

# The Book of Queer Prophets

The Book of Queer Prophets, 24 short stories on sexuality and religion curated by former Stonewall CEO Ruth Hunt, will be published on 28<sup>th</sup> May.

The publisher Harper Collins advertised on Twitter if anyone would like a proof copy and we were lucky to receive one.

SPN volunteer Gina Roberts (who submitted her PhD on 30<sup>th</sup> April!) wrote this insightful review: <https://www.ginamaya.co.uk/books-music/the-book-of-queer-prophets-curated-by-ruth-hunt.html> and if you'd like to borrow it, get in touch.

At previous events we partnered with Lighthouse Bookshop and they are doing deliveries, if you're interested in buying a copy:

<https://www.lighthousebookshop.com>

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## STEM Equals at the University of Strathclyde

Like our sister project Evidence Base, led by the University of Edinburgh, STEM Equals at the University of Strathclyde is one of eleven EPSRC funded projects under the Inclusion Matters initiative.

STEM Equals is a four-year research and impact project focused on creating more inclusive STEM communities for women and LGBT+ people in both academia and in industry.

Through an intersectional lens, the project examines working cultures within higher education and industry to understand specific challenges and to develop new initiatives to address systemic inequalities.

The project is funded by EPSRC with matched funding from the University of Strathclyde. The project industry partner is BAM Nuttall Ltd.

Read our latest newsletter Re/Act: Updates from the STEM Equals project.

Sign up to join us for our free event on 21<sup>st</sup> October LGBT in HE: Building networks, making change (spaces limited; registration required).

Stay tuned for soon-to-be-announced details for a special LGBT+ STEM Day event on 18<sup>th</sup> November.

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## **LGBT+ Network of Networks in Higher Education's Networks Got Talent Showcase: Derek's Entry**

The LGBT+ Network of Networks in Higher Education (@LGBTNoNHE) have an initiative to showcase the talents and skills of members, and to bring joy to LGBT+ communities during the current testing time. LGBT+ individuals are more likely to live alone or may not situate in an inclusive domestic

environment. #NetworksGotTalent

Enjoy the talents of Staff Pride Network Meeting Secretary Derek Williams and his improvisation on piano of The Village People's YMCA and Macho Man. Check out his own Derek Williams YouTube channel for much more. We hope this brings a smile to your face while we all do our best in isolation and socially distancing.

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## Chase the Rainbow



With social distancing and lots of places including many schools closing because of coronavirus, children are connecting with each other by painting colourful rainbows and putting them in their windows for others to see.

It's thought the rainbow trend started in Italy but has rapidly caught on in other countries including

the US, Canada, Spain and now the UK.

Stay safe and well,

Danielle

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## **Staff Pride Network [ONLINE] events: Virtual Socials**

This is a regular weekly Wednesday lunchtime coffee meetup 1-2pm & once a month (on the first Friday of the month) our evening social event (BYOB) 6:30pm-late.

Please drop in with a coffee and meet your LGBT+ colleagues and ask a committee member those questions you've been dying to have answered!

This event is open to all LGBT+/ally staff (or PhD students) of the University of Edinburgh.

More generally we have a broad range of people attending of all ages, disabilities and social abilities so please feel welcome to join us.

If you are nervous at all and would like to meet up with one of us first then please get in contact via our social media outlets or via email: [staffpridenetwork@ed.ac.uk](mailto:staffpridenetwork@ed.ac.uk)

For the duration of 'the event' we shall be meeting online via a video chat service (Jitsi) as it does not require a login, is browser-based (Chrome recommended) and is open-source.

Join the meeting: <https://meet.jit.si/StaffPrideNetworkSocial>

Mobile apps are available (Room Name: StaffPrideNetworkSocial):

iPhone App:  
<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/jitsi-meet/id1165103905>

Android App:  
<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.jitsi.meet>

Those without internet/smartphone/laptop can join by phone instead (standard charges apply), tap this:  
[+44.121.468.3154,,507231970#](tel:+44.121.468.3154,507231970#)

Please open the chat from the bottom left and you can add a nickname so people know who you are if not using a camera.

Note: Audio settings are found in the bottom right (three dots icon) under settings to check you have the right mic and speaker setup.

Jitsi FAQ

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## Register of Expertise

The Staff Pride Network is creating a subject specialist database bringing together scholars – PhD

students, early career researchers, and established academics – working on LGBTQIA+ topics, reflecting the combined strength of the University of Edinburgh expertise in the field.

## **What is the Register of Expertise?**

The register of expertise will be a database of scholars engaged with LGBTQIA+ research. The register will aim to enable knowledge exchange and facilitate contact between those with common interests or areas of research. The database would be comprehensive in terms of disciplines and research approaches.

The aim of the database is to contribute to the sharing of research and ideas across the university and beyond. This could be supported through a variety of both on and offline spaces. The base for this will be an online register of expertise in LGBTQIA+ research. Possibilities for development could be a regular feature in the Staff Pride Network Blog ('LGBTQIA+ research in focus'), a 'Staff Pride Network Seminar Series' to disseminate completed research and work in progress.

The information to provide will be: contact details, areas of interest, research (relevant books, publications, projects, other outputs), and a summary of current work.

## **How to join?**

If you are a scholar working on any aspect of LGBTQIA+ research and are interested in joining the 'Register of Expertise', please let us know by emailing our Research Officer – Edgar Rodriguez-Dorans at [edgar.rodriquez-dorans@ed.ac.uk](mailto:edgar.rodriquez-dorans@ed.ac.uk)

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# A welcome message from our new events officer David

My name is David and I've recently joined the Edinburgh Research Office as a Solicitor, Contracts Manager in the Research Contracts, Governance and Integrity team. I'm really passionate about Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and serve as Secretary of the Glass Network, the Law Society of Scotland's advisory body on LGBT+ matters and Scotland's organisation for LGBT+ legal professionals. Most recently I was elected to the University's Staff Pride Network as Social and Events Officer.



The Staff Pride Network is now running our weekly Wednesday lunchtime coffee meetups and our monthly social event online. More details are available at the following link with details on further events to follow in due course: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/staff-pride-network-virtual-social-tickets-101570819054>

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## Staff Pride Network Event: Lavender Menace LGBT+ Book Archive

Forty years ago, when Lavender Menace Bookshop opened, positive depictions of LGBT+ people in books were rare. One lesbian pulp novel of the 1950s was called Women in the

Shadows. There were similar shadows over all queer people in print and film. And legal censorship was alive and well in the 1980s. It simply had to be more focussed than before, as with Section 28.

Today our lives can be explored straightforwardly in fiction and non-fiction – but how did the change come? It was mainly LGBT+ writers and presses, along with radical bookshops and book distributors, who took the risk and opened the door. Their success surprised everyone and gave a lead which others followed.

But now many of the original LGBT+ and feminist presses have closed and well-known books have been forgotten. Lavender Menace Returns hopes to create an archive and database of the material we knew best. They want to also include LGBT+ writing of today to form one body of work telling the story of our community – and our demand for equality and honesty.

Follow Lavender Menace Returns on:

Twitter: @menacesof2019

FaceBook: lavendermenacereturns

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## **A response to the School LGBTQ+ Diversity Since Section 28/Clause 2a event**

February is LGBT history month and in Scotland, the focus is on that Clause 2a/Section 28 was repealed 20 years ago (<https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/news/2019/announcing-the-theme-f>



or-lgbt-history-month-2020/ ). There were three more years for it in England and Wales and the less said about Northern Ireland the better. I grew up under Section 28 and it was a confusing time. We had no internet, and no school or medical resources about homosexuality or bisexuality so all we had was the media and that was ... varied.

Most media articles were hysterical in tone. Gay men were either said to be or implied to be paedophiles, gay women were often ignored or considered frigid or man-hating and bisexuals needed to pick a side. Where there was variation in representation it was HUGE and isolated. The famous Brookside lesbian kiss (<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/our-work/campaigns/1994-same-sex-kiss-between-two-women-brookside-builds-first-kiss-between-two-men> ) was often reported for being “saucy” and framed through the male gaze. The gay kiss between Simon and Tony in EastEnders ([https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/loud-proud-eastenders-gay-kiss-mark-homer\\_uk\\_5725ad16e4b0a1e971cb84f0](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/loud-proud-eastenders-gay-kiss-mark-homer_uk_5725ad16e4b0a1e971cb84f0)) meanwhile should never have been shown before the watershed. Because sexuality was inherently sexual and not to be discussed.

For me growing up as bisexual in that world, and wanting to get married and have kids one day, “pick a side” meant picking men because there was no way I could have those things with a woman. I was still outspoken about gay rights but did not think that could apply for me. Things have changed but Section 28 cast a long shadow over the lives of so many people and has influenced the way children are taught, even today. There are more resources outside of school but they still take courage to find. It is still hard.

The Staff Pride Network held a schools event that highlighted the parallels between Section 28 and the treatment of trans rights and some attendees asked if there really was a parallel. For me, there are some obvious ones. Media representation of trans people has the same hysteria I remember from my childhood and teen years. Trans women are presented as sexually deviant, trans men are all but forgotten, non-binary identities? Pick a side. A recent Guardian Blind Dates column with a trans woman and a lesbian led to people claiming the trans woman was somehow tricking the lesbian. Thankfully she rebutted it in the strongest possible terms (<https://twitter.com/aigroe/status/1199431598929784838?s=20>).

I know the internet is a resource now, but not everyone has it in their homes. Imagine suspecting you are trans now in this media environment? How much courage would it take to look it up at school where people might see, particularly when everything you see is so hysterical and claims you are such a threat to the fabric of society (recalling Thatcher's words as she introduced Section 28)?

The fact that so many of the arguments and tropes that were used against lesbian, gay and bisexual people are being used against out trans siblings is something many of us can't ignore because we remember the impact those things had on our own lives, and our own opportunities to be who we really are.

The shadow of Section 28 is still long, and the impact on trans lives is still harder. Research from LGBTYS (<https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/media/1354/life-in-scotland-for-lgbt-young-people.pdf>) shows that when asked if they had a mental health problem, 40% of LGBT young people and 66.7% of transgender young people said "yes", while half (50%) of LGBT

young people and 63% of transgender young people experienced suicidal thoughts or behaviours. 73% of LGBT young people, and 83% of transgender young people, who had experienced at least one mental health problem, had been bullied at school and this shows why the work of organisations like LGBTYS is so vital.

The parallels are real. We need to learn from the past, I know the 80s and 90s are back in fashion but prejudice, discrimination and bigotry never should be.

*Siobhán*

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## **Staff Pride Network Event: School LGBTQ+ Diversity Since Section 28/Clause 2a**

It has been 20 years since the repeal of Section 28/Clause 2a in Scotland. This event was held to provide an understanding of current equality law pertaining to schools, to discuss the experiences and challenges that our students and staff had in school before and after Section 28's repeal, in particular young trans students' experiences.

This event was intended as a positive experience for staff and students to share their LGBTQ+ experiences, for the audience to learn about the similarities and differences of their times.

Event Co-Chairs are Elliot Byrom, EUSA Trans & Non-Binary

Liberation Officer and Sharon Cowan, Professor of Feminist and Queer Legal Studies.

Panellists were: Sarah Quinn (PrideSoc Faith rep who has done work in the background to section 28), Hazel Sanderson (PrideSoc Trans and Non-Binary Rep), Levi Mitchell (PrideSoc President) and LGBT Youth Scotland Head of National Programmes (including schools guidance), Cara Spence.

<https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/staffpridenetwork/>

<https://pridesoc.com/>

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