

annual report 2009



THREE DECADES OF GALHA

2009

Promoting Humanism and
LGBT equality for 30 years!



**THE GAY & LESBIAN
HUMANIST ASSOCIATION**



Chair's Report

It has been another great year for GALHA as the report that follows makes abundantly clear. As well as keeping up our normal excellent programme of regular events, we excelled ourselves in the celebration of our thirtieth anniversary, maintained a record level of attendance at Prides, launched our new website and welcomed a government minister to our annual lunch. We should thank especially the many committee and ordinary GALHA members who have worked so hard in the past year to ensure we achieved all this.



This year has also been one of administrative development, just as important if not as visible to members and the world at large. After the rapid changes in personnel in the last few years, the committee has taken seriously the need to ensure that GALHA is prepared to take on the challenges of the future in a sustainable way. Part of this involves the transition to charitable status that is still in progress, with the committee in negotiation with the Charity Commission about the objects for the new charitable GALHA. At the same time, the committee has committed to a review of financial policies in 2009/10 and has produced a draft action plan for the year ahead and a new vision and mission for GALHA which will guide future committee members and give continuity to GALHA's next three decades.

The good strategic sense and dedicated commitment of the committee in taking these developments forward can give us all good reason to be hopeful for those years.

Committee membership

The 2009 Committee: Andrew Copson (Chair), Adam Knowles, David Christmas (Secretary), Derek Lennard, Henry Lawson, Keith Angus (Treasurer to April 2009), Malcolm Trahearn, Mike Rickwood (Treasurer from April 2009), Tony Kemp Jones.



At work at the June meeting: David Christmas (Secretary), Keith Angus (retired Treasurer), Henry Lawson (Press), Mike Rickwood (Treasurer), Malcolm Trahearn (Newsletter), Adam Knowles (Website), Derek Lennard (Meetings Organiser). Tony Kemp-Jones (Weekend Conference) was taking the photo and Andrew Copson (Chair) sent his apologies.

Public Events

In October our public meetings continued with an interesting and lively discussion on the subject of bisexuality led by Grant Denkinson and Karen Boyd and was followed by an interesting talk the following month by long time American GALHA member, John Lauritsen entitled "Romantic Forerunners of Gay Liberation". Our solstice event was based on the panel game "Just a Minute" and featured such an impressive and innovative buzzer system, that many of us have been waiting for its inventor David Christmas to make an appearance on the Dragon's Den!

2009 heralded GALHA'S 30th Anniversary and a special "Pearls of Wisdom" programme of special public events. It could hardly have got off to a better start when a record breaking 80 people came to see Daniel Kerslake's film "For the Bible tells me so". The film was introduced by NSS President Terry Sanderson and led to a very interesting discussion about the issues raised.

In March Dr Matt Cook treated us to a fascinating talk about the Brixton Gay Community in the 1970's and their alternative communities. The talk was illustrated by several members of the audience who gave illuminating accounts of those heady days! For the following month Maryam Namazie, from the Council of Ex Muslims talked about Gay Rights, Human Rights and Islamophobia and a provocative debate followed.

GALHA has co-ordinated the **International Day against Homophobia** (IDAHO) since it started in 2005 and we marked this important international campaign with a Euro Elections Panel Discussion with leading politicians around the issue of LGBT/Human Rights. IDAHO was also responsible for a historic declaration against homophobia by over 70 members of the General Council of the United Nations, and GALHA committee member Derek Lennard attended a special conference in May in Paris called by the French, Dutch and Norwegian Governments to build on UN support. In the UK there were over 100 IDAHO events.

In June Derek Lennard gave a talk about Thomas Hardy and explored whether or not he was a humanist.



Darwin Day

We marked the 200th Anniversary of Darwin's birth, with two plays performed by Fire and Brimstone Productions and a buffet supper. The event was special for at least two reasons: it was the most successful fundraising event in GALHA's history, and secondly we received a special award as a memorial to the late Paul Patrick (the inventor of LGBT History Month and an ex GALHA member). The award of £250 was administered by the LGBT Consortium and represents the first award of this kind that GALHA has received in its 30 year history.

The 30th Anniversary Event

On 10th July GALHA celebrated its main 30th anniversary celebration, after months of planning by the Committee led by Derek Lennard. A remarkable success, over 120 people attended the main hall at London's Bishopsgate Institute, including the founding and longstanding members George Broadhead, Jim Herrick, Roy Saich and Terry Sanderson.

Peter Tatchell joined us to speak on the recent history of LGBT campaigning, telling the audience that "The GLF never argued for mere 'equality'. Our agenda was about changing society, for the benefits of gays and straights alike. We challenged traditional notions of masculinity and femininity, and of the patriarchal nuclear family". He later praised GALHA as "a voice of reason and evidence-based thought".

Michael Cashman MEP contributed a keynote speech during which he warned "Gays and lesbians too often think that rights once won, can never be taken away." and that "Unless we can separate religion and politics, we will never advance".

Part of the celebration was the presentation of the first Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE)/Derek Oyston Award for services to the gay community. Veteran journalist and CHE Vice President Ray Gosling presented the award to Sue Sanders for her campaigning, particularly 35 years of "School's Out". Sanders spoke of the enormous strides that had been made since the days when teachers could be sacked simply for being gay and commented. "I can't tell you how much it means to receive



an award like this from the community". She also paid tribute to the late Paul Patrick and to other members of the organisation.

Other speakers included Stefan Dickers of the Bishopsgate Institute, who warmly welcomed their hosting of our archives; an exhibition was available with documents of interest from our history. Finally, committee member Adam Knowles provided a brief outline of the possible future for GALHA, its focus to be increasingly international while leading by example in the UK.

Messages of support were received from, amongst others, the British Humanist Association, the National Secular Society, The South Place Ethical Society (both Giles Enders and Barbara Smoker attended), and the Council of Ex Muslims. A beautiful 30th anniversary cake was cut by guest-of-honour Michael Cashman to loud applause, before a canapé and drinks reception.

The evening received kind comments from many attendees, and garnered support for another 30 years of GALHA.





GALHA Online

The GALHA website was re-launched this year at: www.galha.org and has received complimentary feedback from many people. This project, led by committee member Adam Knowles, was the result of many months of work. The goals were to update the look and feel, to increase the focus of the homepage, to keep information easy to find and to make use of new technologies where appropriate.

Features of the site:

- New visual design to provide a good impression to visitors.
- Details of our upcoming events (powered by meetup.com).
- Comprehensive search engine to help locating content.
- Powered by a system that makes it easy to update by anyone on the Committee or beyond. This should help the website stay relevant while making it easy to find out what GALHA is doing.
- An archive of the postal newsletters.
- Prominent button to join the organisation.
- A humanist 'thought of the moment'.
- Link to YouTube so people can see GALHA in action.
- Links to our members' websites (get in touch to add yours).

We intend to continue to improve the site in terms of both features and content, both historical and new. In the meantime we are also paying attention to GALHA's online presence elsewhere: we have set up groups on Facebook, YouTube, Flickr (please upload photos and tag them 'galha') - while also working on the site's search engine rankings. Feedback and contributions are very welcome at webster@galha.org.

Media

GALHA had a good year in the media, with highlights including our chair, Andrew Copson, tackling Stephen Green (National Director of Christian Voice) in debate on Talksport radio; Adam Knowles appearing on The Big Questions on BBC1 in a discussion of evangelism; and Derek Lennard on Premier Christian Radio. We had letters published in the Guardian, the London Evening Standard and Gay Times and David Christmas wrote pieces for Gay Times and the Pink Paper.



Press Releases

GALHA has remained very active in publishing press releases in response to events of concern to LGBT Humanists:

- * Gay Humanists Condemn Religious Intolerance on International Day Against Death Penalty - 10 October 2008
- * GALHA Condemns Vatican Attack on LGBT Rights - 3 December 2008
- * Homophobia Fears in State-Funded Faith Schools - 8 December 2008
- * GALHA Celebrates 30th Anniversary - 7 January 2009
- * GALHA Celebrates Darwin Day-4th February.
- * GALHA Support Demonstration for a Secular Europe-11th February.
- * GALHA Condemns Religious Anti Gay Brainwashing Campaign - 20th April 2009
- * GALHA Condemns Plans to allow Anti-Gay Indoctrination in Schools - 29th April 2009
- * Official UK LGBT Hustings for European Elections to Quiz Candidates, as Gay Rights Come Under Attack Across Europe -7th May 2009
- * Gay and Lesbian Humanists Celebrate 30 years of Achievement While Warning of New Threats to Overcome - 21st June 2009
- * Gay and Lesbian Humanists Call on Bishop of Rochester to Repent and for Church of England Disestablishment - 5th July 2009
- * Cashman and Tatchell Lead Gay Humanist 30th Birthday Celebrations but warn: "Gay people too often think that rights, once won, can never be taken away." - 10th July 2009
- * Gay And Lesbian Humanists Express Solidarity for Gay Man Arrested Over Assisted Suicide of Partner - 24th July 2009
- * Gay Humanists Welcome Quaker Conversion to Gay Marriage - 31st July 2009



Prides

We fronted stalls at 8 LGBT Prides this year, 2 up on last year, thanks to the sterling efforts of Paul Allen. The BHA helped greatly by sharing the costs of stall hire and helping to staff many of the stalls. We also had contact with many Local Humanist groups who have sent us their literature to go onto the stalls for the Prides in their area. Greater Manchester Humanists have been very enthusiastic to work with us again this year, as well as the Brighton and Hove group, we had a stall this time too!

There are many stories to tell, told by people coming to the stall to talk to us; a celebrant employed by the Catholic Church to do non-religious ceremonies, young people with horror stories of homophobic bullying in schools, parents wanting their children to have Humanism included in RE at school. Priests sizing us up as the opposition, vicars praying for us, ministers saying Humanists are liberal Quakers. It is great to hear how many people are Humanist in all but name, living their lives without religion and pleased to see we exist.

Taking part in Prides is a significant investment of time and money. In return the stalls have recruited more members, increased the LGBT public's awareness of Humanism, and raised GALHA's profile at Prides and with Local Humanist groups. We have also extended our activities beyond the South East to encourage more participation UK wide by running stalls at Edinburgh, Newcastle, Birmingham, London, Brighton, Cornwall Pride (Truro), Black Pride (London) and finally Manchester.

Lunch with Angela Eagle

Treasury Minister Angela Eagle was the guest of honour at a very well attended GALHA lunch held at the Café de Amis on the 15th November. Her speech provided some interesting anecdotes about life in Westminster, her personal lobbying and effectiveness in helping bring about change, and the need to ensure that advances that had been made in relation to LGBT Rights could not be undermined. The speech was so well received that one guest immediately joined GALHA!

Government Consultations

2008/9 was a quieter year than previously in terms of government consultations, but GALHA responded to news of the Equality Bill with a submission to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), and remained in contact with the EHRC throughout the year. GALHA responded to government consultation on new guidance on Religious Education, saying that there must be no religious instruction in schools and to government consultation on sex and relationships education urging that same sex relationships must be fairly taught about and that 'faith' schools should have no special exemptions.

Winchester Weekend

GALHA's 29th weekend conference and AGM was held in Winchester for the first time. The Wessex Hotel was our base for the weekend, a place whose beauty was best appreciated from the inside, looking outwards towards the cathedral and grounds.

Members flocked from far and wide to enjoy a private walking tour of the city, a trip to historic Mottisfont Abbey and, on the Saturday evening, a Big Gay Humanist Quiz to test the grey matter.

Our AGM was held on Sunday morning where members took part in a lively topical debate, as well as electing a new committee and entrusting them to run GALHA for the forthcoming year.



"I know the budget's tight but is this all there is for dinner tonight?"

Committee members Keith Angus (right) and Adam Knowles (left) getting over-excited at the GALHA weekend.

GAY & LESBIAN HUMANIST ASSOCIATION

Accounts for the year ended 31 July 2009

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

| 2007/8 | | 2008/9 |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------|
| £ | INCOME | £ |
| 2,216.61 | Standing Order subscriptions | 2,401.00 |
| <u>2,676.51</u> | Other subscriptions | <u>2,563.61</u> |
| 4,893.12 | Total Subscriptions | 4,964.61 |
| 357.08 | Donations to GALHA | 487.00 |
| 96.00 | Affiliations | 48.00 |
| 464.85 | Interest income after tax | 191.27 |
| -55.50 | Weekend event 2008 (Loss) / Surplus | 105.20 |
| -9.98 | Annual lunch 2007 (Loss) / Surplus | -14.79 |
| 0.00 | Books, etc / Surplus | 51.19 |
| <u>5,745.57</u> | Income (excluding bequests) | <u>5,832.48</u> |
| | EXPENDITURE | |
| 1,714.91 | Magazine/Newsletter (net of sales & adverts) | 1,469.96 |
| 719.55 | Stationery | 12.07 |
| 1,937.24 | Post, telephone & fax | 472.25 |
| -156.98 | Meetings (costs less collections) | -217.18 |
| 1,936.36 | Advertising and publicity | 2,794.84 |
| 169.49 | Committee meetings | 296.32 |
| 100.00 | Affiliations to other organisations | 160.00 |
| 465.23 | Depreciation / Write off of Assets | 0.00 |
| 0.00 | Conference Fees paid to BHA | 162.00 |
| 255.99 | Donations (net of funds raised) and Awards | 102.82 |
| 31.09 | GALHA Internet Domain and Renewals & Other | 52.06 |
| 56.02 | Inland Revenue payment on previous year's accounts | 134.82 |
| 20.00 | Other Expenses [1] | 240.48 |
| <u>7,248.90</u> | Total expenditure | <u>5,680.44</u> |
| -1,503.33 | Surplus/deficit for the year before bequests | 152.04 |
| 0.00 | Credit prior year adjustments | |
| -1,503.33 | Surplus/deficit as carried to General Fund | 152.04 |
| 0.00 | Bequests | 0.00 |
| <u>-1,503.33</u> | Total surplus/deficit for the year | <u>152.04</u> |

BALANCE SHEET

| 2007/2008 | | 2008/2009 |
|----------------------------|--|------------------------|
| £ | | £ |
| CURRENT ASSETS | | |
| 297.58 | Debtors - Pink Triangle Trust | 0 |
| 11,436.39 | Deposit account | 11,127.66 |
| 1,171.44 | Current account | 3,594.95 |
| 12,905.41 | | 14,722.61 |
| CURRENT LIABILITIES | | |
| -2,403.62 | Subscriptions in advance | -£2,561.00 |
| 0.00 | Miscellaneous Creditors | -£902.78 |
| -1,080.00 | Creditors weekend event Sep 2009 | -£1,685.00 |
| <u>-3,483.62</u> | | <u>-5,148.78</u> |
| <u>9,421.79</u> | Net Assets | <u>9,573.83</u> |
| REPRESENTED BY: | | |
| 18,617.87 | Bequests: accumulated total | £18,617.87 |
| <u>-10,200.00</u> | less transfer held in trust by PTT | <u>-£10,200.00</u> |
| 8,417.87 | | 8,417.87 |
| 2,507.25 | Accumulated General Fund | 1,003.92 |
| <u>-1,503.33</u> | Surplus/(deficit) for the current year | <u>152.04</u> |
| <u>1,003.92</u> | | <u>1,155.96</u> |
| <u>9,421.79</u> | | <u>9,573.83</u> |

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

[1] Other Expenses relates to BusinessLegal Ltd (co/charity setup admin)

TREASURER'S REPORT

I hereby submit the GALHA accounts for the year ended 31 July 2009. As you will note, last year's loss has been converted into a small profit, mainly because postage and stationery costs incurred by the charitable status consultation did not recur. Income was broadly stable, but expenditure fell by some £1600. Notable items of expenditure were:- £1700 on Pride events; £1075 net on the magazine (£3430 gross less £2356 from the PTT); £750 (approx) for the 30th anniversary event.

17 August 2009

Mike Rickwood, Treasurer

AUDITOR'S REPORT

I have examined the above Income & Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet and confirm that they have been properly prepared in accordance with the records, information and explanations supplied to me.

28 August 2009

Colin Swinburn, Auditor
FCA(NZ)



GALHA News

GALHA has achieved its target of publishing six issues of the newsletter in the past year. Derek Lennard edited the first three and was succeeded by Malcolm Trahearn when he was co-opted onto the committee mid-year. The intention of the editor and the committee is to provide news of GALHA's activities, feature articles of interest to LGBT humanists, details of forthcoming events, an editorial, photographs and high-quality, professional presentation. All issues have been uploaded to the website, where they help to showcase GALHA to the wider world. Copies have also been available at London events and on the many Pride stalls throughout the summer.

Vice Presidents

The Committee was delighted that **Jim Herrick** accepted the invitation to become a Vice President. As a founding member of GALHA, the author of numerous books on Humanism and free thought, Editor of *New Humanist* for 18 years and an outstanding GALHA Chair, Jim is a worthy addition to the panel of Vice Presidents:

President: Maureen Duffy.

Vice-Presidents: Barbara Smoker; Claire Rayner MBE; Darren Johnson GLA; Dr Evan Harris MP; George Broadhead; Dr Harry Stopes-Roe; Jim Herrick; Maryam Namazie; Michael Cashman MEP; Patrick Harvie MSP; Professor Rob Tielman; Taslima Nasrin.

Affiliations

GALHA continues to be affiliated to Amnesty International and the International Lesbian & Gay Association (ILGA), and be a member of the International Humanist & Ethical Union (IHEU), all of which give us vital information about LGBT and Humanist campaigning outside the UK and the opportunity to influence international developments. In 2009 GALHA was delighted to be accepted as a member of the European Humanist Federation (EHF).

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