



GALHA NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GAY & LESBIAN HUMANIST ASSOCIATION

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WORLD PRIDE

Despite last minute budget problems that saw the exclusion of floats and motorised vehicles from the parade, and much of the entertainment being scaled back, the World Pride festival held in London on Saturday 7th July was still an enjoyable and worthwhile event.

A group of Galha members and supporters took part in the march from Baker Street to Whitehall, proudly bearing the Galha banner - making an impact even from among the more colourful participants. As Pride Co-ordinator Paul Allen reported:

"Pride was great. We were between a Bavarian group in lederhosen, a man in drag wearing three urinals, and a group from a fetish club wearing mainly their

birthday suits! People we calling me from all over for our BHA and Galha leaflets."

Galha Chair Adam Knowles said:

"Despite the setbacks suffered by London Pride this year, it's been good to support the event and get our message out there. It's great, not only in terms of our own visibility, but also to take advantage of opportunities to interact and make connections with some of the other many and varied LGBT groups in attendance. A fantastic day and lovely to share it with so many LGBT Humanist friends.

Our thanks to all who came to support Galha, and to everyone who cheered us on!"



It was just great. It's always so nice to talk to Humanist people with an open mind.

Inan



More feedback from Galha supporters who attended the event:

So much fun! A great mix of people and there were some outrageous costumes! I'm so happy I took part in this. It was great marching in the parade (everyone was looking!) though it was very exhausting!

Jodie

Fantastic day. Despite controversial scaling down of event a fabulous parade and day out was had.

James Heather

EDITOR'S NOTES

On August 1st Galha officially became the LGBT section of the British Humanist Association. My personal congratulations to the Galha committee who've worked so hard and for so long to make this happen. It's been a long road but we're finally here.

And a warm welcome to the many new supporters who've recently been adding themselves to our ranks. Whether you found us at Pride, attended one of our events, or discovered us through the BHA - welcome on board!

Many of you attended the 'Summer Social' in July, which was such a success that we've decided to add a regular monthly social evening to our schedule. And that's in addition to our usual program of events, which resumes in September, after a short summer break, with a presentation from American performance activist Peterson Toscano - the advice is to book early for that one...! Then there's the Annual Weekend in October - taking place in

Manchester this year, and a talk from legendary human-rights activist Peter Tatchell in November.

Finally, some fairly shameless name-dropping... I recently bumped into a certain Time Lord, who upon seeing a copy of Galha News and last issue's celebrity endorsement of same-sex marriage, was only too keen to have us print the following. Thanks Doc!



Richard Unwin
Editor@galha.org

UPCOMING EVENTS...

Peterson Toscano: Waking Up From A Biblically Induced Coma
Friday 14th September, 7.30pm in the Brockway Room, Conway Hall.

Performance activist Peterson Toscano shares his journey out of the closet and details his encounters with the 'ex-gay' movement. Performing excerpts from his original one-person comedies. **This is a ticketed event - Book online at: www.galhameetup.com**



Secular Europe March and Rally
Saturday 15th September, assembly at 1.30pm at Storey's Gate, near Parliament Square.

Come and march under the Galha banner at this large-scale and important event. Galha Chair Adam Knowles will be making a speech at the rally after the march.

September Social
Friday 28th September, from 6.30pm at the Somers Town Coffeehouse Bistro Pub. (Just five minutes from London's Kings Cross Station.)

An informal evening of drinks and chat. The venue serves both a main menu and bar menu until 10pm. Look out for the committee members wearing Galha badges.

Galha Weekend 2012: Manchester
Friday 12th - Sunday 14th October. See overleaf for more details. Book online at: <http://galha.wufoo.com/forms/galha-conference-2012-manchester/>

Peter Tatchell: The Unfinished Battle for Human Rights
Friday 9th November, 7.30pm in the Brockway Room, Conway Hall.

A talk by the veteran human rights campaigner.



A VISION FOR GALHA



The Galha committee has spent some time recently thinking about what it should mean to be an organisation promoting LGBT rights and issues of non-religious belief – humanism but also secularism and atheism. And how do we take advantage of being part of the BHA with its substantial membership across the UK.

The outcome is an embryonic vision. We would like you to help us flesh it out and suggest ways to make it happen.

The key elements are:

Becoming a genuine LGBT organisation

We're adding "bisexual" and "transgender" to our name; we need to make this a reality, start embracing the B&T in our name and make it clear we're here for those communities too.

Being a place of sanctuary, providing fellowship and support

This has always been an important role for Galha, both for LGBT people seeking a refuge from religious influences in their past and those seeking the companionship of people like themselves who also share a humanist outlook; it's a role often fulfilled by local humanist groups especially outside the major cities, and one we think we should develop - ultimately we believe there's scope for LGBT representatives in all local groups and separate LGBT Humanist groups in larger cities.

Co-ordinating a network of local representatives

We think Galha should promote the concept of local LGBT reps, who would also link with other local LGBT groups, and co-ordinate their network; we should also be a resource for local groups (provide materials, speakers, etc...)

Widening our scope

We should exist for the families of LGBT people too and deal with sexuality generally as it relates to religion.

Campaigning

We should engage in more big single issue campaigns (homophobic bullying, gay marriage, conversion therapy, international issues), linking to BHA campaigns and acting as a resource for them, making more use of online, including video, tools.

Widening our appeal

We need to think in terms of supporters, not just members, and attract a greater diversity, not just B&T but women, young people and a broader ethnic mix as well; we need to promote more social events, exploit the promotional potential of events like the annual lunch and conference; and develop a press function in conjunction with the BHA.

London vs national

We would still run monthly Conway Hall events and engage in other activities in London; there would be separate London and national roles .

Developing our online presence

This would include a new online forum to replace the existing discussion group, as well as making greater use of Twitter and other online resources .

There will be a workshop to develop these ideas taking place as part of the Galha Weekend in Manchester on Saturday 13th October.

We also invite and value input from those who will be unable to make it to Manchester. Let us know your thoughts at:
secretary@galha.org

FLASHBACK: ENTRAPMENT

Some readers will remember me as a very active member of GALHA in the 1980's before I came to New Zealand. This article narrates what happened when I tried to take action over an entrapment campaign in early 1989, if my memory serves me correctly.

There were a number of reports in both the gay press and the mainstream press about police in the West Midlands Region scaling up their use of entrapment in public toilets, in order to arrest gay men. I decided to take action and wrote first of all to John Taylor, Conservative MP for Solihull. He never gave a straight answer about anything. After several weeks of correspondence on the issue I delivered all of the information to a sympathetic reporter at the Solihull Times. Unfortunately, there was not enough substance to Mr. Taylor's replies for her to write a good article.

The situation deteriorated even further. About a dozen reports were published in the local press about police officers being so overzealous in the attempts to arrest men in public toilets that prosecutions had been brought against a number of heterosexual men.

I, therefore, wrote a letter to the Solihull Times. The letter merely listed the newspaper articles about the arrests. I finished with the words: "So, don't you think that the police are being a little overzealous, if they are managing to arrest heterosexual men in public toilets?" To my surprise the letter was published in its entirety.

The next Saturday morning I answered a knock at the door and was told by a police officer, "Mr. Boulton, we read your letter to the Solihull Times. Would you like to come to the police station to discuss the matter?"

How could I decline the invitation? Two senior officers spent over an hour trying to get me to withdraw what I had said. My reply was firm. I had not written any of the articles about the entrapment of heterosexual men and I could not retract what I had not written.

The next edition of the Solihull Times carried a statement from the chief officer of the police station, which said that I had been interviewed by the police, had admitted that I had made the whole story up and had retracted what I had written in my letter to the Solihull Times. I telephoned the newspaper and asked to talk to the sympathetic reporter. I was told that she had left. When I asked to speak to a number of other sympathetic staff at the newspaper, I was told that they had all left, too. I felt rather disappointed at the cover-up and wondered what sort of police state I was living in.

Over the next couple of weeks, many people came to discuss the matter with me on the streets of Solihull. My words had not fallen on deaf ears. A number of people, none of them gay, expressed their revulsion at entrapment tactics. I had the satisfaction of knowing that at least a few people had been persuaded of the wrongfulness of the practice.

FRANK BOULTON



2012 GALHA WEEKEND

MANCHESTER

12-14 OCTOBER

**EXPLORING THE PAST
CREATING THE FUTURE**

**BOOK
NOW!**



The Alan Turing Experience: Visit the places in Manchester University where Alan Turing worked and learn about what he did there. Led by Henry McGhie who curated the Turing Exhibition at Manchester Museum. Visit the exhibition.

Keynote address by Andrew Copson: Chief Executive of the British Humanist Association.

Dinner with Paul Fairweather: Paul is a leading LGBT activist and campaigner in Manchester and city councillor. He will be our guest speaker at a special dinner.

A walk through Manchester's gay history: Led by Carole Truman, Professor of Health and Community Studies at Bolton University and local LGBT Humanist.

Annual meeting: Discussion groups to develop our vision; our first AGM since becoming part of the BHA.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK ONLINE, VISIT:

<http://www.galhameetup.com/events/71915142/>