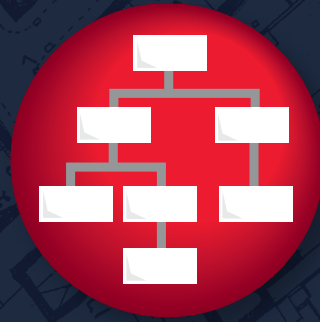


# Gateway to Your Archives



**A guide on how to identify,  
use and manage your  
community archive**

**explore**



**YORK**  
Gateway to History





During 2014 over 40 community groups in York were asked about their community archive training needs. All of the information supplied in this guide has been created based on the feedback.

The **York: Gateway to History** project would like to thank all community groups who took the time to discuss and feed into the content for this guidance with the Community Collections & Outreach Archivist.

**Explore York Libraries and Archives** would like to thank the Heritage Lottery Fund and City of York Council for providing the essential funding for this project.



Sarah presenting at the launch of the Poppleton History Society archive



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# Introduction



This guide has been created as part of the Heritage Lottery Funded project **York: Gateway to History** and is designed to support community groups across York in identifying, managing and using their archive collections.

We've given you all sorts of advice in this guide to give you the confidence to get started; whether you're planning to deposit your collections with **Explore York Libraries and Archives**, looking to develop your own archive facility or seeking inspiration for a community project.

We realise that making the commitment to your archives is a big one and that you face budget restrictions and will be dedicating your own time to the task. All of the guidance we're offering can be done on a limited budget and if you don't believe us, we've added case studies at the end of each section.

Once you get started you might find you need some more information, so we've added a handy **Discovering more** section. It includes links to all different kinds of institutions who have published detailed guidance on managing archives. Look out for the icons throughout this guide, as they'll help you choose the further guidance that's right for you.

## What are archives?

In the most formal sense, The National Archives UK describes archives as follows:

*"In the course of business lots of organisations and people accumulate archives. These include government agencies, local authorities, universities, hospitals, museums, businesses, charities, professional organisations, families and individuals."*

*Archives may be books or papers, maps or plans, photographs or prints, films, tapes or videos, or computer generated records. Archives are intended to be kept permanently, to preserve the past and allow others to discover it."*

Each individual archive is different, and everyone defines archives slightly differently. Our top tip is that you should keep what means the most to your group and local community, and this could include paper based records or artefacts.

Archives services don't traditionally accept artefacts into their collections. This is mainly a space issue and to avoid overlapping with museum collections. However, when an archive collection is closely linked to an object or series of objects it often makes sense for things to be kept together. If you're thinking about depositing your archive you'll need to have a chat with an archivist first to see if they can accept everything.

The **Depositing your archives** section will give you more information.







## Why are archives important?

Our **York: Gateway to History** project has taught us that archives mean something different to each one of us, and that the records of our communities provide a unique insight into the lives of local people.

All archives act as evidence of our local, national and international histories. Without archives providing a written history and memory, so many events in our past could be forgotten or distorted. If you've ever read George Orwell's *1984*, you'll understand the power of the written record!



Beyond the evidential value of archives is the personal and emotional impact they can have on individuals and local communities. The records of a community group or a family can provide a sense of belonging and identity, making people feel rooted and part of something unique to their area. These collections also give balance to the official city record which rarely features local community activities.



## Where to start

The most daunting part of this process is getting started. First of all you'll need to make some decisions as a group/organisation:

- **Why do you want to preserve your archive?**

Knowing why you want to dedicate time to this task is important. Consider how managing and using your archive will add to the aims and objectives of your group/organisation.

Managing your archive will also:

- **Improve access.** Knowing what information you have and where everything is stored will make it easier to find your records and use them. It also improves security as you can keep track of everything and know if something goes missing
- **Ensure long term preservation.** Through the process of understanding your archives you can preserve things for the future. You can also think about whether your collection is better kept at an archives service
- **Increase use.** With a working list of your records and an accessible storage space you have more opportunities to use your collection to support your operational and promotional activities. Don't forget that your collection will probably be relevant and important to the local community, so why not plan a project around your collection?
- **Where do you want your archive to be kept?**  
You may decide to deposit your collections or to develop your own storage space. Everyone might have different ideas, so you'll need to make sure you weigh up both the opportunities and challenges. The **Storing your archives** and **Depositing your archives** sections will give you advice on what's involved.
- **Who will support your archive in the long term?**  
It's a long term commitment managing your archives as your collection will continue to grow for as long as your group/organisation exists. For this to be successful, you'll need to decide who will be responsible for the collection in the long term and put in place a system that makes it easy to hand responsibility over to someone else.



# Understanding your archives



**At the moment, you'll probably have a room (or several!) full of boxes and a computer full of files that you don't know what to do with.**

**The main thing you'll need to dedicate to this stage is your time. Try and get a small team of you together – a regular group effort will keep momentum going and will help you to set deadlines. Use our handy guide to get started sorting your archive.**

## What should you keep?

In most archive collections, you'll find similar types of records including:

- Meeting minutes
- Correspondence
- High level financial information
- Publicity (e.g. event leaflets and materials)
- Photographic and film material

All of these records provide a good overview of your group/organisation's activities. If you have any of these, you should always keep and continue collecting them. You might not have all of these kinds of records and you might have additional categories; each organisation/group is different and there is no one-size fits all approach.

It's important that you don't fall into the trap of keeping everything your group/organisation has ever created. By keeping everything you'll quickly run out of space and too much information can be just as un-usable as too little.

Don't be afraid to throw things away and to help you make those decisions, we recommend you dispose of the following:

- Low level financial information such as invoices and receipts, where there is no longer a legal requirement to keep them. If you have a higher level financial record, keep this instead
- Photocopies of items in your collection or of items held in other archive collections
- More than 3 identical copies of the same item. Having more than one copy is fine if the item is fragile but keeping too many copies takes up unnecessary space.

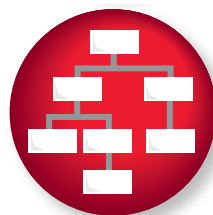
Remember that everything you throw away that includes financial and personal data should be shredded.

If your organisation is a registered charity, you will probably be aware that there are legal requirements to keep some types of records for certain periods of time. The **Discovering more** section includes links to professional advice.





## Box listing and cataloguing



When managing any archive collection, it's essential that you first make a box list. This can be a really interesting process, especially if this is the first time you've got your collection in one place. Try and keep to broad descriptions of whole types of records, but remember someone who doesn't know your archives should be able to find everything.

Our box list template information sheet has been designed to include everything you'll need to create a good quality, comprehensive box list.

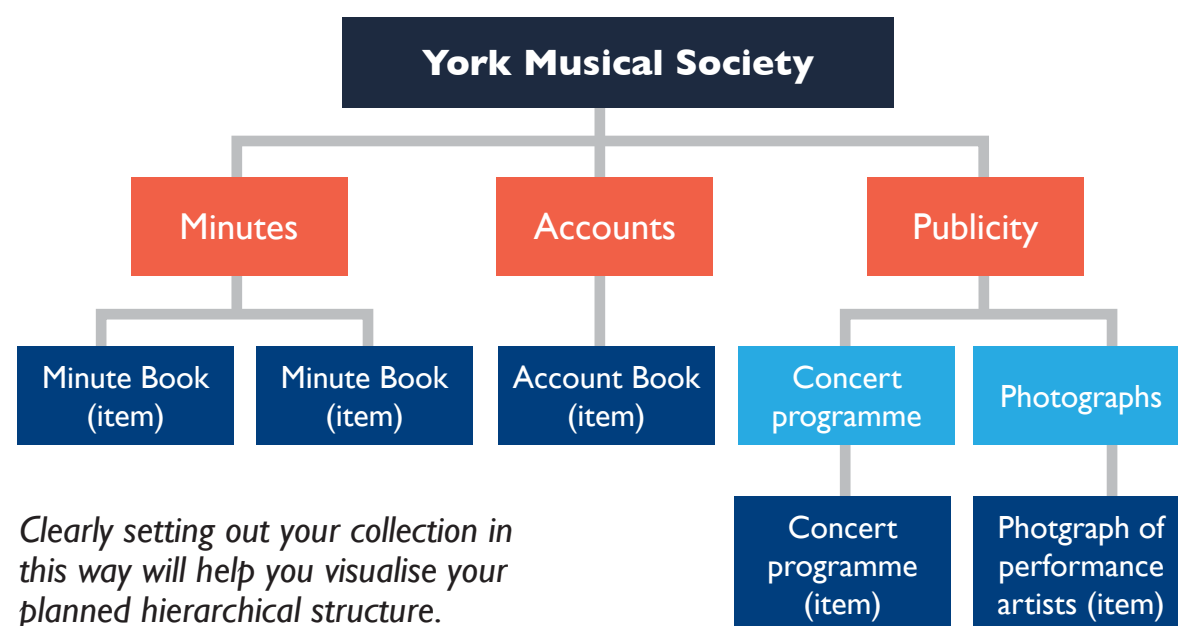
Once you have your box list, you will need to think:

- **How will you structure your collection?**

Archives are traditionally organised as a hierarchy, based on the original order they were created and used in. The reason archives are organised in this unique way is to make sure that the context in which the records were used is preserved along with the documents themselves. You might find that your collection already has an order, for example it might be organised by theme or labelled by function.

If there is no order, or if the one you have doesn't make sense, you will need to create one. You can do this by thinking about the different activities your group is involved with and hopefully your records will fit into those categories. Be as flexible with your structure as you need to be, as the most important part of creating an archive catalogue is to allow people to use your collection easily.

When building a catalogue structure, always remember to move from the general to the specific. If your group/organisation is still active make sure you create a structure that can be expanded as you collect more records. If you need more advice on how to create a catalogue, see the **Discovering more** section.

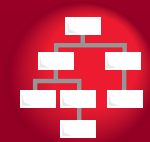


- **Do you have any personal information in your collection?**

As you work through your collection, check for any documents which include personal information. Any material less than 100 years old should always be looked at in more detail, as the person may still be alive and making this accessible would be a breach of the Data Protection Act. If the person is known to be deceased you can make information accessible but only if the content is not going to cause distress to their living relatives. It sounds complicated, but you can find more guidance in the **Discovering more** section and we're always happy to talk things through with you if you're unsure.

- **What are you planning to do with your archive?**

It doesn't matter whether you intend to keep or deposit your archive, a usable catalogue is essential. If you're planning to deposit your archive with **Explore York Libraries and Archives**, we'll need to have at least a completed box list from you. The **Depositing your archive** section will tell you more about this process.







# Digital records

Managing digital information is a challenge for all of us, but don't use that as an excuse to ignore them! Your digital files form part of your archive in the same way as your paper documents.



## • Where are you storing your digital records?

Think about how secure your current storage location is. You can strengthen security by having at least two copies of all digital records, stored in two different ways. Remember that you'll need to keep all of your versions up to date.

There are lots of different places you can store your digital files, however they each have benefits and risks so you'll need to choose carefully:

|               | PC hard drive                                                                                                                                 | External storage device                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Cloud storage                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Description   | Storage on your home or organisations' PC or laptop                                                                                           | Including memory sticks, SD cards, external hard drives and CDs                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Online storage space where you can upload files directly from your PC hard drive                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Pros          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to manage and use</li> <li>• Uses existing hardware</li> </ul>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relatively cheap and easy to buy</li> <li>• Portable and can be used on any device with a USB port, SD card slot or CD drive</li> <li>• Some types can store large amounts of data</li> </ul>                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lots of free to access options, see the <b>Discovering more</b> section for suggestions</li> <li>• Password protected</li> <li>• Accessible from anywhere with an internet connection</li> <li>• Can be used by multiple assigned users</li> </ul> |
| Cons          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data can easily get corrupted</li> <li>• Fixed location and limited access by other users</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technology can quickly become out of date</li> <li>• Recovering data is expensive and will become difficult over time</li> <li>• Data can easily get corrupted and can suffer physical damage</li> <li>• Low level of security</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited free storage space</li> <li>• Reliant on internet connection and online provider</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                |
| Best used for | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Storage of records you'll still need</li> <li>• Access copies of your archive</li> </ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A short term solution to back up storage when you don't have access to the internet</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A back up to your hard drive files</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

## • Who has access to your digital records?

Access to your digital archives should be restricted to named individuals. Avoid relying on just one individual to manage and provide access to records. It's a lot of pressure and work for one person and will cause access problems when they are not available.

## • What format are your records in?

Once you're no longer working on or editing a document, the easiest way of turning it into an archive copy is to save it as a PDF. You can do this from any PC or Apple Mac office programme. The great thing about PDF files is that they can't be altered by the viewer, so your documents can't be accidentally changed. The programme the file was originally created in is recorded as well.

Save your photographs as TIFF files as these are a high quality, stable digital format. TIFF files are quite large, so if you want to use any copies of your digital photographs or make them accessible to other people; create a JPEG version as well.

## • How are you naming your records?

The names you give your files can transform your collection into one that is easy to use. Give your files titles that are short, easy to identify and consistent. Long file titles can be confusing and cause problems if you ever need to recover information.

Just because your digital records are not kept in the same place as your physical collection, doesn't mean that they should be listed separately. Put your files into a structure that matches your overall catalogue structure and include your digital records as part of your complete archive list. Add an extra note to let people know that those records are digital and can be found elsewhere.





## Case Study: The cataloguing challenge

### Background

Poppleton History Society has historic archives relating to the history of the village and their Society from 1655 to the present day. These archive collections had for many years been held in the homes of the Society's members, and no one really knew what each other had. To address this growing problem, the Society approached **Explore's Poppleton Library**, asking to make the complete collection accessible to the public for the first time.

### The project

**Explore York Libraries and Archives** agreed to house a selection of the Society's archive in Poppleton Library and support them in making it accessible to the public. We couldn't take everything as Poppleton is one of our smaller libraries, but we gave the Society the freedom to choose the material they made accessible. We supplied the Society with a catalogue template and guide to help them organise the collection, which gave us a fantastic opportunity to test our guidance in action!

The Society assigned two members to work on the archive and they spent two days collating the archive from around the village. It took a further 8 hours, over 3 meetings to create the list of 68 folders. The Society spent a total of 26 hours getting their archive ready for use in Poppleton Library including the move and taking part in a launch event.

### The outcome

Two filing cabinets and the archive collection were delivered to Poppleton Library at the end of September 2014 and became accessible to the public from October 2014. This is a year long pilot, due to run until October 2015, when its impact will be accessed by both the Society and Explore.



*"For many years it has always been the hope that Poppleton History Society would work with professional archivists to create a semblance of order to our records which have been stored in various houses belonging to members. We both found the template fairly straightforward and it was enjoyable to create something that means that our records are accurately described and stored in a safe place."*

**Julian Crabb, Secretary of Poppleton History Society**

Since we launched the collection there has been interest from the Parish Council, local researchers and residents of the village who want to discover more about the history of their historic neighbourhood.

You can see the complete list of the Poppleton History Society archive on the **Explore York Libraries and Archives**, Poppleton Library website at **[www.exploreyork.org.uk](http://www.exploreyork.org.uk)**



# Storing your archives



**It doesn't have to be an expensive process to create a place to store your archive. Sometimes the simplest solutions can make a big difference and we understand that you won't have a lot of space or a huge budget to work with.**

**We want to make you aware of what risks archives can be exposed to as there are more than you might think. You will always have to compromise as it will never be perfect, but knowing the risks and planning what to do in an emergency can make the difference between saving and losing your collection.**



## Managing environmental risk

The environment in which you keep your collections is one of the most important things to consider, and one that often gets overlooked. You are probably going to be stuck with the space you have and have limited room, but there are things you can do to make improvements. Take a look at your space and think:

- **Is it clean and tidy?**  
Dust and dirt are a major cause of damage to archives, so always make sure your space is clean. Decide on a regular pattern of cleaning, who will do this and how often.
- **What is the temperature and relative humidity like?**  
It's likely that your space won't have any temperature or relative humidity controls but wherever possible always look for a cool, dry place where the temperature won't change quickly.
- **Does your space have windows or skylights?**  
Natural light can cause permanent fading to records as well as increasing the room temperature. If you do have windows, you can purchase a blackout blind and always make sure everything is boxed. You will also need to think whether your windows are a security risk.
- **Does your space have evidence of pests or gaps where they could get in?**  
A lot of mammals and insects love to munch on paper and they can get into any boxes, including plastic ones! Try to block up any holes where anything could get in and cause damage. Regularly check for evidence of pests and you can learn what to look for in the **Discovering more** section.
- **What flooring will you be using?**  
If you have a choice, try to avoid carpet as it creates a space for pests and dirt to live. Wooden floors can also attract pests so are best avoided. Keeping your space clean and checking for pests regularly will help.





## Managing temperature/humidity

Archive standards recommend that all archives are stored within the following temperature/relative humidity ranges:

**Temperature: 5°C - 25°C**

**Relative humidity: 35% to 60%**

Gradual changes within this scale will cause minimal damage and will usually be unavoidable due to seasonal change. If your temperature and humidity goes up and down over a short period of time on a regular basis your records may be at higher risk.

- Above **65%** relative humidity, **mould** can grow and spread across records causing irreversible damage as well as being bad for your health
- Below **35%** relative humidity paper can become **dry and brittle** which increases the risk of damage through handling
- Photographs and films need a lower relative humidity of **30-35%**.

If you can, try to store photographs and films in a cooler area. If this is not an option, keep things boxed separately and check them regularly.

It's no easy task monitoring your temperature and humidity, especially when you don't have a specially designed space. There are, however, simple things you can do which can improve conditions:

- Understand your temperature and humidity. Knowing when the environment is putting your collections at risk means you can think about other options if you need to. You can buy a basic device to measure this for around £10
- If you can't monitor the environment, always aim for lower temperatures and humidity, to keep your archives cool and dry
- Only use the lights when the room is in use and try to keep your storage area separate to office or heavily used spaces
- You can create a disaster plan to act as a guide for if things do go wrong. The **Discovering more** section has a guide on how to create a plan for your space.



## Managing fire risk

Fire is a major risk to everything and your archives will be destroyed if a fire takes hold. If you discover a fire in your building, always contact the emergency services and do not re-enter the building until instructed. Take a look at your space and think:

### • Does your space have any heating systems?

Open fires, stoves, gas, radiant electric or paraffin heaters are major causers of fire. Don't attempt to heat your space using any of these methods as it's best to leave the temperature to self regulate than to introduce temporary heating.

### • Do the walls and doors have any fire protection?

Many buildings are multi-purpose which often include areas of high fire risk such as a kitchen, factory or workshop. If you can, consider investing in fire resistant doors, windows and walls as it will slow a fire down.

### • Do you have a smoke detection system in place?

Almost all buildings have smoke detection systems. Your local fire department will be able to supply with some if these are missing. Make sure you know how this system works and how it sounds when activated.

In large buildings a system might be in place that automatically contacts the emergency services if it is activated. Make sure you know how your building is protected.

### • Are there any master switches or electrical circuits in your space?

Try to choose a space that is away from master switches and electrical circuits as these are at increased risk of electrical fire. If you can't avoid them, have contact details of an electrician and keep these details both in the building and elsewhere.





## Managing flood risk

Being in York means that you're never too far away from a flood risk area, but even in areas of the city away from water you can still face drainage and surface water problems. Take a look at your space and think:

- **What floor of the building is your space on?**

If you get a choice, look for a space on the first floor and avoid using basement storage. Attic spaces are generally also unsuitable because they suffer from quite quick temperature changes, and there is always the risk of a leaky roof.

Make sure that the floor can fully support the weight of your shelving and records as they are heavier than you might think. Seek professional advice before undertaking any conversion work.

- **Is there a system in place for the regular maintenance of drains and guttering?**

Overflowing drains and damaged guttering are the main causes of water getting into a building and causing damage. Make sure there is someone responsible for the regular maintenance of your drains and guttering.

- **Does your space contain water pipes or systems?**

Heating systems can increase the temperature and relative humidity, while water pipes are at risk of leaking or bursting.

If you can't avoid this make sure you have a maintenance contract set up. Keep copies of instructions for how to turn off the water and contact details for a plumber both in the building and elsewhere.

- **Will you be storing items close to the floor?**

When installing shelving you should aim to have the lowest shelf raised off the floor so that you're not storing items too close to the ground. This helps to prevent the risk of damage in the event of low level rising water.



## Managing theft and unauthorised access

The environment, fire and flood are all major risk factors, but so is theft and unauthorised access to your building. Take a look at your space and think:

- **Do you have a lock on the door to your space?**

As a minimum we suggest that you have a lock on the door to your space that can't easily be broken.

If your space has windows, think about if this causes any security problems. You can always look at adding a lock or bars if security is a concern.

- **Who will have access to your storage space and records?**

It might be that anyone in your group/organisation can access your collection. It's great to make the records accessible, but for security you should think about giving certain members overall responsibility. Records can easily get removed and not returned if too many people are allowed access. You can manage this by creating a simple log to trace the use of the collection.

- **Does your space have any security systems?**

For shared use buildings this system may already be installed. It is worth checking that your space is covered and you know what the process is should it go off.

If you have an independent space, a basic intruder alarm will act as a deterrent and alert local people. The level of security you choose will depend on your local context and how likely someone is to break into your space.

Try to avoid signage on your space as it might advertise to thieves that there could be items of value...if they can find them!

- **For added security, can you install lockable cabinets?**

If you are limited to the extent to which you can install security systems, secure doors or locks, we recommend you try and invest in at least one lockable metal cabinet for your most important records. This adds an extra layer of security should anyone break into your space and is looking to steal something.



## Choosing the right shelving

Choosing the right shelving and packing items well on shelves will make your collection easier to use and protect it for the future. Look at your space and think:

- **What type of shelving do you have?**

If you are installing new shelving you should try to get metal shelves which are large and strong enough to hold manageable sized boxes. The metal racking should be attached to both the floor and the ceiling for safety as overloaded shelves can easily topple over.

If you don't have the space or can't get hold of boxes, filing cabinets are acceptable for some paper documents. Try to keep fragile documents flat and don't overfill them. We've seen important documents get crumpled in the back of filing cabinets, so be careful with how you're packaging things.

- **Does your shelving allow for air circulation?**

Keeping the air circulated behind and around shelving can help to avoid mould growth. It's as simple as leaving gaps between your boxes and exterior walls to help the air move around your space easily. If you can do this, it's recommended that:

- Between your collections and the building fabric there should be an air gap of at least 150mm
- Between your collections and the shelf above there should be an air gap of 50mm
- Leave small gaps between boxes to further allow for air circulation.

If you discover mould on any of your collections, isolate those items immediately as you'll be surprised at how quickly it will spread. You'll need to seek advice as mould can be damaging to your health as well as your archive. The **Discovering more** section includes links to further guidance.



## Boxing and packaging

It might seem like a small point, but the way you box and pack your archives can make a difference as to how protected and accessible they are. Look at your space and think:

- **How will you be storing your collection(s)?**

Wherever possible you should always try and keep your records boxed. Acid free boxes are used by archives services, which are expensive but would be a long term investment. In the **Discovering more** section you can find links to suppliers.

We know that limited funding will reduce your options. It is acceptable to use other types of boxes, but as best practice we recommend you:

- Use sturdy cardboard boxes
- Avoid using plastic boxes as these do not allow your records to breathe and can create a microclimate where mould can grow
- Only use boxes with lids as this will help to keep out pests and prevent damage from sunlight and dust
- Avoid using boxes that have previously contained food as, not surprisingly, these can attract pests.





## • How will you package individual items?

Unless you have particularly fragile items, you can keep items in their original files and you won't need to repackage anything. If you do choose to repackage, we recommend you choose files that are acid free. In the **Discovering More** section you can find links to suppliers.

Make sure items are packed flat into boxes and you don't over fill them as this will make them too heavy to lift and will cause damage to the contents.

## • Do you have large items in your collection that can't be boxed?

Large items in your archive collection can easily cause you problems. The best thing you can do is to keep them flat, covered, off the floor and out of direct sunlight to avoid fading.

## • Do you have any photographs in your collection?

Photographs are one of the most unstable archive materials that can easily suffer damage. You'll know straight away if your photographs are deteriorating as they'll begin to smell strongly of vinegar.



We recommend that you invest in acid-free photograph albums. There is guidance in the **Discovering More** section on how to care for photographs.

## • Do you have any film/multi-media items in your collection?

Photographs and films need to be kept at lower temperatures as they are at higher risk of deteriorating. If you have a colder space, or area, try to keep these items separate.

Please be aware that if you have any films and photographic negatives in your collection, that those made from Cellulose Nitrate have been identified as high risk. Films were made using this material from 1889-c1950. If you think you have any films at risk, please seek specialist advice as soon as possible as they have been known to combust at temperatures as low as **38°C** when stored for long periods of time. There is further advice in the **Discovering more** section.

## Case Study: Cupboard to Community Archive

### Background

Wigginton Parish Council holds records relating to their activities from the 1800s to the present day. The collection was stored in the office of the Parish Clerk, took up a large amount of space and was continuing to expand. The Parish Council wanted to keep the collection local and so chose a nearby permanent storage space for their archive.

### The project

The Parish Council agreed to fund the conversion of an outbuilding, which was being used as a storeroom. Transforming the space meant addressing a number of problems:

- Damp exterior walls with peeling paint
- No lighting or electricity supply
- No shelving or suitable storage
- Low security via external door

In April 2014, **Explore York Libraries and Archives** met with the Parish Clerk to discuss the project and subsequently provided best practice storage guidance ahead of the conversion.

### The outcome

Based on the provided guidance, the Parish Council completed the conversion in July 2014 using local contractors for a total cost of just **£685**. The total cost of the conversion included:

- Purchase and installation of a waterproof/damp-proof membrane and insulation of 100m rock wool, over-boarded with MDF
- Installation of electricity supply and a single, tube covered, florescent lamp
- Fitting of slatted shelving for storage and to allow for air circulation
- Retention of a lockable metal storage cupboard to give extra security to valuable items.

In addition, no heating or electrical sockets were added other than the light fitting to ensure there were no ignition sources. There is also no external signage or indication that the space is used as an archive which improves security.

If you would like to find out more, you can contact the Parish Clerk of Wigginton Parish Council directly at [clerk@wiggintonparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@wiggintonparishcouncil.org.uk).

Before...



After...





# Depositing your archives



**You may discover that you don't have a suitable space in your community to manage your archive but depositing it doesn't mean you'll never see it again. Collections added to the archive facility at [Explore York Libraries and Archives](#) are made accessible to the public and stored in controlled environmental conditions in a city centre location.**

As a public service, there are a few things we'll need from you to make sure the process runs smoothly and we can make your archives accessible as soon as possible.

## **1 A complete box list or catalogue**

Before you deposit your archive, you'll need to make sure you have a box list of your collection, and ideally a complete catalogue. This will reduce the processing time required to make your collection accessible to the public. It will also make sure that you have a detailed record of what you've given us for future reference. For more information see the [Cataloguing and box listing](#) section in this guidance.

## **2 Boxed and labelled items**

To make the transfer of your collections as easy as possible, make sure all your collections are boxed and labelled to match your list.

## **3 A signed deposit agreement**

The archive team will work with you to help you decide if you'd like to gift, transfer ownership or loan your collection to us for a fixed period of time.

## **4 Clear deadlines set with Explore**

You'll need to work with [Explore York Libraries and Archives](#) directly to choose a date and time of deposit so that staff are ready to receive it and transfer it to the archive.

# Using your archives



**Using your archives is the most exciting and rewarding result of choosing to care for them.**

**There are so many exciting and innovative ways to use your collection to support your organisation and engage with the local community.**

Here are a few simple ideas that have been tried and tested across the country:

- Public exhibitions, using originals or copies where you don't have display cases
- Oral history projects to capture the thoughts and memories of local people
- Lectures and talks in local village halls and libraries
- Collaborating with local primary and secondary schools

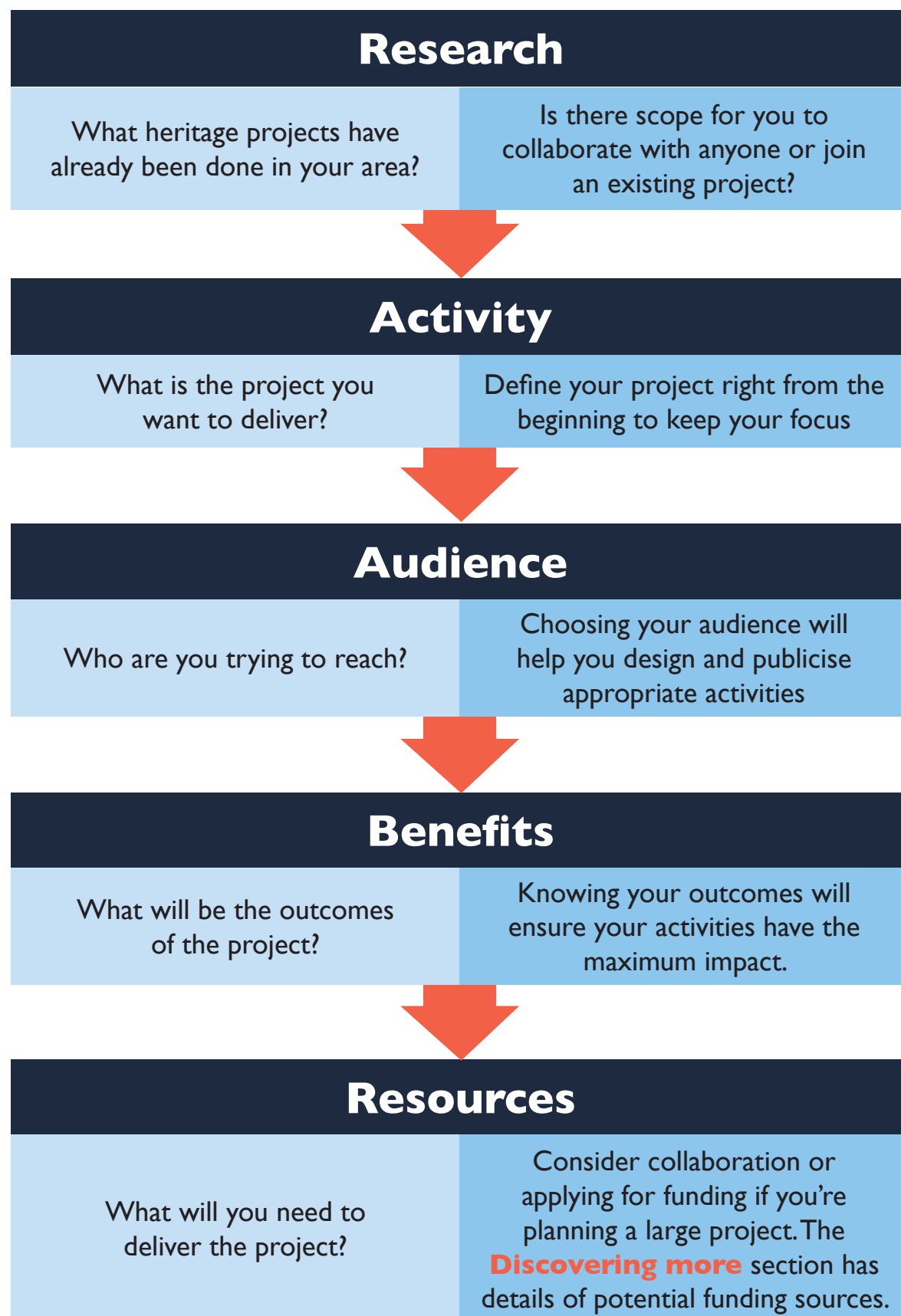
Just because these type of projects have been done before, doesn't mean that these are the only options available to you. Why not think about doing something completely different?

Archives can be used in so many different ways and we've just scratched the surface of what's possible. If you have ideas you'd like to share, talk to us at [Explore](#) as we may be able to help you to turn your ideas into a reality.



## Planning a project

Turning your idea into a project with timescales and outcomes can be a challenge, especially when time is being offered on a voluntary basis. Here are some tips to help you start planning your project.



## Social media

Knowing how to use social media effectively can benefit your group/organisation and help you to promote your archives. It's also a great way for the public to engage with and add to your collection. You may never have used social media before, and it can be a daunting prospect, so here are a few commonly asked questions and answers to get you started.

### • What is social media and what is it useful for?

Social media is a way for people to share and create content together online, to keep others updated on projects, events and other important information. It can also be used to create links between your group and others, and can help you keep up to date with the latest news and projects.

Social media works in all sorts of ways, here are the most common:

#### Social networking

There are various websites and other online platforms which can be used to network with people who share similar interests, activities and backgrounds. Key examples are Facebook and Twitter and on both you can share information and content such as photos, links and information in bite size amounts. Social networking is great for sharing news and updates.

#### Blogging

A blog looks just like a website where you can upload content, known as blog posts. The posts look like short informally worded articles and you can use them to update people about projects or highlight interesting parts of your archive collections. Blogging is great for sharing more detailed updates about your group/organisation.

#### Photo and Video Sharing

Sharing photos and videos can be done quickly and easily on almost all social media platforms. The most popular mediums for sharing photographs are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr and Pinterest. Videos can be uploaded onto websites such as Youtube as well as Facebook and Twitter. Photos and videos are a great way of visually sharing your collection and activities.

#### Crowdsourcing

With so many people using social media you can use this to your advantage and get them to provide you with information. You could ask people to help with identifying images, fill the gaps in local knowledge or even share their memories. You could do this using a Wiki, which is a publicly editable website where people can add or edit their own information on a subject.







We use our blog to share updates about our service and projects

Pinterest is a great platform for showcasing your collections

### • How should I manage my social media?

The most important thing when starting out with social media is to plan in advance and work out what you want to share with people. You will need to think about who will be responsible for creating and updating content.

People will contact you on social media and it works best when you're able to respond and have conversations. It can be a time consuming process so you'll need to plan exactly how you're going to use it to get the most from it.

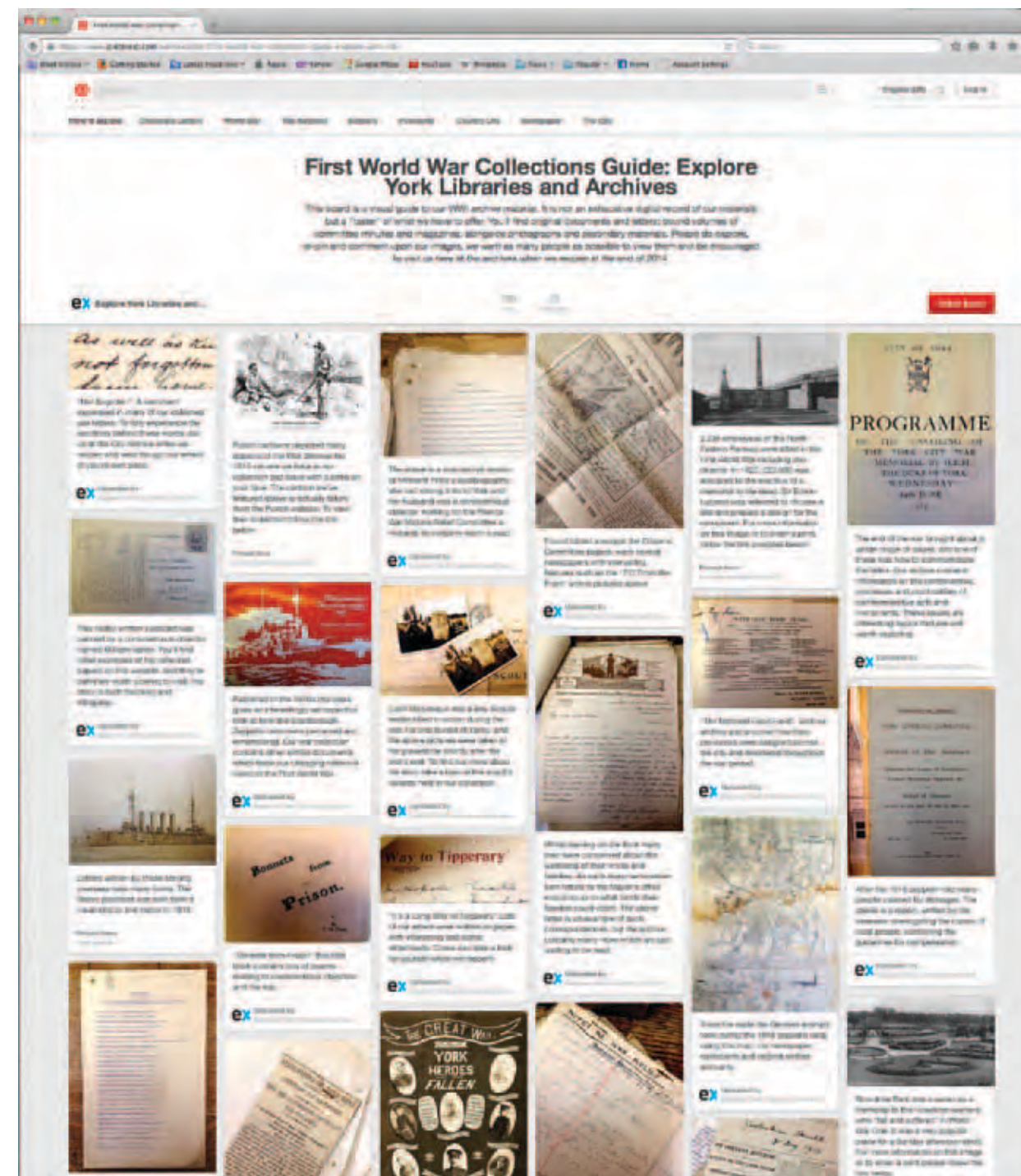
To make things manageable you could, for example, set up a blog rota, which shares the responsibility of uploading blog posts as well as varying the content. You may also want to use a platform such as Hootsuite to manage multiple social media accounts and to schedule tweets on Twitter. A link to Hootsuite can be found in the **Discovering more** section.

### • What else should I be aware of when using social media?

Social media can be a fantastic tool, but here are a few general rules that are worth remembering:

- 1 Try not to post too many updates, this can swamp people who follow you
- 2 Avoid sharing anything that is sensitive or could be interpreted as offensive
- 3 Do not share anything that conflicts with the data protection act or that you do not have permission to share (that includes photos of people, as you have to get their consent)

Another really important thing to bear in mind is that once something is on the internet it is very difficult to remove. It is common for social network sites



to have it written into their user agreements that any media you upload can also be owned, shared or used by them for their own purposes. If you are not sure whether you can – or should – upload something, it's probably best not to.

We've included the very basics of social media, as it's a huge topic. If you'd like to find more out about the different types of social media and how you can use them, the **Discovering more** section has further guidance.

**ExploreYork Libraries and Archives** also run social media workshops several times a year, look out for those on the website and by following @YorkLibrariesUK on Twitter.





## Case study: Normandy Veterans Legacy Project

### Background

In May 2014 a representative from the Normandy Veterans Association:York Branch, Nick Beilby, approached **Explore York Libraries and Archives**. 70 years after the D-Day landings, the six remaining members of the York branch were concerned about what would happen to their archives and un-documented memories.



### The Project

**Explore York Libraries and Archives** recruited two MA Public History student volunteers from the University of York in June 2014. Throughout July and August the volunteers, along with Nick, visited the homes of six Normandy Veterans and recorded their memories of life during the War through their archives. The volunteers recorded some previously untold stories and discovered unique archive material including personal letters, photographs and medals.

Throughout the remainder of 2014 the personal archives of the Veterans and of the Normandy Veterans Association:York Branch were collated by Nick. The information from the recordings, alongside additional discussions with the Veterans to explain their collections, were pulled together to create new archive catalogues.



### The Outcome

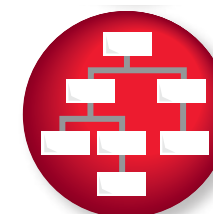
In April 2015 the archive collections were ceremonially handed over to the archives at an event for the Normandy Veterans at **York Explore Library**. The catalogues then went live, allowing the public to search and access these unique collections, leaving a permanent legacy for York's Veterans.

*"By working with these wonderful people and engaging in 'living history' their lives and achievements will be preserved for future generations who will understand how their deeds have helped shape the world that we now live in."*

**Nick Beilby, Representative of the Normandy Veterans Association**

## Discovering more

### Cataloguing your Archives



#### Community Archives and Heritage Group Resources

<http://www.communityarchives.org.uk/content/resources/resources>

The Community Archives and Heritage Group supports community archives and heritage projects in the UK and Ireland. Their resources include guides on setting up an archive, digital preservation and cataloguing.

#### RunCoCo online community collections

<http://projects.oucs.ox.ac.uk/runcoco/index.html>

RunCoCo offers advice, training, and support to those interested in running a community collection, particularly online.

#### The Charity Commission

[https://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/FAQS/Running\\_a\\_charity/ID214.aspx](https://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/FAQS/Running_a_charity/ID214.aspx)

This contains guidance on what records a charity must keep and how long for.

#### The National Archives UK, Data Protection Act

[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/legislation/data-protection/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/legislation/data-protection/)

### Digital Preservation



#### The National Archives, Guidance on Cloud Storage and Digital Preservation

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives/cloud-storage-guidance.pdf>

**Dropbox free cloud online file storage** <http://www.dropbox.com>

**Google Drive** <https://drive.google.com/>

**Microsoft One Drive** <https://onedrive.live.com>

Dropbox, Google Drive and Microsoft One Drive are some example of companies that offer free storage space up to a certain amount (roughly 15GB). Most online providers will charge for additional storage space.

### Storing your Archives



#### British Library Preservation Advisory Centre

[www.bl.uk/aboutus/stratpolprog/collectioncare/publications/booklets/index.html](http://www.bl.uk/aboutus/stratpolprog/collectioncare/publications/booklets/index.html)

The British Library Preservation Advisory Centre is now disbanded, however guidance is still available online to promote improved preservation management of library and archive materials in the UK and Ireland. Their guidance includes advice on pests, mould and how to monitor your environment.





**The National Archives guidance on caring for records**

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/caring-for-your-records.htm>

**The National Archives, Protecting Archives and Manuscripts against Disasters**

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/memo6.pdf>

**Library of Congress guidance on Collection care**

<http://www.loc.gov/preservation/care/>

*This guidance from the US Library of Congress includes guidance on preservation of a wide range of archival material.*

*Suppliers of archival quality boxes and packaging materials:*

**Preservation Equipment Ltd.** <http://www.preservationequipment.com/>

**Conservation by Design**

<http://www.conservation-by-design.com/home.aspx?pagename=home>

**Conservation resources UK** <http://www.conservation-resources.co.uk/>

*All of these companies supply high quality archive grade materials, and these are a sample of the most widely used suppliers. Some of the items sold by these companies can be quite specialist, so check with your local archive if you're unsure about anything.*

## Using your Archives

**Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) guidance on applying for project funding**

<http://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding>

*The HLF is the largest dedicated funder of the UK's heritage, investing around £375 million a year in new projects.*

**Pararchive Project** <http://pararchive.com/>

*Pararchive is an AHRC funded project based at the School of Media and Communication (SMC) at the University of Leeds. Pararchive's key aim is to co-produce a new 'open' digital resource that will allow communities to research and document their histories via the creative linking of their own digital content with archival material from public institutions such as the BBC and the Science Museum who are partners on the project.*

**The National Archives UK, Social Media**

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/get-involved/social-media.htm>

*See how The National Archives UK makes use of various social media platforms to promote their collections*

**Nowthen social media worksheets**

<http://nowthen.org/resources/social-media-training>

*Social media training guide from West Yorkshire Archive Service with getting started worksheets as part of their Nowthen project that aims to make local heritage accessible and open.*

**Use of social media platforms guidance**

<http://rebeccahopman.com/socialmedia/>

**Popular social media platforms**

[www.historypin.com](http://www.historypin.com)



[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)



[www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)



[www.instagram.com](http://www.instagram.com)



[www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)



[www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com)



[www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com)



[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)



[www.hootsuite.com](http://www.hootsuite.com)



[www.wikia.com](http://www.wikia.com)

## General archive guidance

**The National Archives, Archives Principles and Practice: An Introduction to Archives for Non-Archivists**

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/archive-principles-and-practice-an-introduction-to-archives-for-non-archivists.pdf>

**Nowthen**

<http://nowthen.org/resources>

*Nowthen is West Yorkshire Archives project that aims to make local heritage accessible and open. They have produced a series of worksheets for communities to work through on various aspects of managing archives.*

**Archives Association of British Columbia**

<http://aabc.ca/resources/archivists-toolkit/>

*Provides access to a wide range of on-line and published resources for archivists and anyone managing an archive collection.*

**The Archive Skills Consultancy's 'Info-Bytes' sheets**

<http://www.archive-skills.com/infobytes/index.php>

*The Archive Skills Consultancy provides training in archives and records management. Info-bytes are short, easy to read summaries containing essential information about an archive topic.*

*All information correct at time of printing – January 2015.*

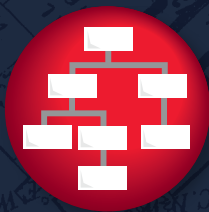


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**[www.exploreymork.org.uk](http://www.exploreymork.org.uk)**

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Written by Sarah Tester and Francesca Taylor

**explore**



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