



TIMELINE OF LGBT+ LIVES & HISTORY IN THE UK

1st c. Laws in Roman Britain included a death penalty against any man who had committed adultery with the same sex.



2nd c. Emperor Hadrian ruled over Britain. He was known to have openly slept with younger men, including Antinous, who was deified after his death by Hadrian.

1102 With England now primarily following the Christian faith, there were measures taken by the Roman Catholic Church and Council of London to encourage the public to see homosexuality as sinful.

1395 John Rykener, also known as Eleanor, slept with both men and women, and dressed fluidly in their life as a man and a woman. Arrested in 1395 for performing a sexual act with another man.

1533 “The Buggery Act” brought in by King Henry VIII pronounced the act of buggery an unnatural act against the will of God and man, and a felony punishable by “hanging from the neck until dead”. This was repealed by Mary Tudor and then reinstated by Elizabeth I.



1603 King James I becomes King of England. He was known to have strictly enforced the Buggery Act, yet preferred the company of men, and his reign is characterised by honours bestowed on male favourites. Later, King William II was also said to have had several male lovers.



1699 The Society for the Reformation of Manners, encouraged with support from the Church, organises the arrest of a group of gay men (generally referred to at this time as 'mollies') in Windsor. Arrests of mollies continue, the most famous being the raid on Mother Clap's molly house in 1726. Molly houses were safe spaces for gay and bisexual men to meet other men, and cross-dress. Thousands of arrests were made until the 1730s. Many of these ‘criminals’ were put on the pillory and beaten to death or near-death by the public.

1778 Fearing forced marriage, aristocratic Irish women Lady Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby elope, together with their maid Mary Caryll, and set up a home together in Wales where they became known as ‘The Ladies of Llangollen’.



1811 In a scandal that saw the closure of the private girls' school they ran together; Edinburgh teachers Marianne Woods and Jane Pirie are accused by a pupil of lesbianism. The case was deemed 'not proven' by the Scottish court but dragged on all the way to Parliament and ruined Woods and Pirie. It inspired Lillian Hellman's stage play, *The Children's Hour*, and later the film with Audrey Hepburn and Shirley Maclaine.

1861 The Offences Against the Persons Act is amended to remove the death sentence for buggery (which hadn't been used since the mid-1830s). Thousands of executions had previously taken place for 'sodomy'. The penalty became imprisonment from 10 years to life.



1865 On his death, the eminent military surgeon James Barry (born c.1789) is discovered to have been born female. One of the first surgeons to carry out a successful caesarean section, he was buried in Kensal Green Cemetery.

1870 Ernest Boulton and William Park arrested in London for dressing as women while attending the Strand Theatre. They were subjected to an illegal medical examination and on the recommendations of the doctor, were subsequently charged with sodomy. Their trial caused a sensation and is, perhaps the first time that the 'homosexual subculture' came into popular knowledge. They received public sympathy and were found not guilty.

1873 Jewish Pre-Raphaelite painter Simeon Solomon arrested for sodomy. His artistic peers would no longer support him following the scandal, and he died in 1905 after years of alcoholism and street begging following the arrest.



1885 The 'Labouchere' Amendment to the Criminal Law Amendment Act makes all male homosexual acts ('acts of gross indecency') illegal and punishable by up to 2 years hard labour. Although such laws had been used before to target gay and bi men, it was only now that the law treated them as an entity, and one to be feared and punished. It became known as 'The Blackmailer's Charter'.



1895 Famous author and playwright Oscar Wilde enjoyed various affairs with men, which ultimately led to his arrest. Wilde was released from prison in 1897 and set sail for Dieppe by the night ferry. He never returned to Britain and died in 1900, aged 45. As one of the first modern 'celebrities', the visibility of his sexuality was a precursor to social change.

1905 Thomas Driberg was born, a liberal politician, journalist, High Anglican churchman and potentially a Soviet spy. He lived openly as a homosexual in his years as a politician and was friends with many figures of high society, to whom he often boasted of his 'conquests'. He died in 1976.



1921 An amendment is proposed to the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act to make sex between women an act of 'gross indecency', with the same punishments meted out to gay and bi men. The proposal is defeated, as MPs didn't believe that women were capable of such acts, and didn't wish to publicise such behaviour.

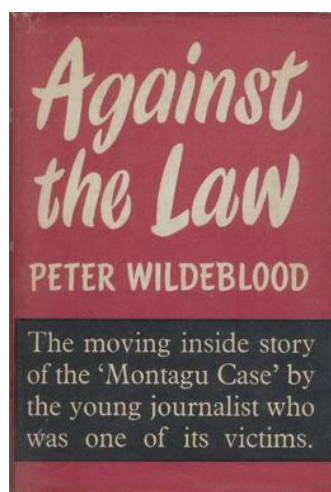
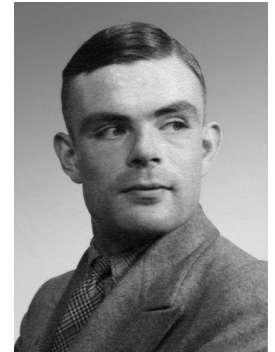
1928 Radclyffe Hall's novel 'The Well of Loneliness', a plea for the tolerance of "female inversion", is banned after an obscenity trial, following a campaign against its publication by the editor of the Sunday Express. It was not published in Britain until 1949. Virginia Woolf's 'Orlando', a love-letter to her life-long friend and lover Vita Sackville-West, telling the adventures of a gender-fluid, bisexual aristocrat, is published the same year, earning Woolf critical acclaim and financial success.



1938 In 1938 across England, there were 134 prosecutions for sodomy, 822 for attempted sodomy and 320 for gross indecency. By 1952 this had increased to 670 for sodomy, 3,087 for attempted sodomy and 1,686 for gross indecency.

1942 Sir Harold Gillies and his colleague Ralph Millard carried out the UK's first recorded phalloplasty surgery in the world's first sex change operation of a woman into a man on the young aristocrat, Michael Dillon. Nine years later, after successful surgery by Sir Harold Gillies, Roberta Cowell becomes the United Kingdom's first recognised trans woman.

1954 Considered to be the father of modern computing, Alan Turing was amongst those responsible for cracking the German 'Enigma' code. In 1951, Turing was found to have a male lover in his home after calling the police following a burglary. He was arrested for gross indecency and was chemically castrated. This resulted in a period of deep depression and eventual suicide. He was later pardoned posthumously by Queen Elizabeth II in 2013, and in 2019 became the face of the £50 note.



1957 In the mid-1950s, there were over one thousand men each year imprisoned for homosexual acts. After several high-profile cases and the publication of Peter Wildeblood's writing on his experiences of prison in the book 'Against the Law', the Conservative government set up a departmental committee to look into aspects of British sex laws. The resulting Wolfenden Report, named after the chairman of the committee, was published in September 1957, recommending that "homosexual behaviour between consenting adults in private should no longer be a criminal offence" and found that "homosexuality cannot legitimately be regarded as a disease, because in many cases it is the only symptom and is compatible with full mental health in other respects."



1957 Following the publication of the Wolfenden Report, Dr. R D Reid wrote to The Spectator to call for a society to help the victims of police entrapment. A E Dyson had a similar letter published in The Times, supported by 33 signatories, including Lord Attlee, Bertrand Russell and Angus Wilson. This rallied Wolfenden's supporters and on 12 May the Homosexual Law Reform Society (HLRS) was formed. The group's first public meeting attracted over 1,000 people at a time when homosexuality and bisexuality were illegal.

1960 April Ashley undergoes gender reassignment surgery in Morocco, before being outed when working as a model and actress in 1961. Ten years later, her marriage to Arthur Corbett was annulled on the grounds of her being born biologically male, a ruling that reflected the legal position on the matter of transgender marriage until 2004. She spoke in a morning television interview in the 1970s of her distrust of the police with her safety after abuse from the public. Ashley was awarded the MBE in 2012 for her contributions to trans equality and representation.

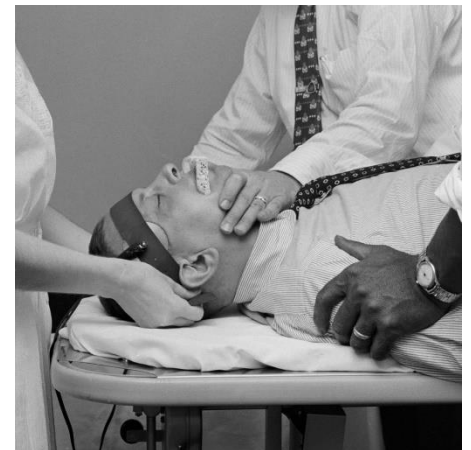


1961 The film 'Victim' is released, starring Dirk Bogarde, and is the first British film to use the word 'homosexual'. Its theme is that of the blackmail of gay and bisexual men.

1963 The first UK group for lesbians is founded, the Minorities Research Group, which subsequently went on to publish the lesbian magazine *Arena Three*. Their primary aim was to research information into the gay experience.

1964 Several studies have shown a rise in criminal prosecutions of gay men from early 1950s, reaching a peak around 1964. Often a conviction of gross-indecency would result in between 7 and 18 months and up to a maximum of 2 years.

1965 Treatments such as electroconvulsive therapy for 'gay conversion' peaked during the 60s-70s, including at hospitals in London such as the Maudsley hospital, of which people have protested against as recently as 2018 for continuing to use electroconvulsive therapy on patients. An opinion poll in 1964 commissioned by the Daily Mail finds that 63% of respondents did not believe that homosexuality should be a crime, although 93% felt homosexuality was a mental health problem or disease.

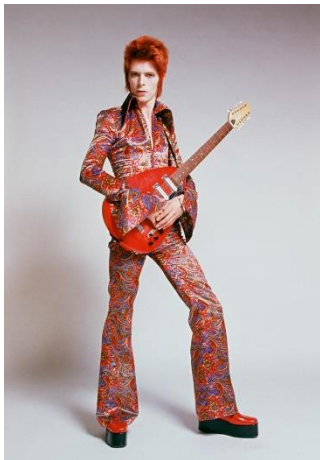


1967 Male homosexuality is legalised in England and Wales between two consenting males over the age of 21, in private, although it wasn't clear what spaces were public or private. This excluded those serving in the armed forces. The age of consent was higher than for heterosexuals and the laws did not affect Scotland or Northern Ireland. The age of consent was not equalised for all until 2001 in England, Wales and Scotland, and only equalised in Northern Ireland in 2009.



1970 The Gay Liberation Front (GLF) is formed, creating a list of demands published in the GLF magazine 'Come Together'. According to black gay activist Ted Brown, a veteran of GLF, their mission was 'establishing and encouraging homosexual people to be proud, happy and open about our sexual orientation, while simultaneously challenging society's homophobia.' Other groups formed across the UK. The early GLF included lesbian, trans and bisexual members.

1971 Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE), which grew out of a local group of the Homosexual Law Reform Society in the north-west of England, changes its name and becomes national. Its activities include canvassing for further law reforms, providing educational material for use in schools, attempting to influence the provision of medical, psychiatric and social services, as well as fighting the discrimination, prejudice and social



isolation faced by many LGBT people. They produce a report in 1974 detailing lack of service provision for older LGBT people entitled 'Needs of Elderly Gay Men and Lesbians' which is submitted to Age Concern England.

1972 David Bowie comes out as gay to Melody Maker magazine, later clarifying his orientation as bisexual in an interview with Playboy magazine in 1976.

1972 The first official UK Gay Pride Rally was held on 1 July 1972 with approximately 2000

participants. What is now referred to as 'Pride in London' has grown to almost 1.5 million people reported attendance in 2019. Black Pride UK was formed in 2006 as a way of establishing a safe space for Black LGBT people outside of racism from the wider community. Trans Pride events were held in Brighton for a few years prior to the first London Trans Pride march in 2019.



1975 Action for Lesbian Parents founded after 3 high-profile custody cases where lesbians were refused custody of their own children.

1975 The gay magazine *Gay Times* began its publication, later widening its representation to lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people, across quarterly issues.

1975 Labour MP for Northampton North Maureen Colquhoun leaves her husband for Barbara Todd (publisher of the magazine *Sappho*) and is briefly the first known lesbian in Parliament after being outed by gossip columnist Nigel Dempster. She is deselected by the constituency party, which cites her "obsession with trivialities such as women's rights".

1979 Gay's The Word bookshop is founded in Bloomsbury, London, by a gay socialist group. Later, many groups would form with the bookshop as its unofficial headquarters including the Gay Disabled Group and Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners.



1980-1982 Homosexuality is legalised in Scotland in 1980 (in private and over the age of 21), and later in Northern Ireland in 1982 – (two men over the age of 21 in private).

1980 The Gay Asian Group becomes Gay Black Group (London), where LGBT people of colour meet at bookshop Gay's The Word in Bloomsbury. Later they formed Black Lesbian and Gay Centre project, as well as the first magazine for LGBT BAME people, named 'Blackout'. One of the members was Isaac Julien, who later became a film director, with his work focusing primarily on black gay lives.



1982 Terrence Higgins dies of AIDS in St Thomas' Hospital in London. His friends and partner set up the Terrence Higgins Trust, an AIDS charity preceding the AIDS crisis, that killed thousands of LGBT people from the 1980s to today. There are currently over 100,000 people living with HIV as of 2019. Deaths from AIDS continue, and HIV infections disproportionately affect BAME populations.



1982 The Hall-Carpenter Archives founded, and are housed at the London School of Economics and Bishopsgate Library. These are the largest source for the study of lesbian and gay activism in Britain following the publication of the Wolfenden Report in 1958.

1984 Chris Smith, MP for Islington South, becomes the first MP to come out voluntarily while in office. He was also the first openly gay Cabinet minister, and the first MP to acknowledge his status as HIV positive in 2005.

1984 The National Bisexual Conference is founded, originally with 40 attendees under the name 'The Politics of Bisexuality'. BiCon is now attended by thousands of people every year.

1984 Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners campaign begins, supporting the National Union of Mineworkers between 1984-85.

1985 The Greater London Council (GLC) publishes "Changing the World", a charter of gay rights. Later that year, with support from the GLC, the London Lesbian and Gay Centre opened at Cowcross St, London, E1. One of the management committee's first moves is to exclude bisexual groups from meeting there.

1986 Out black lesbian Linda Bellos becomes leader of Lambeth Council, London. In 1987, she founded Black History Month in the UK.



1987 A South Staffordshire councillor called for 90% of lesbians and gays to be gassed to prevent the spread of AIDS. A subsequent sit-in at the councillor's house by 12

members of the Lesbian & Gay Youth Movement was broken up violently by the local police and all were arrested and remanded for 10 days. When the case went to court all were released and later legal action is taken against the police and the Crown Prosecution Service for wrongful imprisonment was successful.



1987 Section 28 is introduced by Margaret Thatcher's government, stating that a local authority "shall not intentionally promote homosexuality" or "promote the teaching in any school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship". This proposed ban leads to large protests all over the UK including in Manchester and London. Lesbians stormed the House of Lords and BBC1 newsrooms. Section 28 became law in 1988, and was later repealed in 2003. David Cameron as Prime Minister apologised in 2009 for Section 28.

1989 Stonewall Group is set up to campaign and lobby against Section 28. Originally only a service aiming to support and provide information to lesbian, gay and (nominally) bisexual people, Stonewall became trans inclusive in 2015.

1990 OutRage! founded by activist Peter Tatchell as a response to the murders of several gay men and police entrapment and arrests of gay men for alleged sexual activity. Outrage! was the longest lasting LGBT grassroots organisation in the world, active for 21 years, from 1990 to 2011.



1990 Black British soccer star Justin Fashanu becomes the first out gay footballer in division one when he is coerced into coming out by The Sun. He later commits suicide, aged 37. The Justin Fashanu Foundation was set up in 2020 against anti-gay discrimination in football.

1992 The World Health Organisation declassifies homosexuality as a mental illness.

1994 The magazine *Diva* is founded in the UK, focusing its representation on lesbian and bisexual women.



1995 The organisation Mermaids is set up to support children and the families of children who are trans or have gender dysphoria.

1998 Waheed Alli becomes the first openly gay member of the House of Lords and one of the few openly gay Muslim politicians in the world.



1999 At 6.37 pm on Friday 30th April, a nail bomb explodes in the Admiral Duncan pub on Old Compton Street, Soho, London. This attack on a gay pub was the third of a series of bombs targeted at minorities by a lone extremist. Three people in the Admiral Duncan died as a result of the bomb.

1999 Trans people gain legal protection in the field of employment. The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999 make it illegal for employers to discriminate against trans people. The regulations cover all those people who intend to undergo gender reassignment; are undergoing gender reassignment or have undergone gender reassignment in the past.

1999 Imaan set up, a charity founded by gay activist Faisal Alam, as a safe space and community service for LGBTQ Muslims.

2000 The UK lifts its ban on lesbians and gays serving in the military after a case is brought before the European Court of Human Rights, which ruled that the ban is a breach of human rights.



2002 Equal rights granted to same-sex couples applying for adoption, under the Adoption and Children Act 2002.

2003 Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations. This act protects people in the workplace from discrimination relating to their sexual orientation. It covers the full range of workplace issues, from terms and conditions of pay to recruitment and dismissal.

2004 The Gender Recognition Act comes into force, entitling trans people to the same benefits as anyone else of their correct gender. They can also legally change their birth certificates to their 'corrected' gender.

2005 Gay artist Ajamu X sets up the rukus! Archive which documents Black LGBT cultural history in the UK, hosted at the London Metropolitan Archives, mostly researched by volunteers.



2005 Civil Partnership Act comes into force. In effect, this is virtually identical to civil marriage.

2005 Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans History Month in the UK was founded in 2005 and takes place every year in February.



2005 The church House of Rainbow is founded in Nigeria, and later relocated to the UK, run by openly gay Church of England minister Jide Macaulay. Jide fled Nigeria in 2008 and has since become one of the most visible Black gay activists and theologians.



2006 The Equality Act (Goods and Services) comes into force making it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services, the management of premises, education and the exercise of public functions. Later, in 2010, The Equality Act is introduced to consolidate and update previous equalities legislation. It introduces the concept of ‘protected characteristics’, which include sexual orientation and gender identity.

2008 Criminal Justice and Immigration Act: Parliament passed important new legal protections against “Incitement to Homophobic Hatred”. The legislation brings the statutes governing incitements to hatred on the ground of sexual orientation into line with the long-standing laws prohibiting the incitement of hate based on a person’s ethnicity.

2008 The Human Fertilization and Embryology Act is passed, granting female same-sex couples equal access to IVF treatment and assisted insemination.

2012 The Bisexuality Report is published, detailing experiences of bisexual people in the UK, including their wellbeing.



2013 The House of Commons passes the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act. The Act, which applies to England and Wales, allows same-sex couples to marry in civil ceremonies and religious ceremonies, where the religious organisation has ‘opted in’ to conduct such ceremonies and the minister of religion agrees. Previously, same-sex partners had only been able to enter into civil partnerships.

2013 Nikki Sinclair comes out as transgender, becoming the United Kingdom’s first openly trans politician. From 2016, there are now dozens of LGBT MPs in Parliament.

2014 The Switchboard LGBT Helpline (previously the London Gay and Lesbian Switchboard) is praised by Queen Elizabeth II on its 40th year anniversary. The service helps with information and support to its callers.



2018 National LGBT survey of over 100,000 respondents carried out, asking LGBT people questions on their experiences such as school bullying, care, and mental health. An LGBT action plan was formed by the Conservative Government following this, including proposed training for teachers and funding for local community groups.



2019 LGBT teaching rows occurred in Birmingham, after books were included in the curriculum of primary schools that referred to same-sex relationships. The protests were aimed at stopping any LGBT-related education. Protests were eventually banned after negative effects on teachers at the school. LGBT Muslims led the Pride parade in Birmingham this year, alongside

Andrew Moffatt, creator of the 'No Outsiders' program that had been protested.

2020 Teaching on transgendered people was refused by Warwickshire council after protests from The Christian Institute, who have referred to 'transgender ideology' as 'controversial'.

2020 Same-sex marriage legalised in Northern Ireland on 13 January. The first marriage ceremony takes place in February 2020.

