

## LUNCHTIME SCHOOL

### AN INTRODUCTION TO POLARI, WITH ALAN BUTLER

FRIDAY 13 MARCH 2020

Traditionally, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans + lives have struggled to become part of history. Much of what becomes part of the historical discourse is enabled by what is stored in the archive and these lives didn't generate these type of materials. People did not take photos in the gay haunts of the 1940s, 50s and 60s, love letters could fall into the wrong hands and diaries could lead to blackmail. Instead, queer lives were lived performatively and within the moment. In spaces that were seen as "safe" and in ways that remained underground.

One such means of performance was the "secret" language Polari. In a time when gay men's lives were actively being legislated against, this form of slang originating in London's theatrical scene was adopted into Britain's gay subculture and supported the performance and communication of lifestyles outside of what was perceived to be the norm. Please join Dr Alan Butler for a talk exploring the history of Polari and then a somewhat off the wall language lesson . . . where we spend a little time learning how to polari (talk) . . . polari!

#### References

Baker, Paul Fabulosa! The Story of Polari, Britain's Secret Gay Language. London: Reaktion Books (2019)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LsP4uXaFh\\_U&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR3mtgh387c0xUfEF\\_cHuggFIMuMWO0VTZT4TYq2TSOFSoeryjIDe4qQ\\_F8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LsP4uXaFh_U&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR3mtgh387c0xUfEF_cHuggFIMuMWO0VTZT4TYq2TSOFSoeryjIDe4qQ_F8)

<https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/secret-language-of-polari?fbclid=IwAR0WtAv2ZD3ACbumbbg7NdnAuVFAd3SMkS5IAS1y3EIRqo0ac7M6xsa5j04>

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/may/24/polari-language-origins>

<https://theconversation.com/a-brief-history-of-polari-the-curious-after-life-of-the-dead-language-for-gay-men-72599>

[http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20180212-polari-the-code-language-gay-men-used-to-survive?fbclid=IwAR3QXj0JZPeetClmo\\_elQ-Pt0fV7XWs3spbzVa6mx7CGgaTSsPGWX\\_Ze8ck](http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20180212-polari-the-code-language-gay-men-used-to-survive?fbclid=IwAR3QXj0JZPeetClmo_elQ-Pt0fV7XWs3spbzVa6mx7CGgaTSsPGWX_Ze8ck)

[https://twitter.com/polarisalon?s=07&fbclid=IwAR00YJCDC\\_mqQ-u-\\_ItHOUhiRA3XK9NV6b7n1tNndKWZPiiPYQXtjFZiEho](https://twitter.com/polarisalon?s=07&fbclid=IwAR00YJCDC_mqQ-u-_ItHOUhiRA3XK9NV6b7n1tNndKWZPiiPYQXtjFZiEho)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ol8MIXWouY&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR3na00DU\\_mOk2-JJiQZRk83SZ0LtmBpdqbPiULk2b5hPcGL4jttX8guT5M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ol8MIXWouY&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR3na00DU_mOk2-JJiQZRk83SZ0LtmBpdqbPiULk2b5hPcGL4jttX8guT5M)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1-rX\\_u5\\_wE&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR2\\_kQmXXjDHL5WlpgNdYBLNCPx9hqwrCQqEnLkYxxTy\\_bp3h1rnZGHuNq4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1-rX_u5_wE&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR2_kQmXXjDHL5WlpgNdYBLNCPx9hqwrCQqEnLkYxxTy_bp3h1rnZGHuNq4)