

Third Annual Report of the Trustees

Year ending 8 September 2000

Last year's report was called "The Year the Lynxes got an Office". Well, this became the year we outgrew it. How on earth can a small voluntary agency with no funding and no paid staff outgrow its first office within a year?

A resource across the region

One reason for the Trust's expansion is that as we develop a better-known track record, more and more agencies ask us to work with them, and more and more members of the public approach us to ask for advice, information, or help in fighting their corner against homophobic harassment, crime or bullying, or against prejudice and discrimination.

Community Volunteers

Another reason is that an organisation like this, however cash-poor, can nevertheless be rich in terms of the time, enthusiasm and professional expertise of its volunteers.

We ended the year with fifty-one volunteers on our books. Our office log records that they put a total of 4,099 hours into the Trust during the year—roughly the equivalent of 2½ full-time employees. However, this figure omits much work that never gets recorded in the log. The true figure is probably between 4,500 and 5,000 hours. We calculate that in addition to money expenditure recorded in the accounts, the Trust has contributed over £70,000 worth of volunteer time to the regional economy over the year.

The mileage-accounts tell us that Trust volunteers travelled over 7,000 miles within the South West this year. This omits a great deal of travel that we know volunteers have not recharged.

The office and phones have been staffed for an average of 42 hours every week, seven days a week; and were unstaffed on only 18 days out of 366. Over a 29-week sampling period, September 1999 to March 2000, we logged 806 incoming and 1,441 outgoing phone-calls. Matters of support and advice for individual members of the public accounted for a quarter of all incoming phone-calls (188) and a sixth of outgoing calls (210). This was before we acquired our second phone-line, which is advertised as a dedicated helpline.

We offer our deepest thanks to the office volunteers, Danny, Michael, David, Jenny, Jimbo and Kit for the devoted and professional service they gave the Trust during the year. We also thank those who have undertaken particular responsibilities: Maria and Gill, as Women's Officers; David, as Young People's Officer, and Michael, as Community Safety Worker, Outreach Worker and principal Training Officer.

Special thanks to the Rainbow Café volunteer team, above all Steve, Hugh, Terry, Jimbo, Robin and Barry, and to our strong team of rural and regional volunteers, Steve, Kevin, Prudence, Gay, Alan, Roberta, John, Steph, Brian, and many others.

Homophobic Bullying Project

The main reason for the expansion of our work this year was the growth of our partnership project to combat homophobic bullying in schools (Joint Action Against Homophobic Bullying, or JAAHB—pronounced 'JAB'). During the year this proved to be of great interest to local education authorities and youth-workers across England, Scotland and Wales; it was featured in the *Times Educational Supplement*, on local radio, and on both our regional television channels. The helpline has taken calls from parents, teachers and young people from Cornwall to Dumfries.

In March, the Trust formally launched the JAAHB Project and its Helpline at a joint press-conference with our partner-agencies, including Devon & Cornwall Constabulary, Devon County Council, FFLAG (Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), PTA Devon, the NUT, and the Gay & Lesbian Switchboard South West. Baroness Massey of Darwen was an inspiring guest speaker. We were delighted to welcome her, and very grateful to her for making the journey. The launch was covered on both regional TV channels, local radio, and the local press.

Six weeks after the launch, just as Devon County Council was sending out the JAAHB Guidelines to maintained schools in Devon, we heard that our application to Comic Relief for funding for the JAAHB Project had been successful. As a result, we were able to advertise

nationally for a part-time Project Co-Ordinator. Over eighty people sent for the application-pack. After interviewing a strong field of candidates, we appointed Jonathan Matthews, who has eleven years' experience as a primary and secondary school teacher, is a member of the NUT Executive Committee on lesbian gay bisexual and transgender issues, and runs a regional helpline for School's Out!, the organisation for LGB school staff. Jonathan worked with us as a volunteer during the summer before formally taking up the post just as this financial year ended. We welcome him cordially, and look forward to working with him.

New Offices—again

With all this volunteer work going on, and the Trust's first employee about to arrive in post, it was no wonder that we found we were outgrowing our one little room. We badly needed to move to larger premises. Happily, the year has ended with a generous donation from Eurobell which will enable us to do just that.

Support, Advice and Advocacy

All the Trust's activities are partnership-centred, and this approach proves itself most powerfully in our provision of support, advice and advocacy services to individuals.

We continue to develop and extend our contacts with our professional colleagues in other statutory and voluntary agencies. Local government officers, police officers, social workers, teachers, parents and carers, volunteers in other agencies, youth-workers, and many other professionals make contact hoping for consultancy, referral, volunteer-assistance, or professional expertise. Time after time we have been able to solve what had seemed like an insoluble difficulty of care, support or service-provision either by supplying an appropriately-skilled volunteer of our own or by referring a colleague in one agency to resources available from another regional or national agency.

As we develop this partnership network, building a unique resource within the region for our own and other agencies' clients, we are at the same time developing our own understanding of best practice and best value across an extremely broad range of issues and procedures.

Formal Partnerships

The Trust's primary partnership body, the Executive Council, has met four times, and now has thirty members including representatives from local government, police, Victim Support, Age Concern, youth workers, HIV agencies, and many others. We are particularly glad to welcome our first formal representative from a Health Authority in the region. As always, the Trust will seek to broaden and deepen our partnership working with the NHS at all levels.

The JAAHB Partnership has been active throughout the year, culminating in a meeting to agree the parameters within which we would advertise and supervise the new post of JAAHB Project Co-ordinator.

We have continued to develop our existing partnership work with Devon & Cornwall Constabulary and Devon County Council, and we have begun working closely and positively with Cornwall LEA. Our lively and very affectionate working partnership with the locally-based national association FFLAG (Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), which began in 1998, has become a special asset of the Trust and an invaluable resource for many of our support-clients. We have greatly strengthened our practical and formal liaison with transsexual and transvestite people in the South West, especially through the Beaumont Society. We are establishing a warm and effective working relationship with the newly-formed Plymouth Pride Forum. And we have been glad to have been part of the North & East Devon Health Authority Health Forum's Social Inclusion Task Force.

Women's Officers

Between them, Gill, Maria, Amy and Teresa have put hundreds of hours into providing individual support ranging from befriending to referrals, and running women's events such as Women Take Liberty's in Exeter (in partnership with the Trust). Events have included a rounders match with picnic, beach parties, barbecues, cinema outings, and trips within the West Country. Many women have expressed their gratitude for the existence of Women Take Liberty's, and for the work of the Trust's Women's Officers in addressing lesbians' and bisexual women's social and emotional needs.

Young People's Officer

On the Board of Trustees, at the Executive Council, and in the JAAHB partnership David has ensured that the concerns of young people never become marginalised. He has taken over the

running of LGB StudentLynx South West, our standing conference of LGB Student Officers in Colleges of Further and Higher Education in the four counties. StudentLynx has met four times in Exmouth, Exeter and Taunton, and is producing regular e-mail and occasional printed newsletters, helping to resource young people across the region who have no other access to information and support on issues of community-safety and homophobic crime, community-building, and family support resources.

Community Safety

Across the region, we continue to receive increasing reports of homophobic crimes and other incidents. We incline to believe that the rise is due to increased confidence in the reporting process on the part of victims and increased awareness of the existence of the Trust, rather than to a real increase in attacks and abuse; but we keep an open mind. Homophobic attacks and habitual homophobic abuse by young (pre-16) teenagers, on and off school premises, are causing the Trust and our partner agencies in the JAAHB Project particular concern.

We have maintained a close working relationship with police District Diversity Officers in Devon and Cornwall. Locally as well as at Headquarters we have worked with the Police Service on incidents, on policing issues, and on strategies for reducing homophobic crime.

We have continued to develop the idea of local ISCATs—**intercom** Safer Communities Action Teams—set up to diminish homophobic crime and the fear of homophobic crime in a single local government district, working under the provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Wherever possible we aim to broaden these into full Diversity Action Teams, fighting all forms of hate crime. We are especially glad to be able to report that we are developing a close and effective partnership with the Racial Equality Councils for Cornwall, Plymouth, and Devon and Exeter.

The year's work of the Exeter District ISCAT, which is jointly led by the Trust, Victim Support and the police, culminated in the launch in August of a city-wide poster-campaign, funded by the Exeter Community Safety Partnership. The launch took place in the Central Library, and was covered on regional television and radio and in the *Express and Echo*. The speakers were the Chief Executive of Exeter City Council, the Area Commander for North and East Devon Police, and the Chair of the Trustees of **intercom**.

Other District ISCATs or DATs are being developed in Mid-Devon, Torbay, Plymouth, Restormel, Kerrier and Teignbridge Districts. Others are, we believe, on the way. Some statutory agencies in Cornwall have proposed there should be one Cornwall-wide Diversity Action Team. We will be interested to see full details of their proposal.

Community Projects

Our Rainbow Cafe in Exeter has flourished, and is used by people from as far away as Ivybridge and Plymouth, North Devon, Torbay, East Cornwall, Minehead, Taunton and Lyme Regis. The Rainbow Café aims to provide a positive and unpressured social environment where LGBT people and our friends and supporters can meet in a securely unprejudiced but non-scene, non-alcoholic venue. The Trustees and the customers are very grateful indeed to the loyal and dedicated volunteers who have come forward from the local community to keep the event staffed.

There have been 41 two-hour Rainbow Cafés during the year in Exeter Central Library. The volunteers have served over 900 teas and coffees to between 8 and 36 visitors each time (average 22). Over the year, the Rainbow Café required a net subsidy of £58 from the Trust's funds.

A projected Plymouth Rainbow Café was blocked. We were unable to find suitable premises whose managers were prepared to allow openly gay and transsexual people to use the building.

Training

Our training and consultancy work has continued to grow. Public-service education, aimed at diminishing prejudice and discrimination, is at the centre of the Trust's Objects. Appropriately, training fees provide a vital part of the Trust's income.

In partnership with Devon & Cornwall Constabulary, we have trained all police Diversity Officers in the two counties (2 full days), and we have rolled out awareness sessions for police response officers and supervisors to cover the entire local government districts of Exeter, East Devon, Penwith, and Torridge (19 two-hour sessions). Representatives of the local Armed Services, Fire Service and Victim Support, together with local councillors, have been welcome visitors at these.

There have been many ad hoc consultancy meetings with a wide range of agencies; we have also provided formal professional training for Exeter Victim Support, for the APAUSE project run by Exeter University Dept of Child Health, for Devon Curriculum Services on homophobic bullying in schools, and for Cornwall County Council's Child and Family Services division.

Campaigning

Apart from the local liaison and advocacy work we have done in support of our own clients, we have been active on national issues that affect the Objects and client-base of the Trust. In particular, we sent a memorandum to Ministers and issued a press-release in response to the well-funded campaign of certain extremist organisations to make the Government water down the anti-discrimination provisions of the draft European Union Equal Treatment Directive. Our briefing analysed the social costs, effect on children, and public-policy implications of allowing church schools to refuse to employ any teacher or other member of staff who was lesbian, gay or bisexual. After an encouraging dialogue with Government, we found the Directive taking final form in terms which we are assured answer our concerns.

National and local media are increasingly turning to the Trust for briefings and comments on relevant issues of policy and current affairs.

Finances

We are immensely grateful and proud that Comic Relief have funded the JAAHB Project with £63,000 over three years. It is now our responsibility to find core funding for the remaining 85% of the Trust's work. In all these areas our lack of core funding leaves the Trust seriously vulnerable. It must be a matter of urgency, not merely for the Trust's volunteers but for the statutory agencies who have come to rely on us as a regional resource, to help to ensure that the Trust becomes more securely established in the near future.

We also acknowledge gratefully Eurobell's donation of £5,700, two donations of £500 each from the Elmigrant Trust in Dartington and from Devon & Cornwall Constabulary, three donations from regional branches of the NUT to help with the JAAHB Project, a donation from Plymouth University students (Exmouth Campus), and the contributions of many private supporters. We have Gift Aid forms to enable those of our supporters who pay standard-rate income-tax to make enhanced charitable donations under the Treasury's new, more generous, rules.

Every donation counts. Each individual pound gives the Trust a few more minutes of life.

The Future...

...is already upon us as we write this. The Trust is developing in many directions, and we believe it is getting closer to realising the Founders' mission statement, "To work to build a South West where lesbian gay and bisexual people can live and work amongst our neighbours without prejudice and without fear". We're moving onwards.

Amy Morris
Andrew Duncan, *Treasurer*
David Clark, *Deputy Chair*
Gill Vooght
Jenny Broughton, *Secretary*
Michael Halls, *Chair*

ACCOUNTS for the year ending 8 September 2000

INCOME

000 Brought Down	755.79
001 Subscriptions	199.17
002 Donations	8,010.86
003 Collecting Tins	15.37
004 Grants	2,250.00
005 Other Fund-Raising	66.95
006 Professional Fees	2,412.66

007 Lynx Events	608.61
008 Bank Interest	0.40
009 Travel Costs recharged	524.93
015 Other Credits	54.55
414 Volunteer Expenses Redonated	194.96
TOTAL INCOME 1999-2000	15,094.25

EXPENDITURE

101 Postage	256.38
102 Stationery	481.56
103 Telephone	747.66
104 P.O. Box	52.00
105 Photocopying	132.50
107 PR & Advertising	480.01
108 Petrol expenses	1,477.55
109 Food & Accommodation	25.00
110 Rail & Bus Fares	240.05
111 Car Park Fees	110.35
121 Periodicals	4.09
126 Events Stock	146.90
131 Hire of Rooms	608.50
145 Entertainment	42.55
150 Misc. Office Expenses	167.98
151 Electricity	145.42
190 Other Expenditure	48.96
211 Computer & Peripherals	312.98
220 Training Equipment	1.75
230 Misc. Office Equipment	95.36
270 Rent and Rates	2,485.84
311 Insurance	173.25
312 Training & Development Fees	112.00
315 Affiliation Fees	25.00
340 Grants & Support	25.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE 1999-2000	8,398.64
Excess of income over expenditure	6,695.61
<i>Less Restricted Funds (Comic Relief):</i>	<i>-1,369.91</i>
<i>Unrestricted Funds carried forward:</i>	<i>5,325.70</i>