

# An LGBT Walking Tour of Nottingham



**Yellow Walk - 1½ hours**

**Pink Walk - 45 minutes to take in more sights.**

**200 COFFEE**

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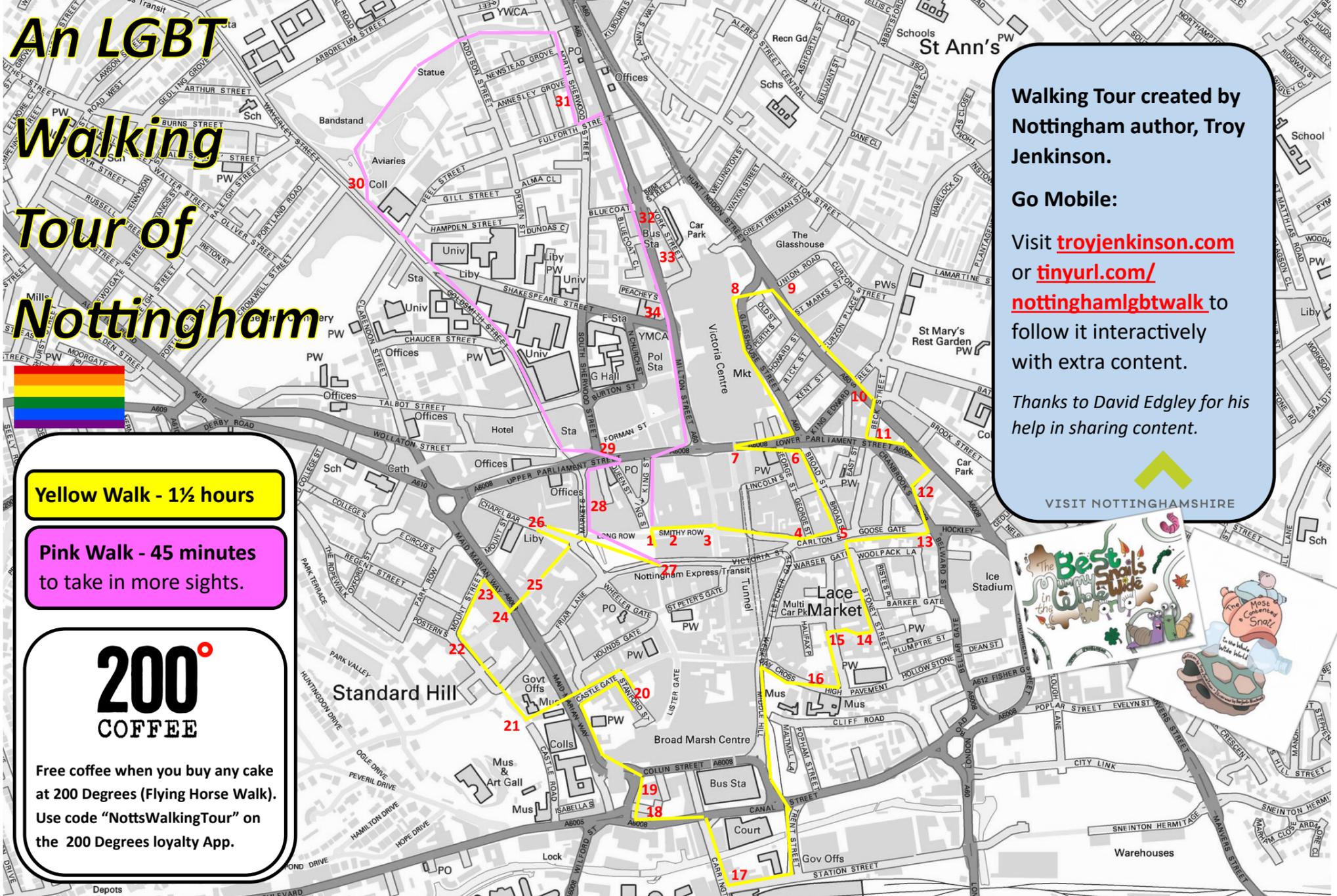
**Walking Tour created by Nottingham author, Troy Jenkinson.**

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Thanks to David Edgley for his help in sharing content.

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VISIT NOTTINGHAMSHIRE



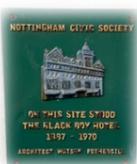
## Start—1—Market Square

The traditional meeting place is by the lions. Facing the impressive Council House; walk to its left. Tucked away down a narrow alleyway (Greyhound Street) was **The Casablanca**. This small venue over several floors became **Kitsch** in 1995. Today it has been converted by the City Council into public lavatories. Heading away from the square, down another tiny alley is **Five Leaves**, an independent book shop that has a good stock of LGBTQ literature and friendly, helpful staff. It was set up following the closure of **Mushroom Bookshop** (another gay-friendly independent) on Heathcote Street.



## 2—Black Boy Hotel (Primark)

This modernist building is now Primark. Originally built by Littlewoods following the demolition of **The Black Boy**, a salubrious hotel that housed one of the gay bars of the 1960s. All that remains is a small plaque on one of the pillars of the esplanade.



## 3 Blackmore's Head (Zara)

At little further along Pelham Street (behind The Council House) is a branch of Zara. This is where the **Blackmore's Head** public house once stood. When Lord Byron died, his "immorality" prevented him being buried in Westminster Abbey. On the way to his final resting place in Hucknall, his coffin was laid in state for four days here as people queued to view him and pay their respects.

## 4 George Hotel (Mercure)

Leaving Market Square behind us, we walk up Pelham St towards Goose Gate and Hockley. Just beyond the brow of the hill, the Mercure hotel looms ahead of you. In the 1940s this was known as **The George**. This hotel housed another bar frequented by some of Nottingham's queer folk.



## 5 Broad Street

Carry on walking down Hockley across one of the painted **rainbow crossings** created for the 2019 Pride celebrations and turn down onto Broad Street, where predecessor to **Nottingham Pride** (Pink Lace) began life in 1997. As we walk down this now pedestrianised street, a number of gay and gay friendly venues sprung up with a welcoming vibe. Home to the **GAI Project** on the right, a little further down is the ever popular **Broadway (Independent) Cinema** that shows a range of LGBT films and hosts many community groups. On the left a group of short lived gay bars popped up in late 2018/19 including **Bar 96**. Carrying on down Broad Street, **The Lord Roberts** is nestled onto the corner of the road. Building on its reputation as a theatre bar, in the late 1990s it became more gay friendly and opened its **Green Room** to many LGBT groups. It has a predominantly gay clientele these days. Pop in for a refreshing drink and a happy hello.



## 6 Newmarket & Palais de Danse (now Pryzm)

At the bottom of Broad Street, we see **The Newmarket** (though not officially gay, it has been very gay friendly in several incarnations of its life). Opposite the Newmarket was the **Palais de Danse** (now Pryzm). It was one of the many super clubs to host regular monthly gay night; "Revolution" organised by Pete Martine (of Sleaze Sisters fame) in the late 90s.

## 7 The Old Dog & Partridge

Turning left at the bottom of Broad Street, a short walk along Upper Parliament Street, is **The Old Dog & Partridge**, one of the most popular gay bars in the 1970s. Like many pubs at the time, the gay bar was separate, at the back of the straight pub. Sometimes bars such as this had signs on the door saying "Private Party" to attempt to "keep the straights out." This pub was one of the first to be run by the Bradley family who monopolised the Nottingham gay scene in the 80s & 90s. One famous punter was comedienne, Su Pollard who is quoted as saying, "I met my first gay man when I was fifteen. It was very much under wraps then as you can imagine. They all gathered in the Dog & Partridge, in the back room with their Pringle shirts. I loved their sense of humour, I totally clicked with it."



## 8 The New Foresters

Head back towards the Palais and turn left onto Glasshouse Street, past the side of Victoria Centre. The high-rise flats of the shopping centre were infamously known as "**Fairy Towers**" during the 1990s due to the number of gay residents. Just before Glasshouse Street joins Huntingdon Street, an inconspicuous pub called **The New Foresters** (originally called The Foresters Arms) has provided over 50 years of continuous service as a lesbian bar. Opened in 1958 it welcomes all LGBTQ folk. Often open during the day, it may offer a welcome refreshment, part way around this walk.



## 9 The Lost Weekend

Carry on past The New Foresters and you come to a gloomy looking, abandoned venue that used to be **The Lost Weekend**. Another venue that briefly provided a home for DJ Pete Martine's **Revolution** monthly nights in 2005. A couple of doors down, **The Foresters Inn** (not to be mistaken with The New Foresters), was for a long time also considered gay friendly.



## 10 Gatsby's / Central / Niche / New Gatsby's

Continuing down Huntingdon Street and on the corner of King Edward street, a small art-deco building (currently a karaoke bar) was formerly **Gatsby's** a gay mecca for many years from 1983. The pub was run by the Bradley family (Hilda, the matriarch and her four sons). Towards the end of the 90s alcoholism and old age forced a change in management and name. The pub reverted to its original name, **Central**. In 2007, it was renamed **Niche** and reopened again as **New Gatsby's** in 2009 only to be closed again acrimoniously with a note left on the door that blamed the "gobby queens" for causing the licensees trouble by boycotting the venue, saying "you will be the first people to complain that there are only a few gay bars left, but if you're going to be vile old bitter queens, you're never going to have a nice gay bar in Nottingham."



### 11 Gay Garage / Jacey's / Admiral Duncan / NG1

Continue down Huntingdon Street to the Shell petrol station, colloquially known as **The Gay Garage** for many years as this was the 24 hour venue for drunken snacks after falling out of one of the many gay venues in this part of town. Standing on the corner where Beck Street meets Lower Parliament Street, directly opposite another stunning art-deco style pub became a large gay venue known by a variety of names. Initially **Jacey's** in 1999, under a range of new managers it became **Ice**. In 2008, it became **Pink** but closed in December 2010 when its license was revoked after management tried to cover up a violent incident. In 2012 it transformed into **Queen of Clubs** though it became another casualty in the loss of gay venues in 2014. On the opposite side of Heathcote Street a short-lived, small, private members only venue called **G-Spot** opened in 2012. A few steps down from garage was **The Admiral Duncan**. From 1987 it was tentatively a gay venue run by a well-meaning straight couple. It's blacked out front windows provided a private dancing floor space while the back room was more of a chill out room. Towards the end of the 90s it was refurbished and renamed **@D2** attracting a lively crowd until the Spring of 2013 when it closed its doors as a pub for good. Next door, in 2000, the first gay club for some time opened; **NG1**. This super-club boasted 2 floors, 3 bars and attracted people from far and wide. In 2015, it acknowledged it had become a straight venue; its late license (until 6am) had drawn clientele from other surrounding venues that closed earlier.



### 14 Propaganda / Faces / F&G

Continue up Hockley to the familiar junction of Broad Street (and its rainbow crossings). Take a sharp left onto Stoney Street. Follow this road past the NCP car park and turn right onto a pedestrianised road; Broadway. This former lace factory (a blue plaque on the wall demarcates the building as the former HQ of world-renowned Birkin & Co) complex was a pocket of gayness. To the right a small basement bar (now Annie's Burger Shack) opened in 2011, initially called **Fag**, after some backlash from locals it changed its name to **F&G** (Friendly and Gay), though it didn't pull in the crowds and closed in 2012. Almost directly opposite an elaborate doorway led to an upstairs club known as **Faces** that played host to Pete Martine's "**Revolution**" monthly night. As you look up Broadway, the imposing entrance to the former factory building housed **Propaganda**. Opened in 2009, it was soon joined by **Fuel** and **Foundation** (marketed as a Boutique Bar) in 2010 though the latter two fared less well and closed within the year. Propaganda gained notoriety when high street marketing diva, Janet Street Porter criticised its cheap booze-fuelled nights called "**Pounded**" on her television documentaries. Propaganda fell victim to closure early on in the Covid-19 lockdowns.

### 15 Lizard Lounge

Follow Broadway around a corner and turn left onto St Mary's Gate. On the left is a smart entrance to luxury apartments that still bear the name of its former infamous club, The Garage. It was also known as **Lizard Lounge**, and hosted to one of the many monthly gay nights in the late 90s.

### 16 National Justice Museum / County Tavern / Cellos

At the end of St Mary's Gate, directly opposite is The Galleries of Justice. This former court house is now the **National Justice Museum** and as part of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality played host to an exhibition commemorating those hounded by the immoral laws. Opposite, a small bar now called "The Cock and Hoop" (part of The Lace Market Hotel), was **The County Tavern** in the late 90s and was another popular gay friendly venue. Continue along High Pavement to Weekday Cross. Number 22 Fletcher Gate, diagonally opposite the junction was The Old Vic and held a monthly lesbian night, **Cellos** in 1993. Follow the road (Middle Hill) downhill, cross Canal Street and follow the old railway viaduct to Station Street.



### 17 Parkside Club

Turn right onto Station Street, on the right just past Hopkinsons (a former hardware store and now antiques centre) was **The Parkside Club**. The building was demolished in 2021 after being derelict for some time. In the 1960s it was a straight private members club though in the 1970s it operated a gay night for a few months making it the first gay club in Nottingham.

### 18 La Chic

At the end of Station Street, turn right. Follow Carrington Street to junction of Canal Street and turn left. A little way down on the left is **Via Fossa**. Strictly speaking this is (and always has been) a straight venue, though it shares its name with a 'gay counterpart on Manchester's famous Canal Street and as such began attracting a gay friendly feel when it first opened. Continue down Canal Street almost to its junction with Maid Marion Way. On the right is a building now known as Albion House. This was **La Chic** which was ground breaking as it became the first club in the UK in 1973 to be licensed specifically for gay men and lesbians, making headlines in the Nottingham Evening Post. It changed names to **Part 2** but finally closed in 1985.



### 19 Revolution at MGM

On the corner of Collin Street takes is **Ocean**. This enormous straight club was formerly **The Sherwood Rooms**, **Astoria** and **MGM**. For almost two decades from 1984, it played host on the first Monday of every month to "**Revolution**" organised by Pete Martine. Crowds came from all corners of the East Midlands.

### 20 Mario's / Shades / Whispers / Outburst LGB Youth Group

Continue up Maid Marion Way and turn right after St Nicholas' Church onto Castle Gate. Turn onto Stanford Street. The building on the right now known as Stanford House, was once the tatty home of **Mario's**, reputedly Nottingham's first gay club (though it was predated by Parkside Club by a few months). It later changed its name to **Shades** and finally **Whispers** but reigned for over ten years. Back on Castle Gate, a building that formerly housed Radio Trent is now **NGY**, managed by **Base 51**, a community space opened in 2012 providing facilities including counselling, a fitness space and recording studio. Outburst LGB Youth Group also meets here.



### 12 CS2 / OutHouse LGBT Centre

Continue your walk down Lower Parliament Street to the junction of Lennox Street. The building on the corner known as **CS2**, was a gay sauna originally bought in 1999 to house **The OutHouse LGBT Community Centre**, though this was never fully realised.

### 13 The Mill

Further down the Lower Parliament Street, we turn up Hockley, back into the city centre. On the corner of this junction stands **The Mill**. In the late 1990s this two floor dance venue proved a popular gay friendly venue until it was purchased by property developers and turned into luxury apartments and a Mandarin restaurant.



### 21 Robin Hood Statue / Nottingham Castle / Pink Lace

Retrace your steps back to and crossing over Maid Marion Way. Follow Castle Gate to the **Robin Hood Statue**. It is here that we pause to

reflect on the fact there are many stories out there professing Robin's gayness. It should be acknowledged that the first written accounts of Nottingham's infamous legend were recorded by 14<sup>th</sup> century gay poet, **Sir John Clanvowe**. He participated in a church approved ceremony of "wedded brotherhood" with his partner Sir William Neville, constable of Nottingham Castle. Staying with **Nottingham Castle's** gay links, we walk past the medieval entrance. **Edward II (1284-1327)** known as the gayest king of all, was besieged by rumours of intimate relations with close courtier; **Piers Gaveston** another town constable. It seems even way back in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Nottingham was a beacon for gays! In 1998 and 1999, it became the venue for the **Pink Lace** festival before it moving to The Arboretum.

### 22 Rotunda

Continuing up Standard Hill towards a round towering building known as Rotunda, this was a well known lesbian monthly night called **Infinity**.

### 23 The Hearty Goodfellow

Walk down Mount Street to its corner with Maid Marion Way, a restaurant (4550 miles from Delhi) was formerly known as **The Hearty Goodfellows** a popular gay bar in the late 70s in a downstairs room (adorned by a "Private Party" sign).

### 24 Albany Hotel (now The Britannia Hotel)

Walk towards St James' Street. The Britannia Hotel, formerly the **Albany**, hosted the Annual Conference of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE) in 1977. Nottingham was a key centre for CHE for the Midlands.

### 25 Nero's / De Luxe / Malt Cross

Cross Maid Marion Way and continuing down St James' Street. An inconspicuous entrance to a club (now 101 Bar) was another venture by the Bradley family that began life as **Nero's** and transmogrified into **L'Amour**, **Club 69** and finally **De Luxe** before closing. A few doors down, **The Malt Cross** (a restored Victorian Music Hall) hosted a **St Valentine Mascara** in 2007 and subsequently homed a gay arts group called Arts Social.



### 26 The Dragon / Angel Row Library

Re-entering Market Square, if you turn immediately left, one of Nottingham's oldest pubs the **Bell Inn** reputedly had a gentlemen-only bar (though never proven to have gay connections) and further up Chapel Bar, **The Dragon** took the mantle of popularity following the demise of the Hearty Goodfellow. Apparently one night, it was invaded by an abusive bunch of skinheads. The landlord disappeared upstairs to return with a large Alsatian that rapidly dispersed the aggressive cowards! Opposite in **Angel Row Library**, an LGBT exhibition was displayed in the front window in 1987 receiving frequent vandalism. The library has since hosted a number of queer exhibitions.

### 27 The Flying Horse (200 Degrees Coffee House)

The shortened version of this walk finishes where we started, on the opposite side of Nottingham's Council House. **The Flying Horse** was once a dingy, dark pub with salubrious clientele including queer folk in the 50s and 60s. Sometimes known as "The Pansy's Parlour," it now houses a delightful coffee shop run by local roasters, 200 Degrees. You can either finish your walk here with a refreshing drink and light snack (use the code on the map for a free hot drink) or if you are feeling the energy (and the weather is good), you can venture on the second half of this walk taking you to the peace of The Arboretum.



### Extend your walk a bit further...

#### 28 The Scala - (no longer there but where Debenhams is now).

Exit Market Square via Market Street, to the right **The Scala** opened in 1878 as the **Gaiety Palace of Varieties**, later becoming King's Theatre. In the 60s and 70s it had a reputation for showing "risque" films with gay themes - such as "Fortune and Men's Eyes". Serving as an unconventional meeting place for gay men, the building is no longer there.

#### 29 The Peach Tree (Langtry's)

**The Peach Tree** (now Langtry's) to the right as you face the Theatre Royal, catered for the "theatrical crowd" and had what was called a "gentleman's bar" where "gentlemen" used to meet. The period was the 1930s to 1950s. Read what you will into this.

### 30 The Arboretum (site of Nottingham Pride)

Walk past front of the Theatre Royal and turn right down Goldsmith Street. As you reach the bottom and begin the incline, to the right is a smart set of gates leads into **The Arboretum**. This pleasant park with aviaries, coffee shop, bandstand and public amenities provided the perfect venue for Nottingham Pride as it outgrew Nottingham Castle from 2003 to 2007 and again in 2012 (it relocated to Forest Recreational Ground in 2010/2011). The peaceful park held a main stage as well as bars, stalls and "speakers' corner" where party goers could listen to the spoken word. Nottingham Pride recently relocated again to centre on The Lace Market area. Take in the serenity as you continue your walk in the park and through the tunnel to the exit gates and turn right onto North Sherwood Street.



#### 31 The Hole in the Wall

On North Sherwood Street, stop outside **The Hole in the Wall**. In 1984, it was noted as a gay friendly venue and played host to lesbian pool nights.



#### 32 The Roebuck (demolished—near to where The Dice Cup is now)

Walk down Bluecoat Street opposite the Hole in the Wall and turn right towards Victoria Centre. **The Roebuck** was the key rival to the Old Dog and Partridge in the 70s though it is long since demolished. Situated near to York House, it was managed by the formidable Maxine; whose partner ran off with a horse trainer from Cheltenham.

#### 33 The People's Centre (start of Nottingham's LGB Switchboard)

Continue down Mansfield Road. **The People's Centre** was an alternative citizen's advice bureau based at 33 Mansfield Road. In 1974, Howard Hyman, of Nottingham CHE, approached the People's Centre who agreed to hold face-to-face advice sessions for gay men and lesbians. In essence, the start of **Nottingham Lesbian & Gay Switchboard**.

#### 34 YMCA (on the corner of Shakespeare Street)

Continue down Mansfield Road. In 2000 OutHouse obtained a Millennium grant to run an LGBT history project at Nottingham's **YMCA** on the corner of Shakespeare Street/Mansfield Road. It was launched on History Day on April 15th. Those attending were subjected to a demonstration by 50 members of the BNP, though this was broken up by police when things started to turn ugly. Follow the pink route back into Old Market Square to finish your walk where you started.