

ratio of 5x, the negatives were filtered individually, allowing the operator to adjust the illumination according to the density of each plate. Each image was targeted with its series title and number, further detail being readily available to the researcher from the inventory. The camera operator was able to accommodate 660 images on each roll, filming approximately ninety frames per hour.

After processing, each roll was inspected for physical and photographic defects, content, resolution and density. Defective images were re-shot, spliced to the end of the roll and the box marked accordingly.

Two comments: first, microfilming negatives using negative film produces positive images. This is convenient for reference purposes but the production of a positive photographic print from the microfilm requires a negative. This can be made from the original film by a service company, or can be produced at the outset by filming the glass negatives with a non-reversing film of the type used for making slides. Second, while the reference tool was developed using 35mm roll film, the use of 16mm film, jackets and microfiche offers even greater advantages for certain applications. The 16mm film provides a less useful back-up negative, but is considerably cheaper than 35mm. Microfiche and jackets are easier to handle and the cost of readers is far less than for roll film.

The microfilm of the Health Department series is now available on one and a half rolls in the Archives reading room. Researchers using the film are shown how to obtain further information about each image from the relevant inventory volume and are provided with a "Photographic Print Request Form" should they wish to order copies.

Previously only a few scholars were given access to the fragile glass plates, and they could rarely spend the time to more than sample the collection. Now it is a simple matter for the archivist to put a roll of film on the reader and leave the researcher, whether serious or merely curious, to browse through hundreds of images. The response of both archivists and researchers to this new reference tool has been so positive that the entire glass negative collection is now being microfilmed.

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Film Archives in Scotland

The first film archive in Scotland was established in November 1976, under the sponsorship of the Scottish Film Council with staff provided by the government's Job Creation Scheme. The Council's Library at the time held approximately seven hundred cans of film, the contents of which were little known. A team of three persons, including an archivist, a technician and a clerk, first concentrated on the archival preservation of this material. Under guidelines directed by the Standing Committee on Archive Film in Scotland, the team began identifying and listing the collection as well as surveying for possible archival footage held in public areas. The general appeal for film more than fifty years old and contacts with proprietors and managers of cinemas soliciting locally made newsreels have been fruitful. Increased surveying and the necessary research into film and its sources has stretched the staff's capacity to the limit; indeed, research alone could be a full-time task were it not for the accumulated film material which still remains to be made available.

The research required to locate potential archival film footage has led to numerous interviews with persons formerly employed in the Scottish film industry. Their colourful accounts of the early days of filming have added another dimension to the history of the industry in Scotland. Even some of the vaguest references elicited have resulted in new acquisitions. For example, "A film made in the 1930s about some jute

machinery" led to a firm in Dundee which had deposited the material in a local museum. Extensive media coverage throughout Scotland has proven to be the most effective means of adding new material to the collection and confirmed the existence of considerable resources remaining in private hands. Once found, however, such films are not always easily acquired, for owners, understandably, are sometimes reluctant to part with the material. Success in this field will continue to depend upon the growing public awareness of the archive as the national home for Scottish film.

Film, of course, presents special archival problems, not least of all in the area of preservation. Often it requires cleaning and repairing before viewing is possible. Old film is frequently shrunken, creating projection difficulties, and if in negative form, a positive print must be made. Cellulose nitrate film, because it is subject to rapid decomposition, is naturally given priority in the film archive programme. Particularly in matters of preservation, the staff of the National Film Archive in London has been most helpful, advising on the nature and ramifications of the work.

Once film has been properly preserved, assuming it is identified, a detailed catalogue or "shot-listing" is made of each reel. This catalogue includes not only the actual subject of the film, but also a list of peripheral information which will be of use to a wide variety of researchers. Identification of personalities, places, dates, and events has not always been easy, and assistance has often been solicited from outside sources. The dating of wartime scenes has proven to be particularly difficult because censorship was in effect at the time. This sort of basic information is absolutely necessary for effective use of the material by researchers.

Although public access is the end of the archival process, there are numerous problems which hinder availability. Copyright questions, for example, arise when ownership is unclear. One of the greatest difficulties involves the provision of a viewable print, for it would be irresponsible to subject unique and fragile footage to the strains of the viewing table, however slight.

The entire venture is still in the process of developing, and of defining its role in the Scottish community. Many problems remain to be resolved, not least of which involves the fact that filming of present-day events is no longer a cinema activity. Videotape is replacing ordinary motion picture film through television. This is obviously a future source of archival footage with, unfortunately, very different problems of preservation.

The Scottish Film Council's archive is essentially a collection relating to the people and past of Scotland. While the project is reluctant to refuse material, some selectivity is essential. For example, "home movies" are not included, and feature films are sent to the National Film Archive in London where work in this field is already well established. For the present, film archive work in Scotland is concerned with locating and preserving threatened film material, and making it available to anyone interested.

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Clearing-House of Microfilming Projects

The International Archival Affairs Committee (IAA) of the Society of American Archivists is proceeding with plans to establish a clearing-house of microfilming projects in foreign archives.

The project was inspired by strong urgings from several repositories engaged in microfilming archival materials abroad, reflecting the problem of mounting expenses,