



MERMAIDS X LGBTQ+M



Happy LGBT History Month! Celebrated every February in the UK since 2005, it's an opportunity for the community to claim our past, celebrate our present and create our future.

This year, the theme is Politics In Art, so we've teamed up with an incredible illustrator, Rowan Frewin, for a very special trans history lesson.

We've also got some great ideas for shining a light on the T in LGBT this month and beyond, and we've put together some recommendations for great resources which you can share with your friends, family and colleagues long after February is over.

Tag us on social media [@Mermaids Gender](#) and let us know how you're marking LGBT History Month, and find out more about events happening this month and how you can get involved at lgbtplushistorymonth.co.uk.

#LGBTHM



A TRANS HISTORY LESSON

WITH @ROWANPREWIN



#LGBTQM



Gluck (1895-1978) was a British painter who rejected gendered language for themselves. Known privately by partners and friends as Peter or Hig, they referred to themselves as Nesta Obermer's wife. Gluck described their unapologetically queer portrait of themselves and Obermer, Medallion (YouWe), as their wedding painting. This piece would later act as the cover for Virago's 1982 edition of Radclyffe Hall's *The Well Of Loneliness*.



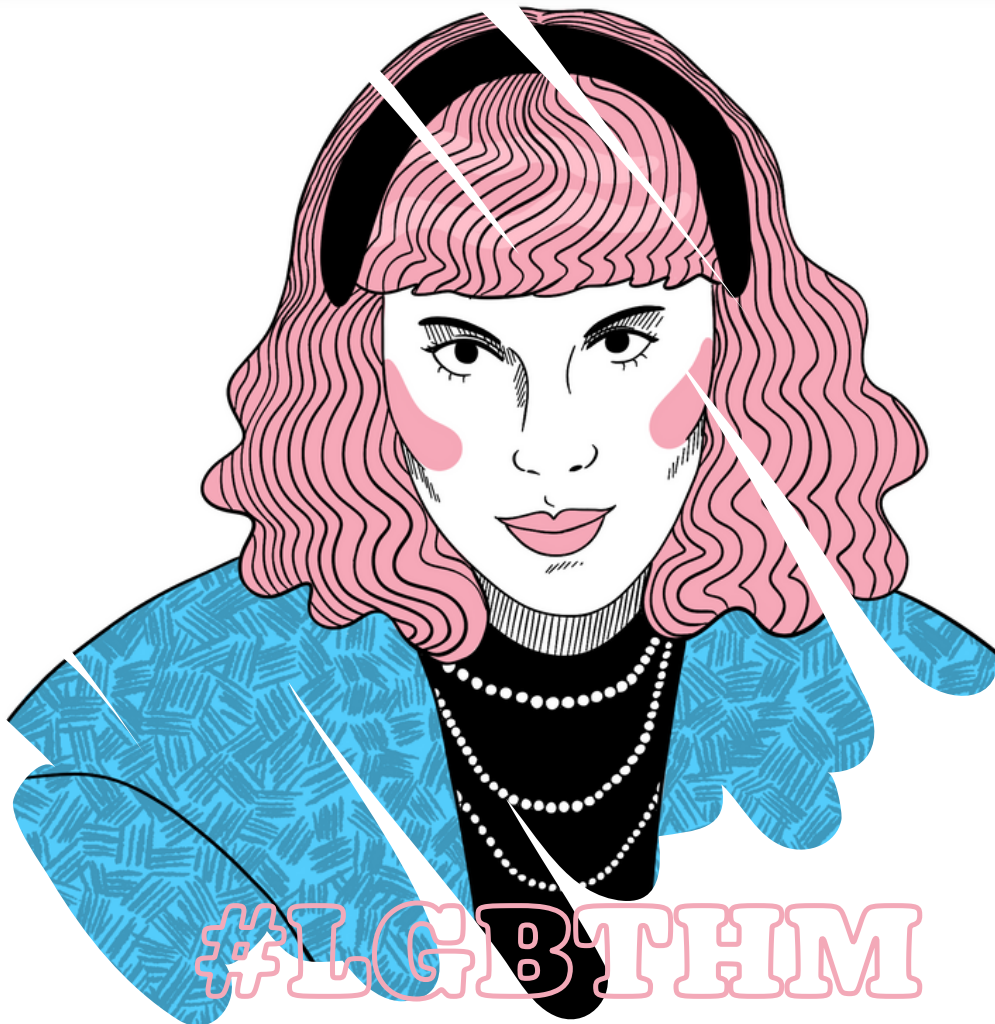


Mary Frith (1584-1659), also known as Moll Cutpurse due to her reputation as a thief, was a notorious Jacobean pickpocket whose colourful life was fictionalised in Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl*. Known for wearing men's attire, cursing, smoking a pipe and being accompanied by her Mastiff, Wildbrat, in one famous account, they were bet by a friend that they wouldn't ride from Charing Cross to Shoreditch dressed as a man. They won the wager, and did so with a banner and trumpet as props.



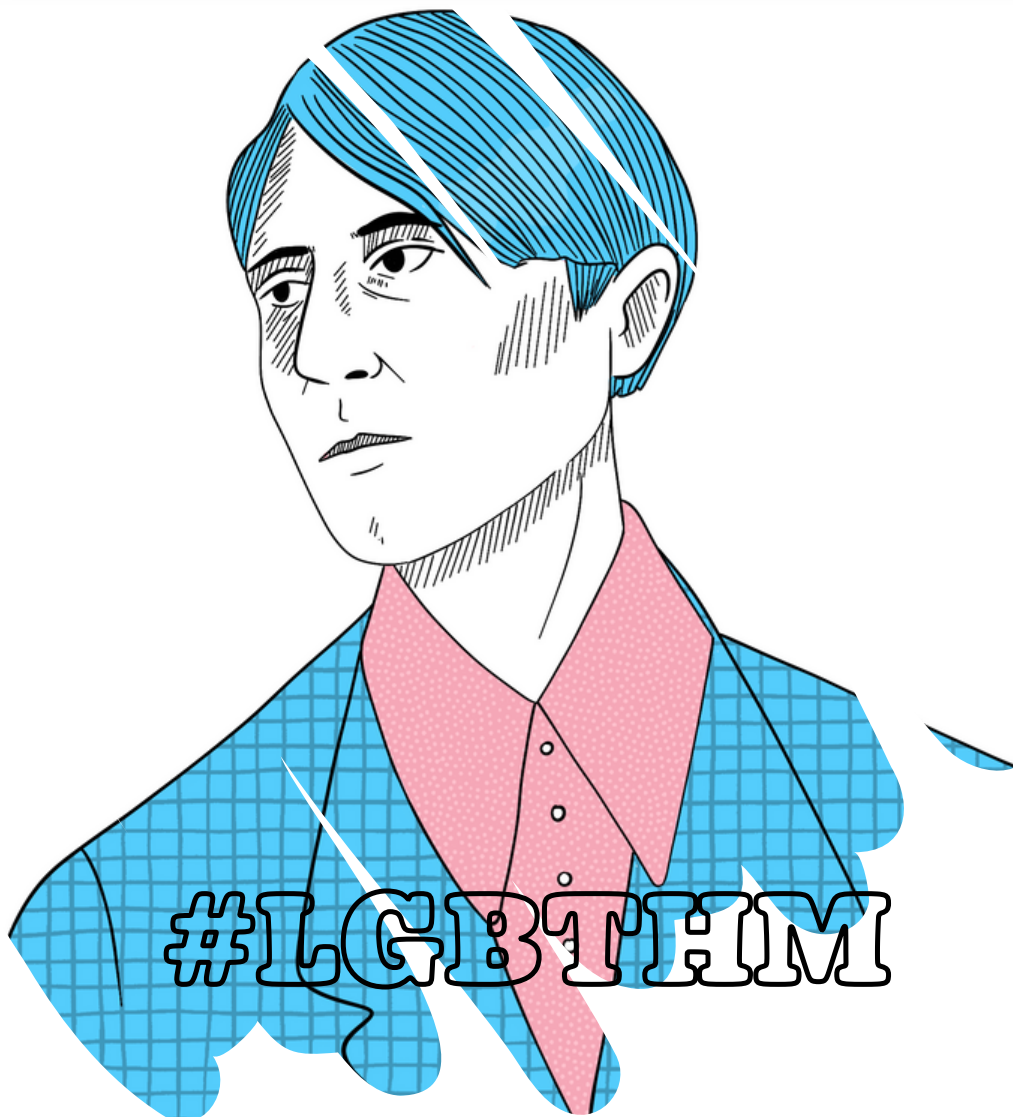


Roberta Cowell (1918-2011) was a WWII fighter pilot and racing driver, and the first trans woman in the UK known to have had gender affirming surgery, noting “I have become woman physically, psychologically, glandularly and legally.” Following the war, Cowell made contact with trans man and physician Michael Dillon who agreed to secretly perform an illegal orchiectomy for her. Because of Dillon’s surgery, Cowell was able to see a gynaecologist and present herself as intersex, which allowed her to legally have her sex changed on her birth certificate. In 1954, the story of Cowell’s transition was published in The Picture Post, followed by her autobiography, which generated much public interest. She continued to motor race for the rest of her life.





Bryher (1894-1983) was a novelist, poet and the lover of the modernist writer H.D. They took on the gender neutral mononym from one of the Scilly Isles, a place that they loved, and expressed their dissonance with womanhood in their writing and personal life, asking H.D not to refer to them as "she" and referring to themselves as a boy in their memoirs. Bryher also discussed their gender with sexologist Havelock Ellis, saying of their encounter "we agreed that it is most unfair for it to happen but apparently I am quite justified in pleading I ought to be a boy." Bryher started their polyamorous relationship with H.D in 1918 and they were together until H.D's death in 1961. In 1927 they married H.D's lover Kenneth Macpherson in order that they could formally adopt H.D's daughter.





Paul Downing (unknown - 1906) was an American sailor who worked in the UK as a farm labourer. As a sailor, he travelled extensively across the US and Europe. In 1905 Downing was arrested in London where he was chasing after buses shouting that he was searching for his wife. Upon his arrest it was discovered that he was assigned female at birth, he was subsequently sent to an asylum where he died within a year.





CELEBRATE OUR PRESENT

Ideas for shining a light on the T in LGBT at school, uni, college or work

Artivism: Make a collage exploring the intersection between activism & art.

Create your own trans time capsule, containing some items & artifacts that have been important in your transition.

Talking trans: See next page for conversation starters.

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Who are the gender diverse people from history who inspire your #TransJoy?

What impact has colonialism had on trans history?

We're living through a pivotal moment in LGBTQIA+ history.

How do you want it to be remembered?



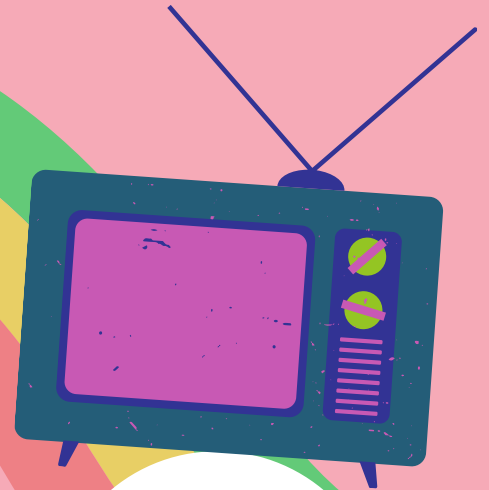
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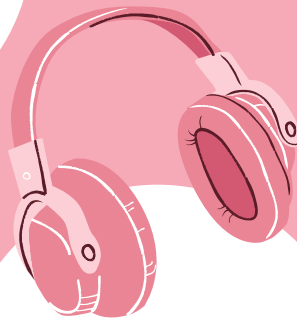
MERMAIDS RECOMMENDS



**The Hidden
Case of Ewan
Forbes by
Zoe Playdon**



**Paris Is
Burning**



**One From
The Vaults
podcast**

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For more film recommendations, visit intofilm.org



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