

LGBTQ+ Communities in Southwark



Kenneth Lowndes in drag as Cinderella, c.1917

A guide to our resources and archive collections on the histories of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Trans & Queer people.

Local Groups and Organisations

Southwark LGBT Forum collection including meeting minutes, posters, photographs (2011/6 & 2010/12)

Southwark Sappho - newsletter of Southwark Women's Centre Lesbian group, issues 1993-1994 (RES 306.766)

Gay Men in Southwark group, newsletter 1987 (PC 306.766)

Gay & Lesbian rights and services

Southwark Council leaflets on services and activities in the borough 1980s onwards including 'First Ever Day For Lesbians & Gays in Southwark', Housing Rights, Pride events, Gay & Lesbian reading list at Southwark libraries, LGBT History month, launch of Civil Partnerships etc (PC 306.766)

Press cuttings on local LGBTQ issues c1990s-2000s (PC 306.766)

Pride & LGBT History Month

Posters and planning ephemera, photographs of Southwark float in Pride parade, 2005-2010 (2011/6)

Pam Isherwood Pride Photographic Exhibition 1972-2004 – display produced for Southwark LGBT Network & Forum, 2005-2009 (2011/6)

Drag & Performance

Poster advertising male-impersonator Vesta Tilley at the South London Palace, 1882 (PC 792.7)

Photograph of Mr Hudson and Mr Colmer as the Duke and Duchess of Bermondsey at Bermondsey Carnival, 1900 (RES 791.6)

Painting by Winnie Collins of a drag troupe performing on the back streets of Peckham, 1935 (SC 942.16422)

Photographs of Kenneth Lowndes and others in drag performing in 'The Roosters' concert party, 60th Division, during World War One (RES 356.1)

Photograph of drag in 'The Follies' concert party c.1916, 47th Division (A52)

The Street Entertainers Move On, 1935 painting by Winnie Collins of a drag street troupe performing in the back streets of Peckham. (SC 942.16422)

Oral History

Stephen Bourne – historian & co-founder of Southwark Anti-Homophobic Forum. Talks about his experience of homophobic hate crime in Walworth & his upbringing & work for gay community in Southwark

Sue Sanders – campaigner & founder of LGBT History Month, member of Southwark LGBT Forum

James Gardiner – social historian. Memories of nights at the Union Tavern, Camberwell New Rd & drag queen house in 1970s Lewisham

Stuart Feather – GLF historian. Transcript re: Bermondsey Baths in 1960s

Mike Watson – worked as DJ at the Ship & Whale, Rotherhithe in 1990s

Politics

Peter Tatchell – coverage of the 1983 by-election including homophobic smear campaign (Bermondsey Labour Party collection)

Trans Identities

Sarah Paul using alias Samuel Bundy, convicted in 1760 and sent to Southwark Bridewell for marrying a woman, Mary Parlour (PC 306.766)

James Allen a ‘female husband’ married to wife Mary for 21 years, worked as a shipwright’s sawyer at Dockhead, died 1829 (PC 306.766)

The She/He Barman of Southwark – lyrics of song about Mary Ann Walker alias Thomas who worked at Royal Mortar Tavern in 1867 (PC 306.766)

Frederick Park and Ernest Boulton aka Fanny & Stella – famous cross-dressers taken to court in 1871 (PC 306.766)

Venues & Spaces

Photographs of pubs used as queer venues: The Father Red Cap (P10935), The Ship & Whale (P10388), The Dun Cow (P10483/P10274)

The King’s Club – gay club night at the King’s Arms, Peckham Rye, 1980s (2017/32, P14902, PC725.72KIN)

Little Frida’s, advertisement for women-only night at East Dulwich Tavern, 1994 (Southwark Sappho)

Bermondsey Public Baths, Grange Road – gay cruising space at the Turkish baths c.1920s-1970s (PAM 613.47BER / 306.766 Houlbrook)

Reference Books

Queer London – Matt Houlbrook, 2005 (306.766)

Queers In History – Keith Stern, 2009 (306.7)

Fantabulosa: Dictionary of Polari & Gay Slang – Paul Baker, 2004 (306.766)

Queer City – Peter Ackroyd, 2017 (306.766)

Explore our LGBTQ+ collections gallery online at:

heritage.southwark.gov.uk



Can you help?

We are always looking for new additions to our collections and we rely on members of the public to help us better represent Southwark communities. Do you have anything you could donate to help preserve and share your story? Some of the things we are looking for are:

- Event programmes, flyers, posters, clippings
- Photographs (we can copy these if you need the originals)
- Local community groups and club records
- Written accounts and Oral histories
- Home movies, films, tapes of local events

If you can help please come and visit us or contact us by post or email:

local.history.library@southwark.gov.uk

Southwark Local History Library & Archive, 211 Borough High St, London, SE1 1JA