



Les and I opened our first **Doreen** shop in City Road in 1953. Les was a tailor and bra maker. In fact his first present to me was a bra. My mother went mad; she was very strict: "How comes a boy gives you a bra? I was 21 and I'd trained as a window-dresser at Mary Parque in Oxford Street. Most customers think of me as Doreen - which is fine with me - but the name originally came from the girlfriend of the man who sold us the shop. Les and I sank all our wedding-present money into it on a Saturday, worked all Sunday getting the shop ready putting things on the old wire-frame torso displays - they used to go rusty! - and then went off to the Black-and-White milk-bar in Fleet Street because it was open all night, with £5 to our names and hoping we'd sell something on Monday morning.

CELEBRATING 50yrs
Betty interviewed by Suki

Our first regular TV customer was an American who lived here and ran a club in Hoxton, a bit like the WayOut Club now, but this was back in the 50's when it was still very much taboo. He asked me to do the cabaret - before window-dressing I'd studied piano at the London College of Music - but I didn't want to work nights as well. I used to let him borrow bundles of clothes to dress his cabaret and then TV's from the club started coming to the shop. We found them easy and pleasant to deal with - they were often much more appreciative than many of our women customers!

The second shop was opened in Lea Bridge Road in 1955, then Trafalgar Square, Leather Lane and Baker Street. The original City Road and Trafalgar Square shops were both very popular with TV's who had to keep their cross-dressing secret coming in during lunch-time or after work. Site redevelopment and big rent increases eventually shut the other four shops, but we're still open at Lea Bridge Road and in our 50th year we're thinking of staying!

Larger sizes were easier to find back then; there were many more local manufacturers either doing larger sizes or willing to make things to order. Now we have had to find sources from around the world.

We began a busy mail-order service some years ago which later progressed to include an extensive and popular web shop now totally overhauled and can be found at

www.doreenfashions.com

web shop or call

0208 539 4578 mail order

Still many of our customers prefer to visit the shop in person from all over the world. One comes from Australia every 6 months to visit relatives - and Doreens. We're happy to welcome customers who come dressed, but we are equally happy to let others spend some time in an unhurried way to get their own look right.

The success of our website is our current concern. Once it is running well, I'm going to look for a producer for the musical I've written - it's set in a dress shop of course !

London has an exciting new Shop and Dressing Service - just recently opened called Adam & Eve. We were keen to give them a try and we were not disappointed!

ADAM & EVE - A new service in London reviewed by Andrea

Adam & Eve have just opened their shop not far from the City / Liverpool Street areas of London. Located at the junction of Bethnal Green Road and Brick Lane, their discreet entrance door leads down to a marvellously furnished shop, make up, change and stay facility. The friendly, informal atmosphere that Angela has created immediately strikes you.

On this visit I opted for make-up only - However at a future date I would love to explore their very extensive wardrobe that would clearly suite any "girl" who wanted to stay with them all day.

Although in my case they knew in advance that I would be coming - their aim is to provide a service where no appointment is necessary - and what's more they intend to have a party evening once a week from 8.00 to 11.00pm.

As I intended to venture out - I had brought all my own clothes - but I must say some of their new underwear, shoes and wigs in their shop were very tempting! I will soon be back to see the range of designer clothing at outlet prices that is about to arrive

There is an extensively mirrored main gallery and seating area which is, at the centre of the facility from which leads the make-up, changing and wardrobe rooms. Angela is keen to point out that this configuration means that any "girl" staying for the day can socialise with the staff and other visitors and feel part of the set up and action.



There is no "hard sell" here, their attitude being very much for clients to enjoy the moment!

My make-up was excellently applied and I was more than pleased with the results. It is Angela's intention that once a clientele base is built up - that she will start arranging one to one and group escorted trips for shopping, lunch, afternoon tea, dinners and clubs.



Adam & Eve are at 121A Bethnal Green Road, London, E2 7DG Tel: 07952 715 929

photographs by Don Allen

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LADYBOYS OF BANGKOK

On tour in the UK

by Donna Gee

THEY'RE young, gorgeous and unbelievably feminine. So it was absolutely no surprise that Manchester's red-blooded males were utterly turned on by the bevy of transsexual Thai beauties who took the Lowry Centre by storm this summer.



The Ladyboys of Bangkok - World Tour 2003 visited Brighton before coming to Manchester and then on to Edinburgh. The cabaret show has been a smash-hit here in the UK since Cheshire promoter Phillip Gandey first brought them to the Edinburgh Festival five years ago. Mr Gandey assured me when I went backstage to meet the girls that there will be yet another UK tour next year - and plans to launch them in Germany and other parts of Europe.

However when the Ladyboys show was first brought to Edinburgh five years ago, the Church of Scotland said 'Ban them'.

Ticket sales were terrible. Now it's absolutely packed... we are virtually sold out already for the entire festival this year.

The tour continues to re-educate the public about transgenderism. The show is billed as transvestite entertainment - and to a degree it is. But it also portrays the respectable side of transsexuality - the fact that gender-dysphoric boys really can become, beautiful girls.

There is a drag-show element to some of the comedy routines, but most of the 22-strong troupe are fulltime girls...and have been since pre-puberty or their early teens.

I didn't ask how many have had SRS, but I find it difficult to believe that Farida, Sonia, Vivienne and a few of the others ever had male attachments - never mind still have!

The show itself is a spectacularly colourful pageant of colour in which the cast prove they are as accomplished dancers and entertainers as they are stunningly beautiful. It is also very much a show for all the family -

indeed, my 12 and seven-year-old granddaughters (yes, I was a child bride!) thought it brilliant. I just found it sad that more children didn't go, because there was nothing sordid or freakish about the show and it held my little ones spellbound. The song-and-dance routines were slick and professional, the choreography superbly arranged. Much of the music was predictable, given the theme - routines set around classics like Man I Feel Like a Woman and I Am What I Am, for example. There was also tributes to female icons like Kylie Minogue, Gloria Gaynor and Sophie Ellis-Bexter. And an emotional rendition of My Way, in which the show's compere Mr Sak divests himself regretfully from glamorous woman to his true self, left me and most of the predominantly-female audience in tears.

Mr Sak is one of the few cast members who are happy to remain in their birth gender. In fluent English, the cheery former clerk told me: "I don't feel the need to change. I am happy to be a gay man." His only regret was that, with a heavy six-day-a-week work



schedule, he didn't have time to visit the Gay Village during his stay.

Language limitations prevented me delving as deeply as I would have liked into the lifestyles of the fulltime girls, most of whom are practising Buddhists. But tour manager Adul Wongmanee, whose Mambo enterprise employs 98 ladyboys in Bangkok, told me:

"At one time, no-one used to look after the katoey (ladyboys) but now many of them have good respectable jobs, like teachers, hairdressers - even sports celebrities, like the champion kick boxer who changed sex".

"There are downsides, however, like having to go into the army as men - and being unable to change passports under Thai law. All 22 people in our party travel on male passports, though many of them have lived as girls for many years".

"In the army, the katoey don't do active service, mainly office work with other girls. And there is no problem with clothing as men and women wear the same uniforms - and no-one asks questions about underwear!"

Mr Adul, as he is known, has already taken his Mambo girls to China, Japan and Singapore, as well as to the UK and Ireland. He makes a point of trying to change 50 per cent of the cast each year, in order to give other entertainers from the cabaret a chance to travel abroad.

"As for Manchester, it has been great right from the start. It appears they've not had real cabaret here for so many years that it has been a revelation to the diverse audiences"

Mr Gandey's one disappointment is that the show has yet to take off elsewhere in the West. "I've had promoters over from Holland and South Africa who have been knocked out by the Ladyboys," he said. "They've gone away raving" and then not followed it up.

"Something is still holding them back, so it looks like I will probably do it myself - and I think Germany is likely to be the next country we take the show to. After all, it has such a great history of cabaret."

Meantime, another run at Manchester's Lowry Centre is very much on the cards for next summer. So Mr Sak, if you still want a look around the Gay Village, I will be free to give you a grand tour ...

The Meadows Studio big top Melville Drive Edinburgh 1st - 30th August

www.ladyboysofbangkok.co.uk



For these 'girls' - Image Works

Man / Feel Like a Woman

Alison Jones

has progressed from being a very closeted crossdresser to a very happy go lucky t-girl about town. Her warm and friendly personality makes people smile wherever she goes. A regular at the Philbeach Hotel in Earl's Court or out to lunch with the girls at Harvey Nichols she know how to enjoy herself. She also enjoys kite surfing en femme and since treating herself to a Porshe she can be seen zipping around the British countryside with the top down and hair blowing in the wind (sadly she has to pull over occasionally to run back and pick it up).

Annie Olsen

is a Texan crossdresser who admits to only dressing two or three times a year, but when she does, she likes to do it in style, as in this photoshoot when she crossed the ocean to have a session with us here at Image Works. Tall and willowy and a devotee of sexy glamour she is blessed with a loving and supportive wife....doesn't she look great.

To see more pictures of Alison and Annie, visit Image Works website ...
www.pandoradepledge.com





*** Royal Ascot**
 week has long been an important event in the summer diary of any well connected lady. The Queen for one has never missed a day what-ever "horribulus" might be pressing on her shoulders. Royal Ascot week has also become a wonderful event in any well connected trannies diary. A number of individu-

als and groups of trannies visited this year to enjoy the fashion the alternative atmosphere of the social picnic and to have a flutter (of eyelids if not of fivers). All reported an ever warmer welcome from the lads and lasses. In fact for some after eight years they were greeted by previous acquaintances like old friends. The Boudoir "fielded" a particularly fine batch of fillies (in frillys).

I must mention that the mad tranny witch who was attention seeking by sitting on the race course (until escorted off by security) and then went round poking her ugly mush into various camera lenses, hardly represents our readers good taste and decorum and is not known to *Utterly FABULOUS* - thank god.

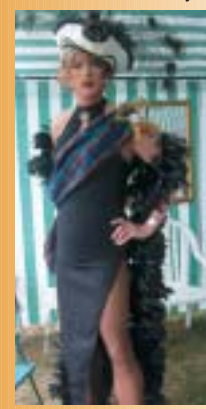


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- Miss Samantha
- Miss Stephanie
- Christine Nielsen & Jasmine
- Angela Geneva

The Team, Grooms & Trainers:

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- Tracie Ross, Maureen & Michael
- Pattison, Joan & Ralph Fewins
- and Miss Sarah Lloyd,



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*** My Fair Lady matinee trip**

Possibly inspired by their day at Ascot, ("Come on Dover move your blooming arse"), Jodie arranged a trip just a week later to see a matinee performance of 'My Fair Lady' in London's West End followed by a sunny evening meal at (long time tranny favourite) Steph's Restaurant in Soho.

The WayOut Club's Miss Sarah Lloyd joined the party. Sarah "lives" for theatre and said "despite being disappointed not to see Martine McCutcheon I found the show spectacular due mainly to the clever staging of props scenery and of course costumes" Jodie, Sarah and all the 'gurls' highly recommend seeing this show while it is still in London.



*** Vibeke Bryld**

is one of many students who contact WayOut but none have made the impression that she made. For her MA in television documentary at Goldsmiths college she recorded hours of rehearsals, photo shoots, shows. After winning our confidence, she shot extensive interviews. Steffan and family attended an emotional College screening and Vicky Lee hosted a second equally emotional screening at her home for family and friends. The 26min documentary is OUTSTANDING and has already been nominated for the Royal Television Society Students Award. YOU are invited to a screening of the documentary at The WayOut Club 23rd August at 10pm.



*** Krystyna**

(formally of Cheshire) has moved home and her Dressing Service to Wales, to what she calls her "Secret House and Enchanted Cottage". Krystyna is working with Martine at Repartee magazine to create some special events at the beautiful location. Her services have been extended and include her extensive range of wigs and hair services, breast forms and a new sex cache to smooth out any imperfections to the line of your skirt. Visitors are welcome to make enquiries or pre book appointments, as always mutual discretion is essential. (see advert)



*** Nikki&Debbie**

gently twisted Steffan & Vicky's arms to join them in creating a float for Gay Pride 2003. The trannygrange.com and thewayoutclub.com float was part of the largest parade that London has ever seen, for the first time passing through all the major tourist and political landmarks. The event was marked by approx 24 openly gay Metropolitan police in uniform leading the parade handing out goody bags of well worded friendly advice and fun pressies. Well done the Met and their LGBT advisors. Thanks are owed to the diverse float team who ALL worked hard to make such fun and memorable day. I know we are all ready to do it again (bigger & better) next year.

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