Caring for your Photographs

Knowing who's who

It is important for you to record as much information as you can about each photograph. You should try to record who is in the photograph, where it was taken, when it was taken (even a rough date is better than none) and any stories relating to it. Try to record the full name of a person, not just "mother and father". You should write this information on the back of your photographs in soft pencil (available from art shops) or number photographs and write information in a separate book which is kept with the photographs.

Displaying your photographs

The main danger to printed photographs when displaying them is light, which can fade them. Below are some suggestions of how you can prevent fading.
• You could display copies of important photographs instead of the originals
• If you do want to display the original, keep light exposure to a minimum by:
• Displaying photographs for a while and then putting them away so that none are exposed to light for long periods of time.
• Turn off the lights when no one is in a room. Use low wattage bulbs.
• Place them on the walls that get the least amount of sun.
• Close curtains and blinds when you are out of the room for extended periods of time or when you are not at home.

Storing your photographs

- Store photographs and important documents in a cool, dry place. Changes in temperature and humidity can cause damage to your photographs. Avoid lofts, basements and garages.
- When purchasing albums or storage boxes, look for those that are acid-free and have passed a "photographic activity test."
- Never put an adhesive on your photographs. Use photo corners or sleeves to mount photographs in albums.
- Store negatives in a separate location from albums and prints. In the event of a disaster, you will have two chances for your photographs to survive.
- Use a soft pencil to label photographs or paper that might come into contact with photographs.
- Handle your photographs and negatives by their edges and with clean hands to avoid marking the surface.

Copying your photographs

It is a good idea to keep a copy of the original photograph. You can do this by scanning your photograph and making a digital copy. Always keep the original copy too.

Recording images digitally

An image can be recorded digitally. This process is called digitisation. Through digitising photographs, documents or objects you can keep a visual record of your archive. These can then be used on the internet, for prints or simply to keep a record of your archive.

Capturing a digital image

A digital image can be captured using either a scanner for documents, clippings and photographs or a digital camera for objects and outsized images. Most scanners will come with an attachment for scanning old negatives and 35mm slides. If you don't have a digital camera you can get a CD of images when getting film developed.

Resolution

This term describes the quality of the image, the higher the resolution the higher the quality of the picture. This is also called dpi (dots per inch). The more dots the better the quality the picture will be. It is important to consider how the image you are producing will be used, e.g. for a website or for printing.

When you create an image using a scanner or a camera it is best to produce a file size that is large. Making a big print from a file that is small will look very low quality.

Image files should be Mega Bytes (MB) and not Kilo Bytes (KB). If the image size is in KB it is very small and will result in a poor quality print.

To overcome this always choose the highest quality setting on your camera which will

probably be Large J- PEG. When scanning try to enlarge an image to a file size of between 5 -18 MB at 300dpi.

It is always a good idea to back up digital images onto a writable CD.

File Types

These files are the most common and will be recognized by nearly all computers.

J-PEG – This is the most common but is usually a small file.

TIFF – This is large file and can be recognised by many computer programmes.