



LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY HERITAGE CHAMPIONS

‘We’re Still Here!’ Blackpool

Be part of creating Blackpool’s first-ever LGBTQIA+ digital archive

We’re Still Here! is delivered by Abingdon Studios in partnership with:

- Showtown
- Grundy Art Gallery
- Blackpool Council
- You

This is History in the Making

Blackpool has one of the largest and most infamous LGBTQIA+ communities in the North, but our stories, images, costumes, nightlife, activism, art, and everyday lives have never been properly archived.

Until now.

The ‘*We’re Still Here!*’ Archive focuses on documenting the history and contemporary experiences of LGBTQIA+ people connected to Blackpool creating the town’s **first dedicated LGBTQIA+ digital archive**, collecting photographs, oral histories, memorabilia and community stories.

We are recruiting **2 x Community Heritage Champions** to help us uncover, document and celebrate this hidden history, taking part in research, gathering stories from the community and attending our fabulous programme of events.

This is your chance to help discover, preserve and protect stories that have never been recorded before. To celebrate the archive we develop, we will create two major exhibitions that connect Blackpool’s LGBTQIA+ heritage with national archives and collections. These will go on display Feb - Jul 2027 in Showtown and Grundy Art Gallery.



What Is a Community Heritage Champion?

This is a paid role, essential to the project's development, and is also an opportunity for you to develop skills in culture, heritage and community engagement.

You'll be:

- A community connector
- A story-finder
- A heritage advocate
- A voice helping shape how our archive is built
- A hoarder of relevant and engaging materials.

You'll work alongside our Project Director, Project Manager, Project Coordinator and Community Archivist to uncover, preserve and present stories, images and other materials that deserve to be protected for generations to come.

We also seek to involve volunteers or buddies that can work with you throughout the project.

What You'll Be Doing

1. Uncovering Community Stories

- Leading on design and storytelling of 1 community "History Club" session
- Supporting our other community "History Club" sessions
- Encouraging people to share stories, photographs, costumes, flyers, posters, memories and memorabilia.
- Supporting the Community Archivist in collecting LGBTQIA+ stories and materials from queer community in Blackpool including images and oral history
- Contributing to research into Blackpool's queer past
- Identifying LGBTQIA+ material in local collections

You'll help ensure the archive reflects lived experience - in community language, not institutional language.

2. Creating Archive Content

- Contributing to shaping how the archive feels, looks and speaks to visitors
- Assisting the Community Archivist with digitising of LGBTQIA+ heritage materials onto new archive platform
- Contributing to the interpretation of existing collections through an LGBTQIA+ lens
- Contributing to social media storytelling by sharing your journey
- Writing 3 x blog posts sharing your journey of being part of the process

This is about storytelling as much as preservation.



3. Supporting Events & Exhibitions

- Supporting an exciting programme of 8 public events
- Being part of an Archive and Exhibition Advisory panel, contributing to the shape, content and presentation of 2 major exhibitions in 2027
- Representing community voices in programming discussions
- Participating in the launch of the new archive

You'll help bring history into public view — proudly, visibly, and with care.

Opportunities & Benefits

This role aims to develop meaningful, practical experience in heritage and cultural practice.

You'll gain access to:

- Gallery Interpretation workshops
- Oral history training
- Digital archiving skills
- Inclusive collections practice
- Creative writing support
- Learning and participating in evaluation practice
- Broad and deep Heritage Sector insight

You'll also have opportunities to:

- Visit other queer heritage projects across the country
- Build peer networks
- Gain experience working alongside museums and galleries
- Sit on a Steering Committee with partner organisations

We will provide a personalised letter of reference recognising your contribution to the project.

Stipend

This is a **stipend-based freelance opportunity**, not a salaried job.

You will receive:

- A fixed stipend of £2000 paid in agreed instalments across the project.
 - The stipend for this role reflects pay for approximately 38 half days at a rate of £15 per hour spread between now and July 2027.
 - The payment will be linked to agreed activity milestones
- Reimbursement of approved travel expenses



The stipend recognises your:

- Time
- Contribution to research, events and archive creation
- Lived experience
- Community leadership

You will be engaged under a freelance agreement and will manage your own tax and National Insurance responsibilities.

The project runs March 2026 - July 2027, with flexible time commitment that increases around events and exhibitions.

Time Commitment

We expect to work out exact time commitments that will be suitable and flexible to your own needs and interests. However, we expect that the allocated commitment will include:

- History Clubs x 5 working one half day per event
- 1 day for preparation on the History Club you will be designing
- Key exhibition days
- Events days
- Some time for days researching archives and cataloguing materials
- Some time for attending training sessions

Upcoming Key Dates

Ideally, the Community Heritage Champions to be available on the upcoming dates:

- **2nd June, 6pm-8pm.** History Club (thematic to be announced).
- **6th June 2026:** Blackpool Pride

Other dates for 2026, as well as key dates between January and July 2027, are as yet TBC.

Who We're Looking For

You should be:

- Connected to Blackpool's LGBTQIA+ communities, with an understanding of intersectionality of lived experience
- Curious about local history
- Interested in storytelling or community work
- Passionate about protecting queer culture
- Wanting experience in heritage or cultural leadership



Skills and knowledge you will need:

- An understanding of LGBTQIA+ community sensitivities around collecting our heritage
- Ability to work independently and in a small team
- Ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds
- Comfortable communicating with new people at in person events regularly
- Good organisational skills
- Existing knowledge of Google cloud working (docs, sheets, drive etc) or the ability to learn these digital skills

No formal heritage experience is required. Community knowledge is as valuable as formal training.

We particularly welcome applications from:

- Working class LGBTQIA+ people
- Disabled LGBTQIA+ people
- Older LGBTQIA+ people
- Younger LGBTQIA+ people
- QTPOC people

We recognise there are systemic barriers in getting into this sector for people from these communities, and want to provide training and skills development opportunities to help more people gain experience to advance their journeys where we can.

How to Apply

Application deadline: Friday 1st May at Midnight

Email: wsh@abingdonstudios.co.uk

Please email us a short expression of interest Tell us about you and why you're interested where you should include:

- Your connection to Blackpool's LGBTQIA+ community
- What excites you about uncovering local queer heritage

We welcome either written, audio or video formats. Written submissions should be between 500 - 1000 words (approximately 1 or 2 pages long) and video/audio files should be no more than 5 minutes long.

You will hear back from us with the outcome of your application on Friday 8th May by 8pm.



About us and our Partners

Abingdon Studios is a flagship contemporary visual arts studio and producing organisation based in the heart of Blackpool. Simply put, we believe in Artists Being Supported. Providing permanent artist studios and a public project space for testing and exhibiting new work, ABS develops and delivers ambitious independent and co-commissioned projects in partnership with galleries, museums, consortium networks and partners. We are proud to have supported 150+ artists to date.

Over 60% of our programme has prioritised LGBTQIA+ artists, creativity and development opportunities. Our projects include We're Still Here!; Work/Leisure, our artist residency and development programme; and tailored sector development support and bursaries. ABS champions high-quality, cross-artform contemporary practice, creating the conditions for artists to experiment, collaborate and reach new audiences in Blackpool and beyond.

Showtown is Blackpool's bold and brilliant, award-winning, interactive museum of fun and entertainment. Mere footsteps from the iconic tower, it shines a spotlight on the town's showbiz legacy through six lively galleries exploring everything from magic and circus to seaside holidays and dance.

The Grundy Art Gallery has been at the centre of artistic life in Blackpool for over 100 years and is now recognized as a leading contemporary visual arts venue in the northwest region with a growing national and international profile. It has been an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation for the past 8 years and holds Museums Accreditation status.

Grundy's current position has been achieved through ambitious and contextual programming, which makes the most of its beautiful exhibition spaces and the unique cultural environment and context which exists beyond the gallery walls. Grundy inspires audiences through an ambitious and varied year-round exhibitions programme that draws on the unique and invigorating context and heritage of Blackpool, for instance exploring the space between contemporary art, entertainment and popular culture.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund is the largest funder for the UK's heritage. Using money raised by National Lottery players we support projects that connect people and communities to heritage. Our vision is for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future. From historic buildings, our industrial legacy and the natural environment, to collections, traditions, stories and more. Heritage can be anything from the past that people value and want to pass on to future generations. We believe in the power of heritage to ignite the imagination, offer joy and inspiration, and to build pride in place and connection to the past.