



# GALHA NEWS

NEWS FROM THE LGBT SECTION OF THE BRITISH HUMANIST ASSOCIATION

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## LONDON PRIDE 2014

June 28th saw London Pride create a splash through the centre of the capital. And Galha LGBT Humanists were out in force.

Once again Galha proudly took part in the parade that wound its way from Baker Street to the celebrations in Trafalgar Square. We were thrilled to be joined by many members and supporters from all over the UK, and even from as far afield as Sweden.

This was the second event organised by the new management, and as far as we could tell from our point of view, everything went smoothly, despite the parade being slightly delayed in setting off.

One factor beyond everyone's control was, of course, the British weather. A very soggy start eventually gave way to clearer skies, and no one seemed to let the occasional downpour dampen their spirits. Indeed -

the dreaded drizzle actually gifted us with several spectacular rainbows throughout the day.

Galha chair Richard Unwin said:

"You sometimes hear criticism that Pride festivals have become too 'party' orientated and are not political enough. But actually, for organisations like Galha - who work hard all year round to promote LGBT rights - this is a day for us to let our hair down and enjoy ourselves. The reception and applause that we're getting from the crowd lining the streets is fantastic, if a little sporadic - it's quite clear when we're passing a group of Humanists!

"One thing that irks slightly - the gay Christians are getting more press attention than us because of their giant gay Jesus puppet. We need to build an enormous flying spaghetti monster next year!"



## AWARD DISCORD - NIGERIAN CENTENARY DEMONSTRATION

**Nigerian LGBTs in Diaspora Against Anti Same-Sex Laws, with the support of Galha LGBT Humanists, London Black Atheists, and other LGBT activists, staged a demonstration at the venue of the Nigerian Centenary Awards, UK.**

The demonstration took place on the eve of London Pride, Friday 27 at Waltham Forest Town Hall, Walthamstow, London. Standing outside the venue of the awards, the LGBT/ Human Rights activists unequivocally

condemned the Anti-Lgbt law which stipulates 14 years jail term for Nigerian gays, Bisexuals and Transgender and 10 years imprisonment for anyone who supports LGBTs or advocates for LGBT rights.

At the entrance of the venue, the activists peacefully engaged guests on the importance of equal rights. They also used the occasion to chastise the lawmaker, Hon. Abike Dabiri, for her homophobic support of the 14 year jail term for Nigerian gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgenders.

The demonstrators spoke against the criminalisation of sexual minorities and Nigeria's Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition law. They urged the guests to remember the many Nigerians who are made homeless, beaten up on the streets, and jailed for their sexual orientation.

The Nigerian Centenary Awards UK was organised to celebrate 100 years of the amalgamation of Nigeria (1914-2014) and also give awards to 100 outstanding Nigerians in the UK. The organiser of the protest, Yemisi Ilesanmi, said:

*"The demonstrators are not against the awards but rather we see it as an opportunity to raise awareness of the criminalisation of Nigerian LGBTs and protest the attendance of homophobic law maker Hon Abike Dabiri. The 'Jail the Gays' law has turned many Nigerian LGBTs into asylum seekers and every Nigerian must embrace equality for all.*

*"We are here to speak out on behalf of all oppressed Nigerian LGBTs who have been denied a voice in Nigeria. We are here to put a face on Nigerian LGBTs. We are here to remind you that LGBT Nigerians are not criminals and are worthy of celebration. We are here to remind all those who criminalised us and are turning us into asylum seekers that we will not be silenced. We are LGBT Nigerians and we are proud."*

The LGBT activists chanted "Equal rights for gay Nigerians, Equal rights for everyone" while engaging guests in discussion on equality and LGBT rights. The majority of guests appeared to support the activists.

The demonstrators left the guests with the message "Nigerian LGBTs and LGBT rights supporters are not criminals and we will not be silenced in our fight for our human rights. We hope as Nigeria celebrates its hundred years of existence, its people will also celebrate diversity and do away with homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic laws."

**This article originally appeared on the blog of Yemisi Ilesanmi. Yemisi is a Nigerian woman, resident in UK. She holds a Masters of Law (LL.M) degree in Gender, Sexuality and Human Rights. She is a trade unionist, human rights activist, an author, a poet and sometimes moonlights as a plus size model. She is a passionate campaigner for equal rights, social justice and poverty alleviation. Her debut book 'Freedom To Love For ALL: Homosexuality is Not Un-African' is available in paperback and kindle editions on Amazon. She was the guest speaker at our January 2104 event at Conway Hall in London.**

See more of Yemisi's blog at:

<http://freethoughtblogs.com/yemmynisting>



# JULY EVENT REACTION: DIDN'T YOU USED TO BE DEREK JACOBI?

July's Galha public meeting at Conway Hall was an exclusive performance of 'Didn't You Used To Be Derek Jacobi?'

A brilliantly entertaining one-man play written and performed by **Nigel Fairs**, and directed by **Louise Jameson**. (Best known for her roles in Doctor Who, Bergerac, Tenko, and Eastenders.) Nigel plays all the roles, telling the tale through Leonard and Douglas - two gay men from very different generations - as well as the endearing neighbor, Elaine. Fame, pain, and lives destroyed by religion are just some of the topics explored...

We present here a write-up that originally appeared on the 'Give 'Em The Old Razzle Dazzle' blog:

"Hills, History Boy (Crog), and I had a most unexpectedly brilliant evening yesterday, courtesy (once again) of those lovely people from Galha LGBT Humanists, at the twee Conway Hall.

"For we had booked tickets for a new one-man play they were hosting, improbably titled 'Didn't You Used To Be Derek Jacobi?'. The name alone sounded intriguing enough - but the fact it was produced by none other than Louise Jameson (the sexy savage Leela, assistant

Below: Nigel Fairs, Nigel Fairs, and Nigel Fairs.



to Tom Baker in Doctor Who back in the late 70s) was a potential draw for a "Whovian" like Crog. (Had she actually been there in person, which she wasn't, he would have been thrilled.)

"We were certainly not disappointed by the performance!

"Mr Nigel Fairs is a truly talented actor (and writer, for the play is his work). It takes some stamina to perform alone on stage for an hour and a half - but to change characters (and clothes!) seamlessly while doing so, as the monologues shift from character to character, was pure genius.

"The story is in parts hilarious, and in others tugs at the heartstrings as the lives of two "luvvies", Douglas and Leonard, intertwine over the decades until the latter's death. The sad events surrounding that, and his funeral, are largely commented upon by their soft-hearted neighbor Elaine (also played by Nigel), and "she" has some of the best lines of the whole shebang.

"We were utterly gob-smacked, and couldn't wait to congratulate Mr Fairs on his triumph!"

See more from the blog at: <http://jon-doloresdelargo.blogspot.co.uk>

We also received feedback from several others:

"Excellent performance and very well written script. The script was very tightly written - needed to concentrate the whole way through. And Nigel inhabited all characters despite on-stage costume changes and minimal props. One of the best theatre experiences I have had for a while - including up 'West End'."

**Alistair Beard**

"A brilliant performance by Nigel Fairs in all 3 roles!"

**Robin**

"Had a great time last night! Glad this was my first meeting!"

**Vedi Roy**

Our thanks to Nigel for providing such a splendid, and relevant, evening of entertainment.

If you've enjoyed a Galha event or meeting, or even if you didn't, let us know your thoughts. We're keen to hear your opinions and feedback. Drop us a line at: [Editor@galha.org](mailto:Editor@galha.org)

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Firstly - an apology to anyone who was looking forward to our 'Proud to Serve' Army LGBT event, which we had to cancel at the very last minute. We were contacted by the group just two days before the event was due to take place and told that 'Chain of Command have declined permission for the speaker to attend'... No further explanation has been forthcoming. We do, however, intend to have another attempt at a military themed meeting next year.

We've had plenty of events that have gone ahead though! We're always very busy over the summer period, with Pride season in full swing. We had a fantastic time on the Pride march here in London, and I know that many of you have been promoting Galha at other festivals around the country. (If you're interested in running a Galha stall at your local Pride event, please don't hesitate to get in touch and we'll be delighted to send you promotional materials and help out in any other ways that we can.)

We celebrated the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia with 'Free Speech and LGBT Rights' - a joint event organized alongside freedom of expression group Article 19. This saw a varied panel of speakers and short films, and took place at the Free Word Centre in Clerkenwell. And we were delighted to play host to a special performance of Nigel Fairs' one-man play 'Didn't You Used To Be Derek Jacobi?' in July - a genuinely brilliant piece of theatre that touched upon so much of what we're all about here at Galha.

Below: Our thanks to Theo Gordon for his help running the Galha bar at events!



At the time of writing we're gearing up for the World Humanist Congress, due to take place in Oxford from the 7<sup>th</sup> of August. (Hopefully this newsletter will be out in time to be available there - a big hello to congress delegates who are reading this esteemed organ for the first time!) I'm sure we'll be bumping into lots of you there - we'll be arranging an informal LGBT get-together at a local gay hostelry on the Friday night...

And if you can't make it to Oxford (tickets sold out quite a while back...) then we hope you'll join us at one of our other events - the program for the rest of this year is already shaping up very nicely.

As always, don't hesitate to get in touch and let us know how we're doing. And if you haven't already, there's still time to take part in the great Galha Survey 2014, details elsewhere in this issue.

**Richard Unwin** (Galha Chair)  
[Chair@galha.org](mailto:Chair@galha.org)

With performer **Nigel Fairs** (right)



## TELLS US WHAT YOU THINK IN THE GALHA SURVEY 2014

[bit.ly/galhasurvey2014](http://bit.ly/galhasurvey2014)

Answering these quick questions will help us develop our plan for the future and should only take about ten minutes.

## UPCOMING EVENTS...

### Galha Summer Social

Thursday 28th August, 7pm, Upstairs Bar of The King's Arms on Poland Street, Soho, London.

A summer social - a relaxed evening of drinks and chat. A great opportunity to meet other members in an informal setting. Committee members will also be on hand to answer any questions. Come and join us!

### Living, Loving, and Leaving - How To Celebrate Without God

Friday 12th September, 7.30pm, Conway Hall, London.



The BHA has around 300 accredited celebrants up and down the country providing namings, weddings and funerals for the non-religious. New research published by Stonewall and The Co-operative Funeralcare suggests that LGBT people fear discrimination when it comes to arranging funerals, and a recent study suggests that demand for all types of humanist ceremonies will accelerate even if humanist weddings don't become legalised soon. But with registry offices offering secular arrangements, why are humanist ceremonies so important? **Speakers:** **Steve Emmett** - BHA Ceremonies Training Coordinator, a funeral celebrant and Galha

committee member.

**Mary Porter** - BHA funeral celebrant, BHA Trustee and Galha committee member.

**Janice Thornton** - BHA funeral, weddings and namings celebrant, and Yorkshire Regional Coordinator (ceremonies).

### London Trans Diversity Event

Friday 10th October, 7.30pm, Conway Hall, London.

An event organised alongside our friends at London Trans Diversity. More details to follow soon...! (Keep an eye on our Meetup and Facebook pages for the latest updates - details of these can be found at the bottom of this page.)

### Annual Fundraising Lunch

Saturday 15th November, 1pm. Venue to be confirmed.



Our annual 'posh' lunch. (This will be a ticketed event.) More details to follow - this listing is just to make sure that you all put the date in your diaries!