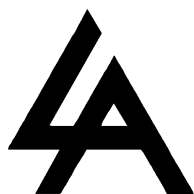




A WEEKEND IN AMSTERDAM: ONE LIBERTARIAN'S EXPERIENCE OF FREEDOM

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**Libertarian
Alliance**

FOR LIFE, LIBERTY AND PROPERTY

A WEEKEND IN AMSTERDAM: ONE LIBERTARIAN'S EXPERIENCE OF FREEDOM

DANNY FREDERICK

1. Introduction

I have been to Amsterdam four times: twice in 1986, and twice in 1992. Each time, the purpose of the visit was pleasure. The last time I went was for the Whitsun bank holiday weekend in May. What follows is some thoughts on my experiences in this city, where people can enjoy felicitous freedoms which are, sadly, suppressed in Britain.

2. Pornography

A wide variety of pornography, in a range of different media, is openly available in Amsterdam, from a number of different types of outlet. I offer the following classification.

(a) **Magazines.** You can obtain hard-core pornography in newsagents in Amsterdam. However, as you would expect, you get a much better selection in the sex shops. Sex shops seem to be dotted all around Amsterdam, but the biggest concentration of them, understandably, is in the red light district. This is my favourite place in the world, and I spend the vast bulk of my time in Amsterdam in this area. The sex shops are great, and you can spend ages browsing in these without any hassle. (I did exchange a little good-humoured banter with an assistant in one shop: he wondered whether I was actually going to buy anything. But apart from him, nobody bothered me at all, except to offer friendly assistance. They seem to have great sympathy for the sex-starved British.) The general format of the magazines is as follows: there are a number of sections, each of which tells a "story" (minimal plot); this story is told in a sequence of sexually explicit photographs with accompanying short narration (sometimes quite amusing) in four languages, including English. The photography is wonderful. None of this excellent material can be sold legally in Britain.

(b) **Films.** In addition to a wide selection of magazines, the sex shops also stock a wonderful range of video films. In one of these shops (in Oude Zijds Achterburgwal) you can pick any film on offer and view it, or some of it, in a private cabin, prior to (or instead of) purchase. This is very useful for the British who would have such films confiscated if they

tried to bring them back through customs. In some other sex shops (eg. Chickita's Sex Paradys), there are a number of individual cabins in which one can pay to view films by putting coins in a slot. There is a selection of films to choose from, and while your money is running you can switch from one film to another as you wish. The number of films on offer varies from about a dozen to about forty; the cost is small (minimum fee is 1 Guilder, which is about 30 pence).

Video cabins are not only provided in sex shops: there are also a number of arcades, where there are many more cabins provided and a much greater selection of films. There is at least one where you can choose from 100 different films. These arcades also provide peep shows, about which I shall say some more below.

Films can also be watched in any of the sizeable number of sex cinemas. These have a continuous show lasting one-and-a-half to two hours or so, though you can stay as long as you like. Entrance fee is around 5 Guilders (approximately £1.50), though some are cheaper. The best cinema, though, is just around the corner from Chickita's Sex Paradys: there are four separate screens, each with its own continuous show, and 10 Guilders (roughly £3.50) gives you access to them all. One of these screens is devoted entirely to sado-masochistic material (which I particularly enjoy). The last time I was there I spent eight hours viewing the shows on screens 2, 3, and 4 (the last is the S/M screen). As I was leaving, the attendant/cashier directed me to screen 1; but I'm afraid that even I had had enough for one sitting (I hadn't eaten all day and I was starving!).¹

Another place where there is a continuous showing of porn videos is a little bar at the end of an alleyway off Oude Zijds Voorburgwal. The barmaids here are topless, and they have only underwear on the bottom half.

(c) **Other Items.** The pornography in sex shops is not restricted to magazines and films. There are also books, with few if any photographs, though some have some illustrations; but they are not written in English. There are playing cards with sex photos on them (one pack, called "With Big Cocks", has some

incredible pictures, and goes down well with the ladies). There are audio cassettes. There are also other items of erotic interest, including sex aids (eg. loads of vibrators in varying sizes), lingerie, leatherwear, S/M and bondage equipment, and various novelty items (eg. jumping plastic penises).

The pornography for sale caters to most tastes: there is gay and lesbian, bondage and domination, sado-masochism, transvestism and transsexuals, sex with animals, and "bizarre" (i.e. "toilet sex"). However, about 80% of the material is straightforward heterosexual: fondling, intercourse, oral and anal sex, though with quite a bit of it involving triples and quadruples rather than couples. The "specialist" interests all together account for only about 20%.² The sado-masochistic material is unfortunately quite tame: I've seen much better stuff in Hamburg. The films on show in the video cabins reflect the same range of interests in about the same proportions. The cinemas, on the other hand, show almost exclusively straightforward heterosexual activity, except for the multi-screen cinema mentioned earlier.³

It is worthwhile to take a moment to contrast the reality of pornography with its misrepresentation in "radical feminist" mythology. Amid the controversy surrounding the launch of the new magazine *For Women*, the *Times* published a letter by a Rachel Wingfield objecting to pornography on the ground that it "consistently equates male sexual pleasure with violence and domination".⁴ It is difficult to believe that this person has ever seen any pornography. The vast bulk of it shows men and women *enjoying* uninhibited sex with each other, with no suggestion of any coercion, violence or domination. Of course, in sado-masochistic pornography, all these elements are by definition involved; but, for one thing, this type of porn represents only a tiny fraction of the overall output; and for another, it as often shows women dominating men as *vice versa*.⁵ It testifies to British hang-ups about sex that Ms Wingfield's stupid and ignorant views were given space in a respectable national newspaper (and, incredibly, that my intelligent and informed response was not published).⁶

3. Sex Shows

The two main sex shows are in Oude Zijds Achterburgwal. They both have continuous shows and you can stay as long as you like. The entrance fee is officially 50 Guilders (about £16) but you never have to pay that (usually 30-35 Guilders will do, though on one occasion I got away with paying 25).

The *Moulin Rouge* is the better of the two. It has a nice theatre with seating in front of the stage, while to the side of the stage is a bar with stools around it and a small area where people can stand. The booze is good and at pub prices (not like the piss sold at exorbitant prices in clubs in London's Soho). The number

and variety of acts seems to vary from time to time, but there is always a number of female strippers, some of whom do vibrator and banana shows, and there is always some audience participation.⁷ There is also always at least one couple who strip each other off and perform various sex acts on the stage. Sometimes there is more than one couple act; and sometimes there is a male stripper too.

The *Live Porno* theatre is about 400 yards down the road. This has quite a high stage with rows of seats in front of it. Behind the seats is an area where people can stand, and to the side of this area is a bar. There is also another theatre downstairs with a similar arrangement. The bars here do not sell draught beer, but they do have Dutch Heineken in cans (not to be confused with the rubbish sold as Heineken in Britain). Once again it is pub prices. The number and variety of acts is comparable to those at the *Moulin Rouge*.

The audiences for these shows are always mixed: there are groups of young men, coach parties of women, married couples, other couples, mixed groups, and people who come in on their own. It always seems that at least half the audience is British, which will be explained by the fact that live sex shows are illegal in Britain. The atmosphere is great: open, friendly and jolly (nothing seedy or furtive about it). I particularly enjoy the fact that I can sit at a bar drinking beer while a few feet in front of me a naked man and woman are engaging in energetic sexual intercourse in a series of different positions. Ironically, the act I enjoyed most the last time I was there was the male stripper in the *Live Porno* club; but not through watching him, rather through watching the reactions of the women present. There was a gang of women (aged around thirtyish I would guess) who were pretty rowdy when the female strippers were on, but when the male stripper started they went crazy. There was also a crowd of four or five young girls (aged about 18 or 19) who were squirming in their seats, and the male stripper headed straight for these. One after another they were brought on to the stage and involved in his act, helping him to undress and being picked up and held upside down in simulation of a stand-up 69. Their reaction seemed to exhibit a mixture of excitement, fear, and embarrassment; or possibly a conflict between eagerness to take part and enjoy it, and embarrassment at revealing this to the assembled crowd (including their friends). It was delightful to behold. My favourite act so far, though, goes back to 1986, also in the *Live Porno* club, but downstairs. A gorgeous dark-haired young woman did a strip, with some assistance from some men in the front row. When she was completely naked, the music changed and a man, also completely naked, strode on to the stage. He just stood there while the woman got on her knees and gave him the

most fantastic-looking blow job. Wow! I wanted to marry her!

It seems that these two theatres are the only places offering live sex shows in Amsterdam nowadays. There are about a dozen theatre fronts in the red light district advertising shows; but they all sell tickets for one or other of these two theatres. So, for example, the impressive *Casa Rosso* theatre front, opposite *Live Porno*, is actually selling tickets for the latter. In 1986, on the other hand, there were also a few smaller, and cheaper, theatres providing live sex entertainment. One of these had an hilarious act. It featured "Tina and Ted". It turned out that Tina was a fat biker, and Ted was her teddy bear wearing a strap-on dildo. That one had us in stitches.

The other kind of live show is the peep show. These are available in the arcades along with the video cabins. You walk into a cubicle and shut the door behind you. In front of you is a window covered by a screen. Below this is a couple of slots into which you put coins, either 1 Guilder or 2.5 Guilder. Once a coin goes in, the screen comes up, and through the window you see a naked girl on a bed. She moves sensuously to music, displaying her most intimate nooks and crannies. Generally, these girls are lovely. In fact, one was so beautiful that I was spellbound: she had shaven off her pubic hair so that everything could be seen, and it was absolutely the most fantastic vision I had ever seen (I've not seen one that beautiful before or since). There are also, however, the exceptions. I remember one girl back in 1986: she was a punk with attitude, and a right bruiser at that (tattoos and all). She obviously didn't like the job, and she was useless at it: she just sat there with a bored expression, until she eventually got up, walked to the screen and started pulling faces. God knows how she got the job!

In some of these arcades there are also one-to-one peep shows. For the general shows there are a number of girls who take it in turns to perform. For the one-to-one show, you can take your pick of one of these girls and she will perform for you alone in front of the solo cabin. For this the minimum fee is 5 Guilders.

In 1986 there was a peep show with a naked man performing; but I didn't see any of those around this year.

4. Prostitutes

Perhaps the thing that Amsterdam is most famous for is the women in the windows. There are loads of these (I would say at least 100 windows, which means at least 200 women, since they seem to work shifts⁸). They are to be found in Oude Zijds Achterburgwal and Oude Zijds Voorburgwal and all the little alleyways off these. All tastes are catered for here: there

are white, black and oriental; young, older, and mature; tall and short, slim and fat, and generally all shapes and sizes. There is one window used by two girls (alternately) who specialise in sado-masochism; both these girls are beautiful and appear to dish out the punishment rather than to take it.

These women are available both night and day. They stand or sit in windows (many of which are actually doors) wearing only their underwear. In some cases this means panties, bra and high heels, in other cases it means also stockings and suspender belt, or basque, etc. A few wear more "kinky" gear, like black leather, and thigh-length boots. They usually have some music playing, though you don't normally hear this out in the street, and some of them dance to the music, sometimes a very suggestive dance to what must be some hard-driving rock, though one young girl was clearly dancing for her own enjoyment being quite oblivious to the crowds outside (she seemed completely wrapped up in her music and looked quite bewitchingly beautiful). Lots of these girls are really gorgeous: beautiful blond Dutch girls with perfect figures dressed in sexy underwear; also lots of pretty oriental girls. They are really so breathtakingly beautiful that the sight of them knocks me for six and fills me with a desire that I cannot resist.⁹

The standard fee for their services is 50 Guilders (about £16). This buys a blow job or intercourse or sometimes both, though some girls charge double for both. What you pay and what you get really depends on the girl, and it also depends on you. Certainly, in the daytime (when it is not so busy) and with the not so attractive girls, you can knock the price down to around 35 Guilders. The most I have paid is 100 Guilders: this was to a particularly money-grabbing girl where I had made the mistake of peeling off the 50 Guilders from a bundle of notes, and she kept badgering me for extra money for extra services. Since then I always keep the 50 Guilders in a separate pocket; but this is only a precaution because all the other girls I have been with have been great. Indeed some have not asked for any money until after the sex was over (normally they want the cash up-front); and one didn't ask me for any money at all, but as I was about to leave I realised I had not paid, so I gave her 50 Guilders. So the money-grabber was definitely an exception: every line of business has its "cowboys".

The best was a girl called "Inge" who I met on my first visit to Amsterdam: she was beautiful with short blond hair and a fantastic body; she was wearing lovely black underwear which soon came off, apart from black seamed stockings and suspenders (my particular fetish); I was with her for ages and we did everything, including "deep throat" which many girls find difficult; and she didn't ask for any money until I was getting ready to leave (and she only asked for 50 Guilders). Before I left she asked if she could look

me up when she was in London, but I dismissed this with a smile (yes, I was a right prick!). On my second visit to Amsterdam later that year I was hoping to see her again, but she wasn't there.

I think these girls are great, and I love the time I spend with them even apart from the sex. I always try to engage them in conversation, to find out a bit about them and to swap experiences. Some of them can get quite chatty; and one even thanked me for taking the time to talk to her (and I was worried that I was keeping her from her business for too long)! The girls that I have met certainly seem to be happy in their work, and with one exception (already noted), they do their job with such attention to service quality and customer care that you would swear that they had all been to business school. Indeed, in some cases, the choice of occupation seems to have been purely a rational economic decision. For example, one girl said that she used to be a hairdresser, which she liked, but that she changed to prostitution because the money was much better. Lots of others are intelligent and humorous and, of course, very presentable, and ought easily to be able to do something else; but, on the other hand, for all these reasons (and others besides) they can make a packet as a prostitute (perhaps they have been to business school!). Contrast the facts with the daft claims made by sex puritans about prostitution, viz., that it's a life of debased misery, that women only do it because they're forced to, or because the alternative is unemployment and poverty, etc. Such claims can only issue from the conviction that sex is so awful that it could only be done for money by people who had no choice, or no other way of earning a living.

Usually I go for the gorgeous young girls, especially those with suspenders and stockings on; but I sometimes select the attractive older women. I do enjoy laying back on a bed and watching a good-looking older woman in just stockings and suspenders bending over my middle with her head bobbing up and down. The visual image wonderfully complements the physical sensation.

Over the Whitsun the weather was very hot and sunny. During the day lots of the girls had their windows/doors open, some were actually standing out on the street, and some were taking a stroll along the street to have a chat with some other girls. Remember, these girls are just wearing underwear. What a place!

Incidentally, all these girls insist on condoms (even for blow jobs), so there is no risk of catching anything.

In addition to the girls in windows, there are also in the red light district girls who walk the street (fully clothed) and who approach men to offer their services; but I have not yet taken up any of these offers.

Amsterdam also has a large number of brothels where you pay an entrance fee and can stay as long as you like, have as many girls as you like, and also have a drink at the bar. I have not got around to this scene yet, but I intend to rectify this the next time I'm there.

Women are not neglected either. Male (and female) prostitutes for women are provided by *Jan Bik*. And there are gay brothels too.¹⁰

5. Bars

There are bars aplenty in Amsterdam, with a good selection of beers, including a range of bottled Belgian beers each of which comes with its own distinctive glass (a special shape and with the name of the beer displayed on it). But be careful: these are strong!

It appears that you can get a drink in a bar in Amsterdam at any time of the night or day: if one bar is shut, there is always another one that is open. What a contrast with Britain, where you can't legally drink in a pub before 11.00 in the morning or after 11.00 at night (except for bank holidays, when you may be allowed to drink until midnight)! Of course I make the most of this freedom when in Amsterdam: you will usually spot me staggering around the Leidseplein at 4.00 or 5.00 in the morning, trying to get back to my hotel for a few hours sleep before the next day's excesses.¹¹

Although I spend most of my time in the red light district, I always make for the Leidseplein at about half-past midnight because it's very lively with lots of bars, lots of people and a wonderful atmosphere. The bar staff are generally friendly and welcoming (another contrast with Britain), there are a lot of tourists in a holiday mood, and the Dutch people are so nice and friendly too. I'm sure the key to this is the freedom they enjoy: unlike the British, they are not stifled by laws against people having fun.

I always get talking to people in these bars during the small hours of the morning, sometimes Dutch people, sometimes tourists (except for English ones, who are too unsociable). I always try to impress upon these people that they shouldn't waste any time coming to London, or Britain in general, because it's too repressive: types of magazines, films and shows that almost every other civilised country takes for granted are banned; even films that are permitted have all the best bits cut out of them by the British Board of Film Classification; people are allowed to enjoy a drink in a pub only within a restricted range of hours, and they have to stop at 11.00 at night which is just when most people are getting in the swing; in a word, British people's enjoyment of life is ruined by a whole batch of senseless bans and restrictions. Other than that, though, I can never remember very much of what I've been talking about to these people, because I'm always too pissed!

The *Bulldog* bars are famous for selling dope. There is one in the red light district (in Oude Zijds Voorburgwal) and one on the Leidseplein; there may be others too (I don't know). My first time in Amsterdam, three of us spent an afternoon in the one on the Leidseplein. They have a main bar where they sell beer, and downstairs they have the marijuana bar. Here you are offered a menu of different types of weed and you take your pick. Once we had made our selection, we returned to the main bar to smoke it, along with lots more beer. We had a great time chatting to some girls, listening to some music, and boozing and doping ourselves into a fine old state. We then decided to go for a meal, so we went round the corner to an Indonesian restaurant. The meal was great: loads of it and very nice. Or at least, two of us thought so: the third fell asleep in his, face first (and despite the fact that he hadn't eaten, he still managed to throw up in a conveniently provided litter bin on our way to the red light district).

I don't normally smoke dope, though of course I smoked some when I was an undergraduate at the LSE (I think all undergraduates do). I'm really more into booze. However, I couldn't resist the opportunity of smoking some openly in a bar with no risk of prosecution. It was great as a one-off, but I haven't repeated it since, and I doubt if I will in future.

I can't leave the subject of beer without mentioning the Heineken Brewery, at 78 Stadhouderskade. They offer tours of the brewery from Monday to Friday, at 9.30 am and at 11.00 am (with afternoon tours, too, from June to October). The admission fee is only 2 Guilders (about 65 pence), which they donate to charity. They actually stopped brewing beer at these premises a few years ago, and it has now been turned into a kind of museum. You get a guided tour (in English) with lots of pictures, artifacts and videos. This lasts about an hour and is all very interesting. Afterward, they lead you into the bar and provide you with free beer plus cheese and biscuits. And they don't skimp: as soon as you finish your beer, they refill your glass; and similarly for the food. We enjoyed about an hour of this hospitality! How many British companies employ this type of public relations? The problem goes to the heart of British culture: the aversion to giving anything away for "free" seems to go hand in hand with the idea that there is something wrong with having fun (indeed, something so wrong that it must be legislated against).

6. Heavy Metal

One of the most wonderful things about the bars in Amsterdam is that so many of them play heavy metal music, loud! There are at least two *Hard Rock Cafes*, one in the red light district, and one just off the Leidseplein. As I entered this latter on my first night last Whitsun, I was greeted by the sound of AC/DC's

"Are You Ready?", immediately followed by their "Got You By The Balls". Later came Nirvana, Metallica, Guns 'n' Roses, and many more.

Unfortunately, this *Hard Rock Cafe* closes early, at a mere 2.00 am, so then I have to stroll three or four yards across the walkway to *Sam Sam*, where the music is more variable but the atmosphere is good.

The heavy metal enthusiast is much better served by the bars in the red light district. Just around the corner from its *Hard Rock Cafe*, there are a couple of good music bars in Damstraat (the little street that joins Dam Square to Oude Zijds Voorburgwal). One has a loud jukebox with a great selection of Rock 'n' Roll (e.g. Rolling Stones) as well as heavy metal. I don't know where the music came from in the other one. As I walked past it I heard AC/DC's "Whole Lotta Rosie" belting out and I just had to go in. Inside there was a crowd of thirtysomething (pushing fortysomething) Dutch blokes who were even more pissed than I was; and some of them were in a decidedly aggressive mood (though they weren't directing it at me). The only other customer in the bar was another bloke on his own, and he kept glancing in my direction; but his message seemed to be more like "make love not war". I didn't hang around: I finished up my drink and left.

There is a bar called "Excalibur" on Oude Zijds Achterburgwal. Here they play heavy metal until about 6 or 7 pm (at which time the daytime barmaid is replaced by the next shift and the music changes to more chart-style stuff). Video films of bands are shown on a screen at one end of the bar while the music plays. I spent Saturday afternoon of the Whitsun here. I sat at a table by the window with two glasses of beer in front of me; to my right a couple of young girls were smoking dope from a wooden pipe; Metallica's "Sad But True" was blasting out, while the band could be seen playing this number on the screen; and as I looked through the window, it was a beautiful sunny day, and the girls in the windows were out on the street just wearing their underwear. Paradise!

Heavy metal is not actually illegal in Britain; but it might as well be. There are very few pubs (in London at any rate) that cater to the heavy metal fan. Occasionally you find a pub with a few great tracks on the jukebox, but normally the jukebox is so quiet (especially when any of these tracks are on) that an inspiring masterpiece gets reduced to an irritating rumble in the background. The fact is, Britain suffers from a cultural bias against heavy metal which seems to me to be connected to the cultural bias against fun: it is allowed only grudgingly, and even then is subject to constraints which stop people enjoying it.¹²

7. Museums

There are more than a dozen museums in Amsterdam, with perhaps the biggest and most famous ones being in "Museum Square", near the Heineken Brewery. On the other hand, in Oude Zijds Achterburgwal there is an Erotic Museum, and on the Damrak a Sex Museum. Needless to say, these were the only museums I was interested in. Each of these is fun, but the one on the Damrak is the bigger of the two. There are various models, sculptures, pictures, exhibits and accompanying narrative, giving information and illustration concerning the history of sex and its manifold manifestations, e.g. the historical development of pornography. Each charges a small entrance fee.

8. Conclusion

I have friends who have enjoyed a stay in Amsterdam without visiting any of the places I have discussed (except perhaps for the bars around the Leidseplein). So I have given only a very partial account of the place; but it is an account which reflects the activities to which I am very partial. Even then, though, it is incomplete, because I still have a lot of exploring to do. I've already mentioned that I haven't yet visited any brothels. There are also, however, singles' clubs, swingers' sex clubs, and at the Hague, a world-famous sado-masochist club, with live shows, a dungeon, "slave girls", and much more. There is even a place called *Hairotics* which offers a haircut and blow job!¹³

A few months ago, I heard someone of libertarian persuasion ask if freedom would really make much difference, at least to us in the Western world. Sure, he said, we would all have a bit more money in our pockets, and that would of course be welcome; but how else would our situation be changed?

This man needs a trip to Amsterdam! I suppose you don't miss what you've never had.

Actually, I suppose it is possible that this chap is just not too interested in sex and booze and rock 'n' roll, so that if the British were allowed the freedoms that the Dutch, along with almost every other civilised nation, take for granted, then he wouldn't notice much difference. Contrast his situation with mine: all the things that I most enjoy are legally prohibited in my own country! This, incidentally, does indicate one difference that he ought to notice: a much happier Danny Frederick. For the change in me has been visible to friends who have been there with me. In Amsterdam I am in a permanent state of euphoria (and ecstatic twice a day).¹⁴

NOTES

1. Parenthetically, most of the S/M films shown in this cinema do not involve actors playing out a story; instead, they show the activities of actual couples, trios, etc. In other words, in most of these films, and in all of the most interesting ones, what you see are people who regularly have sado-masochistic sex with each other enjoying these activities in front of a camera.
2. My estimate of an 80%/20% split is not based on any objective method of sampling. It is merely based on my impressions; but these are impressions derived from a broad base of experience.
3. I think there are cinemas showing gay porn, but I have not visited these myself. In fact I don't even remember seeing any of these; though I might have done (they just wouldn't have registered). I am told there is a very good gay scene in Amsterdam, but I suppose that unless you are looking for it you wouldn't really find it or notice it. There is one gay club, though, which is conspicuous because of its name, viz. La Pouffe in Oude Zijds Voorburgwal. I apologise to any gay readers who may feel that I have omitted all the things of most interest in Amsterdam.
4. *The Times*, April 29, 1990.
5. Besides, sado-masochistic fantasies are common among members of both sexes: see, eg, Nancy Friday's fascinating book, *My Secret Garden: Women's Sexual Fantasies*, Quartet Books, London, 1991. And there is, of course, nothing wrong with acting out such fantasies, provided the participants are all consenting adults (so the coercion is pretend, though the violence, or pain, may be real).
6. Ms Wingfield wrote as a spokesperson for the "London Women's Centre". It is an insult to women that the views of a few crackpot sex puritans, organised into so-called women's groups, are routinely paraded as the views of women. The sales of *For Women* would give a more accurate indication of ordinary women's views.
7. For those unfamiliar with these shows, perhaps a word of explanation would be desirable. A banana show involves, among other things, the following: the girl inserts a banana into her vagina, peels back the skin, then has some male member of the audience take bites out of the banana. I presume it is obvious what a vibrator show involves.
8. I think 100 "windows" would be an underestimate. I drew a rough map of the red light district and tried, from memory, to plot all the "windows" on it. I made it 140. However, I found it difficult to remember exactly where all the "windows" were, and how many. It could be nearer 200. But I thought I would play it safe and say "at least 100".
9. The first time I went to Amsterdam I went with a gang of blokes some of whom had been before. Each of these had been with a prostitute the last time they went and they were all firmly committed to the view that everyone of us should go with a prostitute this time. I didn't like the idea: the thought of paying for sex struck me as demeaning. Yes, I was a right prick. All that was changed when I got to Amsterdam. I was dumbstruck by the sight of the beautiful girls on offer. I went with more prostitutes than anyone else in the gang; and the next time I went I had even more. (On the other hand, I have no interest in paying for sex with prostitutes in Britain; but I'm not yet sure how to explain this contrast.)
10. I owe these last two facts to Tuppy Owens, *The Safer Sex Maniac's Bible*, Miss Tuppy Owens, London, 1990.
11. Someone might point out that after the pubs have shut in Britain, one can always go to a nightclub for a drink (or at least you can in London and other big towns and cities). There are several problems with this:
 - (i) you have to pay an entrance fee (usually quite high) to get into a nightclub;
 - (ii) they never sell any decent beer;
 - (iii) the booze they do sell is at ridiculously inflated prices;
 - (iv) the music is uniformly loud disco or pop;

(v) the atmosphere is similarly uniform, and it is club atmosphere, not pub atmosphere;

(vi) there's very little flitting from one club to another (either by others or by yourself) because entrance fees would be incurred every time you move, so once you've made your choice you're stuck with it, and stuck with the other people who have made the same choice;

(vii) most importantly, however, there are many publicans who want to sell booze to their customers after 11.00 pm, and many of their customers who want to stay in the pub and drink it!

Although a few years ago I used regularly to go to nightclubs for the sake of continuing the evening beyond 11.00, nowadays (for all the above reasons and doubtless more besides) I rarely do, except for those catering for specialist interests (ie. S/M clubs), which are an entirely different sort of night out altogether.

12. Some comments on the British cultural bias against heavy metal are made by Kevin McFarlane in his excellent *Rock Music and the Subjectivity of Taste*, Cultural Notes No. 22, Libertarian Alliance, London, 1990.
13. Cf. Tuppy Owens, op. cit.
14. In further answer to our friend's question, I would say that the differences would be vast, and not just in the realm of personal freedoms, but also in the more narrowly economic sphere. For free markets are not just about efficiency (his reference to more money in our pockets); they are also about effectiveness, or the satisfaction of human wants. My point can be illustrated by reference to privatisation and internal markets in the public sector. This introduction of private sector disciplines into the public sector improves efficiency, so that the same, or better, public services are provided at lower cost. But we are still talking here of public services financed from taxation, eg. privatised council services paid for from local taxation, or an internal market in nationalised health care; so there are still the consequent misallocations of resources, with people being provided with things that they don't want (or wouldn't want at the price), and having to pay more for the things that they really do want, or even not having these things provided at all because their preferences don't register in the distorted marketplace. So even at the narrowly economic level, freedom would not just mean that we have the same things at lower cost; it would also mean that we actually get the things that we value most. And this would make a big difference even to those with no interest in sex and booze and rock 'n' roll.