

GO

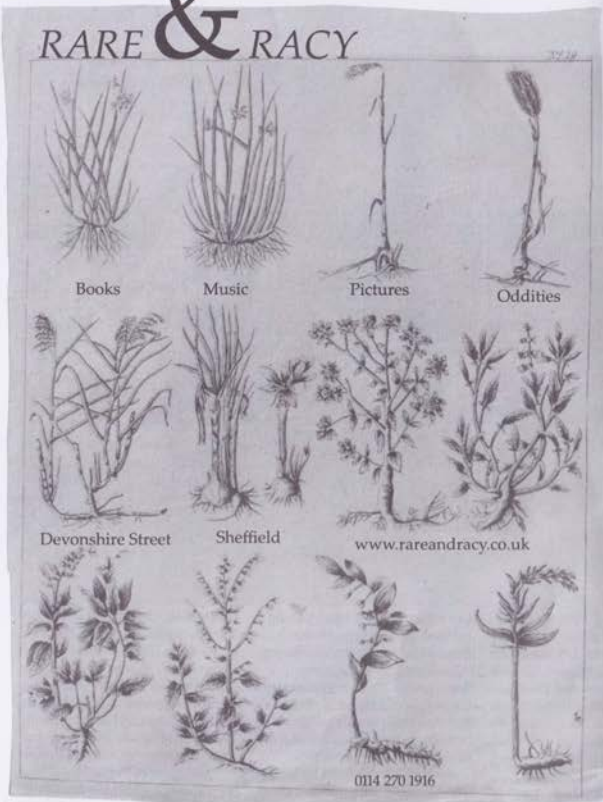
GAY

9

I'm free

GO can be found in

RARE & RACY



GO

ISSUE 9

GAY

*GO is a fanzine about Sheffield,
the best city in the world*

TOM HYDRO
*Oh, is it really so, really so
strange?*

TOM COMMON
We don't need another hero

ROY DISCO
It's fun to be at the

PAUL V
Crushed by the wheels of industry

CHRISTIANE

Contributions from:
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Schmidt
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Phlegm

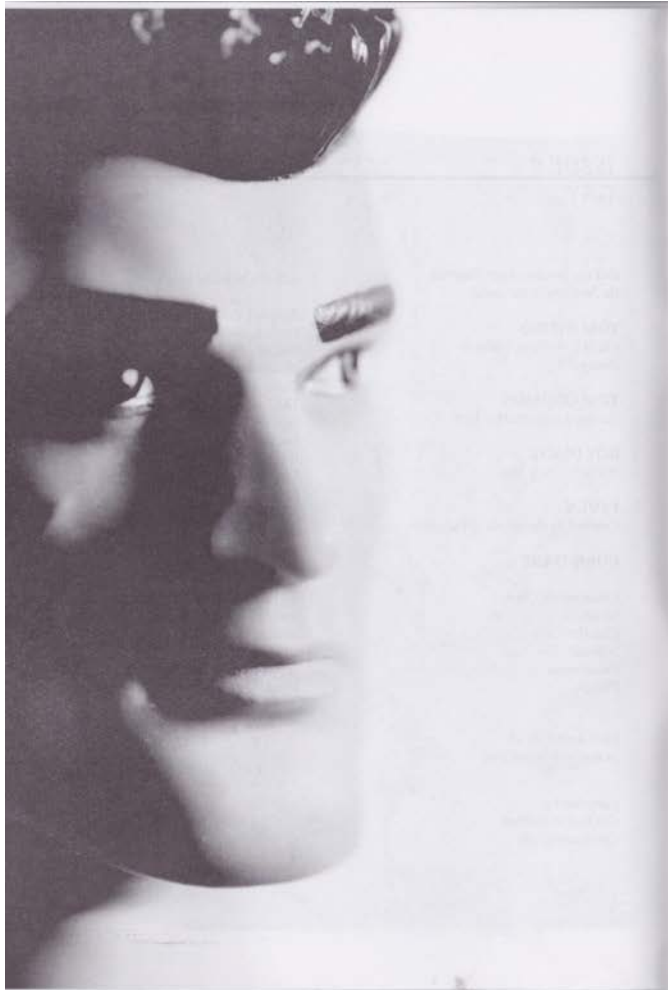
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Sheffield isn't a very gay place. But then that's no great surprise. Unless people from outside the city are saying it's 'Gay' in the playground putdown sense of the word. They are dicks. This issue is about Sheffield being gay, and being gay in Sheffield. Clearly it's not conclusive, but then what is? It's just a start.

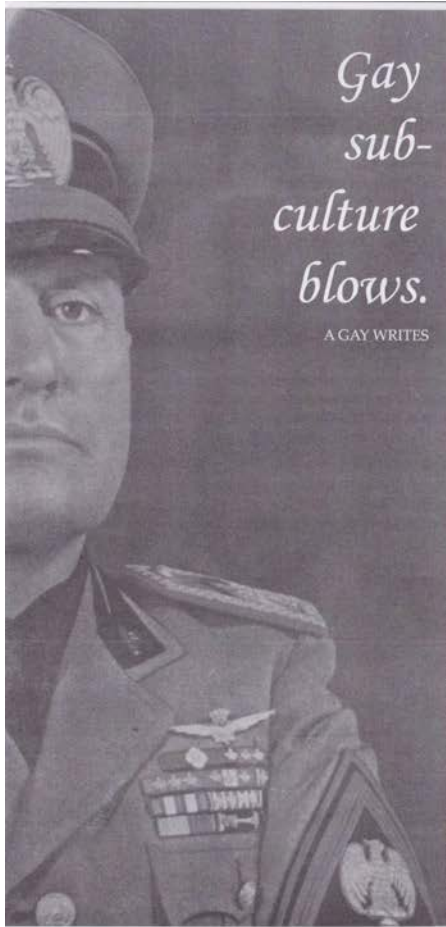
Most of the things we'll talk about in this issue never concerned me before I realised I was gay. And that's fine. Why would you spend any length of time considering stuff that doesn't affect you directly? You probably wouldn't, but you should. A degree of understanding from both sides is definitely the order of the day.

Gays are still thought of by the large majority of people to be, on some level, wrong or slightly unsavoury. Leading a dirty, immoral, drug fuelled, shagging in toilets, seedy version of the acceptable middle class existence. Even the most tolerant and open minded of us would recoil, and feel a touch uncomfortable about two men kissing in public. In daylight. With children around. Would the same be thought of a heterosexual couple? I think not. It's just nice that they're so in love.

But it's not all doom and gloom. This isn't just a form of cheap therapy. Sheffield could be the best gay city in the world. It's friendly, it's got soul, it's lefty. It doesn't have to be all "gay villages" and rainbow flags. There just has to be something.

Hydro.

Pictures throughout by Andy Brown.
Gay Action Hero commissions
now being taken.
www.envioustime.co.uk



Gay sub-culture blows.

A GAY WRITES

This is Mussolini. He is a fascist bastard. And, thankfully, dead.

Doesn't it?



Maybe it's just me, but gay clubs make me want to die inside. Not because they're gay clubs, but because of what we've been led to accept that this automatically means. Tops off, hands in the air, Kylie blaring out, Euro-pop bass lines. It's not my scene. I like music, not ironic, funny-because-it's-shit music. I like clothes that fit me. I rarely get naked in public. These are all my preferences.

But, if you want to go to an event with other gay people, you have a choice of pink and fluffy or naked and hard. Just because you like boys, do you have a yearning to gyrate to Charlotte Church? Answer - No. Just because you like girls, do you have to shave your head? No.

I can understand the need to feel part of something, part of some kind of community. But is it really necessary to translate that into some sort of limp wristed theatre? The clichés that abound in every gay club I've been to just enforce the stereotypes with very little imagination. It's like the cloning of the gay army, in a fun, fake-tanned and hair-straightened way. They've all clearly been savagely attacked by Topshop.

It's very simple. If you're a boy who likes girls, or a girl who likes boys, and prefer one scene over another, you don't have to go to places you think are shit. It takes all sorts and all that. Different strokes. But as a gay person, there's no choice. Like it or lump it. There's no where else to go.

Overleaf is our small guide to Sheffield's small gay scene. This is our opinion/guide to the Sheffield gay scene. It isn't very long.

Sheffield is the fourth biggest city in the UK. Or so we are told over and over by politicians that don't realise that this statistic just illustrates how we're not. Using playground/UB40 'one in ten' logic, of the 500 000 people living in or around the city, around 50 000 must be gay. But we have one bar, two gay clubs and a couple of nights with rude names.

You can be affectionate about these nights, these places. Some of them are good at what they do. And some provide a much needed gay shoulder to lean on if you're getting hassle in the street. But really it isn't great. We're told that the first Gay place in Sheffield was called Rocky's, and had a plastic muscly man's torso on the sign outside. Have we really moved on that far?

A little respect?

Fuel.

It's the sister club of Hull's best gay venue, which naturally gets your hopes up before you even arrive. But what a venue! The pebble dashed ground floor of an NCP car park has never looked better, even when it was painted with the contents of one can of purple emulsion in its last guise.

It's caused massive waves for those inside the scene. Every night is a gay night you see. There's some quite creative people pushing things (see Gayham). But it's still just one side of the coin. Get yourself to the web gallery, Pink Pounder, Love Juice, Porn and Camp as Tits, Scrape that barrel. And I quote: they think it's studio 54 in there and it really isn't.

Dempsey's.

Bless Dempsey's. This place is like an old Gay Cheers. Every time we walk past it, there's a senior lesbian couple sitting in the window and the same five people at the bar. You've got to love a place that has pictures of faded 80's superstars on the wall, possibly signed: Sly Stallone, Annie Lennox. Upstairs, once the shutters come down it's a tune sensation, a super camp wedding disco every night of the week. Plus there's always a few people in there because it's open late and it isn't the Cabah. So extra mixed points. Dempsey's is our favourite, because at least it's got some heart.

Climax.

You see, this is what we're talking about. A tale of two rooms. The back room is ace because the music is amazing: Lionel Vinyl and Easy Tiger from 7 by 7 play some Right Tunes. But there's no fucker in there. The drinks are cheap and the atmosphere is good. This is what gay clubs could be like: a place you can go without hassle, a club that isn't all out 10,000% gay but just open-minded and gay alike.

But then step through to the main room and you find ten thousand people grinding madly to euro pop and bad Kylie, dance divas and too-tight clothes. The night isn't sold on the back room, but on live PA's from has-been rave pop stars. Step forward Kozalla. Everybody's Free to embrace the lowest common denominator and pretend to be happy and fabulous.



Club XS.

I always like the way that gay bars are marketed as a place to hang out with Diana, Ross and be fabulous, but in reality it's an ex pub with a fruity and some pictures of men on the walls. Set in glamorous 24 hour continental Attercliffe. Reasons why we wouldn't go to Club XS even if we were real journalists and ever did some research: 1) Attercliffe blows 2) The name is a dead give away that this is not a good club.

Homo Mad.

Homo-mad links all this lot together in a big pink gay bubble. To encapsulate all that's cheap about the Sheffield gay scene, we have a festival celebrating exactly that cheapness.

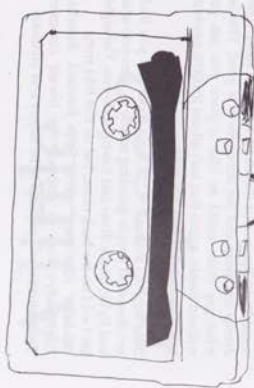
Homo-mad, in your face, we're all having an amazing gay time. It's not just the name that's offensively shit, but everything about it: the pink, the rainbows. It's just so thoughtless. Ten minutes in a gay bar with a bro. In Manchester, they had Queer up North. That's witty, and the schtick was classy and still gay. We could have had I Feel Sheffield, Steel Love. Even Go Ho Mo. Shit ideas, yes, but all about a million times better than Homo Mad.

Yeah it's good that other venues are showing their support. The aim of broadening gay Sheffield out to include different clubs is a positive step. But for god's sake, aim higher.

And that's it.

Look. Fair play if camp Kylie is your idea of a good time. There's this weird feeling that criticising gay culture means we're criticising gay people. That isn't the case. You can understand why lowest common denominator gay scene exists: a reaction to abuse. And I know that people getting naked and dressing up for a night doesn't mean they're idiots, or doing it all the time. It's just dressing up. It's just ironic, knowing. But that doesn't mean it isn't crap, ok?

If I was to
say to you
"can you
keep a
secret?"



Schmitt

We all know that the music this city has produced is the best in the world. You don't need to hear that again. But I've got a bit of a secret for you. It's not just different in the way it sounds or the way it looks. It's 'different' because it's confused.

The Human League, ABC, Heaven 17, Cabaret Voltaire, even Pulp. What unites these boys? Sheffield's pop culture is homoeroticism gone mad. Maybe not Warp; that was all about making dewy eyes at robots and laptops (although if you've been to a wonky techno night recently you'll notice it's ALL boys with beards and NHS glasses).

Sheffield created a new sound, and with it a new aesthetic. This aesthetic swept the eighties like a disease. Sheffield's musical heritage, the electro-pop, the synths, is tight, awkward, and homoerotic. Along with the new sounds and new machines to make them on, came unisex glamour. It was androgynous, not for boys not for girls, not about boys not about girls: but stranded somewhere in the middle.

Never new romantic, that was about frilly shirts and silly dances. It was a reaction to heavy macho rock posturing, to prog dinosaurs and pub rock, to dressing in leather and singing about sex. But it was a different reaction to rest of the country. They all learnt three chords and started saying rude words. Sheffield put on eyeliner and sat in attics twisting pitch knobs.

Now, imagine the excitement of gay people everywhere, faced with the prospect of another night out in Climax (crop tops and mincing) Dempsey's (bitter and mincing) or Fuel (just mincing). Another night of dancing to 'it's raining men', 'I'm too sexy', and 'Believe'. Another night of chomping along on the sub-cultural mainstream, on songs with innuendo so obvious a nun would get it. It's raining men. I like men. Because I'm gay.

When all the time, outside the very club, there's pop music made here, and still being made here, that's much more applicable. That shimmers with hope, difference, new ideas and fear of all that's shit. If Sheffield's gay scene looked towards Sheffield's music, it would find relevant, apt music, saved from cliché. Music that wasn't just ironic, but actually good, and danceable too.

It's alright homophobes: don't get upset. I'm not saying you shouldn't dance to Don't You Want Me at any more super straight Friday night snogathons. That's the good thing about this music. It's not out and out gay, too obvious. It's just confused, open to suggestion. All those things that the cool kids were in the eighties, before the Lads came back, and culture decided you were either A MAN or a big pink fairy.

That's how Sheffield could contribute. Music that questions and opens up, rather than music determined by sexual preference. Sheffield has a lot to offer gay culture: electronic, homoerotic, the post-industrial destruction of posturing macho rock music by hard, tensile, electronic pounding beats.

Or you can keep dancing to some plastic faced 80's superstar who's put a shitty rave beat on and wants us to believe in life after love. It ain't difficult.

Who broke my heart? You did, you did.

NEO.
JUST ANOTHER NEW YEARS
FUTURE PARTY
INVITES AVAILABLE FROM FOREVER
CHANGES, DULO, GOLDEN HARVEST,
RIP ZERO, SHEFFIELD/05.
WE UNDERSTAND.



Is This It?

You don't see many gays in Sheffield. There's not a lot of opportunity to be open about it. This isn't a very gay city.

We asked a lot of people what it's like being gay in Sheffield. There were two answers. Those inside the scene said: it's fine, it's getting better. And those outside said: it's no worse than being gay anywhere else. Maybe a bit safer than snogging your same-sex loved one in Bolton-on-Deerne.

Is this it? Either a really small gay scene or not quite as violent as other places? This seems to be a rubbish conclusion to come to for one of the biggest cities in the country, no?

There are a few alternatives, of course. The best places in Sheffo aren't out and out gay, they're just friendly. Razor Stiletto isn't strictly a gay club, but that's a good thing you see? Ralph continues to do his thing, so respect, because it turns out that some gays like good music after all. The Rutland Arms is a wicked, wicked pub and you're not going to get any shit if you happen to be gay. This is what it should be like in Sheffield.

At the moment though, these alternatives are still pretty few and far between. Most of the gay people we know in Sheffield aren't G.A.Y. They're geeks, stoners, old school ravers, catering managers. They just have to make do with the city as it is: friendly, safe, generally quite tolerant, but not particularly aware.

If there's one thing I'd like to see change in Sheffield, it's that awareness. Maybe, because it is quite a friendly city, there won't ever be a gay quarter that's in your face. That's cool. But the city still needs to understand. Sheffield has a history of understanding and being on the right side, going against the grain.

Until then, we'll all just have to stay in our boxes, super gay or super straight. A few people dancing to Kylie, and everyone else staying in and getting baked.

tom common

TOP TEN HOMO-EROTICA THAT NO-ONE REALISES IS!

Yep, popular culture is a fickle mistress, mixing things up... confusing the issue and generally doing weird shit. Homophobia and homo erotica live cheek by jowl and is often enjoyed (ironically) by the same group of people... now I ain't no Freud... no REALLY I'm not! Anyway enough of this and lets get down to a truly enjoyable TOP TEN COUNTDOWN (if you don't like top ten countdowns, you may find the current cultural climate a bit of a desolate wasteland, may I suggest you lighten up). So in the spirit of mindless, tenuous, totally unfounded theories I bring you:

by Suzietron



10: Straight in at number 10 it's The Mitchell Bruvvers, (from Eastenders not the grimesters). These two butch poofters have enjoyed a renaissance recently and injected Enders with renewed vitality, rocking it around the square and putting the frighteners on weaker boys. Lots of leather bombers and shaven heads. They love their Mum and stuff. Nuiff said.

9: Ant and Dec. The cheeky Geordies left Byker Grove after Ant went blind or something, made an illegal record about rumbling, and have gone on to enrapture the nation with their unique brand of silliness and fat ties. The bastard children of Bob Monkhouse and Vic and Bob... they sleep together in the same bed like Morecambe and Wise. No one cares... they could perform fellatio on each other on live Saturday night telly and they'd still be popular. Bless 'em.

8: Morph and Chas - plasticine men from Take Heart. They lived in the same box, and no Nick Park never bothered to fashion lady plasticine men for them (yeah I know that doesn't make sense). Look out for the X rated episode of Take Heart where Morph, morphs into a huge plasticine cock and Chas ain't surprised.

7: Hoddle and Waddle.

6: Fight Club - THE FIRST RULE OF FIGHT CLUB IS BLAH BLAH BLAH. THE SECOND RULE OF FIGHT CLUB IS BLAH BLAH DE BLAH BLAH BLAH. THE THIRD RULE OF FIGHT CLUB IS THE FIRST RULE AGAIN. Oh Jesus! In this exciting tale of nihilism, men get together and remove their tops. Then they beat seven bells out of each other while Brad Pitt storms around looking sweaty. Why does Brad have to take his top off so much? Dunno, he just does alright! He's fighting in a club and that's the way it is.

5: Lord of the Rings - this epic trilogy mostly consists of close up shots of Frodo looking pale and bothered; trying his best to resist fingering his ring. He wants to, he knows it, but he can't as it's something to do with unleashing a terrible evil on the world. I think ole Tolkien was talking more about the Ring representing the greed of humanity, the relentless onslaught of industrialism, and the desecration of the natural world. But I ain't in no fucking English GCSE exam so let's stick with the homo erotica tip... it's funnier.

4: ALL BOY BANDS - Take That who were marketed almost exclusively to gay men in the early days. Check out their 'do what you like' video, where the fab five roll about in jelly and have their arses spanked. The Backstreet Boys - a truly unfortunate moniker that proves you can get on in the world with a stupid name. And practically every other Boy Band ever.

3: Top Gun, this is so unbelievably gay Will Young has ripped it off wholesale for his video.

2: The Pussycat Dolls. These aren't birds! Ladyboys anyone?

1: Pete and Dud, making lots of jokes about hating women.

yo

VOCODERS

I've always wanted to be a robot, and vocoders give me the chance. I just want to walk into a post office and say 'I WOULD LIKE SOME STAMPS' like a computer. Is that too much to ask?

BRAGAZZI

Abbeydale Road. The best damn food in Sheffield and a place to have a coffee without feeling like a dick (see also café no 9). Knocks Nonna's into a cocked hat marked 'twat'. A twat hat.

H & M

Honest to god, once this opens in the city centre, the only reason to go to Meadowhall will be to make yourself angry.

TAXIS

All my friends are getting taxis everywhere because it's cheaper than the bus. This is getting really stupid.

DONCASTER SHEFFIELD AIRPORT

Though Sheffield has the culture and the soul and the sound, Donny is flat. You can't build an airport on hills. A glorious partnership is born.

4 X 2 DEBATE

A chance to get overwrought about how Sheffield is a punk city, whilst the audience

and everyone sitting there blank faced. Feat. amazing flyers by Kid Acne and the Designers Republic proving yet once more that Sheffield design is the best in the Western Hemisphere and all those other northwestern creative economies can kiss our post-steel lo-fi ass.

HOT CHIP

I saw them at Bestival and they were inspirational, but I was on one at the time. So I was worried that they wouldn't be as good second time round. But lo, it was still touch and go whether or not to take my top off. White boy geek funk casio disco. Amazing.

CHRISTMAS

Everyone feels warm inside as the Woolworths adverts finally grind to a halt. If you're unexpectedly pregnant and sleeping in a stable, you're possibly onto a winner. Only Fools and Horses and walks and too much food. I love this country you bastards.

THE PAUL O'GRADY SHOW

It's the funniest thing on telly and it's only 5 O'Clock in the evening. A generation of children confused by deadpan humour.

LEEDS

Six firework displays: free. Sheffield: one firework display £6. Doing it for the kids.

no

design
Paul V

ONE IN ONE OUT AT SPAR

Is this what late night entertainment in Sheffield has come to? The council have finally shut down so many bars we need to hang around grocers?

FIREWORKS

Crowd of menacing children: 'we'll give you some money if you go and buy us some fireworks'. Me: 'so you can surround me with your stupid faces and launch them up my arse? Do I look stupid as well as ugly?'

DONCASTER AIRPORT

Whose idea was that? Can you imagine the confusion when you ask for a ticket or reveal your destination to a local? People in Doncaster have never heard of Prague, they think it's a disease.

FIRST BUS

The driver just drives past like you're dead to him, so you spend the rest of the evening composing a letter to First, but get stuck on the first line which just says CUNTS!

THE MEDIA

Fuck the media forever, how do they sleep at night? I can't understand how someone could spend their life regurgitating the same inane features, Christmas gift ideas, ten ways to get him off in bed, five hundred ways to stick your fingers down your throat because you

feel shit about yourself. Or reporting stories of dogs having fireworks put up their arse with a straight face, as if this has NEVER happened before and society has JUST THIS SECOND gone to the dogs, once and for all. What a bunch of fucking liars.

MANCHESTER

It's so beautiful. On every corner there's another glorious warehouse, the streets are wide without any huge gaps or car parks. Our city is so fucking ugly and they still won't build anything decent.

LANDLORDS

That's it - save money and time and just concrete over the gardens and bring greyness and death to our streets like we're in Leeds or summert. Live in a nice green and leafy area yourself? I bet you fucking do.

SUPERTRAM

Trams used to be dead good but I was living the la dolce vita and used them when I needed to be in the Primrose View area at some time around the next equinox. Now I am doing it for the man and would like the trams and their timetable to have some sort of relationship to each other. Also if you were involved in letting the tram tangle with the traffic you are an idiot. Another 1 step forward 2 steps backwards Sheffield idea.



Straight or gay are not the only people living in this city. There are other people, too, with other things going on. Natalie B tells us about

LIVING A TRANS LIFE

It may seem strange to a lot of people, indeed it has taken a long time for me to come to terms with my situation, but finally I've accepted who I am and the way I must now live the rest of my life. I suffer from a condition which only affects about 1 in 1,000 of the population, a condition known as gender dysphoria.

There is little understanding of this condition amongst the general population, although there has been many years of research into the whys and hows of it all by both the psychological and medical professions. In a nutshell it means that the physical gender and the brain gender or gender identity of a person are at odds with each other. It is not possible to alter the way the brain works, years of psychotherapy and drugs would make no difference whatsoever, the only possible solution in extreme cases of gender dysphoria is to match the brain gender with the physical gender by changing the physical gender.

So, it all sounds pretty straight forward. I lived as a man and now I must live as a woman. Whenever I seriously thought about the implications of such a transition I was full of dread. How can it be possible to be accepted in society? Are others going to accept me as my true self without regarding me as some sort of freak or fetishist? There was only one way to find out if I could live the alternative lifestyle that I needed to live and that was by living it.

I was already at a stage where I had a substantial wardrobe, was well versed in the art of applying make-up and had a reasonably natural-looking wig. I was quite lucky in comparison to others in a similar position to myself in that I was reasonably passable although I had not ventured out into the 'real world'. Finally the time had come when I felt prepared to take the first tentative steps into discovering whether I could live the lifestyle I needed to live.

My first trip out was to buy myself a winter coat. I got myself ready, jeans and jumper with day-time make-up and off I went into town. My first Sheffield shopping experience was in Atkinsons. I was full of trepidation as I walked down from the car park into the ladies department. It was late afternoon and not too many shoppers about as I started browsing, I was comforted by the fact that a lady browsing nearby took a quick glance at me and continued with her own browsing, I had passed. I found a coat I liked, put it on and a shop assistant showed me to the mirror. Again no sign of being read. I liked the coat and took it to the till point and made my first purchase as a woman. The only giveaway finally was my male name on the credit card and my unconvincing voice, but even though I was finally given away there was no bad reaction to my presence.

I felt elated and ecstatic. Everything had gone so well. I was so pleased that I decided to pop into a pub on the way home of glass of wine. This would be a much sterner test but I was ready for it. I walked into the pub and ordered a glass of wine. As I paid the barmaid my hands were shaking. I couldn't help it. She just smiled at me. I sat down with my drink at a table in the middle of the pub and lit a cigarette. No-one in the pub seemed to notice that I was any different from any other woman. I had truly passed.

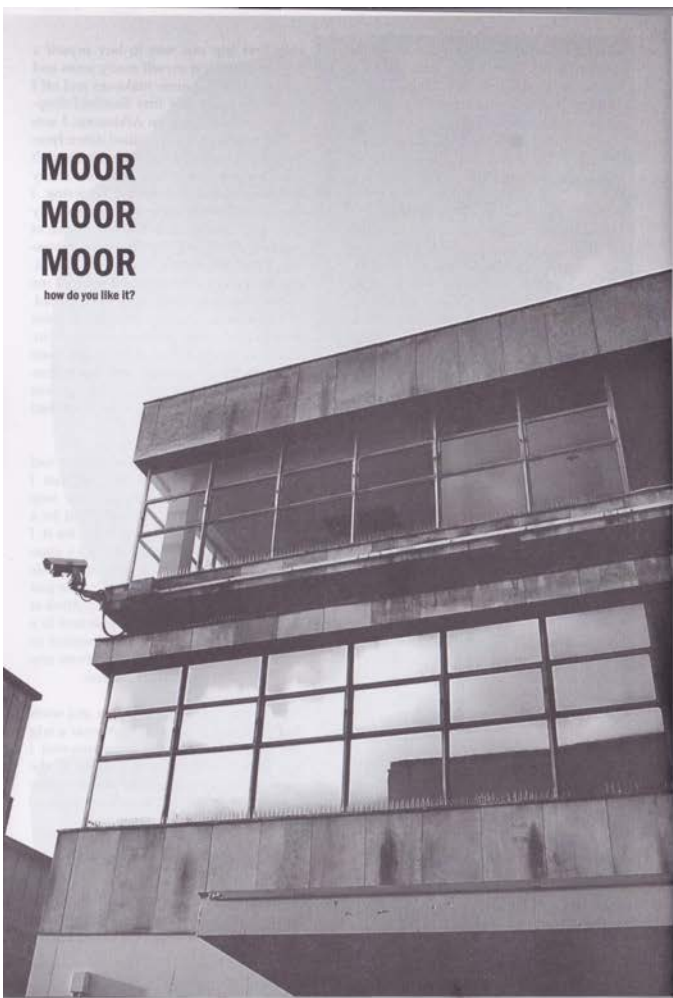
That was a year ago. I now live and work full-time as a woman. I don't wear a wig anymore. All my fears have evaporated. I can now live my life as I must as the woman I truly am and so many people I've met over the last year have been so understanding and accepting.

I have renewed faith in society in general.

Natalie B

MOOR MOOR MOOR

how do you like it?



Welcome to Sheffield's premier 70's themed shopping street! Join us on a nostalgic walk back to oil shortages, strikes and post-industrial decline.

Yeah the moor is super cool, and everybody in Sheffield knows it. The last time the government looked they said it was officially thirty years behind the rest of the UK: it looks like a photo of Leeds in the 70s.

I like it. It's nice. There are a few very beautiful, very interesting things and buildings tucked away. The Moor used to be THE classy shopping district of Sheffield. It had a habitat. There's poems written on the floor and jagged teeth sticking up between trees. There's a sense that the Moor is a place, it has its own feel. Really unfashionable design ideas, modernism, tiles, stripes and colour. There are orange and blue and green and red coloured panels everywhere. It feels like one of those streets you see in other cities where the buildings are in the same style, but all slightly different. You know, real streets.

And it's hugely busy. There's a real need for a shopping street like this, with shops selling real things, not just mobile phones, or one dress a year. It's proof that people in this city want, or need, the poor shops too. I know I do.

But at the same time it's knackered. The market stalls down the middle make any remaining grandeur disappear in an instant, and the potentially wide vista of happy citizens is reduced to two lanes of people and lots of cheap socks. Every city needs a market, but to cram it in the middle of an already knackered shopping street is to the detriment of both. Basically, a downward spiral, less and less real shops selling real things, and more and more cheap, temporary shops selling cheap, temporary things. I wish there was a sign at the top of the Moor saying, in huge letters

THE MOOR: YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR

And some of the buildings are equally cheap: paper thin and not really fit for use anymore. Even the pigeons don't sit on those buildings.

Behind the Moor, there's nothing. It's a façade, a fake: side streets leading off into a wilderness of bricks and bins, sad and dropping offices, rotting cafes under car parks. It's strange because this feels like the only part of Sheffield that was actually planned: straight streets, and surrounded by what were once motor ways. But this means there's no routes out of it. At the top, at the bottom, Moorhead and Moorfoot, is cheap Sheffield postwar architecture at its very worst. This is why people think our city is ugly.

But it's the people that really make it. The people on the moor are crazy. There are some pashmina girls from university slumming it like they never heard common people, and still think that poor is cool. Office workers trying to maintain their cheap Norwich union dignity amongst the litter. And truckloads of The Poor, of course, milling around and doing their swearing and drugs. But the best are the out and out crazies. There's the bloke that wears a deer stalker and huge geggis. There's Gemma, the most aggressive beggar in Yorkshire. And there's the man who spends his time buying snickers from Home Bargains.

Whilst we were hanging around the DWP offices taking photos, a woman came and asked us what we were doing. We told her, and asked her what she thought of the Moor. It's alright, she said. Pretty spot on, love.

Tom Common

NEW IDEAS FOR THE MOOR

We were recently ushered into a room full of smiling people stood around a glass box. Inside this glass box were lots of little glass cubes. lit up in happy colours. This, we were informed, is how the Moor will look when it's done. An architect came over. We said that we thought the Moor was interesting and pretty uniform, and that we hoped they wouldn't re-clad it. "Don't worry," he said, "we're not going to re-clad it. We're going to demolish it". We laughed. Then we realised he wasn't joking.

He said the problem with the existing Moor is that it was rushed up in a really short space of time, all at once, inorganic. We just stood there with our mouths open. "But not this time", he said. "This time we're going to do it all at once in five years, but it will be iconic. We're going to have a Debenhams so good that when people think of Sheffield, this comes into their heads." We must have looked unimpressed. "It will be iconic?" he said again.

The development of the Moor could be quite exciting, RREEF (that's Deutsche Bank to you and me, don't mention the war) own the whole thing: the ground, the streets, the sky. They bought it off the council for about £2.50, after the World Student Games had gone wrong. So they can do anything they want. If they have any brains, this will be something good. Something that does stand out, attracts the best shops. Something like the Selfridges building in Birmingham.

But we're still worried. Because around Selfridges, the rest of the Bullring is like any modern shopping centre. With the New Retail Quarter being built at the same time, we're worried that we'll just get about fifty thousand streets full of shopping developments that are trendy and cutting edge right now, but which will date even worse than the buildings they're going to knock down. You shouldn't blow everything up and start again. That's why the last one was shit.

Building an entire new city then ripping it down thirty years later isn't working for Sheffield. Didn't anybody get that memo?

So we asked these nine pigeons what they think should happen instead.



3. KNOCK DOWN SOME CRAP. The BT building. Milton House. The whole of Moorhead. We're not afraid of demolition. If you need to re-clad it to try to convince people Sheffield is fresh and urban and sexy, then take this chance to knock it down instead.

1. MOORFOOT. This little shopping precinct is one of the worst things in Sheffield. Knock it down and make a park, maybe with a little mini heather covered moor on it (see what we've done there) for office workers and shoppers. Instant happiness.

2. TRADITIONAL. Not all the shops in a city can be Harvey Nicks exclusive, granted. But it doesn't have to be all pound shops either. Down the bottom of the Moor, there are already lots of little traditional shops selling good quality things for not much. A butchers. A pet shop. A bakers. A super retro thornorton's. A chippy. So why not put them all on one street, and court the best toyshop and independent bookshop and tobacconist in Sheffield to complete the set. It would be like real, twentieth century town shopping. Local, independent, sustainable. Completely different shopping experience from any new retail quarter rubbish.

5. GREEN Green roofs on all of these buildings to let the people who live above the shops walk around on them. Have some roofs for families to play on. A sports pitch on the top of Decathlon. An allotment on the top of Wickes. Grass the side streets over. These could be sitting areas, temporary market areas, street theatre

6. SAVE THE THEME. Even if you knock the whole thing down, keep the layout, keep the modernism, keep all those unfashionable white buildings.

7. Get some enormous **PUBLIC ART** for the middle of the silly roundabout. Maybe **LOVE** on top of each other forty feet high? Haven't we got any bloody artists in this city?

8. PARKS IN THE SKY A new park over the ring road. Right, stick with us here. London Road and Eccy Road is where all the restaurants/ cool kids/ good shops are. But if you're not from round here you wouldn't know they exist. A new park over the ring road would link the city up with these roads, and make it super easy to get to. A new tram, buses, cycle paths, people: all on top. Cars below. Yeah it might cost a bit. What else are we going to spend it on? Answer: war with Iran.

9. Turn the road that runs parallel to the Moor (Earl Way) into a **green street**, to let people walk and cycle to work in peace. At the moment, cycling up Eyre Street feels like cycling up the M1. Put some art on the walls and some grass in. Nice.



Christmas Lights Illuminate Our Empty Souls

"Why do I hate Meadowhall?" the policeman on the other end of the megaphone often shouts. Well, maybe it's because it stands for everything fake and empty and bad in the entire world, I answer. And, as if I needed any more proof of this wonderfully innovative theory, who should arrive to turn on the Meadowhall Christmas lights but Peter Andre and Jordan Of No Second Name.

Two people who spend each and every day smothering each other in the baby oil of minor, fleeting, empty celebrity. I can't wait till I meet people like this in the pension offices of the future, empty handed and forgotten. They will say: do you remember who I was? And I will say: no.

Now, you might expect me to lament this fact. Society has gone to the dogs, high on cheap newsprint and silicone implants. Come back Stalin, all is forgiven, that sort of thing. That the only switch I'd like to see either of their hands on is the one on a life support machine that says: stop. But that would be to misunderstand me.

I'm delighted that Meadowhall have paid them to appear. Because, hopefully, the sum will have been grotesque. And anything that sucks money out of Meadowhall plc, thus accelerating it's descent into ruin and the realisation that, actually, shopping in a big 80s warehouse with no windows makes everyone feel a little sick, is a Good Thing.

In contrast, who is turning on the lights in the city centre? Not just Dick and Dom doing that bogey thing and everyone going mad. But friend of the people, proletarian all-star, civil servant super hero POSTMAN FUCKING PAT. That's right, it's a wholesome character from children's literature, doing a good job for shit pay, maybe going on strike once in a while but not round Christmas, for all the family and/or religious denomination.

I think this says more about Sheffield's collective soul than anything gushing we could write. We'll keep going no matter what they do to us. Just one more reason why Sheffield is the best city with the most soul ever. Thanks Pat.

<http://www.peter-andre.net/pages/news.htm>





Head north from Birmingham;

head south from Nashville and you hit Sheffield; yeah, down from Nashville; country music - white man's blues; Hank Williams on the wind. This ain't no Sheffield, England. This ain't no steel city; nope; this is Sheffield, Alabama. Me? I'm from the edge of town. I'm a harmonica man; you feel the music here.

Let me tell ya 'bout Sheffield, Alabama: Population: 9000; on the banks of the wide Tennessee river; I see it sliding by; slide guitar style. But hey, this ain't no dreamsville; it's the wrecked hope of America - and New Orleans ain't so far away.

Sure we got schools; we got country clubs, radio stations, grid pattern streets and a big tidy cemetery - dead centre. And we got what folks in Sheffield call 'achievers': sing song people - like Herschel Sizemore. Hersch was born in '35 and played mandolin - blue grass music - with the Dixie Gentlemen. Or Spooner Oldham keyboarding with the great Neil Young. And guess what? - just outta town you get to Muscle Shoals studio where, once upon a time, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Willie Nelson, Bob Dylan and Dire Straits did their stuff. 'Sweet home Alabama'.

Words by Cherokee Grits

Listen a while: a lazy rhythm mists over the dreamy air. And listen to the late-night DJ - a Brown Sugar gal all sweet molasses voice - ain't no one can touch her - not God himself. She melts you down - right down. She play the groove, she turn the spell, she make you believe.... Yeah, listen a while.....

But this Sheffield ain't fresh cut Dixie chicks and hydra-glide Harleys. No sir. This ain't no rose romance and can-ya-take-ma-picture? fat-gut tourists. This is Buick 6 land - all a'rusting out. Sure we got sun pie - we got fruits of the earth; ripe and glowing. We e'en got pie at 50 cents a slice - and the waitress she nearly mean 'honey' when she kiss-speak you. A slice of honey pie. A slice of pie.....

But listen good now: we got our slice of surveillance society too. How so? Well, we got the e detective. A private eye on-line just waiting to snatch your failings. And this is what 'e say:

'Is someone lying about their background in Sheffield, Alabama? Or, do you suspect that someone is trying to pull the wool over your eyes - whatever the case, get the truth with a background check. Now you can peruse their criminal history - see what they have been sent to prison for in the past. Get the run down of all court cases they have had involvement with anywhere inside the United States ...'

Hey man, that's spooky. Paranoia Alabama. This ain't no dreamsville. This is dreadsville.

Let's get outa here; way out 'cross the water. Let's get to Sheffield, steel guitar city. Let's drive those stupid crazy streets, let's breathe the wintry gloom - let's blow harmonica hard 'gainst the brick and stone, 'gainst the debt and dereliction. Yeah. For sure there ain't no dream left in Sheffield, England.

Doesn't it?



Maybe it's just me, but gay clubs make me want to die inside. Not because they're gay clubs, but because of what we've been led to accept that this automatically means. Tops off, hands in the air, Kylie blaring out, Euro-pop bass lines. It's not my scene. I like music, not ironic, funny-because-it's-shit music. I like clothes that fit me. I rarely get naked in public. These are all my preferences.

But, if you want to go to an event with other gay people, you have a choice of pink and fluffy or naked and hard. Just because you like boys, do you have a yearning to gyrate to Charlotte Church? Answer = No. Just because you like girls, do you have to shave your head? No.

I can understand the need to feel part of something, part of some kind of community. But is it really necessary to translate that into some sort of limp wristed theatre? The clichés that abound in every gay club I've been to just enforce the stereotypes with very little imagination. It's like the cloning of the gay army, in a fun, fake-tanned and hair-straightened way. They've all clearly been savagely attacked by Topshop.

It's very simple. If you're a boy who likes girls, or a girl who likes boys, and prefer one scene over another, you don't have to go to places you think are shit. It takes all sorts and all that. Different strokes. But as a gay person, there's no choice. Like it or lump it. There's no where else to go.

Overleaf is our small guide to Sheffield's small gay scene. This is our opinion/guide to the Sheffield gay scene. It isn't very long.

Sheffield is the fourth biggest city in the UK. Or so we are told over and over by politicians that don't realise that this statistic just illustrates how we're not. Using playground/UB40 'one in ten' logic, of the 500 000 people living in or around the city, around 50 000 must be gay. But we have one bar, two gay clubs and a couple of nights with rude names.

You can be affectionate about these nights, these places. Some of them are good at what they do. And some provide a much needed gay shoulder to lean on if you're getting hassle in the street. But really it isn't great. We're told that the first Gay place in Sheffield was called Rocky's, and had a plastic muscly man's torso on the sign outside. Have we really moved on that far?



FUZZ CLUB BEACH

DJ Badabing plays neu indie, anti disco & 'lectric rock+roll

DJ Jimm plays a riot of messy metal and punk rock

December 15th - Last Fuzz of 2005 featuring Duels

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, see you back at Fuzz on 19 Jan 2006!

Confirmed so far
 Jan 19th - The Research
 Jan 26th - The Noisettes
 Feb 2nd - Kooks
 Feb 9th - The Chalets
 Feb 16th - The Modern

Sheffield University Fusion & Foundry £3.50 adv /£4 door

Get on the mailing list for The Fuzz Club, text Fuzz to 07870686466

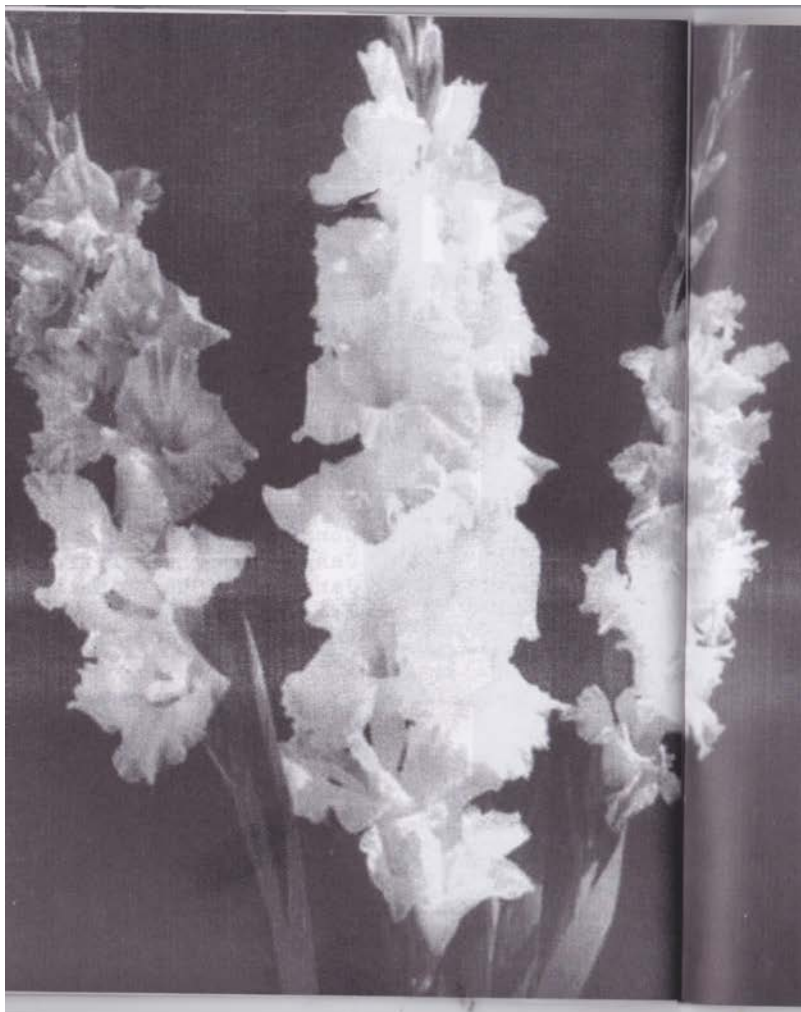
9pm - 2am Last entrance midnight



Carling, Worthington, Strongbow, Woodpecker & Snakebite £1.50, Jagermeister £1

Jack Daniel's & Coke £1.50

www.sheffieldunion.com



When I first realised I was gay, I thought at first it was no biggy, I just fancied other people, it's fuck all to do with morality, and it wouldn't affect the people around me. But it turns out, how could it not affect those people? Everything I'd ever learned was set up for straight people. No one ever talked to me about how I'd feel.

The worst thing is, people are basically hypocrites. Liberal parents who're down on racism like a ton of bricks basically fall apart. Teachers who talk about equality and personal and social education aren't allowed to talk about being gay. Kids call each other gays as the put down de jour. And it's tolerated. Gaylord at my school was basically the end of the debate.

People turn away from homosexuality and try to pretend it doesn't exist, or that it's just some sort of showbiz joke. Will Young's allowed to be gay because he's completely asexual. Dale Winton's allowed to be gay because he's a complete fucking joke. To be gay, you have to fit into people's thoughtless stereotypes. Otherwise, they just can't get it. Gay and not crystal meth-ed off your face. That won't do.

Being gay shouldn't be an issue. I don't resent being gay because I don't have a choice. It's just another thing. Some people are fat, some people are thin, white, black, funny, sensitive. But it does suck at times. Because everyone's a little prejudiced at heart.

Fin.

