



The Wales LGBTQ+ Timeline Collection

Sir Fynwy / Monmouthshire 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.

12th CENTURY >

1136

Geoffrey of Monmouth (c.1095–c.1155) was a cleric from Monmouth, and one of the major figures in the development of British historiography and the popularity of tales of King Arthur. He is best known for his chronicle *The History of the Kings of Britain* (Latin: *De gestis Britonum* or *Historia Regum Britanniae*) which was widely popular in its day, being translated into other languages from its original Latin. It was given historical credence well into the 16th century, but is now considered historically unreliable.

In *The History of the Kings of Britain*, the Welsh king Maelgwn Gwynedd (died c.547) also known as Malgo, was described by Geoffrey as:

AFTER him succeeded Malgo, one of the handsomest of men in Britain, a great scourge of tyrants, and a man of great strength, extraordinary munificence, and matchless valour, but addicted very much to the detestable vice of sodomy, by which he made himself abominable to God.



Geoffrey, who was equally scathing of other kings, provided no proof for his accusations and the word sodomy should be treated with care as it could, and did, mean many sexual 'deviances'.

Sources: Wikipedia; Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, Broadview Press, 2007, p.201. Image of Maelgwn Gwynedd from *Historia Regum Britanniae* via Wikimedia Commons.



13th CENTURY >

1326

King Edward II (1284–1327), also known as Edward of Caernarfon, was a disinterested king which frustrated most of his court as well as his controversial relationship with Piers Gaveston who was assassinated in 1312. Edward, who was sexually fluid, had a second significant relationship with Hugh Despenser who owned most of south Wales and who had enormous influence over Edward. When Isabella, the queen, invaded in 1326, Edward and Hugh ran into Wales staying at Chepstow Castle before moving west.

Source: Wikipedia; image of Hugh Despenser from *Founders' and benefactors' book* of Tewkesbury Abbey, via Wikimedia Commons



19th CENTURY >



1835

Scotch Cattle first appeared in the early 1820's as a movement formed by disgruntled workers, predominately coal miners of the Monmouthshire valleys. Towns and villages would have their own 'herds' and would operate in strict secrecy and they would come out in force when demonstrating against poor working conditions or wages but their activities later degenerated into mobs handing out rough justice. One of the features, like that of the Rebecca Riots, is that many would disguise themselves in women's clothing.

In 1835 four men, John James (otherwise Shoni Coal Tar), aged 33, John Griffiths, aged 19, William Jenkins, aged 31, and Thomas Jarman, aged 33,

were indicted for a burglary in the house of Thomas Rees, in the parish of Bedwellty, Caerphilly on the night of the 5 January. Their activities straying a long way from social justice and reduced to mere theft. They 'disguised themselves by blackening their faces, and some put on portions of women's clothes.' They were brought to Monmouthshire Assizes in April. John James and William Jenkins were found guilty and sentenced to death, the others were acquitted.

Source: Glamorgan, Monmouth and Brecon Gazette and Merthyr Guardian, 11 April 1835



1847

1847

On Wednesday a woman was charged at the Newport police-office, Monmouthshire [Monmouthshire was the historic county for Newport, now in Newport County], with walking about in male attire. The defendant, who wore seamen's clothes, in her appearance, gait, and gestures appeared to be every inch a sailor; and in boldness of conduct presented a striking contrast to the quiet-looking seaman, her husband, who stood beside her. It seemed that for no less than ten years she has scorned her proper clothing and devoted herself to hard and incessant toil. In various capacities she has voyaged to Quebec, Bombay, and other distant places, and at time has shipped in coasters, never shrinking from her share of duty, but loading and unloading the cargoes with the crew. On one occasion, it is said, she carried between the vessel and the shore, in a day, no less than 70 sacks of flour; while at the winch her courage never flagged and her strength never failed. During two

of the ten years spoken of, however, she did a little duty on land, working as a navvy upon the railway to Exeter. Yet her sex was never suspected. Her last voyage was from Truro, as an able-bodied seaman at 21 5s per month. She arrived at Newport a short time ago, but her sex became by some means revealed; and, as she continued to remain here and dress as usual, the sergeant of the dock police preferred the charge. The defendant said she was married on the 12th of July last, and shipped as cook and steward from Truro about three months ago, in order to support her husband, who had met with a misfortune. The woman was discharged, and left the court, obtaining the protection of an omnibus, however, to prevent being mobbed.



Source: The Era, 23 May 1847

1848

Lately, in the Forest of Dean, aged 83 years, Sally Collins who, for a great number of years, daily resorted to Monmouth, with coal. Her masculine appearance, grotesque attire and her blunt manner, stamped an originality upon her which caused her to be known within many miles of her own neighbourhood, and was the means of introducing her name in the published pages of many a tourist. Many 'masculine' women were written about and some became tourist attractions.

Source: *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 25 March 1848

1854

Clara St Casse, (born 1841), an English actress and singer often took on 'breeches' roles, woman acting men's parts, such as Edgar in the little-known play, *The Swan and Edgar*. She appeared in Monmouth:

Miss St. Casse again appearing and delighting the house with her inimitable impersonation of "Little Pickle" (disguised in a sea-boy's apparel).

During the 19th century, roles with women cross-dressing as men were extremely popular.

Source: *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 23 June 1854



MISS CLARA ST. CASSE AS "EDGAR," IN "THE SWAN AND EDGAR," AT ST. JAMES'S THEATRE.

Photo credit: © Illustrated London News Ltd/ Mary Evans



1885

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.

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.

1885

Mumming, a type of folk play, known throughout Europe, combined music, dance, and sword fighting, but it often became rowdy which caused it to be banned. Henry VIII ordered, 'that if any persons did disguise themselves in apparel, and cover their faces with visors, gathering a company together, naming themselves Mummers' and particularly if involved in criminal activity, would be 'arrested by the king's liege people as 'Vagabondes, and be committed to gaole, without bail or mainprise, for the space of three months.' In an article in 1885, a visitor to Monmouthshire wrote how mumming was still being practiced, 'much to the disgust of my hostess':



There were about half-a-dozen youths, most ludicrously dressed in coats with tails that touched the ground, festooned with coloured streamers and rosettes. One of the company was dressed as a woman, and two had hoop-iron swords, while the others carried tambourines or "bones." All wore masks, and their hands and throats were blackened.

Source: *Western Mail*, 2 January 1885



1898

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

At the Liverpool Assizes on Friday before Mr. Justice Bigham William Henry Cossens 38, surgeon, who is well known in Monmouthshire, was put forward charged with having on August 3 and October 8 last, at Prescot, committed acts of gross indecency with other male persons. To the charge of October 8 he pleaded guilty. Prisoner was sentenced to four months' imprisonment.

Source: *Western Mail*, December 10, 1898

20th CENTURY >

1904

Committed to the assizes

James Reid, a sapper in the R.M.R.E. Militia, for an unnatural offence on a bugler in the same Regiment, was committed for trial at the Monmouth Assizes.

Source: *County Observer and Monmouthshire Central Advertiser*, 11 June 1904

1908

Herbert Reynolds, 31, a railway porter from Llanelly was charged with 'committing sodomy with Mervyn George Harries' between 20 February and 3 April 1923. He was tried on 3 November but found not guilty and discharged.

Source: *UK Calendar of Prisoners, 1868-1929* via Ancestry



1909

Source: *Abergavenny Chronicle*, 17 September 1909



> 1921

1910

Masquerading as a man

Mary Francis, who, according to the police, was masquerading as a man was charged at the Llanelly Police Court on Wednesday with being drunk. A constable said that the woman, who was drunk in Market-street on December 28th, was dressed in male attire. She was shouting at the top of her voice, and when he was taking her into custody she attempted to strike him with an umbrella. The defendant, in pleading not guilty, said: "He will be believed I suppose." Supt. Jones reported previous convictions, and the defendant was fined 12s. Defendant: "I have no money. The only one I depended on is at the front." An application for a month to find the money was allowed.

Source: *Cambrian Daily Leader*, December 30, 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.

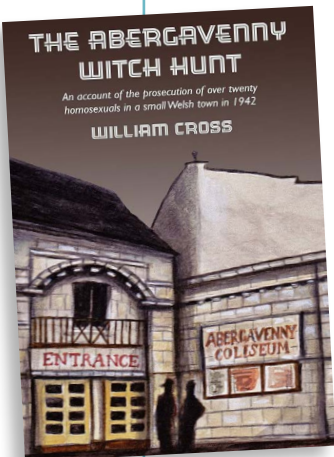
1921

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.

1942

In 1942 over twenty men, between 18 and 50 years of age, were arrested at Abergavenny for charges relating to homosexual activity (mainly gross indecency with other men and buggery). Sent to trial at the Monmouthshire Assizes, some men were acquitted, whereas others were sentenced to between 12 months to 10 years imprisonment.

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



1942

The Welsh photographer, Angus McBean (1904–1990), was born in Newbridge, and attended Monmouth School and Newport Technical College before going on to revolutionise portrait photography taking pictures of some of the most famous celebrities of his time. In 1942 he was arrested in Bath for criminal acts of homosexuality and sentenced to four years in prison. He was released in the autumn of 1944 but was able to successfully resume his career.

Source: Wikipedia

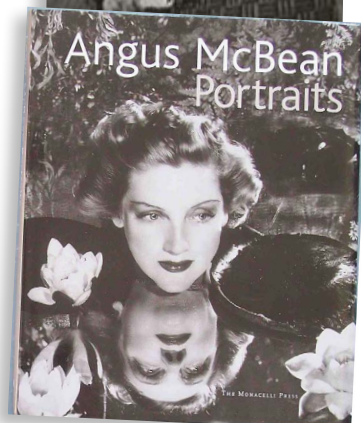
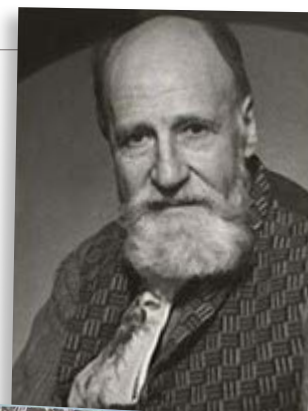


Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons
By Angus McBean



1946

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.

1946

Ron Davies, former Secretary of State for Wales, former Member of Parliament, and former member of the Welsh Assembly for Caerphilly is born on 6 August 1946 at Machen in the Rhymney Valley in Monmouthshire. In 1998 he admitted an “an error of judgement” in agreeing to go for what he said was a meal with a man he had met while walking on Clapham Common in London, which is a well-known gay meeting place. He was mugged at knifepoint. The full details of the incident (which he infamously called a “moment of madness” at the urging of Tony Blair’s Press secretary Alastair Campbell) have never emerged. He later acknowledged that he is bisexual, and was receiving treatment for a personality disorder which led him to seek out risky situations. He stood down from Parliament at the 2001 general election.

Source: Wikipedia

1951

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

1954

Prescoed Prison in Usk, Monmouthshire was built in 1939 by prison labourers and operated as an open Borstal until 1964. In 1954 a 'dreadful situation' occurred when, according to Mr Justice Finnemore it was obvious that the camp, as it was called then, 'had become a sink of iniquity and corruption'. It seems that twelve youths had pleaded guilty to 'serious offences concerning each other' and Mr Justice Finnemore sentenced them to terms of imprisonment ranging from eight to fifteen months.

'Everyone one of you,' the Judge said, 'knows that this sort of thing is rotten. Those of you who go to prison will go to a special gaol where there will be strict discipline and hard work. It will be the kindest and best thing for you if you work the beastliness out of your systems.'

Source: *News of the World*, 13 June 1954



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.



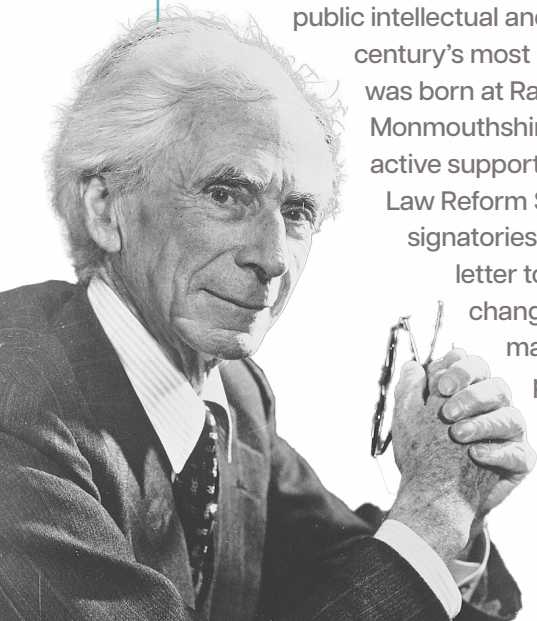
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons
File:Alan-Turing-Rephotography.jpg

1958

Bertrand Russell (1872–1970), a British mathematician, philosopher, logician, and public intellectual and one of the early 20th century's most prominent logicians was born at Ravenscroft, Trellech, Monmouthshire. Bertrand was an active supporter of the Homosexual Law Reform Society, being one of the signatories of A. E. Dyson's 1958 letter to *The Times* calling for a change in the law regarding male homosexual practices, which were partly legalised in 1967.

Source: Wikipedia

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons
By Yousuf Karsh for Anefo



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.

1970

Gay Liberation Front (GLF) was established.



1971

1971

The *South Wales Echo*, published an article entitled, 'Why Andrew feels like a leper ...'

Andrew S- is a tall, fairly hefty forestry worker. He has short hair and is well spoken. He is aged about 30, a bachelor, and lives with his mother in a village in Monmouthshire. He is also a homosexual ... 'I realised I was a homosexual when I was 19,' he said. 'I have felt hunted ever since. You meet people, and they are very friendly, and always you think: 'If they knew, would they be so nice?'' People ask you if you're courting, and you get sick of making idiotic excuses. You never escape from the feeling of being a leper.'

When Howard Llewelyn, set up a Cardiff branch of the Gay Liberation Front, Andrew described it, as 'marvellous. People were talking in terms of what could be done - what we could do - about the plight of homosexuals. The idea was self- help, instead of waiting for tolerance or charity.'

Source: Ken Follett, 'Why Andrew feels like a leper ...', *South Wales Echo*, 15 September 1971



1972

Stuart Neale became the first openly gay man to stand in an election as a Plaid Cymru candidate. From 1967, he contested seven elections at district, county and parliamentary level in rural Monmouthshire ... Neale's out status while also a Party activist was not a positive experience. Seen through the lens of the acceptance of gay liberation within electoral politics then, his experiences illustrate the perceived conflict between a political party's electoral focus and its coming to terms with an emerging social movement which was not prepared to be invisible.

As the Party rapidly expanded, a Monmouth district committee and Abergavenny branch of Plaid Cymru were formed, both with Neale as secretary.

During 1970, Neale contested no less than three elections. For Monmouthshire County Council in April, he gained over 40% of the vote; standing for Abergavenny Borough Council in May, he achieved his highest yet, over 45%. In the June 1970 UK general election, Neale broke more new ground as the Party's first candidate for Monmouth constituency; that year was the first time Plaid Cymru contested all parliamentary seats. Neale ran what is generally considered to be a good campaign with a small, enthusiastic band of activists. The Party's national vote share was 11.5% and its first and only MP, Gwynfor Evans, lost his seat. Although Monmouth polled the



Plaid Cymru
Party of Wales

lowest percentage nationally, Neale reported, "Morale is running very high

In August 1971, Cardiff GLF organised a letter-writing campaign for reform of the Sexual Offences Act by equalising the age of consent; Neale wrote to Monmouthshire MP, John Stradling Thomas, whom he'd opposed as Plaid Cymru candidate the previous year. That letter is both personal and political: "I hope it will come as a surprise to you to learn that I am a homosexual. I have recently become involved in the Gay Liberation Front and my involvement in GLF has given me the freedom to admit what was once a desperately hidden guilty secret". On the issue of coming out, he reveals "I, for instance, am still discreet in Abergavenny and district in order not the embarrass my family; otherwise, I do not hide my homosexuality".

In September, Neale was one of three Cardiff GLF members interviewed by *South Wales Echo* journalist Ken Follett.

Source: [Syd Morgan, Stuart Neale, blog for LGBTQ Cymru. Available online.](#)



› 1974

1974

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

1974

Ten men, who had been arrested in December, appeared before Newport magistrates charged with committing acts of gross indecency in a public lavatory at Carpenter's Arms Lane, Newport. Two of the men, aged 28 and 33, were from Monmouthshire. All of them pleaded guilty and were given conditional discharges for two years.

Source: [South Wales Weekly Argus, 31 January 1974](#)

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.



1983

Heartbreak of father who wants to be a woman

In July 1983, the *Free Press of Monmouthshire* included an interview with Lisa Benton, a 19-year-old chartered accountant, described as a 'transsexual'. 'Years ago I would have been put in prison if people found out. Doctors would have tried aversion therapy, electric shock treatment and all kinds of things to cure me. It's been tried with hundreds of transsexuals and they have all failed. It's not something you decide yourself about.' Liverpool-born Lisa had moved to Wales on getting married but was now separated. 'I told my wife before we got married.' The couple remained on good terms and their son called Lisa 'auntie'. Lisa concluded, 'I'm feeling happier than I've ever felt before, my epilepsy has almost gone and I see in the future myself being able to face life with more confidence.'

Source: *Free Press of Monmouthshire*, 8 July 1983

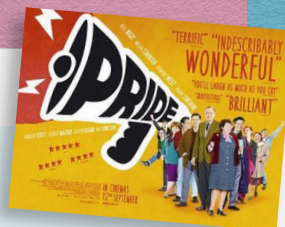


1988

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.

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



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.



Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons
© Roger Harris

1992

The Most Reverend Dr Rowan Williams, an Anglican bishop, theologian and poet and later the 104th Archbishop of Canterbury (2002-2012) was enthroned as Bishop of Monmouth in 1992. Sometimes controversial, Williams was strongly in favour of women priests and wanted them to be made bishops (the first in the UK was in 2019) and was strongly supportive of an open attitude towards homosexuals, both within the priesthood and the laity.

'If we are looking for a sexual ethic that can be seriously informed by our Bible, there is a good deal to steer us away from assuming that reproductive sex is a norm, however important and theologically significant it may be,' he told a conference of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement in 1989. These views brought him into direct conflict with the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, who had gone to great lengths not to recruit, train, appoint or promote homosexuals who profess to be in a same-sex relationship.

Source: Stephen Pritchard, 'Troublesome priest?', *The Observer*, 20 January 2002

1994

The male homosexual age of consent in England and Wales was set at 21 in the Sexual Offences Act 1967 for 'consenting adults in private' (following the recommendations of the Wolfenden Report). In 1994 a review suggested lowering the age of consent to 16 but on 21 February, 307 to 280 MPs rejected the proposal. Instead, 427 to 162 accepted 18 while some, such as the Monmouthshire MP Roger Evans (from 1992 to 1997) voted against any lowering of the age from 21.

It was finally lowered to 16, in line with the age of consent for heterosexual people, in 2000.

Source: *Gay Times*, April 1994



1999

1999

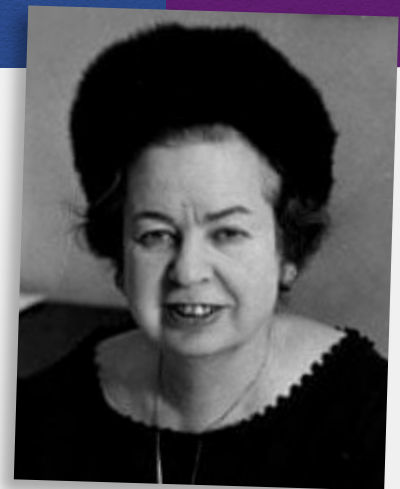
Eirene Lloyd White, Baroness White (née Jones; 1909–1999) died in Abergavenny. Born in Belfast, she was the daughter of Welshman Dr Thomas Jones. In 1967 she was a Labour MP and Minister of State at the Welsh Office for three years and retired from the House of Commons in 1970 when she was created a life peer on 12 October 1970 taking the title Baroness White, of Rhymney in the County of Monmouth. In 2022, a purple plaque was unveiled at Flint Town Hall in her honour, recognizing the fact that she was one of the first three women to represent Wales in the UK Parliament, and indeed Wales's only female MP for ten years.

In 1960, Labour MP Kenneth Robinson introduced the first full-scale Commons debate on the Wolfenden Report's proposals, White described it as a 'difficult, embarrassing and distasteful' subject and described homosexual activity as 'something extremely

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons
By An unknown staff for The Guardian -
Original publication: The Guardian/Immediate

repugnant.' She also accused other men 'that in considering the subject of male homosexuality a number of men consciously or subconsciously are moved to vehement condemnation by some feeling that they have to assert their own virility in the process.' Nevertheless, she voted to support the Motion.

Sources: Wikipedia; McManus, Michael, (2011). *Tory Pride and Prejudice: The Conservative Party and Homosexual Law Reform*. United Kingdom: Biteback Publishing; Brooke, Stephen (2011). *Sexual Politics: Sexuality, Family Planning, and the British Left from the 1880s to the Present Day*. United Kingdom: OUP Oxford.



21st CENTURY >

2000

Controversy over the repeal of Section 28

Tory Assembly Member (AM) David Davies staged an exhibition of LGBTQ+ literature in the Senedd which he erroneously claimed would be made available in schools if Section 28 was not repealed. He was the only AM to vote against the repeal. While most people condemn the exhibition, the leader of the Tory party William Hague supported it. Cardiff-born Brian Rich, then president of the Warwick University LGBT Students Society, accused Davies of 'whipping up hysteria and encouraging the kind of intolerance which led to the Soho bombing' the year before.

Source: *South Wales Echo*, 4 April 2000; *Daily Post*, 5 April 2000

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.



2002

2002

Gay priest gives up licence

A gay priest, living in a Monmouth diocese, and his partner of 22 years, adopted a 15-year-old boy, who had severe emotional and learning difficulties, two weeks previously having caring for him for ten years. The priest was moved to non-Church related work, as a media storm began.

Source: *Barry & District News*, 28 October 2002

2002

Head defends evangelist speech

A Christian headteacher who apparently used a morning assembly to criticise homosexuals and single mothers has dismissed calls for his suspension. Bill Beales told hundreds of pupils at Cwmcarn High School in south Wales the groups were 'flaunting God's rules.' Lindsay Whittle, of the Plaid Cymru-controlled Caerphilly Council, said: 'How many pupils left the assembly feeling worthless because their parents are divorced, because they live with a single parent or may be homosexual? When children from certain backgrounds are singled out there is a danger bullying could be encouraged.' Geraint Davies, of the teachers' union NAS/UWT, said: 'We have to teach our children that no one in society should be discriminated against because of their background.'

However, Monmouthshire AM, David Davies supported Beales, 'I believe what you get up to in your private life is your own business, but there seems to be a small but growing group of gay rights campaigners who have a much wider agenda of bringing down the age of consent, and distributing gay literature in schools to impressionable young people convincing them that it is normal and should be encouraged. It should not be encouraged, it should be tolerated.'

Sources: *BBC News*, 4 June 2002, *Barry & District News*, 5 June 2002

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.



2005

2005

Among the first places in Monmouthshire licensed to hold ceremonies for civil partnership ceremonies were the register office in Abergavenny - the only one in Monmouthshire - High Trees, Chepstow, Glen yr Afon in Usk, Llansantffraed Court and the Angel in Abergavenny.

Source: *Barry & District News*, 1 December 2005

2005

Transvestite protestors on the Mon & Brec restoration

Protestors, men dressed in 19th women's clothes, protested at the lack of restoration to a section of the Monmouth & Brecon Canal. The boatmen said they were trying to resurrect the spirit of the Daughters of Rebecca, a 19th rebel group who protested against road tolls. They thought council plans to restore Cwmbran town had overlooked the possibilities of its canal. Torfaen council said it recognised the importance of the canal.

Source: *BBC Wales*, 1 May 2005



2006

A gay pastor, 31-year-old Julian Riley from Overmonnow, was intending to establish a new church for all in Monmouth, but 'candidly accepts that the more conservative may not approve.' Riley hoped to establish the All Saints Metropolitan Ministry at an inauguration service in mid-September, saying, 'The Church definitely isn't my generation's cup of tea and we need to move with the times. We're very open-minded and, as long as you're a baptised Christian, you can come along.' He added: 'We don't care who you are, what you do or what your sexual preferences are, be it straight, bisexual or gay. This is a ministry for the Church's homeless, that encourages all

its members to grow so that they may become a blessing to others.'

Riley was originally baptised Julian Robert Evans in Gilwern, in 1984, but adopted his partner Paul's surname after a civil partnership ceremony in Abergavenny in December last year. And he admits to having faced serious obstacles within the Church over the years due to his sexuality, 'When you go for ordination there's a panel, and they're very clever in their selection process,' he said, 'But I believe that if you've got a calling from God, who are they to say whether you're suitable' or not?'

Source: *Barry & District News*, 27 July 2006



2008

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

2008

A gay worker from Abergavenny won a £35,000 payout from his employer, The Presbyterian Church of Wales, after his manager branded him a 'poof'. Stephen Price, 25, claims the bullying and teasing about his sexuality began within days of him starting work at the Brecon retreat and conference centre owned by the Presbyterian Church of Wales, in December 2006.

A Cardiff employment tribunal heard his manager Mair Jones gave him an Oscar Wilde card and 'a decorative loo roll with fairies on' for his birthday. Miss Jones claimed she selected the Oscar Wilde card because she associated him with wit and intellect. But Mr Price said Miss Jones, a self-styled 'Queen of innuendo', also called him 'vile' and a 'waste of space'.

Employment judge Dr Rachel Davies ordered the church to pay Mr Price £25,000 for injury to feelings, and a further £11,924 to cover his loss of earnings.

Source: *Barry & District News*, 16 July 2008

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

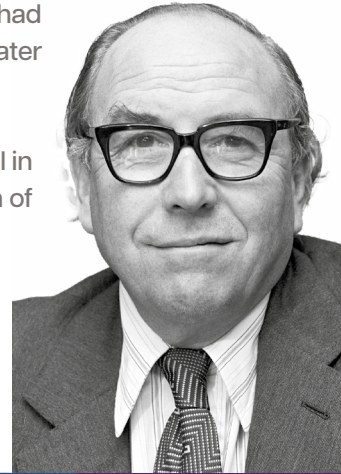
The Equality Act 2010 makes discrimination against lesbians and gay men in the provision of goods and services illegal.

2014

A biography of Roy Jenkins (1920–2003) a Welsh politician, born in Abersychan, Monmouthshire and Chancellor of the Exchequer and Home Secretary under the Wilson and Callaghan Governments, outlined a same-sex relationship between Roy and Tony Crosland (1918–1977) a British Labour Party politician and author, who had numerous gay affairs. Crosland later described the relationship as ‘an exceedingly close and intense friendship.’ Roy was instrumental in the 1967 partial decriminalisation of homosexuality.

Source: John Campbell, *Roy Jenkins: A Well Rounded Life*, Jonathan Cape, 2014

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons
By © European Communities, 1977, CC BY 4.0



2020

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.



2019

Abergavenny Pride is formed and holds its inaugural event on 25 August. Planned celebrations for 2020 are cancelled due to COVID lockdown.

2020

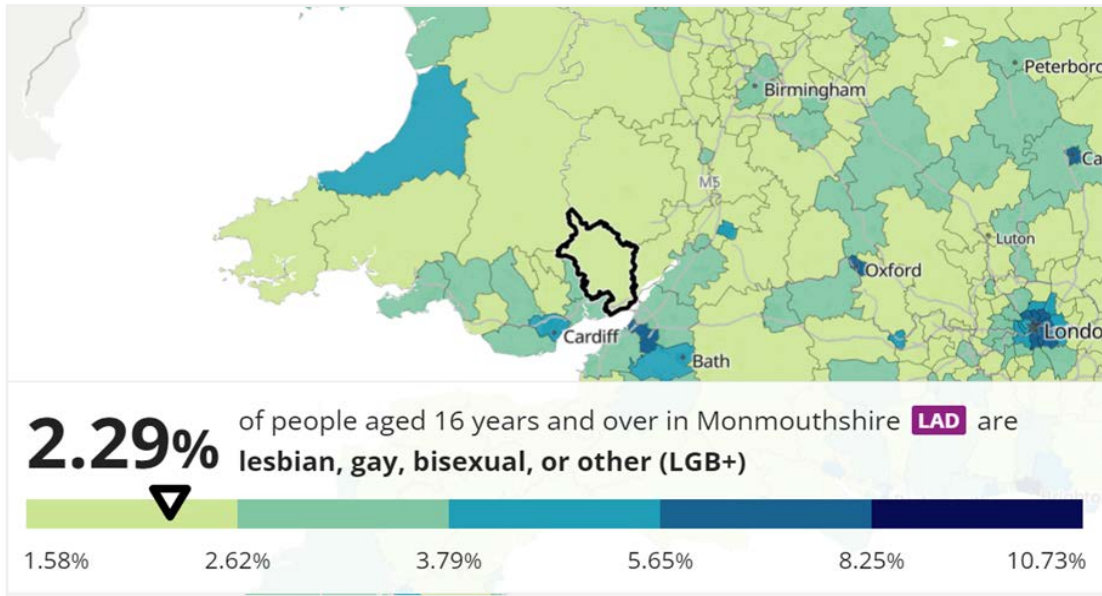
Cherry Vann was consecrated in front of more than 400 people in a ceremony at Brecon cathedral on 25 January as the Bishop of Monmouth. According to The Church in Wales, in 1994 she was one of the first women to be ordained as a priest in the Church of England, and she lived with her civil partner Wendy and their two dogs. Her consecration came just days after the Church of England’s House of Bishops released a new document, reaffirming its opposition to same-sex marriage and declaring that sex should only be for married, heterosexual couples.

The document stated: “The Church’s teaching on sexual ethics remains unchanged.”

Source: Lily Wakefield, ‘A lesbian priest has made history as the first-ever woman to be appointed Bishop of Monmouth’ in *Pink News*, 27 January 2020

2021

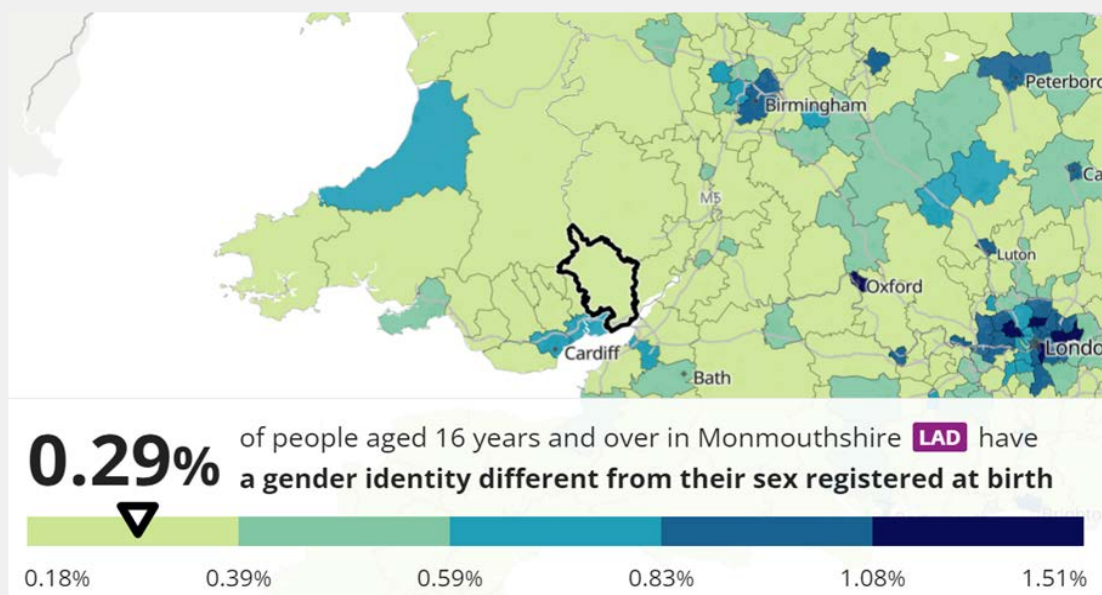
The 2021 UK Census was the first in world history to include questions on sexual orientation and gender identity. Some care should be taken over the figures as not all people answered the question.



2021

2021

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

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



2022

Monmouthshire County Council announces its first LGBTQ+ Champion. The role has been accepted by Cllr. Ian Chandler, Ward Member for Llantilio Crossenny, who will be representing the rights and interests of the LGBTQ+ community in all Council business and meetings. Cllr. Ian Chandler said: "I am delighted to be the Council's Champion for the LGBTQ+ community in Monmouthshire. Despite the great progress that I have seen in my lifetime, LGBTQ+ people in the UK still face discrimination when accessing public services, at work and in education. Shockingly, two-thirds have experienced verbal, physical or sexual abuse, and nine in ten secondary school teachers say that pupils in their schools have suffered homophobic bullying. This has to change and I want to support LGBTQ+ people in Monmouthshire to have their voices heard."

Source: Monmouthshire/Sir Fynwy website, *Monmouthshire County Council announces its first LGBTQ+ Champion*, 9 December 2022

Abergavenny Pride holds its second Pride event.



2023

2023

Norena Shopland, author/historian specialising in the history of sexual orientation and gender identity, and Monmouthshire resident, is awarded an honorary doctorate by the Open University in recognition of her work in raising awareness of diversity in Wales.

Source: 'Welsh diversity champion and Nation.Cymru columnist awarded honorary doctorate', *Nation Cymru*, 24 October 2023



2023

Abergavenny Pride holds its third and most successful event. Formed in 2019, the event on Saturday 29th June consisted of a parade through town and a series of activities, stalls and performances.





Thank you

These have been just a few highlights from Sir Fynwy / Monmouthshire'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**