

WELSH PRIDE

A Timeline of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender (LGBTQ+) History in Wales



national
museum
wales
amgueddfa
cymru



Glamorgan Archives
Archifau Morgannwg

BY NORENA SHOPLAND WITH ANNE HUDGENS

Acknowledgements

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The Welsh Pride E-mag

This E-mag is a timeline of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBTQ+) history with regard to Wales. It includes people, places, events, publications, films, books, allies – all of which illustrates our rich queer past.

“First funded project to explore a history of sexual orientation and gender identity in Wales”

The timeline is one of the outcomes of a 2011 National Heritage Lottery Funded (NHLF) project *Welsh Pride* hosted by the charity the LGBT Excellence Centre. It was the first funded project to explore a history of sexual orientation and gender identity in Wales.

The culmination of this work was the first Welsh LGBTQ+ exhibition launched during History Month 2012 at the Pier Head in Cardiff Bay. Material gathered during the project was shared with our partners Glamorgan Archives; Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales; and Cardiff Story Museum (now Museum of Cardiff). Six oral histories were also completed and these are now lodged with Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales and Museum of Cardiff.



The timeline was originally intended to be published as part of *Welsh Pride* but unfortunately that did not happen and it has sat on my computer for many years. However, I felt it was too important a source to let it disappear and decided to resurrect and update it, a decision made easier by the generosity of Rhondda Pride who sponsored turning the text into an e-mag.

The content is selective so apologies for any gaps and errors. I hope to expand the content every few years so please do feel free to send in any suggestions; the easiest way is to message me on Twitter. There is a short reading list at the end, obviously there is a lot more available but these are publications I often recommend to people.

I hope you enjoy the timeline and find it interesting. In the meantime, kept promoting our history because if we don't others won't do it for us.

Norena Shopland
Editor



Sample panel from the Welsh Pride exhibition (2012)

A Few Words

A number of people were instrumental in working on and supporting *Welsh Pride* and I have invited a few Wto outline why they felt it was important to take a role in the project.

Andrew White

Director of Wales,
National Lottery Heritage Fund

We were delighted to fund the Welsh Pride project in 2012 to focus on the cultural heritage of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Wales over the previous 100 years. It began chart the often invisible history of LGBT communities in Wales by exploring the social, political and personal aspects of what life was like for LGBT people over the years.

Thinking back to my own upbringing, as a gay teenager I could scarcely believe that there were other lesbian, gay, bi or trans people in Wales, let alone that people like us had been around throughout our nation's long and inspiring history. People like us were not confined to certain towns or cities, classes or professions. Often persecuted, sometimes celebrated, we were always part of Welsh history and continue to be so.

It's wonderful to see the updated timeline launched this LGBT+ History Month. Knowing our history is vital to understanding our present and to informing our future. All too often LGBT+ people have been erased or edited from our history books. This resource brings to life the rich history of queer Wales. It's a great starting point for learning about the people on whose shoulders we stand.

Ceri Harris BEM

(pronouns she/her/hi) – Former Chair of the LGBT ECWales. Currently the Equality & Diversity Manager for Velindre University NHS Trust. Passionate about inclusion, dignity and respect.

The LGBT Excellence Centre, for all its faults, was a pioneer regarding its projects on Gender Fluidity, and LGBT+ Heritage. It opened the doors for many other LGBT+ projects in Wales. It gave a voice to those that had been hidden for so long and it gave us Norena Shopland! Who now gives so many hidden voices an opportunity to be heard.

So, what does Welsh Pride mean to me and why is it so important. It's a rainbow cwttch of comfort, belonging and also fierceness. A Welsh mam, protecting their offspring.

It seems so strange, looking back to think why in Wales we waited so long to have a LGBT+ project to look at Welsh Pride, but that's because we now see LGBT+ history so widely discussed and celebrated. We only have to go back briefly in time to see that was not always the case.

If we were to stop someone in the street and ask them to name an LGBT+ Icon, who would they come up with? RuPaul? Elton John, Ellen? All recent celebrities.

Then ask them to identify a Welsh Icon, it becomes even harder. We are not taught our history. I'm always surprised by the amount of people who have never heard of Stonewall, section 28 or that it wasn't until 1992 that the World Health Organisation declassified same-sex attraction as a mental illness. It amazes me that LGBT+ people don't know the events or names of the people who sacrificed their dignity, authentic lives, so we can have the freedoms we have today.

It was just less than a decade ago, that Wales received funding for the first time to look at Welsh Pride and its beautiful history. Which when you consider the LGBT+ icons of Terrance Higgins, Jan Morris, Ivor Novello, Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby (the Ladies of Llangollen). We are a nation steeped in LGBT+ Icons that cries out to be celebrated and known.

The project was vital to collect people's stories and experiences, to share them for the generations to come. So easily we can forget the struggles that our LGBT+ family have fought to give us the rights we have now.

Welsh heritage is so often overlooked, hidden under the banner of Britishness, but the Welsh have a unique voice and needs to be known and represented. Historically as a nation it has been conquered and subjugated by English law and moral persecution, but it has also led the way too.

Welsh Pride for me is a celebration of perseverance, solidarity and a need to get our stories heard.

The project and exhibition gave a platform for the stories of people who made a difference, who both quietly lived their truth but also banged the drum for the rights of others. Whether LGBT+ or Ally, the Welsh have and will continue to leave its mark on the world and as a proud member the charity that led the project that opened the doors for others. I will always be full of Welsh Pride.



“ It seems so strange, looking back to think why in Wales we waited so long to have a LGBT+ project to look at Welsh Pride, but that's because we now see LGBT+ history so widely discussed and celebrated. ”

Susan Edwards

Former senior curator of Glamorgan Archives

Welsh Pride - celebrating LGBT heritage in Wales - was launched at the Senedd at the start of February (LGBT history month) 2011. Alongside the launch, the National Lottery Heritage Fund awarded a grant for a project to research the history of LGBT people in Wales and celebrate their contribution to the nation's culture and heritage. It was my great privilege to represent archive services on the project board together with heritage partners including National Museums Wales. The project produced an exhibition and the research undertaken fed into the development of new galleries at the National History Museum in St Fagans.

The timeline presented here is another output from the project with a continued relevance today. The history and existence of LGBT people in Wales has been overlooked and hidden for so long that every generation can feel like the first of its kind: the "coming out" which is so much a part of each individual's story could be extended to the entire community. Welsh scholars are working to rectify this and there has been a recent and welcome production of popular histories on the subject. The more knowledgeable we are about our past the more confidence we can have in demanding our present rights and the better we can build for the future. Welsh Pride was intended to raise awareness of the long term existence of LGBT people in Wales, explore the issues they continue to face and challenge discrimination. Reaching into the past to celebrate the achievements of our predecessors is an excellent contribution to greater understanding and the research deserves to be better known and better used.

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Victoria Rogers

Museum of Cardiff

During the Welsh Pride project, we were a new museum. Created from scratch, we had opened just a year before as the new city history museum, telling the story of the people who had lived, worked and played in Cardiff over centuries. Welsh Pride was one of the first projects we were partners in after our opening. As the first major project exploring LGBT history in Wales, it was certainly instrumental for the community. But it was also instrumental for us, helping us forge new relationships, tell important stories, and find new ways of working.

Despite being small in size, our ambitions were (are!) huge. Welsh Pride signalled the start of a long term commitment to Cardiff's LGBTQI community. Our work with the community certainly did not end with the project; the project helped us embed it. As a community-centred museum, our work is never done in terms of representing Cardiffians. Welsh Pride helped us think how we do that meaningfully: not only in terms of the objects we have in our collection, but how we work with the community to make sure they are the right objects; how we celebrate the heritage and culture of the community in displays and exhibitions, but also in events, activities and family fun workshops; how we ensure we are visible allies outside the museum, as well as within it.

Welsh Pride certainly lives on in the Museum of Cardiff, not only in the oral histories it deposited in our collection, but in the ways of working and the commitment to the community that it began.

Lisa Power

Trustee of Queer Britain and author of *No Bath But Plenty Of Bubbles*.

In 2012 I'd lived in Cardiff for a number of years, but commuting weekly to work in London left me with little leisure time here. I'd not made a lot of contact with local LGBT+ groups and was starting to feel the need for connection. On a weekend ramble round the Bay, I came across a Welsh Pride timeline and exhibition in the Pierhead. LGBT+ historical figures? I was intrigued and also delighted to find something like that in an official Government building.

It was a good exhibition, with lots of stuff that was new to me but alas, it was (like so much in our movement) a bit men-heavy. Being an interfering kind of dyke, I overcame my reticence as an English interloper and said so on a feedback form. To my astonishment, I got a reply from Norena Shopland, who remembered me from her earlier work in London.

“ History is important for community spirit ,”

Norena conceded the criticism - and challenged me to help improve things. That response spurred me on to get much more involved in Welsh LGBT+ activism and in particular what is now more widely recognised as LGBT+ historical activism, uncovering lost lives and helping stories get told and places remembered. Thanks to that original project and the relationships that sprang from it, LGBT History Month is now celebrated annually (when we're not overrun by a pandemic) in events at the Senedd and all across Wales. Many of the Senedd talks (including Norena's) are available to view on the Pride Cymru YouTube page. The *Icons* and *Allies* travelling exhibition of LGBT+ historical figures (with more women) which sprang directly from that first exhibition is still a popular hire from Pride Cymru during History Month.

History is important for community spirit, whether it be the vibrant oral history of recent times or the complexities of interpreting times long past for an ignored and stigmatised social group. It's vital to a sense of identity and the recent loosening of rigid identity categories has actually been beneficial to LGBT+ historical research, allowing us to describe without over-claiming. We still have a way to go in uncovering the full diversity of the queer Welsh experiences of the past, but we are getting there, and for me - and many others - that 2012 project, the exhibition and the timeline, was a stepping stone into a fascinating world of stories and people and ideas; a confirmation that we have a past in this land as well as a future.



Mark Etheridge

Curator at Amgueddfa Cymru
- National Museum Wales

Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales was proud to be one of the partners in the ground breaking project *Welsh Pride*. As the first major project to look at the history of sexual orientation and gender identity in Wales it was important that there was a permanent legacy from this work and the oral histories recorded as part of this project are now deposited in the oral history archive at St Fagans National Museum of History.

At about the same time that *Welsh Pride* was getting off the ground, Amgueddfa Cymru had just set up a working group to reassess and reinterpret its LGBTQ+ collection. This led to a greater involvement in events such as LGBT History Month and Pride Cymru; to increased work with various LGBTQ+ community groups; and to LGBTQ+ related exhibitions such as the Ladies of Llangollen exhibition held at the National Waterfront Museum in 2017.

In 2019 I took on curatorial responsibility for the LGBTQ+ collection at St Fagans National Museum of History. I am now actively working on further building up this collection to ensure it is fully representative of all LGBTQ+ people in Wales.

Anne Hudgens

Co-writer of the original 2012 timeline

I became involved with the LGBT History Project through my work as a volunteer at the Glamorgan Archives. For me, my participation in the project had a personal dimension, as I had moved to Wales from the United States to be with my partner Mair. Researching the history of LGBT people and communities in Wales became an important part of acclimating to life in a new country as an LGBT immigrant. The history we uncovered was fascinating, and inspiring, and helped me to feel I had a place here in Wales, that I was participating in a long history of queer Welsh people. I'm proud of my contribution to the LGBT History Project and its contribution to Welsh history as a whole.

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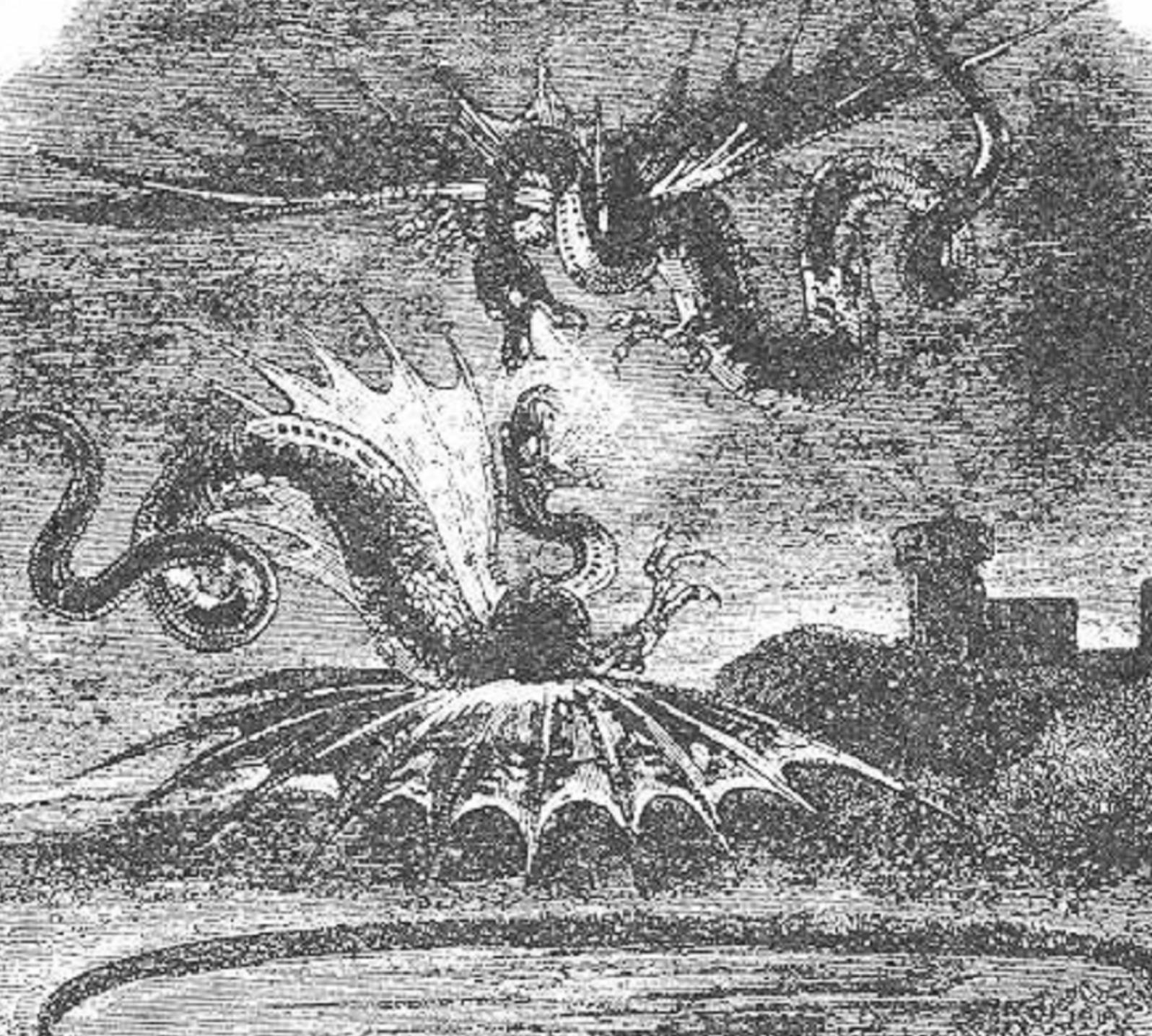
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Rhondda Pride

Rhondda Pride was founded in 2019 by Lauren and Natalie Bowen. The idea was to bring Pride to more remote areas of Wales where the impact is most needed. Now in our third year Rhondda Pride is rebranding as RCT Pride and offering support to ALL LGBTQ+ people in Rhondda Cynon Taff. With a team of dedicated Trustees and patrons including Alex Davies-Jones MP and Stifyn Parri we go from strength to strength. RCT Pride will always remain a non-commercialised community-based Pride event which will be free of charge to attend.

RCT Pride has been successfully campaigning to have Welsh LGBTQ+ history taught in schools. This led us to have the pleasure of working with Norena Shopland one of the leading LGBTQ+ historians in Wales. Pride is very important for the community and the history of Pride is important to all of us. Wales has a rich and varied LGBTQ+ history which is important to all of us. At RCT Pride we feel that this is an important project to support.



A Welsh LGBTQ+ Timeline

Antiquity

The Mabinogian. Celtic cultures of Wales and Ireland are believed to have had homosexual and homoerotic practices, especially among the warrior classes. Mythological stories often reflect this homoerotic and transgender quality. A notable example is the transformations of Gwydion and Gilfaethwy into mated pairs of animals in *The Mabinogion*.

Gwrach y Rhibyn (hag of the dribble) is a Welsh spirit who approaches people about to die and calls them by name. Usually female in appearance and legend she will cry out “Fy ngŵr, fy ngŵr” (my husband, my husband) but will also adopt a male voice and cry “Fy ngwraig! Fy ngwraig” (my wife, my wife). She has been known to appear as a male.



500 - 589

St. Gildas, educated at a monastic centre, probably Cor Tewdws in south Wales, became an influential teacher and wrote *Monastic Rules*, in which he prohibits homosexual practices in his order.

c. 569

Canon 8 of *The Synod of Victory* held at Caerleon, officiated by Dewi Sant (Saint David) 'he who commits the male crime as the Sodomists shall do penance for four years. But he who [had relations] between the thighs, [three] years. However, if by one's own hand or the hand of another, two years.'

942 - 950

Hywel Dda, the powerful Welsh king, institutes legal reforms in his kingdom. The Cyfraith Hywel legal codes prohibit those convicted of sodomy from testifying in court.

Hywel Dda, from a Latin copy of the Laws of Hywel Dda, in the National Library of Wales.

Hermaphrodites were defined in his Laws:

Hermaphrodite: Whether it ranks as a male or a female.

XXXVI O deruyd geni dyn ac aclodeu gór a rei góreic ganthaó, ac yn petrus o ba vn yd aruerho; rei adyweit panyó heróyd y móyaf yd aruerho y kerda y vrent; os o bop un yd aruerha ynteu, kyfreith adyweit dylu o honaó kerdet órth y breint uchaf, sef yó hónnó breint gór: ac or beichogir ef, dylu ohonaó kaffel treftat y gór ae beichocco; os ynteu a veichocca góreic, kaffel or mab y dref tat ynteu.

36. If a person be born with the members of a man and those of a woman, and it be doubtful of which it may make use; some say, that according to such as it principally may use, its privilege is to rank; but, if it make use of each, the law says, that it is to rank with the highest privilege, and that is the privilege of a man: and, if it should become pregnant, the offspring is to have the patrimony of the man who caused the pregnancy; but, if it should make a woman pregnant, the son is then to obtain its patrimony.

Source: Aneurin Owen Ancient Laws and Institutes of Wales (1841)

Throughout the medieval period, church and state laws prohibited homosexual acts and punishment often included the death penalty. Despite this, many well-known historical figures are believed to have engaged in same-sex relationships, including King Edward II, Richard the Lionheart, and King William II.



/ Two male lovers being burned at the stake, 1482

c.1136

Sieffre o Fynwy (Geoffrey of Monmouth) writes *The History of the Kings of Britain*. In Book XI, Chapter 7, he describes Welsh King Malgo as being “addicted” to sodomy.

c. 1150

Gerallt Gymru (Gerald of Wales) is born. In 1194, in the *Description of Wales*, he accuses the Welsh of practicing “wicked sodomitical sin”. In the *Topography of Ireland*, he wrote a description of “a novel form of marriage” between two men, as well as accounts of bearded women and intersex people.

1285

John of Wales dies in Paris. A theologian who condemned effeminacy in men – ‘it is dreadful to be a man by sex but effeminate in behaviour. Too much of various indulgences ... has a gentling and feminising effect, and therefore such things should be avoided.’

1290

The first mention in English law of a punishment for sex between men states:

Fleta, xxxviii.3: “Those who have dealings with Jews or Jewesses, those who commit bestiality, and sodomists, are to be buried alive after legal proof that they were taken in the act, and public conviction.”

[*Fleta, seu Commentarius Juris Anglicani*, (London: 1735), as trans in Derrick Sherwin Bailey, *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition*, (London: Longmans, Green, 1955), p. 145

1326

King Edward II, born in Caernarfon, is deposed by his wife Queen Isabella and Edward flees to Caerphilly with Hugh Despenser, the Lord of Glamorgan. Hugh and Edward were believed to be lovers and they took refuge from the Queen’s army in Caerphilly Castle. They were eventually arrested in Neath and Edward was forced to abdicate. Hugh was charged with treason and interfering in the royal marriage. He was hanged, castrated, drawn, and quartered.

Edward II |



Statue of Gerallt Gymru, St Davids Cathedral |

“ Despite this, many well-known historical figures are believed to have engaged in same-sex relationships, including King Edward II ”



Same Sex Unions not a treaty but a marriage

American academic John Boswell (1947-1994) argued in *The Marriage of Likeness: Same-sex Unions in Pre-modern Europe (1995)*, that in medieval Europe unions between same-sex couples were acceptable under certain circumstances. They may even have been sanctioned by the Roman Catholic Church. One of his examples was taken from 'Topographia Hibernica' (Topography of Ireland), a 12th-century work by Giraldus Cambrensis (Gerald of Wales). However, Boswell's interpretation was widely criticized with many writers arguing that this was not a same-sex union.

The Gerald of Wales piece, originally in Latin, includes the line 'De argumento nequitiae, at novo desponsationis genere,' and the word that caused the controversy is "desponsationis." Throw the word into Google and the results will show that most definitions refer to betrothal, engagement, or marriage.

In both Portuguese and Spanish, *desposar*, refers to marriage, and the English word spouse, meaning a marriage partner, comes from this root. However, most translators of *Topographia Hibernica* ignore the reference to marriage and substitute a very mild definition meaning 'treaty' John O'Meara, in his 1969 version, followed this practice and it is his publication which remains the most used version of *Topographia Hibernica* today.

Yet during O'Meara's time all Latin-English dictionaries listed *desponsationis* to mean espousal, betrothal or marriage - yet he ignored these for 'treaty'. Since then very few new translations have appeared; the exception being a 2000 version in the Medieval Latin Series from Cambridge, Canada, which conforms to the 'treaty' version. Surely it is time that new editions of *Topographia Hibernica* replace 'treaty' with 'marriage'.

The meaning of Christian same-sex unions was considered by Alan Bray in *The Friend* (2003). He considered several cases, including Sir William Neville and Welshman Sir John Clanvowe who had a ceremony of 'wedded brotherhood.' When Clanvowe died on a military pilgrimage in 1391 Neville 'died in grief for him,' and the image on their Istanbul tomb makes 'even the casual visitor pause, for in the engraver's arrangement the helmets of the two men seem as if about to kiss.'



c. 1550

Welsh poet Huw Arwystli publishes *Mab wedi Ymwisgo mewn Dillad Merch* (A Boy Dressed in Girl's Clothes):

*The slender shapely gentle maid
prefers intimacy with her girlfriend
than her boyfriend.
The authority of her chastity;
she'd rather have the love of a girl than a boy.
Incomparably more would she love
her niece, by half, than her nephew.
And for a boy who really desires a girl
it's no use chatting up this one...
"The upper part is a girl" says a suitor,
the remaining part, nevertheless, is a man...*

*Gwell gan dda'i llun, fun feinwar,
neges â'i chares no,i châr.
Awdurdod ei diweirdab:
gwell genti serch merch no mab.
Mwy'n ddigwmpâr y carai
ei nith, o'r hanner, no'i nai.
A hon no thâl ei hannerch
i fab rhy chwannng i ferch...
"Rhan fry'n ferch", medd gordderchwr,
rhan yn ôl, er hynny, 'n wvr...*

1547

William Salesbury's translation of the Bible into Welsh, uses the word *gwrywgydiwr* for the first time as a translation of sodomy.

1533

The Buggery Act: Parliament, under King Henry VIII, makes sodomy (between two men or with a woman) punishable by death. Victims were hanged, and their property confiscated by the crown. Henry VIII made use of his law to prosecute monasteries and convents during The Dissolution. The death penalty for sodomy remained in force until 1861.

Forasmuch as there is not yet sufficient and condign punishment appointed and limited by the due course of the Laws of this Realm for the detestable and abominable Vice of Buggery committed with mankind or beast: It may therefore please the King's Highness with the assent of the Lords Spiritual and the Commons of this present parliament assembled, that it may be enacted by the authority of the same, that the same offence be from henceforth adjudged Felony... And that the offenders being hereof convict by verdict confession or outlawry shall suffer such pains of death and losses and penalties of their good chattels debts lands tenements and hereditaments as felons do according to the Common Laws of this Realme."

Source: The Buggery Act 1533

c. 1632

Anglo-Welsh poet Katharine Phillips is born. The first widely celebrated female poet in Britain, her poetry depicted romantic relationships between women.

“ Henry VIII made use of his law to prosecute monasteries and convents during The Dissolution. The death penalty for sodomy remained in force until 1861



To Mrs. Mary Awbrey

SOUL of my soul, my Joy, my Crown, my Friend,
A name which all the rest doth comprehend;
How happy are we now, whose souls are grown,
By an incomparable mixture, one:
Whose well-acquainted minds are now as near
As Love, or Vows, or Friendship can endear?
I have no thought but what's to thee reveal'd,
Nor thou desire that is from me conceal'd.
Thy heart locks up my secrets richly set,
And my breast is thy private cabinet.
Thou shed'st no tear but what but what my moisture lent,
And if I sigh, it is thy breath is spent.
United thus, what horror can appear
Worthy our sorrow, anger, or our fear?
Let the dull World alone to talk and fight,
And with their vast ambitions Nature fright;
Let them despise so innocent a flame,
While Envy, Pride, and Faction play their game:
But we by Love sublim'd so high shall rise,
To pity Kings, and Conquerours despise,
Since we that sacred union have engrost,
Which they and all the factious World have lost.

Source: *Minor Poets of the Caroline Period.*
George Saintsbury, ed. 1905



1682 - 1722

Bartholomew Roberts, born John Roberts in Casnewydd Bach, was a Welsh pirate who raided ships off America and West Africa between 1719 and 1722. Homosexuality was common among pirates but Roberts forbade either boys or women on board his ship *"No Boy or Woman to be allowed amongst them. If any Man were found seducing any of the latter Sex, can carry'd her to Sea, disguis'd, he was to suffer Death."* No penalty however was mentioned for those smuggling boys aboard. (Source: The Origins and role of same-sex relations in human society by James Neill)

Bartholomew Roberts with his ship and captured merchant ships in the background. A copper engraving from A History of the Pyrates by Captain Charles Johnson c. 1724

1778

The Ladies of Llangollen arrived in Llangollen and made their home at Plas Newydd which they decorated in an ornate gothic style.

Eleanor Charlotte Butler and Sarah Ponsonby from the Anglo-Irish gentry ran away together, despite attempts by their families to prevent them. The local townspeople in Llangollen referred to them as *The Ladies* and they gained a reputation throughout Britain and Europe. Famous and influential people visited and wrote about them including many devoted women admirers. Even Queen Charlotte persuaded the king to give them a pension.

Plas Newydd is run as a museum by Denbighshire Council. Generations of lesbians have visited their home and civil partnerships are now held there. Living Histories Cymru were artists in residence in 2018 and 2019.



Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby, by J.H. Lynch, c. 1880

“ The local townspeople in Llangollen referred to them as The Ladies and they gained a reputation throughout Britain and Europe ”



Jane Hoy & Helen Sander as the Ladies of Llangollen ©Living Histories Cymru

1779

The sons of the Earl of Denbigh are blackmailed for money by clerk James Donally and threatened with exposure as sodomites. Donally was convicted of robbery but, possibly due to the influence of the Earl, was pardoned a week before execution. There is a possibility that the blackmail threat was an attempt by Donally to cover his relationship with the younger son, Hon. Mr. Fielding, who went to live abroad and died unmarried.

“ There is a possibility that the blackmail threat was an attempt by Donally to cover his relationship with the younger son ”

1785

The English philosopher Jeremy Bentham argues for the decriminalisation of sodomy in England (which covered Wales at the time). A political radical, he advocated equal rights for women, the abolition of slavery, freedom of speech, and animal rights. His essay was not published until 1931.

“To what class of offences shall we refer these irregularities of the venereal appetite which are stiled unnatural? ...I have been tormenting myself for years to find if possible a sufficient ground for treating them with the severity with which they are treated at this time of day by all European nations: but upon the principle utility I can find none.”

*Excerpt from Jeremy Bentham's essay *Offenses Against One's Self* (c1785)*

A collection of Welsh travels, and memoirs of Wales (1738)

Edward Holdsworth, Samuel Cobb, John Torbuck

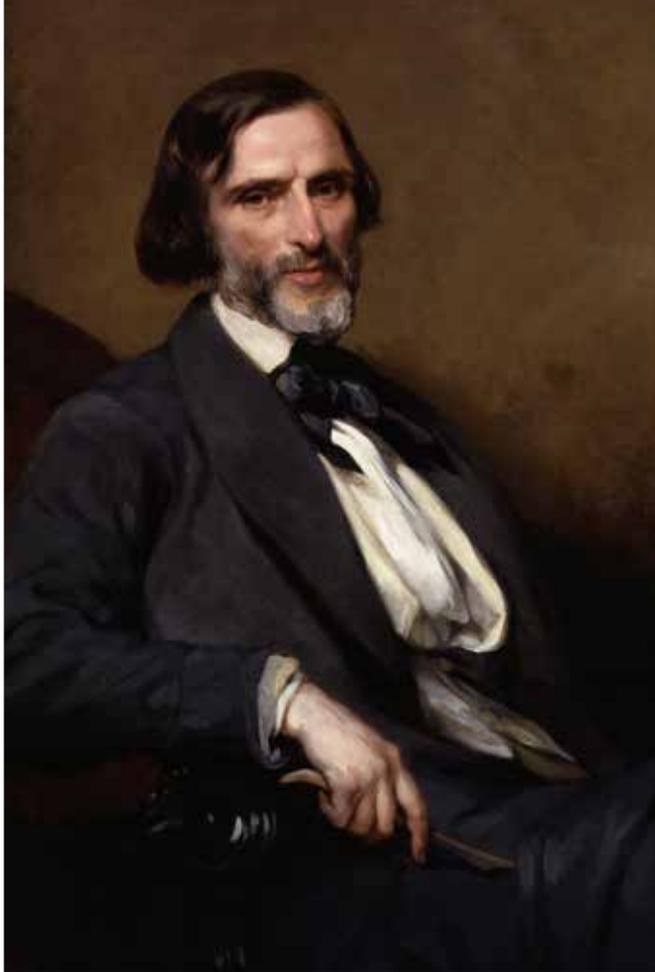
This work, which satirises the Welsh, contains a description of a gender queer individual, a cotquean:

For the Welsh People are a pretty odd Sort of Mortals ... Among rational Wonders, the most remarkable Miracle of this Place was an eminent Cotquean a meer Woman in the Habit of a Man, a king of Mal cut-purs'd Creature, an Epicaene Animal of a twisted Gender, who hath a Petticoat Soul in a Trunk-Breech'd Body, and scandalizeth Virility by Skill in Housewifery. He spins (they say) like a Spider, and makes his Wheel giddy by a swift Vertigo; we observed him to be stately in his Gate when he advanceth up to Spindle; and indeed was retrograde again with no little Gravity. He is a learned Craftsman in the making of Diet, a notable Food-Framer who buffets the Cream till he hath frightened it into a Consistence, and knock'd it into Butter, and afterwards squeezes with Dexterity of Fist. He was endow'd with the Gift of tossing of Pancakes, and had a wonderful Knack at tempering the materials of a bag-pudding. He surpassed the dairymaids in milk-pan accomplishment, and was excellently qualified for a Meal-tub Office. He squeezed the curds with cheese-press bum, and kneads the dough with sulch of elbow. He is a critick at sweeping, and managing the beesom with mighty skill. We could hardly discern any mote of dust, he having dislodged from crevis even the smallest atoms; we were dazzled with the sun-shine of his radiant brass, which was exceedingly enlighten'd by modern cleaning, he being a singular Scowrer, and very knowing and able at sand and Oistershell.

This Hen-Housewife Mortal lived a Monkish kind of life, being cloistered up in a desolate Habitation of a certain Gentleman, who, we suppose, does see him to dwell there to affright the Mice, and to be a Bull-begger to the Rats; and also to terrify a worse Kind of Vermin, which we call Thieves, who are apt to creep through the Mouse-hole of a Window, and to nibble away the Furniture of a dispossessed house: or possible he might abide there to repair its Breaches, and to recover it from its Crazyiness and by the wholesome physick of frequent Fires to keep it in Health, and to persuade it not to tumble, but to remain still a mansion to the family that owns it.

“ We observed him to be stately in his Gate when he advanceth up to Spindle; and indeed was retrograde again with no little Gravity ”

Cotquean.—Quotquean. An effeminate man, man interfering in women's concerns. Du. *kutte*; Fin. *kutta*, *kuttu*, the distinctive feature of a woman, thence as a term of abuse for a feeble womanly man. In like manner Bav. *fud*, of the same original sense, is used in vulgar language for a woman, and contemptuously for a womanish man. E. *cot*, *cote*, a man that busies himself in the affairs of the kitchen.—Bailey. In *cot-quean* the element signifying woman is repeated, as so often happens when the original form of the word has lost its significance.



John Gibson painted by Margaret Sarah Carpenter.

1790

John Gibson born in Conwy to a poor family. By 1817 he had found his way to Rome to study sculpting with Canova in the neo classical tradition. He became a member of the Royal Academy and was commissioned by Queen Victoria and the Duke of Devonshire for his gallery at Chatsworth House. Gibson never married and had an intimate friendship with Welsh painter Penry Williams. A selection of his works can be seen in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

1792

William Jones, an Anglo-Welsh philologist, wrote extensively on Indo-European languages. In *Al-Sirajiyah: The Mohammedan Law of Inheritance* he outlined the inheritance rights of hermaphrodites.

1801

Marged ferch Ifan dies in Nant Peris. A woman described in the press and poetry as an 'extraordinary woman' who lived almost as a man.

1819

Mary Charlotte Lloyd born in Denbighshire. She studied sculpture in Rome with world famous Welsh sculptor John Gibson from Conwy and was part of a sapphist circle of women artists and writers. She later exhibited at the Royal Academy, London. Mary met Anglo Irish Frances Power Cobbe in Rome and by 1862 they were living together in London. Both women were anti vivisectionists and Mary re-mortgaged her London house to support the new Battersea Dogs Home. Frances was an influential and outspoken journalist who campaigned for women's rights and an end to violence against women. They retired to Hengwrt Hall near Dolgellau and are buried together in a shared grave.

*In joy and grief, in good and ill,
Friend of my heart: I need you still,
My Guide, Companion, Playmate, Love,
To dwell with here, to clasp above,
I want you,*

- Mary

From the poem "I Want You Mary", by Frances Power Cobbe quoted in her autobiography of 1904





1839 - 1843

The Rebecca Riots took place in South and Mid Wales. They were a series of protests undertaken by local farmers and agricultural workers, dressed in women's clothes, in response to high taxes on the toll roads.

1831

Charlotte Andrew and Amelia Lolly, originally from Manchester, inspired by the Ladies of Llangollen move into the Ladies house, Plas Newydd, and lived there for twenty years.

1837

Death of Catherine Thomas age 76, at Llanberis. Catherine had been celebrated by Welsh tourists as the famed Catrin of Cwmglas. In her younger days she was rumoured to have greater bodily strength than any man in the country. Many anecdotes are recorded, such as holding a man of 14 stones at arm's length suspended over a quay, rescuing some stolen goods from a powerful young robber. In appearance she exactly resembled a strong man dressed in female attire, with extraordinary deep gruff voice, and strong black beard which she shaved regularly. She held a pretty extensive mountain farm under Mr. Asheton Smith, and was much esteemed as a kind and hospitable neighbour. Charitable to the poor, and exemplary in the whole of her conduct, she had one singularity which was, never to allow any individual whatever to sleep a night in her house.

Source: *North Wales Chronicle*, 14 February 1837

1841

Sir Stephen Glynne was a Welsh landowner and Conservative MP. During the election campaigns of 1841 *the Chester Chronicle* made allegations of homosexuality and Glynne sued. *The Chronicle* was made to apologise.



1845

Amy Dillwyn was born in Sketty, Swansea. While a teenager she developed a close relationship but unrequited love for Olive Talbot. Amy refers to Olive as her wife in her journals. She later wrote several novels including *The Rebecca Rioter* (1880), and *Jill* (1883) which include queer themes of sexual orientation and gender diversity. She became a successful industrialist in Swansea, renowned for her unconventional dress, her cigar smoking and support for women's rights.





1839 Sarah Jane Rees aka Cranogwen

Sarah Jane Rees (1839-1916) more popularly known by her bardic name 'Cranogwen', was a navigator, teacher, poet, editor and temperance campaigner.

She was born at Llangrannog a seaside village in Cardiganshire, the daughter of a mariner John Rees. Rather than take up traditional roles associated with women she chose to go to sea with her father. This was not as unusual as is often portrayed as many families lived on board ships but Cranogwen is one of the rare women who gained an official qualification, a master's certificate, which allowed her to command a ship in any part of the world.

Cranogwen was the first woman to win a Bardic chair at the 1865 National Eisteddfod in Aberystwyth with her winning poem *Y Fodrwyl Briodasal* (The Wedding Ring). She won further acclaim and went on to be editor of the Welsh-language women's periodical *Y Frythones* (1878-1889).

Cranogwen's poems such as '*Fy Ffrynd*' clearly indicates her affinity with women. It is thought that she had at least two significant same-sex relationships. The first with Fanny Rees who died of tuberculosis in her arms, leaving her heart broken. Cranogwen was in great demand as a temperance campaigner and lecturer. She travelled widely throughout Wales and also went on a trip to visit the Welsh in America.

Cranogwen seems to have lived most of her life with her parents at 15 Brynaeron Llangrannog but later in her life she had a close affinity with Jane Thomas, a general servant, also from Llangrannog. Did they live together? Some accounts locate Jane as living next door to Cranogwen but the 1881 Census does not confirm this as Jane lived at 43 Frongoch. By 1891 Cranogwen is living with her father and niece and Jane is on her own at 57 Green Park. In 1911 when Cranogwen is 72 and Jane is 67 they are found at the same address, 41 Green Park, Llangrannog, where Jane was living at the time of the 1901 census. So Cranogwen may have moved in with her although they are shown as separate households.

“ It is thought that she had at least two significant same-sex relationships ”

Years later Sarah died aged 77 at Cilfynydd, Rhondda Cynon Taf the home of her niece. The home for homeless and at-risk young women she was planning to build was completed a couple of years later. She is buried in the churchyard at Llangrannog. It has not yet been ascertained what happened to Jane.

For those lives that were kept hidden, this shows that census returns can be utilised to flesh out people's stories and leaves us wondering how many same-sex people sharing a house were in fact a couple.

1851

Pembrokeshire Herald

EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCE.—On the 28th ult., at Llanfynydd, Sarah, the wife of Evan Jones, shoemaker, gave birth to a child which is a perfect hermaphrodite, and the registrar is consequently puzzled how to register it. The medical faculty have as yet failed to solve the problem submitted to them in this case. Had not this fact been communicated to us from a source which we have every right to rely upon, we should have been inclined to doubt its authenticity, but there is no reason to doubt the correctness of our information.

1856

John Frost from Newport returns home after been transported for his role in the Newport Rising. He later wrote about his time in Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) most notably about sodomy among male convicts.

1861

The Offences Against the Person Act abolishes the death penalty for buggery in Great Britain and Ireland. Instead, those convicted of buggery were to be imprisoned for at least 10 years, up to a life sentence. It was under this law that Oscar Wilde was prosecuted and sentenced to hard labour.

"Whosoever shall be convicted of the abominable Crime of Buggery, committed either with Mankind or with any Animal, shall be liable, at the Discretion of the Court, to be kept in Penal Servitude for Life or for any Term not less than Ten Years..."

Whosoever shall attempt to commit the said abominable Crime, or shall be guilty of any Assault with Intent to commit the same, or of any indecent Assault upon any Male Person, shall be guilty of a Misdemeanor, and being convicted thereof shall be liable, at the Discretion of the Court, to be kept in Penal Servitude for any Term not exceeding Ten Years and not less than Three Years, or to be imprisoned for any Term not exceeding Two Years, with or without Hard Labour."

Text from the 1861 Offenses Against the Person Act

1862

Pembrokeshire Herald

CHARGE OF INDECENCY.

John James and George Hughes were charged with indecent conduct at Saint Thomas Green, on the morning of Good Friday. Mr W. John appeared for the prosecution. The accused denied the charge. The magistrates, after hearing the evidence (which is unfit for publication), adjourned the case till the next sessions, for the attendance of additional witnesses.

1863

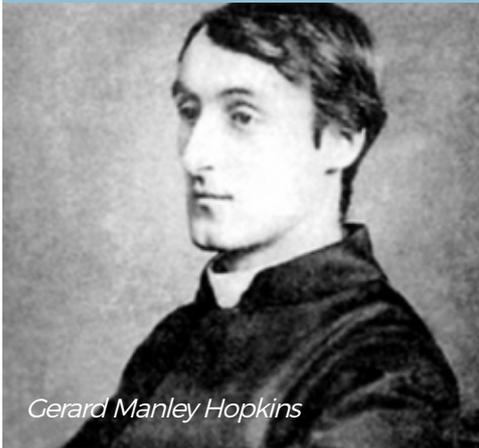
Welshman

AGRICULTURE.

FREE-MARTIN.—Should a heifer, being a twin calf, the other being a male, be brought up for breeding purposes? The breed is a valuable one.—[Free Martins are almost invariably hermaphrodites, and such will not breed. There have been instances of animals—a twin heifer calf, the other being a bull calf—breeding. Therefore you may allow a bull access to the heifer when the animal reaches the age of one year.]

1874 - 1877

English poet Gerard Manley Hopkins studies at St Bueno's, Tremeirchion, near St Asaph North Wales. A Jesuit priest, he struggled with his sexuality all his life and many of his poems have homoerotic themes.



Gerard Manley Hopkins

1875

Henry Cyril Paget, 5th Marquess of Anglesey, was born. He lived a flamboyant lifestyle and often cross-dressed. H. Montgomery Hyde called him the 'most notorious aristocratic homosexual at this period'. In 2016 Seriol Davies immortalised him in a musical, *How to Win Against History*.



Henry Paget

1876

Artist Gwen John was born in Haverfordwest and spent her childhood in Tenby. She lived in London and Paris and throughout her life she was attracted to people of both sexes.



Gwen John



Penry Williams

1882

Penry Williams (1800-1882) born in Merthyr Tydfil to a house painter. He showed talent as a painter of local Welsh scenes from an early age and trained in London. From there he went to Rome where he painted highly successful scenes of Italian countryside and people. He met the Welsh sculptor John Gibson in Rome and they became intimate friends, travelling and working together. A collection of his paintings can be seen in Cyfarthfa Castle Museum.

Poet and writer George Powell of Nantos, dies. His sexuality is discussed by Dr. Harry Heuser, Aberystwyth University, in *Queer Wales*.

1883

Margaret Haigh aka Lady Rhondda born London raised in Newport. A Welsh peeress, businesswoman, and significant in the history of women's suffrage in the United Kingdom. After her divorce, she had close relationships with Winifred Holtby, the author of *South Riding*, and writer and editor Theodora Bosanquet. In 2018 a musical, *Rhondda Rips it Up* about her life was performed by the Welsh National Opera.



Margaret Haigh

1884

Oscar Wilde visits Swansea. The *Cambrian* noting that 'the attitude which he struck was a singular one, with the chest thrown forward and the head thrown back, and the utterance was clear and distinct, but very languid and effeminate.'

1885

The Blackmailer's Charter: Section 11 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885, commonly known as the Labouchere Amendment, made 'gross indecency' between men illegal. The vagueness of the term 'gross indecency,' which the law did not define, allowed juries, judges and lawyers to prosecute virtually any male homosexual behaviour, leaving victims vulnerable to blackmail.



Portrait by John Singer Sargent, 1881

Mrs Brown, 1884

Matilda Adams, born in Carmarthenshire in 1815, was the daughter of Edward Hamlin Adams (1777-1842) the son of a colonial family in Barbados who had made a fortune during the Napoleonic Wars. Adams had returned to Britain and bought Middleton Hall (now the site of the National Botanic Garden of Wales) where Matilda grew up. Her daughter was the writer Vernon Lee (born Violet Paget) who described her grandfather as 'extremely doctrinaire and moral, an ardent Voltairian who spent most of his time disputing with the local persons and refusing to pay tithes.' She later described her mother's childhood in a loving memoir *The Handling of Words*.

Vernon Lee was born in France, was a lesbian and lived most of her life in Italy. She wrote

one novel set in Wales entitled *Penelope Brandling: A tale of the Welsh Coast in the Eighteenth Century* (1903) which although excellently written has little in terms of a plot.

In August 1882 Vernon Lee visited Llanfair in Carmarthenshire to stay with her cousin Adah Hughes and took the opportunity to visit Middleton Hall. It no longer belonged to the family but she was given permission to visit the house where the portraits of her mother and grandparents were still hanging in the hall.

This visit later misfired due to Lee's controversial novel *Miss Brown* written in 1884. The novel was a thinly veiled portrayal of the Pre-Raphaelite and aesthetic circles popular in the 1880s and caused anger from various individuals who believed they were being portrayed. Adah Hughes also believed that Lee had used gossip she had heard, and people she had met during her trip to Llanfair to populate her novel. The character of Sacha, Adah claimed, was based on a Llanfair local Madame Skariatine whom Lee had heard about whilst visiting. In addition, Adah claimed that Hamlin in the book was based on her brother and accused Lee of a 'very great breach of hospitality.' Lee dismissed the matter writing to her mother, 'the thing is a piece of the usual ridiculous self-importance and touchiness as if all the world had heard of Adah and her brothers and cousins.'

There is no record that Vernon Lee ever visited Wales again and she died in 1935.

1893

Ivor Novello, actor, dramatist and composer, is born in Cardiff. He became famous for his WW1 song *Keep the Home Fires Burning* and was part of the homosexual theatre subcultures of the 20s and 30s, which included Noel Coward. There is a statue to him in Cardiff Bay.

Also born this year is Evan Frederic Morgan, 2nd Viscount Tredegar, a Welsh poet and author. Openly gay, he nevertheless had two wives and was well-known for his flamboyant lifestyle. For more on Morgan see William Cross' book *Not Behind Lace Curtains: The Hidden World of Evan, Viscount Tredegar* (2014).



Ivor Novello

1897

Will Thomas, the noted Welsh female impersonator appears at Pontygywaith.

1897

South Wales Echo

“ NAUSEOUS AND DISGUSTING.”
Jeremiah Sullivan and Isaac Jones, of Maesteg, pleaded not guilty to a charge of committing gross indecency with each other on 5th July at Maesteg. Mr Douglas Lewis (instructed by Mr R. C. Griffiths, Bridgend) conducted the prosecution, prisoners being undefended. Evidence in support of the charge was given by Police-constables Edward Jones and William Jones, William Dupplow, a labourer, and Dr. W. H. Thomas. In defence Sullivan pleaded that he was mistaken as to Jones's sex and was drunk, and Jones, that he was suffering from a peculiar physical malformation, which rendered him different from other men. Prisoners were found guilty, and the learned Commissioner, in passing sentence upon them of 18 calendar months each, said the case was about as nauseous and disgusting as could be well imagined.

THE SAILOR GIRL.



1898

Newport women Amelia Vella who had dressed as a male sailor and went to sea admits being a biological woman.

1901

Rhys Davies, the novelist and short story writer, is born near Tonypany. Although a prolific author he never wrote about his homosexuality.

Tom Barger, a Welsh female impersonator, appears at Amlwch and Llangfni.

1902

Kate Morgan was admitted to Glamorgan County Lunatic Asylum claiming she had been raped by a woman with whom she lived. (Glamorgan Archives DHGL/10/63 Case notes for Angleton - female patients - 1864-1909.)

1903

The Cambrian

HERMAPHRODITE CHILD.
CURIOUS PHENOMENON AT CARDIFF

An inquest was held at Cardiff on Thursday touching the death of Francis Knight, the hermaphrodite child of Henry Knight, commercial traveller, Penylan-road.

The mother said the child, which had been delicate from birth, was so formed that it was impossible to tell whether it was a boy or girl.

Dr. Boyd, who made a post-mortem examination, said death was due to a clot of blood on the aorta.

A post-mortem was the only means of ascertaining the sex of the child, which he found to be a girl. A verdict of "Death from natural causes" was returned.

1906

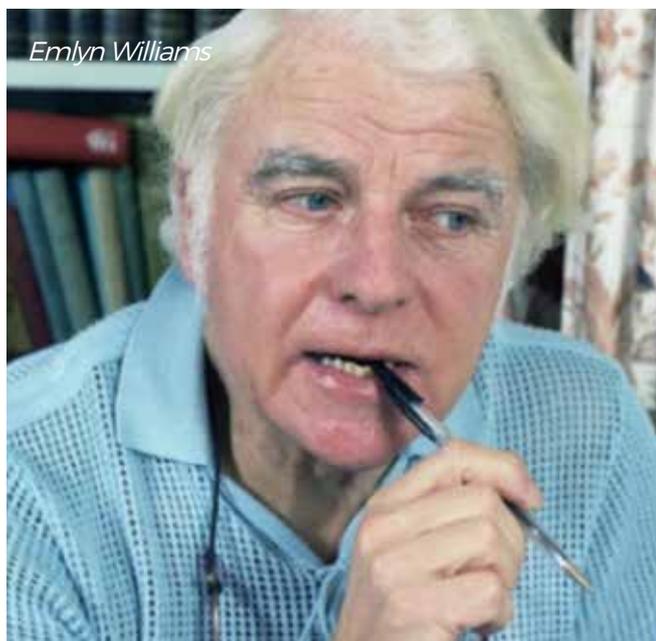
Openly bisexual actor and playwright Emlyn Williams is born in Flintshire. He goes on to outline his life in two autobiographies.

1907

Female impersonator, Will Pritchard, 'delighted' the audience at Aberdare with the song 'Men, men, men.'

1909

American writer Jeannette Augustus Marks, who had a 48-year relationship with Mary Emma Woolley, publishes *Through Welsh Doorways* a collection of stories collected while hiking in north Wales.



Emlyn Williams



Abergavenny Chronicle

1900 Stuart, the Male Patti appears at Swansea Empire

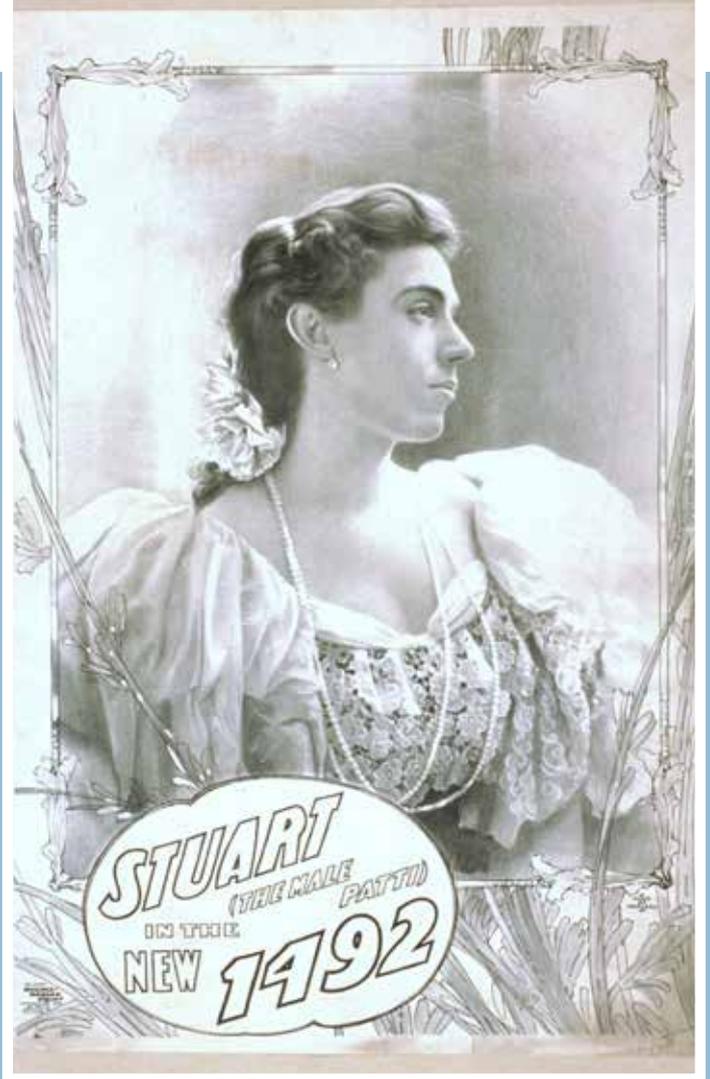
The *South Wales Daily Post* had a chat with an American 'famous artiste' – Stuart, the Male Patti which is the only recorded interview with Stuart.

'What do I think of English and Welsh audiences?' asked the *Post's* journalist and Stuart replied, 'I think they are very kind indeed and I have the same to say of the folk of Cardiff and Swansea.'

The journalist continues: "Stuart, is an artiste to his fingertips. He is so much so that having so long performed as a female impersonator, his mannerisms have become quite effeminate. He wears his female attire with admirable grace, and even after talking to him for an hour you find it difficult to persuade yourself that he is a mere man. A gentleman of artistic instincts, he goes into raptures over the historic remains in the Old World, and it is interesting to note that he considers Cardiff Castle equal to anything in Europe."

Originally Everett Stuart a former postal worker in Wichita, Kansas. He joined the McIntyre & Heath minstrel show in 1887 and became known by his stage name "Stuart, the Male Patti" – in reference to Adelina Patti a famous coloratura soprano (who made her home in Wales at Craig-y-Nos in the Brecon Beacons).

When Stuart appeared in Cardiff the *Evening Express* reassured its readers that although his "soprano singing is almost too realistic ... he takes care to prove his identity."



1911

Swansea man Albert Roe is implicated in the suspicious death of his lover Eric Trevanion in Brighton. In court, evidence of homosexuality is suppressed by the Public Prosecutor, the judge and the Home Office physician (who later appeared for the prosecution at Radclyffe Hall's Well of *Loneliness* trial). Albert Roe's story is told in *The Veronal Mystery* (2020) by Norena Shopland.

Albert Roe

1912

Rachel Barrett born in Carmarthen becomes editor of *The Suffragette* a key figure in keeping the newspaper in print despite the Home Secretary's efforts to suppress it. She and I. A. R. Wylie had a close relationship and in 1928 were supporters of their close friends Una Troubridge and Radclyffe Hall during the trial of *The Well of Loneliness*.

1918

Anglo-Welsh poet Wilfred Owen is killed in action in France during World War I. His poetry described his homoerotic relationships with fellow soldiers.

1922

Dr. Mary Louise Gordon wrote the book, *Penal Discipline* (1922) in which she recalls helping an inmate who was frequently arrested for stealing men's clothes. The inmate told her that 'she felt it impossible to live as a woman, but could live as a man, and enjoyed men's work'. Gordon provided her with men's clothing and a train fare to South Wales where she obtained work as a coal miner. In 1936, Gordon wrote the historical novel *Chase of the Wild Goose*, based on the Ladies of Llangollen; and she and her supposed partner Violet Labouchere erected a marble relief of the Ladies at St. Collen's Church in Llangollen where they were buried - the relief modelled not on the Ladies but on themselves.

1924

Bisexual poet Edward Prosser Rhys wins the national Eisteddfod crown held at Pontypool with his poem *Atgof* (Memory) detailing his relationship with a man, possibly Morris T. Williams, the husband of Kate Roberts. It proved very controversial and has not been reprinted. The complete poem, with English translation, appears on the *Queer Wales* site.

1928

The Well of Loneliness, the first openly lesbian novel by Radclyffe Hall, is published amidst great controversy and branded obscene by a judge. Stephen Gordon's love in the book is Welshwoman Mary Llewellyn.



Rachel Barrett



Wilfred Owen



Nina Hamnett



Portrait of Cedric Morris painted by New Zealand gay artist Frances Hodgkins.

1932

Nina Hamnett, born in Tenby, publishes *Laughing Torso*, a tale of her flamboyantly unconventional, and openly bisexual life. This tale of artist Nina's bohemian life in London and Paris became a bestseller in the UK and US.

The film *The Old Dark House* is set in Wales and stars English bisexual actor Ernest Thesiger playing "a haughty, weak and effeminate Horace Femm, a member of a grotesque and eccentric family who live in isolation with several skeletons in their closet." (*Gay Times*, March 1992)

1933-1935

Welsh Guardsman Tony Hyndman is partner to poet and novelist, Stephen Spender. Their relationship is described in Spender's autobiography, *World Within World*.

1936

Kate Roberts, known as 'Queen of Welsh Literature' writes what is considered her masterpiece, *Traed mewn Cyffion* (Feet in Chains). A 2011 biography by Alan Llwyd suggests she was bisexual.

1937

Welsh painter and horticulturist, Cedric Morris, opens the East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing at Dedham with his partner Arthur Lett-Haines. Numerous queer artists enrol including Lucian Freud and Maggi Hambling.

1939

Female impersonator Tom Davies returned to his home town of Blaengwynfi. The only Welsh drag artist of the time to leave written memories of his life.

Mary Francis Vivian Lobb, a farmer, dies and leaves her archive to Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru / National Library of Wales. It contains details of her life with her partner of 22 years, May Morris, an important figure in the Arts and Crafts movement.

1941

Noel Coward writes *Blithe Spirit* while staying at Portmeirion.

1942

Micky Burn is held prisoner in Colditz. In his autobiography, *Turned Towards the Sun*, he discussed his bisexual love affairs, including Guy Burgess. He later retired to North Wales.

Angus McBean, a Welsh photographer who revolutionised portrait photography, is jailed for four years for criminal acts of homosexuality.

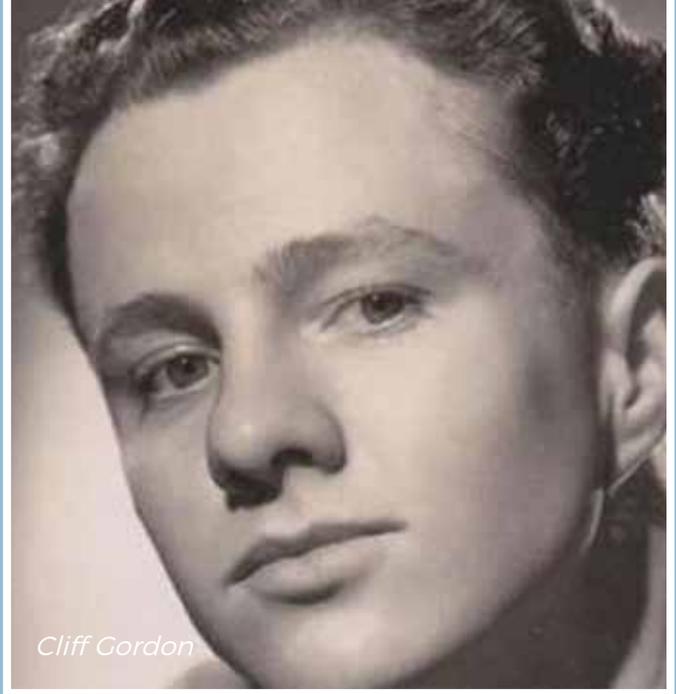
The Abergavenny Witch Hunt takes place when 20 men, including Cliff Gordon, are put on trial for homosexuality. The full story is told in *The Abergavenny Witch Hunt* (2014) by William Cross.

1950

Sue Butterworth born in Llandudno. Educated at Penhros School, she went on to co-found Silver Moon Bookstore, a women's bookstore in London specializing in feminist and lesbian literature.

1953

Desmond Donnelly, MP for Pembrokeshire, introduces a motion into Parliament to investigate the law against homosexual offenses. This motion eventually results in the Wolfenden Report.



Cliff Gordon



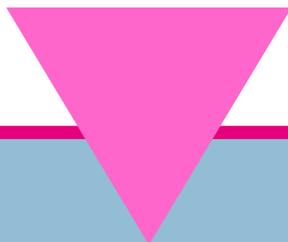
"I consider that the best way of dealing with it [homosexuality] is by a strong Royal Commission which I argue for and support most strongly. In this I think that I am supported by most of the responsible journals of today. If the Under-Secretary agrees to this plea, he will be supported by most of the present-day enlightened public opinion. To stand by at this moment and do nothing about this matter is a grave indictment of our existing society, and I hope that some action will arise out of the short debate that we are having tonight."

- MP Desmond Donnelly



1939 - 1945

Thousands of homosexuals are sent to concentration camps where they are made to wear pink and black triangles. It is estimated that between 3,000-9,000 homosexuals die. The pink triangle becomes a symbol for gay people.



1954

Cliff Gordon, a gay Welsh writer and actor from Llanelly is arrested. He was charged with 'attempting to procure another male person to commit an improper act at Newtown on Nov 13' (News of the World, 31 January 1954). He was then living at Churchill Way, Cardiff, and the incident seems to have ended his career. In 1957 he moved to Rome with Caitlin, wife of Dylan Thomas, mainly as a drinking partner. He died on 16 October 1964 aged 44 years.

1955

Mihangel Morgan is born in Trecynon. One of Wales' leading Welsh-language novelists, he has published two collections of short stories with gay themes, *Te Gyda'r Frenhines* (1994), and *Tair Ochr y Geiniog* (1996).

1957

Goronwy Rees, Principal of University of Aberystwyth resigns. Rees was born in Aberystwyth which he described as a 'priest and professor ridden town'. He went on to a brilliant academic career in Oxford University, moving in intellectual and left-wing homosexual circles. He became lifelong friends with senior diplomat Guy Burgess and pursued a career as a journalist. He was a member of the Wolfenden Committee. In 1956, a series of anonymous articles appeared in *The People* about Burgess who had emerged, (along with Kim Philby and the Cambridge Five) as a spy for the Soviet Union. The articles emphasised Burgess' so called dissolute and homosexual lifestyle and the author was revealed to be Goronwy Rees. An enquiry was held by the University in which Rees was found to have behaved inappropriately for his position. Rees resigned from his post and returned with his family to England where he resumed his journalistic career.

1957

The British Parliament publishes the Wolfenden Report on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution and recommends that homosexual behaviour in adults over the age of 21 be partially decriminalised.

1958

The Lord Chamberlain lifts the ban on plays with homosexual themes.

Novelist Margiad Evans dies. She had a relationship with Ruth Farr and her novelists explore themes of sexuality.

Tony Dyson at Bangor University pens his famous letter to *The Times* calling for the Wolfenden report to be implemented. He and others form the Homosexual Law Reform Society.

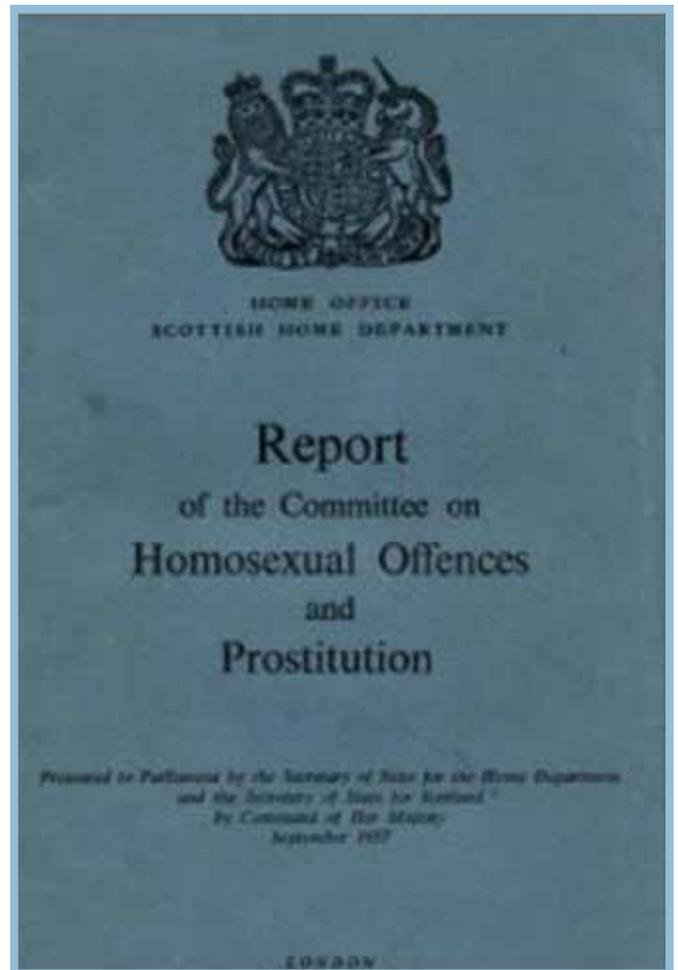
A paper by R.M. Lockley on observations on seals in south Wales, 'there is no territorial struggle between males, and in fact they are often friendly - even with some homosexual behaviour.'

1960

John Randell born at Penarth, Glamorgam in 1918, writes the first thesis on transsexuality at the University of Wales.

1960s

Actor Victor Spinetti, born in Cwm, near Ebbw Vale gains fame from appearing in a number of films by The Beatles. He and Graham Curnow lived together for forty-four years.

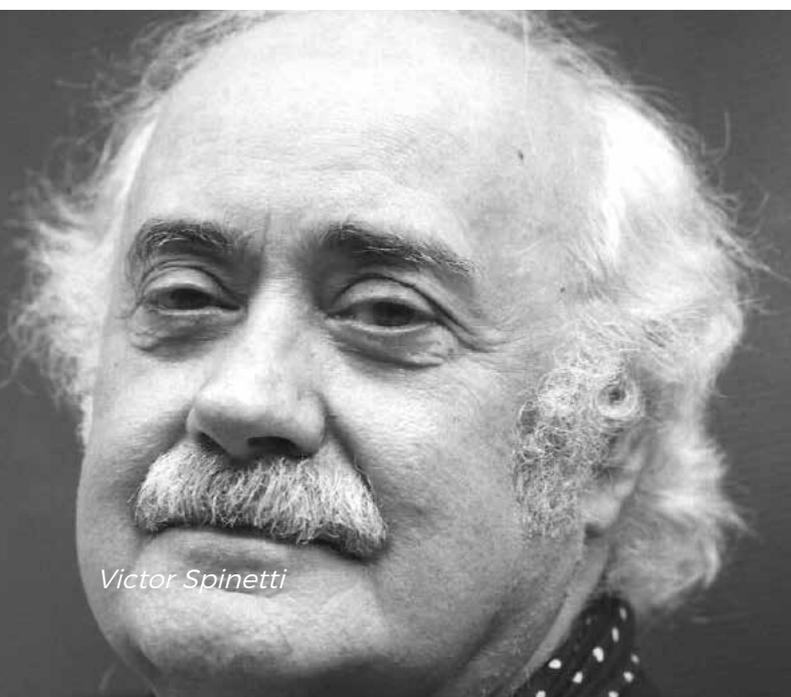


1963

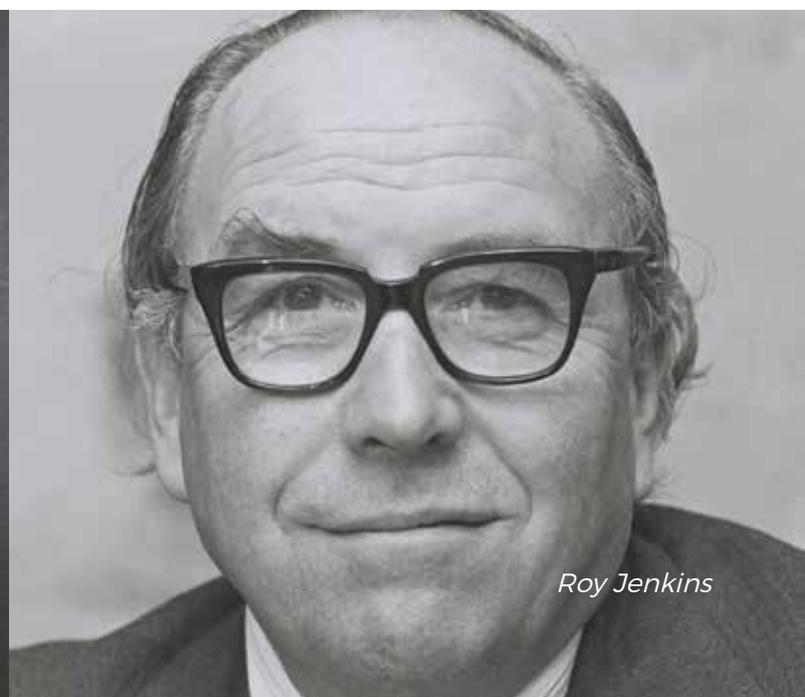
Gay Welsh photographer Angus McBean shoots the photo for the cover of the Beatles' first album.

1964

Griffith Vaughan Williams, born in Bangor, begins a life time of LGBTQ+ rights activism. He was one of the leading members of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE).



Victor Spinetti



Roy Jenkins

1966

Lesbian author Sarah Waters born in Neyland, Pembrokeshire. Her first book *Tipping the Velvet* was made into a BBC TV drama in 2002 and she has subsequently written several highly acclaimed novels.

Bisexual Roy Jenkins, then Home Secretary, circulated a memorandum advocating making time in the House of Commons to discuss the bill to decriminalise homosexuality.

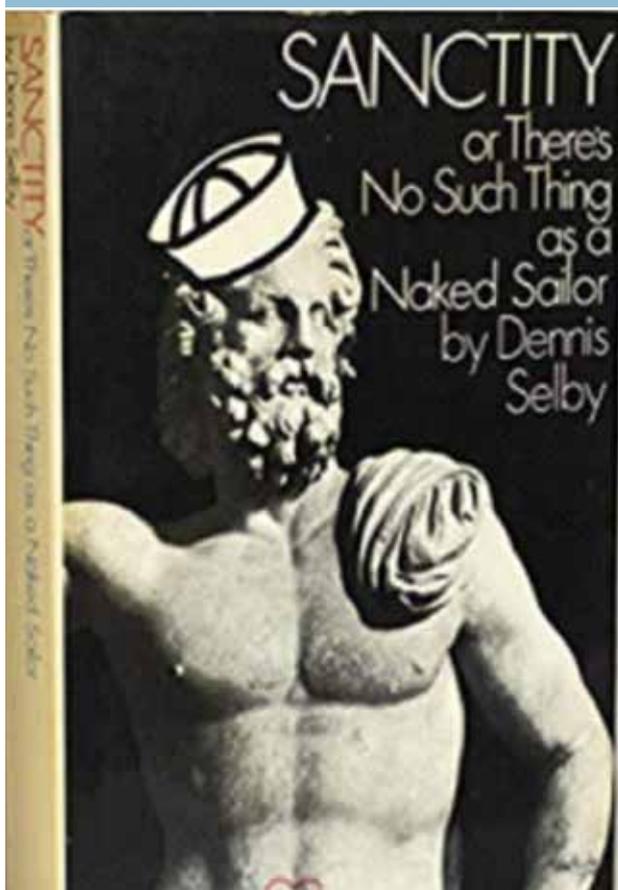
1967

The Sexual Offences Act partially decriminalises homosexuality between two men, over 21, in private in England and Wales.

1969

Welsh psychiatrist John Randell is a leading organiser of *The First International Symposium on Gender Identity* held in London. It is co-sponsored and co-organised by the Albany Trust, which is still in existence.

Denis Selby publishes his explicitly homosexuality novel *Sanctity: or, There's No Such Thing as a Naked Sailor*. It has become a cult work in American gay fiction. Dennis came from Ely, Cardiff and this is possibly the first openly gay novel by a Welsh writer.



1971 - Howard Llewellyn, an LGBT+ activist recalls some of his notable events:

On 1 July 1971, I set up Cardiff Gay Liberation Front (Cardiff GLF) – it lasts until the Autumn of 1972. It met first at 58 Charles Street and then upstairs in the Blue Anchor pub at the bottom of St Mary Street. Cardiff GLF had an extensive programme of campaigning – distributing posters, writing articles for local papers, appearing on local tv programmes, supporting attempts to set up gay societies in the student unions at Cardiff and Swansea universities. Members took part in the first gay march in London on Aug 30 1971 and also campaigned against the Festival of Light and David Reubens awful book *Everything you wanted to know about sex*. Ken Follet (now a famous novelist) wrote an article about Cardiff GLF for the *South Wales Echo* in 1971 when he was a reporter.

1972 A Cardiff branch of the Campaign for Homosexuality (CHE) is set up and the GLF is morphed into CHE. The Cardiff CHE group met at Chapter Arts Centre but Sidney Doxey a Cardiff Councillor objected and stopped the group meeting there.

8 September 1973, The Campaign for Homosexuality holds a national conference in Cardiff at University College and launches its Educational Campaign

1997-98 I set up the South Wales Gay Teachers Group – unfortunately the group folded in 1998 due to lack of interest and the fear that gay teachers had of attending meetings. The appearance of gay clubs meant that gay persons became less interested politically although some did campaign because of the AIDS crisis.

1998- 2008 I represented Wales on the National Union of Teachers national LGBT committee.

2001 A conference on homophobia is held in Cardiff City Hall – this becomes an annual event.

2001 An attempt was made by Dean Williams to set up a Wales TUC gay and lesbian steering committee but this failed.

2002 Debbie Rees, I, and a few others revive the Wales TUC gay and lesbian steering Committee – it becomes well established and changes its name to the Wales TUC LGBT Committee and eventually becomes a fully constituted committee of the Wales TUC. I succeeded Debbie Rees as chair of the Committee and was later succeeded by Mike Smith.

1972

Renowned Welsh travel writer Jan Morris goes abroad to have sexual reassignment surgery recalled in her memoir, *Conundrum* (1974). In 2008 she and her wife of 59 years, whom she had to first divorce, entered into a civil partnership. They lived mostly in rural Wales and Jan died in 2020.

'I was three or perhaps four years old when I realized I had been born into the wrong body, and I should really be a girl. I remember the moment well, and it is the earliest memory of my life.'

1974

Griffith Vaughan Williams takes part in London Weekend Television's pioneering documentary about homosexual equality called *Speak for Yourself*.

Terrence (Terry) Higgins was one of the first people in the UK to die of an AIDS related illness. Born in Pembrokeshire he spent most of his life in London. The charity the Terrence Higgins Trust was set up in his memory.

Roy Jenkins fights to lower age of consent.

1977

Historian and sociologist Jeffrey Weeks writes *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain from the Nineteenth Century to the Present*, one of his many books on LGBT+ matters.

Plaid Cymru debate gay rights in their national conference in Swansea.

1980

John Randell appears as consultant in the TV documentary *A Change of Sex* following Julia Grant as she pursued a gender reassignment.

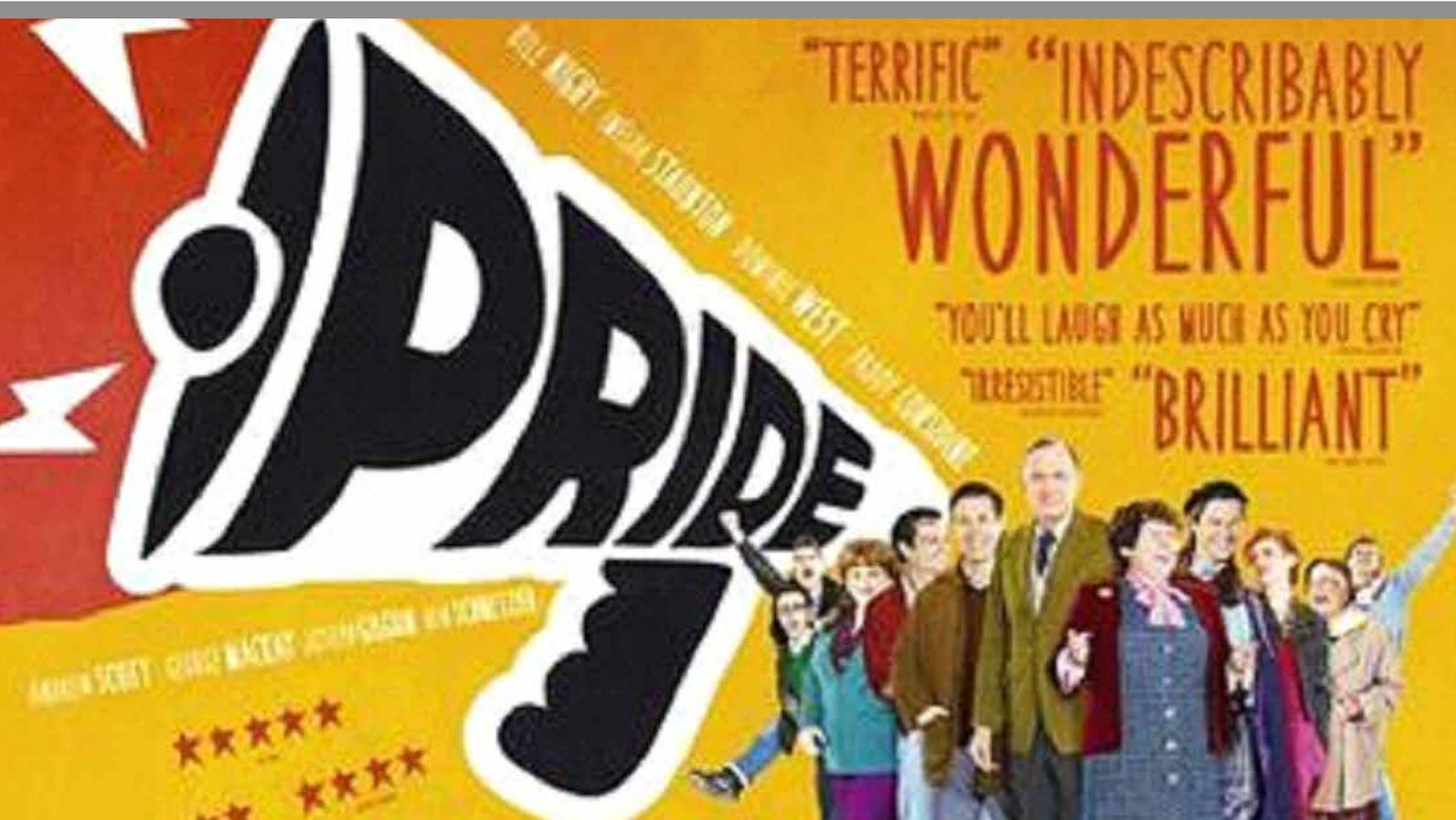
Griffith Vaughan Williams contributes to the research leading to CHE's publication *Attacks on Gay People* by Julian Meldrum. Williams and others approach the Metropolitan Police in a ground breaking move to work alongside police known as the London Lesbian and Gay Police Initiative (LLGPI).

1981

Welsh feminist Jo Opie co-founded the Islington branch of the mental health charity Mind. She was a member of Feminists Against Censorship and the Lesbian and Gay Freedom Movement, the anarchist sexual liberation group.

1984-5

Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners is formed to support the mining community during the pit closure strikes. The LGSM raised £20,000 for the miners and their families. The Dulais community, who received generous donations from the group, and representatives of the South Wales National Union of Miners, marched in the 1985 London Pride parade. The story is covered in the 2014 film *Pride*.



1986

When a lecturer at a college of art and design was dismissed from his job because he had been convicted of gross indecency with a man in a public lavatory, he launched an appeal in *Gardiner v Newport County Council*. The argument was that dismissal would amount to a second punishment, however it was not upheld.

1988

John Davies (born 1938 in Rhondda) ex Warden of Pantycelyn, the Welsh Hall of Residence at University of Aberystwyth and respected Welsh historian comes out on S4C TV as bi-sexual in support of labour MP Ron Davies (no relation) who was accused of cruising for gay sex.

The Plaid Conference 1977

by Syd Morgan, independent researcher

Plaid Cymru formalised its position on homosexual rights in 1978. Its annual conference voted “total opposition to all prejudice on the grounds of race, creed, sexual preference or language” within a Race & Minority Rights resolution. It was initiated by Cardiff North-West Constituency which co-sponsored the motion and proposed an amendment to insert “sexual preference” after “grounds of race and creed”. Plaid had debated race and minority rights the year before. Its 1977 conference programme included a motion, Racialism & Fascism, without reference to sexual equality. The inclusion of resistance to fascism and racism “by any means necessary” led to its deferment. Also in 1977, a separate motion on “the age of consent for homosexuals” was included in the draft conference programme but withdrawn from debate by its Cardiff North-West proposer. The retraction resulted from homophobic reaction within a fetid public discourse. Gay News’ prosecution that year “had used articles on paedophilia as evidence of the paper’s corrupt nature”. While Race & Minority Rights passed, the age of homosexual consent was not included.

“

The retraction resulted from homophobic reaction within a fetid public discourse

”

This narrative reveals the Party’s intersectional approach responding to multiple Far Right threats. We can also place its debate on sexual preference in a global context. Harvey Milk was elected to San Francisco Board of Supervisors in November 1977 and reported in *Gay News*, which was read by a cadre of young, openly gay members in Cardiff North-West. College-educated, middle-class and Cymraeg-speaking, they were also part of the city’s gay scene. From these social bases, they debated with and influenced other pleidwyr on the issue, place it in the wider progressive context and through diligent work and informal networks, persuade the Party conference to adopt what was then an advanced position for a political party with three MPs.

Attempting to develop its in-principle decision, the 1978 conference resolved “to draw up a Charter of Minority Rights to present to the next Conference” and “consider carefully the situation and demands of the various minorities and . . . the opinions of organisations representing minorities prior to drawing up the charter”. Potential engagement with the emerging gay and lesbian community and other minority organisations outside the Party might have been a significant political advance. However, it was not to be in view of wider political events. 1979 was traumatic for Plaid Cymru. The Labour government’s Wales Act, 1978, setting up a Welsh Assembly, required a confirmatory referendum. Held on 1st March 1979, voters rejected it by a margin of four to one. In that May’s UK general election (which saw the election of the Thatcher government), Party president Gwynfor Evans lost his parliamentary seat. In same-day local government elections, Plaid Cymru lost control of two flagship authorities, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymni Valley, and a swathe of councillors nationally. The massive rejection of its core demand and other failures in a short period provoked the Party to prioritise a strategic Commission of Inquiry. The Minority Rights Charter was debated in December 1979 but came to nothing; the Commission Report ignored it. Plaid Cymru retreated to existential issues.

1985

The *South Wales Echo* publishes a page-long feature on Cardiff's gay nightclub, the 'Tunnel Club'

1988

The Local Government Act, containing Section 28, becomes law. It forbids the promotion of homosexuality by local authorities.

Late 1980s-90s

A badge was donated to St Fagans National Museum, the donor recalling that wearing it indicated you were either a lesbian mother or you supported lesbian mothers.

1992

Gay rights group Cylch cause controversy by appearing at the Eisteddfod.

Gwynedd Lesbian Line and Gwynedd Gay Line in Bangor amalgamate to provide a joint counselling service.

Cardiff Triangle Housing Society is set up to help local gay people to secure accommodation.

1993

A gay student confronts his sexuality in Welsh/Russian language film *Gadael Lenin* (Leaving Lenin) when Welsh sixth-formers are accidentally left to fend for themselves in St Petersburg.

1994

The age of Consent between two men is reduced from 21 to 18.

From the LGBTQ+ collection at St Fagans National Museum of History. © Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales

1995

TV drama *Dafydd* about a gay Welsh man is produced by Wales Playhouse. It stars Richard Harrington.

1996

Sexual health and LGBT+ rights campaigner Lisa Power publishes *No Bath but Plenty of Bubbles: An Oral History of the Gay Liberation Front, 1970-73*.

1998

Observer article, *In ancient Greece, she'd have been a god. In Wales, they spit on her*, discusses intersex Linda Roberts' life in North Wales where she received a huge amount of discrimination and hate.

Ann Keen, born in north Wales makes the first attempt to equalise the age of consent, through the addition of a clause to the Crime and Disorder Bill. She was inspired by being reunited with a gay son whom she had given up for adoption after a teenage pregnancy.

1999

Russel T. Davies' TV drama series *Queer as Folk* premieres.

Cardiff County Council supports calls to repeal Section 28.

The first Cardiff Mardi Gras takes place in Bute Park, Cardiff.



2000

Jaci Taylor is elected mayor of Aberystwyth, the first openly lesbian mayor of a British town.

The Labour government scraps the policy of barring homosexuals from the armed forces.

2001

Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff, produces *Carrying Lyn*, a performance art piece by disabled trans performer Lyn Levitt.

The age of consent for gay and bisexual men is reduced to 16, in line with the age of consent for heterosexuals.

2002

Gay priest, Martin Reynolds, and his partner foster a disabled 15-year-old boy in Newport, and cause outrage; the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams is criticised for his role in the case.

Bisexual Welsh pop star Stephen Strange's autobiography *Blitzed* is published.

Parliament passes legislation allowing gays, lesbians, and unmarried heterosexuals to adopt.

2003

Ron Davies, ex Secretary of State for Wales and Labour MP for Caerphilly resigns over an alleged gay encounter.

Gay Welsh priest Jeffrey John is nominated Bishop of Reading but later has to withdraw his name.

Stonewall Cymru is founded.

Welsh TV series *Pobol y Cwm* introduces the character Gwyneth Jones, who later enters a civil partnership with her girlfriend Yvonne.

Section 28, which banned councils and schools from intentionally promoting homosexuality, is repealed in England and Wales.

“
Martin Reynolds, and his partner foster a disabled 15-year-old boy in Newport, and cause outrage
”

2004

Cardiff Lions, a gay and inclusive rugby union football club is formed.

The Civil Partnership Act 2004 is passed by the Labour Government, giving same-sex couples similar rights and responsibilities as married heterosexual couples.



“
“Be it enacted by the Queen’s most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows: –

(1) A civil partnership is a relationship between two people of the same sex (“civil partners”)–

(a) which is formed when they register as civil partners of each other...

... (3) A civil partnership ends only on death, dissolution or annulment.”

- Excerpt from the text of the Civil Partnership Act
”

2005

Wrecked at the Boat Club, Aberystwyth a monthly lesbian nightclub is founded by Rosie Collins and Sara Macaleese.

2006

Torchwood by Russell T. Davies premieres on BBC3. The show becomes famous for the numerous homosexual and bisexual relationships.

BBC Little Britain's comedy sketch *Only Gay in the Village* is set in Welsh village Llandewi Breffi with Matt Lewis as Dafydd. Ruth Jones plays barmaid Myfanwy who had a civil partnership with Rhiannon, which Dafydd said was 'disgusting'.

2007

Ian "H" Watkins singer in the pop band *Steps* comes out as gay and talks about growing up in a small Welsh town.

BBC Radio Wales programme *My Uncle* broadcast. Actor Richard Harrington talked to his Uncle Illtyd Harrington, one of Wales' most flamboyant political figures. Illtyd, born in Merthyr Tydfil and openly gay, was a member of Harold Wilson's Labour Government and was Ken Livingstone's deputy on the Greater London Council.

The Iris Prize Festival, an international gay and lesbian short film prize, is established in Cardiff. Set up by Berwyn Rowlands, it is the only short film prize in the world which allows the winner to make a new film.

BiCymru, set up as an all-Wales network for bi people, people attracted to more than one gender, and those who think they may be bi or attracted to more than one gender.



2008

Leo Abse dies; born in Cardiff, he was a Labour MP for 30 years and active in the decriminalisation of male homosexuality.

Cardiff Dragons Wales's first and only LGBTI+ football team is formed.

2009

Hotel Stephanie a BBC One TV series about a Welsh trans woman who owns hotels in north Wales is aired.

Rugby player Gareth Thomas, from Sarn, Bridgend and rugby referee Nigel Owens, from Myneddcerig, Carmarthenshire come out.

Pobol y Cwm is nominated for an award from Stonewall for its positive portrayal of gay and lesbian characters.



The Welsh Pride Project

In 2012 *Welsh Pride* made history by being the first exhibition focusing solely on Welsh LGBT+ people, allies, and events. It remained on show at the Pier Head in Cardiff Bay for three months and the launch was held in the Senedd on 1 February. The speakers were Huw Lewis, Kirsty Williams on behalf of the Liberal Party, Lindsay Whittle on behalf of Plaid Cymru, and a poem was read by Gillian Clarke, then National Poet of Wales. This poem, *Sarah at Plâs Newydd, Llangollen, 5 July 1788* about the Ladies of Llangollen, is the first known poem by a National Poet or Poet Laureate dedicated to the LGBT+ community of their country.

As this is such a seminal event in Welsh history some of the talks are reproduced here.



Lindsay Whittle

Plaid Cymru

Here in Wales we can be proud of our contribution, in the past a certain flamboyant character by the name of Leo Abse who was the member of parliament for Pontypool and was in fact a Cardiff boy. Here you will recall in 1967, for those of you that were around that time, I was sadly, introduced to the first private members bill which legalized homosexual acts between consenting adults in private. That law referred particularly to England and Wales, for some reason Scotland followed in 1981 and Northern Ireland in 1982, but really the issue of gay rights really began in the world 28th June 1969 at the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village, when New York people in that gay community fought back against a government sponsored system that persecuted sexual minorities. There were riots in the street that meant the gay rights movement from that very moment was born, not only in America, but spread across the world even to here in the far gentler land called Wales. If you've never been to the Stonewall bar I can assure you it's well worth a visit.

In Wales who would have believed that we would have witnessed in our lifetimes a ban on gay people serving in the military. I remember talking to one old soldier who told me he would rather the person next to him, whose life he may have to have depended upon, be able to shoot straight rather than think straight. I think that's particularly important.

Who would have said in our lifetime in 2001 that the age of consent would have been equalized, in 2004 people would have the RIGHT to change gender. And I'm pleased with the petitions committee is now in fact this government is looking at those issues. In 2005 who would've thought that civil partnerships would have been allowed. I predict that same sex marriage will occur by 2015. I can see and hear all the right-wing Christian groups clutching their hearts now, no doubt, but it's going to happen so get real.

It would be remiss of me not to mention of course the LGBT hosted the very first UK international summit for human rights for LGBT people right here in Cardiff in our Capital City in our country last August and September so the war is being won, albeit very slowly. The hearts and minds, there is no doubt, of legislators are being won it's the general public we have to convince now. They must be won.

I'd like to pay tribute to Gareth Thomas the WRU captain who I think showed great courage in 'coming out' last year or the year before. The great courage has done a great deal of good for this particular cause, I think that so sad that we have to read of the number of attacks on LGBT people are actually on the increase so it's the public we have to win over now. We have won the rest of the war, but it is the war out there with 2 public walking by. That's the war we have to win. At least the number of incidents rising is being reported and I hope these people will be hunted down and punished as they so rightly deserve. There is so much more educational work to be done here in Wales and I congratulate the centre on all of the work that they do here in Wales. No longer do people have to sneak into tiny bars hidden away from the general public. I am proud that here in Cardiff in Swansea in Newport and in Bangor in several cities and towns, here in Wales pubs and clubs can now fly the freedom flag proudly and I think that's something to our credit as a country. I look forward to the day when the hatred and the violence and the bigotry towards LGBT people are condemned to the very gutter where it belongs. Ladies and gentlemen, I'm proud to add my name and Plaid Cymru, my party's name, to this very worthy cause.

I wish you all the luck in your month of celebrations.

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Kirsty Williams

Welsh Liberal Democrats

Good afternoon.

Can I start by expressing my thanks to the LGBT Excellence Centre for hosting this event in the Senedd today and I am pleased to see the second LGBT History Month Cymru take place here in Wales.

And it is so good to see many other organisations that promote and champion LGBT rights here in our Senedd today.

Just before Christmas, it was announced that a theme of the 2012 LGBT month would be sport - but most importantly eradicating homophobia from sport.

This year, the United Kingdom is going to be the focus of the world and I want to us to be able to show that we are wiping out this discriminatory practice on our sport fields. Sport affects us all, whether we actively participate or whether we just support a team.

But sports' biggest influence is on young people and how they behave on that rugby or football pitch and then in the classroom. Like racism, homophobia must be stamped out on the professional field before it poisons our younger generation.

I am extremely proud of Gareth Thomas and Nigel Owens, two big names in the 'macho' world of Rugby, who recently came out. They have paved the way for other scared young people who doubt whether they will be accepted by their peers. And as we all know, peer acceptance is crucial when you're a teenager.

Last year, I took part in Stonewall's 'It Gets Better Campaign' following a devastating wave of teen suicides in the US and in the UK, celebrities like Lady Gaga, Katy Perry and Duffy, staff of Google and Pixar and Facebook, and politicians like Obama, the Speaker of the House and Equalities Minister Lynne Featherstone took to their webcams to reassure young and confused teenagers that life does get better.

But the message must get through to all teenagers and I believe that the way to do that is in the classroom.

Homophobic bullying is, I believe, an epidemic.

65 per cent of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) teenagers have been bullied while at school.

Of those bullied,

- 12 per cent have been sexually assaulted,
- 17 per cent have suffered death threats,
- 41 per cent have suffered physical abuse.

The statistics become more harrowing:

- 50 per cent of those bullied have contemplated suicide,
- 40 per cent tried to take their own lives,
- 30 per cent attempted suicide on more than one occasion.

And the final shocking statistics:

Only 6 per cent of schools have a specific policy to deal with homophobic bullying.

Those few that did have them saw incidents of homophobic bullying fall by 60 per cent.

“ Like racism, homophobia must be stamped out on the professional field before it poisons our younger generation. ”

Bullying, in any form, must stop. And I sincerely hope that by the time we come to ask LGBT teenagers these questions again, we won't have the same shocking figures. As education policy is devolved, we have the perfect opportunity to make a real change for Welsh LGBT teenagers – changes that can make our society a better, fairer, more equal place.

From devolved issues to non-devolved issues, I am pleased that the Coalition Government in Westminster will begin work in March on addressing the equality of marriage in the United Kingdom.

Civil partnerships, back in 2004, were a welcome first step, and I pay tribute to the previous Labour Government for laying this foundation but I cannot abide by discrimination in any form.

And I, and my colleague, Equalities Minister, Lynne Featherstone, believe that to deny one group of people the same opportunities offered to another is not only discrimination, but is not fair.

There will be opposition to giving full and equal status to gay marriage and addressing other issues facing LGBT people – but I am confident as the debate on these issues intensifies, more people will hopefully share my – and our – views here today that LGBT rights are also human rights.

We can make changes to our lives, here in Wales and the UK, but there are thousands of LGBT people all around the world who are living in very difficult circumstances:

- Countries where it is a crime to love the person they love. How can that be right?
- Countries where people are discriminated against for something they cannot change.

How can it be right that?

Over the decades, since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was established,

- racist laws have been repealed,
- the ability of minority religions to practice their faith has been protected
- and the legal and social practices that relegated women to second-class citizens have now been abolished.

Acting alone, minorities can never achieve the majorities necessary for political change.

It is the duty of progressive countries to pave the way for equality:

- South Africa is leading the charge in the African Continent.
- Mexico, Brazil and Canada are changing attitudes over the pond.

But there are still countries around the world where you could be put to death for loving someone.

That is fundamentally wrong. Progress is never easy. People are often weary of change. And accepting that other people can live differently to how they were brought up or how they live now can be difficult. But, if we keep to that basic premise that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, we will achieve equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and transgender people. I hope we have a successful month and I look forward to many more LGBT History Months in Wales.

Thank you.

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John Davies

Welsh historian

In the 1950s, the distinguished Welsh poet, Waldo Williams wrote: 'Wedi'r canrifoedd mudan, clymaf eu clod.... Cymru, y mae nhw hefyd yn eich chwedl'. ('After the mute centuries. I tie myself to mention them.... Wales, they too are part of your story.') He was referring to the Welsh Catholic Martyrs of the late sixteenth century. As a Quaker, he had no innate sympathy for the hierarchical religion for which the Catholic martyrs died, but he did believe that, after the mute centuries, these ignored people deserved at least to be remembered. And this is how it should be; even those who have no innate sympathy for LGBT people need to recognize that they are part of the story too, and that the negativity of the mute centuries should be overturned.

And they were mute centuries. The earliest sources suggest that the mainland European Celts described by Strabo and others and the Brythonic peoples criticized by Gildas were tolerant of homosexual practices and one of the stories in the *Mabinogion* seems to be a description of such practices. Nevertheless, penitentiaries from the sixth century onwards condemn all such activities and suggest lurid punishments. An act of 1533 laid down that the death penalty should be the punishment for those convicted. The act predated the Act of Union between England and Wales by three years and both acts can be seen as Henry VIII's advocacy of big government - his eagerness to have full control of his kingdom and to lay down the law about how his subjects behave. (Paradoxically, right-wing Americans who are advocates of small government seem anxious that the state should interfere in citizens' sexual activity.) From the Act of 1533 onwards, Welsh court records contain much relating to those convicted, punishments that the Welsh collective consciousness

has chosen to forget. As Wales did not have any large centres of population, a urban homosexual sub-culture did not develop until the twentieth century. It seems likely, however, that by about 1600, gay men from Wales had found refuge in the sub-culture of London, a sub-culture which produced poems such as Philip Sydney's 'My true love has my heart and I have his' and Fulk Greville's 'Is it the mask and majesty of power/ To make offences that it may forgive?/ Nature herself doth her own self deflower/To hate those errors she herself doth give.'

“ *the mainland European Celts described by Strabo and others and the Brythonic peoples criticized by Gildas were tolerant of homosexual practices* ”

The mute centuries continued, although late eighteenth century Wales was the home of a remarkable phenomenon - the Ladies of Llangollen, who were recognized, discreetly, as the most renowned Lesbian couple in Europe. The discretion continued into the later twentieth century, for until very recently the guides ushering visitors at Plasnewydd, Llangollen, were not allowed to utter the L word. Through an act of 1861, the death penalty to cease to be the punishment of males convicted of homosexual activities, but an act of 1885 laid down that punishment should involve lengthy periods of imprisonment. That was the act which led to the imprisonment of Oscar Wilde.

By 1885, the great majority of Welsh MPs were Liberals, but most of them seem to have supported the act, suggesting that to be Liberal is not necessarily to be Libertarian, although - to be fair - the Liberals were in power in 1861 when the death penalty was removed.

In the mid-twentieth century, a Welshman is reputed to have made a significant contribution to bring the whole issue into the public discourse. The Cardiffian, Ivor Novello, whose statue stands on the quay just outside this building, composed the opera 'Gay's the word' first performed in 1950, and it is widely claimed that it was the opera which popularized gay as a synonym for homosexual - although there are those who believe that its origins lie in an acronym invented in America - GAY: Good as You. (Incidentally, complaints that a word as cheerful as gay has been hijacked should be answered with the retort that if homosexuals have hijacked gay, many words - bent, for example, or a host of other derogatory adjectives - can now be returned to the complainants.)

Then, in the later twentieth century, came Wales's greatest contribution to the ending of the mute centuries, when in 1967 Parliament decriminalized male homosexual activity in Wales and England. The decriminalization was above all the work of a native of the Swansea Valley, the Cardiff solicitor and the MP for Pontypool, Leo Abse. Indeed, it would not be too much to claim that it was Abse who gave full citizenship to tens of thousands of the inhabitants of Wales and England. Other developments since then include the publication in 1974 of Jan Morris's *Conundrum*, which made the self-acknowledged Welsh Republican the most celebrated transsexual in the world. The Bangor helpline was established in the early 1980s, Cylch was founded in 1990, the Cardiff Mardi Gras in the mid 1990s and Stonewall Cymru in 2003; astonishingly, considering attitudes over the last millennium, Stonewall receives part of its funding from the Welsh Assembly Government.

“

The decriminalization was above all the work of a native of the Swansea Valley, the Cardiff solicitor and the MP for Pontypool, Leo Abse. Indeed, it would not be too much to claim that it was Abse who gave full citizenship to tens of thousands of the inhabitants of Wales and England.

”

I started with Waldo Williams. I will finish with him. One of his finest lines is 'Beth yw maddau? Cael ffordd trwy'r drain/at ochr hen elyn.' ('What is forgiveness? Crawling through thorns/ to be besides an old foe'). The author, John Sam Jones is also appreciative of Waldo's writing for *Crawling Through Thorns* is the title of John Sam Jones's memoir, the finest piece of gay writing to come out of Wales. Waldo also wrote the line; 'Gobaith fo'n meistr; rhoed Amser i ni'n was'. ('Hope is our master; Time was given to us as a servant'). I am sure that, throughout the mute centuries, there were those who lived in Hope. At long last, Time has fulfilled some of the hopes, but much still need to be achieved. And may I say in ending that the term the gay *community* or the LGBT *community* should be avoided. There is only one community, one which all of us are members; but, within it there should be a myriad of multiple identities. That is the way ahead.

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Highlights Between 2010 and 2020

2010

The Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, after initially supporting gay clergy, later controversially amended his position.

Nigel Evans, Conservative MP, comes out.

Janet Paraskeva, from Newport, a British government official who has worked on many leading government issues is named Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

The first civil partnership ever held in the Houses of Parliament is between Chris Bryant MP for Rhondda and his partner Jared Cranney.

Welsh gay soldier James Wharton makes history for being first openly out soldier to appear on cover of Soldier magazine.

Richard T. Harris publishes *Closets are for Clothes* on various aspects of LGBT+ life.

The Equality Act 2010 makes discrimination against lesbians and gay men in the provision of goods and services illegal.

Gender Fluidity, the first trans funded project in Wales, is managed by Norena Shopland with Jenny-Anne Bishop and others.

2011

Micky Rourke comes to Wales to discuss filming Gareth Thomas' life.

Anglesey hosts its first Pride celebrations.

The Dinas-Powys Police Service fly the rainbow flag to recognise International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.

King's Cross, Cardiff's oldest gay pub, closes – the pub sign is rescued by the Museum of Cardiff.

The Church in Wales considers providing pensions for the civil partners of gay clerics.

Anne Hudgens researches LGBT+ individuals in the Fingerprint Register. It is turned into a slide show by staff at Glamorgan Archives and launched during history month 2012. This resource is free to use, for more details contact Rhian Diggins at Glamorgan Archives.

“ *Dinas-Powys Police Service fly the rainbow flag to recognise International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia* ”



Sample slide from the Fingerprint Register
©Glamorgan Archives

2012

Alex Drummond, trans activist based in Cardiff, publishes her book *Grrl Alex: A Personal Journey to a Transgender Identity*.

Julie Carpenter writes the report for the only UK government consultation on same-sex marriage held in Wales. Another response is written by Ed Gareth Poole for Plaid Cymru. Copies of both are in Glamorgan Archives.

First *Pride on the Prom* gathering in Aberystwyth.

Swansea University's Professor Kirsti Bohata leads a CREW (Centre for Research into the English Literature and Language of Wales) Literary Tour on *Amy Dillwyn & The Rebecca Rioter*.



2015

Phil Forder coordinates *Inside and Out*, a booklet about being LGBT+ in HMP Parc prison, Bridgend.

Following homophobic abuse and receiving no support, Alex Lonan sets up Project Unity in Aberdare and Merthyr.

Highly acclaimed artist Clive Hicks-Jenkins exhibits *Dark Movements* at Aberystwyth Arts Centre.

Paul Burston's *Polari* comes to Wales for the first time, at Chapter Arts Centre.

2014

Aberrration, based in Aberystwyth, launches its first LGBTQ+ History Month event, followed by a cabaret later in the year. Since then, Aberrration, run by Helen Sandler, Ruth Fowler and Jane Hoy have been delivering LGBTQ+ events every year.

Pilot Catherine Burton transitions and becomes BA's most senior female pilot.

Jenny-Anne Bishop, the chair of *Unique* the largest trans charity in Wales, is awarded a CBE for services to the trans community.

Since 2014, Youth Cymru has delivered *TransForm Cymru*, a ground-breaking project supporting trans and non-binary young people to take action on their passions, concerns and aspirations.

Cardiff Mardi Gras is renamed Pride Cymru.

The annual Welsh Pinc List of the most influential LGBT+ people in Wales begins.



“

Since then, Aberrration, run by Helen Sandler, Ruth Fowler and Jane Hoy have been delivering LGBTQ+ events every year

”



2014

Aberration in Aberystwyth is launched.

Run by Ruth Fowler, Helen Sandler and Jane Hoy Aberration hosts LGBTQ+ friendly mixed arts. Their sell-out shows celebrate the creative and wonderful contributions of queer artists, performers, activists and writers from Wales and the UK. Other regular events include an autumn Cabaret *Cabarration* and talks, films and discussions for LGBTQ+ History Month. In summer 2020 they delivered Aberration Adre, a lively on line event attracting a wide audience.



“ Their sell-out shows celebrate the creative and wonderful contributions of queer artists, performers, activists and writers from Wales and the UK. ”

ABERRATION

Dathlu Mis Hanes LGBT
Celebrating LGBT History Month

All Queered Up

Amy Dillwyn (P & S Micros)

7.45yh Gwener 19 Chwefror Canolfan y Celfyddydau // £7.50
7.45pm Fri 19 February 2016 Aberystwyth Arts Centre // Tickets:
Tocynnau: www.aberystwythartscentre.co.uk 01970 623232

Info: www.aberration.org.uk

Sgysiau a thrafod am hanes lesbiaidd, hoyw, deurywiol a thrawsrywiol, yn ogystal â cherddoriaeth fyw. Saesneg yw iaith y digwyddiad. Croeso i bawb.

Talks and discussion about lesbian, gay, bi and trans history, plus live music. Event in English. All welcome.

 SpringOut

Rhaglennir gan / Programmed by Entlys Aber & SpringOut

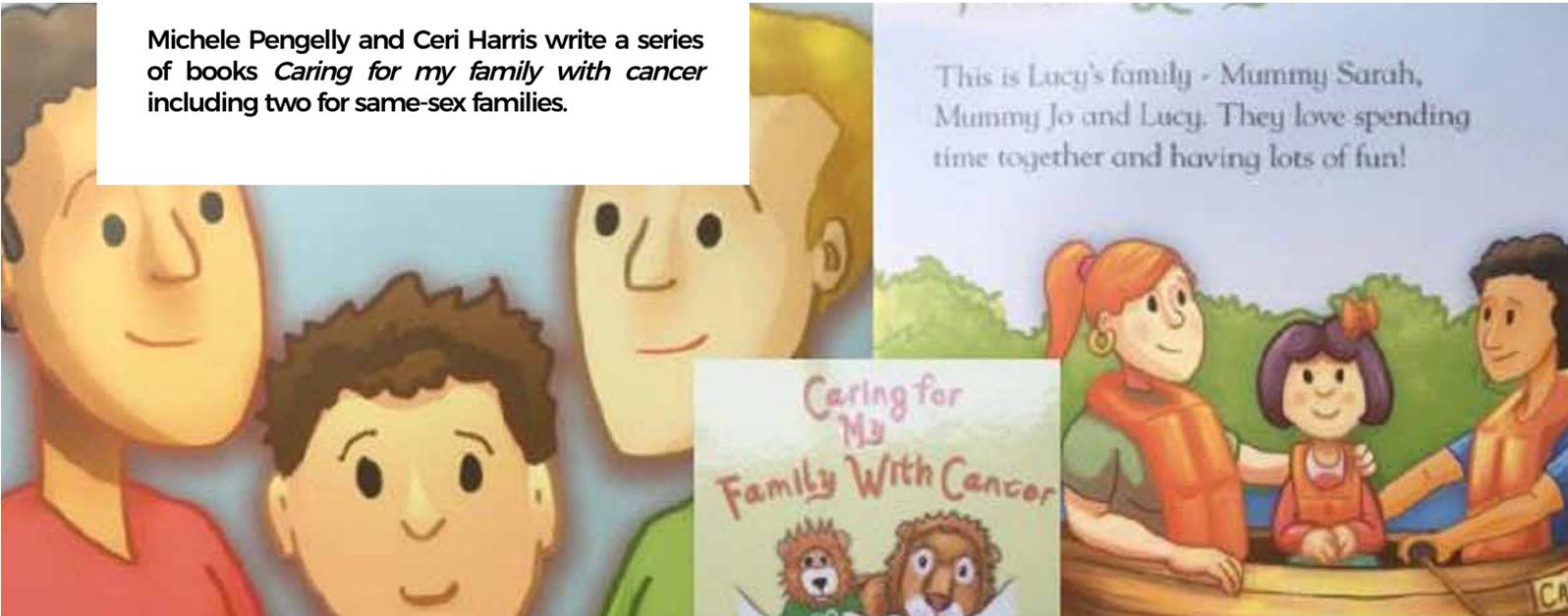
CANOLFAN Y CELFYDDYDAU
ABERYSTWYTH ARTS CENTRE

2016

Queer Wales: The History, Culture and Politics of Queer Life in Wales (University Press Wales), Editor: Huw Osborne is published.

The Welsh Assembly has three openly gay politicians, Hannah Blythyn (Labour) the first woman to officially be out in the Assembly; Adam Price (Plaid Cymru); and Jeremy Miles (Labour).

Michele Pengelly and Ceri Harris write a series of books *Caring for my family with cancer* including two for same-sex families.



“

The first exhibition of the Ladies of Llangollen, curated by Norena Shopland, is held at Swansea's Waterfront Museum.

”

2017

Forbidden Lives: LGBT stories from Wales (Seren Books) by Norena Shopland is the first historical book on sexual orientation and gender identity in Wales.

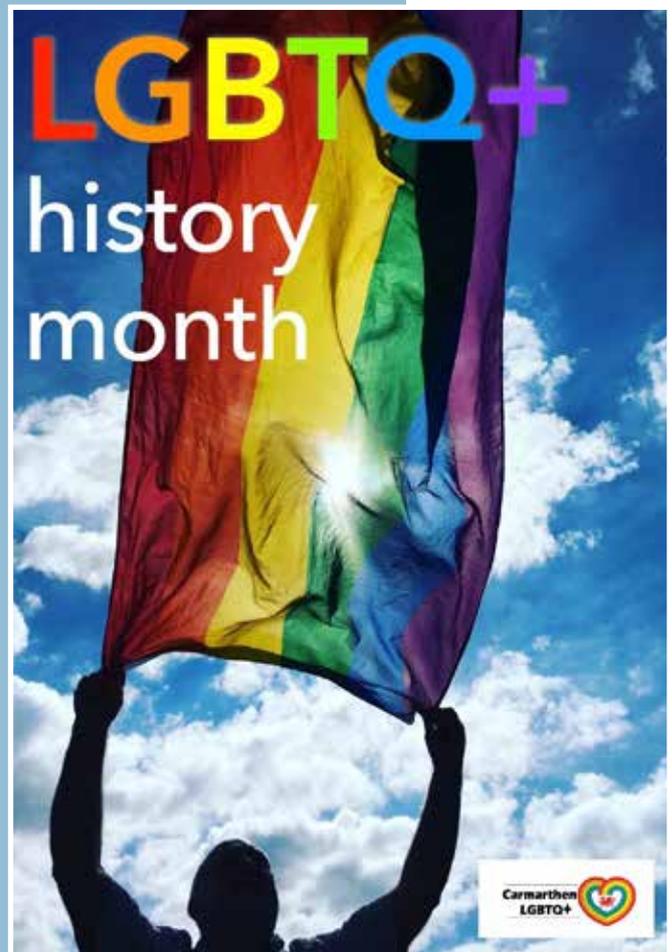
L Fest, a lesbian music, arts and comedy festival, run by Cindy Edwards is held in Llandudno.

Museum of Cardiff hosts an LGBTQ+ exhibition.

Carmarthen LGBTQ+ is formed and later produce a highly popular booklet of stories which can be read on their Facebook page.

Prism, the award-winning Welsh Government LGBTQ+ Staff Network / Rhwydwaith Staff LHDTRh+ arobryn Llywodraeth Cymru is formed.

Jane Hoy and Helen Sandler formed *Living Histories Cymru*. Their short plays aim to bring to life the often-hidden histories of LGBTQ+ people and their friends in Wales and the Borders and include individuals such as the Ladies of Llangollen, Mary Charlotte Lloyd and Frances Power Cobbe, Amy Dillwyn, Marged uch Evans, John Gibson and Penry Williams.



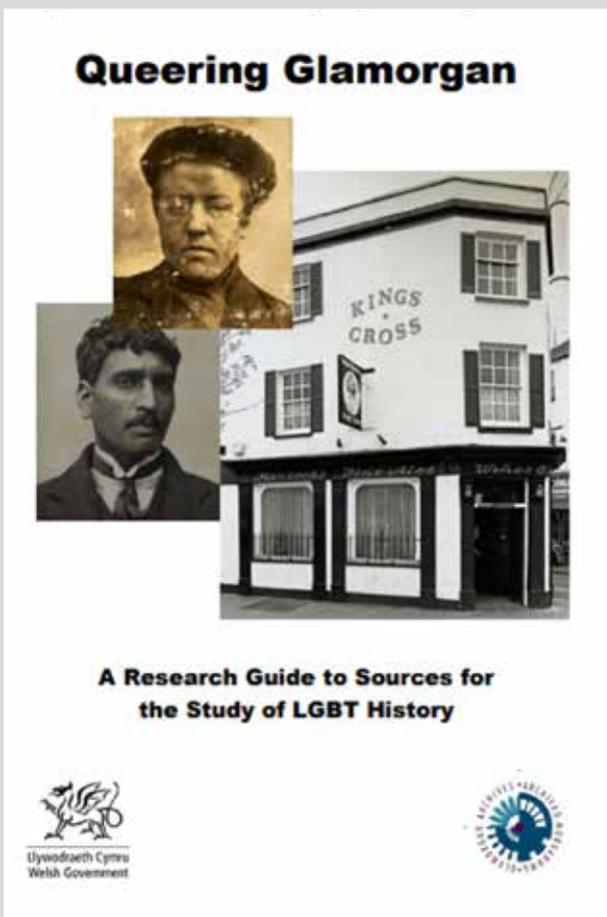
2018

First LGBT+ research guide in Wales, *Queering Glamorgan*, is commissioned by Glamorgan Archives and funded by the Welsh Government. Authors Daryl Leeworthy and Norena Shopland. Free to download from the Glamorgan Archives website.

The first exhibition of the Ladies of Llangollen, curated by Norena Shopland, is held at Swansea's Waterfront Museum. At the launch Living Histories Cymru perform *An Extraordinary Female Affection*.

Pride Cymru launches its *Icons* and *Allies* travelling exhibition and is available for anyone to use - contact Pride Cymru for details.

Glitter Cymru, a Cardiff based social meet-up group for Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Trans (LGBT+) records a short film, *Glitter*, with Iris Film Festival Outreach programme.



“
Michele Pengelly and Ceri Harris write a series of books Caring for my family with cancer including two for same-sex families.
”

“
Their short plays aim to bring to life the often-hidden histories of LGBTQ+ people and their friends in Wales and the Borders and include individuals such as the Ladies of Llangollen, Mary Charlotte Lloyd and Frances Power Cobbe, Amy Dillwyn, Marged uch Evans, John Gibson and Penry Williams.
”

2019

THE FIRST EVER PRIDE EVENT IN THE WELSH VALLEYS

Came courtesy of Lauren and Natalie Bowen and Rhondda Pride. In the Rhondda Town of Treorchy where a permanent mural stands in commemoration of this important event





2019

A Little Gay History of Wales (UPW) by Daryl Leeworthy is published.

The new Swansea Pride is launched and also Rhondda Pride.

The first Cypsy, Roma & Traveller LGBTQI International Conference held in Cardiff.

Mike Parker's highly popular *On the Red Hill* about two gay couples in rural mid Wales wins non-fiction Book of the Year and runner-up for the Wainwright Prize for Nature Writing.

2020

National Museum Wales/Amgueddfa hosts the first *Queer Tour* in a Welsh museum highlighting LGBT+ items in their collection.

Amguedda Ceredigion hosts a queer history tour of Aberystwyth for LGBT History month led by Jane Hoy of Living Histories Cymru.

The Welsh Government lifts restrictions on LGBT+ people donating blood, partly as a result of the campaigning of @EqualBloodWales.

Mair Jones launches her blog *Queer Welsh Stories*.

First *Queer History Story Walk* in Wales presented by Living Histories Cymru and the Ceredigion Museum Aberystwyth, Featured talks, stories and performances about Cranogwen, Percy Maye, Goronwy Rees, John Davies, Wrecked Lesbian Nightclub, Gentleman Jack.

Eleven organisations are named as top employers for LGBT+ staff in Wales in Stonewall's Top 100 Employers list.

Ceri Harris and staff from Velindre NHS Trust runs *Love is Love* poetry competition for history month. Winning poems can be read on

www.velindre-tr.wales.nhs.uk

Hanes LHDT+ Cymru / LGBTQ+ Research Group Wales aiming to promote research and knowledge about Welsh LGBTQ+ people, allies, and events has its first meeting.

Paned O Gê C.B.C. an LGBTQ+ bookshop in Cardiff is launched.

2021

Wales' first national LGBTQ magazine is launched by LGBTQymru.



Queer History Story Walk

A Reading List of Welsh LGBT+ People, Allies, Events, and Fiction

Bohata, Kirsti. (2018). "A Queer-Looking Lot of Women": Cross-Dressing, Transgender Ventriloquism, and Same-Sex Desire in the Fiction of Amy Dillwyn. *Victorian Review*, 44(1), 113-130.

Boswell, John (1995) *The Marriage of Likeness: Same-sex Unions in Pre-modern Europe*

Bray, Alan (2003) *The Friend*

Burn, Michael (2003) *Turned Towards the Sun: An Autobiography (made into a documentary of the same name)*

Cross, William (2014) *The Abergavenny Witch Hunt: An Account of the Prosecution of Over Twenty Homosexuals in a Small Welsh Town in 1942*

Cross, William and Morgan, Evan Frederic (2014) *Not Behind Lace Curtains: The Hidden World of Evan, Viscount Tredegar*

Gerald of Wales and O'Meara, John (1982 reprint) *The History and Topography of Ireland*

Davies, John (2016) *A Life in History*

Davies, Sioned (2008) *The Mabinogion*

Dillwyn, Amy (1870s): various novels including *Jill*, *A Burglary*, *The Rebbeca Rioter* which include themes of sexual and gender diversity

Drummond, Alex (2012) *Grrl Alex: A Personal Journey to a Transgender Identity*

Harris, Richard T. (2010) *Closets are for Clothes*

John, Angela V. (2014) *Turning the Tide: The Life of Lady Rhondda*

Lee, Vernon (1884) *Miss Brown (available as a free download from Internet Archive)*

Leeworthy, Daryl (2019) *A Little Gay History of Wales*

Leeworthy, Daryl and Shopland, Norena (2018) *Queering Glamorgan: A Research Guide to Sources for the Study of LGBT History. Free download from Glamorgan Archive web site.*

Llwyd, Alan (2011) *Kate - Cofiant Kate Roberts 1891-1985 (in Welsh)*

Neill, James (2011) *The Origins and role of same-sex relations in human society*

Mavor, Elizabeth (1971) *The Ladies of Llangollen: A Study in Romantic Friendship*

Maddox, Brenda (2007) *Freud's Wizard: The Enigma of Ernest Jones*

Morgan, Mihangel (1994) *Te Gyda'r Frenhines* and (1996) *Tair Ochr y Geiniog*

Morris, Jan (1974) *Conundrum*

Osborne, Huw (ed) (2016) *Queer Wales: The History, Culture and Politics of Queer Life in Wales*

Painting, David (2013) *Amy Dillwyn*

Parc Prisoners (2015) *Inside and Out*

Parker, Mike (2020) *On the Red Hill: Where Four Lives Fell Into Place*

Power, Lisa (1996) *No Bath but Plenty of Bubbles: An Oral History of the Gay Liberation Front, 1970-73*

Roe, Sue (2001) *Gwen John: A Life*

Shopland, Norena (2017) *Forbidden Lives: LGBT stories from Wales* *Forbidden Lives: LGBT stories from Wales*

Shopland, Norena (2020) *The Veronal Mystery: Supressed Evidence, Missing Witnesses - Was it Murder?*

Shopland, Norena (2020) *A Practical Guide to Searching LGBTQIA Historical Records*

Slattery-Christy, David (2016) *In Search of Ruritania: Ivor Novello*

Spender, Stephen (1951) *World Within World*

Spinetti, Victor (2006) *Victor Spinetti Up Front: His Strictly Confidential Autobiography*

Warner, Kathryn (2017) *Edward II: The Unconventional King*

Weeks, Jeffrey (1977) *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain from the Nineteenth Century to the Present. Consult his page on Wikipedia for all his published works.*

Williams, Emlyn (1976 reprint) *George: An Early Autobiography (1905-1927)*

Williams, Emlyn (1973) *Emlyn: A Sequel to 'George'*

Woodhouse, Adrian (2006) *Angus McBean: Facemaker*