

## LANDMARK COLLECTION OF VIDEO ARTS TRAINING FILMS NOW PRESERVED IN BFI NATIONAL ARCHIVE:

INCLUDING APPEARANCES BY COMEDY GREATS INCLUDING JOHN CLEESE, THE TWO RONNIES,  
BERNARD CRIBBINS, RIK MAYALL, STEPHEN FRY, HUGH LAURIE, EMMA THOMPSON, DAWN FRENCH  
AND JENNIFER SAUNDERS



*John Cleese and Dawn French in Balance Sheet Barrier*

**Embargoed until 9pm - Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2016. London.** The BFI National Archive and Video Arts are pleased to announce that a legendary and extremely influential series of training films and corporate learning content featuring some of the greatest British comic actors and comedians of the last 40 years will be preserved for the nation in the BFI National Archive.

CEO of Video Arts, Martin Addison, said “We are honoured that the Video Arts library of over 40 years of engaging and memorable learning content will be entering the BFI Archive for preservation. Our library charts the changes that have taken place in the workplace and documents our unique approach of using humour to change behaviours at work. To quote John Cleese, ‘People learn nothing when they’re asleep and very little when they’re bored’”.

Patrick Russell, Senior Curator, Non-fiction, BFI National Archive said: “The BFI National Archive exists to preserve the art, history and impact of British film - and Video Arts is an important part of the art and history of filmmaking that has had a real impact in the workplace. We are delighted to be able to preserve this important collection for the nation.”

Video Arts was set up in 1972 by Antony Jay and John Cleese and instantly revolutionised the workplace training film, making films that were not only effective but also extremely popular with audiences and managers. Video Arts brought together witty and powerful scripts, high production values, learning expertise and top comic actors of the day including Cleese, Ronnie Corbett, Ronnie

Barker and Bernard Cribbins. In the 1980s and 1990s a new generation of alternative comedians including Rik Mayall, Stephen Fry, Hugh Laurie, Emma Thompson, Dawn French and Jennifer Saunders were brought in to make new films as well as updated versions of the most popular titles of the 1970s. Today, stars such as Robert Webb, Sharon Horgan and Sally Phillips front the new digital films that Video Arts produce for online distribution. The Video Arts collection deals with a huge span of topics including management, leadership, customer service and workplace skills. Between them the films constitute a remarkable record of the ever-changing British workplace across four-and-a-half decades of national life offer a rare insight into our social history and changing attitudes to work and a vast array of workplace issues.

To mark the entry of this special collection in the BFI National Archive two key titles will be available from next month to view for free on the BFI's VOD platform BFI Player: the classic 1974 film 'Manhunt' featuring John Cleese as three inept managers who can't run a selection interview; and a 2016 short from the Leadership Essentials library called 'Control Freakery' which features Robert Webb and Sally Phillips. [www.bfi.org.uk/player](http://www.bfi.org.uk/player)

### **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 Josh Berger.

**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.

**Stills**

A selection of stills for press use in connection with this story can be found at:

**[www.image.net/BFI/BFI National Archive/Video Arts](http://www.image.net/BFI/BFI%20National%20Archive/Video%20Arts)**

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