



PRESS RELEASE

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## **New BFI Mediatheque opens at Central Library, Cambridge**

### ***Eastward Ho!***

#### ***A portrait of Cambridge and the East of England on Screen***

The people of Cambridge can now view their great city and surrounding areas through the eyes of previous generations in a new BFI Mediatheque at Cambridge, Central Library opening to the public on 29 September 2009.

As well as the thousands of hours of film and television footage from the BFI National Archive covering many themes from across the UK, this latest BFI Mediatheque features **Eastward Ho!**, a major new collection of 100 titles weaving together more than a century of life in Cambridge and East Anglia as seen on film and television and dating from 1902 - 2007. This material has been curated from the BFI National Archive and from the East Anglian Film Archive.

Up to 30 people at a time can access these remarkable films in the BFI Mediatheque, completely for free. Everyone can explore the historic city with early sound documentary *Cambridge* (1931) and 1958 feature *Bachelor of Hearts*. A 1922 newsreel captures the annual Lent Races, while two legendary academics are portrayed in Derek Jarman's *Wittgenstein* (1993) and BBC drama *Hawking* (2004). Beyond the city, glorious early colour captures a country idyll, and military personnel recall life at Duxford in *One of Our Airfields* (1976).

Elsewhere in the region, the striking landscapes of East Anglia inspire, from classics of British cinema to the arrival of North Sea gas in *Pipeline Through the Fens* (1968). Edwardian *Yarmouth* (1902) and precious records of folk traditions (*Here's a Health to the Barley Mow*, 1955) are available alongside contemporary TV treats (*Anglian Lives: Alan Partridge*, 2003) and Home Counties outings to *Sunny Clacton* (1939) and *Bernard Shaw's Village* (1951).

The BFI Mediatheques offer free access to over 1500 complete films and television programmes, mainly drawn from the BFI National Archive and featuring selected material from partner archives around the UK. The BFI Mediatheques are designed for browsing, with the material collected into themed packages called 'collections' for ease of access.

BFI Mediatheques are located at BFI Southbank and the BFI National Library in London, at QUAD in Derby and now at Central Library, Cambridge.

Further Mediatheques are planned across the UK with the next scheduled for Wrexham Library in Wales and following that in Newcastle.

Some of the collections are devoted to areas such as literary adaptations, lesbian and gay subjects, *The Search for Shangri-La* (early films of Tibet), *The Joy of Sex Education* (this perennially difficult topic tackled on film), legendary BBC drama strand *Play for Today*, and the Black British experience. The Pandora's Box collection offers quirky delights which will amaze and amuse: *The Acrobatic Fly* (1910), an early Audrey Hepburn colour screen test, an advertisement for Dunlopillo set in Bombay, or a Christmas *Top of the Pops* (1977).

There are regular additions to the core Mediatheque collections and new thematic collections. Most recently these have included a history of beer-drinking in Britain and *Brit Chic* a celebration of British fashion on film and television.

Most of these films and television programmes are not available anywhere else and offer an extraordinarily rich audiovisual resource for anyone interested in the social and cultural history of Britain.

For further information see:

[www.bfi.org.uk/mediatheque](http://www.bfi.org.uk/mediatheque)

### **Ten to try from Eastward Ho!**

**1. Dreams of Toyland** (1908) - As night falls on St. Albans the toy box comes alive in this pioneering stop-motion animation.

**2. Toot-an-kum-in** (1923) - Boisterous Cambridge students take to Egyptian style during Rag Week.

**3. Opening of the British Instructional Films Studio** (1928)

VIPs brave the mud at the launch of Welwyn Garden City's answer to Elstree

**4. English Harvest** (1938)- Humphrey Jennings' newly-restored Dufaycolor short evokes a Cambridgeshire country idyll.

**5. War of the Worlds** (1952) - The budding thespians of Clacton County Youth Centre go sci-fi.

**6. The Questioning City** (1959) - Michael Redgrave in a glorious Technicolor tour of Cambridge University.

**7. Whistle and I'll Come to You** (1968) - A Cambridge don encounters unnameable terror in windswept Norfolk

**8. The Go-Between** (1971) - Illicit passion and a long hot Norfolk summer.

**9. Milk** (1998)- Winner Best Short, Cannes, shot in Cambridge by Andrea Arnold (*Red Road & Fish Tank*).

**10. Ooh Aah Delia** (2001) - Queen of TV cookery takes the reins at Norwich City FC.

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### **Notes to editors:**

**Simon McCallum**, curator, BFI Mediatheques and **Amanda Nevill**, BFI Director are available for interview.

Selected clips are available for broadcast by arrangement.

1. For more information on the BFI, including details of the BFI's theatrical touring programmes, DVDs and books, visit [www.bfi.org.uk](http://www.bfi.org.uk)

2. 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.

3. The BFI National Archive is the world's most significant archive of film and television. It contains more than 230,000 films (features, shorts and documentaries) and more than 675,000 television programmes. The collection also contains internationally renowned holdings of posters, stills and designs along with the papers of major directors.

#### **4. BFI Mediatheque collections:**

We are continually adding material to the BFI Mediatheque, and it currently contains over 1,500 titles, totalling over 900 hours of material.

**Anarchy in the UK** - From Johnny Rotten to Gizzard Puke, this celebration of punk brings you the players, the fans and the satirists.

**Beautiful Things** - Queer lives in Britain. Join the Mediatheque on its odyssey to a time and place before Graham Norton.

**Before Midnight - a Portrait of India on Film, 1899-1947** - An extraordinary collection of rarely seen home movies, documentaries and dramas, exploring life in India prior to Independence.

**Black Britain** - A hundred years of Black British stories, histories and representation on film and TV. From the fleeting appearances of Black Edwardians to the BBC's provocative *Shoot the Messenger* (2006).

**Bombs at Teatime** - Tea drinking, rationing and the Blitz... Welcome to the 1940s.

**The Box of Delights** – a treasure trove for children and families.

**Cinema of Tomorrow: BFI Production 1952-2000** - Celebrating the BFI at 75, a collection charting the organisation's remarkable legacy of innovation in British cinema.

**Double the Trouble, Twice the Fun** - An exploration of sex and disability.

**Essentially British** - What is being British all about? Stiff upper lips? Saucy seaside-postcard humour? Morris dancing? Find out in this collection that takes us from Glasgow to Stonehenge, hockey sticks to the hijab.

**Exodus: Remembering Slavery** - Marking the 200th anniversary of the Anti-Slave Trade Act, this collection explores one of the most shameful episodes in Britain's past - its role in the Atlantic slave trade

**Funny Girls** - The Mediatheque's tribute to Britain's best female comedians and comic actresses, from a century of British screen entertainment.

**Heartlands: A portrait of Derby and the East Midlands** - Explore the landscapes, meet the locals and uncover the rich heritage of the East Midlands in this landmark collection celebrating the launch of the BFI Mediatheque at Derby QUAD. Curated in collaboration with the Media Archive for Central England.

**Housewives' choice** - Travel back to an era in which housewives had good reason to be desperate with this collection exploring the lives of British housewives from the 20's to the 50's.

**The Joy of Sex Education** - How did films help our parents and grandparents to discover where babies came from or the perils of STDs?

**On Your Bike!** - Britain's love affair with the bicycle.

**Pandora's Box** - The Mediatheque's regular dip into the world of the odd, the esoteric, the delightful and the downright dangerous.

**Play for Today** - The Mediatheque's marathon retrospective of the BBC's landmark drama slot - the true National Theatre of the 1970s.

**Reality Bites** - The rich and surprisingly diverse history of the British documentary, from its roots in the brief 'actuality' films of the Victorian period to the cutting-edge digital productions of today.

**Santa's Grotto** - A festive treat to warm the hearts of sentimental traditionalists and bitter cynics alike.

**The Search for Shangri-la** - To mark His Holiness the Dalai Lama's visit to the UK this collection of very rarely seen films provides a vivid portrait of life in Tibet prior to the Chinese occupation of 1950.

**Silent Britain** - Journey back to a time before 'talkies'. The BFI Mediatheque rounds up the surviving landmarks of the British silent feature film.