



# Glasgow LGBT History Walk

This walk was devised by [OurStory Scotland](#) in 2014 at the time of the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. The walk was led on 29 July by Donald Gray, Criz McCormick and Margaret Hamilton, and had input from many others, notably Tommy Clarke, Amy Murphy and Jeff Meek. In 2008, for the OurSpace exhibition at the Kelvingrove, the first LGBT exhibition at a major Scottish museum, OurStory Scotland created the OurSpace Map, [mapping the past](#) through places important to the LGBT community. Jeff Meek has created several [LGBT Historical Maps of Scotland](#) including an interactive Glasgow LGBT Historical Map that plots queer spaces and places that can be included along the way, or as detours from the route.

The point of the History Walk is not to act as a guide to places that operate now, but to record a heritage of past places that have been significant for our community. This is a circular walk that can begin anywhere on the route, and of course can be walked in part or over several occasions.

There is an extended loop out to the Mitchell Library. From there a diversion could be added to the Kelvingrove, site of the OurSpace exhibition in 2008. Another extended loop takes in the Citizens Theatre, People's Palace and Glasgow Women's Library. The extended loops can be omitted from a shorter central walk, or undertaken as separate walks.

In July 2014, at the time of the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, the walk started and finished at Pride House.

# Route of the Glasgow LGBT History Walk

## 14 Albion Street

**Pride House** for the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

Pride House is a location set up during an international sporting event to give information and support to LGBT sportspeople and visitors. It was first organised for the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, Canada. For the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in July 2014, Pride House received support from the Scottish Government.

## 18 Albion Street

**UNISON Scotland LGBT Committee** and **Diverse Artists** are amongst the LGBT groups that have used offices and meeting rooms here.

## 34 Albion Street

**The Gordon's Gallery** hosted the groundbreaking exhibition 'Generations of Space' curated by Dianne Barry (Glasgay! 1998), and **Carnival Arts Centre** hosted the Transfusion Underground party (Glasgay! 2006).

## 48 Albion Street

**Gay Men's Health** had offices on the fifth floor.

## 109 Trongate

**Glasgow Women's Library**, established at 50 Hill Street in Garnethill in 1991, moved to Glasgow City Council premises here in 1994. The **Lesbian Archive and Information Centre**, set up in London in 1984, relocated to the Glasgow Women's Library in 1995. Glasgow Women's Library relocated to 81 Parnie Street in 2006.

## **63 Trongate**

**Tron Theatre** has been a venue for many LGBT theatre productions, and a prominent Glasgay! venue. Alan Cumming began his acting career appearing in seasons at the Tron Theatre. The Tron introduced gay Quebec playwright Michel Tremblay to Scottish audiences in 1989. 7:84 Theatre Company produced *Just Pretending* for Glasgay! here in 2000.

## **91 Saltmarket**

**Q! Gallery**, Scotland's first gallery dedicated to queer art and artists, was opened here in 1995 by Steven Thompson, who was the producer of the internationally famous Glasgay! Festival from 2004. Glasgay! ran from 1993 to 2014.

## **St Andrews in the Square**

Grade A listed building, which is now Glasgow's Centre for Scottish Culture. This was Glasgow's second oldest church, refurbished and opened to the public in 2000 as Centre for Traditional Scottish Music, Song and Dance. It was the venue for Glasgay! ceilidhs.

## **84 Bell Street**

**The third Glasgow LGBT Centre** (2006-2009)

## **49 Bell Street**

**Winchester Club**: a Glasgay! venue, which has hosted Rubyfruit (women only dance and cruise night) and The Shondes (queer transgender rock band). In 2010 it hosted *Club Gateways* (a musical with lyrics by Rachel Jury, score by Andrew Cruikshank) celebrating the famous Gateways, a small private members' club in Chelsea, which was one of the first women's clubs in the world.

### **30 Bell Street**

**LGBT Youth Scotland Glasgow Office** was on Third Floor

**Gay Men's Health** was on Fourth Floor

**Rape Crisis Centre** was on Fifth Floor

### **20 Candleriggs**

**Merchant Pride**, formerly **Candle Bar**. Cabaret nights and regular appearances by iconic performers Robert and May Miller.

### **106 Brunswick Street**

**Brunswick Hotel** (LGBT friendly) with **Basura Blanca** nightclub in basement, including LGBT club nights; regular Glasgay! sponsor and venue, including 'Queer Stories' in 2005, launching a yearlong nationwide storytelling project of OurStory Scotland.

### **101 Brunswick Street**

**The Gallery Bar**: LGBT bar with paintings by Robert Miller, quiz nights and live performances. Saltire Thistle LGBT football team has met here.

### **105 Brunswick Street**

**Old Sheriff Court**: Historic Scotland listed building located between Brunswick Street and Hutcheson Street. The Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 1980 brought the law into line with the Sexual Offences Act 1967 (England and Wales) in its partial decriminalisation of homosexual acts. However, the majority of legal cases involving homosexual acts had been prosecuted under common law and heard in the Sheriff Court, rather than the High Court, with less publicity. The Old Sheriff Court now houses the UK's first purpose-built arts centre for young people: Scottish Youth Theatre has its headquarters here, and its premises have been used for meetings of LGBT Youth Scotland.

## **69 Hutcheson Street**

**Court Bar**, established 1881 by Gertrude Gifford, who never married and lived with her mother and maid in the Gallowgate. Located beside the former Sheriff Court, it was popular with lawyers and long retained its 1950s décor. Meetings of BiGLes Youth Group and the Bear's Club were held here. The basement at weekends became a leather bar.

## **80 Glassford Street**

**Bennets**: Glasgow's oldest and longest running gay disco opened in 1981. Bennets was at one time the largest LGBT disco in Europe. 'Girls on Top' nights were for women only. When Bennets closed, the gay dance club **AXM** opened here in 2012.

## **85 Glassford Street**

**Glasgow Trades Hall** was the venue for the OurStory Ceilidh in 2006. In the best tradition of the ceilidh, storytelling alternated with music and dance, as 20 LGBT storytellers from all over Scotland told their story live in a crowded ballroom decorated with LGBT portraits, artworks and episodes giving witness to our lives.

## **84 Wilson Street**

**The Polo Lounge** belongs to Stefan King's G1 Group that opened a cluster of bars and clubs in the Merchant City, including Delmonicas and Café Latte in the same block, to make it the hub of a commercial 'gay village'.

## **68 Virginia Street**

**Delmonicas**: LGBT bar featuring karaoke nights and quiz nights that have been hosted by such as Karen Dunbar, Tom Urie and Charlie Ross.

## **58 Virginia Street**

**Café Latte** (later **Moda**, later **The Riding Room**): part of Stefan King's G1 Group empire.

## **45 Virginia Street**

**Luke & Jack**: adult shop (previously Clone Zone), with **Virginia Gallery** in basement. The gallery regularly shows LGBT art and has been a venue for Glasgay!, LGBT workshops, art classes and meetings, including Prime Time. Tommy Clarke curated the exhibition 'LGBT History Lessons: The Scene' in the Virginia Gallery in 2014.

## **6a John Street**

**Underground Bar** (formerly **Revolver**): cellar bar with pool tables, drag bingo and queeraoke evenings.

## **10 St John Street**

**Speakeasy** and **FHQ**: FHQ billed as Scotland's first and only female gay bar; Speakeasy, a LGBT bar with karaoke and drag evenings, with Trophy Room camp pop on Saturday nights.

## **17 John Street**

**Katie's Bar** (formerly **Milk**): LGBT basement bar with pool table, bingo, drag and cabaret evenings.

## **George Square**

**Pride Scotia 2006** and **Pride Glasgow 2008** marches terminated here with festival and speeches. When LGBT people contacted Lesbian Line and Gay Switchboard for advice and support, the befriending service would offer to meet them in the public and safe space of George Square.

## **8-10 West George Street**

**Sadie Frost's** (previously **Berlin's** and **GHQ**): said to be named after the actor Sadie Frost in honour of her performance in the 1992 film Bram Stoker's Dracula; included Karen Dunbar as DJ and women-only nights in the Blue Room.

## **61b Miller Street**

**Austin's**: formerly at 183 Hope Street, this bar was re-opened here by Robert Austin in 1999, when the focus of the commercial LGBT scene had moved to the Merchant City, but it did not prove viable.

## **57 Miller Street**

**Glasgow Women's Centre** was the first women's centre in Scotland. It was opened in 1976, with support from the Equal Opportunities Commission, providing a resource centre for women's liberation. It continued until the late 1980s. Many of Glasgow's first lesbian and women-only groups were established here, such as Lesbian Line and Fourwalls Women's Housing Cooperative. It was the hub of political and social activity with dozens of campaigns, protest marches and demonstrations organised in the crumbling damp rooms.

## **Royal Exchange Square**

**Gallery of Modern Art** opened in 1996. sh[OUT] exhibition (2009), including Our Vivid Stories. The OurStory Scotland LGBT Handling Kit created with the Open Museum (2008) was put together here, with archival and heritage items that bear witness to our story and can be used for reminiscence and education.

## **25 Royal Exchange Square**

**Club X / Club X-Change:** the first nightclub established by Stefan King in 1990, tapping into a lucrative market seen in terms of the 'pink pound'. Wednesday nights were designated as straight. Stefan King's G1 Group went on to open Delmonicas, Café Latte and the Polo Lounge.

## **98 Buchanan Street**

**Borders Bookshop** (closed 2009), along with Waterstones (formerly Dillons) 174-176 Argyle Street, had LGBT sections where you might meet other book browsers.

## **12 Renfield Street**

**Scottish Minorities Group:** SMG had a branch here, publishing newsletters and furthering its campaign for law reform. In 1978, the newsletter 'SMG News' changed to 'Gay Scotland', and the group itself was renamed the Scottish Homosexual Rights Group (SHRG).

*Extended loop via the Mitchell Library: if this loop is omitted, the route continues at 99 Gordon Street.*

## **126 Renfield Street**

**Greens Playhouse:** opened in 1927 at the corner of Renfield Street and Renfrew Lane. It closed in 1973 and reopened as the Apollo, Scotland's premier rock venue. In its time, it was Europe's biggest cinema with over 4000 seats, and it became well known among gay men as a place to meet. Edwin Morgan met the love of his life here.



## **12 Rose Street**

**Glasgow Film Theatre:** this has long been a meeting place for LGBT people due in part to its continued support of LGBT films and events. They have hosted regular LGBT film seasons and Glasgay! screenings. It has also been a meeting place LGBT Youth Scotland in Glasgow.

## **50 Hill Street**

**Glasgow Women's Library** opened here in 1991, developing from the arts organisation Women in Profile, established in 1987. It moved to 109 Trongate in 1994.

## **167 Renfrew Street**

**Glasgow School of Art:** venue for Utter Gutter alternative queer disco. Utter Gutter was launched at the Riverside Club in 2005, and appeared at Glasgow School of Art from 2007 on the second Saturday of the month.

## **534 Sauchiehall Street**

**The first Glasgow LGBT Centre:** designated the **Glasgow Gay Centre**, it was launched in 1977 by the Glasgow branch of the Scottish Minorities Group (later Scottish Homosexual Rights Group) as the first explicitly named gay centre in the UK. Celebrity visitors included singer songwriter Tom Robinson and writer and actor Quentin Crisp.

## **4 Queen's Crescent**

**The Club:** opened in 1980 by the Scottish Homosexual Rights Group. It was envisaged as a licensed gay club, an alternative both to the Gay Centre and to the commercial scene. There were regular discos and meetings of a range of LGBT groups. The Glasgow Gay Advisory Service was based here.

## **6 Granville Street**

**The Mitchell Library:** formal address North Street, main entrance now on Granville Street. In Archives and Manuscripts there is the OurStory Scotland Collection, including research and policy documents, LGBT magazines, minutes of meetings and memorabilia of OurStory Scotland and other organisations, such as Diverse Artists and Glasgow Gay Men's Chorus. **Glasgow Women's Library** re-located here (entrance was at 15 Berkeley Street) in 2010, before moving to their permanent home at 23 Landressy Street, Bridgeton, in 2013.

## **106 West Campbell Street**

**Squires:** LGBT bar from 1989-1997. This was a long narrow basement bar, popular in the early 1990s. It was also a venue for meetings of Gay Football Supporters Network.

## **183 Hope Street**

**Austin's** (formerly **The Strand, Misty's**): popular basement bar opened by Robert Austin. This area, which included other LGBT bars, such as Squires at 106 West Campbell Street (closed 1997), lost clientele when the focus of the commercial LGBT scene became the Merchant City. Robert Austin moved the bar to Miller Street in 1999.

*return via Hope Street to...*

## **99 Gordon Street**

**Central Hotel** (reopened as Grand Central Hotel in 2010): café was popular with the LGBT people for afternoon teas at the weekends, or for a quiet late drink after the chaos of the 'half ten' bar bells rang in the surrounding city centre bars.

### **253 Argyle Street**

**The Arches:** theatre, venue for arts and live music, nightclub. Founded in 1991 as a not-for-profit organisation when Andy Arnold, the first artistic director, acquired the space to create a theatre. Its artistic activities were supported by the nightclub events. The Arches was a regular Glasgay! sponsor and venue from 1993, including 7:84 Theatre Company (Scotland) production of SexShunned (2004).

### **306 Argyle Street**

**Waterloo Bar:** Glasgow's oldest gay bar (since early 1970s). Betty Hutton hosted the popular karaoke nights. DJs have included Cheri Treiffel.

### **316 Argyle Street**

**Duke of Wellington:** one of the first bars to cater for a largely LGBT clientele.

### **18 Jamaica Street**

**Penelope's Nightclub:** Tuesday nights included Pink Penelopes and Jojo's. Later became **Club Devotion** with queer nights on Thursdays and Sundays: free passes were available from the nearby LGBT Centre.

### **30 Midland Street**

Rear entrance to **The Arches** for club events and large gigs. LGBT club nights would see long queues forming here. Club nights included Burly 'designed to be cruisy', Love Boutique, and Death Disco's camp celebration of the undead.

### **312 Clyde Street**

**Vintners:** gay bar, very busy and popular during the 1970s to early 80s, catering for a wide age range, with the small intimate bar below and the large bar and diner above. On Saturdays it was so crowded it was difficult to get in.

### **11 Dixon Street**

**The second Glasgow LGBT Centre**, 1996-2006. This was Glasgow's longest running LGBT centre. Edwin Morgan wrote a poem for the opening. The entrance was away from main street, signalled only by the rainbow flag. With a café, exhibition and performance space and meeting rooms, the Centre was used by a wide range of LGBT groups, including Diverse Artists, who prepared art exhibitions and performances on LGBT Themes. It was at their December 2001 meeting that the idea of OurStory Scotland was born, resulting in the Becoming Visible exhibition at the Centre in 2002. Eventually, due to rising property prices, the Centre's yearly rent became too high, and the area was cleared for redevelopment.

### **33 Fox Street**

**Riverside Club** was a LGBT friendly dance club in a former ceilidh hall. Utter Gutter alternative queer disco played here 2005-2007 on the second Saturday of the month. When the Riverside closed in 2007, Utter Gutter moved to the Classic Grand in Jamaica Street and thence to Glasgow School of Art.

### **Custom House Quay**

**Panama Jax:** this disco (formerly **Spankies**) opened 1983, and became a LGBT nightclub on Mondays and Wednesdays. The entrance was on the Clyde Walkway, where the proximity to the river could be fatal if the drink encouraged you to risk a midnight dip. Following a fire, the whole edifice was demolished in 2003.

## **214 Clyde Street**

**Community House (Iona Community):** used by the Scottish Minorities Group for meetings and for planning campaigns for gay law reform. The Iona Community is an ecumenical Christian community that was initially linked to the Church of Scotland.

*Extended loop via the Citizens Theatre, People's Palace and Glasgow*

*Women's Library: if this loop is omitted, the route continues at King Street Car Park.*

## **44 Carlton Place**

**Star Club:** opened as a folk club in 1978 at the rear of the Communist Party building. From the early to mid 1980s, it was the venue for monthly lesbian discos. Frequently showcasing live music from women performers, these popular nights attracted women from all over Scotland.

## **1 Carlton Place**

**Glasgow Sheriff Court** moved here in 1986. Like the Old Sheriff Court, this is a Historic Scotland listed building. Cases of hate crime and unlawful discrimination are heard here.

## **119 Gorbals Street**

**Citizens Theatre** (opened 1878) became renowned for its innovative repertoire and staging, especially during the 1970s to the 1990s under the triumvirate of Giles Havergal, Philip Prowse and Robert David MacDonald, who introduced radical international drama and several first performances in Scotland, including plays of Jean Genet. Experimental theatre had been the focus of the annexed **Close Theatre Club** (1965 – 1973), a private members' club, with freedom to present plays that would otherwise have been censored. The club was seen as Glasgow's first unofficial gay bar.

## **Glasgow Green**

The use of Glasgow Green as a meeting place for gay men goes back a long way, and court records from the 1920s, analysed by Jeff Meek of Glasgow University, show that the location cited most often in legal cases was Nelson's Monument in Glasgow Green. This use of Glasgow's central public park seemed to hit a peak in the 1920s. An area of dense shrubbery surrounding the monument offered some protection from prying eyes.

## **People's Palace and Winter Gardens**

The first LGBT exhibition here was held in the Winter Gardens in 2007: Rainbow Stories devised by OurStory Scotland. In 2009 the People's Palace in conjunction with OurStory Scotland and LGBT Youth Scotland held a tour of the museum from an LGBT perspective and demonstrated the OurStory Scotland LGBT Handling Kit created with the Open Museum.

## **23 Landressy Street**

**Glasgow Women's Library** moved to its permanent home here in 2013.

*return via Glasgow Green to...*

## **King Street Car Park**

**Pride Glasgow 2014** festivities were held here.

## **81 Parnie Street**

**Glasgow Women's Library** relocated temporarily here in 2006, before moving to the Mitchell Library in 2010.

*return to...*

## **14 Albion Street**

**Pride House 2014**

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