



Sorrel Atkinson, Chair of the Trustees of FFLAG

Welcome to our new FFLAG newsletter. It has been a while since we last published one but thanks to our events co-ordinator Ken Batty we are once again able to update you with news both from FFLAG national and from the local groups.

In this issue we look back at the highlights of the year. You will see we have been very busy. The main event for us was our 25th Anniversary Conference "Reaching for the Rainbow" which we held in Manchester. The feedback we received was outstandingly good and it was a great success. Part of the feedback from the groups at the conference was that they missed the newsletter and the sense of connecting the local groups across the country. So we are really pleased that we will now be able to offer this much-missed facility.

This newsletter is mainly about national FFLAG and our hope is that future issues will contain many local stories as well. All around the country great work is being done by local groups - so do please get in touch with Ken at events@fflag.org.uk and tell us about what you have been up to. And send us photos you would like to share too. We aim to issue the newsletter quarterly and we would really like to include your stories and events in the next edition.

I hope you enjoy the newsletter.

Wishing you a very happy Christmas and a great start to 2019!

Jenny Broughton MBE, President of FFLAG, steps down as a Trustee

Jenny Broughton, who has been one of our most active Trustees, stepped down from the Board earlier this year. She first got involved with supporting other parents after her daughter, Sarah, came out to her as a lesbian. Jenny, who was living in Exeter at that time, started supporting other parents, firstly by phone and later with a local support group. She was active in FFLAG from the start of the organisation and became the National Co-ordinator. In 2000 Jenny became EuroFLAG President working alongside parents from Italy, France, Belgium, Germany and Spain to campaign and offer support across Europe. In 2015 she was honoured to receive an MBE for her work with FFLAG.



Though no longer a Trustee, Jenny is not stopping her work. She remains the President of FFLAG and is still campaigning hard for us. She now lives in Cardiff and has most recently been working with Hilary Beynon, another FFLAG trustee, to relaunch FFLAG South Wales.

Reaching for the Rainbow



Reaching for the Rainbow

News from the FFLAG 25 Year Anniversary Conference in Manchester

FFLAG has held several national conferences and the 25th anniversary was too good an opportunity to miss. Our Chair, Sorrel Atkinson, agreed to chair the organising committee. Hugh Fell, another of the FFLAG Trustees, also agreed to help. Sue Allen, the previous Chair of FFLAG, and her husband Bob, had both been greatly involved in organising the last conference. They brought expertise on what had, and hadn't, worked in the past. Ken Batty, who had organised the 2017 dinner at the Houses of Parliament, was our fifth member.

The first task was to get funding and find a location. We were greatly helped by Paul Roberts, the CEO of the LGBT Consortium, and his husband Jack Peat, who is a professional events organiser. We were very grateful to receive a grant of £8,650 from the National Lottery's Awards for All, without which the Conference would not have been possible. We also got a good deal at the Doubletree Hotel in Manchester and so decided to hold the entire event there.

We wanted to focus on a couple of areas where we get lots of questions. Firstly, we get increasing contacts from the parents of trans children, so this is a topic on which many of our local groups need more information. Secondly, we know that parents with strong religious faith often struggle to come to terms with the fact their child is LGBT+. Thirdly, local groups told us that they were least familiar with Islam, and could do with some insights into, Muslim families. Mermaids, the organisation that campaigns for and supports families with a trans child agreed to send someone to speak. The founder of Birmingham South Asians LGBT – Finding A Voice, Khakan Qureshi, is a well-known speaker on being Muslim and gay so we were delighted when he accepted our invitation.

Michael Cashman, Lord Cashman, is one of our patrons and always prepared to give us time when we need him. He agreed to come along and speak on the importance of family (you can read some of the key things he said further on in this newsletter). We wanted a question and answer session so invited Sally Carr, the co-CEO of the Proud Trust, onto the panel. The Proud Trust run LGBT+ youth groups across the North West of England. We also invited Sarah Furley and Bruce Kent, two of our trustees, to join the panel, alongside our chair – Sorrel Atkinson. She also agreed to open the Conference and talk about the vision for FFLAG.

We selected break out topics that would run concurrently and people could choose which they thought were most interesting for them. Sarah Furley is the mum of a trans child so she agreed to run a session on helping the parents of trans children. Sue Allen along with Hilary Beynon agreed to run a session on setting up a new parents group. We invited Matt Mahmood-Ogston of the Naz and Matt Foundation to talk about building bridges between Muslims and the LGBT community. Peter Bampton from the LGBT Foundation was invited to talk about the latest advances in AIDS and HIV+ treatment and how to help parents who have an HIV+ child or concerns about sexual health. Finally we invited two speakers from BiPride UK, Zed and Sam, to talk about multi gender attraction.

We arranged a reception and dinner in the hotel for Saturday evening to provide a relaxed ending to the conference. In addition, we invited representatives from the local groups to stay on Sunday morning so we could hear from them what the national FFLAG organisation could do to support them more. We then planned lunch before the final people departed for home.

Reaching for the Rainbow: impressions from those who attended

Inga Rhodes was one of those originally involved in FFLAG, 25 years ago, so we asked her to write about her experiences of the conference. Phyllis and Neville Kenyon had never been involved with FFLAG before and was persuaded to attend by a friend. She and her husband joined the conference and were so impressed with what they saw they sent all the attendees a letter.

FFLAG's 25th Birthday Conference

An amazing day on Saturday November 10th. I was pleased to be able to attend FFLAG's 25th birthday conference, Reaching for the Rainbow, at the Double Tree Hotel in Manchester, courtesy of my dear friend Mo, who was my carer for the day. I am 81 years old and a wheelchair user and without her help, I would not have been a guest at this wonderful conference. Thank you Mo.

FFLAG is the umbrella organisation for the parents support groups throughout the UK. Manchester Parent's Group is affiliated to FFLAG.

The day's proceedings started with an introductory speech by Sorrel Atkinson, FFLAG's Chair of trustees. She spoke about FFLAG's beginnings and its history and gave a warm welcome to delegates.

Then followed a very emotional address by Lord Michael Cashman, a patron of FFLAG. He spoke passionately about campaigning in the 80's for the repeal of Section 28 and for an equal age consent, which we are proud to have been part of. He also spoke about the importance of the family, and supporting our LGBT children with love and pride, a sentiment which was reiterated throughout the conference.

There were more inspiring speeches, and breakout sessions, and the day concluded with a drinks reception and a celebration dinner.

For me, a long-time member of Manchester Parents Group, a FFLAG committee member and an ardent campaigner for gay rights, it was so emotional to meet up again with colleagues from FFLAG's early days. I am sure they won't mind my saying, we are all now in our 80s, and not quite as active as we used to be, but still as enthusiastic as ever! I am pleased to count them as my friends: Jenny Broughton MBE, founder of EuroFLAG, retired chair of trustees but still a trustee aged 84; Cath Johnson MBE, founder member of Manchester Parents Group (MPG) and FFLAG, and founder of The Albert Kennedy Trust, an organisation supporting homeless young LGBT people; Frances Nicol, retired chair of trustees, long time committee member, and active in the European Parents Movement; and Angie Woods, a retired member of MPG, and retired FFLAG trustee.



We also remembered the inspirational leadership of Joyce Layland, and Brenda Oakes in the early days of FFLAG. Sadly they are no longer with us but they're never forgotten.

Standing: Cath Hall, Frances Nicol, Michael Cashman, Angie Woods. Seated: Inga Rhodes and Jenny Broughton

We are proud that Joyce's legacy lives on as The Gay Youth Centre in Manchester is now "The Joyce Layland LGBT Centre".

In the early days we were very much involved in campaigning for gay equality. We lobbied the Lords for the repeal of Section 28, and fought hard for an equal age of consent. We went on

marches with our banners, appeared on television and spoke out on radio. We wrote articles and gave presentations and so much more.

We feel so proud to have played some part, in the fight to improve life for LGBT people and their families and as FFLAG Pioneers, we were honoured to each receive an award, from the wonderful Lord Michael Cashman.

Much has been achieved over the years but there is still work to be done. The challenge now for FFLAG is to be more inclusive, to also stand up, and to support trans people, their families and friends in their fight for equality.

An amazing day, amazing people, amazing memories.

Love Inga.



FFLAG history display produced for the 25th anniversary conference by Sue Allen

Dear Friends,

We were surprised and delighted to be invited to this year's FFLAG conference in Manchester.

We arrived with slight trepidation as we were unsure what to expect and what was expected of us. All of this was completely misguided as the FFLAG 'family' adopted us immediately, and made us feel as if we had always been friends.

The day was full on with talks from speakers on a variety of topics, and two breakout sessions. It was interesting, informative and personal, we felt privileged to share in the how the FFLAG family have fought for recognition.

As parents, we were saddened by the number of people that have been made outcast by their own parents for being different. This is definitely not our vision of parenthood. On the upside we met parents who were so supportive of their children it was a pleasure to have met them.

There is obviously a wealth of experience and knowledge in the FFLAG community, and they are there for anyone who needs help or just wants to talk.

We are so pleased to have met you all and if you would like to stay in touch please contact Ken Batty at events@fflag.org.uk as he has our email addresses.

Love to you all

Phyllis and Neville

The Q & A panel at the 25th Anniversary Conference. From left Bruce Ken, Sarah Furley and Sorrel Atkinson – all Trustees of FFLAG, and Sally Carr, Co-CEO of the Proud Trust.



Through the year with FFLAG: a look back at 2018

January: FFLAG launches a closed Facebook Group for leaders/officers of local parents groups to share thoughts and ideas

20 February: Trustees meeting in Bristol agrees FFLAG's Vision, Mission and Values

22 March: Sarah Furley appointed trustee

30 March - 1 April: Information stall at NASUWT Conference, Birmingham jointly with New Road Parents Group

31 March: Launch of "A Guide for Family and Friends - for families with a transgender member"

April: Launch of FFLAG South Wales in Cardiff

12 May: Exeter Pride (the picture shows our group getting ready to join the crowds at Exeter Pride)

June: Cornwall Pride's "Pop-Up Pride" Bus Tour

7 July: Pride in London

14 July: Bristol Pride

28 July: Weston-super-Mare Pride

25 August: Cardiff Pride

29 August: Patrick Gale book launch at Bristol Cathedral

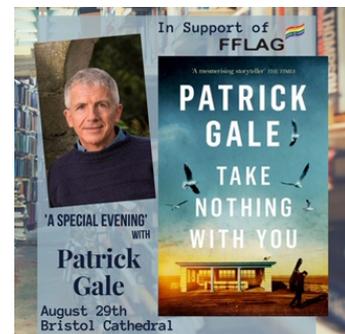
10-11 November: FFLAG 25 - Reaching for the Rainbow conference

10 November: Launch of FFLAG short films, "FFLAG" and "A Trans Family Story" along with our all-new "How Do I Tell My Parents? - I'm Trans" booklet

November: Trans Pride South West

December: FFLAG trustees meet to plan for 2019 (the picture shows the Trustees along with our President, Jenny Broughton)

December: Launch of the new FFLAG newsletter



PRIDE IN LONDON

6th July 2019

If you are interested in walking with us in the Pride Parade next year, please drop a line to events@fflag.org.uk putting "London Pride 2019" in the subject line and we will send you details about the arrangements for meeting when the Pride organisers have briefed us.

If you have never been to a Pride event before with FFLAG or any other parent support group, please join us to experience a truly memorable day.

Can you help FFLAG?

FFLAG is a tiny charity run entirely by volunteers.
If you can, please help to secure our future by supporting us financially.

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"Supporting Families and our LGBT+ loved ones with Pride"

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