more about their exciting Edinburgh Festival Line Up

Michelle McManus

Ten years after taking the Pop Idol crown, I talk to Michelle McManus about her music, gay sing-a-longs and why her mum thought she might be a lesbian!

Catching up with Michelle just a few days after her birthday, she tells me it was a rather quiet celebration being mid-week and mid-30’s! But a story about a previous birthday party soon has her opening up that closet door a little - booking a burlesque dancer to perform for her and some mates might have sent the wrong message to her unsuspecting mother, who asked her if this was a way of Michelle coming out to them! She said, "I thought maybe I should calm things down a bit this year after that, but I'm still single in a couple of years I might just give it a try!"

Rewinding just to the turn of the new millennium and there was no Sky, no Twitter, no smartphones and a digital music service called iTunes had just launched (it'll never work!). A new TV phenomenon had begun in 2002 with a rather unassuming girl with a packed lunch through to the live shows. Stories in the press thought I'd appear on TV or have fame in any significant way", she explains, "but I went along to the auditions with my granny with a packed lunch and thought I'd appear on TV or have fame in any significant way", she explains, "but I went along to the auditions with my granny with a packed lunch and..."

After singing for the Pope, The Queen and the Number 1 spot and Michelle was whisked into the spotlight as a "posh boy" (Will Young) taking the crown in a brand new musical talent show "Pop Idol" - it was a ratings hit and Britain was hungry for more. Viewers were glued to TV sets in their millions for the new series and, harnessing the new power of phone voting, they quickly eliminated contestants like Sam Brown, Sam Nixon and Mark Rhodes crowning a new Queen of Pop in December 2003, Glasgow lass Michelle McManus.

She'd been no stranger to controversy throughout the show, with unfavouring headlines across the tabloids about her weight and where she would 'fit in' with the music industry. "I was aware of being a bigger lady in my teens and never thought I'd appear on TV or have fame in any significant way", she explains, "but I went along to the auditions with my granny with a packed lunch and..."

"I've never felt confident enough to have my own show or tour, so this is a big step for me but it’s my own show or tour, so this is a big step for me but it’s my own show or tour, so this is a big step for me but it’s my own show or tour, so this is a big step for me but it’s my own show or tour, so this is a big step for me but it’s my own show or tour, so this is a big step for me but it’s my own show or tour, so this is a big step for me but it’s my own show or tour, so this is a big step for me but it’s my own show or tour, so this is a big step for me but it’s my own show or tour, so this is a big step for me but it’s my own show or tour, so this is a big step for me but it’s my own show or tour, so this is a big step for me but it’s my own show or tour, so this is a big step for me but it’s my own show or tour, so this is a big step for me but it’s..."
HAPPY SUMMER CAMPERS! Despite the snow in the north, Glasgow has had its four days of sun allowance for the year so I think it’s safe to say we’ve had our Summer! It’s been quite the eventful month in the West, lots of celebrities gracing the scene, which is always welcomed. I popped around the scene this month and it’s been quite usual with a bit of extra time free - I also chummed new boy to ScotsGay, Stuart, to his interview with Michelle McManus (see page 5). What a laugh! The polo lounge band, you girls' dance music people, The Watertones was the place to be if you remembered TIT. Lead vocalist Mary Kiani has been touring with her newest solo album and graced the wee pub next to Central Station with her presence before flying back to Australia where she lives. I like The Watertones, it’s got a nice atmosphere and it’s tucked away from the scene which makes it that little bit special! They had a great atmosphere for Mary and I’m sure there are many more badges from the past who will grace us with their presence in this pub!

Back home (Speakeasy for all you that don’t know) I had the pleasure of hosting a Eurovision Party to cheer on sor Bonnie. I tell a lie, I was cheering for Cascade but I think that was just the pool in me. Finland had one of the most political numbers ever aired on Euro-Music show, promoting gay marriage with that noticeable lesbian kiss that was banned from airing in Turkey. There’s new nights afoot in yon Speakeasy, on the John Street, with Nancy Clenches teaming up with DJ Shazza to give you your pre-Polo Lollipops Karaoke night which returns after a year's hiatus from the scene. Speakeasy is still the only pub on the scene serving all your homemade hot meals until 9pm every day, so get in for your lunch or dinner before a pub crawl ensues.

Skip around the corner to Delmonica’s and DJ Darren just turned 30. He’s been around for much longer, so I think he might be lying about his age - but we’ll go with it to give him the benefit of the doubt. He’s a regular in Del’s hosting his very own Scally Ladz Night which returns after a year’s hiatus from the scene. Speakeasy is still the only pub on the scene serving all your homemade hot meals until 9pm every day, so get in for your lunch or dinner before a pub crawl ensues.

Back round on John Street and Milk have closed their doors for the last time as they transition to their ClydeSquare Club V premises. They’re open 7 nights a week down on the ClydeSquare so make sure you miss them a pint before you head into town for a night of frolicks, I’m sure George and the team would be delighted to see you.

Let’s stay on John Street then, and go downstairs to The Underground. There are two fabulous ladies who perform in here every Tue night. Check out mother and daughter duo, Bee Fierce and Tess Testosterone as they croon their way through a busy night filled with great singers and a great atmosphere. The bar staff, whether it be one of their regulars or a guest-filled space, are always happy to help with a big smile on their face. It’s gotta be one of your stops whenever you’re out.

Where to next? Head on round to KXM. They held out an olive branch to the Polo Lounge and wished them a happy 15th Birthday on Facebook. It’s great to see the end of what had been a bit of hostility between the clubs and Mary and Matt at KXM will only lead to bigger and better things from both which will be better for us as gay men and the scene as a whole. It’s still a sharp contrast however to a certain DJ who likes to post about horrid things about certain people, but we’ll not go in to that too much - he’ll just know who he is! AXM’s Scally Ladz Night has been a great hit - especially when they get all their Bar Lad in to some Scally gear and put their pics on Facebook/AXM not so long ago celebrated their 1st Birthday and it’s been a welcome addition bringing the scene to light on some great nights.

So in talking about Birthdays, and there has been quite the Birthday theme this month, Polo celebrated its 15th Birthday. That’s right, Polo first grazed Glasgow in 1996 - when only 6 years old. Gosh, makes me feel old. They had a week of events, from a Birthday Hat party to a massive Birthday Bash which topped in all off it! I hope they had a massive birthday cake though! and I’m sure my piece got lost in the post! Polo’s been all about the live acts this month, introducing actor and Big Brother winner Ryan Aylan to a packed club before he was later seen taking home a local Glasgow boy! Tut tut! They’ve also brought a bit of Tastecome on round to the heart of the Men’s Health has it! Definitely watch this space because Nick Bruce is a name to look out for. So, we’ve almost got to the end of the scene but I want to take a trip up to the West End and visit the King’s Theatre. I had the delight to go and see the UK tour of Hair, which included Waterloo Road’s Mr Chad as Ed and Marcus Collins as Seaweed. David MiB was a special guest, and had his own solo act. The schedule was Sketch, much enjoyed it. The gays were everywhere at Hair, full review to come soon before it comes back to Edinburgh and Aberdeen! The month of Jun sees the Queen Fabulous, Camp-Tastic Priscilla Queen of the Desert The Musical grace the stage in Glasgow, so do go along!

Fancy an evening with some league-topping fit football players at Scotland’s National Stadium this summer? For just £25 you could be sitting down to champagne and a 3-course meal with after dinner entertainment all thrown in! Saltire Thistle, the Glasgow gay-friendly football team recently won their national league and invite you to help them celebrate in style at the home of Scottish football Hampden Park on Sat 8th Jun from 7.30pm.

For more information or to purchase tickets call lain Sharkey on 07941 028999 or E-mail: saltirethistle@hotmail.co.uk

For full details on all Glasgow venues and emporia see the inside back page.

For the most comprehensive up to date listings go to scotsgay.co.uk/listings/venues

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**Nathan Sparling**

glasgow
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With Cabaret from current Mr BearScots Jason Green
The only Bear Pride event in Edinburgh’s Pride this year...

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Hosted by Scott Agnew with performances from DIVAS:Live with

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The New Town Bar, 26 Dublin St, Edinburgh, 0131 538 7775

www.newtownbar.co.uk
Glasgow is renowned for its fantastic collection of bars and clubs catering for all tastes but earlier this year a brand new experience opened up in the classy Merchant City area. Say a big gay “hiya” to The Gallery and owner Jim Young!

Jim is a typical business man, he noticed a venue which was in a good spot and knew it would make sound business sense to open a new venue with a new experience for Glasgow. But opening a new bar in one of the city’s listed buildings wasn’t as easy as you might expect.

“Obtaining the grant of a new premises licence is a time consuming process, we applied in May 2012 and opened late Dec. It wasn’t the best time to open a new bar just before Xmas, but we managed it and haven’t looked back since. A big thank you to Greig, my bar manager, not forgetting Chris, Ryan, Dan and Daniel.”

Jim took a modern venue and has opened a really contemporary relaxed bar with a great style. The name also reflects something of the bar’s character, if you like some unique musical-themed art then come have a pint or a cocktail in The Gallery and admire the fantastic artwork on the walls from acclaimed Scottish artist Robert Miller. All the work is on sale, from an amazing portrait of Elton John to a beautiful Liz Taylor picture - everything can be purchased there and then!

When I asked about the name, Jim told me he came up with it himself to reflect the re-sale of art but that it also had some other uses – “The use of the seven colours of the rainbow flag seemed like a good fit with the name so we have a really colourful brand which hopefully says we’re a gay venue without it being too in your face.”

Live music is giving The Gallery a good niche, with local bands and the less well-known artists also getting a chance to entertain the crowds. A rotation of eight new acts to the scene keep customers satisfied with more being added to the bill regularly. One such act who has been a regular hit has been “Nick Bruce and Friends” whose covers of some fantastic hits have you up singing and dancing in no time. Interactive Quiz Wed nights is something special using mobile technology to bring a fun Quiz Night experience with some big prizes.

Evenings and weekends bring live sport to The Gallery, being one of the few venues in Glasgow where you can view uninterrupted boys in tight shorts playing with their balls to a huge TV audience! With fingers crossed for a few days of good weather, Jim also has an outdoor seating area which is a fantastic sun trap in the late afternoon - perfect for a beer and sharing platter this summer.

“We want to provide something different on the scene” Jim tells me. “Maybe theme nights, including comedy, we’re really lucky to be situated beside the Scottish Youth Theatre Auditorium and are in negotiation at having some big acts on a monthly basis downstairs which is really exciting.”

I look forward to seeing anyone who has not visited The Gallery yet and can promise you the friendliest of welcomes and an enjoyable experience.
Srdjan Dragojevic’s beautiful and powerful film, THE PARADE (15) takes a comedic look at Serbia through the lens of one group’s fight to hold a Gay Pride event in Belgrade. When a building is shot, an improbable alliance develops between two very different men. We meet Pearl and Limun (Nikola Kojo), a couple about to be married, and Mirko and Radmilo (Milos Samolov), a couple involved in the Gay Pride parade.

Held a lover’s kill, Limun - who is less than accepting of Gay Pride - makes a deal to protect the participants in the parade in order to win Pearl back. Limun and Radmilo embark on a road trip across Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo as Limun attempts to assemble a fearsome security team for the parade.

A real treat for lovers of gay indie cinema, THE PARADE is accessible enough for Hollywood fans too.

Growing up gay in Pakistan can be an horrific experience as is shown in the romantic drama of the year showing from early July.

OUT IN THE DARK (15). When his family learns about his life the stunning leading man is told to leave immediately as he will ruin their reputation. Till then it is a very engrossing story as somehow he has had permission to study in Israel and falls in love with a Jewish guy in Tel Aviv. Many young Jews have a problem growing up gay in any country as they are brainwashed that homosexuality is unacceptable to their religion. The appeal of the leading man in this film makes most of it enjoyable viewing.

Two gay British Jewish celebrities of the past who suffered from this brainwashing at an youth. Lionel Bart, the composer of Oliver, the most successful musical of all time, left his East London home in his teens. While his career brought vast wealth his feelings of inadequacy made him drink a bottle of brandy a day and take endless drugs. Having the constitution of an or he survived till his seventies. Manager of the Beatles, Brian Epstein, drank a bottle of whisky a day and took drugs including sleeping pills each night. His heart collapsed at 34. These facts make us realize how lucky we are.

THE COMEDIAN (15) is a British curiosity by a new writer/director about a guy who has a platonic friendship with a girl who shares his flat and works in a call centre selling products in the daytime as well as practising his comedy act at night in small pubs and clubs. On a late night bus he picks up a black guy who appeals and after long they are sharing a bath running fingers and lips over each other. His new interest now becomes jealous about the time spent with his flatmate. It is a brave start by a new moviemaker but the script rambles and efficient editing would have helped. The plus is that the two leading guys are very attractive.

A real treat for lovers of gay indie cinema, THE PARADE is also very accessible.

THE GREAT GATSBY (12A) in 3D or 2D, must be the most publicised film of the year, but so many people loved the F. Scott Fitzgerald book of American life in the twenties that pleasing them onscreen is not easy. Director Baz Luhrmann has put his vast budget onscreen as Gatsby was known for giving the best and biggest parties ever. Leonardo DiCaprio’s appeal makes it playing the person who falls in love with a girl who he could not afford to marry and spends five years becoming a millionaire before returning to court her although she is now married.

Elaine from Aberdeen has been complaining to me that her teenage daughters don’t believe how magnificent Clint Eastwood and Harrison Ford looked in their prime. “Why don’t these men take care of their faces?” she asks me. I have told her few people have George Clooney’s confidence in admitting he has already had an operation to tighten the skin around his eyes. In film stars of the past none took care of their face as well as Cary Grant who starred with Max West in the early thirties and was still playing leads in the sixties. If someone does not apply dry skin cream on a daily basis the surgeon’s knife has to be faced later. But as these guys are multi-millionaires and are surrounded by yes men telling them how marvellous they are they can’t face surgery. It is doubtful if Robert Redford’s face has ever seen a drop of cream and he as become a good director, film companies finance his movies if he also stars in them. Elaine remembers his face in THE WAY WE WERE in 1973 and knows then it thrilled billions. If she can cope with his mature look she will find it in THE COMPANY YOU KEEP (12A). He plays a lawyer reflecting on his life 30 years before as a revolutionary against the American government’s part in the Vietnam war. He withdrew from the movement after someone was killed to change his name and study law. Now the FBI is tracking him down and he has to go on the run. Audiences will love here great ladies of the past Susan Sarandon and Julia Ormond.

If Elaine keeps reading this page, I always list new great looking young men from anywhere and currently it is the French Romain Duris in POPULAR (12A). Only the French would consider making a film about a girl being ordered by her employer to practise her typing so she could win awards for speed across the world. It is the widest romance ever filmed and although Romain has had hits with him playing unshaved rough diamonds on the make here he is a clean shaven insurance man. He may come up to your incredibly high standards.
HALF PRICE ENTRY TO ‘LIPS AND LASHES’ FOR ALL SCOTSGAY READERS

LIPS AND LASHES is Edinburgh's newest and biggest Cabaret and Party Event. Several big name guests will be in attendance at the Corn Exchange Edinburgh.

Guests include, Lady Razzle Dazzle, the most outrageous Mab wife of Leith - full of wit, humour and elegance. Plus, Aberdeen’s Miss Scarlet Diamonte will be there - the drag diva will amaze you with her voice, hitting notes that will have you wonder if she really does have balls (it says here).

Put Sat 29th June at 9pm in your diary.

For the complete line-up and to grab HALF PRICE tickets check out extravaganza.co.uk and use discount code LAL50.

JESSIE J COMES TO EDINBURGH AND GLASGOW

Here’s a pub quiz question for the next time you’re quizzmaster in your local gay bar: “How many albums has international pop legend, Jessie J unleashed upon the world?”

Real fans will know that the answer is simply, “just the one”. Follow-up question: “How many contemporary UK acts, with just one album in their locker, attract such an enormous and diverse set of fans?”

Well, we can’t think of anybody.

The openly bisexual Jessie J, born Jessica Cornish, is a genuinely talented singer/songwriter. Even before album two emerges, she surely deserves the crown, Queen of Pop. And since getting her hair cropped for Comic Relief in March this year we reckon she has never looked better.

The good news is that her tour is reaching Aberdeen’s Miss Scarlet Diamonte will be there - the drag diva will amaze you with her voice, hitting notes that will have you wonder if she really does have balls (it says here).

Put Sat 29th June at 9pm in your diary.

For the complete line-up and to grab HALF PRICE tickets check out extravaganza.co.uk and use discount code LAL50.

FATHER’S DAY CARD FOR GAY DADS

Recently launched gay and lesbian greeting card company, ‘Pride To Be’, has unveiled its contribution to Father’s Day - a card for ‘Daddies’. Featuring a delightful little monster, the unique card offers friends and families of gay dads the opportunity to buy a quality card which truly represents their family make-up (see the picture on page 27).

For further information and to order cards, please visit pridetobe.co.uk

COUNT DOWN TO THE EDINBURGH FRINGE

Next month ScotGay carries the first of three specials, containing all you need to know about the Edinburgh Fringe. Although it doesn’t run until 2nd-26th Aug, many tickets are on sale already. Indeed, by the time you read this, the full fringe programme should be out too.

Early recommendations include Michael Griffiths at the Edinburgh Playhouse with his show, In Vogue: Songs By Madonna. Griffiths has no accent, costume or wig. Just Madge accompanying herself at the piano, leading you on a journey through her life.

Monica Bauer brings two plays to Edinburgh this year. Made For Each Other is the 2012 surprise smash hit about gay marriage that received five stars from ScotsGay and several other organs. The Year I Was Gifted is a new piece of work starring Bauer in the title role in a true tale of a working class girl’s attempt to survive a prestigious boarding school for the arts. Two ‘Must See’ plays.

Sandel, Angus Stewart’s cult novel of forbidden love, has been adapted for the stage by Trigger theatre Glenn Chandler. Set in 1960s Oxford, it tells the story of a romance between David, a 19-year-old undergraduate, and a christboy. The book has been out of print for many years because of its subject matter, yet Sandel is even more relevant and controversial today.

Much, much more next month. In the meantime for tickets go to edfringe.com
**ARTS**

**In Glasgow:**
- The Rise and fall of Little Voice at the Theatre Royal from June 3rd
- Ruthie Henshall in Concert comes to Oran Mor on June 10th
- Sleeping Beauty on Ice arrives at the Kings Theatre from June 15th
- Evita the musical at the Kings Theatre from June 3rd

**In Edinburgh:**
- Blood Brothers the Musical at the Edinburgh Playhouse from May 24th
- Bill Bailey visits the Festival Theatre from 6th-8th June
- Local company MGA bring Flashdance to the Festival Theatre stage on June 15th
- National Theatre Connections Festival takes over the Lyceum Theatre from June 17th

**In Aberdeen:**
- The 39 Steps at His Majesty’s Theatre from June 3rd
- Ruthie Henshall in Concert at the ACT on June 7th
- The Woman in Black at His Majesty’s Theatre from June 10th
- Grey Matter at the Lemon Tree on June 27th.

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**Ghost the Musical Review**

The Playhouse Theatre, Edinburgh

Based on the 90’s movie and following successful West End and Broadway runs, Ghost the musical has rolled into Edinburgh’s Playhouse Theatre. The story of Sam Wheat who is able to bridge the gap between life and death to protect the love of his life Molly who is unaware that someone close to them is responsible for Sam’s death. The key to the communication is Ode May Brown who is able to talk across the divide. This emotional story of the power of love has breathed the best of the movie and tested what is achievable on stage to the brink with the result that this touring production is a stunning tour de force. Stewart Clarke and Rebecca Trehearn take on the central roles of Sam and Molly and quickly establish their love for each other only to watch Sam’s death rip them apart. Sam’s best friend Carl Bruner (played by David Roberts) becomes an emotional crutch for Molly in her grief whilst harbouring a dark secret. Bringing comedy and light to the production is Karlene Wray (stepping in for Wendy Mae Brown) as Ode Mae who starts off exploiting a talent for communicating with the dead that she doesn’t know she has and Sam’s comes into her life from the afterlife. A simply stunning production design by Rob Howell, harnessing incredible film technology and fully automated set, add to the illusions by Paul Kieve and with you believing that a man can pass through a door and that spirits both good and bad do come to take us to the next life. The ensemble work hard producing a stunning array of choreography through the show as the story builds towards the emotional and tear filled finale which the audience watched in total silence. Director Matthew Warchus has delivered a tight production with stunning values that ensure an unforgettable evening at the theatre. This touring production has truly raised the bar on what is achievable in musical theatre. The combination of an engrossing story, excellent performance and score which really works in many styles combined with unforgettable staging and illusions ensure this is a show which will remain with you long after the curtain has fallen. Don’t miss out on the chance to believe in Love. BH

Glasgow Kings theatre in Oct 2013 and Aberdeen His Majesty’s Theatre in Jan 2014

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**Gay Theatre**

Whilst sitting on an East Coast train hurtling past Newcastle on route to London’s Kings Cross ahead of a weekend of meetings and various theatre visits, I read an interesting article in The Stage, the theatre industry’s weekly newspaper. The article was talking about Jonathan Harvey’s seminal Play, “Beautiful Thing” which is celebrating its 20th anniversary with a new production. The stage proudly declared that GAY theatre was back with a bang. I wonder though do we still need to label theatre which has a gay character or story element as being purely gay theatre that only appeals to an LGBT audience? During the 80’s and 90’s, gay theatre was vital in sharing our stories as we strived towards equality and playwrights like Harvey really captured the mood of a whole section of society. It was theatre that both empowered those who identified as anything but heterosexual and educated those seeking to understand those different from themselves. While I was growing up and discovering my love of the theatre, I always admired those performers who were brave enough to either come out of the closet or play openly gay characters - in my opinion there were never enough. The performance arts as an industry has always been associated with the LGBT community as a means of earning a living but it took far too long a time to actually put a gay story on stage. So the period that saw a surge in gay theatre was massively important. Looking at where we are now and the openly gay characters in soaps, sitcoms and TV drama and across stage in all mediums of theatre. We couldn’t have achieved that without those who blazed a trail and broke down the barriers. We need to thank them for writing, directing, performing or indeed having any input into gay theatre. As my train pulls into KGX, I’ve come to realise that gay theatre is not a label, it’s a banner, a banner we should be proud of. It continues to empower LGBT society; it empowers me to know we can still share our stories - so long may the curtain rise on new Gay Theatre.
BELIEVERS

1st (Friends of) West End Presbyterian Church, 37 Eglinton Crescent, G3 8PY. Tel: 0141-332-0794. Fax: 0141-332-0795. Email: info@westendpres.net. 

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43 Upper Larmour Street, Edinburgh, EH1 2JU. Tel: 0131-225-6000. Fax: 0131-225-6008. Email: augus@augustinius.org.uk. 

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www.egl.gc.org.uk

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BAGS was established in 1997 by a select group of gay hoteliers with the aim of providing a warm, welcoming and safe place for the gay traveller and their friends to stay whilst visiting Blackpool.

We are very proud to be able to say that we continue to do this some sixteen years later. BAGS has become a well-established and respected Association within the Blackpool community with its own Chaired Committee and written Constitution.

Our forty two current members are located throughout North, Central and South Blackpool and are able to offer accommodation ranging from bed and breakfast to self-catering.

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I've read a number of opinion articles, including several in this magazine, about Grindr. The overriding theme of any article about the app seems to be a tongue-in-cheek complaint about how everyone using it is a disgusting pervert. Except them. I'm simply here to suggest that there may be websites, or even public places better suited to these people, because to use Grindr and complain about all the people trying to hook up is surely a losing battle, like standing on a golf course and complaining about all the golfers. An article I read was more fitful and suggested that gay men have been sexualizing themselves for the last 25 years, and was in some way harmful. I take exception to this. Casual sex has been part of gay culture in the past due to the need for secrecy whilst homosexuality was still a criminal offence. However, in this day and age, gay men are free to civil partnerships, and probably marry soon. That doesn't mean that promiscuity is wrong or shameful. Sexual promiscuity is only viewed as wrong by the same religious institutions that thought (or still think) that homosexuality is wrong. There's no need for the gay community to adhere to the 'slut shaming' in order to achieve equality. People who use Grindr to have casual sex are never portrayed in a positive light in these articles. They're sad, or desperate, or pathetic. An article I read went further and suggested that people who admit to using Grindr will often say that they don't like the fact that they can't make that area of life easier as it has done for them. They're wrong. This is a generation that has made itself more post-modern than anyone else. We live in an age where wanting to have casual sex is not something a person can be ashamed of. We have grown up with the opportunity to make that area of life easier as it has done for them. This is a generation that has made itself more post-modern than anyone else. We live in an age where wanting to have casual sex is not something a person can be ashamed of. We have grown up with the opportunity to make that area of life easier as it has done for them.
**VENUES/EMPORIA**

**ABERDEEN**
- PAPAYA
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- Global Village
- LGBT Centre

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- Extra Club
- Club Bar

**INVERNESS**
- LGBTQ+ NightCLUB
- Stirling
- The Pier
- U-NIGHTS

**STIRLING**
- The Pier

**TRIEN**
- Little Shop with No Door

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**DUMFRIES**
- DUMFRIES LGBTQ+ CENTRE
- DUMFRIES
- Facebook

**DUNDUNES**
- DUNDUNES
- Facebook

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**LISTINGS**

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- KLOZE T*

**DUNDON**
- KLOZE T*

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IN VOGUE
Songs by Madonna

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY DEAN BRYANT - LIZA (ON AN E)

AUSTRALIAN
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★★★★
A borderline religious experience.
-Time Out

★★★★
Sheds new light on Madonna's songs.
-Herald Sun

★★★★
Griffiths is a rare and wonderful performer.
-ArtsHub

Exceedingly funny.
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