

# FACES OF BANKSIDE

by Better Bankside

Photography by Eve Milner LRPS

Curated by Jenny Nash

This exhibition is dedicated to the diversity and uniqueness of the LGBTQ+ community who work and live in Bankside. Those featured in the exhibition have given accounts of the places in the neighbourhood that are special to them and how they've seen things change for the LGBTQ+ community in the area over the last 50 years. We would like to thank all of our twelve 'faces' for sharing their special and very personal stories.

## **Nazir Uddin** *Tate Community Gardens*



**What makes the location you were photographed in Bankside special to you?**

This is a nice place. I feel very relaxed here. Over the years, many LGBTQ+ venues have unfortunately closed in the area, so I am keen for Local Authorities to see saving the venues left as a priority, it is very important for our LGBTQ+ community.

**How do you think things have changed for the LGBTQ+ community in the past 50 years?**

This year, we're celebrating 50 years of Pride in London, so it is important to reflect on the major moments in LGBTQ+ history. At that first UK event in 1972, around 2,000 participants marched together, calling for gay rights. In the 1980s, progress sped up rapidly as more LGBTQ+ people came out and demanded equal treatment and in 1989, Stonewall was founded to fight back against Section 28. The 1990s saw the World Health Organisation declassify same-sex attraction as a mental illness, and two openly gay MPs are elected in the 1997 elections. In 2010, we saw the introduction of same-sex marriage across the UK. So, it's fair to say we've come an incredibly long way since 1972. By 2019, 1.5 million people celebrated and protested at Pride in London in support of LGBTQ+ rights. But looking around us today, it's clear that we still haven't reached equality. There are 69 countries that have laws that criminalise homosexuality, and nearly half of these are in Africa. We must continue to fight for them as well.

## **Victor Chamberlain** *The Gladstone Arms*

**What makes the location you were photographed in Bankside special to you?**

I picked the Glad because it's my local pub that I've lived around the corner from since moving to Borough & Bankside. It's a place I feel welcome and comfortable and where I can be myself. I've enjoyed many happy times there with partners, friends and family. It's also a place with



real heritage, having previously been a gay bar, which is also what I wanted to celebrate by being photographed here. The team at the Glad are very welcoming and reach out to all parts of the community. I also picked the Glad because William Gladstone was a Liberal Prime Minister, and I'm a Liberal Democrat local councillor, so I thought it is a poignant way to give a nod to my political role in Southwark, Borough and Bankside.

### **How do you think things have changed for the LGBTQ+ community in the past 50 years?**

In many ways, London is a much stronger and prouder city. We now understand, recognise and celebrate greater diversity in the LGBTQ+ community. It's fantastic that so many people feel empowered to be themselves, but I still feel there are really acute challenges we haven't addressed as a city and a borough in Southwark. With hate crimes on the rise, many people still don't feel safe in their communities, services are not well designed for LGBTQ+ people and the number of safe spaces has dramatically dropped in London. LGBTQ+ safe spaces are vital for the community to come together and promote and celebrate different queer communities. I am really delighted to live in London and in Southwark, it's been a place that has allowed me to lead an open proud lifestyle and I feel it's a place that provides genuine opportunities for lots of different people and which really embraces the LGBTQ+ community.



**Adam Huber**  
***Millennium Bridge***

### **What makes the location you were photographed in Bankside special to you?**

I first came to London in 2014 for a 1-month 'Study Abroad Programme'. Essentially, we ate lovely food, toured museums and watched plays, getting extra college credits in the process. I was 18yrs old at the time and was away from everyone I knew, friends, family, and just here on my own for the first time. I took it as an opportunity to reinvent myself and be who I wanted to be, without worrying about explaining it to everyone. Part of this was dating guys for the first time. One of these first dates was an evening walk around the city. We went to the Founder Arms, and I tried a gin and tonic for the first time, which I hated. My, how so many things have changed! After that, we walked down Bankside shore and over the Millennium Bridge. This was the first place I ever held a man's hand. I was terrified, I thought everyone was going to stare at me or throw something at me, but no one batted an eyelid. It was a defining moment for me. I will always remember thinking, 'this is fine, nothing bad has to happen'.

### **How do you think things have changed for the LGBTQ+ community in the past 50 years?**

I remember growing up in California, when gay marriage was illegal in the US, and thinking I would never be able to marry the person I love. Now, I live with my husband of two years, and I am still amazed at how much has changed in my lifetime alone. Looking back to 50 years ago, I have to salute all of the generations that came before that wanted to give us a life they couldn't have. My dad is gay, and he came out when I was twelve. He grew up in a Catholic, military family and I think back to what he went through: supressing his emotions, finding a wife, having kids and then coming out in his late 30s. I've had such a different experience even just a couple of years on. It seems like, with each generation, the path to self-discovery is becoming shorter and shorter. I'm amazed at kids now that are out and proud at 13, or younger, who are being themselves and not caring what anybody thinks. It makes me happy to think about what's coming next!

**Dor Chappell**  
***Bankside Shorefront***

**What makes the location you were photographed in Bankside special to you?**

I chose this location on the Bankside because I am closer to the calm water that flows below us and it's my favourite place to go alone when the tide is out to reflect.



**How do you think things have changed for the LGBTQ+ community in the past 50 years?**

Since my first Pride in London there have been many changes with LGBTQ+ people now able to walk freely through the streets, and on a positive note, we have all blended in together very well. Older lesbians are restricted because they are not all great on computers and would like to meet and socialise more, but Pride events bring us together.



**Jamie Eagles and Carlo Flores**  
***Tate Modern Community Garden***

**What makes the location you were photographed in Bankside special to you?**

We both work for different companies, in an office adjacent to The Tate. Its pure coincidence that we are in the same building, although working for different companies. We regularly visited the Tate before our jobs placed us in Bankside, and we often meet to see exhibitions and visit the members' cafe or visit the Community Garden, where we are photographed. This is a hidden gem, an amazing secret garden, maintained by Bankside Open Spaces Trust for the enjoyment of the Bankside Community.

**How do you think things have changed for the LGBTQ+ community in the past 50 years?**

Attitudes have changed for the better, and we have fought hard for rights, and we owe a debt of gratitude for those members of the community who fought for what we now have. However, there is still progress to be made on rights and recognition of the Trans community and on the LGBTQIA+ communities' attitudes to race. Bankside is a neighbourhood where we feel safe making those little gestures that most people take for granted, like holding your partner's hand, and not fearing verbal or physical assault. We hope for a time when the LGBTQIA+ community do not feel the need to self-edit their behaviour in public spaces due to fear.

**Kate Howell**  
***Borough Market***

**What makes the location you were photographed in Bankside special to you?**

Borough Market came into my life about 11 years ago and I'm not sure I'll ever leave it. It is just somewhere that is incredibly special for so many people, for London and for me. Outside of the amazing food and our efforts around sustainability and community, I love it because of the people, and I feel the connection between people when I walk through the space, there's real energy. I also just adore the



fact that there's somewhere that you can go and do your shopping and chat to somebody, which is so increasingly rare these days in the socially isolated society that we're becoming, when you can go to checkout and not talk to anybody. On the day I had the photograph I wasn't feeling tip-top, but as soon as we were in the market I relaxed - the atmosphere, the food, just the kindness of the people meant I couldn't choose anywhere else really.

### **How do you think things have changed for the LGBTQ+ community in the past 50 years?**

I want to say immeasurably, but they are measurable. Even within the last five to six years there's been a huge amount of change within our society around the visibility of LGBTQ+ community in mainstream marketing. But there's still real importance in an exhibition like *Faces of Bankside*, not only to celebrate the community, but increase that visibility. I still occasionally find myself coming out every day when you are asked what your husband does. Of course, society is far more accepting now, and I can see this through the eyes of my 13yr old goddaughter, it's not even a worry for them. That certainly wasn't the case for me, so huge leaps forward, but people are still fighting every day for everybody just to be on the same page as everybody else, because that's what this is really about, it's about equity. It is still important to be talking about this and making individual changes on a daily basis. A friend of mine says you can't change the world, but you can change your small bit of it. That's why on an individual level we have a responsibility and why it was important for me to take part in the exhibition.



**Lip Wieckowski**  
**London LGBTQ+ Community Centre**

#### **What makes the location you were photographed in Bankside special to you?**

Working here has been really significant in cementing my belief that community spaces are extremely important in helping people grow into themselves. What I've valued most is seeing people come in and learn who they are, because many of us in the community don't know who we are until we're given the space to explore. There are many places in the city that are amazing for parties and lots of other things but places where you can sit and chill and discover yourself are really important.

### **How do you think things have changed for the LGBTQ+ community in the past 50 years?**

I think there's been many changes for the community in the past 50 years, lots of good, some not so good. I feel like it's one step forward two steps back. A lot of people in the community feel like the fight is over, because they're comfortable with what they have. But our community is very broad, and there are many of us still being attacked by the government and by members of the public, with legislation being discreetly pushed through removing the progress that has been made. It's pessimistic to say, but I think it's important to remember that Pride was and is a protest. Because there's still a lot of work to be done and we need to have Pride to continue to remind ourselves, each other and the world that more progress has to be made. One thing we're really trying to do at the London LGBTQ+ Community Centre is to give room for joy as well as protest. It's important to remember our past traumas, but it's also equally important to remember how amazing it is to be part of this community and have fun.

**Dede Foley**  
***The Bridge***



**What makes the location you were photographed in Bankside special to you?**

I chose where I work here at The Bridge, because this is a very special place to me. I lost my mum seven years ago and I've been in this role for four-and-a-half years and before that I went through a really bad period. When I came to work here, in some ways it saved me. I used to come here and do personal training, so I knew The Bridge, but it was only when I started working here that I found the perfect environment that suits me with lovely and supportive colleagues, members and friends.

**How do you think things have changed for the LGBTQ+ community in the past 50 years?**

That's a really interesting question. I'm 55yrs old and I came out when I was around 19yrs old, which is a long time ago. When I first came out, it was a very different place, with clubs and bars still all blacked out and you'd be knocking on the door to get into them. But I'll be honest, I've never ever experienced any homophobia in my life. And it's an interesting subject because people want to talk about that side because lots of people have. I was always just sure about who I was, and I didn't really care - I was just Dede and I just happened to be gay. The one big change is that is definitely easier to be gay now. I don't really feel like I have to consistently come out myself - straight people in general are much more aware of how gay people are, so it's not this big thing or big deal. So, I think we are in in a really good place, and I really hope that those who are coming out now are aware that actually we are in a fairly safe environment. Of course, there will always be people who hate, but it's not because you're gay particularly, they just hate anyway, so it's any excuse to hate and I truly believe that. So yes, I think it is a better place and a kinder place and working here has really opened my eye to that.



**Michael Stanley**  
***Park Street***

**What makes the location you were photographed in Bankside special to you?**

My reason for choosing this spot for the shoot, was initially firmly rooted in my past. The memories I have for this area from my late teens to mid-twenties are some of the saddest and most fond memories I hold and to be honest it was all very melancholic at first, but the more I spoke with Eve [the photographer], the more it went from melancholic to hope and pride. I'm so happy to be able to share my experience, and feel like I'm finally being given a chance to be seen for more than just my sexuality or the colour of my skin, but as a whole.

**How do you think things have changed for the LGBTQ+ community in the past 50 years?**

I only came out as bisexual about ten years ago and I feel like the biggest changes there has been for the LGBTQI+ community are around acceptance and understanding. Coming from a Caribbean family, anything that was even remotely homosexual was seen as wrong or as my dad would say "nasty" and it made accepting my sexuality and coming out to my family an incredibly frightening experience. But the conversations being had, and the actions being taken, especially in the last fifteen to twenty years, have helped a lot of the older generation understand that we're just people

and that love is love regardless of gender. Things aren't perfect and there's still a long way to go but a hell of a lot of progress has been made.

**Terry Morris**  
***Hopton's Almshouses***

**What makes the location you were photographed in Bankside special to you?**

I love my flat in the Hopton's Almshouses in Bankside because it's such a wonderful and exciting area to live in. It embraces multiculturality and it embraces different sexual orientations and religious and cultural views. It's a great and very friendly place to live and I think it's the centre of the centre of London.



**How do you think things have changed for the LGBTQ+ community in the past 50 years?**

Apart from very small pockets of bigotry, I love London, not just because it's cosmopolitan, but because it's one of the most tolerant cities in the world. I love the fact that on Blackfriars Station and on others now it says 'London, you can be whoever you want to be and love who you want to love' - which is like two fingers to all these bigots. When I came down in 1969, I went to the famous A&B club which isn't there anymore. I was 19 yrs old and I remember going to the club and even though it was legal, looking around to make sure that nobody saw me, especially pupils, when I became a teacher. Things have changed for the better. Now there are over 300 gay clubs, and in Soho you just walk around and it's great to see so many men holding hands in public. Also, as a teacher, it is wonderful to see there is now a gay teachers association and a gay policemen association. It's great to see that the law is on our side, no matter what these minority of bigots want to say. And I suspect walking through Soho, if I was attacked for holding a boyfriend's hand, I think the majority of people would come to my aid, even the ones who might be slightly bigoted because they see a crime going on. So massive change for the better.



**Julie Wade**  
***Southwark Cathedral***

**What makes the location you were photographed in Bankside special to you?**

My place of significance is close to my heart as I light candles on special occasions in remembrance of my parents i.e., anniversaries, birthdays, Christmas. I get strength and comfort in the cathedral thinking of all the wonderful times spent with them and caring for them both till the end of life.

**How do you think things have changed for the LGBTQ+ community in the past 50 years?**

I've had great times over the years going to many Prides in different places but there used to be more events in different parks like Battersea Park and around, but that stopped years ago. For me, those were the best Prides. I've also noticed that many places for women have closed down apart from a few. I find that as we get older there is less places to go for mature women as I myself would not want to club or go to a bar with much younger women. But it's wonderful that this generation has so much for them now to enjoy, so it's still all positive.



**James Dunne**  
***Bankside shore***

**What makes the location you were photographed in Bankside special to you?**

Why is this little slither of sand special to me? For the past year or so now, I've been really enjoying this idea of romanticising my own life and think the beach is the perfect place to do just that. A stone's throw from the beating heart of London, there is this quiet and close

perch that gives space to observe not only the business of the world around you, but to also observe oneself introspectively. It's beautiful, this intimate corner whose history is that of those who find it, the setting for first kisses or photoshoots or for those who seek a quiet seat to listen. Bankside beach will always be one of those important places to me as I'm sure it is for so many others for many other reasons.

**How do you think things have changed for the LGBTQ+ community in the past 50 years?**

Honestly, I can't speak for many of them personally as I've only been alive for the past 20! When I speak to my older peers within the community, they speak of the atrocities many of us had to live through, the Aids pandemic, Section 28 and ultimately being treated like a second-class citizen just because of who they fell in love with, so yes I can say it has gotten better than that, I've never had to denounce my sexuality publicly or hide who I am (I know this still isn't the case for everyone and I am so appreciative of the privilege I had growing up). With that being said, I still see the need to love and to fight, and for those of us who can, to be present and be vocal. Recent events have shown us that these basic human rights the community fought so hard for can be revoked, and I hate to say the future isn't looking as bright, but with more inclusive education and community building like what's happening here in Bankside, I think love will prevail!

## **PHOTOGRAPHER EVE MILNER LRPS**

Eve Milner is a Bankside resident and has lived in the area for over 10 years. As a commercial photographer she creates media content for a variety of businesses including the Diocese of Southwark, The Robes Project, and United St Saviour's Charity. Her personal work explores identity, belonging, gender and ageing through longer term local social documentary projects in partnership with United St Saviour's Charity. Her work has won competitions including the V & A's 'My Paul Strand' and the Dulwich Picture Gallery's 'Rembrandt's Light', and has been exhibited in London, Glasgow, Barcelona and Croatia.

Collaborating with Better Bankside on this show '*Faces of Bankside*' has been to celebrate 50 years of Pride in London.

*'As a proud ally of the queer community, it has been an honour to work on this project to create portraits with local people, who I hope feel seen and celebrated.'*

To see more of her work @evemilnerphotography

## **JENNY NASH SULLENRIOT CURATION**

Jenny Nash (representing Eve Milner) is a non-binary photographer and curator based in Hackney, originally from Yorkshire. They mentor clients from Scotland to the south coast of the UK who engage in a wide range of artistic practices. Jenny welcomes all ability levels into their client base from students and emerging artists to well established practitioners in the arts. For services offered, please visit Instagram @SullenRiotCuration

For Jenny's auto-ethnographic photography research "An Exploration of Auto-Pathography Within Phototherapy" they were awarded the Leyden Gallery Emerging Artist Award in 2020 and shortlisted by the New Emergence Art Prize in 2021 for their work "Sinnestäuschung".

Jenny Nash's own work has been exhibited and published internationally since 2015 and their work "Forget Me Not" is currently on display at Echo's Studio in Sao Paulo, Brazil. To see their work visit @SullenRiotPhotography

## **ABOUT BETTER BANKSIDE**

Powered by the people of Bankside, Better Bankside leads innovative economic, environmental and social action in one of the world's great neighbourhoods, responding inventively to urban challenges and celebrating the differences that define the area as London's Other Side. By co-creating a programme with Banksiders, Better Bankside brings benefits to businesses and Banksiders, improving the experience of the neighbourhood for everyone.

Better Bankside was one of the first Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in the country, established in 2005. The Bankside BID covers the area from the riverside in the north to Borough Station and along Great Suffolk Street in the south. It extends to Blackfriars Road and Hatfields in the west, and stretches east beyond Borough High Street to Trinity Street. Visit [betterbankside.co.uk](http://betterbankside.co.uk) for more information and follow us on @bankside\_london.