

## DVD press release



### **If War Should Come** **The GPO Film Unit Collection Volume Three**

The third and final volume of BFI deluxe double-disc box sets presenting all the key films of the GPO Film Unit on DVD for the first time will be released on 6 July 2009. The 18 films in this collection provide a fascinating and poignant insight into a nation on the cusp of war and its transition to the brutal realities of life in the Blitz.

Created in 1933 out of the ashes of the Empire Marketing Board Film Unit, the GPO Film Unit was one of the most remarkable creative institutions that Britain has produced. A hotbed of creative energy and talent, it provided a spring board to many of the best-known and critically acclaimed figures in the British Documentary Movement, including **John Grierson**, **Alberto Cavalcanti**, **Basil Wright** and **Harry Watt**, alongside innovators and experimentalists such as **Len Lye** and **Norman McLaren**. Their work embraced public information films, drama-documentary, social reportage, animation, advertising and many points in between.

The BFI National Archive, in partnership with The British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA), Royal Mail and BT Heritage has curated and preserved the legendary output of short films produced by the GPO Film Unit.

This final volume of three sets covers 1939-1941, the last years of the GPO Film Unit before it evolved into the Crown Film Unit. This period saw it at its most technically sophisticated, with directors such as **Humphrey Jennings**, **Harry Watt** and **Alberto Cavalcanti** leading the way in the use of documentary cinema in support of the war effort. Among the films in this collection are Jennings' poetic masterpiece **Spare Time** and the rousing classics **London Can Take It!** and **Christmas Under Fire**.

The discs are presented in a deluxe box with a 68-page bound book containing introductory essays, film notes and selected biographies.

Volume One, *Addressing the Nation* was released last September. Volume Two, *We Live in Two Worlds*, was released on 23 February. *Full film listing on page 2.*

**Experts on the collection are available for interview and there is extensive information on the GPO Film Unit project at [www.bfi.org.uk/gpo](http://www.bfi.org.uk/gpo)**



THE BRITISH  
POSTAL  
MUSEUM  
& ARCHIVE



**Release date: 6 July 2009**

**RRP £24.99 / cat. no. BFIVD760 / E**

UK / 1939-1941 / black and white / optional subtitles for the hearing-impaired

260 mins + 19 mins extra material / DVD-9 / ratio 1.33:1 / DVD-9

Available from the Filmstore at BFI Southbank, London SE1 and all good DVD retailers; by mail order from the Filmstore on 020 7815 1350 or online [www.bfi.org.uk/filmstore](http://www.bfi.org.uk/filmstore)

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**Disc one:**

*The City* (Ralph Elton, 1939)

*The Islanders* (Maurice Harvey, 1939)

*Spare Time* (Humphrey Jennings, 1939)

*A Midsummer Day's Work* (Alberto Cavalcanti (uncredited), 1939)  
*If War Should Come* (uncredited, 1939)  
*The First Days* (Harry Watt, Humphrey Jennings, Pat Jackson, 1939)  
*SS Ionian* (Humphrey Jennings, 1939)  
*War Library Items 1, 2, and 3* (uncredited, 1940)

**Disc two:**

*Squadron 992* (Harry Watt, 1940)  
*La Cause Commune* (Alberto Cavalcanti, uncredited, 1940)  
*French Communiqué* (Alberto Cavalcanti, 1940)  
*The Front Line* (Harry Watt (uncredited), 1940)  
*Men of the Lightship* (David MacDonald, 1940)  
*London Can Take It!* (Harry Watt, Humphrey Jennings (both uncredited), 1940)  
*Spring Offensive* (Humphrey Jennings, 1940)  
*The Story of an Air Communiqué* (Ralph Eton, uncredited, 1940)  
*War and Order* (Charles Hasse, 1940)  
*Christmas Under Fire* (Harry Watt, 1941)

**Special features**

- *Britain Can Take It!* (1940) Slightly shorter version of *London Can Take It!* which was made for British audiences
- Interview with director Pat Jackson (2007)

**About the BFI**

There's more to discover about film and television through the BFI. Our world-renowned archive, cinemas, festivals, films, publications and learning resources are here to inspire you. To find out more go to [www.bfi.org.uk](http://www.bfi.org.uk)

**About the BPMA**

The British Postal Museum and Archive cares for the visual, physical and written records of over 400 years of postal heritage including stamps, poster design, photography, staff records and vehicles. For more information visit [www.postalheritage.org.uk](http://www.postalheritage.org.uk)

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**About BT Heritage**

BT's commitment to its heritage is published in its Heritage Policy ([www.bt.com/heritage](http://www.bt.com/heritage)) adopted in 2004. BT is the only major company to have made such a public commitment to safeguarding its past and future heritage. The key features of our approach are to maintain historical documents and records within the company, under the management of BT Archives, and to promote access to our physical artefacts online and at museums across the UK through BT's Connected Earth initiative ([www.connected-earth.com](http://www.connected-earth.com)).

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