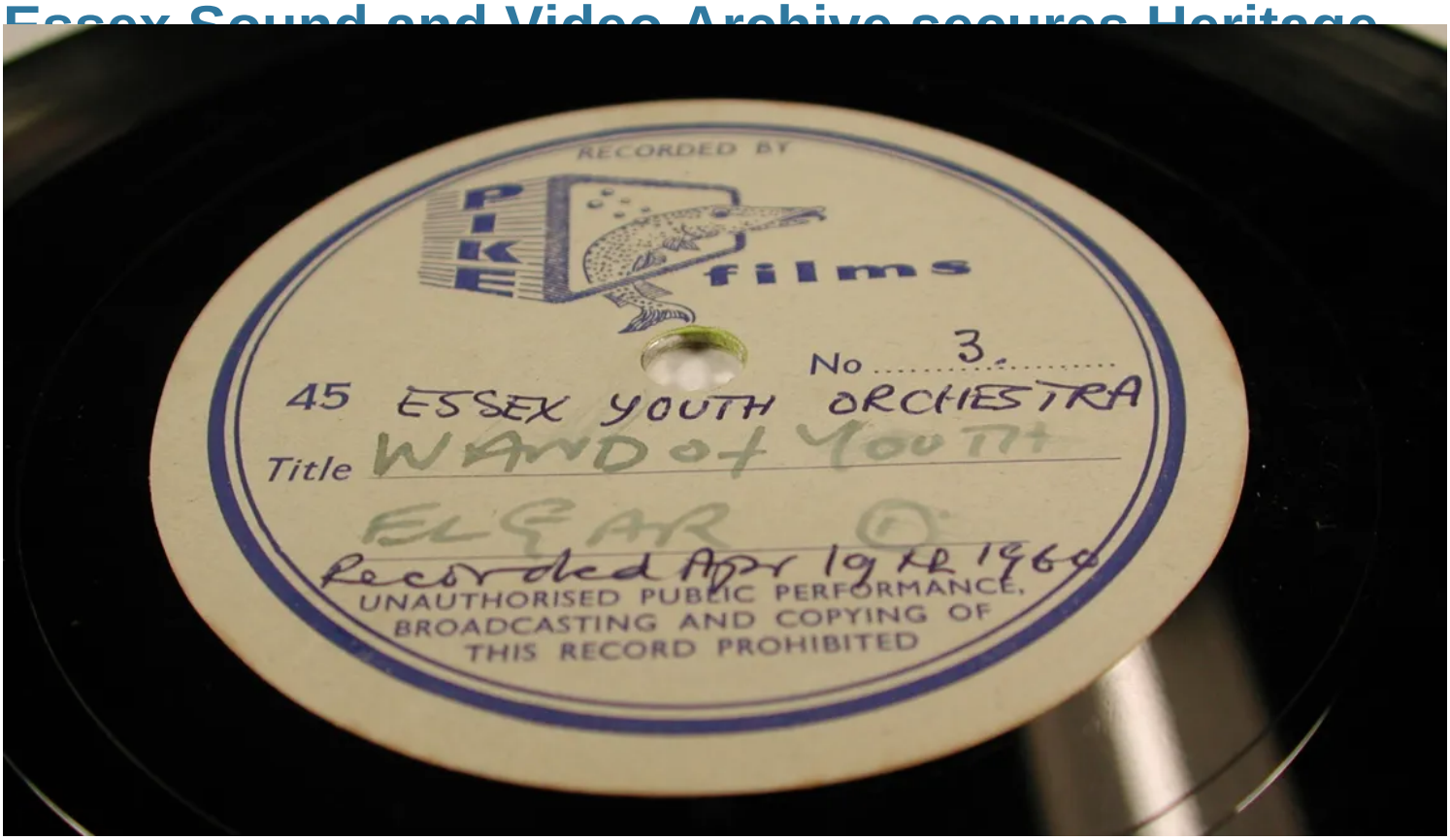
Essex Sound and Video Archive secures Heritage



Lacquer disk recording of Essex Youth Orchestra Essex County Council

Over three years, starting this autumn, the project will digitise and catalogue many of the historically significant sound and video recordings in the Essex Sound and Video Archive, using them to help people in Essex develop and enhance their sense of place. Focussing primarily on oral history interviews, these recordings reveal the remarkable experiences of everyday people over the last century.

The project will work with community groups in villages and towns throughout Essex, helping them to reflect upon where they live by engaging with the recordings. Each group will create a sound montage of clips about their community from the Archive. The montage will then be installed on a sonic park bench. Whether placed on a village green, by the seaside, or in a shopping district, at the press of a button anyone will be able to listen to recordings from the past tell the story of where they are sitting.

The You Are Hear project team will also consult the public about which sounds of twenty-first-century Essex should be captured and archived. Based on these suggestions, an online audio map will enable comparisons between the historic sounds in the Archive and new sounds recorded during the project.

Lastly, tours of interactive audio / video kiosks and sonic benches will showcase more recordings from the archive, reaching every corner of the county.

County Councillor Roger Hirst, Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Libraries, Planning and the Environment said: "Digitisation of these irreplaceable records will safeguard them for future generations. Once digitised, they will be posted online for all to freely enjoy, without having to travel to the Essex Record Office in Chelmsford to hear them."

Robyn Llewellyn, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund East of England, said: "From local accents to a nationally significant collection of folk music, the Essex Record Office holds the key to over a century of our county's sounds. Thanks to National Lottery players we're delighted to support this project which will enable even more people to benefit from this immersive connection to Essex's heritage and ensure these sounds can be heard by generations to come."

The Essex Heritage Trust and the Friends of Historic Essex will also contribute grants towards the project.

About the Essex Sound and Video Archive

The Essex Sound and Video Archive was established at the Essex Record Office in 1987. One of the most important audio-visual archives in the UK, its unique collections range from oral history, radio broadcasts, talking magazines, and dialect recordings to folk, classical, jazz and popular music from Essex. They date from 1905 to the present. Whether on 78rpm shellac discs, open reel tapes, cassettes, mini-discs, video tapes, or other historic formats, the Archive aims to preserve and make freely available any sound or video recording that reveals life and culture in Essex.

The digitised recordings will be available through the Essex Record Office's online catalogue, Seax.

Sample recordings which have been cleared for publication are available on the Essex Record Office blog.

Further information

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