



Master Film Store, Gaydon

# BFI Collection Policy

## 16 November 2011

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# Introduction

## 1 Introduction

The British Film Institute (BFI) was founded in 1933 and constituted under Royal Charter on 18 July 1983 (amended April 2000). Its objectives are to:

- Encourage the development of the arts of film, television and the moving image throughout Our United Kingdom
- Promote their use as a record of contemporary life and manners
- Promote education about film, television and the moving image generally, and their impact on society
- Promote access to and appreciation of the widest possible range of British and world cinema
- Establish, care for and develop collections reflecting the moving image history and heritage of Our United Kingdom

From this we can state that our subject area is the **art, history and impact of film**—where “film” signifies moving image works crafted to express an idea or tell a story – fictional, factual or artistic – regardless of production process, recording medium or distribution channel.

Hence the BFI develops, cares for, and interprets a collection that illustrates the art, history and impact of film, to be held in perpetuity for the public, for their use and for use by the BFI in pursuit of its objectives.

The collection includes feature films, documentary and factual films, television programmes, artists film, books, journals, photographs, audio recordings, scripts, designs, press books, posters and personal papers. The collection is briefly described at appendix A.

It is one of the largest and most diverse collections in the world, comparable to the Library of Congress and Archives Françaises du Film du CNC. In the UK it ranks alongside other great National Collections<sup>1</sup> including the British Library, The British Museum, The National Archives and Tate.

These institutions share a common purpose, which is to enable people to explore their collections and subjects for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They all collect, safeguard and make accessible collections to support this objective, utilising similar procedures and in accordance with a broadly common framework of standards.

This document sets out BFI policy for these procedures and describes our role in a national network of organisations that collect or provide access to film. It supports European Council film heritage policy (*Recommendation of the European Parliament and Council 2005/865/CE*) and addresses many of the challenges of the digital era outlined in the 2010 Council Conclusions on Film Heritage (2010/C 324/01).

The policy will be reviewed every five years.

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<sup>1</sup> There are some 30 designated National Collections which by definition are held on behalf of the Nation and which are funded directly by Government Departments



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# Policy Overview

## 2 Policy overview

The procedures for collecting, preserving and making collections available are:

- Acquisition and disposal
  - Documentation
  - Conservation
  - Access
- 
- } Preservation
- } Subject knowledge

These procedures are united by subject knowledge, which guides acquisition, informs documentation, sets priorities for conservation and enables access through interpretation for diverse audiences.

### 2.1 Acquisition and disposal

Acquisition and disposal policy explains the BFI's cultural territory from the point of view of collecting; it defines in broad terms both what we will collect and, in the case of some information resources, what we will create.

Within this field of interest it defines criteria used by curators in selecting works or items for the collection. It describes the formal process by which material is added to the collection (acquisition) and by which material can be removed (disposal).

### 2.2 Documentation

Documentation encompasses record keeping to account for the collection by recording ownership of materials and rights. It supports management of the collection by retaining technical data and by tracking location and conservation needs and activities.

Documentation also concerns the creation of information resources around the BFI's cultural programme and the art, history and impact of film. It underpins access by describing the collections so that staff and users can search for items of interest and see what is held, and to provide interpretation and meaning.

### 2.3 Conservation

Conservation means measures taken to protect the collections from deterioration and damage, so that they can be used both now and in the future. These include security; preventative measures such as storage environment and guidance on handling and active measures including repair, duplication and restoration.

It also covers digitisation and migration to new formats, describing the circumstances in which these strategies may be desirable or necessary, and the essential requirements of the migration process and new format.

### 2.4 Access

Access policy sets objectives for using the collection in support of the BFI's cultural purpose. It also outlines the ways in which the collection can be accessed by users. It identifies limitations in terms of rights and conservation considerations, and outlines the channels and platforms through which the collections will be made available to the widest possible audience.



Acquisition



## 3 Acquisition

The BFI develops, cares for, and interprets a collection that illustrates the art, history and impact of film—to be held in trust for the public, for their use and for use by the BFI in pursuit of its objectives.

### 3.1 Scope

Collecting activity is focussed on British production, as defined in appendix B.

We aim to collect all British films certified for cinema exhibition<sup>2</sup>. We will also collect a selection of other fiction, factual and documentary films, television programmes and other materials that exemplify the art of filmmaking (broadly defined), its history – including both use and form – and its impact on and relationship to the people of the UK.

We collect film on physical media of all types, and in digital file formats that are independent of physical media. We will not exclude material by production type, medium, distribution channel or platform: television, amateur films, corporate material, material on the internet, born-digital material, DVD and computer games may all be considered<sup>3</sup>.

We collect objects and records related to the creative process of filmmaking and to the promotion, distribution and consumption of film in the UK. These include personal papers of key individuals in the industry, scripts, designs, stills, posters and other ephemera, especially where these relate to the moving image collections.

We collect books, periodicals and other information resources that support research into the art, history and impact of film.

We create records and knowledge resources around the subject. The key priorities are the documentation of the collections and the creation of knowledge resources supporting the BFI's cultural programme. These records feed into a developing UK filmography, covering British production intended for public distribution.

### 3.2 Exclusions

We will not collect non-British films, except copies of key works that support the BFI's cultural purpose that might not otherwise be available in the UK. The BFI may also accept non-UK material that might otherwise be at risk of loss<sup>4</sup>.

Our cultural mission is focussed upon the art of communication through film. Hence we will not collect CCTV footage or other records that are not authored or crafted, unless they are key to understanding the art, history and impact of film.

Film culture is international and the library will collect books and periodicals that reference non-British material. However, we will not systematically create information resources relating to world cinema or non-British material released in the UK except where such works are included in the BFI's cultural programme.

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<sup>2</sup> In the UK certification is carried out by the British Board of Film Certification (BBFC). Contractual deposit arrangements are in place for films made with assistance from Lottery funds administered by the BFI.

<sup>3</sup> Provision is made in the Communications Act 2003 for archiving selected Public Sector Broadcast television.

<sup>4</sup> The BFI will as far as possible work with other archives and organisations such as FIAF (The International Federation of Film Archives) to ensure that such activity is shared and coordinated on an international basis.

The BFI does not aim to create a complete record of UK moving image production or consumption. Many other organisations in the UK have a role in collecting, preserving and providing access to moving images:

- The British Library collects some moving image material useful as a resource for research communities whose primary interest is in the content
- The BBC and other broadcasters hold extensive archives of their productions
- The Imperial War Museum collects films relating to the history of conflict
- The National Archives (TNA) selects public record film, which is deposited with BFI as a specialist repository
- The National Libraries of Scotland and Wales collect films related to their national history and filmmaking activity; Regional Film Archives collect similarly in the English regions (although in all these cases BFI also collects material of UK-wide significance)
- The National Media Museum – part of the National Museum of Science and Industry (NMSI) – collects the technology of film and television
- Tate collects limited edition works intended for gallery presentation
- The Victoria & Albert Museum creates filmed records of live performances
- Many other organisations collect films relating to their subject areas. The National Railway Museum (part of the NMSI) for example records railway operations in the UK; the Wellcome Trust collects medical moving imagery.

The BFI will work with partners across the UK – and establish protocols where possible – to ensure that our moving image history and heritage is maintained whilst minimising duplication or competition, taking into account issues of sustainability and public value.

We will store film materials for the film and TV industries but will seek a contribution to the costs or public benefits such as educational usage rights, assistance with conservation and restoration, or collections development.

We do not generally collect objects relating to production and viewing technologies such as cameras, projectors or editing equipment except where essential for conservation and access; nor do we collect costume and other props, nor any part of buildings such as cinemas or studios.

In the event that a collection is acquired *en bloc* that includes such objects, we will endeavour to deliver care and access to the physical objects in partnership with other institutions.

### **3.3 Quality and significance**

The BFI National Collection is recognised as outstanding in terms of its aesthetic, historical and cultural importance. It is rich and varied, with unparalleled coverage in both depth and breadth of the art, history and impact of film, and contains many items that are rare or unique. The collection is central to the study, understanding and appreciation of film in both national and international contexts.

Future collecting will uphold and develop the collection in these terms.

### 3.4 Selection criteria

Unless a work is a British-produced film certified for cinema exhibition to qualify for inclusion in the collection an item or work must meet at least one and preferably more than one of the following criteria:

- **Aesthetic**—the work is a quality production showing excellence in the treatment of the subject, script, direction, performance or cinematography
- **Historical**—the work contributes significantly to the history or appreciation of film; it provides essential evidence of the workings or output of the industry; or it has a significant value as a representation of social, cultural or political events, trends and phenomena
- **Impact**—the work is innovative, had a significant impact on film form or practice, or was seen by a large proportion of the UK population and is widely regarded as a significant cultural reference point
- **Technical**—the work illustrates a significant development of a specific technique, exemplifies excellence of craftsmanship and increases the understanding of the method of production of a class of films
- **Completion**—the item completes or enhances the value of a film, collection or object already in the collections.

These criteria apply both to moving image works and to objects and records related to filmmaking and promotion, distribution and consumption of film.

### 3.5 Preservation and access

The collection is permanent and is held in trust for the public. But it is intended to be used. In other words, preservation and access have equal priority as objectives.

The measures used to protect items from damage or loss are described in detail in the conservation policy at section 6 below.

For reprographic media we generally prefer to acquire the best quality materials, which can be used to make copies for access, thereby meeting access requirements without risk of loss or damage to preservation material. The highest quality materials tend to be those used in the original production of a work.

Hence, the BFI will generally seek to acquire original production materials whenever possible.

Where original production materials are not available the BFI will seek to acquire copies of equivalent quality. Failing that, it will acquire distribution or viewing materials. There is in principle no lower limit to the quality of copy it will accept.

Where material is preserved elsewhere the BFI may prioritise the acquisition of materials best suited to access.

If there is doubt about the survival or availability of a work elsewhere the BFI will prioritise the acquisition of materials best suited to preservation. It will treat whatever copy it holds in the same way as original production materials, and will explore all avenues to acquire or otherwise secure the best quality materials.

### **3.6 Title and rights**

The BFI seeks to acquire materials with the minimum of restrictions on use, which may include some or all of:

- Study by students, researchers and other members of the public
- Educational use including screenings for students and distribution with other resources for classroom use
- Screening in BFI seasons and those of appropriate regional organisations
- Use in displays, touring exhibitions, publications, festivals and events
- Online access via mediatheques or the internet
- Commercial distribution including television and footage sales.

Acquisition without at least some of these usage rights will only be considered if there is a risk that significant material will otherwise be lost.

### **3.7 Acquisition procedure**

The Head Curator is responsible for ensuring that acquisition decisions are made in line with this policy, including assessment against the criteria, ensuring through consultation with colleagues that documentation and care needs can be met and that external stakeholders and other BFI staff are informed and involved.

The Head Curator will be responsible to the Head of Collections & Information and the Acquisitions Review Board. The Board is chaired by the Chief Executive of the BFI and includes curators, other BFI staff and external specialist advisors.

Items may be acquired by donation, purchase, transfer, exchange, copying, recording, deposit or loan. Acceptance will be subject to a written agreement or equivalent legal understanding between the donor or depositor and the BFI.

### **3.8 Limits on collecting and acquisitions planning**

Key subject areas and strands in the art, history and impact of film—including genres, media, and key practitioners—are described in more detail in a separate document: the Collections Development Plan.

This assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the collection and explains our plans for the development of key strands and priorities both for acquisition of contemporary material and for addressing historical weaknesses.

Unsolicited offers will not normally be acquired unless they meet one of these priorities, unless a special case is accepted by the Acquisitions Review Board.



# Deaccession and Disposal

## 4 Deaccession and disposal

The BFI has a long-term purpose and holds permanent collections in relation to its Royal Charter objectives. The collection is also a palimpsest of film history, reflecting the priorities and decisions made by curatorial staff through time.

Therefore there is a strong presumption against deaccession and disposal of works or items from the collection (see appendix C for a glossary of technical terms). Nonetheless a case for deaccession may be made when:

- The item is a duplicate copy in excess of the needs of preservation or access
- The item is on deposit or loan and return has been requested by the owner, in accordance with the deposit or loan agreement
- The item is lost, damaged or deteriorated beyond repair or use
- Following formal review of the collection, the item or work is found no longer to meet the selection criteria in the Acquisition Policy.

Items that have been deaccessioned may then be disposed of by transfer to another institution, return to owner, sale or destruction.

Records of all deaccessions and disposals shall be retained for audit purposes.

### 4.1 Deaccession authority

The Head Curator is responsible for ensuring that recommendations for deaccession and disposal are made in line with this Policy, for ensuring that relevant sections of the BFI are informed and involved and taking into account the views of donors, stakeholders and user communities.

For reprographic media there is a difference between disposal of copies, and the disposal of original materials—or of all materials associated with a particular work. The first case is a relatively routine matter in a film collection; the second and third cases require special authority:

- **For copies that are replaceable**—deaccession can be approved by the Head Curator, acting on the recommendation of curatorial and conservation staff
- **For original or unique materials**—or where all materials associated with a work are being considered *en bloc*, deaccession must be approved by the Director and the Acquisition Review Board.

### 4.2 Disposal methods

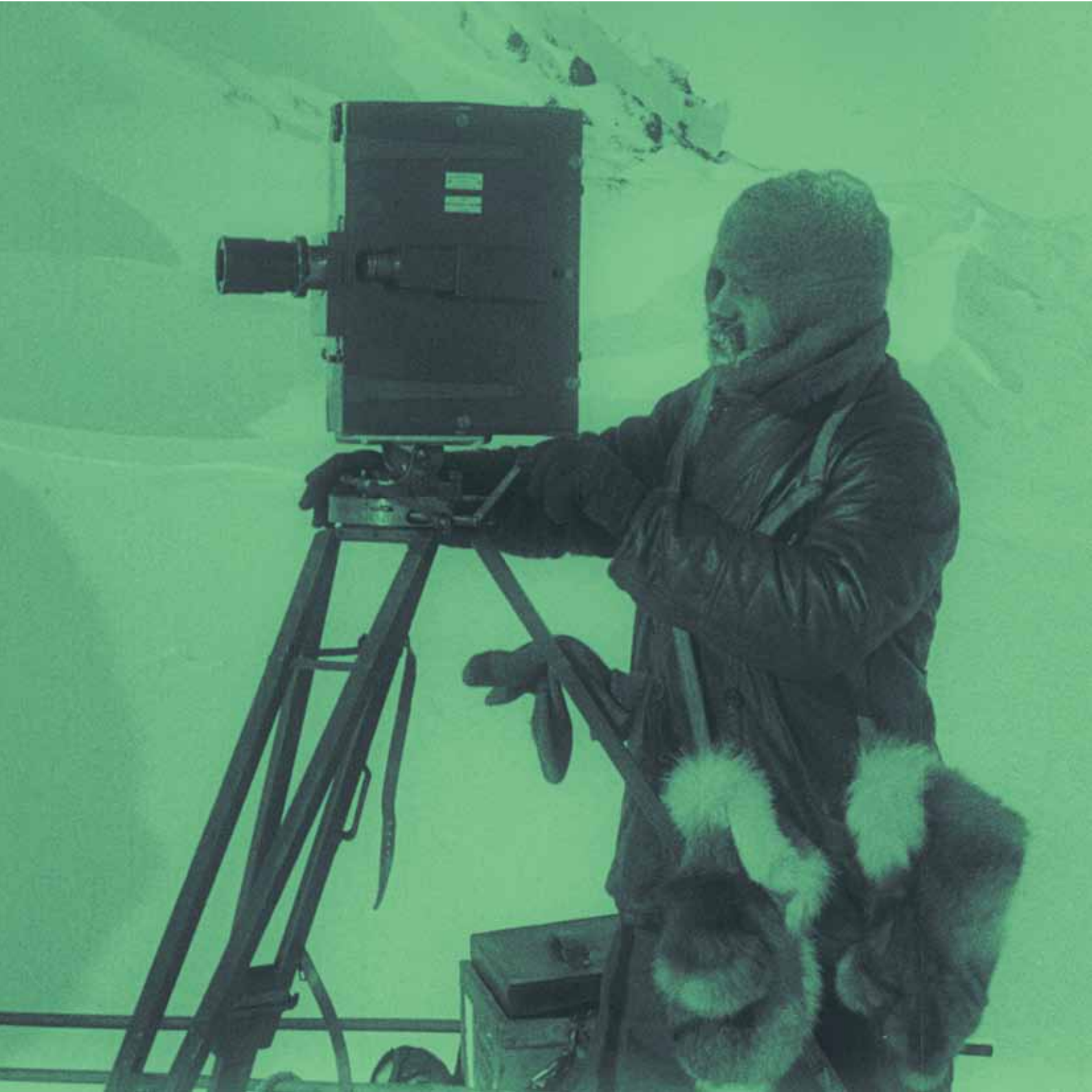
Following deaccession approval materials will be disposed of by one of the following methods:

- **Transfer to another institution**—preference will be given to offering items to another public sector archive or museum. Recipients must be competent and either be members of FIAF or FIAT or suitably accredited within a recognised scheme. UK institutions will be preferred for UK material; non-UK material may be offered in its country of origin.
- **Return to owner**—in accordance with a valid loan or deposit agreement.

- **Sale**—items that cannot be disposed of by either of the above methods may be offered for sale. Any monies generated from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the collections.
- **Destruction**—items that cannot be disposed of by any of the above methods or which are so badly deteriorated that they beyond use may be destroyed.

Donors, rights holders and other stakeholders such as funding bodies and user communities will be consulted as required.

Disposal will include arrangements for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned.



Still from *Great White Silence* (Herbert Ponting, 1924)

# Documentation



## 5 Documentation

Documentation enables accountability for moving image works and physical objects in the collections by recording provenance, ownership and rights. It supports collection management by tracking location, recording technical data and conservation activity. Documentation underpins access by describing the collections and providing associated information, interpretation and meaning.

The BFI also creates information resources in connection with its overall subject – the art, history and impact of film – which include filmographic and biographical information and knowledge resources created in association with its cultural programme.

Collections documentation, information and knowledge resources are all subject to this common documentation policy.

The BFI aims to adhere to existing standards and best practice in the film archive sector or those communities of practice relevant to a particular part of the collection, such as museums, libraries or archives. Our first priority, however, is to ensure institutional interoperability over adherence to collection specific requirements so that information can be shared with other organisations, supporting the widest possible access through a network of collections.

Detailed implementation plans will be drawn up for each collection and dataset, as part of an overall collections management programme.

### 5.1 Principles

Documentation and information resources affect all aspects of the BFI's work. It must be created at the most appropriate level required to deliver institutional objectives for collections management, conservation and access, and must take into account the audience it is created for.

- **Fitness for purpose**—all data created shall be fit for purpose and adhere to the defined guidelines agreed for each dataset. Data creation must aim to be accurate and reliable.
- **Efficiency**—data shall be created only once within the dataset designated to hold that type of information. To avoid duplication of data and effort, all subsequent use of the same data shall link to the designated core data set.
- **Quality**—no member of staff shall undertake data entry or editing unless they have received training in the relevant rules and appropriate system. Each dataset shall have a designated member of staff responsible for its data quality. Additional quality checks will be undertaken for a proportion of all data. Validated data shall not be altered to suit particular purposes.
- **Audit trail**—all data shall be traceable through an audit trail as to who created or edited it. Data must reference its source, where applicable, and record source differences.

## 5.2 Standards

Standards apply to catalogue content and data values, as well as data format and structure. Each dataset shall have a set of guidelines based on whichever standards are pertinent, drawn as required from museum, library and archive communities.

- **Cataloguing**—rules shall be based on best practice for the material described, as implemented by the relevant communities of practice, such as archives or libraries.
- **Format**—all datasets shall be compatible with international data exchange standards suitable for the type of material, such as EN 15744 and EN 15907 (European standards on interoperability of film databases).
- **Information architecture**—all datasets shall have a variety of access points. To avoid search inefficiencies, ambiguity and duplication, all access points shall be standardised and derive from a single authoritative list for each category, such a film titles or people.
- **Subject and genre headings**—across all BFI collections shall be streamlined into a single terminology. Maintenance and development of this taxonomy structure shall be undertaken by an information professional; new terms added to the vocabulary shall be vetted by a centralised process.

## 5.3 Elements of documentation

The collections are defined as being the works or objects for which the BFI is legally responsible, which are identified by an inventory that records all holdings, their provenance and their current location.

Records shall be created for all works or objects received into the collections, or created by processes of copying or duplication. For previously acquired materials without records, each collection shall have a plan to create them.

### 5.3.1 Inventory records and collections management

To properly manage the collections and adhere to best practice standards of the appropriate communities, the documentation system will support the following primary collections management procedures:

- **Acquisition**—the formal entry of items into the collection, including the conditions of acceptance, allocation of a permanent identity number; record what the item is, where it is from and who owns the IP rights;
- **Labelling**—each accessioned item or, where appropriate, group of items shall, where possible, be marked / labelled or barcoded with its permanent identity number without damaging the item;
- **Location & movement control**—the location and movement of items within the BFI is recorded by updating the record in the documentation system;
- **Loans**—are subject to written agreement(s). Rights, royalties and movements external to the BFI are managed within a separate system;
- **Conservation**—condition information, certain forms of intervention and conservation processes such as copying and restoration must be recorded;
- **Disposal**—any item de-accessioned and disposed of shall be recorded.

### 5.3.2 Cataloguing

The cataloguing process will:

- Explain why the item or work is being acquired (significance: see acquisition policy section 3.4 above);
- State in simple terms what it is about (subject/genre);
- Describe the content in sufficient detail to make it retrievable by key information including production and association(s).

In-depth contextualisation is not part of cataloguing.

### 5.3.3 Benefits

The creation of records with inventory and catalogue data will allow the BFI to:

- Enable access to the collections;
- Enable interpretation of the collections;
- Give public accountability and evidence of ownership;
- Provide an audit method for staff.

### 5.3.4 Contextualisation

Interpretation and contextualisation is a separate process undertaken as required, for example for research, presentation, publication or educational purposes. The documentation system shall, however, support links to external information sources such as reviews and blogs and enable users to tag records with their own search terms and describe or interpret materials from alternative perspectives.

## 5.4 Information and knowledge resources

The BFI will also acquire and create information that is not directly associated with physical items in its collections in order to develop knowledge resources around its subject and cultural programme, as follows:

- Information on British productions with a view to creating a UK filmography;
- Works forming part of a BFI cultural output, such as titles for DVD release, Southbank programming, festivals or publication;
- Event information, such as talks and exhibitions.

## 5.5 Priorities

Different priorities and levels of descriptions apply to documentation activities:

- Items acquired into the BFI collections will be assigned highest priority and will receive at minimum a standard description;
- Items from the collection that feature in the cultural programme will receive a comprehensive description;

- To fully tell the story of British film and television, non-collections related information gathering will be focussed on British productions, aiming for comprehensive coverage;
- Collection and/or creation of other information – such as details of non-British titles screened at BFI Southbank – will be captured with a standard description.

The specification for comprehensive and standard description respectively shall be defined for each collection or purpose and will be subject to periodic review.

## **5.6 Roles and responsibilities**

The main responsibility for BFI data lies with the Head of Information, who is responsible to the Head of Collections & Information.

There shall be designated persons overseeing all data quality issues, who shall be the arbiter of any queries arising from cataloguing rules. These rules shall aim to be as clear as possible as to avoid any subjective interpretation.

The excellence and richness of data in terms of consistency and accuracy must be a shared goal and responsibility of all involved in creating or capturing information.

The responsibility for adhering to established data standards and managing data quality lies with each individual, who must aim to pay close attention to detail.

Staff undertaking any form of documentation shall receive training. Need for refresher sessions shall be assessed as part of the appraisal process.

Guidelines for data entry, as well as use of data, shall be provided.

## **5.7 Accessibility of data**

### **5.7.1 Internal**

In principle all BFI staff shall have access to all documentation. Access shall be as streamlined and intuitive as possible. Bespoke interfaces that filter or present data in a way that suits the nature of their job will be provided when possible.

All staff must recognise that we have a duty of care to protect sensitive or confidential information and are subject to the Data Protection Act.

### **5.7.2 External**

The BFI shall make its collections documentation freely available to the public nationally and internationally through a coherent delivery mechanism subject only to limitations of the Data Protection Act and certain additional limitations that may be agreed with donors.



Conservation

## 6 Conservation

The collection is permanent and is held in trust for the public. But it is intended to be used. In other words, preservation and access have equal priority as objectives.

The purpose of conservation is to ensure that items and works are protected from deterioration, damage and loss, to preserve their integrity and to ensure that they remain available for use indefinitely.

Conservation of moving image materials is complex, and this section necessarily contains much that is specific to film, video and other forms of moving image. Nonetheless it is intended also to be applied – as is the policy as a whole – to documents and other objects from the collection.

### 6.1 Strategies

Traditional moving image media are fragile, and it is normal to provide access through copies, to avoid risk to source materials. Some are inherently unstable (nitrate and acetate film base) or prone to technological obsolescence (video tape).

Hence film archives have generally used duplication and/or migration to alternative media as key components of conservation strategy. This approach is appropriate for materials that are at risk of loss through deterioration. And where copies are made for access purposes, it makes sense to generate new preservation copies at the same time, to provide insurance against loss of the original materials. For certain old or rare formats, wholesale migration to a new carrier may be the only viable way to guarantee continued access.

On the other hand, original materials and formats embody aesthetic qualities that may not survive the process of duplication. Nitrate prints do not look the same as modern film stocks, for example, and it is virtually impossible to make a faithful film copy of a 1920s stencil-colour print. Furthermore, in the analogue domain, copying is never loss-less. Transfer to digital formats also involves some degree of transformation of the analogue originals, whilst techniques such as compression, transcoding or even simply viewing on a monitor a work that was designed for cinema projection will all result in change.

The BFI also holds extensive collections of materials that are not reprographic in nature, such as original annotated scripts, press-books and collections of archival documents. For such objects the preservation of the original object is axiomatic.

We also have a role in keeping moving image materials in their original form as an end in itself: we retain selected television works on their original 2” quadruplex video tape, for example, despite having made copies on more modern formats.

Consequently, although we make use of duplication and format migration as important components of conservation strategy, we also make extensive use of museum-like conservation practice, with an emphasis on passive methods and preservation of original materials—including moving image materials.

In summary, the choice of conservation strategy is a complex matter, which must take into account the integrity of the original materials, appropriate safeguards against loss, the scale of the collections, sustainability and the practicalities of exhibition, distribution and access.

## 6.2 Integrity

For moving image and other reprographic media we consider the following aspects of integrity:

- **Original work**—the artistic integrity of the original work is paramount, within the limits of our understanding of the creator's intent. Protecting artistic integrity is the overall objective of conservation.
- **Original materials**—for moving images and other reprographic media there is a presumption in favour of preserving original materials, because it supports the other aspects of integrity and because copying usually results in a loss of quality.

Hence although we may make duplicate copies of original materials, the originals shall be retained unless they have deteriorated beyond further use or the decision has been taken to migrate all works on that medium.

- **Original format and medium**—where copies are made we prefer to use the formats and media in which they were originally made and seen, especially where these affect the appreciation of a work, either for aesthetic reasons or because the limitations of the media influenced the form.

Even when the original medium is a factor in the integrity of a work we anticipate that a case may at some point be made to migrate to a new medium or format—if preservation in the original is not sustainable, for example, or because scope for exhibition is too limited. In such circumstances we will aim for the new medium to be at least as secure, to match the quality and to preserve the essential features of the original.

For all other items the integrity of the work, medium and materials amount to the same thing; preservation of the original object is the fundamental objective of conservation.

## 6.3 General principles

The first principle is to adopt a preventative approach as far as possible. In general terms this means that materials should be:

- Stored in a secure and stable environment with temperature, humidity and light levels held within limits that prevent or reduce the rate of deterioration;
- Handled as little as possible, to prevent mechanical damage, and that handling for conservation or access purposes is carried out with due care.

However, materials are sometimes acquired in damaged condition or in a state of deterioration. They can also suffer accidental damage and wear through use. In such cases, remedial work may be required, including cleaning and repair.

Restoration means the process of returning an item to some known earlier state. It carries special risks because it depends upon understanding the intent of the original creator and for some types of object can result in the destruction or alteration of original materials. Hence we will only attempt restoration for specific access purposes as part of the BFI's cultural programme or in association with selected partners.

## 6.4 Preventative measures

### 6.4.1 Environmental conditions

The issues surrounding the best environmental conditions for heritage artefacts have been extensively researched and described. The effects of light, temperature and humidity on objects are nonetheless the subject of ongoing research and there is a continual debate on “safe” levels, which are regularly revised.

- **Film**—The preferred storage environment for film can only be a compromise, but it can be summarised as cold and dry with controlled airflow to inhibit mould growth and to carry away the by-products of deterioration, which can have an autocatalytic effect, resulting in accelerated deterioration.

Whilst it is possible to fine tune different environments for different types of film, it is simpler to aim for the smallest possible number of environments. At the time of writing, our aim is to provide the following environmental conditions:

Master status film elements	-5°C, 35% RH
Deteriorating viewing status film elements and magnetic film soundtracks (pending migration)	+5-10°C, 35% RH
Stable viewing status film elements	+15°C, 35% RH

Films on different base materials (especially nitrate and acetate) will be stored separately to eliminate the risk of cross-contamination from decomposition by-products and to meet fire regulations. Multiple copies or individual elements that comprise a film may be stored separately to minimise risk of loss through disasters such as fire or flood.

- **Magnetic sound tracks, video, audio and data tape**—Acetate-based magnetic film sound tracks suffer from acute levels of base decomposition. However, storage at sub-zero temperatures has a deleterious effect on play-back. Hence it is policy to migrate magnetic film sound tracks to alternative media—currently digital audio files stored on disc or tape.

Magnetic video, audio and data tapes require a cool, dry and dust-free environment to minimise physical deterioration—although format obsolescence is frequently a more significant problem. We aim to store magnetic tapes at +15°C 35% RH.

Magnetic tape is also vulnerable to electromagnetic fields that can seriously degrade the recorded signal. Hence, all magnetic media will be protected from damage by ensuring that storage areas are kept free from sources of magnetic fields.

- **Photographs**—Paper prints will be treated in the same way as other paper items—see below. Negatives and transparencies will be treated in a similar way to the film collections, with storage at +15°C, +5°C or -5°C and 35% RH as appropriate.
- **Books and papers**—Paper items including books, journals, posters and documents from special collections shall be stored as far as possible in accordance with BS5454, which calls for temperature and humidity to be at a point between 16–19°C and 45–60% RH.



- **Mixed-media items**—Such objects frequently combine a range of materials in one object, making it difficult to provide an ideal environment. We will aim to keep such items in a stable environment which can be summarised as: rate of change of temperature <10°C in 24 hours; relative humidity between 40% and 70% for greater than 90% of the time; rate of change of relative humidity <10% in 24 hours<sup>5</sup>.

Air supplies will be filtered as appropriate and we will aim to exclude light from all collections storage areas. Materials kept in low-temperature environments will be acclimatised before use.

#### **6.4.2 Monitoring, testing and maintenance**

In order to ensure confidence in the preventative regime we monitor facilities and undertake regular inspection and testing of materials.

Environmental monitoring and logging will be accomplished through appropriate technologies, and networked building control systems.

Heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) equipment shall be kept in good working order by a preventative maintenance regime. Uninterruptible power supplies will be provided for critical storage areas where possible. Security and safety systems shall be tested regularly.

Film, video, audio and data tapes will be subject to physical inspection and testing as part of periodic collection condition reviews, and in the course of general working, using techniques appropriate to the materials.

New acquisitions will be subject to an appropriate level of inspection to minimise the risk of contamination (acid, mould, insects, computer viruses, etc) to collections in store.

#### **6.4.3 Security, fire and flood**

Appropriate measures will be put in place to guard against loss resulting from theft, fire, flood or other major disaster including – for some materials – duplication of content in geographically separate locations.

Protection from fire shall be in accordance with building regulations, and will include heat and smoke sensors, fire-fighting equipment and where appropriate, automatic suppression systems. Nitrate film will be stored in purpose-built compartmentalised fire-proof storage.

Protection from flood will primarily be through building location and design: the site will be on well-drained ground, well away from flood risks such as rivers. Single-pitch roofs with sufficient pitch to promote positive water shedding are preferred, with external gutters and down pipes. The number of openings in the building fabric will be minimised.

All sites will be provided with a disaster plan.

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<sup>5</sup> Organic materials suffer in various ways at RH <40%; corrosion, mould and condensation become problematic at RH>70% -see Bordass, B; "Museum Collections in Industrial Buildings", Museums & Galleries Commission, 1996.

#### 6.4.4 Packing and storage furniture

Objects will generally be packed in order to protect them from mechanical damage during handling, and to provide some buffering against rapid change in temperature and humidity.

The general principle of packing is that the materials used should be inert – they should not react chemically with the items contained within, nor introduce pollutants of their own.

For film our choice is for strong, inert cans. Cans shall be stored horizontally, so that the film is standing on its edge. The film will be wound onto cores, not spools, so that it is evenly supported by the interior surface of the can. Video reels shall be stored vertically in their original cases. For ephemera and archival documents we will use only conservation-grade materials such as acid free tissue, Tyvek bags, Melinex sleeves, unbleached calico and acid-free cardboard boxes.

Storage furniture will be constructed from inert materials. Transport containers for nitrate film will be to the relevant UN standard.

#### 6.4.5 Handling and use

The preventative approach generally means that materials should be handled as little as possible, to prevent mechanical damage.

Handling for conservation, acquisition, and collections research will in general only be carried out only by personnel with appropriate training.

Handling for public access purposes shall either be supervised or subject to an agreement that includes the requirement for handling to be carried out by suitably trained staff. Materials will be inspected or serviced as required on return.

### 6.5 Remedial Measures

Remedial conservation may be required for items acquired in damaged or deteriorated condition, or which have been accidentally damaged in use.

For moving images, some interventions are routine: films are nearly always cleaned before printing, for example. But in general we only undertake remedial work if there is a risk of loss, compromise to integrity or if poor condition prevents further use. Remedial work shall be reversible; it shall not involve alteration of the original work and it shall be documented.

- **Film**—servicing and repair is generally limited to cleaning in perchloroethylene, with ultrasound, repair of damaged perforations and tears, and remaking splices. Such work will be undertaken by Archive staff, or at approved external facilities.
- **Magnetic tape recordings**—only very limited repairs can be made to physical damage and often the best that can be done is to clean the tape using a dry wipe system and attempt to recover the content by copying. If cleaning alone is unsuccessful the Archive will consider such techniques as baking and the application of lubricants to playback heads if they seem likely to help.
- **Still negatives and transparencies**—will be treated in the same way as film.

- **Photographic prints, posters and other paper items**—work may be required to treat tears, folds, curling, the removal of surface marks and damage resulting from adhesives on sticky labels and tape. More intrusive work may include mounting, rebinding, provision of protective coatings and deacidification. Reversible treatments are preferred and will be chosen in accordance with current best practice<sup>6</sup>. In some areas limited resources will restrict the action we take; many thousands of items of ephemera, for example, are likely to suffer at some stage from being printed on acidic paper and it may not be possible systematically to de-acidify the whole Collection. Here we will prioritise items of high cultural value if there is risk of loss.

Remedial conservation will be carried out by our own staff where they have the required specialist skills, materials and facilities, or through specialist contractors, in accordance with current professional guidelines and specialist advice where necessary. Once an object has received remedial conservation it will be returned to a preventative conservation regime.

## 6.6 Copying and migration

For reprographic media our preference is to preserve the most original material we hold for as long as possible. We will generally only copy materials for access purposes, to a quality standard and on a format suitable for the access need. In some cases, this means that new intermediate materials will also be made, and it may make sense to generate new preservation copies at the same time, to provide insurance against loss of the original materials.

If deterioration or damage cannot be addressed through remedial work or has advanced to a point that renders the material inaccessible or threatens loss we will attempt to preserve the content by making copies—and may then destroy the original.

Where it is no longer feasible to maintain playback equipment – thereby posing a serious risk that the content will become unreadable – we may migrate works to a new format or medium. We will aim to ensure that the new format matches the quality of the original and preserves its essential features (such as aspect ratio).

## 6.7 Restoration

Restoration means the process of returning an item to a known earlier state—or in some cases our best estimation of an earlier state. It includes consideration of artistic integrity, accuracy and completeness alongside the repair of physical damage or deterioration. Restoration carries special risks because it depends upon understanding the intent of the original creator. For some types of objects restoration can also result in the alteration or destruction of original material.

Hence we will only attempt restoration for specific access purposes, in accordance with the BFI's cultural and curatorial plans. The process will be informed by research, which may involve detailed comparison of surviving versions of the work. It will be fully documented and, for moving image works, the source materials will be preserved.

Restoration of moving images involves complex and exacting processes including research, selection, physical repair, cleaning and various photochemical and digital techniques for repairing the image and creating new materials. The BFI will work collaboratively with moving image archives and collections-holding bodies around the world in pursuit of this aim, exploiting the fullest possible range of expertise, sources of material and the most appropriate techniques.

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<sup>6</sup> The Institute of Conservation (ICON) maintains a register of conservators who offer specialist advice and services.

The BFI will also contribute to research and development of new techniques, and work to share and disseminate this knowledge through seminars, publications and training, in collaboration with professional bodies and educational partners.

## **6.8 Digital preservation**

For the purposes of this policy 'digital preservation' is taken to mean the preservation of cultural artefacts in data form utilising appropriate file format(s) which are independent from the carrier medium. Such artefacts may be 'born digital'; others may have been created from analogue originals.

Cultural artefacts that are born digital will be preserved digitally. As far as possible all digital preservation will be in accordance with Open Archival Information System Standards (OAIS, ISO 14721:2003).

Digital preservation technology is evolving rapidly, so the policy statements that follow will be subject to frequent review, within the five-year review cycle of the collection policy as a whole.

### **6.8.1 Preservation and access materials**

In some cases, digital copies will have been produced from analogue originals – in accordance with this policy – because continued preservation in the original format or medium is no longer possible or practical. Examples include deteriorating magnetic film sound tracks and obsolete video formats. In such cases the digital copy may be the only surviving version of the original artefact, and shall be afforded the same level of protection from loss as any original materials.

In other cases, digital copies may have been generated for access purposes. Because these are replaceable we may accept a lower standard of protection from loss (we may keep fewer backup copies, for example), but the high cost of digitisation means that they will nonetheless be documented, managed and preserved alongside preservation masters, using the same systems.

### **6.8.2 File formats**

Digital media are acquired, created and delivered in a very wide range of formats, with varying levels of quality (resolution and bit-depth), using different encoding hardware and software, proprietary and non-proprietary (open source) codecs and varying levels of compression. File wrappers or containers of different types are used to unite video and audio essence files with technical metadata into a single file suitable for distribution and use.

Our preference is to use open-source, non-proprietary technologies that are in widespread use in order to minimise costs, support interoperability and maximise options for migration or upgrade paths in the event that they are superseded. However, proprietary technologies may be used where the alternatives might create operational difficulties. For example, we might prefer to use the proprietary HDCAM-SR format for HD television at production quality for reasons of efficiency in acquisition and later re-distribution.

We will endeavour to minimise the range of formats in use in order to obtain best value from investment in equipment and skills.

Quality standards of resolution and bit-depth will be chosen so as to minimise any loss in conversion from analogue sources, although we accept that for some source material this may be impractical.

In principle we prefer to store digital materials uncompressed, because compression may compromise quality, make files more vulnerable to degradation and loss, and limit options for re-use and future image-enhancement technologies. However, some born-digital materials may be acquired in a compressed format, such as Digital Cinema Package (DCP), and these may best be preserved as they are. We also accept that storage of uncompressed files may also be impractical if they are very large. We will endeavour to balance issues of risk, affordability and quality appropriate to protect the integrity of the work.

In practical terms the following formats are preferred:

- **Standard definition (SD) video**—4:2:2 10-bit component video stored either uncompressed or using loss-less compression. D10 MPEG-2 at 50Mbps per second may also be used for video from certain legacy analogue sources.
- **High Definition (HD) video**—AVC Intra 100, Apple ProRes 422 (HQ) or HDCAM-SR.
- **High quality film scans**—(mainly 2k, 4k, or above) uncompressed 10-bit (or better) DPX format.
- **Digital Cinema**—Digital masters in DPX format or Distribution Masters (DCDM) to SMPTE standards (images stored as linear TIFF in x,y,z colour, with 48kHz WAV audio). Digital Cinema Packages (DCP) are not preferred (they are highly compressed) but if we do accept a DCP it must be unencrypted.
- **Audio**—will be preserved in 48kHz or 96kHz 24 bit BWAV format.
- **Technical metadata**—created during encode/transcode is captured in a standard XML document and wrapped with the essence file and/or attached to the appropriate record in the documentation system.
- **Wrappers**—OP1a mxf (media exchange format) is preferred for preservation purposes; a wide range of wrappers is used as required for interoperability and distribution.
- **Delivery file formats**— Digital Cinema Package (DCP) and D10 MPEG-2 at 50Mbps per second are used for theatrical presentation and broadcast. D10 also provides a mezzanine position for creating delivery transcodes. Stills, documents and other paper materials are scanned at 300dpi and stored as TIFF files with loss-less compression and delivered in JPEG format.

### 6.8.3 Systems and hardware

Storage of file-format artefacts is achieved through a variety of approaches, with accessible data being held on networked storage including individual hard disc drives, RAIDs and flash RAM; nearline or offline data is held on data tape such as LTO5, removable drives and in some cases recordable optical disks.

To guard against loss, preservation materials (ie those where the digital file is the best or only copy of a work) will be duplicated and kept in at least two locations—geographically separate where possible. All equipment critical to the ongoing preservation of digital files will be protected by uninterruptible power supplies (UPS). All systems will be backed up in accordance with IT policy.

Equipment and software will as far as possible be compatible with the open-source ethos applied to file formats above, allowing for the equipment/software to evolve in parallel with the preservation and access requirements of the collection.

Physical media containing digital files will be managed through the documentation system (section 5 above). Digital artefacts and digital copies of analogue artefacts held on networked storage will be recorded in the same documentation system but may additionally be managed through an integrated digital asset management system (DAM).

## **6.9 Roles and responsibilities**

Primary responsibility for development and implementation of conservation policy and activities lies with the Head of Conservation. The Head of Collections Management, however, plays a key role in delivery of preventative measures, especially storage and handling, and in ensuring that materials and work processes are tracked effectively.

Both are responsible to the Head of Collections & Information.

Conservation work will be carried out in accordance with appropriate standards and relevant legislation including Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH), fire regulations and the Health & safety at Work Act.

Staff will be required to maintain awareness of relevant current practice and will be given training as required.



Access

## 7 Access

The BFI develops, cares for and interprets a collection that illustrates the art, history and impact of film—which is held in trust for the public, for its use and for use in pursuit of the BFI's cultural objective—which is to promote enjoyment and understanding of film (broadly defined) to the widest possible audience.

Access policy sets objectives for using the collection in support of this cultural purpose and outlines the ways in which the collection can be accessed by users.

It identifies limitations in terms of rights and conservation considerations, and outlines the channels and platforms through which the collections will be made available to the widest possible audience.

### 7.1 Principles

The BFI champions the principle of free access to collections and information.

However, large parts of the collections are protected by intellectual property rights owned by third parties who require clearance for public exhibition or distribution. Often the only access that we can provide without rights clearance is for individual researchers, on BFI premises. Access through public exhibition or distribution also usually requires the production of suitable materials, which incurs costs.

Consequently, the provision of free access within the constraints of copyright law and public funding would inevitably be severely limited. The BFI may therefore charge for some kinds of access or fund them through application of appropriate business models, as required, in order to secure the widest possible access.

The BFI recognises that a great deal of film is accessible through commercial cinemas, DVD and other channels. Hence we will tend to focus on providing access to film that is not generally available—except where the integrity of the programme requires it, in which case we will ensure that rights holder interests are respected.

### 7.2 Audiences

We believe that film should be at the heart of cultural life in the UK. The collections lend themselves to audience development by providing cultural breadth, by encouraging critical engagement and, where possible, enabling creative re-use. We want them to be used and enjoyed by everybody.

Hence we aim to serve a wide range of audiences, from cinephiles with a serious interest in film to complete newcomers. We aim especially to develop new audiences by conducting market research to inform our programme and access provision. Priority groups include:

- **Interest**—newcomers, students and lifelong learners;
- **Age**—young people (16-24 age group);
- **Diversity**—ethnicity, gender, disability, excluded social groups;
- **Geographical**—UK regional and home nations.

From the perspective of collecting, the BFI's core subject area is the art, history and impact of film. However film is a rich and multi-faceted medium with the potential to reach audiences



with interests outside this core subject area, as recognised in our Royal Charter objective to promote the use of film as a record of contemporary life and manners.

We will therefore exploit the collection – working in partnership with other cultural and educational organisations as required – to engage new audiences from the perspective of social history and other subject areas, and aim to maximise use of the collections from a wide range of subject perspectives.

## 7.3 Channels

### 7.3.1 Exhibition

The BFI is committed to providing opportunities to see films from the collection as originally intended. For cinematographic works this means seeing them on the big screen, presented at the best quality that can be achieved within the constraints outlined above. For silent works it often demands live music accompaniment.

Our preference is to show works in their original format as far as possible. However it is unrealistic regularly to screen cellulose nitrate prints<sup>7</sup>, for example, and the transition to digital technology in cinemas worldwide will soon make it difficult to show traditional motion picture film of any kind. Where we must shift format for exhibition – by digitisation, for example – we will nonetheless aim to maintain the aesthetics and quality of the original medium so far as is possible.

We give priority to exhibiting at our own venue (BFI Southbank) but we will work with other venues and stage special events where these allow us to reach new audiences or enable delivery of an effective programme.

Exhibitions of non-film works – posters for example – will be staged to provide context to our programme or to engage new audiences with different aspects of the art, history and impact of film.

### 7.3.2 Distribution

We distribute works in order to reach audiences across the UK, through a range of channels:

- **Theatrical**—we will distribute works from the collection to UK cinemas and internationally in accordance with our cultural programme with the aim of enabling audiences around the UK to see them as originally intended.
- **Non-theatrical**—works from the collection will be made available for screening in film societies and non-traditional venues such as prisons, hospitals and community centres, to reach audiences that do not use or do not have easy access to a cinema.
- **DVD**—is used to provide collections access on the small screen, generally at home, for those who are unable or do not wish to visit a cinema or a non-theatrical screening. DVD is likely to be eclipsed by video-on-demand, which is covered under online access below.

We will digitise works on traditional formats in support of these aims, as required.

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<sup>7</sup> BFI Southbank is one of very few UK cinemas licensed to do so

### 7.3.3 Television

Television currently reaches bigger audiences than any other form of access.

We undertake co-productions with television production companies with a view to showcasing key works or groups of works from the collection and/or the work of the BFI National Archive.

We sell whole works, clips and packages of materials to TV broadcasters and production companies to maximise audience reach and return on our investment in curatorial work.

### 7.3.4 Online access

Online access can reach large audiences nationally and internationally, and people that may not encounter BFI collections in any other way. Works from the collection will be digitised to support online access, both as part of our cultural programme and, where possible, on demand (see 7.3.5 below).

However it does not allow people to see cinematographic works in their intended form. Where possible we will therefore use online access to awaken interest so that users may then seek out other forms of engagement. At the same time we will endeavour to engage new audiences with film in ways which interest them.

We draw an important distinction between mediated and unmediated access:

- **Mediated access** is well suited to presenting works and groups of works thematically and providing audiences with signposts and pathways to help them to engage with both our subject and the collection;
- **Unmediated access** enables users with some subject knowledge to explore our collections in their own way. Crucially it can also allow users with little or no knowledge of film to encounter and engage with the collection from different subject perspectives.

In the field of mediated access we will produce curated packages of works designed to engage audiences with the subject of film, to provide access to key works or groups of works and to support aspects of our cultural programme. We will include materials from our special collections to provide rich contextualisation. These packages will be presented through the BFI website wherever possible.

The primary method for providing unmediated access will be through public online access to our collections database. We will allow:

- **Free access to collections data**, to read, refer to and re-use (except where prohibited by the Data Protection Act or to protect commercially confidential information);
- **User tagging** of records with their own search terms to enable retrieval from the widest possible range of perspectives (whilst protecting the integrity and authority of the core data);
- **Free access to digital surrogates** (where available) for reference and re-use, for works that are BFI-owned or out of copyright;

For works in copyright we will seek to make digital surrogates available for educational use (rights clearance or changes to copyright law permitting) and give free access to low-resolution, digitally watermarked copies.

### **7.3.5 Research access**

We will provide access for bona fide researchers to original non-moving image materials through our library reading room, by appointment<sup>8</sup>. We expect users to identify the materials they wish to see through use of our online collections database.

Access to pre-existing digital surrogates (or original digital artefacts) will be provided through our library reading room at no charge<sup>9</sup> where these can be streamed or downloaded to a library workstation. Some material may be made freely available through mediatheques at BFI Southbank and UK wide.

Research access to moving image works that are not digital or have not been digitised will be provided by digitising on demand, where materials that can readily be scanned exist. We will charge a contribution towards costs for such access.

Some works in the collection may in practice be inaccessible because there are no materials that can readily be scanned, although options and costs will be discussed with the user.

Primary access to original materials of all kinds will be offered as part of agreed research partnerships and will generally involve researchers using facilities at the BFI Conservation Centre in Berkhamsted.

### **7.3.6 Loans**

Where possible we will lend materials for exhibition, restoration projects and other legitimate purposes to film archives, accredited museums, archives and libraries.

We may require completion of a facilities report to ensure that appropriate equipment, trained staff, security and environmental conditions are provided so that materials are protected from damage or loss. We reserve the right to make charges to cover costs.

## **7.4 Protecting the collections**

Moving image materials may be subject to special controls to guard against damage or loss through use.

Materials on loan or deposit may be subject to special arrangements specified in the deposit or acquisition agreement which may (for example) provide for privileged access for donors or limit access by others.

Wherever possible we prefer to provide access to moving image materials via a duplicate access copy – digital where possible – which can be used without fear of compromising preservation of the original. Direct access to moving image preservation materials may be given in special circumstances, subject to a risk assessment, which must demonstrate that the benefits significantly outweigh the risk of loss or damage to the materials.

Third party contractors operating within BFI framework agreements are subject to appropriate scrutiny to ensure the security of the collections.

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<sup>8</sup> Restrictions on space mean that we can only bring in small volumes of material at any one time

<sup>9</sup> Beyond existing library membership charges



# Appendices

## Appendix A: The Collections

### 1 The collection

The National Collection is one of the largest and most important in the world, ranging from Birt Acres' *The Derby* (1895) to Tom Hooper's *The King's Speech* (2010), the personal papers of David Lean and Carol Reed to the worlds largest collection of film books and journals. It is an unparalleled resource for anyone with a passion for the art of film. In more detail, the collection comprises the following:

#### 1.1 Fiction film

60,000 titles. The collection includes the original camera negatives of some of the most important feature films in British film history. These include nitrate negatives for *Blackmail* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1929), *Henry V* (Laurence Olivier, 1944), *Brighton Rock* (John Boulting, 1947), *The Red Shoes* (Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, 1948) and *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (Robert Hamer, 1949). More recently this collection of original negatives range from *Witchfinder General* (Michael Reeves, 1968) to *Distant Voices, Still Lives* (Terence Davies, 1988).

The BFI also looks after an extensive international collection of films. These include one of the world's most important collections of silent cinema, most of which is held uniquely by the BFI; a major collection of Chinese cinema and the world's largest collection of non-fiction films shot in India pre-Independence.

#### 1.2 Non fiction film

120,000 titles including actuality films, documentaries, newsreels, government, political and campaigning works, sponsored films, educational films, advertisements and amateur productions including home movies. They constitute one of the world's most important collections of factual filmmaking, especially of early non-fiction, documentary (from Humphrey Jennings to Nick Broomfield), and industrial filmmaking.

Two collections were entered onto the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in 2011: the

Mitchell and Kenyon collection of original negatives of 28 hours of actuality films of Edwardian Britain, and the work of the 1930s GPO Film Unit. Other major collections include the Topical Budget newsreel, the Central Office of Information, British Transport Films, the National Coal Board, Shell and BP. Individual highlights range from film of Queen Victoria's funeral, through the original camera negatives of Herbert Ponting's footage of Captain Scott's ill-fated 1910-13 South Pole expedition, to 1935's groundbreaking *Housing Problems*.

#### 1.3 Television

Around 750,000 television titles including material recorded off-air, as it was seen by the viewer, as well as production and transmission material. The collection includes all BBC output since 1980 including unique live broadcasts and interstitial material, and extensive samples of commercial terrestrial television, with emphasis on key British productions. As well as the recorded material, significant collections of transmitted programming donated by broadcasters include the [Rediffusion Collection](#) (the earliest ITV contractor) and the related [This Week](#) and

[Jack Hylton](#) Collections, and material preserved on analogue videotape from the sixties and seventies donated by the BBC and ITV.

The collection also includes recordings of the proceedings of the two houses of Parliament and select committees (approximately 60,000 hours).

## 1.4 Library

The library holds some 45,000 books including major film, TV and video directories and yearbooks from around the world, all major film and TV festival catalogues, programmes and brochures and all UK-based festival catalogues. It also includes major film catalogues from around the world, annual reports from relevant companies and bodies; official publications including copyright, arts policy, and government reports; biographies and autobiographies of UK film/TV personalities.

One of the greatest strengths of the library is its near comprehensive collections of UK trade and academic journals (5000 titles; many hundreds of thousands of issues). An extensive collection of newspaper cuttings, publicity and press material are also held (on microfilm) as are brochures, leaflets, prospectuses etc. describing the work of organisations that are relevant to film and television.

## 1.5 Special collections

30,000 unpublished scripts, from first drafts to release scripts, relating primarily to British film and TV titles.

30,000 pressbooks, 15,000 film posters and 2,000 items of cinema ephemera such as programmes, tickets, autographed letters, promotional material and personal memorabilia.

600 collections of personal and company papers reflecting the history of British film and television from the earliest days to the present time. Highlights include the collections of directors Carol Reed (including his annotated shooting script for *The Third Man*), Derek Jarman, David Lean, Joseph Losey, John Schlesinger, Karel Reisz and Ken Loach; producers Michael Balcon, Gerald Thomas and David Puttnam and the papers of organisations including the Children's Film Foundation, the BBFC and Hammer Film Productions.

Approximately 1 million still images from or related to films and television programmes, including publicity material, production shots, and portraits.

3000 production and costume designs. This remarkable collection includes over 400 designs for *The Red Shoes* (Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, 1948); the sketches of costume designer Julie Harris, including her Oscar-winning costumes for Julie Christie in *Darling* (1965) and production designs by John Box for David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), *Doctor Zhivago* (1965) and *A Passage to India* (1984).

3000 animation cels including artwork by leading animators Lotte Reiniger, Bob Godfrey and Halas and Batchelor.

Extensive audio collections including the Gifford and BECTU oral history recordings, including interviews with many key industry figures.

## Appendix B: Definition of British

A professionally produced cinematographic work is defined as British if it is:

- Produced wholly or in part by a company registered in the UK at Companies House;  
OR
- Capable of passing the Cultural Test administered by the BFI Film Certification Unit, even if there is no UK production involvement.

A television programme is defined as British if it is:

- Made in-house by a British broadcasting organisation for transmission anywhere in the world;  
OR
- Commissioned from a British-based independent production company for transmission anywhere in the world;  
OR
- Co-commissioned by a British broadcasting organisation for transmission in Britain and contains significant British contributions or subject matter

For an amateur production to be classed as British it should be made by a UK citizen and available for viewing in the UK.

Non-moving image materials including stills, posters, designs, ephemera, and documents need not be defined as British in themselves. What matters is a known relationship between the item and a moving image work that qualifies as British, or wider relevance to British film culture on the basis of its content, talent or impact.

## Appendix C: Glossary of collections management terminology

<i>Accession</i>	<i>Accession</i> means adding <i>item(s)</i> to the <i>Inventory</i> . <i>Items</i> on <i>Inventory</i> are formally part of the <i>Collection</i> , and are protected from <i>disposal</i> .
<i>Acquisition</i>	The process of transferring <i>item(s)</i> from a third party into the care of the BFI. It requires assessment against the Acquisition Policy (section 3 above), agreement of terms & conditions and <i>accessioning</i> .
<i>Cataloguing</i>	The compilation and maintenance of key information, formally identifying and describing items in the collections, as well as the creation of access points for their retrieval.
<i>Collection</i>	Heritage assets listed on the <i>inventory</i> and held in accordance with our Royal Charter Objective to “Establish, care for and develop collections reflecting the moving image history and heritage of Our United Kingdom”.
<i>Conservation</i>	Measures taken to prevent damage, deterioration or loss through natural processes and use, theft or disaster; repair for items that are damaged; copying and restoration.
<i>Deaccession</i>	The process of removing an <i>item</i> or <i>work</i> from the <i>Inventory</i> . <i>Items</i> not on <i>inventory</i> are not considered part of the <i>Collection</i> , and are not protected from <i>disposal</i> .
<i>Disposal</i>	The process of removing <i>item(s)</i> from the BFI’s care. It includes negotiating with the original donor (if the terms & conditions require), followed by transfer to another institution, repatriation, return to owner, donor or rights holder, sale or destruction.
<i>Documentation</i>	Process and records required to manage the collection and make it accessible. Includes the <i>Inventory</i> for accountability, basic access and rights management; <i>cataloguing</i> to explain cultural meaning and support access, and technical data for care and <i>conservation</i> .
<i>Film</i>	Moving image works crafted to express an idea or tell a story – fictional, factual or artistic – regardless of production process, recording medium or distribution channel.
<i>Inventory</i>	Formal and auditable list of the <i>collection</i> recording a brief description of the <i>item</i> , its provenance and date of <i>accession</i> , and current location.
<i>Item(s)</i>	A single physical or digital object, such as film, video, script, printed book, etc. treated as the baseline entity of any collection that forms the basis for a single individual description.
<i>Preservation</i>	Activities which ensure that items and works in the collection remain accessible both physically and intellectually in perpetuity. It includes <i>documentation</i> to keep track of materials and their cultural meaning, and <i>conservation</i> to protect materials from loss.
<i>Work(s)</i>	The product of the intellectual process of one or more persons comprising intellectual or artistic content and which has been realised in a particular medium. A work can be made up of many items.



## Appendix D: Regulations and standards

All aspects of collections care are subject to ongoing research and there is a continual debate within the museum, library and archive communities on best practices.

The BFI contributes to the debate and participates in the development of standards with other archives and professional bodies including:

- Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA)
- BBC Information & Archives and R&D Departments
- Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC)
- International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF)
- International Federation of Television Archives (FIAT/IFTA)
- Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTE).

This Policy refers to and takes account of such standards where appropriate. The BFI does not, however, guarantee always to meet these standards because:

- They are not mutually exclusive, and contain some contradictions or emphasise different priorities.
- They are always evolving and there are resource issues and time lags in modifying facilities, procedures or records to meet them.
- Facilities are designed within statistically likely parameters that can nevertheless be exceeded from time to time.

The BFI observes all legislation and regulations governing the care and handling of materials including especially Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH), fire regulations and the Health & safety at Work Act.