QUEER BRITAIN | AUNT NELL | AMPLIFYING LGBTQ+ VOICES TOOLKIT

This toolkit was produced as part of the Stories + Strategies: Diversifying our national LGBTQ+ heritage collaboration between Queer Britain and Aunt Nell. This project brought together eight heritage institutions and nine LGBTQ+ community groups from across the UK in an effort to reduce barriers that exclude LGBTQ+ people from heritage institutions. It does not have all the answers, but instead aims to voice and help address some of the barriers that have been identified as part of the project, and to offer suggestions for a model that could be replicated and expanded. We hope that by sharing our experiences - both from our failures and successes - we can contribute to the ongoing efforts to preserve and recognise queer heritage and help improve confidence across the heritage sector in improving access for and co-production with LGBTQ+ communities.

The Stories + Strategies: Diversifying our National LGBTQ+ Heritage project was born as a way to help ensure that queer stories are preserved and respected as important parts of the UK's history

Both at an institutional level within the heritage sector and within LGBTQ+ communities and by individuals themselves. Whilst it is increasingly recognised by galleries, libraries, archives and museums (GLAMs) that queer stories must be honoured in their collections if LGBTQ+ people are to feel welcomed and included in these spaces, it is less widely understood how this can be achieved in practice. This project was an experimental attempt in exploring strategies to include LGBTQ+ stories, focussing on oral histories, from

which broadly applicable and practical guidance could be shared.

It began with a collaboration between Queer Britain and Aunt Nell. Queer Britain is the UK's first LGBTQ+ museum. It was created to help protect the UK's LGBTQ+ history and to make it accessible to the public, so that LGBTQ+ people could have the opportunity to see themselves represented and learn about their distinctive histories. With this project, we saw an opportunity to combine our connection to the LGBTQ+ community, our knowledge of the heritage sector, and our UK-wide profile to contribute to the work already being done by heritage organisations and community groups to remove barriers to inclusion for LGBTQ+ people.

Aunt Nell is an independent podcast production company co-directed/run by Tash Walker and Adam Zmith. Their first podcast series together, The Log Books, tells the hidden stories of LGBTQ+ life through the eyes of Switchboard volunteers. To produce this podcast, the team spent three years conducting interviews with members from the LGBTQ+ community. We identified Aunt
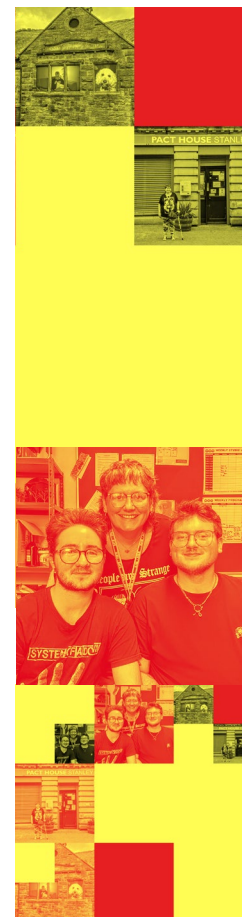
Nell as the ideal partner for this project due to their experience working with archives and oral histories on British LGBTQ+ History and their extensive knowledge and experience in collaborating with the queer community and sharing their stories with care.

Together we organised eight Story Discovery workshops. They were facilitated by Aunt Nell, in partnership with heritage institutions and community groups. These workshops served as a platform to spark intimate conversations questioning what we consider our queer heritage, gather diverse LGBTQ+ stories, and foster open dialogue on how to improve LGBTQ+ collaboration in the activities of cultural memory institutions. At the workshops we asked participants about how they felt about their local museums, archives, heritage organisations and science centres (e.g. Do they feel represented? Do they feel welcome?) and what barriers (if any) they feel are keeping LGBTQ+ people and their stories out of these spaces.

Out of the eight locations, one each was from Northern Ireland, Wales, and Scotland. Where possible, either the heritage institution or an

invited community group was from a rural area. To help address the balance of what stories have been traditionally excluded from LGBTQ+ history, we prioritised inviting queer POC, trans+, working class, disabled and people of faith to the workshops. By hosting a workshop held in a space that members of the LGBTQ+ community may not have entered before, and having the organisation purposefully welcome them, we were hoping to take that first step towards reducing a barrier.

These workshops focussed on using the radical potential of oral history to challenge whose stories qualify as 'history', and, in doing so, to empower historically marginalised groups. Each participant was prompted to explore their histories, key moments, people, and places in it, and to recognise the importance of their lived experiences. This was done to challenge the general idea that history is only the big moments and events that happen elsewhere and to other people. ∎

THE NEXT SECTION
explores the relevance, and limitations, of oral history research methods to LGBTQ+ heritage

Project terminology

GLAM The acronym for galleries, libraries, archives and museums. In this guide it is used interchangeably with 'heritage organisation' or ' heritage institution'.

HERITAGE ORGANISATION/ INSTITUTION An organisation/institution that is dedicated to the education and preservation of cultural, natural, scientific, or historical heritage.

HISTORY In this guide, 'history' is used to denote any individual's lived experience and/or personal story.

LGBTQ+ The acronym for lesbian, gay, bi+, trans, queer, questioning and ace. See also Queer.

ORAL HISTORY In this guide, 'oral history' is not used in the traditional sense, but to refer to personal storytelling and verbally shared stories.

TRANS+ Anyone whose gender is not the same as, or doesn't sit comfortably with the sex that they were assigned at birth. The '+' signifies that this is an umbrella term for anyone on the trans spectrum, including those who are genderqueer, non-binary, etc.

QUEER An umbrella term used by some in place of LGBTQ+. Previously used as a slur and still rejected by some in the community, it has been reclaimed by many across the LGBTQ+ spectrum. See also LGBTQ+ ∎

Oral history in heritage institutions and queer communities

Oral history has always been a radical way of documenting the voices of marginalised people. It began as a break from traditional approaches in recording evidence for the historical record. Audio recordings were made of the verbal testimony of those often ignored. In particular, it became a favoured method for socially conscious and politically engaged historians to document the experiences of the working-class, women, or of Black history[1].

Over the last 40 years, there has been a strong interest within LGBTQ+ community groups to record oral histories. This resulted in several projects, often produced in conjunction with cultural heritage institutions. Notable projects include the Hall-Carpenter collection. This collection includes over 100 interviews from 1985 to the early 1990s. It is kept within the British Library's Sound and Image Archive[2]. The interviews within the Hall-Carpenter collection represent a key moment in UK queer history, one which sees the effects of HIV and AIDs and the introduction of Section 28[3].

Within the last 20 years there has been more of a shift to community groups instigating projects independently with funding, such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund. OurStory Scotland[4] and OutREACH Cumbria[5] are just two examples. Often, these project interventions are time and resource limited, dependent on the funding they receive. Despite this, the artefacts and oral histories they produce are relied on by UK cultural institutions - used for events that cater to LGBTQ+ communities. More often than not, these events are only arranged over pride month or LGBTQ+ History month each year.

When institutions only consider queer heritage during LGBTQ+ History Month, this silos LGBTQ+ heritage. Similarly, only focusing on pride related or protest artefacts and stories presents a skewed history of LGBTQ+ experiences. One that does not reflect lives lived outside of those moments[6] or embedded within the wider experiences of queer lives. When queer stories are kept to awareness periods, they are also excluded from an organisation's wider collections, interpretations, and storytelling.

If queer collections were included and displayed in the main collections throughout the year, rather than being displayed during key LGBTQ+ awareness periods, then we could see a shift in how queer history is perceived. This would signal that queer history is not a silo or separate from other archives and artefacts 'not for us'. It would show that queer history is for everyone. Similarly, if queer heritage practices were embedded into the existing standards and heritage organisations became more confident and capable with these stories, then they would become less dependent on community groups alone to fund and preserve them. ∎

[1]PERKS, R. AND THOMSON, A. (1998). THE ORAL HISTORY READER. LONDON ; NEW YORK: ROUTLEDGE/TAYLOR & FRANCIS GROUP
[2]HTTP://SAMI.BL.UK/UHTBIN/CGISIRSI/X/X/0/49/%20:%20 CHARSET=UTF-8
[3]HTTPS://BLOGS.BL.UK/SOUND-AND-VISION/LGBTQ/
[4]HTTPS://WWW.OURSTORYSCOTLAND.ORG.UK/
[5]HTTPS://ORALHISTORYRESEARCHANDTRAINING.UK/ORAL-HISTORY-RESEARCH-SCOTLAND-UK-PORTFOLIO/CELEBRATE-LGBT-CUMBRIA/
[6]HTTPS://MEDIUM.COM/@MMULIBRARY/LGBT-HISTORY-MONTH-BEHIND-THE-LENS-A-NORTH-WEST-FILM-ARCHIVE-CALL-OUT-C25C53069817

WHAT'S NOT BEEN WORKING?

Despite the strong foundational political/ sociological mission of oral history, its interview structures and methods do not automatically lead to diverse and inclusive practices. Traditional methods of oral history interviewing have the possibility to trigger some trans+ exclusionary practices. Standard opening ice breaker questions that request the name and date of birth of the interviewee, or about their earliest childhood memories can be especially difficult to answer[7]. Such practices may inadvertently serve to exclude trans+ individuals from participating, meaning their personal histories get left out of collections. This in turn perpetuates the exclusion of trans+ experiences and individuals from GLAM institutions that may hold cultural power and influence how 'history' is perceived more widely.

There also continues to be intersections of marginalised groups still excluded, such as disabled, bisexual, intersex, ace/aro voices, QTIPOC and rural lived experiences. This is arguably a legacy of collections from projects 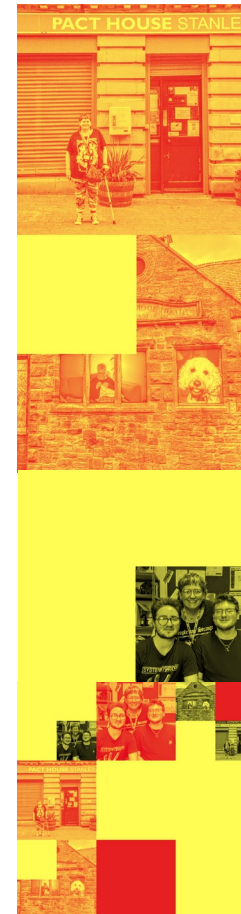that have not been community-led, or have not had the resource and scale to develop collaborative methods to identify and address barriers to inclusion.

These structural imbalances and omissions have damaging effects outside the archive or gallery space. They can be considered to perpetuate an erasure of an identity and have the potential to further fuel discrimination within the LGBTQ+ community itself. Mel Reeve of BiHistory describes how 'these prejudices are exacerbated if bisexual+ history is not preserved and celebrated.'[8] ∎

WHAT HAS WORKED OR COULD WORK?

We could argue that 'queering collections' is not enough now. What if we focus on 'queering the methods' with which we gather our stories? What if wider collections are not considered to exclude queer identities inherently?

It's suggested that community led practices can lead to more ethical, collaborative and co-produced methods of gathering history[9]. Voices within critical archive studies[10] argue for a questioning of and disruption of exclusionary professional heritage practices[11]. Particularly within queer oral history, adopting insider interviews[12] is also seen as key to developing shared trust, understanding, and relationality between parties.

The collaboration with wider reaching platforms, such as podcasts, creates a potential for interviews to be gathered via non-traditional oral history methods. Taking this project as an example, Queer Britain's work with Aunt Nell has created a series of 1-2 hour interviews reflecting wider geographical and diverse experiences. Interviews were conducted after a series of workshops, which provided opportunities to foster trust and collaboration. It also allowed community members and groups to be directly involved in the

[7]VICKERS, E. (2022) 'DRY YOUR EYES, PRINCESS.' IN NEW DIRECTIONS IN QUEER ORAL HISTORY. 1ST ED., LONDON: ROUTLEDGE, PP. 175-184
[8]REEVE, M. (2024) 'IT'S RADICAL TO EXIST' HTTPS://BIHISTORY. WORDPRESS.COM/ZINES/
[9]GUTTERMAN, L. J. (2010) 'OUTHISTORY.ORG: AN EXPERIMENT IN LGBTQ COMMUNITY HISTORY-MAKING.' PUBLIC HISTORIAN, 32(4) PP. 96-109
[10]CASWELL, M., PUNZALAN, R. AND SANGWAND, T.-K. (2017) 'CRITICAL ARCHIVAL STUDIES: AN INTRODUCTION.' JOURNAL OF CRITICAL LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES, 1(2) PP. 1-8.
[11]LEE, J.A. (2020). PRODUCING THE ARCHIVAL BODY. MILTON: TAYLOR & FRANCIS GROUP.
[12]TOOTH MURPHY, A., 2022, NEW DIRECTIONS IN QUEER ORAL HISTORY: ARCHIVES OF DISRUPTION. TOOTH MURPHY, A., VICKERS, E. & SUMMERSKILL, C. (EDS.). ROUTLEDGE, P. 162-172.

process. They identified existing needs for their communities, contributed to discussions on ideas and what methods can work in the future.

This is just one collaborative community based method, and this guide details how we did it. In doing so, we intend to add to existing work, not to invalidate or replace other well-established methods within the field of oral history. ∎

USING THIS RESOURCE
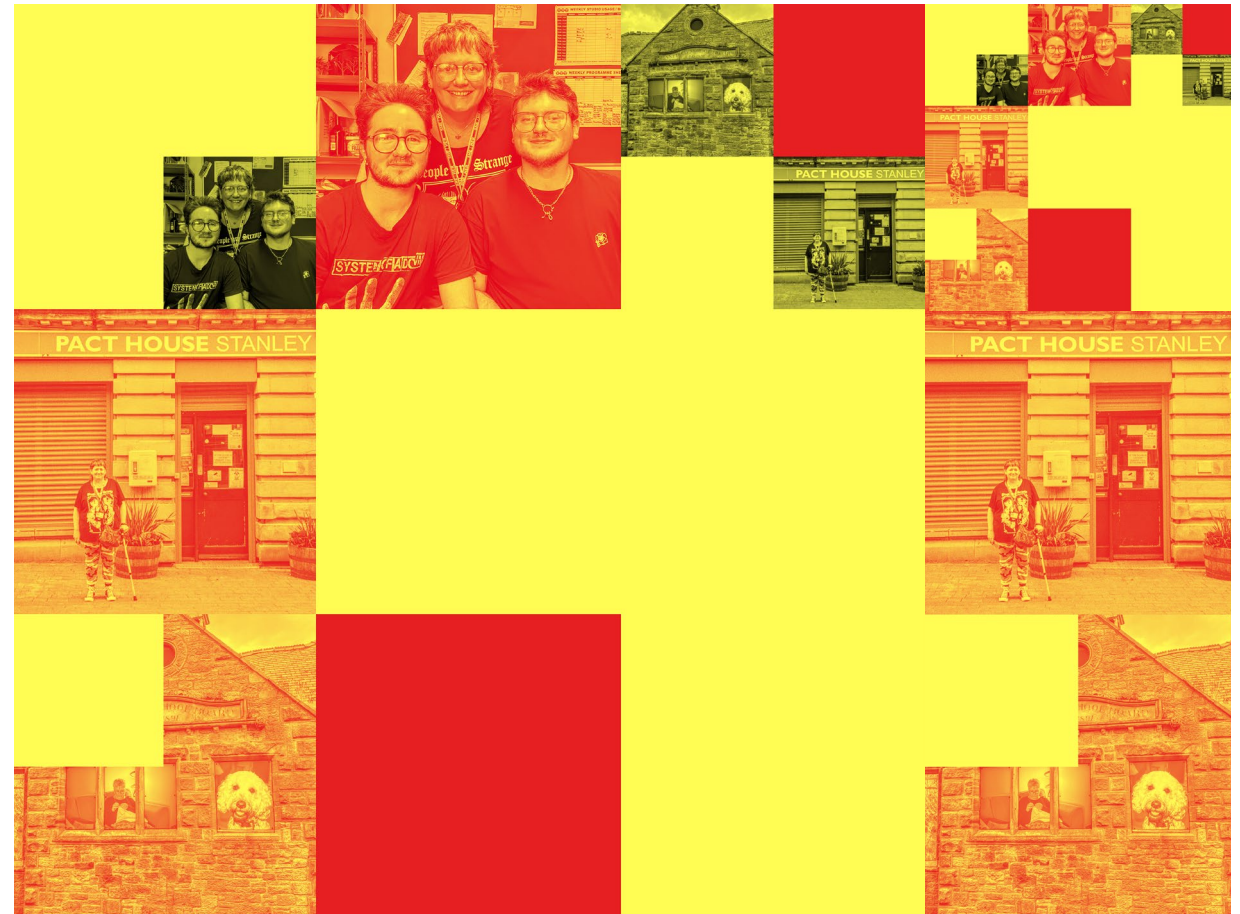
WHO IS THIS RESOURCE INTENDED TO HELP AND HOW?

■ Organisations within the GLAM sector that want to engage more with LGBTQ+ collaboration and co-production in audiences and collections.

■ Organisations within the GLAM sector that haven't carried out queer oral history projects before or consistently as business as usual practices.

■ LGBTQ+ community groups that haven't felt included in heritage organisations' collections or activities and want to reduce these barriers.

■ LGBTQ+ community groups that want to record their own oral histories.

■ Heritage groups that are already working in this area but want to further develop their methods and activities.

WHAT WILL THIS RESOURCE ADDRESS?

■ Share the findings of our workshops.

■ Suggest methods that can help increase diverse stories and collections.

■ Identify absences and gaps within existing stories and practices.

■ Voice the concerns of LGBTQ+ audiences and use non-hierarchical collaboration to gather ideas to address these absences.

■ Identify ways in which heritage institutions and community groups can gain more confidence in building relationships with each other.

■ Highlight some practical information to assist future queer oral history projects.

WHAT WILL WE EXPLORE IN THIS RESOURCE?

■ What are the barriers to personal, diverse and untold stories being shared and preserved?

■ How can heritage institutions redress power imbalances in who gets to tell queer stories?

■ What practical advice is useful to help community groups and heritage institutions initiate improved oral history practices?

■ What are accessible ways of elevating our shared queer heritage?

THE NEXT SECTION
will begin by sharing the learnings that we've gathered from this project. Focussing on the impact of lack of inclusion of LGBTQ+ stories in heritage organisations and barriers to LGBTQ+ engagement with the heritage sector.

QUEER BRITAIN | **AUNT NELL**

Throughout all eight Story Discovery workshops, we repeatedly heard expressions of how queer heritage has been left out of collections. As a direct result LGBTQ+ people shared how they struggled to identify with or feel represented by them.

Co-Hosts from such groups as BiHistory and Queer Kernow provided important contextualisation of ongoing work in addressing untold and overlooked queer histories. Mel Reeve from BiHistory spoke at our Glasgow based workshop on the importance of bisexual histories - of 'naming it and saying it'. She stressed how important it is to name, index, and catalogue bisexual+ collections so they are not 'overlooked and brushed aside' as

'it is absolutely there!' This can be applied to all identities. Visibility is crucial.

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I feel like our history has been swept under the carpet and we have a long way to [go to] start telling our story. [These] workshops with collaboration will start to uncover more.'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

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Just that some people see museums etc as [a] collection of the past, rather than collections of current real life, everyday history.
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

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This supports the understanding that if the UK's heritage sector is to be more inclusive of LGBTQ+ people, then it must have better organic representation of the community in its collections and activities. To do this, it's vital to have the LGBTQ+ community directly involved on any projects working to address this lack. To quote one of the workshop participants, 'nothing about us, without us'.

After years of exclusion and discrimination, it's important to be aware of and explore barriers that might prevent LGBTQ+ people

from collaborating on projects with heritage organisations. We'll explore these barriers in more depth in this section. ∎

IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO LGBTQ+ ENGAGEMENT WITH THE HERITAGE SECTOR

During the workshops, we facilitated a discussion about the wider barriers that might affect LGBTQ+ people from accessing, contributing to, or feeling a part of queer heritage. This question was then expanded more specifically with personal detail within a survey that we asked all participants to complete. The intention was to gain insight around what changes are needed in how we approach methods of gathering and curating queer heritage. For this project, we wanted to markedly switch the hierarchy and give the community the opportunity to define what best practice should be.

This resource has been crafted based on the thoughts and feedback shared by the community members during these discussions and in their surveys. In the following section, we have identified the main barriers preventing

LGBTQ+ people from contributing to queer history that were identified by our participants. For each barrier, we have included direct quotes and insights from our participants. ■

WHAT BARRIERS MIGHT YOU HAVE FACED TO CONTRIBUTING TO QUEER HISTORY IN THE HERITAGE SECTOR?

- Cost and transport
- Safety and trust
- Poor communication / Lack of communication
- Not seeing the value in their own stories
- Tired of the queer trauma narrative
- Divisions and prejudices within the LGBTQ+ community
- Location, isolation and loneliness

COST AND TRANSPORT

Unsurprisingly one of the main socio-economic reasons that participants highlighted was the barrier of cost or difficulty with transport. Lack of stable finances prevents LGBTQ+ people from being able to afford entry fees to heritage

organisations and associated exhibitions, displays or events. This can be compounded if the cost of transport is also high or it is difficult to reach by public transport.

'LGBT are on average on a lower socioeconomic scale. So people don't come in'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT IN WORKSHOP

'Cost - either to enter a space or travel there'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

'Transport. Safety. Finances.'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

'Lack of spaces in [the] local area - having to travel. -> time, cost, energy'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

'Socioeconomic marginalization, exposure to violence, trauma, isolation and alienation have led to years of exclusion from participation in UK society, which has led to poor life outcomes despite some academic success...'

If LGBTQ+ people cannot reach the heritage
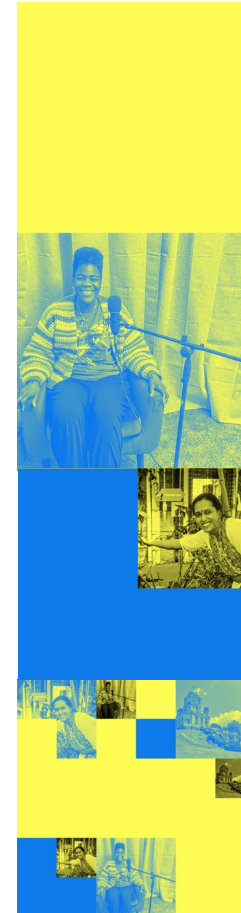
organisation conducting the research or project, then they cannot contribute and their voices won't be heard. If there are already feelings of exclusion this barrier will compound that feeling, causing disinterest and lack of engagement. ■

LOCATION, ISOLATION AND LONELINESS

Location - both of the LGBTQ+ heritage projects and of LGBTQ+ participants was a key barrier raised. Participants reported that many of the existing LGBTQ+ heritage projects seemed to be based in London or in the South East of England. The barrier created by this physical distance to anyone located elsewhere in the UK can cause the exclusion of certain lived experiences and stories, as well as a disengagement:

'A lot of niche-specialist culture work (including collections/workshops) is London-centric. More people would contribute if more visible things took place closer to their doorstop.'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

In addition to this feeling of exclusion from the lack of opportunity, participants that were based in more rural or less connected areas also shared feelings of isolation and loneliness. It was noted that living - and for some - ageing in rural areas compounded barriers caused by physical ability and cost of transport. This causes feelings of increased isolation and lack of connection to others with comparable experiences.

'My personal LGBT history has been a fairly solitary affair. I am old enough to remember times when the public climate was even worse than it is today, which certainly contributes to a habit of keeping a low profile and being cautious about who you reveal yourself to. Add this to the fact of having lived in remote and rural parts of Scotland for [the] majority of my adult life, really until the past year, I have had no opportunity for any meaningful contact with other trans or LGBT people. For all sorts of reasons, I am not a party person, a bar person, a crowd-loving person, or someone who naturally feels draw[n] to large events like pride. So it is easy to imagine

that my very quiet existence holds little interest even for other members of the LGBT community.'
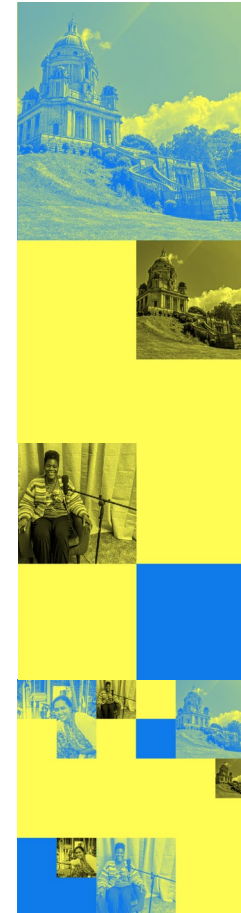QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

When considering location as a barrier, it's important to reflect on how best you can meet the communities that you want to collaborate with. What steps can you take to connect with the communities and community members and create a space for them to effectively connect with one another. ∎

SAFETY AND TRUST

The number of participants that identified a lack of feeling safe or a lack of trust in the heritage sector was a key finding. Some highlighted not feeling welcome in museums and heritage organisations as a barrier to contributing. As explained by our participants, if they don't feel welcome and accepted in the space where the project is being held, they won't participate:

'The general feeling of unwelcomeness +

judgement in traditional museum spaces. - whether intended or not.'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

'Not feeling like your (sic) welcome'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

'Stress regarding not knowing how I would be perceived in various locations. Being autistic increases social anxiety.'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

'Being scared or intimidated by institutions'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

Maybe if there were openly queer people greeting those who come to events that could make it feel more welcoming to attend events.

The need for safety was especially notable with disabled and autistic participants, older participants, and participants that came from cultures where they face additional barriers if they are out or perceived as LGBTQ+. Individuals who need anonymity don't always feel confident that more traditional heritage

organisations can provide this:

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'Wanting anonymity + not trusting institutions to provide this.'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

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"In informal community archives people feel a lot more comfortable and there's trust.'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT WORKSHOP

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'The one I have experienced is feeling afraid since where I come from [it] is not allowed. But [I] am working on my confidence...'
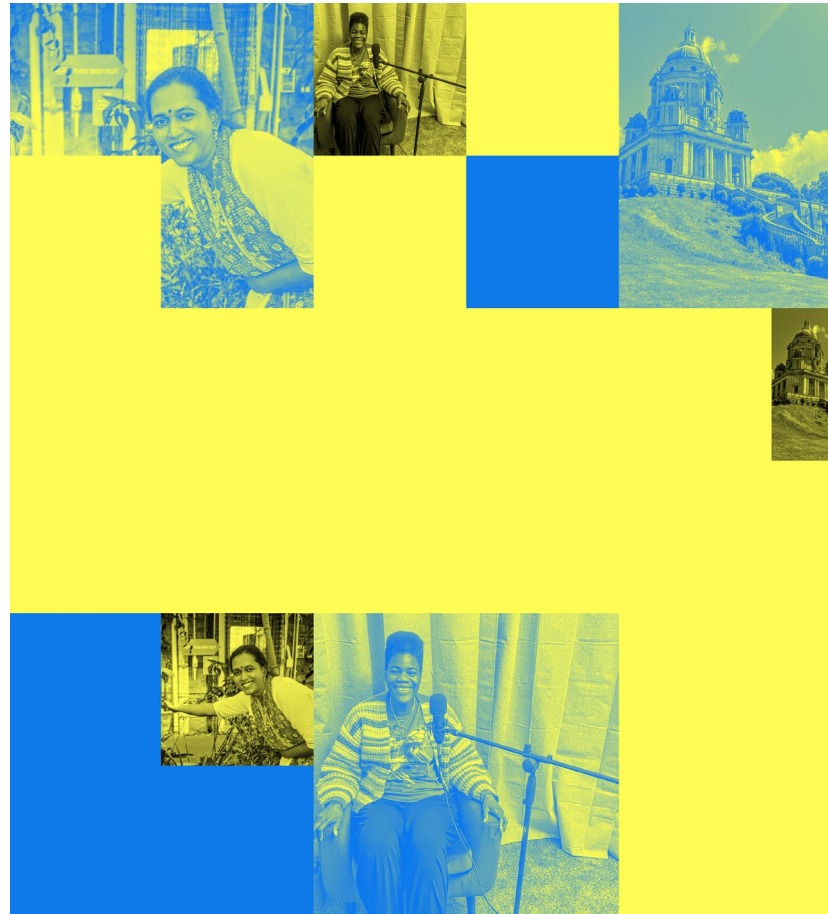QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

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'Some people may feel uncomfortable due to cultural beliefs of family, or fear of being ostracised'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

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'For most of my life I lived in secret, plagued by guilt and shame. This is of paramount importance in not contributing.'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT WORKSHOP

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'They're uncomfortable/feel unsafe in

expressing their identities. They may not feel like their contributions are worthwhile or think queer history is important.'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

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Others raised fears about sharing their histories and experiencing judgement or prejudice from heritage sector professionals. Some also raised concern of having their stories presented through a distorted discriminatory lens:

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'Fear of being identified or judged or of the story being distorted by others or reframed.'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

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'Fear of prejudice/discrimination.'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

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'Being misrepresented or misquoted. Being reinterpreted through a straight lens. Being discriminated against if recognised.'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

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'If heritage spaces don't prioritise queer heritage it can put off [the] community to feel unsafe uneasy.'

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

'Less representation, diversity of LGBT+ people of Colour. Voices are marginalised further. Inequality. Barriers [unclear] based on judgements. Judgement/ fear/ inequality/ bias personal.'

Fostering a relationship based in trust and safety is paramount to having LGBTQ+ community members collaborate or participate with heritage organisations. Due to a long history of exclusion, active steps must be taken to demonstrate a commitment to collaborating with and protecting LGBTQ+ people that are invited into heritage organisations. If they don't trust that this will be provided, they will not engage. ■

POOR COMMUNICATION / LACK OF COMMUNICATION

A common, preventable, barrier that many participants raised was around communication. Participants commented that they often heard about events or projects after they had finished. They were simply unaware of events or projects that were happening. Some felt this was because the events had not been effectively communicated to the community. Others felt that there simply was no attempt at communication as queer heritage projects weren't being led by heritage organisations.

'Information isolation - a big thing for disabled people + venues still find it difficult to promote what they have + Institutions fear of saying the wrong thing'
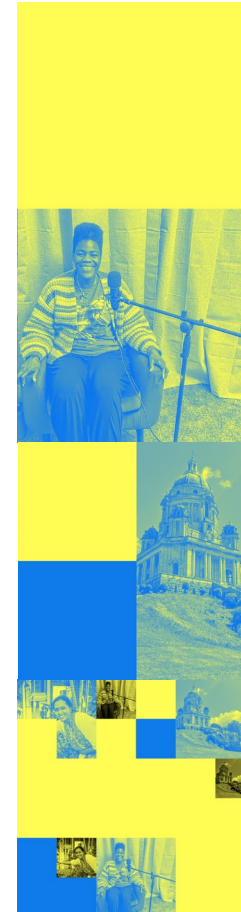
'I think there's a lack of 'call outs' for our histories - there feels like no place to start...'

'Nobody has ever asked me! -> no representation.'

When communication is infrequent or lacking, suspicions can arise around the intention of the organisation reaching out. The initiatives can be seen as tokenism or false. This is intensified when the projects are not community-led or co-produced:

'Nothing about us without us. When making sure people actually from the community are consulted make sure it's a variety of people, not just a couple of token spokespeople. Make sure current issues affecting the community are given a platform to wider society for example trans people's responses to the horrendous CASS resort, to balance media portrayals of us.'

Effective, consistent, and clear communication are vital to building trust with the LGBTQ+ community. It is not only necessary to raise awareness of any projects or events, but to ensure that people will attend. If LGBTQ+ communities feel something is false or not truly for the community, they won't engage. ■

NOT SEEING THE VALUE IN THEIR OWN STORIES

Sadly, a recurring finding was participants reporting that they felt like their story wasn't important or valuable. Repeatedly this came back to what the participants understood history to be, and importantly, how they felt LGBTQ+ history related to it.

'There is a question of a lack of knowledge within the LGBTQIA+ community about its own history, lineage and stories of lived experience, objects that represent. How can you contribute if you yourself don't know the value? Or understand the concept of what history is or can be?'

'That personal histories aren't history - it doesn't come to mind for people that their experiences/lives are history. The life of a LGBT+ is so personal. particularly trans, that we don't look at the bigger picture, nor the need to have history.'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

'Thinking their stories are not "historic" enough.'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

'History can feel like a fixed finished thing. I feel like my queer self is constantly shifting especially in how much I want/I don't want to show so giving a history feels a bit too definitive.'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

'People don't see the value in what they have done' - Mel Reeve, BiHistory;
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT IN WORKSHOP

'There's lots of people that might think that there (sic) stories aren't a part of it [LGBTQ+ history]'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT IN WORKSHOP

'People may not feel like their stories are not interesting enough, or aren't important.'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

Feeling 'not English' - not artist enough, not significant enough, gay enough etc - the idea that others 'do more' for the community - people not realising that they matter. Historic attitudes to LGBTQ+ collecting + display' QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

One contributor spoke of how they came out eight years ago, after there had been so much change in LGBTQ+ rights. They felt that amongst the vast LGBTQ+ history that they would be telling their story from a privileged point of view. They thought 'people can't get much out of this.'

Again, we can see how the (lack of) representation of queer heritage in GLAM spaces is actively supporting it being understood as less valuable or important. These feelings are increased when LGBTQ+ heritage is literally kept 'separate' or 'othered':

'I would like to see LGBTQ+ history intertwined throughout collections, not just a separate collection that you have to seek out.'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

'Queer history can often feel ghettoised to a single exhibition or display rather than acknowledged as an experience and presence throughout the whole museum.'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

If positive steps are to be taken towards

preserving more queer heritage, then the community must first recognise the importance of and value in their own lived experience and history. For this to happen, they must also be able to see themselves represented in the shared national heritage. ■

TIRED OF THE QUEER TRAUMA NARRATIVE

Often LGBTQ+ collections and exhibitions are based on objects from events, such as pride, or protests. There has also been a focus on the negative or traumatic stories from LGBTQ+ lives; HIV/AIDS epidemic, effects of Section 28 or societal homophobia and lack of family acceptance. While it is important to have these stories told, when they appear to be the only queer narratives shared, it can cause disinterest and distrust in the community that it is meant to serve.

'I would like less emphasis on remembering traumatic experiences and more examples of queer life being lived throughout history e.g. queer people cooking, going to chapel, exercising, dating/courting etc.'

QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

'Because some people are trauma focused' QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY
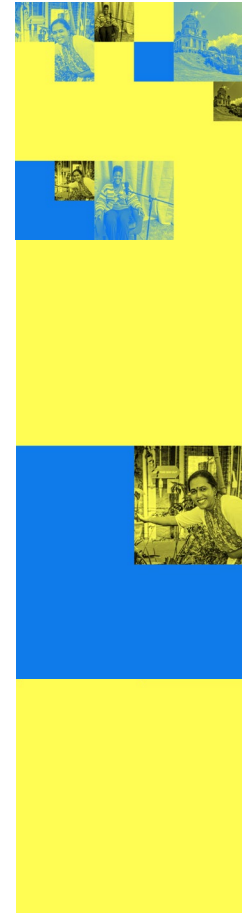
'Lack of representation and lack of positive stories (i.e they may focus on negative aspects/ focus on AIDS as the only gay experiences) -> not empowering exhibitions. QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

LGBTQ+ history is more than the fight for equal rights and the traumas the community has experienced. If the community does not feel itself represented outside of this narrative, they are less likely to contribute or engage with any initiatives from the heritage sector. ■

DIVISIONS AND PREJUDICES WITHIN THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY

Within LGBTQ+ identities there are many intersections of communities, with differences in lived experience. These differences are often contributed to by the divisions and biases that are seen in wider society, such as sexism, racism, bi/ace/transphobia. Historical tensions within the LGBTQ+ community about how queer history is recorded and remembered are just one example of how these divisions can impact the LGBTQ+ community.

For example, it has been acknowledged that there is an issue with 'lesbian invisibility." Within the LGBTQ+ community, especially for those who identify as Lesbian, they have noticed their stories missing in collections and LGBTQ+ history projects. It's important to note that a similar feeling of exclusion has been raised by other LGBTQ+ community groups, especially those who identify as Bisexual, Intersex, Asexual or are from the global majority and have intersecting identities.

'Sometimes the emphasis is on gay male history as representative of all. Less so these days happily. As a lesbian, I have felt invisible in queer history, marginalised or cut out & replaced by [current tropes]...' QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

'Anti-trans rhetoric is a huge problem currently. Very toxic. Bisexual people and

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

histories are so often sublimated into gay ones.'
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

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'As a bisexual person I sometimes feel adrift from queer history, and worry that when I'm in queer spaces other people might think I'm taking up space that should be kept for someone else. I always second guess myself when it comes to "is this event/space for me?"
QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

Just as lack of representation of LGBTQ+ stories in heritage organisations can cause queer people to not recognise the importance of their stories, so can the lack of representation of the wider LGBTQ+ community in queer history. Unfortunately, there are also more severe divisions caused by prejudice and bias. The LGBTQ+ community is not safe from homo/bi/ace/transphobia which can cause some to not feel safe to contribute to queer heritage projects.

The barriers identified in this section were the main barriers identified by our participants that prevent LGBTQ+ people from contributing to queer history. The list is not exhaustive, but highlights some of the key barriers that are preventing LGBTQ+ people from contributing to queer heritage projects and feeling included in the UK's wider heritage. Many, if not all, of the barriers overlap with one another. Again and again, they highlight the impact of years of exclusion and discrimination. For which the main solution can only be true co-production and collaboration: 'nothing about us, without us'. ∎

THE NEXT SECTION
will explore steps and practical actions to take to help address and reduce these barriers to foster positive relationships with LGBTQ+ communities.
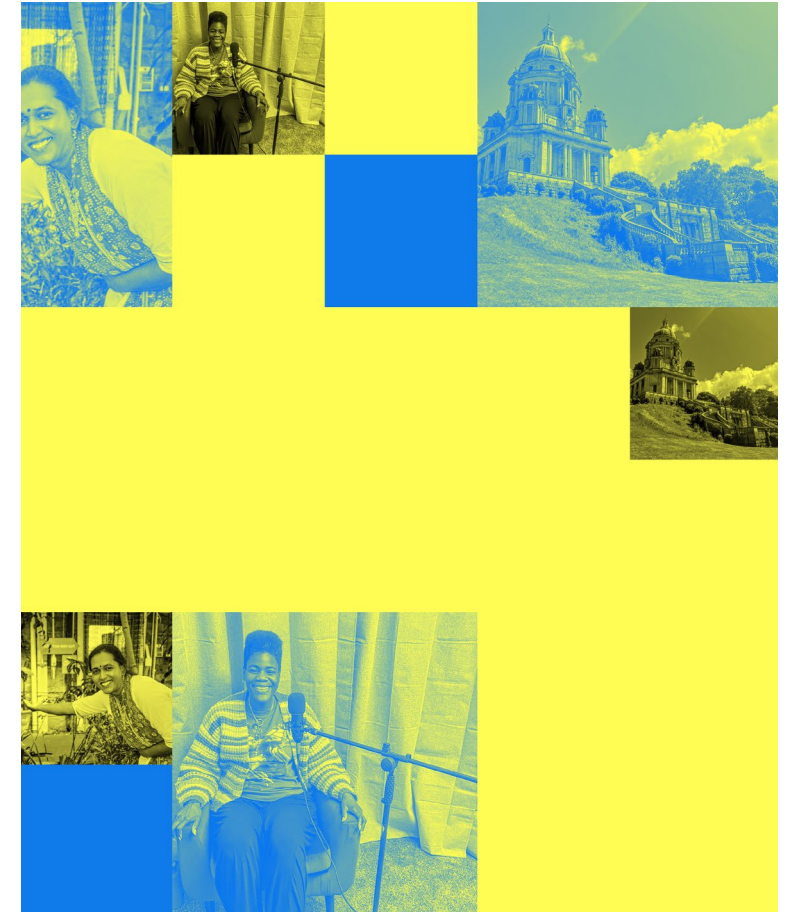
How can I foster a relationship with my local LGBTQ+ community?

When seeking to foster a new relationship, or further strengthen and develop an existing one, it's vital to build trust. It's crucial to acknowledge that LGBTQ+ communities have often been mistreated or ignored by heritage institutions and many still do not feel safe or welcomed into these locations. It is likely they will be cautious and perhaps hesitant in the beginning stages of relationship development, especially if the communities you are attempting to engage with face multiple structural barriers (e.g. racism, sexism, classism, etc.) Without dedicating time and attention to these relationships, trust will not take root and they will not lead to any long-term or fruitful connections.

In addition to time and attention, there are a few important steps to take:
■ Identify what you'd like to achieve (how you can offer support/reduce barriers)
■ Offer consistent and open communication
■ Follow-through
■ Create space and let the community lead (Redistributing power/space)
■ Be open and accepting of feedback, there is a lot of historical hurt
■ Acknowledge time and expertise

Below, we go into more detail about how to progress through each of these steps.

IDENTIFY WHAT YOU'D LIKE TO ACHIEVE (HOW YOU CAN OFFER SUPPORT/REDUCE BARRIERS)

Before you begin contacting community groups or individuals, it's important to have done your prep work first. Clearly identify:
■ What you would like to achieve with the collaboration
■ What steps you can take to foster trust
■ How you can offer support/reduce barriers to inclusion

To answer these questions, you might ask:
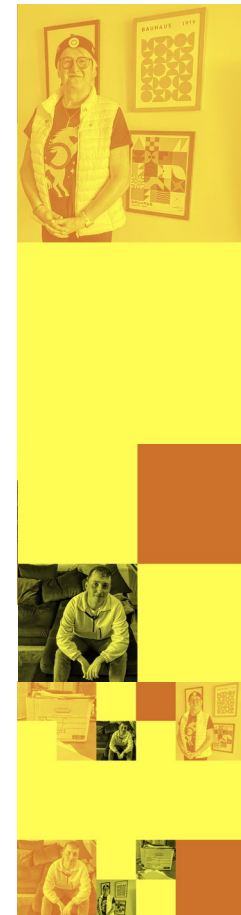
What is the desired outcome?
■ Would you like to collaborate on a defined project?
■ Would you like to increase the number of LGBTQ+ visitors you welcome?
■ Would you like to improve the representation of LGBTQ+ stories in your collections?
——

What are your time expectations and timeframes?
■ How much time/space do you expect community members to have to dedicate?
■ When do you expect them to be involved? At multiple points throughout the project, or only once?
——

How would the community benefit from this relationship? (Ensure this is not a one-sided relationship)
■ Will they receive access to exclusive opportunities and experiences?
■ Will they develop skills or knowledge?
■ Will they build connections and relationships within their community?
——

What resources do you have available that you can offer to help lift the community?
■ A dedicated space for the community to meet and connect

■ Expertise or knowledge about a specific subject or the ability to connect them to a subject matter expert
■ Influence or say about relevant topics/matters within your organisation
——

How can you help reduce barriers to inclusion?
■ What steps are you taking to ensure you are addressing accessibility needs?
■ Can you provide financial support to reduce cost and transport barriers?
■ What steps are you taking to create a safe space for LGBTQ+ participants?

Having a clear understanding of what you want to achieve, what you can offer, and the steps you are able to take to reduce barriers before you contact anyone will help convey the thought and care you have put into the project. It shows that you are not expecting the LGBTQ+ community group to do this prep work for you or guide you through the process. Actively demonstrating that you've taken this work on yourself can help foster trust. ■

OFFER CONSISTENT AND OPEN COMMUNICATION

When you are ready to contact a community group or individual, provide consistent, open and transparent communication. Ideally, you should have one or two people identified as points of contact. The community groups should not be hearing from a new person with each communication. Inconsistency will not provide them the opportunity to build trust or a relationship with any individual.

Be clear about why you are contacting them (e.g. are you inviting them to an event or would you like to collaborate on a project?) and transparent about what you can offer (e.g. free access to your museum/ site, payment for their time, stipend towards transport). Do not ask for a time-consuming call when information can be provided in an email. It's important to recognise that LGBTQ+ community groups are likely run by volunteers or a small, stretched team of staff. Often the individuals leading the groups are also working other, full-time positions. They are more often than not, time-poor, overstretched, and are more likely to be experiencing poor physical and mental health because of it.
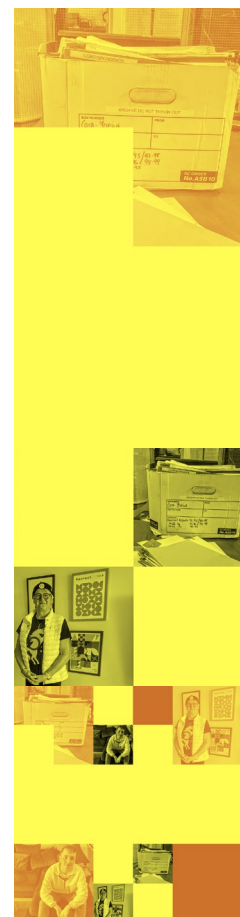
You should be patient - do not demand or expect immediate responses. Remember that while you may be contacting them at work during standard office hours, they are likely having to respond during their personal and unpaid time. ■

FOLLOW-THROUGH

If you schedule a meeting or offer something, be sure to follow-through as promised. The LGBTQ+ community, like all marginalised communities, have historically been let down by the heritage sector and other institutions. Do not over promise or agree to something you know you can't provide. This will lead to further distrust and lack of willingness to collaborate in future. ■

CREATE SPACE AND LET THE COMMUNITY LEAD (REDISTRIBUTING POWER/SPACE)

A key opportunity of fostering these relationships is to be able to redistribute power and space. GLAMs should be a resource for everyone to gather, learn, and

grow but historically they have only catered to a limited demographic. When connecting with communities that have been excluded, you have the opportunity to create space within your organisation for them and their stories. You can empower them to do so by letting them lead on the collaboration. Let it be an opportunity to begin to address the historical power imbalance by letting the community tell you what they need and giving them agency to lead on how their stories are told. ■

BE OPEN AND ACCEPTING OF FEEDBACK, THERE IS A LOT OF HISTORICAL HURT

To truly collaborate, it's important to not just provide space, but to actively listen and respond to feedback and potential complaints that are raised by the community. If community members are to trust you, they need to know and feel like their concerns are being addressed and opinions heard. ■

## ACKNOWLEDGE TIME AND EXPERTISE

It is important to recognise the time and expertise that you are asking of the LGBTQ+ community, just as you would any academic or professional collaborators. It is best practice to offer a payment or honorarium to acknowledge the time and specialised knowledge that they are providing you. This should be applied to:

■ Asking for guidance or advice from an LGBTQ+ community group or leading individual
■ Asking LGBTQ+ individuals questions based on their lived experience; especially as some of the information being requested can be connected to painful experiences and/or memories of discrimination or harassment.

If your organisation doesn't have an allocated budget for collaborations, this might be covered by funding.
  It's important to acknowledge that the initial stages of engaging with LGBTQ+ communities will be time and resource intensive for the organisation. As with creating any new relationship, time will be

needed to foster a strong foundation for it to grow from. If done correctly, the relationship will result in a deeper trust, which can provide richer insight, and opportunities for collaboration and co-production. ■
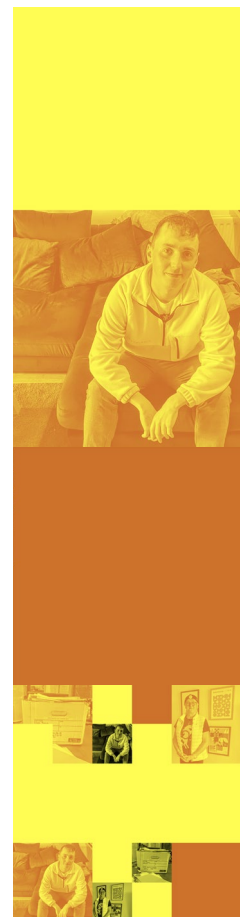
IN THE NEXT SECTION
we'll identify some key things to consider when organising an event for LGBTQ+ participants.
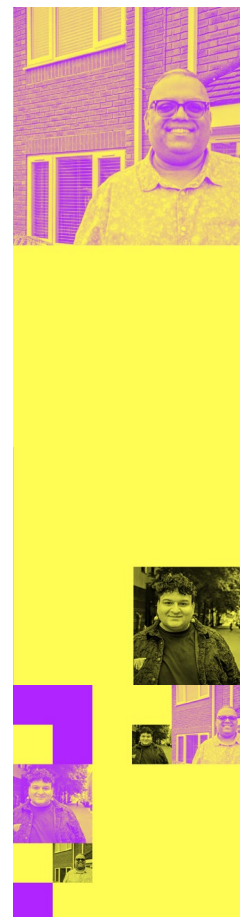
When organising a workshop or event for/ with members of the LGBTQ+ community, there are a number of things to have in place before and during the workshop to help ensure the safety and wellbeing of the participants. After the workshop or event, there are important steps to take to continue fostering the connections and relationships made on the day

This section outlines key steps to take before, during, and after hosting a workshop. Each step is supported with learnings we gained from hosting workshops for this project.

BEFORE

Group size: For workshops/events that ask LGBTQ+ participants to explore their personal histories, it is best to keep the number of participants limited - with a maximum of 25. Due to systemic discrimination and widespread harassment of the LGBTQ+ community, activities like this are likely to bring up difficult memories and experiences that can cause distress to the participants. As the experiences can be personal, most will not feel comfortable or safe discussing their memories with a large group.

Our learnings: Feedback from our participants showed that while some people felt we found the perfect group size, others wanted smaller, more sensory friendly sessions that would be less intimidating. Based on this, if possible, we'd suggest running the workshop/event twice: one with a larger group and standard practices and another with less people (about 10-12), more breaks, and with sensory fidget toys offered.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Support: Any workshop or event that is focussed on LGBTQ+ history, especially personal histories of the participants, is likely to bring up difficult memories and past experiences. It is crucial to have mental health and wellbeing support measures identified in the planning stages so you know how you will support anyone in need.

Our learnings: Before each workshop we identified a quiet space (separate from the event space) that participants could go to if overwhelmed or needing a quiet moment. We also identified a member of the team that was trained and able to provide wellbeing support if a crisis occurred. In a pre-event email sent to all registered participants, we also asked/encouraged participants to let us know if they needed any additional support on the day. This was followed-up with a gentle reminder when participants were checking-in to the event. This allowed us to be more prepared and aware of

any potential support that might be needed during the event.

Safe space agreement (A template is provided in the Appendix): When holding an event it is important to set out expectations of behaviour. Creating a safe space agreement is a useful way of capturing and communicating what behaviour and actions will not be tolerated during the event. This helps to deter harmful or hateful behaviour, while indicating to other participants that their wellbeing is being considered and will be protected. For this to be most effective, share the safe space agreement before the event occurs so participants know what to expect. Review the template in the Appendix for suggested phrasing and what to include.

Our learnings: While the safe space agreement will allow you to set expectations for within the event space, it's important to be aware that this will not apply to the wider venue. We had an incident at one of our workshops where a participant was subjected to transphobic abuse on the museum grounds while they were walking to

the workshop space. Although you can't remove all risk, what can you do to help minimise risk outside of the event space? Can you meet participants as they arrive and walk them to the event space? Do you have signage on your organisation's website and/or physical premise stating that you won't tolerate any form of discrimination?

Set expectations: A few days before the scheduled event, send through an email to all registered participants outlining what to expect on the day. This should include timings, location, notes on accessibility, and a brief overview of what activities they will do during the event.

Our learnings: Some of our participants weren't exactly sure what to expect on the day as we didn't include information on the actual activities. This caused some slight confusion on the day, which was easily addressed, but also easily avoided!

Languages: When coordinating an event, it's important to be aware of the languages of the local area. If the location of the event has a dominant language that is different from the

one you speak, how can you ensure they feel welcome and able to participate in the event? Can you arrange for a translator to be present or arrange multiple versions of the workshop - one held in each language?

Our learnings: When reviewing our feedback and learnings from the workshops we held, we realised that we should have considered language earlier in the project. This was especially apparent when reviewing the workshop we held in Cardiff. We should have considered how we could have offered a version of the language in Welsh, or had a Welsh speaker present during the workshop to translate the presentation and discussion. ■

DURING

Expectations of behaviour: Before you begin the event, after all of the participants have gathered in the space, it is important to reiterate and highlight the expectations of behaviour that are outlined in your Safe Space Agreement. This will ensure that everyone is aware of unacceptable behaviour and that you have the right to ask anyone causing

others distress and harm to leave the event. If possible, you might find it helpful to also make physical copies of the Safe Space Agreement available for participants to review.

Our learnings: We found that being clear about our expectations of behaviour minimised potential altercations or issues. We were clear from the very beginning that the event would be trans inclusive and welcome to all from the LGBTQ+ community. We clearly stated that racist, ableist, classist, transphobic, or any discriminatory behaviour would not be accepted. We clarified that we had the ability to remove any individuals causing harm or distress to others and would use it if necessary.

Use quiet spaces: At the start of each event, after reiterating expectations of behaviour, identify dedicated safe spaces and tell participants how to reach them. Emphasise that these spaces are for anyone who needs a quiet moment to decompress. These spaces should also be used if a participant finds themselves overwhelmed and in need of support.

Our learnings: We found quiet spaces vital for the safety and wellbeing of our workshop participants. Out of the 8 workshops that we hosted, we found that these dedicated spaces were used in more than half. For situations where participants needed additional support, having pre-identified spaces and processes allowed us to minimise additional distress and provide space and privacy in crucial moments. ■

AFTER

Wrapping up: When winding down the event, thank participants for joining and sharing their thoughts and experiences. Confirm any next steps (if there are any) or share information on ways they can continue to be involved with your organisation (e.g. future events).

Our learnings: Include dedicated decompression time so that participants don't feel rushed out after an emotional shared experience. If you would like to ask for feedback, be sure to include dedicated time in this section of the workshop for it.

Follow up: A few days after the event, send a follow up to the participants. Thank them again for joining and contributing. As you did in-person, confirm any next steps (if there are any) and share information about other ways they can get involved with your organisation. If possible, provide a direct email or contact that they can reach out to if they want to share any thoughts or ask any questions.

Our learnings: After an event that will cause many participants to feel vulnerable, checking in and letting them know that they haven't been forgotten is important for building trust and relationships.

Evaluations and lessons learned: To help your own practice to continue to grow and learn, conduct a personal evaluation on how the event went and any lessons learned. How can you incorporate what you learned from this experience into the next event?

Our learnings: Providing time soon after the event for honest reflection will ensure you remember more clearly what went well and what could have gone better.

The steps outlined in this section will help you to create a safe and supportive environment for LGBTQ+ participants during an event. As with relationship building, it's important to be consistent, transparent, and committed to learning from the community. ■

IN THE NEXT SECTION
we have identified some suggested activities that you can use during your events or for inspiration.

SUGGESTED WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

In this section we have outlined some suggested workshop activities. These were designed to encourage discussion, reflection, and engagement with queer heritage and oral history.

For each activity, we have included:
■ An overall description of the activity
■ Prompts, to encourage discussion or deepen the engagement
■ Suggested timing for the activity
■ Materials needed (if any)

LISTENING PARTIES

Description: Identify an episode of The Quilt to listen to as a group. Have the episode play over a speaker so everyone can listen together.

The episode will be divided into sections. At the end of each section, hold a group discussion focussing on the importance of the stories being heard and remembered.

Repeat this until you have listened to all of the stories. When finished, have a final discussion to gather people's thoughts on the whole experience.

Prompts:
■ Did any of the participants recognise any of the locations highlighted in the episode?
■ Did anything in particular resonate with them?
■ Conduct a group activity where everyone identifies an object, location, or moment in time that they would want to capture in their oral history.

Time: 2 hours
■ 15 minutes to introduce the activity
■ 90 minutes to listen to an episode of The Quilt together, stopping after each section for discussion
■ 15 minutes to conclude activity and wrap up

Materials needed: Speaker, whiteboard or large individual sheets for participants, markers and pens
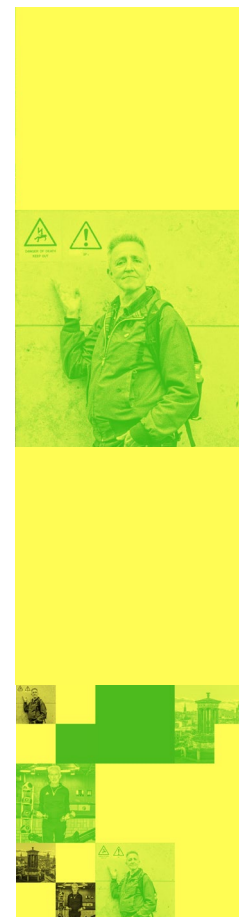
PERSONAL HISTORY MAP

Description: Challenge the idea that history is only the 'big moments' in time by empowering participants to recognise their lived experience as history. This activity is about the participants centring themselves. The importance of people's everyday lived experiences, in providing a tapestry of LGBTQ+ life over the years. This is about our LGBTQ+ ancestry.

Use the following questions at the start of the activity to inspire participants:
■ Is there a place that holds significant importance in your own history? E.g. a sofa you sat on when you had your first kiss or a park where you sit to reflect on life.
■ Is there an object that holds significant importance in your own history? E.g. a book someone once gave you or a plant that you've grown from seed.
■ Is there a moment that holds significant importance in your own history? E.g. the first time you looked in the mirror and saw yourself or when a friend used your right pronouns.

SUGGESTED WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

■ Is there a person that holds significant importance in your own history? E.g. a friend who picked you up after surgery or a teacher who was there for you at school.

Prompts:
■ Can you create one large timeline that combines everyone's history together? Where do participants overlap? Are there any pieces of shared history?

Time: 1 hour
■ 15 minutes to introduce the activity
■ 30 minutes for individuals to create their maps
■ 15 minutes for open discussion and concluding the activity

Materials needed: Large individual sheets for participants, markers and pens

EXPLORE LOCAL QUEER HISTORIES

Description: Before the session, identify a number of artefacts/pieces of art/important figures that are highlighted or displayed at your institution and ask participants to bring an important object/piece of art/or a memento of someone important to

them to the session. Start the session by providing a bit of history around each artefact/piece of art/important figure that you identified from your archive, then open the conversation out. Ask the participants if anyone would like to talk about the object/piece of art/or a memento of someone important to them that they brought to the session. Why is it important to them?

Prompts:
■ What does it reveal about the queer history of your local area? Did you learn anything new?
■ If you want to turn this into two sessions, you can assign one object/piece of art/individual to each participant. Ask them to do some additional research on the assigned piece. Can they learn anything new by speaking to people in the community, reading or through a web search? Have them share their findings in the next session.

Time: 1 hour
■ 5 minutes to introduce the activity
■ 40 minutes for group discussion
■ 15 minutes for open discussion and concluding the activity

Materials needed: Whiteboard and large individual sheets for participants, markers and pens

RECORD YOUR OWN HISTORIES

Description: Host a workshop where you teach/help participants to record their own oral histories. Just with the personal history map activity, this is about the participants centring themselves.

Begin the activity with a discussion about what will happen to the oral histories. Ideally, the participants should all be given a copy of their own interviews, but what more can be done? Can these oral histories also be kept by your organisation or group? Perhaps incorporated in a display or another event that you work with the participants to organise?

Prompts:
■ Can you encourage the participants to interview and record each other in pairs? Allow them to be active in the recording of their stories, all while learning new skills that they can take with them.
■ You might want to use the following questions during the interviews to inspire participants:
■ Is there a place that holds significant importance in your own history? E.g. a sofa you sat on when

you had your first kiss or a park where you sit to reflect on life.

■ Is there an object that holds significant importance in your own history? E.g. a book someone once gave you or a plant that you've grown from seed.

■ Is there a moment that holds significant importance in your own history? E.g. the first time you looked in the mirror and saw yourself or when a friend used your right pronouns.

■ Is there a person that holds significant importance in your own history? E.g. a friend who picked you up after surgery or a teacher who was there for you at school.

———

Time: 2 hours

———

Materials needed: Recording device, microphone, consent forms (A template for a consent form can be found in the 'How to conduct LGBTQ+ inclusive oral history interviews' section).

Considering these activities, are there any that you think would like to organise? How can you customise or build on the suggested activities? Have they inspired you to think of any other potential workshop ideas? ■

IN THE NEXT SECTION
we explore approaches to and important considerations for conducting LGBTQ+ inclusive oral history interviews. This is especially helpful to consider when conducting the final suggested activity in this section - Record your own histories.

HOW TO CONDUCT LGBTQ+ INCLUSIVE ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

Oral history has always been a radical way of documenting the voices of marginalised people, and is a method of giving a voice and power to those who have been silenced. In this section we explore the power of using non-traditional approaches to capturing oral history. We examine how it can be used to reduce further barriers to inclusion by allowing anyone with the appropriate tools and knowledge to capture oral history.

To do so, we provide practical information and link to expert advice on best practices to follow when beginning your journey into oral history. By doing so, we hope to help empower passionate individuals without prior knowledge or training, to feel confident in exploring recording oral histories.

TRADITIONAL VS NON-TRADITIONAL APPROACHES

For this project we used a non-traditional approach to capturing oral history. Aunt Nell conducted all of the interviews with our participants. In total, they conducted 1-2 hour interviews with 30 people. Clips of these interviews then became part of the eight episodes of the podcast we created, The Quilt. In full length, these interviews now form part of the Queer Britain digital archives and have been shared with all project partners for inclusion in their own archives. Although the eventual aim of the interview was for Aunt Nell to produce an eight-part podcast series, their scope and

mission was to always consider the long form. In this way, we propose that interviews can be conducted with both objectives known and understood. In capable hands, in this case in those of Tash Walker and Adam Zmith from Aunt Nell, we have created a successful example of how this can be modelled and replicated.

This method is not intended or recommended as a replacement to the vital role of longer form, formal oral history interviews. Whereby, a perhaps fuller life story, through longer duration interviews and repeat visits can document a more complete overview of queer lives. Instead, this method is intended to provide an alternative and more accessible format for individuals of all backgrounds to be involved in preserving their community's oral histories.

We fully support the skills and field of more traditional oral history. In larger scale projects, or when funding is available, we recommend that interviewers undertake introduction and advanced training courses, such as those that the Oral History Society provides. ∎

HOW TO CONDUCT LGBTQ+ INCLUSIVE ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

PRACTICAL TIPS AND ADVICE FOR CONDUCTING ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

The Oral History Society has created a guide on best practice for approaching an interviewee and conducting an oral history interview. You can access this advice here. While this guidance from the OHS follows a more traditional approach, we used a more non-traditional approach for this project.

Each interviewee was approached by Aunt Nell as a follow-up after attending one of the workshops. By approaching interviewees after meeting them in a relaxed and collaborative space, it allowed them to build upon trust and mutual understanding already created. Using a podcast documentary approach to following leads and finding suitable stories also led to a greater depth of interview in more specific areas.

Adam Zmith and Tash Walker have some great advice to impart in how to approach interviews:

What do you think it's important to consider whilst conducting queer oral history?

Adam: 'While it's important to think about your questions and the technical aspects of recording, there's so much more to doing an interview or oral history that is easily forgotten or overlooked. Think about everything around the interview itself. How can you chat about something silly or simple first, to help make the person feel relaxed with you? Do they seem totally comfortable sharing things with you, and if not, can you do or say something to 'get them there' before you begin?

And how can you make sure that they have your full attention? By not saying how many other things you have on that day, not rushing, not disclosing too much about your concerns and needs? You have to think through all these things, and adopt a bit of a role, if you're going to capture the fullest version of the interviewee.'

What would you advise others planning to interview?

Tash: 'Listen to them. Really listen, and then be confident in your curiosity. If your interviewee says something that captures your interest, ask them more about it. It's your role to get stories and
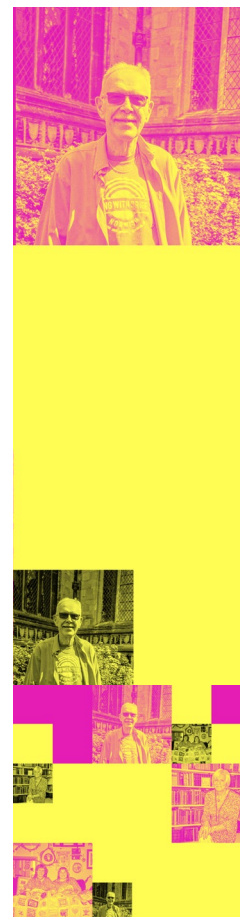
feelings from the interviewee, and you can only do this by listening to them and responding to what they say, from a position of curiosity. If you're too shy to ask something because you're worried about what they'll make of it, you probably won't get the best material from them.

You can, and should, give them the chance to decline to answer, but if you don't try then you won't find out what you're interested in. Part of this confidence is clarity, too. Sometimes our concern makes our questions a bit woolly or more like statements. Better to be short but clear, such as "can you tell me more about that?" or "how did that feel?", and remember to leave space. It can take time for an answer to come, and so often silence and space is a very fruitful tool.'

WELLBEING AND PERSONAL SAFETY

When preparing for an oral history interview it's important to consider both the wellbeing and personal safety of the interviewee and interviewer.

When sharing queer life stories it is common that traumatic or emotionally

complex discussions can occur. LGBTQ+ oral histories may include topics such as harassment, homo/trans/biphobia and difficult experiences with authorities or medical care. This can of course be difficult for the interviewee, the interviewer, and sometimes even the future listener to the recording. Emma Vickers writes of the difference between 'unexpected trauma[1]' and 'expected trauma'. Vickers defines these as trauma that becomes apparent tangentially to the interview subject as opposed to directly from the subject in discussion. It is important to be aware of this and have a wellbeing support plan in place (for the interviewee and yourself) before conducting any interviews.

You might consider:
■ Before the interview begins, let the interviewee know that they are not obligated to talk about anything that they don't want to. If

[1] EMMA L. VICKERS, 'UNEXPECTED TRAUMA IN ORAL INTERVIEWING' FROM THE ORAL HISTORY REVIEW, VOL 46, 2019, ISSUE 1, IS INTERESTING AND HAS SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWERS.

a topic causes them distress, you can move on and discuss something else.
■ Let the interviewee know that it is okay to take breaks. Tell them that they should communicate when they need to stop. Remind them of their agency in the dynamic.
■ Identify a quiet, safe place that they can decompress in if they need a break during the interview.
■ When the interview ends, ask them if they have any self-care practices that they can do. If not, you might suggest: talking to a friend, taking a walk, reading a favourite book, or watching a favourite show.

Remember that your health and wellbeing is just as important. Be sure to consider steps you might take to ensure you have the support and space you need after conducting an interview. ■

TECHNOLOGY STANDARDS AND EQUIPMENT

Various basic and mid-range recording equipment can be used to create good quality audio recordings of oral history interviews. One popular recorder is the H4n Zoom recorder

The Oral History Society (OHS) has created a guide for looking after yourself during interviews. It includes helpful, practical tips, such as telling people when and where you'll be conducting interviews, and planning time for decompressing afterwards. You can access the guide here.

with an inbuilt microphone and options to connect other microphones.

It is advisable to record using an uncompressed PCM WAV (or .wav) file type. A suitable recording quality for recording speech is 44.1kHz 16 bit or 48kHz 16bit.

It is recommended to follow The Oral History Society's guide for choosing equipment.

Things to consider:
■ Microphone placement: Ensure it is placed towardsthe interviewee and is somewhere it can't be knocked or hit.
■ Recording levels: Check that you have set the recording levels correctly before you begin the interview. Do this with a short, test recording that you playback to check the sound. It is recommended to do this test in the location and set up that you will conduct the interview in.
■ Recording environment: For best results, limit background noise or interruptions.
■ Backup equipment and batteries: Prepare for all situations. Remember to always take extra batteries and SD cards with you. For best practice, consider making a backup recording once you have finished.

QUEER BRITAIN | AUNT NELL
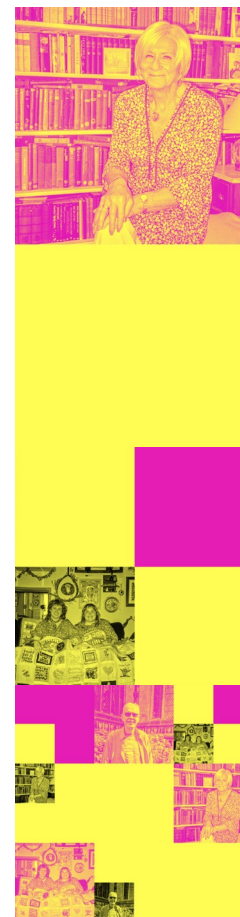
ETHICS, COPYRIGHT AND IP

Ethics: All oral history projects need to be planned and carried out ethically and legally. In the UK there are legal requirements such as the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) and the need to process personal and special category data carefully. This updated act has absorbed what was formerly understood as GDPR, which is an EU Regulation that no longer applies to the UK. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is the best source to check for the latest information about these regulations. The British Library has also created an accessible and helpful short overview - 'Demystifying rights: Data Protection.'

The Oral History Society website has a vital dedicated section that explains the ethics of interviewing for oral history. They highlight how ethics should be considered as important as the essential legal frameworks. A key part of this approach is to clarify the intent of the project, and empower the interviewee to make informed decisions. To do so effectively, without overwhelming the interviewee, it is best to create three documents which will be given to the interviewee at relevant stages of the process. This creates a structure to deliver the necessary information and to frame a discussion regarding consent for the interview, its preservation in the archive and any further use of the recording. It also offers opportunities for the interviewee to take in the relevant information when necessary and more easily ask questions around anything they are unsure about.

The three forms you should create are:
■ A project information sheet: This should be given to the interviewee before the interview begins. This sheet will provide the full details of the project, including the use of personal data. If applicable, you should also include information on your privacy policy.
■ An audio interview participation agreement: This agreement needs to be completed before the interview. It states that the interviewee is consenting to participate in the interview and being recorded.
■ An audio interview deposit form: This agreement needs to be completed after the interview. This provides approval for the recording to be deposited and/or kept by the organisation conducting the interview.

The British Library has created templates that you can use for each of these forms. You can access them in the links provided:
■ A project information sheet
■ An audio interview participation agreement
■ An audio interview deposit form

The Oral History Society hosts a valuable resource explaining these forms, and how to begin an ethical first approach to invite participants to be interviewed.

Copyright and IP: Copyright can often be misunderstood or not considered early enough in oral history projects. This can cause some serious problems further down the line. It's important to have an understanding of who owns the copyright of an oral history recording.

In oral history interviews there are three strands of copyright to understand, with different owners and durations of protection:

■ **The interviewer** - the words they spoke on the recording (70 years).

■ **The interviewee** - the words they spoke on the recording (70 years).

■ **The sound recordist** - the sound recording (50 years).

As part of the recording agreement it is key to empower the interviewee to know their rights and follow their wishes. Please reference the Oral History Society advice pages for the latest guidance on copyright. ■

ACCESS AND PRESERVATION: ARCHIVE AND DIGITAL PRESERVATION

Once the interview has finished, it is important to immediately make copies to prevent the recording being lost due to human or technological error. Never rely on the original recording captured on the SD card in the recorder. This can be easily recorded over and lost.

Before anything else, you should name the file using a consistent file naming system. This will ensure best practice when cataloguing the files, or retrieving them from an archive.

Once named, the full quality uncompressed file created during the interview should be copied with appropriate metadata. Be sure to check that the file is complete and that it has not corrupted during the transfer. To do this, check the file size and duration of the interview. This copy will be the preservation file. It can form part of an archive, if that's the intent of the recording. For best practice, it is advisable to make two copies of the original recording. Each copy of the recording should be stored on a different platform (e.g. two hard drives or servers).

Remember to include all the documentation and agreement forms with the copies of the interview. If transferring the recording to an archive, ensure the archive receives a copy of each completed form. This is vital to take long term care of the histories.

Access files (often MP3 format) are different to archival preservation files. These files can be compressed to make them easier to share or host online. This is of course subject to the copyright and any specific restrictions the interviewee has requested on the Recording Agreement form. ■

Archives+ at The Manchester Central Library has created a training and advice page about best practice for looking after sound archives

CREATIVE USE: HOW TO 'UNLOCK' INTERVIEWS

There are many ways to use oral history recordings to create accessible and engaging events and resources. They do not need to only be kept within archives or used for research purposes. There is a whole field within oral history research and within the heritage sector that explores the creative use of audio interviews that is engaging creatives and communities alike[2]. From in-person events to using digital platforms to share experiences and stories online, the events that come after the recordings are a vital part of realising queer oral history projects.

Archives+ at The Manchester Central Library has made use of Soundcloud to publish curated audio clips from their collections. At Queer Britain, we have previously used oral histories captured in the Log Books podcast in the

[2] FOSTER, HELEN. "FINDING POETRY IN THE SOUND ARCHIVES: CREATIVELY REPURPOSING ORAL HISTORIES FOR RE-PRESENTATION AND ENGAGEMENT." ORAL HISTORY 46, NO. 1 (2018): 111-18. HTTP://WWW.JSTOR.ORG/STABLE/44993461.

an interactive piece in our exhibition, We Are Queer Britain! For this oral history project, we worked with Aunt Nell to produce a podcast from the oral history interviews conducted. To encourage further engagement, we have also planned listening events at various institutions. At these events, groups will gather to listen to an episode of the podcast together and then discuss their thoughts on the topics raised.

Some further examples of how oral history recordings can be used are:
- Interactive exhibition pieces
- Commissioned music composition or sound art performances
- Community performed verbatim theatre plays
- Soundtracks to animation workshops with school children
- Walking tour apps or immersive soundscapes on mobile devices
- Production of filmed documentary or podcasts.

Considering the examples of how oral history interviews have been 'unlocked' to help make them more accessible to a wider audience, how might you use your existing recordings?

In this section, we have provided the information you need to use a non-traditional approach to capturing oral history. By doing so, we hope this toolkit can help empower LGBTQ+ individuals throughout the UK to help capture and preserve their community's stories. ■

IN THE FINAL SECTION
of this resource, we will reflect how all of the learnings and guidance that we have explored in this toolkit can be used to make positive change at your institution.

QUEER BRITAIN | **AUNT NELL**

Positive, lasting change that improves LGBTQ+ inclusion in the heritage sector can only happen through collaborative and community-led approaches. Queer histories and stories will never be accepted and acknowledged as part of the fabric of the UK's history if they are silenced, kept separate, or only highlighted and celebrated during key awareness periods.

I t's important to recognise that many individual heritage institutions and queer-led projects are already co-producing LGBTQ+ heritage projects with their communities. They are doing vital work to preserve and highlight local LGBTQ+ histories before they are lost. If we are to see positive, lasting change that improves LGBTQ+ inclusion across the heritage sector, we must see these approaches and methods accepted and adopted by every institution.

Initiatives that help to empower LGBTQ+ individuals to recognise the importance and validity of their personal histories and include them in the national heritage is just one method to inspire this change. This toolkit demonstrates how oral histories can be an impactful way to capture and preserve LGBTQ+ stories for future generations to listen and learn from. For many LGBTQ+ people, especially those of intersecting marginalised identities, sharing their history through an interview is a way of capturing these important stories before they are lost.

This toolkit, and this project, was only ever
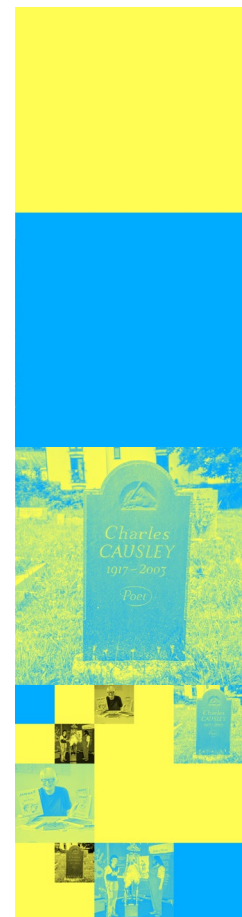
meant to be a first step. Something that could be improved and expanded by others. We've honestly captured our learnings - including areas where we could have done better - in the hope that it will help other heritage organisations. We hope that by sharing our experiences that we can contribute to the ongoing conversations in this area. We hope to help improve confidence across the heritage sector in reducing barriers to access to LGBTQ+ communities and providing appropriate support.

If we all work together, a more inclusive and representative heritage sector is possible. One that everyone will feel welcome to engage with. This can only lead to more empowered and informed future generations. A generation that doesn't feel 'othered' or 'alone' when they don't see themselves (positively) represented in their history museums, library books, archive records, art galleries, and science centres. ∎

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

QUEER BRITAIN | **AUNT NELL**

THE QUILT

A NEW QUEER PODCAST

LISTEN AND SUBSCRIBE WHEREVER YOU GET YOUR PODCASTS

QUEER BRITAIN | AUNT NELL

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SAFE SPACE AGREEMENT

Commitment to an inclusive environment

ORGANISATION NAME HERE is committed to creating an inclusive environment. One where all our staff, volunteers, collaborators, and visitors feel welcome and safe to be their true selves. We will not allow any language or behaviour that is sexist, racist, homo/bi/lesphobic, ableist, transphobic, ageist, or discriminatory or hateful in any way. Any instance of harmful behaviour or speech will not be tolerated.

By visiting or choosing to participate in an event at **ORGANISATION NAME HERE**, you are agreeing to our ways of working and commitment to inclusivity.

If we feel that anyone is exhibiting behaviour that is discriminatory or hateful, then we reserve the right to ask them to leave immediately. We reserve the absolute right of admission and can remove individuals if felt necessary for the safety of others.

You can learn more about our commitment to creating an inclusive environment on our website here **[HYPERLINK OR DELETE AS NECESSARY]** or by reading our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion **(EDI)** policy here **[HYPERLINK OR DELETE AS NECESSARY]**.

USEFUL RESOURCES

EXISTING PROJECTS

Archives+ at Manchester Central Library on Soundcloud: The Greater Manchester Sound Archive collection on Soundcloud. The collection includes hundreds of oral histories, radio and music recordings.
https://soundcloud.com/archivesplus

The Golden Gays by Queer Kernow: A zine on the LGBTQIA+ history of Cornwall from Prehistory to Present day
https://queerkernow.co.uk/the-olden-gays/

It's Radical To Exist by BiHistory: A zine about archives, queer history + preserving a record of your community's existence.
https://bihistory.wordpress.com/zines/

Queer Norfolk Archive: A volunteer-led archiving project dedicated to preserving Norfolk's LGBTQ+ history.

https://queernorfolk.com/archive/

LGBTQ+ INCLUSION GUIDANCE
Trans-Inclusive Culture: Guidance on advancing trans inclusion for museums, galleries, archives and heritage organisations by Suzanne MacLeod, Richard Sandell, Sharon Cowan, E-J Scott, Cesare Cuzzola, and Sarah Plumb. This important guidance sets out an ethical framework to support cultural organisations to advance trans inclusion.
https://le.ac.uk/rcmg/research-archive/trans-inclusive-culture

ORAL HISTORY GUIDANCE AND BEST PRACTICE

Oral history Good Practice Guidance by the Heritage Fund: A comprehensive guide on how to plan and run a successful oral history project.
https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/good-practice-guidance/oral-history

Interviewing Guidance by the Oral History Society: A guide on best practice for approaching an interviewee and conducting an oral history interview.
https://www.ohs.org.uk/for-beginners/interviewing/

Wellbeing and Oral History by Sarah Gudgin: An exploration on the impact of oral history interviews to the wellbeing of interviewers and interviewees.
https://www.ohs.org.uk/general-interest/well-being-and-oral-history/

Looking after yourself - Some advice for interviewers by the Oral History Society: A guide on looking after your safety and wellbeing when conducting oral history interviews.
https://www.ohs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Looking-after-yourself-OHS-v2.pdf

Choosing the Right Equipment by the Oral History Society: Guidance on choosing the correct recording equipment for your project.
https://www.ohs.org.uk/for-beginners/equipment/

Demystifying Rights: Data Protection by the British Library: An accessible and useful introduction on what you can and can't do with your sound collections.
https://northwestsoundheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/BL_01-21-UOSH-Handout-6_Demystifying-rights-data-protection.pdf

Are you legal and ethical? by the Oral History Society: An overview of the key considerations to ensure your project is meeting the legal and ethical requirements.
https://www.ohs.org.uk/legal-and-ethical-advice/legal-and-ethical-preparation/

Copyright Law by the Oral History Society: An overview of the latest guidance on copyright law and how it applies to oral history recordings.
https://www.ohs.org.uk/legal-and-ethical-advice/copyright-law/#:~:text=There%20are%20separate%20copyrights%20in,the%20sound%20recording%20or%20film

Training and Advice by the Archives+ at The Manchester Central Library: Best practice for looking after sound archives.
https://northwestsoundheritage.org/training/

FURTHER READING

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