



150 UNSEEN FILMS ABOUT LIFE IN WALES REVEALED FOR THE FIRST TIME

BRITAIN ON FILM LAUNCHES ON BFI PLAYER

<http://player.bfi.org.uk/britain-on-film> / www.facebook.com/BritishFilmInstitute / #BritainonFilm

Embargoed until 12.30pm, 7th July 2015

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 free¹ access to 1,000's² 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 and events across Wales.

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

Wales' highlights include:

Men Against Death (1933) - the first sound film ever to have been made and set in Wales featuring Dorothea Quarry and its slateworkers who are "poised between heaven and earth"

Tryweryn – The Story of a Valley (1969) - a documentary filmed by schoolchildren of the events up to and the flooding of Capel Celyn, including the last ever day at the village school.

Letter from Wales (1953) – a charming Welsh language drama produced for the Children's Film Foundation, set in and around Llandwrog featuring a happy blend of children, animals and indulgent adults.

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

Tiger Bay and the Rainbow Club (1960) – silent film showing life in Tiger Bay, a diverse community celebrating weddings and children enjoying trips and activities at the local Rainbow Club.

Time of Change (1967) – a tale of two employees at the Anglo Celtic Watch Company in Ystradgynlais, otherwise known as ‘The Tick Tock’.

Dulais Valley - a dizzying array of community celebrations in and around Onllwyn between the 1950s-70s. Filmed in colour by Master Baker John Dillwyn Williams. Hywel Francis, the MP for Aberavon from 2001 to 2015, features as a young boy.

Babs’ Recovery (1969) - a Ministry of Defence film showing the excavation of Babs the racing car from Pendine Sands after it crashed and killed Wrexham’s John Godfrey Parry Thomas in 1927 as he attempted to beat the land speed record.

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 20th 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."

The Screen and Sound Archive of Wales has teamed up with the BFI on the Britain on Film project. **Film development officer Iola Baines** said:

"There are some incredible pieces of Welsh film, rarely seen until now, which tell us so much about our shared history and our communities. Britain on Film has enabled us to unlock film heritage and to share this compelling footage with the wider public. Now we can all explore the landscapes and streets where we grew up, the communities of a previous generation and cultures and traditions that are now long gone."

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.

REGIONAL SCREENINGS

Film Hub Wales - one of nine Film Hubs around the UK that are part of the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN initiative - is organising a series of *Made in Wales* screenings to share Britain on Film's archive shorts to run from November 2015 to January 2016. Screenings and events will take place at Memo Arts Centre, Barry; Chapter, Cardiff; Gwyn Hall, Neath Port Talbot; Taliesin Arts Centre, Swansea with more venues to be confirmed.

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 £15million funding from the National Lottery and the additional support of the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

ENDS

For more information, please contact Jane Thomas on 07967 351 827 or hello@janethomaspr.com.

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

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**

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

