

The background features a large, hand-drawn pink number '8' at the top and a pink square outline at the bottom. The text is centered within these shapes.

INFORMATION

Lives in

DIY

Culture

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EVENT INFO

All activities take place in the School of Digital Arts (SODA), Manchester Metropolitan University.

When you arrive at the event, come in through the entrance (rotating door or side door). You will find a desk staffed by event assistants, where you can pick up a lanyard with your name on it.

All of the rooms for activities are located on either the ground or first floor of SODA. You will find the following facilities on the floors:

Ground floor

Rooms: Cinema, atrium

Toilets: Gender neutral and accessible

Reception desk and registration desk (to pick up lanyards)

First floor

Rooms: 1.01, 1.07, 1.08, 1.09, 1.10, 1.13

Quiet room: 1.13

Toilets: Gendered toilets

Lockers are available to store bags and coats. These do not require money.

SODA has three lifts which are wheelchair accessible. You can also access the first floor by stairs.

Food and drink

We will be providing refreshments and lunch at this event. In the morning, there will be tea and coffee (including decaf/non-dairy milk/herbal teas) available from 9:30-10:30 in the ground floor atrium.

At 13:30 a buffet lunch will be served. This consists of a selection of vegetarian and plant-based sandwich platters, mezze and salads (all veggie with lots of vegan options), fruit salad, packs of crisps, fruit-infused water and more tea and coffee. There will also be a selection of gluten-free lunches. All food will have ingredients listed so you can check for allergents.

Funding and organisers

This event is very kindly supported by AHEAD at Manchester Metropolitan University. It has been organised by Dr Kirsty Fife, co-lead of the Media and Digital Culture group and Senior Lecturer in Digital Information in the School of English.

If you have any questions about the event please contact Kirsty directly at k.fife@mmu.ac.uk.

PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

ATRIUM CINEMA 1.01 1.07 1.08 1.09 1.10 1.13

09:30	Registration and tea/coffee	Introduction			Salford Zine Library pop-up and Pen Fight Distro 10 th anniversary celebration!	Working Class Movement Library pop up	Quiet space
10:00		Queer archiving (talks)	Community-Led Working Class History at WCML (workshop)	Zines as sites of archiving (workshop)			
10:15	Stalls from MURMUR + Simran Purwaha-Sidhu						
BREAK !!							
11:45							
12:00		Remaking (talks)	Zinester speed-friending (workshop)	Zines (talks)		Data sculptures (workshop)	
LUNCH !! (FOOD SERVED IN SODA 1.01)							
13:30							
14:30		Dirt Poets and Flyover Gallery (screening + discussion)	Community-driven practice (talks)			You Are Here - survivor writing + peer to peer knowledge (workshop)	
15:30							
16:15		Wrap up					

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

09:30-10:00

Registration and refreshments (SODA ground floor atrium)

10:00-10:15: Introduction and overview of day (SODA Cinema)

Kirsty Fife (they/them, Manchester Metropolitan University)

10:15-11:45

Panel: Queer archiving (SODA Cinema)

Chair: Kirsty Fife

CJ de Barra (Nottingham Queer History Archive, they/them):
How not to start an archive: how radical archives are documenting queer life.

Monika Rodriguez (she/her) and Michael Pierce (he/they)
(freelance community archivists) - From Attics to Screenings -
Discovering DIY archives

Chloe Turner (Museum of Transology, they/them) - Against
Inclusion: Trans Museological Practices in an Era of
Disinformation

Workshop (SODA 1.07)

Morrigan Ivy Dann (she/they) - Zines As Sites of Archiving

Workshop (SODA 1.01)

Amie Kirby (she/her) - All Flames, Big and Little: Community-Led
Working Class History at the Working Class Movement Library

11:45-12:00: Break

12:00-13:30

Panel: Remaking (SODA Cinema)

Chair: Kirsty Fife

Kim Foale (Geeks for Social Change, she/they) – Building DIY technology infrastructure for community liberation

Ben Perkins (Another Subculture, he/him) – Another Subculture and Punk Evidence (why make a zine when there's Instagram?)

Shaoli Choudhury (British Library, she/her) – Bridging the Island: The Reimagining of Heritage Spaces

Workshop (SODA 1.01)

Vicky Stevenson (Pen Fight Distro/Salford Zine Library, she/her) – Zinester speed-friending

Panel: Zines (SODA 1.07)

Chair: Amie Kirby

Chella Quint (she/her) – 20 Years of Menstrual Zine Making

Elizabeth Gibson (they/them) – Reclaiming Queer Healthcare: Zines as Testimonies and Tools for Change

Martin Smith (Manchester Metropolitan University, he/him) – Take This With You and Leave It Somewhere Else

Workshop (SODA 1.09)

Liv Owens they/them) and Lily Bichard-Collins (she/her) – Data Sculptures

13:30-14:30: Lunch (SODA 1.01)

14:30-16:00

Panel: Community-driven practice (SODA 1.01)

Chair: Kirsty Fife

Alice Parsons (Bradford LGBTQ+ Archive/Castles in the Sky, she/her) – Collecting the collective – an interactive talk and workshop unpacking the work of the Bradford LGBTQ+ archive

Isaac Heller (he/they) – Archiving DIY: Resistant World-Making in Queer Archival Space

Cameron Huggett (he/him) – Voice of the Fans: A Retrospective

Workshop (SODA 1.09)

Jet Moon (they/them) – You Are Here – survivor writing and peer to peer knowledge

Screening and discussion (SODA Cinema)

Chair: Martin Smith

Peter Shukie (he/him) and Paul Nataraj (he/him) – Dirt Poets and the Flyover Gallery: Creating Outside the Conventional

16:15-16:30: Closing comments (SODA cinema)

Kirsty Fife (Manchester Metropolitan University, they/them)

All day activities

Stalls from MURMUR (SODA ground floor atrium), Simran Purwaha-Sidhu (Ground floor atrium) and the Working Class Movement Library (SODA 1.10)

Pen Fight Distro will be launching a special anniversary event to celebrate running for a decade, including a zine launch and drop-in badge making! (SODA 1.08)

Salford Zine Library will be hosting a pop-up with materials from their collection (SODA 1.08)

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTIONS

CJ de Barra (they/them, Nottingham Queer History Archive): How not to start an archive: how radical archives are documenting queer life.

The Notts Queer History was started by journalist and author CJ De Barra in 2022. Over three years, CJ has collected 180 oral history interviews with LGBTQ+ people from 18 to 93 years old (covering 1960 to 2025) across Nottinghamshire, along with collecting 1063 items (covering 1950-2025) from flyers to diaries to magazines. There are also 830 newspaper articles that span 1790 to 2025. The research has uncovered new venues that have been forgotten about, untold stories and hidden lives – all backed with archival research from across the UK.

CJ is not a historian or archivist but a neurodivergent queer journalist who accidentally started an archive. They travel around the UK, discussing the importance of queer radical archiving, how to initiate it, and sharing the stories of the archives. The stories are shared in three books, with the first, *Queer Nottingham: 1960 to 1990*, released in September 2025. The second covering, from 1990 to 2020, will be released in February 2026.

<https://fiveleavesbookshop.co.uk/product/queer-nottingham-1960-1990/>

Shaoli Choudhury (she/her, British Library) – Bridging the Island: The Reimagining of Heritage Spaces

I work at the British Library, in Community Engagement. Over the last 2 years, we have done stupendous amounts of work around

DIY projects, oral histories, family archiving, and most importantly, breaking barriers between heritage institutions and historically-ignored communities. I'd love to give on a talk on the particularly unique nature of the Hub, but more so about our learnings about what it means to truly work with "communities" as it relates to art, heritage and community led DIY programming in the arts. I want to explore the whole concept of "community," and how it can and has been defined, but also talk about the inherently powerful and radical act of opening up previously guarded heritage institutions to ignored groups but also wants in which in those in power can learn and skill share with communities and individuals as it relates to alternate histories, archives, heritage-based work and art. I'll walk through the work we've done as a team (and as an individual,) the barriers faced, the projects we've done, what has and hasn't worked, who we've partnered with and what we believe the future of truly radical heritage and archiving looks like.

Morrigan Ivy Dann (she/they) - Zines As Sites of Archiving (workshop)

In this workshop participants are encouraged to engage in the idea that zines can be used as tools for minority communities to record their own histories and experiences. Participants will be shown several zine folding methods, work through activities designed to encourage idea generations on the theme and shown examples of appropriate zines. The aim of this workshop is to make the participants think of zines as tools not just as sites of art and current politics but as sites of historical importance.

Kim Foale (she/they, Geeks for Social Change) - Building DIY technology infrastructure for community liberation

Not that long ago the web felt like an exciting, new and fun place that DIY culture could thrive in. From *actually* community

owned sites like Indymedia, WeMakeZines, the blogosphere and hundreds of special interest forums, to the kinder corporate websites of the time like Livejournal, Tumblr and MySpace, we used dozens of sites every week.

Some time in the late 10s and early 20s, this messy, diverse, colourful explosion of the early internet gave way to the Monolithic Corporate Blue of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and alongside Google and Amazon suffocated the burgeoning DIY web scene. The internet went from a place for fun and friends to a place for work. You can't even make your Facebook profile pink!

What does going forward look like? Can we ever hope to own our own means of production again, or are the tech giants too big, too cheap and too ubiquitous to compete with? Does the Online Safety Act make it legally impossible to make sites for friends to come together?

Kim's talk explores the past, present and future of community technology, and hopes that one day the end of capitalism *is* easier to imagine than the end of the world.

Elizabeth Gibson (they/them) - Reclaiming Queer Healthcare: Zines as Testimonies and Tools for Change

I carried out the Reclaiming Queer Healthcare project over 2024 with funding from Writerz and Scribez, hosting workshops in queer spaces - Butchcrafts, Queer Roots, and Sparkle Sanctuary - in which we created zines exploring queer experiences of healthcare access and what could be improved. Topics explored by participants included experiencing smear tests and ultrasounds as a non-binary person, being placed on a women's ward as a trans man, dyslexia, ADHD, and ideas around strength and working out in relation to gender. A number of participants donated their zines to the project, creating an archive capturing experiences that often go unseen.

It is a precious and powerful thing that I am excited to share.

Isaac Heller (he/they) - Archiving DIY: Resistant World-Making in Queer Archival Space

Influenced by the broader “archival turn” in the humanities, recent waves of queer scholarship have spent significant time dwelling on and in “the archive” and on the role that archives play in queer theorizing, art-making and political organizing. Emerging from this scholarship is a potential contradiction, as archives are simultaneously positioned as generative spaces of reclamation that can be used for producing knowledge about queer subjects and exposed as sites of erasure implicated in the wider structures of surveillance and violence that disrupt queer lives.

I am very excited to contribute to Information Lives in DIY Culture by sharing research from my recently completed MPhil dissertation in Gender Studies at the University of Cambridge. My research uses DIY ethics and zine-making practices as lenses to understand and make visible the embodied aspects of archival research that are at times absent within queer theories of “the archive”. Sharing personal narratives about my archival research, or archive stories, allows me to draw attention to the material encounters that mark archival research. As a practicing artist and zinester, I am also deeply inspired by DIY ethics and I employ tools such as collage and remixing to intervene in discussions around queer archival absence and repair. My short talk would mobilize understandings of archives and libraries rooted in DIY cultural spaces, and specifically the work of zine librarians, to reframe concepts that are central to the queer archival turn such as ephemerality, archival labour, and the challenges of safeguarding marginalized narratives.

Ultimately, I believe that attending to the rich dialogue between zinesters, queer theorists, and archival professionals helps us to better understand the ways in which material encounters within archival spaces fit into the wider networks of knowledge-making and relationship that people use to make sense of themselves and their communities.

Cameron Huggett (he/him) - Voice of the Fans: A Retrospective

The presentation would focus on 'Voice of the Fans', a collaborative exhibition between Leeds Libraries and the British Library, open between May and August 2025. The exhibition championed the importance of fanzines to activism, identity, and community in football cultures.

The presentation would discuss the curatorial process behind the exhibition, with a particular focus on how collection items and core themes were developed through a combination of research and volunteer collaboration. It would then highlight specific objects to explore how they demonstrated the social, cultural, and political impact of fanzines as a popular movement to a public audience. Finally, the presentation would outline the legacies of the exhibition, such as the creation of new collection items and research resources, including what we believe to be the most comprehensive extant dataset of football fanzines.

Amie Kirby (she/her) - All Flames, Big and Little: Community-Led Working Class History at the Working Class Movement Library.

This workshop would use the WCML's project 'Big Flame: Inspiring Community Organising Then and Now' to talk about the power of activating and using archives to understand community histories and stories. It would also discuss Big Flame's use of DIY

DIY print media, i.e. pamphlets, newspapers, and cartoons, to spread political messaging. The workshop would be part-discussion, part-activity - using collage material and photocopies of the archive to have participants create their own zine in Big Flame's tongue-in-cheek tone.

Jet Moon (they/them) - You Are Here - survivor writing and peer to peer knowledge

You Are Here is an archive of survivor writing, from the queer, kink, sex worker, disabled, and survivor communities I belong to. Its focus is the power of writing as an act of survival in storytelling, documenting, and developing our own voices. This workshop introduces the materials and ethos of You Are Here. I'll share short sound recordings of voices within the project and speak about how I came to produce You Are Here; the experience of holding survivor writing spaces, how these functioned as both creative and truth to power spaces. The process of collecting interviews and my experience of the relationship between marginalised communities and archiving institutions.

YAH uses an open definition of survivorship including but not limited to survival of sexual violence, it is open to all who have been affected by trauma. Developed through workshops, writers groups, collecting interviews and publishing an anthology of survivor writing. You Are Here is an intersectional resource featuring the voices of writers, researchers, artists and activists that exists online and in publication form, it was created in collaboration with Wellcome Collection which holds a full archive of the work.

To give a sense of the breadth of the collection: Dr Nat Raha, poet, researcher and academic speaks about embodied writing, trans politics and her work on colonial carceral systems,

trans politics and her work on colonial carceral systems, Christine Bylund speaks about her research on Swedish state austerity politics targeting services and support for disabled citizens in Sweden. Artist Francesca Dolor speaks about the role of writing and creativity as an act of deliberately disobeying traumatic instruction.

MURMUR (stall)

MURMUR was first established in 2017 as a printed, illustrated newsletter, shining a light on free or low-cost grassroots and DIY events in Manchester, Salford, and Stockport. After a hiatus brought on by the pandemic, we revived MURMUR in 2024. MURMUR is run by volunteers passionate about community and culture, with the aim to offer focus, a digest, for people's busy lives and eyes. The newsletter helps readers take a break from screens and gives small organisers with low or no budgets a platform to advertise their events for free.

In this digital age not much printed ephemera is produced and kept. MURMUR is a natural aid to save the archive of our culture. We'd love to host a stall showcasing copies past and present - a record of DIY events in Manchester over the years. We also hope to inspire others to return to print and offer a non-commercial platform that kindles community and collaboration.

The newsletter is published monthly and distributed across small, independent shops and cultural venues in Manchester and Stockport.

(www.murmurmcr.com)

(<https://www.instagram.com/murmurmcr/>)

Liv Owens (they/them) and Lily Bichard-Collins (she/her) - Data Sculptures

This is a hands-on workshop where participants create dioramas of their homes/community spaces (such as a library to examine how datafication and surveillance penetrate our environments. As sociologists studying data surveillance within families and communal units, we use creative methods to tease out people's behaviors, beliefs, fears, and emotions around datafication. Studying the everyday is crucial because it's precisely through routine, repetitive practices that social life reproduces itself, making it particularly valuable when examining how surveillance systems become embedded in our daily lives through mundane decisions.

This workshop functions as a skill-sharing session, teaching participants how creative methods can enhance social science research and community educational initiatives. We will lead the session as if it were one of our actual participatory research workshops, demonstrating the effectiveness of our "Data Sculptures" method—using diorama-making to visualize complex issues and solutions. Participants will learn how creative approaches engage research subjects as co-creators of knowledge, centering emotions and imagination while building trust among strangers discussing personal experiences.

Using recycled materials and repurposed technology components, participants will craft miniature worlds revealing hidden digital infrastructure in domestic spaces. Through hands-on experience, attendees will discover how physical construction transforms abstract surveillance concerns into tangible objects for collective analysis, helping people visualize routines, examine privacy beliefs, and explore resistance to digital monitoring. Visual construction activities help participants imagine abstract concepts in precise ways and articulate patterns they notice in daily life.

Participants will leave understanding how creative methods provide multiple modes for expression beyond verbal discussion, capture feelings difficult to articulate, and make research genuinely engaging. The finished dioramas become archives documenting grassroots visions for reclaiming communal spaces from data extraction, while demonstrating the collaborative power of creative research methodologies. We hope to also do a write up of this activity with reflections from participants and pictures of their work to go in the event zine.

Alice Parsons (Castles in the Sky/Bradford LGBTQ+ Archive) - Collecting the collective - an interactive talk and workshop unpacking the work of the Bradford LGBTQ+ archive

Through hosting a space for discussion and interactivity I'd like to host a scheduled talk/ workshop to share some of the challenges and opportunities that have arisen through the Bradford LGBTQ+ archive project. I would bring a selection from the archive - both digital and physical and am keen to explore the reality of being a community archive rather than an institution both in terms of the collecting freedom this provides and the challenges faced. I am especially keen to talk about how collecting a topic that involves much of the personal as well as the public and the political relies on vast contextual collecting and how as a community archive we try to address collecting gaps, build relationships and attempt to create an unbiased record.

Pen Fight Distro 10th anniversary celebration

Pen Fight is a one-woman queer feminist zine distro and tiny press, celebrating it's 10 year birthday!

You are all invited to dip into their official birthday party - along with the launch of their 10 year anniversary celebration zine,

there will be goodies, drop-in badge making, and other surprises to come.

Ben Perkins (he/him, Another Subculture) – Another Subculture and Punk Evidence (why make a zine when there's Instagram?)

I have been publishing Another Subculture, a punk listings zine for gigs in London, since 2019 (with an understandable gap between 2020–21) as a means to signal boost the events which are happening across the city's multiple DIY and punk scenes, and more recently as a way to more generally document what's happening in those scenes.

I have become increasingly aware that producing a monthly record, anachronistic as it may be, has begun to act as an archive – a paper counterpart to pages on digital ticketing sites and posts on social networks, particularly Instagram. I will explore ways in which bands, promoters and fans have worked to maintain their own archives of the gigs they have experienced – and how we can learn from the loss of digital records of our subcultural past!

I will use both my own experiences while making zines, including tracking down gigs I put on half a lifetime ago and using Upset! the Rhythm's determination to record everything to piece together a map of the over one hundred venues they have used in their 20 year history, and I will also provide examples of listings projects past and present, including Philadelphia's DIY PHL and current calendars in New York, Paris and elsewhere.

Chella Quint (she/her) – 20 Years of Menstrual Zine Making

In 2005, against the backdrop of the G8 Summit protests, and wider political, feminist, queer, and environmental unrest, Chella Quint OBE stapled together her first copy of Chart Your Cycle.

What began as a 24-hour zine about body literacy grew into the satirical Adventures in Menstruating series, a touring comedy show, and eventually the global Period Positive movement.

Emerging from the vibrant DIY publishing and activist cultures of the mid-2000s, including infoshops, direct action networks, and events like the London Zine Symposium, the series was shaped by and contributed to wider conversations about how grassroots publishing could challenge stigma, build community, and circulate critical information, eventually rippling outward to disrupt dominant narratives and influence policy and education. This talk reflects on twenty years of menstrual zine-making as queer feminist pedagogy, arts-based research, and activism, tracing the evolution from perzine confessions and ad-busting collages to participatory workshops and the Mobile Menstrual Zine Library. Along the way, these zines have been exhibited, archived, and cited in classrooms, government offices, activist spaces, and cultural institutions, demonstrating how small-scale publishing can ripple into large-scale change while preserving and amplifying knowledge often dismissed, overlooked, or co-opted.

Looking back from 2025 with renewed urgency around reproductive justice, censorship, and corporate capture of grassroots movements, Chella revisits the political climate that first motivated her and the continuing relevance of analogue media in an era dominated by digital surveillance. This retrospective also highlights the ways in which the zine's circulation through DIY networks amplified its reach and impact, allowing a small-scale project to influence national debates on menstrual stigma, curriculum design, and equity. Situating the zines within the wider DIY information landscape, the talk concludes with a summary of how these ephemeral, analogue forms act as living archives of embodied knowledge and can be -

now more than ever – relevant, creative, and vital tools for resistance and an engine for social change.

**Monika Rodriguez (she/her) and Michael Pierce (he/they)
(freelance community archivists) – From Attics to Screenings
– Discovering DIY archives**

Our presentation will introduce a DIY framework for working with archives, developed through our community projects in Liverpool. We use "DIY" not as a rejection of formal archives but as a creative solution when access to material is limited or when community histories are missing from institutional collections. For us the act of finding is as important as what is found.

Searching in houses, personal collections and forgotten corners often sparks as much excitement as the hidden gems themselves. The journey of discovery becomes part of the story, reshaping how people see their own stories.

Through tools like Home Movie Day we invite people to look at their homes and personal collections as sites of heritage. This often leads to remarkable discoveries, from a community carnival weekend in the 70's digitised with the support of North West Film Archive, to a 1956 film made by Alsop High School Film Society, one of whose members later became a writer for Dr. Who.

Our approach begins with telling our own story, then listening and reflecting with communities. By validating personal and grassroots archives, we encourage people to take pride in their histories and recognise their everyday materials as culturally valuable. DIY methods allow us to connect with local history groups, support alternative collecting and create screenings and training sessions that bring these stories alive.

DIY Archive are not dusty shelves but living, regenerative practices. They are acts of discover, pride and liberation,

reminding us that archives are as much about the journey of finding as about what is preserved.

Salford Zine Library - pop-up display

Salford Zine Library is a volunteer-run donation-based self-publishing library. Born in 2010 in Islington Mill - and calling Nexus Art Cafe and Salford University it's home along the way, the collection is now going through a phase of redevelopment before they move onto their next planned venture. They'll be bringing along a curated pop-up library from our 5200+ items for you to browse and read at your own leisure throughout the conference.

Peter Shukie (he/him) and Paul Nataraj (he/him) - Dirt Poets and the Flyover Gallery: Creating Outside the Conventional

This session features a screening of Dirt Poets, a film about the Flyover Gallery project - a DIY cultural space in the North West, developed without funding in the wake of redundancy. Through film, talk and discussion, participants will explore grassroots creativity, working-class heritage and alternative archives outside institutions.

Martin Smith (he/him, Manchester Metropolitan University) - Take This With You and Leave It Somewhere Else

I've got an ongoing poetry zine experiment called 'Take This With You & Leave It Somewhere Else'. I leave zines with my poems, instructions to "take this with you & Leave it somewhere else" and my contact details in public places then I map their movements (<https://bit.ly/mapofzines>). None of the poems in the zines are available digitally anywhere. They've only ever been read by people who have found one of the physical zines. I like the idea of a poem interrupting a stranger's day then

disappearing. So far the ones that have travelled the furthest have found their way into various kinds of libraries and museums, and my talk will in part be unpacking why that might be.

Vicky Stevenson (she/her, Pen Fight Distro and Salford Zine Library) - Zinester speed-friending

Come make some new friends! In this speed friending you'll get chance to chat to fellow zine-makers face-to-face in a low-pressure environment. Don't worry, we know a lot of us are an awkward bunch, so there will be plenty of chatting prompts available to get the conversation going. Bring your zines too, for some added speed zine-trading (optional for those who have them).

Chloe Turner (Museum of Transology, they/them) - Against Inclusion: Trans Museological Practices in an Era of Disinformation

This talk considers how the Museum of Transology stands as both a grassroots DIY archiving initiative and a powerful countermeasure against the rising tide of anti-trans disinformation within the culture and heritage sector. The talk explores:

1. Origins as an urgent community-led response to deliberate trans erasure in heritage spaces and public discourse
2. Development of collaborative curation methodologies that center lived experience as primary evidence against manufactured narratives
3. The project's commitment to ethical documentation as a defense against sensationalized and dehumanizing representations
4. Strategies for maintaining community sovereignty when navigating institutional partnerships in an increasingly hostile

information landscape

5. How the museum's DIY practice actively dismantles cisnormative information hierarchies that fuel contemporary moral panics

6. Tactical approaches for grassroots archivists to preserve authentic community knowledge in the face of coordinated disinformation campaigns

This presentation offers a timely exploration of how DIY archival practices serve not only as documentation but as vital community defense, perfectly aligning with the event's focus on grassroots information activism and ethical approaches to heritage work in contested cultural contexts.

Working Class Movement Library (stall)



