

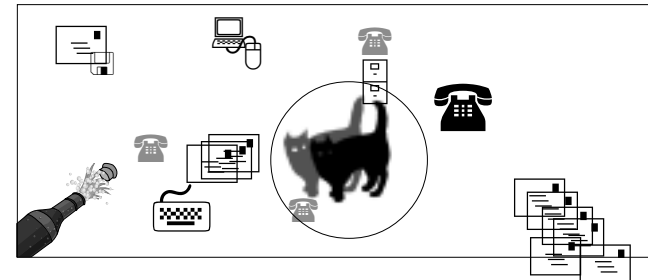
The **intercom** Trust

lesbian gay & bisexual support forum
in the South West

Onward and Upward

or,

The year the lynxes got an office



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intercom

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The second Annual Report
of the Trustees

September 1998 to September 1999

November 1999

The Executive Council: Agencies

Age Concern
AIDSline
Cornwall Gay Men's Health Project
Devon & Cornwall Constabulary
Devon County Council
Devon & Exeter Racial Equality Council (seat vacant)
Devon HIV & AIDS Association (seat vacant)
Devon Youth Council
EDGAR (East Devon Gay Advice and Recreation)
Exeter College Students' Union
Exeter University Guild of Students
FFLAG (Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays)
Gay & Lesbian Switchboard (South West)
The HOPE Project for young people (Exeter)
In Touch Youth Counselling Service (Exeter)
Life Skills Initiative (Plymouth)
Devon Mediation Service (Crediton)
North & East Devon Health Authority
North Devon SHOUT! Social Group
Peer Positivity (Ivybridge)
Plymouth University Students' Union (Drake Circus)
Plymouth University Students' Union (Exmouth)
Stonewall (Equality 2000, Exeter constituency)
Victim Support
Wilder Park Cottage Project (Ilfracombe)
Women's Aid

JAAHB (Joint Action Against Homophobic Bullying): Agencies

Devon Curriculum Services (Local Education Authority)
Exeter University, Department of Child Health: the APAUSE Project
JACAT Joint Agencies' Child Abuse Team, Devon Social Services / N&E Devon Health Authority
National Union of Teachers (Equal Opportunities Officer, Devon)
PTA Devon
@ttic (technology to talk in confidence)
In Touch Youth Counselling Service, Exeter
MDA Project
National Association of Governors and Managers of schools
Secondary Heads Association
Advisory Centre for Education
Anti-Bullying Campaign
ChildLine
The Chrysalis project
Cornwall County Council Child & Family Services
GALOP
Kidscape
National Children's Bureau (Sex Education Forum)
Parents Against Bullying (Exeter)
Plymouth Education Authority
School's Out!
Torbay Education Directorate
Unison

INCOME

Brought Down	249.37
Subscriptions	253.51
Donations	1,207.29
Collecting Tins	296.33
Grants	1,833.00
Charities Aid Foundation:	£833.00
Devon County Council:	£500.00
AIDSline:	£500.00
Other Fund-Raising	75.50
Professional Fees	156.25
Lynx Events	1,093.42
Bank Interest	0.29
Other Credits	62.73
Volunteer Expenses Redonated	461.15
TOTAL INCOME 1998-1999	5,688.84

EXPENDITURE

101 Postage	282.28
102 Stationery	155.61
103 Telephone	438.81
116 Internet charges	52.93
104 P.O. Box	52.00
105 Photocopying	149.84
108 Petrol expenses	918.20
109 Food & Accommodation	3.95
111 Car Park Fees	131.40
121 Periodicals	7.23
126 Events Stock	120.89
130 Hire of Equipment	18.00
131 Hire of Rooms	599.90
150 Misc. Office Expenses	145.04
151 Electricity	51.39
220 Training Equipment	15.13
230 Misc. Office Equipment	4.99
270 Rent and Rates	1,523.76
311 Insurance	166.08
314 Legal Fees	0.50
315 Affiliation Fees	15.00
320 Other Professional Fees	37.50
340 Grants & Support	143.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE 1998-1999	5,033.43
Excess of income over expenditure	655.41

The telephone and post logs record that the Trust has made over 1,280 telephone calls from the office since January, and has sent out over 1,400 letters over the whole financial year. Incoming telephone calls were running at 80-90 a month, and rising (there were 116 in October 1999).

The morning after the Soho bomb we worked with police headquarters to warn LGB people to be on the alert for copy-cats, without causing panic. The police phoned LGB-friendly licensed premises across the two counties. **intercom** volunteers spent the week-end phoning social groups and other LGB contacts, and sent a mailshot to all Members and Friends and other agencies.

All police districts are planning to appoint trained LGB liaison officers. There will then be at last be one named officer available in each district whom any LGB person can approach in the confidence that s/he is *not* prejudiced, and *is* aware of LGB issues.

We are gaining confidence that though there may be—inevitably, there will be—rocky passages ahead, we are now moving in the right direction. We believe it is now possible for us to say with confidence that though personal prejudice certainly exists (and **intercom** will vigorously combat it), the Force as a whole is working in positive partnership towards making the South West a region where LGB people can live without prejudice and without fear.

Finances

Within weeks of moving into our little office in January we heard the crushing news that for financial reasons, the grant we had relied on to pay the rent for a year would in fact end after three months. It is not too much to say that the survival of **intercom** to this date is due to a private benefactor, who stepped in to pay April's rent, to the Charities Aid Foundation, who most generously gave £833, a whole five months' rent, when it was desperately needed, and Devon County Council, whose recent grant will cover our rent till the end of the calendar year. We cannot adequately express our gratitude to these three donors.

Our landlords have been wonderfully supportive through this difficult time. Maryjane and Clive, thank you.

Other benefactors have enabled us to help our support clients, and to pay running expenses such as phone bills, mailshots, and other office and travel costs. We give very special thanks indeed to Philippa May, Andrew Duncan, Prudence de Villiers and Gay Jones, and Barclay's Bank. Dottie and Michael Thyer gave us furniture for the new office. Dave Evans made the mailshot of the last *mini/ynx* newsletter affordable. Exeter Council for Voluntary Service has been a tower of strength on many occasions when we have needed help. They also gave us a stout serviceable cash box just when we had to have one. Thank you, John, Liz, and all other friends—and a special thank you to the Helping Hands.

We have received help of many kinds from many Members, Friends, Volunteers and other supporters. Our deep gratitude to you all.

Finally...

Our special love and thanks to all the Trust's Members, Friends and Volunteers. Tell us more about what you would like the Trust to be doing. If you are able to, join us in making it happen.

Jenny Broughton
Jim Straker
Maria Cox
Michael Halls
Trustees

Two years ago...

Eight people gathered in Wynards in Exeter, surrounded by mediaeval sandstone and nineteen-fifties formica, celebrating **intercom**'s first four months. Last year there were twenty-nine of us from Devon and Cornwall. That was our first real Annual General meeting. Our hosts were Georgia and Carl of Liberty's, and we take this opportunity of thanking them for all they've done for LGB people, and for **intercom**, these last years. We're sad to hear that they may be moving on. Many hundreds of LGB people across the South West will join with us in sending Georgia and Carl our love.

And this year...

Much has happened. The Trust became a registered charity in December 1998, after the vote at the AGM that authorised us to make certain amendments to our Constitution. We would like to thank Mr David Hughes-Jones and his colleagues at the Charity Commission in Taunton for all the work they put into this, and for their encouraging helpfulness while they were guiding us through the mysterious thickets of UK charity law.

There have been changes on the Board of Trustees. We have sadly said farewell to Penny, and then to Gill, who is off on her long-planned trip round the world. **intercom** owes a great debt of gratitude to Penny and Gill for much hard work as the Trust's Women's Officers, as support workers, as the founders of Women take Liberty's, and for much more. We hope Gill has a wonderful circumnavigation of the globe, and that Penny and Eileen have a blissful year studying in Italy. Our love goes with them all.

New trustees are Jenny, our contact in the South West for the national helpline organisation FFLAG (Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), and Maria, from Women's Aid. Following Gill's departure, Maria will take on the position of Women's Officer. Both Jenny and Maria are long-term friends and supporters of **intercom**. On behalf of its Founders, Members and Friends, the Trust thanks them for agreeing to serve.

Overview of the year

The **intercom** Trust was founded to assist isolated lesbian gay & bisexual people, and victims of prejudice; to help build an LGB community in the South West; to combat homophobia; and to foster inter-agency communications and multi-agency partnerships.

We have been making progress.

The Trust now has 122 Members and Friends across the four counties. There are 22 members of the Executive Council, many of whom represent our partner-agencies. Our partnerships with other agencies have been strengthened on many fronts.

We have become deeply involved in multi-agency crime-prevention work across Devon and Cornwall, fighting to keep LGB people's personal security and social well-being at the top of the agenda. Our new partnership project to combat homophobic bullying has attracted national attention. (See below.)

With the Gay & Lesbian Switchboard South West, we have circulated joint helpline posters for display in all libraries in Devon.

We are particularly glad to have signed up formally to the excellent working partnership agreement which Devon County Council has developed for use with voluntary agencies. The support we have had from the County Council since then has been not only practical, but immensely good for our morale.

Over the year, the Trust has provided long-term support to many clients affected by homophobic prejudice, violence, harassment, &c. This has involved addressing issues within (amongst others) the Benefits Agency, Cornwall Health Services, Cornwall Social Services, the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, Devon & Cornwall Police, Exeter City Council, Motability Finance Ltd, and North & East Devon Health Services.

We have also provided short-term support, advice or information to many dozens of others who have approached us by phone, e-mail, or letter, in person at the Rainbow Café or other **intercom** events, or after referral by Trust volunteers or by agencies including FFLAG, the Gay & Lesbian Switchboard SW, the police, youth workers, and Age Concern.

We helped make a film on LGB issues for WestCountry TV, at the end of which our phone number was put up as a helpline. Our volunteers took calls till after one a.m.

We have set up displays and/or spoken at many social venues across the region, and at local conferences and seminars including the 50th anniversary celebrations of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, a conference on What the Churches Can Do to combat homophobia, and a two-day conference on bullying. We are active in the Gay Men's Sexual Health Alliance in Exeter, and the HIV/GUM Services Review Group set up by the North and East Devon Health Authority.

The Admiral Duncan

The bomb in Soho... The last year of this century will be remembered long into the next, with pain and dismay. But we must not let pain and dismay blur into despair. It must never happen again. We have to be prepared to work, actively, to create a more secure more decent world. Within **intercom**, we dedicate ourselves afresh to diminishing prejudice and combating hatred in our sphere—in education, in the media, in the family and workplace, and in the statutory and voluntary agencies which have such power over our private lives.

All the Trustees, Members, Friends, Volunteers and other supporters of **intercom** send their love to all those who suffered.

The Executive Council

The Council is the multi-agency partnership which has responsibility for all **intercom**'s new initiatives, its crime-prevention strategy, and its LGB-awareness education and training work. We have been delighted this year to welcome new members representing Age Concern, Victim Support, Women's Aid, the Cornwall Gay Men's Health Project, Devon County Council, Devon Youth Council, Life Skills Initiative (Plymouth), Peer Positivity (Ivybridge), Wilder Park Project (Ilfracombe), the HOPE Project (Exeter), Devon Media-tion Service (Crediton), and Exeter College Students' Union. We thank all Council Mem-bers for their time, helpfulness, and expertise, and above all for their enthusiasm for progressing the cause of lesbian gay and bisexual people in the South West.

There have been five formal Council meetings in this year.

New Council initiatives

For **JAAHB**, the task-force on homophobic bullying, see below.

ISCATs. The Council has started facilitating local crime-prevention and safer-com-munity action teams, or **ISCATs** (intercom Safer Community Action Teams). One **ISCAT** is already at work in Exeter. We hope we can ask for general support for any programme

that is trying to find practical ways of making the South West a safer place for all LGB people and all who are affected by issues of sexuality, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, age, marital status and poverty.

Freedom Festival. This Devon Gay Pride event was held in April. There were 19 events in 14 venues from Plymouth to Exeter, from Barnstaple to Bantham. We estimate that over 1,000 LGB people and supporters took part. If a Co-Ordinator can be found, the Council would like to facilitate a large-scale Freedom Festival 2000 across Devon and Cornwall in the first week of May.

The Rainbow Café in Exeter Central Library has now been running for a year, providing a friendly, secure, quiet environment for LGB people and their friends. It seems clear that this could be a pilot for other similar weekly events across the region. We need venues and volunteers!

Training. This was a quiet year for training. Mind you, as soon as the new financial year started in September we found ourselves up to our ears with new requests. More about this next year!

Coming out groups / LGB Youth Project. The Council has set up a task force, headed by Michael Bracey of the HOPE Project, to make recommendations about how adequate facilities might be set up across Devon for young LGB people growing up in small towns and rural environs.

JAAHB (Joint Action Against Homophobic Bullying)

The **JAAHB** task force was set up by the Executive Council on a motion proposed by Andrew Duncan, and first met in April. Membership of **JAAHB** now reaches far beyond the Council: its lead agencies include the Devon Local Education Authority, the NUT, **APAUSE**, **JACAT**, **PTA Devon** and many others. National supporters include the National Association of Governors and Managers, ChildLine, and **GALOP**. The project has been wholly funded by **intercom** from its (vanishing) reserves. One friendly agency very generously helped us with the costs of a mailshot.

JAAHB has now produced a three-part project based on the needs of LGB young people, the whole-school environment, and the schools' duty of care. Guidelines for School Staff will be circulated to all schools; training workshops will be set up for school staff; and a helpline for victims, parents, teachers, governors and others will be publicised. We thank all those who have helped to develop this innovative project, which has attracted much attention from within and outside Devon. The task force has met six times during the year.

Crime-Prevention

The **JAAHB** project is of course part of our crime-prevention work. Other projects include the **ISCAT** programme and a poster campaign in the South Hams which we are co-developing with the district council and police. But the major part of our crime-prevention work this year has consisted in helping to build up an effective working relationship between LGB people and the police force. Much of the last six months has been spent briefing officers on the realities of LGB people's lives, and co-developing new strategies against homophobic crime. We have discussed, learned, heard and taught a great deal.