

Welsh Pride – Celebrating LGBT Heritage in Wales

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Launched at the Senedd on 1 February 2011, the Welsh version of the UK campaign will encourage organisations, companies and community groups to host events to help raise awareness of issues faced by LGBT people with an aim to eradicate homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia from all walks of life.

Minister for Heritage Alun Ffred Jones, who sponsored the launch and will be speaking at the event, commented on the initiative: "It's great to see that this event will have a Welsh element this year. History is a powerful way to promote greater understanding and I hope this project will allow more people to celebrate the lives and achievements of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in Wales. I'm delighted that the National Museums are involved in this project and I'm sure they will do an excellent job of telling this important story."

In addition the Excellence Centre has been awarded £49,600 from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a project that will research the history of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people in Wales and will be spending next year working with the National Museums Wales to bring LGBT history to life through a series of initiatives and research projects.

Jennifer Stewart, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Wales, commented on the award: "Heritage is everywhere and means different things to different people. It is important to recognise the contribution that the LGBT community has made to Wales' heritage and our cultural make-up. We are proud to fund this project which will help people learn about this as yet undocumented history. The strong partnership with the National Museum Wales will help create an invaluable resource for future generations to use."

Curator of Contemporary Life, Owain Rhys, said: "St Fagans National History Museum is looking forward to assisting the LGBT Excellence Centre in the task of collecting, documenting and preserving artefacts and oral testimony relating to the history of the LGBT community in Wales. This is an area currently under-represented in the collections, and this project is an opportunity to correct that. It will also raise awareness of LGBT social history across Wales, and enable people to record and archive their stories, for the benefit of future generations."

Throughout the month of February, the LGBT Excellence Centre will be seeking nominations from the community for outstanding individuals that have contributed to LGBT History in Wales.

The campaign will announce the results of the nominations at the end of the month and reward a certificate of accomplishment to those people nominated.

Chief Executive Officer, Federico Podeschi, commented: "We are very excited to add a Welsh dimension to this very important campaign. More and more organisations and companies are

hosting events to celebrate LGBT History Month and we want to provide a portal for everyone to reach out to even more people and credit those individuals that have fought and campaigned for a better future for all LGBT people. We hope that the next year will help us map what events are taking place in Wales, so that we can build on this good practice and grow the campaign even further in years to come with our partners and supporters.”

Other events taking place in Wales during the month of February can be found on the Excellence Centre’s website, including the Celebrating LGBT Youth Conference at Cardiff City Hall on 7 February and LGBT History Month at National Museums Wales on 12 February.

Notes to editors

The LGBT Excellence Centre Wales is a social enterprise and a registered charity that promotes equality, diversity and human rights through gathering and sharing information and good practice. The Excellence Centre is a hub connecting people and organisations: on the charitable end, the organisation delivers free services and support to LGBT communities such as counselling and legal representation for discrimination cases, whilst on the enterprising side it funds itself through projects and business services such as training for employers and anti-bullying workshops in schools.

LGBT History Month originated in the United States and was first celebrated in 1994. In the UK, it first took place in February 2005. The event came in the wake of the abolition of Section 28 and is intended to raise awareness of, and combat prejudice against, an otherwise substantially invisible minority.

The first celebration of the month in 2005 saw the organization of over 150 events around the UK. The organisation's website received over 50,000 hits in February 2005 and the initiative grew from strength to strength since then.

The initiative received government backing from the deputy DfES and Equalities Minister Jacqui Smith.

In 2005 and 2006, LGBT History Month was celebrated in Scotland as an LGBT community event, receiving support from LGBT community history projects and the community. For 2007 and 2008, the Scottish Executive provided funding for a post at LGBT Youth Scotland to bring LGBT History Month Scotland into the wider community, including schools and youth groups.

On 5 March 2009, Prime Minister Gordon Brown hosted a reception at Downing Street to mark the Month.

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported more than 28,800 projects allocating over £4.3 billion across the UK, including more than 1,800 projects totalling over £200 million in Wales.