



PRESERVATION POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1 Brief introduction to MACE

MACE (The Media Archive for Central England) was formally established by the registration of the company in 1995 and became active on the appointment of its first Director in February 2000. MACE's high level mission statement reads:

MACE is an accessible organisation connecting people with the preserved moving image heritage of the Midlands.

1.2 Objectives of collecting

The public moving image archives, of which MACE is one, are defined as *“repositories for the custody and preservation of, and access to, the history of our times as recorded on film, videotape and other moving image formats. Such archives contain works made by amateur and professional producers for cinema, television and other purposes. These archives encompass the history and culture of moving image media and respect the integrity of the works above any commercial or short term exploitation. These institutions operate for the public good on a ‘not for profit basis’.”* (Moving History: Towards a Policy for the UK Moving Image Archives; The UK Film Archive Forum, 2000)

Thus MACE's objective is the promotion of greater understanding and appreciation of the culture and heritage of the Midlands by the ongoing development of a collection of Midlands related moving images, ensuring its preservation, and creating the widest possible range of access opportunities to it for the benefit of the people of the Midlands and beyond.

1.3 Purpose of the policy

The policy is produced to provide guidelines within MACE and to promote a professional approach by its staff and to engender a wider understanding of our work. All publicly funded organisations should aspire to meet the standards set for the management of public collections. Consequently this document together with policies for preservation, documentation and access form a collection management policy document against which standards MACE can be measured thus providing confidence in MACE for depositors and stakeholders.

2. Preservation policy

MACE is a preservation archive.

Moving images are constituted of a wide range of analogue and digital, obsolete and contemporary media.

Different preservation approaches need to be adopted in relation to these different media.

MACE's first responsibility, therefore, is to ensure that material in its care is conserved and preserved to the highest possible appropriate standard to ensure its preservation and consequent accessibility in perpetuity. It therefore undertakes in all its preservation work:

- To preserve film materials wherever possible and appropriate, in the medium of production
- To ensure that, where new master copies of material are being created in media other than that of production, the loss of information is at the lowest level achievable.
- To adopt the appropriate standards for digital preservation
- To maintain knowledge of and to apply the highest standards of care to the different materials in the collection
- To minimise the potential for loss and decay by placing all master materials in long term storage conditions which are the best available to us
- To not sacrifice the long term preservation needs of material to the interests of short term exploitation or access

Film preservation

A presumption is made that, regardless of the reason or type of copying undertaken, the archive's master film copy will be retained and held in the best possible conditions available to ensure its preservation.

Where it is deemed essential for ethical or other reasons to be able to preserve film material by making a film copy or to be able to access material in the form of film then a film master and viewing copy will be created.

Where it is not deemed necessary to make a new access or preservation copy on film then the best possible uncompressed digital surrogate will be made and, when satisfactorily mastered (in accordance with the archive's digital preservation policy) the film original will be protected by being placed in appropriate deep preservation storage.

Analogue tape preservation

Moving image recordings held uniquely on obsolete analogue videotape formats will be transferred at the highest possible quality to the digital master format being used by the archive and will be held that way and be subject to digital preservation policy. Obsolete tapes that have been successfully copied and are in digital preservation will be retained in Lincoln or disposed of in a way agreed with the depositor. Agreement permanently to destroy any tapes must be given in writing prior to any destruction.

Digital Preservation

The policy relates to all digital material held by the archive whether born digital or copied from an analogue original by MACE or by a third party and deposited with MACE.

MACE's digital work will conform to standards agreed by the public film archive sector

MACE will keep its digital material in the best available storage having due regard to the need regularly to review arrangements in a fast moving technological environment.

MACE undertakes to ensure that all digital files are appropriately backed up and back up copies maintained in a separate location.

All digital preservation decisions will be taken with due address to the need to ensure that files are not at risk of deletion, corruption and to maintain their security and integrity.

Storage

MACE will always seek to maintain material in its care in the best storage available to it to ensure its long term preservation, accessibility and security. Film and tape materials and digital discs following deposit will be held in MACE's purpose built (in 2011) Lincoln store that will be maintained at temperature and humidity levels in the crossover range appropriate for all. (current recommendation 10 degrees Centigrade / 33-35% RH). Environmental conditions in the store are monitored daily and recorded. Procedures are in place to respond to any failure of the environmental control. Access to the store is limited to authorised staff and is kept to a minimum. Material entering and leaving the store is subject to MACE's established acclimatisation regime.

Long term preservation storage of film materials is at the BFI's purpose built preservation storage facility at Gaydon in Warwickshire and is according to agreements reached. As at Oct 2012 digital preservation storage is delivered in partnership with the University of Lincoln and is subject to constant review as platforms, codecs and technologies advance.

Training

Everyone engaged in handling archive material will be fully trained in the appropriate techniques and procedures. Only those who have been in receipt of training will handle master materials.

Standards

Standards in handling materials and in preservation techniques will be maintained and regularly reviewed in the light of best practice in the profession.

Disaster recovery

MACE will maintain an appropriate and up to date disaster recovery plan.