

# Hidden Histories - coded lives

## Thomas Ernest Boulton (1848–1904) Frederick William Park (c 1848-1881)

Boulton and Park appeared as defendants in a celebrated trial in London in 1871, charged "with conspiring and inciting persons to commit an unnatural offence".

The two men often toured as the theatrical double act Stella Clinton (or Mrs Graham) and Fanny Winifred Park, and received favourable press reviews for their performances.

They often visited the West End of London in both women's and men's dress, attending theatres and social events. They were ejected from both the Alhambra Theatre and the Burlington Arcade on several occasions. On one occasion they were bound over to keep the peace after being mistaken for women dressed as men.

Following their arrest the two men spent four months in jail awaiting trial, and if convicted, their sentence would be between 10 years and life in prison.

During the trial it emerged the police had had their 'dressing-up flat' under surveillance for a year - and that the home secretary himself was encouraging the attorney general to prosecute.

However after the prosecution failed to establish that wearing women's clothing was in any sense a crime, both men were acquitted.

### Find out more

Author Neil McKenna researched court records from the two trials, together with letters between the accused and their supporters— to retell the story of Boulton and Park in the book **Fanny and Stella - The Young Men who Shocked Victorian England**.

