# Exploring Trans+ History Week: Celebrating Diversity, Remembering Roots, and Paving the Way for Equality



### What is Trans+ History Week?

Founded by QueerAF, Trans+ History Week (6 – 12 May 2024) is a vibrant celebration and educational endeavour that invites us all to delve into the rich, often overlooked history of trans, non-binary, gender diverse, and intersex people. This week aims to bridge the past and the future, reinforcing the notion that "knowledge of our past is absolutely fundamental for our future liberation", as the organisers eloquently put it.

In an era where anti-trans rhetoric is distressingly prevalent and hate crimes against trans people have surged by a staggering 186% over the past five years, the importance of uplifting and supporting the trans community cannot be overstated. Trans+ History Week is a rallying cry, affirming that trans people have always been here and will continue to thrive.

### A Weighty and Symbolic Start Date

Trans+ History Week kicks off on 6 May, a date imbued with historical significance. This day marks the anniversary of the Nazi raid on the world's first-ever trans clinic in 1933 – the Institute of Sexology. This pioneering academic institution was not only a beacon for LGBTQ+ rights but also a testament to our ongoing struggle against tyranny and erasure. The raid, which resulted in the destruction of the institute's invaluable library, serves as a stark reminder of the importance of preserving our history.

### Why Do We Need Trans+ History Week?

#### To Remember That Trans People Have Always Been Here

In the face of a rising narrative that misrepresents trans and gender non-conforming identities as contemporary fads, Trans+ History Week asserts the timelessness and profundity of trans experiences. Delving into trans histories reveals that these identities are anything but new. The profound internal experience of gender is intrinsic to many, transcending mere labels or trends. Older trans folk often recount lifelong feelings of incongruence with their assigned genders, showcasing the enduring and deep-rooted nature of their identities.

The historical record is rich with examples of gender diversity. The Galli, priests in the cult of Cybele from Roman times, occupied a third-gender role. Joan of Arc, revered for her martial prowess, defied gender norms in the 15th century. Michael Dillon, the first transgender man to undergo phalloplasty, broke ground in the mid-20th century. These instances underscore that trans identities have permeated and challenged the gender binary across eras and cultures.

The 2021 Census in England and Wales acknowledged this with a landmark question about gender identity, revealing that 0.5% of the population identifies differently from their birth-assigned gender. It’s a call to action for respect and solidarity.

#### Celebrating the Diversity of the Trans Community

Trans+ History Week is also a time to celebrate the myriad expressions of trans identities globally. By spotlighting diverse cultures and experiences, we challenge the notion that being trans is uniquely Western or modern. The hijra community in South Asia, recognised as a distinct third gender, plays a vital role in the social tapestry of the region. This community's existence since the 13th century illuminates the breadth and depth of global gender diversity.

QueerAF’s guided resources and documentaries, such as those on the hijra, provide profound insights into these varied experiences.

#### Recognising Trans Contributions to LGBTQ+ Liberation

Trans people have long been at the forefront of LGBTQ+ liberation movements. From Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera at the East Coast's Stonewall uprising in 1969 to countless unnamed heroes around the world, they have fought tirelessly for rights that many now take for granted. These revolutionaries laid the groundwork for the Pride celebrations we know today, demanding an inclusive movement where every letter of the LGBTQ+ spectrum finds representation.

### Let's Honour and Educate

Trans+ History Week is more than a look back; it's a forward march towards recognition, respect, and equality. Download QueerAF’s Trans+ History Week workbook and immerse yourself in the stories and contributions of trans people—stories that remind us of our shared humanity and the resilience of our vibrant community. Because our past is not just history; it's the foundation for a liberated future.