

# Hidden Treasures

## **The UK Audiovisual Archive Strategic Framework**

ABL Cultural Consulting / Paul Habbeshon Associates  
UK Audiovisual Archive Strategy Steering Group

Funded by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council

March 2004

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*The Battle of the Somme* (1916)  
(Imperial War Museum Film & Video Archive)

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## Executive Summary



Listening and viewing service, British Library Sound Archive

For over one hundred years, moving images and sound have made a significant contribution to our national culture. The existence and availability of this audiovisual heritage from the past and the present has a profound impact on our understanding of who we are, where we live and our place in history.

Moving images and sounds vividly complement and contrast with written primary sources as a vital source of historical evidence. The UK's publicly funded audiovisual archives and collections contain factual and fictional productions made by professionals and amateurs, recording everyday life and work, as well as celebrations, ceremonies and our creativity.

The rapidly expanding audiovisual world touches virtually all aspects of our lives in one form or another, providing a unique contribution to our heritage. It 'crosscuts' several sectors, existing simultaneously as an industry, a cultural activity, a leisure pursuit and as part of the knowledge, information and heritage sectors. Films, television and radio programmes, videos, music and spoken word recordings have become part of everyday life for most people as technological change has widened accessibility. Most recently, the 'digital revolution' is having a transformative effect on the audiovisual world, creating new and less expensive ways of making, recording and saving sounds and images (such as Digital Video, CD-ROM, DVD) and also offering new opportunities for distributing them, through cable and satellite broadcasting and broadband internet.

However, despite (or perhaps, because of) the familiarity and all-pervasiveness of audiovisual culture, the status of moving images and sounds as heritage assets remains insecure. No single body has policy responsibilities for public sector audiovisual archives and a range of interests are involved, including: the

Department for Culture Media and Sport; the UK Film Council; the Museums, Archives and Libraries Council; and the National Archives. The lack of strategy for national and regional planning has led to insufficient levels of funding and investment for core activities and a genuine concern that a significant amount of material could be lost.

In October 2002 the *Hidden Treasures* conference, organised by the Film Archive Forum, the British Library Sound Archive and the National Council on Archives, was designed to draw attention to these problems. It was attended by representatives from all parts of the audiovisual archives community: the major UK institutions - the British Film Institute's National Film and Television Archive, the British Library Sound Archive, the Imperial War Museum, the BBC and ITN, the national collections of Scotland and Wales and the Northern Ireland Film and Television Commission; the audiovisual archives in the English regions; educational bodies, libraries, record offices and community groups with collections of moving images, oral history, spoken word and music.

The conference highlighted the fact that although moving image and sound archives have separate histories of development they share the same philosophies of preservation and access and they work for the same wide community of public users. They also face similar challenges and obstacles with collections that can be fragile, expensive to make safe and often subject to rapid decay. Much material remains at risk and much of that which is preserved can be difficult to see or hear, compared with more traditional forms of heritage provision in the libraries, museums and archives domains.

Lack of public funding to provide access to a properly preserved and documented heritage is a very real concern. For example, the eight publicly funded audiovisual archives in the English regions received a total of only £256,308 in core funding from the UK Film Council's regional partnership agencies in 2003/04 to conserve and make accessible their collections. As an investment in a service that aims to provide coverage for the whole of England, this compares very poorly with the annual budget of around one million pounds for one, medium-to-large county record office.

*Hidden Treasures* threw into sharp relief the contrast between how highly the public values the material held by audiovisual archives and the fragility of the support base upon which they rest. Moving images and sounds have a huge power to involve and engage people, offering the prospect of a more direct experience that can help to foster a sense of place, time and community identity.

Film, video and audio materials contribute new dimensions to the learning process and they provide a source of inspiration for creative work in broadcasting, in the leisure and heritage industries and in the arts and education. Innovative access to such works can help support key government policies on social cohesion, lifelong learning and the creative industries.

Developments such as broadband, digitisation and falling technology costs represent opportunities for a unified audiovisual archive sector. Investment in digital networks will enable it to bring this heritage to a much wider range of public users through interactive catalogues and specially created teaching and learning resources devoted to the histories of communities, events, people and places. But our ability to make use of our audiovisual heritage in this way will only be possible if there is a strong and sustainable network of audiovisual archives, expert in the preservation of this valuable material and committed to delivering to the public the full educational and cultural benefits of these collections.

To break the cycle of under-funding and under-development of our public sector audiovisual archives requires urgent action. We hope that the impact of these issues, raised at the *Hidden Treasures* conference and further developed in this report, will be felt in the outcomes of current policy initiatives and debates such as the Archives Task Force and the UK Film Council's reviews of film heritage provision. We believe this is the moment for a step change to enable this growing sector to make a full contribution to the UK's cultural and educational life at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

**Key recommendation to the national strategic and funding bodies:**

It is recommended that:

- *the national strategic and funding bodies - the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, the UK Film Council and their regional partnership agencies - should work with the audiovisual archives sector to develop a national framework of institutional provision in which national, regional and local responsibilities are respectively understood and well resourced, with the aim of ensuring comprehensive coverage for audiovisual archive activity throughout the United Kingdom.*

## **Key recommendations to the audiovisual archives sector:**

It is recommended that:

- *the public sector moving image and sound archives work together to develop a coherent sector as a mechanism for strategic planning and delivery of services;*
- *the audiovisual archives in the public sector collectively define their holdings as a distributed national collection more widely accessible to diverse communities of users;*
- *the audiovisual archives collectively assert a public right of access to the distributed national collection for non-commercial use;*
- *the sector develops a strategic overview of the resourcing of preservation and access, consisting of a rigorous analysis of need, mapping of provision, and development of a centres of expertise;*
- *the audiovisual archives agree their collecting responsibilities to ensure that gaps and overlaps are minimised;*
- *the sector adopts a principle of moving towards compatible documentation systems;*
- *the audiovisual archives sector develops a representative body - an audiovisual archives forum - as a mechanism for strategic planning and delivery of services.*

In particular, the forum should:

- *develop and implement an advocacy and communications strategy for the sector;*
- *further encourage the development of training programmes relevant to the needs of moving image and sound archivists;*
- *seek funding for the post of Audiovisual Archives Development Officer, to take forward sector development and advocacy work.*

# 1. Introduction and overview of the audiovisual archives sector



*South: Sir Ernest Shackleton's Glorious Epic of the Antarctic* (1919)  
(NFTVA)

## Background

This report, funded by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), was commissioned in November 2002 from ABL Cultural Consulting by a steering group whose membership was drawn from the public sector audiovisual archives and included representatives from the British Library Sound Archive and the Film Archive Forum (FAF). The final report was drawn up by Paul Habbeshon Associates.

The aim was to consider the issues underlying the present position of the UK audiovisual archives community and propose a strategic framework to address:

- the lack of an integrated national and regional infrastructure for audiovisual archival material;
- the need to promote these resources to new and existing communities of users;
- the need for moving image archives and sound archives to develop a unified position to engage policy makers and funding bodies from the public and private sectors with this agenda.

The report was prepared by analysing both recent and past policy papers and strategies relating to audiovisual archiving issues, followed by a series of structured consultations with key stakeholders.

The word 'sector' is used throughout this document when referring to the audiovisual archive sector. It is recognised, however, that MLA refers to the audiovisual archives as a 'sub-domain', given that archives are a domain of the museums, libraries and archives sector.



## **Structure and function of the report**

The report lays out the context and background to an audiovisual archive strategy for the UK before setting out the strategic framework itself. The concluding chapter makes a number of key recommendations which propose actions that are essential to the implementation of the framework.

We hope the report will be of importance to funding bodies and stakeholders, to museums, archives and libraries, to arts organisations, to the wider education and broadcast media sectors, and to all who wish to have a greater understanding of how moving image and sound fit within the national picture on archives.

## **Audiovisual archives and collections**

### *The nature of audiovisual collections*

The collections held by audiovisual archives comprise recordings of sound and images and, for the purposes of this document, are taken to include all such holdings in publicly funded institutions. *A list of existing repositories with significant audiovisual holdings is provided at Appendix 3.* There is a great deal of audiovisual archival material outside the public sector, and much of the content of this strategy relates to this material. This strategy is, however, a tool with which public sector heritage professionals, funding bodies and planners can move towards coherent audiovisual archive provision across the United Kingdom. It is not intended, therefore, to address the needs and requirements of the private sector where they differ from the public sector, although it is important to recognise that material held privately and significant to the national heritage may not be receiving the appropriate level of archival care.

Sound and moving image material (including films, videotapes, DVDs, wax cylinders, vinyl records, sound tapes, CDs, MiniDiscs, CD-ROMs and Laser Discs) can be grouped into four types of resource, defined by the purpose for which it was originally created.

These are:

- published material, including phonograms, videograms and films produced for public screening;
- broadcast material, including radio and television productions;
- unpublished material, including unpublished recordings of musical and artistic performances, oral history recordings, dialect recordings, that are

commissioned to record a particular process or activity, film rushes and other original sound and moving image material used in the publication of published products;

- amateur material, including moving image and sound materials produced for private and non-commercial use, such as home movies and home videos.

Audiovisual collections, formally and informally constituted, can be broadly divided into four groups:

- commercial libraries run by broadcasters and production companies generating income through the ownership and exploitation of rights (including the commercial activities of some publicly funded organisations like the BBC and the Open University);
- specialist public sector repositories, concerned primarily with the custody and preservation of, and access to, the history of our times as recorded in moving images and sounds;
- cultural heritage organisations, such as museums, libraries and archives, that care for or use audiovisual material as part of their role and overall purpose;
- private collectors (who may or may not provide access to their material and who may or may not own the rights to their collections).

There is a significant difference between archives and collections with a commercial purpose and those with a public purpose. The latter can be broadly characterised as spending public money to develop and preserve a publicly owned resource for the public benefit. However, in the main and unlike their commercial counterparts, they do not own the intellectual and property copyrights to that material.

There is a wide range of audiovisual archives, from major national collections to community-based holdings. The policies of the national collecting bodies, such as the British Film Institute's **National Film and Television Archive**, the **British Library Sound Archive**, the **Imperial War Museum Film and Video Archive**, the **National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales** and the **Scottish Screen Archive**, are based upon the acquisition of material regarded as being of national importance. The desire to preserve audiovisual records of regional or local significance which do not meet the criteria of the national bodies has fuelled the growth of audiovisual archives in the regions and nations.

### *Moving image archives*

A regional film archive has been established in each English region except London. Scotland and Wales are each served by a national collecting body, complemented by the British Film Institute's National Film and Television Archive, an organisation with a UK-wide collecting remit. The development of these organisations has resulted in a set of national and regional organisations with slightly differing orientations and funding streams.

In recognition of the existence of this network of archives, the **Film Archive Forum** (FAF) was established in 1987. It provides opportunities for all of the national and regional film archives to come together to share information and to develop a joint approach to film archive policy and professional practice. *A list of member archives of the Film Archive Forum is given in Appendix 3.* This organisation has made significant progress since its inception and worked to strengthen successfully the sector.

Key achievements include:

- successfully making a case for, and seeing the establishment of, a film archive in every English region;
- agreeing a set of standards for the establishment of regional archives;
- support for the development of the first post-graduate training course in film archiving;
- developing and implementing a lobbying strategy for the represented organisations.

### *Sound archives*

In comparison with moving image archives, there is a less comprehensive pattern of organisational provision across the United Kingdom. Sound-based archival material can be found in a wide variety of locations, and is cared for in a variety of contexts by people with differing levels of professional training.

The major national bodies that operate in the UK with responsibilities for sound have relatively sustainable structures and funding levels that support the present scale of their operations. It should be noted, however, that the level of available resources leaves little scope for significant growth in the collections.

The organisations' funding levels also limit their ability to undertake large-scale digitisation of their holdings, invest in the technologies required to enhance significantly public access and to fund adequately urgent preservation work.

Beyond the major collections, sound material can be found in a many different places. Repositories for sound archives in the regions include museums, libraries, record offices and universities. In some cases, bodies that are not specifically designed to manage sound archives are placed in the position of being the only organisations willing to undertake this task. There is also a significant amount of oral history material in private ownership. Some sound archives are formed by people with an interest in history, and in the stories reflected in the material but without a wider understanding of how to manage an archive or the resources to do so. This dispersal of material means that it is very difficult to access information about the content of recordings or their location.

#### *Cross-media collecting bodies*

There are a number of public bodies active in the preservation of archival material in both sound and moving image form. The most notable of these are the **National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales** and the **BBC**. Other bodies of this kind include the **British Film Institute**, **Imperial War Museum** and the **Wessex Film and Sound Archive**. These bodies demonstrate that there is a considerable degree of overlap in areas of professional practice between sound and moving image archivists and they also indicate that the public demand for access to their collections is not specific to either type of media.

#### **Current audiovisual archive activity**

Audiovisual archives feed back their holdings to the nation in a wide variety of forms, serving a multiplicity of audiences and access needs. Such archives range from commercial libraries operated by broadcasters and production companies (including the commercial activities of some publicly funded organisations like the BBC and the Open University); repositories with a full public sector remit, such as the moving image archives represented by the Film Archive Forum; cultural heritage organisations, such as museums, libraries and archives, that care for or use audiovisual material as part of their role and overall purpose; and occasionally private collectors who may provide access to collections with significant regional or national value. The range of all these collections is enormous; recent surveys of audiovisual archive provision in the UK indicate that there may be 2,000 or more such collections, varying hugely in size, access function, preservation needs, and funding needs.

It is argued later in this document that we should view all of the materials held in the public sector audiovisual archives as serving to create a **distributed national collection**. No one collection can represent the full breadth and diversity of the nation; instead, such collections collectively provide what the nation needs. The examples below illustrate the range of contributions to the distributed national collection:

### *National archives*

There are four national film archives in the United Kingdom: the British Film Institute's **National Film and Television Archive**, the **Scottish Screen Archive**, the **National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales**, and the **Imperial War Museum Film & Video Archive**. There is no film archive in Northern Ireland, although the **Northern Ireland Film and Television Commission's Digital Film Archive** performs a key access function. All four of the national archives are members of the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAP).

There are five national sound collections, the **British Library Sound Archive** (formerly the National Sound Archive), the **Imperial War Museum Sound Archive**, the **National Library of Scotland** and the **School of Scottish Studies Audiovisual Archive** serving Scotland, and the above-mentioned **National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales**, the only national public sector body to fulfil a complete moving image and sound archiving remit.

### *Regional archives*

The English regional film archives serve as the focus for public sector moving image services in each of their regions. The eight archives are: the **East Anglian Film Archive**, the **Media Archive for Central England**, the **Northern Region Film and Television Archive**, the **North West Film Archive**, the **South East Film and Video Archive**, the **South West Film and Television Archive**, the **Wessex Film and Sound Archive** and the **Yorkshire Film Archive**. There is no regional film archive for London at present.

A number of small film and sound collections are located within county record offices. The **Dorset Film and Sound Archive** is part of Dorset Record Office, and collects film and videotape material relating to the county. The **Essex Sound & Video Archive**, based within the Essex Record Office in Chelmsford, is a collection of sound and video recordings covering many aspects of local history in the county. It includes oral history recordings, documentary videos of local interest, and recordings from BBC Essex radio. The important **Charles**

**Parker Archive** is held at Birmingham City Archives. The **North West Sound Archive** is one of the few regional archives devoted solely to sound; it holds some 100,000 items relating to North West England, including programmes produced by BBC Radio Manchester and BBC Radio Lancashire. Some independent film archives have established a county-wide service, without being able to provide a full public sector moving image archive service, for which they may co-operate with the relevant regional film archive. Examples include the **Cornish Film and Video Archive**, **Lincolnshire Film Archive** and the **Staffordshire Film Archive**.

### *Higher Education*

Higher education is an important home for audiovisual archives. A number of the major public sector moving image archives are located within universities and colleges (for example, the South East Film & Video Archive is part of the University of Brighton). Smaller collections include: The **Sudan Archive** within Durham University Library, a collection of amateur films relating to Sudanese life, 1920s-1960s. The **Institute of Communication Studies**, University of Leeds, holds comprehensive television news broadcast coverage for the Gulf War, all UK general elections since 1971 (The Electoral Broadcasting Archive), and the Kosovo War Archive dating March-May 1999. The **Glasgow University Media Group Television News Archive** holds television news broadcasts from all channels for the period January-June 1975, relating to its published research on this period. The **Cambridge South Asian Archive**, Centre of South Asian Studies, University of Cambridge, is a collection of amateur film taken by Britons in India and South Asia, from the 1920s to the 1950s. Long-term conservation is conducted in partnership with the NFTVA. Sheffield University houses the **National Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language**, which includes audiovisual materials among its collection relating to English folklore. The University of Surrey's **Animation Research Centre** has ambitions to establish itself as a national collection for the animated film.

### *Charities*

Charitable trusts hold some significant audiovisual collections. The **Wellcome Trust Medical Film and Video Library** is the nation's chief collection of medical, biomedical and veterinary films, including subject areas such as physiology, neurosciences, cell biology, parasitology, and the history of medicine. The **Barnardo's Film & Photographic Archive** contains films holdings on video going back to 1905, focussing on children, child care and education.

### *Museums*

Museums with significant audiovisual collections include the **Museum of Welsh Life**, which has material going back to the 1930s and specialises in fieldwork recordings from the 1960s onwards on various aspects of the folk life of Wales; the **Ulster Folk and Transport Museum**, dedicated to illustrating the way of life and traditions of the people of Northern Ireland, has a notable audiovisual collection, including material from BBC Northern Ireland, a sound archive, and the Ulster Dialect and Linguistic Diversity Archive; the **Scottish Life Archive** collection of agricultural films in the Royal Museum of Scotland; and the **National Motor Museum Film and Video Library**, which has a major collection of motoring films, chiefly from industrial sources.

### *Oral history programmes*

There has been a proliferation of oral history collections in recent years. In particular, the Heritage Lottery Fund has made a significant impact in creating oral history programmes which are developing into archive resources. **The Living Archive** in Milton Keynes, set up with funding from the HLF and English Partnerships, and based on local people's memories, includes taped reminiscences, songs and music, radio and video recordings. Oxford University hosts the **British Hinduism Oral History Project** (The Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies), funded by the HLF, which has recorded the experiences of Hindus who have settled in Britain. Other, well-established oral history collections include the **BECTU History Project**, formed by the Broadcasting Entertainment Cinema Theatre Union, and housed in the *bfi* National Library, an oral history programme recording the life experiences of veterans from the film and television industries; the **Mental Health Testimony Archive** created by Mental Health Media, and housed in the British Library Sound Archive, where former patients under the institutionalised mental health policy of the past give their often harrowing stories; and the **BeMe (Black & Ethnicity Minority Experience) Project**, using audio and videotape oral history recordings to record and preserve the histories of African-Caribbean and Asian communities who have settled in Wolverhampton since the 1940s.

### *Television and newsfilm collections*

The **BBC's** many collections, at regional and national level, form a major part of the national audiovisual heritage. The BBC has a full preservation programme, and while access is primarily for BBC production staff, the BBC increasingly uses the public sector audiovisual archives as access points for its collection. The **British Film Institute** co-ordinates access to BBC television programmes,

which are accessible through the *bfi* or the regional film archive sector. The British Library Sound Archive performs a similar function for BBC radio output. The BBC has recently announced its **Creative Archive** initiative, which will begin releasing selected BBC archive materials online from the end of 2004. It already uses the internet to provide access to parts of its archive through such BBC sites as **On this Day** and **Nation on Film**.

A number of regional BBC and commercial television collections are now preserved partly or wholly by one of the UK's public sector moving image archives. The **South West Film and Television Archive** is built upon the Television South West Film and Video Library. The **East Anglian Film Archive** has Anglia Television and BBC East output. The **Northern Region Film and Television Archive** holds news items from the BBC *Look North* collection and varied programming from Tyne Tees Television. The **Scottish Screen Archive** has material from Grampian Television and Scottish Television. The *bfi* records a proportion of the output of national commercial television by agreement with ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5.

Although commercial film libraries lie outside the immediate concerns of this document, nevertheless they represent a considerable proportion of the nation's audiovisual heritage, and some recent private-public initiatives have brought parts of these collections into public view. The **British Pathe** newsreel collection (now a part of the ITN Archive) has been made freely available online through a New Opportunities Fund grant; and the **ITN Archive** itself is releasing 3,000 hours of newsfilm content to UK higher and further education by 2006, with funding from the CSR2 Digitisation programme, managed by the Joint Information Systems Committee.

#### *Radio collections*

The principal collections are held by the **BBC**, both centrally in London (for national networks' output) and regionally (for local radio output and for Scottish Welsh, and Northern Ireland programming). The **National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales** has comprehensive holdings of radio broadcasting in Wales, and the **British Library Sound Archive** includes 70,000 arts and feature programmes not kept by the BBC, together with archives deposited by commercial channels and independent production companies. Radio material is also held by higher education institutions (e.g. **Bournemouth Media School**) and by local government-funded archives including the **Wessex Film and Sound Archive** and the **North West Sound Archive**.



## 2. The Strategic Development Context



*Eriskay: A Poem of Remote Lives* (1935)

(Scottish Screen Archive)

The strategic landscape which forms the backdrop to the development of the audiovisual archives sector needs to be considered under the headings of legislation, policy and funding.

### **The legal and legislative framework**

The current framework in which the sector works is characterised by the absence of comprehensive legislation. The lack of statutory provision places the audiovisual archives and the heritage they care for in a position of great vulnerability.

The lack of statutory deposit legislation covering audiovisual materials hampers the ability of the institutions in their attempts to collect and preserve a rational and representative cross-section of this area of heritage.

As part of the consultative process recently organised by the National Archives about a statutory framework for records management, a number of bodies have expressed the need for a broader definition of ‘records’ at the local and regional levels, extending beyond local government records to include audiovisual material (much of which is in the form of private depositions). A related view is that a statutory service model should take into account the wider role of archives as custodians of the local and community memory and facilitators of access to those collections. In both respects, provision for audiovisual records under the umbrella of records management could be a significant step forward towards ensuring that local and regional archive services are better able to care for audiovisual records in the future.

### *Legal deposit*

Publishers of books are at present obliged by law to deposit copies of works with legal deposit libraries. The Legal Deposit Libraries Act of 2003 has provided primary enabling legislation to cover electronic publications and other non-print materials, such as websites, microfilm and CD-ROMs. Implementation of these provisions is subject to secondary legislation by Regulations. However, there is no equivalent arrangement that covers the publishers and producers of audiovisual material, although UK-distributed phonograms are comprehensively deposited in the British Library Sound Archive under voluntary arrangements supported by the British Phonographic Industry. There are other examples of such voluntary arrangements.

Terrestrial television broadcasters are obliged to archive their products. The BBC manages this in-house and contracts with the British Film Institute and the British Library Sound Archive to maintain collections of material for access purposes. Terrestrial television broadcasters currently archive selected output through a contract with the *bfi*.

There is much material, however, that is not deposited, so the collections held by repositories are far from comprehensive. Furthermore, depositors generally make no contribution to the costs of acquisition and ongoing care, and grant few rights to exploit the materials. Consequently the collections held for the public benefit are incomplete, often of low quality and restricted in the way in which they can be used.

### *Copyright*

The other area of legislation that impacts on the audiovisual archive sector is copyright. Audiovisual archives are not at statutory liberty to provide unlimited access to their holdings. Audiovisual materials are covered by copyright legislation which can restrict their usage, especially in commercial applications. Copyright law as it applies to audiovisual materials is particularly complex.

All of these aspects make providing access to audiovisual archive collections potentially difficult and costly.

### **The policy environment**

No single body has policy responsibilities for public sector audiovisual archives and a range of interests are involved. The main bodies involved are:

### *The Department for Culture, Media and Sport*

This central government department has responsibility for cultural heritage. The DCMS directly funds national institutions, including the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, the British Library, the UK Film Council and the Imperial War Museum. It provides an overall strategic framework within which its agencies develop sector specific responses. It has policy responsibility for the organisations which distribute money from the National Lottery to the good causes, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund. The overall DCMS policy framework emphasises the promotion of wider access, lifelong learning and social cohesion, together with modernising service delivery and putting consumers first.

### *Devolved Administrations*

Cultural policy has been devolved to the Welsh Assembly, the Scottish Parliament and the Northern Ireland Office. Cultural policy in the Nations is not, therefore, necessarily compatible with policy developed in London. The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council is engaged in extensive discussions with the devolved administrations and is seeking to develop a shared approach to cultural provision. The UK Film Council provides a small annual sum to its partner screen agencies in the nations for specific film activities.

The devolved administration in Wales provides funding for an integrated sound and moving image archive through the National Library of Wales. In Scotland, the Executive funds the national agencies: Scottish Screen (moving image archives) and the National Library of Scotland (sound and moving image collections). The School of Scottish Studies audiovisual archive is funded by the higher education sector.

### *The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council*

MLA (previously Re:source) is a non-departmental public body with strategic responsibility for museums, libraries and archives. It was created by the Government to replace sector-specific organisations and to develop a collaborative and 'cross-cutting' agenda for the three domains, addressing, in particular, access and learning, social inclusion and cultural diversity. CyMAL, the Wales equivalent of MLA created in 2004, provides a similar focus for archival development. Audiovisual archives are well placed to contribute to this agenda, by providing rich and accessible content through existing structures.

MLA has created and funded a network of Museum, Library and Archive Councils in England that provide strategic leadership at a regional level.

#### *The Archives Task Force*

In 2002, MLA was asked by the DCMS to review and analyse the state of the UK's archives. The Archives Task Force has completed a year-long consultation process and will deliver its final report in the spring of 2004, including recommendations in the following key areas: connectivity and networks; centres of expertise; training and development; modernisation; and the support framework for national and local archives.

#### *The UK Film Council*

The Council was established by the Government in 2000 as the strategic agency for developing the film industry and film culture in the UK. Its responsibilities fall into six main areas: UK film in the global market; development and production; distribution and exhibition; training and skills; lifelong learning; and cinema heritage. It provides leadership and funding for the British Film Institute (including the National Film and Television Archive). The Council's Regional Investment Fund for England (RIFE) is the mechanism for supporting the nine English regional screen agencies.

#### *Regional Screen Agencies*

Like the regional agencies set up by MLA, the regional screen agencies in England work in geographical areas which mirror the Government Office and Regional Development Agency network. They support film, television and new media through investment and partnership with regional bodies, including the eight English regional film archives.

#### *National practitioners*

Practitioner organisations with a UK-wide remit include:

- BBC
- British Film Institute
- British Library Sound Archive
- Imperial War Museum

These organisations all operate with distinctive missions and within policy frameworks developed in conjunction with their respective governing bodies. It is

clear that a determination between these agencies to work together within the framework of an audiovisual archives strategy would have a significant national impact, especially because of the combined scale of their operations and their experience.

#### *National Council on Archives*

The NCA is an umbrella organisation with a membership drawn from organisations across the custodial community. The NCA provides a wide range of advisory and co-ordinatory services and has played a significant role in developing the *UK Audiovisual Archives Strategic Framework*.

#### *Society of Archivists*

The SoA is a professional, membership body which promotes archival interests, including training and research. The Society has a network of regional and subject groups, including a Film and Sound Group which has a particular importance in respect of non-specialist repositories.

### **The funding environment**

As outlined in the policy environment section above, a range of national and regional bodies and agencies are involved in 'core' funding the audiovisual archives: the DCMS; the devolved administrations; the UK Film Council and the regional screen agencies.

Other important 'core' funding bodies are:

#### *Higher Education*

Many of the English regional moving image archives have homes within Higher Education, such as the South East Film & Video Archive at the University of Brighton and the North West Film Archive at Manchester Metropolitan University. All of the audiovisual archives, through partnerships with universities, can potentially benefit from the competitive grant schemes offered by the Arts & Humanities Research Board.

#### *Joint Information Systems Committee*

The Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) is an advisory body for Further and Higher Education that provides strategic guidance, advice and opportunities to use Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the support of teaching, learning, research and administration. JISC provides core funding to

the British Universities Film & Video Council which chairs and provides a secretariat for the Film Archive Forum.

#### *Local Authorities*

Many Record Offices funded by local authorities contain sound and moving image archive materials and collections. Local authorities also directly fund some regional audiovisual archives. For example, the Wessex Film and Sound Archive is funded and administered by Hampshire Record Office.

Other important funding agencies which have contributed funds to audiovisual collections on a project basis (including competitive bidding programmes) are:

#### *Heritage Lottery Fund*

The HLF distributes money raised by the National Lottery and has provided substantial capital and project funding for audiovisual archives, collections and projects through its grant programmes (including an associated but separate programme, the Local Heritage Initiative (LHI). For example, the HLF has supported the development of new premises for the East Anglian Film Archive, the North West Film Archive and the Yorkshire Film Archive.

#### *New Opportunities Fund/Community Fund*

The NOF awarded Lottery grants to education, health and environment projects. The NOF-Digitise Fund has provided funding to archives to create web-based resources using audiovisual collections. This includes the British Film Institute's *screenonline*. (Following the 2003 Lottery Review, the DCMS announced that the NOF will merge with the Community Fund to create a new distributor).

#### *Broadcasters*

The BBC funds the British Film Institute to record materials off-air for access purposes only. Independent terrestrial broadcasters (ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5) fund the *bfi* to archive a proportion of their output. The British Library Sound Archive works in partnership with the BBC Sound Archive to provide a public access service, funded by the British Library.

#### *Arts Council of England*

The national development agency for the arts, the Council distributes money from the Government and the National Lottery through central programmes and a network of regional offices. Some forms of audiovisual collecting fall within the

Council's remit, such as artists' work in film and video, creative sound work and digital artwork.

### *Regional Development Agencies*

The RDAs exist to promote economic development and regeneration in the English regions. They operate as non-departmental public bodies. The RDAs are the lead regional bodies for co-ordinating activities around inward investment, workforce skills, improving business competition and social, physical and economic regeneration. They can also provide funding towards regional regeneration activities in conjunction with other regional partners. The first significant example of RDA involvement with the audiovisual sector is found in Yorkshire Forward's support for the development of the Yorkshire Film Archive from 2003.

### 3. Developing the audiovisual archives sector



*CWS Canning Factory* (c.1930)

(East Anglian Film Archive)

Given this diverse landscape of policy-makers and funding bodies, there is now a need for audiovisual archives to begin to work together - for the first time - and to begin to define shared policies and a shared strategy.

Despite the range of audiovisual archive activity in the UK, the publicly funded bodies and collections can be seen to share a number of broad characteristics:

- they are in receipt of public funding;
- they manage collections that have been originated, collected and/or preserved with public funds for the public benefit;
- they share a commitment to preserving their collections and;
- they share a commitment to providing access to their collections for the general benefit of society.

The collections managed by these organisations:

- are rich in fragile analogue media, which can be difficult and expensive to maintain;
- can only be accessed via machines and human skills that, in some cases, are becoming rare;
- are increasingly being originated in digital formats (for which the conservation needs are not yet fully understood).

The material contained in these archives:

- is time-based and difficult to document;
- can be copied to other media;



- often has a relatively high financial value.

#### *A shared mission*

These shared characteristics, together with the similar challenges to development facing both moving image archives and sound archives, provide compelling reasons for regarding these archives as a sector.

They share the same philosophies of preservation and access and they work for the same wide community of public users. They are run by professionals who share the same core values. The benefits to be gained from lobbying and advocating collectively far outweigh the disadvantages in acting from within separate sectors.

#### **Key development themes**

A number of key themes emerge from the broad context as crucial to the development of the audiovisual archives sector.

#### *Preservation*

The desire to preserve material in the original format, where possible and appropriate, has strongly influenced the ethos of the moving image archivist. This stance arises from two main considerations:

- there is an inevitable loss of data that occurs when content is transferred from the original format and this can also be true in the digital domain;
- there is an ethical drive to respect and preserve the creative intention of the film maker.

With respect to moving image archives the imperative to preserve format applies in a number of areas:

- the preservation of the full range of types of media used to hold audiovisual material including digital formats;
- the preservation of the machinery necessary to read these formats;
- the preservation of the human expertise necessary to conserve the formats and to operate the machinery for reading them.

Moving image archivists have the additional responsibility of preserving, where possible and appropriate, the ability to see the film in a form that recreates the original experience. To archive a cinema film in such a way as to make it

impossible to recreate the cinema experience would represent poor preservation. For this reason, moving image archivists have to date tended to maintain an 'analogue to analogue' approach to preservation, though not necessarily for access purposes.

Quite appropriately, digitisation is regarded by sound archivists as the correct preservation strategy for material created in analogue formats as well as 'born-digital' material. Common worldwide standards are used for archival preservation applications where un-compressed data is required.

The difference between the approaches to preservation between sound and moving image archivists are largely due to the earlier adoption of digital technology by the audio industry. It may well be that new digital cinema technologies will begin to change the approach of the moving image archivist.

It must be emphasised, however, that any differences are in the approach to the task of preservation rather than in the imperative to ensure that content is not lost.

Recent audiovisual archive preservation projects, all funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, include:

- the **National Film and Television Archive's** film preservation and collections management project with funding of over ten million pounds from the HLF;
- new vaults and premises for the **Yorkshire Film Archive**;
- new vaults and premises for the **East Anglian Film Archive** within the new Norwich Record Office;
- collections management and tackling cataloguing backlog for the **Scottish Screen Archive**;
- the preservation of 300 films in the collection of the **South East Film & Video Archive**.

#### *Access*

Audiovisual archive material can be accessed in a variety of ways:

- on-site, subject to the preservation status of the collection and the facilities of the archive;
- online, although this mode is still in its infancy;

- screenings and presentations, permanent and temporary public displays;
- content packaging and merchandising, such as videotape, DVD or CD releases;
- broadcasting - television and radio programmes which use archive material.

The demand for access to sound and moving images of our past comes from a wide spectrum of users: school children, students and academics, family and local historians, cultural heritage professionals seeking to reinforce traditional interpretation techniques, from producers of broadcast programmes and a wide variety of special interest groups among the general public.

Examples of types of audiovisual archive access activity include:

- in 2001 the **National Film and Television Archive** organised 1,350 on-site research viewings, provided 20% of all films shown at the National Film Theatre, booked out 2,867 film titles to independent film venues, and supplied 40% of *bfi* videotape and DVD releases;
- in 2002, over 100,000 people enjoyed **North West Film Archive** footage in Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Cheshire through screenings, exhibitions and presentations;
- several of the English regional film archives have all contributed material to the BBC's television series and accompanying website, *Nation on Film*; the **Scottish Screen Archive** has contributed to the equivalent *Scotland on Film*, now on its third series on BBC Scotland;
- the regional film archives each have strong relationships with local broadcasters, which have resulted in regional television series e.g. the **East Anglian Film Archive** and the popular Anglia Television series *The Way We Were*;
- over 75,000 visitors saw the **South East Film & Video Archive's** *Kiss and Kill* exhibition on Brighton and cinema at Brighton Museum & Art Gallery, 2002;
- during 2003, the **British Library** mounted a public exhibition visited by over 33,000 people, celebrating fifty years of the popular music charts by providing self-service public access to all 914 number one hits from the holdings of its Sound Archive;
- the **Moving History** website, with video clips from Film Archive Forum members, has had 20,000 online visits in its first five months;

- the **Scottish Screen Archive** has issued twenty-five videos for public sale, including *Dundee on Film*, *Seawards the Great Ships* and *Life in the Orkneys*;
- the **Imperial War Museum Sound Archive** has organised online exhibitions of its recordings, on themes such as the Spanish Civil War, the Battle of Britain, and Greenham Common.

Levels of demand for content will significantly increase in the short to medium term, if the sector can exploit the opportunities provided by:

- the appeal of audiovisual material and how it can best meet the needs of different users, such as lifelong learners and special interest groups;
- the increase of public access to the internet and the expectations of rich content;
- the rapid spread of broadband and;
- the increasing awareness of the contribution that audiovisual material can make to significant parts of the National Curriculum.

### *Digitisation*

Digital technology is having a transformative effect on the audiovisual world. It is the vehicle for new forms of audiovisual production, some of which, offer opportunities for interaction and exchange. It is also providing new ways to distribute content, including the older forms of analogue content, through cable and satellite broadcasting and the internet. Whilst digitisation is not a substitute for preservation in analogue formats - film still needs to be preserved as film, at least at the moment - increasingly the digitisation of analogue audiovisual material and its distribution through digital networks is becoming both practical and affordable.

Much work is currently under way in the UK creating information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and digital content. It is being driven by government policies, chiefly through the DCMS and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and is designed to:

- upgrade the UK educational infrastructure;
- establish the UK as a leader in the new knowledge economy;
- promote wider access, learning, social inclusion and creativity.

As a result, there is a growing demand for high quality content on the part of a growing number of public sector content providers. Examples include:

- **The People's Network** - which provides internet access in all UK public libraries, including a range of educational and information material;
- **The National Grid for Learning** - includes a network of selected links to websites offering high quality content, as part of the Government's strategy to help learners and educators in the UK benefit from ICT;
- **Curriculum Online** - allocates funds to schools for the purchase of electronic content and also offers a portal to enable teachers to find content from both the public and private sectors that meets the needs of the National Curriculum;
- **BBC Digital Curriculum** - a free online service due to start in 2006, providing interactive resources covering key elements of the school curriculum;
- **Culture Online** - aims to increase access to and participation in the arts by bringing cultural organisations together with 'cutting edge' technical providers, using the internet, digital interactive television, mobile and wireless devices;
- **The National Archives Learning Curve**, an on-line teaching resource, structured to tie in with the History National Curriculum, provides a range of original sources including documents, photographs, film and sound recordings.

Audiovisual archives are well placed to contribute to this agenda, by providing rich and accessible content through existing structures and also through internet-based delivery mechanisms into which the New Opportunities Fund has already invested substantial funds. Digitisation and on-line access will therefore become extremely important to widening access to the audiovisual collections. This work has already started and recent notable developments include:

- **Moving History** - a guide to UK public sector Film and Television Archives, including the collections of the Film Archive Forum members (<http://www.movinghistory.ac.uk>);
- **Collect Britain** – a NOF-funded website providing public access to recordings of traditional music from Africa and of regional English dialects, from the holdings of the British Library Sound Archive (<http://www.collectbritain.co.uk>);

- **BBC Video Nation** - an online service from eighteen regional centres showing short digital films made by local people with the help of BBC producers (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/videonation>);
- **The Showcase** - a streaming media archive of radio, television, film and video programmes, oral history sound recordings, web projects and training materials organised by the Community Media Association. (<http://showcase.commedia.org.uk>);
- **The Digital Film Archive in Northern Ireland**, a collection of 55 hours of archive film made in the period 1897 - 2000 has been customised to support teaching in secondary schools (<http://www.digitalfilmarchive.net>).

Digitisation has much to offer audiovisual archives:

- a practical and affordable method to widen access;
- digital content can be copied easily and accurately and digital distribution has a global reach;
- there is a high level of demand for the kind of content that the sector can provide and;
- it supports Government policies and the agendas of funding bodies.

There are significant challenges arising from the impetus towards digitisation:

- licensing issues will constrain the extent to which proprietary content can be made more widely accessible at realistic costs;
- the legal regime for intellectual property rights (IPR) is currently changing rapidly, particularly with regard to the transmission and copying of digital content and;
- publishers and producers are wary of the proposals for controlled networking of electronic material between repositories which may be seen as endangering the commercial viability of their material.

### *Capacity and skills*

In the broad context of museums, libraries and archives, the audiovisual archives and collections 'sub-domain' is relatively small and workforce development is limited. To date, audiovisual archive training in the UK has been led by the MA in Film Archiving at the University of East Anglia. The Society of Archivists also supports training in audiovisual archiving through its diplomas and certificates.

## **Strategic Issues**

The mission of the audiovisual archives sector to preserve and make accessible the nation's moving image and sound heritage is confronted by some important issues and problems. At present, they serve as a barrier to progress and undermine the ability of these organisations to deliver the standards of service required by users. The areas of concern include:

### *An audiovisual archives sector*

There is a need to create a framework to encompass the diversity of the audiovisual archives sector - from specialist bodies, commercial organisations, museums and libraries to community groups, voluntary societies and individuals, the private and the public sectors. Despite the different characteristics and different histories of moving image and sound archives, the *UK Audiovisual Archives Strategic Framework* represents the first attempt to create a mission based on shared professional values and commitments to preservation, access and learning.

There is no representative body uniting moving image and sound archives. The Film Archive Forum brings together the publicly-funded national and regional moving image archives, but its membership does not include commercial film libraries and archives, nor are the public service broadcasting bodies represented. There is no similar body for sound archives and collections.

### *Policy framework*

There is a lack of a coherent policy framework for publicly funded audiovisual archives in the UK. At the national level, no single body has policy responsibilities for public sector audiovisual archives; rather a plethora of interests need to be taken into account including: the DCMS, the UK Film Council, the British Film Institute, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, the National Archives, and the British Library.

Publicly funded moving image archiving in England falls within the national policy remit of the UK Film Council. The Council funds the *bfi*, of which the National Film and Television Archive is a part, and the Regional Screen Agencies in England, which in turn provide core funding to the English regional film archives. There is no comparable institutional framework for supporting sound archives in the regions. The DCMS directly funds the British Library and its Sound Archive, which is the national sound collection.

The absence of statutory provision in the institutional framework of the sector also places the audiovisual archives in a precarious position.

#### *Legal deposit and copyright*

In the absence of legal deposit legislation for audiovisual material, the collections held by repositories are far from comprehensive. Furthermore, depositors generally make no contribution to the costs of acquisition and ongoing care, and grant few rights to exploit the materials. Consequently the collections held for the public benefit are incomplete and often of low quality. (An exception to this overall picture is the successful trade association-supported voluntary deposit of phonograms with the British Library Sound Archive, mentioned earlier in this document).

There are also restrictions in the way in which they can be used. Property and intellectual rights often involve third parties, especially with published or broadcast material, which is often of commercial value to the publishers or producers. Copying material, even for preservation or for educational purposes can infringe current copyright legislation.

#### *Saving the audiovisual heritage at risk*

A significant amount of material is in poor condition and deteriorating. There is also much material which is inaccessible to the public. Collections held by local and community groups or produced within arts and educational contexts are often not formally 'collected' and preservation is not necessarily regarded as a prime concern, nor one for which budgetary provision is available. 'Born-digital' cultural products, spanning business practice, education, creative work and leisure activity, are proliferating as new technology reduces costs. If such material is to be preserved (on a properly selective basis) in the public interest our audiovisual archives need resources to enable its identification, acquisition, preservation and access on a systematic basis.

#### *A tension between preservation and access?*

To some extent there is an inherent tension between preservation and access. Fragile analogue material deteriorates each time it is used and creating the temperature-controlled environment needed to preserve such items is expensive. The creation of duplicates and viewing/listening copies is regarded as essential by the audiovisual custodial community and is vital to the promotion of the widest possible access.



These two aspects of archival provision are complementary. Preservation is the platform for access. Without it, there will be nothing to access in the long-term. Conversely, public support for the allocation of funds for preservation will only be won by ensuring that access is maximised and the value of the material to be preserved is understood and recognised. Although these two facets of archival practice are intrinsic to each other and work to support each other, it is also true that the need to do both places very severe constraints upon poorly resourced organisations.

#### *The national map of audiovisual archive collections*

There is a need for a strategic overview of the sector in which its various activities at national, regional and local levels are mapped and a rational framework for delivery implemented. Such a 'needs analysis' would identify areas of overlap and gaps in coverage revealing any duplication of effort. It would also help to uncover material at the local level, much of which is currently collected in a variety of informal circumstances.

#### *A sustainable funding structure*

At all levels, national, regional and local, there are concerns about the low level of core funding for audiovisual archives and collections compared with 'traditional' archives and with other heritage and cultural activity. This contrasts with the value and importance placed upon audiovisual material by stakeholders as a highly accessible source of inspiration and entertainment and as a powerful tool in the promotion of social inclusion and lifelong learning.

For example, the eight publicly funded moving image archives in the English regions received a total of £256,308 in core funding from the UK Film Council's regional partnership agencies in 2003/04 (some core funding and in-kind support is received from other sources). As an investment in a service that aims to provide coverage for the whole of England, this compares very poorly with the annual budget of over one million pounds for a medium-sized county record office like Gloucester.

The major barrier to widening access to our audiovisual collections is a severe lack of investment in three areas: (i) capacity-building particularly in terms of staffing, (ii) the preservation of master material and the making of access copies; (iii) the digitisation of collections for use within on-line networks.

*Capacity and skills in audiovisual archives and collections*

Workforce development is limited by the relatively small scale of the sector and the low levels of funding associated with the provision of core services. Amongst the members of the Film Archive Forum, the eight publicly funded audiovisual archives in the English regions employ less than thirty-five people, including some posts which are 'project-funded' and of limited duration. In another example, a recent mapping survey of audiovisual collections in the South East of England revealed that 'out of 116 bodies, including specialist archives, museums, record offices and community-based groups, over 25% had no paid employees, and a further 65% had between one and five paid employees.' (*South East Audiovisual Archives Mapping and Strategy*, report by PHA/BOP for South East Museum Library and Archive Council, 2004)

There is a narrow recruitment pool for jobs involving scarce conservation skills. With only one recognised audiovisual archiving training course in the UK there is a significant shortage of capacity in terms of qualified staff with the appropriate level of technical knowledge. On the other hand, there is a lack of vacancies for such jobs as a consequence of limited development in the sector. Non-conservation jobs are similarly restricted by funding and investment levels, although project funding provides some time-limited opportunities.

## 4. A new strategic framework - recommended actions



British Library Sound Archive juke boxes

There are strong reasons, supported by argument and evidence, as to the advantages of audiovisual archives forming themselves into a more coherent and recognised sector. How might this be achieved and what will be the benefits to stakeholders - the users, the policy and funding bodies and the archives and collecting bodies concerned?

### **1. *An audiovisual archives forum***

Building on the achievements of the Film Archive Forum, the audiovisual archives sector should aim to expand its remit and seek to create a broadly representative body reflecting moving image and sound archives across the full spectrum of publicly funded provision. Consideration should also be given to gaining the involvement of key commercial and private sector organisations.

In particular, this new forum would:

- generate a clear statement of principles and a vision for the sector;
- act as a focus for sector-wide discussions and leading the strategic approach to policy development;
- advocate the benefits that would flow from the sector to all stakeholders.

Among the most important aims and objectives of the forum would be to develop recommendations to address the obstacles, issues and problems described above which are currently preventing the audiovisual archives from realising their full potential.

## **2. A strategic approach to the development of the sector**

The sector should adopt the concept of a **distributed national collection** and place it at the centre of its strategic work. It has been adopted by the Australian national audiovisual archive and is defined as:

*... a co-operative national network approach to identifying and managing cultural collections across Australia. It has been used for many years in the more traditional library context and has direct relevance for the audiovisual collecting community. The approach aims to rationalise collections, avoid unnecessary duplication and provide more Australians with greater access to the National Collection of audiovisual materials.*

(ScreenSound Australia website [www.screensound.gov.au](http://www.screensound.gov.au))

Adopted as a principle in the UK, it would enable us to view all of the material held in public sector audiovisual archives as part of a distributed national collection held on behalf of the British public. It would describe a series of working practices and agreements between autonomous organisations, rather than a concrete structure in which one organisation *owns* all of the heritage material covered by the term. In the UK audiovisual context, the term should refer to the relationships between regional and national organisations and would help to define the roles and responsibilities of these centres of expertise.

Such a collaborative approach could begin to address important issues of stewardship and collections development, such as:

- agreement on collecting responsibilities and parameters to ensure that gaps and overlaps are minimised;
- the development of sector-wide standards and a shared ethical approach to the work of audiovisual archives;
- the movement towards adopting compatible documentation systems;
- mapping the activities of the whole sector, identifying needs and a framework for delivery;
- identifying and developing national and regional centres of expertise for preservation, digitisation and access, based on a partnership approach and leading to enhanced levels of provision. In particular, it is recognised that the development of material for online use will be central to a new audiovisual archive strategy and the scale of this work will require significant co-operation across the sector;

- developing the principle of free access for non-commercial educational use of the audiovisual heritage. This was one of the key recommendations of the Film Education Working Group, set up in 1999 at the behest of the DCMS. It produced a draft protocol addressing the issue of copyright, which can be a significant obstacle to realising the potential for supporting lifelong learning.

It will be necessary to undertake sensitive, high level discussions between organisations to ensure that this strategic approach is achievable and realistic. The needs analyses that precede these discussions will need to be rigorous and objective to ensure that these discussions are productive and meaningful.

### ***3. A national framework of provision***

The forum will be able to build upon the concept of a distributed national collection to make a critical assessment of national, regional and local provision in the sector. This assessment, if undertaken in a timely manner and in line with broader initiatives in the cultural heritage sector, will be well placed to make a substantial contribution to planning. It will be necessary for the forum to maintain close links with the programmes of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and the UK Film Council, ensuring that its outputs are seen to support broader policy initiatives. The assessment should take note of gaps in provision and should also identify cases of best practice, particularly when these models are applicable more widely in the sector.

There is a clear opportunity to engage with the rapidly developing agenda for the English regions. A raft of measures will have a significant impact upon regional cultural provision. These include the work of the Archives Task Force, the developing work of the Regional Agencies for museums, libraries and archives, the development of the Regional Screen Agencies and the Regional Development Agencies, amongst others. This coincides with the fact that the network of regional film archives in England has only just been completed, and there is a pressing need for additional funding to enable them to realise their potential.

There is no comprehensive pattern of coverage for regional sound archives in the UK. The forum may take the view that the development of a network of regional sound archives should be a priority. It would also seem logical to suggest that a coherent sector of sound and moving image archives should be characterised by integrated audiovisual archives across the UK. This would result in a concentration of resources allowing for the development of regional centres of expertise with the means and experience to support both preservation

and access. An integrated approach to audiovisual archive practice is a model that works well in Wales and within national bodies including the BBC and Imperial War Museum.

Regional audiovisual archives, as centres of expertise, would play an important role in assessing the needs for audiovisual preservation and access across each region, supporting the regional agendas of both the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and the UK Film Council.

#### ***4. A national framework for training and development***

Professional development is vital to the healthy development of the audiovisual archive sector and the limited opportunities currently available need to be urgently addressed. In an emerging digital age there is a real need to strengthen existing initiatives, such as those provided by the University of East Anglia and the Society of Archivists and to develop new opportunities for the development of a UK-wide professional education for audiovisual archivists.

#### ***5. A national framework for advocacy and communication***

The main task for the audiovisual sector and the forum through which it represents itself will be to engage with Government Departments and with Non-Departmental Public Bodies to make a compelling case for enhanced levels of policy and funding support. The success of this case is dependent upon demonstrating that the sector can help Government to achieve its objectives and that an enhancement in levels of support will result in demonstrable benefits to society.

Ensuring that communication within the audiovisual sector, between members, and externally, with other organisations, is timely and consistent will be the key to a successful communications strategy.

The main elements of an advocacy and communications strategy would include:

- developing specific arguments for sector enhancement that relate to government objectives;
- collecting evidence that support these arguments;
- establishing the forum as a credible and authoritative representative body for the sector;

- developing a close relationship with the museum, library and archive domains, with the arts sector and with the film and broadcasting industries, participating in all relevant collaborative initiatives;
- developing and maintaining relationships with policy makers and funding bodies;
- the perception and marketing of the sector to its key audiences;
- development presentation materials in multimedia form to emphasise the dynamic nature of the sector and the exciting and valuable collections it manages.

An early priority will be to develop the arguments that should be made at regional and national levels to enhance levels of support for the sector. These should focus upon the contribution that the sector can make to social inclusion and learning, and should demonstrate that this contribution is being enhanced by the development of the sector. Evidence about provision and need in the sector will need to be collected, along with examples of best practice in preservation and access. It will then be possible to present compelling arguments for enhanced levels of support.

#### ***6. An Audiovisual Archives Development Officer***

To make genuine progress in bringing together the audiovisual archives within the strategic framework described above, a new post of Audiovisual Archives Development Officer is considered to be essential.

The post-holder will need to have a high order of advocacy and organisational skills; be able to communicate with policy makers and funding bodies; and also be able to ensure the effective co-operation of forum members in pursuing agreed policy objectives. It is recommended that a level of financial support appropriate to this post and its advisory and influencing role be sought from potential sponsors.

To develop this proposal the forum will need to identify an organisation through which to apply for funding and within which to base the officer. The National Council on Archives is an umbrella organisation with a membership comprising representatives of archives from across the UK. It has a track record of successfully applying for, and administering funds to employ sector development workers.

The aims and objectives of the NCA are:

- to bring together the major bodies and organisations concerned with the care, custody and use of archives and to provide a forum for the regular exchange of views between them;
- to provide a voice of consensus on archive matters;
- to bring to the attention of the public, government or relevant institutions or organisations, matters of current concern in the field of archives.

For these reasons, it is recommended that, the NCA and other national archive bodies across the UK be approached to provide support for the necessary institutional framework for the audiovisual archive sector's representative body and the creation of the post of Audiovisual Archives Development Officer.

### **Benefits of the new strategic framework**

The development of an Audiovisual Archives Forum, supported by an Audiovisual Archives Development Officer would bring a range of benefits, including:

- the definition of sector objectives, clarifying goals and aims;
- a sectoral advocacy strategy that defines the aims of the sector, presents an agreed and positive public message and enhances the prospect of stronger policy support and more secure funding;
- sector-wide co-ordination, in terms of standards, copyright, the right of public access and commercial agreements;
- sector-wide knowledge, including the sharing of best practice and support for professional development.

### **Benefits to practitioner organisations**

Practitioner organisations would benefit in a number of ways by defining themselves as a sector. These benefits include:

- the development of a representative body able to provide a unified 'voice' for the sector;
- the development of a strategic overview of the work of the sector, enabling a rational allocation of roles and responsibilities between organisations;
- the development of a framework for defining relationships between member organisations;
- the development of a view about priorities for funding and development, based upon a shared vision of desirable outputs and outcomes;



- the development of sector-wide standards that would, in turn, help them to develop a case for enhanced levels of public funding;
- the articulation of a shared ethical approach to the work that they undertake.

### **Benefits to funding bodies and policy makers**

It is also important to consider the notion of sector development from the perspectives of the various funding bodies and policy makers. At present and as already identified in this report, organisations that can be characterised as audiovisual archives are governed and funded by a wide variety of types of body. These include central and local government, Non-Departmental Public Bodies, Higher Education and autonomous trusts. These in turn report to a variety of agencies from differing sectors.

This is not a substantial barrier to the creation of a sector for all audiovisual archives. Indeed this diversity of approach will result in a sector that has a wide variety of perspectives and expertise within it and is able to build upon this diversity to assemble compelling initiatives and advocacy strategies.

For funding bodies and policy makers, the benefits to be derived from the development of a unified audiovisual archives sector would include:

- planning for the sector based on coherent and well-founded advice from the representative body as a single point of contact;
- developing a coherent national policy and funding framework in response to focused advocacy from the sector.

### **Benefits to users**

Developing the audiovisual sector should bring very positive benefits to the users of these archives, including:

- a greater sense of public ownership derived from a higher profile for publicly-funded audiovisual heritage defined as a dispersed national collection for the benefit of all users;
- improved access to the audiovisual collections through new investment in preservation, documentation and public facilities;
- wider access to the collections through digitisation and online delivery;
- wider access to the audiovisual collections in classrooms, libraries, record offices and museums through new collaborations between the audiovisual sector and public sector partners in education, lifelong learning and heritage.

## 5. Conclusion



*Fishermen at Work in Berwick Upon Tweed (1945)*

(Northern Region Film & Television Archive)

Taken as a whole, the sector has two main functions:

- as stewards of the national audiovisual heritage, to preserve the original material informed by internationally agreed standards for care and conservation;
- to make this heritage available to the widest possible range of audiences.

It has been argued that these two facets of archival practice are intrinsic to each other and work to support each other. It is equally true, however, that the need to do both places very severe constraints upon poorly resourced organisations.

The proposals contained in this Strategic Framework document are concerned with developing a structure through which various organisations can come together to form an audiovisual archives sector, developing solutions to the challenges they face, engaging in a dialogue and strengthening their understanding of each other's perspectives and ambitions.

The time is right for sound and moving image archives to develop a cohesive approach to their work. By coming together they can communicate a powerful collective message to funding bodies, stakeholders and users about the enormous contribution they can make to society and the need for sustainable and growing levels of support to enable them to continue this valuable cultural work.

To break the cycle of under-funding and under-development of our public sector audiovisual archives requires urgent action. We hope that the impact of these

issues, raised at the *Hidden Treasures* conference and further developed in this report, will be felt in the outcomes of current policy initiatives and debates, like the Archives Task Force and the UK Film Council's reviews of film heritage provision. We believe this is the moment for a step change to enable this growing sector to make a full contribution to the UK's cultural and educational life at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

## **Summary of recommendations**

### **Key recommendation to the strategic and funding bodies:**

It is recommended that:

- *the national strategic and funding bodies - the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, the UK Film Council and their regional partnership agencies - should work with the audiovisual archives sector to develop a national framework of institutional provision in which national, regional and local responsibilities are respectively understood and well resourced, with the aim of ensuring comprehensive coverage for audiovisual archive activity throughout the United Kingdom.*

### **Key recommendations to the audiovisual archives sector:**

It is recommended that:

- *the public sector moving image and sound archives work together to develop a coherent sector as a mechanism for strategic planning and delivery of services;*
- *the audiovisual archives in the public sector collectively define their holdings as a distributed national collection more widely accessible to diverse communities of users;*
- *the audiovisual archives collectively assert a public right of access to the distributed national collection for non-commercial use;*
- *the sector develops a strategic overview of the resourcing of preservation and access, consisting of a rigorous analysis of need, mapping of provision, and development of a centres of expertise;*
- *the audiovisual archives agree their collecting responsibilities to ensure that gaps and overlaps are minimised;*

- *the sector adopts a principle of moving towards compatible documentation systems;*  
*the audiovisual archives sector develops a representative body - an audiovisual archives forum - as a mechanism for strategic planning and delivery of services*

In particular, the forum should:

- *develop and implement an advocacy and communications strategy for the sector;*
- *further encourage the development of training programmes relevant to the needs of moving image and sound archivists;*
- *seek funding for the post of Audiovisual Archives Development Officer, to take forward sector development and advocacy work.*

## Appendix 1: Consultations

SG denotes member of steering group

 denotes telephone consultation


C denotes face to face consultation

### Steering Group

SG Frank Gray (chair) *Director, South East Film and Video Archive*

SG/C Crispin Jewitt *Head, British Library Sound Archive*

SG Beth Thomas *Keeper of Social & Cultural History, Museum of Welsh Life*

SG/ David Pierce *Curator, NFTVA, bfi* / Ruth Kelly *Registrar, NFTVA, bfi*

SG James Patterson *Director, Media Archive for Central England*

SG Shirley Day *Policy Adviser, Museums, Archives and Libraries Council*

SG Janet McBain *Curator, Scottish Screen Archive*

### Major stakeholders - Wales

C R. Iestyn Hughes *Head, National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales*

C Dafydd Pritchard *Secretary, Welsh Audiovisual Archives Forum*

C Iola Baines *Film Development, National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales*

C Kevin John *Research & Archives, BBC Wales*


C Jennifer Pappas *Librarian, S4C*

### Scotland

SG Janet McBain *Curator, Scottish Screen Archive*

### Northern Ireland

C Clifford Harkness *Head of Archival Collections, Ulster Folk and Transport Museum*

 Richard Taylor *Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Film and Television Commission*

C Karen Quinn *Archive Development Officer, Northern Ireland Film and Television Commission*

### England

C David Lee *Film and Sound Archivist, Wessex Film and Sound Archive*

 Sue Howard *Director, Yorkshire Film Archive*

### United Kingdom

C Judy Aitken *Research and Policy Officer, Heritage Lottery Fund*

- C Mark Wood *Museums, Libraries and Archives Council/Chairman ITN*
- C Carol Comley *Head of Strategic Development, UK Film Council*
- C Chris Chandler *Head of New Projects, UK Film Council*
- C Sophie Crabb *New Projects Executive, UK Film Council*
- C Justin Frost *Senior Policy Adviser (Archives), Museums, Libraries and Archives Council*
- C Nick Kingsley *Chair, National Council on Archives*
- C Henrietta Lidchi *DCMS*
- C Jisha Salim *DCMS (Film)*
- C Chris Dawes *DCMS (Broadcasting)*
- C Annabel Jones *DCMS (Legal Deposit)*
- C Susie Daly *DCMS (Music Division)*
- C Vic Gray *Director, Rothschild Archive/Archives Task Force*
- C Jane Mercer *Chair, FOCAL*
- C Anne Johnson *Commercial Manager, FOCAL*
- C Julie Lewis *General Manager, FOCAL*
- C Adam Lee *BBC Information and Archives Project Manager*
-  Roger Smither *Curator, Imperial War Museum Film & Video Archive*
-  Margaret Brooks *Curator, Imperial War Museum Film & Sound Archive*
-  Paul Habbeshon *consultant*
-  Clyde Jeavons *film archives consultant*

### **Written responses to the draft strategy**

Association of Chief Archivists in Local Government  
Film Archive Forum  
Greater Manchester County Record Office  
National Archives  
National Council on Archives  
National Archives of Scotland  
National Library of Scotland  
National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales  
North West Sound Archive  
School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh  
Scottish Music Information Centre  
Trilith  
University of Wales Bangor  
University of Wales Swansea  
Wales Audiovisual Archive Forum [FFACC]  
Wessex Film and Sound Archive

## Appendix 2: Sources

The following sources have been researched to inform this study.

### **National Archival Policy**

*Improving Access to, and Education about, the Moving Image through the British Film Institute* (National Audit Office, 2003)

*Changing the Future of Our Past* (National Council on Archives, 2002)

*Developing the 21st Century Archive: An action plan for United Kingdom Archives* (Re:source, 2000)

*Moving History: Towards a Policy for the Moving Image Archives* (Film Archive Forum, 2000)

*British Archives – The Way Forward* (National Council on Archives, 1999)

*Government Policy on Archives* (Presented by the High Lord Chancellor by Command of Her Majesty, 1999)

*Full Disclosure – Releasing the Value of Library and Archive Collections* (National Council on Archives, 1999)

*Archives at the Millennium - The 28th Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts 1991-1999* (The Stationery Office, 1999)

Freedom of Information Bills of 1999-2000 (Home Office, 1999)

*Report of the Working Party on Legal Deposit* (British Library)

### **National Archival Standards**

*Nof-digitise Technical Standards and Guidelines* (UKOLN, 2002) [version 4]

*A Standard for Record Repositories on Constitution and Finance, Staff, acquisition and access* (Historical Manuscripts Commission, 2001) [third edition]  
*Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom* (Museums and Galleries Commission and the Standing Conference on Archives and Museums, 1996 [under revision 2001])

*Best Practice Guideline 6 - Film and Sound Archives in non-specialist repositories* (Society of Archivists, 2000)

*Managing Digital Collections: AHDS Policies, Standards and Practices* (Arts and Humanities Data Service)

### **National Policy**

*Inspiring Learning for All* (Re:source, 2002)

*ICT Strategy* (Re:source, 2002)

*Learning and Access Strategy* (Re:source, 2002)

*Benchmarks in Collection Care for Museums, Archives and Libraries* (Re:source, 2002)

*The Mark of Success* (Re:source, 2002)

*Renaissance in the Regions: A New Vision for England's Museums* (Re:source, 2002)

*Neighbourhood Renewal & Social Inclusion: The Role of Museums, Archives and Libraries* (Re:source, 2002)

*A Strategic and Advisory Structure for Museums, Libraries and Archives in Wales – Consultation Paper* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2002)

*Creative Futures: A Culture Strategy for Wales* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2002)

*bfi Education Strategy 2001-4* (British Film Institute, 2001)

*A Framework for Re:source's International Activity 2001/2* (Re:source, 2001)

*A National Archives and Records Policy for Wales* (Archives Council for Wales, 2001)

*Safeguarding and Celebrating our Sound and Moving Image Heritage* (National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales, 2001)

*Centres for Social Change: Museums, Galleries and Archives for All* (Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 2000)

*The Learning Power of Museums – A Vision for Museum Education* (Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 2000)

*Libraries for All – Social Inclusion in Public Libraries* (Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 1999)

*Tomorrow's Tourism – a growth industry for the new Millennium* (Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 1999)

*The Departmental Spending Review and Response – A New Cultural Framework* (Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 1998)

*S4C Archive Scheme and Selection and Archive Policy* (S4C, 1998)

*International Activity: A Strategic Plan for Action* (Re:source)

*Manifesto* (Re:source)

## **Regional Cultural Policy**

*Archives in the Regions – An Overview of the English Regional Archive Strategies* (National Council on Archives, 2002)

*Film in England: A Development Strategy for Film and the Moving Image in the English Regions* (Film Council, 2000)

*Local Cultural Strategies* (Department of Culture, Media and Sport)

*Libraries and Regions – A Discussion Paper* (Department of Culture, Media and Sport)



## **Models of other Regional Strategies**

*South East Audiovisual Archives Mapping and Strategy* (SEMLAC, 2004)

*A Regional Strategic Framework for Museums and Galleries in Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire* (Yorkshire Museums Council, 2000)

*A Museums Strategy for North West England* (North West Museums Service Working Party, 1999)

*A Strategic Framework for South West Museums* (South West Museums Council, 1999)

*First Principles: Update 1998: A Framework for Museum Development in the West Midlands* (West Midlands Area Museum Service, 1998)

*First Principles: A Framework for Museum Development in the West Midlands* (West Midlands Area Museum Service, 1995)

*Research and Development Strategy* (LASER)

## **Reference**

*The Researcher's Guide: Film, Television and Related Documentation Collections in the UK* (British Universities Film & Video Council, 2001) [sixth edition]

## Appendix 3

### **Audiovisual Archives in the UK - an indicative list of significant national, regional and local collections**

#### **FAF = members of the Film Archive Forum**

BBC Information & Archives  
British Film Institute - National Film and Television Archive (FAF)  
British Library Sound Archive  
East Anglian Film Archive (FAF)  
East Midlands Oral History Archive  
EMI Archives  
Essex Sound & Video Archive  
Imperial War Museum Film & Video Archive (FAF)  
The Living Archive  
Media Archive for Central England (FAF)  
Museum of Welsh Life  
National Library of Scotland  
National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales (FAF)  
Northern Region Film & Television Archive (FAF)  
North West Film Archive (FAF)  
North West Sound Archives  
Orkney Sound Archive, Orkney Archives  
School of Scottish Studies, Edinburgh University  
Scottish Life Archive, National Museum of Scotland  
Scottish Music Information Centre  
South East Film & Video Archive (FAF)  
Scottish Screen Archive (FAF)  
South West Film & Television Archive (FAF)  
Ulster Folk and Transport Museum  
Wessex Film & Sound Archive (FAF)  
Yorkshire Film Archive (FAF)



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