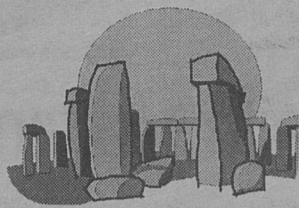


STONEHENGE TO STONEWALL

by charlie emond

From the Cutting Room Floor



This month I decided to look back over the twenty-five *Stonehenge to Stonewall* columns that I have written up to now. I must say that they have been great fun to write even though each one is really a mini term paper — deadline and all. I am prompted to do this by the really excellent on-line version of *OITM*. All of the *Stonehenge to Stonewall* columns are available in the Archives. In case you want to check them out, here is a handy guide to what I have covered so far. I began with an overview and a definition of terms and then tackled the Old Testament. Next, I cruised the Greeks and the Romans. I finished off that year by wandering through early Christianity. Then I roamed about freely through the Middle Ages and Renaissance, introducing a gay Robin Hood, drag queens, Renaissance artists and cross dressing priests. I waltzed into gay marriage and clerical chastity. I discussed the universality of gay sex, gay animals, three gay superstars and gay kings. Recently, I wrote about gay terminology and last month about gay France. All together these 25 columns give you a pretty good short course in the gay history of Western Civilization. Because I had a word limit, I had to edit what often started out at over 2000 words.

In looking back over the stuff I had to cut out, I found a number of fascinating items that didn't make it. Here are a few with which to entertain and amuse your friends.

In the Old Testament (1 Sam. 18:24) King Saul sends David off to collect 100 Philistine foreskins. This is the price he demands for the hand of his daughter Michal in marriage. (You will remember that David really loves Jonathan.) Of course he must kill the Philistines first. As you might imagine they would be most reluctant to give these up.) David does him one better and brings back 200.

Plato discusses the nature of same sex love in his Symposium. He makes the point that the acceptance of homosexuality is a sign of a true democracy.

The reason why the hyena was thought by the ancients to be homosexual is that you really can't tell the sexes apart. The female gives birth through an elongated clitoris the same size as a penis. Their ridiculous birth apparatus results in the suffocation of over half the cubs in the birth canal of a new mother hyena.

The Roman emperor Nero is on nearly every gay list (like it or not); this guy was seriously whacked. He poisoned his rival to become emperor at 16. He then tried several times to kill off his own mother, Agripina. When feeding her poison didn't work, he rigged the ceiling over her bed to collapse during the night. She crawled out. He sent her on a cruise in a ship rigged to sink at sea. She swam ashore. He finally had her executed for treason. Certainly not a gay role model.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) went out to heal a young man who was dying. He lay on top of the boy but failed to bring him back to life. Jested a nearby monk, "Never have I heard of a monk lying down upon a boy without the boy arising immediately after the monk."

The gay sculptor, Benvenuto Cellini had to bring a date to a party so he persuaded his beautiful male model, Diego, to dress up as a woman. Cellini's date was hailed as the prettiest woman there until the trick was revealed. Reportedly, the women were furious.

One famous legal case in England was that of Anglican Bishop John Atherton who was hanged for sodomy in 1640. The pamphlets advertising his hanging showed he and his lover John Childe. There were many other famous cases involving priests in Sussex in the 15th century and the headmasters of both Eton and Essex

in the 16th century. The unfortunate aspect of it all was a general belief that burning at the stake was the cure for homosexuality (Yep, that would do it all right) and the only way for a homosexual to enter heaven.

Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz once uncharacteristically lost her temper and told her mean prioress, "Hold your tongue, you ignorant fool!" The prioress complained to the Archbishop who replied, "If the Mother Superior can prove that this charge is false, justice will be done."

In 1725 London, a visitor to a "molly house" wrote, I went to the . . . house in Field Lane, I found between 40 and 50 men making love to one another as they called it . . . They would get up, dance and make curtseys, and mimic the voices of women. (Hey, some things never change.)

After the Renaissance I could head off in three different directions, all of them equally fascinating. Come to think of it, I still must tell you about Richard the Lionhearted and a couple of other gay kings, and Madame de Stael. Then there are those gay folk in Chaucer and . . .

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