

SPANNERpeople

Support the Spanner Trust

Fighting the Spanner case is expensive so help us by sending a donation to The Spanner Trust (Cheques/Postal Orders only). . . Better still, make out a standing order.

To(Bank)
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Re Account No.....

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Please pay £..... on the of each month to **The Spanner Trust**. This payment is

to continue until I cancel or amend it. This mandate cancels any previous standing order to this account.

The Spanner Trust

Account Number 50055306

Sort Code 08-90-61

Signed.....

Name.....(In Caps)

Date.....

Send this form to The Spanner Trust, c/o Central Station (address below). We will forward it to your bank.

Countdown Couture - For more information, and pictures send for our mailorder leaflet.

T-shirts - £8 each (incl. p&p)

Circle your size

A Kiss is but a Kiss but a Whiplash Lasts Until Morning	x.....	XS S M L XL	£.....
Cruising for a bruising	x.....	XS S M L XL	£.....
Perve and Proud	x.....	XS S M L XL	£.....
Pervert	x.....	XS S M L XL	£.....
Perverting the Cause of Justice	x.....	XS S M L XL	£.....
Used, Abused & Loved It	x.....	XS S M L XL	£.....

Badges - 50p each (incl p&p)

Keep Cuffs Consensual	x.....	£.....
SM Pride	x.....	£.....
Often Thrashed, Never Beaten	x.....	£.....
My Pain, My Choice, SM Pride	x.....	£.....
SM: Validity, Equality, Legality	x.....	£.....
A Kiss is but a Kiss but a Whiplash Lasts Until Morning	x.....	£.....
Used, Abused & Loved It	x.....	£.....
SM: Doing it till it Hurts	x.....	£.....

Donation - I enclose donation of...

Total - I enclose a cheque/PO for...

Name.....

Address:.....

Post Code:.....

- Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to 'Countdown'



Countdown on Spanner meets on the last Sunday of each month. Campaign planning meeting starts 7.30 pm at Central Station (nearest tube Kings Cross). Workshop starts 8.30 pm (admission £2, concessions, with proof £1)

Countdown on Spanner, c/o Central Station, 37 Wharfdale Road, London N1 9SE

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Issue 10 - May 1996

UNLOCKING OUR BODIES FROM LEGAL RESTRAINTS

POLICE MOVE ON CLUBS

Action by officers of the Metropolitan Police has forced the cancellation of the Heavenly Sex Maniacs' Ball. On 20th March, two days before the event was due to be held at the Brixton Academy, organiser Tuppy Owens was called to a meeting of Brixton Police. Despite every effort to accommodate police concerns by the organisers, continuing pressure from Brixton officers resulted in the Academy cancelling the Ball at a day's notice. Arrangements were then made to transfer the event to Bagley's Warehouse, but they also cancelled following police pressure.

The Ball was a fund raising event, aiming at raising £15,000 for the Outsiders Club, a self-help group for disabled people. Losses caused by the cancellation have put the charity in financial jeopardy. The Ball is an annual celebration of sexuality and erotic entertainment that attracts visitors from Europe and beyond.

A crowded protest meeting held in response at Conway Hall resulted in the setting up of the Sexual Freedom Coalition to campaign against the police action through lobbying and public demonstrations. The first demonstration, which was well attended, took place on 21 April. Marchers went from Soho Square to Downing Street, where a petition was handed in.

The cancellation of the Ball follows events

in February when Sadie Masie, SM Gays and Gummi were forced to cancel events at Club 180 in Earls Court following police threats against Bass Taverns, the licensees. Following two public meetings at Central Station organised by Countdown on Spanner, threats of disruption to their pubs (many of which are gay) and discussion with Club organisers, Bass have since apologised for their 'heavy handed action' and have offered financial compensation.

It appears that the police may have found a new way to close down SM and other clubs they disapprove of. Instead of identifying a criminal offence they simply put pressure on the licensee.

WORKSHOPS

After several months of mainly business meetings we now have a full programme of workshops for our meetings on the last Sunday of the month at Central Station (see back for more details).

May: How we grew up Kinky with the Passion Brigade

June: Electricity, Fun and Safety with Bad Conduct

July: The Polarities of Sexuality

INSIDE THIS MONTH: VICTORY IN WHIPLASH CASE, SM PRIDE, SPANNER IN EUROPE, SEXUAL FREEDOM COALITION

SPANNERpeople Whiplash Victory

FETISH CLUB MANAGER ACQUITTED

Whiplash defendant Martin Church has been found not guilty of running a disorderly house by a jury at Southwark Crown Court after a two week trial.

Church, manager of the Reflex Club, the Putney venue which frequently hosts Whiplash, was charged under the 1751 Disorderly Houses Act after a raid in October 1994 by 60 officers on the monthly fetish club.

The prosecution alleged that undercover officers had seen group sex between three men and a woman and oral sex taking place in the bar area; a transvestite being beaten so hard that blood showed through his knickers and a group of transvestites masturbating together. It was further alleged that the police had found a woman being fucked with a riding crop, another used two candles in a sex act while a third had hot wax poured on to her genitals. It was stated that throughout proceedings hard core SM videos were shown. According to the prosecuting counsel, 'The music was loud but the sound of whipping was louder.'

Defence witnesses poured scorn on the police version of events. Church stated that he saw beatings, whippings and spankings but they were consensual and the participants were not distressed, nor was blood drawn. Witness Dr Mike Frost added that he had not seen any of the events the police described. The videos, he said, were tame.

In his closing speech, defence counsel Paul Higham stressed that the case had major importance for civil liberties and sexual freedom in the UK, 'This is a test case in 1996 on how far a jury are prepared to permit the criminal law to control and punish the acts of consenting adults,' he said.

Judge Peter Jackson, summing up the case told the jury that, 'One of the things you will have to consider in this case is are you sure that certain things happened, and, if those things did happen do they outrage public decency.'

Commenting on the not guilty verdict Paul Higham said that the jury felt that even if the allegations were true, 'in 1996 what outrages the sense of morality is the mass genocide in Bosnia, not the behaviour of consenting adults in relative private.'

The failure of such a high profile prosecution has been hailed as a land mark decision by civil liberties campaigns such as Liberty and Spanner. Hopes were expressed that the result would be seen as a test case which would discourage police interference with SM and fetish clubs in the future.

EUROPE APPEAL

The hearing for the three Spanner men appealing to the European Court of Human Rights is expected to be around October. The Appeal is based on Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights which gives everyone the right to private life. Though there is little doubt that the court will accept their private life was violated, Article 8 has a large number of qualifications. The government will probably, for instance, claim their action was justified to protect health. Hence our submission needs detailed arguments to refute such claims. This, in case you haven't guessed, costs money so keep those donations flowing.

SEXUAL FREEDOM CAMPAIGN

Anger at recent police action over clubs and events such as the banning of the Sex Maniacs' Ball (see page 1) has resulted in the foundation of a new campaign group. The Sexual Freedom Coalition is a pan sexuality organisation set up to fight against interference by the UK authorities in the sexual activities of consenting adults. The group aims to use a joint strategy of lobbying, public demonstrations and joint campaigning with like minded groups such as Spanner, civil liberties bodies and others. High up on the agenda is the repeal of the 1751 Disorderly Houses Act which has been used with such effect to harass club owners. The next meeting of the Coalition will be held at Central Station, Wharfedale Road, Kings Cross London N1 on 21st May at 8.00pm.

SM PRIDE ACCOMMODATION

To cut the cost of attending SM pride for people living outside London, Spanner has cheap accommodation available in University of London Halls close to Dungeon In The Sky venue ULU on the night of 14th September. Costing £21.50 including full breakfast, the rooms are available on a first come, first serve basis. For further information contact Mark Conner, care of Campaign on Spanner at our usual Central Station address.

This edition of Spanner People was written by David, Mark and Rob. Contributions for the next issue will be gratefully received.

SPANNERpeople **CONSENT IS NO CRIME**

A one day conference to discuss SM Sex and the Law Commission Consultation Paper: 'Consent in the Criminal Law'

Saturday 18th May

Speakers include: Avedon Carol, Feminists against Censorship; Derek Cohen, SM Gays; Tuppy Owens, Organiser - Safer Planet Sex Ball; Paul Roberts, Lecturer in Law, Nottingham University; Eleanor Sharpston, Barrister & Fellow in Law, King's College Cambridge; John Wadham, Director, Liberty; Nikki Wolf, Managing Editor, Fetish Times; Tim Woodward, Skin Two. Also Pat Califia, author, via video link.

Venue: The Institute of Contemporary Arts, The Mall, London SW1, 10.00am-5.30pm
Admission: £20 Concession: £10 ICA Member £15 Credit Card Bookings: 0171 930 3647

Spanner Surfs the Internet
Our e-mail address is:
spanner@honour.demon.co.uk . Drop us a note for more information.

Also check out the web page at
www.csv.warwick.ac.uk/~esrhi/span1.html for lots of spanner stuff.