



Santa's Grotto!

Christmas greetings from the BFI Mediatheque

This December the Mediatheques at BFI Southbank and QUAD, Derby get in the spirit of Christmas past with a unique and very special selection of seasonal archive treats.

Explore the delights of Christmas as seen in film and television from the holdings of the BFI National Archive (and all for free). They're not on DVD and you won't see them in any other cinema. (Just like most of the other 1,000 plus titles in the Mediatheque collections).

From a rather bleak *Christmas Day in the Workhouse* (1914) to hilarious family entertainment in one of the all-time greatest Christmas programmes – *The Morecambe and Wise Christmas Special* – (1980) there's a wealth of sparkling seasonal goodwill. Experience the slightly hesitant address to the nation by **HRH the Queen** in her first ever televised Christmas message (1957). Or enjoy *The Crazy Gang's Party* from the same year with festive frolics from **Bud Flanagan** and friends with a reprise of some of their famous theatrical antics.

Christmas specials are often among the rarest parts of television history, consigned to oblivion after their once-only outing, but these entertainers really do deserve to be seen again. **Tommy Cooper's Christmas** (1973) features his inimitable brand of magic, music and sketches plus appearances by **Sacha Distel** and **Clodagh Rogers**. *Cilla* (1974) has the Liverpoolian songstress in excellent voice joined by **David Essex** and **The Wombles** for a special Boxing Day broadcast.

There's a touch of social realism in *Father Christmas Union* (1972) when a winter of discontent gave way to striking Santas in this evocative comedy. More seasonal dysfunction is on offer with the documentary covering festivities at the home of media mogul, Robert Maxwell – *We Wish You a Merry Christmas (This Week Special)* (1966).

With a nod to the spirit of Christmas Past, we're showing the first film ever to feature Father Christmas, *Santa Claus* (1898); and the earliest version of A Christmas Carol, *Scrooge* (1901).

Get in the mood for a traditional singalong with *Rod Hull and Emu Sing a Christmas Song* (1976) or enjoy a cheeky take on Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* from the Carry On team in *Carry on Christmas* (1969).

Keep an eye on YouTube – we'll be adding several Christmas-themed offerings to our already considerable list of titles at www.youtube.com/bfilms.

And remember the Mediatheque's not just for Christmas. These and every item in the collection are added to our permanent holdings available to view throughout the year.

Simon McCallum, Curator, BFI Mediatheque, is available for interview.

ENDS

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