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LGBT+ people in medicine and health, 1700-1914

Volume 1



LGBT+ History Month 2021

Introduction

As part of the awareness session's, training and events to mark LGBT+ History Month this year, Velindre University NHS Trust are thrilled to be working with historian and author Norena Shopland, to present this time line of people and events focusing on LGBT+ in medicine and health.

This is volume 1 of 2, this volume focuses on 1700-1900's, the second volume looks at the 1900's to today.

The majority of the second volume comes from NHS North West publication, LGB&T History, Challenges and Successes. A brief history of involvement of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans people in medicine and healthcare through the ages, which was published in 2011. We thought it important to revive this document to celebrate its 10 year anniversary and we are very grateful to the authors and developers of that publication for giving us permission to adapt it for this document. We have added to their timeline and extended it to cover the past 10 years.

As you go through the timeline you will see words, phrases and descriptions that may not be used today, but as this is taken from historical writings and information for authenticity the words and phrases from that time have been used.

Attempting to trace individuals with diverse histories of sexual orientation and gender identity can be very difficult. Few terms are available for historians to use, and most in use today belong predominantly to the 20th century. It becomes necessary then to look at, not what or who people were, but what they were doing and the most frequent behaviour by those we would identify today as lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans is that they were cross-dressing. The following examples cannot definitively be defined - even if a woman lived as a man for many years it may not mean she identified as a man, simply that she did not wish to live as a woman for whatever reasons. However, due to the gossamer thin line between genders they can be included in trans history.

I hope that you, like I, will find this timeline interesting, inspiring and insightful. The more we learn about our history, the more we can grow, empathise and support the LGBT+ community today.



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Credits

Commissioned by Equality and Diversity Manager, Velindre University NHS Trust

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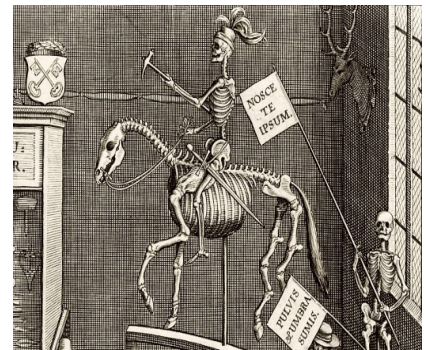
Editor Ceri Harris, Velindre University NHS Trust

Design and production -

1700's Onwards

1710

Dutch soldier, Aal de Dragonder, is stabbed to death during an altercation. Discovered to be a biological woman the body was donated to Rotterdam Medical School and the skeleton and stuffed skin put on display holding a sword and sitting on the stuffed carcase of a horse. As only criminals were denied burial, this has been seen as some sort of 'posthumous punishment.' Various people wrote of seeing the display until the medical school was closed in 1828 and it is not known what happened to the remains.



There are no known pictures of Aal, the one above is from Leiden's theatrum anatomicum and believed to show a similar pose to that of Aal.

1788-9

Johanna Stain, an Englishwoman with a 'stout masculine figure' had served in the army for ten years. They fought in eighteen battles and was wounded several times. On one occasion, the biological sex had been discovered by a doctor but they gave him \$150 to keep quiet.

1807-
1814

One way to avoid detection from doctors was to become one yourself. One unnamed 'sinister-looking doctor' with a ferocious temper who served throughout the Peninsular War (and who also fought several duels) was, on death, found to be a biological woman. Virginia Ghesquière passing as a soldier in the same war, was injured but knew discovery would come through medical intervention and so refused to be treated. Nevertheless, they were discovered.

1812

James Miranda Barry graduates from the Medical School of Edinburgh University as a female-born doctor. Barry goes on to serve as an army surgeon working overseas. Barry lives as a man but is found to be female-bodied upon his death in 1865.

1814

Marie Marguerite Metey applied to change her sex and was examined by the doctors. Mr. Metey subsequently became a 'thriving farmer in the Commune of Bu, northern France, with a very pretty wife.' Mary is featured in the *Dictionary of Medicine* and the [History of human metamorphoses and monstrosities](#) by Auguste Debay (1845)

1829

In Dreux, France, Rose Victoire Vivien had been registered as female at birth and was very feminine until the age of 26. When her uncle died and left her a small property, she tried to establish herself but no man would show any interest in her. Becoming despondent, she went to a doctor who, 'to her inexpressible surprise, assured her that, instead of being an old maid, she was neither more nor less than a young bachelor.' She applied to have her birth certificate altered and the court had her examined by three doctors, who all confirmed she was 'to all intents and purposes a gentleman ... Monsieur Ross Victoire Vivien has set off in search of a wife.'

Mary Cannon, aged 55, was admitted into Guy's Hospital suffering from fever from which she died. All in the hospital were struck with the 'coarse and masculine expression of her countenance; this and her somewhat square and muscular figure were all the observations relating to her sex that were made during life, but the post mortem inspection disclosed clearly that it was a case of hermaphrodism. 'It appears that in the former part of her life this hybrid had assumed the dress and habits of a man at one time working in a brick-yard, at another period acting as a groom, then as a milk man, and afterwards she kept a green-grocer's shop. Her (habits and manners were rude and bold, sometimes indicating a degree of derangement. More than once she engaged with success in pugilistic encounters; and, it is said, manifested still less equivocally male propensities. For the last seven or eight years she has appeared as a female, calling herself Mary Cannon and, it is odd enough, that she first sustained her new sex at a public-house called "The World turned upside down," where she engaged herself as maid of all work." She was not, however, fully received by her female fellow-servants as one of them suspicion hung about her, and care was always taken to provide for her a separate bed.'

1837

In an article entitled 'More Funny Than Pleasant' an unnamed woman demanded the right to marry a young woman, alleging that an error of sex had existed, and requiring to be publicly recognised as a man. 'The medical men, who have been consulted in this matter, have ascertained that the person in question is, in every sense of the word, androgynous.'

1846

Harriet Palmer and Caroline Sarah Abbey offered themselves as apprentices on board a man-of-war. They had worked at the Blue Bell Inn, Hull, one as cook and the other as barmaid, and had 'contracted a strong attachment for each other.' They were discovered by the doctor.

Medical Lexicon (1846) by Robley Dunglison:

TRIBAS, gen. *Tri'badis*, (τρίβας,) (F.) *Tribade*, (from τριβω, 'I rub,') *Frie'trix*, *Frica'trix*, *Futu'trix*, *Mas'cula*, *Subagita'trix*, *Subigita'trix*, *Etæria'tria*. A female whose clitoris is so large as to cause her to be regarded as a hermaphrodite. One who acts as a male with another female.

1851

'At Llanfynydd, Sarah, the wife of Evan Jones, shoemaker, gave birth to a child which is a perfect hermaphrodite, and the registrar is consequently puzzled how to register it. The medical faculty have as yet failed to solve the problem submitted to them in this case. Had not this fact been communicated to us from a source which we have every right to rely upon, we should have been inclined to doubt its authenticity, but there is no reason to doubt the correctness of our information.'

1852-63

Dr. Johann Ludwig Casper, Germany's leading medico-legal expert on homosexuality, develops a distinction between 'innate' and 'acquired' homosexual characteristics. These form the poles of the debate for generations to come.

1855

Dictionary of Medical Terminology and Dental Surgery:

CLITORIS'MUS. An enlargement of the clitoris; also Sapphism.

1857

Auguste Ambroise Tardieu, a French forensic doctor, published his book *Etude médico-légale sur les attentats aux mœurs* (Forensic Study of Assaults Against Decency). Tardieu, who wrote extensively on various kinds of sexual abuse, outlined six basic criteria which he claimed could be used to identify homosexual men by the nature of the anus and buttocks. Tardieu's book ran into numerous editions, his method of examination was adopted in many countries, including Britain and other doctors built on his work with examples of their own.

Perhaps the most well documented case is that of Thomas Ernest Boulton and Frederick William Park or 'Fanny and Stella' as they were popularly known.

The Boulton and Park case was a sensation in 1871 when the men, who often cross-dressed, appeared in court on a charge of 'conspiring and inciting persons to commit an unnatural offence', namely homosexuality.



Boulton and Park were submitted to extensive and intimate examinations to ascertain if they had anal sex but in the end the prosecution could not convince the jury and they were released.

By the late nineteenth century, the theory of Tardieu and others was completely discredited: there is simply no consistent evidence that can prove anal sex has taken place and 'open' anuses can have a variety of causes.

However, the legacy of this flawed examination is a long one and Tardieu's theories are still being used in a variety of countries today to 'prove' homosexuality, despite the UN Committee Against Torture saying that such examinations 'have no medical justification' and campaigners insisting that they violate international law.

In the archives of the Somerset Heritage Centre is an 1857 medical case involving a young lad of eleven years old. The doctor stated his belief that 'If boys are reared in a more effeminate way nowadays than the girls were 50 years ago, where is the surprise if they get girls' diseases and come home from the school hysterical.'

1861



One of the earliest known examples of a gender variant person practising as a nurse. Canadian Franklin Thompson, born Sarah Emma Edmonds (1841–1898), serves with the Union Army in the American Civil War.

The death penalty for buggery, which had been tacitly abandoned since 1836, is finally abolished in England and Wales (abolished in Scotland 1889).

1864-79

Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, a German sexologist, publishes a series of 12 booklets calling for an end to the legal, social and religious condemnation of homosexuality. He sees homosexuality as a 'third sex', implying inversion of gender characteristics as well as sexual attraction and coins the term 'Urning' for a male subject of this condition, and 'Urningin' for a female. Ulrichs was a self-acknowledged Urning and so was the first homosexual to come out publicly as well as one of the first theorists of homosexuality.

1869

The word homosexual is coined. Havelock Ellis explains it was:

devised (by a little-known Hungarian doctor, Benkert, who used the pseudonym Kertbeny) in the same year (1869), but at first attracted no attention. It has, philologically, the awkward disadvantage of being a bastard term compounded of Greek and Latin elements, but its significance — sexual attraction to the same sex — is fairly clear and definite,

while it is free from any question-begging association of either favorable or unfavorable character. (Edward Carpenter has proposed to remedy its bastardly linguistic character by transforming it into "homogenic;" this, however, might mean not only "toward the same sex," but "of the same kind," and in German already possesses actually that meaning.) The term homosexual" has the further advantage that on account of its classical origin it is easily translatable into many languages. It is now the most widespread general term.

Karl-Maria Kertbeny was himself homosexual.



1870

Karl Friedrich Otto Westphal, a German psychiatrist, publishes a paper on 'contrary sexual feeling', detailing the case of a young woman. Westphal believed her sexual attraction to women was congenital and not a vice. The philosopher Michel Foucault credits Westphal for the birth of the modern homosexual as an individual and not a vice.

1872

A NOTORIOUS FEMALE DOCTOR.

WASHINGTON, January 10, 1872.

From an account of the "Women's National Suffrage Association," reported to the Press, I cut the following description of a noted female doctress who dresses in a garb as near to a man's as the cramped laws of the land will admit.

"Ten minutes after the opening . . . a curly, crinkly feminine, in very large walking boots, came to the front, being followed, after a brief pause, by the rest of the sisters. This lady was new, even to the reporters, and one of them, handing up a pencilled inquiry to Mrs. Dr. Walker, was informed that she was 'Mrs. Ricker, a beautiful, charming, and good widow, fair, forty, and rich.' This bit of interesting news started on its travels.

"The doctor, who has the usual manly proclivity for hugging the girls, threw her arms around a pretty and modest-looking girl standing by, and enthusiastically shouted, 'You are a dear, sweet little creature.' The frightened young woman drew hastily back, and faltered out that she was not in the habit of being hugged by men. This turned the laugh on the doctor; but she gained her lost ground by quickly replying to the inquiry of the secretary as to what place he should put her down from as a delegate, to put her down 'from all the world;' but he objected, anxious for the completeness of his roster.

1873

Johanna Johnson is arrested in Australia for being in men's clothes and explained they suited her better because when she wore women's clothes, she was called a man and 'bad names.' She had fought in the army disguised as a man but her face became disfigured by an injury. She told the court doctor that she could earn more money as a man and wanted to save to return to her native Germany.

1876

Alice Holmes from Massachusetts, who had hard and calloused hands showing 'how she has toiled from many years at sea', managed to get through the recruitment process because two male friends paid \$25 each (about £600 today) to the doctor.

Diverse people were often exhibited and many showmen justified this by claiming to be in the interests of medicine and science, as can be seen from this 1876 advertisement.

**EXTRAORDINARY AND MIRACULOUS
SPECIMEN OF HUMANITY WELL
WORTH SEEING—**For physicians, midwives
scientists and others, a most curious personage
(Hermaphrodite, man and woman in the same
person) on exhibition daily, from 11 A. M. to 7
P. M., at No. 42 Eighth street, corner Walnut.
Admission \$1. mh25-6t



A 'genuine hermaphrodite' was put on exhibition at the Miami Medical College in Cincinnati in 1876. When describing diverse individuals' journalists were often at a loss what terms to use so often avoided them by using 'it.' Hahman, a Bavarian by birth, was fifty-five years and 'when it was born it was baptised as a girl, and bore the name of Catharine Hahman. The sexual organs were malformed to a certain extent, but the female genital organs predominated. The child grew up and passed as a woman, and became a wife. The organs named were healthy, performing all the operations of nature common to the female at a mature age. The male organs suddenly began developing and the female attributes became secondary. She then became he and married a woman, who is with him in the city. The case became known to the medical profession in Europe, and attracted general attention there. The leading physicians of Vienna and Berlin examined the peculiarities of the case and declared it the most pronounced case of human hermaphrodite ever known to the medical profession.



The man now has a beard, but the breasts are still fully developed, like those of a woman. This man claims to have been the father of a child, although he has never had any children by his present wife. Professor Virchow, a celebrated medical authority, in his *Archives*, vol. 43, page 332, which may be seen at the Public or Hospital Libraries, gives a detailed and scientific description of the case. The subject is a very interesting one to professional men, but its nature forbids any more minute details in the *Enquirer*.'

1883

James Murray, in West Canada, tried to sell some horses for suspiciously low prices and the policeman who arrested him thought he 'presented a rather robust appearance about the chest.' James replied that the doctor had ordered it as a remedy for a severe cold – but he turned out to be Mary Bell from Toronto. This is a rare historical example of chest binding.

1885

All male homosexual acts are made illegal in Britain through Section 11 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, known as the Labouchère Amendment.



In the age of the Victorian 'freak' show bearded ladies were a staple. Women who grow beards naturally do so for a variety of reasons but predominantly due to an excess of male hormones. Often journalists were at a loss how to describe these people and often did so in negative terms. One bearded lady who worked for Barnum was arrested for being drunk and the policeman 'caused a medical examination of the monstrosity to be made; and when the case was heard, the doctor was put in the box, and, in reply to the magistrate, said, "This woman is a man." The prisoner denied the imputation; but, on further inquiry, said he (or she) really did not know to which sex he (or she) belonged. Three months in gaol were at once accorded for the solution of these anthropological doubts.'



Josephine Clofullia, 'The Bearded Lady of Geneva'.

Richard von Krafft-Ebing, a German-Austrian psychiatrist, publishes *Psychopathia Sexualis* which names and classifies virtually all non-procreative sexuality. He argues that in many cases the 'perversion' is not a sin or a crime but a disease and that sexual disorders are often inborn in the individual.



Richard Freiherr von Krafft-Ebing, an Austro-German psychiatrist, and one of the first 'sexologists' working on the sexual nature of humans, publishes his major work, *Psychopathia Sexualis*. It is one of the first books that studied homosexuality and bisexuality.

1889

A young recruit is arrested in London and charged with trying to enlist in the army. When the Sergeant had looked at him, 'he' blushed so a doctor was called and it was discovered the recruit was actually New Zealander, Harriet Muir. So many people were cross-dressing that it was necessary to have court doctor's check an individual's biological sex. The magistrate asked the Sergeant if there was a question about sex in the 'long string of questions which you put to would-be recruits?' to which the rather bewildered Sergeant admitted, 'no.'

1890

Mary Louisa Gordon qualifies as a doctor from the London School of Medicine for Women and later worked as a clinical assistant at the East London Hospital for Children and at the Evelina London Children's Hospital. She published a number of papers including the effects of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), prostitution, and alcohol dependence on women. She worked in a number of prisons and wrote the book, *Penal Discipline* (1922) in which she helping an inmate who was frequently arrested for stealing men's clothes. The inmate told her that "she felt it impossible to live as a woman, but could live as a man, and enjoyed men's work". Gordon provided her with men's clothing and a train fare to South Wales where she obtained work as a coal miner. In 1936, Gordon wrote the historical novel *Chase of the Wild Goose*, based on the Ladies of Llangollen; and she and her supposed partner Violet Labouchere erected a marble relief of the Ladies at St. Collen's Church in Llangollen where they were buried – the relief modelled not on the Ladies but on themselves.



1890-

Alan L. Hart was a pioneering radiologist, physician, and tuberculosis researcher. His greatest work was arguably when he discovered that x-rays could be used to detect tuberculosis, saving countless lives worldwide. He attended medical school while presenting female, graduating in 1917, he was the first woman to receive the Saylor medal for achieving the highest standard in all departments of the school. During his time in medical school, Hart realised that his attraction to women was considered abnormal by contemporary



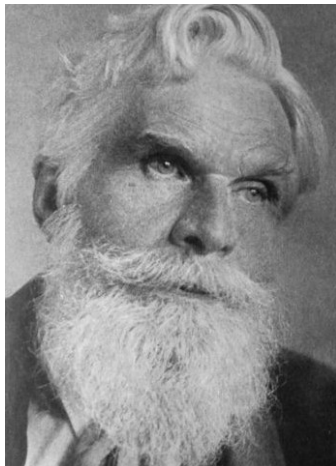
1896

Magnus Hirschfeld, a German physician and leading sexologist publishes the pamphlet, *Sappho and Socrates, on homosexual love*, under the pseudonym Th. Ramien.

1897

Dr Helen Boyle and her partner, Mabel Jones, set up the first women-run general practice in Brighton, including offering free therapy for poor women. Dr Boyle also founds the National Council for Mental Hygiene (now MIND).

An individual who arrived in New York was discovered to be a biological woman, but they begged the doctor not to expose them saying, 'I'll kill myself before I will wear women's clothes. It is my life's desire to be a man. That the Almighty made me a woman is no fault of mine.'



Havelock Ellis

Havelock Ellis' book, *Sexual Inversion*, co-written with the writer and poet John Addington Symonds, was the first English language medical book on homosexuality. Both argued that male homosexuals should not be seen as effeminate, yet were willing to portray lesbians as mannish women.

To obtain a copy it was first necessary to get a statement from a doctor or lawyer as to the good character of the person before they could buy it.

Magnus Hirschfeld founds Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee, WhK (the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee) in Berlin to campaign for social recognition of gay, bisexual and transgender men and women, and against their legal persecution. It is the first LGBT+ rights organisation in history but is destroyed by the Nazis in 1933.

1900-05

Turn of the century filmmakers Mitchell and Kenyon record a cross-dressing carnival in Crewe, in the north west of England.

1903

The renowned psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud argued that everyone is born bisexual, but this theory had been around earlier: Otto Weininger in *Geschlecht und Charakter* (Sex and Character) published in 1903 tried to explain the similarities between male and female. He stated that all organisms are born bisexual and in reality, there is no such thing as male and female because individuals contain elements of both and we oscillate between them, according to internal and external influences.

1906

Iwan Bloch, a German dermatologist and psychiatrist, publishes *Das Sexualleben unserer Zeit in seinen Beziehungen zur modernen Kultur* (The Sexual Life of our Time in its Relations to Modern Civilization) an encyclopaedia of the sexual sciences. Bloch's studies were instrumental in the



1910

Magnus Hirschfeld is credited with coining the term transvestite in 1910, but its French roots go back much further to the Latin travestire (trans – across, vestire, clothes) - which led to the French words travestir and travesti to denote a disguise, predominantly of men dressing as women.

1911

Wealthy Eric Trevanion dies in Brighton and his partner, Swansea man Albert Roe is suspected in his death. At the inquest Dr William H. Willcox, the Senior Scientific Analyst to the Home Office, gives evidence to 'prove' Eric's 'perversity'.



However, it is not until the 1920s that Willcox's bias against homosexuality became apparent. He had played a part in the banning of Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* in 1928, the first English language novel by a woman about two female lovers. When prosecutors looked for medical advice to support their ban, they called on Willcox.

Albert Roe

Lesbianism was, according to him, 'well known to have a debasing effect on those practising it, which is mental, moral and physical in character.' Adding, 'It leads to gross mental illness, nervous instability, and in some cases to suicide in addicts to this vice. It is a vice which, if widespread, becomes a danger to the well-being of a nation.' Publication of the book, Willcox claimed, would risk its being read 'by a large number of innocent persons, who might out of pure curiosity be led to discuss openly and possibly practise the form of vice described'. Willcox also played a damning role in the trial of Eric Mareo in New Zealand who was accused of killing his lesbian wife, Thelma, who was having a relationship with dancer Freda Stark. For more on both these stories see *The Veronal Mystery* (Wordcatcher Publishing) by Norena Shopland.




Thelma Mareo Trott

1913

Ernst Burchard a German physician, sexologist, and homosexual publishes *Zur Psychologie der Selbstbeziehung* (On the psychology of self-accusation) and *Der sexuelle Infantilismus* (Sexual infantilism). In 1914 he published *Lexikon des gesamten Sexuallebens* (Lexicon of the entire sexual life); and also wrote lyric poems for gay periodicals. He was one of the co-founders of the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee and fought for the repeal of Paragraph 175 (also known as Section 175) a German law from 1871 that criminalised homosexual behaviour between men. it was this law that the Nazis used to persecute homosexual men.

1914

Magnus Hirschfeld publishes *Die Homosexualität des Mannes und des Weibes* (The Homosexuality of Men and Women), a survey of homosexuality around the globe.



We hope you found the information and stories in this booklet interesting and it gave you a better understanding of the impact of both social and medical attitudes towards LGBT+ people and how that is still influencing how we provide services to our patients and donors in the NHS. It is of course just the tip of the iceberg and we hope in the coming years to bring you more interesting and fascinating histories.

Thank you

Norena Shopland

Originally from Cardiff, Norena Shopland specialising in researching, recording and promoting LGBT+, women's and Welsh histories. Her book *Forbidden Lives: LGBT stories from Wales* is the first completely historical work on Welsh sexual orientation and gender identity. Norena lectures extensively and her work has appeared in the press, radio, and TV. She is currently working with the Big Pit museum on the first exhibition of women miners in Wales; and with Swansea's Waterfront Museum on an exhibition of Welsh button badges. Her book *The Curious Case of the Eisteddfod Baton* celebrates Welsh choral singing; *The Veronal Mystery* examines a real-life gay crime; and *A Practical Guide to Searching LGBTQIA Historical Records* presents methodologies to research sexual orientation and gender identity.



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