



## A Blue Plaque for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of The first National Transvestism & Transexualism Conference

Leeds Civic Trust is unveiling a blue plaque to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First national trans conference which took place at Leeds University in March 1974.

The blue plaque celebrates the significance of this conference and the impact it had on the Trans community in the decades that followed.

The importance of the plaque was underlined by the award of a temporary rainbow plaque in 2018 which went on display in the Parkinson Building at the University of Leeds.

The blue plaque ensures that there is now a permanent reminder of this important event that the city played host to in 1974.

The blue plaque unveiling is part of a series of events celebrating this important historical event.

The wording for the blue plaque is as follows:

**'Transvestism and Transsexualism in Modern Society'**

This groundbreaking conference took place in this building in March 1974.

Convened by trans people of Leeds,  
it was the first trans rights conference to be organised  
by trans people in the United Kingdom.

**Leeds Civic Trust Director Martin Hamilton said:**

“This conference was of huge significance in that it was the first conference on trans issues convened by trans people in the UK, bringing these issues into the mainstream. Many of our plaques tell the stories behind people and buildings, but events and gatherings are equally as important and this blue plaque is a means of drawing attention to a moment in history that many people will not know about.”

**Blue Plaque Nominee GossipGrrrl said:**

“The 1974 conference was something of an urban legend - talked about by members of the local trans community but with very little in the way of recognition for it by the rest of Leeds. The 50th anniversary seemed like the right time to nominate this landmark event to take its place in the story of our city.”

The plaque will be unveiled by TBC

The blue plaque will be unveiled on 15 March, 16:00 at Leeds University Union, Lifton Place, Leeds, LS2 9JZ.

**Notes for editors:**

**Information on the First National Transvestism and Transsexualism & Conference**

In March 1974, The University of Leeds and the then Leeds Polytechnic played host to the first national Transvestism and Transsexualism conference in the United Kingdom. This momentous occasion was marked by the attendance of over 100 guests, many of whom identified as trans themselves, the conference is seen by many as the beginning of understanding and recognising Trans rights here in the UK.

The weekend-long conference in association with the Gay Liberation Front and Leeds Students' Union, was spread across various venues in Leeds city centre, with the conference report noting that the hospitality industry was openly welcoming of delegates even though the organisers anticipated some hostility. In another sign of acceptance, the report also noted that the hotel and hospitality industry allowed delegates to use toilets that they were most comfortable with. The city as a whole was largely welcoming, with local radio stations broadcasting an advert for the conference in the days leading up to the event and numerous media outlets reporting on the conference in the days that followed.

The conference included lectures from psychologists, medical professionals and leading activists, many of whom were trans themselves, covering topics such as gender roles, gender reassignment and the position of Trans individuals in modern society. Conference guests also attended workshops to discuss family responses, the legal status of the Trans community and the difference between sex and gender. On the Saturday night of the conference, a large disco was held at the University. Many of the Trans guests were accompanied by their partners (in many cases, wives and girlfriends) and the disco was well attended by non-Trans students of the university as well, further contributing to the wider aims of encouraging social acceptance of the Trans community.

Images:

Image1 – Leeds University Union. Image courtesy of Leodis, copyright Leeds Libraries

Image 2 – Headrow, Guilford Hotel. Image courtesy of Leodis, copyright Leeds Libraries

Image 3 – The original rainbow plaque

**For more information about the unveiling, please contact Martin Hamilton, Director of Leeds Civic Trust on 07717 003685**

### **About Leeds Civic Trust**

Leeds Civic Trust is a charity established in 1965 that promotes the improvements of Leeds in the spheres of planning, architecture, heritage, and city amenities. It is responsible for the “Blue Plaque” scheme in the city.

Leeds Civic Trust is proud of our city and takes inspiration from its achievements. We celebrate and promote the best of Leeds and its people.

The historic Blue Plaques scheme in Leeds celebrates people, places, events and buildings that have made an important contribution to the city development.

For more information about the unveiling, please contact Martin Hamilton, Director of Leeds Civic Trust on 07717 003685

**The blue plaque unveiling will mark the launch of a series of events celebrating the anniversary of the conference which includes:**

#### **The Little Prince, 100 years of Angela Morley: 10 March, 14:00**

A special screening dedicated to Angela Morley who arranged and orchestrated music for this film, to mark the centenary of her birth.

[Book here](#)

#### **Contested Bodies, Curator’s Tour: Friday 15 March, 17:00 – 17:30**

Join Dr Laura Claveria for a tour of the exhibition ‘Contested Bodies’. ‘Contested Bodies’ interrogates and celebrates the performativity of gender as a social construct and features artworks from over 40 artists across the gender spectrum.

This is a free event, but booking is required

[Book here](#)

**Contested Bodies, in conversation with Tiegan Handley: Friday 15 March, 17:30 – 18:00**

Join GossipGrrl (She/her) with Leeds – based artist Tiegan Handley (they/them) who was commissioned by The Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery to create four new temporary banners for Parkinson Court alongside the '[Contested Bodies](#)' exhibition.

This is a free event, but booking is required

[Book here](#)

**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference: Saturday 16 March 11:00 – 17:00**

Saturday 16 March marked the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first Trans conference to happen in the UK. GossipGrrl has partnered with Leeds city Museum to bring you a day of talks and discussions, workshops and tours.

This is a fee event but booking is required for the event and individual workshops. For full details please click [here](#)

**100 years of Angela Morley at Leeds City Museum: Saturday 16 march 11:00 – 17:00**

Leeds City Museum will play host to several performances of Angela Morely's compositions throughout the day, culminating in a final performance of them all at 16:30

**Free entry no booking required.**

**Remember I was here: Sunday 31 March, 18:30 – 20:00**

Taking place at The Bookish type, join poet Dalton Harris for a poetry workshop, using poetry as a way to find your voice. Using words to make poetry or protest.

This is a free event but booking is required

[Book here](#)