



**PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**BLEEDING POOF - THE NEW SHORT FILM  
MADE BY AND FOR YOUNG GAY PEOPLE  
LIVING IN THE STICKS**

**YOUNG LESBIAN, GAY AND BISEXUAL PEOPLE PRODUCE EDGY NEW  
DRAMA**

[www.ruralmedia.co.uk/sticks](http://www.ruralmedia.co.uk/sticks)

Gay lobby group Stonewall estimates that there are more than 60,000 young people suffering from homophobic bullying in rural areas.

Herefordshire's Rural Media Company launched **STICKS AND STONES**, a Camelot Foundation funded project, back in 2007 to raise awareness of homophobic bullying in rural areas. Backed by well know gay and lesbian celebrities the project created an on-line forum to capture the experiences and ideas of young LGB people and then worked with them to create a powerful new drama that conveyed some of their stories about what it's like growing up in the countryside.

The end result is **Bleeding Poof**, a dark and shocking 10 minute drama that acutely visualises the effect of homophobic bullying. Working with a professional film crew, the film was made on location in Herefordshire with young gay and lesbian people who contributed to the projects on-line forum.

You can read more about the project at [www.ruralmedia.co.uk/sticks](http://www.ruralmedia.co.uk/sticks)

**Bleeding Poof** (together with a 'Making Of' documentary and promo film) will be available on DVD, accompanied by a 20 page booklet with advice and guidance for professionals on how to tackle homophobic bullying. This

will be distributed to schools in October. The short films will also be launched on internet sites and be distributed to film festivals nationally and internationally.

The Rural Media Company chief executive Nic Millington said:

"There are so many homosexual youngsters in rural areas across the country but many feel they're the only one. They are usually being bullied in school for being different because teenagers are trying their best to fit in."

Sam Hyde from the Camelot Foundation said:

"What makes this project special is that the films have been made by and feature the people who know about the issue best - young gay men and lesbians themselves."

For further information or for interview/picture opportunities call Steven Paul Davies on 07711 208314 or email [stevenpauldavies@aol.com](mailto:stevenpauldavies@aol.com)

Producer Adrian Lambert can be contacted at The Rural Media Company's Herefordshire offices on 01432 344039.



## PROJECT INFORMATION / PRODUCTION NOTES

Gay equality organisation Stonewall estimates that over 60,000 gay and lesbian young people are suffering from homophobic bullying in rural areas, anything from name calling to serious assault.

The psychological effects on a young person can be immense and long-lasting and more than half of lesbian, gay and bi-sexual people who have been bullied at school contemplate suicide.

Living in a rural area can be particularly hard for rural and parochially based LGB young people. In some traditional, tight-knit, small rural communities there can be fear, ignorance and outright prejudice, against LGB young people.

Confidentiality can also be a problem in small, close-knit communities where rumours can spread fast, making it even harder for young people to come out and feel confident with their sexuality without being victimised.

The first phase of the Sticks and Stones project saw the launch of a website complete with an on-line forum, enabling rural young people from across the country to share their ideas and feelings about their own experiences. Topics centred on what life is like for young people growing up in the sticks: the isolation, the lack of gay groups and activities, 'coming out' and homophobic bullying.

Presenters and artists such as Anthony Crank and Mz Fontaine also appeared on the Sticks website from the outset, in support of the project.

Participants from the forum were invited to take part in a series of practical film making/script development workshops and participate in the films pre-production and production process.

A fully participative process was always an integral element to the project, ensuring that the forum members had the opportunity to not only help devise the production but also perform in it as well.

The group met in March 2008 for a weekend of group discussions in Herefordshire with professional film Director John Humphreys, and decided on which story strands they wanted to develop into a final script.

The film shoot took place during the first week of June 08. Our chosen actors - Simon, Hannah, Emma and Chris - together with a professional film crew descended on Hereford to film the Sticks youth group's chosen script. Rural locations included farm barns, deserted country lanes and open fields while the rest of the shoot took place in Hereford city centre.

Emma, who's been involved with the project since she joined the online forum, said "It was surreal to be filming a gay-themed story in Hereford because that's where I grew up and I got my fair share of abuse. Whereas in big cities like London and Brighton there are more support groups around that can keep young gay people safe, here we didn't have that. We had one pub which had a 'back bar' we could use one night a week. It was the only place to go to meet other gay people."

The film was edited over the summer and will be made available on The Rural Media Company's website, YouTube, Myspace, Facebook and on DVD from October.