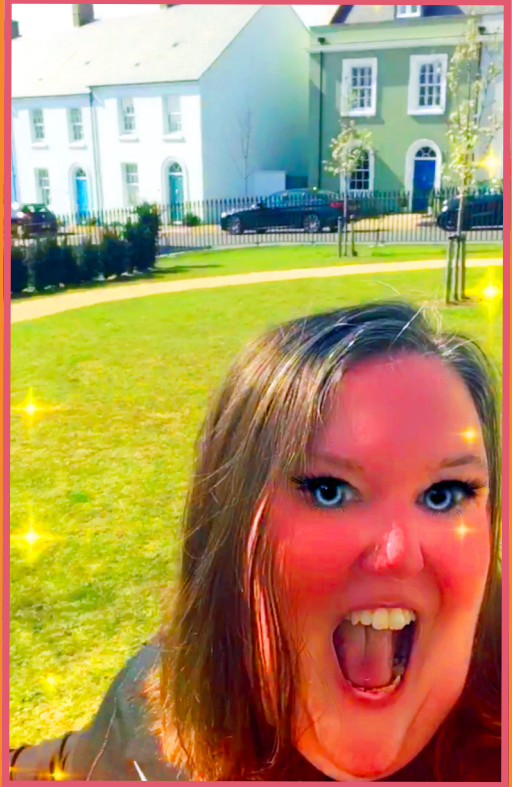


Poundbury

*A Queer
Tour of
Monarchy*



Homosexual Death Drive

"Sensational!" Lois Keidan (nobody in particular)

Poundbury

A Queer Tour of Monarchy

Homosexual Death Drive



Published in 2023 by 33editions, London E15 4LY.

ISBN 978-0-9935320-6-1

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HomosexualDeathDrive.com
@thebeef

Abuse of power comes as no surprise

– Jenny Holzer

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Prologue: A New Village | 9 |
| Groom of the Stool | 11 |
| Awakening | 15 |
| Trooping the Colour | 16 |
| Burn it Down | 17 |
| Sending Pictures to Elizabeth | 18 |
| Garden Wall | 19 |
| Untitled (Princess) | 20 |
| Buck House | 21 |
| Reconnoitre | 24 |
| Provocation | 27 |
| Problematizing | 28 |
| Cavalier King Charles Spaniel | 30 |
| Methods | 34 |
| Costs | 36 |
| Residency | 39 |
| 19-26 March 2022 | 40 |
| Skulking Queer | 41 |
| Durational Performance | 42 |
| Jonathan Meades | 43 |
| Subconscious | 45 |
| Mega Vulva | 46 |
| Friendly Animals | 48 |
| Totalitarian Middle England | 51 |
| Pavilion in the Park | 53 |
| Players | 57 |
| Is Queen Elizabeth sexy? | 58 |
| The Waitrose | 59 |
| Queen Mother Square | 63 |
| Poundbury Farm | 68 |
| Fleur-de-Lis | 70 |
| Buttercross | 72 |
| A Vision of Britain | 79 |
| Who wipes King Charles' arse? | 80 |
| The Duchess of Cornwall Inn | 81 |
| The Pétanque Boudrome | 83 |
| The Poet Laureate | 85 |
| Pummery Square | 88 |
| Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service | 92 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Stret Euther Penndragon | 93 |
| Tradition | 97 |
| What does King Charles' penis resemble? | 98 |
| Phase One | 99 |
| The Overly Columned House | 103 |
| Control | 105 |
| Why is King of the UK and Commonwealth so annoying? | 106 |
| Poundbury Garden Centre | 107 |
| Mansell Square | 108 |
| Strathmore House | 110 |
| Wills and Kate Bench | 112 |
| Amphitheatre | 114 |
| Obelisk | 115 |
| The Belvedere | 116 |
| Greenwash | 119 |
| Have you ever fucked Charles, King of the UK and Commonwealth? | 120 |
| Poundbury Site Board | 121 |
| Overflow Parking | 123 |
| Poundbury Allotments | 124 |
| The Great Field | 125 |
| Subjects | 129 |
| Why is there no critical art in Poundbury? | 130 |
| Edgelands | 131 |
| Crown Street Coffee Lounge | 133 |
| Poundbury Wealth Management | 134 |
| Brownsword Hall | 135 |
| Deathville | 139 |
| Is Poundbury stupid? | 140 |
| Damers First School | 141 |
| Youth Shelter | 143 |
| The Centenary Field | 146 |
| PoundburyLand | 149 |
| What is a Homosexual Death Drive? | 150 |
| The Quiet Space | 151 |
| Whistling Witch | 152 |
| The Playground | 154 |
| Loop Technology | 156 |
| Hayward Square | 158 |
| Regeneration | 161 |
| Should Homosexual Death Drive shut her mouth? | 162 |
| Café Octagon | 163 |
| Pink Castle House | 167 |
| Camilla at the Palace | 171 |
| Invitation | 172 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Fantasy and Reality | 174 |
| Skulking Queer Revisited | 176 |
| Epilogue: King George VI Memorial Chapel | 183 |
| Postface | 189 |
| Illustrations | 193 |
| Thanks | 197 |
| About | 199 |
| Bibliography | 201 |
| Index | 215 |
| 33editions | 223 |

Prologue: A New Village

I'm watching a news report about a housing project. There are only four channels on the box. I've grown up with TV and haven't yet realised that I can switch it off. It's Charles striding along a muddy road in a new village. Opining. A v-shape of yes men behind him, like migrating geese. The hollow flexing whok-whok-whok of a high quality wellington boot around a muscular calf. Tweeds as far as the eye can see. A new village, that's weird.

The terrace of cottages on the road look like the house in Buckingham that Mum helped Mrs C move into. I remember the smell of new plaster drying out on the walls, the empty rooms. I don't know why Mrs C had to move from the village to the town, I assumed that's what happens when you get old. She gave me a pair of shoes, part of her life's clear-out. Later, when running around a playground, their slippery leather soles failed me. I fell and knocked myself out. I remember coming to in the centre of a sideways cospo of legs, everyone peering at me curiously.

It's not Buckingham but Poundbury, a housing development that's part of Dorchester, a town in the county of Dorset, which is in the south of England. Some parts of Poundbury look hundreds of years old but it was established in the early 1990s by King Charles when he was Prince of Wales. It benefits the Duchy of Cornwall. It is Charles' hobby.

I have remembered Poundbury for so many years. Why have I remembered? What a strange thing to stay with me. I'm trying to make sense of something but I don't know what it is. I don't know if it's big or small, or worthwhile to think about. Is it buildings, place, monarchy, Charles, me? It won't leave me alone. There's a pull, I keep coming back to it, I get sparks but it's too much to hold on to. It's confusing. Do they want me confused? Why would they want that? I need time and space to think, research, be, reflect, move, go there, sense, share. I will understand something soon. I will really understand in time. Right now I don't know. Trying to understand and convey makes me feel really mad. I'm scared. Doing it in public. Maybe failing. It's all a risk.

Back on a screen and Paolo Sorrentino shows me what power is and what it does in his films.¹ I take the hint. The front and the back, the seductive swagger and the hollow core, existential doubt. Grotesque. He shows, the judgment is implicit. The party scenes. I can't get enough of them. Look. Look!

¹ Watch them, I need to talk about them with someone. *The Great Beauty* is his most celebrated, start with that then go on to *Loro*, *The Young Pope* and *The New Pope*.

Reconnoitre

I visited Poundbury twice, first in 2016 and then again in 2017. The second time was because I hadn't believed my eyes the first time and I wanted to go back and check.

During these trips I walked around a bit and had a lunch in the garden centre café. I spent a bit of time at The Quiet Place. I felt confused and disturbed by the architecture. It seemed like a dull and lifeless place. The buildings of Queen Mother Square were going up and I could see that they were built like an out of town shopping centre. Contrary to what I had understood about Poundbury's architectural principles, the place was made of plastic.

After the first visit I went to the Winterbourne Abbas Nine Stones, which are modest and lovely.

After both encounters I went to Tolpuddle and visited the Tolpuddle Martyrs Museum. This is a very moving place that tells the story of the first labour organisers in the UK who were brutally punished. Their brave actions led to the founding of trade unionism as we know it today. Many people are indebted to them, including me and my ancestors.

Problematizing

My awakenings made me curious to understand. I decided to problematise Poundbury.

When you problematise something you are taking a critical approach to it. The word comes from the French philosopher Michel Foucault, a homosexual, pervert, person with AIDS, dead white guy. It's not a pretty word and that's too bad. But the patrilineal canon does not have the monopoly on being a bitch, refusing to take it lying down or not putting up with any shit.⁹ I problematise because I can't live any differently, it's a way of navigating things and living well. Your aim is to look at your subject differently, from another angle. You are trying to make strange what is taken for granted, to refute its mythology and to be curious. Problematizing helps people think about how things could be better. This is second nature to those of us who can't or won't conform to a dominant view.

I am talking primarily about Charles here. He's no longer the Prince of Wales, and the Duchy of Cornwall is now all about Wills. But Charles is the focus of this work. Mostly.

Charles, the King formerly known as the Prince, and his supporters have defined Poundbury in particular ways. They say it's an architectural project, like the Garden City movement or new towns, planned places with a whiff of utopianism. At a pinch it might be compared to Bourneville or Port Sunlight, prettified housing estates built by paternalistic industrialists to control and pacify their workforce.

Problematizing Poundbury reveals a lot more. It's less architectural, more ideological. Sometimes it's compared to Portmeirion, a rich man's collection of curious architecture. Buildings are statements in Poundbury and this puts me in mind of Schloss Neuschwanstein, Ludwig II's monumental Bavarian folly. It is elitist and reminds me of the shameful, racist Human Zoo or Marie Antoinette prancing around her pretend farm at Versailles, Le Hameau de la Reine.

Charles is Poundbury, it's a macrocosm of him¹⁰ and a microcosm of monarchy. It mobilises the values and tastes of middle England, monarchy's most loyal subjects, to enforce a totalitarian regime of control. Poundbury shores up the next generation of monarchy with cash, profits the elite and reproduces itself in neoliberal property development and landlordism.¹¹

⁹ Thank you Eleanor Roberts for the language and helping me to think about this.

¹⁰ (Russell 2022)

¹¹ Neoliberal doesn't mean liberal in the left-ish, *Guardian*-reading, progressive sense. It's easy to get

I think abuse of power is to be expected.¹² But Poundbury signalled to me obliquely that monarchy is an ongoing institution of untruth that continually pressures people to capitulate in blatant and subtle ways. Foucault has inspired me for many years to be interested in how power replicates itself, how it is upheld, and what can be done to resist control.

them confused but it actually refers to an ideology of private ownership, free market capitalism, austerity, precarity, globalisation and so on. It is really conservative and, unfortunately, insidious and pervasive at the moment.

¹² It is for this reason that Zoe Leonard's *I want a president* (1992, frequently resurfaces) rarely moves me. The text starts with a line about wanting a dyke for president, but dykes are no better presidents than anyone else. It's the president part that's the problem.

19-26 March 2022

I got the Poundbury bus
I bought food from the Poundbury Waitrose
I walked, photographed, filmed, experienced and danced in its
different sectors daily
I saw all the sights: squares, a field, statue of Queen Mum, different
phases of Poundbury
I spent time in public spaces observing and sometimes talking to
Poundbury people
I ate Poundbury food
I read the local paper and gathered promotional materials
I found its arts scene
I found its edges
I did a lot of thinking and writing
I sent postcards
I drew some pictures
I posted some things on social media
I was on theme
I was able to unmask, I stopped performing gendered neurotypical
expectations
I experienced the residency with neurodivergent intensity and focus
I was mostly non-verbal
I made no contact with my loved ones
I had a major arthritis flare-up
I disintegrated
I constantly reformulated my ideas
I theorised the place
I did all the things I set out to do
Not bad!

Should Homosexual Death Drive shut her mouth?

I know, I know, Homosexual Death Drive. Shut up. You're just being a giant bitch. That's what this whole thing is about, right?

But I'm just curious. I'm curious because I have a question for you:

Is it a bitch to be a giant bitch?

I mean, I'm a huge bitch, and I'm not trying to be anything else. I don't really even know if I'm a bitch. I don't really know what a bitch is. I know there's a bitchy thing, I know there's a friendly thing, and I know there's a smart thing. I know there's a jealous thing. I know there's a spiteful thing. I know there's a mean thing. I know there's a selfish thing.

But I don't know what a bitch is.

And you don't know what a bitch is.

And the reason you don't know is because you are a bitch.

Index

A

Ancients 24, 46, 146, 193

Architecture 24, 28, 32, 55, 70, 73–74, 79, 81, 83, 85, 92, 97, 99, 103, 105, 107–108, 111, 115–116, 141–142, 144–145, 152, 154, 158, 166

Architect 63, 73–74, 83, 90, 99, 108, 111, 131, 143

Léon Krier 83, 85–86, 90, 108–111

Architectural Determinism 105, 107–108, 110, 116

Poundbury Design and Community Code 54, 81, 85–86, 88–90, 105, 108, 110–111, 116, 126, 144, 157, 164

Master Planning 54, 83, 90, 105, 108–109, 112, 115, 144

Neo-Georgian 90, 93, 97, 103, 131, 141, 152, 156, 158, 193

Columns 63, 93, 103, 131, 134, 141, 152, 156, 165

New Urbanism 54, 85–86

Art in Poundbury 111, 114, 130

B

Brad Pitt 79

Buckingham 9, 99

Buckingham Palace 11, 17–18, 21–23, 68, 71, 73, 89, 110, 172–174, 176–180

C

Carceral culture 68, 100, 107

Class 11, 21–22, 37, 43, 61, 73, 80, 99–100, 109–110, 112–113, 115, 131, 135, 142

Deference 16, 21–22, 28, 30, 48, 55, 59, 61, 66, 68, 111, 121, 142, 176–179. See also Resistance

Proles 13, 24, 30, 61, 70–71, 113

Toffs 16, 30, 60–61, 68–69, 71–72, 75, 86, 90, 121

D

Disney 21, 70, 108, 155, 164, 166

Dorset Museum 46

E

Empire 21, 30–33, 59–61, 64–65, 89, 94, 110, 114, 147, 152, 163

Slavery 32, 59, 64, 101, 147, 157, 163

F

Feminism 13, 67, 69, 130, 133, 172, 176, 178

G

Gardens 16, 19–20, 23–24, 28, 71, 85–86, 90, 103, 107, 110, 112, 115–116, 121–122, 124, 126, 151

Enforced gardening 107

Greenwash 24, 93, 119

Birds 46, 121–122, 124, 165

Cars and parking 41, 88, 93–94, 111, 117, 123, 132–133, 144, 156, 164–165, 168, 183

Helicopter 63, 71, 81, 121, 164

Trees 20–21, 46, 62, 68, 108, 116, 121, 124–126, 151, 164

Groom of the Stool 11–13, 37, 61, 163, 168

Care work 11

H

Housing 88–90, 92, 110–112

L

Landlords 28, 54–55, 57, 59, 61, 67–71, 86, 88, 110, 117, 131, 142. See also Monarchy, Charles' organisations, Duchy of Cornwall

Live Art 36, 42, 156

Locals 131, 133–136

 Simon and Helena Conibear 54, 81, 86, 143, 154

Loves

 Cat Pausé 48, 166

 Dad 16, 44, 136, 193

 Kay Hyatt 18, 45, 48, 81

 Mum 9, 16, 133, 167

 Simon Murphy 48

M

Meta 28, 30–31, 34

 AI texts 58, 80, 98, 106, 120, 130, 140, 150, 156–157, 162

 Films, art, songs 9, 13, 29, 32, 42, 46, 85, 115, 134, 152, 158

 The Queen Sucks Nazi Cock 185, 205

 Funding this project 34, 36

 Lists 30, 34, 37, 40, 42, 59–62, 64–66, 113, 163–165, 189, 193

 Methodology 34, 39

 Poems 20, 40, 53, 81, 167, 186

 Poundbury Ears, The 165, 167

Modernism 43, 54, 74, 99, 130, 139, 141–142, 152, 165

Althea McNish 141

Jonathan Meades 43

Monarchy 59. See also Royals

Charles' organisations

Duchy of Cornwall 9, 28, 45, 47, 57, 59, 66, 68–72, 75, 81, 83–86, 88–90, 92–94, 108–110, 114, 116, 121, 124–126, 142, 145–146, 152, 163, 166, 193. See also Landlords

Eleanor van Cutsem, Lady Arran 68, 71

Tenants 68–71

Prince's Foundation 54, 72–75, 86, 89–90, 92, 112, 121, 143, 163, 169

Allegations 75

Dumfries House 75, 89

Inevitable end 146–147

Guillotine 165, 168

The Firm 30–32, 59–60, 147, 163, 172–173, 175–176, 178–180, 184

O

Old people 9, 11, 123, 131, 144, 154. See also Young people

Otherness 62, 107, 132, 175, 180

Black people 22, 31, 102, 113–114, 134, 141–142, 147, 158, 179–180, 184

Disability 43, 46, 62, 72, 107, 112, 135, 154, 156, 164

Fat 11, 43, 166

Neurodivergence 11, 39–40, 43–44, 66, 136, 176

People of colour 30, 45, 61

Queer 11, 13, 20, 31–32, 34, 41, 59, 100, 136, 142, 152, 157, 167, 176, 180

Trans and non-binary people 33, 45, 113, 142, 164, 177

Women 11, 13, 30, 33, 43, 46, 53, 58, 69, 82, 100, 106, 110, 131, 133, 136, 144, 150–151, 169, 184

P

Postmodernism 149, 152, 154, 165, 167–168, 189

Michel Foucault 28–29, 153

Simulacra 94, 149, 152, 154

Poundburys 89

Knockroon 75, 89, 93

Nansleden 89, 93, 193

R

Resistance 18, 29, 31–32, 62, 75, 90, 110, 121, 153, 163–165, 179, 189

Eggs and egging 31, 62, 99, 169, 193

Martyrs 24, 65, 100, 166

Royals. See Monarchy

Andrew 30–31, 64

Camilla 32, 63, 65, 70, 82, 164–165, 172–181

Charles 85, 106, 166, 184

As therapy client 63–67

Delusional 70–71, 73, 92, 115, 154

Genitals and arse 80, 98, 120

Mismatch between public and private 28, 31, 89, 114, 121, 125

Never heard of feminism 64, 69, 83, 172

Peevish 11, 81, 83, 141, 155

Power-tripping 9, 53–55, 59–60, 72, 74, 86, 110, 146

Corgies 22, 183

Diana 20, 58, 64, 82, 112, 165

Elizabeth 11, 16, 18, 21–22, 30–31, 36, 58–59, 68, 121, 146–147, 184–187

George 70, 147

Harry and Meghan 147

Kate 19, 30, 47, 112, 147

Marg 12, 186

Phil 21, 30, 183–187

Queen Mum 40, 63, 164, 166, 184

Wills 19, 28, 30–31, 47, 59–60, 68–70, 112, 125, 144, 146–147, 164, 185

S

Seaside 81, 85, 108

Sex work 13, 30, 62, 164

Somatics

Bodies 9, 11–12, 20, 42–43, 45–46, 80, 98, 101, 177

Feelings 9, 19–20, 22, 31–34, 37, 42–43, 45, 62, 65–67, 70, 100–102, 107, 120, 124, 143, 147, 158, 179–180

Horrible sex 20, 32, 45, 65, 82, 120, 177

Pain 32, 42, 67, 178

Remembering 9, 16, 18, 31, 34

W

Waitrose 40, 59, 61, 112, 114, 154

Witches 100–101, 152, 154

Y

Young people 132, 139, 143–144. See also Old people

Totalitarian Middle England



Poundbury

A market town suburb in southern England
Charles III's real life model village plaything
A template for future developments
A money-spinner for the royals
A microcosm of monarchy
A postmodern theme park
A really weird place



This funny, playful, rude and serious artist's book is for anyone who wants an alternative queer and Othered take on the soft and hard power of monarchy. It reveals the discrepancy between its optics and objectives.

Homosexual Death Drive plays The Groom of the Stool, or royal arse-wiper. She guides you through Poundbury's grandiose avenues and lesser-known alleyways. In a bizarre twist, she meets Camilla at Buckingham Palace.

Discover Poundbury's history, ideology, use of pseudo-tradition, greenwash and social control. Homosexual Death Drive introduces you to some of its people and reveals how they resist royal power-tripping. She argues that Poundbury is currently a death zone that could be redeemed as a postmodern theme park for artists, queers and Others.

Poundbury includes original research, personal reflection, drawings, poetry, experimental writing and AI-generated texts. It is shaped by queer theory, feminism, neurodivergence and the social model of disability, working class identity, decolonisation, environmental activism and anarchism. Its guiding principles are: beauty, intelligence, humour, integrity, the liberation of all beings.

NULLA MONARCHIA INFANTEM!



Homosexual Death Drive is a live art project that uses performance, text, drawings, music, merch and showbiz. Founded 2010 in East London by Charlotte Cooper.

HomosexualDeathDrive.com
@thebeefeeer

ISBN 978-0-9935320-6-1



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