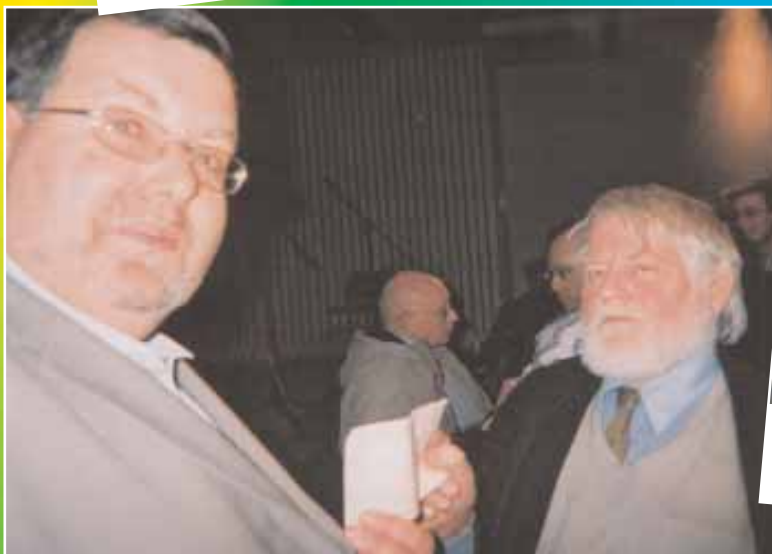


Campaign for Homosexual Equality

2005-2006

Annual Report



Top left, Ray Gosling; top right, Antony Grey (left) and Allan Horsfall; bottom left, Derek Lennard, UK coordinator of the International Day Against Homophobia (left), receives a cheque from CHE's Griffith Vaughan Williams; bottom right, Peter Tatchell, the gay human rights activist. See reports inside for details.

Campaign for Homosexual Equality

Annual Report 2005–2006

SINCE THE 1960s, **CHE**, under previous names and this one, has sought to bring social and legal equality to gays, lesbians and bisexuals. In this **Annual Report**, you can read about some of CHE's activities over the past year, as well as notable topics that have dominated LGBT news.

For those who may have picked up this report but are not members of CHE, we have this year included a **short history** of the organisation, written by two veteran campaigners.

An important **exhibition** in Tyne and Wear was attended by a CHE executive committee member in February.

CHE member **Ian Buist** has been honoured at the annual conference of the **Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement**.

During CHE's year, its Executive Committee agreed to meet the cost of printing 1,500 A3 brochures promoting the **International Day Against Homophobia** (or **IDAHO**), which was

held on 17 May. We have a picture on our front page and a report inside.

And we bring you news of the **Howard League for Penal Reform**, which has been supported by CHE for many years, and has now expressed concern about the way lesbians and gays are treated in Britain's prisons.

Sadly, we report on the death of **Jim Edgell**, who had long been a campaigner in both CHE – serving on the Executive Committee – and in Friend.

There's much more in our 16-page report this year, which has been produced by a former CHE executive committee member, Andy Armitage, who formed Coventry's second CHE group in the late seventies, having given his own speech of welcome to the Coventry CHE conference after the homophobic city council controversially refused us the civic reception it was happy to give to other organisations.

Campaign for Homosexual Equality

Executive Committee 2005–2006

Bernard Crowe – Treasurer

Barry Cutler – Secretary, Newsletter Organiser

Alan Louis – Community Liaison Officer

George Tregaskis – Membership Secretary

Griffith Vaughan Williams – Media Officer,
Conference & Events Organiser

How to contact CHE:

Post: CHE, PO Box 342, London WC1X 0DU

Phone: 07702 326 151

Fax: 020 8743 6252

Email: secretary@c-h-e.fsnet.co.uk

Web: www.campaignforhomosexualequality.org.uk
(or, alternatively, www.c-h-e.org.uk)

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Bequest from Derek Oyston spurs CHE's charity application

The CHE Executive Committee is very pleased to report the receipt, since the last AGM, of a very generous bequest by Derek Oyston, who lived on Tyneside.

The amount of the bequest has enabled CHE to seek professional advice from a consultant, Mr Mick Denton of Inspiracion Ltd, on how best to secure the charitable status that we have been seeking since this was decided upon some years ago. Securing that status will also enable us to safeguard this considerable increase in funds, for the 'advancement of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality', as was requested by Mr Oyston in his will.

The Committee is also concerned that a suitable donation to continue CHE's work in Mr Oyston's former home area should be made in due course. However, the best way to support LGBT activities and CHE's work in the North-East may take some time to resolve.

At recent CHE Conferences, the CHE Secretary, Barry Cutler, had reported that little headway was being made with the Charity Commission due to their objections to some aspects of the current CHE Constitution. In an effort to overcome these difficulties, CHE had sought advice from Mr Denton, who has helped other organisations to obtain charitable status.

In March, we mailed out to members a report prepared by Mr Denton, detailing the options available to us in pursuing our application with the Charity Commission. About a

third of the membership responded, and we thank all those members who replied, and for the comments and suggestions made.

Of those replies, about a third chose to follow the limited-company route, and about half chose to leave the decision up to the Executive Committee. After the matter was discussed and the advice offered considered, it was decided not to follow the limited-company route, but to make another application direct to the Charity Commission.

Mr Denton advised us that a new Constitution, worded so that it would be acceptable to the Charity Commission, should be drawn up and adopted in place of CHE's current Constitution. This is being done, and, later in the year, an extraordinary general meeting will be called to deal with the adoption of the new Constitution.

At its 25 April Committee meeting, Griffith Vaughan Williams signed on behalf of CHE a contract to engage the services of Mr Mick Denton of Inspiracion Ltd, at a total fee of £1,750. Half of the cost will be for producing the new Constitution, and the balance will be due only when CHE has been registered by the Charity Commission and been given its Charity Number.

Mr Denton will attend the 2 July AGM to answer members' questions and to explain why it has been necessary to have a completely new Constitution for submission to the Charity Commission. However, the new one will closely follow CHE's current Constitution.

LGCM tribute to work done by CHE member Ian Buist

The annual conference – its thirtieth – of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement held at Cardiff Bay between 28 and 30 April paid a special tribute to the work undertaken on the Civil Partnership legislation by long-standing CHE member Ian Buist. Ian read a lesson at the LGCM's closing service in the United Reformed Church in the centre of Cardiff on 30 April.

CHE Executive Committee member Griffith Vaughan Williams attended the conference and the Civic Reception on 29 April in the Wales Millennium Centre. Also present at the reception was the Archbishop of Wales, the Most Revd Dr Barry Morgan; and the Presiding Officer of the Welsh Assembly Government, Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas, AM (Assembly Member).

Both made speeches that were well received by the hundred or so at the reception. This was



Ian Buist (shirt and tie) at the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement reception.

especially so in the case of Lord Elis-Thomas, because he revealed having a gay son.

Also at the reception were two former members of the CHE Executive Committee, Peter Norman of Chesterfield and Paul Cannon from north London.

CHE at Liberty

CHE IS AFFILIATED to Liberty – previously known as the National Council for Civil Liberties. Each year members of the Executive Committee endeavour to attend its annual general meetings, and in 2005 Alan Louis and Griffith Vaughan Williams were present for the event, held at Waterloo, London.

The AGM now takes the form of a conference, and in 2005 there were contributions from the Rt Hon. David Davis, the Conservatives' shadow Home Secretary; and two regulars from BBC1's Thursday-evening political programme, *This Week*, the MP Diane Abbott and former MP Michael Portillo.

See <http://www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk>

Awards project: response not forthcoming

The Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association (GALHA) has been invited by CHE to see if it would be interested in organising an awards ceremony. It would be similar to that of the defunct Mike Rhodes Awards project, of which the late Barry Jackson (a former CHE Treasurer and organiser of the 1975 CHE Conference at Sheffield) was the driving force.

The annual Mike Rhodes Awards ceremony was a high-profile event for LGBT activists.

CHE asked GALHA about its interest to help stage a similar project because it had expressed regret at the demise of the Mike Rhodes Awards.

So far, GALHA has failed to indicate to CHE its response.

GALHA website: <http://www.galha.org>

Local authorities quizzed about LGBT History Month activities

During February 2005 and this year there has been a nationwide LGBT History Month.

Each time, CHE Executive Committee member Griffith Vaughan Williams has written to the chief executives of all 32 London boroughs, the Corporation of London and all Welsh boroughs asking what each local authority was doing to mark LGBT History Month.

This year, he also asked if the month in 2005 had been marked, and, if not, what was the reason for not doing so?

In 2005, the London Borough of Southwark was quickest with a response, while the Corporation of London the most detailed.

Responses were not received from all local authorities and the tone of replies varied from very positive to very cool. Replies from Welsh local authorities were very sparse.

Griff Vaughan Williams intends to undertake a similar exercise in 2007 to see what local authorities will be doing for next year's LGBT History Month.

Glasgow finds new base for LGBT Centre as it marks tenth anniversary

For ten years Glasgow has had its own LGBT Centre near Glasgow Central Station. It is to move at the turn of the year to a new location in Glasgow's Merchant City. Currently at 11 Dixon Street, it will relocate to 84 Bell Street.

Issue 69 of Scotland's own gay monthly magazine, *ScotsGay*, states: 'With thanks to the assistance of Glasgow City Council they have been successful in obtaining new premises in the Merchant City of Glasgow and 84 Bell Street will be their new home for the next 20 years!'

A considerable amount of refurbishment of the new base is necessary and £600,000 will have to be raised for the predicted work on the ground floor and basement premises.

The present LGBT Centre celebrates its tenth anniversary this year. The Dixon

Street building has a café and a meeting room named after the late London-based lesbian activist and former CHE Executive Committee member Jackie Forster.

While the Centre celebrates ten years' activity, the local LGBT Switchboard marks its thirtieth birthday.

One of CHE's long-serving members has returned to local government.

John Gallagher, who has chaired CHE's annual policymaking conferences, decided to return to party politics at Ealing, West London. He was elected a Labour councillor for the South Acton ward on the London Borough of Ealing Council at the 4 May local government elections.

John was an alderman many years ago on Ealing Council and a number of years later was given the Freedom of the Borough.

Cost of printing IDAHO brochure met by CHE

The CHE Executive Committee agreed to meet the cost of printing 1,500 A3 brochures promoting the International Day Against Homophobia (or IDAHO), which was held on 17 May.

The date marks the decision on 17 May 1990 by the World Health Organisation to remove homosexuality from its list of mental disorders.

In commemoration of this historic decision, communities around the world were urged to recognise this day by organising events to raise awareness of the danger posed by homophobia in today's world.

A cheque for £352 to cover the printing was handed to IDAHO's UK coordinator, Derek Lennard, by CHE Executive Committee member Griffith Vaughan Williams during a launch ceremony on 7 April at Amnesty International UK's new premises, the Human Rights Action Centre, 25 New Inn Yard, London EC2.

The Keynote speaker was Louis-Georges Tin, founder of IDAHO.

The former *EastEnders* actor Michael Cashman, who is now a Labour Member of the European Parliament's Intergroup on gay and lesbian rights, also addressed the event.

Additional speakers included Jean Lambert, Green MEP for London, and Dr Evan Harris, Liberal Democrat MP for Oxford West and Abingdon.

The evening concluded with a dramatised reading of an excerpt from Rex Batten's book,



Peter Tatchell, Derek Lennard and Simon Hughes MP at the protest outside the Home Office.

Rid England of this Plague. The cast included Rex Batten himself, who is the character Tom in the book. The work has been described as a 'terrifying and vivid eye-witness account of the 1950s purge of homosexuals'. The book ends with an observation by a former Chair of CHE, Glenys Parry, at a CHE conference.

The credit to CHE's financial support on the brochure included the tag line coined by CHE Executive Committee member Alan Louis: 'CHE is a national, democratic LGBT organisation challenging homophobia and building communities'. In presenting the cheque, Griff stressed the 'challenging homophobia' aspect of CHE's activities.

Amnesty's web page for LGBT matters can be found at <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/lgbt>

Death of a steadfast campaigner

Late last year, we were saddened to hear news of the death of Jim Edgell, who had long been a campaigner in both CHE – serving on the Executive Committee – and in Friend. Ross BURGESS, a friend of Jim's and founder of the Tunbridge Wells CHE Group, of which Jim subsequently became Chairman, pays tribute to him.

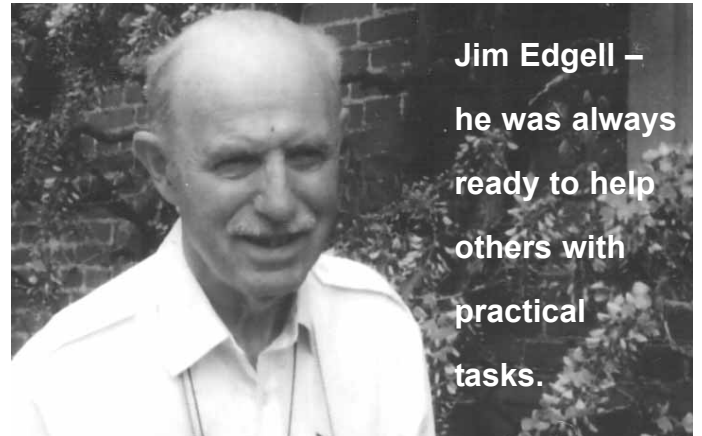
Jim Edgell was born in Gloucestershire in 1936. He and his sister were adopted at an early age, but may have been closely related to their adoptive parents.

Jim's aptitude for languages became apparent at school and at Cambridge, and during National Service in the Royal Navy he worked as a translator and was sent on a course to learn Russian. He then worked at GCHQ (Government Communications Headquarters) in Cheltenham, where the Official Secrets Act prevented him from discussing work with his family; this led to a rift with his father, and Jim left home.

In an age when homosexuality was still illegal, he could not have come out as gay at GCHQ, so he took a teaching job at West Kent College in Tonbridge, and bought a little house at Harmony Street, Rusthall, near Tunbridge Wells.

In 1974 he became Campaign Organiser for the Tunbridge Wells CHE Group, and a year later took over as Chairman. The group was relaunched in 1982 (when CHE shed its local groups) as the Tunbridge Wells Independent Gay Group (TWIGG). Meanwhile, Jim had become coordinator of the West Kent Befriending Group, and he continued to serve on the CHE National Executive.

Jim's life was much changed when he met Roger, who lived in Bedford. They shared many holidays and happy times, but could not live together because of family responsibilities (Jim's mother having moved to the Tunbridge Wells area). Sadly, Roger died of



cancer at an early age.

Jim had meanwhile left West Kent College to work as a translator for the Department of Trade and Industry, and after his mother died he moved into the house in Bedford that he and Roger had bought together. He continued his work with CHE, and was one of the founders of the Bedford gay helpline. He was a very effective spokesman for the helpline in the face of opposition from a local newspaper, and his combination of sharp intellect and gentle approach made him particularly effective on local radio.

During this time he met Albert (Albie) and they lived happily together for more than ten years, with Albie acting as a devoted carer during Jim's last illness. Jim died of Lewy body disease in October 2005.

As well as having linguistic abilities, Jim was always good with his hands. He had lifelong interests in photography and in clocks and clock repairing, and was always ready to help others – for instance, with practical tasks, or by driving vans and minibuses. He had a quiet Christian faith, and towards the end of his life became very interested in the Roman Catholic Church, joining Quest (the gay Catholic group), although remaining an Anglican. He will be fondly remembered as a good friend and a steadfast supporter of gay causes.

The author and his partner, Roger Burg, attended Jim Edgell's cremation at Bedford on 27 October

For many years CHE has supported the Howard League for Penal Reform and expressed concern about the way lesbian and gay prisoners are treated – from the availability of condoms to obtaining publications, such as *Gay Times*.

The May issue of the League's three-times-a-year magazine, *HLM*, carries an important whole-page article, **HM PRISON SERVICE: A 'DIVERSITY CHAMPION'?**

It argues that Stonewall, with its list of 'Diversity Champions' – featuring the hundred best employers in the country – 'should revoke the prison service's "Equality Champions" award, at least until it is a true champion of equality in every respect of its work'.

Written by Steve Taylor, director of the Forum on Prisoner Education and a trustee of the Howard League for Penal Reform, the article is critical of

Stonewall and the Diversity Champion award to the prison service.

'It is something of an affront that a charity lobbying for equality rewards an organisation for employment relations when it fails to uphold such standards for its prisoners,' comments the article.

Two CHE Executive Committee members, George Tregaskis and Griffith Vaughan Williams, regularly attend the annual general meetings of the League.

CHE hopes to raise the points highlighted by Steve Taylor at the next AGM, to be held on 15 November in the Great Hall of King's College, 151–171 Strand, London.

The League has kindly agreed for CHE to reproduce the article.

HM Prison Service: a 'Diversity Champion'?

Steve Taylor asks whether the prison authorities are doing enough to protect gay and lesbian prisoners.

According to the gay rights group Stonewall, Staffordshire Police is the best place for a gay person to work. The force appears at the top of their list of 'Diversity Champions', the hundred best employers in the country. The Metropolitan Police appear at number thirty, whilst eighteen other criminal justice agencies appear in the top hundred.

No one witnessing the Metropolitan Police's response to the homophobic murders of David Morley or Jody Dobrowski in the last two years would have any doubt as to the seriousness with which that force in particular deals with homophobia at any level. Keen to learn the lessons in equality from Macpherson, police forces across the country have often been at the forefront of

equality for gay and lesbian clients and employees alike.

However, looking through the list of 'Diversity Champions', one might be surprised to find the Prison Service listed halfway through. Not because they are a poor employer – they have provided generous funding to a support group for lesbian and gay staff – but for the way in which they routinely fail to care for gay people held in custody. It is something of an affront that a charity lobbying for equality rewards an organisation for employment relations when it fails to uphold such standards for its prisoners.

Five years from my last article on this subject in *HLM*, gay prisoners continue to suffer verbal, physical and sometimes even sexual abuse, they are denied access to mainstream magazines and publications, endure stifled visits from partners without embrace, and lack the sustained attention of any mainstream organisation

in either the penal reform or equality sectors. Meanwhile, rape goes underreported, and the provision of condoms remains a matter for local discretion.

'Adam', a twenty-four-year-old gay prisoner from the north of England, told me how he was suspected of being gay for the first three months of his sentence. He decided that he would be honest in the hope that the interest would die down, only to find that the result was an increase in the verbal abuse from other prisoners – largely ignored by staff – culminating in a vicious assault in which he was slashed across the face. He was later moved to another prison, almost 200 miles from home, making visits from his physically disabled partner even more difficult.

Some prison censors still refuse prisoner access to publications such as *Gay Times*, the *Pink Paper* and *Attitude* – mainstream magazines for the gay community that in no way could be judged as 'obscene'. There remains no national policy within prisons on what is, and what is not, acceptable – decisions are left to the discretion of the censor at each establishment.

The social visit still presents problems for a prisoner being visited by her or his same-sex partner. An officer at a Midlands prison recently told me that two men embracing would be 'inappropriate with children present', and he would intervene were such a situation to occur. Despite the Prison Service's recent policy announcement enabling prisoners to take part in a Civil Partnership on the same terms as they could a wedding, it seems that the partners of gay prisoners must continue to endure a lack of physical contact and affection during visits.

Despite the Sexual Offences Act 2003 having dispensed with the prison service's ridiculous assertion, never tested in court, that a prison cell is a public place (and therefore sexual activity would be illegal), action to implement a national policy for the provision of condoms has been nonexistent. Because of the very nature of prison, rape goes underreported and, as high-

lighted in the *Howard Journal* two years ago, is rarely taken seriously even when it is reported.

The Howard League for Penal Reform has considered the issue of gay prisoners several times in the past, as has the Prison Reform Trust and others. But none of these organisations are able to give sustained attention to these issues. The equality organisations have largely ignored prisons, and prisoners often complain to me of their letters to these organisations going ignored – save, perhaps, for a letter some months later asking for a donation. The pen-pal group, Out-Side-In, offers nothing other than friendship to their clients. Gay prisoners have become the forgotten minority.

The lack of attention for this group of prisoners, which probably numbers around 4,000, has been exacerbated by the prison service's work on equality for black and minority ethnic prisoners and in combating racism. The service has been desperate to get its house in order following the racist murder of Zahid Mubarek at Feltham six years ago, and the forthcoming publication of the report of the inquiry into his death.

The tunnel vision afforded to issues of race and racism has been to the detriment of other minority groups and the prison service has failed to use the opportunity, as grasped by the Metropolitan Police among others, to grasp the whole 'equality' nettle and examine its performance in relation to all minority groups.

The prison service must, for once, be proactive and give urgent attention to the way in which it treats all groups of prisoners in their care. It must not take the murder of a gay prisoner for them to be spurred into action. Stonewall, for its part, should revoke the prison service's 'Equality Champions' award, at least until it is a true champion of equality in every aspect of its work.

Steve Taylor is director of the Forum on Prisoner Education, and a trustee of the Howard League for Penal Reform. This article, reprinted with kind permission, first appeared in *HLM*, the magazine of the Howard League, in May 2006.

Monitoring homophobic prosecutions

CHE Life President Allan Horsfall and journalist and broadcaster Ray Gosling, a Vice-President of CHE, have been lifelong campaigners for gay rights. In more recent years, they have been involved, through Gay Monitor, in befriending and counselling people who have fallen foul of homophobic prosecutions. The GM website details their work and can be found at <http://www.gaymonitor.co.uk>. With the improved financial standing, CHE has been able to supply funding to the pair to help them continue their work. Here, RAY GOSLING presents a report on the setting up and history of Gay Monitor.

The Gay Monitor operation has received an initial donation from CHE funds of £500 and we thank the executive. It was back in 1996 that Gay Monitor slowly, almost accidentally, set itself up after fighting and winning (eventually!) the infamous Bolton Seven business.

The Bolton Seven affair was the last legal barrier to full equality in this country between heterosexual and homosexual acts. And the campaign to defend the Bolton lads and finally change the law was orchestrated very much by Allan Horsfall, the founder of CHE, and me, albeit with enormous help from fraternal friends in OutRage! (Peter Tatchell) and Stonewall and the actor Sir Ian McKellen and Brian Iddon MP. Both Allan and I are on friendly terms still with them, and, though some are now heterosexual fathers, they are OK with respect to the part they played in this final push for homosexual equality under the law.

It's important to remember that *the* crunch issue with the Bolton Seven was to persuade the lads to enter pleas of not guilty. Always, always *the crunch* when male gay sex acts (or the allegations of them) are prosecuted is for the parties to say not guilty. Too many for too long have said (to avoid the publicity) 'guilty', even when they're not.

Anyway, the backwash of all that was streams of other enquiries from all over – from others in other prosecution/persecution

predicaments and situations – for, though the laws have now been equalised, their application often was and is applied with severe neo-homophobia, particularly where men were/are involved (or alleged to be involved) with lads.

So we became interested and involved in other cases, and we registered ourselves for this court watching under the title Gay Monitor. The first word, *gay*, is an easy path to wwww yourself into. And we have developed a historical section to record the whole history of our struggles as a movement for gay rights.

Since then it has run entirely on funds from my and Allan's pensions. There have been advantages in this, but the number of hits and amount of interest have been growing – particularly so since we developed this historical section. The grant will enable us to consider further development.

We have always, and naturally, regarded ourselves as within the family umbrella of CHE, of which Allan was the founder and I am a Vice-President. But it has been useful, we think, for Gay Monitor to be a slightly separate body, primarily because of the often confidential, intimate nature of much of the court-watch stuff and befriending. Gay Monitor has been one hundred per cent just Allan and me.

However, it has been a great success. Success? Well, for the gay-rights history section, yes; and, of course, it is a history of CHE, the greatest, most democratic and all-embracing

movement of gays for freedom, equality and rights for England and Wales in the twentieth century ever. And ever can be. Great success, oh, yes, in that respect. And, thankfully, hopefully, those Big Battles will never have to be fought again.

But troubles with the application of current law (or threat of law) continue to buzz around and sometimes badly sting male gay sex behaviour or what can/may be construed or alleged as such. Indeed, false allegations are a large part of Gay Monitor. And how we might resolve these or propose a way to make the situation better is not yet clear, even in our own heads.

The Gay Monitor site receives troubles daily: comrades victimised for being camp in Past Times at Crawley; comrades evicted on totally

false allegations from their very home, in Lancashire; former lovers turning in Bristol; a bullying to death in Newcastle.

Gay Monitor is – and has to be in its case department – 100 per cent confidential. Though it has links to HAAP (Historic Abuse Appeal Panel) and FACT (Falsely Accused Carers and Teachers), it maintains its own independence.

So we'll be exploring ways for the work to maybe continue beyond our lifetimes; and the initial grant from the CHE Executive will help towards that. Thanks.

See <http://www.gaymonitor.co.uk>

Falsely Accused Carers and Teachers can be found at <http://www.factuk.org>

For HAAP, see <http://www.appealpanel.org>

CHE – a history

CHE has had a colourful and brave history. For non-members reading this report who are unfamiliar with the organisation, here is an edited extract from the website of Gay Monitor (see above).

CHE AROSE WHEN enough gays became strong enough to publicly 'come out' and say we are what we are and have a right – a human right – to equality within the law. This hadn't happened before, simply because queers – as gays were known and often called themselves – were just frightened to publicly say what they were.

The early moves to law reform were done *for* gays by straights – like J B Priestley, Leo Abse, Lord Arran – and the first UK gay activist Antony Grey who was gay – but very quietly so. You had to be in those days. Antony did sterling work for law reform by lobbying the great and good, who would of course be non-gay. This group based in London called itself the Homosexual Law Reform Society and it had its charitable arm

called the Albany Trust, after Albany off Piccadilly, London, which was J B Priestley's flat, where the first meetings were held.

But by the 1960s gays themselves started to 'come out' and most noteworthy, writing letters to the papers, and articles for left wing periodicals, was a colliery clerk, Allan Horsfall from Lancashire.

Out of Allan Horsfall's energy, a group gathered in Manchester to support Antony Grey in London and this group were more radical, and were mainly gay – and quite soon all gay – so it was out of Manchester that a movement began to demand full law change.

Great national movement

There must be equality: an end to discrimination and CHE, as it became called, advocated and worked for the practice and use by gays of their rights under the law. And to actively claim what should be their right.

So the Campaign for Homosexual Equality became this great national movement of a vast >>

>> range of gays from Tories to Lefties, from north and south, from promiscuous to partnered. And it worked in two great areas: **first**, to lobby for Parliamentarians to change the law, and the harder work of having public opinion constantly being 'educated'; and in a **second** way CHE was great in making pioneering moves to have society accept that gays might want their own dances/clubs and ways of meeting. And meeting without fear.

By the 1980s and 1990s many of the objectives had been won and as laws were changed, and gays took advantage, the need for a political mass movement on a CHE scale fell away. Many gays were starting to live just normal lives, and partnering openly, and, for those who wanted it, creating an open social life of clubs, chat lines, personal ads.

The founder of CHE was Allan Horsfall – a colliery clerk, and his partner Harold Pollard, a primary school head. Allan lives in Bolton, Greater Manchester.

First chairman

The Campaign for Homosexual Equality was formerly known as the Committee for Homosexual Equality.

Early on, CHE was greatly helped by the Church of England in Manchester Diocese, who provided the early meeting rooms at the Board for Social Responsibility offices in Blackfriars Road, Salford. And provided CHE with its first chairman – a non-gay Scot, Colin Harvey, who worked full time as a lay worker for the Church of England Manchester Diocese and was a great supporter of gay rights.

CHE's early development was also greatly helped by the then Bishop of Middleton (Manchester), another non-gay, and Ted Wickham, a Cockney, who was willing to stand out and be the first vice-president of the early CHE – as was Neil Pearson, a leading Manchester solicitor, who was the first president.

And CHE were the first to come out – and in Manchester this movement was before the



Ray Gosling (left) and Allan Horsfall. Ray and Allan run Gay Monitor (see previous report)

New York City Stonewall riots. From Manchester, CHE began to publish the very first lists of gay bars/gay meeting places, and to hold socials in hired rooms and publicly begin the first moves to openly ask for licences to operate property as an openly gay club. We were always turned down.

'Rocking the boat'

And this activity got CHE into considerable hot water with the London campaigners for law change, who said, 'You're rocking the boat.' Indeed, Lord Arran, who had passed through the House of Lords a Bill, said that gays could in private have relationships (if they were over 21) and he declared in the *Evening Standard* he'd never have pushed through such a bill if he'd realised gays would be wanting to have their own clubs.

Looking back, at times there were hilarious moments, particularly for the organisers who had bravely 'come out' and passed through the first scary barriers. But we must not forget that for the membership of CHE in those early days just to be a member took great courage, for queers did live then under real fear, and the repression so many lived under often resulted in blackmail and tragic suicides.

This is an edited version of the CHE history page

on the website of Gay Monitor (see

<http://www.gaymonitor.co.uk/chehistory.htm>)

CHE history on Tyneside in 'important' exhibition

Tyne and Wear Museums staged a small, yet concise and comprehensive, exhibition, *Private Lives and Public Battles*, at Newcastle upon Tyne's Discovery Museum during early 2006. It was launched on 7 February and CHE Executive Committee member George Tregaskis attended the evening launch.

Alec Coles, director of Tyne and Wear Museums, explained during the exhibition that it had been created 'as part of Our Place in History, a project that aims to affirm the lesbian, gay bisexual and transgendered community's place in the history of North-East England. It is being held to mark Lesbian and Gay History Month, and is the first such exhibition in a major venue in the North-East.' Our Place in History was funded by the North-East Regional Museums Hub.

Alec Coles described it as an 'important new exhibition'. CHE, as well as its contribution to LGBT history in the North-East, was well represented in the items featured.

CHE Tyneside was responsible for producing and marketing a tape/slide kit for schools in the 1980s. A considerable part in compiling the exhibition was played by former CHE Executive Committee member Tim Bolton-Maggs, a former teacher.

George Tregaskis was cordially invited to attend the launch of this impressive exhibition, which (apart from its northeastern emphasis) was strongly reminiscent of another exhibition George had seen a week before. That exhibition had been held at the Museum of London and was entitled *Queer London*.

At the Newcastle event, George was able to meet former members of Tyneside CHE both before and after the ceremony, the importance of which was marked by the presence of several local dignitaries. Later in its run, Griffith Vaughan Williams toured the exhibition, which subsequently had an extended run.



Peter Tatchell

CHE's support for Peter Tatchell

CHE HAS FINANCIALLY supported the gay- and human-rights activist Peter Tatchell's Human Rights Fund.

A £50 cheque was presented to Peter by CHE Executive Committee member George Tregaskis at an annual London fundraising social evening.

It was held at Sound, the Leicester Square nightclub in London, on 20 March, when George and fellow Executive Committee members Alan Louis and Griffith Vaughan Williams were the guests for the evening of Gays Very Welcome.

It was extremely good to see CHE's Returning Officer, Robert Cook, present at the event, following his serious operation on 8 July last year at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, London.

Camden Forum

Each week a valuable and informative document – about six A4 sheets – is produced by the Camden LGBT Forum.

It was this London-based charity that put CHE in touch with its charity consultant.

The weekly *Forum Update* covers topics of concern to LGBT activists and gives detailed information on London, national and international activities and news stories.

See <http://www.camdenlgbtforum.org>

Notable LGBT news during the past year . . .

Civil partnerships

The most significant news for lesbian and gay people during the year was that of Civil Partnerships. These were made available to same-sex couples in the United Kingdom in December 2005, granting rights and responsibilities that are virtually identical to those of marriage between an opposite-sex couple.

As with divorce, there's a formal process for dissolving partnerships.

However, one big difference that has upset many same-sex couples and campaigners is that places used for worship are not allowed to be used for ceremonies. So a same-sex couple could not 'marry' in a church, say, even if the religious body allowed it. This has been widely seen as unfair and a sop to the religious lobby.

Civil Partnerships came in under the Civil Partnerships Act 2004. The first ceremony – between Matthew Roche and Christopher Cramp – took place on 5 December last year. The fourteen-day waiting period was waived, because Matthew Roche was suffering from a terminal illness. He died the following day.

The first ceremony after the statutory fourteen days was between Grainne Close and Shannon Sickles and was held in Belfast.

Edinburgh Castle was used on 20 December for the first Scottish ceremony, and the first in England and Wales was on 21 December. The largest numbers of ceremonies were recorded in Westminster, Hampshire, Hammersmith and Fulham and Brighton and Hove.

The most talked-about ceremony must have been that between Elton John and David Furnish. Another notable one was that between a Church of England vicar from Darlington, Christopher Wardale, and Malcolm Macourt, a

retired lecturer.

Yet other notable registrations include those of the Liberal Democrat politician Margaret Smith, who registered her relationship with Suzanne Main in March 2006; the Labour MP Ben Bradshaw, who announced in March 2006 that he would register with the BBC *Newsnight* journalist Neal Dagleish in June, and the former *EastEnders* actor and now a Labour Euro-MP Michael Cashman, who registered with Paul Cottingham on 11 March 2006.

In addition, the former Boyzone singer Stephen Gately registered with Andy Cowles on 19 March this year; Guy Black, former chief executive of the Press Complaints Commission and now director of corporate affairs at the Telegraph Group, registered with Mark Bolland, former deputy private secretary to Prince Charles, on 11 February, and the Labour MP and former CHE convener David Borrow registered with John Garland on 6 May.

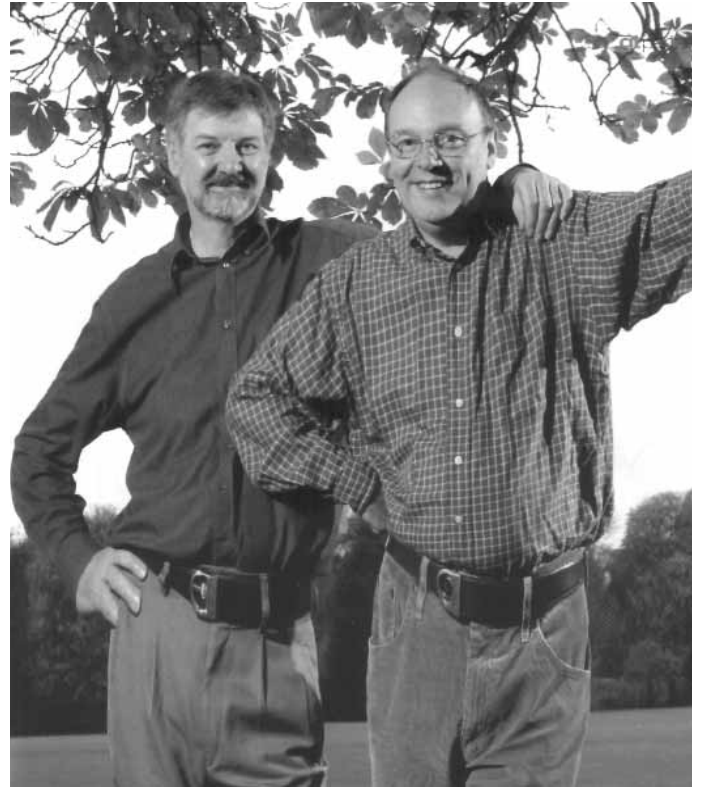
CHE members might be more interested in gaydom's own celebrity, Terry Sanderson, writer for *Gay Times*, media officer for the Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association and vice-president of the National Secular Society. He and his partner – the NSS's executive director, Keith Porteous Wood – are making things formal later this year. Terry and Keith met at a CHE annual conference – Durham, 1981 – and will use the same month, August, 25 years later, to 'get spliced'.

Terry says, 'Of course, I had been associated with CHE almost since the beginning and I remember having a brief spell on the Executive Committee in the late seventies. I also ran the Rotherham CHE group for eight years, which was very high-profile for its time. (Why Rother-

ham? you might ask. Well, I just happened to be born there, and I wanted something to happen in that apparently gay-free part of the world.) CHE gave me a lot of gay friends, some very exciting adventures (after all, it was all new territory then and a bit dangerous) and taught me the rudiments of campaigning, which I am now applying to the NSS.

'Keith lived in London at the time and was a regular at CHE groups around the city, as well as in the various and nefarious bars and clubs. It was our shared enthusiasm for gay rights and our antipathy for religion that brought us together and which is still important to us. We never thought that we would have the opportunity to legally formalise our relationship, but here we are – and, if CHE had not started the ball rolling, it might never have happened.'

CHE wishes Keith and Terry and all civil partners very best wishes.



Terry Sanderson (left) and Keith Wood – tying the knot later this year. (Picture: *Gay Times*)

Homophobic bullying – it won't go away

BULLYING WAS NEVER far from the lips of campaigners and others who care about these things during the year.

Homophobic bullying takes place notably in schools, but also in the workplace, and can have a devastating effect on people's lives.

An organisation called the Anti-Bullying Alliance reported early this year that teachers are cracking down on bullying in schools, but are finding it difficult.

In London alone, there were around 860 suspensions and expulsions connected with bullying, 52 per cent up on the previous year.

Simon Blake, spokesman for the Anti-Bullying

Alliance, told the *Evening Standard*, 'There is sometimes reluctance for people to acknowledge that there is an issue of bullying. There isn't a school in the country, as far as I know, that doesn't have some sort of bullying that they have to address at some particular time. It is not something to be ashamed of.'

Homophobic bullying in the workplace exercised the Scottish Executive early in 2006, when Stonewall Scotland introduced the Diversity Champions scheme. The Executive was set to back the project.

Anti-Bullying Alliance's website is at:
www.anti-bullyingalliance.org

London is Pride of Europe ...

EUROPRIDE CHOSE LONDON to be the centre of activities this year, with events due to be held on 1 July. About a quarter of a million people celebrated Pride in London in 2005, and the number for EuroPride was expected

to be more than double.

'Pride is fully inclusive and now embraces our growing acceptance in the world of politics, business, media and entertainment,' says the Pride

organisation on its website.

'However, there is still a long way to go and Pride is committed to tackling issues including bullying, discrimination and homophobic abuse.

Campaign for Homosexual Equality

CHE

Annual Report for 2005-2006

For more information on becoming a member of
the Campaign for Homosexual Equality, please log
on to our website

www.campaignforhomosexualequality.org.uk

or

www.c-h-e.org.uk

or send a letter requesting an information pack
and application form.

See Page 2 for full contact details.