

## TOOL

## 05

## Using Other Research Resources

**Problem:** Limited information about women filmmakers is held within and beyond the archive. Even when archive metadata exists, it can offer little depth: limited to a name and associated film titles, with no details on women's creative careers or filmmaking craft.

### Strategies to Adopt:

Additional research can deepen your knowledge of women filmmakers and their approaches to filmmaking and lead to better metadata.

#### 1. Recruiting external research support:

If you have limited time or resources available for further research on amateur filmmakers, you could offer a small annual bursary to local community heritage/history groups or college students to engage in targeted research.

#### 2. Collection documentation:

Use pre-existing data (names, titles, cine club roles) as prompts to begin any expanded search of other resources. Note any significant gaps in those data.

#### 3. Historical sources (paper/online):

Useful resources include census records, amateur film press, and local newspapers: begin with those resources that have built-in search options (online) or indexes (paper). Many historical sources contain sexist and patriarchal attitudes that limit research such as foregrounding men's contributions over women's, or truncating / removing women's names (e.g., 'Mr and Mrs John Smith').

#### 4. Oral histories:

Where a filmmaker or the donor is alive, undertaking an interview can answer specific questions, or reveal new information, new titles, or data on collaboration and craft.

#### 5. Triangulate information:

Once data are located, you will need to triangulate and gauge the reliability of comparable information (donor questionnaire, film credits, newspaper article) to ensure the accuracy of your new metadata.



*Balloon Adventure* (c1970s, Philippa Miller, East Anglian Film Archive).



Triangulating information from film credits, filmmaking craft, census records, transport manifests, and local newspapers informed the creation of fuller metadata on Miss Mabel Basham. *Untitled Cable Films* (1935, Mabel Basham, East Anglian Film Archive).



## 05 CASE STUDY

When working with cine club collections, we occasionally found the names of women filmmakers in archive metadata but with no further biographical data available. Although it can be time-consuming, historical research using online, paper and human sources was very helpful in building up a fuller picture of women filmmakers and their creative work.

– **Amateur journals:** Using two such sources (*Amateur Cine World* and *Movie Maker*) we were able to identify over 1000 women involved in amateur film across the UK & Ireland between the 1960s and mid-1980s. This allowed us to clarify the different creative and collaborative roles these women played as lone filmmakers, via small production teams, or the larger productions of amateur cine clubs, across multiple collections at local, regional and national film archives.



Conducting an interview and remaining in communication with a filmmaker can gather additional information on their filmmaking career, including an expanded list of film titles and collaborations. *135... And Rising*, (1979, Breeda Kiely, East Anglian Film Archive).'

- **Oral history:** Interviewing one filmmaker, particularly when done in association with a known or new collection, can be illuminating. Through different interviews, we have been able to ascertain fuller production histories, expand archival knowledge of collaborative filmmaking practices, and identify additional film titles for acquisition.
- **Triangulation:** Given the sparse nature of historical information, particularly around amateur film, we worked with one smaller regional film archive to pull together disparate sources from different publications (including amateur journals, newspapers, census records, film viewing, film society notes, and acquisitions paperwork) in order to create new film records and a collection overview that identified nine previously unheralded women filmmakers.
- **Recruiting external support:** We offered a small bursary to a local college student to carry out document and newspaper research on local amateur cine clubs. This helped to enhance some of the amateur film metadata for specific archival collections and we were also able to publish the collected data on external authority records like the AMDB.

Research in newspaper and amateur journals such as *Amateur Cine World* can reveal information about previously unknown film titles and women's filmmaking collaborations.