

# GAY NEWS

NUMBER 139

March 23 -

April 5, 1978

THE WORLD'S  
LARGEST  
CIRCULATION  
NEWSPAPER  
FOR  
HOMOSEXUALS

UK/EIRE 30p  
US/CANADA \$1  
FORTNIGHTLY

**BATTLES & BELIEFS**

Lesbian MP Maureen Colquhoun interviewed -p15

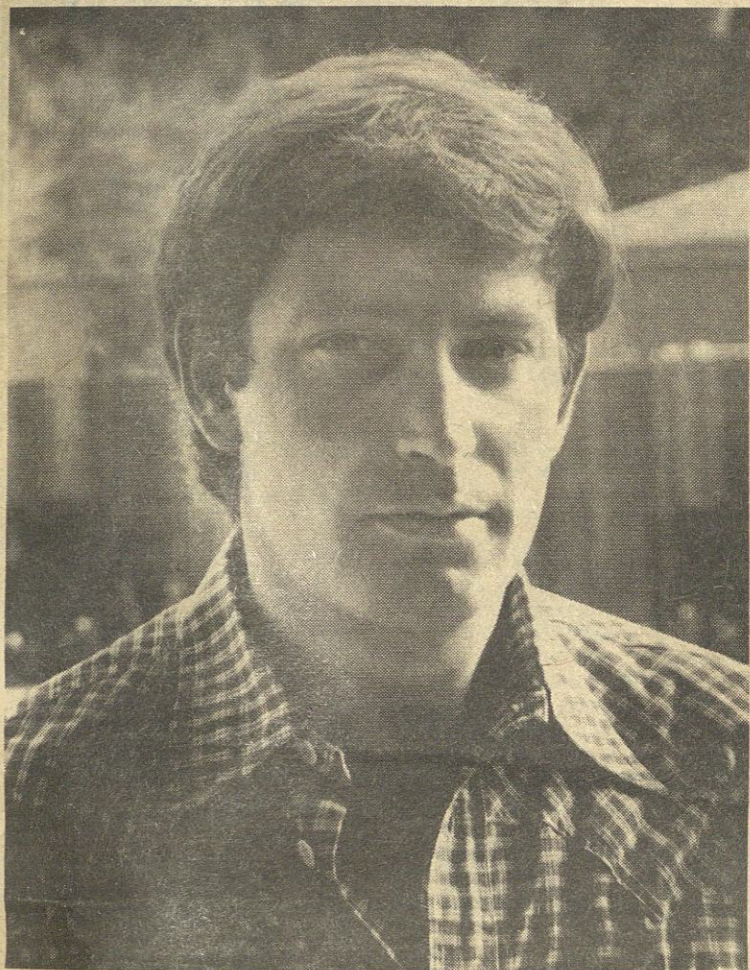
**SKIN PICS**

Gays and a penetrating art -p21

**QUEENS & CLOWNS**



Why the West End stage's depiction of gays is getting beyond a joke - p16



GN editor Denis Lemon - asking you to decide

**LONDON:** The Court of Criminal Appeal has turned down the appeals of Gay News and editor Denis Lemon against conviction for Blasphemous Libel.

In a one and a quarter hour judgement, Lord Justice Roskill delivered the careful and deliberate findings of himself and his two colleagues on the bench—Lord Justice Eveleigh and Mr Justice Stocker.

The three men had rejected all our grounds for appeal.

Asked to reconsider the sentences against Gay News (a £1000 fine) and Denis Lemon (a £500 fine and a nine month suspended prison sentence), they upheld the fines on both appellants, but quashed Denis' prison sentence.

Mary Whitehouse asked for, and was granted her appeal court costs out of public funds, though she did not make a personal appearance at the court for the hearing.

Outside the court, a tired Denis Lemon was jostled by crowds of reporters who wanted to know whether Mary Whitehouse had indeed succeeded now in closing Gay News down. "No," answered Denis. "Ever since Ms Whitehouse announced her plans to prosecute us the letters of support have been flooding in—with cash and cheques to help us. We are confident that our Fighting Fund contains enough now to pay for all the costs up to date. The paper will continue to publish as usual."

## No intent

He admitted he was disappointed at the outcome. He had been optimistic that the sen-

tence would be quashed on the grounds that the prosecution had not tried to show an intention on the part of Denis or Gay News to blaspheme. To be guilty of murder, you must intend to kill. To be guilty of blasphemy, surely you had to intend to blaspheme? The Gay News case had been straightforward right the way through; for homosexual Christians, Professor Kirkup's poem was an expression of devotion, not a blasphemy.

On one side of the pavement a group of gay protesters kept up an angry chant. Traffic snarled past as the impromptu news conference with Denis continued.

Mary Whitehouse's press conference was an entirely different affair. She had spent the hearing concealed in a fourth floor solicitor's office across the road from the law courts. It was to this office that she invited the press after the hearing was ended.

Michael Mason, who has covered the trial for Gay News from the first hearing, through



Ms Mary Whitehouse

# IT'S YOUR PAPER... IT'S YOUR CHOICE...

the Old Bailey and the Court of Appeal, was turned away at the door as the rest of his press colleagues were allowed through.

## Police guard

The Metropolitan Police had provided Ms Whitehouse with an officer to stand guard at the door of her press conference as if to underline the limited welcome that was being offered.

"You have not been invited," explained a solicitor sympathetically, as he turned Michael Mason away and let in a BBC reporter—who had also not been invited!

The next big decision to be taken is whether or not Gay News should appeal to the House of Lords. That is the decision we are leaving to you, the readers (see the panel on this page explaining). The case must be certified as of public interest before leave to appeal to the Lords can be obtained, but Gay News' counsel, John Mortimer QC and Geoffrey Robertson, are confident that this is no stumbling block.

We can now only fight on with your renewed support and we would urge you to let us have your views.

## closing date march 29

**WE HAVE LOST** our appeal. Mary Whitehouse has won round two, and the judges have ordered that her costs must be paid out of taxpayers' money. The next step would be for us to appeal to the House of Lords. But that is a decision which we must leave to you.

It is Gay News readers who have carried us so far in our fight to prove our innocence. Your moral support, and the money which you so generously gave have taken us as far as the Court of Criminal Appeal.

If we fight on to the House of Lords it is likely that we shall have to come back to you and ask for more donations to the fighting fund. So we ask you to tell us now what we should do.

We have only a short time to tell the court whether we want to appeal to the Lords. We are therefore asking people to write and tell us what they think urgently. We must hear from you by first post on Wednesday March 29.

It would help us enormously to count 'votes' if you would use the slip below to tell us what you think. Please tick one box only!

- YES — I would support you if you appealed to the House of Lords ☐  
NO — I do not believe Gay News should appeal to the House of Lords ☐

(send your vote to 'House of Lords', c/o Gay News, 1A Normand Gardens, Greyhound Road, London W14 9SB)