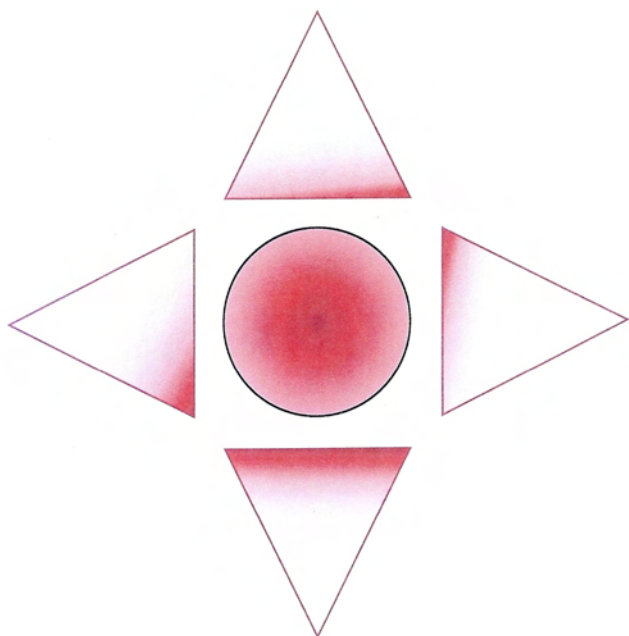




**N**aturist  
**A**ction  
**G**roup

# Annual Report 2015

‘I said: “Somebody should do something about that”. Then I realized that I am somebody.’

Lily Tomlin  
US Actress and Comedian



# *Contents*

|              |    |
|--------------|----|
| Forward      | 5  |
| The Projects | 6  |
| Our Finances | 11 |
| Who Are We?  | 12 |
| Afterword    | 14 |



# *Forward*

Welcome to the inaugural Annual Report from Naturist Action Group.

Since the formation of NAG in 2010, some things have changed, others have not. The Crown Prosecution Service, for instance, have issued guidelines to its lawyers and to all police forces in England and Wales indicating that naturists should not be prosecuted unless an actual crime had been committed. Yet, naturists are still making court appearances because there is no compulsion to give training in the CPS guidelines to frontline police officers. These same officers are under pressure because despite protests like the World Naked Bike Ride happening annually, many in British society still believe simple nudity is a criminal offence. They believe this because they still have a Victorian mindset when it comes to a naked human figure and few are advocating a change to that.

NAG has set itself a goal to change social attitudes to the human body by our twin objectives of campaigning on behalf of naturism to Government and other national representative bodies, and to educate the public to promote awareness. We are under no illusion about it being an easy task but we are buoyed by the knowledge that social change has been done before. The feminist movement changed the way we think about women, from chattels of men unable to grasp the fundamentals of politics or business to equal partners in life. Over the last 50 years or so, the LGBT community have changed the way we view them as a social group and as individuals. That is not to say that there are no misogynists or people with homophobic tendencies around, but their voices are now drowned out by those who simply think they are wrong. Naturists will always be in a minority, but there is no reason to think that acceptance, in the same way the majority accepts a person's religion or sexual orientation, is not impossible.

It is said: 'From little acorns do mighty Oaks grow.' Stretching that analogy further, at five years old, NAG is just a sapling. As a volunteer organisation, we can only do so much with the resources we have to hand and by banding together we have been able to do some positive things, like attending a conference organised by Relmagine London, the campaign that could see Greater London being declared a national park. Through similar events, we will get naturism talked about, become a part of the conversation, and seen through different eyes. That is just the first step in the long walk, and every journey begins in just such a way. We hope that you will come with us on that journey.

# *The Projects*

## **The Police and Naturism**

The issue of the Crown Prosecution Service's "Nudity in Public" Guidance on Handling Cases of Naturism" in 2013 changed the focus of this long running campaign. The Guidance represented significant progress towards our goal of reducing the police's 'automatic' antipathy towards nudity. Our aim altered to finding ways of educating front line police officers in understanding and applying the CPS Guidance to avoid the escalation of minor incidents into something worse. This involved detailed and delicate discussions with the College of Policing, complicated by their own reorganisation. However, another significant step forward was achieved late in 2014, when the College agreed to include reference to the CPS guidelines in its National Decision Making Model, which ought to help steer any proceedings in the right direction and avoid the input of personal prejudices in the process. Although this campaign is showing good results, we feel that more needs to be achieved in getting the message to the front line police officers, where incidents are handled initially. To this end the campaign will continue, though in its nature it has to be conducted mostly by confidential negotiation. NAG is taking the lead in a joint approach with BN, and our thanks goes to Brian Johnson, who has given considerable help to this project.

## **Children and Nudity**

It has become apparent that many people, not least by police and judges, assume that the sight of a naked person will have a negative effect on children. One manifestation of this is the use of the 'a child might see' argument by prosecutors. This assertion goes unquestioned, and so is accepted as true even though there is no evidence that nudity harms children, and indeed quite a lot of anecdotal evidence that contradicts it. To try to debunk this growing myth, NAG proposed a joint project with BN to try to persuade a reputable academic institution to carry out a proper, objective study of what the effect of nudity on children actually is. NAG is taking the lead in this, in full cooperation with BN.

The project has only recently been started, and will take years to complete, as it has funding and academic challenges to overcome before it can start properly. There may even be an international dimension to this project that might complicate things further. We are still in the very early stages of this project. However, we are committed to it because we believe it is important we prove objectively that naturism is at worst harmless to people who can not recognise



Duncan Heenan outside the Royal Courts of Justice in 2011.

their own social conditioning. In time this could move public opinion towards our goal of wider acceptance of naturism generally.

### **Hampstead Heath Naturism**

Our strategy for this project is 'slowly, slowly' while encouraging discreet naturism when possible, in a way that does not lead to confrontation. Linked to this is our new **Casual Naturism Survey** (see below). About 20 people are actively involved this project, but more are needed, especially women and naturists living locally to Hampstead Heath. The project group meets about every three-months to review progress and plan actions. Your support for our online Hampstead Heath Petition on our website is always welcome.

## Casual Naturism Survey

This is a recently launched initiative to gather information and create a database on what happens when naturists in the open are seen, or met, by members of the public. We hear many reports, particularly in court cases involving naturists, of the very sight of a naked body causing offence and distress. We realised that there is little contrary evidence that can be presented – because it has not been gathered in a systematic way.

In November 2014, NAG set up this new survey with a **Casual Naturism Form** available online or hardcopy. It is quite comprehensive in locations and types of naturist activity, but only takes about five minutes to fill in. We anticipate that information in the database will be useful both in promoting awareness of naturism, and to assist naturists facing legal sanctions.



NAG supporters – Chris and Luigi – tending to our stall at the *ReImagine London* event in February 2015, making the case for naturism to be taken into account in London's bid for National City Park status.

## The London Question

NAG joined in with the debate about creating a *Greater London National City Park*. The organisers of this initiative amassed an impressive array of facts to show how 47% of Greater London is green space that has many social benefits for sport and leisure, wildlife and environment, and education. *Reimagine London*, an information sharing and debate event took place on 24 February 2015 and NAG was there. We promoted the health values inherent through open space naturism to the 500 people attending the South Bank event.

A discussion with supporters followed and it became clear that the survey of open space in London suitable for naturism, carried out between 2010 and 2012, was geographically limited. We have now revived The London Question project and are asking London naturists to join small groups in each Borough to explore whether the green spaces in their vicinity may provide an opportunity for discreet naturism. The techniques used in our previous survey work on this are still relevant and a guidance sheet is available.

## You & The Law Leaflet

Since we first published this leaflet in 2012, some changes in the law means that a revised version is needed. We currently have a small team working on this and a new version will be available late in the summer. In the meantime, we have taken the previous version down from our website.

## Other Projects

As this is the first Annual Report Naturist Action Group has produced, it was decided we should include some of the other projects we have been involved with, however briefly.

During our first 12 months of existence, NAG was asked to provide assistance in creating local naturist groups. At Bristol there was insufficient local support for the project to succeed. In Cheltenham the request was to help a **naturist sauna** get launched, but with other similar events nearby, this was not viable.

Another project that did not go beyond the initial stages was the republication of the books by **Phil Vallack**. As much as we wanted to see these books being made available to the public again, as eBooks, issues with copyright could not be resolved.

One other project we actively considered was 'acquiring' the **NUFF** website from its owner and operator, Jules. The technology behind this resource for naturists had become outdated, as had much of the information it was giving, and it was only after long deliberation that it was decided the website was no longer viable.

In the political field we contributed to the public consultations for two Acts of Parliament. The first was made in relation to **Section 5 of the Public Order Act**, where we argued for elimination of the word "insulting" from the text as this could be ignored by the person receiving the insult and no actual damage is done. However, we separated that from abusive behaviour, as this could do actual harm as it tended to be accompanied by physical action. Ultimately, in our view, naturism is a lifestyle expressed by a lack of attire, just as a religious person may express their faith through wearing a cross or star of David around their neck, but what may be considered insulting by some. Our reasoning was summed up by a quote from Lord Justice Sedley in *DPP REDMOND-BATE v. DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS* [1999] EWHC Admin 732 (23rd July, 1999):

"Free speech includes not only the inoffensive but the irritating, the contentious, the eccentric, the heretical, the unwelcome and the provocative provided it does not tend to provoke violence. Freedom only to speak inoffensively is not worth having."

NAG also contributed to the public consultation for what became the **Anti-social Behaviour and Policing Act 2014**. As originally drafted the text defined anti-social behaviour as: "...conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to any person." It was changed in the House of Lords to: "...conduct that has caused, or likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person." A change that we supported and lobbied for when it returned to the House of

Commons, our argument being that the original definition was too wide and could have led to vexatious complaints by members of the public, leaving front line police officers and PCSOs in an impossible position. The change made by the HoL means the new Act is consistent with Section 5 of the Public Order Act and in the words of Duncan Heenan: “This makes the Bill much less likely to be used against naturists than the original... wording, which played into the hands of prudish authoritarians.”

Both consultations were part of co-ordinated action with British Naturism’s Director of Campaigns, Malcolm Boura.



NAG Autumn Committee Meeting 2013 with guests: (L-R) John Paine, Harvey Allen,, Sam Hawcroft (H&E editor & guest), Reg Barlow, Peter Knight, Tim Forcer (guest) and Duncan Heenen.

## *Our Finances*

Naturist Action Group exists in a legal sense in Naturists Limited, a not-for-profit company Limited by Guarantee.

A summary of the accounts for the year to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2015 is shown below:

Opening Balance (at 01/04/14) £1,147.06

### Income

Donations 296.00

Website Advertising 0.00

Publication Fees 500.00

Photo Competition 0.00

---

Total Income 796.00

### Expenditure

PayPal 12.06

Website 31.14

Campaign 755.81

Photo Competition 0.00

Sundry 0.00

---

Total Expenditure 799.01

Surplus/(Deficit) (3.01)

Closing Balance (at 28/02/2015) £1,144.05

All funds are held as Bank and PayPal deposits, and at 28<sup>th</sup> February 2015 there were no known liabilities.

The above does not fully represent NAG's activities, as all activities are conducted by volunteers who receive no remuneration, many of whom bear their own expenses incurred without reimbursement. In the year to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2015, such donations-in-kind of expenses are estimated at about £500, though exact records have not been kept.

No director received any remuneration, and there are no employees.

# Who Are We?

## The Directors (in alphabetical order)



Reg Barlow

NAG's chairman and co-founder. Reg produces the words for **News From NAG** column in **H&E Naturist** magazine and posts for the NAG website. He currently works in a contact centre for a claims management company in West Yorkshire.



Duncan Heenan

Treasurer and co-founder. An Isle of Wight resident, Duncan is a retired general manager and accountant, Duncan also oversees two of our current projects: **The Police and Naturism** and **Children & Nudity**



Peter Knight

A co-founder of NAG, Peter was formally employed in various roles in the water industry, has undertaken voluntary work for a NGO in South Sudan, and was a 'Gamesmaker' at the London 2012 Olympics. Peter is NAG's eyes and ears in social media, keeping NAG abreast of anything that is new or is likely to affect our projects.



John Paine

A co-founder of NAG and project leader, John is a retired Community Development Officer who worked in various UK cities and now lives in Oxford. John oversees the revived **The London Question** and the **Hampstead Heath Naturist Project**.

We should also mention those of the management committee, but are not directors of Naturists Ltd. They are Andy Crawford, who lives in Cambridgeshire and Harvey Allen from London, who provide invaluable work on our behalf. Nor would NAG have existed without the early assistance of former Director, Richard Burnham PhD from Shropshire, while later David Piper from Hertfordshire lent his expertise in website design.

Others who should be thanked, are our guests to the bi-annual meetings, who have provided an alternative point of view. They include Sam Hawcroft (H&E Editor), Judith Stinchcombe (BN Chairperson), Emma James and Tim Forcer.

## *Afterword*

In closing our first Annual Report, it occurs to me just how far we have come in five short years since we began this adventure. While Naturist Action Group is not universally known within naturism, even in the UK, we have created an international name for ourselves, with naturists from Europe, North America and Australasia among our 256 registered users for our website, 540 likes on Facebook and more than 2000 followers on Twitter. These figures are not phenomenally successful when compared to other similar organisations, but when you consider that we have not sought new registered users, likes or followers very hard, I think we should be proud of our achievement and take heart that what we have to say has found resonance within others.

It is doubtful that naturism will be so mainstream that our high streets will match Stephen Crowley's imagination for his graphic novel [The Koala Bares](#). Yet, we believe it is possible for naturism to gain sufficient acceptance among the general public to go unremarked when encountered in an open space or beach environment. We know this will not be easy and will not be accomplished by tomorrow, but that is the goal we have set ourselves.

The projects we have are the right projects to have long-term significance if we continue to take the baby-steps forward, as we are doing. Especially, I believe, with the Hampstead Heath Naturist Project. There if we can prove that naturism can happily co-exist with other users of large parks and open spaces in and around London then there is no reason why it should not work in other parts of the country. It already works in Germany, why not here? That does not mean our other projects have any less importance. On the contrary, they are just as important because they all work hand-in-glove. They rely on each other to succeed.

You can read more information about each of the projects referred to and keep up-to-date with future developments by going to the [Naturist Action Group](#) website.

But, I also believe that the workload NAG has undertaken is almost at its capacity, and like other voluntary organisations, we find ourselves competing for people's time if we want them to do the things I think we should do as advocates of naturism.

I also think we need to find the means to make NAG more democratic, to give it the capability to go beyond the involvement of its current management board, which is – not wishing to be discriminatory here – too male and on the whole, ageing.

As you have seen from the report, NAG is financially healthy but only because we have had some great support from our donors, volunteers and other organisations. If we are to do the things that other advocating organisations do (e.g. Ramblers, Liberty, etc.), things that cannot be carried out by volunteers, however willing then we shall need more of this precious resource. In part, that is why we started the photo competition, with the second competition open for entries from late March 2015.

Despite the concerns noted above, taken on the whole, I think it all looks very positive for NAG and I hope you agree.

Reg Barlow  
Chairman, Naturist Action Group  
West Yorkshire, April 2015

