

HANDLIST 73 - SOURCES FOR LGBT (LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER) HISTORY

1 - WHERE SHOULD YOU LOOK FOR LGBT HISTORY AT LANCASHIRE ARCHIVES?

Criminalization, stigmatisation & persecution of the LGBT community have made researching LGBT history a challenge! This so called 'hidden history' can seem daunting; our guide offers a series of suggestions for potentially useful documents & collections at Lancashire Archives to help you uncover hidden LGBT Histories within Lancashire.

This list is **non-exhaustive** & much more LGBT history remains still hidden in the Archives! Share your finds with us so that we can expand upon this list for other users!

2 - QUARTER SESSIONS RECORDS

Homosexuality and sex between men has been illegal since Henry VII's so-called 'Buggery Act' in 1533.

The legal control of homosexual sex has created the bulk of surviving LGBT-relevant archives at Lancashire Archives and at other local authority Record Offices and Archives across the country.

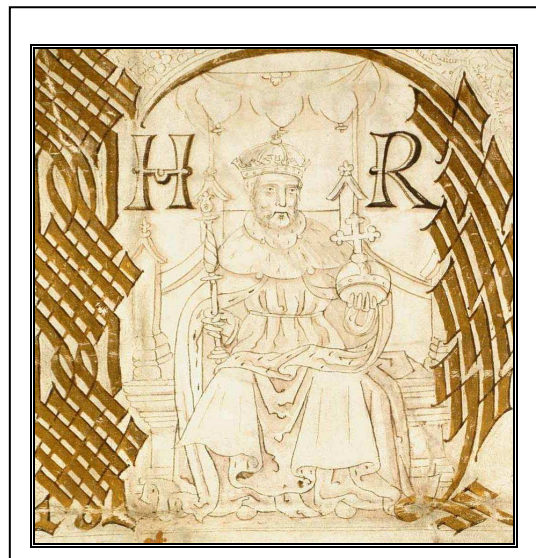
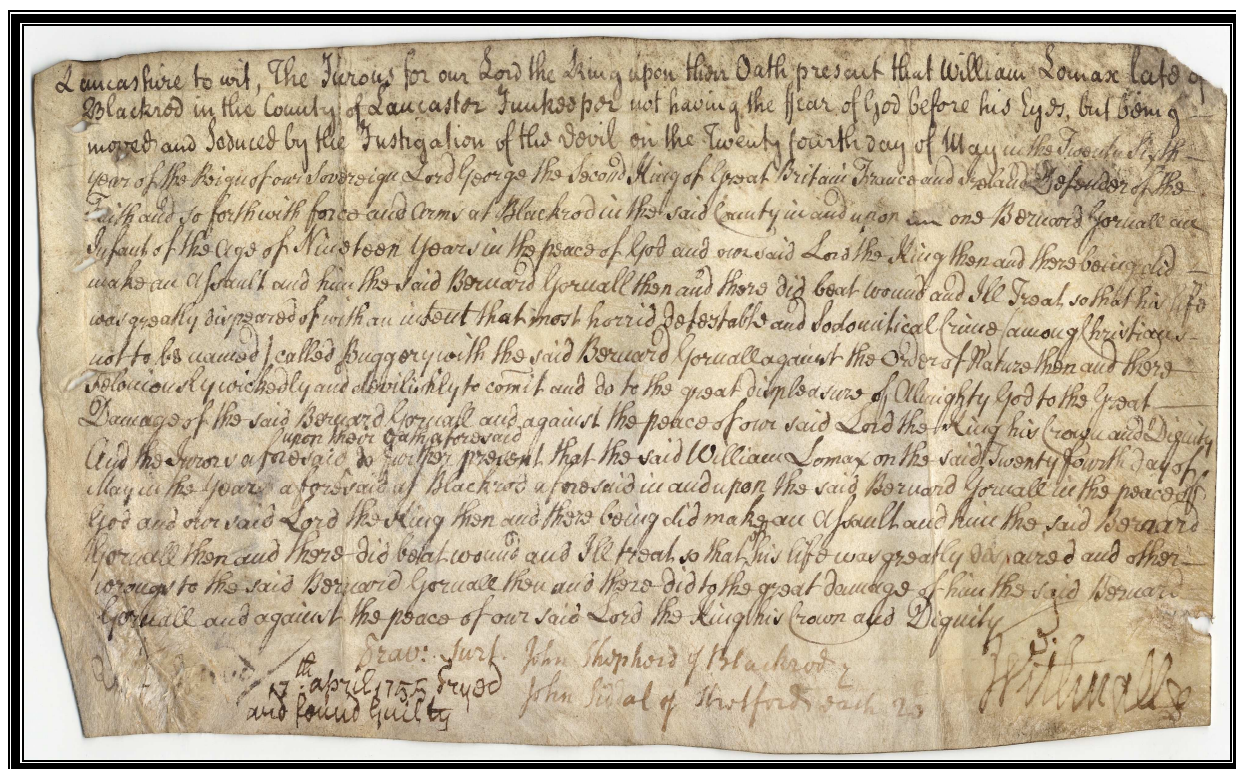


Image from DDHU/10/1 - Letters Patent creating the parish of Deane, 1541

Try looking in the following series:

Calendars of Prisoners, [reference QJC](#) - to search lists of prisoners held before trial. Calendars provide the prisoner's name, crime & date of arrest. We hold Calendars of Prisoners for, 1801 – 1873 & 1889 – 1971

Indictment Rolls, [reference QJI](#) – for more detailed accounts of a crime. Lancashire Archives holds Indictment Rolls for the years, 1605 – 1869



QJI July 1753, William Lomax – indicted for 'that most horrid detestable and Sodomitical Crime...called Buggery...against the Order of Nature'

Quarter Sessions Petitions, [reference QSP](#) - Quarter Sessions Petitions show the name, crime & costs incurred by a case, but can also point you towards records relating to an offender held in other series.

3 - SAME SEX INSTITUTIONS

Same sex institutions, such as same-sex schools & prisons presented a constant source of concern for those in authority. Where there are large groups of men, or women, there will often be material recounting anxieties about homosexuality.

Try looking in punishment books, minutes & correspondence relating to these institutions.

For example:

Liverpool Juvenile Reformatory Association, [reference DDX 824](#)

Punishment Books for this all-boy's reformatory school are rich with references to 'immoral' behavior.



4 - GAY & LESBIAN POLITICS

Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 was a controversial amendment which stated that a local authority should "not intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality" nor "promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship." It was not repealed until 2003. Trace the implementation & repeal of this law within records of local authorities including:

Lancashire County Council, [reference LCC, LCC 195, LCC 196](#)

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman, [reference DDX 2067](#)

Lancashire County Council, County Youth and Community Officers, [reference LCC/CSC/YS/2](#)

Please note many of these records are subject to a 30 year closure: consult the catalogue for further details. Access to closed records may be granted at the discretion of the Archives Services Manager in cases of genuine academic research only and on condition that no names of individuals are released.

5 - WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT

Despite attempts in the 1920's, it has never become a criminal offence to be a lesbian. As such, historical records for the research of lesbian history are even more hidden than those of gay men!

Many leading & influential suffragettes are now known to have been lesbians, including Christabel Pankhurst & Annie Kenney. Explore the archives of Lancashire's suffragettes to uncover the world of many of these women in photographs, letters & campaign material.

Selina Jane Cooper, JP [formerly Coombe] suffragette & women's leader, [reference DDX 1137](#)

Miss Mary Alice Hackey, J.P. of Litherland Park, [reference DDX 1057](#)



DDX 1137/5/18 - Meeting of Suffragettes on campaign in the West of England, circa 1908

6 - HOSPITALS & HEALTH

In the past, LGBT men & women were perceived as mentally ill; Asylum & Mental Hospital records may contain admissions of Gay, Lesbian or Transsexual people.

Hospital Records of less than 100 years old will be closed under the Data Protection Act. Try consulting case books & admissions registers of Victorian Hospitals including:

Whittingham Asylum, [reference HRW](#)

Lancaster Moor Hospital, [reference HRL](#)

Lancaster Asylum, [reference QAM](#)

LUNATICS. <i>Order for Admission of Pauper Patient into an Asylum.</i> 16 & 17 Vict., c. 97, s. 73. Sched. (F.) No. 1. (No. 21.)		ORDER FOR THE RECEPTION OF A PAUPER PATIENT INTO AN ASYLUM.	
(1) I, C. D., a Justice of the Peace for the county, city, or borough of —; or in case of two Justices, or of a clergyman and relieving officer or overseer, We, C. D. and E. F.	1	<i>Robert Benson Esq. a Justice of the Peace for the County of Lancaster</i>	
(2) My or our.		the undersigned, having called to ² my Assistance a ³ <i>Physician</i>	
(3) Physician or surgeon, or apothecary, as the case may be.		and having personally examined <i>Andrew Robertson</i>	
(4) Omit the words, a pauper, when the lunatic is not a pauper.		a Pauper, ⁴ and being satisfied that the said <i>Andrew Robertson</i>	
(5) Lunatic, or an idiot, or a person of unsound mind.		is a ⁵ <i>person of unsound mind</i>	
(6) Add where the lunatic is sent as being wandering at large, and in the case of a lunatic sent by virtue of the authority given to two Justices, add not under proper care and control, or and is cruelly treated or neglected by the person having the care or charge of him, as may appear to the Justices to be the case.		and a proper Person to be taken charge of and	
(7) Justice of the Peace for the county or borough of —; or an or the officiating clergyman of the parish of —. To be signed by two Justices where required by the Act.		detained under Care and Treatment, hereby direct you to receive the said <i>Andrew Robertson</i>	
(8) The relieving officer of the union or parish of —, or an overseer of the parish of —.		as a Patient into your Asylum.	
Subjoined is a Statement respecting the said <i>Andrew Robertson</i>			
(signed)		7 <i>Robt Benson Esq</i>	
		<i>for the County of Lancaster</i>	
		8 <i>Fenny Turner</i>	
		<i>Relieving Officer</i>	
Dated the <i>12th</i> day of <i>January</i>		One thousand eight hundred	

HRW/12/1/02547 - Reception Order admitting Andrew Robertson to Whittingham Asylum for having 'delusions' of 'belonging to the opposite sex', 12 January 1879

7 - ORAL HISTORY

Oral Histories are extremely significant, revealing individual and group experiences that have not been recorded in any other medium and would otherwise be lost.

The holdings of the North West Sound Archive (NWSA) will soon be searchable on LANCAT, our online catalogue. For details of other services provided by the NWSA contact Andrew Schofield on nwsa@ed.lancscc.gov.uk

A few examples include:



Bolton Women's Liberation Group - Dorothy Clark, born 14 Mar 1951, recorded 19 Jun 2009, [reference OH/3604 - 2010.0215](#)

Vera Martins - Discussing feminism and LGB youth work in Manchester, recorded 4 Nov 2008, [reference FEMWEB/16 - 2009.0449](#)

Qboy - Rapper discussing 'homohop' scene in the UK, recorded 25 May 2007, [reference OH/3229 - 2008.0112](#)

FINDS SO FAR!

Staff, users and volunteers have so far uncovered the following LGBT archives:

[WCW/K 1630 John Hobson](#) - The will of John Hobson, written in 1630, describes him as "John Hobson Hermaphrodite"

[DDX/1137/4/16](#) – Lancashire Suffragette Selina Cooper saved newspaper cuttings reporting on the sex change of the Hon. Elizabeth Forbes Sempill in 1952.



DDKE/HMC/1440A – Letter to Lord Kenyon from Lady Eleanor Butler & Miss Sarah Ponsonby, 'The Ladies of Llangollen', written 1 Jan 1822

RCHY/5/1/56 Letter discussing the "unnatural practices" behind two men's companionship, in relation to a dispute over the Will of John Marsden, c. 1830's

DDX 824/4/8 Liverpool Juvenile Reformatory Punishment Book entry, "Committing an act of indecency with another boy - 1 days cells", 27 February 1913

QSP/3975/110 Bill of costs of prosecution of Francis Moran and William Pye for attempting to commit buggery, 1875

QJI/1/134/43 Indictment accusing Ralph Harrison of Wigan of "that most detestable horrid and Sodomitical crime called buggery, 14 Apr 1760

Let us know what you find! Email record.office@lancashire.gov.uk or Tweet us at [#lancasarchives](https://twitter.com/lancasarchives)!

WHAT NEXT?

There are archives, groups and organisations across the country dedicated to collecting, preserving and making LGBT History accessible for research. Below are a few suggestions of useful starting points, locally and nationally:

Manchester Archives and Local Studies, St Peter's Square,
Manchester, M2 5PD
Tel: 0161 234 1979/80
Email: archiveslocalstudies@manchester.gov.uk
Website: www.manchester.gov.uk/libraries/arl
Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/manchesterarchiveplus/

Manchester has the largest LGBT community outside of London and Manchester Archives and Local Studies is committed to collecting LGBT archives and making these publicly accessible. Check out their online LGBT Source Guide and Flickr exhibits as well as their archival collections.



The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU

Tel: 020 8876 3444

Website: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

The National Archives is the UK government's official archive, containing over 1,000 years of history. Their website hosts an excellent series of 'in-depth research guides' including one for Gay and Lesbian History, as well as links to podcasts and a useful glossary of suggested archival search terms.

The Hall-Carpenter Archive, Library of the London School of Economics & Political

Science, 10 Portugal Street, London, WC2A 2HD

Tel: 020 7955 7223

Email: document@lse.ac.uk

Website: www2.lse.ac.uk/library/archive/holdings/hall_carpenter_archives.aspx

The most significant resource for researchers interested in the history of gay and lesbian political activism since 1957 is the Hall-Carpenter Archive at the London School of Economics. Founded in 1982, the collection includes the archives of organisations including the Campaign for Homosexual Equality.

LAGNA, Lesbian and Gay Newsmedia Archive, Bishopsgate Institute, 230 Bishopsgate,

London, EC2M 4QH

Tel: 020 7392 9270

Website: www.lagna.org.uk

Email: enquiry@lagna.org.uk

LAGNA houses over 200,000 cuttings taken from the non-gay press on all LGBT matters since the late Nineteenth Century.

Glasgow Women's Library, 15 Berkeley Street, Glasgow G3 7BW

Telephone/Fax: 0141 248 9969

Website: www.womenslibrary.org.uk

Email: [info\[at\]womenslibrary.org.uk](mailto:info[at]womenslibrary.org.uk)

A women only library which includes The Lesbian Archive and Information Centre and the 'Lesbians on the Shelf' project!

A2A – Access to Archives Website:

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a

The A2A database contains catalogues describing archives held locally in England and Wales and dating from the eighth century to the present day. Try using LGBT search terms such as

those suggested by The National Archives' LGBT glossary, see above, to browse catalogues across the country.

LGBT History Month

Email: listmgr@lgbthistorymonth.org.uk

Website: www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk

LGBT History Month is celebrated every February. Follow the LGBT History Month website for news, blogs and events happening all across the UK, including here at Lancashire Archives!

