

**5.2 Pride Scotia** In 1988, SHRG organized arguably the highest profile lesbian and gay rights event that had ever been held in Scotland, to protest Section 28 just four days after it came into force See ***Equality Network (2022), Dalgetty (2022)***

Organised by Marushka Greenwood and Kate Fearnley, the well-attended *Lark in the Park* pride-type event was held in Princes St. Gardens, Edinburgh, with the battlements of Edinburgh Castle soaring high in the background. There were speeches from the stage where Loch Nor once was from Ian McKellen, Peter Tatchell, and others. The spectators watched and listened dutifully from the sloping concrete terrace. They were also entertained by music, comedy, and other artistic performances. *The Lark in the Park* event also graced Princes St. Gardens in 1989 and 1992.

Between 1995 and 2008 Pride Scotland Limited, which went bust in 2002, and Pride Scotia, organized Gay Pride marches that alternated between Edinburgh and Glasgow (***Equality Network, 2022***).

In 2008, Pride Glasgow split from Pride Scotia, and Pride Scotia subsequently held an annual Gay Pride march in Edinburgh in June of each year. The organisers in Edinburgh included the ubiquitous John Hein and Brett Heriot.

The marches initially drew together Edinburgh's LGBT community in their struggle for justice, and in recent years has been regarded as a family event, where parents bring along their children. But cracks began to appear as time went on. Campaigning socialist groups became less welcome; the

Tories, led by Ruth Davidson, made their presence felt, and more and more of the institutions of neo-colonialist Edinburgh became involved.

Following the death of John Hein in 2020, the enigmatic actor and producer Brett Heriot took charge. Heriot comes across as a would-be Establishment figure who does not obviously represent the progressive parts of the LGBT+ movement.

**5.3 Fascist Scum! Off Our Streets!** By 2016, parts of the Scottish LGBT+ movement were become much more pro-active, in large part to protect trans people against the TERFs.

During July 2016, Lindsay Oliver and I marched together with the *United Colours of Leith* against the racists and fascists in the *Scottish Defence League (SDL)*, and in the much more intense neo-Nazi group *National Action* who'd flooded into Leith following the Brexit vote (**Admin, 2016**) and glued stickers on the lamp-posts with images indicating 'No tolerance for poofs', 'no tolerance for druggies', and 'no tolerance for Commies'.

About a thousand protesters met in Pilrig Park, including various left wing and queer groups, most conspicuously *Glitter against Fascism* whose members included many brave and glittering TQI+ people.

My friend Rory Reid gave me a row for talking to a pig, and introduced Lindsay to his firebrand girl-friend Purple Nails. Then I set off down Leith Walk with Lindsay, who was in a wheelchair pushed by her angelic niece Eilidh from the Western Isles. Rory and Purple Nails sped ahead, and marched with their queer and straight comrades in *Glitter against Fascism*.

The SDL are amateur, badly disciplined, fascist football casuals who express racist and Islamophobic views. In contrast, *National Action* organize themselves into cell-like structures and try to bring about a fascist state. They are professional, fascist intellectuals, well read in fascist theory and history, and they are banned as terrorists by the UK government, (Source: Rory Reid).

In Scotland, *National Action* evolved in part into the fascist group *Scottish Dawn*, and Rory estimates that they have well over 100 members. This causes grave concern for in the future.

Following an undercover investigation by *The Ferret (Briggs, 2020)*, *Scottish Dawn* was proscribed as a terrorist group in September 2017. For information about further Scottish fascist groups who were planning an attack on Elgin during 2023, see *Mann (2023)*.

In July 2016, a mixture of about 15 SDL and *National Action* fascists were gathered in a police-pen at the foot of the Walk, and they bayed for our blood when we, the demonstrators, roared, 'Fascist scum! Off our streets!' in deafening and repeated unison.

Then the demonstrators moved on to Leith Links, and to several triumphant speeches. The narratives were a bit mixed and one speaker even praised *Police Scotland*.

With groups like *National Action* and *Scottish Dawn* around, it is clear the sort of people we're up against. By 2022 queer folk in Wisconsin were experiencing similar problems with the Nazi-esque groups *Blood Tribe* and

*Gays are Groomers* (Section 2.7 and **Garton, 2023**). We all have to stand firm,.

**5.4 Faggots fight fascists.** In stark contrast to many of the Pride Edinburgh marches, the 2017 Pride Glasgow march tackled fascism as part of the class struggle. **Beaton (2017)** reported that at least five people, including anti-fascist activists marching in a bloc organised by Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), were arrested at the Pride Parade in Glasgow.

Two people, including an IWW member, were arrested after police confronted an activist in the IWW bloc holding a placard reading 'These Faggots Fight Fascists' (on the grounds that the slogan was homophobic in nature!) Three other queer activists were separately arrested while protesting the participation of Police Scotland in the parade.

Members of the Scottish Socialist Party were among the anti-fascist and queer activists marching in the IWW's 'Red & Black Bloc'.

A spokesperson for Clydeside IWW told the SSP, "We utterly condemn the arrests of three trans activists and two others, one a minor, on trumped up charges. Politics is integral to Pride, and it cannot be separated from all struggles against oppression, including anti-fascist struggle. We find it completely bizarre that Glasgow Pride later refused entry to anti-fascist and Black Lives Matter activists. This amounts to an erasure of queer struggle."

**5.5 Out of the Blue Drill Hall.** Early in 2018, Edinburgh Sisters Uncut, part of the class struggle against the TERFs who besmirch us, demonstrated in an even bigger way. See **Reid (2018)**. [The remainder of this section is

contributed by Edinburgh grass-roots activist Rory Reid, whose girlfriend 'Purple Nails' demonstrated on behalf of Sisters Uncut]

There was, as of early 2018 a sharp rise in transphobic 'feminist' activism around the proposed Gender Recognition Bill (GRA) legislation, which was designed to give more rights to the trans community while the Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminist (TERF) organisation 'A Women's Place' currently toured the UK. A TERF meeting held in Glasgow was praised by two publications of the Scottish Independence Movement-The National and Bella Caledonia- who appeared to be showing their true colours. Reaction follows reaction.

After the channelling of some 'psychic powers' to discover the venue, the assembled activists (many anarchists and anti-authoritarian leftists among them) of Sisters Uncut, Edinburgh Action For Trans Health, Edinburgh Antifa and others gathered outside the meeting place of the TERFs at *Out of The Blue* Drill Hall in Leith.

For those who don't know *Out of the Blue* is a local arts and cultural space which often hosts political meetings including in the past meetings involving two of the aforementioned groups. It did have a fairly good(ish) reputation among the Edinburgh Left, though they did once nearly invite a speaker from the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) who was involved in the Comrade Delta Rape cover up scandal a good few years back, until threats of protests saw the speaker quickly no-platformed.

A noise demo ensured that the protesters outside the hate-fest couldn't be easily ignored. Attempts by the TERFs to provoke the activists into a

confrontation failed. Local residents who talked with the activists were sympathetic and unconcerned by the noise.

With two police cars and a van standing by to arrest anyone stepping out of line, the pigs were on hand to escort the TERFs out of the building just like they do with the fascists. This help from the police was later celebrated by the transphobes, the irony being lost on them that they were protected by the patriarchal capitalist state and its thugs- the very same thugs who killed Sheku Bayou and who have sent officers in to infiltrate social movements and sexually abuse women in deceitful manipulative emotionally abusive romantic relationships as part of the *Spycops* operation.

All in all it seems to have been a success with TERFs being so riled up they are spilling bile all across Facebook and other social media and the TERF Vonny Leclerc who writes for the National, has penned a 'we're all friends here' paean to bigotry disguised as 'reasonableness' with *Out of the Blue* seemingly retreating to the liberal defence of "free speech" (aka open season for bigots)

Edinburgh Sisters Uncut demanded that *Out of the Blue* publicly apologise for hosting TERFs and donate all money raised during the TERF conference to Edinburgh Action For Trans Health.

Afterwards, Edinburgh Sisters Uncut wrote that they were fighting for the safety of all their siblings, not just their cis-thers, and were in solidarity with the movement for trans liberation. Transphobia and transmisogyny were violent: 4 in 5 trans people had experienced domestic abuse and 2 in 5

trans people had experienced a hate crime in the last 12 months. Sisters Uncut demanded that The Out of the Blue Drill Hall give the money made from the event to Edinburgh Action for Trans Health and make a public apology.”

For discussion by Purple Nails of this key event in Scottish LGBT+ History see section 6.6.

**5.6 Pride Edinburgh 2022 splits.** According to *Admin (2022)*, the Edinburgh Pride March of 25 June 2022 was sponsored from the fossil fuel industry through Exxon-Mobil. However, a few hundred of the 15,000 or so marchers broke off to go to Waverley to support those taking part in the Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers RMT strikes.

According to reports by an eyewitness, who wore his ever distinctive cloth cap for the occasion, the breakaway group was joined at Waverley station by protesting members of *Living Rent*, Scotland's largest tenants union. The members of *Living Rent* then returned to watch the main Pride march before rejoining the breakaway group at the U.S. Consulate.

The breakaway group had marched to the US Consulate to protest the recent overturning of Roe versus Wade. There they were also joined by supportive representatives of Communist and Anarchist groups that were still participating in the main march.

According to *Admin (2022)*, the decision to leave the official route was made by the breakaway group to highlight what they regarded as Pride Edinburgh's 'abandoning of the historical values of solidarity which Pride should represent'.

The protesters marched with a banner made by non-binary and transgender people, based on an original 1985 Lesbians & Gays Support the Miners banner. They took inspiration from their continuing legacy of queer solidarity with workers' movements.

The protesters said that ahead of the event the Pride Edinburgh's organisers made anti-strike statements against the RMT to Nigel Farage on *GB NEWS*, in what is regarded as an attempt to sow division between the queer community and the RMT strikers.

The protesters said, "Pitting queer people against strikers will never work, because the queer community will always stand up for organised labour".

The protest group claimed that to parade and party to celebrate queer rights a few streets away from workers striking for their own rights goes against the solidarity Pride stands for, and said that, *The fight for queer liberation is the fight for the liberation of all workers.*

Too true. We queers should always stand with the workers against the forces of abuse and repression. Otherwise we are no better than the bigots who abuse us. If they start cossetting the workers and giving them a fair deal then we also should have less to worry about.

Michael Lynch, the general secretary of the RMT since May 2021, is a vocal advocate of workers' rights. While taking strike action in August 2021, he announced 'the working class is back'. For an account of his inspiring career, see *Faulkner (2022)*.

During the Edinburgh Festival in August 2023, Rory Reid and Purple Nails listened to Lynch giving an outstanding presentation at the Stand Comedy Club venue in Freemason's Hall. Lynch referred to the excessively massive wealth of the privileged patriarchy of Great Britain who are getting richer and richer on the backs of the workers, who they could therefore well afford to look after instead of exploiting them. Lynch (aged 61) said that he and his generation would do well to understand these issues in more detail. All grass-root queers should support people of the calibre of Mike Lynch, and RMT, just as LGSM supported the miners.

**5.7 Unite at the 13th Note.** On 15 July 2023, Glasgow Pride drew massive crowds, initially on George Square. But about 15 trans folk broke off the march to support the striking queer and straight workers at the *13th Note* Café, a music venue, bar and restaurant in Glesca's Merchant City. The strikers were protesting against their appallingly unhygienic and dangerous working conditions, low wages, and their employers' bad employment practices (*Glover, 2023, Inglis, 2023*). They were also supported by about ten members of *Unite*, a union that is dedicated to protecting workers' rights and equality and diversity in the workplace, and has moved into retail and hospitality where it is more pro-active than USDA and Unison.

The owner of the *13th Note* reacted in truly uncaring fashion several days later, when she closed the entire business down, as reported in the uncaring right wing press by *Jody Harrison (2023)*. I see this as a signal for workers' collectives to take over such cruel businesses, and to operate them along much fairer lines.

As of 2023, the progressive queer rights groups in Glasgow and Edinburgh were gathering in strength, largely in opposition to Rainbow Capitalist Pride organisers as they lapped up to vested interest. Much of the inspiration for the progressive groups came from the successes of LGSM in 1984.

### 6.1 Some highlights for queer folk

**2009:** *Jesus, Queen of Everything*, a play from the perspective of a transgender Jesus written by Jo Clifford, premieres at Glasgow's Tron Theatre. The play would become a rallying cry for LGBTQ rights in Brazil.

**2013:** The social and community group *Bi and Beyond Edinburgh* was formed during November for 'people who identify as bisexual, pansexual, queer, sexually flexible or curious, multi-sexual, poly-sexual or otherwise not monosexual.' It met twice a month e.g. in the LGBT Centre for Health and Well Being on Howe St.

**2014:** *Pink Saltire*, a national LGBT+ community development organisation, was launched in Fife. *Pink Saltire* was, until 2023, Scotland's community voice for LGBT+ people of all age groups, in every corner of the country.

**2016:** On 30 July, the largely TQI+group *Glitter against Fascism* marched with the United Colours of Leith against the racists and fascists in the Scottish Defence League and the neo-Nazi cult National Action, chanting 'Fascist Scum, off our streets'

**2018:** On Valentine's Day, a meeting of the TERF reactionary group 'A Women's Place' in *Out of the Blue Drill Hall* in Leith was besieged by about 80 members of Sisters Uncut, Edinburgh Action for Trans Health, Antifa, and

IWW. After stout resistance, the TERFs were escorted out of the drill hall under police protection (see sections 5.4 and 6.6)

**2019:** On 20 November, trans-people and their supporters held a massive Candlelight Vigil outside the Scottish Parliament as the Quaker TERF Dr. Heather Brunskill-Evans argued with the politicians inside. Jo Clifford addressed the vigil with a stirring speech, in between visiting trans people in Brazil.

**2021:** Scotland becomes the first country in the world to embed LGBT+ inclusive education across the curriculum, though the Scottish government have since said that they want to control it.

**2022:** The Gender Recognition Reform Bill was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 22 December, by 86 votes to 39. The Bill recognised that a person's gender is not the gender they were assigned at birth, but rather their acquired gender of their choice. The Tories in Westminster subsequently obstructed the bill from receiving royal assent.

**2023:** LGBT Health and Well-Being create *Non-Binary Edinburgh*. Meanwhile *Non-Binary Scotland* mainly holds its meetings in Edinburgh.

**2023:** The LGBT+ friendly Muslim SNP politician Humza Yousaf was elected First Minister of Scotland on 27 March, in the face of serious opposition from two TERFs, one of whom was a way off centre Wee Free religious fundamentalist. This gave us some hope that trans people would somehow ultimately prevail in the fierce political struggle over the Gender Recognition Reform Bill. However, the current outlook is bleak as many trans people struggle in both emotional and austere economic terms.

**2023:** LGBT, AIDS/HIV, and animal rights activist Paul O'Grady passed away at his home in London on 28 March after performing as Miss Hannigan in *Annie* in the Edinburgh Playhouse on the Top of Leith Walk from 21 March to 25 March and drinking in the nearby gay bars. O'Grady

had made themselves famous by appearing in the Edinburgh Fringe as Lily Savage during 1989-91.

**2023:** On 12 April 2023 the Scottish Government decided to launch a legal bid to overturn Scottish Secretary Alister Jack's outrageous attempt to block the 2022 Gender Recognition Reform Bill (**Sim, 2023**). This followed the arrest of former First Minister Nicola Sturgeon's husband for the alleged pilfering of up to about £600000 donations to the SNP, which put the ruling SNP in turmoil.

**2023:** On 1 May, the proprietors of the Stand Comedy Club in Edinburgh's New Town Theatre cancelled a Fringe show starring transphobe Joanna Cherry MP (**Mackay, 2023**) because of protests by the workers. Cherry felt discriminated against because of her belief that 'sex is an immutable biological fact', and the proprietors subsequently reversed their decision.

**2023:** On 10 August, Joanna Cherry gives a well-attended, typically pro-TERF interview in Freemasons Hall, Edinburgh, organized by the Stand Comedy Club. Very few staff turned up to help. Meanwhile, the death fires raged on in Hawaii, and a major anti-French-and-American neo-colonialist conflagration threatened to break out in West Africa, as Niger appeals to Russia and China.

Why couldn't Cherry focus her publicly-financed attentions on saving lives world-wide rather than destroying trans people? I think that she was trying to cop out of her key responsibilities as an MP by continuously diverting to the trans issue.

**6.6 Let the haters hate.** This section was written by Rory Reid's girlfriend Julie Beveridge (Purple Nails) on 28 February 2023. The ever energetic 'Purple Nails' took part in the 2018 demonstration by Sisters Uncut and other pro-trans activists against the TERFs occupying the *Out of the Blue* Drill Hall in Leith (reported in Section 5.4 by **Reid, 2018**)

Love is love so they say...or is it? In my mind anyone can form a relationship regardless of sex/creed/gender/disability/class/age etc. The meeting and chemistry between two individuals is a beautiful thing and is

NO-ONE else's business. End of. This is the way it should be and as long as the union is consensual and respectful then we all should be happy. After all, 'life is short' and we should embrace happiness and joy where we can.

Shouldn't we? Ladies & Gentlemen let me introduce you to the J. K. Rowling groupies, the super *HATERS* aka *TERFs*! They do not want this. Oh no, they do not want you to make your own choice of partner. Not until they have checked your private parts first! How perverse is that? *AND* let us not forget the intersex (who apparently are greater in number on Scotland than having red hair). Where do they fit into the haters ideology?

The haters are exhausting in their hatred. They have burnt out and destroyed countless feminist and lefty groups in the UK. Many of the hater are well established in their middle-class professions and have the money and connections in politics and business to destroy and suck the very life blood of trans and non-binary and the lefty feminist groups they are a part of.

They do this by the vile doxing on social media of trans and non-binary people and spreading their hatred far and wide. In contrast to the States who by and large do not tolerate *TERFs*.

It was fitting therefore that 'A Woman's Place' (one of the *TERF* groups) chose to have a public meeting in Edinburgh on 14 February 2018 – *VALENTINES DAY*! There is nothing like spreading the love than an unhealthy dose of hatred isn't there?

Appalled that this meeting was taking place Sisters Uncut Edinburgh Branch (before we eventually were destroyed by the *TERFs*) organised a noisy protest outside the venue of the meeting at *Out of Blue* Drill Hall, in Leith, Edinburgh. We got plenty of support from various supportive lefty groups and we banged pots and baking trays loudly outside the venue with the aim to cause maximum disruption to the haters.

The haters were protected by the cops. Naturally. Ha! Though this did not stop us from having a noisy protest and to try and drown the vile poisonous speel from the haters' cruel, evil lips.

*BUT* oh boy did we pay for it!! The haters came out of the drill hall frequently during their meeting to smoke and take photos of us. Luckily, we were wise to their known tactics were covered up. The haters wanted revenge, and many of us were trolled with hate speech on social media.

This went on for days. The CIS folk in our groups just blocked the haters and went on with our daily lives, but for the majority of trans and non-binary people – this was a devastatingly sad and challenging time. Trans and non-binary mostly have low incomes and have mental health issues so are especially vulnerable to the effects of the *TERFs'* abuse.

*TERFs* need stopped by any means necessary, and we must protect our trans and non-binary in society. *NOW!*

[The *TERFs* were eventually escorted out of the drill hall by the police]

6.7 Piskies here we come. Durin

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