

OPENING ARCHIVES CASE STUDY

LGBT FOUNDATION LTD

LGBT+ Oral Histories Digital Archive



HERITAGE DOMAIN:

Community Archives.

PROJECT OVERVIEW:

This project created a digital, accessible archive of LGBT+ oral histories focused on community empowerment and queer activism in Greater Manchester and beyond. The project involved training a group of volunteers to conduct a series of 10 one-hour-long interviews with LGBT+ people of a range of ages across Greater Manchester. The interviews were transcribed, and the recordings and transcriptions formed the content of an online exhibition which was launched on LGBT Foundation's website to mark LGBT History Month.

PROJECT STATS (data accurate as of April 2022):

- 24 participants took part in the project, with a further 40 attending the launch event.
- There were 484 visits to the dedicated webpage.
- On social media, 3 Instagram posts had an audience reach of 1,339 with 60 click throughs, whereas Facebook had an audience reach of just over 2,000 across 2 posts. 2 YouTube videos had 103 views.

SUCCESSES:

- The wide range of people from the LGBT+ community that were involved in this project.
- LGBT Foundation have developed a strong base level set of skills and understanding of how to grow this digital archive in the future.
- Discovering digital tools like Otter.ai and Audiogram made a huge difference in how efficient the project was in transcribing and presenting oral histories.

LEARNINGS:

- The project highlighted a need to shift understanding about what constitutes heritage, activism, community organising - and ultimately what stories are 'worth' sharing and archiving.
- The project team adapted to the ongoing pandemic restrictions and remote working by utilising digital platforms. It was acknowledged that delivering the project completely online will have excluded some participants or impacted their experience.
- Digital exclusion is present in all communities and has been more visible due to the pandemic. In aiming to democratise archives, it's important to factor in intersections of experiences.

TOP TIP FOR WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES AND ARCHIVES:

Involve your participants from conception, give yourself as much time as possible to reach out to interested participants and have a good understanding of structure as far in advance as possible!

LINK TO DIGITAL OUTPUTS:

www.lgbt.foundation/oral-histories



Opening Archives was an action research project, designed and led by The Audience Agency, supporting 10 organisations to explore archives, community engagement and digital tools. It was funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund in 2021/22.