

# LGBTI HERITAGE WALK OF WHITEHALL

- This walk, starting at the junction of Horseferry Road and Marsham Street and ending at the Strand should take about 90 minutes. It was developed as part of LGBTI History Month 2017 and is now published in self contained form. It was devised and written by Andy Kirby.

Directions - Walk up Marsham Street with the Home Office building on your left until you get to Romney House on your right. Go down the pedestrian alley to its left into Tufton Street where there is a plaque to Siegfried Sassoon at 54 Tufton Street

## Stop 1 - 54 Tufton Street



Siegfried Sassoon 1887-1967 was an important First World War poet and novelist and lived in a house at 54 Tufton Street between 1919 and 1925. He was a major influence on another war poet Wilfred Owen. Sassoon's biographer, Rupert Hart-Davis claimed he was "torn politically, the possessor of a private income with an uncomfortable socialist conscience; ...and torn emotionally by a succession of disappointing homosexual relationships."

Directions - Continue down Tufton Street and at the junction turn right into Great Peter Street, left into Cowley Street, follow it left until it becomes Barton Street. Number 19 is on the right.

## Stop 2 - 14 Barton Street



T E Lawrence's gay and masochistic sexuality are contested, and in 1927 he wrote to E M Forster "I'm so funnily made up, sexually." In 1919 he rented an attic room at 19 Barton Street where he wrote "Seven Pillars of Wisdom". Littered with books sent to him for comment, he once found it so hard to get into bed, he filled his knapsack, went to the canons' houses in Westminster Abbey Close and left volumes he thought suitable in the letter-boxes. When a 2nd Lieutenant in autumn 1914 he worked in the War Office making a map of and a guide to Sinai based on his peacetime travels. You will see the place where Whitehall meets Horse Guards Avenue. These pictures are from the National Portrait Gallery.

Directions - Backtrack to Great Peter Street and follow it left until you reach Little College Street, look for Number 13 on the left.

## Stop 3 – 13 Little College Street



On the death of his cocoa manufacturing father in 1883 Alfred Waterhouse Somerset Taylor inherited £45,000. and as he said "had no occupation but have lived a life of pleasure." In 1894 Taylor and Arthur Marling, a female impersonator, were arrested for wearing female clothing at a party. Between 1892 and 1893 he rented rooms here for £3 a month and hung muslin on the windows. Oscar Wilde is known to have visited for contacts with young men. Taylor was pursued by the Marquis of Queensbury and tried and convicted alongside Oscar Wilde and on his release from prison he went to America. Taylor was educated in Preston Village, near the park where Brighton Pride is held.



Directions - Continue to the end of Little College Street and turn right into Great College Street. At the end of the street the Palace of Westminster is in front of you. The picture is from 2007.

## Stop 4 - Houses of Parliament



2016 saw 35 lesbian, gay and bisexual MPs in Parliament (26 are shown below). Firsts include Maureen Colquhoun first outed MP in 1976, Angela Eagle first female MP to come out while an MP in 1997 and first to enter a civil partnership 2008, Baroness Steadman-Scott first out peeress 2010, Education Secretary Justine Greening 2016, first female Minister to come out in office, Margot James first MP to be out before being elected. 1992 saw the first trans delegation of Mark Rees, Krystina Sheffield and others to see Alex now Lord Carlisle. In the square stands George Canning, Prime Minister in 1827 and said to make advances to any pretty boy near the House of Commons.



Directions – continue to the corner of Parliament Square and turn left. Behind St Margaret's Church is Westminster Abbey.

## Stop 5 – Westminster Abbey



Poet's Corner in the south transept has memorials to many gay artists. Lord Byron, Thomas Gray, playwrights Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, composer Benjamin Britten, together with his librettist W H Auden. Overlooking them is gay monarch James I in the Great Nave and his lover the Duke of Buckingham. Less famous but more colourful is the one-footed comic actor and playwright Samuel Foote who was smuggled as close to Poets' Corner as his friends dared in 1777, months after the conclusion of a scandalous trial in which he faced a charge of 'sodomitical assault'.

Directions – Continue to west main door of the Abbey. Over the road to your right is Westminster Central Hall. Cross over Victoria Street and stand in front of the main entrance in Storey's Gate.

## Stop 6 – Westminster Hall

The 1971 Festival of Light, held at Westminster Hall, was led by a group of nagging Christians — including Mary Whitehouse and Cliff Richard — who were concerned with the world's escalating 'evils'. It was disrupted on 7 September by Gay Liberation Front protesters dressed as nuns in costumes bought by Monty Python member Graham Chapman. They released mice into the audience and cut the power supply.



Directions - Continue up Storey's Gate to the junction with Birdcage Walk which runs south of St James Park. In front of you is the Treasury Building.

## Stop 7 - Treasury Building



Eminent economist John Maynard Keynes 1883-1946 worked in the Treasury 1915-19 and was a key advisor on the Treaty of Versailles at the end of the First World War. Before his marriage in 1905 to Russian ballerina Lydia Lopakova Keynes was predominantly homosexual. One of his lists reveals his catholic tastes: "Stable boy of Park Lane; The Swede of the National Gallery; The Soldier of the baths; The French Conscript; The Blackmailer; sixteen-year-old under Etna; Lift boy of Vauxhall; Auburn haired of Marble Arch, Grand Duke Cyril of the Paris Baths..." He had 65 encounters in 1909, 26 in 1910, 39 in 1911.

Directions - Turn left and cross Horseguards Road into Birdcage Walk until you get to Cockpit Steps on your left.

## Stop 8 – Birdcage Alley

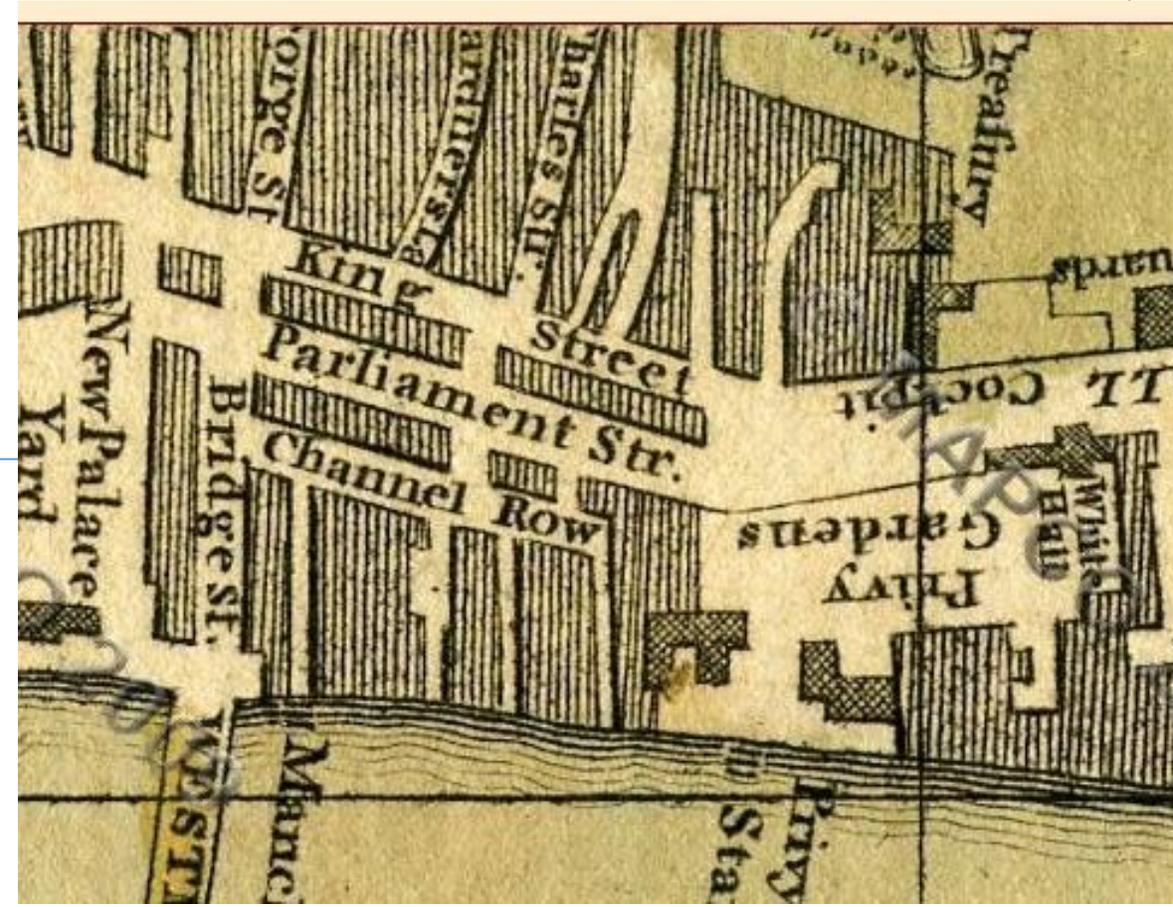


Birdcage Alley or Walk - named after the Royal Aviary here in James I's reign - was a pick up area from 1700. Hanky codes developed here, men poked a white handkerchief through their coat tails and wagged it to get the attention of cruisers, including guardsmen from the nearby barracks supplementing their pay. One such James Brown claimed with his brother he had picked up and blackmailed 500 men in the alley. Westminster Abbey storekeeper Samuel Drybutter on 30 June 1777 was reported for picking up a guardsman, seized and beaten by a mob and died on 5 July. In 1958 Ian Harvey, Foreign Office Minister, and a Coldstream Guardsman were found in the park bushes and imprisoned. In the seventies he became Vice President of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality

Directions – Retrace your steps to Horseguards Road and continue to the steps on your right. Go up them to King Charles Street. Continue to the arch at the end the street.

## Stop 9 – King Street

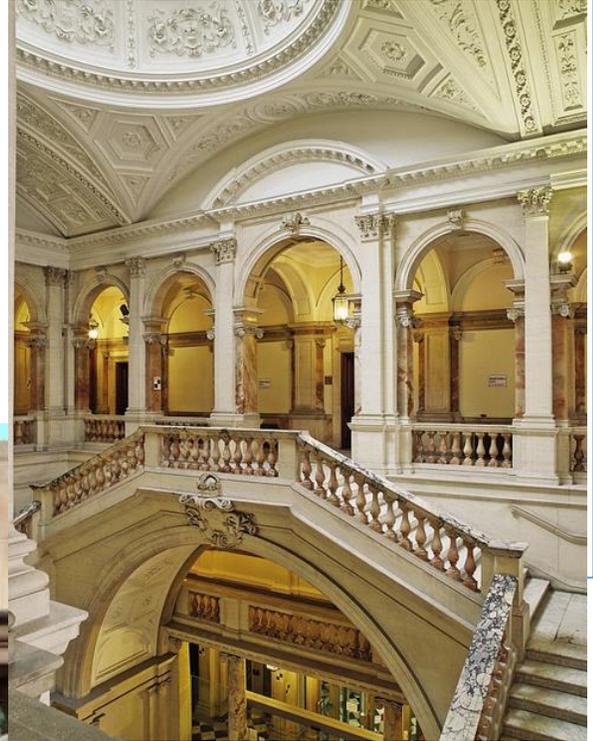
The current Parliament Street was once two narrow parallel streets, Parliament and King Streets. It held a molly house owned by partners Robert Whale and York Horner. Known to their friends of Peggy and Pru until it was raided in July 1726 and on 6 January 1727 they were convicted of “keeping an House in King-Street with Conveniences for Persons to commit the detestable Sin of Sodomy” and pilloried at Charing Cross.



Directions - Turn left and continue up Whitehall until you reach the junction with Horse Guards Avenue on the right. The building on the corner is the former War Office.

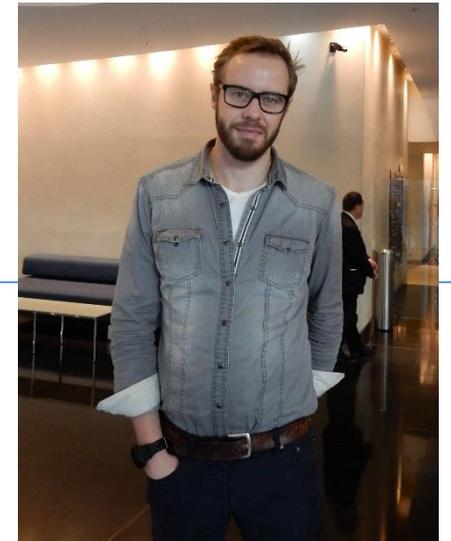
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## Stop 10 – War Office



Directions - Walk up Whitehall to Trafalgar Square. Stop at the King Charles I statue. The SW plinth is to General Sir Charles Napier, In 1845 he sent Captain later Sir Robert Burton to investigate the homosexual brothels in Karāchi; his explicit study resulted in their destruction; and that of Burton's promising career.

Trafalgar Square was the location of the 1971 Festival of Light rally we have already encountered at Westminster Central Hall. The following year 2,000 people took part in the Gay Liberation Front's first Gay Pride march from here to Hyde Park. Since 2004 Pride has ended with a rally here. On 19 June 2016 in time for the 2016 LGBTI Pride the green pedestrian "go" setting on some 40 traffic lights here were masked with a range of LGBTI symbols. Here is Rory Svensson designed them.



## Stop 11 – Trafalgar Square

Directions – Walk to the front of the National Gallery on the north side of Trafalgar Square directly in front of you.

## Stop 12 – National Gallery & Portrait Gallery



At the top of these steps in the entrance to the National Gallery are Boris Anrep's marble mosaics laid between 1928 and 1952. Two gay icons are the film star Greta Garbo as Melpomene, Muse of Tragedy and Loomsbury writer Virginia Woolf wielding an elegant pen as Clio, Muse of History. To the right is the National Portrait Gallery with pictures and photographs of Martina Navratilova, K D Lang, Virginia again, Alan Turing, Harvey Milk and Joe Orton.



Directions – Turn right and cross Charing Cross and walk down Duncannon Street between St Martins in the Fields church and the South African Embassy. Notice the Oscar Wilde statue in Adelaide Street to your left. Continue to the front of Charing Cross Station.

## Stop 13 – Charing Cross

The replica statue marks one of the Eleanor Crosses commemorating Edward I's first wife, which once stood where the Charles I statue is. Distances from London are measured here, and here stood the pillory where many gay men were locked, mocked and punished. The picture is of similar incident in Cheapside. On 25 September 2009 Ian Baynham died after homophobic attack in the square and died soon after. Joel Alexander, 20, and Ruby Thomas, 19, were imprisoned for it. Maggi Hambling's statue "A Conversation with Oscar Wilde" was unveiled in 1998.

Directions - Walk down the street to the left of Charing Cross Station and then right into John Adam Street. Turn right into York Buildings and on your left is a tunnel called Lower Robert Street

## Stop 14 - Adelphi Arches



These are the remains of the Adelphi, 24 palatial houses that soared from the river to the Strand from the 1770s. To the 1930s. The trial of middle-class war-hero, sportsman and public schoolmaster Frank Champain for importuning a policeman at midnight in toilets here in 1927 had a dramatic effect on police activity after Mr Champain was spectacularly acquitted on appeal. The police were so cowed by the evidence of entrapment that arrests fell for some years thereafter.

Directions - Backtrack to John Adams Street, cross and walk up George Court to Stand. Cross it carefully to Agar Street. On the left the big white building is Charing Cross Police Station, formerly Charing Cross Hospital.

## Stop 15 – Charing Cross Hospital



Now a police station this is where Doctor Lennox Brewster carried out some of the first sex change operations in the thirties. One, athlete Mary Edith Louise Weston, transitioned in April 1935 to become Mark Edward Louis Weston. Previously she had competed in the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics in shot putt and javelin. He became a physiotherapist, had three children, and died in Plymouth in 1978. Most of these cases were probably intersex as plastic surgery was at an early stage of development and hormone treatment unknown.



- 1 Tufton Street – Siegfried Sassoon
- 2 Barton Street – T E Lawrence [of Arabia]
- 3 Little College Street – Alfred Taylor/Oscar Wilde
- 4 Houses of Parliament - various
- 5 Westminster Abbey - various
- 6 Westminster Hall – Graham Chapman
- 7 Treasury – John Maynard Keynes
- 8 Birdcage Alley – Samuel Drybutter, Ian Harvey
- 9 King Street – Robert Whales and York Horner
- 10 War Office - T E Lawrence [of Arabia]
- 11 Trafalgar Square – Jackie Forster
- 12 National Gallery – Virginia Woolf, Greta Garbo
- 13 Charing Cross – Ian Baynham/Oscar Wilde
- 14 Adelphi Arches – Frank Champain
- 15 Charing Cross Hospital – Mary/Mark Weston