

Lust for power

The Dyke March is coming to town! This June, Dublin will host the second international march. While you're planning what to wear (or not), read some herstory and build up some power

Ignite the Riot! Snatch the Power! It's a Dyke Thing! It's all about You! Fierce Dykes Ignite for Power!

These and other slogans have been the call to battle for the Dyke Marches of the 1990s. The first ever Dyke March was held in Washington DC in April 1993 and was attended by 20,000 lesbians. Newsweek called it "an unabashed display of lesbian clout". It inspired lesbians in other cities in the US to also parade their visibility. Some cities, such as New York and Chicago, have since seen annual Dyke Marches through their streets in summer, proudly declaring dyke's love for dykes.

Some sponsored and some co-sponsored by the Lesbian Avengers, the US Dyke Marches are more political than Gay Pride Marches, but are also seen as 'good clean fun for the entire family.' The radical spirit of the Stonewall era, AIDS and queer activism are carried through these marches by the fact that the annual Dyke March in New York, for example, is held without a permit. Organisers have referred to this as a protest, not a parade. Yet, these marches also symbolise celebration for lesbians and are a potent sign of power in solidarity and identity. Huge numbers of lesbians on the streets are a sure sign of dyke power and existence. We cannot be ignored.

The First International Dyke March was held on 25 June, 1994 in New York. According to observers, it was the most dramatic and significant event of the week commemorating Stonewall 25 years previously. The theme for the march was 'Ignite the Riot!' which was a call to action to lesbians everywhere to stand up and be counted. An estimated 40,000 dykes marched, proudly asserting their visibility and power.

The Second International Dyke March will be held in June this year in our own Dublin. The Dyke March, contrary to some reports that have appeared already, is not in conflict with Gay Pride but is an addition, an extra celebration and something for women to have for themselves. It is a sign of our power and identity. According to the organising committee, this Second International Dyke March is about fun. It will not be necessary to take off your clothes, but if you feel like doing so, go right ahead. Dancing, singing, marching, chanting, kissing; do whatever you want to do in celebration of yourself and ourselves.

The massive organisation and co-ordination of this event has

already started. If you want to get involved or donate money to show your support, contact PO. Box 999, c/o GCN, 6 South William Street, D2. Further information is also available from the above address.

The International Dyke March Committee