

FOREVER WITH PRIDE



1st February 2026
Issue 51

Editors Words

Forever with Pride e-magazine confidently wishes all of our readers and sponsors a spectacular new year 2026! We know that good health and happiness will be yours; may this year exceed your expectations and be greater than 2025. We are excited to bring you exceptional content, and if you have a story to share or a business to showcase, don't hesitate to reach out, and don't forget photos and logos have live links set inside them.



Jewellery That Speaks

Our jewellery is more than adornment—it's a story of craftsmanship, quality, and passion. Each piece is thoughtfully designed to celebrate your unique journey, blending timeless artistry with modern elegance to create treasures as meaningful as they are beautiful.

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Bitchin' Boutique

CURVACEOUS VINTAGE AND ALTERNATIVE APPAREL

Bitchin' Boutique was established in 2016 by Lisa, its birth sparked by a love of Hell Bunny and the disappointment at the lack of plus size items available on the High Street.





OUT LOUD

P.O.D.C.A.S.T

The OUT LOUD Queer Music Podcast is presented by The Q LGBTQ Creative Network. Hear great Artist interviews and conversations and discover the latest and greatest new music releases by LGBTQ artists from around the globe. Hosted by The Q founder Kenney Fitzpatrick. LGBTQ artists can submit their music at curatedbyq.com to be featured on a podcast episode.



THE PARANORMAL

A Haunting Through Time!

Podcast

- WITH -



**ROBIN .S.
GOODFELLOW**



The Bold and the Brave: The Queer Vibrancy of Fat Pigeon Art

In a world that often demands conformity, art serves as the ultimate act of rebellion and celebration. Few artists capture this spirit as vividly as Sid (Sidney), the creative force behind Fat Pigeon Art. Known for a signature style that blends high-octane pop energy with a deep reverence for queer history, Sid's work is more than just a visual feast—it is a mission-driven engine for community support. From the pebble-strewn beaches of Brighton to his new creative home in Ramsgate, Sid has built a brand that transforms bold aesthetics into tangible aid for the LGBTQIA+ community.



A Journey from Brighton to the Kentish Coast

Sid's artistic identity is inextricably linked to the South Coast of England. Originally hailing from the vibrant, inclusive hub of Brighton & Hove, he recently relocated to Ramsgate, Kent. This move marks a new chapter for Fat Pigeon Art, bringing his distinctively "cheeky" and vibrant energy to the burgeoning art scene of East Kent.

Despite the change in geography, Sid's focus remains steadfast. His portfolio is a kaleidoscope of queer life, ranging from the ethereal to the wonderfully absurd. Whether he is illustrating "cosmic heroines" traversing the stars or "bearded sailors tangled in octopus arms," Sid's work challenges traditional gender norms and replaces them with a sense of play, power, and unapologetic joy.

Retro Pop Meets Sacred Glass

One of the most striking elements of the Fat Pigeon Art collection is Sid's "Retro Pop" stained glass style work. By taking the visual language of traditional religious iconography—bold black outlines, leaded-glass textures, and radiant light—and applying it to the "saints" of modern pop culture, Sid creates a bridge between the past and the present.

Icons such as Madonna, Cher, and George Michael are reimagined in these vivid digital prints. These pieces do more than just celebrate celebrity; they acknowledge the role these figures have played as beacons of hope and identity for the LGBTQIA+ community over the decades. By framing these icons in a stained-glass aesthetic, Sid elevates pop culture to a form of modern-day mythology, creating art that feels both nostalgic and refreshingly contemporary.

Art with a Purpose: Supporting The Sussex Beacon

While the visual impact of Fat Pigeon Art is undeniable, the heart of the business lies in its charitable backbone.

Sid has integrated a sustainable model of giving into his creative output, ensuring that his success directly benefits those in need.

For the past five years, Sid has utilized his talent to support various LGBTQIA+ organizations. A significant portion of his merchandise—including mugs, t-shirts, and hoodies—features celebrated UK Drag Queens. The profits from these specific sales are funnelled directly back into the community.

Sid's commitment to The Sussex Beacon Hospice—a clinical care centre in Brighton providing specialist support for people living with HIV—is a cornerstone of his work. Every purchase made through the Fat Pigeon Art Shop contributes to this vital cause, proving that art can be a powerful tool for social healthcare and advocacy.





Innovation in Fundraising: From Calendars to Colouring Books

Sid's dedication to fundraising is often marked by creative, large-scale projects. Three years ago, he launched the "Real Dragwives of Brighton & Hove Calendar." By illustrating 12 iconic local drag queens, he created a collector's item that celebrated the local scene while raising substantial funds for charity.

Building on that success, Sid is set to release a new Drag Queen Colouring Book later in 2026. This interactive project invites fans to become part of the creative process, adding their own colour to Sid's intricate lines. More importantly, the proceeds from this launch are earmarked for The Sussex Beacon, providing a fresh way for supporters to contribute to hospice care through a fun, artistic medium.

Where to Experience Fat Pigeon Art

For those looking to bring a piece of Sid's world into their own homes, Fat Pigeon Art is accessible through several channels. Digital prints and merchandise are available on his official website, while those seeking a physical gallery experience can find his prints at the Brighton Box Gallery in Brighton,

As Sid continues to expand his reach from his new base in Ramsgate, his influence on the queer art landscape only grows. You can follow his latest designs and community initiatives via the Fat Pigeon Art Facebook page or by following him on Instagram.

For business inquiries, collaborations, or custom projects, Sid remains highly accessible to his community by email:

fatpigeonartbrighton@gmail.com

In an era of mass-produced decor, Fat Pigeon Art stands out as a testament to the power of local artistry. It is art that doesn't just sit on a wall—it speaks, it celebrates, and it gives back. Through the lens of Sid's vibrant imagination, the world is a little bit brighter, a little bit bolder, and a whole lot more inclusive.

You can find his website at fatpigeonart.uk

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February 2026

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**Gay Gardeners UK, Plants, Seeds and
surplus Exchange Group**

We've had a bit of a strange winter and looking back at other years gardening inserts, that seems to be the trend! I had Snowdrops flowering two weeks before Christmas in my front garden and they are still flowering. The cold seems to have slowed the other bulbs down a little but I've also got a Magnolia that is looking like it is ready to flower very soon and that shouldn't happen for weeks yet. The grass keeps growing but if you cut it remember to only take the top off, don't cut it short. As I write this the sun is streaming through my window and in case you wonder, I'm not based down south I live in Hull in the north east – not normally known for being the sub-tropical centre of the gardening world.

By now you will know if your summer grafting and hardwood cuttings have been successful. If they have they will have bright red spots which are the tiny buds where new growth will come from. The same from Fuchsias you are over-wintering. I've still got some winter veg in potato sacks in the cold greenhouse rather than leaving it empty. They keep slowly growing and will give me early vegetables in the early spring. I've also got primroses flowering nicely in pots in the front. The local cats have sat on them a few times but that hasn't hurt them as they grow close to the soil anyway and I love cats so I'm not going to complain.

What you do in the greenhouse or on the windowsill this month will depend if you have any heat on in the greenhouse. If you don't then take your time before sowing those early seeds as you will have nowhere to put them when they germinate. Later sown ones often catch up anyway due to better light and temperatures. You can buy your supplies early from the garden centre

of course. Try to delay clearing the piles of debris from the garden as hedgehogs are still hibernating and queen bees will be coming out of their winter homes this month so better for nature if you pause the clean up until next month. The blue tits seem to be very active in the garden already so remember to provide food and water if you can along with nest boxes.

Equally be careful around the pond as there maybe frogs close by in the leaf litter. They need cover of long grass or something similar before they will take up residence and provide frogspawn for the pond. If you have fish they will feed on some of it but they won't get it all. A pond can be a real haven for garden wildlife so I encourage you to build one if you don't have one already. It's great in the warmer months to sit by the pond and watch all the different visitors you get both large and small.

If you have heated propagators or heat in the greenhouse then you will be able to force Dahlias to shoot earlier and then you can take softwood cuttings and put them on the window ledge if you don't have enough space. It's that time of year what you demonstrate what windowsill are really for! Be careful if you have a furry friend as they may like sitting there and you don't want to find your prized cuttings on the carpet.

Forsythias will be flowering this month so don't prune them until they have finished flowering. Similarly, Wisteria but don't leave that long after flowering before pruning as once they get their full flush of leaves it's difficult to see where you should be pruning. My Wisteria needs a good haircut every couple of years as it thrives in the south facing front garden and can get out of hand otherwise. I used to think they were delicate but they are far from it!

Instead of clearing the debris from the soil, if you're itching to clean up then go for the power washer and clean the paths and decking to get rid of the winter slippery slime and grime that appears from nowhere. I find I don't need any chemicals as the pressure from the water is enough to clean everything. Those chemicals will end up on your garden so be careful how much you use if you feel you need to.



Left – Over-wintered sweat peas from a cold frame that will give an early start for flowering. They are tough seedlings you just need to keep the mice away during the cold months else they will feed on the seeds.

Right – A Dahlia with multiple shoots that are perfect for taking as softwood cuttings – remember to leave some on the tuber.

If you have some heat then you can wake up your fuchsias too but remember they are susceptible to frost so they need protection. Heated propagators in the greenhouse can give you a lot of help at this time of year.

- Plant of the Month - Winter Aconites

Forsythia is the obvious one at this time of year as they produce such abundance of yellow flowers, they light up the garden and are a great promise of better weather to come. Be careful which variety you plant as some can get too big and can be a heavy task to remove once established.

Crocuses in their many colours are always a sign that better things are on the way. Don't be tempted to remove the leaves until they have turned yellow as they are recharging the bulb for next year. Be careful with your early enthusiasm else you know what I say about frozen assets! Spring is coming folks, my favourite time of year!



Left – Two for one – this is what will happen in my garden this year I think. The Magnolia flowering at the same time as the Forsythia – they should be a month apart but a good example of garden plants changing their timings.

Right – A beautiful blue crocus, very delicate looking and available in many colours. They will come back year after year in your garden. They bring welcome colour to the early spring garden.



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back story of the characters.

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Transparent Action is a new campaign group set up by parents of trans, non-binary and gender-diverse children and adults of all ages. They sent us an update on what they have been doing.

Transparent Action – Proud parents taking a stand

Transparent Action was formed late last year by a group of parents who came together to take a stand in support of our trans loved ones of all ages – children and adults. We are a mixed bag of parents but were all tearing our hair out at



the same thing, the hurtful, harmful stories being peddled in the mainstream media about trans people. We felt ignored and helpless facing the power of big corporations and hostile celebrities and said enough was enough. We would find a way to get our truth told.

We are all volunteers, balancing our activism with busy lives, juggling online meetings with our other roles – whether seeing clients or opening the shop or the crucial job of watching Traitors with our families.

We started by publishing the *Transparent Pledge* – a shared declaration based on seven simple principles that we believe every trans person should be able to count on:

1. *Respect and dignity* – Every person deserves to be recognised for who they are and be treated with kindness.
2. *Legal recognition* – Everyone should be able to live safely and confidently as themselves.



3. *Freedom from discrimination*- Everyone should be treated fairly in every area of life.

4. *Proper healthcare*- Everyone should have access to the care and support they need.

5. *Safety and protection*- Everyone deserves to be safe from harm.

6. *Inclusion in society* -Everyone should have a place to belong.

7. *Consultation and voice*- Everyone should be involved in decisions that affect their lives.

If you have a trans loved one, we ask you to show your support by signing the *Transparent Pledge*. We already have over 1300 signatures. But we want this to grow - the more signatures we have the more powerful our collective voice.

<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/transparent-action>

One of our founders is Caroline Litman, author of *Her Name Is Alice*, about her daughter who died by suicide aged 20 in 2022. She describes her situation like this:

"Alice's death has released me from the constraints you all face when you want to speak out but choose not to, to protect your loved ones. My daughter cannot be harmed anymore by my speaking out, so that is what I do to protect all trans youth in her memory.

I know the anxiety that comes with parenting a trans person and the fear of drawing unwanted attention to your family by being outspoken. Before Alice died I only ever went to one Trans Pride and never spoke publicly about Alice or trans matters beyond my close friendship circle. Now I do, but I want others to read

and hear stories from parents whose trans kids are thriving."

We want the experiences of other families with trans members to be heard. But we understand parents' concerns about privacy and know how hard it can be to both speak publicly and maintain that privacy. This is where we want to be able to help by speaking out on their behalf - in the media, by responding to policy announcements or consultations and by taking part in actions that reflect our shared values. The *Transparent Pledge* is a first step and we will ensure that the names of those signing the *Pledge* will not be publicly visible to anyone.



In the future we want to share more voices of parents who support their trans loved ones. We also want to involve more parents by sharing knowledge and resources so that they can take action themselves to support the wider trans+ community.

We really need the help of other supportive parents to grow our movement. So please follow us on social media, sign

and share the *Pledge*, and tick the box at the bottom to receive e-mails about how you can get more involved in the future.

You can sign the *Transparent Pledge* here:

[https://actionnetwork.org/
petitions/transparent-action](https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/transparent-action)

And follow us on social media here:

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Happy 2026 From The
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www.wacadoddles.com



OVO by Cirque du Soleil

The critically acclaimed OVO by Cirque de Soleil returns to Royal Albert Hall in London and it's a feast of bugs!

Whenever Cirque de Soleil comes to town it's always a major event, an opening night red carpet full of celebrities (this year Erin O'Connor, Vanessa Feltz, Gethin Jones, Jodie Kidd, Lee Mack, Layton Williams, Stephen Mangan, Dame Kelly Holmes plus more were seen on the pink carpet) which had decor of large plants and trees and actors dressed as insects. Upon entering the hall prior to the show there were two large stemmed roses on the stage (where two performers eventually popped out of), other large flowers, and a very very large egg. And Welcome to Ovo (which, in case you didn't know, is Egg in Latin). Thus the show begins.

We are treated to a melange of circus acts which Cirque de Soleil has presented to audiences many times throughout the years worldwide. These include amazing aerial acrobats (which closes out the first act), contortionists doing incredible things with their bodies (Nyamgerel Gankhuyag), hand balancing and foot juggling with barrels, duo straps (two performers hanging on to ropes) - very beautiful and gracious,



and lots and lots of Trampolining and Tumbling with a large group of performers who jump and bounce on a climbing wall and back and forth on trampolines and up and down up and down - it's an amazing feast for the eyes. There is lots more in this show, including the requisite clowns who makes us laugh out loud (Mateo Amieva, Neiva Nascimento and Robin Beer), all part of a very large cast that includes performers from all over the world (Canada, Argentina, Ukraine, China, Turkey, and lots of others including Mongolia!). It's a truly international cast from a company that has been bringing us entertainment since the 1980's! You can't really miss with a show from Cirque de Soleil, and I recommend catching now while you can while they are in London until March 1, 2026. Ovo is a very family friendly show, and it's nothing that hasn't been seen or done before, so enjoy this one where you will see crickets leaping all over the stage, butterflies soaring in midair, ants and more ants, and spiders that bend in many ways. Let's hope you don't get bitten by any of the insects!



[www.royalalberthall.com/tickets/
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Mind, the charity on the frontline of the fight for mental health



We're Mind, the biggest mental health charity in England and Wales. We're here to fight for the nation's mental health, and provide support so no one has to face a mental health problem alone.

We're fighting for a future where seeking support doesn't mean waiting months. Where you can get the support you need at the time you need it, not years down the line when a small problem has grown bigger and harder to control. And a future where everyone is treated the same regardless of background or circumstance.

We're pushing law and policy makers to transform the existing mental health system into one that doesn't just work but thrives, and addresses unacceptable inequalities of care.



What affects your mental health is personal to you, but we know that groups who regularly experience discrimination and stigma for other reasons can have additional challenges when it comes to managing wellbeing, looking after poor mental health and reaching out for support.

If you identify as LGBTQIA+ you might be more likely to experience mental health problems like depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder, or things like low self-esteem and stress which can lead to poor mental health. And existing stigma and discrimination might make it harder to reach out for support – that's not fair, and it's something we want to see change.

Our campaigners fight on the frontline for a number of different issues affecting our mental health and access to support. We've called tirelessly for a blanket ban of the abhorrent practice of conversion 'therapy' that we know can have huge consequences on someone's health and wellbeing. We've lobbied for changes to the benefits system, to improve the lives of those struggling with mental health problems and claiming benefits. And we've fought for the transformation of the outdated Mental Health Act, to give people a better say in the treatment they receive.

And as well as campaigning for change and influencing the system, we also provide immediate support for people struggling now. We're online, bringing people together through peer support. We're at the end of the phone, to help with information, emotional support, welfare benefits and understanding mental health law. And we're in the community, providing services through your local Mind.

Our online information covers a wide range of topics, from an A-Z of mental health problems to managing wellbeing during particular events or occasions. And we also have a wealth of information available specifically for people managing wellbeing and mental health problems who identify as LGBTQIA+.

We're here for you if you need support or if you're supporting someone else. And there are also a number of other ways you can get involved with Mind and help us win the fight for better mental health. You can sign up to be a campaigner, joining us on the frontline and campaigning on issues like banning conversion 'therapy' and our ongoing calls to overhaul the Mental Health Act. You can donate or fundraise for us – we're striving for a mentally healthy society, where everyone has timely access to support, but we need help and support to make that happen. A one-off donation, a marathon run, a neighbourhood bake sale – every pound raised helps us in the fight.

And you can keep talking about mental health and practicing kindness, because raising awareness, promoting understanding and fighting against misinformation and stigma starts with every single one of us. We're in it together – by joining forces we can create a happier, healthier nation, where all of us are

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Roger in Highbridge supporting Forever with Pride LGBTQ+ Free to Read Monthly E-Magazine matched 2 numbers and won 3 extra tickets

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Tales of the Second City

Misadventures on Birmingham's Gay Scene

Where There's a Will

Neither my partner nor I are ready for the grave just yet, but I am at a point where, if I get on my knees in a cubical, I need to grip hold of the gloryhole to get back up.

We have an acquaintance whose business is drafting wills and testaments.

Over a beer outside Missing Bar, he explained how financially vulnerable we were with nothing official in writing.

Long-term relationship, cohabitation, joint accounts, dual ownership of property (depending how it was set up), all count for nothing. Respective halves of savings, property, and worldly goods would potentially transfer to the deceased's natural next of kin, leaving the surviving partner in the mire.

Simon Durant explained, 'Many unmarried couples mistakenly believe that, because their house and bank accounts are in joint names, they retain full ownership when one partner dies. That is not the case. Immediate family inherit half and you could find yourself forced to leave your own home if they insist on a sale or having to buy half a house you have already paid for.'

We hope our families would never do the dirty on our significant others, but when it comes to money, you never really know.

Several days after that insightful conversation, I saw an old friend of Simon's walking down Hurst Street. I stopped him, explained that we were planning on drafting wills with his mate, but wanted to doublecheck that he was legit. I was assured that all was aboveboard and Simon was experienced in his field (Director of Durant & Co, no less).

'I assumed that would be the case,' I clarified, 'but was slightly concerned that we were about to handover all our personal information and do business to some guy from the pub.'

We were advised to consider mirror wills (Basically, what's mine is his and his is mine) and right of attorney (The right to make all the big decisions and pull the plug when the time comes).

It was liberating going through such formal matters with a fellow gay. Meetings happening in venues on the scene, where conversations about practicalities of death and inheritance would pause periodically as the three of us checked out hot guys passing-by the window.

The biggest challenge proved to be coordinating a final catchup meeting on Zoom, mainly due to my unpredictable schedule.

'OMG, This is like trying to arrange a hookup on Grindr!' I messaged. 'I'll be dead before this will is signed and sealed.'

The process prompted serious thought about funeral plans or lack of them.

I made it very clear that I did not want a service, memorial, or gathering of any type. I've never felt comfortable as the focus of a party, so certainly don't want to be guest of honour when I'm dead.

I opted to donate myself to medical research. They take away the cadaver, slice, dice, plunder your offal and pickle your vitals, then return the scraps to your nearest and dearest. No burial or cremation.

'Just flush me down the toilet,' I instructed, 'like a dead goldfish.'

'People rarely think about their pets,' Simon told us. 'If you were both to pass before your dog, who would look after her?'

Without hesitation, my partner and I automatically nominated our housemate, Ru.

'Oh, just great,' he harrumphed when we told him. 'I'll be homeless but with a dog!'

The following weekend, we pointed out Simon to Ru across the bar at The Fox. 'That's the guy who we are working with on our wills,' I explained.

Ru marched over, introduced himself, and told Simon, 'They have given me the dog. I don't want her. Can I have the house?'

We now have everything down in writing, signed, and witnessed.

Job done. We can rest in peace.

Ruru may scatter my remains at the crossroads on Hurst Street... where he'll be sat outside Tesco Express begging with the dog.

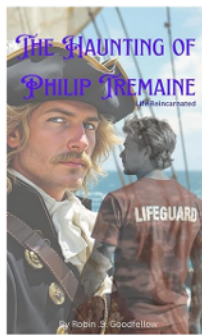
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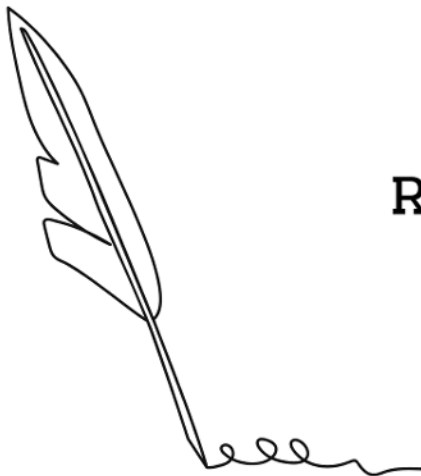
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With over 20 years of experience as a mental health professional, I've had the privilege of working with both children and adults across the UK, supporting them through their challenges and helping them achieve growth and well-being. My journey has been driven by a deep desire for change, and a passion for seeing individuals unlock their potential, find happiness, and reach their goals.



The Haunting Of PHILIP TREMAINE

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Authored by
Robin .S. Goodfellow

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Weaste Pride

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Queen tribute



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Weaste Pride is back for 2026 and it is shaping up to be another brilliant day for the community. After an amazing first Pride in 2025 that brought colour, joy and togetherness to Weaste, the team are excited to return with a full day of music, performances and fundraising that everyone can enjoy.

Taking place on 11 July 2026 at Weaste and Seedley Social Club in Salford, this free entry event is all about celebrating pride locally and making it accessible for all. Whether you came along last year or are joining for the first time, you can expect a warm welcome, great vibes and a proper feel good atmosphere.

The daytime disco will bring together the best of the 80s and 90s with a Madonna vs Kylie soundtrack to keep the dancefloor busy from start to finish. DJ Tasha will be on hand alongside Disco Doyenne Ben to keep the tunes flowing and the energy high.

Live performances are a big part of the day, with the fabulous Dawn Spry taking to the stage and Phil Kinsella delivering a Queen tribute that is sure to get everyone singing along. The whole event will be hosted by the one and only Tina Tuna, bringing laughs, sparkle and plenty of personality throughout the day.

Weaste Pride 2026 is also proud to be fundraising for Jak's World Forever, helping to support a cause that means a lot to the local community. Thanks

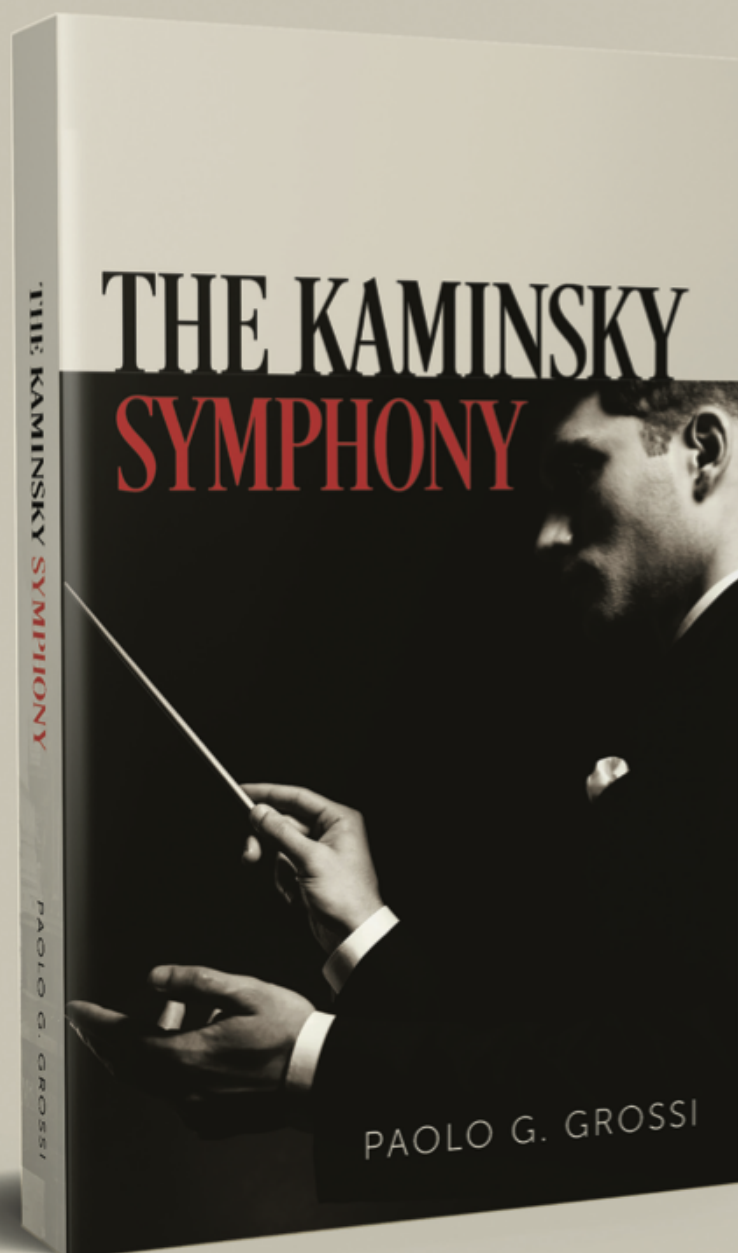
Weaste pride team

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Two men swept away by love and impending tragedy in the dying days of Imperial Europe.

**OUT ON GENERAL RELEASE
6TH DECEMBER 2025**



Maestro Carlo Mandelli leaves Milan for a new life on the shores of the Black Sea. But Russia is about to be rocked by the October Revolution. Amid the ravages of the Civil War, he is confronted with a desperate choice.

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Plus Importance Project

Plus Importance Project is a national charity that improves understanding and inclusion of people in the + of LGBT+, defined as “sexualities, gender identities, relationship orientations and sex characteristics including, but not limited to, asexual, genderfluid, genderqueer, intersex, non-binary, pansexual, polyamorous and queer”.



As the UK's first registered charity with a focus on the + of LGBT+, we aim to create a world where those who identify fully or partly in the + of LGBT+ experience equal rights, respect and representation.

We do this through four main areas of training and supporting organisations, improving public awareness, conducting and collating research and advocating for equal rights and representation.

We're now a team of over 50 volunteers, filling a vital gap in the LGBT+ sector!

Training and Supporting Organisations

We provide support to organisations to help

them be more inclusive of people in the +. This includes training sessions, a policy review service and culture strategy support to embed long-term change.

Our pilot project had excellent feedback with 98% of training session attendees saying they would recommend the session and many positive testimonials from the 13 organisations we worked with.

We have since rolled out our training and support offer to more organisations and have continued to receive excellent feedback such as "As a queer person myself, I've found a lot of LGBT+ training to feel patronising, superficial or othering. You did an excellent job in not alienating anyone and delving into topics that are spoken about less. Overall, I thought it was very engaging."



Improving Public Awareness

We improve public awareness of identities in the + of LGBT+ through social media, creating public resources, having stalls at events throughout the year and lots more!



We've delivered talks to over 250 business leaders and HR professionals on the importance on recognising and including people in the + in the workplace.

We also contributed to the Bristol Museums Gender Stories exhibition as a community partner, helping to shape it into an inclusive and meaningful exploration of gender. In 2026, the touring exhibition is moving to Brighton and Liverpool!

We're also partnered with the team behind the short film [I Promise To Annoy You Forever](#), which features an aromantic asexual main character. Our Lived Experience Volunteers reviewed the script to ensure it was an accurate portrayal of a-spec experiences, and the film should be released later this year!

Research, Advocacy and Campaigns

As identities in the + are historically underrepresented, we have a small research team that collates and analyses existing research and we have also started to conduct our own research. In addition, we're starting to build relationships with other researchers, including being a steering committee member for the Queer Health Survey.

This research then helps to inform our campaigns and advocacy. We respond to national consultations to ensure that the + community is considered by decision makers. Most recently, we've responded to consultations on the 2031 Census and the EHRC's Code of Practice.

Get Involved

- Get in touch with us on hello@plusimportance.org.uk if you'd like to partner or connect with us.
- Check our our [website](#) for a wide range of volunteering opportunities. If you are in the + of LGBT+, you can join us as a Lived Experience Volunteer, which is an incredibly flexible and rewarding role!
- Check our [resources page](#) for useful guides on awareness days, inclusive events, the history of identities in the + and more!



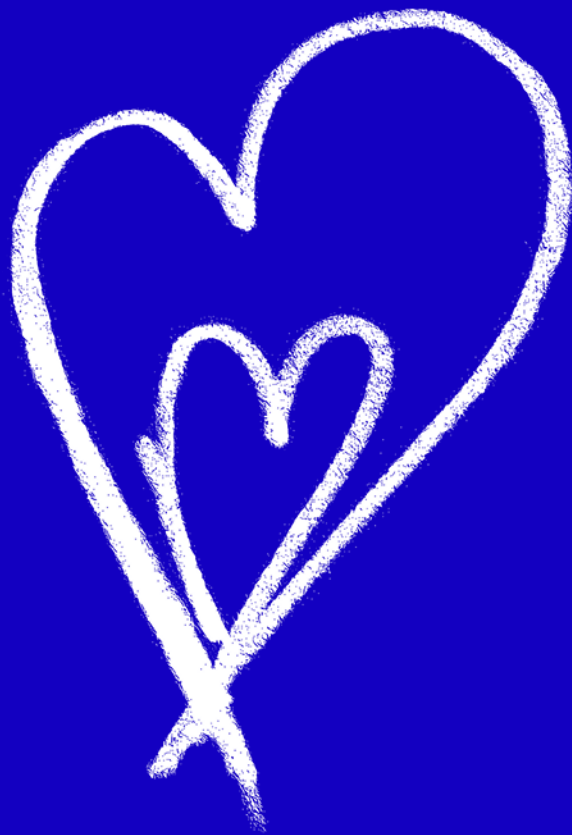
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Canal Street FC – Manchester's newest LGBT+ football team



Manchester has never been short of football passion, and newly-created Canal Street FC are thrilled to offer keen local LGBT+ footballers the opportunity to play the game they love without fear, judgement, or barriers.

Marking another step forward for inclusion, visibility, and community within the city's vibrant sporting landscape, the club offers an opportunity for members of the LGBT+ community to join a sports team that is a welcoming space for players of all identities and abilities.

The club was founded, and is run, by experienced members of the LGBT+ football community who have decades of understanding of how important clubs like Canal Street FC are.

One of the club's founders, Rob McPherson, said: "I came out as gay in 2003 and joined the local LGBT+ football team not long after – it was one of the best decisions of my life!

"Before joining, I enjoyed playing football, but I was a bit shy and didn't feel comfortable playing for the university team or a random local club that I didn't have some sort of link with. As soon as I joined the LGBT+ team – playing with and speaking to like-minded people – I felt completely at home and I flourished.

"In my time at the club, I grew so much in confidence, took up several positions of responsibility, and made friends for life – and this is something I would love for other members of the LGBT+ community to experience.

"Canal Street FC was born from a lived experience, and, due to this, we believe that we are ideally placed to help LGBT+ players take their first steps (in football boots!), back into competitive team sports."



Named after the world famous street in the heart of Manchester city centre, the LGBT+ community is central to everything Canal Street FC do.

The club currently train on Monday evenings in central Manchester, and they take part in 5-a-side tournaments and 11-a-side games against other LGBT+ clubs from across the United Kingdom.

They do not just focus on the action on the pitch; the social side is just as important.



Rob continues: "Playing football is a great way to improve your skills, maintain your fitness and develop your communication skills. But the bonding and socialising that happens off the pitch is a huge thing for Canal Street FC.

"After training we head to the pub to watch a game on the TV, take part in a quiz or just to have a catch-up – this is a great way to find out more about people, build friendships, and increase inclusiveness."



The club welcomes new players, volunteers, and supporters – so whether you are a seasoned footballer, a complete beginner, or simply someone looking for a supportive community, there's a place for you.

To find out more about Canal Street FC, follow them on social media.

Instagram: @canalstreetfc

Facebook: Canal Street FC

X: @CanalsStreetFC

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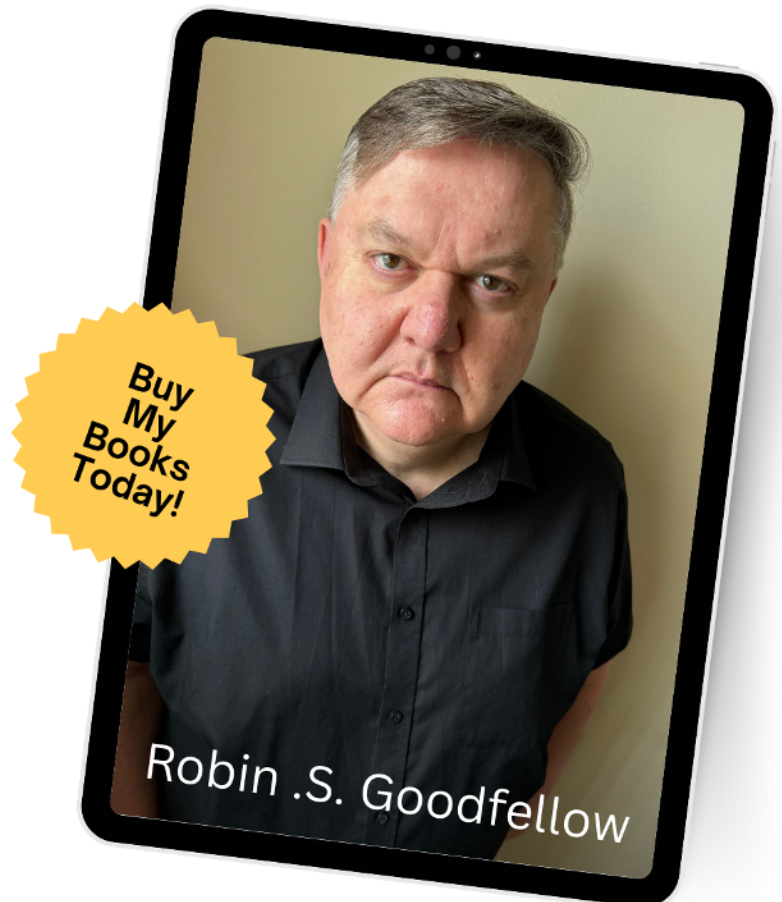
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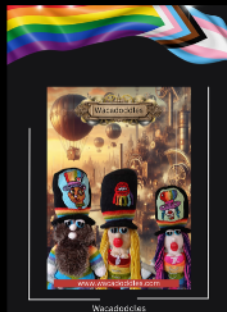
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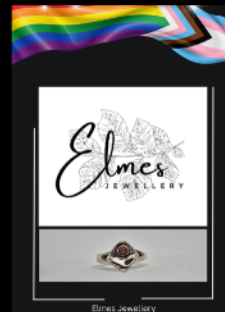
Adam Swain Ferguson



Wacadeedies



Rachel Sewell



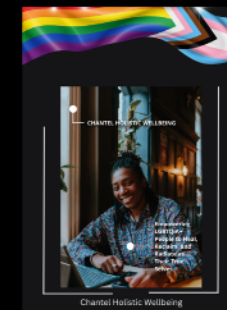
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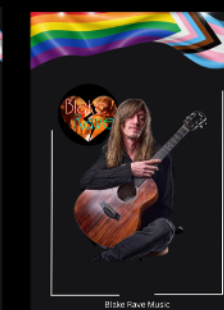
Aubrey N. C. Mitchell



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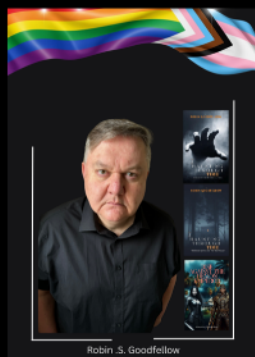
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