

# In London at an LGBT conference

It seems strange to be writing this on the morning after a terrorist attack in London. I was there in the city at the beginning of the week, attending a conference on LGBT networks in Higher Education, and now this.

London struck me as a beautiful place when I was there. I grew up in the 1980s and 90s and imagined the English capital as a place of pollution and litter. Perhaps it was, back then; I remember the 'Keep Britain Tidy' campaigns of my childhood in cinemas and on the back of crisp packets, as they tried to do away with the culture of casual littering. But walking through London this past week, I understood why people flock to it. That windswept, asphalt smell that hits you on the Underground of a million stations, then in daylight, the sense of something prestigious, at least in the Temple district, of people who inhabit another world, a private school world, glamorous and utterly beyond me, a Wimbledon world of privilege. Then through the high streets, striding behind the guy I was with from Edinburgh, a small suitcase in tow, feeling vaguely important in my business suit and heels as a six-foot transwoman PA, passing men and women in their business suits.

The photo shows me in profile and in discussion after the conference had finished, and some of us had gathered in a London pub to network. You can see me talking with Isabella, while staring morosely into the lens is Andy. Isabella said some really nice things to me about how I looked. When I got back to Edinburgh with the guy I was with, Jonathan, he asked me for my reflections on the conference. 'The woman, Isabella, said nice things to me, and London was nice,' was my reply. He must have been wondering why our LGBT network had bothered to pay for me to come along, but actually there was something I

remember from one of the speakers, and it's this:

People perform better when they can be themselves.

Yes, I think so too. I was a terrible student in my younger days, and it's costing me now. Now, I am the kind of student who can get distinctions, but 'way back when', before I was out as transgender, I applied myself to all things like a zombie. I simply switched off and escaped, into Ealing comedies on a bedroom TV or in unreal fantasies of myself in an imagined America.

So now, when I apply for funding, I can't get it, because people see my record from the past and immediately dismiss my application, regardless of the impact I talk about making, or the performance I'm *now* capable of scoring. I wish there was a greater understanding with funding bodies and with the HR departments of Edinburgh University, who think it's a level playing field, but I'm not sure it is, not if you were once someone who couldn't engage with the world, and was accordingly a mediocrity.

I wonder how I can contribute in changing that for future generations, but in the meantime, the London conference was useful to me in consolidating this sense of unevenness I have, concerning the opportunities out there, for trans people but also for anyone else weighted down by a past that once zombified them from any discernible achievement.

To conclude: I went down to London and enjoyed its magic, and picked up breadcrumbs of useful ideas, which may not be breadcrumbs but seeds. And London was a shining, happy place to be, and I wonder why those terrorists did what they did, what was this cause they decided to kill for, and die for, with their foot-long knives and fake suicide belts.

Article by Gina Maya

Taken from her blog:

<https://www.ginamaya.co.uk/transgender-life/in-london-at-an-lgbt-conference.html>

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# June Newsletter

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# Welcome to the new Staff Pride Network Newsletter

Over the past year the Staff Pride Network has been growing and evolving, and as such we felt it was time for a makeover to match! As well as a new image, we'll be sending out a regular newsletter to keep you up to date with all the Network news and upcoming events, and to help you stay connected with your LGBT+ Colleagues and Allies.

We also want to celebrate the achievements of the diverse LGBT+ community across the university. So if you have any news, research or events that you would like to share with us then please do get in touch – [StaffPrideNetwork@ed.ac.uk](mailto:StaffPrideNetwork@ed.ac.uk).

## A Message From Our Co-Chairs



**Sharon Cowan**

**Jonathan MacBride**

The newly named Staff Pride Network (previously the LGBT Staff Network) was relaunched in September 2016, for LGBT+ colleagues and allies, and we are delighted to complete the relaunch today with a new logo designed by ECA student Kael Oakley.

Having discovered that the previous network had gone into abeyance, Jonathan MacBride explored the possibility of reinvigorating the static network with his now co-chair, Sharon Cowan. With the support of the UoE Human Resources team, VP for People & Culture Jane Norman, and committed volunteers, the new network has gone from strength to strength in its first year.

We have developed links with external organisations such as Stonewall Scotland and university LGBT+ staff networks such as Napier and LSE, as well as internally with the Disability Network. LGBT+ History Month in February saw a packed programme of academic, arts, social and other events, some of which were organised with the student LGBT+/queer groups BLOGS and Liberation+.

Future planned events include a UoE SPN Pride March contingent wearing our newly designed t-shirts with logo, while the rainbow flag flies over Old College, and trans awareness training for network members.

We are proud to provide a safe space for all LGBT+ identified staff and allies, and happily welcome anyone who wants to join the network to contact the committee at [StaffPrideNetwork@ed.ac.uk](mailto:StaffPrideNetwork@ed.ac.uk).

## News

### Logo Competition Winner Announced



Congratulations to **Kael Oakley**, winner of our Logo and Branding Competition.

The Staff Pride Network was re-established in July 2016 but needed an updated logo and brand. Fashion Lecturer and Edinburgh College of Art (ECA) Staff Pride Network Rep, Emily Ford-Halliday, set an ECA-wide competition for Art and Design students to come up with a branding makeover that would encapsulate the networks' values and purpose. Read More

And here is Kael's winning design which is now the new logo for the University of Edinburgh's Staff Pride Network!



## 'Tis the Season to be Proud



### Join SPN at Pride Edinburgh

Get your rainbow hats out of the closet and get ready for Pride Edinburgh 2017 which is now just a few days away. The 22nd annual pride scotia march starts at 12pm on Saturday 17th June. Meeting point for Staff Pride Network members (and friends of course!) is at **11am at the Scottish Parliament, beside the water feature**. Look out for our new logo branded t-shirts.



### Order Your SPN Pride T-Shirt

We hope you can join us this Saturday for Pride Edinburgh. We'll be marching together so remember to order your Staff Pride Network T-Shirt. E-mail us at [StaffPrideNetwork@ed.ac.uk](mailto:StaffPrideNetwork@ed.ac.uk) with your size (M-L-XL) and we will save you one. Limited stock though, so hurry!

### Edinburgh Frontrunners Pride Run

Early bird? Join/come and support other SPN members at the **Meadows (eastern end) at 9am** for the Edinburgh Frontrunners Pride Run before the march, including a cake sale in aid of LGBT Youth Scotland. Visit the web page for more details, [here](#).

### Pride Edinburgh 2017 Sat 17th June



For a full running order of the day's events – visit the [Pride Edinburgh website](#).

## Events

### Pre-Pride Edinburgh Coffee Afternoon

**TODAY – 1-3pm, Teviot Library Bar (Side Room)**

Join us at our regular monthly coffee afternoon and the first of our Pride Edinburgh events. Please drop in any time for a coffee and cake, catch up with your LGBT+ colleagues and ask a committee member those questions you've been dying to have answered!

### Pride Edinburgh

**Saturday 17th June – 11am, Scottish Parliament**

Meeting point for Staff Pride Network members (and friends of course!) is at 11am at the Scottish Parliament, beside the water feature. Look out for our new logo branded t-shirts.

### SPN Social

**Friday 30th June – 5:30pm, The Potting Shed**

Continuing our monthly evening socials, join us after work to unwind and meet other network members. Conveniently held on the first Friday after payday.

Full Events Calendar  
Useful Information  
Contacts & Committee  
Help, Support & Advice  
[staffpridenetwork@ed.ac.uk](mailto:staffpridenetwork@ed.ac.uk)

