



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

...INCLUDING THE 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 / #BritainOnFilm

PRESS RELEASE – embargoed until Tuesday 7th July at 12.30pm.

100's of unseen films about life in Northern Ireland are revealed for the first time through Britain on Film, launched today on BFI Player.

From Belfast visits by Edward Carson and Winston Churchill to early Stirling Moss racing car footage, as well as Royal visits, our industrial heritage and tourism, Northern Ireland features prominently in **Britain on Film**, a new National Lottery-funded project that reveals hidden histories and forgotten stories of people and places from the UK's key film and TV archives. From today the archive goes digital on **BFI Player**, giving everybody in the UK free¹ access to 1,000's² of film and TV titles by location 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 and events across Northern Ireland.

The project has also uncovered extraordinary footage of ordinary people at work and play in Northern Ireland, including Queen's University rag days, Lord Mayor's Shows, 12th July celebrations in Belfast and Benburb, Bangor square dancing, the 1959 World Ploughing Championship in Armoyle, and the re-enactment of a Viking invasion in Killybegs by costumed role-players.

Britain on Film will unlock the UK's film and TV history and make it accessible to the public on an unprecedented scale, providing a dazzling mosaic of British life. You'll be able to see vanished landscapes, historic traditions, and fascinating films which were intended as purely private records of family life. ***The Passmore Family Collection – the world's earliest known surviving home movies***

¹ Over 90% of the film and TV content is free

² 2,500 film and TV titles will be available on 7th July 2015

(1902) feature 10 films of the family on holiday in Bognor Regis and The Isle of Wight and at home in Streatham.

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."

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 making them available, no matter where you live."

Britain on Film is a result of the BFI National Archive and the UK's national and regional screen 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.

Richard Williams, Chief Executive of Northern Ireland Screen said:

"Our Digital Film Archive team has worked closely with partners including National Museums Northern Ireland to make accessible for the first time in a long time so much illuminating archive material. Thanks to the advances in technology, archive material can now be enjoyed by everyone, and there is no shortage of footage from Northern Ireland spanning politics, sport, industry, tourism, Royal visits, and people at play."

Belfast: The Churchill Meeting captures the historic – and infamous – visit of Winston Churchill to Belfast in 1912, an occasion on which he addressed an audience of nationalists in Celtic Park and told them of his support for Home Rule.

Royal Victoria Hospital is early film from 1938 – perhaps the earliest – of this iconic institution, giving us a rare glimpse into the casualty department as it was then, and a young woman receiving a massage to relieve the tensions caused by the workplace.

There are a number of Royal visits, ranging from Edward VII's trip to Belfast in 1903 to the Queen and Prince Philip's first engagement in Northern Ireland following her coronation.

And there is a wealth of footage taken by Tourism NI (formerly Northern Ireland Tourist Board) ranging from the scenic to the eccentric, from salmon fishing in the Glenelly River to the 1962 Kilkeel Prawn Festival.

The complete travelogues and rushes reveal the image of Northern Ireland that was projected to the rest of UK and America during the 1950s to early 70s. These films were central to a successful campaign that boosted tourism across Northern Ireland prior to the conflict.

Robert Blair worked for Tourism NI for 39 years as a jack-of-all-trades creating colour films to promote Northern Ireland as a holiday destination. During this time he has experienced many social and technological transitions. Since retiring he has also shown these films in the local hospice to the delight of people who have spent their lives and holidays in the places captured on screen. Robert, who is available for interview, said:

“During the winter months our Cavalcade toured the industrial towns of Scotland and England ending with the Easter Parade in London. A large float covered in replica mountains with accordion players and people fishing, would drive into town and whip up interest. That evening large crowds of up to 1,000 would flock to a concert and watch our films, whilst holiday reps booked people in to spend their summer holidays in Northern Ireland.”

Britain on Film also unearthed footage of ploughing championships in Armoy. A farmer’s son, Lawrence McMillan MBE took part in his first ploughing match in 1942 in Newtownards. Now aged 87, he recalls: *“I started out with a Ferguson tractor and plough. There were hydraulic ploughs, trail ploughing in open classes, high cut classes, wholework classes and Young Farmers classes.”*

Lawrence would go on to win the International match five times but in 1959, when Northern Ireland hosted the World Contest for the first time in Armoy, Lawrence would have his crowning moment when he got his hands on the Golden Plough, winning with a ransome trail plough.

As part of the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN), NI Screen, Film Hub NI & QFT will present Britain on Film screenings of archive film focusing on Belfast’s urban history, for the city’s Culture Night celebration on 18th September. The event last year attracted more than 30,000 people. Curated programmes of short archive films will be shown at the places where they were originally shot or where there is a strong thematic link.

If you want to know more about your past, discover where you’ve never been, or help your children understand how we used to live, begin your search for Britain on Film today at <http://player.bfi.org.uk/britain-on-film>

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

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Film and TV titles and the Britain on Film Trailer can be viewed and downloaded via Panther - for access to please contact Richard Gaston

Images via – [www.image.net/britain on film](http://www.image.net/britain%20on%20film)

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**

NOTES TO EDITORS

BRITAIN ON FILM – NORTHERN IRELAND HIGHLIGHTS

Politics

Belfast – The Churchill Meeting 1912: This footage captures the historic – and infamous – visit of Winston Churchill to Belfast, an occasion on which he addressed an audience of nationalists in Celtic Park and told them of his support for Home Rule.

Warships at Belfast 1913: Coastguards at Bangor Co. Down, signal to destroyer on guard off-shore. A naval rating on a harbour wall signals by semaphore to destroyers in the distance; pan right to show flotilla of eight destroyers. The Ulster Volunteers on the watch – two members of the corps view the warships through a telescope on the harbour walls.

Machine Guns Ready: Sir Edward Carson Watches Machine Gun Drill and Presents Colours at Drumalis, Larne 1914: It is believed this footage could be connected with the Unionist Larne gun-running operation which took place in April 1914 followed by the UVF Howth gun-running operation which took place in July 1914. Rifles and ammunition was smuggled from the German Empire to Larne, Donaghadee and Bangor. The UVF dispatched a decoy ship to Belfast Lough instructed to make its approach as suspicious as possible as part of 'the Hoax'.

Industrial Heritage

There is no shortage of footage showing people at work – from spinning mills to construction of the M1 at Stockman's Lane and the building of the extension to Kennedy's Bakery at Beechmount Crescent.

Royal Victoria Hospital: Early film – perhaps the earliest – of the most iconic medical institution in Northern Ireland. In recent years the hospital has been subject to a number of major refurbishments and renovations, so this footage should allow us to see the hospital as it once was and the extent of the changes. Shots of casualty department and footage of a young woman receiving a massage to relieve the tensions caused by the workplace. A young man is brought into the operating theatre and the narrator describes the care he receives from hospital surgeons and nurses.

Land of Ulster: covers all aspects of Ulster agriculture – growing up as a child on a farm, the importance of Northern Ireland produce to the local economy; introduction of the Marketing of Eggs Act 1924 (followed by potatoes in 1928, pigs in 1932 and milk in 1934).

Tourism

There is a wealth of NITB films covering work, sport and leisure in Northern Ireland from the scenic to the eccentric. The complete travelogues and rushes reveal the image of Northern Ireland that was projected to the rest of UK and America during 1950s-early 70s.

Kilkeel Prawn Festival 1962: a massive event, which took place in Kilkeel during the summers. The festival began in 1962 and drew huge crowds to the harbour every year. It eventually became known as the Kingdom of Mourne Festival, which has been taking place for over 35 years.

Viking Invasion at Kilkeel 1963: Various shots of Viking replica ships in the harbour and re-enactment of Viking activities by costumed role-players.

World Ploughing Championships: Colour footage of the 1959 World Championship in Armoyle shows Lawrence McMillan ploughing field in front of spectators.

Bangor Square Dancing: Couples square dancing at Bangor marina and Pickie Pool.

Skating at Balmoral: Children and young couples skating around Belfast ice-rink; some falling over.

There is additional footage of Lord Mayor's Shows (1957, 1960 & 1962), Queen's University graduations and rag days, King Leopold of Belgium being given the freedom of Enniskillen, pony trekking in Rostrevor, yachting in Kircubbin, Portrush in 1957, the Lammis Fair in Ballycastle, the Hollywood May Queen and Maypole dance, Dwight Eisenhower in Hillsborough, the visit of RMS Caronia to Bangor in 1955, and dozens of travelogues promoting the breath-taking beauty of the Northern Ireland landscape.

Royal Visits

Colour footage of several 1950s royal visits: the Queen, accompanied by Duke of Edinburgh, on her first official visit to NI (Carrickfergus Castle and Bangor) following her coronation; Queen Mother visits hospital, Stormont and Queen's University; Princess Margaret in Belfast.

12th July

Colour footage of 12th July celebrations between 1950s and 1980s across Belfast, Derry, Portrush and Benburb. What memories do people have of being taken to watch 12th July parades as a child, or participating in 12th July parades during those less contentious decades? There is also footage from the Scarva: Sham Fight that still takes place every 13th July to commemorate King William's stay there with a mock fight between Orangemen and Nationalists. These days it has a less political and more festive overtone.

Sport

Golf: Amateur Golf Final at Sandwich where Hezlett (from Portrush) is beaten by Jenkins (from Troon) by 3 up and 2 to play.

Motor racing: Early Racing Cars (rare footage from 1903... actually from Co Kildare but that event was really the birth of motor racing as we know it in Ireland) / The 1930 race was considered one of the most thrilling in Ulster T.T. history with Alfa Romeos coming first, second and third.

Motor cycling: colour footage of Carrowdore 100 / North West 200 (1957)

Horse racing: Maze Races / The Tynan and Armagh point to point steeplechase is over a century old and has always been held by kind permission of the Leeman family at Farmacaffley.

Religion

There is colour footage of the annual prayer pilgrimage from Saul to Down Cathedral.

ABOUT NORTHERN IRELAND SCREEN'S DIGITAL FILM ARCHIVE

Northern Ireland Screen's Digital Film Archive contains almost 80 hours of moving images about Northern Ireland from 1897 to 2014. Originally launched in November 2000 as part of the BFI's Millennium Project, the Digital Film Archive is accessible at 22 partner locations (museums, libraries etc) across Northern Ireland. Most of the material can now also be accessed online at www.digitalfilmarchive.net.

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.



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

