Trans History Timeline

1885

The Criminal Law Act makes homosexuality illegal.

Cross-dressing, being associated with homosexuality, put people at risk of imprisonment. The act sent Oscar Wilde to prison, where he composed The Ballad of Reading Gaol.

1946-1949

Trans man Michael Dillon undergoes 13 surgeries to construct a penis.

He is outed by the Sunday Express in 1958. His story is described in The First Man Made Man

1952

Christine Jorgensen's very public transition has a snowball effect

465 men and women write to her Danish psychiatrist, expressing their desire to 'change their sex'.

1966

Compton cafeteria riots

A San Fransisco riot takes place between police and queer patrons of the Compton Cafeteria, triggered by years of abuse and mistreatment that was undocumented by the media.

1969

A series of riots following a police raid on the Stonewall Inn kickstarted a national movement fighting for LGBTQ+ rights.

An online living monument Stonewall Forever was created in honour of the 50th anniversary of the riots.

Marsha P. Johnson, Joseph Ratanski and Sylvia Rivera at the NYC Pride Parade in 1973, by Gary LeGault.
Marsha P. Johnson was a transgender activist who was a key figure in the Stonewall riots. Dramamonster at English Wikipedia.

1972

Sweden becomes the first country to allow its citizens to legally change their sex.

Although it was groundbreaking at the time, it required sterilisation. This requirement was only abolished in 2013.

1999

Trans Day of Remembrance is held for the first time on November 20th 1999 to commemorate the murder of a trans woman, Rita Hester.

The day has since been observed annually to memorialise victims of transphobic violence.

2002

Jenny Bailey is elected to the city council of Cambridge, and she eventually becomes the UK's first transgender mayor in 2007.

This article incorrectly claims Bailey was the world's first trans mayor; this honour belongs to Georgina Beyer, who became mayor of Carterton, New Zealand, in 1995.

2004

The Gender Recognition Act 2004 gives trans people the right to legally change gender.

Although welcomed at the time, the act is now considered humiliating and intrusive, and activists are campaigning to have it reviewed.

2008

22-year old Isis King becomes the first openly trans woman to compete to be America's Next Top Model.

2009

Trans Day of Visibility is celebrated for the first time.

The day is created by trans activist Rachel Crandall, out of frustration that the only well-known day centred on trans people was Trans Day of Remembrance.

2013

The first UK Trans Pride takes place in Brighton.

2014

Denmark depathologises transgender identities, paving the way for self-determination of legal gender

2017

Donald Trump announces a ban on trans people serving in the US military

2018

Scotland celebrates its first Trans Pride in Edinburgh.

The second Trans Pride is held in Dundee in 2019. Sadly, the bid to bring the march to Aberdeen in 2020 fails because the event can't afford the fees the City Council would charge.

2017/2018

The Scottish Government begins a consultation to improve the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

The aim is to simplify the process, lower the age limit, and improve legal recognition for Non-Binary people. Currently, the process is a "humiliating, offensive and expensive red-tape nightmare" (James Morton, Scottish Trans Alliance)

September 2019

Merriam Webster adds singular pronoun 'they' to the dictionary.

January 2020

Dutch youtuber Nikkie de Jager comes out as transgender.

Thankfully, she receives an outpouring of love and support for taking back her power and foiling a blackmailer's plan to leak her story to the press and end her career.

March 2020

A day before Trans Day of Visibility, while the world is distracted by a global pandemic, Idaho passes two laws targeting vulnerable trans people.

The state's Civil Liberties Union files a lawsuit challenging the law in April.

31 March 2020

Aberdeen City Libraries and Four Pillars team up to publish Transgender Stories, an anthology of writing by trans people local to Aberdeen.

Learn more about transgender people and their histories from the following resources:

- My Genderation
- Trans Radio UK
- Our Story Scotland
- University of Victoria Transgender Archives

Trans Pride, Brighton, 2017

TDoV 31/03/2020

Four Pillars group Grampian T-Folk & Aberdeen City Libraries teamed up to create an e-book to celebrate Transgender Day of Visibility. Every story inside is written by someone local.

Download your copy from Aberdeen City Libraries BorrowBox.