

Gately's partner speaks at Stonewall Awards



WITH REPORTER KARL RILEY

news in brief

On the buses with Stonewall

Stonewall's iconic 'Some People Are Gay, Get Over It' adverts are appearing inside 3,500 buses all over the country this month. It's part of the charity's efforts for anti-bullying week which begins next week. 'We're targeting buses because we know many school pupils use buses to travel to and from their school and, without the watchful eye of parents or teachers to uphold anti-bullying policies, homophobic bullying can thrive,' said Stonewall spokesperson Gary Nunn. Also, keep an eye out for Stonewall volunteers handing out 'Some People Are Gay...' travel card holders at London's major train stations on Monday.



Man jailed after London chatline robberies

A 27-year-old has been jailed for six years for robbing men he met on gay chatlines. Adil Zahid from Walthamstow pleaded guilty to four counts of robbery. The offences took place in Tottenham, north London, between June and August this year. It's believed he stole a laptop, stereo, jewellery and cash and threatened at least one man with a knife. He told the court that robbing gay men was 'strategic' rather than 'homophobic'.

Schools will teach gay sex education

School pupils are to have classes on gay sex, HIV and civil partnerships from September 2011. Children as young as five will be taught about relationships, including civil partnerships. Fifteen year olds will be taught about contraception and protection, and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV. Currently, parents can withdraw their children from sex education classes up to the age of 19; this will now be lowered to 15 to allow children at least one year of sex education before they reach the age of consent. The National AIDS Trust welcomed the announcement. 'In the past young gay men have often been ignored in sex and relationships lessons in schools and the result has been a rise in young gay men being diagnosed with HIV,' said Chief Executive Deborah Jack.

Jake raises £15,000 for charity at 10th birthday bash

Networking community, Jake, celebrated its 10th birthday this week and raised £15,000 for charity in the process. Proceeds from ticket sales, a raffle and an auction went to the



Ian McKellen

Albert Kennedy Trust, a charity that supports young homeless gay people throughout the country. The party took place at Quintessentially Soho, a temporary members club at the House of St Barnabas on Greek Street, where DJs included Boy George and Fat Tony.

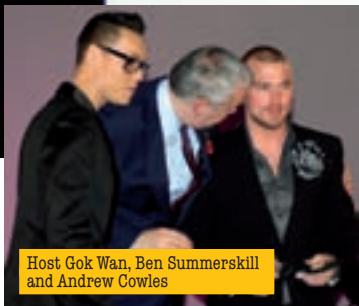
Among items auctioned were hotel stays, and theatre tickets, with the highlight proving to be an oil painting of actor Sir Ian McKellen, a patron of the charity. Sir Ian himself helped auction the painting, alongside TV's Kristian Digby and Dr David Bull. It was the biggest earner of the evening and sold for £5,700. 'We are so grateful to our members for raising such a significant amount for such a worthy cause,' said Operations Director Craig Solomon, adding: 'Gay professionals have really made an impact on the lives of young people who turn to the AKT for advice and support. A big thank you to everyone who came to our 10th Birthday in aid of the Albert Kennedy Trust'.

Matt Lucas play to close early

A West End play that starred Matt Lucas will close three weeks early following poor ticket sales since the star's departure. Lucas, famous for his role in Little Britain, left the play last month after the suicide of his former partner, Kevin McGee. The last performance will take place on Sunday.



Matt Lucas & Kevin McGee



Host Gok Wan, Ben Summerskill and Andrew Cowles

The partner of late Boyzone star, Stephen Gately spoke publicly last week for the first time since Gately's death. Andrew Cowles accepted an honour on behalf of Boyzone at equality organisation Stonewall's annual award ceremony on Thursday 5 November.

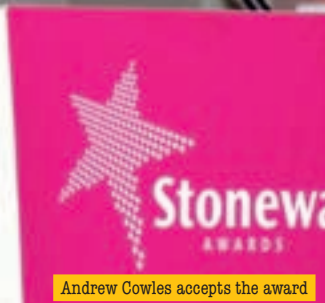
Boyzone were the winners in the Entertainer of the Year category, beating off competition from Stephen K Amos, Russell Tovey, Beth Ditto and Mary Portas.

Stonewall Chief Executive, Ben Summerskill said they had been chosen as the winners before the sudden death of Gately, and he welcomed Cowles to the stage.

'A few years ago Boyzone made pop history by featuring a gay kiss in one of their videos,' said Cowles. 'That was not a marketing stunt, it was simply a mark of respect for Stephen and his sexuality.'



Gok Wan, Johann Hari, Ben Summerskill, Joan Bakewell



Andrew Cowles accepts the award

His first public appearance comes three weeks after Daily Mail writer Jan Moir wrote a now infamous article on Gately's death in which she described it as 'strange' and 'unnatural'.

Moir appeared to challenge the results of a post-mortem that found Gately had died of natural causes. 'Healthy and fit 33-year-old men do not just climb into their pyjamas and go to sleep on the sofa, never to wake up again,' wrote the 56-year-old.

Cowles, who entered into a civil partnership with Gately in 2006 said: 'I would like to take this opportunity to say how insensitive some of the press have been in their reporting of Stephen's death, adding: 'In particular I would like to thank everybody who contacted the Press Complaints Commission about the Jan Moir Daily Mail article.' More than 20,000 complaints were lodged, making her article the most complained about article in press history.

To loud applause, followed by mock boos and hisses, Summerskill and awards host Gok Wan announced that Moir was a 'late entry' to the Bigot of the Year category. Moir and Father John Owen - who said the majority of child abuse was carried out by gay men - were jointly named as the award winners. Neither were present to pick up their awards. Other winners included Ben Bradshaw as Politician of the Year and Johann Hari and Joan Bakewell as joint winners in the Journalist of the Year category.



Actor Russell Tovey lost out to Boyzone