

Hamish: Hello and welcome to Queer as Fact! I'm Hamish.

Alice: I'm Alice.

Eli: I'm Eli.

H: And by our powers combined in a sort of Voltron formation, we are Queer as Fact. We are a loosely fortnightly queer history podcast, and each episode one of us will present a person, a place, a thing, or a topic from queer history, discuss it in depth and then probably laugh about it a bunch. This week we're talking about the sex life of John Maynard Keynes, the notable English economist, from 1901 to 1915.

[intro music plays]

H: Before we begin, our very first Queer as Fact correction. Hurray! Except not really hurray because I mispronounce somebody's name like a million names. I call Keynes' wife, Lydia Lopokova, Lydia Lopovka, which is not her name at all, and I do it every time I say her name, so every time you hear the words Lydia Lopovka you should mentally substitute it with Lydia Lopokova and then also probably my embarrassed face. And with that, on with the show.

Some content warnings for this episode. We speak about sex from beginning to end, which may be an advertisement, and there's also one mention of a suicide that may not be a suicide, and may in fact be a murder by the Russian government. If that's not your thing, we have plenty of other material that I'm sure you'll love. We've compiled a companion piece to this episode where we've included some information and photos to help you get a grip on just who exactly was putting what in whom throughout this time period.

For those of you not familiar with Keynes, his name is spelt K-e-y-n-e-s which sounds like "keens" which means we're going to mispronounce it at least once in this episode. The rest of his name is John Maynard Keynes, except nobody called him John except for his mother. He was called, for most of his life, Maynard.

A: Oh!

H: Yeah. Which I never knew.

A: Because I always wondered why we said John Maynard Keynes, I was like, I assume he didn't go by John Maynard, but this explains it.

H: Yes, everyone called him Maynard, and all of the letters are addressed to Maynard.

E: Out of those three names, if I had them, I probably wouldn't have chosen to be called by that one.

H: Me neither, but it's fashionable at the time. There are a couple of people in here who go by their middle names.

E: I mean, go by middle name but...

A: Maynard?

[laughter]

H: Quite true.

E: We're allowed to be salty about this language but, like, not with most of the languages that we-

A: Yeah.

E: -discuss because we don't speak them so we just have to get all of our ire out in this episode.

[laughter]

H: Suck it, English! The other one is, uh, Lytton.

E: That's alright.

A: L-i-t-t-o-n?

H: L-y-t-t-o-n.

A: Ooh, fancy.

H: If you've heard of one economist, it's Keynes. Keynes was perhaps the most influential economist of the 20th century and he's got a good shot at most influential human of the 20th century.

A: Really?

H: Oh, yeah. He started out as a scholar and an economic theorist and then he started working for the British government at the India office and then moved up through the India office to eventually head the English delegation to the Bretton Woods conference which created the World Bank and the IMF and-

A: Oh, okay.

H: -standardised the US dollar as the currency of trade. [whispers] Which he wasn't very happy about but the Americans made him do it. [speaks normally] He was actually in a different room of the conference at the time.

[laughter]

E: Oh, wow.

H: Yeah, no, right, he, he went off to establish the IMF and then the, the leader of the American delegation was off in the fiscal policy and currency negotiations saying, We're going to make sure that all the currencies in the world are pegged to a gold equivalent currency which we're not going to name, and then eventually someone said, just name a gold equivalent currency for, like, argument's sake, and he was like, well I suppose it'll have to be, y'know, the US dollar, and everyone's like, sure, it's the US dollar, let's write down that it's the US dollar, and then, then it stayed in the paperwork. There were other good reasons for it to be the US dollar, it was the most stable gold pegged currency at the time, and everyone was really keen on a gold standard to prevent hyperinflation after the war, but there was some trickery involved in this.

A: Mmm. I've never thought about the fact that when you're at a, like, let's decide how to, like, shore up the African countries, or let's decide how to, like, create our economy, that you have to look at your conference programme and be like, would I rather be in this room or that room right now?

H: Yes.

A: But I guess that's how it is.

H: It's, uh, definitely a decision that he had to make.

A: I would really like to return to this at the end of the episode and decide if he is the most influential person of the 20th century.

H: He has a good shot at it. I think there are a lot of people who have a good shot at it though.

A: I believe from what you said that he has a good shot.

H: Yep.

A: But like, it was quite a claim.

E: Then we can move on to the semi-finals where we discuss who would win in a fight, John Maynard Keynes or Dong Xian.

[laughter]

A: Dong Xian does command the army.

H: True.

E: Does he though?

H: [laughter]

A: He could if he chose.

E: Could he though?

A: [laughter]

H: To get this reference, go to our episode entitled Queer Love in Early China and I swear it'll be hilarious. But yes, Keynes was an incredibly influential economist. He had a couple of the most influential economic works of the, the 20th century, but he was also very deeply embedded in the Bloomsbury group, who were...

E: Yeaaaah.

[laughter]

H: Yeaaaah.

A: The real reason we're interested. I know nothing about economics, I struggle to understand

economics, and I'm going to have to try really hard this episode.

H: That's okay.

A: So I'm glad the Bloomsbury group is here.

H: There's not going to be a lot of economics because there are much better biographers of John Maynard Keynes and I thought that it was time that we did a thing episode, an object episode, so we're not actually talking about John Maynard Keynes as a whole. We're using some entertaining papers he wrote to talk about John Maynard Keynes as a whole, and the Bloomsbury group.

E: Mmkay.

A: This sounds fun.

H: Yes, I think it should be good. Uh, for those of you not familiar with the Bloomsbury group, they were the gayest thing around-

E: [laughter]

H: -and also the most artistic.

E: Mhm.

A: Mhm.

H: They included people like Virginia Woolf, Duncan Grant, E.M. Forster, who were all at Cambridge or around the city of Cambridge in the early 1920s and the 1910s and the 1900s.

A: I hope one day we're as famous and gay as the Bloomsbury group.

H: That would be great.

A: That should be our goal.

H: That would be grand.

E: Um, the Bloomsbury group is gay enough that when I was doing research for E.M. Forster recently, I came across the knowledge that not everyone in the Bloomsbury group was queer and I was like, wait, wait, what...

H: [laughter]

A: Who was the straight friend? 'Cause that's awkward.

E: Ah, I don't know, there were a couple.

A: Huh.

E: I think there were a few, yeah. Um...

H: Who will not be touched on in this episode.

E: Yeah, yeah, look forward to never hearing about them. But I suppose this does unofficially mark the beginning of our Bloomsbury group series.

H: Yes.

E: Yeah.

H: Which should be fun. I'm looking forward to this. We also get a nice callback to an earlier episode, but I'll leave you hanging on that because it comes towards the end. The Bloomsbury group included everyone from painters and authors and are generally regarded as a sort of, ah, louche Bohemian set in Cambridge at the time and in the middle of them sits John Maynard Keynes, who is an economist, studies mathematics, and deeply loves spreadsheets, which is to our enormous advantage, because he tabulates everything he does.

A: Aw.

H: Uh, he donated all of his, uh, letters and his writings and his personal papers to Cambridge after he died and so there's a great archive of everything that he wrote, including all of his really saucy letters. He, he tabulated his expenses, his golf scores and then, my favourite of all of his tabulations is... It's actually a pretty unassuming spreadsheet, it's uh... It's, it's two sheets of paper, two single sheets of paper, and it looks like it's a compilation maybe of a larger spreadsheet because it includes activity from 1901 through to 1915 and this, uh, these two together are called JMK/PP/20A...

A and E: [snorts]

H: Which is rather a dry name for one long list of sexual partners which is correlated to a three column spreadsheet cataloguing his sexual activities with the cryptic titles for each column C, A and W.

A: C for copulation?

H: Indeed! Which we figured out because it corresponds with his list of sexual partners. All of the entries for copulation have a corresponding link to one of the sexual partners listed in the longer sexual partners list. It's postulated that W stands for wanking, because it's inversely correlated with C.

A and E: [laughter]

H: But nobody really knows what A stands for.

E: Oh my God, are there papers on this?

H: There are sections of biographies that would total papers. So what we're going to do with this C, A and W spreadsheet, or more specifically with his long list of sexual partners, is that we're going to go down them as a romp through the Bloomsbury group-

E: [laughter]

H: -from 1901 to 1915, and make some digressions into the lives of spies and cryptanalysts and classicists and also just the weird incestuous mess that was the group itself. We begin our story in

1901 with ADK. He only gets the entry ADK and he's the only entry for the year and this is Alfred Dillwyn Knox who goes by Dilly.

A: Can I just ask what year was Keynes born, like how old is he in 1901?

H: In 1901, Keynes is seventeen and he has his eighteenth birthday in 1901.

A: Okay, cool.

H: But this is why he's still at Eton with Dilly.

E: So is this his first ever sexual partner? Is he, like, thoroughly comprehensive, or...?

H: It seems to be so. There's some reference later in his letters that this was undertaken very scientifically in the spirit of experimentation which I think sounds adorable, but I'm not qualified to say exactly what they did, only that in a later letter he describes... He mentions describing their relationship to someone else and that other third party is shocked.

E: Uh huh.

H: So.

A: Okay. I mean, they may have just been shocked that they were queer and having sex.

H: No, I think this was to another queer man.

A: Oh, okay.

E: So this is like, we did *everything*. Is that what's happening here?

H: I think so?

E: Okay.

H: Unfortunately, it's just a spreadsheet with, with names and numbers and so we don't have a strong description of his sexual activities although we do have some saucy letters to his later wife who he marries way, way, way down the line.

A: I mean, I assume if you were a seventeen-year-old in the spirit of scientific inquiry, you would do everything, like...

H: Yes.

A: Yeah.

H: Dilly, fetch the duck feathers!

E: [laughter]

H: Dillwyn Knox was a prominent individual in his own right. He wrote a very well received commentary on the mimes of Herondas between the wars, which are just bawdy scenes from common life in play form, uh, where he apparently ruined his eyesight poring over candlelit

manuscripts, he was a papyrologist. He was piecing together fragments from virtually nothing, uh...

E: Papyrologists deserve, like, all our respect.

H: Certainly the British government thought that his work in deciphering papyri deserved a lot of respect.

E: Mhm.

A: Imagine if our government thought like that.

H: It was a very different time and there was very much a war going on when the British government decided that they really needed a bunch of classicists all at once and so he was conscripted to - actually I'm not sure if he was conscripted or invited to join - Room 40, which is one of those ominous government names that means our most secret thing ever and plus some more stuff. But yes, he was, uh, he was working for Room 40 which was naval signals intelligence during WWI.

A: Mhm.

H: And he was responsible for decrypting the Zimmerman telegram, which described how Germany would give a bunch of America to Mexico if they'd declare war on America and helped to bring America into WWI and... may have changed the outcome of the war? That's a big call to make and it seems like the US may have been leading to war before that time.

A: Mhm.

H: But it was certainly enormous and pivotal, and then during WWII he worked at Bletchley Park, uh, where I like to hope that he knew Alan Turing.

E: Yeahhhh...

H: They certainly worked together on the Naval Enigmas...

E: Oh my God. That's amazing.

H: And he was partially responsible for breaking the Abwehr Enigma, and then also personally, I think seems like maybe for fun, broke the Commercial Enigma, and then also the Spanish Enigma, and then did some very substantial work on the German naval enigmas.

E: I'm... so attracted to this man.

H: Yeah, right?

A: Remind me of his name, just because it was long...

E: Dilly!

H: [laughter] Yes.

A: I know it was Dilly but what's his full name?

H: Alfred Dillwyn Knox, or ADK, and he appears this year and the next year...

A: So he records on this spreadsheet each time he sleeps with one of these people?

H: No, I think the year has a total that has been cropped from another spreadsheet-

A: Ah, okay.

H: -and then he just gives sexual partners for the year. So it's organised by 1901, 1902 and so forth, up until 1915.

A: Okay.

H: Then in 1902, we meet Daniel de Mendi Macmillan, who was also at Eton with Keynes.

A: I'm going to ask a useless question.

H: Mhm.

A: So you're telling us three names for all these people, did they go by three names, was this standard, or are you just putting their middle names in because he used their initials?

H: Yes, he used three initials for most people, but in the case of many of them they went by their third name. So, for example, Alfred Dillwyn Knox goes by Dilly for his second name, and Maynard goes by Maynard and Lytton Strachey goes by Lytton...

A: Oh!

H: His first name was Giles.

A: I'd heard of him and I never separated his names enough to recognise when you said Lytton who you were talking about.

H: Yeah. But in this case, it looks like Keynes only knew him by Daniel Macmillan because his entry in the spreadsheet is DM, and Daniel Macmillan was very important in Keynes' later life and career because he was heir to... I'm not sure if he was the heir to but certainly the family business was the Macmillan publishing house.

A: Ohhhh!

E: Oh!

H: Right!

E: Wow, we have just made so many connections already.

H: Yeah, that Macmillan! And he published *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* which Keynes wrote at the end of WWI as an analysis of post-war economics.

E: Mhm.

A: Mhm.

H: Or a projection of post-war economics, [whisper] which turned out to be mostly true.

E: So, whenever you see Macmillan on a book, it's gay now.

H: Yep.

E: Yep. No takebacks.

A: Did Daniel ever control Macmillan publishing? Like how gay is Macmillan publishing?

H: He was the managing director of Macmillan Publishing.

A: Excellent.

E: Daniel put his gay little hands all over Macmillan Publishing.

A: [laughter] Yeah, that's what I needed to know.

H: He was also the brother of the later prime minister Harold Macmillan, so Keynes was super connected. And that's it for 1901 and 1902, he only has two sexual partners in that time and then he goes off to university and there are some dry years that are marked 1903 – nil, 1904 – nil...

A: The fact that he started university and his like first years of university were like, nah, no sex, sounds quite fake.

H: He was studying mathematics.

A: Okay.

E: Mm.

H: So 1903 – nil, 1904 – nil, 1905 – nil and then sometime in the middle of this he joins the Cambridge Apostles, which at this time includes Keynes and Lytton Strachey and a number of other prominent students, uh, which is effectively a sort of semi-secret debating society, which becomes known for a great prevalence of homosexuality.

E: Gooood.

A: I have a question.

H: Mm.

A: Why don't we have a secret society known for its prevalence of homosexuality?

E: It's a secret and you're not invited for some reason.

A: Yeah, well what's up with that? I...

E: I dunno.

A: Well, this is awkward, I'm sorry.

E: So, having like two years where you perform every sex act imaginable and then three years of, like, nothing sounds, I don't know...

H: A little dry?

E: Like, just... Yeah. I don't know, that's like, if we're mapping this on a graph it's just this massive spike and then immediately to the bottom where it just flatlines...

A: Do you think he was like...

H: Yep, that's what it looked like.

E: ...there's a graph?

[laughter]

A: But do you think he was like, nah, I've done it all, I'm fine, and then three years later he was like, no, I'm not fine? Like...

H: It's possible that in the Etonian bubble, in his scientific mindset, closed off from the rest of the world, he felt that it was safe to experiment in his early years and then he became exposed to the world and a world where homosexuality was super illegal at the time.

E: Yep.

H: Uh, he does say later, 'And our law on that matter in question...' which is the question of homosexuality, 'is a mere survival of barbarism, supported not by reason but by sheer prejudice' and certainly throughout his life he mentions in his letters a fear of discovery, a fear of being found out by the rest of the world. At one point, one of his friends receives a letter from somebody else, warning them about homosexuals in their midst and they are, they are galvanised to talk to people about Keynes and so forth and it doesn't really spread further than the, the outsides of the Bloomsbury group, but he is thoroughly spooked, and in a letter to Lytton Strachey, he writes, 'So I have no doubt now that, although they are too polite to mention it everybody in England is perfectly aware of everything. Well, I suppose it is a fair penalty for going about with such people, but in the state of public opinion, damn and damn and damn.'

E: Aww. That's so sad and so English.

H: Yes.

A: What was the punishment for homosexuality at the time?

H: Imprisonment. At one point, one of the things that happens a little while before he writes this letter is that an Irish contemporary is sentenced to death not on the power of his homosexuality conviction but also informed by homosexual writings in his diaries and his letters, uh, for another criminal offence, so it's, it's a rough time to be a gay man and certainly Alan Turing is a contemporary of these men.

E: Yeah. We'll uh, we'll return to Alan Turing in his own episode no doubt...

H: Yes. He certainly deserves his own.

E: Well-deserving, yes. Um, yeah, it doesn't end happily for him because of the laws at the time is

what I think you need to take away from that.

H: Yes. So it's possible that he spends 1903 through to 1905 finding his feet at Cambridge, finding his way into the bosom of the Apostles, who George Bernard Shaw notes was a particularly homosexual club in his later writings, and then finds his feet. And we know that he finds his feet in 1906 because it's a bumper year!

E: [laughter]

H: Where he has sex with Giles Lytton Strachey, who we'll be referring to, as all of his contemporaries did, just as Lytton Strachey for the rest of the episode. He was a great friend of Keynes, even though they were romantic rivals a couple of times and they had periodic fallings out as prettier and prettier men came into their lives.

E: [laughter] Oh no.

A: Life is hard when you're a gay man at Cambridge.

H: Including Arthur Hobhouse, who is referred to as Hobby, who has sex with no fewer than three people mentioned in this episode and then possible a fourth. And then James Strachey, brother of the aforementioned Lytton Strachey.

E: Okay.

H: So those are, those are his three for 1906. Lytton Strachey was a fellow Cambridge Apostle. It's likely that they met through the society. He was in later life a prominent biographer, he wrote an irreverent biography entitled *Eminent Victorians* which was...

E: Oh, I know about this.

H: Yeah, right, which was basically a character assassination of four great Victorian heroes.

E: Mm.

A: Mm.

H: Which was well received that he thereafter had to worry very little for money, but he was also a keystone of the Bloomsbury group. As I just mentioned, his brother James Strachey was part of the group, he was married to...

E: Another member!

H: Yes, he was married to another member, and he was later a romantic rival for Arthur Hobhouse and Duncan Grant to other members of the Bloomsbury group who are included later in this episode. James Strachey is far less notable, he...

A: Yeah, I've never heard of him.

H: He was a translator of Freud and he was a psychoanalyst and he by all accounts had a perfectly fine psychoanalytical practice, and he was a translator of Freud and he was a psychoanalyst also and that is all I know about James Strachey.

[laughter]

H: He doesn't really produce very much by way of literary and artistic work.

A: Mhm. So he hung out with them but he wasn't like...

H: Yeah, yeah, definitely.

E: I feel pressure to produce good artistic and, like, significant classical works so I will be well considered as part of the, like, inevitable queer group I end up being referred to as a part of in history.

A: The queer artistic group that you will one day join.

E: You don't want to be one of the lame ones.

A: No, you don't, you don't. I mean, I always thought Keynes was one of the lame ones and I feel like by the end of this episode, I'm not going to think that anymore.

H: Oh, no.

E: But like, there were lame ones-

H: Yes.

E:-they're just not who you thought.

A: [laughter]

H: Like, for example-

E: [laughter]

H: -Arthur Hobhouse, who was referred to as Hobby, who as people go, as general humans go, wasn't particularly lame. He was also a member of the Cambridge Apostles, he was a politician and he was for one year a representative for the seat of Wells and he established the National Parks of England and Wales in that role.

A: Oh, good on him.

H: Yeah, good on him for that, but he's not a notable author, he was however notably attractive and so Lytton Strachey competed with Keynes for sometime for Hobby's affections.

A: I mean, if you can't be the artistic one, you might as well be the hot one.

H: Yes, and he was the very hot one, he was thoroughly desired by both Lytton Strachey and John Maynard Keynes and they had a grand falling out over his affections and at one point Lytton Strachey stops corresponding with Keynes altogether, which is quite a thing given that he then sleeps with Keynes later the same year, and the next year, and then the year after that, and then the year after that-

E: [laughter]

H: -and then, then there's a break in 1910.

E: You sound like someone scrolling through a spreadsheet.

H: I certainly am. And this period of no correspondence ends with a letter of apology for some unknown transgression that is not fully described in the letter, but involves Keynes consorting with Hobby, perhaps behind Lytton Strachey's back, but then a couple of months later they're talking to each other and writing letters.

E: Is what happened here is that in the competition for his affections, Lytton Strachey won, and then behind Lytton Strachey's back, Keynes and Hobby got it on?

H: It's not clear. I would imagine if that was the case, Lytton Strachey would have been angrier.

E: Oh, okay.

E: So maybe he was just, like, hey, I slept with that guy, and Lytton Strachey was like, I wanted to sleep with that guy!

H: It seems like something a little bit more like that.

E: Okay, alright. I... Given how incestuous this group is, I think they should just commit.

H: Certainly they get a little bit better at it over time but then there's another grand falling out over Duncan Grant.

E: Mm.

H: And, uh, at one point, a contemporary of Lytton Strachey calls these great fallings out a bout of Pozzophobia where Pozzo was a nickname given to Keynes later in life.

[laughter]

H: Which reoccurred intermittently.

A: Not a great nickname.

E: These, uh, nicknames sound very Australian and you can very much see that they were the kind of...

H: Archetypes.

A: This is where we came from.

H: Mhm.

E: Yeah. Like, I could imagine a, a footballer having these names.

A: Pozzo.

H: Yes.

E: Dilly. Hobby.

A: Yeah, no that's very true.

E: Less so Maynard.

[laughter]

A: I wish there was a footballer called Maynard.

H: That would be great. Then, later that year, Keynes is writing to Lytton Strachey saying things like, 'For months I courted him and he turned a cold cheek.' Regarding Hobby. 'For three weeks I have cultivated the demeanour of the utmost apparent coldness; I have rated him and jeered at him; I have appeared as white-hearted as a man could be. And tonight he comes round and declares his love for me. What do you think? Is he to be trusted? Won't he veer off again as soon as I show my feelings?' And then the next line is just, 'Heavens!' Exclamation mark! And they have a brief and tempestuous relationship, which then rapidly cools and this is kind of a pattern with Keynes, throughout his life, that he has great infatuations with people and then they just sort of peter off.

A: Mhm.

H: He's a very sort of passionate man and then at the end of this relationship, he heads off to Switzerland for a holiday and Hobby who is, who is a lifelong friend thereafter and I think also appears in this spreadsheet later on, picks up with Duncan Grant, who also appears in this spreadsheet later on.

E: Oh my God.

H: And Lytton Strachey will complain at one point that Duncan Grant seems much more interested in Hobby than he does in Lytton Strachey and this has perturbed Strachey because he wants-

E: Mmm.

A: Duncan Grant.

H: -Grant for himself, yes.

A: I like Duncan Grant.

E: I want a miniseries of this and I want it to be very dramatic.

H: So, also included in this list for podcast purposes but not included in the spreadsheet, which seems to be a table only of male lovers-

A: Oh. Okay.

H: -is potentially Rachel Costelloe who is known as Ray and is also linked to the Bloomsbury group.

A: So did he have a significant number of female lovers or are we unsure on that or...?

H: It doesn't seem like it. It seems as if most of his lovers are men throughout his life.

A: Okay.

E: Mm.

H: And then the only really prominent ones are Rachel Costelloe and then later his wife, Lydia.

E: Okay.

A: Mhm.

E: I'll be interested to get up to his wife and hear about that.

H: She is a very entertaining individual.

E: I'm sure she is.

A: Good.

H: Yes. Rachel later marries another member of the Bloomsbury group, but it's not clear if this is ever consummated or indeed if it's returned because Keynes seems to have a little bit of trouble engaging her. There's a quote from a letter that says, 'I seem to have fallen in love with Ray a little bit, but as she isn't male I haven't [been] able to think of any suitable steps to take.'

[laughter]

H: So it's possible that this was his first proper female love.

E: Uh huh.

A: There are so many boys that are this.

H: Yes. Later she marries Oliver Strachey, who is the brother of Lytton, or possibly a cousin, and then runs for parliament after WWII but is not successful.

E: Um, is that all of the Stracheys who we are to discuss?

H: Yes.

E: Okay.

H: Certainly all of the Stracheys that John Maynard Keynes has sex with.

E: Okay.

A: Wait, did he sleep with all of the brothers, is that what you're trying to say here?

H: Uh, no no no, Oliver isn't featured in this spreadsheet.

A: Okay. But he slept with Lytton and James.

H: Yes. He did.

A: Okay.

H: And in fact in 1907 he sleeps with only members of the Strachey family – Lytton and James – and then in 1908 adds to that list with Duncan Grant, who many scholars call the love of Keynes' life-

A: Oh!

E: Okay.

H: -referring to a letter or two that he sent around his contemporaries calling Grant the love of his life, because he was intellectually stimulating, very attractive – but it seems that as with many of Keynes' romances this was one of those incredible bouts of passion that so enflamed him over a relatively brief period and then sort of petered off. He does have sex with Grant a lot throughout his life, but he has other primary lovers who eclipse Grant later.

A: I definitely think that you can't assume because someone writes a letter saying 'You are the love of my life' that then you're like, 'Yes, that is factual' for the rest of their life.

H: Yes.

A: That's not good scholarship.

E: Is this the only person he ever refers to as the love of his life in the letters?

H: As far as I know.

E: Okay.

H: Oh, wait, no. His wife Lydia.

E: Okay. Well. Okay. Fair enough.

A: Reasonable.

H: The only man.

E: Mmhm. Okay.

H: So he's often called the male love of his life. And he is the best man at Keynes' wedding. Grant is himself a noted post-impressionist painter.

A: I like Grant.

H: He has some lovely paintings of Keynes just sort of at rest, with a book in his lap, and a little hat on. He's one of the keystone members of the Bloomsbury Group and is involved in some of their earlier exploits, which include the Dreadnought Hoax. Are we familiar with the Dreadnought Hoax?

A: No.

H: The Dreadnought Hoax was Duncan Grant, Virginia Woolf, her brother – who had done this before - and a couple of other Bloomsbury Group members, disguised as Abyssinian royalty. They get an accomplice to send a telegram-

A: I do know this!

H: -to the commander of the flagship of the fleet, the HMS Dreadnought, saying 'Be prepared-'

A: The flagship of the British fleet?

H: Of the British fleet. Of the Channel fleet.

A: Yeah.

H: So the British had a number of fleets. Saying 'Be prepared to accept Abyssinian royalty'. Of course, this is the navy in 1910, and they are not prepared to detect the veracity of Abyssinian royalty, and so they give Virginia Woolf and Duncan Grant and her brother and all these three other members a guided tour of the battleship, and they give them various honours. They're not able to find an Abyssinian flag and so they use a Zanzibar flag and play the Zanzibar national anthem instead because they think that will cut it. And then they get away scot-free and publish it in the papers.

A: So just a quick question – is Abyssinia a real country at that time?

H: Yes, Abyssinia is Ethiopia at the time.

A: Ohh, yes, yes. Okay.

H: Zanzibar is also a real country at the time-

A: Yep.

H: -and earlier Woolf's brother had performed a similar prank at Cambridge masquerading as Zanzibar royalty.

Grant also slept with Lytton Strachey and Arthur Hobhouse, and Strachey complains often in letters to Keynes that Grant shows much much more interest in Hobby than he, and then he eventually wins him away from Hobby and then Keynes wins him away from Lytton, and they carry on a tempestuous romance for a while, until much much later when Duncan Grant forms a triad with Clive and Vanessa Bell – also members of the Bloomsbury Group.

A: Clive *and* Vanessa Bell?

H: Yes, so they form a triad, and he-

A: 'Cause Duncan marries Vanessa, doesn't he?

H: No!

A: Oh no, he marries-

H: No, Clive marries Vanessa-

A: Ohh, I understand. Alright.

H: And then Duncan and Vanessa have a child together, and he lives with them for the next 40 years.

E: Awww.

A: So they're just a triad.

H: Yeah.

E: I'm so happy!

H: It's really sweet.

And then thereafter Duncan Grant appears in 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 19- Oh wait, no he – oh no, yep, 1914-

A: This is so good.

H: And then all the way to the end of the spreadsheet in 1915.

E: Okay. You couldn't have said, like, 190-whatever through 15?

A: He was checking!

E: Okay.

H: I was reading down the spreadsheet.

E: I know, I know.

H: I was scrolling, dear listeners.

A: Have you input this into an excel spreadsheet for ease of reference?

H: No, it's actually in one long word document because I am a heathen.

A: Heathen!

H: While carrying on this long affair with Duncan Grant, John Maynard Keynes makes the acquaintance of a young man named Francis Arthur St George Nelson, who he calls Bubbles for obvious reasons. Despite his rather grand name, Francis Arthur St George Nelson is in fact a lowly 17-year-old actor from the lower-middle class who is born in South London, and they meet when he models for Duncan Grant and-

A: Ah!

H: -Keynes is present and looks at him modelling for Duncan Grant and thinks 'You could model for me.'

A: So, I'm imagining nude modelling. Is that correct?

H: I'm also imagining nude modelling but it's not recorded.

A: Okay.

E: Alright.

H: And the two of them live together intermittently until the start of World War 1 when Bubbles goes off to war and-

E: Bubbles goes off to war! He sounds like a pet hamster. I'm sorry.

A: Hamsters contributed to the war effort though.

H: And at the time it's possible that Grant may have been living with them for brief periods as well. And they lived together intermittently until the start of World War 1. In this time, Richard Davenport-Hines writes a particularly interesting account of an encounter between a physician's wife from Brighton and Bubbles and Keynes-

E: Mmhm?

H: -and a tertiary source – I couldn't find a free copy of Davenport-Hines biography of Keynes – but a tertiary notes that 'Early in the war, Keynes and Nelson' – who is Bubbles – 'themselves were picked up by a physician's wife from Brighton. They repaired to a nearby hotel room where, too nervy to comply with the wish of the physician's wife that he and Bubbles desport while she watched, Keynes took a stroll-

[laughter]

H: -he returned with a young man from Ealing, and there followed a four-in-a-bed frolic so convoluted that it's best read about in Davenport-Hines.'

E: This isn't my experience of seaside towns in England.

H: Nor my experience of economists.

E: This is my experience of economists.

A: What economists do *you* know?

E: No, like, *this* is my experience of economists.

[laughter]

H: Certainly Keynes lived a more adventurous life than the average commerce student.

A: Mmhm.

H: Christmas Eve in 1910 finds him in the basement of the Commercial Hotel in Ramsgate, in the company of pantomime actors, with whom Bubbles was acting, and he writes that he spent his evenings 'In the basement of a lodging house chatting with lowly comedians whose chief characteristic seems to be their extraordinary kindness' and with an undertone that they were getting preposterously drunk the whole time.

A: That sounds fun.

E: Good, good.

H: Duncan Grant also sort of circuits around this arrangement with Bubbles for some time, and this carries on – he's sleeping with both – I should stop calling him Bubbles....

A: No!

E: No.

H: Okay. Keynes is sleeping with both Bubbles and Grant from 1909 through to 1911.

A: Okay.

H: At which point, perhaps emboldened by his picking up of a young man from Ealing, Keynes discovers cruising, and so we get a bunch of people who we can't peg down. We have DG, who is Duncan Grant, and FB, who is Francis Birrell, and St G, who is Bubbles, and then in 1911 we get Jack Colby – no idea who he is-

E: That sounds working class.

H: Indeed. And Rosario Sciacca, an Italian man, by the pairing of Rosario and Sciacca-

E: Uh-huh.

H: If it was the Spanish Rosario it'd be feminine. And then '16-year-old under Etna'. It's not clear where Etna is. It may be Etna hospital. And then 'Auburn-haired of Marble Arch' and also 'Liftboy of Vauxhall', and that's *all* in 1911.

A: I'm really enjoying that he doesn't even have names here. He's just like 'this place'.

H: Yes.

E: Well, you don't always get the names for people you-

A: Yeah. But like, he keeps a spreadsheet.

E: Yeah, true.

[laughter]

E: But you don't need to be all economist about it whilst you're cruising. Like 'Hey, just for my spreadsheet, what are your measurements?'

H: But in my excitement to get to 1911 I've skipped over 1910, where we introduce Francis Birrell, who is unfortunately another one of those less notable figures. He was a journalist and literary critic whose work hasn't really survived into popularity, but he's not a particularly notable fellow, and he really doesn't appear in the spreadsheet after this except for one entry in 1913. It seems like he was certainly a lesser lover, and appears at a time when Keynes is branching out and finding new lovers for himself, so it's possible that this was a much more minor affair.

A: Mmhm.

H: In 1911, we see the reappearance of Duncan Grant along with all of these unnamed people that we just covered, and Bubbles as well.

A: So, in 1910 does he sleep with Grant?

H: Yes, he sleeps with Grant and Bubbles and Birrell.

A: Okay, yep.

H: And then goes on to 1911 carrying Grant and Bubbles with him, and meets a bunch of new friends.

A: Yes.

H: In 1912 these friends include Benoy Kumar Sarkar, who I believe he meets as part of his duties as part of the India Office, for the British Crown. Kumar Sarkar is a-

A: Does he go to India in this time, or does he just work within that part of the government?

H: No, interestingly Keynes doesn't spend a lot of time in India. Duncan Grant spends a fair bit of time in India-

A: Oh, okay.

H: -but without Keynes. And so it looks like he meets Benoy Kumar Sarkar in England. Benoy Kumar Sarkar is cute as hell. Sarkar is a prolific Indian scholar and nationalist and he writes a bunch of works. He writes 53 books in English which is a small section. He writes a lot in Hindi and often on the subject of India in the world, and world history. And he carries on with Keynes for some time out through to 1914. They seem to have a long-lasting relationship, although it's not clear if this is an intense romantic relationship or not, 'cause as I say, it's just a spreadsheet rather than a-

E: Yep, yeah.

H: We don't have as many letters of his that go to Sarkar. We have more with his Bloomsbury contemporaries.

A: So did Keynes ever keep a diary or write a biography, or are the quotes you're giving us from letters when we hear from Keynes?

H: Yes. All of the quotes that we hear from Keynes are from letters that he writes. Primarily they're quotes from letters that he writes to Lytton Strachey, who is, if not his primary love interest, certainly one of his most persistent sexual partners, and also one of his most vocal correspondents, who he speaks with throughout his life, and writes to a lot.

In this period we're introduced to Chester, who is Patrick John Chester Purves, who is a diplomat, and he's active in the League of Nations, but he, like many of the other people that we've mentioned in this list, doesn't produce much by way of work. And he's one of two diplomats that Keynes sleeps with in this period, but his life's work is really tied up in the League of Nations. We know that he was also at King's College, but we don't know very much about what he specialised in, and he doesn't have published works that we can refer to. But he is well noted enough to be recorded in the public record. And then the final entry for 1912 after Chester is just 'Jew boy' which is definitely something John Maynard Keynes wrote.

Moving swiftly on to 1913, we see the reappearance of 3 familiar characters – Duncan Grant, Bubbles, and Chester, who we've all met before – and then also a fourth – Benoy Kumar Sarkar, although he appears it seems later in the year because he's last in the list, and then we are introduced to Brush, Salem, Cairo – who sound like racehorses-

[laughter]

H: And we are also introduced in this year to perhaps my favourite of Keynes' sexual conquests, a fellow who he calls Cookie, whose full name is Sidney Russell Cooke. He was a lieutenant during World War 1, he wrote 'The Oil Trusts and Anglo-American Relations' which was apparently well-received by the Russian government and reprinted there. He was a stockbroker with Rowe and Pitman, which makes him sound terribly exciting, until you also learn that he was the second husband of either the widow or the daughter of the captain of the Titanic. They have the same name. It's always difficult. Sometimes he's referred to as the second husband of the widow, and sometimes he's referred to as the first husband of the daughter.

A: Okay.

H: He's also possibly a spy, in a kind of wink-wink nudge-nudge 'possibly a spy' sort of way.

A: A lot of people who went to Cambridge at that time in this kind of circle were possibly spies, as I understand it.

H: Yes, very much so. And a lot of people who were stockbrokers with Rowe and Pitman, as he was, were spies at the time, or were previously employees of Room 40.

E: Mmhm.

H: That mysteriously-named codebreaking unit. Adding to this speculation, he dies in incredibly mysterious circumstances. He is cleaning a shotgun - inverted commas - which is pointed towards his stomach at an unusual angle.

A: That's how I always clean my shotgun.

H: Indeed. And then later after his death Hugo Pitman – who is the Pitman in Rowe and Pitman – just straight-out tells a colleague that 'Cooke has been shot by the Russians.' There's also a suggestion that Cooke was involved with the Russian government. He receives Trotsky's brother-in-law, Leo

Kamenev, who comes to visit and stays with him for a while in London on a trade mission, and apparently the two of them stay in contact. It's not clear whether he's a spy at the time, it seems like he might just be an enlisted soldier when he knows Keynes, or at least becomes an enlisted soldier the year after he meets Keynes, in 1914.

In 1914, Bubbles appears for the last time before he leaves for the front. Likewise, Benoy Kumar Sarkar is not seen after this. Cookie appears, Sidney Russell Cooke, who we just mentioned, and Arthur Elliott Felkin, who is the second of the two League of Nations diplomats that Keynes sleeps with-

A: That's quite an achievement.

H: -but I think the least bland of the two, which is again, quite an achievement, because he is an exceptionally bland man by all accounts, he doesn't publish any... or, historically bland, and difficult to get information on.

A: Yep.

H: He doesn't publish anything, he doesn't really leave a strong literary legacy, but according to the footnotes of a Commonplace Book of E.M. Forster edited by a Mr. Philip Gardener, he's an excellent cook.

E: Hm.

A: Nice.

H: And may have slept with E.M. Forster.

A: I mean like, if that's your legacy you're not doing too bad.

H: Yeah.

And of course, because he appears in all years, Duncan Grant is here.

A: Good on you Duncan.

H: Now we come to 1915. My second favourite of Keynes' partners, David "Bunny" Garnett, who is in there as BG, so as not to conflict with the persistent presence of DG.

A: Ah yeah.

H: He was given a rabbit-fur cloak as a tiny child and swaddled himself up in it, and was thereafter called Bunny. Garnett was a celebrated novelist and a publisher. He wrote a fantastical allegory about a woman turning into a fox and he is one of those people who just generates a knot on the Bloomsbury Group spit chain. Bunny is peripherally attached to the triad with Clive and Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, and Grant at one point sleeps with Garnett, who is Bunny, who had first been married to Rae – Rachel-

A: Oh!

E: Good Lord.

H: And also ran a bookshop with Francis Birrell, who is featured below, and also then married the daughter of Duncan Grant-

A: Oh no!

H: And Vanessa Bell.

E: Ohhh.

H: She was in her early 20s, he was in his early 40s. But he is the centre of this knotty knotty intersecting diagram of the Bloomsbury Group.

Also in 1915, the above noted Francis Birrell and the last entry of Lytton Strachey, a fellow known only as Grip, and then John Tressida Shepherd, who is an important classicist and a lecturer at King's College who later becomes Provost, and performed some form of undisclosed intelligence work during the war. He's later knighted for his services to Greece, and possibly for his involvement in the war effort. Perhaps this was a way of giving him an honour without actively acknowledging his services to intelligence.

A: Oh yeah. That makes sense.

H: And that brings us to the end of Keynes' spreadsheet, or rather, Keynes' list of lovers which accompanies his spreadsheet, but certainly not to the end of Keynes' lovers. He takes many more lovers throughout his years, most notable of whom is Lydia Lopokova, who has her own interesting story in and of herself, and features the appearance of an old friend from an earlier episode. See if you can spot his enormously prominent role when I say his name just straight-up.

[laughter]

A: Okay.

H: She was a ballerina in Russia originally.

A: Is it Nijinsky or Diaghilev?

H: It's Diaghilev. And presumably Nijinsky as well, although there isn't very much catalogued about her relationship with Nijinsky, only with Diaghilev, where he managed her as almost a novelty act. He chipped a year off her age and presented her as a child genius and then later as a particularly novel solo dancer, but she left Russia with Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes so she presumably danced with Nijinsky at one point, and in 1915 when our spreadsheet ends was engaged to the American sportswriter Heywood Broun, who broke it off when he – and this is a quote from one of his colleges – 'Caught the enchanting....' Oh wait, no. How do we do an American accent? [in American accent] 'Caught the enchanting Lydia Lopokova in the lap, so to speak, of her Russian director.'

E: Jesus Christ.

H: 'Broun walked east on one street, knocking over every garbage can and trash can he passed, then he walked west on the street giving it the same treatment. Just as he was getting really warmed up to the sport, he ran into the hands of the law. Heywood spent the night in the hoosegow before friends bailed him out the next morning.'

E: That's the second 'hoosegow's come up in the last week for me!

A: I've never heard this word. Can you spell it for me?

H: H-o-o-s-e-g-o-w

E: It just means prison. It's in 'Of Mice and Men' as well.

A: Ah!

H: Yeah.

E: Yeah.

H: Obviously that engagement doesn't last. It should be noted that it was not the 'lap, so to speak, of her Russian director'. It's more likely that it was the lap of the Italian business manager of the company Randolph Barrochi, who was a bigamist and a thief. Also becomes engaged to and then later married to Lopokova, but she's in the process of finalising her divorce for his bigamy when she meets Keynes in 1921, while she's dancing. This is one of Keynes' many sudden and tempestuous infatuations with a person. He sees her dance in 1921 as part of the Ballets Russes 'Sleeping Beauty', and he quote 'Sat every night in the stalls, enchanted by Lydia as the Lilac Fairy casting spells over the cradle'.

E: This reminds me of Dorian Grey and Sybil Vane.

H: It is equally creepy, certainly.

E: Okay, cool. Yeah.

H: And they eventually meet, and they have a strong relationship for 4 years, during which time Keynes carries on a relationship with the philosopher Walter John Herbert Sprott, which is just the most Cambridge name I can imagine.

A: Sprott!

H: Sprott. And then he breaks off the relationship in 1925 when Lopokova's divorce goes through and they are married. Even despite this great show of faithfulness Keynes continues to keep lovers throughout his life, but it's not clear if he wanted to devote more time and attention to Lopokova, or if the relationship with Sprott broke off of its own accord.

A: Is it clear if Lydia was aware and fine with Keynes' ongoing relationships with other people, or...?

H: Yes! She was quite quite aware.

A: Okay, good.

H: And quite happy with it, it seems. She is mentioned as crossdressing for him-

E: Huh.

H: -in an attempt to seduce him early in the marriage until she realises that she doesn't have to.

E: Oh wow.

A: Oh!

H: Which is cute.

E: I wonder what her endgame was for that.

H: Apparently really good oral sex.

E: Oh yeah. Okay.

H: We have a bunch of thoroughly saucy letters that are exchanged between the two where Keynes writes that he 'wishes to be foxed and gobbled abundantly'.

E: Oh God.

A: Well that's clear. Foxed!

H: Indeed.

E: Gobbled! Jesus, that doesn't put you in the mood, does it.

H: Not really, no.

[Laughter]

H: But there is every indication that their marriage was a passionate one, and also while the two are at the Bretton Woods Conference together while they're deciding the financial and trade fate of the world-

E: Uh-huh.

H: -there are complaints from the room below, and Lopokova tries to pass it off as 'ballet exercise'.

E: Oh, that's good.

A: I assume the hotel room but I definitely assumed conference room for way too long in that sentence.

[Laughter]

H: So actually-

E: 'As I said, *the American dollar would do.*'

H: A discursion that I can't believe I forgot to include here, on the Bretton Woods Conference, there was a downstairs conference room called the Moon Room, which was the name of the bar, and at the Bretton Woods Conference some of the conclaves would periodically break up around 1am so that everyone could go downstairs to the bar, have a drink and watch the titillating gyrations of the Brazilian dancing girl and then, so refreshed, they were equipped to head back up and continue negotiating economics well into the morning.

E: Jesus! That's.... alright. Yeah.

A: So this is the basis of our society.

H: Yes. This is the basis of our society. And-

A: Cool.

H: -may explain how we got to where we are.

A: Yeah.

H: So that brings us to the end of our long long *long* spreadsheet of Keynes' sexual partners, which accounts for 24 different sexual partners over the fifteen years of its span, not including Lydia Lopokova and Walter John Herbert Sprott-

A: My fave.

H: -and many others besides in the later years. This is the man founded our world bank, so when you next hear about international currency trading....

A: So how long did Keynes live after he concluded his spreadsheet?

H: Keynes lives another 31 years after the end of his spreadsheet, and lives to 63.

A: Oh, okay. Do we know why he chose to conclude his spreadsheet in 1915?

H: It's possible that he compiled this version of the spreadsheet in 1915. As I say it is very comprehensive and it seems like it may have been drawn from another broader spreadsheet – I'm not sure – because it doesn't include any tally marks on the paper, where he goes back through his memory, and you know, jots things down. He just has this as a finished product that he keeps in an envelope in his desk.

A: What do you do with that? Like, do you just get it out and look at it occasionally and be like 'Yeah' like....

H: Potentially it feeds into later spreadsheets.

A: Yes.

H: Knowing John Maynard Keynes.

E: I think – I mean, if it's the case of a group that was as incestuous as the Bloomsbury Group, you know, you might get an angry letter from one of your friends being like 'You slept with the guy I'm interested in!' and before you hastily write 'I did not!' you get the spreadsheet out and look and be like 'Oh yeah. Fair cop.'

[Laughter]

H: Yeah. Quite quite possibly. It's possible also – it's been suggested that the spreadsheet ends in 1915 because he's afraid that some of these men will die in the war, and certainly Francis Arthur St George Nelson, who is Bubbles, is killed on the Western Front in 1916.

E: Awww.

A: I liked Bubbles. He was one of my favourites.

H: He was all accounts a sweetheart. And so it's possible that he wishes to record his memories from before the war, or that he stops keeping the spreadsheet in 1915 when somebody that he knows is killed and it seems to be a morbid exercise thereafter. And it's possible that further spreadsheets were kept more securely locked away in an iron box that will be opened 100 years after his death.

A: Is there more archival material on Keynes that's still unopened for the current time period, or....?

H: No, I don't think so. Certainly not that is in the King's College collection.

A: Okay.

H: He bequeathed all of his papers to his old college, King's.

A: And made them open?

H: Yes.

A: Okay.

H: It's possible that there is an archivist chuckling somewhere because they've been bound to keep the secret of Keynes' extended spreadsheet, but I could speak authoritatively to that.

And that brings us to the end of our first 'things' episode. It's been a rich ride through these two sheets of paper.

[Laughter]

A: Yes it has.

H: To say nothing of the envelope, which I am told is of white paper.

[Laughter]

E: Oh! We might have to bleep that.

H: And with that, we are Queer as Fact. I'm Hamish.

A: I'm Alice.

E: I'm Eli.

H: And you can find us as Queer as Fact on Facebook, as Queer as Fact on Tumblr, on Twitter as Queer as Fact, and you can email us at queerasfact@gmail.com because we are incredibly on-brand, and we are also on iTunes now, which is fantastic! So you should go to there and you should download us, and you should also rate us 5 stars or whatever you think is appropriate, but I think we deserve 5 stars, and I can't emphasise this enough, it really really helps because Apple trusts you a lot in rating podcasts and so how prominently we are displayed in the search results and how many more people we get to the spread the good, queer word to will depend on your positive rating of us.

E: You can also review us there if you like. Doesn't have to be long. You can just choose positive adjectives like 'radical' or 'zoinks' even. We'd be pleased.

H: 'Slammin''

A: Snazz.

E: There's some examples for you, so we look forward to seeing which one of those does the best.

H: I can't speak to 'slammin'' being considered by Apple's positive words algorithm, but let's find out!

E: No, it does, but only if you have an apostrophe at the end. No 'g'.

H: Of course.

E: If you listened to our Gad Beck episode a couple of episodes ago, you might have noticed that the episode that we said we would do next never came out. We had some technical difficulties with that one, but we've resolved them, thankfully, and our next episode will – for real this time – be Alice talking about queer women in medieval Arab literature, and that one's coming out on the 15th of August.

H: Thank you for listening, and we'll see you then.

[music plays]