
GGLCommunity News



Summer 2017

Blood and Empire - Articles

The latest News, Views and Opinion

DIARY OF EVENTS

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Hi,

I didn't think I would be writing another one of these. Best laid plans of mice and men and all that!

I felt sorry for my husband Alan, tasked with finding out if I would be prepared to stand again as Chair. (especially as my first answer was a resounding NO!).

It was flattering to be told of the total support for me to remain. Mind you, the fact that the only applicant couldn't wait to withdraw their nomination did play a part (thank you Howard). It was this unstinting support that changed my mind. Thanks must go to Peter for co-ordinating all of this on your behalf.

I will continue to do my best and help guide the GGLC to a secure future. I'm delighted that Howard and the Committee remain to help us achieve this.

In friendship

Michael

(Starting his 26th year as Chair)



Pride

Gloucestershire Pride is on Saturday June 10th this year, and we will be there with our always popular Bottle Stall.

It starts from Shire Hall at 11am for the Parade, ending at the Park where there will be stalls, free entertainment, fun, games and general merriment. Join us for a fun day!

Graham, Editor

Raffle

The Raffle takes place during our Thursday Coffee and Chat evenings, . Don't forget to bring your money and all donations for prizes gratefully accepted.

This is one of the few fund raising events for our group

Why can't gay and bisexual men donate blood? By Johnny

A lifetime ban on men who have sex with men (MSM) donating blood in the UK was initially imposed resulting from a rise of blood-borne infections, (primarily HIV and Hepatitis B) in the 70s and 80s. (The rates of these infections were found to be highest amongst MSM).

The lifetime ban was lifted in September 2011 (2016 in Northern Ireland) because, on closer scrutiny, a lack of evidence was found to justify it: men are now excluded from donating blood for 12 months following sexual activity with men. This is known as the 'deferral' period and applies even if men have used condoms and includes both anal and oral sex.

Why the change to 12 months?

Blood-borne viruses such as HIV and Hepatitis B do not show up in the blood straight away. This is often called the 'window period' between infection and detection and can vary from patient to patient. It is for that reason that an extended deferral period of 12 months was determined.

The NHS Blood and Transplant service test every blood donation for these viruses but as with all testing, 100% accuracy is not possible. This deferral period aims to ensure maximal safety of blood products.

The methods of testing for these viruses has become increasingly more sophisticated over the last three decades and this key development in medicine was pivotal to the change in criteria.

Why MSM?

In the UK, the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissue and Organs (SABTO) is an expert body that reviews the eligibility criteria for blood donations. They are keen to stress that the ban is not intended to discriminate against men and their sexuality. Reasons for excluding some people from giving blood include a possible negative impact on the donor's health and/or the safety of donated blood supplies.

People may not be allowed to donate blood for many reasons, including having had a serious illness or major surgery in the past; having had complicated dental work; people taking antibiotics, who are pregnant, have had acupuncture, or have had a tattoo, semi-permanent make up or any sort of body piercing in the previous four months.

There is a complete blanket ban on anyone who has ever had sex for money or drugs or ever injected drugs (including body-building drugs and injectable tanning agents) and there are deferral periods for people who have traveled to some areas abroad. (If you are the sexual partner of one of these people, in some

cases, you may also not be able to donate blood).

Public Health England (PHE) recorded 6364 new HIV diagnoses in 2012. Of these new cases, almost two thirds were found to be in MSM within the UK. PHE's figures have repeatedly confirmed that this group of patients continues to remain the most at risk of HIV and would, for this reason, pose a risk to donated blood supplies.

Is this discrimination against gay and bisexual men?

Some feel the exclusion criteria for blood donation is discriminatory against gay and bisexual men or MSM, as donors who engage in heterosexual activities are not excluded unless they fall under other exclusion criteria.

A heterosexual man could have multiple sexual partners without practicing safer sex, and continue to be eligible for blood donation. A gay or bisexual man who actively practices safer sex, however, is excluded. On the surface, this does not seem fair. Sexually transmitted infections can affect any sexually active individual, regardless of their orientation. HIV and Hepatitis B are also found in the heterosexual population.

It is important, however, to look at how statistical modelling is done: projections are based on research about what happens across populations and the truth is that men who have sex with men (MSM) are far more likely to contract HIV during the course of their regular sex life than men who have sex with women.

Despite this, the LGBT rights charity Stonewall continues to push for a fair donation system based on the real risks a potential blood donor poses. A spokesman said: *"Screening all donors by sexual behaviour rather than by sexual orientation would increase blood stocks in times of shortage and create a safer supply by giving a more accurate, non-discriminatory assessment."*

So, is it time to reconsider?

Over the last 10 years, there has been a 40% drop in the number of people donating blood. Blood products cannot be stored indefinitely, so a regular supply of donors is needed. Over 7,000 blood donations are taken each day, and the NHS estimate that one in four of us will need a transfusion at some point in our life.

Italy, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Russia and Spain are the only European countries' that do not discriminate: they focus on the sexual behaviour of the person and blood donation is allowed if the donor has not had a risky sexual encounter, regardless of their sexual orientation.

A recent drive by the NHS Blood and Transplant service for more people to

donate blood has led to the eligibility criteria for donation being scrutinized once again.

The department of blood has revealed that UK blood is safer since the lifetime ban on gay men donating was thrown out in 2011: two new significant data sets indicated that the risk to blood safety from gay male donations had decreased since the policy changed in the UK.

Whilst this rule is controversial, and will continue to ignite debate, at present, many health experts recommend that it is supported by medical evidence, and aims to protect all patients in their time of need. Activists state that the rules, introduced at the height of the AIDS crisis, do not reflect modern screening capabilities and the government has now confirmed it will review the ban gay and bisexual men donating blood.

Such is the strength of feeling among some campaigners that a group called Freedom To Donate has been established to launch a nationwide campaign on securing a review into blood donation guidelines. The group believes that advancements in screening processes and immunisation levels since the 2011 12-month deferral decision was taken, mean that it is time to review the decision.

Freedom To Donate is urging people to sign a petition calling on the UK Government to “Re-consider the current blood donation guidelines in relation to those individuals classed as MSM (Men who have had Sex with Men), CSW (Commercial Sex Workers) and Intravenous Drug Users.”

<http://www.freedomtodonate.co.uk>

See the National Blood Service website for more information on MSM donating blood in the UK:

<https://www.blood.co.uk/who-can-give-blood/men-who-have-sex-with-men/>

Young People's Social Group

GAY-GLOS Aims to provide a safe meeting place for LGBT young people (and those exploring their sexual orientation) aged between 14 to 18 years old in the county of Gloucestershire.

We meet 12:00 midday to 3:00pm every second Saturday in Gloucester. The group is free to join and we are able to help those who need it with transport costs.

Contact via our Website www.gay-glos.org or email to youth@gay-glos.org or leave a message on 07903 472899 and we will call you back.

GGLC Membership Payments

GGLC members have 4 choices when paying their membership,

- 1 BACS
- 2 CASH
- 3 Cheque
- 4 Pay-Pal

Our preferred method of payment is via BACS for those who use internet banking, this way we get our money promptly and the members don't have to wait for their cheques to clear the bank.

Cash and cheques can be paid in person at any meeting, however due to us only meeting once a month now, cheques may not be paid into our bank very quickly and could possibly take a few weeks before they clear the member's bank.

The other option is to pay by Pay-Pal but by using this method GGLC lose a percentage of the money through administration costs. So please pay by BACS if you can or cash at our meetings.

Many Thanks, Julie, Treasurer.

Meal at Fairview Garden Centre

After the very successful Afternoon Tea, Luke at Fairview GC has agreed to provide an evening meal. A menu is available from Chris D. via email. Orders and payment are required advance of the date of Wednesday July 19. The meal will be at 7.00 pm prompt. Chris will collect the cash and choices at the Meetings, and if you want to come but will not be at the Meetings, something can be arranged!

Graham, Editor

"Wicked" in 2018 at the Bristol Hippodrome

A visit to the theatre to see this splendid performance is being organised. It will be on Wednesday 7th Feb 2018 at a matinee performance. The cost for members would be around £25 for a decent seat.

These things take time to organise and require commitment—payment will be taken in advance and once booked, no refunds will be available. Please contact the Committee for further details.

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

A.G.M. 27TH APRIL 2017

Dear Fellow Members, Friends,

This is not the address I planned on giving to you tonight. After a year of notice that I was standing down at the end of this term, I was expecting some new blood to come forward and take a turn in running our Group.

I was delighted that Howard stood forward to put his name for Chair but no one would fill Howard's shoes as Vice Chair. It was disappointing, but that was the way it was going.

Over the past months I have received several requests, asking me if I was reconsidering standing again. No – I was not considering it. I had made my decision. Two weeks ago before our Committee Meeting our Secretary had forewarned me the Committee were supporting a decision to ask me to stand again. Also that request had the backing of the majority of active members. I must say I found it very flattering that you would still want me after 25 years, but I wasn't completely swayed. I did not want to take any incentive away from Howard who had put himself forward. However, Howard assured both the Committee and myself, rather hurriedly I thought, that he put his name forward as no one else had and would quickly withdraw and be very happy to remain as Vice Chair. A job in which he excels.

Re-assured on that basis, I agreed for my name to go forward, on the understanding I achieved a Vote of Confidence. For those that feel I should finish or it is time to go, must be allowed to have their say.

Regardless of who is the figure head of the Group, what happens to the GGLC and securing its future is what is important. We have seen a year of change which has been some time in the coming.

What do I see as the future of the Group? I believe we are in the midst of a longer period of transition – one in which we have to adapt to what we would like it to be, not necessarily what outside bodies expect of us. We are a Volunteer group and if others groups or organizations have expectations of us then they must support us in whatever way they can. We don't get funding and cannot pay people.

There has been talk for many years of attracting younger people and it still gets mentioned. At Christmas, a young man came along for the first time with a friend. He not only told us that this was for him, but how welcoming we were and he spent a pleasant evening chatting, in particular to Mark and Robbo. A few days later, he e-mailed Peter saying thank you for looking after him and what a relief it was to find a group like ours. I would say that sort of feedback is success. Wouldn't you? Have we seen him since? No.

We need to be realistic. Life and lifestyle change and will continue to do so. The

Gay world is more inclusive at the moment, but more and more we hear of people longing to be part of a gay community and social scene. Mixing with the everyday world is very inclusive on paper but at the end of the day, people like to relax with their own kind. I think this is why there has been such a surge in people meeting on line – for whatever they are seeking. Everyone needs human contact and at some point, people are going to get lonely and seek out companionship. That is when we will come back into our own.

In the meantime, My view is that we need to run the group successfully for our current members – the tried and tested. It does not stop us taking part with other groups or exploring other areas if we want to. If we attract new members that is a bonus. Perhaps to “go with the flow” for a while will do no harm. With the gay scene changing about us, we will find our own level and where we stand within the gay community in the County. Time will tell whether we survive or dry up. The worst that can happen is the membership falls to a level where there is no point in the group continuing.

We have already moved from weekly to monthly meetings – I am disappointed that active members do not make more of an effort to attend the new schedule. We are also struggling to make up numbers for social events which is surprising. Even the popular skittles was cancelled through lack of interest. I don't think it is the wrong event but that people just don't want to put the effort in. So be it, the members dictate what happens to the Group not the Chair or Committee. We can use our efforts to put on events, but if members cannot be bothered to respond or attend, then we will stop arranging events.

There is no doubt that those who attend enjoy themselves. We can only do our best.

You might think this sounds rather lacklustre. But, we have to adapt and change as we go along. This is the best way I see for us to secure a future that validates our existence and makes us a community worth the amount of effort we put into it.

An interesting time is ahead, starting with more proposed changes you will hear about later.

I cannot finish without thanking on your behalf the sterling work all our Committee have undertaken during the year. The men and women use their own time and money to attend Committee Meetings and in research and checking venues, they pay the same for all events as you do and the first to put their hand in their pocket. Please, show your appreciation in the usual way.

Thank you for listening.

Michael
Chair GGLC
27/04/2017

Gilbert Baker created the Rainbow Flag which debuted at San Francisco Pride in 1978.

27 May 2017

by Rafaella Gunz

Gilbert Baker, creator of the iconic rainbow flag, died on 31 March at age 65.

GSN spoke with Charley Beal, film art director and a close friend of Baker's, about the 14 June memorial of Baker's life and legacy.

Baker, a vexillologist, first created the flag in 1978. According to Beal, Baker created the flag as a symbol of gay pride because he was disillusioned with the other images used at the time, such as the pink triangle which was a relic of World War II but later reclaimed by the LGBTI community.

The flag originally had eight colors, but hot pink and turquoise were later removed due to the lack of availability of those dyes. The now-famous flag's final version consists of six colors: red to represent life, orange to represent healing, yellow to represent sunlight, green to represent nature, indigo to represent harmony, and violet to represent spirit.

Beal met Baker in 1994 when he made a mile-long rainbow flag for Stonewall 25, the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots that started the Pride movement. Pieces of that flag were sent around the world, thus helping to internationalize the rainbow flag as a symbol of gay culture. This was a key moment in Baker's life, as he was then invited to travel all over the world to promote the flag.

People would always question why Baker never sought any money or copyright for the flag. Though technically one cannot copyright a flag, Baker never even wanted to try. To him, the flag was a gift to the LGBTI community. One of Baker's proudest moments was upon the 2015 Supreme Court decision to legalize same-sex marriage. Monuments all over the world, from the White House to the Eiffel Tower, were lit up in Baker's signature rainbow colors in celebration.

Baker was a passionate activist, creating banners for all types of social movements. In 2013, he created a 'PUSSY POWER' banner in solidarity with the Russian feminist punk band, Pussy Riot, who were treated horribly by the anti-LGBTI Putin regime. In 2014, he bolstered the Irish LGBTI community's protests of their exclusion at the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade by creating a 'BOYCOTT HOMOPHOBIA' banner.

'I broke down. I crawled under my bed and screamed and cried. I was crushed,' Beal recalls upon hearing the news Baker had passed. 'He was my closest friend. I was always there for him and he was always there for me.'

Beal is working with Baker's family to put together a memorial march, taking place on Flag Day (14 June). As a flag designer, Flag Day was an important holiday to Baker. The NYC march will start at Stonewall Inn on Christopher Street and continue to the Christopher Street Docks. Members of Baker's family, as well as other LGBTI activists, will be speaking.

Even if one cannot attend the event, Beal hopes that people all over the world will raise a rainbow flag on 14 June in Baker's honor.

For younger members of the LGBTI community who may not know of Baker, Beal wishes for them 'to connect to [Baker's] philosophy of hope,' as the pride flag was a symbol of hope for Baker. Beal also encourages those in the LGBTI community to honor Baker's legacy by becoming an activist and taking to the streets, which is what Baker spent his life doing.

Article originally from Gay Star News

Inclusive Church

The Inclusive Church has asked us to list some of their services. They are a registered charity now including multiple church denominations, and further information regarding them can be found on the web.

June 18th Glos St Paul and St Stephen corner of Stroud Rd and Park End Rd
GL1 5AN

July 16th and Aug 20th St Bartholomew's Church, Cam Pitch, Lower Cam,
Gloucestershire, GL11 5JX

Sept 24th St Peter and St Paul, Northleach (7pm).

This information is provided for our members who may be interested, and does not constitute any endorsement of any particular faith or belief.

Check out this link to Cheltenham Borough Council's new LGBT page!
http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/200041/equality_and_diversity/295/communities_of_interest/6

NORTH SOMERSET LGBT FORUM

This group is a voluntary forum whose aims are to provide a voice for the LGBT Community of North Somerset and to be the "go" organisation for the LGBT for their community. They are looking at social activities and celebration of LGBT life and ideas of what the community would like to see happening, particularly in and around Weston Super Mare. If you can help or are interested please get in touch with Nigel at nigel.nslgbtforum@gmail.com

Debating the British Empire's 'legacy' is pointless – this is still an imperial world

Ibtisam Ahmed Doctoral Researcher, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Nottingham

March 13 saw celebrations for the 40th Commonwealth Day, and the UK is preparing to host the 2018 Commonwealth heads of government meeting. Both these approaches to Britain's imperial heritage are wrongheaded, and the reality of the imperial legacy is both more pedestrian and arguably more dangerous.

The British Empire never really died; it just morphed into a new form. Much of its official architecture may have gone or been reduced to vestiges, but many of its most distinctive impositions remain in place. More than a billion people are still living in countries that criminalise acts of homosexual intimacy via held-over colonial laws, notably the infamous Section 377 which was introduced in 1860 in what was then the British Raj and then exported to other parts of the empire. A vast majority of the 52 Commonwealth member states have retained this toxic remnant – but whatever their reasons, global narratives of decriminalisation often forget where the laws came from. This is just one example to illustrate why nuance is so important.

The sun still rises

Before British rule, governance, law, social structures, and cultural norms across the empire varied enormously. Many social issues were actually dealt with more progressively before the empire arrived, and would even be considered progressive today. To return to the Section 377 example, the pre-imperial Indian Subcontinent did not view sexuality and gender, either legally or culturally. Many regions not only accepted homosexual intimacy but promoted it as a positive and organic part of society. Yet a look at the local discussions around removing 377 tend to focus on homosexuality – not legalised homophobia – as a forward-looking Western import while completely ignoring the realities of history.

The danger here is that the rhetoric of “civilisation” could take hold once again. Empire was often justified as a means of enlightening, and thereby saving, the populations of the colonial outposts. If Western neoliberalism and paternalism can be reframed as liberating tendencies, that false narrative will return with force.

Talking past each other

Discussions about trade, aid, and diplomatic pressure tend to recreate the power dynamics of the past. This arrangement is painfully familiar to the populations who'll be affected. Aid is rarely provided unconditionally, and most conditions are aimed at creating targets based on Western standards of growth and development. Trade deals, as Liam Fox effectively acknowledged, carry the same implicit assumptions of Western superiority.

In short, many of the “past sins” about which power-brokers like Fox declare themselves “unapologetic” are still being committed. And complicating matters further is the historical revisionism that takes place not just in the UK, but in its former colonies themselves.

Many of their governments are all too keen to comply with the postcolonial neoliberal order. And for all that their nationalist parties claim ownership of traditional, pre-imperial past glories, they nonetheless rely heavily on Western support and decline to uproot the imperial elements of their legal and political systems.

The legitimacy these parties enjoy is often nothing to do with pre-colonial culture, but instead closely entwined with the imperial legacy. Look at how the conservative governments of British allies Malaysia and India have recently suppressed LGBTQ+ expression in the name of traditional values even though those values are imperial, not traditional.

All the while, the voices that need to be elevated most are silenced, and marginalised groups in Britain's former colonies are marginalised even further. Whether counted as victims of oppressive regimes or traitors to national pride, they are deprived of agency and subjugated to the status quo.

Shamefully, the politics of neocolonialism and postcolonialism as currently practised fail to deal with the nuances of these people's positions; instead, one side simply reiterates the white saviour narrative while the other rejects it.

Article submitted by John B

Editor—Please note this is a discussion article and may not represent the views of the membership or Group.

Membership Update

At this time we have fifty four group members which unfortunately, once again, is one down on the last Newsletter report March 2017.

We have one new member Paul C. A very warm welcome to you Paul.

Rob P

Membership Secretary.

Below is a letter sent on our behalf to the MPs for Cheltenham and Gloucester regarding the situation in Chechnya.

Editor

Dear Mr Chalk,

CHECHNYA DILEMMA

I am writing to you as Chair of Gloucestershire Gay and Lesbian Community Group.

In the last week there have been reports of systematic violence targeting gay men in Chechnya. According to human rights groups and local media, gay men are being intimidated, imprisoned and tortured by Chechnya authorities. UK media is now sharing reports that people are being detained in a former military base close to Grozny. Reports also suggest that men have been killed.

Chechnya's authorities have denied such actions could have taken place because "you cannot arrest or repress people who just don't exist in the republic". These people do exist, at the moment, but beaten, butchered and fewer in number.

I am pleased that Baroness Anelay, the UK's Minister of State for the Commonwealth and UN, has condemned the persecution. However, the UK must go further. These are not just the actions of one federal republic independent of Russia, but instead sit alongside Russia's continued violence and repression of homosexuality. This is state-sponsored brutality.

It is not enough for British Citizens to rejoice in our own gradual shift towards gay , we merely shake our heads while others beat their citizens because of their sexual orientation. To do so shames us all.

We implore you to contact the Foreign Office and the Prime Minister to secure the safety of gay people in Chechnya

Yours sincerely

Michael

M J Charlton-Hubble

Chair

GGLC

National AIDS Helplines

"You can ask what you want to ask"

0800567123

Gay & Lesbian Humanist Association (GALHA) http://www.galha.org/	Lesbian & Gay Christian Movement Alan 0117 982 1512 http://www.lgcm.org.uk/	Jewish Lesbian & Gay Help Line Mon & Thurs 020 7706 3123
Gay Bereavement Project Helpline: 020 7403 5969 Tuesday 7.30pm to 9.30pm	Beaumont Society (Transgender Issues) http://www.beaumontsociety.org.uk/	Transvestite Help Line Rita 0117 951 4481
Gay Girls of Gloucestershire 07561 067888 http://www.gaygirlsofgloucestershire.co.uk	Gay Men's Project West of England 0117 955 1000 Wiltshire and Swindon 01793 695 300	Living Springs Metropolitan Community Church, Bath 01172 301170

Gay Outdoor Club

The national website has changed to <http://www.goc.org.uk> so all you out-doors types log on and see what you could be getting involved in!

FORTHCOMING BIRTHDAYS

July

11th Stuart H
14th Rosie G
17th Mark M
22nd George S
29th Anthony B
29th Paul D

August

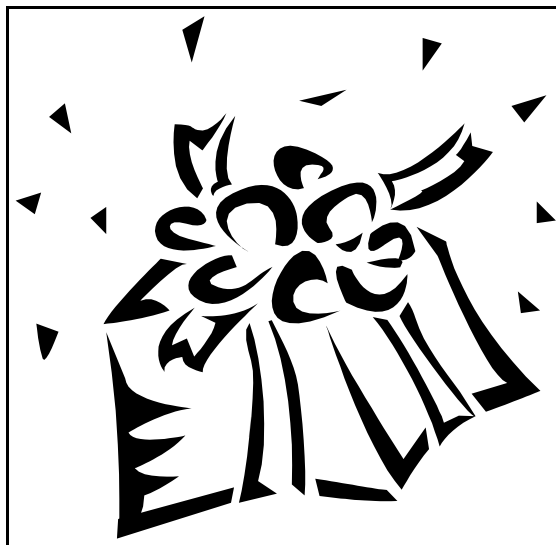
19th Ian V
21st Norina S

September

4th Neil W
8th Jackie J
8th Mike B
10th Graham T
11th Brian H
15th Peter T
19th Paulo L T

October

1st Peter S



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU ALL



GGLC's SOCIAL CALENDAR DIARY OF EVENTS

June

10th Gloucestershire Pride—Shire Hall and Gloucester Park

July

6th Coffee, Chat and Raffle

15th NSPCC Concert at Highnam Court

16th Picnic at Mallards Pike Picnic Area
near to Speech House 1pm

19th Meal at Fairview 7pm sharp, see article

August

3rd Coffee, Chat and Raffle

17th Skittles, Sausage and Chips,
Farmers Club Glos, 7pm (£3 for meal)

20th August 1pm Rounders on Minchinhampton Common

September

7th Coffee, Chat and Raffle

Advanced Warnings and Notes!

28th October Annual Dinner at Gupshill Manor

Visit to Wicked being arranged for February, it will
be a matinee performance.

The meal at Fairview, Skittles, Annual Dinner and
Wicked will be bookings only, with deposits and
Payments In Advance! Contact Committee members for
information.

*The diary is subject to change due to changes in circumstances,
whim, Editor's insanity and attacks by weasels...*



GGLC



GGLC



GGLC

GLOUCESTERSHIRE
GAY & LESBIAN
COMMUNITY

c/o 50 Knowles Road,
Gloucester GL1 4TP

07050 627273

www.gglc-glos.co.uk
info@gglc-glos.co.uk

GGLC

CONTACTING THE GGLC

Gloucestershire Gay & Lesbian Community meets 1st Thursday monthly, from 7.30pm, in Gloucester city centre. A warm welcome is assured for everyone. For further details or directions please phone 07050 627273 or write to :-

The Secretary, GGLC, c/o 50 Knowles Road,
Gloucester GL1 4TP. (postal only)

We also have our own website www.gglc.co.uk and the email address is info@gglc.co.uk - several new members have contacted the Group this way!

Your Committee

Chairman: Michael C-H.

Vice-Chair: Howard H.

Secretary: Peter C.

Treasurer: Julie S.

Membership Secretary: Rob
P.

Member: Chris D.

Member: Richard

Newsletter Editor: Graham V.

Well, you voted for us again, so it's your fault... the "new"
Committee is listed above.

If anyone knows of any new venues opening, please let us know.

IT

Watch this space over the coming months for news on the Website. We are working with a group member who is a professional in this field. We hope you will be able to book online your place on socials, pay for tickets and generally be more interactive with members.

M.