

The Mass Observation Archive
University of Sussex Library
Collections Policy

January 2009

Reviewed January 2016



- 2 To fulfil their obligations, the Trustees will aim to
 - 1 Continue in the tradition of the original MO in documenting the everyday lives of people living in the UK
 - 2 Maintain and develop the role of the MOA as a centre of expertise in the care of life story materials and the study of everyday life in the UK
 - 3 Preserve the archive created by the original MO (1937-), and any new related collections subsequently acquired, in accordance with best practice archival standards
 - 4 Create a documentary record of everyday life in the UK as it is experienced and reported not by the media or by professional commentators, but by people in their own words and images
 - 5 Ensure that the MOA is as fully accessible as possible without jeopardising its physical or intellectual security
 - 6 Augment the original archive with new collections as specified in the Acquisitions Policy (see below)
 - 7 Promote the MOA as a resource for teaching and learning in both academic and non-academic contexts through publications, conferences, public events, digital media (including website) and the national and international media

3. Acquisitions policy

- 1 The MOA Trustees and their representatives will consider for acquisition the donation of life story documents produced by people in accordance with the traditions of MO and in the light of its operational selection criteria.
- 2 The Trustees of the MOA will make the final decision about acceptance in accordance with the agreed Acquisitions Policy and in the light of academic and professional advice. The decision-making may be delegated to authorised individuals by the Trustees.
- 3 If a collection is offered to the MOA which requires particular resource needs (eg storage space, conservation, cataloguing, special access facilities) and the Trustees wish to accept the collection, then the Trustees take responsibility for finding the appropriate resources and associated funding. However, although every effort will be made to conserve, catalogue and promote all new acquisitions as quickly as possible, no guarantees can be made to donors about how soon these procedures can be carried out. Any format will be accepted providing the MOA has facilities for appropriate physical care and full public access.

The Trustees will give preference to:

- 1 Unpublished material about everyday life created by people who might not otherwise have their papers archived in accordance with collecting criteria annually reviewed by the Mass Observation Archive Trustees.
- 2 Published material only where it constitutes a unique library relating to the themes of non-élite autobiography, biography or collective/community history.
- 3 Material relating to 20th and 21st century.

- 4 Material created within the UK or associated with living in the UK although the content need not be connected to any specific themes.
- 5 Material which can be made public immediately²
- 6 Material generated by life story related research projects when accompanied by copies of the “end product” (copies of books, films, theses, CD Roms, websites).

The Trustees will not normally accept:

- 1 Material on deposit/loan
- 2 Material where the copyright cannot be transferred to the Mass Observation Archive
- 3 Copies of original material
- 4 Newspaper cuttings or other printed materials which can be obtained elsewhere
- 5 Re-written, re-worked or edited versions of diaries, letters or other papers unless accompanied by the original version
- 6 Material which would, by virtue of its format, content or provenance, be more appropriately archived in another repository
- 7 Material generated outside the agreed date period (ie pre-twentieth century) or geographic region (UK)
- 8 Material which the appropriate professional and academic advisers consider could never constitute a useful research resource (eg because of its condition, its legibility or its legal status).

6. The Trustees reserve the right, in exceptional cases, to re-locate or otherwise dispose of material in accordance with good archival practice. The records or papers of institutions or organisations (other than of Mass Observation itself) will not normally be accepted.

² The imposition of fixed term embargoes on public access may be agreed with donors where material is of a particularly personal or sensitive nature