

Christine Burns

Trans Rights Campaigner and Educator

Name	Christine Burns MBE., B.Sc., M.Sc., C.Eng., M.B.C.S., C.I.T.P.
Born	February 1954
Profession	Business Manager and Diversity Consultant (former IT & Business Consultant)
Home	Manchester, England
Joined PFC	1993
Campaign Responsibilities	Former Vice President (retired August 2000), Feature Writer, Government and Media liaison, Parliamentary Forum member, PFC Representative in Liberty and coordinator of several media "coming out" stories and projects.
Email	c_burns@btinternet.com

Background

Christine is a transsexual woman and was invited to join Press for Change shortly after the campaign's formation in 1992. Being a Conservative Party Branch Secretary at the time, her initial specialisation was to use her connections and letter writing skills to draw cabinet attention to the issues facing transsexual people. In 1995 she "came out" within her community to enable her to chair fringe meetings at the Labour and Conservative Party Conferences and, shortly after that, became a Vice President of the Campaign. She left the Conservative Party in 1997, although not for reasons connected with her trans status. Indeed, "coming out" inside the local party did little to affect her popularity as an organiser and activist.



Christine Burns – August 2004

In the course of her Press for Change campaigning career she has made many national and local television and radio appearances, especially when milestone events have attracted media attention. Examples include "Womans Hour", "Sunday" and the "Today" programme (BBC Radio 4), BBC News 24 and Sky News (Digital TV), BBC 1 News, documentary contributions (BBC1 & 2), North West Tonight and Granada Reports (regional TV), GMR Radio, BBC London and other local radio stations. She has also briefed a wide variety of journalists researching stories about campaign events and "coming out" stories, and has regularly been quoted in their articles. When Granada Television first introduced a fictional trans character to the soap opera "Coronation Street" Christine also led the lobby and initial negotiations which resulted in the introduction of a PFC "advisor" to the production team.

However it is as a writer that Christine has probably made her greatest contribution to trans campaigning and consciousness.

When the Internet began to become a widely available public resource in late 1995, Christine had a leading role in setting up the campaign's web site and setting its original editorial objectives – but her main forte has been to write articles covering every aspect of the campaign and trans people's issues, including a weekly topical essay series known affectionately as the "Sunday Sermon". Over the course of ten years, Christine has written literally hundreds of articles, web site features and commentaries to help educate and mentor trans people as campaigners. These days she has now switched her emphasis to writing for a wider external audience, with many articles now published across a range of print media, and her focus is in specific areas such as Human Relations, Equal Opportunities and Diversity journals – educating the people responsible for employing and managing trans people at work.

Aside from her long term membership of the Parliamentary Forum on Transsexualism Christine was until recently a member of the policy-governing "Council" of Liberty, and is often invited to meetings organised by other groups to debate equal opportunities advances such as the proposed Single Equality Body and forthcoming legislation to widen the scope of non-discrimination legislation. In these settings Christine doesn't formally represent Press for Change, as her interests are wider than those of trans people alone. Nevertheless she is open about her own trans history and involvement, and therefore ensures that trans interests are taken into account wherever it is relevant to distinguish these.

As a campaign leader, and with an interest in mainstream politics, Christine has always been involved in the front line of dealing with Government on trans issues. In 1998/9 she was closely involved (with colleagues) in direct Ministerial negotiations concerning the extension of the Sex Discrimination Act. This became law in April 1999. Subsequently she co-authored the initial Press for Change submission to the Interdepartmental Working Group on Transsexualism (2000-2001) and remained involved in close consultation with Government Officials through the entire development of the Gender Recognition Act, which attained Royal Assent in July 2004.



In her private life Christine has been a Business and IT Consultant for much of her career, rising to a senior level within one of the world's largest Consultancy companies before taking a deliberate change of career direction in 2002. Her approach to mixing campaigning and career work is to be honest about both, but to keep them separate as far as possible.

She says, "Work colleagues inevitably learn about my own background and my campaign work through my media appearances - and just the sort of 'phone calls I get. My response is to treat the interest matter-of-factly though. Being trans is nothing to be ashamed of. In fact I'm very proud of how campaigning has allowed me to develop as a person, and in terms of my management and advocacy skills. These days fifty percent of my personal CV includes the things I've achieved as a campaigner. That may put some prospective employers off I suppose, but those are not the sort of companies I would want to

work for anyway. A good employer looks at the whole package - and I guess they reason that if I can be so committed to something I'm not paid for, I can be totally committed to them as well"

Christine nowadays lives near the centre of Manchester and helps to manage a company which cares for people with Learning Disabilities and long term mental health problems. She lectures regularly and also runs a Diversity Consultancy, specialising in helping organisations to understand and accommodate trans recruits and staff. She was awarded an MBE for her services to "Gender Issues" in the 2004/5 New Year's Honours List.

For more details see <http://www.plain-sense.co.uk/diversity> and http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/christine_burns

Updated – October 2005

Personal Campaigning Highlights From The Last Decade

- **Labour and Conservative Party Conference Fringe (1995)** — Chaired meetings at both conferences, effectively launching Christine's "Out" campaigning career.
- **Parliamentary Forum on Transsexualism** — Became a founding member of the interdisciplinary committee chaired by MP's Alex Carlile and Dr Lynne Jones
- **Press for Change Web Site (Jan 1996)** — Launched the original pilot version of the Press for Change web site
- **Private Healthcare Insurance Success (BUPA – 1996-97)** — Campaigned personally to reverse the UK private health insurer's initial refusal to provide insurance cover of any kind to a transsexual woman.
- **PFC News (July 1997)** — Collaborated in the launch of PFC's email news distribution list and became its principal contributor of original material.
- **10 Downing Street (October 1997)** — Took part in the delivery of PFC's 10,000 signature petition to the Prime Minister.
- **Pursuing Change Within The UK Press (1997 ongoing)** — Encouraged and assisted many trans people to make complaints about specific coverage in the press, achieving two substantial printed apologies by the Guardian. Also liaised at length with the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) to attempt to bring about a permanent change in derogatory writing about trans people as a group. Published the report "Transsexual People and the Press" (Nov 2004), making the case for the PCC to take a lead in reforming discriminatory attitudes. In May 2005 the PCC updated the Editors' Code of Practice to expressly signal a need for editorial change.
- **Coronation Street (Spring 1998)** — Initiated liaison work between Granada TV and PFC's anonymous "Coronation Street Advisor", leading to realistic development of the character of "Hayley Patterson" and storylines reflecting key trans issues.
- **BBC "Home Ground" (Spring 1998)** — Collaborated in the making of a BBC TV documentary about the transition of Bristol Labour Councillor, Rosalind Mitchell.
- **The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations (DfEE 1999)** — First personal taste of negotiating face-to-face with a Government Minister (Margaret Hodge, MP).

- **Liberty (1999-2005)** — Was a Council member of the human rights campaign group, “Liberty”
- **The Interdepartmental Working Group On Transsexual People (Westminster 1999 to 2000)** — Helped bring civil servants and trans representatives closer together. Co-authored the PFC report, “*Recognising the Identity and Rights of Transsexual People*” (PFC, June 1999).
- **Governmental Liaison (2000-2004)** — Collaborated extensively with Government officials and Ministers at each key stage in the conception and development of what became the Gender Recognition Act 2004.
- **Headline News Appearances (2002-2004)** — Appeared regularly as a spokeswoman for the transsexual rights campaign in news coverage of the announcement of Government policy on trans people (Dec 2002), on the publication of a draft Bill (July 2003), during the debate on aspects of the Bill (Spring 2004). Appearances included Sky TV News, “Littlejohn” – with Amanda Platell (Sky), BBC Wales, BBC London, BBC News 24.
- **Criminal Records Bureau (2002)** — Lobbied and persuaded the Criminal Records Bureau to find a workable solution to enable transsexual people to work in the fields of education and care without being obligatorily “outed” to their employers by the disclosure application process.
- **The “J Michael Bailey” affair (April 2003 onwards)** — Contributed to efforts by US trans campaigners to oppose the views expressed in the controversial popular science book, “The Man Who Would Be Queen” (Joseph Henry Press, 2003). Included the launch of an international web-based petition signed by 1460 people, protesting the nomination of the book as a finalist in the 2004 Lambda Literary Awards.
- **Metropolitan Police (Autumn 2003)** — Consulted with senior officers to enable them to launch the force’s policies for retaining and recruiting transsexual officers.
- **National Care Standards Commission (Autumn 2003)** — Lobbied and persuaded the Department of Health and the National Care Standards Commission to introduce changes to prevent the obligatory “outing” of trans care workers and registered home managers by the requirements concerning production and holding of employees’ birth certificates.
- **Cleaning Up Google (Autumn 2003)** — Led a global campaign to persuade the web’s number one search provider, “Google” to stop providing pornographic advertising links alongside serious support and Governmental policy links in its search results on terms such as “transsexual”.
- **Encouraging Change At The BBC (Spring 2004)** — Led an International protest and national complaints to persuade the BBC to provide journalistic and production guidelines on the use of pronouns referring to transsexual people. The BBC has since provided explicit guidance to content makers in the relaunch of its overall editorial guidelines in 2005.
- **Cleaning Up Derogatory TV Advertising (Summer 2004)** — Encouraged a mini campaign by transsexual women to complain at exploitative TV advertising. Resulted in an OFCOM ruling for A.G.Barr and Co. to cut the offensive ending from a TV campaign for the soft drink “Irn Bru”.

- **Parliamentary Passage of the Gender Recognition Bill (Spring-Summer 2004)** — Worked with PFC colleagues to liaise with supportive MP's and Ministers during the passage of the Bill through the House of Lords and House of Commons.
- **Pride London (July 2004 and July 2005)** — Addressed an estimated crowd of 10,000 gay, lesbian and bisexual people at rallies both years in Trafalgar Square. Helped lead the 35,000 strong "Pride Parade" through London's streets in July 2005.
- **General Social Care Council (Autumn 2004)** — Challenged the GSCC to modify its procedures for the registration of social workers and care managers to prevent a similar form of unavoidable "outing" to employers.
- **Pressing For A New Agenda In Treatment For Transsexual People (Summer 2004 onwards)** – Helped promote a critical report concerning treatment at Charing Cross Gender Identity Clinic, drew widespread attention to the behaviours of its psychiatric team, and helped to press for a more radical consultation agenda for proposed new standards of care within the professions. Published a set of seven key principles and tests for trans healthcare in July 2005 – referred to as "A Manifesto for Care". Also published increasingly critical commentaries about clinics, clinicians and commissioning bodies.
- **Greater International Cooperation (2004 and ongoing)** — Strengthened ties with trans rights campaigners in the United States, Australia and Europe so as to facilitate better sharing of resources and support and to encourage widespread exploitation of the advances contained in the Gender Recognition Act 2004.
- **Campaigning Video (Autumn 2004)** — Launched a pilot 18 minute video production, explaining the key aspects of the Gender Recognition Act and other contemporary campaign issues with a special emphasis towards GLB audiences
- **Awarded MBE (New Years Honours List, Dec 31st 2004)** — Awarded an MBE in recognition of work representing transsexual people.

Bibliography

Book chapters and contributions

- **The Second Transition** - Chapter in "Finding the Real Me - True Tales of Sex and Gender Diversity" (Eds Tracie O' Keefe and Katrina Fox. Wiley 2003. ISBN 0-7879-6547-2
- **If That's Your Idea of Non-Discrimination** - Article in "Sex, Gender and Sexuality - 21st Century Transformations" (Tracie O'Keefe 1999, Extraordinary People Press. ISBN 0-9529482-2-2)



Newspaper Articles

- **A Change for the Better** — Society Guardian, 3rd August 2004
<http://society.guardian.co.uk/health/story/0,,1275200,00.html>
- **Transforming Attitudes** — Society Guardian, 9th August 2004
<http://society.guardian.co.uk/health/comment/0,,1278040,00.html>

Magazines and Journals

- **The Measure of a Democracy** — The Diversity Directory, 23rd Edn, Spring 2003. ISSN 1358-7978
- **The Measure of a Democracy** — Diversity Today, Vol 1 Iss 3, June 2003. ISSN 1479-098X
- **Labour's Legislative Promise to Trans People** — Equality Exchange Reporter (EOC) Winter 2002/3
- **Metropolitan Police launch policy to recruit Transsexual officers** — Equality Exchange Reporter (EOC) July 2003
- **When Will Inclusiveness Include Me?** — Equal Opportunities Review, January 2003 Number 113, IRS LexisNexis, ISSN 0268-7143
- **CRB Acts to Stop Creating Transsexual Victims** — Diversity at Work Bi-monthly Newsletter (Winter 2002) <http://www.diversityatwork.com/articles/CRB.htm>
- **Trans People and the Equality / Diversity Agenda** — Diversity at Work (Online) <http://www.diversityatwork.com/articles/Trans.htm>
- **Why Phrasebook Diversity Is Not Enough** — Diversity at Work (Online) <http://www.diversityatwork.com/articles/Phrasebook.htm>
- **Why HR should wake up to the needs of transsexual employees** — Personnel Today, 18th November 2003 (Online) <http://www.personneltoday.com/Article21321.htm>

Educational Media

- **A Year of Landmark Events (Oct 2004)** — Video (DVD) produced to explain the Gender Recognition Act and Explain the Post-Legislative Agenda for Trans People
- **Gender Variance (Jan 2005)** — Lesson Plan introducing and contextualising Gender Diversity issues for secondary school teaching, launched to coincide with Britain's first LGBT History Month <http://www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk/resources/LessonPlan-GenderVariance.pdf>
- **Until Gender Do Us Part (Spring 2005)** — Contributed towards the production of a ten minute video about trans people left with the choice of divorcing their present partners if they wish to obtain legal recognition of their gender. (Directed by Frazer Paddy, final year broadcast journalism student).



International Web Publishing

- **When Sally Met Harry (May 2003)** — <http://www.tsroadmap.com/info/sally.pdf>
Exploring the trials of dating and loving when your sex, and the consequent interpretation of your sexuality, is regarded as a matter of opinion, rather than a matter of fact.
- **I'm Me, Therefore I am (May 2003)** — http://www.tsroadmap.com/info/Im_Me.pdf
Exploring the way in which researchers (and one in particular) categorise trans people, and whether that is a help or a hindrance in understanding a diverse collection of different people, motivations and constraints
- **Not Quite so Incredibly Brave (May 2003)** — <http://www.tsroadmap.com/info/NotBrave.pdf>
Simple and non-pathological reasons why some trans people transition earlier than others
- **The Lesson We Keep Forgetting (March 2003)** —
<http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/TS/Bailey/TheLesson.html>
How a picture can feed stereotypes and change the meaning of an article
- **The Queen Who Won't Be Crowned (March 2004)** —
<http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/TS/Bailey/Lambda%20Literary%20Foundation.html#Queen>
Reflecting on the controversy that surrounded the nomination of a highly transphobic book for a 2004 Lambda Literary Award
- **Nadia's Conundrum (July 2004)** —
<http://bigbrother.digitalspy.co.uk/article/ds6844.html> and <http://www.pfc.org.uk/pfclists/news-arc/2004q3/msg00014.htm> Feature length discussion of the pressures and dilemmas facing Big Brother contestant Nadia Almada
- **Whoops There Goes Another Rubber Tree Plant (Jan 2005)** — Article for Gay.com reflecting on the opening of the Gender Recognition application process.
<http://uk.gay.com/article/3285> and <http://www.pfc.org.uk/pfclists/news-arc/2005q1/msg00002.htm>

Web Publishing for Press for Change (selection only)

- A Basis for Evaluating Care Approaches and Services for Trans People in the UK (July 2005) <http://www.pfc.org.uk/medical/cb-eval1.pdf>. Also referred to as the “Manifesto for Care”, provides seven key principles and seven basic tests for the design and critical evaluation of modern care services aimed at transsexual people.
- **Transsexual People And The Press (Nov 2004)** <http://www.pfc.org.uk/gendropol/pcc-doss.pdf>
A detailed dossier examining press discrimination towards transsexual people in Britain and recommending paths towards improvement on the part of the Code Committee of the Press Complaints Commission. Contains accounts from 30 trans people.
- **Echoes Of A Bygone Age (Nov 2004)** <http://www.pfc.org.uk/pfclists/news-arc/2004q4/index.htm>
Drawing parallels between the removal of homosexuality from psychiatric classification and the position still faced by transsexual people in 2004.
- **Will the Altruist Just Pick Up Her Flowers and Go Home? (May 2004)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/pfclists/news-arc/2004q2/msg00070.htm> — Does the passing of the Gender Recognition Bill mean our work is over?
- **Recognising the Identity and Rights of Transsexual People (Collaboration) (June 1999)** <http://www.pfc.org.uk/workgrp/pfcrpt1.htm> — Press For Change's submission to the Government's Inter-departmental Working group on the status of transsexual people

- **Court Judgement Criticises UK Government's Lack of Action (1998)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/news/1998/shj-an11.htm> — Sheffield and Horsham versus UK -- analysis of the 1998 ECtHR judgment which preceded Goodwin & I
- **101 Unequal Ways to Try to Treat You Equally (July 2000)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/news/2000/101ways.htm> — Analysis of the report of the government's Interdepartmental Working group on transsexual people.
- **Seven Out of Ten - Must Try Harder (1999)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/news/1999/dfee-1.htm> — Reflections on the experience of negotiating changes to the Sex Discrimination Act, and the effects which the shortcomings can have
- **The A to Z of Trans People's Discrimination (1998)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/campaign/a-z.htm> — a catalogue of the areas in which UK law disadvantages trans people, and which form Press for Change's main campaign issues. By Christine Burns and Claire McNab
- **Fourth Column Revolutionary (1998)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/gendropol/4th-col.htm> — Some revolutionary ideas about birth certificates
- **Who What and Why - The False Hope of the ID Card (1996)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/politics/idcards.htm> — Analysis of why the problems of legal identity faced by trans people are not solved by an ID card in any form
- **Woman Plus (1997)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/gendropol/womnplus.htm> — How to forget the label and concentrate on the quality of the cloth. The emotive thing about labels is who owns the definition.
- **A Very British Obsession (1998)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/news/1998/obsess.htm> — Pondering the impact of the British attitude to toilets for trans people.
- **What Colour are Your Eyes (1993)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/gendropol/eyecolor.htm> — A cautionary reminder of the dangers of placing too much reliance on science to legitimise any sort of difference from contemporary concepts of normality. (First published in GEMSNEWS)
- **Measuring Sex in Centimetres (2000)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/gendropol/micro.htm> — On the false distinctions created by marginally different court judgements
- **The Sunday Sermon: Walking the Eggshell Road (2000)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/news/2000/eggshell.htm> — Why, in commenting on the actions of judges and others who put reasoning before humanity, it is important to be careful not to fall into the same trap
- **The End of a Chapter (Nov 1997)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/news/1997/endchap.htm> — Report on the delivery of the Press for Change petition to Downing Street, and what it meant
- **The End of the Beginning (1996)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/news/1996/endofbeg.htm> — Reporting on the failed passage of Alex Carlile's Private Members Bill in Parliament. February 1996

- **The Diary of a Conference Campaigner (Oct 1995)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/politics/camdiary.htm> — The day by day account of taking PFC's meeting the the heart of the Labour and Conservative Party Conferences in person
- **Of Babies and Bathwater (April 1997)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/gendropol/babybath.htm> — A childhood view on Gender Identity.
- **Divided We Fall (1996)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/gendropol/divided.htm> — Reconciling the differences and shared interests of Gay and Trans People
- **Safe for Some (1996)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/gendropol/safesome.htm> — Trans women and women's space
- **Consultation Deluge Brings Minister to the Table (June 1998)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/news/1998/deluge.htm> — How the Labour Government initially failed in attempts to consult with trans people - recording a key turning point in relations
- **The Rosalind Mitchell Story (Sep 1997)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/pfclists/news-arc/97/msg00036.htm> — Introduction to one of many media "Coming Out" stories
- **What's it All About (Dec 1998)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/campaign/pfcissue.htm> — Introduction for web site readers

Web Features

- **The ABC of XYZ (1997)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/news/1997/xyzindex.htm> — Feature covering the failed case of the X, Y and Z family in the European Court of Human Rights
- **A Tragedy Just Waiting to Happen (1997)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/insure/insurnce.htm> — Feature on the harsh realities of life for transsexual people dealing with any sort of insurance
- **Searching Questions Tax Police (Aug 1996)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/legal/police01.htm> — Introducing the issues which have dominated employment issues for trans people in policing
- **Review of the Year 1996, 1997, 1998** <http://www.pfc.org.uk/news/1996/review.htm>;
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/news/1997/review.htm>; <http://www.pfc.org.uk/news/1998/review.htm>

Book and Television Reviews

- **Wild Side : Uncomfortable but Unforgettable**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/pfclists/news-arc/2005q1/msg00017.htm> — Detailed review of the French Art House film “Wild Side” and discussion of trans film history as a genre
- **A Funny Kind of Integrity (Dec 2001)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/news/2001/cb-ea1.htm> — Critique of the book 'Transsexuality', published by the Evangelical Alliance
- **The Transgender Debate (July 2000)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/reviews/tdebate.htm> — Review of '*The Transgender Debate (The Crisis Surrounding Gender Identity)*', by Stephen Whittle

- **True Selves (Aug 1997)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/reviews/tselves.htm> — Review of the book, 'True Selves: Understanding Transsexualism For Families, Friends, Coworkers and Helping Professionals', by Mildred Brown and Chloe Ann Rounsley
- **Lifting the Veil (1996)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/gendropol/liftveil.htm> — Review of the BBC Series "Dark Secrets"

Interviews

- **Gender Studies (Attitude Magazine, September 2004)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/pfclists/news-arc/2004q3/msg00093.htm> — feature by Johann Hari
- **Putting Gender on the Agenda (July 2004)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/pfclists/news-arc/2004q3/msg00004.htm> — feature length interview by student journalist Vikki Miller
- **Trans World News (May 2004)**
<http://www.the-sisterhood.net/transworldnews/id52.html> — on the eve of passage of the Gender Recognition Bill in the House of Commons
- **He ain't heavy, he's my sister (The Independent, 26th Nov 2003 contributory interview)** <http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/politics/story.jsp?story=467361> — Interview with Shaun and Lesley Woodward
- **Changing Times (Pink Paper, October 2000)** <http://www.pfc.org.uk/news/2000/pinkp2.htm>
- **UK Transsexuals a Breed Apart (Japan Times, Dec 3rd 1995)**
<http://www.pfc.org.uk/news/old/cb-jt.htm>