

# The Wales LGBTQ+ Timeline Collection

Conwy 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.





18th CENTURY

Birth of sculptor John Gibson (1790-1866) in Gyffin, Conwy. Gibson lived much of his adult life in Rome with his partner, the Welsh painter, Penry Williams (1802 - 1885).

He was close friends with Mary Lloyd and her partner Frances Power Cobbe. John's most famous work 'The Tinted Venus' caused controversy when first exhibited. It can now be viewed at the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool.

Photo credit: © National Portrait Gallery

# 1790 1865-1872

# 19th 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.

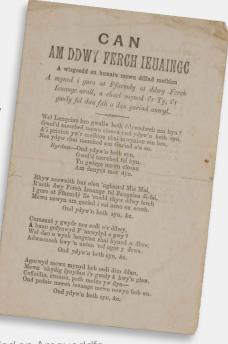
Abel Jones (1830 - 1901) was a rather eccentric part-time criminal, oneeyed balladeer, 'the last of the "great" balladists' but who was often known by his bardic name Bardd Crwst after his birthplace, Llanrwst.

He wrote a Welsh language ballad, Can and a later version, Can Newydd, striking for their explicit sexual nature depicting cross-dressing women having sexual relations with women.

He died in Llanrwst Workhouse. The ballads can be read in the blogs A Queer Bawdy Ballad on the Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru / National Library

of Wales website and A Queer Welsh Ballad on Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales. The ballad was revived for a presentation at an LGBTQ+ History Month 2022 by Aberration, recorded by Cerys Hafana with backing vocals by the community.

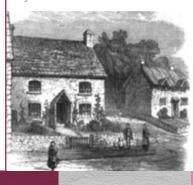
Photo credit: 
Amaueddfa Cymru Ballad MS 1736/5



Mary Lloyd, and her partner Frances Power Cobbe were living in Hengwrt, near Dolgellau when their friend American Harriet Hosmer came to visit.

Harriet was the first female professional sculptor, and for 25 years she was romantically involved with Scotswoman Louisa, Lady Ashburton.

Both she and Mary were friends of John Gibson and so they went on a search for his house in Conwy a year after he had died.



< John Gibson's house

#### 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.

1895

#### 1890

Life at Llandudno. The tendency of the dainty ones to adopt men's attire gets stronger. They have got our hats, our collars, our neckties, even our shirt-fronts and vests, to nothing of our coats and jackets. These young maidens have left us only one garment, and when they get married they may take even to that.

Source: North Wales Chronicle, 11 October 1890

### 1895

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



# 20th CENTURY

1903

The eccentric the Marquis, of Anglesey, known for his flamboyant costumes gives a rare interview to the Llandudno Advertiser at the Clarence Hotel.

The Marquis tried to play down his reputation for his extravagant costumes and jewels: 'A good deal of nonsense has been printed in various papers about his Lordship's jewellery displays on the stage. It is not true that the leading lady and himself wear many thousand pounds worth of jewels. They do not array themselves with anything that is extravagant, or not in perfect taste. His Lordship's burlesque costumes are always previously sketched by artists, and the costumes are exact, replicas of the sketches, while the jewels for the productions are of the best quality Parisian paste.'

Source: Llandudno Advertiser, 11 September 1903



1914

1907

GROTESQUE FOOTBALL AT LLANDUDNO. On Wednesday evening last, in the cause of charity, a football match between young men masquerading as "Suffragettes" and a team of shop assistants was played!, before a considerable crowd. The "women" were grotesquely attired, and! were under the protection of a very tall "policeman." The game was quite a success from a laughterproducing point of view. One of the devices was that when a player was "hurt" she was soused with water and placed on an ambulance, which immediately gave way. The "Suffragettes" won by three gtoals to two. A "cup" was presented to the team at the close. It turned out to be a paraffin-oil can.

Source: The Weekly News, 17 May 1907

1910

Llandudno's Prince's Theatre, Rosie Bartlett met with 'much success as a male impersonator'.

Source: North Wales Weekly News, 20 May 1910

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.

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.

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.

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.

1951

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

1957

#### 1954

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

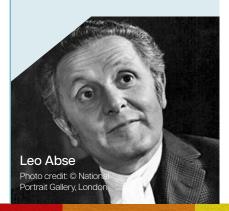
He had been given a course of female hormones (chemical castration) by doctors as an alternative to prison after being prosecuted by the police because of his homosexuality.

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.

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

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.



1970

Gay Liberation Front (GLF) was established.



1974

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

) 1977

1976

Aberconwy Council blocks conference.

A row breaks out between the Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE) and Aberconwy Borough Council about CHE wanting to hold a conference in Llandudno. The row makes national news when the council blocked the holding of the conference claiming lack of available accommodation despite having given positive initial responses to CHE and having previously hosted similar size conferences held by other organisations.

CHE accuses committee of 'smokescreen'

THE claim by a borough committee that there is no suitable venue at Llandudno for a CHE conference has been described a a "smoke-screen" by one of the organisers.

Sources: Forbidden Lives: LGBT stories from Wales, Norena Shopland (Seren, 2017); North Wales Weekly News 16th June 1977

**1977** 

Founding of Gay Support helpline in Llandudno.

Against the backdrop of the row between CHE and Aberconwy Borough Council and after 3 suicides of gay men in Llandudno within the space of days, a Gay Support Line is set up called 'Friend'.

Sources: Forbidden Lives: LGBT stories from Wales, Norena Shopland (Seren, 2017); North Wales Weekly News 25th August 1977

FRIEND. North Wales offers free and confidential help to homosexual and men and women. For further information, or just a friend-Tel Llandudno 77013. Friday evening. 10. or write to us at P.O. Box 11. Llandudno. Gwynedd

The licensee of the Bluebell Inn, Conwy ioins other licensees across Wales in objecting to their pubs being listed as meeting places for gay people in 'Gay Times'.

Source: Western Mail, 24 August 1978

Licensees PUBLICANS IN Wales objected in a nation magazine as needing lates for homosexuals.

Can Name—the Cartnightly news1982

A teacher on the staff of a primary school for 13 years committed an act of gross indecency with another man in a public toilet, Colwyn magistrates heard yesterday.

Source: North Wales Weekly, 25 November 1982

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

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. 1984

A row blows up over the Vicar of Betws-y-Coed's offer to the Gay Rambler's Club to hold their annual meeting in the Church Hall. Alan Spencer, from the council, condemned the vicar but was accused of over-reacting. The Rev. Canon Barry Morgan, later the Archbishop of Wales, supported the vicar by referring to Christ's identification with outcasts and quoting the verse "Whilst we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Tom Rees, of 32 Bryntirion Park, Conwy wrote a letter to the North Wales Weekly News objecting to Spencer's 'man's inhumanity to man' views, adding, 'the next time he attends church service he should, first of all, remove his rose-tinted spectacles that depict all others as misguided sinners - excepting of course, himself and the Capel Curig Community Council. He should then look up the Bible quotations: "Take out first the mote that is in their own eyes, then those shalt see clearly the mote that is in thy brother's eye" (Matthew 7:5). Finally, and most importantly, he must re-adjust his "halo" that has clearly fallen over his eyes so as to read and reflect on that old verse:

There is so much good in the worst of us,

And so much bad in the best of us:

That it ill-behoves any of us

To find any fault with the rest of us. (Robert Louis Stephenson)

Source: North Wales Weekly News, 29 March 1984; North Wales Weekly News, 5 April 1984

Female impersonator, Danny La Rue (1927-2009), makes his first appearance in Llandudno, at the Arcadia. He meets up with comedian and female impersonator, Tommy Rose who recalled, "We first met when I was appearing in a Summer season in Margate in 1949. I was top of the bill and Danny (whose stage name was then Danny Carroll) joined as a chorus boy. He was an extremely nice person, going through a bit of a bad time, and my wife and I took him under our wing."

Source: North Wales Weekly News, 11 July 1985

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons File: Danny La Rue.jpg



1996

#### 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.

1996

The first respite centre for HIV and AIDS victims in North Wales was to be opened.

"It is the project that they said would sink Penmaenmawr. But today the people of the Victorian coastal resort will have to face a future in which the town will be known not only for its prom but also for its contribution in helping those afflicted by one of the scourges of the late 20th century."

#### Source: Daily Post, 16 May 1996

It opened the following year but shut down in 2013 due to lack of funds. The Tyddyn Bach Trust respite care centre in Penmaenmawr for people and their families living with HIV shut down on Tuesday due to a lack of funding.

Source: Daily Post, 18 April 2013

# 21st CENTURY

### 2000

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

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.

#### 2000

#### Cottaging

Toilets at Llanfairfechan, Conwy were used for cottaging (meeting in toilets for sex). Detective Brian Powell Jones (39) of Beaumaris, Anglesey was arrested there for 'soliciting for immoral purposes'. A detective has been cleared of a charge of importuning. Brian Powell Jones, a detective constable in the North Wales force, had denied persistently soliciting for immoral purposes in the toilets at Llanfairfechan between June 14 and July,

Source: North Wales Daily Post, 25 January 2000; Daily Post, 25 January 2000

2003

2000

CONWY (01492) GOOD TASTE BISTRO Colwyn Bay. 01492-534786 Mo-Sa 9-Spm Gay-friendly... JACK'S HYDRO Pennant Hall, Beach Rd. Penmaenawr, 622878. Open daily. Sep. bar/rest. Accom. V MUDIAD MERCY HOUSE Tyddyn Bach Aids/HIV Respite Centre, Graiglwyd Rd. Penmaenawr. 623322.

Source: Gay Times, February 2000

2001

HTV broadcast a programme "The Night Before The Morning After" about "A wild night out at north Wales only gay club. Hellbent in Llandudno"

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.

#### 2003-2006

Kai Owen (born 4 September 1975) is a Welsh actor of stage and screen born in Llanrwst.

He became first known as Kev, a gay roofer in *Tipyn O Stad* (2003-2006),

shown on Welsh-language channel S4C. In 2006 Owen was cast as the recurring character of Rhys Williams in the TV series known for its sexually fluid characters, *Torchwood*.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons Kirstin Tanger

#### 1 2004

The Guardian newspaper reported that 'one member of Welsh Labour...was quite amused to be turned away from Llandudno's only club on Thursday because it was gay night "and, apparently, I don't look gay enough [...] After 10 minutes of remonstrating with them about the irony of their policy, I got in."

Source: The Guardian, March 2004

Photo credit: The Washington, Llandudno (©Conwy Archive Service Ref:CP395/3/335)



# 2009



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.

2004

Tommy Rose, comedian and female

impersonator dies in Llandudno. Born in 1916 in London, he was one of the famous all-male forces revues during WWII and appeared in shows such as Soldiers in Skirts, Forces in Petticoats and Misleading Ladies. Most of the performers appeared in drag and spawned a host of female impersonators including Danny La Rue. Tommy joined up with Sonny Dawkes and together they worked in revues and as ugly sisters in pantomime. In the 1970s, Tommy moved to Llandudno where he lived at 6 Tudno Street, set up a theatrical costumier (3 Madoc Street), and would regularly appear in local shows. He died on 15 May 2004, aged 87.

Source: The Times, 14 June 2004; North Wales Weekly News, 11 July 1985

2009

North Wales Police yesterday raised a rainbow flag to mark the start of staff activities aimed at celebrating lesbian, gay, bisexual history month. Source: *Daily Post*, 31 January 2009

#### 2010-2011

#### During 2010 and 2011 a Llanrwst man carried out a series of slanderous statements:

Homophobic abuse left me feeling like dirt says Llanfairfechan gay rights campaigner Mr Hinchliff, who is North Wales Police's lesbian, gay and bisexual group official, and who believes homophobic crime victims may tolerate attacks.

#### Source: Daily Post, 30 January 2010

Llanrwst man faces jail over internet slur campaign across the internet with captions wrongly accusing them of having slept with hundreds of men, of being gay or of being paedophiles.

#### Source: Daily Post, 20 December 2010

Llanrwst man given community order for internet slur campaign A BULLYING victim who wrongly branded people paedophiles, promiscuous or gay on the internet apologised to his victims on Monday and said he

#### Source: Daily Post, 17 January 2011

North Wales internet slur man's sentence 'too lenient' INNOCENT victims of a man who falsely branded them paedophiles, promiscuous or gay on the internet have criticised his sentence as too

Source: Daily Post, 18 January 2011

2013

#### 2010

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

#### 2011

The Buzz Club opens in Llandudno close to the Broadway Boulevard. One Thursday of every month is a gay night.

### 2013

Buildings belonging to the National Assembly of Wales in Cardiff Bay and Colwyn Bay will fly the Rainbow flag tomorrow, in order to mark LGBT History Month.

Source: Pink News, 6 February 2013



Jim Cotter (1942-2014) dies. He was an Anglican priest and a lifelong campaigner for greater understanding and inclusion in Christianity.

He was the first Honorary Secretary of Gay Christian Movement (GCM) and bravely appeared on a TV programme in 1977, The Lord's My Shepherd and He Knows I'm Gay and in 1978 edited Exploring Lifestyles: An Introduction to Services of Blessing for Gay Couples. In 2001, Rev. Cotter moved from Sheffield to Wales. In 2008, as a vicar, at St Hywyns Church in Aberdaron having celebrated the civil partnership of two women he said it was a "day of great delight and healing", which brought a reprimand from Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Wales. Cotter replied: "When an archbishop tells me that, as an ordained member of the Church, I cannot celebrate and bless a civil partnership in a church, but that I can argue for a change that would allow that, it frankly feels both patronising and chilling." Typically, he turned a negative into a positive by publishing that year The Service of My Love, a liturgical and pastoral handbook for these occasions.

He died on 16 April at Llandudno.

Source: The Church Times, 25 April 2014

2014

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

2016

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

2021

2018

Conwy Castle lights up for LGBT+ History Month.

2018

L-Fest, a national festival for Lesbians, is held for the first time at Bodafon Farm in Llandudno. It is held there again in October 2019. The last L-Fest took place in 2022.

2021

Conwy Dragons RFC - Gay and Inclusive Rugby is formed.



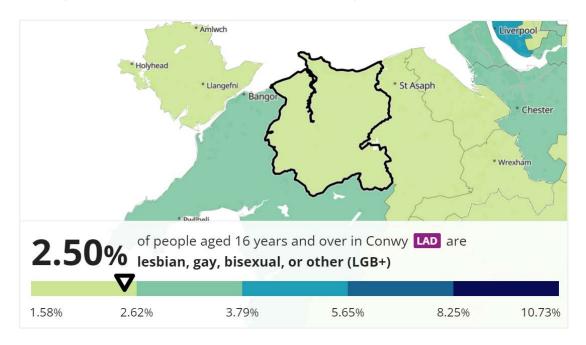
2021

Llandudno Museum run "Hidden History - an LGBTQ Heritage Walk for the first time.

2021

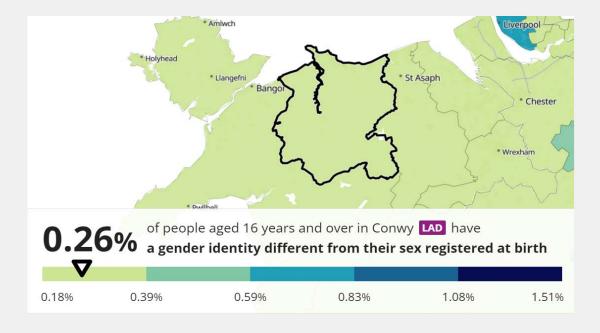
Owen J Hurcum became the world's first non-binary mayor and Wales' youngest ever elected mayor of Bangor City Council in Gwynedd, Wales.

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.



2021

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As part of the Get Out Get Active (GOGA) Programme North Wales, Pride Cymru in partnership with Disability Sport Wales hosted their first LGBTQ+ Network and partnership Event at Deeside Leisure centre, Queensferry. The event welcomed over 130 attendees from members of the public to partners and projects and had a positive response from all

who attended, who reported having valued the networking and sharing of good practice, learning opportunities and increased awareness of local opportunities.

Source: DSW Comms, Disability Sports Wales, 'North Wales LGBTQ+ Network and Partnership Event 16th Feb 2023,' 27 February 2023



ALLAN AC O GWMPAS: CYFRES LDHT+ GWEITHDY YSGRIFENNU CREADIGOL BALCH Gyda Norena Shopland MAE NORENA YN HANESYDD AC AWDUR MREIG SY'N ARBENIGO MEWN YMCHWIL A HANES LIIDTC-. MAE HI'N RHOI YRSIAU, DARLITHOEDD A GWEITHDAI AR REFTADAETH CYMRU A HANES LIIDTC-. BYDD Y GWELTING T SOMEWITH.
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**Out & About: LGBTQ+ Celebration Event** Join Conwy Museum and Archive Service for this free LGBTQ+ History Month event to share stories of the LGBTQ+ experience in North Wales. We will be joined by Norena Shopland, Rev'd Sarah Hildreth-Osborn, and Queer Tales From Wales. Participants are welcome to bring personal items and photos along with them for discussion hopland will be discussing the LGBTQ+ Welsh History Production of Huseums and Art Coffering of Huseum Huseum Ampundiffyed at Children Ampundiffyed at Children Coff Comm

OUT AND ABOUT: AN LGBTQ+ SERIES PROUD CREATIVE / WRITING WORKSHOP With Norena Shopland NORENA IS A WELSH HISTORIAN AND VRITER WHO IS SPECIALIZED IN LOBTORESEARCH AND HISTORY.

SHE GIVES TALKS, LECTURES AND WORKSHOPS ON WELSH HERITAGE AND LOBTORY. 10:00am to 12:00 pm Conwy Culture Centre www.DiwylliantConwy.com SINCLUSION STATES AND ACCORDING STATES AND ACCORDING STATES AND ACCORDING AC

> 2023



## Thank you

These have been just a few highlights from Conwy'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



