



2026 HISTORY AND
ARCHIVES IN PRACTICE

***Shaping Societies,
Improving Lives:***
the Impact of Archives and
Historical Research

#HAP26

Thursday 16 April 2026

Firth Court

University of Sheffield, S10 2TN



INSTITUTE OF
HISTORICAL
RESEARCH

SCHOOL OF
ADVANCED STUDY
UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON

THE
NATIONAL
ARCHIVES



University of
Sheffield



HISTORY AND ARCHIVES IN PRACTICE

History and Archives in Practice is an annual event, building on its partners' long experience of bringing archivists and historians into close conversation.

A partnership of The National Archives, Royal Historical Society, and the Institute of Historical Research, History and Archives in Practice (HAP) is where historians and archivists come together to consider shared interests in archive collections, their interpretation and use. Every other year we endeavour to partner with a UK archive or institution who similarly specialise in the bringing together of archivists and researchers. For History and Archives in Practice 2026 (HAP26) we are partnering with the University of Sheffield Library.

Central to HAP is a focus on archival and research 'practice': creating opportunities to demonstrate and discuss how we work with historical collections, and what historians and archivists can achieve collectively. By making 'practice' central to HAP, we'll also make more of collections – with time to learn about selected archives and how historians and archivists work better together.

2026 History and Archives in Practice Shaping Societies, Improving Lives: the Impact of Archives and Historical Research

Archives are both shaped by and shape the communities and societies in which they exist and serve. For HAP26, we're exploring the relationship between collections, researchers, practice and locality to consider how archives have the potential to challenge the status quo and initiate change through collaboration and co-production. With HAP26 we will consider the opportunities, experiences and challenges that occur when working at the intersections of history and archives.

Firth court

Firth Court, University of Sheffield, S10 2TN

Please enter the building from the main entrance on Brook Hill.

Access note: There is a separate entrance ramp to the left of the front doors.



Front entrance to Firth Court. Red brick heritage building with black double doors, large windows and foliage.

Event Spaces

Firth Hall

Panel sessions and refreshments (including lunch) will be served in Firth Hall.

Access: The room is located on the first floor, and is accessible by stairs or lift.

Council Room

Panel sessions will take place in the Council Room.

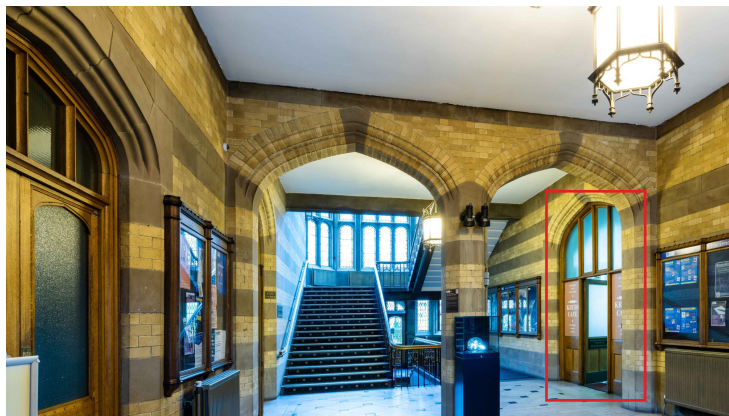
Access: The room is located on the first floor, and is accessible by stairs or lift.

Chancellor's Room

Workshops 1 and 2 will take place in the Chancellor's Room.

Access: The room is located on the first floor, and is accessible by stairs or lift.

Quiet space



Ground floor of Firth Court. Krebs room (designated quiet space) can be located in the centre-right of the image, highlighted in red.

Krebs Room

Located on the ground floor of Firth Court, near the bottom of the main staircase. It's a large casual space which can be used at any time. Students and staff do frequent this room but it remains generally quiet throughout the day. Krebs room can be accessed from the main lobby on the ground floor, not far from the main staircase.

Western Bank Library



The **HAP26 lunchtime showcase** will take place in the Research Commons (Western Bank Library) and the interactive **Digital Humanities session** will take place in (Western Bank Library).

Housekeeping Information

Toilets

- The toilets in Firth Court are on the **Ground Floor**. From Firth Hall, go down the main staircase. The toilets are off the main entrance hall in a corridor on your right. There will be signage.
- An accessible toilet in Firth Court is located near these toilets on the Ground Floor. There will be signage.
- The toilets in Western Bank Library are on the ground floor, down the main stairs, then turn back on yourself and they are in the corridor.

Fire Safety Procedure

- Exit via the main stairway and gather at the concourse - the area underneath the main road. For Firth Hall, come out of the entrance and go down the stairs on the left. For the Library, come out of the ground floor doors and walk to the right. We are not expecting fire alarm tests on the day.

Wi-Fi

- You can access the wifi via **Eduroam** or the **Guest Wifi**.
- <https://sheffield.ac.uk/it-services/guest-wifi>

09.00 - 10.00 Registration

Registration can be found outside of Firth Hall, with refreshments and networking taking place inside Firth Hall.

10.00 - 10.10 Introduction to #HAP26 Firth Hall

Angela Haighton (University of Sheffield Library)

10.15 - 11.15 Session 1

Panel 1 | Recovering Feminist Histories: Collaborative Approaches to Women's Archives in Wales and the Midlands Firth Hall

Chairs: **Dr. Annette Naudin** & **Dr. Assunta Ruocco**

This panel explores how researchers and cultural organisations are recovering women's histories through collaborative and interdisciplinary archival practice. Reflecting on how regional archives can act as catalysts for feminist memory work, connecting past activism to present-day social change. Panelists include:

- **Dr. Annette Naudin** (Birmingham City University)
- **Dr. Assunta Ruocco** (University of Lincoln)
- **Dr. Alice Bell** (University of Lincoln)
- **Dr. Steve Fossey** (University of Lincoln)

Panel 2 | Navigating the Politics of/within the Archive Council Room

Chair: **Dr Hannah Elias** (Royal Historical Society)

- The Politics of the Archive: Contextualising Far-Right 'Community' Archives in Britain
Kevin Harris (University of Sheffield)
- Contemporary society, community outreach, and political archives: a case study of the Joyce Butler archive and project
Julie Melrose (Haringey Archive and Museum Service) and
Dr. Lyndsey Jenkins (Mansfield College, University of Oxford)
- Born-digital collections and the challenges of curation, access, and utilisation: Islamic State photo-propaganda at the Imperial War Museum
Hirah Azhar (University of Southampton and Imperial War Museum)

11.15 - 11.35 BREAK Firth Hall

11.40 - 12.40 Session 2

Panel 3 | Co-creating and Sustaining Archives: History, Identity and Community in an Institutional Setting Firth Hall

Chair: **Angela Haighton** (Library Associate Director, University of Sheffield)

Drawing on case studies from archives held by the University of Sheffield, the panel will reflect on the relationships between communities and institutional archives, in particular how the foundation of an archive can promote a sense of identity, shared history and legitimacy. They will discuss the challenges and benefits of first establishing an archive within an institutional setting, sustaining relationships between the archive and the community over the long term, and the benefits co-creation can bring to both individual wellbeing and community cohesion. Panelists include:

- **Professor Vanessa Toulmin** (University of Sheffield)
- **Sheldon Chadwick** (Liverpool John Moores University)
- **Sarah Broadhurst** (University of Sheffield)

Panel 4 | Reflections on Participatory and Creative Archival and Historical Research Practices on/with Migrant and Refugee Background Communities in the UK, Belgium and Jordan Council Room

Chair: **Dr Lucy Newby** (Manchester Metropolitan University).

This panel session explores three projects based at Manchester Metropolitan University which work in dialogue with communities, partner organisations, archives and histories. These projects all have collaboratively developed public outputs, contributing to, or drawing on, archives and community histories, demonstrating the ways in which creative and engaged methods with contemporary communities can provide linkages and insights into the past. Panelists include:

- **Dr. Sarah Linn** (Manchester Metropolitan University)
 - **Professor Robert Ellis** (Manchester Metropolitan University)
 - **Dr Andrew McTominey** (Manchester Metropolitan University)
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12.40 - 13.45 LUNCH Firth Hall

12.40 - 13.45 HAP26 showcase Research Commons,
Western Bank Library

- [Roots and Futures](#) | Sheffield
- [Archaeological Data Service](#) | York
- [Heritage Quay](#) | University of Huddersfield
- [Borthwick Institute for Archives, University of York](#) | York
- [University of Bradford Archives](#) | Bradford
- [Hull History Centre](#) | Hull
- [University of Leeds Cultural Collections](#) | Leeds

Be escorted by HAP colleagues, and take a scenic walk from Firth Court to Western Bank Library and visit the HAP26 Showcase, an exhibition which showcases a diverse array of some of the services and projects in the region.

Feel free to make your own way to Western Bank Library, or, be escorted by colleagues at **12:40** or **13:10** from the registration desk.

13.15- 13.35 Digital Techniques & Workflows, Western Bank Library
an Interactive Demonstration

The University of Sheffield Special Collections, Heritage and Archives Team in collaboration with the Digital Humanities Institute are offering an interactive demonstration of archival digital techniques and workflows. It includes early handwritten cards created as part of The Survey of Folklore and Language for the Yorkshire area, which began in 1964 and continued until the early 2000s.

The session demonstrates techniques including automated handwriting transcription and named entity recognition, and the opportunity for participants to try the technology for themselves. Colleagues will reflect on how such technologies can be incorporated into archival workflows and used for scholarship, while supporting the interpretation and interrogation of material relating to specific local areas and communities.

13.45 - 14.45 Session 3

Panel 5 | Working Together to Drive Change:
From Collaboration to Co-Production Firth Hall

Chair:

- From Collaboration to Co-Production; Whose Power? Co-Producing Change with Young People in Museums and Archives.
Professor Abigail Harrison Moore (University of Leeds)
- Your Manchester: co-curation and community engagement at the University of Manchester
Dr. Grant Collier (University of Manchester Library)
- Revoicing the Archive: Co-creation, Community, and the Making of a Vocal Collage
Mohan Xie (University of Portsmouth; Portsmouth City Council)

Panel 6 | Building a People's History:
From Collections to Classrooms Council Room

Chair: **Dr Claire Kennan** (The National Archives)

Inclusive Histories is a three-year, £1.5m Arts and Humanities Research Council supported project, led by Royal Holloway, University of London, in partnership with nine archives, museums and libraries, including Black Cultural Archives, Glasgow Women's Library, People's History Museum, and Bishopsgate Institute. Together with community researchers and teachers, they are collaboratively researching and co-producing resources to support the more inclusive teaching of GCSE British political history in schools. The project responds to a groundswell of reports stressing the need for such resources – from the Royal Historical Society's 2018 Race, Ethnicity & Equality, to AQA's 2021 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in AQA History, and most recently, End Sexism in School's 2025 The Great History Heist.

In this roundtable, as the project reaches its midway point, the multi-sector Inclusive Histories team will reflect on building equitable partnerships; how they are working to benefit teachers, students, and our partners; the approach to collaboration and co-production; and how to measure and sustain the impact of this work. We will also consider ongoing challenges: balancing the academic ambitions of the project with the realities of the classroom, navigating the uncertainties of curriculum review and reform, acknowledging positionality in representing perspectives that have often been excluded from these histories, and ensuring that a three-year project has a meaningful legacy. Panelists include:

- **Dr Matthew Smith** (Royal Holloway, University of London)
 - **James Ellis** (Hastings Academy)
 - **Dan Edmonds** (Royal Holloway, University of London)
 - **Jenny Mabbott** (People's History Museum)
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14.50 - 15.50 **Session 4**

Panel 7 | Participatory Approaches: Meaningful Engagement and Lived Experience **Firth Hall**

Chair: **Amelia Süsserott** (TNA)

- Creative and Participatory Approaches to Homelessness in the Archives
Chelsea Collison (LSE Library)
- Stories of Mental Health from York: Past, Present and Future
Laura Yeoman (Borthwick Institute for Archives, University of York)
- Mobilising communities: Capturing voices and memories of Covid-19 in East London to inform public health policy
Kate Jarman and **Laura Owen** (Barts Health NHS Trust Archives)

Panel 8 | Class identities, community histories and collaborative practices **Council Room**

Chair: **Neil Stewart** (Institute of Historical Research)

- Mining the Past
Liz Wood and **Dr Sarah Hughes** (Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick)
- Solidarity! Collaboration
Beatrice Tailby Hardstaff (Manchester Metropolitan University)
- Archiving Injustice
Alma Nishtar (University of Leeds)

Workshop 1 | Detective Sheldons and the Case of the Queer Archive: Performing, Building, and Belonging at the Margate Queer Library & Archive **Chancellor's Room**

Facilitators: **Dr Sé M. Nomyo** (Margate Queer Library), **Dr Rachel Seoighe** (University of Kent) & **Jennifer Scott**

In this interactive workshop, Special Agent Sheldons will present his investigation into the emergence of the Margate Queer Library & Archive (MQLA) and conduct a live interrogation of founder Dr Sé M. Nomyo. Inviting workshop participants to be witnesses and co-interrogators, Special Agent Sheldons will gather evidence on the MQLA's emergent practices - including collective cataloguing, donation practices and co-curated programming - and establish if they constitute co-production under the strict disciplinary law.

A long-time undercover operative on the Margate LGBTQ+ scene, Special Agent Sheldons' investigation responds to local witness testimony that describes the MQLA as a space of joyful, live and collaborative archiving practice. As an agent of law enforcement and the state, he is understandably concerned. As a key suspect, Dr Nomyo will explain their motives and invite workshop participants to imagine queer histories and archives differently, as live, relational and collective.

15.50 - 16.10 **BREAK**

Firth Hall

16.15 - 17.15 **Session 5**

Panel 9 | Mobilising Partnerships for Civic Good: Equity, Collaboration and Co-Design **Firth Hall**

Chair:

- Defining a renewed framework for archival collaboration between uneven partners: An EAP project of the British Library in Cuba's National Archive
Dr Jesús Sanjurjo (University of Strathclyde)
- Designing community co-creation into the 'DNA' of a new archive collection project
Dr Jason Griffiths (University of Gloucestershire & Dean Heritage Centre)
- Reimagining Hackney Museum: Using Local Archives to Empower Communities and Tell Meaningful Stories of the Past
Olivia Majumdar (Hackney Museum)

Panel 10 | Voices for Change: Archives as Activism **Council Room**

Chair:

In what ways can archival collections, and their interpretation, inform present-day debates and campaigns? And what can others learn from campaign-focused uses of archives; and how are historians and archivists, working together, engaging with policy discussions?

This panel will introduce the HAP audience to the Oral History of the UK Environmental Movement (1970-2020) (OHEM) archive, currently the only major national collection of voice speaking directly to the history of the modern environmental movement in the UK. Demonstrating the value of oral histories as an archival resource for social change, the HAP audience will hear voices from the archive that have the potential to inspire empathy and emotional engagement, hope and efficacy. Stories of personal and collective action demonstrate that positive change is possible, in ways that scientific facts and data often fail. Through accounts of culturally specific experiences and diverse voices, the archive also promotes inclusivity and engagement with the wider audiences that present day campaigners seek to reach. Panelists include:

- **Dr Barbara Brayshay** (OHEM)
- **Chris Church** (OHEM, Friends of the Earth)
- **Nigel Doar** (Head Science & Research, The Wildlife Trusts)

Workshop 2 | Is This an Archive? A Participatory Workshop on the Limits and Possibilities of the Archive

Chancellor's Room

Facilitators: **Theresa Kneppers** (London South Bank University) and **Sarah Haylett** (Tate)

Is This an Archive? explores the evolving relationship between archival practice, artistic research, and public engagement. It invites participants to collectively question what constitutes an archive by responding to a series of images drawn from institutional collections, counter-archives, and speculative artistic practices. Through dialogue and collaborative annotation, the workshop surfaces tensions between visibility and erasure, preservation and interpretation, and institutional and community ownership.

Initially developed and piloted as part of the Reactivating Archives in Contemporary Art seminar series at the Instituto de História da Arte, we are continuing to develop the format hoping to expand the practice through iterative cycles of delivery and reflection.

Is This an Archive? proposes a replicable, open-ended model for reimagining the archive as a social and pedagogical space, one that foregrounds participation, dialogue, and multiplicity as catalysts for change within both artistic and institutional contexts.

17.20 - 17.30 **#HAP26 closing remarks**

Firth Hall

Professor Lucy Noakes (Royal Historical Genetics Society)

17.30 **Optional networking opportunity**

We invite you to join HAP organisers after the day's event, to walk over to the **University Arms** (see map below). Food and drink can be purchased here.

