

The April Ashley exhibition at The Museum of Liverpool

The festival will celebrate the lives and achievements of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, their history, their diversity and their contribution to society.

Representatives from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) will join organisations, charities and community groups at events in venues including The People's History Museum and Manchester Central Library Archives +, to showcase new research into LGBT history and share people's stories from across the UK.

Sara Hilton, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North West, said: "Heritage is such a varied topic and means so many different things to different people. We at the Heritage Lottery Fund are committed to helping people from all walks of life learn about what's important to them. The LGBT community's history deserves to be better documented and this festival will open up, share and record those important stories and help people understand the contribution LGBT people have made to the UK's heritage and society."

Minister for Women and Equalities, Nicky Morgan, said: "The tenth anniversary of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History Month provides an important opportunity to celebrate and reflect on the achievements of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people throughout history, to acknowledge the progress made in advancing LGB&T equality and the challenges that still remain. Congratulations to all those participating in the First National Festival of LGBT History; I am sure that it will be a great success."

More information on the festival can be found on the LGBT History Festival website.

Over the past 20 years, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has invested more than £2.6million into exploring, recording and sharing this under-researched and often hidden part of our heritage. Examples include:

Bona Eek - Polari Mission, Initiative Arts, awarded £69,800 HLF grant

If you've been for a bevvy, or sent up some old cove for being naff, you've been speaking Polari, the lost language of gay subculture to be celebrated in a new art exhibition. HLF awarded a grant of £69,400 to Manchester-based Initiative Arts to produce a lasting archive and exhibition about the endangered language of Polari. The Polari iPhone app has been downloaded worldwide and is recognised both as a work of digital contemporary art and as a positive learning tool.

April Ashley exhibition and heritage education project, Homotopia, awarded £78,800 HLF grant

The Museum of Liverpool hosted a major exhibition looking at the history of transgendered people in Britain over the past 70 years, focusing on the experiences of one exceptional individual. April Ashley: Portrait of a lady - for the first time – explored the story of April Ashley MBE, one of the first people in the world to undergo pioneering gender reassignment surgery. Featuring unseen photographic archive documents the exhibition investigated the wider impact of changing social and legal conditions for all transgender, lesbian, gay and bisexual people from 1935 to today.

From Queer to Eternity, The Lesbian & Gay Foundation, awarded £15,300 HLF grant, Greater Manchester

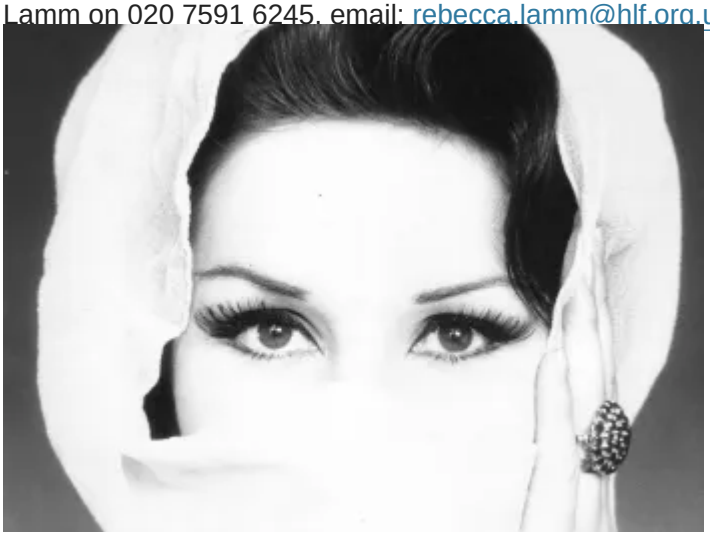
This project sought to encourage people to learn about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual heritage (LGBT) with a particular focus on Greater Manchester over the last 100 years. An online timeline, highlighting key points within Manchester's LGBT history from the last century, learning events based on topics such as Section 28 Legislation and Alan Turing and events led by experts in relevant fields and inspired by LGF's archives helped open up and understand this part of Manchester's heritage.

Burnley LGBT Heritage Project, Lancashire LGBT Centre, awarded £49,900 HLF grant

HLF's grant helped research Lancashire's gay and transgender communities. The Burnley LGBT Heritage project, which was carried out in the run-up to Burnley's first Pride event, collected stories from local men and women from the LGBT community about their lives in the county.

Further information

For more information contact the HLF press office: Laura Bates on 020 7591 6027, email: lbates@hlf.org.uk or Rebecca Lamm on 020 7591 6245, email: rebecca.lamm@hlf.org.uk.



April Ashley, one of the first people in the world to have gender reassignment surgery

Celebrating LGBT history