

March 1982

CHIMAERA  
CHIMAERA  
CHIMAERA  
CHIMAERA  
CHIMAERA  
CHIMAERA  
CHIMAERA  
CHIMAERA  
CHIMAERA

nottingham  
che  
newsletter

# CHIMAERA

## NOTTINGHAM CHE NEWSLETTER

PROGRAMME: MARCH 1982

- THURS 4TH GENERAL MEETING at CVS at 8pm.
- WED 10TH A Fish and Chip meal at Mr Haddocks at Canning Circus. Meet up in the Sir John Borlace Warren at about 8pm. (This trip is for those who find the Savoy too expensive or too up-market).
- TUES 16TH Gay Switchboard Meeting at the Salutation Inn, Houdsgate at 7.30 pm. This is NOT restricted to switchboard operators - anyone who is interested in the switchboard (possible even as a potential operator) can attend, but not vote if the occasion arises.
- WED 17TH Chris Cook offers his hospitality to show to videotapes one dealing with the gay issue of "Couples" and one on gays in the armed forces. The address is flat 11, 4th floor of Victoria Centre at 8pm.
- THUR 18TH GENERAL MEETING at CVS at 8pm.
- SAT 20TH Visit to Spots Club in Leicester. Meet up at the Haerty Good Fellow first at 9.00. If you need transport to get there, make your needs known!
- WED 24TH Group visit to see "BENT" at Nottingham Playhouse. Tony has tickets for those who gave their names to him. If you haven't yet booked you can still come along even though you won't be sitting with the rest of us. After the show there is a discussion with the director and cast which may prove interesting and which some people will certainly be stopping for.
- FRI 26TH At the Playhouse again, a short programme of Gay Verse is being given after the performance on this night (10pm approx - but check with the Playhouse boxoffice). Readings are by members of the company and admission is free.
- THURS APRIL 1st GENERAL MEETING at CVS at 8pm. Despite the date, the time is after noon, so it IS genuine.

DON'T FORGET Thursday April 29th is the date for the CHE AGM. Attendance here is important for two reasons:-

1. We have to discuss the future of the group and that of its relationship to National CHE in the light of what happens at the National Council in Wirral of Saturday March 20TH.
2. We shall need to elect a Convenor, a Treasurer, a Membership Secretary a Campaign Officer, a Gay Lobby Officer, a Newsletter Editor, a Social Organiser and possibly others as well and most of the group's current officers will not be seeking re-election. If you are interested in filling any of these vacancies, let Mike or John know - they will be able to explain to you exactly what is involved.

If there is any matter that anyone wants to discuss specifically, please let Mike know by Thurs. April 15th so that the constitutional requirement for publishing the agenda can be adhered to. This is particularly important if the matter could be considered contentious as it is at the discretion of the AGM. as to whether business is accepted at the meeting.

\*\*\*\*\*

Please remember that the CVS stands for the Council for Voluntary Service, whose premises are at 31a, Mansfield Road, Nottingham. Nottingham Gay Switchboard also operates from here on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 7-10pm - phone 46881.

\*\*\*\*\*

In the INFORMATION SHEET in the last issue of CHIMAERA there was the following error:-  
LINCOLN GAY WOMEN'S GROUP does NOT meet in the Horse and Groom. Phone Lincoln Gay Switchboard for details of when and where they do meet.

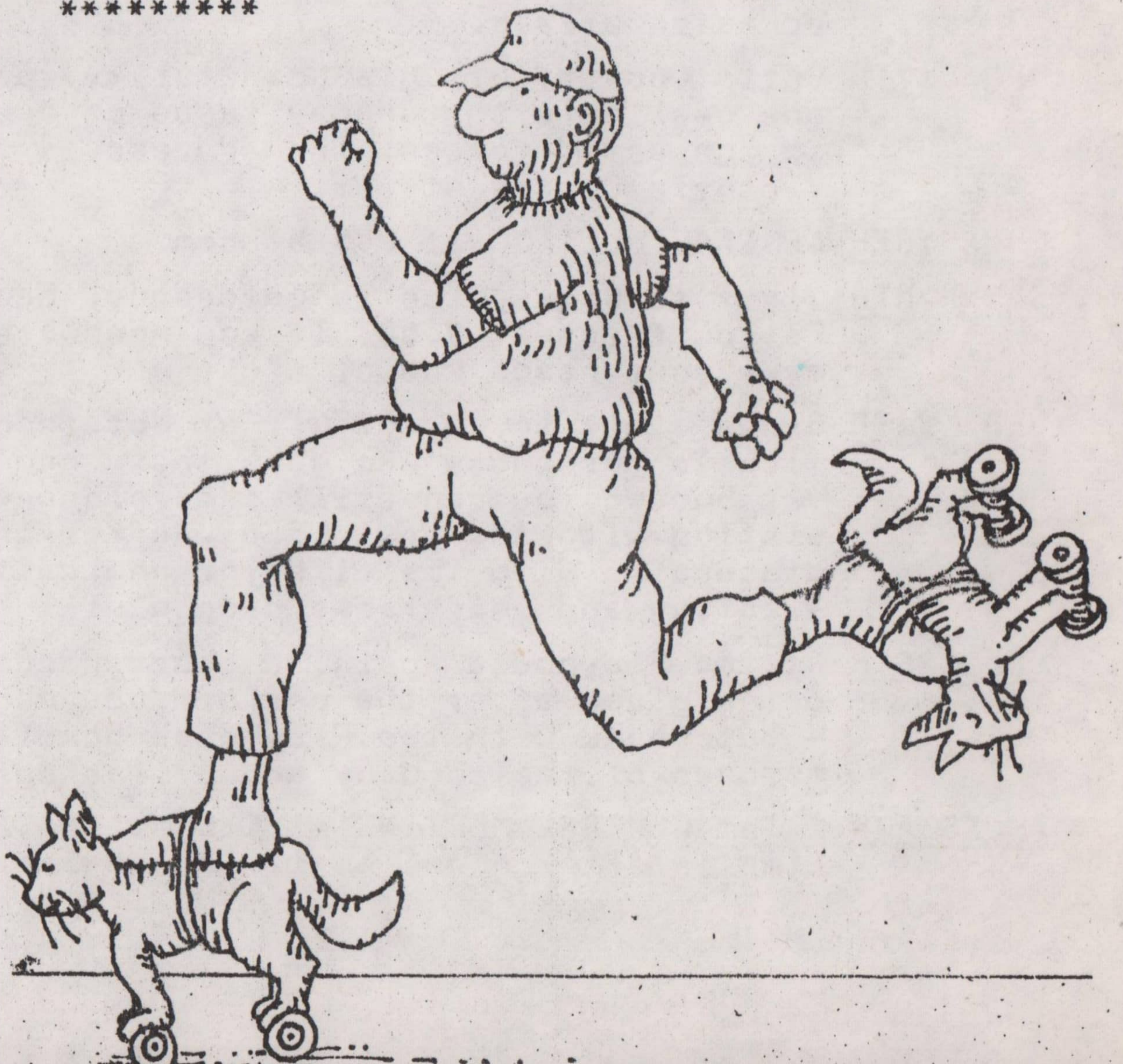
\*\*\*\*\*

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF CHIMAERA WILL BE SUNDAY 1ST OF MAY.

\*\*\*\*\*

I was taken aback to find that not all CHE members are aleurophobes and some even have a grudging affection for the old flea-ridden mange-bags.

With that in mind I have succumbed to an inclusion of a marginally more affectionate view of the Moggy. But not YET. For that turn to page 4. In the mean time here's another glimpse of the truer feline metier.



FOR WHAT YOU DID NOT RECEIVE MAY THE LORD MAKE YOU TRULY THANKFUL

Residents of Nottingham may be aware of the existence in the city of a dental practitioner most aptly named Mr. Snapper. He is not alone in having his name amusingly linked to his profession, or to have a name that is simply amusing, as I found when I came across "Remarkable Names of Real People" a book by John Train. All the entries are true, though it seems at times as though the reader is the victim of someone's extraordinary imagination.

To take a cue from Mr. Snapper, a firm of New York Attorneys rejoices in the name of Lawless and Lynch - and the same city boasts a detective agency of Wyre and Tapper. No doubt a young medical student named Fillerup must have felt his name to be a clear pointer to his becoming a successful obstetrician; but fate is not always so kind and Lynda Whynot must have felt cheated on being convicted of lewd and wanton behaviour in Providence, Rhode Island.

Some names would indicate disaster, rather than success. The New York telephone directory lists five doctors with the name Bonebreak, 18 butchers and no less than 164 Pains or Paynes; a former Archbishop of Manila had the unpromising name of Cardinal Sin; and could one really anticipate emerging as an even passable singer if one was taught by Mrs Screech of British Columbia? Business partnerships can also prove unfortunate namewise, as Messrs Bull and Schytt (Glaciologists of Geneva) may have found to their cost.

Amorous unions are not free from misfortunes either: in 1963 in London a Mr Cock married a Miss Prick. A whilst on a vulgar tack, one can only assume that the Turkish government were displayed good sense in not posting a military attache called Mustafa Kunt to an English-speaking country and sending him to the USSR instead. Again, one can only wonder at the exact nature of the garments made by the Climax Underwear Co. - leather or rubber perhaps, and did they evade the Trade Descriptions act?

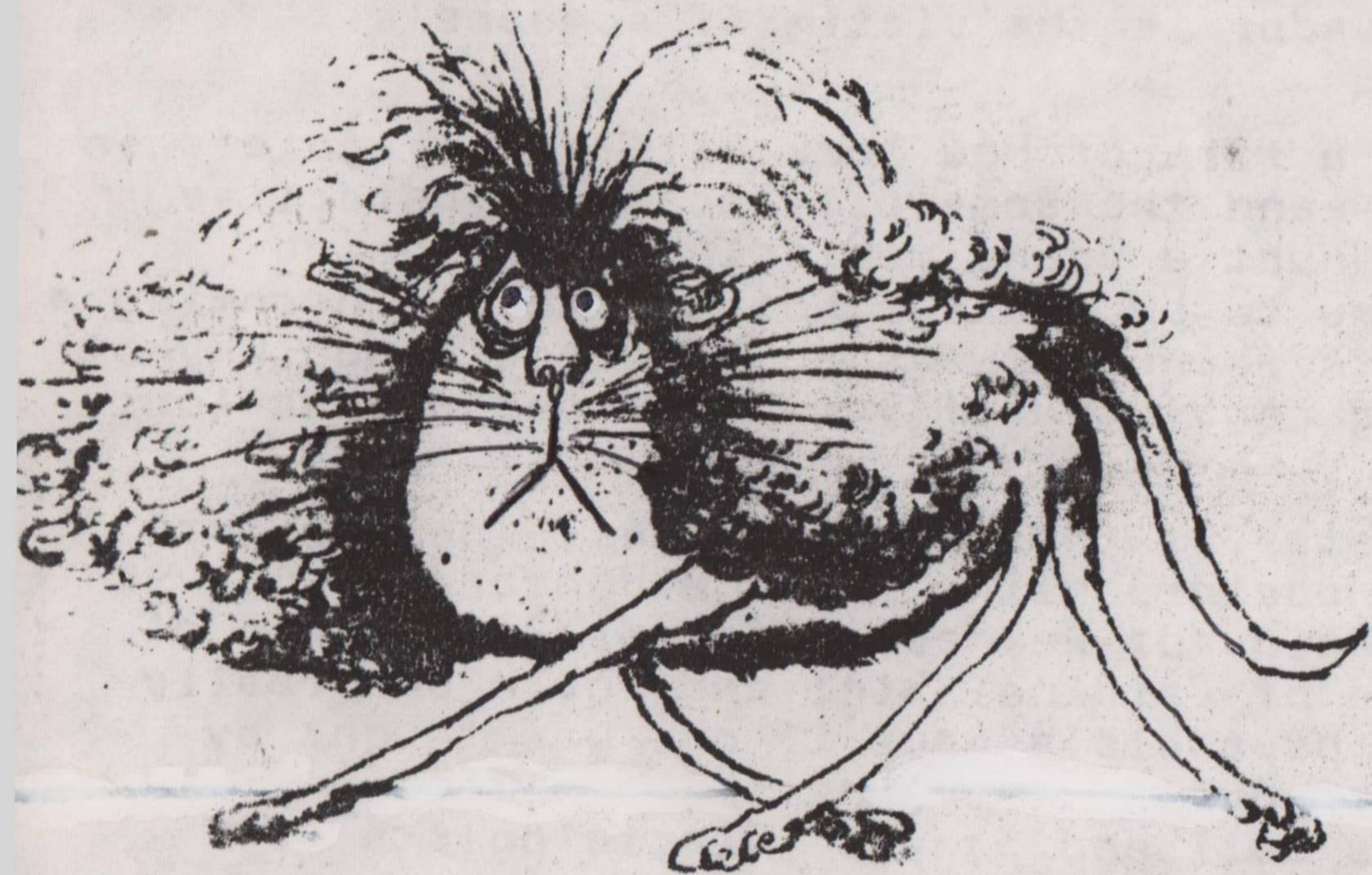
As if some surnames are not embarrassing enough on their own, parents on occasion seem to have thought that the best way of laughing off the situation was to combine it with an equally embarrassing first name. Bambina Broccoli does have a nice ring to it, but imagine having to struggle through life as Horacine Clutch, Grecian T. Snooze or Gaston L. Feeblebunny. At least Clarence Clapsaddle was not intimidated by his handle and attained the rank of colonel in the US Army; no more was Charles Adolphe Faux-Pas Bidet, who proved that such names can be the stuff of which Parisian commissaires de police are made.

Often, by accident or design, people can end up with a name of the punning variety: Rosetta Stone isn't too bad, but Memory Lane is rather contrived. Ima Hogg cannot have had much to thank her parents for, whilst Iona Victory Bond sounds like something "Round the Horne"s script-writers tossed off in an idle moment. Initials too can have amusing results, as Mr I.O. Silver no doubt discovered; and whilst Sir Arthur Sullivan was pleased with his middle name of Seymour, he was not too thrilled about the resulting acronym.

Mr and Mrs Pleasure must have been singularly naive or malicious to give their son the name Hyman, but fond parents who name their daughter Friendly could hardly anticipate that she would marry a Mr Ley (or indeed that her career of amiability would end abruptly when her husband's revolver went off by accident as he was cleaning it in the kitchen!)

In fact marriage can be the one way in which a woman can divest herself of an unwanted surname, but on at least declined to do so: Miss Belcher married a Mr Wack and proceeded to style herself Mrs Belcher-Wack; when her husband died she married his brother and took to calling herself Mrs Belcher-Wack-Wack. Similarly, undaunted by being named Sir W.C. Dampier-Whettam, that gentleman took up residence in Upwater Lodge.

So all you John Smiths and Mary Browns out there, you might have a lot to be thankful for if you did but know. Of course, you could always do what Mr Anton Przbysz did - he changed his name ..... to Christopher Przbysz.



Balding cat walking out in unsuitable wig



Exhibitionist cat trying out certain effects.

ANIMAL

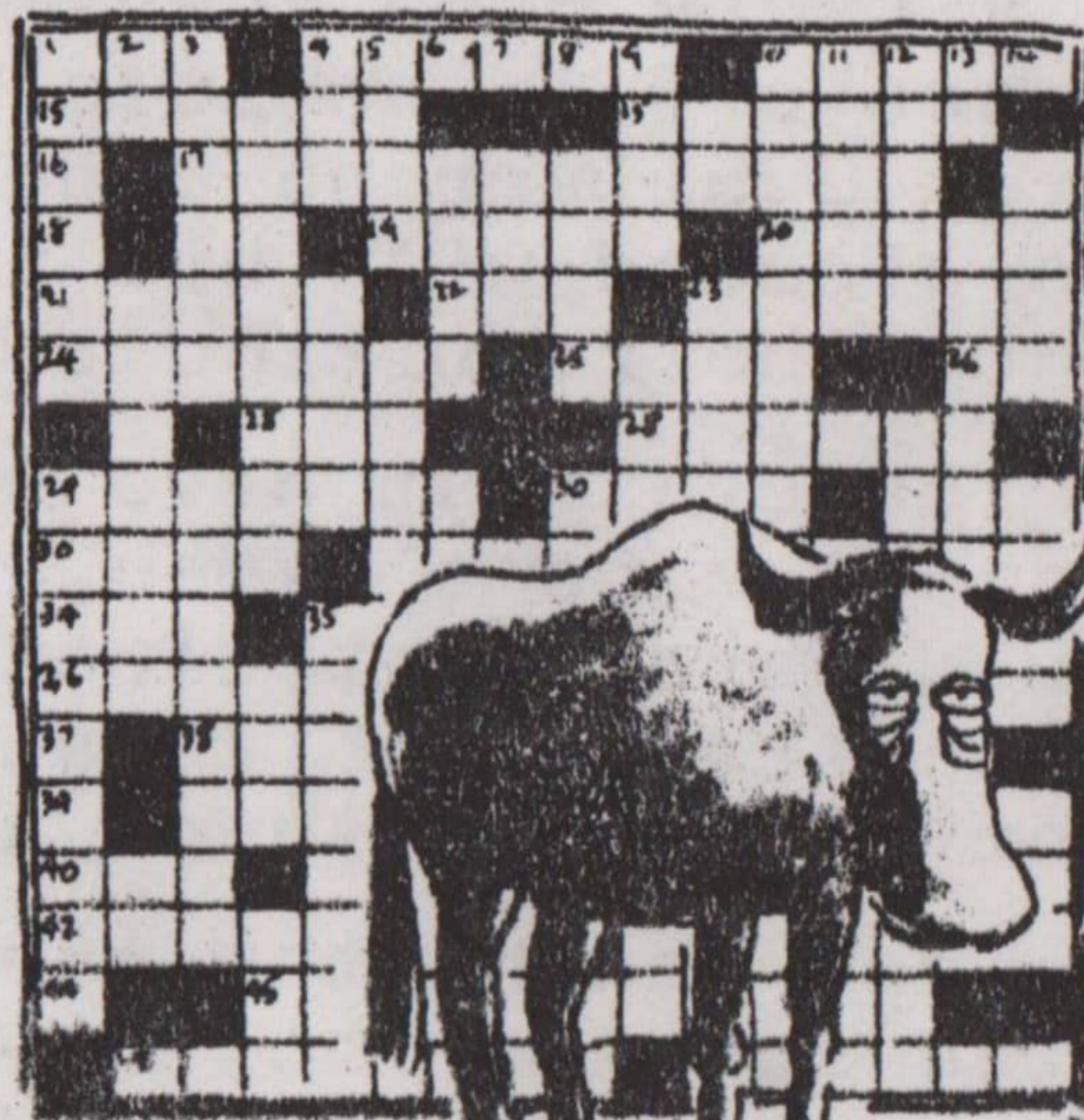


"Not just now, Mother"

CRACKERS



"Alice, can't you get it through your head bulldogs aren't supposed to look pretty . . ."



ZOO

GNU

"I'm glad to see every animal is kept in its natural habitat."

THE FUTURE OF CHE
-------------------

The following is a crystallisation of various thoughts and ideas of members of Nottingham CHE arising partly out of the recently circulated discussion paper from Nick Billingham of the Executive Committee, but also from discussions between Nottingham CHE members which go back 6 months or more. Although it has points of similarity with the discussion paper, it does present a somewhat radical view of the situation and advocates a greater degree of change than is the subject of the paper.

How should CHE change? The brief answer to this is "as much as possible".

CHE's faltering attempts over the past 2-3 years to rally the various elements of the gay community have failed and have even led to a serious thinning of its own tanks due to the lack of leadership and sense of getting nowhere that have prevailed during CHE's search for its role. It should be apparent by now that CHE (or indeed any other organisation) will never be able to speak for the whole gay community, and that it is unlikely ever to become a mass-membership organisation. It has the mistrust and even hostility of some sections of that community, to whom its attempts to become all-embracing must have sounded more like attempts to absorb and take over. At the same time its much-publicised traumas can only have further reduced its credibility in the eyes of individual gays, both inside and outside CHE.

We are therefore of the opinion that the changes in CHE should be thorough-going, involving the dismantling of its present physical structure and rethinking its attitude totally. When originally formed, CHE was purely a campaigning organisation, but since then it has adopted a social and befriending function, and it has realised that even as far as campaigning is concerned it is not just a case of getting Parliament to change the law, but of getting almost every section of the community to review its thinking on the subject of homosexuality. This involves a more low-key type of campaigning, a persistent slow erosion of prejudice and myth that needs to be carried on in every town and village in the country, not just in London. Taken together with CHE's own acknowledgement that social and caring roles can only really effectively be carried on at local level inclines us to the view that the gay 'movement' needs to be de-centralised as much as possible and the initiative handed over to 'local' groups, either geographical or topical in nature.

The name Gay Community Organisation, which CHE is at present toying with would perhaps be the ideal one for the looser organisation we envisage. To put it at its simplest, this Organisation would consist solely of a national office, staffed by as full-time an officer as can be paid for, and as much supplementary voluntary help as is needed and can be found. Gay groups and concerns throughout the country would affiliate to the Organisation through the national office, helping to fund it.

Although this might involve what some might consider an unacceptable level of self-effacement by CHE, we feel that the more of CHE's present image that is changed the better this will be for the gay community in the long run. The rate at which CHE's membership and standing among gays is declining at the moment give it a short lifespan, especially given the level of dissatisfaction that exists within CHE at local level. We need to start almost from scratch - entirely so as far as appeal to gays goes - but do have in Gay Lobby and the Discrimination Commission a sound basis from which to continue valuable work that has already been done and which is currently CHE's only claim to effectiveness at national level.

THE FUTURE OF CHE

The National Office The prime consideration here is that it should be efficient, in whatever its exact functions are determined to be. The Officer employed should first and foremost be an administrator able to maintain the efficiency of the Office. An interest in and knowledge of the gay community would obviously be required as well, and if he/she had literary abilities this would also not come amiss. Functions of the National Office would include:-

1. Acting as an initial point of contact for individuals seeking to link up with other gays for campaigning or social purposes.
  2. Acting as liaison between different gay organisations where necessary although it is hoped that gay groups with related interests would be able to establish their own communications network.
  3. Acting as a contact point for the media. However, the office would not itself issue comment or make statements, but instead would refer the media to relevant affiliates.
- {To carry out the above, the Office would need to have some kind of listing of gay groups and contacts, which would be the limit of its involvement with any membership system)
4. Being a distribution point for leaflets, booklets etc produced by affiliated organisations.
  5. (optional) possibly being the repository of the national Gay Archive.
  6. (optional) in suitable premises the office could also be a part of a gay social centre, which would help with the financial burden.
  7. The Office might make periodic mailings to affiliates. This, however, is time and money-consuming and may not be necessary.

In effect the Office is to be a secretariat, rather along the lines of those in NAGS, the IGA and LIS. It would in no way be a maker of policy: that function would devolve upon sub-groupings of campaigning, social and caring groups which it is hoped would evolve, each dealing with its own area of interest, although not without due regard for other gay groupings. The only role of the Office here is to keep itself and be kept abreast of developments within these sub-groupings, and to do what it can to ensure harmony and co-operation between its affiliates, and other groups.

With no policy to decide, there would be no need for a standing executive committee of the kind that CHE has at present, whether elected or, as has been the case recently, self-appointed in effect. There is, however, a need for some body or trust to oversee the working of the Office, and to appoint the Officer, who would be responsible to it. It may also be necessary to determine the use to which any surplus finance would be put. We make no definite suggestions at this stage as how membership of this body should be decided, but it should obviously be done with as wide a consultation of affiliates as possible.

Effect on present local CHE Groups The only major effect is likely to be that groups become responsible for their own membership arrangements, including the level of subscriptions. All gay concerns (switchboards, gaysocs, political gay groups etc) would be encouraged to affiliate to the Organisation in order to finance its Office, and could do so under either a broad campaigning or social/caring capacity. It should be borne in mind that social groups are likely to be in a position to provide more money by virtue of being able to concentrate on fundraising and of probably having a larger membership. Unfortunately, they are also the groups whom it will be hardest to persuade of the necessity and advantages of affiliation.

THE FUTURE OF CHE

We do not feel that there is a need for separate arrangements for national individual membership, nor would this really fit in with our conception of the Organisation. If people only want to give financial support then it can be done by a simple donation or by some form of covenanting system. If they want to do anything more than that, they would probably join one of the affiliated groups and work through it.

National Councils With the Organisation ceasing to be a policy-making body, national councils for that purpose would be redundant. However, we do believe that it is important that members of affiliated gay groups should meet together periodically for exchange of ideas and experiences, to make their need of support or help etc known, for discussions and simply to socialise. We should see these gatherings as being held 2 or 3 times a year, possibly over a weekend as opposed to on a single day. It is hoped that all gay groups in the locality would join together to organise these, assisted by the Office if necessary.

It is also hoped that there would be other gatherings based on a locality or around a particular interest, and that with the help of these that sub-groupings of affiliates would be able to strengthen their links with each other and define common aims towards which the groups should strive. Where feasible, particular campaigns or efforts should be coordinated by these sub-groupings. We do not feel that even this degree of policy making can be really forced onto the individual groups, but obviously all concerned should be encouraged and helped to carry out defined objectives.

Finance As always this is a crucial factor and will be so whatever form CHE takes in the future. Having considered the three possibilities put forward for consideration, we conclude that the most satisfactory method would be to combine elements of the 1st and 2nd ideas: groups would pay a basic affiliation fee of approximately £20-25, and in addition would contribute a capitation based on membership, not per individual member but on bands of membership (1-10 members, 11-20, 21-30 etc).

We feel that the number of present local CHE groups that would immediately affiliate is probably about 35 i.e. the number of groups who have shown sufficient interest to attend recent national councils. For many of these paying out £300 would cripple their local effectiveness, if they could afford it at all. By expecting a relatively low financial contribution from affiliates, the chances of more groups joining should be increased, and this would enable the Organisation to boast of a higher total individual membership via affiliation than might otherwise be the case.

Whatever system is adopted, there will always be room as well for donations, covenants and the like, and these should obviously be fostered. An organisation such as we propose may even succeed, where CHE has failed, in attracting support from commercial gay ventures - indeed, there is no reason why they should not become affiliates. We recommend, however, that any form of regular payment should not be considered as national membership but as individual affiliation, and that the rates fixed for it should take the form of an income-based sliding scale as with individual subscriptions to CHE at present.



THE FUTURE OF CHE
-------------------

A Concrete Proposal      Whether the above is accepted or not, we feel that a serious approach should be made to the NCCL with the view to possible alleviation of the problems over premises and payment of an Officer.

The NCCL has, we understand, recently moved into new premises that are fairly spacious. They may well be prepared to rent space on a favourable basis to an organisation concerned with an aspect of civil liberties to which they have already demonstrated a commitment. It might be possible, if this were the case, that their post of Gay Rights Officer could be merged with that of the Organisations's Officer.

We are not certain how feasible this is, but do believe that the potential advantages are great enough to merit careful investigation by the present EC, and consideration by both them and the National Council.