

# Rear View: January 2023

Monthly spotlight on an item from the HIV/AIDS Graphic Communication Archive

## Chosen by Chris Olver

"I chose these postcards as I wanted to choose an item that represented the buddy system that supported people living with HIV during the AIDS crisis. The buddy system was initially developed by the Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York in the early 1980s, before being adopted and run by several HIV/AIDS charities in the UK, most notably the Terrence Higgins Trust (THT). Buddies were specially trained volunteers who could provide a person living with HIV with emotional and practical support. By the early 1990s, there were 600 buddies working in Greater London alone, but the system began to recede with the introduction of combination therapy before stopping altogether in the early 2000s.

The postcards seem to be a rare example of visually representing the importance of the service, with the messages of the postcards conveying assistance and commitment but they do not explicitly state what a buddy does. This discreet messaging corresponds with oral history interviews with former buddies in the National HIV Story Trust collection that I recently catalogued at the London Metropolitan Archives. The interviews reinforced the message that the buddies were a confidential companion to their clients, who provided care and end of life support and often formed strong bonds with their clients.

I found their stories to be inspiring and deeply moving that so many strangers were happy to comfort and aid those living with a then terminal disease, and much like the mutual aid initiatives during the Covid-19 pandemic, that the sentiment for mutual care and assistance is still alive in our society."

## January Guest Curator

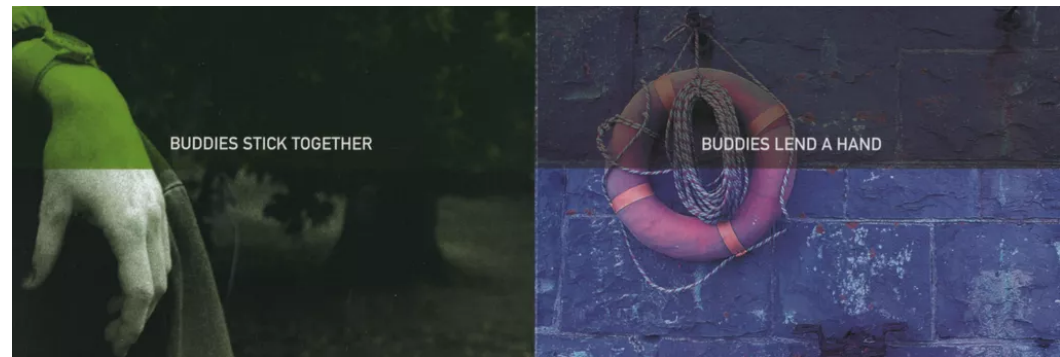
**Chris Olver** is an archivist currently working on a national survey of HIV/AIDS archives at the West Sussex Records Office. He has previously worked on HIV/AIDS collections at the London Metropolitan Archives and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Twitter: [@arch\\_olver](https://twitter.com/arch_olver)

LMA Positive History Project: <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/history-and-heritage/london-metropolitan-archives/about-lma/positive-history>

National HIV Story Trust: <https://www.nhst.org.uk/>

## 36. Buddies Lend A Hand, The Terrence Higgins Trust. Date unknown.



<p><b>help Buddies</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I would like to help fund a Buddy and enclose a donation. THT has 500 Buddies. It costs about £600 a year to train and support each Buddy.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Please send me more information about the work of The Terrence Higgins Trust.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Please send me more information about fundraising for THT in my college, school or place of work.</p> <p>Name _____          Address _____          _____ Postcode _____          Telephone _____</p> <p>Please make a donation to The Terrence Higgins Trust by putting a cheque made payable to 'The Terrence Higgins Trust' in an envelope with this postcard and send it to the address on the right.          If you would like to donate by credit card you can call THT's donation line on 0990 11 88 98</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Please tick this box if you do not wish to receive mailings from other organisations who are sympathetic to our cause</p>	<p>NOT FOR SALE</p> <p>The Terrence Higgins Trust          Buddy Appeal          FREEPOST WC5004          52-54 Grays Inn Road          London          WC1X 8BR</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p><b>Buddies help</b></p> <p><b>The Terrence Higgins Trust</b> </p> <p>A Buddy is always there.</p> <p>At The Terrence Higgins Trust, Buddies are trained volunteers who offer friendship and support, helping those who are ill with HIV or AIDS to feel less isolated.</p> <p>The Terrence Higgins Trust is the leading national AIDS organisation, saving lives through education, information and care.          The Terrence Higgins Trust, 52-54 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8BR          Charity registration number 208527. Donation line: 0990 11 88 98          with enthusiasm and support from </p> <p>Designed with loving care by spin</p>	<p>NOT FOR SALE</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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The Terrence Higgins Trust. 2 x A6 postcards, perforated join. (Front & back shown). Design: Spin. Date unknown (pre 2006).