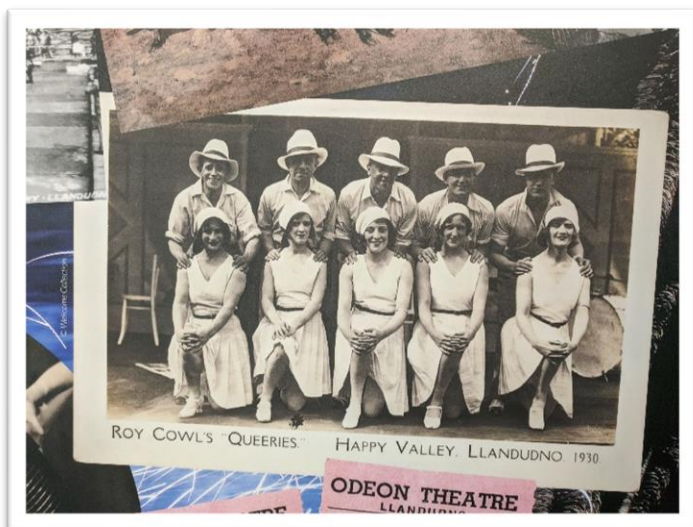


Hanes Cudd: LGBTQ Taith Gerdded Treftadaeth 2021



Llandudno's Hidden History: LGBTQ Heritage Walk 2021



Author: Dr DeAnn Bell

Thank You

Tessa Fox who gathered the initial research for this 2021 LGBTQ+ heritage walk.

Graham Morgan and **Rachel Claire Evans** who created the first LGBTQ+ heritage walk in Llandudno in 2018.

Norena Shopland who wrote *Queering Glamorgan Archives: A Research Guide to Sources for the Study of LGBT History and *Forbidden Lives** helping us learn where and how to look for these histories.

Daryl Leeworthy author of *A Little Gay History of Wales* who helped me identify locations and see the bigger picture.

A Very Brief History of UK LGBTQ+ Laws

Thank you to the British Library for making this timeline possible.

2017: 'Alan Turing law'

In England and Wales, The Policing and Crime Act 2017 pardoned all historic instances of criminal convictions of gross indecency against men.

2014: Marriage and Civil Partnership Bill (Scotland)

Civil partnership could be exchanged for marriage certificates from 16 December 2014. The first weddings took place on 31 December 2014.

2013: Marriage (Same-Sex Couples) Act

Although same-sex couples could enter into Civil Partnerships, they were not permitted to marry.

2010: Equality Act

The Equality Act 2010 legislates for equal treatment in access to employment as well as private and public services, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

2005: Civil Partnership Act and Gender Recognition Act

This gave same-sex couples the same rights and responsibilities as married heterosexual couples in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. It officially came into effect on 5 December 2005.

4 April 2005, The Gender Recognition Act came into effect. This gave trans people full legal recognition in their appropriate gender.

2002: Equal rights for adoption to same-sex couples

The Adoption and Children Act 2002 allowed single people of any sexual orientation as well as same-sex couples the right to adopt children in the UK.

1998: The Bolton Seven

Seven gay and bisexual men were convicted of gross indecency under the Sexual Offences Act 1956. The **Sexual Offences Act 1967** partially decriminalised gay sex but limitations included only allowing homosexual sex between two sexual partners.

1989: Stonewall UK

In response to Section 28 legislation, actor Sir Ian McKellen came out on BBC Radio 3. He co-founded Stonewall, a group renowned for its campaigning and lobbying for LGBTQ+ rights.

1988: Section 28 of the Local Government Act

Section 28 of the Local Government Act expressly denied local authorities the ability to support its LGBTQ+ constituents. Section 28

remained enforceable until 2003. In 2009 British Prime Minister David Cameron issued a public apology for it.

1981: First UK case of AIDS

The first UK case of AIDS was recorded when a 49-year-old man was admitted to Brompton Hospital, London suffering from Pneumocystis Carinii Pneumonia. He died 10 days later.

1972: First gay newspaper and first UK Gay Pride march

Gay News, Britain's first gay newspaper was a fortnightly publication founded by the Gay Liberation Front and members of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality.

The London Gay Liberation Front organised the first UK Gay Pride march in London. The march ran from Trafalgar Square to Hyde Park with around 1,000 people marching through the capital.

1967: Sexual Offences Act

The Sexual Offences Act partially decriminalised homosexual acts. Restrictions included sex being between two men only, both had to be over the age of 21, sex could only occur in a private home, and homosexuals were not allowed to invite a partner to have sex in public or in writing.

1957: The Wolfenden Report

The Wolfenden Committee recommended the decriminalisation of gay sex between consenting adults over 21, except in the armed forces.

1946: Autobiography of the first transgender man

In 1946 Michael Dillon published *Self: A Study* a partially autobiographic tale recounting the author's journey from being Laura to Michael. It included the surgeries undertaken by pioneering surgeon Sir Harold Gillies.

1921: Attempt to make sexual acts between women illegal

In 1921 three MPs attempted to add a clause to a new Criminal Law Amendment Bill. Both Houses rejected the amendment over concerns the legislation would encourage women to explore lesbianism.

1835: Last two men executed for homosexual acts in the UK

The last two men to be executed for homosexual acts were James Pratt and John Smith on 27 November 1835.

1533: Buggery Act

This Act of Parliament passed during the reign of King Henry VIII, moved the issue of sodomy from the ecclesiastical courts to the state. The Act applied specifically to sodomy, both homosexual and heterosexual, and between a person and an animal. Convictions under the Buggery Act were punishable by death.

1. Griffith Vaughan Williams (1940-2010)



Winter Gardens, Gloddaeth Street, Llandudno, LL30 2DF

Date: 1977

Griffith Vaughan Williams, born in Bangor in 1940, was a freelance journalist and active campaigner for LGBTQ+ equality. In 1964 Williams became an LGBTQ+ rights activist and was a leading member of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE). This was a full three years before the 1967 Sexual Offences Act partially decriminalised homosexual relationships. He held several roles at the CHE becoming a vocal member who spoke out in nationwide articles, on committees, and in public broadcasts. He was described by historian Keith Howes as, "Passionately, noisily committed to gay rights but never pompous or elitist; always politely eloquent, even at his most bombastic. His was a powerful gay voice, devoted to truth and equality."



In 1977 Williams applied for space to host the CHE annual conference in Llandudno. Noreena Shopland in *Forbidden Lives* speculates that this could be because Llandudno had been receiving publicity for its 24-hour homosexual support helpline. Although the town council initially appeared eager

to host the event offering the Winter Gardens as potential location, the offer met resistance from local business owners. When Griffith attempted to book the venues, he was told there was not enough room for the CHE. Moving instead to the Pier Pavilion Theatre, he was once again turned away under the guise that the venue did not have the capacity, and then again when the venue claimed it did not hold conferences during peak holiday season and prioritised regular guests. Frustrated Williams went again to the council who made excuses, and then to the press, but without success. In the end, the conference was held in Nottingham where it ended up gaining headline news after conference members condemned the stereotyping of gay men as sexual predators.

According to the Bishopsgate Institute in the early 1990s Griffith Vaughan Williams created the London Lesbian and Gay Police Initiative (LLGPI) to tackle violence against homosexuals on the street and prejudice in the police force. In 2007 he became a member of the LGBT Advisory Group with the Metropolitan Police. Williams continued to liaise with the London police force until weeks before his death in 2010.

2. William T Rowlands

The Further Adventures of William Rowlands

VICTIMISING A LLANDUDNO LANDLADY.

At a Special Police Court on Thursday morning, before Mr J. Adey Wells, and Mr J. O. Thomas, William T. Rowlands, a youth of 19, was charged with obtaining board and lodging on false pretences from Mrs Davies, Southerndale, Bodhyfryd Road.

Southerndale, Bodhyfryd Road, Llandudno

Date: August 14th, 1909

On the 14th of August 1909, an article was published in the *Llandudno Advertiser and List of Visitors* of 'The Further Adventures of William Rowlands'. Rowlands, aged 19, was set to appear before police court after obtaining board and lodgings under 'false pretences' in Llandudno. What were the false pretences in question? Rowlands had successfully presented himself at a female boarding house called Southerndale here on Bodhyfryd Road as a female teacher looking to rent lodgings in Llandudno for the sake of her health. Three years before this act, Rowlands had been convicted of larceny (theft) for obtaining women's clothing from the Bangor Drapery by successfully presenting himself as a 'young woman'.

This meant that from around the age of 16 to 19, Rowlands was not only dressing in women's clothes but also effectively speaking, moving, and engaging with other members of the public as a young woman – a sex not assigned at birth. From such a young age, we can only wonder how Rowlands was able to obtain his first outfit. The reports of his actions claim the purpose of obtaining and then wearing women's clothing was theft, but to have repeatedly attempted to present himself as female, even after being previously prosecuted and sentenced suggests other motives. We must also recognise that there would be no need for Rowlands to wear the clothing if his objective was to sell them.

We



cannot say for certain whether Rowlands was transgender or a transvestite, but we can sympathise with his plight. The article explains that he came from a farming family worked odd labour jobs but had no fixed address. Rowlands was sentenced to 6 months hard labour without pay or benefit for his Llandudno attempt and was told by the Judge to join the army. The judge said, 'The Army will make a respectable man of you. It is just the place for a strong lad like you.'



3.The 5th Marquess of Anglesey

**Old Bank Building, 103
Mostyn Street,
Llandudno LL30 2PD**

Date: 1905

Henry Cyril Paget, the 5th Marquess of Anglesey is perhaps even better known as The Dancing Marquess of Anglesey. Born in 1875, he is now famed for his dramatic flair, his passion for theatricality, and his hedonism. Paget earned his nickname The Dancing Marquess due to the sinuous, snake-like dances he gave during

performances at his converted chapel-to-theatre 'the Gaiety' in his home Plas Newydd, Anglesey. Paget was known for lavishly spending his money on costumes, theatre productions, and other items of extravagance. In recent years, new images have surfaced from the National Trust at Plas Newydd of Paget in dresses and jewellery appearing relaxed and comfortable as he stares directly at his photographer. Despite being married for a short time to Lilian Florence Maud Chetwynd, the couple never consummated their marriage and Lilian filed for divorce after 6 weeks. Paget boldly toured and performed plays

written by Oscar Wilde who, by this time, had faced imprisonment from 1895-1897 for sodomy. There is some debate over Paget's homosexuality because of a lack of evidence of physical relationships with anyone but believing sex is the only way to define sexuality is a very limited way of understanding it. The Marquess was publicly and proudly gender queer. His life was unfortunately short and his spending eventually led to bankruptcy.

In 1905, large portions of his possessions were sold off in what Pink News called, 'The infamous Great Anglesey Sale'. The Marquess died shortly after the first sale on the 14th March 1905. Following his death his letters, diaries, and other articles documenting his life were destroyed by his family.

The Gaiety Theatre was turned back into a chapel and the existence of the Dancing Marquess was essentially erased. This is one of the many challenges current researchers face in recovering LGBTQ+ histories. The remaining portion of items continued to be sold after his death, finding their way eventually to Llandudno where: 'For two hours on Wednesday afternoon a continuous stream of people passed into the wide entrance hall and up the broad staircase of the old bank building on Mostyn-street, Llandudno.' In an issue of *The Welsh Coast Pioneer and Review for North Cambria* from 8th September 1905, the Marquess is remembered as a kind and charitable man, with a Mr W. A. Dew stating that the sale of his items was done to pay respects to a man that had once been very charitable to the people of Llandudno.

4. Roy Cowl's *Queeries*



Pier Pavilion Theatre on Llandudno Promenade, LL30 2LR and Happy Valley Theatre

Date: 1930's

Roy Cowl's *Queeries* were happily kicking up their heels at Happy Valley, and the Pier Pavilion Theatre, Llandudno, during the 1930. The group of 10 male performers had half of their cast dressed as female performers. So convincing were their costumes that they have been misidentified by some local historians as one of the first mixed gender performing groups in the area. The Digital Trans Archive says, "Not all seaside concert parties incorporated drag into their acts. But there was certainly an essence of camp fun common to all of them, sometimes accentuated by the

names that they bore, as in this case, the 'Queeries'. The word queer in the context of homosexual would have already been in use by a minority, if not in common usage.” The implication being that this type of gender queering was not only recognisable in mainstream entertainment in the 1930’s, but the word Queer was also already being associated with homosexuality.



The history of drag and drag performance can be dated all the way back to the beginning of staged performances where it was both illegal and immoral to have female actors. The term “drag” is thought to come from the male actors ‘dragging’ their dresses along the floor as they performed. According to Daryl Leeworthy in *A Little Gay History of Wales*: In Wales as early as 1887 there is the phrase *cadi ffan* in the North and *sioni fenyw* in the South loosely meaning effeminate man. Equally, the theatrical term ‘travesti’ is a performance while wearing clothes of the opposite sex. Pantomime would not be the same

without the “principal boy”, an actress portraying the male lead, and the all-important Dame.

The *Queeries* gained the same popularity as Victorian Vaudeville and Minstrel shows at the time in Llandudno and they successfully toured the UK including Norfolk, London, and Sussex. Drag history today is still evolving with The Vivienne, winner of Season 1 of *Ru Paul’s Drag Race UK*, coming from none other than Colwyn Bay. *RuPaul’s Drag Race UK: The Official Tour* will visit Venue Cymru in 2022.

5. UNIQUE



**Cae Mor Seafront Hotel, 6 Penrhyn Crescent,
Llandudno, LL30 1BA**

Date: 2002

UNIQUE was formed in 2002 with millennium funding and held its first official support meeting in Mold. Regular meetings were then held in one of the founder’s homes before moving to Ty Wepre / Wepre House in Deeside in 2003. It now meets virtually on Zoom but hopes to return to its Thursday meetings at Cae Mor Seafront Hotel, Llandudno.

UNIQUE is now the largest self-funded sustainable trans support group in Wales with over 405 virtual members. Defined by UNIQUE, trans (or transgender) and gender diversity (or variance) includes a full range of individuals who come into conflict or question the gender they were assigned at birth. The support UNIQUE offers directly address the difficulties faced by this community today. They provide personal support to both transgender people, their family, and friends. They provide links to friendly medical services, support those starting transitioning, and use groups and social outings to improve confidence. They also work with the media to insure fair representation of, and education about, Gender Diverse People.



UNIQUE

also shares resources that include friendly places to purchase clothing, shoes, and make-up, other support groups, and therapy groups. For the past 20 years, UNIQUE's work has taken multiple forms including: Trans Awareness and Equality Training, focus groups with the

NHS, and Hate Crime awareness and reporting projects. Hate Crime is common in the trans community with the LGBTQ+ equal rights charity, Stonewall, estimating in 2019 that two in every five trans people had experienced a hate crime or incident. With your help, we can make this stop.



6. L Fest

**Hosted by Bodafon
Farm Park, Bodafon
Road, Llandudno**

**Welcomed in 2018 by
Venue Cymru,
Promenade,
Llandudno, LL30 1BB**

**Date: July 13-16th
2018**

L Fest was developed by festival director Cindy Edwards in 2010, with the first festival running in 2011. According to Edwards the festival was originally conceived as a lesbian multi-sport event and evolved thanks to its many contributors, into a music, arts and comedy festival with its own cinema. Contributors include SpringOut, The Rainbow Film Festival, Laughing Cows Comedy, and many other individuals. The festival's organisers have worked hard to ensure it is a diverse and inclusive space that hosts a variety of creative and active events for single adults and families. Allies are welcome.

The festival moved from the Midlands to Llandudno in 2018 where it enjoyed a very successful turn out of over 800 people. Venue Cymru rolled out their red carpet flying their rainbow flags during this event. This was a very different reception than Griffith Vaughan Williams and the CHE received in 1977, and perhaps marks a significant change in local attitude towards the LGBTQ+ community.

At the end of L Fest 2019 Cindy Edwards announced that due to a lack of funding the 2020 festival would be the last L Fest. With the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic, the festival was postponed to 2021, and then postponed again until July 22nd - 24th 2022 where it will take place again at Bodafon Park Farm. Tickets for the final instalment of the festival sold out in just 45 minutes.

The L Fest community is active online on Facebook and YouTube with advice, support, upcoming events, and stories about real people in the community. Statistics have frequently shown that members of the LGBTQ+ community



face feelings of isolation or loneliness more frequently than other groups in society. Support for organisations and events such as L Fest is vital.

7. The Buzz Club, in The Washington:

now Dylan's Restaurant, The Washington, East Parade, Llandudno LL30 1BE

Date: 2002

OUT IN THE COLD

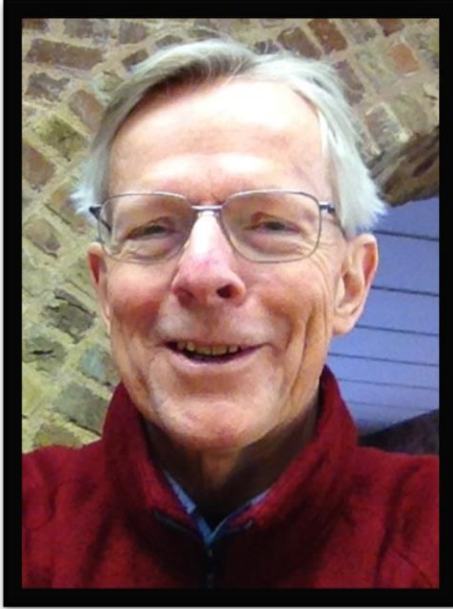
The last few days have seen something of a leap forward for gay activists in both the main parties. The Backbencher was delighted to read about the Tories' gay summit, charmed to see Alan Duncan outing himself again in the Evening Standard, and considers the proposals for gay partnerships thoroughly fine progress. But - as one member of Welsh Labour discovered at the conference in Llandudno last week - not everyone is so enlightened. "I was quite amused to be turned away from Llandudno's only club on Thursday because it was gay night and, apparently, I don't look gay enough," he tells the Backbencher. "After 10 minutes of remonstrating with them about the irony of their policy, I got in. It wasn't half bad." Alan? Alan Duncan? We have a mission for you, Alan. Now, it's in Llandudno ...

Llandudno has been a host to a variety of gay club nights over the years. In the 1970's these included the Rembrandt Bar in the Washington Hotel and the Orme Bar at the Alexandra Hotel. In the 1980's The Viking Club at the Imperial Hotel or the Neville Hotel were the places to go. In 2004 The Buzz Club in the upper area of the Washington Hotel was the only gay club in town.

During 2004 there was humorous uproar from Westminster when a Welsh Labour party member was initially turned

away from the club for not looking 'gay enough' to enter. This event occurred after the public coming out of Conservative Party Member Alan Duncan in 2002. Duncan was the first openly gay Conservative member of Parliament. According to the news report, the unnamed Welsh Labour member eventually gained entry to the club after ten minutes of challenging them about the irony of their policy. Whilst this story was reported with humour in the *Guardian*, it is important to understand that safety for members of the LGBTQ+ community would have been a necessary concern for clubs such as the Buzz Club.

Attacks in gay clubs are not uncommon. In 1999, The Admiral Duncan in Soho was subject to a nail bombing. In 2016, less than ten years ago, a gunman opened fire in Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, USA. This was a devastating reminder for many that intolerance towards the LGBTQ+ community sadly still exists today. A 2017 UK Gov poll of more than 5000 members of the LGBTQ+ community found that, 'One in five LGBT people have experienced a hate crime or incident because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity in the last 12 months'.



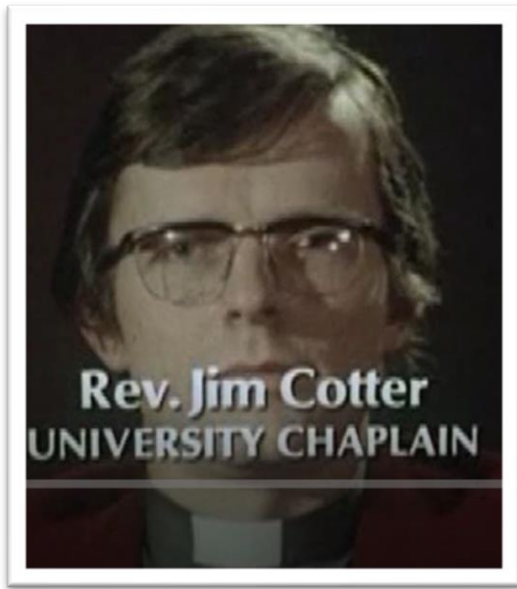
8. Reverend Jim Cotter

**The Imperial Hotel
Vaughan Street, The
Promenade
Llandudno, LL30 1AP
Date: (1942-2014)**

Reverend Cotter was a spiritual leader, a writer and poet, and a man who devoted his life to reconciling the Anglican Church with the LGBTQ+ community. Born in Stockport in 1942, he went to Cambridge University and became a lecturer at Lincoln Theological College from 1970 to 1973. In 1976 he became the honorary secretary of The Gay Christian Movement (now the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement). In 1977 he appeared with other ordained clergy on a BBC TV program *Everyman* on an episode called “*The Lord’s My Shepherd and He Knows I’m Gay*”. At the start of that episode Reverend Cotter said: “As members of the Gay Christian Movement we are convinced that it is entirely compatible with the Christian faith not only to love another person of the same sex but also to express that love fully in a personal sexual relationship.” It is a fight that continues today. The Church of England currently allows homosexual ministers so long as they are celibate. In his own book *Pleasure Pain and Passion*, Cotter

states that this subversion of natural love causes unbearable mental, physical, and spiritual stress.

As we began to uncover Reverend Cotter's connections to Llandudno and LGBTQ+ heritage, we were blessed to be able to speak with his friends Bishop Stephen Lowe, who lent us some of Rev Cotter's books and spoke to us about how Rev Cotter's



love of words and poetry inspired him to open his own press called Cairns where he wrote and published more than 30 books and published the works of some 15 other authors.

We also spoke to Reverend Geoffrey Hooper of Bangor. Reverend Hooper explained that he attended a retreat for gay ministers that Rev Cotter had organised. He says:

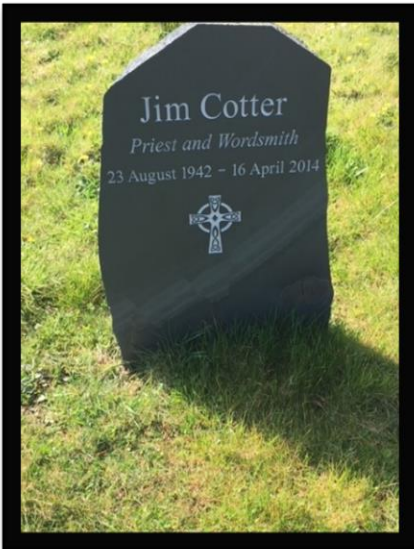
For me, and scores of others of my generation, it was Jim's contribution during the mid to late 1970's which was nothing less than revolutionary within orthodox Christian circles. He, effectively, put his head on the block by arguing – morally and theologically – for an accepting and normative attitude

towards same sex relationships. He was very aware that if he had not spoken out in the way he did, bravely and honestly, his preferment within the established church would have been very different, for before he would have been considered to be potential bishop material. But his integrity and conviction gave him strength to make his stand and take the risk. He decided to work independently, free of financial support from – and constrictions of – the church, by establishing a raft of income strands through counselling, speaking engagements and writing. He was not prepared to take the hypocritical route of “don’t ask, don’t tell” which was demanded by bishops and colluded with by most gay clergy.

For those of us struggling, ordained and lay, he gave courage by reframing the gay case *publicly*. Because it was our lived personal experiences as committed Christians (lay and ordained), we already knew this was the only authentic way we could live positively and honestly: true to our same sex nature, loving in same sex relationships.

It is difficult today to realise just how radical a message his was, within the prevailing systemic ecclesiastical ethos. For me, it was manna in a desert: bread, when most bishops were forcing stones down our throats. I had just faced these realities within a marriage with two children and knew these realities only too intimately. Lighting upon, first, Jim’s writings, and then attending one of his workshops, gave me endorsement of the inner truth I had just acted out, and gave me encouragement to continue on my own parallel path. For so many of us, Jim was acting in a truly *prophetic role*. — Reverend Geoffrey Hooper, 2021

Reverend Cotter travelled, lectured, conducted retreats, and broadcasts in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. In 2008 as the Vicar of Aberdaron, he blessed the marriage of a lesbian couple without the permission of the Church. He stated that celebrating the civil partnership of two women was a "day of great delight and healing" but the act also brought a reprimand from the Archbishop of Wales, The Most Reverend Barry Morgan. Rev Cotter commented that he'd been blessing same-sex services for 30 years. He said, "When an archbishop tells me that, as an ordained member of the Church, I cannot celebrate and bless a civil partnership in a church, but that I can argue for a change that would allow that, it frankly feels both patronising and chilling."



His response to the reprimand was to compose *The Service of My Love*, which is a liturgical and pastoral handbook for Lesbian and Gay Weddings. When asked after the reprimand whether he would continue to bless same sex partnerships he responded, "It depends on who is asking."

He died of leukaemia in Llandudno in 2014. He is remembered here at the Imperial Hotel because his friends say that he spent his last days dining in good restaurants,

including here, with great friends. We will be publishing an extended history of Reverend Jim Cotter on our blog later in the year.



MOSTYN Gallery

**12 Vaughan Street,
Llandudno LL30 1AB**

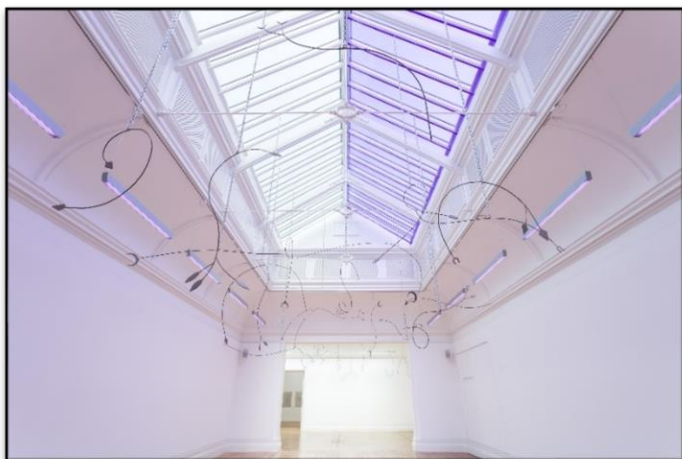
From the past, we
move to the present
and to the future
where communities
and community
partners such as

MOSTYN Gallery feature bright new voices from the LGBTQ+ community. This summer they are featuring two exhibitions that explore the intersections of sexuality.

'My Immortal' by Tarek Lakhri runs from July 3rd to September 19th, 2021 and is the artist's first solo exhibition in a UK institution. This exhibition includes existing and new works in film, sculpture, text and performance. Rooted in poetry, Lakhri's practice seeks to challenge contemporary constructs of language and identity. This new body of work reflects on what constitutes a community, particularly a queer community. It considers the notion of community as a complex entity: one that offers both the possibilities of love, empowerment, and protection but also nightmares, traumas and fears. Milton's 'Paradise Lost' is the anchor around which such tensions are played out – the possibility of a community that offers paradisiacal solace and yet, through its fragilities, can be easily lost.

'In Words, In Action, In Connection' also runs from July 3rd to September 19th, 2021. (Advanced booking is recommended.) This is a display of publications and printed

materials that explores historical and contemporary intersectional feminist activism in Wales. Brought together by artists Minna Haukka and Kristin Luke, whose collaborative practice stems from their ongoing project, the Mobile Feminist Library – a travelling collection of printed materials that responds to its locality. This exhibition considers different activist movements at the intersection of class, disability, ecology, gender, language, neurodivergence, race and sexuality, taking these as inherent considerations of any feminism.



Thank You

This research is ongoing. Our intention is to add new histories each year and to refine the information already here. If you would like to contribute stories, suggestions, or artefacts connected to County Borough Conwy LGBTQ+ heritage, please contact us. Info@llandudnomuseum.co.uk.

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UNIQUE

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L Fest

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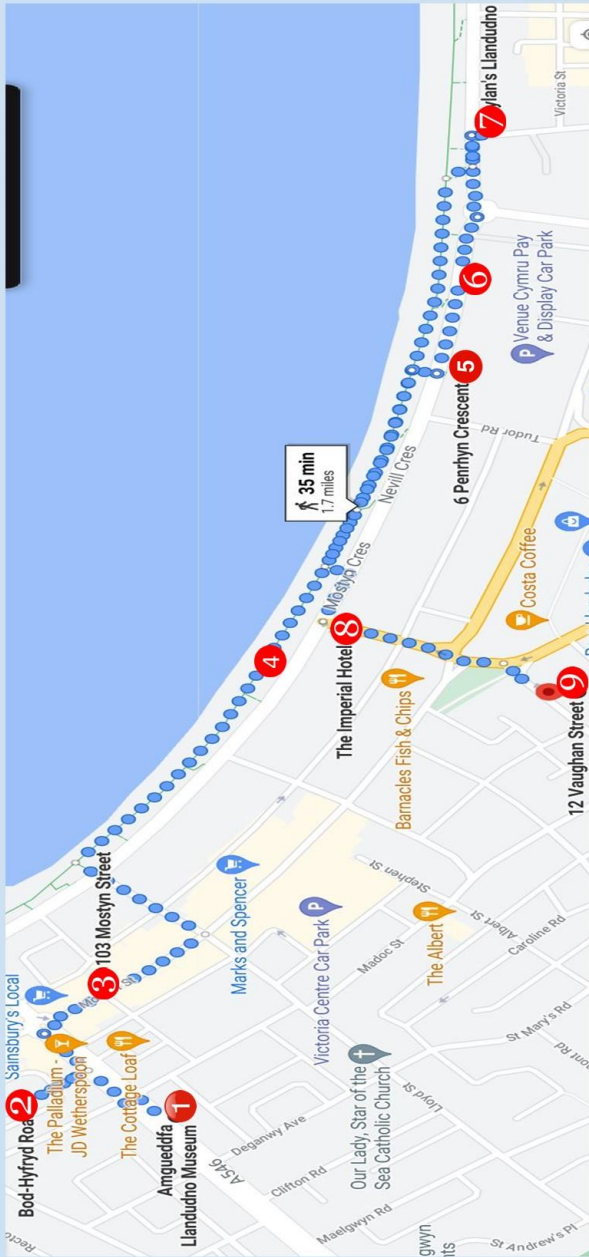
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Tarek Lakhrissi, My Immortal at MOSTYN, 2021. Photo: Mark Blower.



Thank you to our funders.
Without you, none of this would
be possible.





1. **Griffith Vaughan Williams**
Astra Cinema/Winter Gardens
Gloddaeth Street, Llandudno, LL30 2DF
2. **William T Rowlands**
Southerndale Guest House
Bodhyfryd Road, Llandudno
3. **The Dancing Marquess of Anglesey**
Old Bank Building
103 Mostyn Street,
Llandudno LL30 2PD
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Pier Pavilion Theatre

5. **UNIQUE**
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5 Penrhyn Crescent,
Llandudno, LL30 1BA
6. **L Fiest**
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Promenade
Llandudno, LL30 1BB
7. **The Buzz Club**
Dylan's Restaurant

8. **Reverend Jim Cotter**
The Imperial Hotel
Vaughan Street, The Promenade
Llandudno, LL30 1AP

9. **'My Immortal' and 'In Words, In Action, In Connection'**
MOSTYN
12 Vaughan Street
Llandudno LL30 1AB

This is a relatively flat walk. Please wear comfortable shoes