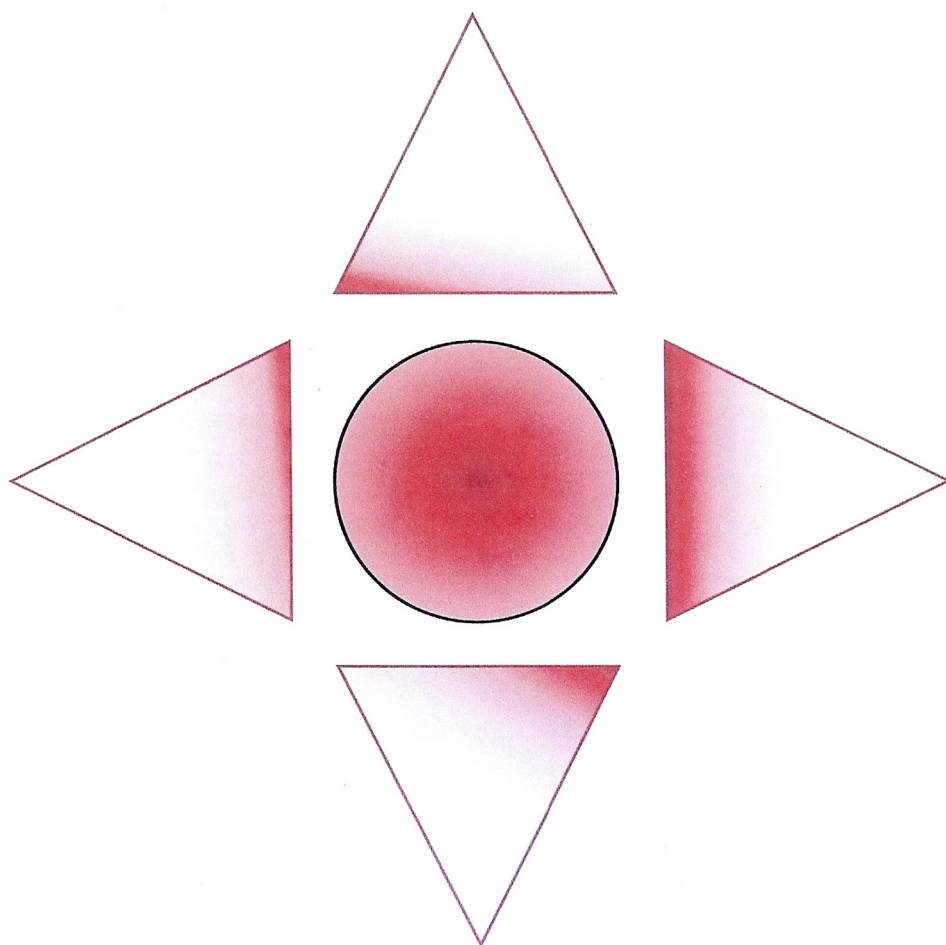




Naturist Action Group

Annual Report 2017

Forward

So, here is our third Annual Report, telling you about what we are doing to make naturism more accepted by British society.

As I write, the sun is mostly hidden behind a thinning blanket of white cloud and I would suppose many of my fellow countrymen (and women) would say that this is why naturism is not popular here. It is far better down on the Mediterranean coast where wall-to-wall sunshine could almost be guaranteed; almost but not quite. Naturally the sun plays a big part in people's perceptions of what naturism is all about, and sadly, in these isles there are times when we can have autumn, winter, spring and summer all in a single day, but this is not typical. In 2016 the UK experienced extreme heat waves, with temperatures rising into the low 30s centigrade, twice, and any of us with long memories will remember 1976, a year when the summer heatwave went on for so long, people began to miss the rain! We even had a Minister of State for Drought as I recall. Of course we have had others since, but that is the one that has stuck in my mind. Naturists do visit our beaches, or go for a naked ramble along the many miles of foot paths and rights of way in this country. Naturist Action Group has confidence in UK naturism, it seems not everyone does.

Reg Barlow
Chairman, Spring 2017

Campaigning

Work in London

In London, slow progress has been made although we have initiated some new initiatives. Planning meetings are not the most attractive activity for naturists, who just want to get out in the sun naked, but they are important. It is only by meeting and pooling ideas that constructive positive actions can happen. More Londoners, including women, are now engaged with NAG in and sharing this vital work. We held three planning meetings in the last year, one in true naturist uniform.

Hampstead Heath

At Hampstead Heath we continued the non-confrontational approach. NAG previously recognised that to get official recognition of naturism by the Hampstead Heath management would require a demonstration of support by thousands of London naturists. However, it is still the case for various reasons London's naturists are mainly unwilling to be publicly identified with open air naturism in the capital. Our slowly, slowly, approach saw another naked picnic on the Heath in July 2016, but with a much reduced attendance.

Major environmental construction work at Hampstead Heath Ponds was one of several reasons why a planned naturist visit to the Women's Pond did not happen, although more women are now prepared to be involved and planning is under way for a summer 2017 visit, led by Carlie and Lynda. The low uptake of naturism at the Men's Pond, in cramped conditions, continues.

Enthusiasm for another group naked photoshoot remains high, but no-one was prepared to pursue the idea and actually organise one. Creating an opportunity for media coverage, as some wish, has also become somewhat a catch-22 situation for NAG as some naturists have indicated that unless some anonymity was allowed, they would decline to participate. Plus, if the media is notified then Hampstead Heath Management would be given advance warning of the picnic, and very likely ban it. 'Not in front of the children' coupled with cultural sensitivities to naked human flesh in multi-cultural London, are two powerful factors in the minds of the authorities. NAG still has much work to do on this official prudishness.

Our work at Hampstead Heath may benefit from an interesting development in Paris. There, two French naturist bodies are in official talks with the city's politicians, who are receptive to the idea of an official naturist open space. You may recall that in 2011 we visited Munich, where open space naturism is accepted. If the Paris talks continue to be positive a delegation from NAG may visit the

city in summer 2017 to show our support, and gather some useful transferable information from Paris for use in London.

London WNBR

The London WNBR enthusiastically involves hundreds of naturists. Held in June for the past ten years it sees over 1,500 protesting cyclists on a route past thousands of tourists in central London. The majority of cyclists are naked, including many NAG supporters. Three of our supporters (including Management Collective member, Harvey Allen) are members of the London's organising collective and organise three of the five starting points around London. It is important for WNBR to have volunteer stewards on the day and NAG supporters are always urged to come forward.

Limited promotion of NAG has occurred during past WNBR protests and it is noticeable that many people under thirty thoroughly enjoy being naked. If more NAG supporters on all WNBR rides could this year contact us before their participation, we can provide publicity materials of our activities for them to pass on. It is only by spreading the word, about NAG and our campaigning efforts to others can we gain more involvement.

Other Initiatives

We are still keen to identify other London open spaces where discreet naturism might be practised. The central and inner London open spaces are heavily used for a variety of community activities. Our focus is now on the outer Boroughs with initial exploration of each location requiring just two people. Suggestions for Richmond Park (south west London) and Chingford Plain (east London) have been made and we have a volunteer for each, who intend to check them in 2017.

The Greater London City National Park initiative continues slowly. We laid down a marker for this initiative in 2015 in order to put open space naturism into their thinking. Progress has been slow during the past 12 months of major political activity and Ray Ward continues to keep a watching brief, informing us of both events and progress.

Naturist swimming sessions continue to be popular, but getting managements' acceptance has proven difficult. Discussions with Dulwich Pool are continuing and explorative talks are taking place in Camden, while Islington Pools will be approached again. If managements are willing to take an initial booking then naturists will need to support each new swim in sufficient numbers to make them viable. It is noted that Naturist London (sponsored by BN) has added another weekly swim at its Malet Street, Bloomsbury location. Their Sunday swim charge has increased to £10 and efforts are being made to encourage more women to attend.

Body Painting Day

As a result of some prudish attitudes by site managers in 2015 and 2016 meant that none of them would grant permission for a body painting event featuring nude models to take place. We have checked over 40 potential sites, public space and commercial in London without any luck. Early in 2017 however, the New York based artist Andy Golub decided to create a new organisation *Human Connection Arts* and appointed a fellow Amsterdam-based artist, Joram Baruch, to handle its European activities, while John Paine and Harvey Allen continue their work to find a London site. At the time of writing they are exploring the Elephant and Castle area, and Joram, John and Harvey made a visit in March 2017 speaking to several key people about site permission. A provisional date

for London, Saturday 19 August, has been included in a 2017 European calendar that includes Amsterdam, Berlin, and possibly Paris.

Elsewhere in London

There has been an increase in London naturist activities run by others. The Secret Swimming Club has held swims at different sites including the Hampstead Heath Mixed Pond one evening. More naked fitness sessions and yoga sessions are now regularly run by people linked with Naturist London. The Singles Outdoor Club has created a separate body, Naturist Ramblers, and in January they held their annual naturist dinner in Kentish Town. In the commercial world the Wood Green naturist venue Elixir changed management and was re-branded as Naked Hands in the autumn of 2016. Part of the change was for Naked Hands to only accept cash payments, meanwhile in Kentish Town, Rio's naturist spa survived a major fire in November 2016 and re-opened in December after refurbishment.

Children & Nudity

We continue to work with the academic world at getting properly researched evidence of the psychological effects of naturism, and so far it seems to be beneficial. Originally initiated by NAG, we are now working jointly with British Naturism. An encouraging development was the publication of a paper by Dr Keon West of London University's Goldsmiths College establishing a link between naturist activity and psychological benefits, including a positive body image. This led to a joint NAG-British Naturism symposium on several aspects of naturism at the British Psychological Society's Annual Conference in Cardiff towards the end of 2016. There, Dr West's findings were presented and augmented by Dr Helen Bowes-Catton of The Open University's psychology department, together with a statistical and social presentation by Malcolm Boura of British Naturism. NAG was represented at the symposium by Revd. Vivienne Heenan, who spoke about everyday naturism generally and also how it fitted into her life as an Anglican priest. The symposium was well received by an audience of some of the top social psychologists in the UK. The hope is that it will stimulate further thought within the academic world, as well as introducing it as a subject for mainstream discussion generally. This is being carried forward at Goldsmiths College, who are currently compiling project proposals and costings for further research into the psychological effects and benefits of naturism. Funding is a critical aspect for this work, and third party sources of funds are being sought, as well as a possible contribution from British Naturism and a request to International Naturist Federation.

In parallel with the above, Dr Marina Rachitskiy of London Regent University is supervising an undergraduate study into the effects of exposure to nudity in childhood on psychological development and wellbeing later in life. NAG is cooperating and monitoring this in the hope it can be further developed in the future.

Casual Naturism Survey Data

As a campaigning group NAG has been concerned at the continuing prosecutions of naturists (nearly always male) for practising naturism in non-threatening ways. Quite often a police and prosecution case will mention that someone is offended and 'alarmed and distressed' by seeing a naked person going about their normal business. Little evidence to support the opposite view – that it has *not* caused alarm or distress – has been available to defence lawyers. In late 2014 NAG set up a process

to gather such evidence. We called it *The Casual Naturism Survey* and provided an easy-to-complete form for naturists to use when going naked in open areas.

The intention was, and still is, to build up a database of instances when naturists are observed by members of the public without upset. The Survey form also asks for comments on positive responses received from people passing by. While many naturists go out in the open during the summer, with some seen by members of the public, very few have supplied information for this important database.

We need to receive more survey reports, and the form can be accessed through our website. The databank will be strengthened as a legal tool with more credible reports of instances of casual naturism added to it. With luck, we shall have a glorious British summer, and not a wet one, and if by chance you go naked out into the countryside: beach, woodland, or ramble along footpaths, then you can do your bit to help fellow naturists by completing our easy-to-use form.

International Naturist Federation

As 2016 ended Naturist Action Group became embroiled in, mostly as a public commentator, the events following the International Naturist Federation's (INF) World Congress in New Zealand. For sometime, we have felt that the INF has not only been poorly run but has been particularly inactive in its representational and campaigning roles in the international arena. At the World Congress, held in November 2016, we were encouraged by the election of M. Javier of France to replace Frau Ivo of Austria (who we held largely responsible for the shortcomings) as President. Unfortunately, ex-President Ivo refused to accept the vote and raised (in our opinion) some spurious procedural matters forcing a rerun of the vote, scheduled for July 2017 in Vienna. NAG feels that the whole situation has been badly handled by INF, and its current approach will not only cost it money but also credibility. Though NAG is not a member, we felt that the situation was sufficiently grave for naturism as a whole to speak out and we have no regrets about our actions, despite the angry response from some INF officials. By bringing the shenanigans of Frau Ivo and her clique to light in several countries, it was our hope that member organisation would become more involved in the actions or inactions of International Naturist Federation.

Finance

Below is a summary of NAG's Income and Expenditure accounts since our fiscal year 2012-13:

	<u>16/17</u>	<u>15/16</u>	<u>14/15</u>	<u>13/14</u>	<u>12/13</u>
Opening funds at 1st March	1,256.96	1,144.05	1,147.06	943.22	573.26
<i>Income:</i>					
Donations	782.60	545.32	296.00	275.00	242.00
Website advertising	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Publication fees	115.00	260.00	500.00	0.00	150.00
Photo Competition	10.00	99.90	0.00	47.50	0.00
Total income	907.60	905.22	796.00	322.50	392.00
<i>Expenditure:</i>					
PayPal costs	-3.49	-10.79	-12.06	-3.11	-5.29
Website costs	-197.94	-177.39	-31.14	-14.39	-16.75
Campaign costs	-853.50	-387.53	-755.81	0.00	0.00
Photo comp. costs	0.00	-30.60	0.00	-88.16	0.00
Sundry	-13.00	-186.00	0.00	-13.00	0.00
Tax	-28.60				
Total costs	-1,096.53	-792.31	-799.01	-118.66	-22.04
Surplus/deficit	-188.93	112.91	-3.01	203.84	369.96
Closing Funds at 28th February	1,068.03	1,256.96	1,144.05	1,147.06	943.22

A large part of the apparent upsurge in both Donations and Campaign Cost in 2017 is due to the incorporation of about £707.60 of directors' costs (which they have borne themselves) as both Donations and Campaign Expenses. In most previous years, this aspect of NAG's activities were left out of the accounts, but it was felt best to start to include them now to show a fairer reflection of our activities.

The funds are held in a bank and a PayPal account, there were no other assets and no known liabilities at the financial year end, 28 February 2017.

Chairman's Report

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead (US cultural anthropologist, 1901-1978)

The 12-months to February 2017 have been fairly successful for Naturist Action Group; financially we are keeping our heads above water and we have participated in a symposium for the British Psychological Society in Cardiff.

As you have seen, Naturist Action Group actually made a deficit during 2016-17 but we still have a healthy bank balance. Even so, taking the benefits in kind provided by the directors and other members of the Management Collective, our income is not what we had hoped. If NAG is to comply more forcefully with the middle word of our name then we shall need substantially more in resources to further the cause of naturism.

That cause has taken a tiny step forward with a presentation at a symposium at the annual conference organised by British Psychological Society trying to generate interest in academic research into the psychology of social nudity. NAG was represented by the Rev Vivianne Heenan, who with Malcolm Boura (British Naturism) gave possible topics for research developed from their experiences, while Doctors Keon West (Goldsmiths College) and Helen Bowes-Catton (Open University) told the audience the results of their research and highlighted areas that still needed exploration. The aim is to develop arguments to counter the automatic assumption made by many people that adult nudity is bad for a child's development, this is sometimes seen in articles questioning at what age should a parent stop sharing a bath with their child, or the question "...but what about the children?" sometimes raised in a court of law.

Naturally, we believe the answer is no, but belief is not enough, especially in places like law courts where everything is questioned, and research done to an academic standard and peer reviewed is hard for them to dispute.

While the symposium was a success, it does not end there. Often it is helpful if the proposer for research can offer some kind of funding to go with it, and the International Naturist Federation has

been persuaded by British Naturism to set aside some of its resources over the next four years. This will go unclaimed unless academic institutions are made aware of it and this should be NAG's next task; ours and British Naturism's.

Towards the end of our year, NAG became embroiled in the events following the INF's World Congress in New Zealand. Although we are not a member of the federation, we were sufficiently concerned by the alleged attempts to manipulate the vote for the INF Presidency that we had to speak out and let others know. In our judgement the INF was poorly managed by Mrs Ivo and her clique, and did little to advance the cause of international naturism. The INF had been reduced to organising talking shops and "jollies" in different parts of the world, and redistributing some of the member federations' own money back to them to encourage attendance. This does not seem rational to us.

In his letter dated 24 February 2016 outlining proposed reforms for the INF, Stéphane Deschênes wrote: 'The INF-FNI needs to remember that naturism is an ideology or philosophy, not an activity. While events, clubs and resorts where naturism happens should be supported, the INF-FNI should be more focused on promoting naturism itself.' It is this that we believe to be true, not only of the INF but for all organisations who advocate the lifestyle, and will continue to strive for, both at home and abroad, as a group and as individuals.

However, nothing can stay the same, including Naturist Action Group. Change is necessary to meet new or evolving challenges and that is as true in naturism as it is in life. After seven years as a group of angry men, basically representing ourselves, it is time we looked at the organisation and the world around it and consider just how appropriate NAG is.

What we have learned, what I have learned as chairman, is that naturism and naturists cannot be led from the front and expect them to follow. Perhaps a better course would be to discover the common beliefs held by the majority of UK naturists and build something around them. Then keep asking the question: 'Are we reflecting what naturists believe?' That way, the organisation will be more responsive to the people it purports to represent, remaining relevant to them and therefore continue to have a purpose, a reason to exist, and this is the journey I intend to take Naturist Action Group on. It might be short journey, or it might be long one, we shall see.

Reg Barlow
Chairman, Spring 2017

Who Are We?

Directors for Naturists Ltd in alphabetical order.

Reg Barlow

NAG's chairman and co-founder; Reg currently produces the News From NAG column for the magazine H&E Naturist and posts for the NAG website. He lives in West Yorkshire and is working towards his own retirement.



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 has taken many different employment opportunities over the years following his service with the Royal Air Force, including a stint as a logistics manager for MSF in East Africa.



John Paine

A co-founder of NAG and project leader, John is a retired Neighbourhood Development Officer for London Borough of Lambeth, where he still lives. John acts as a liaison for NAG London, which includes The London Question.



There are two other people who regularly attend Management Collective meetings and contribute to our emailed discussions but are not directors of Naturists Ltd, Andy Crawford and Harvey Allen, who provide valuable work for us.

Afterword

We have come to the end of another Annual Report and as always if you have any questions or comments (positive or negative) or observations then please send them to me. My email is: reg.barlow@naturistactiongroup.org or you can send it by post via:

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If you would like a reply by post then please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.