



## Special New Year Honours edition !!



### Congratulations to

### Jenny-Anne Christine Bishop O.B.E.

**Jenny-Anne, convener of the Sibyls committee, is made an O.B.E. in the Queen's New Year's Honours list for her work on behalf of transgender people.**

There were also four other LGBT advocates on the list:

**Nigel George Warner O.B.E. (*International LGBTI Association's Council of Europe*)**

**Jerry Broughton O.B.E. (*Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays*)**

**Jay Stewart O.B.E. PhD (*Founder of Gendered Intelligence*)**

**Further, Carol Ann Duffy, the first lesbian Poet Laureate, was appointed Dame.**

For decades, Jenny-Anne has worked tirelessly to improve the standing of Trans-people in our society, as well as to help many individuals. It would be invidious to try to tease out individual examples of her activity, and impertinent to attempt a catalogue, but it is worth pointing out the effect over the whole of society of the work of such activists as Jenny-Anne and so many others, amongst whom a special word must be kept for our own founder, Jay Walmsley. By being so reasonable, intelligent, yet single-minded, they have helped bring about a revolution in social attitudes. The older members amongst us have lived through that revolution, and have much to be grateful for. It is far from over—indeed it probably never will be. These improvements in the opportunities, freedoms and rights enjoyed by trans people have not come free of charge. They have been worked for. Hard.

One example of the new reality was the film shown on BBC1 on Christmas Eve, *The Boy in the Dress*. It is unimaginable that such a heart-warming, positive and relaxed film with a transvestite boy at its centre could have been screened twenty years ago. It would have aroused a storm of prurient and prejudiced comment. Not this time though:-

## David Walliams: *The Boy in the Dress* "being different is something to be celebrated"



David Walliams says that while his children's story about a boy who goes to school dressed as a girl is not autobiographical, he wishes some of the characters in the drama had been a part of his childhood. "The characters and story are in part a wish fulfillment fantasy for me. I would have loved to have met a girl like Lisa when I was 12."

The book, *The Boy In The Dress*, was published in October 2008 and went on to become an enormous bestseller. This one-off drama focuses on 12-year-old Dennis (played on TV by newcomer Billy Kennedy). He is an ordinary schoolboy, but deep down he knows he is different from other children.

His parents divorced when he was young, and he is now being brought up by his struggling single father. But when Dennis glimpses a fashion magazine by chance, his whole world is turned upside down. Lisa, described as "the coolest girl in school", befriends 12-year-old Dennis and encourages him to wear what he wants.

He decides to go to school wearing a dress and disguised as a female French exchange student called Denise. If he is rumoured, what will his father, his ultra-strict headmaster and his mates in the football team have to say about it?

Walliams said, "I just had an idea for a story, what would happen if a boy went to school dressed as a girl? I thought it would make a good children's book as it was a story about children. I wanted it to be about the hypocrisy of grown-ups too, which is so frustrating when you are a child."

He hoped the family drama would encourage people to "think more about what it is to feel different. And that being different is something to be celebrated."

Supermodel and friend of Walliams, Kate Moss, is among the all-star cast. "Kate Moss is the absolute icing on the cake," said Walliams. "I love that we have the world's most famous supermodel in *The Boy in the Dress* on BBC1 at Christmas."

It's only fair to point out that the positive outcome might be not entirely unrelated to the fact that Dennis also happens to be an excellent football-player. He has an easier ride as a result, with the ending being pure fantasy—but who cares? Viewers don't seem to have cared - Pleassee the first batch of comments I found online after the screening, at the bottom of the next page.

It seems appropriate to bring the existence of this organisation to your attention—**two events are imminent:**

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- *GC ecocell workshop on Housing and Energy*, **Saturday 24 January 2015**, London. [Book now.](#)
- *Green Christian Way of Life weekend*, **Friday 29 to Sunday 31 May 2015**, Ringsfield Hall, Beccles, Suffolk [Bookings now open](#)

<http://www.greenchristian.org.uk/archives/7661>

## Online Comments on *The Boy in the Dress*

**Bridget Rech** · Easily the best thing I've seen on TV this Christmas... Great story, superb acting

**Donna Lenton** · Brockenhurst College Spontaneous applause here as the credits rolled ...fantastic telly :)

**Julie Kilshaw** · excellent entertainment for the whole family.

**Vivienne Gwilliam** · Derby I thought it was brilliant. David Walliams is great!

**Abby Kenny** · Hucknall, Nottinghamshire Brilliant I was crying x

**Sheila Fisher** · Bede Hall, Billingham Wonderful one of the best Christmas programmes so far

**Amelia Coffen** · Westfield Community School Really really really good!

**Di Slater** · Superb entertainment !

**Roger Barrable** · douze points

It's interesting that it should be so soon after the appointment of the first female Bishop in the Church of England, that another female Bishop receives public approbation.

Prescient cuttings from *The Church Times* : (Thanks to Jay)



You have to be a Bishop to wear purple socks



All was ready for the Bishop's visit



The diocesan information officer had no faith in rural broadband

#### News of the next Sibyls weekend:

In issue 69 of this Newsletter I offered the idea of arranging a weekend, since there appeared to be nothing planned for 2015 on those lines. There was an immediate and enthusiastic response, with 15 people now being booked in for the 22nd to the 24th May at Hilfield Franciscan Friary in Dorset. They have limited ability to cater for full board visitors. We have taken all the available places, and have a further 5 members staying on self-catering terms. It looks as if there is still a healthy appetite for the kind of weekend we have had in the past, which pleases me very much. It will be wonderful, I have no doubt, to take some part in the everyday Franciscan prayer routine. There are still three s/c places available, with three people considering whether they want to take them up, but I am willing to operate a waiting list. Carol [carol.nixon2012@btinternet.com](mailto:carol.nixon2012@btinternet.com)

#### A touching moment

This letter was sent to the Broken Hill High School Principal's office in Broken Hill, after the school had sponsored a luncheon for seniors. An elderly lady received a new radio at the lunch as a door raffle prize and was writing to say thank you. This story is a credit to all humankind.

*Dear Broken Hill High School,*

*God bless you for the beautiful wireless I won at your recent Senior Citizens luncheon. I am 87 years old and live at the St Anne's Nursing Home for the Aged.*

*All of my family has passed away so I am all alone. I want to thank you for the kindness you have shown to a forgotten old lady.*

*My roommate is 95 and has always had her own wireless; but, she would never let me listen to it. She said it belonged to her long dead husband, and understandably, wanted to keep it safe.*

*The other day her wireless fell off the nightstand and broke into a dozen pieces. It was awful and she was in tears. She asked if she could listen to mine, and I was overjoyed that I could tell her to \*\*\*\* off.*

*Thank you for that wonderful opportunity.*

*God bless you all.  
Sincerely,*