

INVISIBLE INNOVATORS



MAKING WOMEN
FILMMAKERS VISIBLE
ACROSS THE UK FILM
ARCHIVES

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WOMEN FILMMAKERS

THIS REPORT WAS COMMISSIONED BY FILM ARCHIVES UK TO EXPLORE THE CURRENT SCALE AND SCOPE OF THE HOLDINGS OF WOMEN’S AMATEUR FILMMAKING WITHIN THE REGIONAL AND NATIONAL FILM AND MEDIA ARCHIVES AND TO INVESTIGATE WAYS OF OPTIMISING THEIR VISIBILITY

WHO ARE THE WOMEN AMATEUR FILMMAKERS AND WHY DO THEY MATTER?

The women amateur filmmakers discussed in this report took on many different creative roles, but most were directors, producers, camerawomen, and/or writers of their own films.

These women were part of a larger group of (mostly unheralded) filmmakers normally described as amateurs, or non-professionals. Those broad terms can include films made by academics, activists, animators, artists, documentarians, enthusiasts, families, hobbyists, or students, all of whom worked outside of the mainstream film industry during the 20th Century.

Although the technology for making amateur films was initially expensive it soon became more affordable, broadening opportunities for a wider range of people to participate in filmmaking.

Amateur films were produced by lone filmmakers, or people working in small partnerships or larger groups such as cine-clubs where filmmakers could gather and plan larger productions. Amateur films are incredibly varied in topic, theme, and length, but their images and ideas represent a significant and unsung part of our national cultural heritage.

Women played a more important role in Britain’s amateur film culture than might be assumed, and were involved in making a wide range of films, but their contribution has hitherto been largely obscured. The amateur realm provided a precious space for women to exercise their talents as filmmakers when the professional film industry was often far from welcoming.

Amateur women filmmakers are doubly invisible, both as women and as non-professionals, but their work can provide unique insights into women’s experiences and their creativity and is therefore deserving of serious attention.

BUILDING ON AN INITIAL PROJECT

Recent years have seen greater attention paid to amateur and women filmmakers in the British context, across different cultural organisations, archives, festivals and academics (see p.31 for more information).

In 2015, with women’s non-professional filmmaking role still largely overlooked, the University of East Anglia in association with the East Anglian Film Archive (EAFA) began the ‘Women Amateur Filmmakers’ (WAF) project. With support from the National Archives, the Institute of Amateur Cinematographers, and the John and Joy Chittock Fund, 144 individual films by award-winning non-professional women filmmakers were identified, catalogued and digitised. Packages of films from that collection spanning the 1920s to the 1980s were then successfully screened across the UK in cinemas, at film festivals and exhibitions, and on the Talking Pictures TV archive channel, consistently receiving a highly positive response.

The success of that initial project led to Film Archives UK commissioning the WAF team to undertake the nationwide archive mapping exercise of women’s amateur filmmaking that informs this report. A survey assessed what was available and accessible in the archives, what kinds of amateur filmmaking women were involved with, and what further work might need to be undertaken to increase awareness of these trail-blazing women filmmakers.

The survey was completed by East Anglian Film Archive, North West Film Archive, Screen Archive South East, Lincolnshire Film Archive, The National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales and the National Library of Scotland Moving Image Archive, representing holdings across the UK. This report is the first publication to derive from that work. It champions the important work already done by film and media archives and historians, and provides data for Film Archives UK, and the individual archives, to help raise the profile of these women, and to make them and their rich, resonant, and fascinating work visible again.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

THE NEXT FEW PAGES REVEAL THE BREAKDOWN OF DATA AND STATISTICS ON THE WOMEN AMATEUR FILMMAKERS WHOSE CREATIVE WORK IS HELD WITHIN THE UK FILM AND MEDIA ARCHIVES.

The work undertaken for this report has highlighted some extremely dedicated and knowledgeable archivists across the UK, whose expertise is clearly responsible for the continued upkeep and preservation of tens of thousands of films, made by women and other filmmakers.

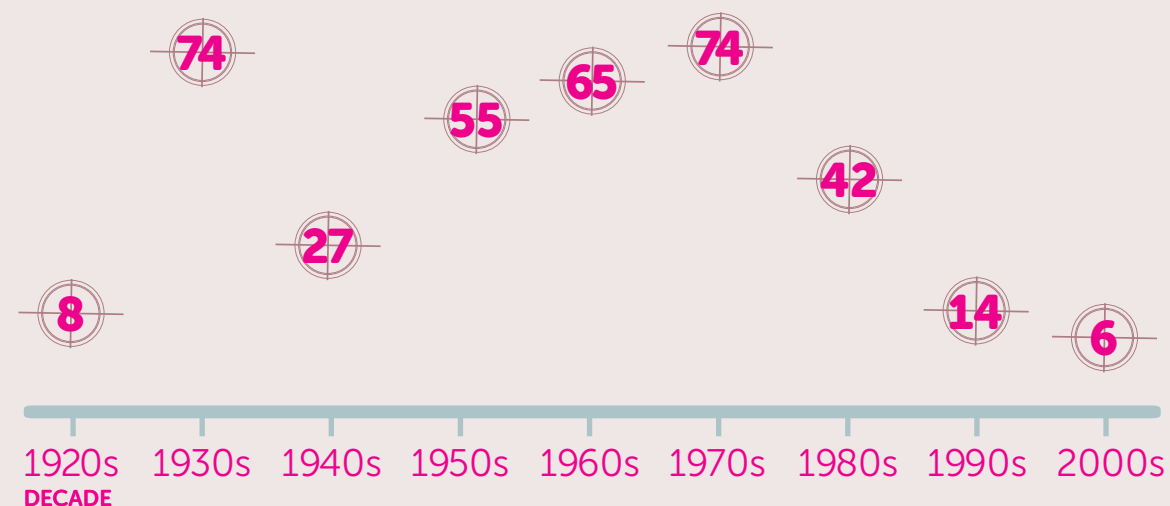
However, the survey and research also makes clear that:

- Women amateur filmmakers still remain hidden and invisible within public-facing resources, and internal metadata and catalogue activities. This includes:
 - The lack of mechanisms by which to search for 'women filmmakers' as a category or a subject
 - Website-based search or browse functions that require existing knowledge of film title or filmmaker to locate relevant films

- Women's invisibility likely arises from individual and national archive policy that has been directed more at location-based cataloguing and digitisation
- Individual and significant regional archive initiatives (from cataloguing through to public events) have often lacked the national coordination to afford them maximum momentum and publicity
- Under-investment in the regional media archive sector has prevented archive staff from being able to fully explore untapped resources that contain women's creative work
- Notions of amateur film as 'home movies' may restrict broader understandings of its rich and complex cultural heritage.

NUMBER OF COLLECTIONS THAT FEATURE FILMS MADE BY AMATEUR WOMEN FILMMAKERS

PER DECADE (BASED ON DATA FROM PARTICIPATING ARCHIVES)



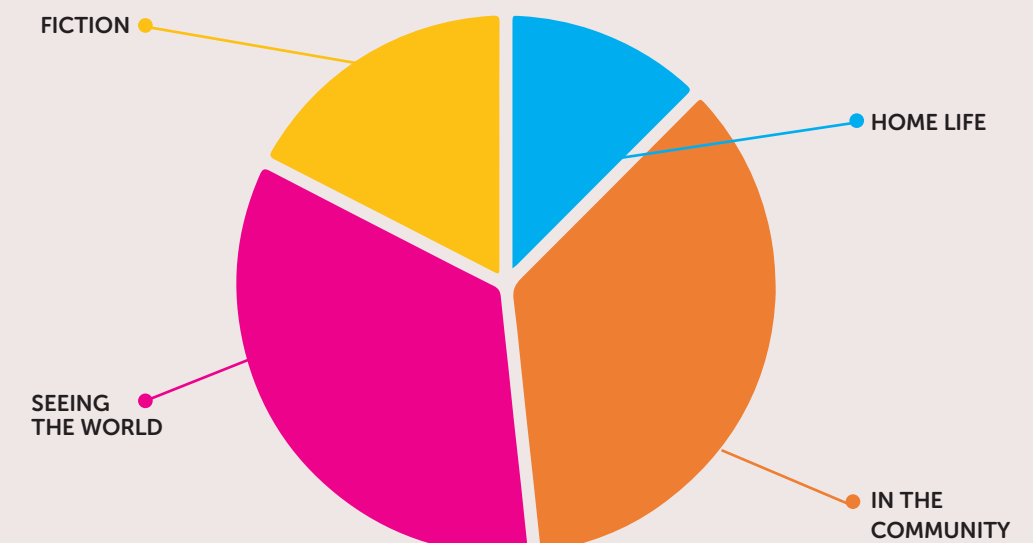
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Our key recommendations are to:

- Introduce 'women filmmakers' (or associated term) within film archive metadata systems
- Introduce 'women filmmakers' as a specific search term – or identified category – on public-facing websites (separate from 'woman' or 'women', which tends to point to the presence of a woman on screen, rather than as the creative filmmaker)
- Make all catalogue records visible on public-facing websites to show scope of women filmmakers in the collection (e.g. Screen Archive South East website)
- Develop national initiatives (like 'Women Amateur Filmmakers', or similar to the BFI Film Audience Network 'Changing Times: Women's Histories' season) that arise from the shared strengths of the regional archives
- Share best practice around key thematic collection strengths across archival holdings
- Develop a significant national funding bid around 'women amateur filmmakers' to include:
 - Expanded cataloguing (many untapped collections require further investigation)
 - Further digitisation of key titles
 - Development of a suitable (and centralised) online resource
 - A programme of themed public film packages to raise awareness of the creative work of these women filmmakers
- Develop a strategy to rebrand / reposition the idea of 'amateur' or 'home movie' for external audiences, emphasising variety and complexity of work undertaken by non-professionals, and rightfully placing women at the centre of that story.

FILM CATEGORIES

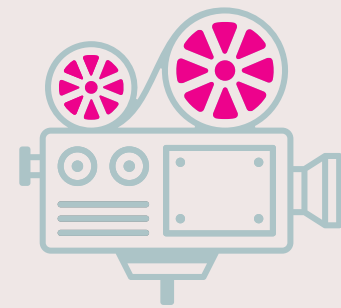
PRODUCED BY WOMEN (BASED ON DATA FROM PARTICIPATING ARCHIVES)



STATISTICS

WOMEN FILMMAKERS...

(BASED ON DATA FROM PARTICIPATING ARCHIVES)



2000+
FILMS MADE

ONLY **26-50%** OF THE FILMS MADE HAVE BEEN **DIGITISED**

250 COLLECTIONS

OVER **83%** OF FILMS ARE ON **FILM** THE REST ARE ON VIDEO

87% ARE NON FICTION FILMS



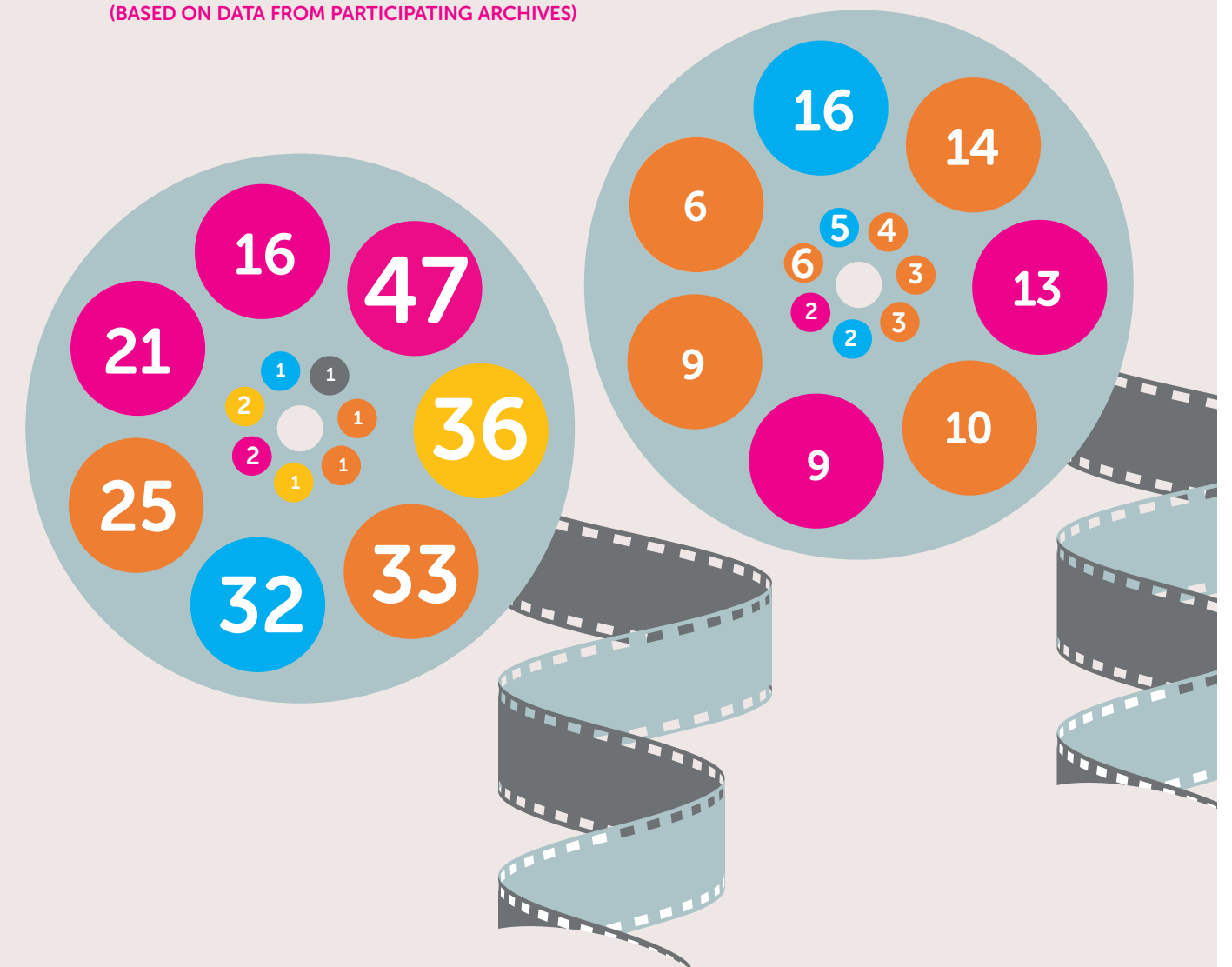
THE REST ARE A COMBINATION OF FICTION/ NON-FICTION

OF THE COLLECTIONS SAMPLED ONLY **34%** HAVE BEEN FULLY **DIGITISED**



FILM SUBJECTS PRODUCED BY WOMEN FILMMAKERS

(BASED ON DATA FROM PARTICIPATING ARCHIVES)



Travelogue	47	Drama	16
Family, home movies	36	School	14
Local	33	Aeroplanes, military, war	13
Animation	32	Events, celebrations, fairs, circus	10
Holidays, seaside	25	Amateur, semi-professional, student, shorts	9
Documentaries, mockumentaries	21	Work	9
Animals, nature	16	Rural life, farming	6
Personal	2	Camping, outdoor activities, leisure	6
Anthropological	2	Humour, comedy	5
Nursery education	1	Cultural organizations	4
Women's lives	1	Church	3
Misc	1	Cine club	3
Brownies	1	Royal Wedding, Coronation	2
Musical	1	Scifi	2

THEMES

TO GAUGE AND UNDERSTAND THE RANGE OF SUBJECTS OR TOPICS COVERED BY UK FILM ARCHIVE HOLDINGS OF WORK BY WOMEN FILMMAKERS, THE SURVEY ASKED INDIVIDUAL ARCHIVES TO DESCRIBE THE BROAD COLLECTION AREAS WITHIN WHICH FILMS FELL.

Compiling this list together demonstrated a vast range of different activities and events being filmed, across local, national and international locations, as well as many fictionalised narratives that took place in real and fantasy worlds.

The top fifteen subject categories (i.e. those terms that appeared most often in the survey data) were

1. Travelogue
2. Family or home movies
3. Local
4. Animation
5. Holidays, seaside
6. Documentaries (and mockumentaries)
7. Animals, nature
8. Drama
9. School
10. Aeroplanes, military, war
11. Events, celebrations, fairs, circuses
12. Amateur, semi-professional, student
13. Work
14. Rural life, farming
15. Camping, outdoor activities, leisure

Some of this list met our prior expectations, partly based on existing understandings of 'home movie' genres and topics. There is a clear focus on the local and the domestic, recording community events and daily life in films such as *Aldeburgh Lifeboat* (Miss Basham, 1929), *School Sports and Farm Vehicles* (Gwen Davies, 1968), *Good Shepherd Flower Festival* (Doreen Coombes, 1969), and *Christmas, Caroline, Dylan and New Car* (Barbara Lloyd, 1963-70).

The same documentary impulse can be seen in the recording of annual holidays and weekend trips with familiar UK-based destinations featured in films such as *Blackpool* (Glynis Edwardson, 1963), *Broadstairs and Margate Items* (Enid Briggs, 1929-38) and *London Zoo* (Joan Barney, 1963), preserving what these women focused on in such trips, capturing friends, family and exciting new sights.

Depending on their status and income, many filmmakers travelled further afield: wife and husband filmmaking team Eunice and Eustace Alliot produced an epic travelogue of their journey around interwar Germany and Austria in the eight-reel *To Oberammergau and the Alps in an Austin Sixteen* (1930); Maud Wallis and Ruth Collingridge's films *London to Australia* (1930) and *Scouting Voyage on the S.S. Calgaric* (1933) relied on footage captured on their travels; while *African Market, Dakar, Senegal* (Madge Thomas, 1958) and *Party and Family Scenes; Hong Kong, Tiger Balm Garden* (Doreen Tomkinson, 1975) offer a combination of home movie and travelogue.

However, some thematic emphases were more surprising and stood out from the other subjects: the tenth highest subject result was around the military theme, either filming the machinery or sites of conflict, or individual women's service experiences. *War Memorial and Trenches* (Leonara Richard, 1930s), which features First World War battlegrounds in Belgium, and *A Day in the Life of a WREN* (Joyce Allingham, 1949) provide good examples of both tendencies.

For the purposes of this report, we grouped the full list of 28 subject terms into broader overarching categories that best captured the submitted subject category terms.

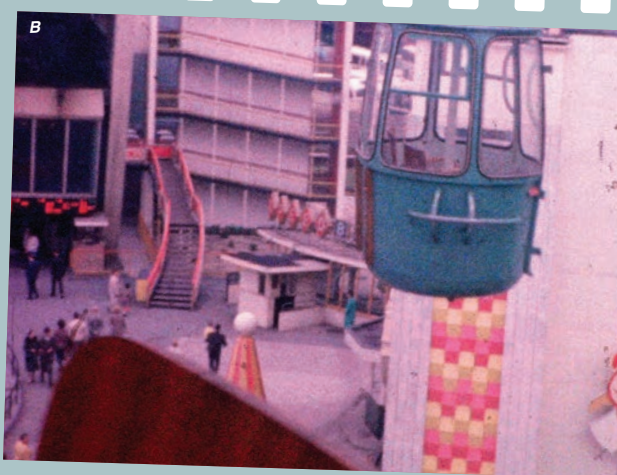
Those categories became the four themes this report focusses on:

- 🌐 Home life (12.46% of the return)
- 🌐 In the Community (35.83%)
- 🌐 Seeing the World (34.27%)
- 🌐 Fiction (17.44%).

Given the emphasis on 'home movies' within assumptions about what constitutes amateur film, it is expedient to note that the smallest percentage of films fall into this theme; less than 'Fiction' – which is a much more complex category (as discussed on pages 16-17).

While this doesn't reduce the importance of the 'home' mode of filmmaking, and its focus on family and everyday domestic life, it should point to the much wider interaction these women filmmakers had with the world around them, at local, national and international levels.

D: *Grange Park Girls School* (Ellaline Jennings and Doris Crompton, 1948, North West Film Archive)
E: *To Oberammergau and the Alps in an Austin Sixteen* (Eunice and Eustace Alliot, 1930, East Anglian Film Archive)



A: *Farming Through the Seasons* (Ann Beck, 1963, North West Film Archive)
B: *Blackpool* (Glynis Edwardson, 1963, North West Film Archive)
C: *Broadstairs and Margate Items* (Enid Briggs, 1929-38, Screen Archive South East)

THEME 1

HOME LIFE

THE DOMINANT IDEA OF AMATEUR FILMMAKING REMAINS THE 'HOME MOVIE' – A CRUCIAL EXAMPLE OF AMATEUR PRACTICE WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN INITIALLY INTENDED FOR FAMILY VIEWING BUT WHICH CAN MAKE AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL CULTURAL HERITAGE.

This genre is well represented in the work of women filmmakers in the UK film archives, revealing what these women felt was important to record for posterity about their families and everyday lives.

These films include domestic scenes, daily household routines, and express a desire to capture the activities of other family members within the home setting. These women filmmakers recorded the everyday lives of their families, at work and play, within houses, gardens, on surrounding streets, and farms. The UK screen archive holdings make clear that women played a significant role in the creation and production of home movies, often in collaboration with other members of the family.

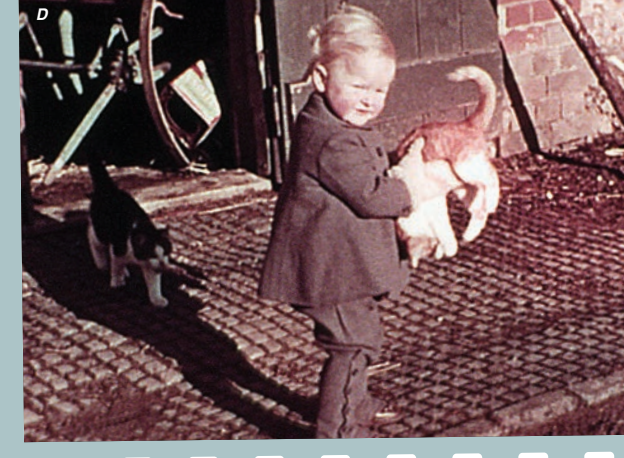
The range of daily routines that these films creatively capture is diverse. Vera Tidey focused on family life, as suggested by the titles of her films *Family Scenes: Children at Play* (1961) and *Christmas; birthdays; christening; baby sitting; village fete* (1968). In *Milk Lorry – last time* (1987) Gwen Davies uses the family camera to record the final day the milk tanker would visit their farm after the Davies family had decided to give up their dairy herd. Filmmaker Joan Irons cuts together different daily activities in *Brockley Scenes; Gravesend Scenes* (1958), from bird-watching to chatting with friends and sunbathing in the garden. In *Butterfly and Christmas Scenes in the Home* (1968), Doreen Tompkinson shows a Christmas party for friends and family, with guests drinking, smoking and talking in her home.

In the colour home movie *Sparta the Dog* (1957), filmmaker Thelma Dowding deftly assembles a montage of different shots of the family playing with the eponymous dog as it grows up: rolling around the back garden of their house, out for walks on the beach, running along a road and leaping over a gate in slow motion; and, finally, Sparta's birthday party featuring all the family members. Animals also feature in *Toddler at the Farm* (Kathleen Arrowsmith, 1937), where a red-booted small boy wanders in and out of the sheds on the family farm, playing with kittens and chasing pigeons.

With archive holdings covering over 70 years of domestic life, there is a rich history of quotidian detail provided by these films, with changes in clothing and interior décor counterbalanced by familiar repetition in the range of family activities they recurrently feature (playing with animals, eating, watching children, celebrating occasions, playing games). The principle

and the content of such films remains very similar across the decades: creating a record of home and family life. The films and videos also show the shift in technology, from 8mm, 9.5mm or 16mm film in the earlier films to video cameras from the 1980s on. Most of the films available via the archives are silent well into the 1960s, due to the lack of inexpensive sound equipment for small gauge film cameras.

Many of these films would have been shot with little idea of wider distribution beyond the family audience, or possibly a home screening for friends. While they may not always have been aware of the significance of the cultural heritage they were creating, these women filmmakers have left a rich and unique record of everyday domestic lives in the 20th century.



A: *Milk Lorry – last time* (Gwen Davies, 1987, Screen & Sound Archive, The National Library of Wales)
B: *Butterfly and Christmas Scenes in the Home* (Doreen Tompkinson, 1968, North West Film Archive)
C: *Sparta the Dog* (Thelma Dowding, 1957, East Anglian Film Archive)

D: *Toddler at the Farm* (Kathleen Arrowsmith, 1937, Screen Archive South East)
E: *Castle Toward Christmas Nativity Play 1963/Sports Day 1963* (Anne Neely, 1963, National Library of Scotland Moving Image Archive)

THEME 2

IN THE COMMUNITY

THE LARGEST NUMBER OF FILMS MADE BY WOMEN FALL WITHIN THE CATEGORY OF 'IN THE COMMUNITY'.

These films have some obvious parallels with the filming of family and home life, but demonstrate a desire to go beyond the immediate domestic sphere in an attempt to document their changing local communities. They show people at church, in community groups, at school and at work. They depict the villages, towns and cities people lived in, and their collective celebrations and festivals.

Aldeburgh and District Scenes (1929) by Miss Basham is typical of the type of films in this category. The film is a compilation, filmed at different times and places, of various happenings in the local community. The film begins with scenes showing the coast and town in winter. Images of the rough waves crashing on the shore are followed by a person skiing in the street. There is a parade of Victorian costumes by Women's Institute members and shots of guides and scouts lining up. Men and women are shown playing golf and swimming from a raft at sea, and there are sequences showing garden parties, fetes and carnivals and even a parade of Catholic clergy and nuns along the cliffs at Dunwich.

Many of these films document the changing seasons, showcasing local flora and fauna. In *Spring Beauty* (1966), Doreen Combes shows Brighton and Hove in bloom, capturing nature's awakening from winter with blossoming flowers and new born lambs. Lambs also feature in rural films by Kathleen Arrowsmith, alongside other farm animals. Horses also feature extensively throughout the archive holdings. Vera Reynolds' *Red Rum at the Grand National* (1979) captures the time the famous racehorse visited the grandstand prior to the 1979 race.



A: *Aldeburgh and District Scenes*
(Miss Basham, 1929, East Anglian Film Archive)
B: *Red Rum at the Grand National*
(Vera Reynolds, 1979, North West Film Archive)
C: *Talybont Show and Corn Cutting*
(Gwen Davies, 1964, Screen & Sound Archive, The National Library of Wales)



D: *Cricket Parties*
(Joyce Allingham, 1937-1950, East Anglian Film Archive)
E: *The Womens Movement*
(Bolton Women's Liberation Group, 1974, North West Film Archive)
F: *Al Massom - Wonder Women*
(Sylvia Caiuby Novaes, 1994, North West Film Archive)

Community is often evoked by filmmakers visiting hospitals or schools in their areas, filming plays and pageants, sporting events, and other activities – often featuring their children, grandchildren, or other relatives. Maureen Holden documents school trips and activities with the Belmont special school, offering a unique perspective of special education and its development in a series of films in the 1970s and 1980s. *Talybont Show and Corn Cutting* (Gwen Davies, 1964) and *Air Ambulance* (Valerie Ong, 1980) capture other community-based activities.

Local events such as carnivals, parties, fairs and fetes are also common topics for women amateur filmmakers. *Cricket Parties* (1937-1950) filmed by Joyce Allingham, who served in the Women's Royal Naval Service, documents 13 years of cricket parties and offers a prime example of films centred on particular community groups.

Local organisations related to the making of amateur films, often known as cine clubs, offered another type of community group. In the 1920s and 1930s, fuelled by the availability of 16mm film cameras, cine-clubs formed across Britain, and these groups included many women, who often collaborated to make both fiction and non-fiction films.

Films about women and women's rights also feature in this category. *The Women's Movement* (1974) by Bolton Women's Liberation group and *Al Massom - Wonder Women* (1994) by Sylvia Caiuby Novaes, as well as *Chinese Culture in the UK* (1995-1996) by Ros Tsang all speak directly to different experiences of being a woman in particular communities.



THEME 3

SEEING THE WORLD

MOVING BEYOND DOMESTIC AND LOCAL SPHERES, MANY WOMEN AMATEUR FILMMAKERS BRANCHED OUT INTO THE WIDER WORLD IN THEIR CHOICE OF SUBJECT MATTER, CAPTURING THEIR TRAVELS ON FILM, AND RECORDING DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THEIR EXPERIENCES.

A significant number of amateur films by women are located in this category, which encompasses depictions of significant events in national and global history as well as films that attempt to record cultures and landscapes across the world.

The genre of travelogue, or travel film, makes up a large proportion of films in this theme. These filmed explorations of a destination in terms of its geography, culture and people go beyond the family holiday films categorised in the first theme around home and family life. While those films often featured trips to the British seaside or countryside, the films featured here often venture further afield in their explorations: both geographically distant (Australia, Japan, India) and closer to home (Ireland and continental Europe). As historians have noted, in the 1920s and 1930s foreign holidays (and much amateur filmmaking) were luxuries mainly for the privileged, although both became more affordable in subsequent decades. Some overseas travel was facilitated by colonial postings. As such, while the films offer fascinating records of different places, they also have to be understood as a product of the times

in which they were made, with British imperial attitudes often coming to the fore as these (largely) white middle-class women (and their husbands) exoticised foreign cultures and habits.

An interesting example of the travelogue is provided by *In Search of Switzerland* (1934-1936), an early film from wife-and-husband filmmaking team Laurie and Stuart Day. Its narrative includes the planning of the trip, onward travel to Switzerland, the Days' exploration of the different sights they encounter, and finally their voyage home. The film showcases beautiful images of the scenic areas they are visiting, with early examples of amateur colour cinematography in shots of the Interlaken swimming pool. The Days were quite prolific travelogue producers: two decades later, their imaginative film *Dance Little Lady* (1953-1954) covered another significant holiday, this time featuring national dances of Thailand, Bali, Fiji, Hawaii and the West Indies

Travelogues such as *Greenland* (1927-1928) by Isobel Wylie Hutchison, *Idling In India* (1930s) by Nettie McGavin, Marion Thorne's *Alpine Holiday*, *Horsham Garden* (1960s) and Ann Beck's *People and Places in Cumbria* (late 1950s-early 1960s) differed in style and

approach but each offer fascinating records of the journeys and voyages of their respective filmmakers.

The anthropological documentary impulse that animates many travel films is also evident in films capturing major historical events on camera. Some of these relate to the British monarchy: Pauline Webb's *Royal Wedding* (1981), or films recording the coronations, jubilees and memorials of various 20th century monarchs. The operations of heavy industry, the prelude to war, wartime experiences, and post-war events can also be seen in noteworthy films such as *Queen Mary on the Clyde* (1934) by Grace Williamson, which showed the construction of ships on the Clyde (many of which would subsequently be commandeered for wartime service), *1938 – The Last Year of Peace* (Laurie and Stuart Day, 1947), Lilian Cochrane's trilogy of films about the Lincolnshire town of Spilsby in peacetime, early war, and wartime, and *The Victory Procession* (Eunice and Eustace Alliot, 1946). The desire of these women to capture different aspects of their wartime experience offers an important and

currently lesser known parallel to amateur collections held at the Imperial War Museum, such as Rosie Newman's film *England at War* (1942).

Sometimes footage captured at home or abroad accrues greater significance in retrospect. For instance, in their 1930 film *To Oberammergau and the Alps in an Austin Sixteen*, Eunice and Eustace Alliot visit historic monuments and tourist attractions on their trip through Belgium, Luxembourg and the Rhine, northern Italy, Liechtenstein and Switzerland, returning to London via Germany. In the third reel of their film, while filming a man washing his hands in a fountain in Heidelberg, they inadvertently capture the presence and activities of the National Socialist party.



D: *To Oberammergau and the Alps in an Austin Sixteen* (Eunice and Eustace Alliot, 1930, East Anglian Film Archive)
E: *Scouting Voyage on the S.S. Calgaric* (Maud Wallis and Ruth Collingridge, 1933, Screen Archive South East)



A: *Dance Little Lady* (Laurie and Stuart Day, 1953-1954, East Anglian Film Archive)
B: *In Search of Switzerland* (Laurie and Stuart Day, 1934-1936, East Anglian Film Archive)
C: *Queen Mary on the Clyde* (Grace Williamson, 1934, National Library of Scotland Moving Image Archive)

THEME 4

FICTION

THE RELATIVE LACK OF WOMEN PRODUCING AND DIRECTING AMATEUR FICTIONAL FILMS ACROSS THE ARCHIVE HOLDINGS, PARTICULARLY COMPARED TO HIGHER NUMBERS OF ACTUALITY OR DOCUMENTARY-STYLE FILMS IN OUR SAMPLE, IS TELLING.

From the 1920s on, making fictional films was a strong element of the activities of cine-clubs which amateur film magazines regularly reported on but women's labour appears to have been much less visible among those club or group structures.

Frances Lascot, the 'first amateur woman director' in Britain (according to *Amateur Films*), wrote and directed *Sally Sallies Forth* (1928), a comedy about a girl forced to become a maid for a day at an upper-class garden party. With an all-female cast and crew, the film was heralded as having 'the unusual distinction of being the products of ladies from start to finish... idea, story, scenario, shooting, titling, and editing having all been accomplished without even the shadow of a man falling across the set. We can't find that even America has done this before' (*Movie Makers*, March 1929).

The film's cinematographer was Ivy Low, who also worked on *The Polite Burglar* (1929), which was written, directed, and edited by Sadie Andrews. This film, produced for a meeting of the London Amateur Cinematographers' Association, was designed as a test for attendees – to see if they could spot the deliberate continuity mistakes in the film. It says something of the confidence of filmmakers like Low and Andrews that they felt able to challenge their fellow cine club members in this way.

Women's active participation in amateur film clubs and their creative work in fictional forms continued in later decades. This was the context for films such as the spoof documentary *The Prendergast File* (Beryl Simons, Peter Kendrick, Geoffrey Hart and Denys Guerolt, 1964), the relationship drama *The Stray* (Marjorie Martin, 1965) produced by the Wycombe cine-club, and the supernatural drama *See You in Your Dreams* (1997) made by members of the Haywards Heath Cine Society.

Wife-and-husband partnerships do not appear to be as prevalent in the fiction work available across the archives but there are some notable exceptions: stage adaptation *Two Friends* (1951) produced by Rosalind and George Alexander Howe; the crime drama *The Two-Faced Killer: A Modern Thriller* (1951, Dede Wright credited as the writer); the drama-documentary *England May Be Home* (Margaret and Richard Hodkin, 1957); the comedy *Further Outlook Unsettled* (Laurie and Stuart Day, 1938).

Lone filmmakers worked less frequently in fiction filmmaking, a likely sign of the difficulties of mounting a significant dramatic production but key exponents such as Mollie Butler, Anne Neely and Ruth Stuart are highlighted over the next few pages.

Animation

Conversely, animation was an area in which lone amateur filmmakers flourished. The ability to control all aspects of the production process, and to work at your own pace, may explain the number of women filmmakers producing amateur animations. Their work as held in UK film archives covers a wealth of different styles and approaches: experimental animations by celebrated filmmaker Margaret Tait in *Calypso* (1955) and *Painted Eightsome* (1970); a range of hand-drawn or hand-painted styles in *The Case* (Beryl Armstrong, 1971), *Make-up* (Joanna Fryer, 1978) and *Michelangelo* (Sheila Graber, 1976); stop-motion techniques featured

in *Love in String* (Rose and Stuart Dabbs, 1966) and *The Burglar* (Tana Fletcher, 1984).

While many women animators adopted a poetic non-narrative approach, as in Sheila Graber's *Face to Face* (1976), Valrie Ellis' *Windmills – My Style* (1982), or Karen Hibberd's *Abstract #1* (2001), narrative-based animations are even more common, whether that is telling the story of *The Runaway Easter Egg* (Joyce Bolton, 1963), or an underwater adventure in *The Mermaid's Treasure* (Barbara and Tony Brindle, 1975), or the comic antics of an invading Viking *In Pillage Idiot!!* (Janice and John Watson, 1976).

Animation is also one of the few areas where women's amateur work could cross over into the mainstream industry, with Sheila Graber working on the television series *Paddington* (1976-79) and *Just So Stories* (1983), and Joanna Harrison (née Fryer) working as an animator on *The Snowman* (1982) and *When the Wind Blows* (1986), and more recently writer/art director on *The Snowman and the Snowdog* (2012).



A: *Sally Sallies Forth* (Frances Lascot, 1928, East Anglian Film Archive)
B: *Two Friends* (Rosalind and George Howe, 1951, Screen Archive South East)
C: *Further Outlook Unsettled* (Laurie and Stuart Day, 1938, East Anglian Film Archive)



D: *Make-up* (Joanna Fryer, 1978, East Anglian Film Archive)
E: *The Stray* (Marjorie Martin, 1965, East Anglian Film Archive)

INDIVIDUAL WOMEN FILMMAKERS

ALL 158 WOMEN IDENTIFIED BY OUR SURVEY DESERVE TO BE RECOGNISED FOR THEIR CREATIVITY, INGENUITY AND IMAGINATION, HOWEVER, THE AMATEUR FILM WORLD WAS NOT ALWAYS RECEPTIVE TO WOMEN FILMMAKERS.

In November 1961, the magazine *Amateur Cine World* published 'What Every Woman Should Know About Cine' a – supposedly – tongue-in-cheek guide for women who 'take an interest in what cine-keen husbands (brothers, sons, boyfriends) are doing and talking about, but find it hard to keep up with it all'. Women filmmakers were not impressed. Kathleen M. Smith wrote that she was 'absolutely sick of the condescending attitude shown towards women by contemporary journals', while Dorothy E. Bean reminded the editors that women were 'technically minded too'. The journal editor's response – which describes Dorothy as 'some outraged feminist' – was lamentably tone deaf in dismissing her concerns and 'mansplaining' the original article as 'a very light-hearted piece of banter' (*Amateur Cine World*, January 1962).

Ironically, the article refused to acknowledge the fact that women had always been a stalwart presence within amateur film culture in the UK, with productions by women filmmakers frequently receiving acclaim and winning awards (including the magazine's own).

Although we can hear their dissenting voices in print, unfortunately neither Dorothy Bean nor Kathleen Smith's films appear to have been preserved in any of the UK archive holdings featured here. However, the work of over 150 different women filmmakers is represented in the archives, some by a single archived film, others (individually or in partnership) with multiple titles.

Many of the single film entries are particularly tantalising and demonstrate the need for additional historical and archival research to try to discover more about these women and their work. It would be great to know more about Sadie Andrews, writer-director-producer of *The Polite Burglar* (1929), who also made the short

film *Man Disposes* (1931) which appears to be lost. Sadie was the secretary of the London Amateur Film Club, but details of her subsequent filmmaking career are unknown; likewise that film's art director Ivy Low, who had previously been involved in production and cinematography for *Sally Sallies Forth* (1928). Frances Lascot, the director of *Sally*, said Ivy was 'so capable and business-like' when operating the camera, but whether Ivy's skills and experience helped other film productions does not appear to be recorded. Equally, information on the career of Nora Pfeill, a contemporary of Sadie, Frances, and Ivy, is partial: she acted in *Sally Sallies Forth* and another cine-club film *Forty Nine* (1928), then writing and producing *Afterwards* (1930) before disappearing from the archival record.

Some filmmakers, like Ruth Stuart (featured on p.28), began filmmaking in their teens. Her award-winning talent meant the Institute of Amateur Cinematographers retained copies of some of her work. Others, like Dorothy M. Maxey, were inspired by their love of the natural world. She benefitted from her family donating her collection to a local film archive. This has meant that their films, or at least some of them, have been kept for posterity.

Whether fully archived or not, the extant evidence strongly suggests that women amateur filmmakers displayed great creative variety and versatility in their work. The next ten pages present portraits of ten **Invisible Innovators**, drawing on the survey data. These are not necessarily the best-known or most prolific individuals but they provide a cross-section of the differing interests, aptitudes, and creative approaches of Britain's pioneering women amateur filmmakers. Identifying and promoting these ten is a first step towards making all these women filmmakers more visible.

1 EUNICE ALLIOTT

THE FILMS EUNICE ALLIOTT MADE WITH HER HUSBAND EUSTACE, ONE OF THE MOST PROLIFIC WIFE-AND-HUSBAND PARTNERSHIPS ACROSS THE REGIONAL COLLECTIONS, SPAN LOCAL, COMMUNITY, DOCUMENTARY AND OVERSEAS TRAVEL, OFFERING COMPELLING VIEWS OF THOSE DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THEIR LIVES AND INDIRECTLY OF A WHOLE ECHELON OF INTERWAR BRITISH SOCIETY.

It is unclear if Eunice had an interest in filmmaking prior to her marriage, although photography was clearly a shared interest with Eustace, given they submitted jointly to the Royal Photographic Society's Annual Exhibition in 1909. Their interest in filmmaking seems to start in 1930. The Alliotts made travelogues of their excursions to London, Wales, Holland and the Alps. They documented major events in British history such as the death of King George V and the Coronation of King George IV, as well as events relating to war in films like *War Time – Gas Masks* (1935-39) and *The Victory Procession* (1946). Local events and family affairs are captured in films such as *Family* (1930-36), *Dad* (1930-36), *Marina's Wedding* (1934) and *Things Seen Near Amersham* (1930s).

Records are not entirely clear as to what roles the Alliotts took in their joint filmmaking. Their early films credit both Eunice and Eustace jointly, and at times, Eunice can be seen on camera organising action and engaging with locals (e.g. *A Picturesque People and Pleasant Places in Holland*, 1931), presumably while Eustace was acting as cinematographer. Eunice continues to be credited on films made into the 1940s.

Although their family films were produced only for private viewing, the couple experimented with early colour technologies, such as Dufaycolor, and made other films that received wider exhibition. They entered a small number into the Royal Photographic

Society's Annual Exhibition of Kinematography Film Competition in the 1930s. It is also known that Eustace Alliott exhibited two of their films, *With The Old Berkeley Hunt* (1930-34) and a film of a trip to the Netherlands (presumably *A Picturesque People and Pleasant Places in Holland*), to the Kinematograph Group of the Royal Photographic Society in 1934.

KEY FILMS

- ✿ *To Oberammergau and the Alps in an Austin Sixteen* (8 reels) (1930)
- ✿ *Holiday Scenes in Kent* (1930)
- ✿ *Family* (1930-1936)
- ✿ *Riding and the Countryside* (1933-1935)
- ✿ *Our Dogs* (1934-1946)
- ✿ *Australians and Canadians Visit the Cenotaph* (1936-1939)
- ✿ *Some Experiments in Dufaycolor* (1939)
- ✿ *The Victory Procession* (1946)



A: *The Polite Burglar* (Sadie Andrews, 1929, East Anglian Film Archive)
B: *Patchwork Quilt* (Dorothy A. Maxey, 1985, East Anglian Film Archive)
C: *Spilsby and District Events* (Peacetime), (Lilian Beatrice Cochrane, 1938-39, Lincolnshire Film Archive)

A: *The Victory Procession* (1946)
B: *To Oberammergau and the Alps in an Austin Sixteen* (1930) 1
C: *To Oberammergau and the Alps in an Austin Sixteen* (1930) 2

2 BERYL ARMSTRONG

BORN IN NEW ZEALAND, BERYL CAME TO THE UK WHEN HER PARENTS RETURNED HOME AFTER THE 1931 NAPIER EARTHQUAKE. HER INSPIRATION TO START MAKING AMATEUR FILMS CAME FROM A TRIP TO INDIA, WHERE HER HUSBAND WAS SENT TO WORK FOR THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION.

Beryl was struck by the Indian culture and began documenting her visit through curating brochures, souvenirs and thousands of feet of cine film that she shot in various locations.

Over her subsequent thirty years of filmmaking she primarily created documentary films on rural subjects such as beekeeping, agriculture, horse shows and local Sussex scenes from the 1960s to the 1980s. She was involved in all aspects of film production from script to final product.

Beryl Armstrong's films were made using Super 8mm film stock, with many entered into local amateur film festivals and competitions, garnering at least one award of merit for *A Taste of Honey* (1968) which documents her father's apiarist activities. Annamaria Motrescu-Mayes and Heather Norris-Nicholson discuss Beryl in their book *British Women Amateur Filmmakers*, highlighting the skill and visual imagination she brought to her work.

Beryl taught the art of filmmaking to her sons, Anthony and Richard, both of whom ended up making amateur films themselves, some in collaboration with their mother; she also became a published author, writing over 12 novels; as such, there is more information about her than some of her filmmaking contemporaries. In publicity interviews about her novels, Beryl mentions her filmmaking career which, echoing the experiences of other women amateur filmmakers, effectively ended with the coming of video.

AWARDS

- 🎞️ *A Taste for Honey*. Certificate of Merit, Sussex Film Festival, 1972.

KEY FILMS

- 🎞️ *A Taste for Honey* (1968)
- 🎞️ *Away with the Wind* (1968)
- 🎞️ *Trains at Work* (1970)
- 🎞️ *The Case* (1971)
- 🎞️ *One Frame at a Time* (1973)
- 🎞️ *The Rally of the Giants* (1980s)



3 LEONORA BICHARD (NEÉ HIGSON)

MANY WOMEN FILMMAKERS ARE ONLY PRESENT IN THE UK'S MOVING IMAGE ARCHIVES FOR A FLEETING MOMENT IN TIME, EITHER BECAUSE OF THEIR OWN PERSONAL OR CREATIVE CIRCUMSTANCES, LACK OF BROADER HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT SUCH FILMMAKERS, OR THE PRACTICAL LIMITS OF THE ARCHIVED COLLECTION OR RESOURCE. THE INTRIGUING LEONORA BICHARD IS A CASE IN POINT.

Thanks to the work of Heather Norris-Nicholson and the North West Film Archive, we know that Leonora was an art student at the Harris Institute School of Art in Preston, North Lancashire. What is not clear is if her 1930s short films indicate a brief experimentation with film (alongside her work in more traditional art forms), or if her interest in film extended beyond her time in Preston.

The evidence provided by the short films that are available suggests a varied set of cultural interests: she films family groups outside a hotel and house, cars, a wedding party, her arts classes in and around Preston, excursions to a cathedral, trips to Blackpool and York, and shows an interest in aeroplanes, airfields and parachuting. Norris-Nicholson has noted how Leonora's three films of war memorials, relics and trenches in Ypres, Belgium and France provide evidence of 1930s battlefield tourism. But the brevity and diversity of her existing film materials - only 14 short films, which overlap between the domestic, community and travelogue themes previously identified earlier - make it difficult to assess if her filmmaking interests exhibit any continuity of theme.

Perhaps the bigger story these enigmatic films point towards is the loss of work by other women filmmakers who, unlike Leonora, don't survive in such tantalising glimpses.

KEY FILMS

- 🎞️ *Scenes Outside Suburban House* (1930s)
- 🎞️ *Leonora's Art Class in Preston* (1930s)
- 🎞️ *Seafront and Countryside* (1930s)
- 🎞️ *Trip to York* (1930s)
- 🎞️ *War Relics* (1930s)
- 🎞️ *War Memorial and Trenches* (1930s)
- 🎞️ *Airfield Scenes* (1932)
- 🎞️ *Parachutist at Blackpool* (1935)



A: *Once Upon A Farm* (1980s)
B: *Rescue* (1980s)
C: *The Rally of the Giants* (1980s)



A: *Parachutist at Blackpool* (1935) 1
B: *Parachutist at Blackpool* (1935) 2
C: *Parachutist at Blackpool* (1935) 3

4 MOLLIE BUTLER

MOLLIE PRODUCED A FASCINATING AND VARIED BODY OF WORK OVER THIRTY YEARS OF FILMMAKING, SPANNING SCIENTIFIC FILMS, DOCUMENTARY, ANIMATIONS AND LIVE ACTION STORYTELLING: FROM ENTOMOLOGY TO ADULTERY, POETRY TO DISABLED ISSUES.

Mollie began making short documentaries in the late 1960s, with a focus on nature and science subjects – including bird watching, and the life cycle of locusts. By the 1970s, bolstered by support from friends within different cine-clubs and the Institute of Amateur Cinematographers, Mollie wrote and directed her first live action narrative, adultery drama *A Game for Three*, featuring professional actors from the Ilkley Playhouse.

Despite her success here, Mollie's next creative leap was into animation – inspired in part by the animated films of her contemporary and IAC compatriot Sheila Graber (whose films are archived within the IAC collection and at the North East Film Archive). Mollie's approach to animation was unconventional, creating hundreds of individual drawings (made using felt tipped pens and paint) on 10 x 8 paper, held together over a pegged light box.

In her parallel career as a schoolteacher – and inspired by her work on the youth page of the IAC magazine – Mollie began to teach filmmaking to schoolchildren at Benton Park School in Leeds, helping them produce animated films. She documented this work in a documentary, *Hand it to the Kids*, as well as helping one of her students produce an award-winning short film, *Freak* (Sharon Gadson, 1988), which won the IAC Junior Gold Seal award.

AWARDS

- 🌀 *Locusts in Camera*. Gold Star, Movie Maker Ten Best Competition 1973
- 🌀 *A Game For Three*. Amateur Cine World Best 8mm Film, 1976; Gold Star, Movie Maker Ten Best Film Competition 1976
- 🌀 *Magnum Opus*. Winner, Movie Maker Ten Best Film Competition 1981; IAC International Award 1981.
- 🌀 *Bait Poem to Catch Girls*. Gold Seal, IAC International Film Competition

KEY FILMS AND HOLDINGS

- 🌀 *Locusts in Camera* (1977)
- 🌀 *A Game for Three* (1977)
- 🌀 *An Odd Ode* (1980)
- 🌀 *Magnum Opus* (1981)
- 🌀 *Hand it to the Kids* (1984)
- 🌀 *Bait Poem to Catch Girls* (1986-88)
- 🌀 *Freak* (1988 – as producer)



A: *A Game for Three* (1977)
B: *Magnum Opus* (1981)
C: *Hand it to the Kids* (1984)



5 LILIAN BEATRICE COCHRANE

FROM THE INFORMATION GATHERED ABOUT LILIAN BY THE LINCOLNSHIRE FILM ARCHIVE, IT WOULD BE SAFE TO SAY SHE WAS A BIT OF A NOTORIOUS FIGURE IN HER COMMUNITY.

Born in Guernsey, Lilian, who was a gifted watercolourist, settled in Spilsby, Lincolnshire, teaching art at the local Grammar School. In 1931, she left, apparently to become housekeeper to a wealthy bachelor; an incident that caused some scandal at the time. This was only compounded when he died just two years later, and Lilian inherited the house and his fortune.

Her interest in film seems to have begun in 1937 when she bought a 16mm film camera, and thereafter she was often seen behind it at local events and gatherings. She made little use of editing or post-production but, perhaps unsurprisingly given her artist background, she had an eye for detail. Her pre-war films document rural living and communities going about their daily lives while preparing for potential war, resulting in poignant scenes of the everyday (clothes hung on a clothesline to dry) juxtaposed with the extraordinary (soldiers assembling to depart for active service).

In Grace Swan Memorial Hospital, Hundleby (1940) Lilian documents patients receiving treatment and undergoing x-rays, even persuading the powers-that-be at the hospital to let her film inside the operating theatre. Unfortunately, Lilian's filmmaking career was short lived. Presumably wartime shortages with respect to photographic materials were responsible for its curtailment and sadly she does not seem to have revived that interest once wartime austerity had abated.

KEY FILMS

- 🌀 *Civil Defence Exercise, Hundleby* (1939)
- 🌀 *Spilsby and District Events (Peacetime)* (1938-1939)
- 🌀 *Spilsby and District Events (Early Wartime)* (1939-1940)
- 🌀 *Duchess of Gloucester opens Hospital Extension, Skegness* (1939)
- 🌀 *Grace Swan Memorial Hospital, Hundleby* (1940)
- 🌀 *Spilsby and District Events (Wartime)* (1941)



A: *Civil Defence Exercise*, (1939)
B: *Grace Swan Memorial Hospital*, (1940)
C: *Spilsby and District Events (Early Wartime)* (1939-1940)

6 MARY CORNER

THE BULK OF THE ARCHIVAL HOLDINGS OF MARY CORNER'S FILMS CLUSTER AROUND ONE OF HER KEY INTERESTS: EARLY YEARS' EDUCATION OF CHILDREN. AS A TEACHER AND HEADMISTRESS IN BURNLEY SINCE THE LATE 1950S, IT WAS A TOPIC SHE WAS IDEALLY PLACED TO EXPLORE.

Mary shot numerous school films between *Nursery School Activities* (1965-66) and *May Fair* (1975), with the films in the 1970s forming part of her Leeds University thesis studying four year olds in pre-schools. The films allowed Mary to explore different aspects of school life, particularly the importance of play within education: *Play is Education* (1965-68) shows children climbing on play equipment and playing with toys; *Burnley Nursery School Trip* (1971) follows a day out to the local countryside.

However, Mary's filming interests went beyond this one mode of filmmaking. She made travelogue-style films on holidays, including trips to Scotland, New York, and a Mediterranean cruise, as well as documentary-reportage work on activities such as London markets, Liverpool tall ships, a girl guides' event, and a country fair.

She also experimented with film that had a more drama-documentary approach. *Taking a Trip* (1966-67), for example, is a drama where a woman dreams about a trip to New York. Working with members of the Burnley Cine Club, Mary also made the documentaries *Ryan's View* (1971-74) and *When God Made the Country* (1969).

Like many of the filmmakers featured here, the local focus of her filmmaking did not prevent her from travelling and screening her films around the world. Her involvement in the World Organisation for Early Childhood Education (OMEPE) allowed her to screen her films to international audiences.

KEY FILMS

- 🎞 *Play is Education* (1965-68)
- 🎞 *West to Aurora* (And Niagara) (1965-68)
- 🎞 *Taking a Trip* (1966-67)
- 🎞 *The Nursery School, Howard Street* (1968-71)
- 🎞 *When God Made the Country* (1969, with Ferdie Anderson and Tom Hindley)
- 🎞 *Ryan's View* (1971-74 – with Ferdie Anderson, Allan & Margaret Sharp, Teresa & Arthur Robinson)
- 🎞 *Play with Purpose* (1974)



7 JOAN HAMMOND

JOAN AND TED HAMMOND, ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE WIFE-AND-HUSBAND FILMMAKING TEAMS FEATURED THROUGH THIS REPORT, WERE ACCOMPLISHED AMATEUR FILMMAKERS, SHARING CAMERA OPERATING DUTIES IN THEIR 16MM FILMMAKING.

With film equipment becoming more portable and affordable in the 1950s, cine clubs flourished and became a place for sharing ideas and expertise. Joan Hammond from Frinton, Essex, was a founder member of one of these clubs, the Clacton Cine Club, alongside her husband Ted Hammond and friend Sidney Manasseh.

Joan and Ted made films both individually and together, on a variety of topics. A film detailing the family holiday to *Woolverstone* (1956) included shots of a caravan being towed, arriving at the Royal Harwich Yacht Club campsite, and explorations of the coast on foot and by boat. *The Great Snowfall* (1958) showed Frinton under a blanket of snow and ice, capturing the activity of digging out cars, exploring the town's deserted roads and shops, and even showing the frozen power cables.

Although most of their films document their local area, the Hammonds would also film their various trips throughout the world: *A Date in Tunisia* (1972) and *Down Under Australia* (1977) demonstrating their broader international interests. Joan acted as chair of the Clacton Cine Club several times including in its final years before disbanding in 1998. Some of Joan's films were later used in the Anglia Television documentary series *The Way We Were* (2002) where she was interviewed about her films.

KEY FILMS

- 🎞 *Ratcliffe Garage* (1930s)
- 🎞 *Woolverstone* (1956)
- 🎞 *Turkey Time* (1961)
- 🎞 *Glass of Wine Slalom* (1963)
- 🎞 *Donkey Derby* (1969)
- 🎞 *A Date in Tunisia* (1972)
- 🎞 *Dach's Delight* (1973)
- 🎞 *Down Under Australia* (1977)
- 🎞 *Gold Fever* (1986)



A: *Liverpool Tall Ships* (1984)
B: *Market Trends in the Year of Rising Prices* (1969)
C: *Play With Purpose* (1974)



A: *Turkey Time* (1961)
B: *Woolverstone* (1956)
C: *Donkey Derby* (1969)

8 ISLA JOHNSTON

(HELEN ISABEL ETHEL JOHNSTON)

ISLA JOHNSTON'S FILMS DOCUMENT THE PICTURESQUE SURROUNDINGS OF THE MENAI STRAIT BETWEEN ANGLESEY AND NORTH WALES, A LOCATION SHE EXPLORED AFTER HER FAMILY MOVED TO GLYNGARTH FROM CHESHIRE.

Isla was the daughter of Helen Kendall and Edmund Johnston, owner of the Liverpool-based Johnston Line Shipping Company. Edmund built a large mansion on the banks of the Menai Strait where Isla kept dairy cows, grew fruits and vegetables, and indulged her passion for fast cars and racing yachts.

Most of Isla's films focus on local maritime life, depicting regattas and other local events. In *Minona* (1930) she captures the Minona steam yacht which was used by the Navy in both World War I and World War II before its acquisition by Richard Burton in 1967 as a gift to Elizabeth Taylor. Other films focussed on family, friends and pets, such as *Mingo and Jerry, Thea and Jerry* (1931). Her keen sense of humour is seen in *Alice's Wedding* (1933) when a boy is caught mocking a bridesmaid while she performs her duties to the bride. She would make over 30 films in her career spanning from the 1920s to the 1950s.

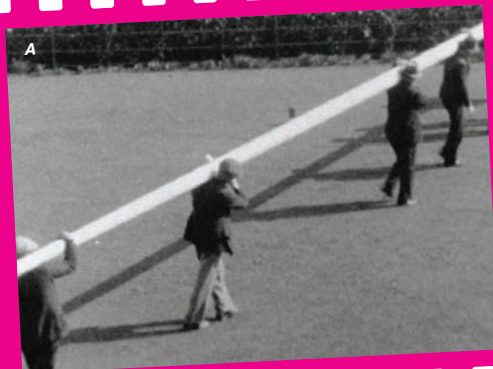
By the 1950s – and after her father's death in 1934 – looking after the large mansion had become too much of an undertaking for Isla alone, so she offered it to the Church in Wales, an organisation with which she was much involved throughout her life. They used the large house and grounds as a summer retreat while agreeing that Isla could continue to live in it until her death (in 1984, aged 86).

KEY FILMS

- On the Swillies (1929)
- Minona (1930)
- Mingo and Jerry, Thea and Jerry (1931)
- Race Around Puffin Island (1933)
- Alice's Wedding (1933)
- Erecting a Flagpole at Bryn Mel (1937)
- H.M.S. Conway. April 1953. A Sad Ending to a Great Career (1957)



A: Erecting a Flagpole at Bryn Mel (1937)
B: Launching of Genetta IV at Dickies Yard, Bangor (1930)



9 ANNE NEELY

WORKING ACROSS BOTH FICTION AND NON-FICTION MODES, FILMMAKER ANNE NEELY CAPTURES THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF AMATEUR FILMMAKING FOUND IN THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND MOVING IMAGE ARCHIVE.

Born in Glasgow, Anne worked as a resident house-keeper in Castle Toward Recreational School, on the Cowal peninsula. The school ran outdoor education, music, and art classes for young people and Anne's films offer an insight to many of those activities.

In a filmmaking career that lasted from the 1950s through to the 1980s, the surprising but seamless combination of documentary-led actuality footage and fictional modes of drama and comedy shows Anne's breadth and versatility as a filmmaker, and her desire to take on different creative challenges,

Everything is not what it seems / Castle Toward and Dunoon (1975) is a compilation of several different types of film: moving from a comedy skit about a dentist's waiting room to travelogue-style images of the ships on the seafront at Dunoon, including the paddle steamer Waverley, before cutting to visitors at Castle Toward, south of Dunoon on the Cowal peninsula. In another compilation of mostly documentary-based material, *Castle Toward Music Course, Summer Schools, Film of Music Programme* (1965), there is a short (untitled) narrative film about a boy being shown around the castle.

Anne's films move between her home life and her local community, filming music and arts events in and around Castle Toward, as well as school activities such as sports day and a Christmas nativity play. She

occasionally ventures out into other areas of Scotland: the documentaries *Eating the Miles and Drinking the Petrol* (1963) and *Road to the Isles* (1964) focus on two women who travel around Scotland, the different sights they see, and the modes of transport they take.

KEY FILMS

- Never a Dull Moment at Castle Toward! (1955)
- Twirl and the Chips are Gone (1960)
- Castle Toward Christmas Nativity Play (1963)
- Sports Day (1963)
- Eating the Miles and Drinking the Petrol (1963)
- Road to the Isles (1964)
- Castle Toward Music Course, Summer Schools, Film of Music Programme (1965)
- Everything is not what it seems/Castle Toward and Dunoon (1975-76).
- Russian Visit to Castle Toward (1978)



A: Never a Dull Movement at Castle Toward! (1955)
B: Road to Isles (1964)
C: Twirl and the Chips are Gone (1960)



10 RUTH STUART

(ALSO KNOWN AS RUTH STUART RODGERS, OR RUTH RODGERS)

A TEENAGE FILMMAKING PRODIGY, RUTH STUART WAS CLEARLY A TALENTED INNOVATOR BUT, LIKE MANY OF THE FILMMAKERS FEATURED IN THE REPORT, THE FULL EXTENT OF HER CREATIVE WORK REMAINS AN ENIGMA.

Described in 1939 by *Movie Maker* as 'the maestra of Manchester', information about her career and filmmaking is limited largely to the period 1932-1940.

Ruth appears to have been a Manchester native: she was part of the Manchester Film Society, and by 1939, had become an Associate of the Royal Photographic Society. A young woman with financial resources, Ruth travelled extensively for filmmaking purposes and for pleasure – whether sailing on the Queen Mary to New York, or even flying to India to film 35mm footage of a Hindu fakir.

Her first film, *Egypt and Back with Imperial Airways* (1931-33), was shot when she was 16: it records her flight from Croydon to Crete, and then on to Cairo, where she tours the city and visits the Great Pyramids and the Sphinx. She may have also – as Ruth Rodgers – directed *Royal Air Force Display* (1931-32) in the same period. Given the documentary nature of those films, Ruth defied expectations with her next film, *Doomsday* (1934): a short apocalyptic drama-documentary shot in expressionist style akin to European and Russian avant-garde cinema of the 1920s.

After those award-winning successes, information about her becomes more sparse: she showed a film called *N'Gomi* to the Manchester Film Society in April 1937; and her filming trip to India in 1938-39 was part of a larger 35mm project, sadly a lost film. Despite being 'one of the ablest women in amateur movies today' (*Movie Makers*, Oct 1937), the record of her intriguing filmmaking career remains frustratingly mysterious and incomplete.

AWARDS

- *To Egypt and Back*: Gold Medal winner (Travel), American Cinematographer Amateur Movie Makers Contest, 1933; Winner, Amateur Cine World 16mm plaque, 1935
- *Doomsday*: Grand Prize, Photography prize, and Documentary prize, American Cinematographer Amateur Movie Makers Contest, 1936

KEY FILMS

- *Egypt and Back with Imperial Airways* (1931-33)
- *Royal Air Force Display* (1931-32, as Ruth Rodgers) – currently lost
- *Doomsday* (1934)
- *N'Gomi* (1936-37) – currently lost
- *Untitled India film* (1939) – currently lost



CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

THE INITIAL WOMEN AMATEUR FILMMAKERS PROJECT CATALOGUED AND DIGITISED **144 FILMS** FROM THE INSTITUTE OF AMATEUR CINEMATOGRAPHERS' COLLECTION, WITH FILM PACKAGES SCREENED ACROSS THE UK, AND KEY FILMS BROADCAST ON TALKING PICTURES TV. THIS INITIAL VENTURE LED TO GREATER KNOWLEDGE AND PUBLIC VISIBILITY OF **48 WOMEN FILMMAKERS** WHO HAD BEEN NEGLECTED AND UNSUNG FOR DECADES.

The WAF project demonstrated one route for rewriting these pioneering women back into a broader history of British film culture, and this expertise led directly to Film Archives UK commissioning the project team to conduct this survey exploring ways of building on and extending its success.

Our research has revealed another **2267 films, by a further 110 women filmmakers**; a hugely significant element of Britain's cultural and artistic heritage that currently largely goes unseen – and this is still just the tip of the iceberg.

We are mindful that the film and media archives already undertake exceptional work to preserve, maintain, and provide meaningful access to films and videos in their care, and that they remain under-resourced to do that job. Therefore it is important to bear in mind cost-effectiveness, feasibility, and efficiency in recommending any further actions.

But it is also clear that women's work is currently obscured and under-exposed in UK film archives and further efforts are required to rewrite these 158 women's stories back into film history, and that this needs to happen before important elements of their stories are lost.

Our recommendations (on page 5) have indicated some key issues and potential solutions to begin to address them. These are some of the future directions that could be embarked upon in order to bring women filmmakers (back) into focus:

- Women filmmakers, whether amateur or professional, need to be more publically visible within regional and national archive holdings
- Women filmmakers need to be identifiable and visible within cataloguing metadata
- Regional initiatives can benefit from scaling up to national level via collaboration among archives
- Regional archives can share expertise around key thematic holdings to create nationally relevant programming around these women filmmakers (as well as other themes)
- Regional archives could work together (via Film Archives UK) to bid for shared funding that would allow further cataloguing and digitisation to take place
- A central site for data on women filmmakers – and their films – could collate and make more visible this rich cultural resource
- Public-facing events – be they film screenings, packages available via Talking Pictures TV, or some other activity – take these films out to audiences who (based on WAF experience) are eager to see and enjoy the fascinating work of these pioneering filmmakers.

// EVERY FEMALE FILMMAKER NEEDS TO SEE THESE – HOW INSPIRING. //

// I'M IMPRESSED AT HOW GOOD THEY ARE, WHAT PIONEERS. //

// IT'S EXCITING TO SEE CREATIVE WORKS FROM THE PAST. //

// THOUGHT-PROVOKING AND ENTERTAINING. //

AUDIENCE FEEDBACK CARDS AT WAF SCREENINGS 2016-2019

A: *Doomsday* (1934)
B: *Egypt and Back with Imperial Airways* (1931-1933) 1
C: *Egypt and Back with Imperial Airways* (1931-1933) 2

NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

THE WOMEN'S AMATEUR FILMMAKING IN BRITAIN PROJECT WAS COMMISSIONED BY FILM ARCHIVES UK TO EXPLORE THE HOLDINGS OF WOMEN'S AMATEUR FILMMAKING ACROSS THE NATION'S ARCHIVES.

Archive members of FAUK were sent a survey composed of two parts. The first part asked for information at archive level relating to the number of collections held in the archive that contained work by women filmmakers and what percentage of that work was digitised. The second part asked for information at collection level: names of women filmmakers and titles of their films, the format, genre, subject and time period.

We initially asked for up to 10 collections, although individual archives could supply us with as many or as few as were relevant for the mapping exercise. While not all archives were able to participate, the

response included material from across England, Scotland, and Wales, and resulted in information about over 150 collections and details of over 2400 films. We augmented this survey data with desk research on the accessibility of women filmmakers via the public-facing websites of all UK regional and national archives, to balance internal and external availability and awareness.

All of this data was collated into a master set that enabled us to identify the significant themes covered in this report, and to make our broader recommendations.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND FURTHER READING

Research and other activities around both amateur film and women amateur filmmakers is continually developing. The authors note the excellent work being undertaken by organisations such as the Amateur Cinema Database, the British Film Institute, Film Hub North, the Independent Cinema Office, the Institute of Amateur Cinematographers, and initiatives emerging from the individual film archives.

We are also excited to see an increased desire to showcase the work of women in film, for example through the work of Bird's Eye View, London Feminist Film Festival, the Woman with a Movie Camera summit, Invisible Women, and academic and curatorial organisations such as the Women's Film and Television History Network, UK-Ireland and the Women Film Pioneers Project. There has also been parallel academic work on amateur film, with these key books, articles and websites providing valuable background for this report.

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WEBSITES

- Amateur Cinema Database: www.amateurcinema.org/
- Center for Home Movies: www.centerforhomemovies.org/
- Women's Film and Television History Network: UK/Ireland: <https://womensfilmandtelevisionhistory.wordpress.com/>
- Women Film Pioneers Project: wfpp.columbia.edu/
- Women and Silent British Cinema: womenandsilentbritishcinema.wordpress.com/



