

LGBTQ+ HISTORY MONTH NEWSLETTER

University of Leicester School of Physics and Astronomy
3rd February 2021, Edition 1

LGBTQ+ in STEM: Spotlight on Jessica Mink

Today, we're highlighting the work of Jessica Mink from the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics.

Jessica is a software developer, data archivist and positional astronomer. After earning her Bachelors and Masters degrees from M.I.T., Jessica worked in

finance for a short time before returning to astronomy at Cornell University and her alma mater. During this time, she contributed to many important discoveries in planetary science, including the discovery of the rings of Uranus and Neptune and the extent of Pluto's atmosphere.

At her current institution, Jessica has been a leader in



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Today's donation link is [Gaysians](#), an organisation promoting visibility and acceptance for the LGBTQ+ South Asian community. Donate [here](#) to help this self-funded organisation grow and reach more people.

the field of astronomy software. Not only has she developed reduction pipelines for both space and ground-based telescope spectrographs, but she has also written a number of widely-used astronomy packages, including [WSTools](#) and [RVSAO](#).

In 2011, Jessica publicly came out as a transgender woman. She has spoken out about her experiences of transitioning and its impact on her professional life in

numerous [interviews](#), [talks](#), [articles](#), [podcasts](#) and [blog posts](#). Jessica is also currently a member of the [CSWA](#) and [SGMA](#) committees on women, gender, and sexual orientation in astronomy, and in 2015 she co-organised the [Inclusive Astronomy Conference](#).

You can learn more about Jessica, including her work in astronomy, her journey with gender identity, and her passion for cycling, on [her website](#)!



Photo credit: Aram Boghosian for the Boston Globe

EVENTS THIS WEEK

6th Feb: OUTing the past 2021

This Saturday, [join Leeds Museums and Galleries to learn more about LGBT+ issues](#), ranging from the history of asexuality to queer visibility in Nigeria. This event is part of the Festival of LGBT History; more dates [here](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS & RESOURCES

Book for younger readers: [Gender Swapped Fairy Tales](#), by Johnathan Plackett and Katie Fransman. With stories like "Jaqueline and the Beanstalk", these twists on classic children's tales confront unconscious bias and gender roles in a simple yet thought-provoking way. Available at [Sevenoaks Bookshop](#) and [Bookshop.org](#).

Book for older readers: [Black on Both Sides: A Racial](#)

[History of Trans Identity](#). In this book, author C. Riley Snorton highlights the lives of Black trans figures and discusses the intersection of Black and trans identities throughout modern history. Available at [bookshop.org](#) and [Pages of Hackney](#).

Podcast: [#QueerAF](#), by National Student Pride, shares stories from different young LGBT+ people each week. Tune in to hear about LGBT+

issues, history, and comedy. Available on [Spotify](#) and [Apple Podcasts](#).

Livestream: [CtrlAltQuin](#) is a queer Twitch streamer whose shows are a mixture of improv, comedy and gaming. They are a part of the [Rainbow Arcade](#), a community of LGBTQIA2+ streamers dedicated to inclusivity in gaming, and talk openly on [Twitter](#) about their experiences as a LGBT+ person of colour. Find their Twitch [here](#).



Photo credit: ITV

Today's key figure in British LGBTQ+ history is [Lisa Power, MBE](#). Born in 1954, Lisa has openly identified as lesbian since the 1970s. At the end of the decade, Lisa joined the [Lesbian & Gay Switchboard](#) in London, which provided information and help for homosexual people in the UK. She then went on to work at the National AIDS Helpline before becoming the HIV policy officer for Hackney Council and the Association of London Authorities. In 1988, Lisa became Secretary-General of the [International Lesbian and Gay Association](#), before [co-founding Stonewall](#) in 1989 in direct response to the introduction of the government's anti-gay legislation, [Section 28](#). She was the [first openly LGBT person to speak about gay rights at the United Nations](#) in 1991, and was [honoured with the Order of the British Empire](#) in 2011 for her services to the LGBT+ community.

Contact us

To recommend scientists, events, donation links, books and podcasts for future editions, please contact the PGR Reps at the emails below:

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