

OUT OF THE VAULT

Queer Screen Heritage

Survival Guide



Contents

01 Orientation	3	06 Travelling Companions	20
Why an expedition survival guide?		Keeping track of who was involved.	
02 Sorting Your Kit	6	07 Safe Camp	22
Taking stock and getting prepared.		Respect and responsibility.	
03 Stow and Store	10	08 The Last Campfire	24
Taking care of your collection.		What happens next?	
04 Choosing Your Route	12	09 Flora and Fauna	26
Planning your preservation journey.		Some other useful things to know.	
05 Field Notes	17		
Adding colour, meaning, and context.			

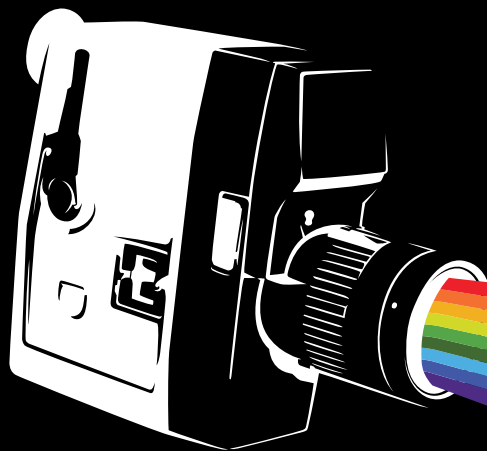
01

Orientation

This playful, jargon-free guide offers advice on preserving any film and video material you have made or look after. Its aim is to find a way of doing this that is right for you and to ensure that your LGBTQ+ story on screen lives on.

Why a Survival Guide?

This guide was made with help from a film archive, but it's not for a film archive. It was made for you, and that's why we've made it look like an expedition survival guide. It's your stuff, and where you go with it is up to you. We're just here to offer some advice on how to get prepared and get you where you want to go safely.



Presented by:



**QUEER
NORFOLK**

Supported by:



Who Is This Guide For?

Whether you're an individual or part of a community group. Fresh on the scene or with decades-long legacy. It's for anyone that has a story to save, and we all have a story to save.

Whether you're a community filmmaker, a performer, an artist, a facilitator, perhaps you're a member of a Pride organising committee, or you've just found a box of old tapes. Whatever your background, technical skills or resources, this guide is for you. No collection is too small. No story is too ordinary.

Who Made This Guide?

This survival guide was made by **Out of the Vault** and brings together advice and expertise from professional and volunteer communities across Norfolk and was developed through a series of in-person workshops and screenings.

Out of the Vault is a LGBTQ+ Screen Heritage initiative developed as part of a community curating collaboration between Queer Norfolk and the East Anglian Film Archive (EAFA). This project was supported by the BFI Screen Heritage Fund, awarding National Lottery funding.

OUT OF THE VAULT

Why Do We Need A LGBTQ+ Screen Heritage Guide?

Your LGBTQ+ story matters. History is typically a story of power. Its narratives tend to privilege the wealthy. Its study and interpretations often foreground the significance of genealogies and in turn remain de facto heterosexual.

Queer lives and stories are often left out, misrepresented, hidden or erased from the official records.

Film and video are powerful forms of communication. It offers a glimpse into real lives and everyday existence. For queer people and communities, film and video can be proof of presence, acts of resistance and sources of pride. By preserving them, we make sure our stories are not erased but celebrated.

Where LGBTQ+ lives are often most visible, in home movies, community documentaries and creative works made by small groups and individuals, they are also most at risk of being lost to time, technology and neglect, or separated from their communities.

This guide is here to redress the balance, giving you the tools to ensure your memories are preserved and your histories survive, in your words and on your terms.

Film and video are powerful forms of communication. It offers a glimpse into real lives and everyday existence.



02

Sorting Your Kit

Before any expedition, it's important to know what you're taking with you. In terms of film and video preservation, your kit is the material you want to protect, as opposed to the cameras, machines and computers you or someone else used to make it.



Take Stock

This section is about taking stock, gathering all your moving image material. Understanding what you have and where it is. Whether it's old video tapes, cans of film, or hard drives filled with digital video, now is the time to gather up your moving image memories.

Where to Start

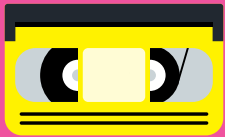
-  Search your home, office or studio for anything that could hold moving images. This could be video tapes, cine film reels, old mobiles, hard drives, USB sticks and SD cards.
-  Don't forget online spaces. Check emails, cloud storage and social media for those digital videos you've shared.
-  Make a 'gathering list' and write down each item as you find it – even if you don't know what's on it yet.



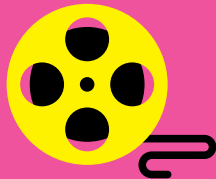
Format Field Guide

With so many different formats of video, film, discs and digital files, it's easy to get confused. But knowing what you have helps you make better decisions about preservation and access.

Some common examples:



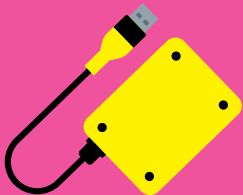
Video tapes



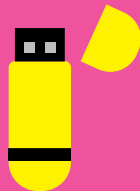
Cine film



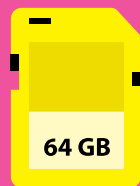
DVDs



Hard drives



USB flash drives



Memory cards



Don't forget online storage too

Take care when handling your material.

If you are initially unsure, try grouping your material by content or event, rather than by format or type.

Finding Your Bearings

If you need help identifying what type of film or video you have you can try the Preservation Self-Assessment Program (PSAP) Collection ID Guide.

Preservation Self-Assessment Program (PSAP) Collection ID Guide

A practical resource for identifying film, video, audio but also paper and photographic materials with guidance on their care and preservation needs.

psap.library.illinois.edu/collection-id-guide

The archive will be more than happy to help you identify what you have and answer any other questions, without you having to share any information you don't want to. If you would like to learn more about regional public sector films archive in the UK we recommend referring to Film Archives UK (FAUK).

Film Archives UK (FAUK)

A network for the UK's public sector film archives. A useful starting point for finding regional moving image archives across the UK.

filmarchives.org.uk

If you're still unsure, just take some photos of the items and send them to your nearest regional film archive for advice. In the East of England this is the East Anglian Film Archive.

East Anglian Film Archive (EAFA)

The regional film archive for the East of England, preserving and sharing moving image heritage from across the region.

eafa.org.uk



03

Stow and Store

Just like anything else that needs care on a long journey, film and video material can suffer from the effects of time, environment and neglect, so it needs to be stored appropriately.



Keeping It Safe

Once you've located all your material, keep it in a safe, environmentally stable space. Lofts, attics, sheds and garages might seem like ideal spots for items you want to keep but don't use often – but these spaces often run too hot or cold, damp, and may already be home to insects and animals that will happily treat your film and video material as new nesting or feeding material.

Storage tips:

-  Remember to check on your collection from time to time, to make sure it remains in the same condition as when you first stored it away.
-  Different formats may have different long-term preservation needs, and film archives have specialist facilities to help preserve film and video.
-  If you have any questions about how best to store your items or would like to talk through other long-term preservation options, contact your nearest regional film archive for advice.

Storage Resources

Here are some resources that can give you advice on storage.

Film Forever

Simple guidance on caring for motion-picture film at home or outside specialist archives.

filmforever.org

How to Care for Video at Home

Practical tips for storing and handling video tapes at home.

nfsa.gov.au/preservation/at-home/video

Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC)

Guidance, training, and practical resources for preserving digital collections. Resources include the Digital Preservation Handbook, Novice to Know-How training, and their Technology Watch reports including guidance on audiovisual preservation, social media archiving, and personal digital archiving.

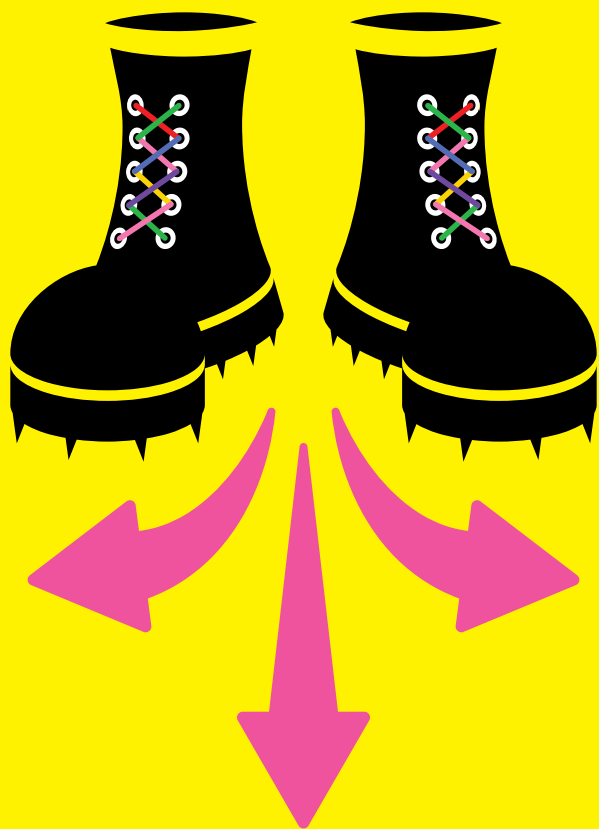
dpconline.org



04

Choosing your route

The following section will help you think about your material not just as a load of objects, but as a collection of films and videos that, together, tell a story.

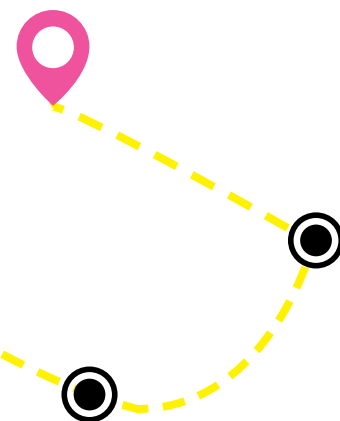


Your Route, Your Story

Film archives, museums, libraries and other heritage institutions all have specialist equipment, technical expertise and experience. So, if you need any advice about the 'technical stuff', just ask them. East Anglian Film Archive is the oldest regional archive in the UK and is always happy to share its experience of how to care for your films and videos.

What archives don't have, though, regardless of how big or small, established or new (like yours), are the stories behind their items, unless somebody tells them.

Preserving the story of your material is as important as preserving the object itself. To help others follow your story, we suggest leaving some **trail markers** behind, so that anyone who comes after you knows the path you took.



WHY?

WHAT?

WHERE?

WHO?



Trail Markers

Making **trail markers** is about the simple but essential task of recording key information about each item in your collection. It's also about recording information about who you are, how you identify, and your relationship to the material. Are you the creator, or the custodian? How did it come to be in your possession?

Use a notebook, spreadsheet, index cards or a combination of all three - it's about using a system that works for you. But consider how clear and understandable this information will be to someone else in the future. You can keep it short and sweet or provide a little extra detail.

You may not know some of the information. If so, just note that you don't know. This will help others trying to follow in your footsteps later, letting them know that you considered it and didn't know the answer, rather than simply forgot to add it. Letting people know that you don't know something, whether because you never knew, you can't remember, or you can't rewatch the material for technical reasons, is an important part of marking a trail, and will help stop others getting lost.

Here are some **trail markers** we suggest you try to record for every piece of material you want to preserve.

Title: Jot down if it has an official title. This may be more relevant for fictional narratives, documentaries. If saving candid moments from socials, give it a name that makes it instantly recognisable to you such as 'Dancing at Pride.'

Description or synopsis: A short summary of what happens in the material.

Type (genre): Is it a fictional narrative, a documentary, home movie, promotional material, a vlog or just a moment? Have you made a queer folk horror, a poetic happening or a kitchen sink drama? You may also want to consider some keywords.

Date: Whether you know the exact date or an approximation based on month or season and year is still very useful, such as 'Summer 2026.' This can include both production dates and if relevant publication dates such as first public screenings or uploads.

Location: Where it was filmed or created. Was it filmed in a specific location, a bar, a cafe, a city or a region?

Format(s): Note the format the material currently exists on (e.g. VHS, MiniDV, digital file, DVD). Indicate whether this is the original format. If it is a copy and the original format is different and known, record the original format as well.

Duration / Length: How long it runs. For film, also note the length in feet if known or indicated.

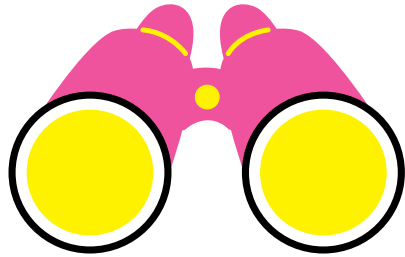
Sound: Does your material feature sound? Is it dialogue, voiceover, music, sound effects?

Cast and Crew: If people appear in the material, who are the cast, those that appear on the film and how can they be easily identified, through clothes, hair colour and style, height - anything that helps to distinguish them from others. It's important to note your crew, anyone behind the camera that was involved in the production of the film or video. Who was filming, directing, producing and helping.

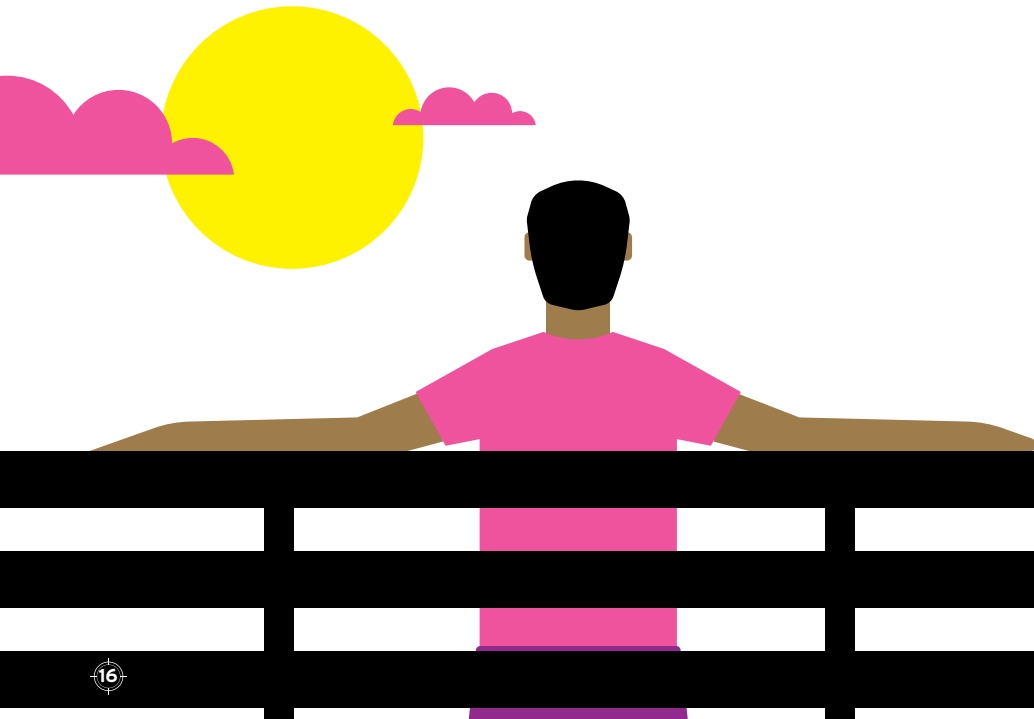
Associated materials: Are there scripts, flyers, programmes or photographs connected to this material? If so, make a note of them here, and if you have them, collect them together and label them to show that they belong together.

Viewpoints

Trail markers often lead to and from historical location signs and viewpoints that remind you why you set out on the expedition in the first place. A viewpoint gives you a perspective on what you have achieved. In terms of your collection, and how it is to be understood by those following after you, information about who made, arranged or organised things helps everything else make sense. So, making a viewpoint is important, because this is where you can tell people about you.



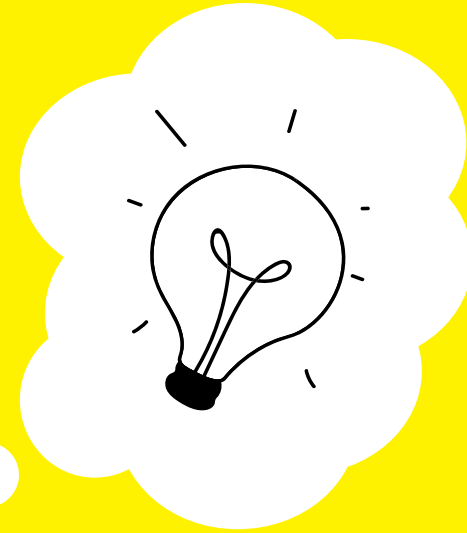
For example, what is your relationship to this material? Are you its creator, a participant or its custodian? As its creator or participant, how do you describe your identity? As its custodian, who was its previous custodian, and how did it come to be in your possession?



05

Field Notes

Making a document about yourself that isn't just a list of dates and places can be tricky. Here are some **Field Notes** on the different approaches you can take.



It's All in the Details

Often, it's the little details, the untold and hidden, parts that provide the most context, meaning and colour.

The following exercise can help you unlock and articulate the story behind your material.

1. Choose one video or film from your collection. With just three words, describe it. They can be prescriptive or ethereal, abstract or literal. They could be an emotion, a colour, a place or a name. Think about what the video means to you, or how it makes you feel.
2. Imagine your video was a person. What questions would you ask them to reveal their story? Think about their past, their journey, their secrets. What stories would it tell if it could speak?
3. Think back to when it was created. What was the atmosphere like? What did it smell like? What were you feeling at the time? Where were you and who else was with you? Why were you there?
4. If you're the custodian, what don't you know? What's missing or lost to time? This is still helpful in understanding its story.

Use these questions to explore your material and unlock its stories and repeat each step for each video or film in your collection. Remember to be clear which film or video your **Field Note** relates to; in case of an unfortunate event, they become separated from one another and can be reunited.

For added depth, invite collaborators or those featured in material to share their own memories and perspectives. By adding your context, memories and feelings, you transform your collection from a series of objects into a living record of queer experience.



If you're feeling a little more creative, here's a few ideas to get you inspired:

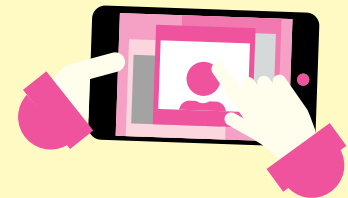
Journalling or writing it as a letter to a future custodian



Voice notes or audio commentary



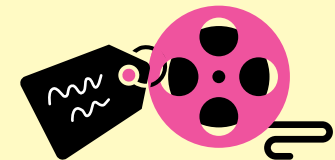
A vlog where you rewatch and review each video



A zine detailing the story of each video



Luggage or gift tags fixed to the outside of cases and cans



06

Travelling Companions

It's not always just about you and the stuff - sometimes it's about other people and their relationship to your collection. Details about them is what can bring your material to life, helping future viewers or yourself to make sense of the events, relationships and stories depicted.



Expedition Party

Here are some ways to start thinking about this that doesn't end up just being a list of names:

Relationships: Note the connections between the people seen or involved. Are they best friends, partners, married, divorced, family members, regular collaborators or paid professional actors?

Recurring appearances: Does someone appear in multiple pieces of your collection? Which other titles might we see their involvement?

Role or significance: Why was this film or video made? Was it promotional, made for a film festival or competition, a moment or special occasion? What was its intended purpose?

Viewed or screening: Where was this material viewed or screened? Did it live on a social media platform or shown in a cinema as part of a festival? Maybe its existence was private, part of your personal memories.

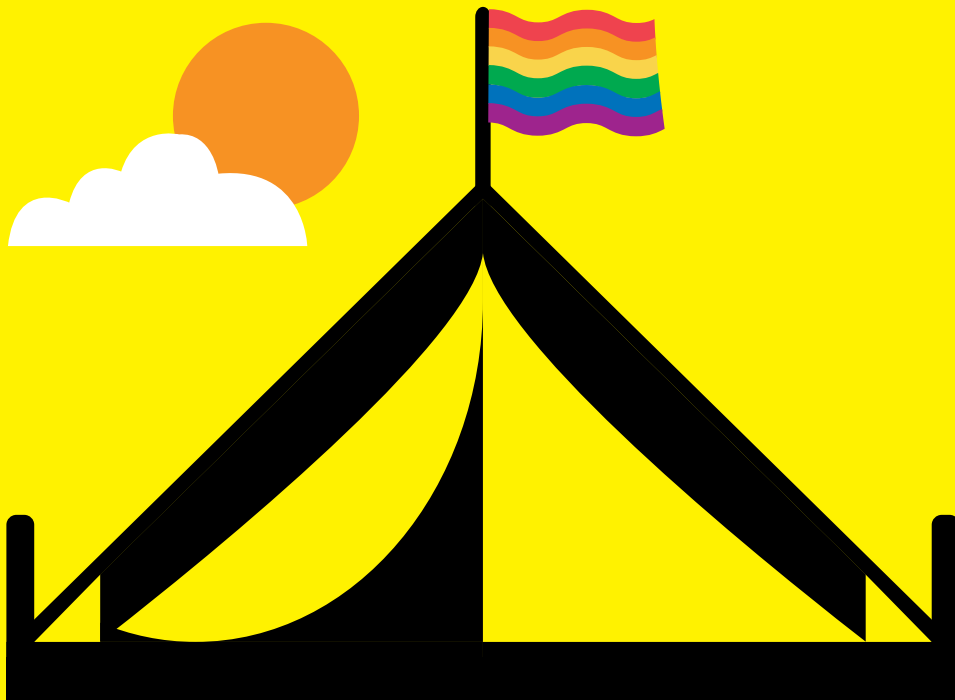
Community context: Was this made in response to a movement, a political act, group or event?



07

Safe Camp

Everyone has a right to privacy, and **Safe Camp** is about understanding these boundaries for what's shared and what stays protected. It's a space to think about and record any privacy, consent and copyright issues that come with archiving and sharing your material, so that you and any future custodians can continue to respect and protect these wishes.



Caring for your materials also means caring for the people connected to them. Everyone has a right to **privacy**, so it's important to understand what can be shared and what should remain **protected**. Recording these decisions helps ensure they are respected now and by future custodians.

For formal (professional, commercial, funded) productions participants are usually asked to sign **release forms** giving **consent** for their image and voice to be used. If you have these, dig them out, create copies and save them alongside the content they relate to.

For more informal recordings, consent is often assumed through pre-existing **trust** and a shared desire to remember a moment together. However, consent can change over time. People change and may no longer recognise or consent to how their past is represented. Avoid taking away someone's **agency**. If you're able to, ask for and **respect** their wishes, and consider your own wishes too. Just because something needs to remain private, doesn't lessen its importance. It holds meaning for you and is still deserving of preservation.

Mark any material you wish to remain private and record any **limits** on access or use.

Copyright protects creative work. You may hold rights in the material you've created, but your work may

also include contributions from others such as music, reused footage, or still images. Record what information you know about these, including any **permissions** or **licenses**, and keep copies of these agreements if possible.

Respecting privacy and copyright are not just legal obligations, it's part of caring for your community, your collaborators, and yourself. Keeping clear records helps ensure future custodians can understand and respect these **boundaries**.

Document: Doing your best to document and share agreements and permissions allows the material to remain accessible to a wide audience in the future. If you don't know this information (for example, if you are only the custodian), this doesn't mean that the material cannot be preserved or is not worth preserving – it just means it may be more difficult to share in the future as it will be unclear who owns the right to show it. Don't worry – archives can help!

Stories matter: Some of the most unique and significant material in an archive has a messy, complicated life story, or no story left at all. The East Anglian Film Archive can advise you, so feel free to get in touch.

08

The Last Campfire

There may come a moment when you're ready to pass your story on. **The Last Campfire** is about possibly donating your moving image material to an archive, making sure your films and videos continue to be cared for after your adventuring days are over.



Where To Next

Donating your moving image material to an archive, can help ensure your films and videos continue to be cared for into the future. Film archives specialise in preserving moving image material. They have the knowledge, facilities, and long-term responsibility needed to keep your work safe.

Across the UK, regional and national film archives collect and care for material connected to their areas and communities. Each archive has a collection policy, which outlines what they can accept. This is usually available to view on their website. Before getting in touch with an archive, check how your material fits their focus. As an example, you can find the East Anglian Film Archive's collection policy on its website. If you would like to know about other archives see our **Flora and Fauna** section for information on additional resources.

Start by identifying a selection of material you would like to offer. This might be your most significant or representative items. Use the information you have recorded (your 'trail markers') such as titles, dates, descriptions and formats to clearly explain what you have, why you have

it and why you think it may be interesting for other people to watch in the future. The archive may ask you additional questions, or to fill out a form or questionnaire. Don't be put off by this. This guide has prepared you for such situations – refer back to your **Field Notes**.

Archives have limited resources and may not be able to accept your donation right away, or at all. Don't be disheartened by a 'no, thank you'. This is not a reflection on the worthiness of your material or story. They may direct you to another organisation or invite you to participate in a future project – like this one!

Even if your collection isn't accepted today, your effort to collate, characterise, contextualise, and care for your material means it's ready when the right opportunity arises.

Your story matters. Whether it finds a home in an archival collection, a community project or remains in your care, you are contributing to keeping queer screen heritage alive.

09

Flora and Fauna

You're not alone on this journey. There is a thriving ecosystem of organisations, resources, and communities ready to offer advice, practical support, or just inspiration for the next stage of your journey.



Organisations and Further Advice

These organisations and resources are a great place to learn more about film preservation, queer heritage and activism and community archiving. It is by no means exhaustive, think of it as a start point for discovery and connection. Add to it as you discover new allies and resources.

Community Archiving

Community Archives Toolkit (Norfolk Record Office)

Practical guidance, templates, and resources to help community groups manage, preserve, and develop their archive collections.

archives.norfolk.gov.uk/30883

Community Archives and Heritage Group (CAHG)

A national network supporting community archives through resources, events, and a directory of projects across the UK and Ireland, helping groups connect, share knowledge, and celebrate local heritage.

communityarchives.org.uk

Copyright

Copyright User

An accessible guide to UK copyright law, with practical advice on permissions, licensing, copyright exceptions, and the reuse of archive and creative materials.

copyrightuser.org

Film Archives

East Anglian Film Archive (EAFA)

The regional film archive for the East of England, preserving and sharing moving image heritage from across the region.

eafa.org.uk

Film Archives UK (FAUK)

A network for the UK's public sector film archives. A useful starting point for finding regional moving image archives across the UK.

filmarchives.org.uk



Format Identification

Preservation Self-Assessment Program (PSAP) Collection ID Guide

A practical resource for identifying film, video, audio but also paper and photographic materials with guidance on their care and preservation needs. psap.library.illinois.edu/collection-id-guide

Caring for Moving Image Material

Film Forever

Simple guidance on caring for motion-picture film at home or outside specialist archives. filmforever.org

How to Care for Video at Home

Some practical tips for storing and handling video tapes at home. nfsa.gov.au/preservation/at-home/video

The Film Preservation Guide

A practical introduction to identifying, handling, storing, and preserving film collections. filmpreservation.org/preservation-basics/the-film-preservation-guide

Digital Preservation

Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC)

Guidance, training, and practical resources for preserving digital collections. Resources include the Digital Preservation Handbook, Novice to Know-How training, and their Technology Watch reports including guidance on audiovisual preservation, social media archiving, and personal digital archiving. dpconline.org

Queer History and Heritage

Queer Norfolk

A community-led project connecting people with Norfolk's LGBTQ+ heritage through shared collections, stories, and digital resources. queernorfolk.com

The Queer Heritage and Collections Network (QHCN)

A UK-wide network providing support, training, and resources for people working with LGBTQ+ histories, collections, and heritage. queerhcn.org

About Queer Norfolk

Founded in 2022, Queer Norfolk is a heritage charity, dedicated to digitally archiving Norfolk's LGBTQ+ past. Its mission is simple: find documents, objects, paintings, artefacts, photographs, landscapes, archaeology, films - anything that has a queer association - and add it to its digital, online archive. Queer Norfolk is not like other archives. It doesn't own the objects it documents. Instead, it maps queer heritage across private and public collections, linking scattered histories into a single, searchable digital resource. It decentralises the county's queer history, handing the ownership of queer stories, artefacts, videos, and pictures back to its own community. It is building an archive that empowers people to access, discover, and contribute to its shared history. queernorfolk.com

About the East Anglian Film Archive

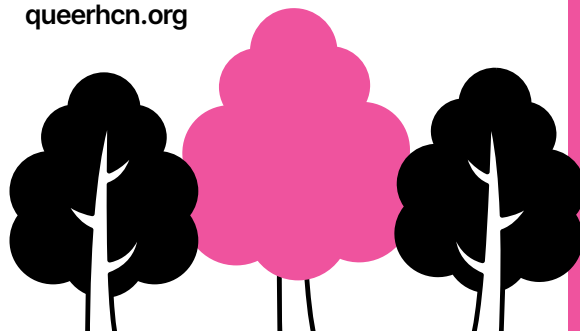
The East Anglian Film Archive, the UK's first regional film archive, offers a unique record of the East of England's social and cultural history. As part of the University of East Anglia, we continue to lead moving image heritage research and inspire audience participation through community projects and events. Our collections represent a broad range of amateur and professional creativity, from 1896 to the present day. eafa.org.uk

About the BFI National Lottery Screen Heritage Fund

The BFI National Lottery Screen Heritage Fund supports projects across the UK to discover, preserve and share film and television heritage, with a particular focus on underrepresented stories and voices. Awarding National Lottery funding, the Fund works in partnership with archives, community organisations and cultural bodies to ensure that significant screen works can be safeguarded and made accessible to audiences now and in the future. The Fund plays a key role in helping organisations care for collections, engage communities, and broaden understanding of the UK's diverse screen history.

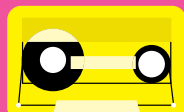
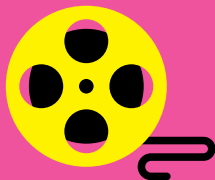
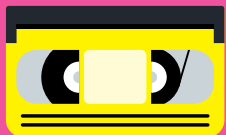
Disclaimer

This guide is intended for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to provide accurate and practical advice, Queer Norfolk and the East Anglian Film Archive accept no responsibility or liability for any damage, loss, or deterioration of personal material resulting from the use or application of the information within this guide. Users are encouraged to seek further professional advice if they are unsure about any aspect of film or video preservation.



Notes

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