

TRANS+
HISTORY WEEK
05 - 11 MAY 2025

WORKBOOK

**FOR THE HISTORY LESSON
WE NEVER HAD**

Launched with

QUEERAF

**“WE’VE ALWAYS
BEEN HERE AND
ALWAYS HAVE
BEEN”**



UNCOVERING HISTORY

Thank you for picking up the 2025 Trans+ history lesson book, for the history lesson we never had.

Trans+ History Week is the week we make space to platform and share our rich history. A history which is as long as all of human life. And as we’ve always been here, and always will be, and it’s time to do justice by our stories.

After a successful inaugural year in 2024, where, in partnership QueerAF we invested in, published, mentored and bought professional equipment for over 30 Trans+ creatives, we’re back with a new set of histories and big plans to do it all again in 2025. And that’s where you come in.

Education and knowledge is liberation. Simply learning that Trans+ people have always been here shuts down the pernicious lie that we’re a “trend”, “modern fashion” or “social contagion”.

But it also does something far more powerful for our own community. Last year, we saw how the history stories we commissioned created a sense of well-being, community and empowerment. Knowing that we’ve always been here tells us that we belong here. Right where we are in this present moment.

Humans have forever told stories to impart knowledge, share wisdom and teach lessons. Our stories are no different. Every Trans+ History Week, we develop stories around four history lessons that remind us that we’ve always been here, we can’t be erased, we’re stronger together, and we’re more than Trans+.

So join us in uncovering even more of our history and learning from it, with four new history lessons in this year’s Trans+ History Week workbook.

Marty Davies (they/she)
Founder & CEO of Trans+ History Week CIC



BEHIND THE RESEARCH

At my core, I've always been a researcher, regardless of any other hats I've worn. My research has moved me across oceans and into spaces I could have only dreamed of. I've never met a topic I didn't want to know more about – and our history is no different. As I unravelled who I am, I discovered it was important to be rooted and part of something bigger than me.

The inaugural Trans+ History Week in 2024 was a humbling experience for me. Once our lessons were out into the world, they took on lives of their own as they resonated with folks around the globe. Our hashtags were used in celebrations of Trans+ icons, event notices and – the most moving for me – coming out posts, where transgender people felt empowered to share themselves for the first time. This is what knowing your own history does for a community; it strengthens our understanding of our very being.

This year, I wanted to bring more voices to the Workbook. QueerAF founder Jamie Wareham and I worked together with four fantastic researchers and writers: Adam Khan (they/them), Ella Osho (she/her), William Elisabeth Cuthbert (they/he), and Sabah Choudrey (they/he) to bring this year's workbook together. Each brought their unique lived experience to the table, allowing them to push the boundaries of what the lessons look like – and we are all the better for it. I'm excited for you to see what they've given us. As we'll learn in this lesson book, we are always stronger when we work together to celebrate each other.

We've used the term 'Trans+' to be inclusive of the many ways people describe and define their relationship with their own gender or absence of gender. This term is inclusive of transgender, non-binary, genderqueer, genderfluid, bigender, gender non-conforming and agender people – or indeed inclusive of any of the other ways people define their gender. This term is also inclusive of

intersex people who have natural diversity in sex characteristics.

We've approached this academically. Despite concerted efforts to erase and suppress Trans+ history, records have survived. We've followed the trails, as much as possible, to their origins. If primary sources exist, we've found them, read them, and cited them. Through our research, we have uncovered some truly inspirational things. We have also been faced with the evidence that colonialism and imperialism were so often the tools used to stamp us out, along with other aspects of the indigenous cultures they oppressed and continue to oppress.

Some of the language you may find offensive and dated now, but it has been used for historical accuracy. It would be dismissive to ignore the terms an individual has chosen, especially because we know the language for them better than they know themselves. It may be that today's terms hadn't been coined or widely used yet, or it may be that a person felt purpose and intent in how they have named themselves.

I hope anyone can pick this workbook up and learn something they didn't know. Maybe you've just come out as Trans+. Maybe you want to be a better ally. Maybe you're just curious. Whatever you're here for, welcome to the classroom.

Gray Burke-Stowe (he/him)
Lead Researcher & Writer



LESSON PLAN

- 1. "WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN HERE"** **6-7**
The Māhū people have always held an honoured space in Hawai'ian and Tahitian culture.
- 2. "WE CAN'T BE ERASED"** **12-15**
Ballroom is more than a location or an event – it's an identity that strengthens those who find their home there.
- 3. TRANS+ HISTORY TIMELINE** **18-21**
- 4. "WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER"** **24-25**
Lynn Conway revolutionised the technology that brings us all together on the internet. She was also responsible for fortifying bonds within our community.
- 5. "WE'RE MORE THAN TRANS+"** **32-33**
Roberta Cowell was an RAF pilot who survived a Nazi prisoner of war camp and used her platform as a motorsport driver to progress Trans+ rights
- 6. GET READY FOR THW 2025** **34-35**
- 7. KEEP ON LEARNING** **36-37**
- 8. THE RECEIPTS** **40-41**

Trans+ History Week is now a Trans+ led community interest company but began as a launchpad project from QueerAF, the UK's only both non-profit and regulated LGBTQIA+ publisher. QueerAF is known for its award-winning content and mentoring schemes that are helping queer creatives to change the media. QueerAF and Trans+ History Week worked together to produce this workbook while mentoring and paying four Trans+ creatives to write, research and develop its lessons.

1. WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN HERE

DID YOU KNOW?

Thanks to a rich oral history tradition, the mähū of Tahiti and Hawai'i have told their own stories through song and dance from times long before colonisation.

Since pre-colonial Tahiti and Hawai'i, known as Mā'ohi and Kānaka Maoli cultures, the mähū have been a deeply respected, accepted and revered third gender community. Mähū roughly translates to "in the middle" or "in between."

Historically, mähū played important spiritual and social roles within their communities. Mähū were teachers of hula and oli, traditional dances and chants. They also served as religious figures, performing rituals reserved for neither men nor women, sometimes acting as spiritual and physical healers.

They passed down important stories, or mo'olelo, to future generations to preserve the cultural traditions of Mā'ohi and Kānaka Maoli, as both cultures relied on oral storytelling traditions to share knowledge, history, and genealogy.

In the 19th Century, Christian missionaries colonised Hawai'i. Their mixture of anti-sodomy laws and forcing locals to adopt their religion led to a decline of many important parts of the Kānaka Maoli culture. Like in other areas of the world, this left a legacy of prejudice toward non-cisheteronormative identities, including the mähū, for generations.

Christian missionaries also colonised Tahiti, but their anti-sodomy laws were repealed when the French later colonised Tahiti. However, this further suppressed Mā'ohi culture in another round of assimilation. However, this colonial influence contributed to the emergence of the Tahitian identity of Rae-Rae, a Western-influenced transfeminine identity.

The term mähū has evolved over centuries of colonialism in the islands in the Pacific. Each island group has had distinct experiences and histories

shaped by its geography and different colonisers. It is an identity that has endured but now cannot be separated from the lasting effects of colonialism. While for many Mā'ohi and Kānaka Maoli, mähū retains its traditional meaning, others within these communities have used the term to describe a range of gender identities, sexual orientations, and romantic orientations in the LGBTQIA+ acronym.

New terms have been introduced into the Hawaiian language to reflect evolving understandings of identity, such as mähūkāne and mähūwahine, which refer to trans men and trans women respectively.

The term mähū has also been misused, become derogatory slang, and applied pejoratively to describe LGBTQIA+ individuals, much like labels for our community in other languages. This includes cultural appropriation of the term mähū by those outside of Mā'ohi and/or Kānaka Maoli communities.

The term mähū is sometimes oversimplified or defined inaccurately, such as in Pukui and Erbert's Hawaiian Dictionary, which erases the term's cultural significance. These misuses highlight how colonialism continues to suppress mähū identity through microaggressions.

Despite the impacts of colonialism, mähū people have always been here. In recent years, advocacy groups have begun renewed efforts to advocate for mähū people in Tahiti and Hawai'i. At Waikīkī Beach in Hawai'i, narrative plaques have been installed to honour the ancient mähū legends of Kapaemähū.



Mähū Pride Flag, CC BY-SA 4.0

Mx. Adam Khan

Agender, Non-binary, Trans, Pansexual, Panromantic, Demisexual, Disabled, Neurodivergent, Low-Income Background, Care Leaver, Survivor



KAOMI MOE

Joint King, Healer, Mähū

Kaomi Moe was the moe aikāne (roughly translated as intimate same-sex partner) of the Hawaiian King Kamehameha III. As a mähū, Koami was said to have been skilled in the art of healing. The King elevated Kaomi to moi ku'i, aupuni ku'i a or 'joint king or ruler', an honorary title signifying the equity of their non-cisheteronormative relationship. Under their rule, they attempted to revitalise Kānaka Maoli cultural practices by enacting more public performances of traditional dance and songs. However, the Christian missionaries removed Kaomi from their positions and began enacting their colonial anti-sodomy laws.

HINALEIMOANA WONG-KALU

Kumu Hula, Activist, Mähū

Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu is a contemporary activist and a kumu hula (traditional dance teacher). She advocates for Kānaka Maoli rights, third-gender identities, and broader LGBTQIA+ rights. She is one of the pioneers of revitalising Kānaka Maoli culture in Hawai'i. She has pioneered cultural, educational, and institutional initiatives to ensure that the Hawaiian language, culture, and mähū identity endure and are celebrated. In 2022, she produced the film Kapaemahu about mähū legends.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THEM?

Both Kaomi and Hina are mähū, and, despite living in different periods, the impacts of colonialism on mähū identity are stark for both – but they've also both shown the power of fighting back against their oppression. Traditional culture in Hawai'i and the Hawaiian language remain critically endangered, and the mähū people remain stigmatised in broader Hawaiian society.

NAMES TO KNOW

Nāwahiokalani'ōpu'u, Naipu, Kaumakaiwa, Kanaka'ole, Kaua'i Iki, Ku'u-mealoha Gomes, Noenoe Silva, Bobby Holcomb, Keali'i Reichel

Trans+ History Week



Jessica Pearl Photography, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

EXTRA CREDIT

The word 'trans' might not have always existed, but gender non-conforming communities always have. Recognising this fact, MVPFAFF+ is an acronym that represents the diverse gender, sexual and romantic identities and roles in Pacific cultures. It is made up of the Mähū of Tahiti and Hawai'i; Vakasalewalewa of Fiji; Palopa of Papua New Guinea; Fa'afafine of Samoa; Akava'ine of Rarotonga; Fakaleiti of Tonga; Fa'afafine of Niue; plus other Pacific Island gender identities.

These groups embody gender fluidity and have important cultural roles within their respective societies. Together, they show the diversity of gender nonconformity in traditional cultures across the breadth of the Pacific Ocean.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

Many gender identities are inherently linked to culture. Before colonisation, mähū were thriving and celebrated. Their history shows the endurance of gender-diverse communities because, despite colonisation, mähū identity endures to this day. It's a reminder that no matter what prejudice or assimilation Trans+ people are forced to endure, we'll always be here, and, wherever we are, we're vital parts of cultures, protecting and ensuring they live on for more generations.

EAT.
DRINK.
PLAY.

TRANS+ HISTORY WEEK
06-12 MAY 2024

**ALWAYS BEEN HERE
ALWAYS WILL BE**

LEARN OUR HISTORY.
STAND UP FOR OUR FUTURE.
SCAN HERE:

Launched with **QUEERAF**

TROUBADOUR
THEATRE
WEMBLEY
PARK
1 MINUTE WALK
THIS WAY
↑
TROUBADOUR
WEMBLEY PARK
THEATRE

open:media

open:media

PARK
WEMBLEY
DRINK. PLAY.
COME ON IN!

WHAT OUR CREATIVES SAID ABOUT QUEERAF AND OUR JOINT MENTORING SCHEMES FOR TRANS+ HISTORY WEEK LAST YEAR

I think QueerAF's approach to media is so refreshing with a focus on clarity and surfacing important issues as opposed to some of the more click-baity stuff in other LGBTQIA+ pubs - Alex Parmar-Yee



I loved the encouragement to keep going and pushing me to complete something I had only dreamed about - Mills Dyer



I love seeing so many of us be supported by an organisation who gives a heck about us - Oduenyi Nwike



The QueerAF sessions make me feel great about what I've done well, and has historically been a helpful next step in bringing the best out of my work - William Elisabeth Cuthbert



I love the fact it is trans led, and that we are also centred as a communal audience and the pieces aren't kept at a trans 101 for a cis audience (while not excluding them) - Jaime S.K. Starr

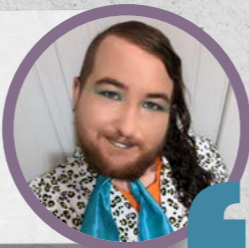


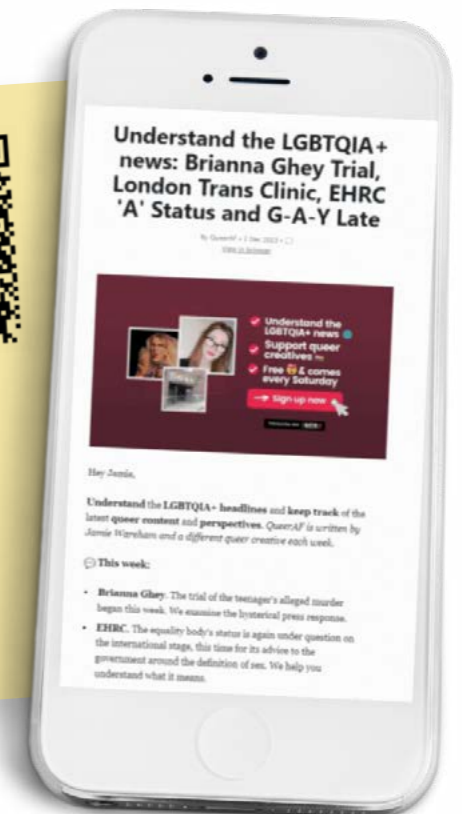
Photo: Sign at Black Trans Lives Matter march, 2020, by Bex Wade (they/them) for Vice Magazine

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5500+ people trust QueerAF to give them everything they need each week to navigate and understand the ever-changing queer world. Join them.



2. WE CAN'T BE ERASED

DID YOU KNOW?

Modern ballroom culture grew from a need for a home for Black and Latinx queer creativity – and out of it was born a global phenomenon of resilience and expression

The queer ballroom scene, rich in history and cultural significance, emerged as a space of resistance and creativity for LGBTQIA+ individuals. Rooted in 20th Century Harlem, New York City, ballroom culture grew as marginalised communities sought refuge from societal oppression. This underground network, largely built by Black and Latinx queer people, developed a distinctive culture blending performance, fashion and identity expression.

In the early 1900s, Harlem's drag balls began to flourish. These events, initially influenced by vaudeville and masquerade traditions, offered LGBTQIA+ people a rare public stage. However, systemic racism and segregation limited participation for non-white attendees. By the 1920s and 1930s, Black queer individuals formed their own drag ball circuit, fostering inclusivity and emphasising community solidarity.

Key figures shaped ballroom's trajectory. Crystal LaBeija, a trailblazing Black trans woman, openly criticised racism within predominantly white drag pageants in the 1960s. Her defiance led to the establishment of the House of LaBeija, the first "house" within ballroom culture. Houses became surrogate families, offering mentorship and protection to LGBTQIA+ youth, especially those rejected by their families of origin. House members competed in ballroom categories, showcasing talents in vogue, runway, and realness, among others. The competition and camaraderie solidified ballroom's unique community structure.

By the 1980s, ballroom had expanded significantly, driven by the emergence of voguing. This dance style, characterised by angular poses and fluid movements, drew inspiration from fashion magazines. Voguing elevated ballroom's

Ella Osho (she/her)
Nigerian, Black, Transsexual, Woman



visibility, culminating in mainstream recognition through Madonna's 1990 hit "Vogue" and Jennie Livingston's documentary Paris Is Burning. While these works spotlighted ballroom's vibrancy, they also sparked debates over cultural appropriation and exploitation.

Ballroom's significance extended beyond performance. It provided a safe haven during the HIV/AIDS epidemic, when LGBTQIA+ communities faced profound stigma and loss. Activists within ballroom, such as the late Willi Ninja, used their platforms to promote awareness and education. This activism underscored ballroom's resilience and its role as a sanctuary.

Today, ballroom remains a vital cultural force, thriving globally in cities such as London, Paris, and Amsterdam to name a few, as a space of self-expression and empowerment. Shows like Pose and competitions like Legendary celebrate its legacy, while its current scene addresses contemporary challenges such as gentrification and commodification. It also continues to serve as a platform for activism and visibility, addressing issues of race, gender, and inequality.

The queer ballroom scene's history reflects resistance, innovation, and community. It highlights the resilience of those who, despite systemic marginalisation, carved spaces to celebrate identity and artistry. This enduring legacy not only preserves its cultural roots but also inspires future generations to embrace authenticity, creativity, and solidarity.



Junior LaBeija/Google Arts and Culture, CC BY-SA 4.0

ANYBODY ELSE WALKING?

A short story by Ella Osho

Jade stepped into the venue, the bass reverberating in her chest. The London ballroom scene had become her sanctuary. Tonight, she wore a black shirt with denim shorts, denim sleeves and denim leg warmers. The categories called for a 90s- or early 2000s-inspired look. She had been attending balls and making connections, but this was her first time walking realness. As a 007, a member of the ballroom with no house, she felt intimidated without that support.

In the changing room, the energy was electric – house mothers gave pep talks, performers adjusted last-minute details and some warmed up. Jade put down her bag, her eyes darting around the room, scoping the competition. She met eyes with a stunning fem queen and wondered if they'd battle on the floor. She smiled, but the girl didn't smile back. This was ballroom though; people were in their heads before walking. Mental fortitude was key to stepping on the floor.

The MC's voice pierced the music. "The next category is female figure realness! Anybody walking 10... 9..." The room fell silent. Realness meant proving to an audience searching for flaws that you were unclockable. For Jade, it was about belonging and being seen for the efforts she made to ensure her safety daily. She took a deep breath, the air thick with anticipation.

Cheers erupted as someone walked – the beautiful fem queen from the changing room. "Her effect really came together," Jade thought, chuckling in relief. In that moment, she felt an unexpected connection to her, a shared experience in navigating this world. "10s across the board! Stand to the side, beautiful. Anybody else walking? 10... 9... 8..." The MC's countdown spurred her forward. Stepping onto the floor, Jade felt transformed, tapping into generations of confidence. She could do anything.

The judges smiled as she earned her 10s. In that moment, everything that once made her feel invisible now made her feel seen. Though she lost the battle, she didn't care. She had already won within, proving to herself she could hold her own in this space.

Later, the girl approached her. "You carried today, sister! You're so beautiful. What's your Instagram? We're doing open practices at Aga. Come see if we're the right fit for you." That night, Jade's life changed forever, her connection to the ballroom community finally solidified.



Shikeishu, CC BY-SA 4.0

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

Ballroom culture holds profound significance, especially for queer People of Colour, serving as more than just a spectacle of lights, fashion, and pop culture. It is a sanctuary where individuals bring their best to life, finding strength and community. For Black queers in particular, understanding and drawing from the resilience of their ancestors can empower them to carve their own paths with courage. However, it's crucial for white queers to reflect on how they might inadvertently perpetuate systemic racism within these spaces, ensuring that cultural appreciation does not slip into appropriation. Recognising this balance is essential to honouring the true essence of ballroom and fostering an inclusive, respectful community.

EXTRA CREDIT

Crystal LaBeija challenged the racism of the drag pageant circuit when, in 1972, she founded the House of LaBeija, the first ballroom 'house.' Crystal and Lottie LaBeija threw 'The 1st Annual House of LaBeija Ball' at Up the Downstairs Case in Harlem, kickstarting a revolution in the world of ballroom. It became clear that these houses were homes for many, and the House of LaBeija hosted benefits to raise awareness and fundraise for house children during the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Crystal's leadership sparked a movement that evolved into the global ballroom culture we know today, celebrating resilience, individuality, and the ongoing fight against discrimination.



Provided by Ella Osho



Gove Press

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

HOUSE

A chosen family structure in ballroom culture that offers mentorship, support, and community for LGBTQ+ individuals, often those rejected by their biological families. Houses compete in ballroom categories.

REALNESS

A ballroom category requiring participants to convincingly present themselves as a particular gender or societal archetype, emphasizing authenticity and blending seamlessly into everyday society.

CATEGORY

A competitive event within a ballroom ball, where participants are judged on specific criteria such as runway, realness, or voguing.

007

An individual in ballroom culture who is not affiliated with any house and competes independently.

BALL

A ballroom event where houses and individuals compete in various categories, showcasing their talents, style, and creativity.

HOUSE MOTHER/FATHER

The leader of a ballroom house who provides guidance, mentorship, and support to house members.

GENTRIFICATION

The displacement of original communities due to urban development, a challenge faced by contemporary ballroom scenes and other Black and Asian spaces.

VOGuing

A dance style originating from ballroom culture, characterized by angular poses, fluid movements, and inspiration from fashion magazine modeling.

MC (MASTER OF CEREMONIES)

The host of a ball, responsible for announcing categories, encouraging participants, and keeping the energy high.

FEM QUEEN

A term used in ballroom culture to refer to trans women who participate in balls.

10S ACROSS THE BOARD

A perfect score in ballroom competitions, used to signify exceptional performance in a category – but has since now become just an indicator of if you proceed to the battle stage or not.

EFFECT

The overall look and presentation of a participant, including clothing, makeup, and demeanor, tailored to the specific category being walked.

CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

The adoption of elements from a marginalised culture, often without understanding or respecting its significance, as seen in ballroom-inspired mainstream works.



WE WILL NOT
BE
ERASED

A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME AND SPACE

WE GO WAAAAAY BACK. THAT'S JUST A FACT.

In this timeline, we've plotted some points in our history but they're by no means exhaustive – that's quite simply impossible because much of our history has been improperly contextualised, undocumented or destroyed. All in an attempt to erase us.

Nor are these moments here because we deem them the most important. They are simply a collection of interwoven moments from across our deep transcestry. To know these moments, and to learn more about them is to know we've always been here and that we belong right here in our present moment.

Use them as jumping off points for further learning.

Photo: Yasmin Finney at London Trans+ Pride 2022,
by Bex Wade (they/them) for British Vogue



Gala, priests of the goddess Inanna/Ishtar, were seen to have adopted feminine dress and names and sung in the temples in emesal, the Sumerian dialect for female characters in literary works

3,000 - 5,000 BCE

The Galli, priests in the cult of Cybele, occupied a third-gender space in Roman society and spread as far as the British Isles

C 300 BCE - C 400 CE

Casimir Pulaski, the Polish nobleman and Revolutionary War hero who saved George Washington's life, was intersex

1777

Nazis seized the queer hub Eldorado club and repurposed it as a Sturmabteilung (SA) headquarters

6 May: Nazis raided the world's first Trans+ clinic, *institut für Sexualwissenschaft* (Institute for Sexual Research)

1933

Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera founded the mutual aid organization STAR in the wake of Stonewall

In a court case involving the trans+ model April Ashley, legal precedent was set preventing trans people from changing legal gender in the UK

1970

Riots outside the Stonewall Inn kickstart the modern liberation movement

1969

Wendy Carlos, a musician who won three Grammys and scored Stanley Kubrick & Disney films, disclosed that she had transitioned more than 10 years earlier

1979



Gilbert Baker created the Rainbow Pride Flag

1978

Caroline Cossey became the first trans+ woman to pose in Playboy

1991



Section 28 was introduced in the UK, prohibiting the 'promotion of homosexuality' in schools

1988



The Transgender Pride Flag was created by American trans+ woman Monica Helms

The Matrix, subsequently revealed to be a trans allegory, was written and directed by trans sisters Lana and Lily Wachowski and made \$467.2 million USD at the box office

1999

Janet Mock established the #GirlsLikeUs Twitter hashtag campaign

2012

11 year old trans girl Jazz Jennings was interviewed by Barbara Walters

2007

The Rajya Sabha unanimously passed the Rights of Transgender Persons Bill in India

SOPHIE's debut album 'Product' was made available for preorder

Caitlyn Jenner publicly came out as a trans woman

2015



The Non-Binary Flag was created by Kyle Rowan

2014

Kim Petras was the first openly trans+ woman to win a Grammy

2023

Dylan Mulvaney began a daily series of videos published on TikTok titled "Days of Girlhood"

Mj Rodriguez became the first trans woman to win a Golden Globe

2022

Yasmin Finney appeared in BBC's Doctor Who as transgender character Rose Noble

2023-24

C 1479 - 1458 BCE

Hatshepsut, Pharaoh and female king of Egypt, first ruled as regent then as co-ruler & king alongside Thutmose III

218 - 222 CE

Roman emperor Elagabalus requested female 'pronouns' and to be addressed as Lady, flouting accepted gender roles

1431

Joan of Arc was willing to die at the stake rather than stop wearing men's clothing

1946

Michael Dillon became the first transgender man to undergo modern phalloplasty in the UK (13 surgeries)

1951

Roberta Cowell became the first transgender woman to undergo modern vaginoplasty in the UK

1960

Model April Ashley travelled to Morocco for sex reassignment surgery

1965

The term transgender was coined by John Oliven

1972

Transvestite, Transsexual and Drag Queen group of the GLF formed

1975

Model Tracey Norman featured on the box for Clairol Nice 'n Easy, No 512, a shade of dark auburn

1977

Renée Richards won legal case against the USTA to join the women's tour and play the US Open

1980

'Transsexualism' was entered into the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) - the American Psychiatric Association's "bible"

1981

Caroline Cossey (Tula) became the first trans+ Bond girl in *For Your Eyes Only*

1998

Dana International was the first trans+ winner of Eurovision Song Contest

2003

Section 28 was repealed in the UK

2004

The first Trans March, consisting of only a few people, began in Dolores Park, San Francisco on June 25, 2004.

Nadia Almada was the first trans woman to win Big Brother UK

The Gender Recognition Act gave trans+ people a way to change their legal gender in the UK

2013

The first Trans Pride outside of North America, Trans Pride Brighton and Hove, was founded

The Intersex Flag was created by Morgan Carpenter of Intersex Human Rights Australia

Following activist campaigns, "gender dysphoria" replaced transsexualism and other renditions in the DSM in 2013



2019

Laverne Cox appeared as British Vogue's first trans+ Cover Star

2020

The Transgender Flag was added to Emoji 13.0



2021

Valentino Vecchiotti created the Intersex-Inclusive Pride flag



2024

Strengthening colonial precedence, a new bill in Ghana requires a jail term of up to three years for identifying as LGBTQIA+ and up to ten years for campaigning for LGBTQIA+ rights

First Trans+ History Week is marked 6 - 12 May, investing in 30+ Trans creatives and is established on UK parliamentary record

Colonial Era

Many countries criminalised the gender identity and/or expression of trans+ people through laws targeting 'cross-dressing', 'impersonation' or 'disguise laws'. Many still do.





THE AWARD-WINNING QUEERAF PODCAST IS BACK WITH THE HISTORY LESSON YOU NEVER HAD

CATCH UP ON SEASON FIVE NOW AND TREAT YOUR EARS
TO BEAUTIFULLY CRAFTED TRANS+ HISTORY STORIES.



2017
Olly Alexander



2018
Courtney Act



2019
Ian McKellen



2020
Lady Phyll



2024
Felix Mufti and Anthony Lexa

NEW SEASON

COMING TRANS+ HISTORY WEEK 2025



3. WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER

DID YOU KNOW?

Without a trans woman, you probably wouldn't have a mobile phone. As well as enabling the whole world to put a computer in their pocket, Lynn Conway taught our community an important lesson.

At the start of the millennium, Lynn Conway was already a highly accomplished and celebrated computer scientist. Using her knowledge of early modern computing tech and programming, she designed the microchips that power our devices today. You literally wouldn't be able to read this workbook without her work.

She built a website to tell her success story, alongside other Trans+ women. The 'Transsexual Women's Successes' archive soon caught the attention of trans men too. Conway volunteered to ally with them, building a new page of 'Successful Trans Men' on her site.

It became what is now an archived insight into trans masc stories from the OOs, with insights into the pivotal early work of many FTM rights and activism.

Some historic heroes listed we're more likely to recognise – healthcare activist Jamison Green, founder of FTM International Louis Sullivan and physician Dr Alan Hart – are immortalised on this site. But we also find the late Alex Fox, and a live link to his own pioneering online support resource for trans men, Trans Man Information Project.

We can learn how Michael Dillon became first to receive modern masculinising hormone therapy and surgery. Then there is Dragonsani Renteria's Deaf Queer Resource Center, and creative records of our lives in Jamie Black's performances and comedy, or Max Wolf Valerio's The Testosterone Files.

Each story to be found here disproves the myth that we've barely existed as a community for ten years. James MacGregor Halleman, a steelworker and steel safety expert, was interviewed by the Washington Blade in 2002 about restroom equality.

William Elisabeth Cuthbert (he/they)
Queer, Trans, AuDHD, disabled, Pagan



This article proves major touchstones of our current fight for human rights have a far longer history in themselves, further exposing transphobic disinformation.

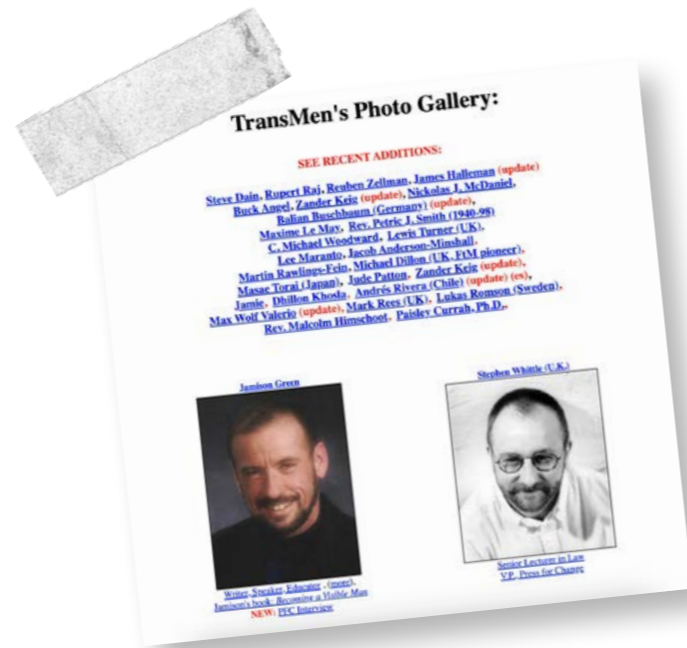
The archive records men living sometimes surprisingly ordinary lives, yet doing what's in their power to advocate for themselves and fellow marginalised people.

MY REFLECTIONS

William Cuthbert

My feelings of isolation as a trans-masculine person subside as I dive into this archive. I become connected to the world of us that's out there, and always has been. I recognise all we're capable of – even through Conway's understated act of compiling these lives for us to find decades later.

Throughout history, trans women have always been more visible than trans-masculine folks, so it's important to recognise that a high-profile, respected, white trans woman showed up for trans men. But there was also a broader lesson – and power – in Conway's site. By searching for trans masc histories, I learned about many more trans women whose names and achievements I might never have known otherwise – that's the strength of working together to uplift each other.



LYNN CONWAY

Engineer, Researcher, Trans

Lynn Conway was an innovator and leader in 'very-large-scale integration' (VLSI) microchip design, alongside her colleague Carver Mead. Thanks to Conway and Mead, billions of electrical signal-controlling transistors can be contained in one tiny chip. This makes our electronic devices high-performance and high-efficiency, but low-cost.

Rewinding to 1967, Conway became one of the first to be treated for gender dysphoria by Harry Benjamin M.D. – the first doctor to give 'transsexualism' a professional distinction from 'transvestism'.

But when she announced her transition in 1968, her first employer IBM fired her.

In 2020, the company publicly apologised and presented her with its rarely-given Lifetime Achievement Award – a worthy acknowledgement of the transphobia she'd faced, and all she went on to accomplish.

Conway died in June 2024, at the age of 86. During her lifetime, she was inducted into the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). On top of being an educator in her field, she was known by Trans+ community as a mentor and an activist, writing blog entries, articles and books about her experiences to advocate for trans awareness and DEI in STEM.

We also need to remember her as someone who used her platform to promote the visibility of Trans+ people more marginalised than herself.



Charles Rogers, CC BY-SA 2.5



THE CONWAY EFFECT

In Conway's book *The Disappeared: Beyond Winning and Losing*, she coined the 'Conway Effect'. She used this term to describe how marginalised people who aren't "expected to innovate" are often erased from records of their accomplishments, or advances they contributed to.

Have you noticed anyone being 'disappeared' in favour of more privileged people – whether in history, your work or daily life? Which surprising or buried histories can you find by exploring Conway's webpages yourself?

Use your discoveries as a springboard to seek out and follow Trans+ people's sites, socials, projects and justice movements.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

With her site full of diverse Trans+ stories, Conway created a digital monument to how we empower ourselves when we leverage our strengths in support of one another.

There is always more to learn, together. Conway said she "never stopped playing, creating, messing around, being in awe of everybody". From her, we can learn to note the inspiration in what otherwise might go unrecognised, advocating for people even – and especially – if their experiences are different to our own.

The 'childishness' Conway championed in herself expressed itself as resilience, audacity, compassion, and boundless curiosity. She shows that when these qualities are harnessed together, they can make for powerful change.



ILLUSTRATION BY
FINN YVO ©

ARTWORK DESCRIPTION, BY FINN YVO

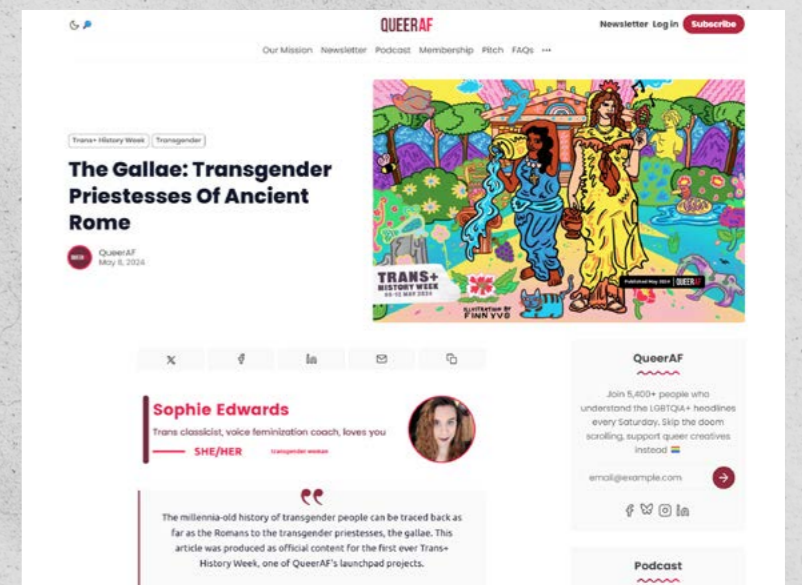
"This is a digital illustration depicting the article, 'The Gallae: Transgender Priestesses of Ancient Rome.' The bright colours and cartoon style are a nod to queer joy and the image itself is a celebration of Trans people past and present."

“NO MATTER WHAT OUR WORLD LOOKS LIKE, TRANS PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS FOUND WAYS TO EXPRESS OURSELVES AND LIVE OUR LIVES THE WAY WE SEE FIT. AND WE’LL CONTINUE TO DO SO FOR AS LONG AS HUMANITY ENDURES.”



Sophie Edwards
Novelist and Transgender historian writing for QueerAF, Trans+ History Week 2024

DIVE INTO THE HISTORY OF THE GALLAE HERE:





@SUNDAYINBLUE

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4. WE'RE MORE THAN TRANS+

DID YOU KNOW?

Roberta Cowell's life was a testament to courage and determination in the face of everyday transphobia. Her pioneering journey as a trans woman, pilot, engineer and racer broke barriers, leaving an enduring impact on motorsports and LGBTQIA+ history.

Roberta Cowell was a pioneering figure in motorsports and a trailblazer in LGBTQIA+ history. She was born into a strict, religious family. Her father was a surgeon and a colonel interested in art, and her mother had an interest in music. She described them as "wonderful people."

Roberta, or Betty as she was also known, showed an early interest in mechanics and racing. She developed her skills by sneaking into Brooklands racetrack in nearby Weybridge to assist mechanics, aiming to design and race cars. At 17, she began driving, and, in 1935, joined the RAF as a pupil pilot. Though she struggled with illness in the air and was later invalidated, her wartime experiences, including surviving a Nazi prison camp, shaped her resilience.

Post-war, Roberta resumed racing and took part in numerous events. Her marriage to Diana Carpenter, a fellow racing driver and engineer, was unfortunately troubled, leading to their separation in 1948. Struggling with her gender identity, Roberta sought psychoanalysis and discovered she was female. This revelation, along with a diagnosis of being intersex, gave her the confidence to pursue gender affirmation surgery.

In 1951, Roberta legally re-registered her birth certificate as female and became the first known British trans woman to undergo what is considered some of the first modern pioneering gender reassignment and facial feminisation surgeries, becoming a linchpin in British LGBTQIA+ history; she received treatment from Dr. Harold Gillies and Ralph Millard, both of whom risked their medical reputations to support gender transitions. Her story gained significant media attention, and she

Sabah Choudrey (they/he)

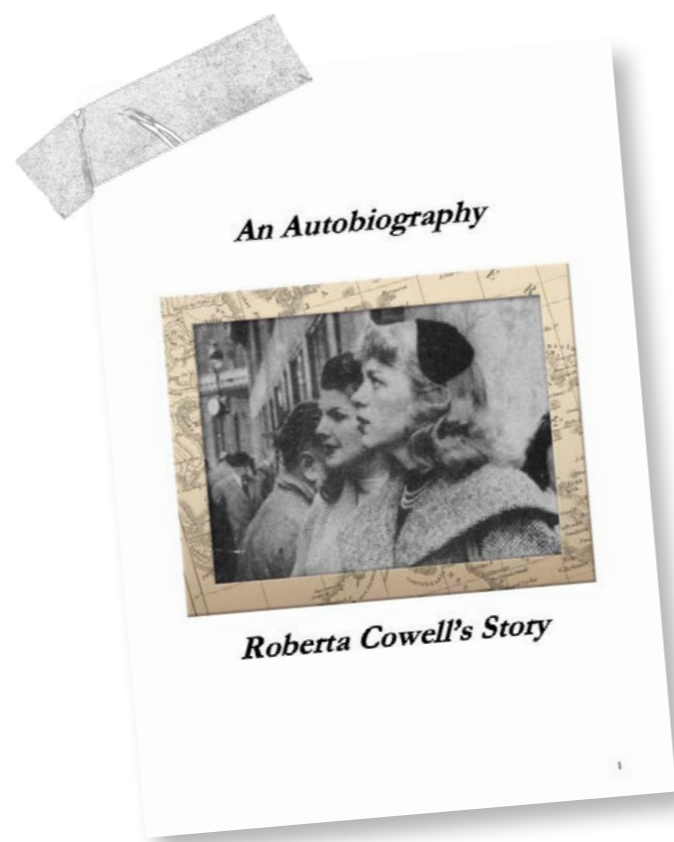
Muslim, queer, trans-masc, able-bodied, Pakistani



used platforms like the Picture Post magazine to shape her narrative. Later, she published her autobiography, Roberta Cowell's Story.

Her visibility as a record-breaking driver and a trans woman soared quickly until her last interview in 1972. After this, she retired from public life, facing some financial difficulties and choosing to live a quiet life away from the public eye until her death in 2011 at her home in West London. There is little to find about what her last years looked like; however, it's likely she was wearing her signature red lipstick and enjoying driving behind the wheel of a luxury car.

Roberta not only broke through a male-dominated sport, she broke through at a time when there was little knowledge and support for trans people. The ways in which Roberta used the media to tell her story was unheard of at the time, but her publicly shared journey as a trans woman is reminiscent of how many Trans+ people now use social media to tell our own stories.



CHARLIE MARTIN

Racer, Activist, Trans

While Roberta Cowell's legacy may not be well known, for Charlie Martin, it was the story she wished she knew growing up.

Charlie Martin is a racing driver and LGBTQIA+ activist breaking the mould of the male-dominated field of automotives, combining her passion for motorsport and positive trans+ visibility.

Racing holds a lot of meaning in her life, and, from as young as 10, she has always been drawn to adventure, from car racing games to watching fighter planes in the sky. The world of racing was not just exciting – it gave her a sense of family.

She got her first car second-hand in 2003, and, through a true labour of love, after a year of sanding, spraying and fixing it up, she competed in hillclimbing, and so began her racing career.

Charlie did not let the lack of LGBTQIA+ visibility in racing stop her from coming out as trans, although at one point she did consider selling her car and leaving it all behind. Her supportive friends and family encouraged her to continue with her transition and keep racing, and she did, speaking to her motto, 'The mountains are calling and I must go.'

Her next mountain? First place as the first trans driver at the 24 Hours of Le Mans, the world's oldest and greatest endurance race. She is a Driver Ambassador for Racing Pride, a movement to make motorsport a more inclusive environment. From Silverstone to Le Mans, Charlie is making history and tells Trans+ History Week she is incredibly grateful for trailblazers like Roberta as early champions of the progress and acceptance she sees in motorsport from the creation of queer groups in the sport to increased visibility of the community: "As someone who is living authentically and working in the sport I love, I'm grateful to Roberta and everything she stood for. I wish she was alive today to see what she started"

NAMES TO KNOW

Jordan Rand, Jessica Alexander, Marion 'Joe' Carstairs, Hugh Hunter, Richard Morris, Michael Dillon



Andrea Sciarra / Fotospeedy, with permission

EXTRA CREDIT

Explore the dynamic intersection of LGBTQIA+ representation and motorsport with Racing Pride, a global movement championing inclusion in the racing world. Delve into Motor Proud at Brooklands Museum, a unique celebration of LGBTQ racing history. For a personal perspective, read Carys Conlon's insights on trans visibility within Racing Pride, highlighting the ongoing efforts to foster a more inclusive motorsport community.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

Trans+ people often get our stories told for us. But Roberta didn't settle for that; she wrote an autobiography and worked with the press to get her story told word for word. She is a reminder of how Trans+ people can take control of our narratives, as our transcestors have for decades, whether that be in print media or social media; Trans+ people will continue to tell our stories.

She also teaches us that, while positive trans representation matters, you don't need to see yourself represented to know that you can live authentically, and be trans, happy and celebrated. You also don't need to leave behind one part of yourself to find the rest of you. Just like Roberta and Charlie who are more than just trans; they are true champions of motorsport.

GETTING READY FOR TRANS+ HISTORY WEEK 2025

WHERE TO START

- Get a **team** in place to collaborate and create activities together
- Planning an event? Suss out what you want to **achieve**, how you want your attendees to **feel** and what **actions** you'd like them take away
- Give yourself plenty of **time** to organise, promote and execute your event
- Establish what **budget** you have in place. Thinking of an external speaker? Investing in Trans+ talent is our initiative's mission.
- Be **intersectional** - could you work with multiple work affinity networks to create something together? For example, both the LGBTQIA+ network and the Black network could collaborate on an event.



MORE WAYS TO TAKE PART

- Feature an article on Trans+ History Week and its importance in your organisation's newsletter, or share ours!
- Display artwork in your workplace by Trans+ creatives (speak to us if you want to display the ones we've commissioned)
- Run a campaign in Trans+ History Week - like inviting colleagues to add pronouns in email signatures or launching a gender expression policy

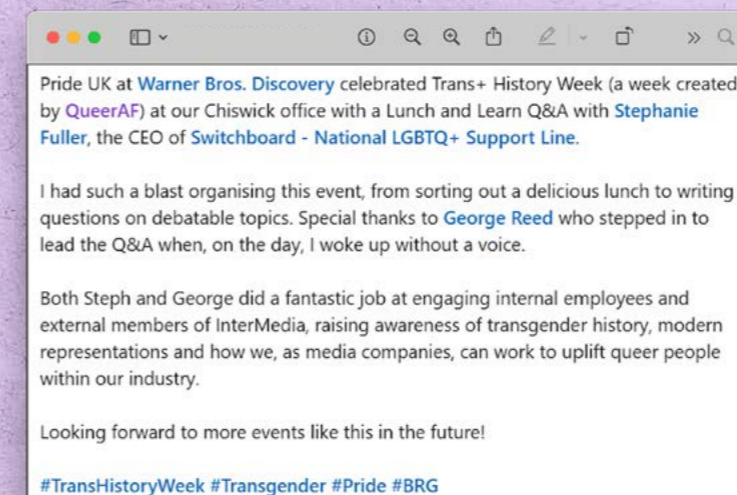
MORE WAYS TO TAKE PART

- Ensure you're centring Trans+ voices. It's great to hear from allies about how they're taking action, but their voices shouldn't be the focus.
- Make sure your actions are rooted in diversity, equity and inclusion. Can people see themselves in your event? Is your panel representative and diverse?
- Think about how you're going to create a safe space that fosters a sense of belonging where people can come together and learn.

THINGS TO AVOID

- Don't ask people to speak for free, especially from marginalised groups. You must value people's time, expertise and lived experience. If you're going to organise an event and invite speakers, ensure you have an adequate budget to pay speakers and pay in a timely manner.
- Trans+ colleagues may be happy to share their lived experience, and should be at the centre of the activity, but they can't do it all. Don't lean on your Trans+ staff to do all the heavy lifting.

EXAMPLES FROM LAST YEAR



KEEP ON LEARNING

REMINDER OF WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

1. WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN HERE

Trans+ identities are far from a modern phenomenon; people who have blurred, subverted, or completely rejected traditional gender roles can be found going back millennia.

2. WE CAN'T BE ERASED

Even when outlawed, trans+ people have never disappeared. We will always find a way to come together and share our experiences

3. WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER

When we put our hearts and minds on a common goal, we can achieve amazing things.

4. WE'RE MORE THAN TRANS+

Our transness is just one facet of the strong, creative, intelligent humans we are.



AND HOW TO TAKE THEM FORWARD AND TEACH OTHERS

1. Send this document to a colleague or friend
2. Produce some social media content about one of the figures profiled here – or share a post from our social media pages!
3. Write a reflection piece about something you've learned in this guidance
4. Make some art about one of the historical periods or events discussed here
5. Listen to trans+ people when they talk about their lives
6. Put on a learning event and invite panellists and contemporary history makers
7. Ask for books about trans+ lives or by trans+ authors at your local bookstore
8. Sign a petition to legally protect trans+ identities

OTHER PLACES TO VISIT TO FURTHER YOUR LEARNING

- The Bishopsgate Institute
- Queer Britain
- Wellcome Collection
- Outmuseum
- Museum of Transology
- Canadian Centre for Gender & Sexual Diversity
- GALA Queer Archive
- Schwules Museum
- Liberty Osaka archives at Osaka Metropolitan University
- Museum of Transgender History & Art (MOTHA)
- California Aggregation for Gender Diversity
- The Museum of Sexual Diversity, São Paulo
- Aravani Art Project
- Brooklands Museum
- The Queer Heritage and Collections Network
- Digital Trans Archives


BOOKS TO READ:

- **Before We Were Trans: A New History of Gender** by Kit Heyam
- **Transgender History** by Susan Stryker
- **Gender Pioneers** by Phillipa Punchard
- **Trans Britain: Our Journey from the Shadows** by Christine Burns
- **Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity** by C Riley Snorton
- **Gender Heretics: Evangelicals, Feminists, and the Alliance against Trans Liberation** by Rebecca Jane Morgan
- **The Sage Encyclopedia of Trans Studies** by Abbie E. Goldberg and Genny Beemyn
- **Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People** by Joan Roughgarden
- **Butch Queens Up in Pumps: Gender, Performance, and Ballroom Culture in Detroit** by Marlon Bailey

FILMS TO WATCH:

- The Stroll
- The Death & Life of Marsha P Johnson
- Disclosure
- Shinjuju boys
- KOKOMO CITY
- Paris is Burning
- Every Body
- Kapaemahu
- The Dream Life of Georgie Stone
- Framing Agnes

Follow us and tag us in the content you share

 @tranhistoryweek
#TransHistoryWeek

A LAUNCHPAD INITIATIVE FROM QUEERAF

What is a QueerAF Launchpad project?

QueerAF launchpad projects facilitate, mentor and support LGBTQIA+ creatives to create their own original projects.

Everything we do at QueerAF is about ensuring there is a better way for our LGBTQIA+ community to be seen, heard and celebrated in the media - this launchpad project is just the latest of our many initiatives.

When we launched QueerAF, we set out to be an incubator of queer talent. To find as many ways to do that, share our secrets and help queer creatives succeed. Creating power for queer liberation isn't always about keeping it either, it's about handing it to those who need it most.

After a year of fiscal sponsorship and direct delivery support, Trans+ History Week is now an independent community interest company. We'll continue to work closely together on our shared mission to invest in marginalised creatives, but the initiative is rightly now Trans+ led and owned.

When we support creatives, we don't just want them to leave with skills, mentoring and support - but solid foundations to succeed as they go forward. Our launchpad initiatives are all about this - helping deliver our mission and goals by even more organisations.

We are incredibly proud to continue our partnership with an organisation we helped found and deliver even more content, training, mentoring and even more.



OUR MISSION

We help you understand the LGBTQIA+ world and support queer creatives to change the media

Jamie Wareham (he/him)
Founder of QueerAF



WHAT IS QUEERAF?

We're an award-winning independent platform launching the careers of **emerging and underrepresented LGBTQIA+ creatives** driven by people, not advertisers.

QueerAF is a platform where creators, journalists and producers can get paid and commissioned directly by the QueerAF community. This while we mentor them to build a career, work in the industry - and then change it.

We've been giving creatives their first commissions with our award-winning podcast scheme for over eight years. Now, our top-rated weekly newsletter is **publishing, mentoring, and building the resilience of queer creatives.**

OUR (NOT SO SECRET) QUEER MILITANT AGENDA

So much of what we think and feel comes, often unconsciously, from the media. So, **if you change the newsroom, you can change the country.**

We believe the UK media industry only thrives when it's bursting with queer talent. Only a media industry that represents hires and understands us - can help shift the narrative on being queer in the UK.

There's a better way for our LGBTQIA+ community to be seen, heard and celebrated in the media. That's why we're skilling up a **new generation of queer creatives** to work in the media to rewrite the narrative and change the industry for good.

IT'S DIFFERENT WE KNOW

We live in a saturated world of doom scrolling and constant media. Online, digital, mobile, it bombards us wherever we are. But it doesn't reflect us.

For too long, the media has been driven by short-term, revenue-led incentives. The diversity of those who write our stories has barely changed. That's why:

- **6 in 10** of our writers last year were **gender diverse.**
- We're the only LGBTQIA+ publisher in the UK that is registered as both a **non-profit** and with multiple regulators, including the

Leveson approved press regulator Impress.

- The majority of our content and our entire website and newsletter is **ad-free.**
- We hand the commissioning power over to **our audience, not editors.**
- We mentored, commissioned, and supported **67 marginalised LGBTQIA+ creatives** to develop their media careers in the last year alone.

OUR VALUES

1. Queer creators should be **paid** for their work.
2. LGBTQIA+ **information** should not be a luxury.
3. Putting the **well-being** of LGBTQIA+ people above all else is the best way to make an impact with queer media.
4. Our **community** and members are our **most valuable editors**, not gatekeepers.
5. Every **queer story** (must) count.

The media has an incredible power to shift the narratives - but is currently failing us. **Our values model the change** we want to see and ground our work.

SKIP THE DOOMSCROLLING

Sign up for our free weekly newsletter to understand the LGBTQIA+ news and support queer creatives.

"As someone who works with queer creatives and the wider LGBTQIA+ community, I find the QueerAF newsletter indispensable. It is an easy and accessible way to stay fully engaged with the stories that matter."

★★★★★

Char Binns

Former Homotopia
Festival Director



**SCAN TO TRY
THE NEWSLETTER
FOR FREE**

wearequeer.af.com/subscribe



WE'VE DONE OUR HOMEWORK

If you want to do some deeper digging, go visit our citations:

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THANK YOU. THANK YOU. THANK YOU.

I would like to thank all the volunteers who have joined us in producing our second-ever Trans+ History Week. Thank you for believing in the project and committing your time, energy, and talent to making it what it has become.

We are incredibly fortunate to have so much talent dedicated to the celebration of our history within our community. Being surrounded by you all makes me feel so hopeful for our future.

These stories will reach young gender-diverse readers with a powerful affirmation – 'we've always been here' – and they'll know that they belong here in 2025.

You did that. Thank you.

Marty Davies (they/she)
Founder & CEO of Trans+ History Week CIC

Thank you to our volunteer management team:

Laura Jordan Bambach (she/her)

Shay Fredericks (they/she)

Neil Hudson-Basing (he/him)

Oscar Hoyle (they/them)

Darkwah Kyei-Darkwah (they/them)

Alex Powell (he/they)

Gray Burke-Stowe (he/him) in particular for his efforts as Lead Researcher again this year pulling this lesson book together.

Jamie Wareham (he/him), the founder of QueerAF, the independent publisher platforming underrepresented queer voices. QueerAF chose Trans+ History Week to be their first launchpad project. Quite simply, this project wouldn't have become what it has without their endless encouragement and support to keep going and keep dreaming big. This year, we want to thank QueerAF for delivering the workbook's production and the mentoring they provided to its writers and researchers.

Thank you to our four Trans+ writers who each wrote one of the lessons in this workbook:

Adam Khan (they/them)

Ella Osho (she/her)

William Elisabeth Cuthbert (they/he)

Sabah Choudrey (they/he)

Big thank yous also to **Bex Wade** (they/them), who generously opened up their archive of photography to enrich the project visually.

Weronika Szklarek (she/her), who redesigned this year's workbook at lightning speed, building on Georgey Lee's design from 2024.

Finally thanks to all of those who have helped support this mission since conception in any small way. There's far, far too many to list here.

You're all history makers!

ESTABLISHED NEW GLOBAL WEEK WITH 20+ UK SECTOR ORGANISATIONS



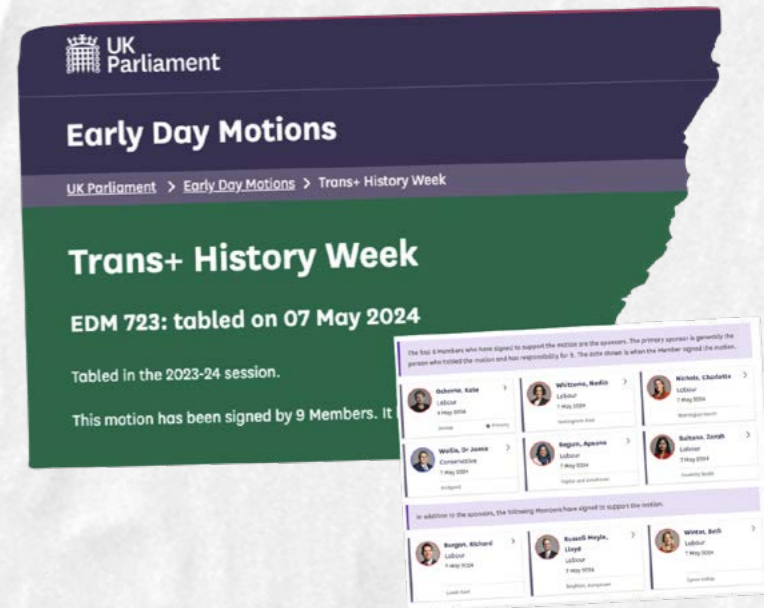
HOSTED THREE EVENTS TO INSPIRE LEARNING AND EDUCATION



PAID, MENTORED AND GAVE EQUIPMENT TO 30+ TRANS+ CREATIVES



ESTABLISHED THE WEEK ON PARLIAMENTARY RECORD



WHAT WE ACHIEVED IN 2024

BUILT TRUST AND SPONSORSHIP WITH BRANDS TO FUND OUR NON-PROFIT

HEADLINE SPONSORS



SPONSORS



REACHED 1 IN 6 OF UK POPULATION WITH OUR SOCIAL IMPACT MARKETING CAMPAIGN



DELIVERED INTERNAL EVENTS ON TRANS+ HISTORY AT MAJOR ORGANISATIONS



INSPIRED MEDIA AND PRESS WITH HUGE AUDIENCES TO TELL TRANS+ HISTORY STORIES



**THE
HISTORY
LESSON
WE
NEVER
HAD**

TRANS+
HISTORY WEEK
05 - 11 MAY 2025

 @TRANSHISTORYWEEK