

June 2019



Dear Club Members,

Fifty years ago, on the 28th June 1969 the Stonewall riots began. In America at that time being gay was illegal, and there were very few places where gay people were welcomed. Greenwich Village in New York City was home to people leading a Bohemian lifestyle, many who felt they didn't "fit in" elsewhere ended up living in the neighbourhood. Bars opened up in the area where people could openly be gay, but police raids were common, and many people were arrested simply for wearing clothing that belonged to members of the opposite sex. Women would be arrested if they were not wearing 3 piece of feminine clothing.

The Stonewall Inn was owned by the Mafia, every week they would pay off the police, as the inn had no liquor license. On the night of the 28th June police raided the Inn, but unusually the owners hadn't received a tip off that a raid was going to happen. Over 200 people were in the bar that night, along with 2 undercover policemen, and 2 undercover policewomen. They had entered the bar prior to the raid to gather visual evidence, and rung for back up using the bars pay phone. Usually during a raid people would be lined up and have their identification checked, but this time people in line refused to produce identification. The police therefore decided to transport many individuals to the local police station. Those that weren't arrested gathered outside the entrance, and quickly a crowd grew as passers by stopped in the street. As people were loaded in to a police wagon violence broke out, with some police officers taking refuge inside the bar. Riot police ended up being involved and a night of violence followed. On 6 following nights people again took to the streets and there were further clashes with the police. The New York Times, New York Post and Daily News all covered the riots, and this coverage is probably led to one of the key legacies of the Stonewall Riots. Within 2 years there were gay rights groups in every major American city, and many in Canada, Australia and Western Europe. One year after the riots the first Gay Pride marches happened in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago.

One of the things that made the Stonewall Inn different to many other gay bars in Greenwich Village was the willingness to admit all members of what we would now call the LGBT+ community (at the time the word gay would have been used to describe all members of this community). Some of the leading activists of the riots were Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, both trans women of colour. Johnson was one of the first to stand up to police intimidation on that night. Marsha was a pioneer in campaigning for equal rights amongst the most marginalised of the LGBT+ community. The New York Times published her obituary in March 2018, 25 years after her death as part of a series entitled "Overlooked", the link is at the bottom, I really recommend you read it. Earlier this month New York police apologised for the actions of officers during the riots. In 2000 the Stonewall Inn was designated a National Historic Landmark, and in 2016 President Obama announced the establishment of the Stonewall National Monument Site, to be cared for by the National Park Service.

Finally, when developing my themes for the Time Travellers Club I try to shed light on periods of history that are maybe less well known, or highlight the work and lives of individuals who have otherwise been marginalised. I am not a member of the LGBT+ community, but have tried to make

sure I did my research before writing the letter this month, and hope I have written it in a way that conveys respect and love for all human beings, whilst sharing information in a factual manner. Any errors are my own, I continue to try to do better, learn more, share more, and live my life according to my belief that all human beings are created equal and deserve to be treated equally.

Happy Spinning

Katie

Further Reading-

The Stonewall Riots-

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stonewall_riots

<https://www.history.com/topics/gay-rights/the-stonewall-riots>

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2018/06/28/what-were-the-stonewall-riots-the-story-of-the-historic-demonstrations-on-their-49th-anniversary/>

What made Stonewall different-

<https://glreview.org/article/article-509/>

New York Times Obituary of Marsha P. Johnson

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/obituaries/overlooked-marsha-p-johnson.html>

Police Apology for their actions during the Stonewall Riots

<https://nyti.ms/2Xyd5TY>

Time article highlighting differences in the accounts of the Stonewall riots

<https://time.com/5579971/christopher-st-stonewall-history/>

Fibre Content- In case your parcel is missing the label
Superfine (18.5 micron) Merino