



SIBYLS NEWS

THE SIBYLS

Christian Spirituality Group for Gender Variant People

BM Sibyls, London WC1N 3XX

www.sibyls.co.uk E-mail: info@sibyls.co.uk

Jesus Christ has no body now on earth but ours:
No hands but ours;
No feet but ours;
Ours are the eyes through which His compassion must look out upon the world;
Ours are the feet with which He must go about doing good;
Ours are the hands with which He must all people

St Teresa of Avila (adapted)

PLEASE HOLD IN YOUR PRAYERS

David with ongoing illness, all who are contemplating or recovering from surgery,
all those who cannot for whatever reason take the course of action their heart desires,
and for all those known to us who are in any kind of need,
and those with disabilities or who are in pain.

OUR MISSION

The Sibyls is a UK-based confidential Christian spirituality group for transgender people,
and their supporters, offering companionship along the journey,
and information/advocacy to churches.
Sibyls pray, eat, and talk together, and seek to fulfil Christ's command to love one another.

OUR RULE

Members must respect the security of each and every other member,
and must never jeopardise that security.

Thank you to all who help to keep cost down by receiving the Newsletter by email.
Please let me know (rosie@sibyls.co.uk) if you would like to receive your copy by email.
We will still send your Newsletter on paper if you prefer.

Please note that views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the editor
or of Sibyls in general.

Rosie's Jottings

Welcome to the *slightly* new look Newsletter, I hope you like it but please do feel free to let me know! ☺

We have a bumper edition this time with several very interesting and thought provoking articles by members. Please remember this is **YOUR** Newsletter so send articles or other contributions including information about events to me and I will do my best to include them in the next Newsletter. Items for inclusion should be sent to me at rosie@sibyls.co.uk or by post to Mrs Rosie Martin, 1 Woodruff Close, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 4UN. My telephone number is 01425 270 540.

It is a sad fact that despite changes to the law and advances in public understanding of diversity issues in general and trans issues in particular; transphobic hate crimes still happen with alarming regularity. I am aware of several members who have suffered abuse recently and sadly such abuse is sometimes carried to extremes as the obituary for David (Sonia) Burgess on page 8 shows. Sonia joined Sibyls in April 2009 and regularly attended the London meetings at St Anne's Soho where she quickly made friends with other members. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

Do not forget that transphobic abuse is a criminal offence and should be reported to the police. Such abuse can also be reported on the GIRES website (<http://gires.org.uk/>) by clicking on the "REPORT TCRIME" button in the middle of the page. Also remember that we have several members who offer a listening service so if you have been the victim of abuse, or just want someone to chat with about your situation, please do call in confidence and talk it over. Details of the listening service are given below.

Plans are well in hand for our two weekends away this year. The first one is at Whaley Hall in the Peak District in May and then we are off to Holland House in Worcestershire in September. Booking forms for both weekends are attached at the end of this newsletter.

As with all things the cost of these weekends continues to rise and it is possible that some members feel that they cannot afford to come. A small fund is available to help in such circumstances so please do feel free to phone Jay on 020 8763 0146 and discuss your situation with her in confidence. We want all members to feel they are able to fully participate and the weekends provide a valuable opportunity to meet with old friends and make new friends as we gather together in total security and freedom.

We try to have sufficient attendees to ensure that we have exclusive use of the house as added security and we need at least 20 people at Holland House to ensure this. I would therefore be grateful if those who intend coming to Holland House could let me know as soon as possible so that I can confirm the booking and hopefully book a speaker for the Saturday. If you have not been to a Sibyls weekend you can get a flavour of what it is like by reading Helen's excellent report on page 10 about the weekend at the Windermere Centre last year.

Finally, the Accounts for 2010 are included at the end of this Newsletter. Our thanks are due to Jay for continuing to act as our Treasurer despite trying to find someone else to take on this important role. If there is anyone who would like to offer to take over as our Treasurer, I am sure that Jay be delighted to hear from you. If you are interested, why not give her a call on 020 8763 0146 and discuss it with her?

SIBYLS LISTENING SERVICE

People prepared to listen to others are one of God's greatest gifts to us. We are fortunate in having some members who are happy to listen to you and chat with you. Please remember that we are not trained to give advice – but a problem shared in confidence often seems less of a burden. The listening service really does work so if you want someone with whom to talk with, why not call one of the following volunteers?

Jenny Bond	01623 836 662	Jane Bowles	01492 660 147
Carol Moore	01625 858 487	Jenny-Anne Bishop	01745 337 144
Helen Mather	0115 922 6450	Jay Walmsley	020 8763 0146

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

LONDON a few members gather on the second Thursday of every second month at 5.30 for a Service at St Anne's, Dean Street, Soho, followed by a meal together. Future dates are: 14th April, 9th June, 11th August, 13th October and 8th December.

MANCHESTER events in the North-West and North Wales are organised by Jenny-Anne and Elen.

TransForum (Manchester Trans Discussion & Support group), 3.30 pm Fourth Saturday, at Manchester Metropolitan Community Church. Contact JennyAnne on 01745 337 144 or 07500 741 955 or e-mail at jennyannebuk@yahoo.co.uk

The TransForum group web page is www.mccmanchester.co.uk/trans.htm, there are also directions to the group venue on this website.

You are also most welcome to attend the communion service at 4.00 pm every Sunday at Metropolitan Community Church, Manchester (www.mccmanchester.co.uk).

Please check the website, or with Jenny-Anne, as arrangements for MCC and the TransForum are subject to change.

JAY'S GARDEN PARTY Saturday 2nd July 2011

Gather at about four o'clock for tea and cake. A communion service presided over by the Revd Martin Kelly will followed by wine and the hearty buffet. All Sibyls are welcome for a time for peace, good chat and good food but please do ring Jay on 020 8763 0146 to let her know that you are coming.

OASIS MEETING - DORSET

Every four months between 12 Noon and 4 o'clock at Rosie's house in Christchurch. The next meeting is planned for Saturday 11th June 2011. Please contact Rosie (details above) if you plan to attend so that I can cater accordingly. There is no charge but donations to Sibyls (if you wish) would be greatly appreciated.

OTHER INCLUSIVE CHURCHES

Metropolitan Community Church's throughout the world embrace diversity. In the UK there are churches in North London, South London, Manchester, Birmingham, Bournemouth, Dorchester, Torbay, Bath and Newcastle. See the main website (<http://ufmcc.com/>) for details.

CARDIFF: City United Reform Church, Windsor Place, Cardiff, CF10 2BZ, 029 2022 5190, (www.cityurc.org.uk) welcomes all to their Sunday service at 10.30am.

BRIGHTON: Dorset Gardens Methodist Church, Dorset Gardens, Brighton, BN2 1RL, 01273 605 502 (www.dgmc.org.uk) welcomes all regardless of age, gender, race or sexual orientation.

OXFORD: St Columba's United Reformed Church, Alfred Street, Oxford, OX1 4EH, welcomes all to their Sunday service at 10.45 (see <http://www.saintcolumbas.org/>)

Many other inclusive churches may be found by going to the Inclusive Church website (<http://www.inclusivechurch2.net/>) and clicking on Churches.

Please do let me know of any other inclusive Churches and I will do my best to include details in future Newsletters.

BI-MONTHLY EVENING MEETINGS - LONDON

Usually the second Thursday of every second month at 5.30 - Service at St Anne's, Dean Street, Soho, followed by a meal together. The next dates are: February 10, April 14, June 9, August 11, October 13 and December 8.

JAY'S GARDEN PARTY - 2 JULY 2011

This will be the usual meeting which hopefully you will enjoy. We start at about four o'clock with tea and cake, and there will be a communion service presided over by the Rev Martin Kelly. After that there will be the buffet with wine and good cheer. With luck the weather will be fine and we can be outside. The communion service under the trees with the sun slanting through is particularly beautiful. Let's hope it will happen again. All Sibyls and partners and friends are welcome, but for catering purposes, if you are going to come, please let Jay know on 020 8763 0146.

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## **JAY'S NEW YEAR GET-TOGETHER 8 JANUARY**

This was a pleasant afternoon and evening. Thankfully the weather was kind and it was merely grey and wet outside, allowing people to travel safely and easily. Eight of us gathered to enjoy an afternoon and evening together. It was a disappointment that we were only eight but there it is. Penny brought a magnificent Christmas cake which she had baked herself; it didn't last long and was much appreciated! The Rev'd Martin Kelly joined us early and took a delightful communion service. The gospel spoke of the loaves and fishes and Martin made the point that although there appears to be not enough and groups like gays and transgendered can feel left out, with God there is always enough for all. After the service there was the usual buffet and an evening of chat. With having to travel, folks were away not too late.

## **LONDON EVENING MEETINGS**

These are always good evenings to which all Sibyls are welcome with no need to book. These are gentle lovely meetings with a service which is always thoughtful, peaceful and healing, followed by a good meal in a peaceful restaurant with a nice atmosphere. Nourishment for mind, body and spirit. We have always been made very welcome at St Anne's and think that that should continue. However with all that is happening there, we shall of course keep an eye on the situation and if anything changes, we will let you know.

We have settled on the Bistro Mediterranean in Brewer Street as our restaurant of choice. It provides a good meal with plenty of choice at a reasonable price, not too noisy an atmosphere, and they make us welcome. However if you can't find us, give me a ring. I will switch on my mobile 07719 726933 and you can ring and get directions.

Details: 5.30 service at St Anne's, 55 Dean Street, Soho W1D 6AF, 40 yards up on the left from Shaftesbury Avenue (it doesn't look like a church but it says so on the sign outside and it is), and from about 6.15 a meal at a local restaurant. Next meetings, always on a Thursday - February 10, April 14, June 9, August 11, October 13 and December 8. Every two months, on the second Thursday - except when it isn't. No need to book - just come.

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At the Windermere weekend in May, there was much talk of gender. There seemed to be an opinion that gender didn't really matter and that a thoughtful society would eventually eliminate it. No, perhaps not so much an opinion, more a desire. Gender wasn't important, should be done away with.

This makes two items of news that I picked up recently even more interesting. Firstly *The Times*, in a Eureka supplement, talked about a recent study which had identified a gene FOXL2 which appears to "keep females female". The gene appears to have a seesaw relationship with another gene SOX9 found in males which stops FOXL2 becoming active. Whichever of these genes is switched on stops the other becoming active and thus maintains the gender identity of the person. What effect this discovery may have on transsexualism and its treatment was not discussed.

Secondly Stephen Fry did a programme on Radio 4 on variations in use of language by men and women. Inter alia he produced an Asian surgeon who is doing gender reassignment surgery at Charing Cross (?). This guy's theory is that transsexuals divide into two categories, those who accept and often seek to reinforce the gender divide, and those who deny it and wish to break it down.

These two bits of information are intriguing and may one day throw a little light on the condition.

It is certainly noticeable that there is a considerable surge in the view among some transsexuals that gender does not matter and that, as far as possible, it should be abolished. This wish manifests itself inter alia in a call for transsexual MtoF husbands to continue to be married their wives and still obtain a Gender Recognition Certificate, for gender to be abolished from all official and similar forms, and for unisex loos. There may be other demands but I'm a bit out of the loop these days.

I am sorry but I find myself at odds with all this. To me gender is a fact of life, neither desirable nor undesirable; it just is. I accept that at a theoretical level it is almost impossible to define. Dr Johnson when asked about the differences between men and women, famously replied, "Which man? Which woman?". However, at a practical level, the differences are only too apparent.

Let us consider the following events, some of which will happen in the lives of everyone and all of which will happen to some:-

Babyhood, childhood, school, puberty, adolescence, further education/training, job/career/vocation, courtship (there's a fine old-fashioned word!), marriage/partnership, becoming a parent, child rearing, middle age, retirement, old age, death.

Each and every one of these words is gender neutral. However, with perhaps the exception of death, the events that they describe will be experienced totally differently by girls and boys, by men and women. Life is different for the sexes. Ask any man and they might say gender doesn't matter. Ask any woman and they know it does.

Of course the various functions asked of and imposed on each gender are to some extent defined by society but across the world they don't vary that much. Biology sees to that. The binary varies at the edges with conditions such as inter-sex, transsexualism, transvestism, gender queer, and androgyny. Such people will try to find a way to live their lives so that they can find fulfilment and happiness but they will have a struggle. Thankfully society is in general more sympathetic and understanding than it used to be. That there are exceptions does not invalidate the general consensus that there is male and female which most people accept and work with. It is the way the world is. There are differences, indeed *vive la difference*.

So when a baby is born and the question is asked, "What is it?" the answer is important and will affect that baby and all those around it for the rest of their lives.

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Way back in 1950 I received my first diagnosis. It was a Sunday at 4 o'clock in the afternoon on a winters' day and I was born into this life. The Midwife said to my Mother, "it's a strong and healthy 8 lb boy". I've had to live up to that pronouncement for the last 50 odd years. I was put on the first rung of the ladder into manhood before I was even capable of saying anything.

I reached the grand old age of 8 before I had some inkling that things were not quite right, but I didn't know why, I just knew that something was troubling me. I knew I was a boy, the evidence was irrefutable and so why did I feel at odds with what was being reflected in the mirror? I had no answer and so I put these strange feelings into a safe box within myself and got on with my life.

I took the path that was laid out in front of me. I didn't put it there. There were no junctions or crossroads, no choices. I had more troubled thoughts to store away in my safe box.

It's only now when I look back that I realise that I was living a life to appease my creators. Sadly my Mother and Father were only conforming to the way things had always been and were acting with the best intentions and without doubt loved and cherished me and I will always love them. My confusion if they had known about it, would have been beyond their understanding, as it was beyond my own at this point.

I progressed into the "teens" and watched my "pals" starting to explore and find excitement and fascination with girls. I didn't get it, I'm the same as them but I'm being left behind, has someone not told me something? I do like the girls though, I'd love to be able to sit and talk with them. Where did that come from? That can't be right! Better put it in the box, it'll be safe there.

The thoughts continued and I put them in the box where they couldn't hurt me or anyone else. Why don't I fancy the girls like all my mates do? I know I'm not gay, the boys don't interest me at all and yet I had no sexual attraction towards girls but I loved them and felt completely at home in their company. I even wanted to look and dress like them. Oh no! What am I letting myself think? Get it all in the box quickly and lock it. That's better, now I suppose I'd better go and play football or something.

The thoughts continued, I started working, I joined the military, I looked and acted like the man everyone thought I was. The box was getting fuller but it was safe.

I was about 30 when I fell headlong in love with a girl and fortunately that love was returned with the same intensity, it was the most fantastic thing that had ever happened to me, I was so happy, so this is cloud 9, I'm going to be ok, at last something I don't have to put in the box. I get it now! This is the way it should be, my mind has been playing tricks on me, the shadows have gone, the sun is shining, I can see ahead with clear eyes. We married and were blessed with a wonderful son and the box was in the attic and gathering dust, at last I have found peace and love, my future is safe and I am so looking forward to enjoying it. Intercourse was no longer a difficult and alien requirement of me, it was two people consummating their love, it was the most wonderful gift, I felt blessed.

I had no idea there was more baggage arriving which would have to go in the box, or that the box was weakening under the strain.....

Life continued, I was happy and so very busy, if those thoughts were there they couldn't break through. We worked hard, bought a house and made it into our home. We raised our son who was a joy, and our relationship settled down and we fell into family life.

Some time later a thought broke through, I can't remember quite when but it frightened me, I mustn't allow anything to upset our happiness. I fought, captured and subdued it and went into my attic and locked it in that dusty box which I thought I'd seen the last of. My wife and son were the most important things in my life, nothing can be allowed to come between us, I loved them both dearly.

The box was secure and so was my life, or so I thought.

After 20 years with two short separations our marriage eventually came to an end. Our son was now in his late teens, he stayed with me for another year but my wife moved out and was living nearby. We remained good friends.

Although I had been visited with these unsettling thoughts occasionally, I managed to get them into the box before they could do any damage.

I was now alone and unhappy, my self esteem at an all time low, it was an immense effort even to get out of the house and go to work, what was the point?

I struggled on for a few more years, more trips to that damned box.

I couldn't carry on like this and so I booked a weekend retreat for people like myself who needed a place to explore their condition and let their thoughts come together. Unfortunately it was simply a safe place for transvestites to live out their fantasies. Nevertheless I threw myself into the spirit of things, who knows, perhaps I am a transvestite and all I need is to dress up now and again, maybe that would give me some peace.

It was not to be. It soon became apparent that this scenario had been created to make money out of the weak and vulnerable. I left 2 days later having been relieved of a small fortune. I felt used and worthless, what do I do now?

It took 2 or 3 years to recover from that devastating weekend and still I was storing thoughts in the box.

### **The Internet arrived!**

I gained a new friend, we met on the net. It seemed that we had similar thoughts and so I was talked into another weekend away, but this time it was organised by people who were not after money but just to get together and have fun. I went, why not? I needed to get away and try to find a way to understand my confusion. The box cannot be bottomless, how big is it? Could I get in it and shut the lid? Would that be the answer?

At last I had made a good decision. My new net friend introduced me to one of her friends and within minutes I realised that we were as one. I felt as if I had known her all my life.

Imagine how I felt, I was sitting and talking to a lifelong friend who I had met minutes before. I was dressed the way the contents of that box had been pushing me all these years. I had never been so comfortable and relaxed in my life. Neither of us could understand why everyone else was disappearing every hour and returning in yet another glitzy outfit! We weren't transvestites, we were simply us. We spent the entire evening sharing our thoughts and drinking perhaps a little too much wine and most importantly forging a friendship that will outlast our time on this earth.

I visited my new friend whenever I could for a weekends respite and each time I was with her the mist lifted and the sun seemed to shine, it was such a joy to be myself. Meanwhile back home it all had to stay in the box, how on earth could I explain it to my family and friends? I thought it highly unlikely they would understand and I didn't want to lose them.

It was about a year later when my Father was dying and I was emotionally very fragile that the box gave up its struggle and burst open. The resulting tsunami of thoughts and emotions engulfed me and I was in complete despair. I couldn't think straight and didn't know what to do. I phoned my friend and cried a lot, she suggested I go to see my GP which I did.

The Doctor listened to my story, (more tears), and was very kind and understanding but felt I needed to talk to someone with more experience of this kind of problem. I was referred to the Gender Identity Clinic where after several in depth sessions I was diagnosed as Male to Female Transsexual. This took me many months to come to terms with, I was secretly hoping there was something else in my past causing all these thoughts and that there would be a quick fix, alas not.

I have now moved away from my hometown and live as my real self, the way it always should have been, it's wonderful.

The NHS has treated me for gender dysphoria over the last three years and now my body is in complete harmony with my inner self.

My dysphoria has become euphoria. Peace and tranquillity at last.

This journey has tested my faith to its absolute limits, at times I felt alone and deserted.

So where did I find the strength to cope? Just because you can't see or feel the hand that is holding yours, it doesn't mean it's not there, have faith, you're not alone.

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A HUSBAND AND WIFE STORY

Angie Davis

My wife Sue and I have just taken an important step in our lives – we have booked our places at the Whaley Hall Residential Weekend.

Not so long ago I had real concerns that my transgendered lifestyle – albeit only part-time – was a significant failing in God's sight. Like many before me, I had tried to suppress or deny my feelings but, as apples do in a bucket of water, they kept bobbing to the surface. I never doubted that God loved me but felt that I would always be consigned to the 'could do better' category, just as in my old school reports. Since much of my time is spent ministering in the Church of England, this was an important and worrying issue for me.

I discovered Sibyls in 2008, whilst reading Helen Savage's PhD thesis 'Changing Sex? Transsexuality and Christian Theology'. Helen had warned me, presumably tongue-in-cheek, that it was 'a bit stodgy', but fortunately I have a perverse fascination with footnotes and there among them was a reference to Sibyls. God does indeed have ways of getting through to all of us! Soon I was attending my first Oasis meeting at Rosie's, and for the second one Sue came too.

It is impossible to overemphasise the importance of those meetings for us. The country seems awash with transgender support groups, but here was a group that was primarily *Christian* and only secondly *transgendered* and it's fair to say that, had it not been thus, we would never have joined. Thank God that we did! Over the past two and a half years we have found ourselves worshipping and praying together, as well as (of course) eating, chatting and making friends with a lovely group of people. Moreover, Sue has benefited enormously from meeting another lady who has a transgendered husband. Sue still has her worries, bless her, but the ministry and friendship received through our Oasis group has been transformational.

Now we look forward to meeting more of you on similar paths to our own, who will gather at Whaley Hall in May. Most of all, though, we look forward to worshipping with you, united in love of the God who has taught us to accept and love ourselves.

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**OBITUARY: DAVID BURGESS** - Lawyer whose work with asylum seekers led to changes in the law and who acted for people seeking to change their gender.

The co-founder of the firm of solicitors Winstanley-Burgess in London in the mid-1970s, David Burgess became a prominent figure in immigration cases, acting on behalf of a number of asylum seekers over a period of more than 20 years. Many of these cases led to changes in the law as a result of the judicial decisions he obtained for his clients.

When he and Robert Winstanley founded their legal aid firm in 1975, immigration law was in its infancy in certain respects and there was only a muted recognition of the rights of those seeking asylum. Indeed, the very notion of these "rights" had virtually to be created. Burgess's exertions



on behalf of Tamil and Kurdish asylum seekers in those early years — put their plight “on the map” and helped to alter the law in a number of important areas. Notable among these was the change that gave asylum seekers the right to appeal against a refused entry without having to return to their native country first.

Undoubtedly the most headline-catching of cases in which Burgess was involved was in 1991, when the Home Secretary, Kenneth Baker, became the first minister of the Crown to be found guilty of contempt of court, after allowing the deportation of an asylum-seeking teacher from Zaire to go ahead, in spite of the fact that a judge had ordered a stay on his removal pending a fresh application, which had been filed by Burgess.

When it became apparent that, through a failure of communication, the aircraft deporting the teacher had in fact already taken off from Heathrow, Burgess telephoned the judge at his home, and the teacher’s return was immediately ordered. But this order was countermanded by the Home Secretary, who was acting on legal advice, and the teacher was, in the meantime, believed to have fled from Zaire to another African country.

Although he could do nothing to reverse this *fait accompli*, Burgess was determined to pursue what he saw as the Home Secretary’s defiance of a judicial order, and he began contempt proceedings. These went all the way to the House of Lords which ruled against the Government, which was required to pay costs, although it was spared a fine. It was an outcome of a piece with others secured by Burgess’s sheer tenacity and work rate.

David Burgess was born in Castleford, Yorkshire, in 1947 and went to school in Skipton. From there he went to St Catharine’s College, Cambridge, where he graduated in law in 1969. After doing his articles at a Skipton firm he was admitted solicitor and in 1972 moved to London where he joined Dawson & Co. Winstanley, whom he had known at Cambridge, was also there, and in 1975 the pair set up their own firm in Islington.

Burgess had always been interested in the welfare of immigrants and he was soon building a reputation in immigration law. His establishment of the right of “in country” appeal — obviating the need for appellants to return to their own countries to fight their cases — was one of his early landmark achievements. With Winstanley specialising in criminal work, and becoming one of the most prominent legal aid solicitors in the field, the firm was soon expanding, taking on new staff and partners and moving into larger premises.

Burgess also built up a practice in cases involving gender reassignment. Perhaps the most celebrated of these was the case of Mark Rees, assigned female gender at birth as Brenda, thereafter undertaking the physically and psychologically traumatic journey to become a male, and fighting for the name on his birth certificate to be changed in the process. Burgess’s help in this outcome was among the support acknowledged by Rees in his autobiography *Mark Rees, Dear Sir or Madam: A Journey from Female to Male*, published in 1996.

Then, in 1996, Winstanley was appointed a circuit judge, a full-time appointment that compelled him to resign from the firm — though it continued to bear the name Winstanley-Burgess. Coming on the heels of the departure of another partner, Henry Hodge, to the Legal Aid Board as deputy chairman, this was a loss to Burgess whose strong suit had never been administration. A man accustomed to focusing his intensity on the case before him he was perhaps not well placed to cope with a climate of cost control as the government sought to rein in the rising legal aid budget.

In 2003 the firm was forced to close. Burgess subsequently found part-time work with the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture and, more recently, with the law firm Luqmani Thompson and Partners in Wood Green, North London.

He was also, increasingly, confronting his own gender issues. Bisexual since university days, he had for some years been moving towards a female persona, dressing and making up as a woman. Professionally he remained David, but socially he had been embracing an identity as Sonia.

In 1985 he had married a Tibetan refugee, Youdon Lhamo, a nurse. They had a son and daughter and also adopted his wife's niece. The marriage was dissolved two years ago.

David Burgess died after falling under an Underground train at King's Cross. An arrest followed.

Burgess is survived by his children.

David Burgess, lawyer, was born on September 25, 1947. He died on October 25, 2010, aged 63.

© THE TIMES Monday November 8 2010

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Sibyls weekend 21 - 23 May 2010, URC Centre Windermere

Helen Mather

Finding Your True Self

Amy had half-hoped I'd go since the weekend at St Deiniol's in November.

I'd another never-to-be-forgotten concert that Saturday, but I'd already made a provisional booking just in case; I might just go on this weekend...

She arrived at 0830: early; to find me in the last stages of getting ready (chaos, actually). We'd arranged to pick up another member halfway, but there were no holdups. Three hours with *Google Maps* last night had paid off, and we arrived at Stephanie's by 1300. Time for a chat! We'd a straightforward run to Windermere; nice and easy. Then **we got lost** in the last 100 yards!

After exploring all the nearby streets we found the Centre at last. Thank goodness!

We arrived at around 1710, and found a free parking space right opposite the door. Elen was the first to greet us: with a big hug; Susie quickly appeared at the door behind her. All the others were inside: the Windermere centre has a big entrance area to sit in and talk. First things first: see who's here, and catch up on events over coffee and chocolate biscuits...

That done, sign in and find my room. Well, some things haven't changed since my last visit eight years ago, but here's one that has. It's a nice, airy room with a compact but tidy *en-suite* shower. **And** a view of the garden. No hurry: there's lots of time to unpack before dinner at 1830.

The dining room's another thing that hasn't changed: big and open, with views of the garden.

And neither has the food: it's every bit as good as I remember it. We'd excellent beef for the main course (*"is it local?"* someone asked) and raspberry meringue and ice-cream for dessert.

And the usual Sibyls wine. That just sets off a splendid first evening's meal. Not bad at all! Now everybody's here I can see how many of us there are. I can count fifteen this weekend: a rather smaller group than usual, especially for such a popular venue.

After dinner, we moved to the upstairs lounge: a lovely room for a meeting; or just to relax in: bright and airy with shelves and shelves of books and more fine views of the garden.

Elen led tonight's meeting; an introduction to the weekend's theme: *"Finding Your True Self"*.

I found it rather heavy for a first evening, but she obviously believed in hitting the ground running!

She started by looking at ideas from Freud and Jung, taking in a gap of a mere hundred years or so by drawing comparisons with computer technology. She then focussed on Jung's concept of the *anima* "the woman within". This, she pointed out, is very important for trans women. She suggested that psychological and emotional wholeness consists in integrating ideas: opposites and intermediates, until we are *"comfortable with what I am"*; that is, *"as near as I can get to being 'the real me'"*.

Elen then invited comments: surely an invitation to open a Pandora's Box, if not a can of worms!

Susan immediately suggested another computer analogy: booting up: an integration of ideas. Personality is similarly a *"coming-together of lots of bits and pieces"* (Jenny-Anne) to form an individual *"me"*; that is, a mix of personal qualities.

Jay suggested that our roles are determined by society and do not reflect our true identity (that is, *"me"*). Similarly, gender allegiance is distinct from gender identity.

The common opinion was that discovering our identity is a journey involving change with time. Rosie added *"don't always seek to go forward - let the world go by"*. She realised too the value of experience in forming an identity, and recalled a much younger woman in transition telling her: *"you've already had a life we'll never have..."* Several members agreed that crisis often forces a positive decision to move on: *"breakdown becomes breakthrough"*.

However, Elen thought that there is a core to our personality that doesn't change with time; so many don't find this true self because they're trying to avoid censure (Susie). Jay noted that identity is defined by labels; these can be good or bad, but it's important *"just to be"*.

Lots of ideas for a first evening; a heady melting pot indeed!

Windermere has moved with the times since I was last here: the big downstairs conference room now boasts good AV facilities, which Jenny-Anne put to good use in her Night Office.

Jenny-Anne had built her Night Office round the theme of diversity; her opening prayer encouraged us to be confident in our own personal diversity; in the diversity of our world; and in our faith.

She opened the meeting with Gaudete, sung by Maddy Prior with her band Steeleye Span.

The format of tonight's Night office was a little different from normal. At its heart was a short video of the speech *"Reclaiming the lucidity of our hearts"* delivered to the UN on Human Rights Day, Thursday, December 10th 2009 by the Filipina transwoman Sass Rogando Sasot: a passionate defence of the rights of trans people everywhere.

Jenny-Anne read a passage from Matthew's Gospel, recalling ideas from the outstanding weekend at Whaley Hall last May with Peterson Toscano, and invited our comments.

*"For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb;
and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men;
and there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the
kingdom of Heaven.*

He who is able to accept this, let him accept it." (Matthew 19:12)

after the ensuing discussion and a short prayer, she concluded:

*O Unfamiliar God, we seek you in the places you have already left,
and fail to see you even when you stand before us.
Show us how to recognise your own strangeness and diversity,
so that we no longer need to cling to our familiar grief,
but may be freed to proclaim resurrection in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

And the meeting finished as it had started, with music: the song *"Fight for the Hero inside Yourself"*, (M People/Heather Small, 1992).

After the Evening Office, everyone dispersed: some upstairs, and some to the dining room in search of liquid refreshment...I looked in the upstairs lounge briefly, then moved downstairs to the dining room to sample the wine before it disappeared, and found others had had the same idea. All the familiar faces seemed to be there, so I stayed talking. But people drifted away relatively early: we don't seem to do late nights any more, and it was an early night for me. Go back to my room and listen to my radio...

...Saturday morning, and it's a lovely sunny day.

I'd brought an alarm clock but not set it up last night. Silly! So I'd to rely on my watch.

Now what time is it? 0705? That's not so early. No, it's 0605: my body clock's in normal Saturday mode. Loads of time: time to relax and listen to my radio before a leisurely shower and a tidy-up.

I took my time and got down at 0820: just time for a look at the garden before breakfast. But others were there well before me. I met Amy and Stephanie, and they weren't alone. Everyone was out enjoying the sun, it seems. But as I was last I had the garden all to myself for five minutes...

Hello: a day visitor. She's made the hour or so's journey from Manchester to be here for breakfast. Good idea! And what a lovely morning for travelling.

It's all systems go now: Morning Office.

We're in the Chapel; more intimate than the big room next door, though rather long and narrow.

Susie offered us a cautionary lesson in the importance of reading scripture in context. She started with well-known examples from Luke and Genesis and showed us how selecting words can be used to give a meaning opposite to that intended. Then she introduced a picture and a poem, two less extreme examples, but nevertheless uninformative and misleading.

She then looked at passages from several of Paul's letters, where he cautions his readers against being selective with the Scriptures, and ended with words from John's Gospel:

"If you hold to my teaching, you really are my disciples.

Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31)

She rounded off with her opening quotation from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*:

"There are more things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy"

In true Sibyls style, a lively, spontaneous discussion ensued...

Now! Coffee! And time for chat. While we talked in the central area Jenny-Anne prepared the Conference Room for this morning's workshop. We came in to background music: the scherzo from Beethoven's Eroica symphony: catchy; but nobody else seemed to notice... Jenny-Anne introduced this morning's special guest. Sister Renate, who presided at the Eucharist at St Deiniol's, had made a return visit for today's workshop. Jenny-Anne explained that she is now officially the Revd Sister Maria Renate (*"irreverent"*, Renate remarked). Welcome back!

Renate introduced a video of her own personal testimony; an early draft of a DVD being made as part of the Liverpool LGBT community project: *"Pink, past and present"*.

In a one-to-one interview she described her own unique background. She recalled the painful isolation of growing up intersexed and not realising why she was different (*"I was pretty: pretty in a feminine sort of way"*); and the joyful revelation of finding her true gender identity in her teens: *"I've been blessed with a wonderful family; they suffered because of me..."*

She gleefully recalled experiencing the '70s Liverpool LGBT scene (*"it was rich, it was vibrant, it was larger-than-life, it was charismatic, it was theatrical, it was fairyland, it was 'everything in the sweetshop'. It was all these things together; it was candyfloss: it was lovely"*). *"I was part of it, but not integrated into it"* she explained, but confessed *"I did end up working behind the bar..."*

She then went on to explain *"Faith has always played a part in my life."* *"When everybody else was rejecting me, I always knew that God never would... and never did; never has."* She described her calling to the religious life and the sense of worthlessness when she was rejected after her past became known.

"I never thought for a moment that my history would be an impediment; that it would have an impact on anybody... I was worthless: I was just an individual who was expendable and could be got rid of." *"It brought back all the wounds and the pain that I suffered as an adolescent..."*

But, she explained, her faith remained firm: *"I questioned man's **interpretation** of faith, but I never questioned God's presence: no, that was never an issue."*

"What it did for me though, was to give me a greater understanding of what it meant to be a Christian, because how I was dealt with was unchristian and lacked compassion..."

She was saddened that so many LGBT people are forced to live on the margin of the church. *"That is not God's way and God's understanding of our presence on this earth..."*

Nor did she regret her transition *"but it wasn't really in my hands; knowing that I'm a child of God, and he made me who I am, I needed to be whole; and being whole is what everybody asks for."*

Jenny-Anne then invited questions from the floor.

Renate returned to her childhood experiences, and also described her extensive work in society.

What stood out was her innocent openness. Her enthusiasm and self-confidence shone through: she consistently used the word *"vibrant"* and emphasised wholeness before God. *"If I can just say this", she said: "I'm very happy that I am out as a trans woman: because to be other than that would be denying who I really am."* *"But" she added "that was **my** life: it's not to say that everybody's life has to follow that model; that is **our** business; it's only when you need to be up-front and visible. You have a history: no more."*

*"Sometimes life **is** sacrifice."* she said; *"The very fact that the Lord has given me a faith that is strong and an integral part of me means that I can be there for those who are in need."* *"It would be easy to walk away, but there are people who say: 'no, you **have** to be visible'."*

"I'm just a person whom God has created in this way, and I have a place in society."

"...and that's what it's all about: as long as you cast a shadow, you exist!"

"Thanks be to God; he has kept me safe..."

Now have I time to go to my room to freshen-up and change into something cooler? Just. Last again. I found an empty place; right in the corner. Ah, I'm next to Renate: could be fun...

My place was one big puddle: Janet had just upset her glass. This is **fun**? Hmm...

What did we have? Salad I do remember... then a hi-calorie sticky flapjack. Forget diets! Renate found a little monologue and read it to us there and then. This is fun!

Saturday afternoon's free this weekend, so I'd planned to show Amy the sights of Keswick. We intended to go swimming, but we'd got the dates wrong: no Saturday afternoon swimming until **next** week. So, second best, we walked to the market for a browse; then on to the shops.

And lastly, to the Theatre by the Lake for a sit-down and a coffee, though we never got to the lake!

Now, we've another hour before dinner, and it's only twenty miles or so. How about a detour?

We took the little-known road round Thirlmere, and returned via Grasmere and Elterwater.

Back five minutes late: there's never enough time. Straight into dinner, still carrying my shopping!

In my afternoon clothes, too, and most of the others had already changed for this evening. I was in such a rush that the meal passed me by: I really can't remember what we had. But I did make time to chat with the staff about our adventures, and show off my new dress...

It's entertainments Sibyls-style tonight: back to our traditional Saturday evening free-for-all. Posh frock time too! Have I time enough to shower and change? I **need** a shower.

Amy looked in: *"ready?"* She'll tell them. Last one in. Again...

The big room **is** big when all the AV stuff has been cleared away. Ideal for entertaining. Lesley's not here this weekend to do her regular MC spot: Mercia is MC tonight. What Lesley could do with a glance in her taciturn style, Mercia did in words: wry humour indeed! *"roll up, roll up for the Magical Mystery Tour..."*

Susie started us off with a selection of humorous verse (including by popular demand, the one-legged horse; now where would we be without that?)

I was called second: I didn't know I'd volunteered! I hadn't prepared anything in advance, but I did have a small volume of poetry with me, and I was able to offer two of George Herbert's poems.

Next, Amy's mystery piece. Would it be serious or not, Mercia wondered. She had lots of little amusing anecdotes *"I can't guarantee they'll all be amusing"*. They were...

Mercia introduced Janet: *"from here I can see every colour of the rainbow, and that's just Janet"*, who then brought us three monologues.

Then, we'd a parody of Wordsworth's *Daffodils* by Daphne Clark *"though I don't know who she is"*.

Susan read a description of sailors and followed it with several short anecdotes (mostly Irish!)

And it wouldn't be Saturday night without Jay's belly-dancing...

Rosie spoke up: *"I've got it on my computer, because I wasn't going to do anything"* and told of a strange coincidence: Morgan Robertson's 1898 short story *Titan*, which uncannily foreshadows the Titanic disaster fourteen years later. Thanks Rosie, that'll do nicely. She added ruefully: *"why are we so arrogant as to believe that mankind has all the answers?"*

"We need someone to raise the tone of the evening", declared Mercia. Heather had brought her flute, and treated us to two popular tunes. But she thought better of it, and recited Robert Frost's *The Road not Taken* as an extra item: two for the price of one!

Amy spoke up: she'd remembered her joke. Could she tell it now? Well, she'd remembered the punchline anyway, and told us that... Ah, yes, **now** she remembered.

Jenny-Anne brought us back to sobriety. She had enjoyed Renate's lunchtime monologue so much that she had borrowed it for tonight; Elen followed with three humorous monologues.

Amy thought she had remembered another joke; only a punchline again... But Stephanie gave us something both serious and encouraging: a reading from Psalm 37.

Angela concluded with a mock sermon (I thought of Ronnie Barker on hearing it again!)

And so we finished, with the contributors (12 or so) giving a group bow to the audience (three!)

We moved quietly into the candlelit Chapel for Night Office led by Rosie in a short service of Compline; compact and beautifully put together.

*My friends, the day our Lord has given us is now drawing to its close, and the darkness of evening is upon us.
As we come together to worship our Creator God in whose image each one of us is made,
let us pray for the protection of Jesus Christ through this coming night.*

She opened with quiet music: *Fauré's Cantique de Jean Racine*, and the intense slow movement from *Shostakovich's Piano Concerto No. 2 in F Major*.

We read from Psalm 5 and 1 John 4:17-21 (*"we love because he first loved us..."*), and a version of the Lord's Prayer, new to most of us, taken from *A New Zealand Prayer Book*.

Traditionally the Night Office is followed by a period of silence:

In peace we will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make us dwell in safety.

Tonight, Rosie ended with more quiet music: Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending*, inviting people to stay and listen, or leave, as they wished. I stayed till the end, then left... I'd brought some music of my own, the piece I would have sung tonight: Maurice Duruflé's

Requiem; intense music, much of it in the same quiet mood as Rosie's. I'd like to hear it again. I'll come back later when the Chapel's empty, and play my CD then.

Upstairs in the lounge, Rosie and Mercia were holding a lively discussion on gender politics!

Good fun. After a while, I went downstairs to see if there was wine left: I'd not looked earlier.

It was well after 11; with just three of us left upstairs when I decided to look in the Chapel again. The previous occupants were still there, but I went in. They invited to put my CD on; and we all stayed to listen to the beginning of the piece. At last just Amy and I remained; then Steph arrived. We talked, cried and prayed till the CD finished, and beyond, then went our separate ways: Amy to the moonlit garden, I to my room to listen to my CD again on my laptop.

It was 0300 when I finally went to bed. So tired...

...Daylight, and it's 0750! I really should have set my alarm. Breakfast's at 0830. Oh help! **And** I need to get my bags together. Quick tidy, then a fast shower; I'll be last-minute today!

I was well late for breakfast, having broken a favourite necklace; but the others hadn't got further than cereal, so I didn't miss anything. After breakfast I went back to search for stray beads (all found, I hope...), and move everything except my bag and my laptop into the car.

We'd no Morning Office today: our Sunday started with Sibyls Together. The meeting was well underway when I arrived. The group was discussing venues.

We agreed that northern venues offered better opportunities; is this convenient for members?

After the success of the weekend at St Deiniol's we decided that occasional open weekends were quite feasible, and gave interesting opportunities to show that we're ordinary people too!

It's usually the same people on the weekends: how many **new** members go? Can we get the hidden members to attend? Do we know what they want or need? We need a response!

Windermere 2012 is assured however; Elen will organise this weekend again.

Apart from the weekends, there are several small local groups within Sibyls. Can we make more of them? Jenny-Anne agreed that they do work well.

We discussed the potential of the Internet at length. Here's an opportunity to use up-to-date technology and presentation; so many others groups do. How much do **we** use it? Is it effective? Is it relevant? Can we develop our own distinctive, welcoming website? Linked with this is the need to be better-known: Sibyls is unique, and has a great deal to offer.

We really need to tell others what we represent and what we do: "*a few articles to give us the idea*"; and "*who's welcome*", suggested Mercia. Rosie made a plea for new ideas. Mercia reminded us that there is an active, secure Sibyls e-group, with many available resources.

These two items occupied most of the meeting.

Mercia thanked Rachael Ridley (who couldn't be with us this time) for her representation of *trans* people at the recent Royal College of Nursing conference.

After a few minor items, and apologies for absence, the meeting ended with thanks: thanks to all who helped to make the weekend work, and thanks for fellowship and blessings received.

Coffee time now, before the Communion service: our last meeting; perhaps the climax of the weekend. I'd nothing I needed to do, so there was plenty of time to relax and chat.

We'd a familiar friend presiding at our Communion service: the Revd John Foulds.

Familiar liturgy, too: the Anglican *Common Worship* that we so often use for our Eucharist.

Our first song was the well-known *This is the Day*, but it got off to a rather indecisive start. No piano; no strong singers. Oops, another Sibyls free-for-all! I felt a bit guilty. After all,

John **had** asked for someone to give a lead. And Jenny-Anne had earlier asked me quietly: *"you're a musician; do you play an instrument?"* *"No, I sing..."* I'm keeping a low profile!

After this I thought better of it, and gave the lead for the other songs. Somebody has to! No-one objected, and everyone sang the more confidently for it.

Elen read Luke's description of the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13), which John followed with the account of Jesus's Anointing with the Holy Spirit from Luke's Gospel (Luke 3:21-22).

Normally the sermon would follow, but John confessed: *"I haven't got a sermon, really; what I want you to do is give **me** a sermon"...* and invited us to share our thoughts of the weekend.

Elen summed up our contributions: *"One of the things I've found: Sibyls is like recharging your batteries spiritually; there's a sense of love and sharing..."*

"That's a beautiful thing" replied John; *"the thing is to try and bottle a little bit of that and take it home with you... So when it's raining, and you're not feeling good in yourself, you can come back here in your mind, in your quiet time; and remember your friends and what you felt; remember God being with you here. Don't just leave it here: take it home..."*

And he closed: *"I just wanted to share with you the last verse of today's Gospel:*

*'A Voice came from Heaven: "You **are** my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."*

*"Jesus loves us as we are; and even when God the Father spoke to him in his moment of baptism, he just said 'You **are** my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased..."*

I think that's what he's saying to all of us: we are beloved..."

*"It's a lovely day today; it's Pentecost; we are all together; the Holy Spirit is with us; so we **are** beloved..."*

Our Prayers, in the traditional Sibyls tradition, with each person lighting an individual candle, were followed by the Peace: hugs all round. A Sibyls Peace isn't complete until everyone has greeted everyone else! Our second song, *To God be the Glory*, went enthusiastically, once everyone had found their voice. All it needs is a bit of confidence and a good lead!

The sharing of the Bread and Wine, hand-to-hand, is something else I always remember Sibyls weekends for. I **love** this, and it's a rare privilege to be able to minister to each other...

"...may we who share Christ's body live His risen life..."

And of course, our service had to finish with *Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah*, yet another Sibyls tradition, sung by now with great gusto.

We had our group photograph at its traditional time, after the Communion service. The terrace behind the house, a quiet place to sit and enjoy the garden, is an ideal place for photographs too. Today it was beautifully sunny. Everyone joined in the photograph, and there seemed as many cameras as guests: how digital technology has changed photography!

For lunch we'd a salad starter and a **huge** chicken breast, with trifle for afters; I discovered sherry in mine - right at the bottom. Surprise!

After lunch, Rosie gave the customary thanks to the staff, then people started to move away, but not to go. Most of us stayed chatting over coffee in the entrance area. Now there's time to take one or two photographs of the empty Chapel.

Good thing I did: I discovered my laptop where I'd put it during the Communion service. Don't forget it! I left it in Rosie's care, playing the music that I'd played in the Chapel last night (I hope she likes my choice), while I took a last look in the garden. There were just two others there: I'd not had chance to speak to them before, so we talked for ages.

Amy peeped round the corner more than once: *"time to go?"*

Everyone was out at the front nattering. Most of the cars were still here: no-one wanted to go yet. They're usually rushing to be off. But we'd a long, roundabout journey before us, so

we needed to get away. We left at about 3 after many big hugs and goodbyes, and for once we weren't last.

It had been a lovely weekend: sunny and warm (what a contrast to my last visit), and the fellowship had been what I always expect from a Sibyls' weekend.

Now, it's going to be a long wait till the next one...

Links 'n' things

Jenny-Anne's prayer on Friday evening:

Lord we praise you for the splendour of our world! We thank you for the varied threads of human diversity that are woven throughout your world. We who are created in your image as many colours and cultures, ages and classes, and of diverse sexual and gender identities. No matter how different or alike, we are all your beloved people.

Free us all from all those fears of difference which wound and divide us. Lead us in dismantling all attitudes & systems of prejudice and hatred.

Renew our spirit in our commitment to make all our churches, houses of faith for all people whatever their diversity, that all may know the challenges of faith, and in our shared ministry, grant us minds and hearts eager to learn, reluctant to judge, and responsive to wherever the spirit leads us. We ask this all in the name of Christ our Saviour. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer used by Rosie in her Night Office:

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain bearer, Life-giver,

Source of all that is and that shall be,

Father and Mother of us all,

Loving God, in whom is heaven:

The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!

The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!

Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!

Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth!

With the bread we need for today, feed us.

In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.

In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.

From trial too great to endure, spare us.

From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, and forever.

Amen.

A New Zealand Prayer Book, 1989

For some comments on this version of The Lord's Prayer see:

http://forum.ship-of-fools.com/cgi-bin/ultimatebb.cgi?ubb=get_topic:f=70;t=013478

This link is a bibliography of the New Zealand Prayerbook: lots of references, but very academic! <http://www.kinderlibrary.ac.nz/files/documents/prayerbook/NZPB%20bibliography.pdf>

Revd Sister Maria Renate and the Bethlehem Community:

The Bethlehem Community's link: <http://ecc-c.org/MissionInLiverpool.aspx> is not now available but see <http://ecc-uk.org/OurClergy.aspx> for a brief biography of Sister Renate

Speech to the UN on Human Rights Day, Thursday December 10th 2009:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JrOc6CIQjtc> (video)

<http://www.blogtopsites.com/outpost/4b18f7b5374b5a4a6e36f4978660be86> (transcript)

Rachael Ridley's presentation

http://www.rcn.org.uk/newsevents/congress/2010/congress_2010_resolutions_and_matters_for_discussion/3.fair_care_for_trans_people

Futility, or, The Wreck of the Titan

<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/24880> (text)

http://www.archive.org/details/futility_tw_librivox (audiobook)

**THE SIBYLS
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2010**

| | 2010
£ | 2009
£ |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| RECEIPTS | | |
| From members in respect of meetings | 2,065.00 | 3,854.00 |
| Use of group funds | 65.00 | 153.50 |
| Meeting receipts | 2,130.00 | 4,007.50 |
| Donations | 635.00 | 1,710.32 |
| Bank interest (net) | - | 0.03 |
| | <u>2,765.00</u> | <u>5,717.85</u> |
| PAYMENTS | | |
| Cost of Meetings:- | | |
| Paid to House | 2,147.00 | 4,066.00 |
| Other expenses | - | 49.50 |
| Meetings Costs | 2,147.00 | 4,115.50 |
| Use of group funds for members
to attend meetings | 65.00 | 153.50 |
| Newsletter duplication and envelopes | 161.17 | 232.55 |
| Newsletter postage | 81.70 | 118.05 |
| Rainbow Alliance expenses | - | 80.00 |
| Donation to Catholic Bible Society in memory of
Michelle Le Morvan | - | 30.00 |
| British Monomarks box number | 96.34 | 65.80 |
| | <u>2,551.21</u> | <u>4,795.40</u> |
| CASH SURPLUS | 213.79 | 922.45 |
| Opening balance at HSBC Bank | 1,295.35 | 372.90 |
| Closing balance at HSBC Bank | <u>1,509.14</u> | <u>1,295.35</u> |
| Made up of:- | | |
| MEMBERS' FUNDS | 1,509.14 | 1,395.35 |
| Deposit Paid to St Columba's | - | -100.00 |
| | <u>1,509.14</u> | <u>1,295.35</u> |
| The movement in Members' Funds is made up of:- | | |
| Opening balance | 1,395.35 | 472.90 |
| Cash Surplus | 213.79 | 922.45 |
| Loss of St Columba's deposit | -100.00 | - |
| Closing balance | <u>1,509.14</u> | <u>1,395.35</u> |

These accounts are prepared on the receipts and payments basis, consistent with previous years.

The 2010 meetings income and costs relate to Windermere. £760 was received for bookings for St Columba's and repaid.

THE SIBYLS
Christian Spirituality Group for Gender Variant People



1 Woodruff Close
Christchurch
Dorset
BH23 4UN

☎ 01425 270 540



rosie@sibyls.co.uk

WEEKEND AT WHALEY HALL, WHALEY BRIDGE, DERBYSHIRE

Friday 20th – Sunday 22nd May 2011

Name

Required - Single/twin room (delete as appropriate)

Name of other occupant in room

Willing to share with

Address

.....

.....

Telephone No.

Email address

Please reserve for me the following number of places:-

Full weekend Friday night to Sunday lunch £125.00

24 hour overnight – afternoon to lunch £65.00

Day visitor - All meals £35.00

- Lunch and tea/coffee £20.00

- Evening meal and tea/coffee £20.00

If you are not coming for the full weekend please
specify the days/times for which you are booking

Please indicate if you are interested in a Peak District mini-bus
tour on Saturday (cost to be advised but probably about £20)

Cheque payable to “Miss J Walmsley – The Sibyls” enclosed £

Any special dietary requirements?

Any other special needs?

Do you need help with transport to Whaley Hall?

Can you offer a lift to someone?

Please send this form with your cheque to Mrs Rosie Martin, address above

THE SIBYLS
Christian Spirituality Group for Gender Variant People



1 Woodruff Close
Christchurch
Dorset
BH23 4UN

☎ 01425 270 540



rosie@sibyls.co.uk

WEEKEND AT HOLLAND HOUSE, CROPTHORNE, WORCESTERSHIRE, WR10 3NB

Friday 16th – Sunday 18th September 2011

Name

Required - Single/twin room (delete as appropriate)

Name of other occupant in room

Willing to share with

Address

.....

.....

Telephone No.

Email address

Please reserve for me the following number of places:-

Full weekend Friday night to Sunday lunch £135.00

Other (please specify):

*If you are not coming for the full weekend please telephone Rosie
on the number above regarding costs.*

Cheque payable to “Miss J Walmsley – The Sibyls” enclosed £

Any special dietary requirements?

Any other special needs?

Do you need help with transport to Holland House?

Can you offer a lift to someone?

Please send this form with your cheque to Mrs Rosie Martin, address above