SOUTHERN COMFORT

The question that was being asked in Dublin last weekend was not whether but when could one get to Cork for the Fun Weekend, for it is one of the most important events for women, dykes and babes of all ages. This year, Cork's Fun Weekend is twelve years old. The venues and schedules are tried and tested. Operations are slick and to the unseeing eye as smooth as Beamish. Although it's only my fourth or fifth time, the weekend has become a pivotal point for me, a place and time for change to breed.

So needing a little Southern Comfort, I arrived in Cork early on the Wednesday evening. Half the Fun Weekend committee are taking time out for their second passion, playing soccer in Ballincollig (surely not in this freezing rain and with all the work ahead?) There's confidence for you!

Later, in bed at HQ Southview, I am offered Ali Clarke's rich new novel *The Way of the Bees* and I start to glide back into the comforting world of fantasy which is nearer to reality in Cork for me.

Next day in *The Other Place* the excitement is rising steadily. The book-shop sports beautifully designed greeting cards and T-shirts carrying the Fun Weekend logo. The clans are gathering from Kerry, Galway, West Cork, Leeds, Birmingham and Scotland for coffee and a chat in th café and everyone begins to glow with child-like expectation and excitement.

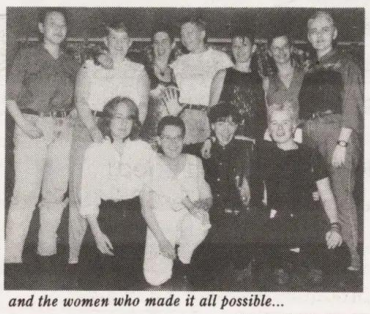
A treat: a preview of the last linedancing practice. I feel privileged and accepted. I am charmed by the dance and the dancers, concentrating on the choreography. *Loafers* is packed way beyond



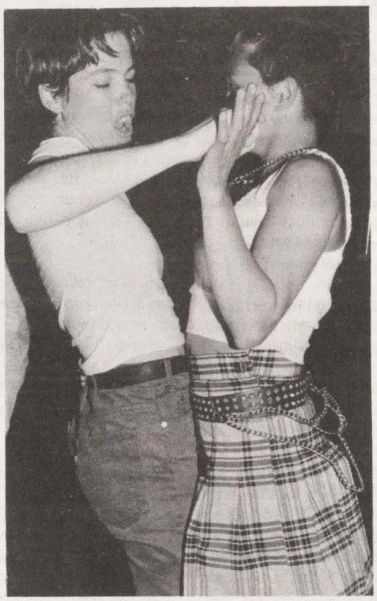
Belly Dancing *Photo Kellie Greene*

the usual Thursday night trade. Cork is ready, willing and able to party, party, party!

Friday finds me doing reception work at Southview HQ, followed by lunch at the *Quay Co-op* and checking out the atmosphere at *The Other Place.* No sign of panic, lists and checks are made



and the women who made it all possible...
Photo Kellie Greene



At Moore's Hotel *Photo Kellie Greene*

and everything is going according to plan.

Official kick off: *Moore's Hotel* at 8.30, and there are queues! A céilí and disco salsa, an unlikely mixture that defines Cork's ability to play with good ideas. *The Waves of Tory* nearly killed me! I opted for tequila, which seemed right for the sexy, sensuous salsa. It was a great start, and those who dared partied on into the night.

Sun's up over the South Parish Community Centre, with women in the yard learning about organic gardening, others drinking beer or eyeing up the earrings, strutting and sunning to the sounds of the women upstairs stomping up a rain



The Waves of Tory *nearly killed us* .
Photo Kellie Greene

dance – which thankfully didn't move the spirits! Out on the Mardyke, Dublin and Cork measured up to each other on the soft ball and soccer pitches.

Saturday had something for everyone but the party is still but a pup. Tonight catch Norway stealing the show from *Riverdance* and then Come to the Cabaret at *Moore's Hotel.* Cork is on its feet and bursting with pride, waves of it breaking on to the floor where cool, sexy and strong dyke dudes strut, stamp and slap leather in the line dancing. I was transfixed. It seemed so right – Cork women claiming their place and their power. Catch that wave, Anita!

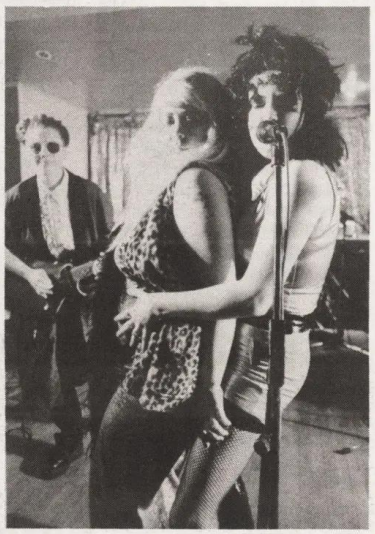
Turkish delight and gritty blues move the mood before the *Camp Vamps* break out in a frenzy. Women flowed towards the sounds like coloured balls in a bingo machine, pulsing and throbbing to everything from Jimi Hendrix to Nirvana. I missed the switch to disco, too busy dancing!

Slow, sleepy, Sunday morning. Those who could played pool and bowled in the restful atmosphere of the Mardyke. Those who couldn't crept to the trains or headed for the clean air at the beach.

At 4.00 *Loafers* exploded into the Pub Quiz. I was glad of my corner seat, and my team knew enough lesbian literature and lyrics to come third. But where was that red-head when I wanted to claim my dinner for two at the Quay Co-op? – gone to Galway, just my luck! Back off, recharge, time out before disco number three. I cannot take the pace and opt for back to back tapes of *Absolutely Fabulous,* another brilliant idea! That's Cork, always a choice, always a mixture of moods to meet the moment.

Thanks, Cork, for being there, for firing up my tired soul, for your women and their wisdom and warmth. Southern Comfort; as they say, "You could stop partying, but where's the comfort in that?"

Antonia Corrigan



The Camp Vamps Strut their Stuff
Photo Kellie Greene

Leap to it

LEAP, Lesbians For Employment Against Poverty, is a project currently being developed by two lesbian resource workers employed under the FÁS scheme at the Lesbian and Gay Resource Centre in Cork.

To launch LEAP and celebrate our lesbian strength and pride we are holding a social with bingo, pool and videos at *The Other Side Café* at 8pm, June 14. We'll be charging £1 to cover costs, and hope to have similar events once a fortnight.

As well as social events LEAP has already set up two self-help groups: a young lesbian group, meeting alternate Tuesdays at 8pm, and an addiction recovery group (first meeting June 19 at 8pm, *Other Side Café).* We also want to set up other groups, such as a lesbian mothers group.

We are holding a general forum open to all lesbians in Ireland who are interested in being involved in the LEAP collective at 8pm on Monday July 3 at *The Other Side Café.* For more information, please contact Mary or Soren at LEAP, 8 South Main Street, Cork, Tel (021) 278470/1.

And don't forget Cork's regular women's events: the **Women's Disco** at *The Other Place* on the first Friday of each month, **Women's Night** every Thursday in the back room at *Loafers,* Douglas Street, and the **Odd Girls Book Club** on the first Monday of each month.

Donna McAnnellan

LOT NEWS

There is plenty of excitement in LOT this month with Mary's new venture, the **Youth Group** for lesbian and bisexual women under 25 years of age. Mary has written to the European Youth Campaign for funding and is also applying to do exchanges with other Youth Groups in Europe. The first meeting will be on Saturday June 10 at 2pm in the LOT office. Helpers and members are needed.

Congratulations to Lynn, Myra and Mary (once again) for the talk they gave at a Dublin school. They were invited by a teacher to discuss gay and lesbian issues with approximately fifteen teenagers. Their handling of questions led them to receive a wonderful thank you letter two days later that had been signed by all the students (even those who'd just recovered from an extreme dose of homophobia).

LOT is looking for women to organise the **Wild and Wonderful Womens Weekend** in September. If you are interested, please phone us at 872 7770 or come along to the meeting on Thursday June 1 at the LOT Office.

The **Lesbian Mothers Grou** hoped to be able to enjoy the cu rent spate of good weather by p nicking together on Saturday M 27, but this had to be postpone Those interested in a future da should contact the LOT office a ask for Bernie or Lynn. The gro is also looking for a two-drawer ing cabinet - if anyone can he please ring Bernie or Lynn.

LOT is at 5 Capel Street, Dublin (01 872 7770).

LOT EVENT GUIDE

First Out
Wed June 7, 7.30 - 9.30pm
Sat June 17, 7.30 - 9.30pm
Lot Office

Women's Bar, at the Ha'penny Bridge Inn
Singers and Musicians wanted for sessions. Players wanted for darts teams. Friday June 2 & 16.

LOT ENTERTAINMENTS

Tea dance
Mother Redcap's - Saturday June 10

Pride Disco
Powers Hotel - Friday June 30

Disco
Mother Redcap's - Friday July 14

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