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# THE TARTAN SKIRT



Magazine of the  
**SCOTTISH TV/TS**  
Groups

New Series No. 7  
July 1993

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## FLASHBACK

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# THE TARTAN SKIRT

The Magazine of the  
Scottish TV/TS Groups

Editor: *Anne Forrester*

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New Series No. 7

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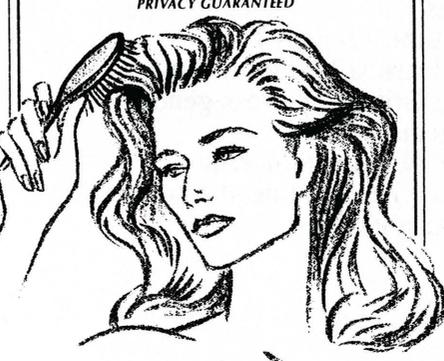
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## THE TABLOID PRESS AT WORK !

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It seems that the tabloid press have recently declared an open season on transsexuals. Between them *The Sun* and *The Daily Record* have published a little stream of stories about transsexuals - and not with much sensitivity, either.

In April *The Sun* published very hurtful items about Jeffrey Archer's TS gardener and, 10 days later, a Scottish TS working in Glasgow; in each case using sensationalist 1½" front-page headlines. In May they licked their lips over an attractive TS from Aberdeen, now living in Glasgow, while *The Daily Record* followed up 3 days later with a centre spread about another TS in Falkirk - although these latter articles were apparently written with the girls' cooperation, and were more reasonable than most.

However, on the same day *The Daily Record* also went to town on the story of an Italian woman teacher, discovered by her pupils to be working as a prostitute and then revealed to be "a man in drag (who) always wore tight-fitting mini-skirts, heavy make-up and low cut blouses to lessons", while working at 'the oldest profession' at nights "to pay for the final operation to turn him into a woman".

We all know that the tabloid press reckon that only sport, sex and violence sells newspapers, but with the exception of the Italian teacher all of these individuals were named, their ages given, and in three of the Scottish cases their pictures published. Surely a person's gender preference is their own affair and of no concern to anyone outside their own families. It is about time that 'the media' took concerns about intrusions into privacy seriously: otherwise they must expect increasing calls for them to be muzzled officially. If they don't want to be censored then they must get their own act together, and start to behave more responsibly ! ■

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## HOME ELECTROLYSIS

by Julia Gordon

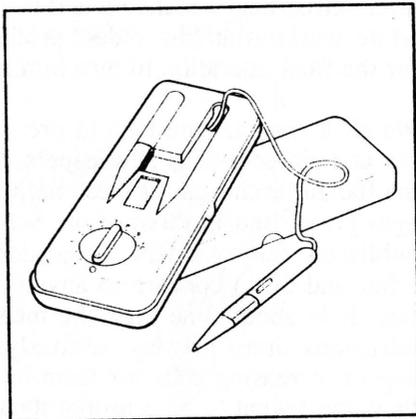
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Most of us are acquainted with the method of hair removal which involves the use of electrical energy to destroy hair growth. The procedure, commonly referred to as electrolysis, is normally carried out by professionally qualified practitioners. The treatment is lengthy and expensive, and usually only available to individuals seeking gender reassignment.

As I use makeup and wear clothes more often associated with women I had always wished that I did not have the problem of dealing with facial hair. I was therefore interested to come across a reference to the Carmen *One Touch* Home Electrolysis System which, it was suggested, could be used to remove beard growth by oneself.

I purchased one of these instruments (currently retailing at around (£ 25) [but see the 'For Sale and Wanted' column in this issue. Ed.] and read the literature which came with it.

The process depends upon the introduction of a small current of electricity to the root of the hair via a thin wire filament passed down the hair shaft. This destroys the blood supply to the root and once this has happened the hair can not re-grow.



It did not take very long to get used to operating the instrument and to date I have removed 21,986 hairs from my face. Total beard removal, in effect. However, to this end I have spent approximately 700 hours in electrolysis (equivalent to about one whole month, non-stop!), spread over the last year and a bit. I still expect to be removing hairs for some time to come, since not every hair follicle is active at the same time, and odd hairs continue to surface, but dealing with these doesn't take up much of my time now.

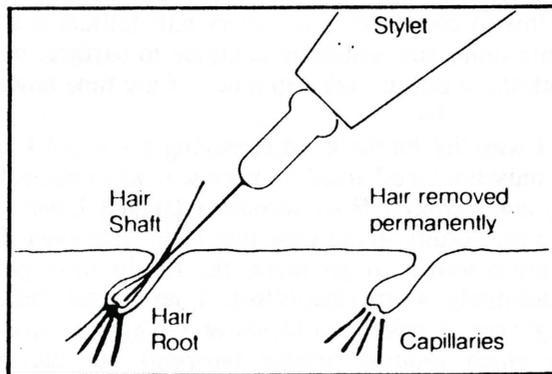
When I was 'in the thick' of removing my beard I am sure it was only because I lived on my own, was decidedly anti-social, and suffered from insomnia (!) that I was able to achieve the results in the time that I did. But even if it had taken much longer to get there, the results have got to be very definitely worth the effort. I no longer cut myself shaving (yes, I still have to shave - I have several facial moles which require regular mowing) but the greatest pleasure is derived from having a smooth skin of normal colour on which to apply my foundation. And, of course, the compliments paid to me when in close contact with my girl friend!

### Some practical hints

The following comments and observations are drawn from my experience of using the *One Touch* system and may be helpful to anyone determined enough to try this for themselves.

I suggest you discard the tweezers supplied with the kit and acquire a good pair of surgical forceps. You will want to carry out your electrolysis on stubble which has been growing for as little as 24 hours. In this time the length of hair is not great and it can not be easily grasped by ordinary tweezers. Obviously, the longer the stubble is left to grow, the easier it is to get a hold of. Keep a stock of spare stylet tips, as they break with the prolonged use to which they are subjected. A magnifying mirror is valuable for enabling you to see what you are doing, and a flexible light

source is useful for illuminating the area you are working on. Make sure you are in a comfortable working position, otherwise you may well find yourself with a stiff neck or back !



The risk of skin infection must be kept in mind continually, and measures taken to minimise this. Preparations containing antibiotics are used by professional electrologists for this purpose, but these are only available on prescription. I adopted the following procedure and it worked adequately. Face and hands are first washed before starting. Surgical spirit is then used to sterilise the area of skin to be worked on, and this is also used to sterilise the forceps and stylet tip, the latter being dipped in it before treating each hair.

The energy required to destroy a hair seems to vary depending on where it is growing, and possibly also on how thick it is. Fine hairs on the upper lip did not require as high an energy setting as some coarse hairs growing on the lower neck. It is probably best to start with a fairly low setting until you get to know your way around. I have used the instrument at maximum setting but found this to be unnecessary. The time allowed to destroy the hair is also an important factor to take into account. Most hairs did not require longer than about one minute. Too low a current, or

insufficient time, may well have been the reason why, early on, some hairs seemed to re-grow. The solution was simply to treat them again at a higher setting and/or for longer. The best guide to effective treatment was the ease with which a hair could be pulled free from its follicle. The hairs around the mouth and below the nose gave rise to some pain and discomfort compared to the ease with which hairs on the rest of the face were dealt with. Of course, clumsy use of the stylet when inserting it into the hair follicle resulted in the occasional twinge. I learned quickly !

Electrical energy is passed down the metal stylet to the root of the hair, and this requires your body to complete the electrical circuit. The pen-like stylet is held in your hand and good contact between your skin and the instrument achieved by keeping your fingers wet with a salt solution. I found this gave rise to a dermatitis - and it did not do a lot for my nails, either. However, I found I could maintain good electrical contact using the minimum of solution when I wound thin string around the terminal on the stylet and gripped this with my fingers.

When treatment was adequate, the hair could be gently tugged free from the skin, and the vast majority of hairs fell into this category. Sometimes, however, the hair would come free readily enough, but would leave the little bulb at the end behind. This would eventually work its way to the surface of the skin from where it could be removed. Sometimes a hair would break and a portion of the shaft be left behind. Again, in time this would work its way to the surface. I never did encounter a hair which did not respond to treatment, if not initially then after a second attempt.

### In conclusion

I believe that this method of doing away with beard growth can be carried out by any determined individual capable of exercising a little common sense and care. Horror stories of facial scarring belong to the unprofessional use of profes-

sional equipment, and warnings against doing this yourself are often given by those with a financial interest in persuading you to let them do it for you. ■

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*NOTE. Despite Julia's comment, facial scarring can often occur, even in the hands of professionals if they are not experienced with male beards - which are different in nature to female facial hair. For those wishing to seek professional help, not all electrologists in 'beauty parlours' are professionally qualified, and few of them will agree to tackle a male beard. However, 3g Resources (same address as The Tartan Skirt - see page 2) has a list of all qualified electrologists in Britain, and also a note of a country-wide chain of clinics that will tackle male beard removal for transsexuals and transgenderists and which applies very strict standards of care and confidentiality. However, the 'up-front' starting cost for a full-face treatment is in excess of £ 1000, which covers a preparatory consultation, skin care and up to 40 hours of electrolysis; although this may not be sufficient if you have a heavy beard growth. Ed. ■*

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## LAND OF THE PHARAOHS

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No, Queen Hatshepsut of Egypt - the first female Pharaoh - was *not* the first recorded female-to-male transsexual. However, although she was undoubtedly a genetic woman, for political reasons she was always portrayed in pictures and sculptures with a beard and no breasts. Well, that's certainly the easiest - and perhaps the oldest - way of achieving a 'sex change'.

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## BLONDES RULE, O.K. ?

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Unlike genetic women, we can usually choose our hair colour and style. So how many of you like being a blonde ? Or do you worry about being labelled with the 'dumb blonde' image ? Well, next time you go out to buy a hair bleach - or a wig - here are a few facts that may help you to make up your mind.

- Only 8% of women in Britain are natural blondes - but another 14.3% use a blonde colour bleach or highlighter; and the cost of maintaining that 'blonde streak' for a whole year at the hairdresser is a cool £ 150 or more.

- On the other hand the 'suicide blonde' (dyed by her own hand) may not be doing herself any good. When Jean Harlow, the film star, died at the age of 26 she was totally bald, as a result of all the peroxide she had used to keep herself blonde.

- It is believed that people associate blondes with being 'dumb' because blondness is so easily obtained from a bottle (or a wig shop).

- However, to contradict the 'dumb blonde' image, in America's Mensa (the club for people with a high I.Q.) 27% of the members are blonde

- Natural blondes have an average of 140,000 hairs on their heads, compared with only 90,000 for redheads.

- Finally, if you want to go blonde you will be in good company, along with Kylie Minogue, Madonna, Dolly Parton, Princess Diana, Michelle Pfeiffer, Sharon Davies, Selina Scott, Paula Yates - and even Glenys Kinnock, Virginia Bottomley and Margaret Thatcher ! ☺

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## A LETTER FROM PRISON

### A TRANSSEXUAL'S STORY

*by Jamie Logue*

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*By way of explanation: Jamie is a male-to-female transsexual who is serving a term in an all-male prison. The offence - repeatedly taking away motor cars - clearly started as an attempt to have a degree of control over a life which previously was confused by a lack of understanding of the condition, but it has now become an addiction. Since visiting Jamie regularly in prison I have been struck by the way in which society, by its ignorance and prejudice about gender dysphoria, and the medical profession by their own lack of knowledge and understanding, have so signally failed to offer the support and practical help that Jamie, like every TS, needs. This is Jamie's own story, which it is hoped will act as a cautionary tale for others who may seek relief from their gender dysphoria by 'taking control' in ways that may confront the law. Jamie can now see the way forward after release from prison, through all the stages to eventual reassignment surgery, and has faced up to this addiction to stealing cars. We all hope that her story will have a happy ending.*

*Anne F.*

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When you are born you are classed as either male or female; and if you are like me, so that you were a girl locked into a boy's body, it was just tough luck.

I was born on 1 April 1967 and named James, but I have been a transsexual since birth. I would like to tell you a wee bit about my growing up with this feeling and, going from one thing to another, trying to escape from my feel-

ings and eventually landing up in prison, where I now face reality.

I was six years old when I first said "I wish I was a girl", and it was then that I stole my first skirt, from a washing line. Thinking back on it, at that age I thought that this feeling was normal, but I knew that I could not say anything about it so I became a 'macho' youngster, trying to do what society sees as 'being a man'. As I grew older I began to realise that there was something about me that was different to other boys. I hated football and used to dread going to PT at school. The thought of taking my clothes off in front of other boys freaked me out, so I used to stay away from school when we had PT.

As I got older this feeling of wanting to be a girl got stronger, so at the age of 10 I joined the Army Cadets, which seemed to hide my feelings. I remember the time when, aged 15, I was a Staff Sergeant in the Cadets and we went to a camp at Winston Barracks in Lanark. It was at the end of March 1983 and we had just finished a parade. I was sitting in my billet when my feelings seemed to overpower me, so I got up and went for a walk. As I was walking I saw that there was a womans' Territorial Army unit also at the camp, and seeing this I kept saying again to myself "I wish I was a girl".

I tried to hide my feelings so I carried on thinking and walking, but with this weird feeling not leaving me. It was like I was looking through someone else's eyes, but from a different body. In the parade square I saw an army truck, so I went over just to look at it. I tried the door handle and found it open, with the keys in the ignition, so I sat in the cab and started this 20 ton truck. At 15 years old I thought this was rather 'macho', but then I drove the truck away. Why, I don't know, but as soon as I stole it the feeling of wanting to be a girl left me. However, all things must come to an end, and I crashed the truck through a fence. I was later caught for stealing the truck and taken to Lanark

police station and charged with theft, driving without insurance, and other road traffic offences. At that time I was not bothered about getting caught as I had found something that overcame my feelings - or so I thought at the time - but the thing that I dreaded most was my parents finding out. At the age of 15 the police can't detain you, so they fixed a trial date and then took me home to tell my parents what I had done. I have good parents and was not allowed out for two weeks !

I didn't steal any more cars until I was 16½ years old, when this feeling came back and I found that for me at this time cars were the only thing that would erase these feelings. So I had started on a mug's game: I stole cars. I had now stolen cars for two years, during which time I got to know a number of people. I became friends with a girl called Karen, and it was while Karen and I were friends that she asked why I had not got a girl friend. I told Karen that I was not bothered about a relationship and she seemed to accept this. After I had known Karen for about four months, in January 1985 she invited me out for a drink at *The Stage Door* in Glasgow. As I got to *The Stage Door's* car park (driving my stolen Mercedes) I saw Karen waiting for me with another girl who was later to become my permanent partner. That is how I met Agnes

I was eventually caught for stealing cars and was remanded in custody and then sentenced to 18 months + 60 days in a Young Offenders Institution. As I was starting my sentence, on 13 December 1986 my girl friend gave birth to my daughter Katrina. I was released from prison on 24 December 1987 and on my release got myself a job in a hospital as a nursing auxiliary. I had been working for about three months before my 'feeling' returned, and yet again I got back into stealing cars. I was now 21 years old and the feeling had not left me. Again I was saying "I wish I was a girl", and the only thing I knew that would take this feeling away was stealing cars; so away I went again.

I was caught again and sentenced to two years imprisonment in Barlinnie. For the first time I had to come down to earth and take my sexual identity problem seriously. Until then my car stealing had served (not very successfully), as an attempt to shut out reality. I decided that when I got out of prison I would go to my doctor and ask for a 'sex change', so when I was eventually released from Barlinnie prison I went to see my doctor - who sent me to see a psychiatrist, who sent me to a psychologist, who sent me...! I was like a yo-yo, going back and forward. By this time I had been told that I was a transsexual - a word that I didn't even know existed.

Then came the hard part. Who would believe me when I said "I'm a girl not a boy" ? I told my friend Joan, who took it brilliantly and bought me my first skirt. I then told my fiancée, Agnes, who also took it well, and we are still together. I have tried to find some way of telling my parents, but so far I have not been out of jail long enough to try to tell them. It hasn't all been accepted easily by my friends, however. My ex-friend John fell out with me once he knew about me, but Joan said that he could not be a true friend: she was right. I had been on a long and lonely journey until I spoke to Joan and had for the first time said to someone else "I am a girl". She had taken me seriously, which I may say was much easier than talking to psychiatrists and psychologists. I had found I was getting nowhere with the medical professionals, and my feelings were so strong !

I now had to face another problem in my life. I was addicted to the thrill and 'buzz' of stealing cars, and this was the only thing I knew that would hide my transsexual feelings. Yes, I stole cars. I was now 24 years old and was sentenced to four years imprisonment, which I am still serving. I am sitting in my cell writing this, not for sympathy but hopefully to help someone else. No matter how you hide your feelings, one day you will have to face them; and to end up in prison is not the place to be just because you feel different. Be the 'real you'.

I am pleased to say that since I have come into prison - or rather, to Craiginches Prison - I have had excellent counselling from Ruth, the Senior Social Worker here, who is just brilliant and to whom I will be forever grateful for all she has done for me. I have found out that I am not the only one with this feeling, and I certainly won't be the last. I am now a member of the Gender Dysphoria Trust (GDTI), who have been marvellous in what they do for transsexuals. And last but not least thanks to Anne Forrester, who is also brilliant and visits me every week. I do appreciate it.

After 26 years I have now faced reality with the help of Ruth and Anne (and Margaret, Ruth's secretary). It is not over yet. I have a long way to go, but at least I will take each hurdle one at a time, and at the end I will be what I've always been - a female. ■

**THE WAY WE WERE**

We take an affectionate look at the past through the pages of *Woman's Weekly*

In 1921 our problem page editor was dietician, beautician, medical expert and literary critic all rolled into one!



Mrs. Marryat  
Advises.

**A** DEVONSHIRE MAID.—What a funny nom-de-plume, seeing you have a husband. Try this as a hair tonic: mix equal parts of castor oil and paraffin. Rub a little into the roots of the hair three times a week with your fingertips.

*Is there a cure for hysterics?—A reader of "W. W."*

**S**OMETIMES the threat of fetching a jug of cold water to pour over the hysterical person effects a quick cure. Don't carry out the threat, however, as sometimes hysterics are a symptom of nervous breakdown, and should be treated by a doctor.

**N**ELLIE.—Don't give the young man a present unless he gives you one first. A book is generally an acceptable present if you want to give him one. All men like Kipling's books. There is one called *A Fleet in Being*. As the young man is in the Navy I am sure he would like that.

---

## TALKING LIKE A LADY

### LEARNING FEMALE SPEECH

*by Anne Forrester*

---

Let's face it; if a 'lady' comes up to you, and in a deep base voice with a thick Glasgow accent mumbles something like "Hey, you Jimmie!", you are likely to doubt that 'she' really is a lady. The bad news is that it doesn't matter how good the makeup, the clothing - even the deportment - it is the voice that is most often likely to be the 'give-away'. The good news, however, is that with reasonable luck and a certain amount of practice, it *is* possible to produce a voice that will be accepted as feminine.

Men and women speak what might almost be different languages - certainly different dialects - that we might refer to as **masculish** and **feminish**. The difference between male and female voices, and between 'masculish' and 'feminish', however, is due to a number of factors, and most of these you *can* do something about. So let's consider how to talk like a lady.

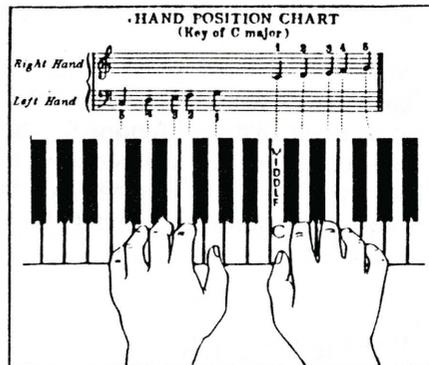
#### Raising the pitch

Most gender diverse people have the mistaken idea that the only way to adopt a 'female' voice is to raise the pitch, and when they do so they produce a falsetto that is almost as certain a 'giveaway' as a natural deep male voice. No, it is not pitch that is the main problem, although it is true that there is a difference between the normal male and female pitches, as a result of the different anatomy of the male and the female trachea (*i.e.* the windpipe) and the larynx (*i.e.* the voice box). However, the secret of understanding

this difference lies in that word 'normal'. As with most other things in life, there is very little that can truly be described as 'normal': normal is merely an *average* of what goes on around us. So let us stop for a minute and consider what is a 'normal' pitch for the voice.

Voice production experts will tell you that if you sit down at a piano you will find that the 'normal' female voice is pitched around three semitones below middle C (*i.e.* A below middle C), while the 'normal' male voice is pitched around one octave and a semitone below middle C (*i.e.* B below that lower C). However, the

good news is that both male and female voices normally have a range of around a whole octave about the 'norm', so that they overlap around the D# between these two notes. And that overlap means that it is always possible that a male voice raised a few half tones can be mistaken for a female voice (and *vice versa* - although in practice, for other reasons concerned with the use of language that we will discuss later, the latter happens less often).

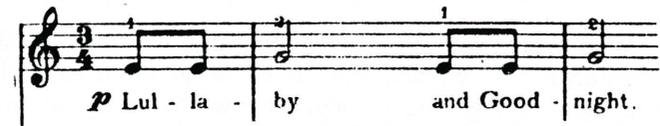


If you want to try to raise the pitch of your voice sufficiently to make a difference try humming a note - any note, just as it comes out without any effort - and then raise it three tones: that is the pitch you should

then aim for with your speaking voice. It is not difficult, but to maintain it constantly while speaking you will need to practise (try speaking into a tape recorder); and if you need to, keep going back to that humming as a marker.

## Inflection and melody

However, it is not necessarily the pitch that makes female and male voices differ. If you listen carefully to men and women speaking - and for this purpose it is better to do so in the shop, the pub or the street rather than to the radio or television, where 'normal' conditions scarcely apply - you can discern one main difference. Men tend to speak in a monotone, the pitch of their voices scarcely varying throughout and with little emphasis on particular words. Women, on the other hand, speak much more melodiously - almost like a form of singing - with the pitch of the voice constantly altering as they speak, and with particular emphasis on certain words.



This melodious form of speech is perhaps one of the most distinguishing factors between men and women. A man reflects the typical masculine practical approach to life by merely saying the words; a woman reflects the typical feminine emotional approach to life by putting emotion into her words and almost acting them. For example, a man might say something like "It's a fine day today", while a woman might say "*Isn't it a lovely day?*". And there you also have two other prime differences between masculish and feminish. Men make plain simple statements ("It is..."), women tend to phrase things as questions ("Isn't

it...?"); and men use simple descriptive words (e.g. "a fine day") while women use more descriptive - and sometimes what men would consider to be 'flowery' or emotional - words (e.g. "a lovely day"). If you wish to speak feminish, avoid dogmatic phrases such as "It is...", "That's...", etc and instead express yourself in terms like "I feel...", "I wish...", and so on.

So what about the melody factor ? You should try to make your words move up and down your tonal range and avoid the monotone that is so typically male: you don't exactly need to sing your phrases, but it comes somewhere near that. At the same time, choose your words more carefully. Be a little more adventurous with the dictionary and use words that are more expressive than you would normally use. If you are commenting on something, instead of the single monotone "Good !", say something like "That's *marvellous*". Get the idea ? It needs practice - and some thought - but with time you will find that it comes more naturally, almost like speaking a foreign language (which, in a way, it is. You are translating from masculish into feminish !).

So what else ? Well, one other thing that is stereotypically feminine is that women tend to be much more particular with their diction and to enunciate words more carefully and clearly. Yes, I know ! There are many women whose speech is so sloppy that it can be difficult to understand them; but they are not the stereotype that you should be seeking to copy if you want to pass. Don't leave off the final consonants of words; say "Going", and not "Goin'", "Asking" and not "Askin'". Whereas a man will say "Yup" or "Nope" if asked a question, a woman will almost certainly say "Yes, certainly" or "No, thank you", enunciating the words clearly as well as expanding the answer. Men's speech, on the whole, is sloppy and lazy; womens' speech, on the whole, is not (and notice that I said "is not" rather than "isn't" - that, too, is typically feminish).

## And what else ?

There is one basic rule that you should never forget when speaking as a woman. **SMILE**. No, this is not just a matter of appearance. Try saying "Hello" in your normal voice. Now, put on a broad smile and say it again. You will find that the pitch of your voice has automatically raised itself one or two half tones. A straight face 'bottles up' the voice and produces a lower tone, while if you open your mouth and relax your lips in a smile the voice is raised without even trying. Try to get up to two fingers width between your upper and lower teeth while you are talking, and you will be amazed at the difference it makes. Keep your lower jaw relaxed and open and then try consciously to move the 'tension' of talking out of your mouth and down into your stomach. Now this is much easier said than done, but it really does make a difference. Relax your tummy muscles and let your voice come out easily - don't force it. Try to draw out those vowels. Instead of just saying "Hello" try to say "He-ello-o-o".



You might also try an upwards inflection on words at the end of sentences, almost as if asking a question. Women do tend to *ask* rather than to *state* dogmatically, as men do, so put 'tag questions' on the end of phrases: "It's time for dinner, isn't it ?" is much more feminish than the masculish dogmatism of "It's dinner time".

One helpful thing that you may be able to do is to adopt an accent. I find that my 'English' accent is a great attraction in America, where it is looked on as 'cute', while just a touch of Scottish lilt brings out great smiles and an immediately sympathetic hearing. Similarly, an American accent in Britain attracts more attention to the accent itself than to

the voice behind it, and so can distract from a male pitch. A Scottish accent in England also helps. (However, too broad a Glasgow accent tends to run to the lower registers of pitch. The 'glottal stop' is also distinctly contrary to the usual perception of feminine clarity of diction, and if too obvious can be self-defeating. Similarly, the Doric of the north-east can be well-nigh incomprehensible to a southerner. Try an Edinburgh [? Morningside] or a west highland accent instead).

Finally, you should always remember that women have the natural advantage of a lighter voice than men. It is not easy to describe this, but a man's voice tends to come from down in the chest while a woman's voice seems to come from higher up, originating in the throat. Also, whereas men tend to speak strongly and forcefully, women speak more quietly (although don't speak so quietly that people are forever asking you to repeat yourself; that invalidates the whole concept). And women also have one intrinsic advantage: they can always attract a sympathetic hearing (and incidentally cover up any 'roughness' in their voice) by a certain amount of breathiness, and this is not difficult to adopt, especially when saying 'Goodbye'. This can be quite sexy, however, so be careful not to use it too much in the wrong situation, and possibly attract attentions that you may not wish !

### What about surgery ?

If you are considering surgery, either to raise the pitch of your voice or to remove a prominent Adam's Apple (and these are moves that many transsexuals do consider), then the best advice can be summed up in one word. **DON'T**. Surgery on the larynx, and the throat generally, is almost never successful. Some will talk about a 'tracheal shave' to reduce the Adam's Apple, and others will talk about surgery to shorten the vocal cords. It is true that there are some surgeons who will attempt such manoeuvres (although not

many reputable nose and throat specialists will do so unless there are very compelling medical reasons). However, I have met far too many people who have had such surgery in the hope of making their voices and their appearance more feminine, but who have ended up with ruined voices that sound neither masculine nor feminine, but just plain croaky.

### And putting it together...

If you want to take the matter seriously - as all transsexuals and true transgenderists do - then there are a few books on the subject that are worth reading. Basically I would advise you to consider those books that consider the differences between the communication styles of men and women, rather than anything devoted specifically to voice production. *You Just Don't Understand* by Deborah Tannen (reviewed in *The Tartan Skirt* NS No3, July 1992) and the recently published *Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus* by John Gray (to be reviewed in the next issue) are probably the best that you will find.

There is one basic rule that you should never forget. **People see and hear what they expect to see and hear**. Therefore if they see a person clothed in a neat dress, nylons and heels, and with well-dressed long hair, they expect to be seeing a woman - so they are mentally attuned to expect to be hearing a woman. If you have raised the pitch of your voice by just a few semitones, speak in a light but melodious voice, use the kind of words and diction that a woman would use, and smile as you speak, then they will accept you as a woman. And the day that someone on the phone, without the benefit of a female image in front of them, addresses you as 'Madam', then you have really cracked it ! ☺

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## **EUROFANTASIA - A EUROPEAN**

### **FANTASY AT EBELTOFT**

*by Linda Marshall*

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"Are you finished?" I asked Alice, hoping to get nearer the bathroom mirror in order to do my makeup. "No, I'm Danish" came the reply. It was an old joke which never seemed to wear thin during the week we shared an apartment, together with a gentle giant from Sweden called Berit. In spite of our different nationalities and backgrounds we had at least one thing in common which had brought us together in the little town of Ebeltoft on the east coast of Jutland for an idyllic seven days in May - a love of all things feminine.

There were Germans, Americans, Scandinavians, a sprinkling of French, a handful of English, an Australian couple, a Swiss, myself and one other from Northern Ireland who I had not expected to run into so far from home. Around 50 people had gathered to celebrate the first ever *EuroFantasia*, constructed on the model of the American *Fantasia Fair* by a Swede living in Norway who had chosen Denmark as the venue and English as the common language. Jenny Sand, assisted by a small committee, had worked tirelessly for months to make sure that everything fell into place as if by magic - and it did. The picturesque little seaside town of Ebeltoft (= apple orchard), with its cobbled streets and timber-framed houses, combined with constant sunshine to produce a real European fantasy.

They had wheeled in the big guns from America to make sure everything went with a bang (or at least a twang). For

readers of *Tapestry* they were all household names and it was a delight to meet them in the flesh - Merissa Sherrill Lynn (executive director of the International Foundation for Gender Education), Eve Burchert of IFGE and Tri-Ess, Dr Sheila Kirk, Nancy Nangeroni and photographer Mariette Pathy Allen. They each conducted one of the seminars or femininity sessions during the packed programme. The European input included femininity schools led by Ebony Davis (who owns a beauty salon in Munich and who is also an accomplished cabaret singer), a seminar involving feminist writer Annie Woodhouse, and contributions from two Danish ladies, one a wig specialist and the other a dressmaker.

Each morning was spent at femininity school, covering everything from electrolysis to the proper way to get in and out of a Porsche! In parallel, a programme of meetings for the small number of partners present was held. After a superb lunch the series of afternoon seminars dealt with hormones, coming out to friends and family, a look at Mariette's photographs, a discussion on transvestism from the feminist's perspective, and an exchange of views on the way forward, chaired by Merissa. The evenings were taken up with a welcome cocktail party, two excellent set dinners, a fantasy disco, and a talent show - with plenty of talent on view. There were also two free evenings in which to sample the local restaurants and bars, and a free day to go shopping in the nearby city of Århus, where the department stores were pretty classy.

The participants (most of whom were from Germany) had plenty to say during the seminars, and some lively discussions developed - fortunately stopping short of boiling over into open warfare, though on one or two occasions it came pretty close. The standard of English spoken by virtually everyone at *EuroFantasia* was very high, with only a couple of the Germans requiring simultaneous translations.

Linguistically the continentals put most of us to shame. Alice, a film distribution company managing director, spoke fluent English, French, German and Italian on top of her native Danish, and Swedish and Norwegian. Berit, an unemployed carpet layer, spoke almost perfect English as well as some Spanish and the Scandinavian languages. Although I speak German and some French, along with the other native English speakers I was glad that most of the local inhabitants spoke English. While slightly bemused by so many transvestites in one place the locals maintained a restrained politeness at all times. Even in one of the roughest looking bars in the place (where I saw my one and only Great Dane) there was not a whimper of disapproval from anyone; though it must be said that being escorted by a large Swede in male clothes does help (no vegetarian cannibals in this town !). The nearest we got to dissidence were a few wolf whistles at Århus.

Underlying the general spirit of positive international contact, however, the dark spectre of internecine conflict, which seems to bedevil TV groups everywhere, still lurked and came visibly to the fore as people talked privately about the problems they face in their own countries. Berit told me of the split in the Swedish FPE, and Alice Nielsen said she had been expelled from the Danish group along with her supporters because she had wanted to be more open. What they described was mirrored in Germany and England, where different factions go off each in their own direction, and harmony is distinctly lacking.

(Strangely, this situation is not reflected in Northern Ireland where, in contrast to the community conflict, in Belfast everyone comes together and there is a positive atmosphere in the TV/TS group. We even have good relations with our near neighbours in Dublin, where national differences are forgotten). However, with parochial problems never far from the surface, it is small wonder that no giant steps were taken to create a Pan-European union of TV/TS groups at Ebeltoft. A trans-national organisation seems a long way

off, but perhaps an important first step was taken in Denmark, and in succeeding years a new spirit of international cooperation will come about.

Maybe it was just coincidence but a few days after *Euro-Fantasia* ended the Danes voted in favour of the Maastricht treaty and greater European union. I think it will take some time before transvestites (or whatever factional name the ego-trippers eventually agree upon) can come together to tackle the real issue - our collective relationship to mainstream society. However long it takes I believe this is something well worth working towards, and I strongly urge you, if you possibly can, to attend *EuroFantasia* in the future (at £265 for the week it is not overpriced). As well as having a great time and meeting new people you may just end up at the finish in front of the bathroom mirror thinking that being Danish might not be so bad after all.

Footnote: As I arrived at Harwich on my return journey I was amused to note that Her Majesty's Customs and Excise were obviously on the ball and had obviously decided to brighten up a dull Monday morning with a little game of 'harass the trannie'. After pinpointing the car they proceeded to haul out my four suitcases from the boot and then, leaving them untouched for the time being, set about ripping out the back seat and generally taking the car apart. My part in the charade was presumably to stand back and sweat pending the opening of the suitcases. However, they had no intention of opening them (and I wouldn't have cared a toss if they had). The comment of the interviewing officer to her colleague once they had replaced my unopened luggage, and as I was preparing to drive off, spoke volumes. "Not a hint of embarrassment" she said. Now why should I be embarrassed ? I uphold the law and do not use my position to infringe the inalienable rights of others to live their lives as they see fit, for my personal amusement. ☺

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THE SIXTH ANNUAL

# Harmony Weekend

**SCARBOROUGH**

**Friday 5th - Sunday 7th November 1993**

*A social weekend organised by Martine Rose for members of all TV/IS groups with the aim of fostering inter-group friendship and harmony.*

We take over an hotel completely for the weekend (the same as used for previous 'Harmony Weekends') so there are no other guests to worry about if you are not used to 'dressing' in public. The friendly hotel staff are well used to us and indeed greatly look forward to welcoming us back again.

The Hotel is of an excellent standard with most rooms having private toilet and bath/shower facilities and all rooms having a tea/coffee making tray, telephone, radio and colour television with an in-house video system. The Hotel is situated within easy walking distance of the centre of Scarborough and is close to the South Cliff (with footpaths and funicular down to the beach).

The cost of the weekend is only £82 (sharing) which includes two nights bed and full English breakfast, a lavish buffet on the Friday evening, a four course dinner on the Saturday evening followed by a disco until late. Lunches are not included but snacks are available at the bar (which is fully licensed).

Guests may arrive any time from the Friday afternoon onwards. The buffet will be served around 7.30pm but food will be available until late for those who arrive late. Rooms should be vacated by midday on the Sunday but guests may stay around the hotel until later and have lunch at the bar.

Through most of the weekend there will also be:

*Vicky's Wig Boutique* – a superb collection of wigs and expert personal fittings.

*Kentucky Woman* – an exotic range of clothes, lingerie, corsets and accessories.

*Kathy's Dress Agency* – fashionable garments, designer wear, ball gowns and cocktail dresses.

*Rose's* – *Repartee* magazine and *Martine Rose's 'Boobs'* will be on sale.

Other traders and events which may be arranged will be announced later.

Booking Form from: **Martine Rose, PO Box 339, Sheffield S1 3SX**

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## POP QUIZ

FOR AMUSEMENT ONLY

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*Do you think you know your pop music ? Well, try this short quiz and see just how much you can really remember. (Answers on page 46 - no cheating, now !).*

1. Who sang about an *Itsy-bitsy teeny weeny yellow polka-dot bikini* ?
2. What colour dress featured in an Alvin Stardust hit title ?
3. Who offered advice to *Leap up and down, wave your knickers in the air* ?
4. Which British pop star sang *Y viva suspenders* ?
5. Who sang about *Bras on 45* in 1981 ?
6. Which girl country singer is associated with a *Coat of many colours* ?
7. Which British heavy metal group had a hit in 1980 with *Women in uniform* ?
8. Which R & B singer introduced us to *Hi-heel sneakers* ?
9. Which girl singer of the 60s never wore any footwear on stage ?

*And finally:*

10. How many girls were there sitting in the back seat ? ■

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## RECIPE TIME

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Why not try this appetising recipe for

### ITALIAN TUNA ?

This dish for two will never appear in the great cookery books of the world, but it's cheap and gets great mileage out of a tin of tuna. When a girl has been on her feet all day a slave to the stove is the last thing you want to be, so 15 minutes is all the time you need to prepare Italian Tuna.

For two servings you will need:

- 8 oz spaghetti
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 large onion, coarsely chopped
- 4 tablespoons of olive oil
- 2 tins of Tuna
- 1 medium sized tin of tomatoes
- 1½ teaspoons of basil *or* mixed herbs
- 2 tablespoons of tomato purée
- Salt and pepper
- Parmesan cheese

Start the spaghetti cooking while you fry the garlic and onions in the olive oil until they are just tender. Then add the tin of tomatoes, basil (or herbs), salt and pepper. Bring all of this to the boil, add the tomato puree and turn the heat low to simmer for 5 minutes. Now add the tuna, let it heat through, and serve all this over the cooked and drained spaghetti, garnishing it with parmesan cheese. Lovely !

Vanessa (Inverness) ☺



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## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

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"You've got to be dressed right for shopping. If you're going to be trying things on you don't want to be wearing stuff that you have to unbutton and heave yourself in or out of and trainers that you have to untie. There's nothing more boring than dragging clothes on and off till you're so hot and bothered you can't actually buy anything. You've got to be in the right gear to do it"

*Nina Myskow  
In Love, Sex and the  
Pursuit of Chocolate*

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## WHAT I LEARNED LIVING FULL TIME

*by Vicki Thomas*

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During the IFGE convention held in Houston, Texas in April 1992 I was amazed to see how accepting the general public has become. Having no formal role to play for the convention I assigned myself the job of unofficial chauffeur. On several shopping trips with ladies who were at best average at passing I was prepared to be gawked at, ridiculed and avoided. In every store we visited, however, we were treated with courtesy and respect, as ladies. This, along with Virginia Prince's suggestion for anyone thinking about living full-time as a woman to take two weeks off and live as a woman in a normal environment, pushed me into an experiment which both answered some questions about the limits of my femininity and raised some new ones. Now my employment doesn't allow me to take two weeks off at a time, so purists might be quick to invalidate my data. While it is true that 40 hours a week had to be served as a man for the six weeks the experiment lasted, the remaining time was spent as a woman. That is to say I did my shopping, banking, household chores, socialising, church attendance and every aspect of my life not related to work as a woman. My goal was to get a greater grasp of what it means to be a woman, and to explore the difficulties of transition.

Those contemplating an experiment like this should make some preparations first. I obtained a Texas ID card which

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\* Reprinted from *The Femme Mirror* 18, No 1

was sufficient to allow me to cash cheques at my bank. (I switched branches so that when I returned as a man there would not be any confusion). Likewise, I shopped at different stores from the ones I normally patronise as a male. The most frightening aspect for me was coming and going from my apartment. I was aided here when most of the downstairs residents were moved away so that repairs could be made on flood damage. Moreover, the new management company that had taken over was unfamiliar with the tenants. Having enough clothes and the right kind of clothes was another important consideration. I'm afraid the majority of crossdressers wouldn't last two weeks as women because real women don't go to that many parties and formal affairs. But what is most important is to be mentally prepared.

For those who don't know me I should tell you that I have been going out in public for a little over ten years. I have a background in the theatre. I have made careful studies of feminine mannerisms, speech and the roles women are called upon to play. Also, I was able to conduct an experiment of living full time because I am **single** and have few family responsibilities. Only those who are unmarried and are ready should attempt such a lifestyle. Being ready means not only presenting a good feminine appearance, but being able to think on your feet with an imaginary biography which can be accessed when confronted. Passing, then, was not a problem. However, self-discovery demanded I stare the transsexual demon in the face until one of us blinked. While I don't share the traditional TS complaint - a woman trapped in a man's body - the joy of life as a man has been slipping badly in recent years. At some point, even if your sexual preference is for women, the single person who has failed to flourish in a long-term relationship with a female must ask the question "Would I be a better companion as a woman for either a man or a woman?". Such a decision need not result in surgery. Virginia Prince has lived successfully as a woman for many years without surgery. Surprisingly, very few crossdressers or pseudo-transsexuals investigate the transgenderist option.

What I discovered is that with a certain level of sexual maturity this kind of lifestyle can be very satisfying. Once you are accepted in this gender role longlasting, deep emotional friendships are possible with women as a whole. Moreover, women can slip in and out of independent and dependent roles without it reflecting on their characters. A classic example of this occurred at a T.J.Max store. A woman ahead of me in the checkout line was having difficulty managing her three children while trying to pay for the items she wanted to purchase. Finally, a woman stepped up and offered to hold her baby. Such an incident would never happen in a line of men. Men, I'm sorry to say, follow the *credo* of lead, follow, or get out of my way.

Ladies' Rooms and changing rooms are another example of the differences between women and men. Only recently have I mastered the courage to take on the dreaded restroom ordinance. However, for many years I have tried on



clothes before buying them. While women do .lm sometimes go shopping alone, typically this is a unique bonding experience for women, like sports and outdoor activities are for men. To a man, clothes only represent a functional necessity, whereas women regard clothes and shopping as an opportunity to relive memories of a rite of passage, or a chance to exercise mental energy to overcome some physical defect by using fashions. Moreover, as women rise higher in the work force, appearance is scrutinised more thoroughly than it is

for men. This is to say that while women may have conversations in restaurants ranging from business to men to family matters, in the changing room the conversation is strictly about the business at hand, and at the very least is as serious a matter as the Super Bowl is for men.

As a crossdresser you learn quickly where you can use a restroom without embarrassment. Living full time, of course, required me to rub against a Houston city ordinance designed to protect the privacy of women, but which can snare the crossgendered person as well. I guess I passed the acid test recently when one of the women in the ladies' room revealed to me that she was a Houston Police Officer. (When I break the law I don't mess around !). Here is another difference between the psychologies of men and women. A man would never speak to a stranger in the mens' room on such a personal level. I believe that men recognise a certain vulnerability while relieving themselves. For the sex that is charged with being captains of their own fate and in control of every situation, there is nothing more frightening than being vulnerable. On the other hand, women from a physiological standpoint don't feel the same sense of control; their bodies never achieve stasis. Likewise, because half the population is physically stronger than they are, they are forced early in life to come to terms with being vulnerable. Lastly, because men control the parameters of a dating situation, the ladies' room may be the only sanctuary women have to compose themselves and to discuss strategies with another woman. Common concerns the may explain why there is such familiarity in the ladies' rooms.

No true experiment could be complete without some interaction with heterosexual men. Singles' bars represent the ultimate challenge for the crossgendered person. I say this because nothing un-nerves us more than to be stared at. To us, being stared at equals being read. However, in a singles' bar being stared at is the rule of thumb. Men are sizing you up regardless of how you look. Their radar picks

up a target and they have to go to battle stations before visual contact is made. Women look you over as well to see how much competition you represent. While my experience is limited in this regard, it is my opinion - and the opinion of others who are transitioning as women - that genetic females are very ignorant of the power they possess when they engage in the mating rituals.

I once danced with a man who said he worked at a Wyatt's Cafeteria. When I innocently asked if he was a manager it was as if I had taken the wind out of his sails. The lesson for all persons inhabiting the female gender is that the male ego is very fragile and the wrong kind of approach can have disastrous consequences. Then there are men who go to singles' bars who are just plain jerks. They don't know how to approach women and are often prodded by their buddies to make a sexual conquest. I was very lucky in the times I was out in that no one made a move on me for sexual intimacy. All the men I danced with were real gentlemen, and also incredibly willing to take the blame for my dancing inadequacies. Moreover, with those men who had a quiet self-confidence I never felt my femininity more personified.

What I learned which I think is applicable to all crossdressers is that, like 'Tootsie', being a woman every day induces a certain pride and gives the world-weary among us a chance to escape and recharge our batteries. It allows us to finally get over that old crossdresser hurdle of worrying whether we pass. Feelings become more important than clothes. Despite the good feelings that come from living full-time there is also a recognition that something is missing. While all our mannerisms, style and self-definition are modelled after heterosexual women, there is an awareness that a huge chunk of what it means to be a woman is absent because we don't share their fiery passions to mate with a male. No matter how hard I tried to simulate sexual attraction for men, I always found my eyes focussing on the women in the room. Unlike many transgenderists who think

that they will have surgery and will become lesbians, I am wise enough to understand that lesbians couldn't care less about plumbing. Indeed, physical sex is hindered more than helped by their anatomy. What lesbians seek is a depth of feeling which in their minds can be tapped only by another woman; someone who instinctively knows where eroticism lies and can communicate on the same level to insure proper timing. Obviously, many transsexuals would fail to satisfy in this dimension, not to mention the poor misguided transgenderist.

For the person who is not a true transsexual the transgendered lifestyle can afford comfort in the superficial aspects of womanhood. This of course means that one must accept the fact that he will never be more than an imitation. Imitation need not be a dirty word here. A whole generation has been reared on margarine and are repelled at the taste of real butter. Likewise, the person who doesn't fit the mould of a transsexual, but feels the same intensity to express femininity can get some emotional relief as long as there is the realisation that not all of the loose ends are tied down by this transition. Hormones, electrolysis, breast implants are options which can be reversed and it is up to each individual to determine which if any of these options their emotional needs require. Likewise, there are classes in voice, makeup, and proper walk. Physiological changes made on the body make any credible male appearance much more difficult. As Virginia Prince suggested, those going beyond the limits of my experiment ought to have a financial plan to support themselves as women.

What I learned living full time was that while I got some relief from the depression caused by my inability to live up to the standards of manhood I set for myself, I did not gain insights on what I need to do to be happy again. Crossdressers use femininity to escape the responsibilities society places on men. Transsexuals seek to escape bodies which don't match their perceptions of themselves. I found myself looking both ways, not sure if I was trying to escape my

masculinity or giving myself a second chance to feel good about myself. Most importantly, though, was my revelation that Cynthia Philip was right. We are all 'Lost girls', permanent residents of Never-Never Land, never master of that which we love with all our passion. We are adolescent girls in dowager bodies. While our sexual fantasies are masculine, we are repulsed by the duties of the masculine role.

From a practical standpoint I realised how inconvenient it is to be a woman. I'm not talking about putting on makeup or putting your hair in curlers. To be sure, the average CD tires of that after a few days. What I'm speaking about is the need to engage in tough, aggressive bargaining. The need to buy another car formally brought an end to my summer experiment. Although gender females are able to engage the masculine side of their personality for such occurrences, transgenderists can't suppress the male side of our personality without corking that part of ourselves used to prevent us from being cheated. Hence I am now aware that if I ever repeat this experiment I will need to live with someone who can take on these kinds of responsibilities for me.

For the moment there are no plans to begin again. After counselling I have been persuaded to give my male self another chance. I will be pursuing some goals as a male which are not so lofty, but which are achievable. Whether knocking down 'straw men' will enable me to have better self-esteem is still unknown. Should this approach fail, I am ready again to live as a woman. To paraphrase Winston Churchill, what I have done is not the end or the beginning, but it is an end to the beginning. ■

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## ENTRY TO BRITAIN BY CROSS-GENDERED AMERICAN CITIZENS

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*Following on the items in previous issues about international travel by transsexuals and crossdressers travelling in a gender role different from that shown in their passport, further enquiries were made of the Immigration Service in London about the position of American (and other alien) citizens seeking to enter Britain while in a gender role different from that shown in their Passport. For the benefit of our American readers the following reply from the Chief Immigration Officer sets out clearly what American citizens may expect when seeking to enter Britain in a gender role different to that shown in their Passport.*

"Dear Ms Forrester:

Thank you for your letter about transgendered or transsexual United States citizens seeking entry to the United Kingdom.

As you are probably aware, the Immigration Rules require a person, on arrival in the United Kingdom, to produce on request by the immigration officer, a valid national passport or other document satisfactorily establishing his identity and nationality for the purpose of determining whether he requires leave to enter. Persons who are subject to immigration control, including United States citizens, must satisfy the immigration officer that they will qualify for entry under the current Immigration Rules which are passed by Parliament.

Whilst it may take an immigration officer a little longer than usual to be satisfied of the identity and nationality of a person travelling in a gender identity opposite to that shown in their passport, this in itself should not normally present a problem. However, once that person's nationality and identity have been established, they will still have to satisfy the immigration officer that they qualify for entry under the published Immigration Rules. Thus a person seeking entry as a visitor must satisfy the immigration officer that they are genuinely seeking entry for this purpose and can maintain and accommodate themselves without working or recourse to public funds and can meet the cost of their onward or return journey. It is entirely a matter for the person concerned whether they carry additional evidence in support of their application for leave to enter, if they feel that their passport alone is not sufficient for the purpose of satisfying the immigration officer on arrival.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely

MV Stanley  
Chief Immigration Officer

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*A considerable amount of official information has been obtained regarding the issue of passports to, and international travel by, British and American transsexuals and crossdressers, and this has now all been reprinted as a pamphlet. Copies are available from the publishers, ADF Editorial Services, Tullochvenus House, Lumphanan., Aberdeenshire AB31 4RN, Scotland, UK, price £1.50 post paid.*

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## HAIR TODAY, GONE TOMORROW

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No doubt we all wish that we could get rid of our body hair when we dress. Of course, this is something that women have been doing for centuries, as female body hair has long been regarded as an erotic turn-off.

As long as 5000 years ago, in ancient Egypt women rubbed themselves with dried papyrus leaves to remove excess hair, while in the third century AD Roman ladies used depilatory creams based on such delightful substances as yellow arsenic, or mixtures such as the blood of a wild she-goat mixed with sea palm - or even the poisonous gall of a viper !

Nowadays most removal of body hair relies on harmless (although often unpleasant-smelling) modern depilatory creams, or on waxing or sugaring, which between them all are used by a quarter of all women in western countries. And it's not only genetic women who use them. Quite apart from crossdressers, transgenderists and transsexuals, male sports enthusiasts such as body builders, swimmers and cyclists also appreciate the benefits of a smooth hair-free body ! ■

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## IS THIS WHAT WOMEN NEED ?

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Mae West is said to have suggested that the needs of women vary with age, and are as follows:

from 0-18	good parenting
from 18-35	good looks
from 35-55	good personality
from 55	money !



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## SHOPPING FOR BEGINNERS

(FOR YOUR *FEMME* SELF)

by Anne Forrester

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For those who are just starting to come out of the closet it can be difficult at first to find places to buy clothes, shoes and makeup. Quite apart from some initial (and usually unnecessary) embarrassment there is the problem of just where to go. Perhaps the following suggestions may help.

### Where to go

Firstly, don't be tempted to go to 'specialist' shops that cater specifically for crossdressers and transsexuals. If you do you will certainly find yourself paying far more for your purchases than you would for superior items elsewhere; and you may also find yourself in unwelcome surroundings of pornographic magazines, 'sexy' outfits and even S&M equipment.

Clothing and makeup are best purchased from the same places that ladies use but (at least until you are totally passable) *while you are in the male role*. Men buy clothes and cosmetics for their wives and girl friends all the time, and businesses these days are almost always interested in only one thing - your money. However, some shop assistants may be disturbed if approached by someone who is obviously a man 'in drag'. Consequently, to avoid possible trouble you should only buy female clothing and cosmetics while *en femme* if you are **totally** passable - and that means not only well dressed and made up, but with a totally female general deportment and mannerisms, and (especially) a feminine voice. The best test is that if you think you

could 'pass' completely undetected while holding a conversation with a woman in a ladies' toilet, then OK; otherwise it is best not to try buying clothing while dressed. Women generally accept cross-dressing quite well in most circumstances, but in places that they regard as female territory (like clothing shops - especially in the changing rooms - and toilets), they can be *very* critical and *very* difficult if faced with it unexpectedly. Also, in some of the larger department stores the store detectives are on the look-out for obvious 'transvestites', who may not be welcome in the store due to bad experiences with some awkward and difficult individuals in the past.

So go out armed with a clear idea of your measurements and sizes, and an equally clear idea about colours and styles that are likely to suit you. Even if you think you will pass, and do go shopping *en femme*, apart from jackets and coats it is best not to attempt to try on items in the shop.

**Outer clothing.** Your best bet is to try the better charity shops (see the article 'Best buy clothing' in the April 1992 issue of *The Tartan Skirt*: reprints available at £1.00 post paid). Generally, the Imperial Cancer Research Fund and Cancer Research Campaign shops will have the best selection of quality items at reasonable prices. For new clothes you can do no better than Happit or Littlewoods. Marks and Spencer (M&S) and the British Home Stores (BHS) are also excellent, but a bit more expensive. If you make a mistake, all of the 'new' stores will give you a refund or exchange if you take the goods back undamaged and with the original tags and receipts, although of the charity shops only the Cancer Research Campaign does so.

**Underwear.** The best place to buy this is in the big Littlewoods stores, where everything is on open racks from which you simply make your selection and take it with your money to the cashier. M&S and BHS are also good, but BHS has a smaller selection and the items in both places are mostly boxed, and so are less easily examined.

**Nylons.** Whether tights or stockings, the best bet is the stands to be found in any supermarket. As a rule 'Pretty Polly' are the best buy, but 'Bear Brand' are also good. Just make your selection and put them in the basket with your groceries. BHS, Debenhams and Frasers also have good ranges of their own brands on display on open stands, and these are excellent value.

**Shoes.** This can be the difficult one. If you are size 7 or smaller then try Curtess for low prices. Otherwise the larger branches of Saxone have a 'Large and Small' section that is not cheap, but well worth trying for sizes up to 11. Timpson's can also be worth a try. (At sale times you often get very good bargains in Saxone in their larger sizes). Shoe fittings are critical for comfort and the best way when you go to buy ladies' shoes while in the male role is to wear slip-on shoes and, instead of socks, a pair of nylon 'knee-highs' ('pop socks') in black or dark grey. These look just like socks but give the fit of nylons. Shoes are normally displayed on racks - especially at Sale times - and it is usually not too difficult to get behind a rack and unobtrusively slip off your male shoe and slip on one of the female ones that you wish to try. When you have found a pair, just take them to the counter with the money.

**Cosmetics.** No trouble at all, here. Either go to Boots or Superdrug - where there are large ranges on display - or to the cosmetics stand in any supermarket. Take what you want and pay for it - although don't always expect to be able to try the 'sampler' items on display. (If you do, try them on the back of your hand, not your face. The skin colour is similar and you can do it more unobtrusively). If you want specialist help with cosmetics, are prepared to pay for this, and can visit London or Edinburgh, there are specialists who will happily provide expert professional advice to crossdressers and transsexuals. Write to the Editor (address on page 2, please enclose a SAE) for names and addresses.

**Wigs.** You can, of course, buy these by mail order, although this is rarely satisfactory as it is really necessary to try a number of wigs in order to get one that is both the right colour and style for you - and even then it will usually need at least some styling by a hairdresser. And don't be tempted to go to the wig counters of the major department stores. These will not always welcome you, and are unlikely to be in a position to offer expert advice to crossdressers or transsexuals. There are a number of specialists who will happily provide expert professional advice to crossdressers and transsexuals. Again, write to the Editor (address on page 2), enclosing a SAE for names and addresses.

#### **In summary**

The main thing for the beginner is to do your shopping in the male role, being quite open and avoiding looking furtive. You don't have to say why you want any of these things, but if you do feel pressed to say anything, say the item is for your wife, girlfriend, or whoever. (You can even ask if you can bring it back if it doesn't fit her or if she doesn't like it). If you still feel that you may have trouble, then why not try mail order catalogues? You can try things on in privacy and at leisure, and return goods if they are not suitable. The only problem is that they are a bit more fuss and a bit more expensive than ordinary retail outlets, and the illustrations in the catalogues are not always a true indication of colour or quality. And in any case, things never look as good on you as they do on the models.

Finally, you really should go along to one of the gender support groups, at any of which you will find help and advice. Contact addresses for all the British groups were printed in the April 1993 *Tartan Skirt*. Again, reprints are available from the Editor, price £1.00 post paid. ♥

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## A CRY FROM PRISON

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They say there is a reason;  
They say that time will heal.  
But neither time nor reason  
Will change the way I feel.

For no-one knows the heartache  
That lays behind my smiles:  
For no-one knows how many times  
I've broken down and cried.

I want to tell you something,  
So there won't be any doubt.  
It's so wonderful to think of -  
But so hard to be without

Jamie L ■

---oooOOOooo---

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## HOW MUCH DID YOU REMEMBER ?

ANSWERS TO THE QUIZ ON PAGE 27

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- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Brian Hyland | 6. Dolly Parton |
| 2. Red          | 7. Iron Maiden  |
| 3. St. Cecilia  | 8. Tommy Tucker |
| 4. Judge Dread  | 9. Sandie Shaw  |
| 5. Ivor Biggun  | 10. Seven       |



## HAVE YOU READ ?

Some Books Reviewed

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*Katherine's Diary: the Story of a Transsexual* by Katherine Cummings. Port Melbourne, Australia: Heinemann. 1992. ISBN 0-85561-450-1. (Paperback. Price not stated. Should be obtainable through booksellers in the UK and USA to special order. Quote the ISBN number to your bookseller).

This is really a rather remarkable book. Katherine (formerly John) Cummings is an over-50 professional academic librarian who lived most of his life as a (frequently fetishistic) transvestite, married and had two children before coming fully to terms with her true transsexuality and undergoing gender reassignment. As befits one with her literary training and experience, the book is exceptionally well written - and therefore exceptionally 'readable'. Consequently this is the sort of book that one simply can not put down, quite apart from the fascination of its story.

John Cummings was born in Scotland - in Aberdeen in 1935 - and as a result of his father's seafaring career was brought up in the Gilbert Islands, New Zealand, Fiji, Scotland and Australia, where he finally settled. He first discovered a propensity for crossdressing in university amateur dramatics and, despite a somewhat 'macho' period of National Service in the Royal Australian Navy, followed by a further period in the Naval Reserve to gain his commission, found that he was spending ever more time exploring the delights of crossdressing. At this time in his life the distinction between crossdressing and transsexualism seems rather unclear - he refers to his 'transsexualism', but it was clearly the 'dressing' rather than the 'being' that interested him.

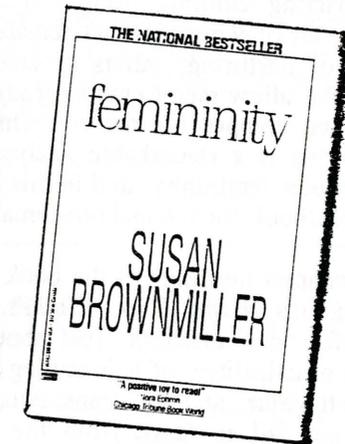
A happy marriage did not stop the crossdressing, and a prolonged period working in the USA allowed him for the first time to meet openly with others of the same interest, including Virginia Prince, the *grande dame* of the transgender community. On his return to Australia John found an increasing interest in the fetishistic crossdressing that he had indulged in while in America, appearing as a 'French Maid' at rather wild parties with his friends in the gender community, joining (while cross-dressed) in some S & M games, and modelling in provocative poses with a 'Madame Lash'. However, throughout this period John remained a firmly heterosexual - and faithful - family man, and the crossdressing was interspersed by long periods of ordinary family and business life. Nevertheless, underlying all of this was a strengthening desire to 'be' female, and not just to dress from time to time in womens' clothes.

Sadly - as is most often the case - his wife disapproved of the crossdressing and eventually, following ultimatums to stop, that he was not able to accept, his marriage broke up and his contacts with many of his family and former friends had to cease. The story has a (modified) happy ending, however, as John eventually found sympathetic professional help and underwent the reassignment surgery that he had come to crave, to become Katherine. She was fortunate enough to be able to transition on the job and retain her senior academic position. On the negative side, however, Katherine had to undergo the trauma of a divorce and a subsequent claim by her (Catholic) wife for annulment of their 23-year marriage.

What makes this story different from most biographies of transsexuals (apart from the very 'readable' way in which it is written) is the way in which a 'normal' young boy first discovered crossdressing and lived with - and enjoyed - that for most of his life, before coming to a full acceptance of his transsexuality in later life. It is a story painfully familiar to many in our community, but one that is too seldom faced up to, let alone recounted for others.

The book - which is very well illustrated with photographs of John/Katherine throughout her life - brought forth at times both laughter and tears from myself, in recognition of so much that we all experience and suffer throughout our lives. It is one of the best and most moving of all such biographies that I have read, and is thoroughly recommended.

A.F. ■



*Femininity* by Susan Brownmiller. New York: Ballantine Books (a division of Random House Books). 1985. ISBN 0 449 90142 4. US \$ 10.00

Although this book was first published in America nine years ago it is incredible that it has not yet been published in this country - although it should be available to special order if you quote the ISBN number to your bookseller. Quite simply, it is about what the title says - femininity. However, it is written by a committed feminist who is a talented writer and who sees all too clearly what are the distinguishing marks of femininity - and who can describe and analyse them with remarkable objectivity while disap-

proving of most of the signs, symbols and attributes that mean that femininity, as commonly perceived, keeps women in a subordinate 'second class citizen' status in society.

You can look at this book in two different ways. As the author wrote (and doubtless intended) it, this is a diatribe against those conventions of society that demean women by keeping them in a state of subjection - from tight skirts and constricting clothing, long finger nails and high heeled shoes, all of which restrict female movements, to expectations of nurturing, bursts of emotion, passive behaviour, *etc*, that allow men to take a leading role with their aggressive and competitive natures. On a different plane, however, this is a remarkable analysis of just what it is that constitutes femininity: and in this respect it makes an excellent textbook for the male-to-female genderist.

The chapter headings of the book give a good idea of what it contains: *Body. Hair. Clothes. Voice. Skin. Movement. Emotion* and *Ambition*. Just about everything is covered, from practicalities of hair styling and speech to the politics of behaviour, and the transsexual or serious crossdresser can not fail to learn from the author's description and analysis of every aspect of femininity. The final point, that makes this book especially valuable, is that it is written in a delightfully 'readable' style that holds on to the reader's interest at all stages of the discussion.

Sadly, it is not a book that you will find on ordinary book-sellers' shelves, but it is well worth seeking out and, if necessary, ordering privately from the American publishers (or getting any friend who may be visiting the USA or Canada to bring back for you). A quite remarkable combination of feminist statement and (perhaps more importantly, if probably unintended,) textbook. Thoroughly recommended.

A.F. ■

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- address on p2)

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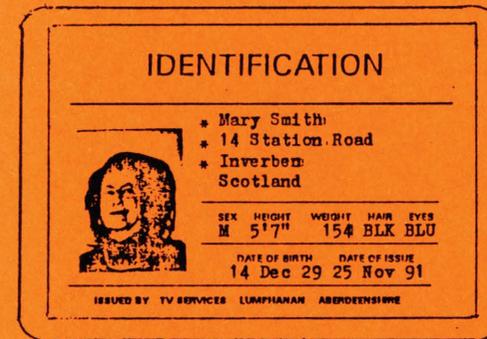
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