



# **The Wales LGBTQ+ Timeline Collection**

Rhondda Cynon Taf Edition

# Introduction



In 2021 the Welsh Government commissioned training in LGBTQ+ Language and History for local museums, libraries and archives to encourage the celebration of local stories of sexual orientation and gender identity.

This is part of the work being done on raising awareness and understanding of the diverse population of Wales and compliments the Welsh Government Action Plan which aims to:

- tackle inequalities experienced by LGBTQ+ communities;
- challenge discrimination;
- create a society where LGBTQ+ people are safe to live and love authentically, openly and freely as themselves.

The training provided effective learning points and practical tools to enable staff and volunteers to move forward with a fully inclusive programme resulting in an expansion beyond the organisation to the general public, such as family historians, local historians and community groups. Allowing the promotion of historic material in ways not realised before and enhancing work with partner organisations in not only in making LGBTQ+ material accessible to the public, but also in collecting and preserving this heritage.

An outcome of the LGBTQ+ Language and History training is the construction of timelines

for each of the 22 counties of Wales. This provides a means by which local people, allies and events can be celebrated instead of replicating mainstream narratives and celebrities.

A baseline of highlighted moments from history was constructed by Norena Shopland from her Welsh historic material collection on sexual orientations and gender identities, and from that contributed to the Hanes LHDT+ Cymru / LGBTQ+ Research Group Wales established to encourage and promote research into Welsh LGBTQ+ history. Their website, LGBTQ Cymru is funded by Swansea University to record as much information as possible on this history.

<https://lgbtqcymru.swansea.ac.uk/>

People are encouraged to add to and keep expanding the timelines to make them as comprehensive as possible.



# 14<sup>th</sup> CENTURY >

King Edward II (1284–1327) is well-known in history for being sexually fluid and had two significant same-sex relationships first with Piers Gaveston who was assassinated for his closeness to the king, and later Hugh Despenser who held vast amounts of land in South Wales including Llantrisant Castle.

When Edward's wife Isabella staged a takeover, Edward and Hugh ran to Wales staying at Neath Abbey. However, when they tried to move, they were, according to tradition, arrested at Pant-y-brad (Hollow of Treason) close to Tonyrefail and held at Llantrisant Castle overnight. Hugh was executed for treason and there is debate about whether the king died or escaped the following year.

The ruins of Llantrisant Castle



> 1326

> 1885

# 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY >

## 1861

The death penalty for buggery was abolished when the Offences Against the Person Act 1828 was replaced with the Offences Against the Person Act 1861.

A total of 8921 men had been prosecuted since 1806 for sodomy with 404 sentenced to death and 56 executed. Homosexuality remained illegal until partially decriminalised in 1967 in England and Wales, and 1980 in Scotland.

The young man who donned female attire and exhibited himself outside a well-known I house frequented by the lovers of the cup that cheers, amused himself in his way and evoked the disapproval of his auditors, who presumably disliked such ludicrous efforts upon his part and evidently formed an opinion that a weak mind was near.

Source: *Aberdare Times*, 1 October 1885

## 1885

The British Parliament enacted Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885, section 11 of which, known as the Labouchere Amendment, prohibited gross indecency between males.

It thus became possible to prosecute homosexuals for engaging in sexual acts where buggery or attempted buggery could not be proven.

The Labouchere Amendment became known as the Blackmailers Charter because it was so easy to accuse men, regardless if it was true or not, of being homosexual.

## 1887

Yes, the young ladies of our town [Aberdare] are adopting the masculine attire with a vengeance.

They are adopting anything they can to adapt them to the masculine sex. Now we see our ladies parading the streets decorated with fronts and collars. Where will it end?

Source: *Aberdare Times*, 14 May 1887

## 1895

Oscar Wilde, tried for gross indecency over a relationship with Lord Alfred Douglas, was sentenced to two years in prison with hard labour.



## 1898

## 1895

Actor Kennedy Allen, gained fame for his cross-dressing role as the 'Baroness of Ystrad Rhondda' in an interview he recalled:

About this time last year I was playing the 'Widow Quankey' at Ferndale. I was sweetly singing my song, when, all at once, the electric light went out. The gas was put on, and that went out, when suddenly an alarm of 'Fire!' was raised, and then the audience began to go out. I sang them two or three verses in the dark, but even my seductive voice could not entice them to remain to hear an invisible vocalist, so they departed thence, and in the silent gloom of the dressing room, whilst putting on my pants, the pocket turned inside out, and I lost my money. That was a very serious accident for me. The Ferndale populace will remember the occurrence. I shall never forget it.

Source: *Evening Express*, 1 February 1895. For more on Kennedy Allen as the 'Baroness' see LGBTQ Cymru's blog page:  
*The Baroness of Ystrad Rhondda: an early drag act.*



MR. ALLEN AS THE "BARONESS."

## 1898

David Thomas, 23, collier, and James Davies, 35 labourer, were indicted with having attempted to commit an act of gross indecency on the mountain side at Tylorstown on January 2. The prisoner denied upon oath the charge, and after a hearing lasting over four hours the jury returned the verdict of "Not guilty," and the prisoners were discharged.

Source: *Evening Express*, March 22, 1898

# 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY >

## 1901

Rhys Davies (1901–1978), the novelist and short story writer, is born near Tonypany. Although a prolific author he never wrote about his homosexuality.

Photo credit: By Unknown author - The Rhys Davies Trust, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=109234722>



## 1907

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

## 1909

Margaret, Lady Rhondda's (1883–1958) known to have had same-sex relationships made her first major speech about women's suffrage at the Temperance Hall, Aberdare but it quickly became apparent that a number of men were aiming to disrupt the meeting and the speakers were drowned out.

As the women stood on the stage the crowd began throwing rotten vegetables, dead mice and even set live ones onto the stage, windows were broken and mayhem threatened forcing the women speakers to leave.

Photo credit: Image public domain from Wiki Commons



## > 1914

## 1911

The idea of women wearing trousers in the early 20th century was very controversial such as this episode:

"Supposed Harem Skirt. Causes Excitement at Pentre. A young lady at Pentre had a disconcerting adventure. She was clad in a hobble skirt with an arrangement of frills at the ankles somewhat resembling a harem skirt. Her strange dress immediately attracted a large throng of interested spectators, who gathered round her and followed her home with such persistent attentions that she was obliged to seek refuge in the house of a sympathetic neighbour. The affair caused a considerable sensation for a short time."

Source: *Rhondda Leader*, 27 May 1911

## 1913

Lewis Davies (1913–2011), was the younger brother of the writer Rhys Davies. Like him, he was born at Blaenclydach, a mining village near Tonypany in the Rhondda valley and like his brother he was gay.

## 1914

The First World War broke out in August 1914. Army historian A.D. Harvey writes that "at least 230 soldiers were court-martialled, convicted and sentenced to terms of imprisonment for homosexual offences" during World War I.

See 2021 for details on Chris Bryant's book.



Photo credit: Image public domain from Wiki Commons

## 1916

Sarah Jane Rees (1839–1916) better known by her bardic name, Cranogwen, a teacher, poet, editor, master mariner and temperance campaigner died at the home of her niece, at 50 Wood Street, Cilfynydd, Pontypridd aged 82 years old.

Evan Rees (1850-1923), better known by his bardic name, Dyfed. Originally from Puncteston in Pembrokeshire, his family moved to Aberdare where at the age of just eight, he began to work underground in one of the local collieries.

Much later, he entered the ministry and became the minister of Pembroke Terrace in Cardiff, one of the most important Methodist churches in the town. He was a renowned poet, preacher and lecturer, and for 21 years served as Archdruid of Wales. He composed two englynys [a traditional Welsh poem] on the tomb of Cranogwen.

She had two main relationships, first with Fanny Rees who died of tuberculosis and later with Jane Thomas. Had Rees known of these relationships, it is unlikely he would have commemorated Cranogwen.



## 1921

The Criminal Law Amendment Act was revised in the House of Commons to include a section making sexual “acts of gross indecency” between women illegal. While the Act was passed by the Commons, it was defeated by the House of Lords.

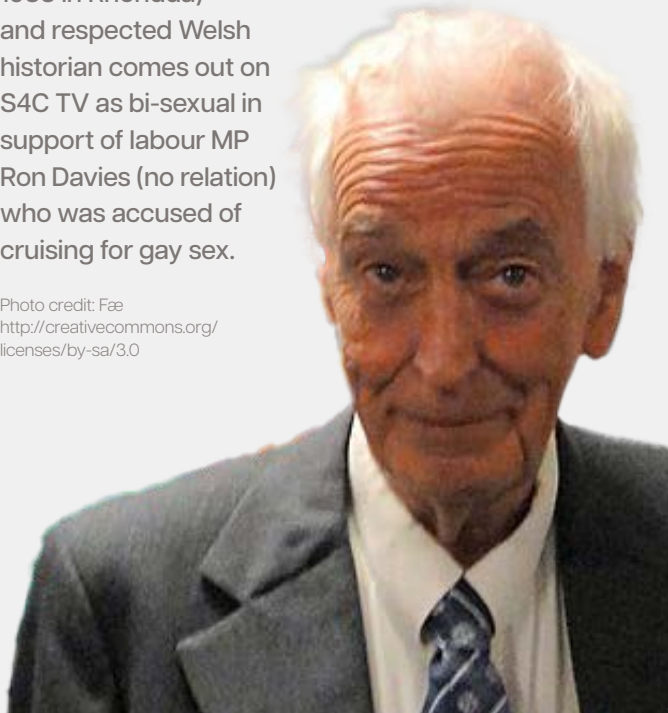


## 1951

## 1938

John Davies (born 1938 in Rhondda) 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.

Photo credit: Fæ  
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>



## 1945

World War II ends. Following the war, moral attitudes to homosexuality changed.

## 1946

Michael Dillon has one of the first sex reassignment surgeries from female to male.

## 1951

Roberta Cowell, a former World War II Spitfire pilot, becomes the first transgender woman to undergo male-to-female confirmation surgery.

## 1954

Alan Turing, an English mathematician, logician, cryptanalyst and computer scientist, influential in the development of computer science, committed suicide.

He had been given a course of female hormones (chemical castration) by doctors as an alternative to prison after being prosecuted by the police because of his homosexuality.



Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons  
File:Alan-Turing-Rephotography.jpg

## 1957

The Wolfenden Committee is formed. When it concludes in 1957 it recommends a partial decriminalisation for male homosexuality.

When these recommendations are not followed by the government the Homosexual Law Reform Society is formed to campaign for the recommendations to be enacted.



## › 1974

## 1967

Ten years after the Wolfenden Report, Cardiffian MP Leo Abse introduced the Sexual Offences Bill 1967 supported by Labour MP Roy Jenkins, then the Labour Home Secretary.



Leo Abse

Photo credit: © National Portrait Gallery, London

## 1970

Gay Liberation Front (GLF) was established.

## 1974

Labour MP Maureen Colquhoun comes out as the first lesbian MP.

A letter to the *Aberdare Leader*, from someone called Blaine of the S. Wales Action Group, Homosexual Parents, etc replied to criticism by someone called Mr Anstey who had attacked the publication *Gay News* - 'Mr Anstey says he is deeply compassionate to any and all who had suffered as a result of the "permissive" society and degrading publications. Does that apply to the Gay people who also have feelings towards the publication? Should they too have their say or does the word of a homosexual always go un-noticed? ... I must stress that homosexuals are not all sinners. We too believe in Christ or perhaps that hasn't occurred to Mr. Anstey either? ... "Gay News" is a world-wide newspapers for homosexuals. It doesn't bring heartbreak and disillusion. If that is what befalls anyone reading it then that is what they have brought on themselves.'

Source: *Aberdare Leader*, 29 September 1977

## 1982

Welshman Terry Higgins dies of AIDS in St Thomas' Hospital London. His partner Rupert Whitaker and friend Martyn Butler set up the Terry Higgins Trust (which became the Terrence Higgins Trust), the first UK AIDS charity.

## 1984

MP Chris Smith is elected making him the first openly out homosexual politician in the UK parliament.

Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners, a campaign of LGBT+ support for striking workers in the miners' strike of 1984 and 1985, is launched. The film *Pride* covers their story.

## > 1977

## > 1986

## 1985

Wales' first Gay Centre, and the first of its kind in Britain, was to open to provide social and recreational facilities for the whole gay community. The group wrote to every local authority in the area and all trade unions with branches in south Wales. A letter to Taff Ely Council asked for support and financial help but it was overwhelmingly rejected by the leisure and recreation committee. Chairman, Coun. D.C. Jones said, 'Quite frankly I don't think we have the facilities available.' Only Councillor Judith Burford stood in favour of helping. Group chairman John Stevenson said the project was not about building a ghetto. He said the centre would be a means of removing barriers.'

Source: *Pontypridd Observer*, 24 October 1985; *Pontypridd Observer*, 5 December 1985

Pontypridd MP Brynmor John branded a proposal a town Conservative, Desmond Swayne, to imprison all homosexuals to stop the spread of AIDS, as idiotic.

Source: *Pontypridd Observer*, 4 December 1986

## 1986

Rhondda and Cardiff area representatives of the National Association of Funeral Directors held an emergency meeting after a funer director was heard to have handled the body of an AIDS victim without knowing the cause of death. They want the bodies of people who die of AIDS and other infections diseases to be sent to the rear of a crematorium and into the incineratory without public viewing.

Source: *Pontypridd Observer*, 4 December 1986



## 1988

Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 enacted as an amendment to the United Kingdom's Local Government Act 1986, on 24 May 1988 stated that a local authority “shall not intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality” or “promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship”.

There was not a single prosecution under Section 28 because nobody knew what ‘promote’ meant or what a ‘pretended family relationship’ was supposed to be.

## 1989

Gay politician Nigel Evans was selected to contest the Pontypridd by-election, 1989 following the death of Brynmor John. He was defeated by Kim Howells in Pontypridd by 10,794 votes.

Source: [Wikipedia](#)



## 1999

## 1993

Brett Burnell was discharged from the Royal Navy for being gay. A routine dismissal, one of eight that year, ‘one of many promising careers cut short (being gay or lesbian in the Navy is not illegal, but ‘incompatible’ with Ministry of Defence policy).

“But the Navy may remember Brett's case more than most, because he has decided to fight. In the sitting room of his parent's house in Cwmparc he said, ‘I'm going to pressure them and embarrass them, their rules are pathetic.’ His case was covered in a Channel Four *Cutting Edge* film transmitted on Monday 29th November and a motion was put forward in the House of Commons, ‘That this House believes that discrimination against homosexual men and lesbians serving in the armed forces should end; notes that an Able Seaman Brett Burnell serving abroad HMS ‘Active’ was discharged from the Navy recently purely on the basis of his homosexuality.’ The ban on being gay in the armed forces was lifted in 2000.

Sources: [Simon Garfield](#), ‘The wrong sort to serve in the navy: In other European countries Brett Burnell would have had no problems, but you can't be a gay British sailor,’ *The Independent*, 29 November 1993; UK Parliament, ‘Homosexuality in The Armed Forces, EDM (Early Day Motion)114: tabled on 25 November 1993

## 1994

Source: [Gay Times](#), April 1994



## 1999

First UK openly gay cabinet member Layton Percy Jones (Plaid Cymru). Cabinet Member for Social Services 1999–2005, Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Source: [Wikipedia](#), List of the first openly LGBT holders of political offices in the United Kingdom

# 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY >

## 2000

The UK Labour government stops banning homosexuals from the armed forces after the European Court of Human Rights rules it unlawful.

The government also introduces legislation to repeal Section 28 in England and Wales – Conservative MPs oppose the move. The bill is defeated by bishops and Conservatives in the House of Lords.

Scotland abolished Clause 2a (Section 28) of the Local Government Act in October though it remains in place in England and Wales.

## 2001

Chris Bryant has been the Labour Member of Parliament (MP) for Rhondda since 2001.

That same year he and Adam Price (Plaid Cymru, Carmarthen East and Dinefwr) appeared at Cardiff Mardi Gras (now Pride Cymru).

Bryant said, "if you'd asked anyone for their stereotype of the Rhondda before the election it would have been that they would never elect anyone like me. But I ended up with more votes than anybody else in Wales in the election - which goes to show that kind of prejudice is a thing of the past. There are a lot of young people growing up in Wales who discover that they are gay and can feel some kind of freak. So it's important that we have role models and that we work to ensure equality in the law."

Price described the event as "a celebration of diversity that is characteristic of the tolerant and inclusive Wales we all want to see ... Unfortunately, there are still too many instances of gay men and lesbians facing discrimination."

Source: *Western Mail*, 1 September 2001



# 2004

## 2003

Section 28, which banned councils and schools from intentionally promoting homosexuality, is repealed in England and Wales and Northern Ireland. Employment Equality Regulations made it illegal to discriminate against lesbians, gays or bisexuals at work.

## 2004

The Civil Partnership Act 2004 is passed by the Labour Government, giving same-sex couples the same rights and responsibilities as married heterosexual couples in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

The Gender Recognition Act 2004 is passed by the Labour Government. The Act gives transsexual people legal recognition as members of the sex appropriate to their gender (male or female) allowing them to acquire a new birth certificate, affording them full recognition of their acquired sex in law for all purposes, including marriage.

# 2007

On the 40th anniversary of the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality a number of men spoke out of their experiences. Campaigner Howard Llewellyn said that, despite the law, attitudes towards gay people had remained slow to change.

The 62-year-old from the south Wales valleys village of Abercynon said he felt isolated growing up in the '50s and '60s because homosexuality was not discussed or tolerated. "You led a secret life and you kept hidden a large part of your personality - this had a terrible effect on me," said Mr Llewellyn. "The stress of not being able to reveal your complete personality to your friends made life difficult. "It was an indictment of those times that it was so difficult to meet gay people because you did not know where they were. My first gay relationship was with someone in

Holland at the age of 26. You were told you were a freak, it wasn't natural, it wasn't supposed to be "That helped me to bring my sexual identity into focus. Most people by the age of 26 are married, they have got kids, they could be divorced and married again.

"But I was waiting all that time to have a relationship with another human being."

Mr Llewellyn, secretary of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights committee for Trades Union Congress (TUC) Wales, said anger over the loss of his gay youth because of prejudice pushed him to become politically active. But he insisted the 1967 act did not make much of a difference to his life because at the time he did not realise his strengthening feelings meant he was gay.

Source: BBC, 27 July 2007



# 2009

## 2008

Angela Eagle becomes the first female MP to enter into a civil partnership (with partner Maria Exall).



## 2009

Welsh rugby star Gareth Thomas becomes the first known top-level professional male athlete in a team sport to come out while still active in professional sport.

## 2009

Gareth Milton from Cardigan joined the fourth series of the S4C drama *Caerdydd*, which followed the lives of a group of friends living in the Welsh capital.

The former Ysgol Uwchradd Aberteifi pupil took on the role of fun-loving Jamie Roberts, a nineteen-year-old gay man who has had a rocky start to life in Cardiff, including spending some time living on the streets. Gareth, then 27, lived in Miskin near Llantrisant, was married with three children.

Photo credit: Richard Townshend  
<https://members-api.parliament.uk/api/Members/491/Portrait?cropType=ThreeFour>



## 2010

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

## 2014

Same-sex marriage becomes legal in England and Wales on 29 March under the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013.

## 2015

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

English weightlifter Michaela Breeze marries Welsh netball representative Sinead Kelly. Together they open a gym in the former St David's Church in Aberdare. With 11 years of teaching experience behind her, she became a familiar face in the schools around Aberdare and Rhondda Cynon Taff.

## 2015

Tracy Myhill, from Rhondda, Chief Executive, Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust is made Stonewall's Role Model of the Year, she also appears as No. 31 in the Welsh *Pinc List* of most influential LGBT people in Wales.

Source: Hannah Jones, 'The Pinc List: The 40 most influential LGBT people in Wales,' *Wales Online*, 15 August 2015



## 2016

## 2015

Jeffrey Weeks OBE (born 1945, in Rhondda, Wales) is a gay activist and an historian and sociologist specialising in work on sexuality. He is among the academics in the early period of gay men's studies in Britain that emerged from the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) which he joined in 1970 and the Gay Left of which he was a founding member. Jeffrey was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the 2012 Birthday Honours for services to social science. In 2015, he was placed 6th on the *Pinc List* of most influential LGBT people in Wales.

Sources: Wikipedia; Hannah Jones, 'The Pinc List: The 40 most influential LGBT people in Wales,' *Wales Online*, 25 August 2015

## 2016

Paul Davies, from Treherbert in Rhondda was crowned Mr Gay Wales in 2016. He was the first Butlins Redcoat with only one hand, and the first physically disabled winner. One of *Attitude* magazine's Bachelors of The Year in 2017, he regularly supports LGBT+ community events and Prides across Wales, and in 2016 compared Monmouthshire's Youth Pride event. He was a news anchor for PinkSixty.

Source: Ruth Mosalski, 'The Pinc List 2018: The 40 most influential LGBT+ people in Wales,' *Wales Online*, 18 August 2018



Photo credit: © Zefrog  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/zefrog/>

## 2016

Hannah Blythyn, Jeremy Miles, and Adam Price became the first openly gay members of the Welsh Assembly.



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

## 2017

A gay clergyman the Very Reverend Jeffrey John born in Tonyrefail in 1953, accused the Anglican Church in Wales of homophobia after he was rejected for a job the Bishop of Llandaff.

The row between him, the Church and Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Wales, ran on for many months.

Source: *Wikipedia*



Photo credit: Richard Gillin  
Wikimedia Commons



## 2021

## 2019



The first Pride event in the Welsh Valleys was organised by Lauren and Natalie Bowen of RCT Pride. In Treorch, a permanent mural stands in commemoration of this important event.

Source: *Welsh Pride: A Timeline of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender (LGBTQ+) History in Wales*

## 2021

Jeffrey Weeks' autobiography, *Between Worlds: A Queer Boy from The Valleys*, is published by Parthian Books. 'Jeffrey Weeks was born in the Rhondda in 1945, of mining stock. As he grew up he increasingly felt an outsider in the intensely community-minded valleys, a feeling intensified as he became aware of his gayness. Escape came through education. He left for London, to university, and to realise his sexuality. From the early 1970s he was actively involved in the new gay liberation movement and became its pioneering historian.'

Source: *Parthian Books website*

**BETWEEN  
WORLDS  
A QUEER BOY  
FROM THE  
VALLEYS**

**JEFFREY  
WEEKS**





## 2021

Norena Shopland talks to Rhondda MP Chris Bryant about his book *The Glamour Boys: The Secret Story of the Rebels who Fought for Britain to Defeat Hitler*.

The full interview can be seen on Pride Cymru's Facebook page.



Photo credit: Chris McAndrew / UK Parliament

## 2021

Owen J Hurcum became the world's first non-binary mayor and Wales' youngest ever elected mayor of Bangor City Council in Gwynedd, Wales.

Photo credit: Owen Hurcum



# 2021

## 2021

### I hid my partner upstairs

Baroness Debbie Wilcox recalls her experiences teaching during the Section 28 era in the 80s and 90s, when promotion of homosexuality by local authorities was prohibited.

'A Rhondda-born girl with a working-class upbringing, she became the first female leader of Newport Council back in 2016 is now the front bench spokesperson for Wales in the House of Lords. But it was during her time as a student at Porth County Girls Grammar School from 1968 to 1975 that she soon discovered she was not like her other students.

From school, she began her journey into teaching. Having left drama school she started educating

others in the subject in south London, before returning to Newport with an ex-partner to be closer to home. But with Section 28 having been introduced, it meant Debbie had to navigate her job as a gay person while hiding her sexuality from colleagues.

"Oh my goodness. After being in London for five years where everything was so open about being gay, to come back to a small valleys town. Blimey, it was like going back in time," she said.

"Although I must say the people I worked with were absolutely lovely, but there was no way I could tell them that I was gay. So, you know, this lifetime of hiding began when I came back to Wales. I was teaching in Llanwern High School (previously Hartridge High School). I had a couple of close friends in school who knew I was gay, but never talked about it."

Source: *Wales Online*, 5 September 2022

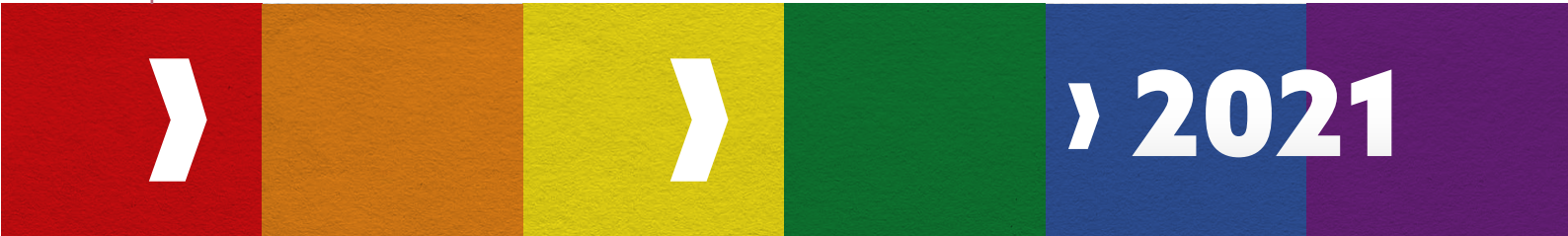
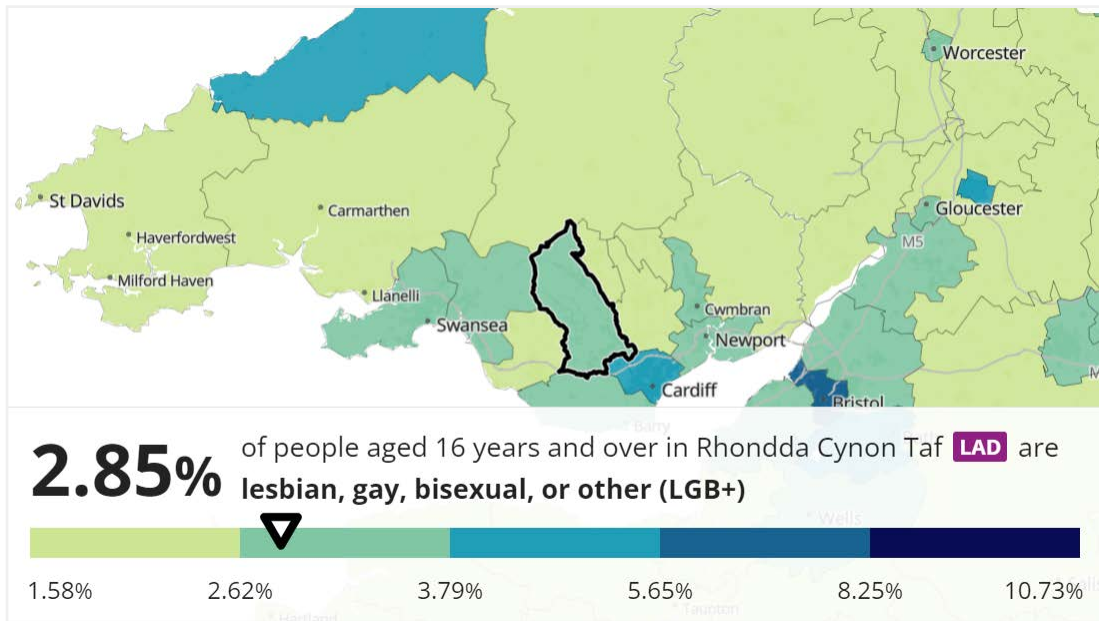
Photo credit: Roger Harris - <https://members.parliament.uk/member/4730/portrait>





**2021**

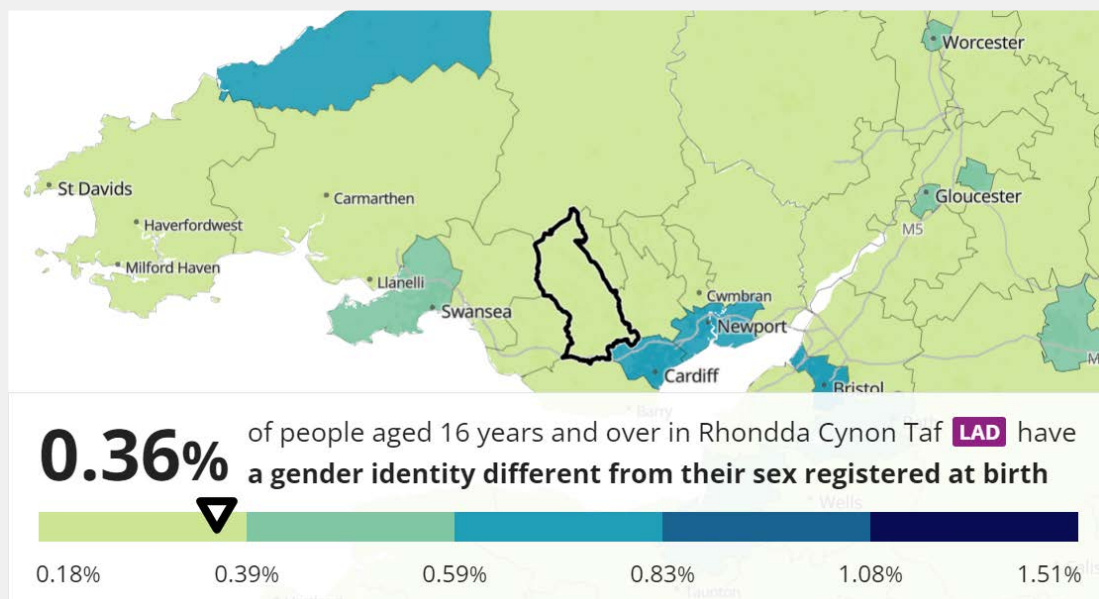
The 2021 UK Census was the first in world history to include questions on sexual orientation and gender identity. Some care should be taken over the figures as not all people answered the question.



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## 2022

The Royal Mint in Ynysmaerdy produces a Pride Coin. It is made to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first Pride march in the UK “marking the first time Britain’s LGBTQ+ community has been celebrated on a UK coin.” Five million were released into general circulation and coloured souvenir editions were also made available.

Source: The Royal Mint website



## 2023

## 2023

“A thriving queer scene is probably not what springs to mind when thinking of the Welsh valleys. But that’s all changing thanks to the emergence of a new LGBTQ+ subculture that sprang up in Cardiff during lockdown. The Welsh Ballroom Community (WBC) is the first of its kind in the country – but waltzing has very little to do with it. In this context, ballroom refers to the queer movement that began in 1920s New York, when black and Latino drag queens began to organise their own pageants, rebelling against racism in the established circuits. Welcoming all races and sexualities, they became safe spaces where people could be themselves and compete for trophies and cash prizes. Tayo Sanwo (dressed

in a recycled Welsh flag outfit, in Tonypandy) is an engineer who grew up in Essex but moved to Cardiff six years ago. She has found joining the WBC transformative. “It has been an extraordinary journey. It’s allowed me to celebrate body positivity and love the skin that I’m in with no apologies,” she said. “It’s allowed me to connect with the beautiful individuals who have now become my chosen family. It has helped me become more of the person that I am today.”

Source: Daisy Greenwell, ‘The thriving queer scene that found a home in the Welsh valleys,’ *Positive.News*, 29 May 2023



## Thank you

These have been just a few highlights from Rhondda Cynon Taf's sexual orientation and gender identity history.

If you think we've missed anything that should be included, please do let us know by using the web link below.

We will update the timeline on a regular basis.

[www.lgbtqcymru.swansea.ac.uk](http://www.lgbtqcymru.swansea.ac.uk)



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