



## **1000's OF UNSEEN FILMS ABOUT LIFE IN THE UK REVEALED FOR THE FIRST TIME**

**INCLUDING DISCOVERY OF WORLD'S EARLIEST HOME MOVIES FROM 1902**

### **BRITAIN ON FILM LAUNCHES ON BFI PLAYER**

<http://player.bfi.org.uk/britain-on-film> [www.facebook.com/BritishFilmInstitute](http://www.facebook.com/BritishFilmInstitute) / #BritainOnFilm

**Embargoed until 12.30, 7 July 2015** The BFI today launches **Britain on Film**, a new project that reveals hidden histories and forgotten stories of people and places from the UK's key film and TV archives. From today the archives go digital on **BFI Player**, giving everybody in the UK free<sup>1</sup> access to 1,000s<sup>2</sup> of film and TV titles featuring where they live, grew up, went to school, holidayed as a child, or any place of interest in Britain. By 2017, thanks to National Lottery funding and the support of the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, 10,000 film and TV titles from 1895 to the present day will be digitised. The public can get involved with the project via Twitter and Facebook, with a campaign launching today that sees 60 films from all over the UK released over 60 days, and special screenings, events and partnerships across the UK. Also announced today is a newly-commissioned film from Penny Woolcock, using Britain on Film material.

**Culture Minister Ed Vaizey** said *"Britain on Film is a fantastic initiative and I congratulate the BFI and the national and regional archives on the huge amount of work they have put into creating a truly remarkable project. I'm particularly delighted that Britain on Film will be reaching the British public in so many different ways this summer all over the UK, and encourage everyone to check it out online via the BFI Player."*

Through the project, Britain on Film curators have found extraordinary footage of ordinary people and places from across the collections. These include:

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<sup>1</sup> Over 90% of the film and TV content is free

<sup>2</sup> 2,500 film and TV titles will be available on 7 July 2015

**The Passmore Family Collection** – *the world's earliest known surviving home movies (1902)* feature 10 films of the family on holiday in Bognor Regis and The Isle of Wight and at home in Streatham, London. **Michael Passmore, the filmmaker's grandson**, still has his grandfather's original camera purchased in 1900 and now lives in Kent. Michael said *"I am very proud of my grandfather's films; they have such a lot of movement and are never boring. The films capture the joys of family occasions and holidays so beautifully. I am delighted that they will be able to be shared with the rest of the country and hope they will continue to give pleasure to anyone interested in the history of home movies."*

**SCOTLAND** – ***Old Norse Viking Festival (1927)***: *wonderfully bizarre folkloric rituals with locals dressed as Michelin Men, walruses, sheep and Vikings*

***Glasgow Tram (1961)***: *a historic moment in time as the preparations and final procession of Glasgow's last tram is captured in glorious colour by an amateur filmmaker*

**WALES** – ***Tryweryn – The Story of a Valley (1965)***: *a film made by local schoolchildren of the controversial flooding of Capel Celyn and Tryweryn Valley to make a new reservoir*

**NORTHERN IRELAND** – ***Prawn Festival Kilkeel & Lord Mayor's Show (1962)***: *from the year it began, this film shows the huge crowds that came to the harbour every summer – now known as the Kingdom of Mourne Festival and still going strong*

**NORTHERN ENGLAND** – ***Davy Crockett (1955)***: *a police officer playing Davy Crockett rides through the city of Hull to get a road safety message across to children*

***The Bradford Godfather (1976)***: *a heart-warming documentary about the founding father of Bradford's Pakistani community*

***Scenes at Chester on the River Dee (1901)***: *shot during the Chester Regatta of 1901 by the pioneering British company Mitchell and Kenyon*

**THE MIDLANDS** – ***Evidence (1935)***: *first film used in an English court of law to prosecute an illegal gambling ring in the town of Chesterfield, with an appearance by three circus elephants*

**SOUTHERN ENGLAND** – ***Father Neptune Ceremony on Brighton Beach (1951)***: *fun and frolics at Brighton Swimming Club, England's oldest Swimming Club, still going strong today*

*Films revealing the development of British Sign Language (1935) from The Deaf Association shot in Weston-Super-Mare*

**EASTERN ENGLAND** – ***George Bernard Shaw's Village (1949)***: *rare footage of the celebrated playwright at home in Ayot St Lawrence, Herts, including extraordinary scenes with American actor and singer Danny Kaye*

**LONDON** – ***Do Something! (1970)***: *a community-based adventure playground project exposes division in a diverse local community in Islington*

***Covent Garden Porters (1929)***: *porters perform near-impossible balancing feats with stacks of baskets, with incredible filmmaking demonstrated*

This newly accessible film and TV presents a Britain that is vibrant, diverse and eccentric, whilst shining a light on issues and situations that affect every generation. Many of these films have never – or rarely – been seen since their first appearance and can now be searched for by specific UK locations through BFI Player’s ground-breaking new **Film and TV Map of the UK**, which also enables people to share films with their family, friends and communities.

While researching the project, **Heather Stewart, Creative Director, BFI**, discovered her great grandmother, grandmother and mother together on film in scenes from ***Children’s Excursion (1952)*** featuring Moniaive in Dumfries and Galloway, the village she grew up in.

Heather said *“I’ve never seen my family on film before so it was a wonderful surprise to discover three generations together. There’s a perennial joy in location spotting; couple this with the emotional power of film and Britain on Film has the potential to touch everyone in the UK.*

*Britain on Film changes the film and TV archive landscape forever. It’s vital that the UK’s film and TV archives – Britain’s national collection – can be enjoyed by everyone, and now they can. The unprecedented scale of this project is a testament to the collaborative effort and skills of the BFI National Archive and the regional and national archives of the UK.”*

Through Britain on Film, a moving and intimate portrait of the diversity of British life is revealed by professional and amateur footage of vanished landscapes, urban and rural communities, historic traditions and folklore, people at work and at play, and British characters in all their unique glory. Newsreels, advertisements, home movies, forgotten TV shows, and films by government departments all offer surprising insights into British life in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Robin Baker, Head Curator, BFI** said *“For 120 years cameras have captured almost every aspect of life in the UK on film, but too often these have been inaccessible to all but the most determined researchers. Now, Britain on Film is transforming access to films from the UK’s archives and giving new life to them by making them available, no matter where you live.”*

Britain on Film is the result of the BFI National Archive and the UK’s national and regional film archives and rights holders joining forces to bring these films together with a major programme of curation and digitisation that started in 2012 and continues until the end of 2017.

#### **ARTIST RESPONSE TO ARCHIVE – Penny Woolcock’s *Out of the Rubble***

Film archives are as much about the future as the past, with filmmakers often using the archive to find inspiration for their work. The BFI was keen to explore how an artist would respond to the Britain on Film content and Penny Woolcock, who previously collaborated with the BFI on the

acclaimed documentary *From the Sea to the Land Beyond – Britain's Coast on Film*, was given free rein in the archives to create her interpretation of the films. Woolcock has created a powerful short *Out of the Rubble* which explores issues of housing, poverty and immigration. It will be released later this summer.

## UK-WIDE ACTIVITY

Britain on Film will be reaching the British public in many different ways this summer all over the UK:

**The BFI Film Audience Network (FAN)** will be staging 85 screening events in 46 locations from Belfast to Canterbury and southern Wales to Inverness. Highlights include:

**Glasgow** – pop-up cinemas will show feature films set in Southside including **Ronald Neame's *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*** (1969) and **David Lean's *Madeline*** (1950) in **Pollok House** alongside regionally specific archive footage

**Kent** – **Georg Hoellering's *Murder in the Cathedral* (1951)** screened in Canterbury Cathedral – as part of the Canterbury Festival on 27/28 October

**Belfast** – Culture Night, 18 September, will screen curated programmes of short archive films shown at the places where they were originally shot, or where there is a strong thematic link

**London** – an outdoor screening of ***Made in Dagenham*** at Parsloes Park, Dagenham, alongside a programme of archive film showing the urban history of the area

Further UK-wide partnerships and activity includes:

- **Luna Cinema** and the BFI are launching a screening programme of feature films and bespoke Britain on Film packages in stunning **National Trust** locations throughout the UK from late August to October.
- Highlights of each city will be shown on large, digital out of home screens in the key city centres of **Glasgow, Birmingham, Manchester, London, Liverpool and Leeds** throughout August, thanks to a new partnership with **Ocean Outdoor**. The Britain on Film trailer will be running across these screens in each city today.
- Those arriving or departing the UK by air will be inspired by Britain as it once was, with a new **BFI channel on British Airways in-flight entertainment** launching this month and featuring Britain on Film footage.
- From August, **Caffè Nero** will have viewing pods in 10 coffee houses across the UK for customers to kick back and view the footage, as well as providing Britain on Film branded coffee cups.

- From 10-13 September, the BFI National Archive in Berkhamsted, East Anglia Archive and North West Archive will be opening their doors to the public as part of the National Trust's **Heritage Open Days**
- In London, **BFI Southbank** is currently featuring **London on Film**, a three-month programme of over 200 films, on-stage interviews and special weekenders focusing on Soho, East End, and Waterloo and South Bank.
- **London Live** will be broadcasting a series based on London on Film gems as part of London Live's special new BFI London strand. Ranging from *We Are The Lambeth Boys* and the original *Royal Festival of Britain*, through to a young Jude Law appearing in *The Crane*, the titles will be aired in a regular early evening weekend slot throughout the summer, starting in July.

#### **BRITAIN ON FILM AND EDUCATION**

- **Make Film – Greatest Generation** is a UK-wide filmmaking project organised by the education charity Into Film, BFI, BBC Learning and the British Council. The project invites children aged 7-11 to record interviews with members of the wartime generation and combine the footage with Britain on Film archive clips to create their own short documentaries. For information visit [www.intofilm.org](http://www.intofilm.org)
- From 14 July until 30 September, **BFI Future Film** is calling for **Instagram** users to share their photos and videos that showcase the diversity of places and people in the *Britain on Film Instagram* competition #BritainOnInstagram around four themes; *Britain's got Flare* (LGBT Britain), *Arrivals* (celebrating Britain's migrant community), *Fiesta* (festivals and carnivals) and *Action Sports on Location*.

#### **ABOUT BRITAIN ON FILM AND UNLOCKING FILM HERITAGE**

Britain on Film is one of the largest and most complex archival projects ever undertaken and is part of the BFI's Unlocking Film Heritage programme (2013-17). Unlocking film heritage for everyone in the UK to enjoy is a key strategic priority for the BFI, and Britain on Film is the public launch of a vast programme of work, which has been ongoing for over three years. This work has included a sophisticated programme of data capture, cataloguing, copying to archival standards, meticulous preservation of original materials, thorough searching of archives across the country, new state-of-the-art equipment and digital storage facilities and the transfer of films to the BFI's online video platform, BFI Player.

Unlocking Film Heritage and Britain on Film are thanks to £15 million funding from the National Lottery and the additional support of the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

**ENDS**

**Press contacts**

**Judy Wells, Head of Press and PR, BFI, Tel +44 (0) 7957 8919 / 07984 180501 [judy.wells@bfi.org.uk](mailto:judy.wells@bfi.org.uk)**

**Brian Robinson, Communications Manager, Archive & Heritage, BFI, Tel +44 (0) 207 957 8940 / 07740 171968 [brian.robinson@bfi.org.uk](mailto:brian.robinson@bfi.org.uk)**

**Lucy Aronica, Press and PR Co-Ordinator, BFI, Tel +44 (0) 207 957 4833 / 07930 327013 [lucy.aronica@bfi.org.uk](mailto:lucy.aronica@bfi.org.uk)**

**Film and TV titles and the Britain on Film trailer can be viewed and downloaded via Panther – for access please contact [lucy.aronica@bfi.org.uk](mailto:lucy.aronica@bfi.org.uk)**

**Images are available via – [www.image.net/britain on film](http://www.image.net/britain-on-film)**

**Regional press releases and press contacts can be found at [www.bfi.org.uk](http://www.bfi.org.uk)**

**Britain on Film online elsewhere**

- Britain On Film will be hosted on the BFI's YouTube channel, Facebook and Twitter, so audiences can find and experience it in the easiest way possible
- BFI curators will be writing features highlighting important films and themes on the BFI website. Their expertise will add context and provide new ways in for the British public to find films that illuminate the places they know and love
- Join the conversation at **#BritainOnFilm**

**Britain on Film is a project from the BFI National Archive and the UK's Regional and National Film Archives**

**About the Regional and National Film Archives**

The English Regional Film Archives and other National Film Archives (listed below) hold significant collections of film and video material specifically relevant to their regions or hold dedicated collections such as Imperial War Museums, preserved in specialised storage facilities and made widely available for education, research, communities and the wider public.

East Anglian Film Archive

Imperial War Museums

London's Screen Archives

Media Archive for Central England at the University of Lincoln

North East Film Archive

North West Film Archive at Manchester Metropolitan University

Northern Ireland Screen Digital Film Archive

Scottish Screen Archive

Screen Archive South East

South West Film & Television Archive

National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales

Wessex Film and Sound Archive

Yorkshire Film Archive

### **About the BFI**

The BFI is the lead organisation for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK - investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

The BFI is a Government arm's-length body and distributor of Lottery funds for film. The BFI serves a public role which covers the cultural, creative and economic aspects of film in the UK. It delivers this role:

- As the UK-wide organisation for film, a charity core funded by Government
- By providing Lottery and Government funds for film across the UK
- By working with partners to advance the position of film in the UK.

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter.

The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Greg Dyke.

### **About the BFI National Archive**

The BFI National Archive was founded in 1935 and has grown to become the one of the largest and most important collections of film and television in the world with over 180,000 films and 750,000 television programmes. For over 80 years the BFI has been an international leader in film preservation and guardian of Britain's unparalleled film and TV heritage. The BFI is an innovator in presenting films to audiences in new and dynamic ways, from cinemas to film festivals, outdoor events to online video-on-demand. At the heart of all its activities is the BFI's central aim to ensure that everyone in the UK has access to the widest possible range of film and their own film heritage.

That heritage includes all time great British directors Alfred Hitchcock, David Lean and Powell and Pressburger; and the rich vein of documentary filmmaking, in which Britain led the world, including the lyrical work of Humphrey Jennings. The archive also boasts a significant collection of filmmakers' papers as well as extensive stills, posters and production and costume designs along with original scripts, press books and related ephemera.

Expert teams undertake the time-consuming and complex task of restoring films at the BFI John Paul Getty Jr Conservation Centre in Hertfordshire. The BFI's most precious film materials are kept in optimum conditions in the world-leading Master Film Store in Warwickshire.

### **About BFI Player**

BFI Player is a ground-breaking video on demand service which offers a uniquely diverse range of films, from the latest releases to the rarest silent cinema classics, giving UK audiences a rich and rewarding digital film experience. The Britain on Film collections are accessible through the BFI Player. <http://player.bfi.org.uk/britain-on-film>

### **About the BFI Film Audience Network**

The BFI Film Audience Network (FAN) is a ground-breaking initiative that gives audiences across the UK the opportunity to see a diverse range of films in a cinema setting. For filmmakers, getting films onto cinema screens is a highly competitive business, particularly for specialised films which includes archive, documentary, independent and foreign language films. The BFI FAN aims to change this.

- With £8.7 million of Lottery funding over four years (2013-2017) BFI has set up partnerships with nine lead organisations (Film Hubs) to work full-time with cinema exhibitors, film festivals, educators, film societies, community venues, film archives and other organisations in their regions or nations to boost audiences for film across the UK.
- The Film Hubs, which drive audience engagement locally, work together with the BFI at a UK-wide level to grow audiences for British independent and specialised film. They currently comprise: Broadway, Nottingham and Cambridge Film Trust; Chapter, Cardiff; HOME, Manchester; Film London; Queen's Film Theatre, Belfast; Regional Screen Scotland; the University of Brighton; Showroom Sheffield and National Media Museum, Bradford; and Watershed, Bristol. These organisations and their partners form the BFI FAN.
- The Film Hub for Central East (Cambridge Film Trust & Broadway Cinema, Nottingham) has secured funding as part of the BFI's Programming Development Fund to administer and coordinate more than 80 screening events across all UK Film Hubs including film from the regional archives to engage with a wider audience in a number of venues.



**Life changing®**

### **About the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation**

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation aims to improve the quality of life for people and communities throughout the UK both now and in the future. We do this by funding the charitable work of organisations with the ideas and ability to achieve positive change. We are happy to be supporting Britain on Film – a significant, UK-wide film archive project, which will make titles from the BFI National Archive and national and regional screen archives available to the British public, offering a unique opportunity for insight and reflection on places, communities and histories throughout the UK.

The Foundation is one of the largest independent grant-makers in the UK. We make grants of £30 - £35 million annually towards a wide range of work within the arts, children and young people, the environment and social change. We also operate a £26 million Finance Fund which invests in organisations that aim to deliver both a financial return and a social benefit.

[www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk](http://www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk)



