

Happy to be gay? : want to make the world a better place... and have some fun at the same time? Not convinced that religion is the answer to life's problems? You could already be a humanist... why not joining the Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association? / The Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association.

Contributors

Gay & Lesbian Humanist Association

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THREE DECADES OF GALHA



2009

Promoting Humanism and
LGBT equality for 30 years!

Happy to be Gay?



Want to make the
world a better place...
and have fun at
the same time?

Not convinced that **religion**
is the answer to life's problems?

You could well already be a humanist...

Why not join the Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association?

The Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association



The voice of humanists who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender

HUMANISTS: A BRIEF OUTLINE

Outlook - Humanists have a view of life based on the belief that human problems can be solved only by human beings themselves and not by reliance on any god or gods, the existence of which is unsupported by any scientific evidence. We must face our problems with our own moral and intellectual resources, using the accumulated knowledge and experience of humankind. Unlike religions, we make no claim to special knowledge or final answers and regard the search for understanding as a continuing process.

Morality - Humanist morality is based on concern for human dignity and welfare, the ultimate aim being happiness and fulfilment. Humanists see moral values not as edicts from a god, but as the principles, discovered during evolution, upon which good human relationships depend. Such values include telling the truth, being honest, accepting responsibility, co-operating for the common good and caring for others. These basic human values lie at the heart of societies, however much they may be ignored in practice. Such principles are the conditions for social evolution. Humanist morality is not absolutist like that of religions which condemn sex outside marriage, including gay sex, as "immoral" and "sinful".

Law - Humanists believe in the concept of universal human rights, which should be recognised in both international and national law in all countries and subject to the jurisdiction of an independent judiciary. They are opposed to racial and sex discrimination in any form and support legislation and social action to prevent such discrimination. Personal morality is not a proper subject for legislation unless actions infringe the basic rights of others. The law must achieve a balance between individual freedom and protection of the vulnerable. Individual variation makes nonsense of "normal" or rigid codes applied indiscriminately to all.

Reform - Humanists have a long record of working for social reforms and have been active campaigners for the reform of laws on abortion, birth control, censorship, divorce, homosexuality, and voluntary euthanasia - often in the teeth of opposition from religionists. The Humanist movement played a prominent role in the campaign for homosexual law reform which led to the Sexual Offences Act of 1967 and the more recent equalisation of the age of consent for gay men. It has consistently backed calls for further reforms, including anti-discrimination and partnership legislation.

Education - Humanists believe that education should be given a high priority in the allocation of national resources. Schools and colleges should model themselves as far as possible on the Open Society, placing the minimum of reliance on authoritarian methods. Education should not avoid questions of social controversy since this divorces education from real life and perpetuates the social divisions which it should be prepared to tackle. It is essential to provide children with an insight into sexual matters including homosexuality. They should be taught about different systems of belief and attitudes to morality in an objective, fair and balanced way, and allowed to make a personal choice between them. The legal requirement for an act of worship in schools each day should be ended and the school assembly used in a way which will involve all children.

Religion - Humanists acknowledge that for many people religion provides substantial emotional support, but they consider that belief in the supernatural is irrelevant to the development of moral and social values. They object to the attempts by some religionists to impose their values on everyone in the conviction that moral behaviour can be based only on the teachings in some ancient "holy" book.

HUMAN RIGHTS BEFORE RELIGION

People who are lesbian, gay, bi or trans have the same personal needs as everyone else: for fulfilment, freedom, love and personal happiness. Most LGBT people also want to play their part in making the world a better, fairer place. At the same time, we know that our hard-won rights and freedoms are under continual threat. You have only to look at the way LGBT people are treated in many countries to see the dangers and sadly, more often than not, these threats have a religious motivation.

Almost all of the rights we have gained in recent years, from an equal age of consent, to equality in delivery of goods and services, the repeal of clause 28, adoption rights for same-sex couples and the right to have our relationships recognised and protected by Civil Partnerships, have been won in the face of fierce religious opposition strengthened by the privileging of religion by the state.

In other countries, barbarous religious laws decree the imprisonment and even the execution of gays and in the UK religiously motivated homophobia can lead to violence against LGBT people.

While not all religious leaders and followers are homophobic, the sad truth is that, especially in countries like Britain, almost all organised homophobia is religiously motivated. What's more, it is the more extreme 'fundamentalist' versions of religion that seem to be advancing fastest.

Most religions base their 'morality' on texts which

were written centuries or millennia ago, reflecting the harsh and primitive conditions of their times.

Humanists believe that morality can only be based on human nature and human experience and on our wonderful ability both to learn from our own and others' experience, and to empathise and imagine ourselves in the positions of others.

Humanists recognise that sexual activity and affection between those of the same sex is to be found throughout the animal kingdom, and is entirely natural.

They also see same sex relationships as a valid means of expressing love, and as such believe that people entering into such relationships have exactly the same rights and responsibilities towards each other as do straight couples.

Accordingly humanists have been to the fore in all recent and current campaigns to protect the rights of gay people both in Britain and overseas for over half a century.

Regular events



Community outreach



Annual residential weekend



Defending LGBT human rights

WHY JOIN GALHA?

Where else can you defend both gay rights and wider human rights while also having tremendous fun? GALHA:

- Has been standing up for non-religious gays and lesbians for the past 30 years
- Promotes humanist values in the gay community
- Makes sure that other humanists are aware of gay issues and concerns
- Organises regular events, giving you the chance to meet like minded people in a relaxed atmosphere, while also discussing subjects of common interest
- Campaigns to combat prejudice and discrimination against LGBT people and to achieve complete equality with heterosexuals
- Takes up wider issues of concern to humanists. Lobbies parliamentarians and raises issues in the media
- Takes part in demonstrations and rallies to support these rights
- Stands up to the many religious organisations who oppose LGBT equality
- Campaigns for the rights of LGBT people abroad. For example, GALHA was involved in introducing the International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO) to the UK and continues to support this vital campaign

LGBT people have played a big part in advancing humanist causes, and GALHA today is an integral part of both the British and the international Humanist movements. We maintain close links with kindred organisations in the UK such as the British Humanist Association (BHA) and the National Secular Society (NSS), both of which have historic commitments to full LGBT equality. GALHA is a member of the Humanist Liaison Group and internationally we are affiliated to Amnesty International, the International Lesbian and Gay Association and the International Humanist and Ethical Union, which has consultative status at the United Nations.

Membership of GALHA is open to LGBT people who share a humanist outlook and to straight humanists who wish to give their moral and financial support.

We have members of all ages, backgrounds and interests, some keen to get actively involved, others just wanting to show they back our cause. We welcome and value them all.

Benefits of membership include:

- Attendance at GALHA's monthly public meetings. These meetings which usually take place on the 2nd Friday of the month at the Conway Hall Humanist Centre in Holborn are an important part of GALHA's public profile, and include debates, films, political forums, plays and talks by human rights advocates. They also provide an opportunity for GALHA members and others to meet socially and to discuss and debate ideas and to exchange information
- Access to the GALHA online discussion forum
- Opportunity to attend the prestigious annual GALHA lunch and annual residential weekend
- Adding your voice to the promotion of a rational humanist approach to homosexuality and of gay rights as human rights
- A regular newsletter of LGBT Humanist news

The Gay & Lesbian Humanist Association

JOIN GALHA TODAY

GALHA membership is open to all lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgender people who broadly subscribe to the Humanist outlook and are concerned about LGBT rights. It is also open to any heterosexual Humanists wishing to offer their moral or financial support.

GALHA provides a fellowship and voice for the many non-religious in the LGBT community. We aim to promote an awareness and understanding of the Humanist outlook in the community, as well as bringing gay and lesbian rights to the attention of our kindred Humanist organisations. GALHA plays a part in the campaign to combat prejudice and discrimination against LGBT people and to achieve our complete equality with heterosexuals. We also take up issues of concern to Humanists. We lobby MPs and raise issues in the media. We make submissions to government committees and respond to government consultative documents concerning LGBT and Humanist rights, as well as participating in demonstrations and rallies concerning these rights. GALHA also stands up to the many religious organisations who oppose LGBT equality.

*promoting a rational, humanist approach
to homosexuality and gay, lesbian, bisexual
and transgender rights as human rights*

APPLICATION FOR GALHA MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to anyone who supports the aims of the Association:

- To promote an awareness and understanding of Humanism among lesbians and gay men;
- To further an awareness and understanding of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people among Humanists;
- To protect and promote the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and Humanists.

Although most members live in the UK, GALHA has members in a number of other countries and welcomes new members throughout the world.



**Membership includes
a subscription to
our regular
newsletter**

Other benefits of membership include:

- An opportunity to take part in GALHA's annual residential weekend events.
- A mail order service offering a selection of books on Humanism and LGBT subjects.
- Access to GALHA's electronic discussion list enabling LGBT Humanists to exchange views and information with others of a similar outlook.
- Notice of London meetings and occasional events elsewhere.
- The chance to help promote a rational approach to homosexuality and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights as human rights, either through moral and financial support, or more directly by participating in GALHA's campaigns.

To: The Secretary, GALHA, 1 Gower Street,
London, WC1E 6HD, UK.

☐ I/we support the aims of GALHA and want to help promote an enlightened, rational Humanist approach to homosexuality and to lesbian, gay and bisexual rights as human rights.

☐ I/we apply for *standard/concessionary/joint/overseas membership.

☐ I/we enclose a *cheque/postal order for £ payable to GALHA. [* delete as applicable]

NAME(S) (in capitals)

ADDRESS

E-MAIL ADDRESS

PHONE NUMBER

SIGNATURE(S) DATE

The current annual subscription rates are:

UK Single £24 / UK Couple £30 /
UK Single Concession £12 / UK Couple Concession £15 /
International Single £30 / International Couple £37.50 /
International Single Concession £15.00 / International Couple
Concession £18.75.

**You can also sign up online at: <http://www.galha.org>
To pay by standing order, email secretary@galha.org**

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