

Blackpool

Posted on Fri, 11 July 2025 by Christian and Nick

In our Blackpool podcast, we take a donkey ride down the beach, vadaing the reviews for the bars and clubs of the Blackpool gay scene, enjoying a drink or two at Mardi Gras, Garlands, The Flying Handbag, Funny Girls, Peek-a-Booze and Manbar. Along the way we discuss police raids, prawn rings and the benefits of shots for breakfast!

Fun Facts about Blackpool

Blackpool become a popular seaside destination in Victorian times, with its seven miles of sandy coastline and three piers, and its name is said to come from a

discoloured stream draining into the sea from peatland.

Its famous for many things including the Blackpool Tower, modelled on the Eiffel Tower; the Blackpool Illuminations, a large-scale light display; and the Pleasure Beach amusement park, home to the UK's first-ever roller coaster which continues to thrill riders.

It's also of course famous for the Tower Ballroom, an iconic 19th century venue with its ornately decorated ceilings, sparkling chandeliers, stunning sprung dance floor and Wurlitzer organ.

Donkey rides and penny arcades are there to be enjoyed and, did you know this, Blackpool is the birthplace of the "Kiss Me Quick" hat!

Robert McVitie, a Scottish baker, first set up shop in Rose Street, Edinburgh and we have his company to thank for the Jaffa Cake which was invented in 1927.

The Blackpool Gay Scene

Blackpool has been a getaway for LGBTQ+ folk since the mid-20th century – especially during times when big cities weren't so safe.

Up until 1967 homosexuality was against the law but as one gay historian has put it, nothing stopped the natural inclination of people to be "happy" and an annual "Easter Bonnet" parade on Blackpool's North Pier would be organised with all the girls and boys wearing bonnets and frocks as outrageous as possible. Blackpool offered, and still offers, a place to escape, relax, and party by the sea … sun, sea and whatever! It has 20 or so gay b&bs and hotels and a similar number of gay bars, catering for all tastes.

Mardi Gras

Situated on Lord Street, Mardi Gras is a bar and accompanying hotel, open till midnight on weekdays and 3am on weekends. The venue boasts a cabaret stage, dancefloor, lounge area, pool room, video screens, hot food menu, sun terrace, free Wi-Fi and mini-gift shop. Since being taken over by John, Mardi Gras has become a Blackpool scene staple and community hub.

Website: https://www.mardigrasblackpool.com/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/mardigrasbarhotel/

Address: 41-43 Lord St, Blackpool FY1 2BD

Garlands

Located on Talbot Road, and open till 2am weeknights and 3am at weekends, Garlands is, according to its website, “proud to provide drag queen entertainment every day of the week” with no less than ten resident drag queen DJs.

Website: https://garlandsblackpool.co.uk/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/garlandsblackpool

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/garlands_blackpool

Address: 69-71 Talbot Rd, Blackpool FY1 1LL

The Flying Handbag

The Flying Handbag advertises itself as Blackpool’s only purpose-built LGBTQ+ venue. Established in 1994 and fully refurbished in 2020, the Bag (as it’s known by the locals) is open from noon daily, offering an all-day food menu. The rota of entertainment includes musical theatre evenings, quiz nights and karaoke, alongside regular live singers and drag artistes.

Website: https://flyinghandbagblackpool.co.uk/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/FlyingHandbagOnline

Address: 44 Queen St, Blackpool FY1 2AY

Funny Girls

Funny Girls is a burlesque cabaret bar, featuring male dancers and drag performers, including the legendary Betty legs Diamond. Established in 1994, it originally occupied a venue on Queen Street before relocating in 2002 to the former Grade II listed Odeon cinema on Dickson Road. The venue is celebrated for its vibrant performances and Art Deco interior. DJ Zoe, a prominent figure since the opening, announced her retirement in January 2025 after a 30-year career at Funny Girls.

Website: https://www.funnygirlsshow.co.uk/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/funnygirlsshow

Address: 5 Dickson Rd, Blackpool FY1 2AX

Peek-a-Booze

Peek-a-Booze is a down-to-earth cabaret bar and budget hotel with drag shows, karaoke, bingo and live music. Décor-wise it's a bit like a transport café with square tables and hard chairs but it really is party central! Owned and managed for many years by Cybil Du Vaux, it now has a new owner Wayne who is promising to take the place to new heights!

Website: https://peekaboozehotelbar.co.uk/

Address: 72-74 Dickson Rd, Blackpool FY1 2AW

Manbar

Manbar is a traditional sort of venue, open from Friday to Sunday. Downstairs there is a pool table and a DJ and an adjoining venue called the Gin and Bear It Bar, whilst upstairs there is Growlr Bar for men only with some dark nooks and crannies!

Website: https://manbarblackpool.com/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/growlrclub/

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/ginandbearitblackpool/

Address: 25 Dickson Road, Blackpool, FY1 2AT.

Visit www.theonetofiveguide.com for our Gay Scene Guides to: Newcastle, Brighton, Leeds, Soho, Cardiff, Birmingham, Manchester, Edinburgh, Blackpool, Glasgow, Belfast, London, Liverpool and the Regions. And finally, please remember that even if we are a little tongue in cheek in our podcast, we do love each and every venue on the scene, and we urge you all to get out there and support your local gay bars!