



The Wales LGBTQ+ Timeline Collection

Sir Ddinbych / Denbighshire 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.

17th CENTURY >

1699

Maen Huail is a stone block at St Peter's Square, in the centre of Ruthin. A circular plaque next to it states "Maen Huail on which tradition states, King Arthur beheaded Huail, brother of Gildas the historian". The stone was recorded in 1699 as being in the middle of the road, and now stands on a concrete plinth against the half-timbered wall of the Barclays Bank building. Elis Gruffydd (1490–1552) a Welsh chronicler, transcriber, and translator wrote a version of why Arthur had executed Huail:

Arthur dressed himself in woman's clothes in order to visit a girl at Rhuthun. Huail chanced to come there, and he recognised Arthur by his lameness, as he was dancing in a company of girls. These were his words: Da iawn yw downshio velly oni bai'r glun 'This dancing were all right if it were not for the knee'. Arthur heard



Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

them and knew who had spoken them. He returned to his court where he caused Huail to be brought before him, and he reproached him bitterly with his faithlessness. Huail was taken to Rhuthun, where Arthur cut off his head on a stone in the market-place, which to this day is known as Maen Huail.

Source: Wikipedia



18th CENTURY >

1778

Arguably the most famous female same-sex couple in history, the Ladies of Llangollen take up home at Plas Newydd. Eleanor Butler (1739–1829) and Sarah Ponsonby (1755–1831), originally from Ireland, lived in Llangollen for fifty years where they wrote extensive letters to people and where Eleanor kept a diary about their lives along with their faithful friend and housekeeper Mary Caryl. All three are buried in St Collen's Church.

For more on the Ladies of Llangollen see Wikipedia but ignore the line about being forced into unwanted marriages, they ran away together because they wanted to be together and for no other reason.



Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

1782

Rev. Hugh Davies a St Asaph clergyman, was accused of 'assault with intent to commit sodomy on the prosecutor, a prospective employee. Other employees of accused testified to similar assaults.' It was found 'no true bill' and dismissed.

Source: Crime and Punishment Database, National Library Wales

19th CENTURY >

1802

In the diaries of the Ladies of Llangollen, 1802: Visit to Chirk Castle. They often visited Chirk Castle, which they admired and knew the Myddletons who owned it. They bought cheese from the staff there and exchanged plants and gardeners.



Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

1813

On Monday last, a female, in man's apparel, was enlisted as a recruit in the 63rd regiment, quartered in Shrewsbury. She shortly afterwards confessed her sex, and said, that her object was to have been enlisted into the 43rd regiment, as in that corps she had a lover, who was now on foreign duty, and that she adopted this expedient from a wish to follow him. She was dressed in a blue jacket and trowsers. Her father is a respectable farmer in the neighbourhood of St Asaph, Denbighshire.

Source: *Liverpool Mercury*, 22 January 1813



1819

1819

Mary Charlotte Lloyd (1819-1896) came from an ancient Welsh family who at the time of her birth lived at Plas Rhagett Hall in Corwen. A Welsh sculptor who studied with John Gibson in Rome and lived for decades with the well-known philosopher, animal welfare advocate, and feminist Frances Power Cobbe.



Photo credit: By John Lloyd - Library of Congress, Public Domain

1822

Anne Lister, better known as Gentleman Jack, visits Plas Newydd, the home of the Ladies of Llangollen. However, Eleanor Butler is not well and Sarah Ponsonby is 'alarmed and ill herself.' Mrs Davis, who deals with Anne tell her she has known the Ladies for 13-14 years and always seen them:

so attached so amiable together – no two people ever lived more happily – they like all the people about them are beloved by all, and do a great deal of good – Lady Eleanor had the remains of beauty – Miss Ponsonby was a very fine woman – Lady Eleanor Butler about 80 – Miss Ponsonby 10 or 12 years younger – the damp this bad account cast upon my spirits I cannot describe – I am interested about these 2 ladies very much – there is a something in their story, and in all I have heard about them here that added to other circumstances makes a deep impression

Sarah agrees to see Anne that evening and she returns at 8pm:

shewn into the room next the library (the breakfast room) waited a minute or 2, and then came Miss Ponsonby – a large woman so as to waddle in walking but tho' not taller than myself – in a blue shortish waisted cloth habit, the

jacket unbuttoned shewing a plain plaited frilled habit shirt – a thick white cravat, rather loosely put on – hair powdered, parted, I think, down the middle in front, cut a moderate length all round and hanging straight, tolerably thick – the remains of a very fine face – coarseish white cotton stockings – ladies' slipper shoes cut lower down, the foot hanging a little over – altogether a very odd figure – yet she had no sooner entered into conversation than I forgot all this and my attention was wholly taken by her manners and conversation.

Anne envied their place and the happiness and, at parting she 'shook hands with me and gave me a rose; I said I should keep it for the sake of the place where it grew.'

When the TV series, Gentleman Jack was first aired in 2019 the costume for Suranne Jones was based on the riding habits worn by the Ladies.



› 1861

1826

On 1 May 1826 Phillip Cha Chambres a Clergyman of Henllan was accused of attempted sodomy but was found not guilty.

Source: [Crime and Punishment Database, National Library Wales](#)

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.

1865

LOCAL NEWS

Sodomy – Thomas Williams, a native of Denbigh, was brought before the borough bench on Thursday, with committing an unnatural crime on a man named Edward Williams, in a lodging-house in this town. He was committed to take his trial at the assizes.

Source: *Wrexham Advertiser*, 15 July 1865

1870s

Abel Jones, ‘the last of the “great” balladists’ was often known by his bardic name *Bardd Crwst* after his birthplace, Llanrwst. Sometime in the 1870s he wrote a ballad about women cross-dressing as men to have sex with some women at ‘Plas uchaf’ Plas Uchaf (Upper Hall) is 1.5 miles (2.4 km) from Corwen, and at ‘Plas Glyn’ possibly short for Plas Glynllifon 56 miles (90km) from Corwen.

For more on this story see *A Queer Bawdy Ballad* on National Library of Wales - Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru website, and *A Queer Welsh Ballad* on Amgueddfa Cymru/ Museum Wales website.

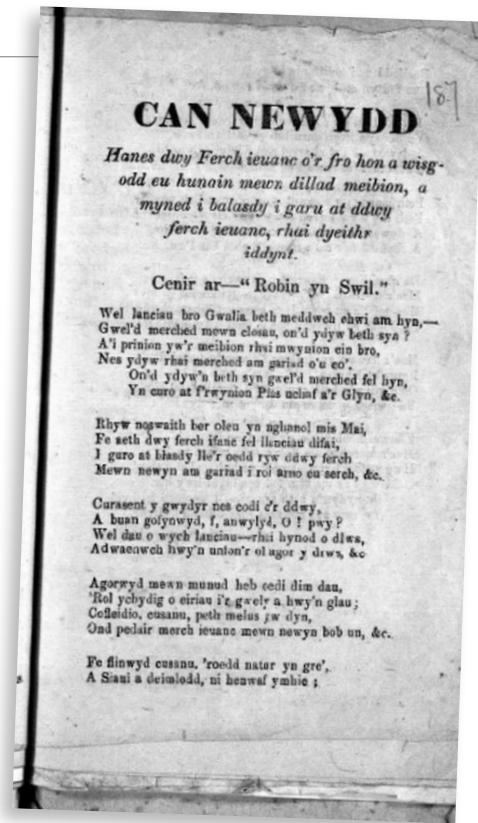


Photo credit: Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru/The National Library of Wales



1883

1874

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–1889) was an English poet and Jesuit priest, whose posthumous fame was as a leading Victorian poet. In 1874 he lived at St Asaph and his three years there are regarded as the most influential and happiest of his life. It has been argued that some of Hopkins poems embody homoerotic themes.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



1883

If a woman were to change her sex, why could she no longer be a Christian?—Because she would be a he (a) then.

Source: *Wrexham and Denbighshire Advertiser*, 21 December 1883

1884

“WHAT IS THE WORLD A COMING TO”—As young men grow more effeminate, as undoubtedly that class of them styled “mashers” do young ladies (save the mark) get more masculine. Male mashers are now too “utterly utter” to exist almost, and the mention of a meerschaum would send them to a dead faint, and even the sight of a Havannah would spoil their appetite to such an extent that a curried shrimp would be more than a meal for them. But to our subject. A masher (that is a male masher) cannot go beyond “a little beauty” or a “Richmond Gem,” but alas for his female equivalent! Larger and stronger the cigar, greater the gusto of the female smoker, or at least so it would appear from the performances of those three young ladies, who enjoyed their weeds on Monday evening on the Rhyl Promenade. There were the three red lights of the Havannahs like danger signals at a railway junction, and the blue smoke curled up in volumes that suggested the idea that three Virginian planters had met to discuss a “whiff.” The fair smokers were evidently not novices at the game.”

Source: *Rhyl Advertiser*, 25 October 1884

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.



1891

1891

‘MASQUERADING IN WOMAN'S CLOTHES. - Thos. Owen, who was apparently about 25 years of age, hailing from Ruthin, and said to be of no particular occupation, was locked up by P.C. Josiah Barker, charged with being a wandering lunatic. On the night in question the constable was informed by Mr. Tilston, a blacksmith, that there was a man in woman attire wandering about Rhydygoleu. P.C. Barker proceeded in the direction indicated, and about a quarter past eleven found Owen wandering at large at the top of High-street, whither he had come from Rhydygoleu. The constable, of course, took charge of the unfortunate man, whom he took with commendable promptitude to the police-station, first having asked him what he meant

by being in woman's clothes, and judging from his appearance and the manner in which he spoke that he was a lunatic at large. It appears that Owen has been in an asylum for two years, but came out last October. It is alleged, too, that he obtained the clothes he was wearing when apprehended from the house of his mother, who is said to reside in Rhos-road, Ruthin. Messrs. P. B. Davies Cooke and Tatton Davies Cooke saw the man on Monday morning, and Dr. E. Williams, of Mold, having certified as to his mental condition, the magistrates made the usual order for the detention of Owen by the proper authorities.’

Source: *Llangollen Advertiser*, 31 March 1891

1894

'To-night's Hamlet – This (Friday) evening Mrs Bandmann Palmer will impersonate "Hamlet" at the Operetta House. Not since the days when the great American Actress, Charlotte Cushman, made her startling impression upon English playgoers, has there been a lady on our stage, or any other stage, who has possessed, with Mrs Bandmann Palmer, the intense dramatic force requisite to the impersonation of male characters. Since Charlotte Cushman's time no one has been forthcoming who could attempt to dispute with Mrs Bandmann-Palmer the honour of being the English Cushman. The great power with which she plays Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, gives a dramatic distinction in which she has no living rival.'

Source: *Rhyl Journal*, 1 September 1894

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons
By Unknown author - Luna Folger, CC BY-SA 4.0



1895

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



1899

1895

Robert Garrett Roe, an elderly man, who was at one time a schoolmaster in Northamptonshire was charged with grossly indecent conduct. Roe had been sent to Wrexham by the National Liberal Federation to organise the Denbigh Boroughs for the Liberal candidate at the recent election, and stayed at Maelor Temperance Hotel, where the offences were committed, namely having unlawfully and indecently assaulted Arthur Henry Guntrip and William Williams. Roe denied that he had ever intended to commit the serious charge brought against him, and appealed for mercy. The bench committed him for trial for indecent assault but unable to find bail, he was removed from Wrexham and sent to Ruthin gaol. He was found not guilty.

Source: *Wrexham Advertiser*, 2 November 1895

1899

Tom Barger, the well-known female impersonator's early professional career was closely connected with Rhyl. In 1880 he was the manager of the Rhyl Pavilion.

1905

Town Hall, Rhyl.
FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY.
Wednesday Next, Nov 1st

Admission: Reserved Seats (numbered), 2s
 Second seats, 1s. Back seats, 6d.
 Doors open at 7-30. Overture at 8. Interval at 9.
 Carriages at 10-15.
 Tickets and plan at Mr H. Sandoe's, Bodfor Street.

Mr Tom BARGER
The Great FRED MACCABE'S Only Successor,
 The Popular Comedian, Ventriloquist, Vocalist, Dialect
 Actor, Female Impersonator and Negro Delineator,
 and acknowledged by Public and Press to be the most
 Marvellous Rapid Costume Changer on record, sup-
 ported by his

Talented Family,
 In their Unique and Refined Drawing Room Entertain-
 ment, entitled
SOCIETY AND VARIETY.

Mrs Tom Barger, Accompanist; **Miss Beta
 Barger,** Burlesque Actress, Vocalist, Skipping
 Rope and Skirt Dancer; **Mr Norman Barger,**
 Eccentric Vocal Comedian; **Mr Tom Barger, jnr,**
 the Droll and Quaint Vocal Comedian.

The performance will conclude with a
LAUGHABLE SKETCH
 ENTITLED
"Quits, or Easily Deceived."
 (Written by Mr Tom Barger).

Miss Louie Strangeways (Member of the Gaiety Co,
 afterwards Sallie Tomkins, a Slavey)...Miss
BETA BARGER.
 Bert (Her Brother, just home from college) a Youth
 quite up to date... **TOM BARGER, Junr.**
 Mr Frank Aylesbury (Member of the Belle of New
 York Co., who impersonates Mr Marmaduke
 Makorkodale)...**Mr NORMAN BARGER.**
 Interspersed with songs and dances. 774

1906

Abominable crime. Albert Edwards (28), labourer, who had been awaiting trial in prison for nearly five months, pleaded guilty to committing gross indecency with Ernest Edward Griffith, at Eyton. He was sentenced to six months imprisonment.

Source: *Denbighshire Free Press*, June 16, 1906

1914

Vesta Tilley (1864–1952), an English music hall performer well-known for male impersonating, appears at Pavilion, Rhyl on 2 September.



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.



> 1914

1916

The funeral took place at Llangwm, near Corwen, on Saturday, and was very largely attended, of Mrs. Janet Pugh, of Bwlch Carneddog Farm, of which she was the tenant. Mrs. Pugh, who was in her 76th year, was a notable figure in the tithe war of a quarter of a century ago, being foremost among the fighters in the historic disturbance at Llangwm, at which 38 arrests were made. The old lady habitually appeared in public wearing male attire, and her figure in a bowler hat and cord trousers was familiar at many local markets and fairs in the neighbourhood. She was a pupil and close friend of Principal Michael Jones of Bala.

Source: *Llangollen Advertiser*, 8 December 1916

1921

Billie Manders (1887-1950) arrived in Rhyl in 1921, and took a lease on the Amphitheatre and opened there on July 11th. There were seven in the original all male company, which was an immediate success, Mr Manders always appeared as a woman. The shows ran for 44 consecutive seasons until 1964. They would often tour the country as Billie Manders and the Quaintesques. In 1934 they came first in a *Sunday Despatch* competition for 'the most popular holiday entertainment in the British Isles, as judged by our readers.'

Source: *Billie Manders and the Quaintesques, on Rhyl History Club website*; "Entertainment in Rhyl and North Wales by Bill Ellis, Chapter Two, The Chalford Publishing Company, Chalford. ISBN 0 7524 0728 7



1935

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.

1924

Edward Prosser Rhys (1901–1945) was a Welsh journalist, poet and publisher. "His poem 'Atgof' (Memory) won the National Eisteddfod in Pontypool in 1924. Although it was controversial due to its

homosexual content. The poem is extensively about sex, most heterosexual but there is a short section about a gay experience. It has been speculated that it could be about Morris T. Williams, a close male acquaintance of Prosser Rhys who at the time was married to Kate Roberts.

Source: [Wikipedia](#)



1935

John Cowper Powys (1872–1963), an English philosopher, lecturer, novelist, critic and poet moved to Corwen in 1935 where he set two novels. In 1955 he moved to Blaenau Ffestiniog where he died in 1963. He wrote *A sailor and a homosexual: Essays on Joseph Conrad and Oscar Wilde* (1923).

1935

Kate Roberts (1891–1985) met Morris T. Williams at Plaid Cymru meetings, and married him in 1928.

Williams was a printer, and eventually they bought the printing and publishing house Gwasg Gee (The Gee Press), Denbigh, and moved to live in the town

in 1935. The press published books, pamphlets and the Welsh-language weekly *Y Faner* (The Banner), for which Roberts wrote regularly. After her husband's death in 1946, she ran the press for another ten years. Both Kate and Morris are believed to have same-sex relationships. North East Wales Archives, holds papers of Morris T Williams of Gwasg Gee, Denbigh, 1900-1945 DD/DM/128.



1942

John Menlove Edwards (1910-1958), an English psychiatrist and mountain climber particularly of Welsh peaks. In 1942 he retired to Hafod Owen, above Nant Gwynant (Snowdon) but underwent electro-convulsive therapy and deep insulin injections at the North Wales Hospital, Denbigh for mental instability possibly due to his suppressed homosexuality. He committed suicide and his ashes are scattered at Hafod Owen.

1945

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



1949

1946

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

1949

Punished by Youth for Bribery Bid. "Deserved it," says Judge

"It is clear that the youth who was picked on left very well-deserved marks on this man who tried to bribe him," said Mr. Justice Hallett at Ruthin Assizes when he bound over for three years Henry Douglas Williams, aged 35, of Clwyd-street, Ruthin. The judge also ordered Williams to pay costs not exceeding £50. Williams, a rate collector, employed by the borough council, pleaded guilty of a charge of improper assault. It was alleged that he made suggestions to a youth aged 17, and later the police found him bathing his face. "Yes," said Mr. Justice Hallett, "this young man was soon knocking him about and went to the foreman." Addressing Williams, who said he was ready to put himself under the supervision of the Probation Officer, the judge remarked, "A wicked feature is that you alleged the suggestion came from the youth."

Source: *News of the World*, 30 October 1949

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



1960s

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.

1960s

April Ashley (1935–2021) an English model and well-known trans woman is one of the earliest British people known to have had sex reassignment surgery. In her autobiography she writes:

'I had also met one of the directors of a local brewery, who offered to put me on a catering course. My first assignment was with Mr and Mrs Leadbetter in Chester at the Commercial pub in St Peter's Graveyard. But when I started to attract an extrovert clientele I got cold feet and asked for a transfer. This was to the Westminster Hotel, Rhyl, to learn dining-rooms and kitchens. It was off-season, dead as dead (roller-skating was the biggest treat in town), so after some months I asked for another transfer. It took me to St Asaph. I didn't get on with the family running the hotel. The last straw came when a horse bolted and dragged me on my back all through the shopping streets one crowded Saturday afternoon. Besides, there's only so much

1960s continued over...

1960s continued...

you can learn about a dining-room. I'd run out of ideas; something else had to happen.'

The hotel in St Asaph was the Talardy (which is still there beside the A-55 Expressway)

I worked there with a Skinny Lad, two or three years younger than me, whom you wouldn't have recognised as a future deputy Prime Minister of Britain. John Prescott had left home to work as a commis chef at the hotel. Commis not commie. He was a hard worker. He and I shared a room with another lad. I think with my androgynous look I was a little exotic for him at that time; nevertheless, we talked quite a bit. He found other digs quite quickly. I liked him, thankfully, for he would be very helpful to me in the future. (Ed. With obtaining her Gender Recognition Certificate). But I didn't get on with the family.

April retired for some years to Hay-on-Wye before moving to London.



Source: *April Ashley's Odyssey* by Duncan Fallowell & April Ashley, Jonathan Cape, London, 1982; *The First Lady* by April Ashley with Douglas Thompson, John Blake, London 2006

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons
By Loz Pycock - Flickr: An Evening With April Ashley at the Southbank Centre, CC BY-SA 2.0



» 1971

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.

1968

In the North East Wales Archives (Ruthin) are the minutes of the weekly medical officers' meetings. Includes a note that "a discussion arose associated with the problem of a patient involved homosexual activities" who was later treated with Stilboestrol injections. [no personal patient information provided]

Source: North East Wales Archives, HD/1/523, March 1968

1970

Gay Liberation Front (GLF) was established.



1971

The ladies of Llangollen: A study in romantic friendship, the seminal work on the Ladies by Elizabeth Mavor is published.



1972

In the North East Wales Archives (Ruthin) are the minutes of the weekly medical officers' meetings. Contains details of patient cases. Includes a brief note that "a transsexualist patient was requesting a penectomy" [no personal patient information provided].

Source: North East Wales Archives, HD/1/523, October 1972

1974

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

1977

A former Mayor of Denbigh and a member of the town council, was convicted at Manchester Crown Court of committing an act of gross indecency in public toilets. Raymond Fox-Byrne, aged 34, of Accar-y-Forwyn, Denbigh, had pleaded not guilty to committing the offence with another man last July. Conditionally discharging him for 12 months, Judge John da Cunha said: "I hope this conviction will in no way affect your career either as a court officer or in your public life." In evidence, Fox-Byrne, a clerk at Chester Crown Court denied that he was the person seen by the police. He claimed that he had entered the cubicle as another man was leaving.

Source: *Manchester Evening News*, 2 February 1977



1980

1980

Clwyd County Council refuses a union request to include a non-discrimination clause on the grounds of sexual orientation in their terms and conditions of employment.

4. **SEXUAL ORIENTATION** – The Director of Administration and Legal Services submitted a report (File ref. 710/48 dated June, 1980 – not reproduced) resulting from a request by the Staff Side, at the Local Joint Committee held 18th April, 1980, for an appropriate clause to be included in the Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment confirming that no discrimination would be made by the Council on account of any officer's sexual orientation.

To seek such an undertaking was in line with NALGO National Policy and the Employers' Side had undertaken to report the Staff Sides' views to this Sub-Committee, but without support from them in respect of the request.

After discussion and hearing the Director of Administration and Legal Services, and Occupational Physician, in relation to the Council's obligations, not only to staff and clients but to those in the Council's charge particularly in the field of education and social services

Resolved – that the Staff Sides' request be not acceded to.

Source: Minutes, Clwyd County Council Personnel Sub-Committee, 10 June 1980

1982

A letter from a Jane Roberts to the *Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald* about 'today's obsession is in fighting and campaigning for a worthy cause or ethnic minority' contained this paragraph:

The homosexual or transvestite found a vent for his feelings in drama and pantomime, etc. today ordinary people rarely get such opportunities. Hence why people are now so obsessed with campaigning on behalf of fringe groups. The small communities must be kept alive for our sanity as much as our identity.'

Source: *Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald*, 27 August 1982

Terrence
HIGGINS
TRUST



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

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

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



1984

Christine Evans (1943-) the noted urologist moves to Rhyl and carried out many sex-change operations (Gender reassignment surgery) in Glan Clwyd Hospital, Bodelwyddan, Denbighshire. Miss Evans continued this surgery until 2004 when she retired and this also led to the collapse of the North Wales Gender Identity service based in Bangor Hospital(Dr. Kenny Midence psychiatrist) , The Royal Alexandra Hospital Rhyl (Dr. Stephen Wong – Endocrinologist) and The Maelor Hospital Wrexham(Martin Riley – Sexologist)) It was only in 2022 when the Welsh Gender Service re-established a satellite Gender Clinic in North Wales at Holywell Community Hospital that North Wales had a complete service again.

1988

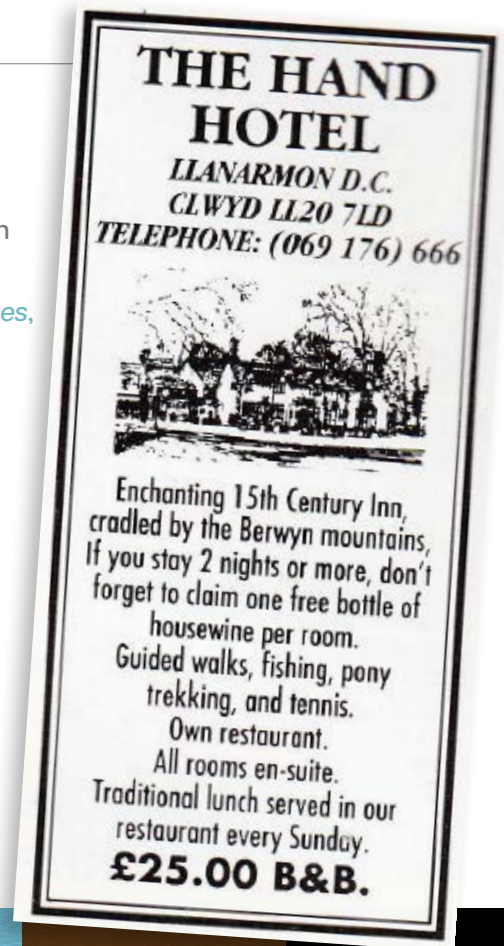
Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 enacted as an amendment to the United Kingdom's Local Government Act 1986, on 24 May 1988 stated that a local authority “shall not intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality” or “promote the teaching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

1994

Advertisement in *Gay Times*.

Source: *Gay Times*, April 1994



1999

1995

Edward Carthy 28, was stabbed to death in Clocaenog Forest in October by a local serial killer whom he had met in a gay bar.

1997

In Rhyl in 1997, the same year as Welsh devolution, the West Rhyl Young People's Project set up to support teenage gays and lesbians by setting up an LGBT support group called Deuce (later renamed VIVA) which is still in existence today and continues to be centred in Rhyl. They now have meetings in Llandudno Junction, Rhyl, Wrexham and Mold and a joint group at the Deeside Leisure Centre. They also run a housing scheme with Clwyd Allyn Housing for homeless LGBTIQ+ youth up to 28. (See 2021 “Ty Pride”)

Viva LGBT Specialist services and direct support for LGBTIQ+ young people (14-25 years old) and those questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity and their families/carers, based in Rhyl and covering all of North Wales.

1999

DENBIGHSHIRE (01745)

PARK Talardy Park Hotel, St Asaph by A55. 01745-584 957. Sa, Call for dates 9-2.No Trnrs.

LGB YOUTH GROUP Under 26. Rhyl, Isabel: 351 293.

LGBT SWITCHBOARD Fri 7-9pm. 337070.

Source: *Gay Times*, August 1999

21st 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.

2000

Gay Times, in their advertisement sections by county listed the following:

Park. Talardy Park Hotel, St Asaph by A55. 01745-584-957. Sa. Call for dates 9-2. No Tmrs.

LGB Youth Group Under 26. Rhyl, Isabel: 351 293

LGBT Switchboard Fri 7-9pm. 337070

Source: *Gay Times*, February 2000)



> 2002

2000

The 15/20 Club, owned by Albert Dyson, a native of Rhyl, from about 1960 to 1980. It was described by several witnesses as a gay club and Dyson himself told the Tribunal that it was a gay venue on Saturday nights, organised by a Rhyl group, during the last 18 months to two years of its existence.

Source: *Lost in Care: Report of the Tribunal of Inquiry into the Abuse of Children in Care in the Former County Council Areas of Gwynedd and Clwyd since 1974*, Department of Health, 2000

2002

The Unique Transgender Network was founded in Mold in February 2002, but has been based in Rhyl, Denbighshire since 2005. Unique, the largest Trans* support group in North Wales is a voluntary self-help and social group supporting Trans (transgender) / gender diverse people right across North Wales. Unique is run by Trans people, with the group's membership reflecting the whole Trans / gender nonconforming spectrum. It provides up-to-date information to help in making decisions and countering the ignorance and prejudice often still encountered. Unique also manages the Trans Community house where people can express their gender identity and gain confidence in being "out" as themselves. It's a quiet place for couples to discuss and become informed about gender identity issues and a refuge for suddenly homeless trans people and accommodation for recently released trans offenders or those on "home leave." It also supports Trans people after gender confirmation surgery who have no home support. It is used for committee meetings, focus groups etc. and by other local LGBT+ groups and is a holiday home for members of the LGBT+ community for up to 3 weeks holiday.

2002 continued over...

Unique
Transgender Network
Serving North Wales & West Cheshire

2002 continued...

Unique's prime purpose is helping Trans people accept themselves and garner acceptance from others. We promote the skills trans people need to interact socially in their appropriate gender, and to give people generally an insight into the rainbow of gender diversity. This is achieved through the group's wealth of personal experience and useful contacts throughout the local and Wales wide community and caring professions.

Unique meets six times monthly in friendly and safe environments in Rhyl, Prestatyn, Bangor, and Deeside, where gender diverse people can meet, find support and make friends. Unique is an inclusive group welcoming all Trans people of every gender diversity, and includes partners, friends and anyone wishing to support and better understand the Transgender community.

A Unique key objective is to engage with the wider community, both those Trans people who need help and encouragement, and to educate the general public to promote awareness and equality for Trans people. Unique regularly takes part in a wide range of activities facilitating greater understanding of Trans issues and improving relations between the

transgender community and wider society. Unique has amassed immense knowledge about, and wide experience of, the transgender community to provide expert training on Trans related diversity awareness and equality. So far it has provided over 850 courses to almost 180 different organisations.

Unique consults with a number of organisations on these matters, including local councils, Universities, Welsh Health, Police, the Welsh Assembly Government, Prison and Probation service and the UK Parliamentary Forum on gender identity.

It writes and checks E&D and transitioning policies for a wide range of organisations

Unique is also a partner in the TrAC (Older Trans Health and Social care) project with Swansea University. It also runs 10 Zoom online Social meetings every month to reach out to isolated community members and those unable to access the live meetings.

**Trans is an umbrella term inclusive of anyone who feels that the sex/gender assigned to them at birth (male or female) is either an inaccurate or incomplete description of themselves.*



2003

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

Transsexual buys string of hotels

Stephanie Booth, "who was once jailed for selling porn and runs a sex-change and cross-dressing website" and a set of shops under the trading name "Transformation," bought five hotels and pubs in Ruthin. With her husband David Booth they bought the 600-year-old Bodidris Hall, Llandegla, the Plough Hotel, also in Llandegla, the Anchor Hotel, Ruthin, the Castle Hotel and adjoining Myddleton Arms in St Peter's Square, Ruthin, and the Clwyd Gate Restaurant, between Mold and Ruthin.

She founded the Albany Clinic as a centre for transsexuals to seek specialist medical advice and guidance on their condition. She starred in a reality television series about her businesses' Hotel Stephanie for BBC Wales in 2008 and 2009. In 2011 her hotels went into financial administration. On 18 September 2016, Booth was killed in a tractor accident at her smallholding farm on the outskirts of Corwen, Denbighshire.

Source: *Daily Post*, 3 July 2003; Wikipedia

2003

Odyssey Crossdressing Group was founded in Prestatyn in 2003 and meets monthly at the Offa's Dyke Tavern to support Crossdressing and androgynous people. In 2005 it becomes part of Unique.

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.



2004

2004

At a Select Committee on Welsh Affairs, John Sam Jones gave evidence, beginning:

My name is John Sam Jones. I am a Welsh-speaking Welshman from Meirionnydd (originally). Currently I work as the Adviser for Personal and Social Education (PSE) in Denbighshire Education Service. For the past five years I have chaired the North Wales Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual (LGB) and Police Liaison Group and for the last 18 months I have been the chair of the LGB Forum Cymru. On two occasions in the last four years I have been a trustee of the West Rhyl Young People's Project. I am the author of *Welsh Boys Too* (Parthian, Cardiff 2000) a collection of short stories about the lives of gay men in North Wales. This collection of stories was an Honour Book winner in the American Library Association LGB Book Awards in 2002. I am 46 years old and have been living openly as a gay man since I was 18.

John's full report can be read on [LGBTQ Cymru, Blogs](#).

2004

Sara Sugarman, born 13 October 1962, in Rhyl is an actress and filmmaker. She is reported to have been the director of the film *Coming Out*, about a Welsh rugby team starring Alan Cumming and Catherine Zeta-Jones. Based on an idea by the brother of Catherine, the film tells the story of an unlucky Welsh rugby team. Already beset with bankruptcy issues, the team is further kicked while they're down due to the untimely death of their coach and the new owner, the coach's son, is not at all experienced in rugby. Instead, the character (played by Cumming) has historically made his living as an actor on the West End, and he's flamboyantly homosexual. What follows is a humorous take on small towns and small-minded prejudices. The film was never made.

Source: [Box Office Prophets](#), *Coming Out*, available online

2007

A North Wales LGB Forum Speak Easy event was held at the end of November 2007 for service providers to consult local lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people. Stonewall Cymru worked in partnership with the West Rhyl Young People's Project to organise the event, which was funded as the culmination of the Inside-Out Project.

Source: Stonewall Cymru, *Report of the North Wales Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Forum, 2007*

2008

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



Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons
Open Government Licence v3.0



2013

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.



2010

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

2010

In August, Unique starts the annual LGBTIQ+ Garden Parties in Rhyl.

2013

A project for the 'Provision of inclusive and anti-discriminatory services to older lesbian, gay, bisexual identifying (LGB) people in residential care environments in Wales' was undertaken by Dr Paul Willis, Swansea University. Questionnaires were sent to randomly selected sites from across Cardiff, Conwy, Denbighshire and Swansea local authorities.

Source: *Provision of inclusive and anti-discriminatory services to older lesbian, gay, bisexual identifying (LGB) people in residential care environments in Wales, Full Report*, by Dr Paul Willis, College of Human and Health Sciences, Swansea University, 28/06/2013

2013

Rustic Rainbow, an informal group for LGB&T people who love the natural beauty of North Wales is formed in 2013, and provides a relaxing environment so LGBT people can make friends and enjoy activities together such as walking, the cinema, parties and days out. Rustic Rainbow is a non-scene based LGBT social group. This means their events do not normally take place in bars or clubs, however they do attend several local pride events, and members are free to organise bar based offshoot events through them.

More information can find out more by visiting their Facebook page.

2014

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

2014

In this year the film *Pride* was released. It was based a true story, depicting a group of lesbian and gay activists who raised money to help families affected by the British miners' strike in 1984, at the outset of what would become the Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners campaign. Gethin, the manager of the *Gays the Word* bookshop, is the only wholly fictional figure in the story, had fled Rhyl sixteen years earlier and never been back but on his pilgrimage home to Rhyl he has to face his unforgiving mother.



2015

2015

Spectrum of Sound LGBT+ Choir, North Wales' only LGBT+ Choir. The group welcome people with or without previous singing experience, and there are no auditions. Bringing together LGBT+ singers of all abilities in a friendly and supportive environment, sharing their music with the community. Founded and practices in Rhyl. 2020 it was amalgamated with Proud Marys LGBT+ Choir in Chester.

More information can be found via their Facebook page.

2015

Jenny-Anne Bishop from Rhyl, Trans Activist and Chair of Unique Transgender Network is awarded an OBE in the New Year's Honours 2015 list for Services to the Welsh Trans Community. She has appeared in the Welsh Pinc List several times.

2015

Unique, together with Transforum Manchester, Manchester Concord and Via Bar in Manchester set up the World's first Trans Memorial and Remembrance Garden in Sackville Gardens, Manchester in 2015 to commemorate all those Trans people who have been murdered for being Trans and all those trans people who felt pressured into taking their own lives.

2015

Photo credit: ©Kelly Williams



The owner of Russell Paul Hairdressing in Prestatyn made headlines in when he put a sign in his window which stated: “If you are racist, sexist, homophobic or an a***hole...don’t come in.” He put up the sign after a salon customer refused to let stylist Richard Evans (above left) cut his son’s hair when he realised he was gay. “So he asked me if I could do it,” recalled Russell (above right). “To which I said ‘No because I’m gay as well!’”

2016

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

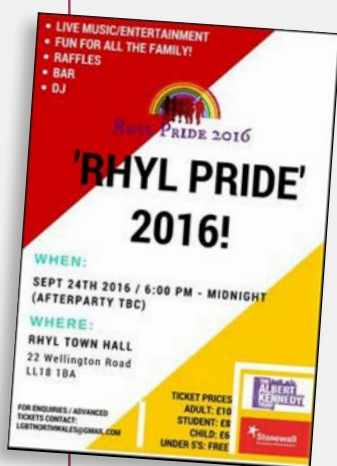


Photo credit:
Wikimedia Commons
By Welsh Government -
GOV.WALES, OGL 3



2016

2016



2016

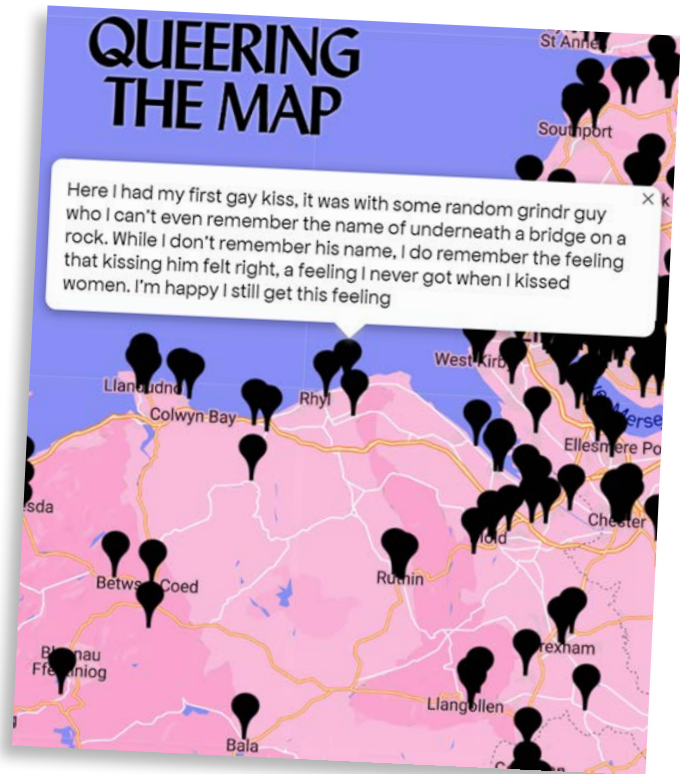
Seventy people joined the Rt Revd Gregory Cameron for a Eucharist service to mark the formal launch, at St Grwst Church, Llanrwst on 12th September 2016. The chaplaincy will be led by the Revd Sarah Hildreth-Osborn and will have a base at St Grwst Church, where Sarah is the Vicar. Two other churches in the diocese, St Peter’s in Holywell and St Giles in Wrexham will also host regular ‘Open Table’ communion services for LGBTQIA+ Christians. Bishop Gregory said: ‘This Chaplaincy has been set up because the Christian faith has something to offer everyone including LGBTQIA+ people. This is about creating a safe, sacred space and extending the hand of friendship. ‘The church has to be bold and get rid of the sense of homophobia, hatred and condemnation of people of different sexualities.’

Earlier this year, the Church in Wales’ Bench of Bishops issued a joint pastoral letter committing to working for a Church in which gay and lesbian people are ‘fully affirmed as equal disciples’ and to praying with and for them. They also apologised to gay and lesbian people for the persecution and mistreatment they have endured at the hands of the Church. Alongside the letter, the Bishops also published a series of prayers which may be said with a couple following the celebration of a civil partnership or civil marriage. St Asaph’s LGBTQIA+ chaplaincy will meet monthly from January 2017.

Source: The UK’s first LGBTQIA+ chaplaincy officially launched, *Open Table*, 13 September 2016. Available online.

2017

Queering the Map is a Canadian initiative to create a community-based online collaborative and counter-mapping platform on which users submit their personal queer experiences to specific locations on a single collective map. Since its inception, users have contributed more than 500,000 posts in 23 languages to the platform. Several people have left pins in Denbighshire.



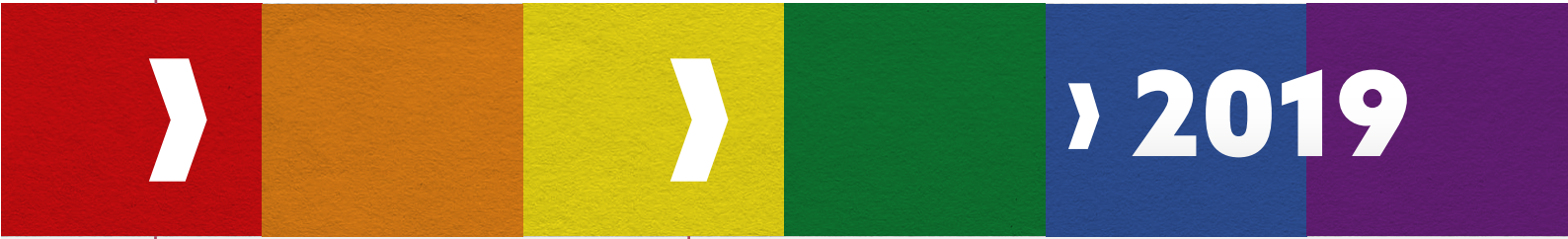
“ The first place I started openly identifying as queer. ”



“ Bi, Christian, asexual and proud. ”



“ I came out as bisexual to my sister, she told me she was also bisexual, and we told the rest of our family together. ”



2018

DJ Drag Artist Stephine appears live at the Lola Bar, Prestatyn from 9pm-2am Friday and Saturday nights.

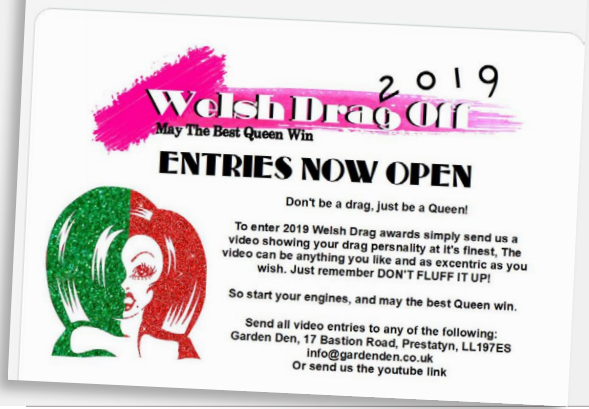
2019

2019

Drag queen story-telling event comes to North Wales libraries. Fresh from a tour of the US and Canada, the family-orientated sessions saw Mama G reading to children in an hour of story-telling that aimed to defy gender stereotypes. Organisers say each session aims to teach everyone about kindness, inclusion, tolerance and acceptance, while celebrating diversity and loving who you want.

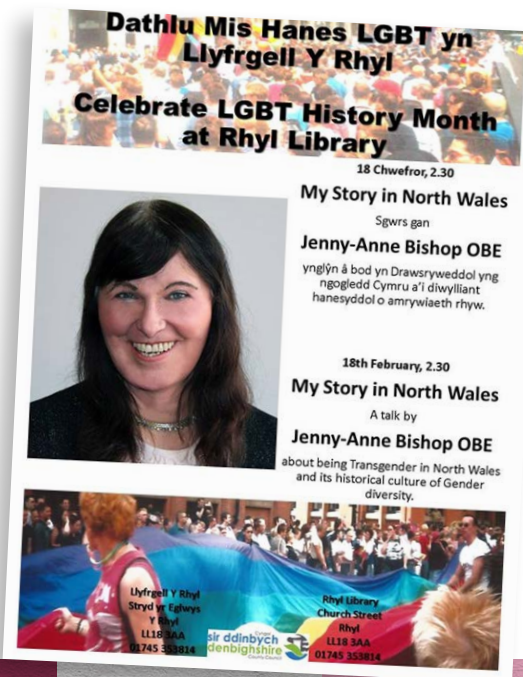
Source: Zara Whelan, 'A drag queen story-telling event is coming to North Wales libraries,' *North Wales Live*, 21 February 2019

Welsh Drag Off @Welshdragoff · Jan 7, 2019
Calling all Drag Queens time has come to shine your heels and glitter that face just don't fluff it up #dragqueens #welshdragoff @rjournal @RhyIPride2018



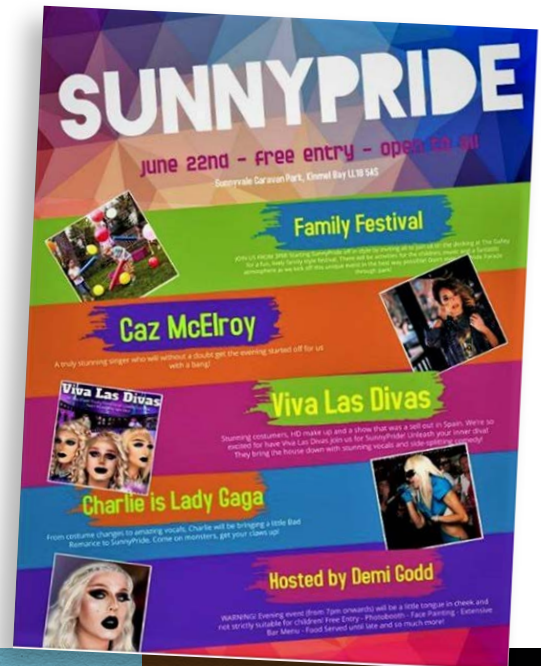
2019

Rhyl Library LGBT History Month February 2019



2019

SunnyPride Rhyl June 2019



2020

2019

The New Welsh Gender Service is launched in September 2019



2019

A housing scheme for vulnerable members of the LGBTQ+ community in Denbighshire launched before Christmas 2019. Denbighshire County Council (DCC) provided 24-hour residential support services for 16 to 25-year-olds in the county who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or other sexual identities. The scheme follows Welsh Government-funded research which found LGBTQ+ young people are four times more likely to become homeless than their peers.

Source: Scott Clarke, Residential support scheme for LGBTQ+ homeless in Denbighshire, *Free Press*, 18 November 2019. Available online.

2020

The North Wales Lesbian Hiking Group is formed.

Source: Facebook group

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.



2021

'One year on from Llamau's report on LGBTQ+ Youth Homelessness, 25 the LGBTQ+ specific supported living project Tŷ Pride has proven a success receiving over ten times more referrals than it has the capacity to house. This clearly illustrates the need for bespoke support for LGBTQ+ young people who are at risk of homelessness. That Tŷ Pride has received such interest, including from neighbouring local authorities to Denbighshire (where Tŷ Pride is based), also shows the need for similar services across Wales. This first-of-its kind project has been successful in supporting LGBTQ+ young people and providing them with the specific support they so badly need through the assistance of local LGBTQ+ support group Viva.'

Source: Stonewall Cymru, *A report to Welsh Government outlining recommendations for furthering LGBTQ+ equality in Wales*, March 2021



2021

2021

Gay couple receive landmark Church in Wales blessing. Father Lee and his partner Fabiano Da Silva Duarte became what is thought to be the first same-sex couple to be officially blessed by the Church in Wales. It comes after the Church's governing body approved a new service of blessing for same-sex couples in September. However, it stopped short of allowing gay couples to marry in its parishes.

Source: Harry Farley, *Gay couple receive landmark Church in Wales blessing*, *BBC News*, 13 November 2021

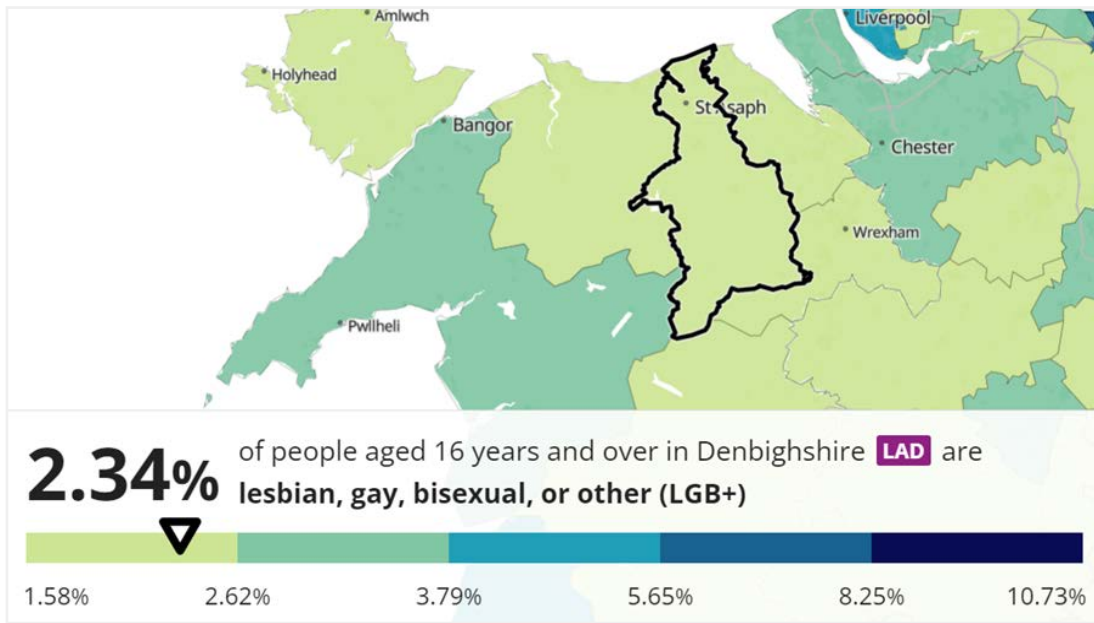
2021

The Bishop of St Asaph was among four senior religious leaders and Parliamentarians recognised for their ground-breaking work in the area of sexuality, gender identity. The Rt Revd Gregory Cameron received an award for his leadership within the Church in Wales in bringing it to a point of enabling same-sex blessings.

Source: 'Bishop Gregory Honoured for His "Outstanding Contribution to The Lives Of LGBT+ People Of Faith," Diocese of St Asaph. Available online.

2021

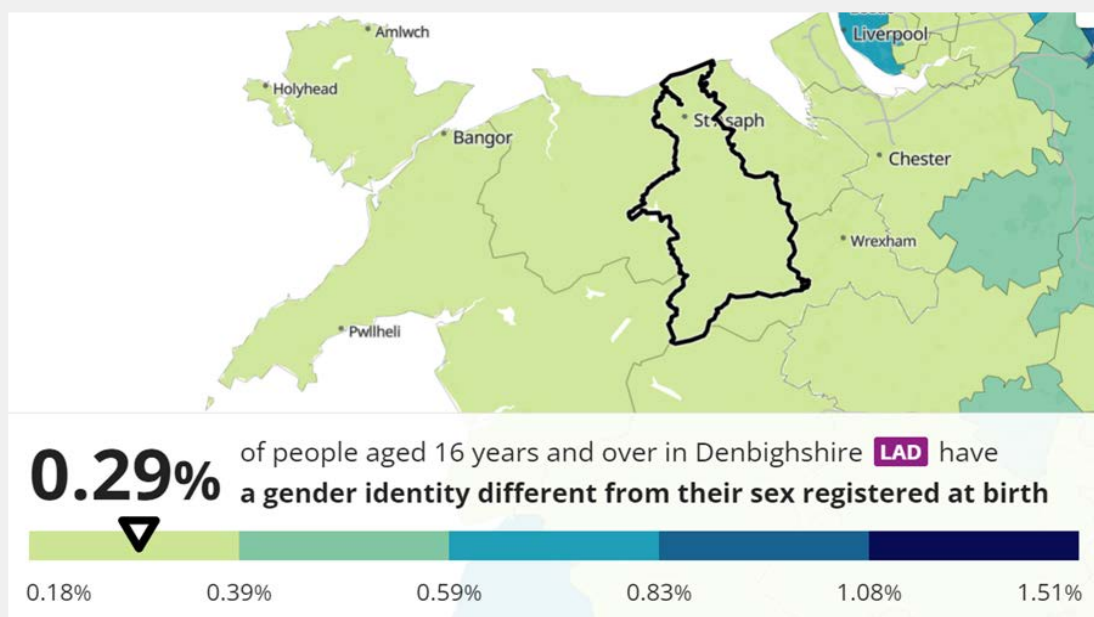
The 2021 UK Census was the first in world history to include questions on sexual orientation and gender identity. Some care should be taken over the figures as not all people answered the question.



2021

2021

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2022

Hate Crime week Oct 2022



North Wales Police
 14 October at 16:03
 As part of #HateCrimeAwarenessWeek a second electronic board has been unveiled in Rhyl promoting the #HateHurts campaign which aims to spread the message that any type of hate crime is not acceptable, and North Wales Police as well as local communities are taking a stand against it



2023

2023

Viva's 25th Birthday

Film Festival

Date: Saturday 25th February Time: 4:30pm-7:00pm

Venue: Rhyl Town Hall

Viva is celebrating 25 years of supporting LGBTQ+ youth in North Wales, by showing award winning short films from Iris Prize, introduced by Viva members.

Free entry, refreshments available, but feel free to bring your own We hope to see you there!





Thank you

These have been just a few highlights from Sir Ddinbych / Denbighshire'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



Draig Enfys



search **Draig Enfys**