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The Kids are Alright

**A celebration of long-lost teatimes, Sunday afternoons and Saturday mornings
– the best of six decades of British children’s television**

A cherry-picked collection of some of the best children’s programmes from five decades of British television will be available to view, free of charge, at the BFI Mediatheques, from February 2010.

Generations of British children grew up with a host of puppet friends, avuncular storytellers and colourful animated characters – and the BFI is making 40 of these beloved programmes from yesteryear available for public viewing in this new collection, *The Kids are Alright*.

Programmes made specifically for young audiences date back to 1946, and for the BBC in particular children's TV was always considered a vital part of public service broadcasting. It is a programming strand under siege in these more commercial times but this collection looks back to happier days when UK television really could claim to provide a ‘service in miniature’.

All mainstream adult genres and formats were once appropriated for younger viewers – drama, comedy, factual, documentary and entertainment. Factual magazines such as the perennial **Blue Peter** – on air since 1958 – and **Newsround** opened up the world to inquiring minds. Comedy ranged from energetic slapstick to controversial sketch shows. Dramatic serials provided honest adventure before maturing to deal with contentious social issues, most famously in **Grange Hill** and **Byker Grove**, - in the latter, viewers will have a chance to see PJ, played by **Anthony McPartlin** of Ant and Dec fame, being blinded by a paintball.

Proving that children’s TV could produce shows as vibrant and innovative as those found anywhere else on British television, this collection also highlights the earliest work of many now-famous names, from **Ronnie Corbett** to **Russell T Davies**; **Pauline Quirke** to **Kate Winslet**.

Curator Alistair D McGown is available for interview. Alistair is the editor of *BFI Television Handbook 2005: The Essential Guide to UK TV* (British Film Institute, 2005) and the co-author of *The Hill and Beyond: Children’s Television Drama – an Encyclopaedia* (British Film Institute, 2003).

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*** PICTURE DESK ***

A selection of images for journalistic use in promoting these programmes can be found at www.image.net under BFI / BFI Southbank / Mediatheque / Kids are Alright

TEN TO TRY

Crackerjack (1958)

This edition of the staple variety show features comic sketches from **Ronnie Corbett**, piggy puppets Pinky and Perky, and **Winifred Atwell** introducing British kids to rock'n'roll.

Play School (1968)

Innovative 'education through play' in a programme which also helped BBC2 trial early colour broadcasts.

John Craven's Newsround (1975)

A day's world news from October 1975.

Multi-Coloured Swap Shop (1976)

Noel Edmonds presents the earliest surviving edition of the trailblazing live Saturday morning magazine show.

Break in the Sun (1981)

The climax of a six-part serial adapted from **Bernard Ashley's** novel about a young girl who flees her abusive stepfather.

Grange Hill (1981)

A Christmas special with the school soap's iconic rebel Tucker Jenkins up to his old tricks at the school disco.

Educating Marmalade (1982)

The late **Charlotte Coleman** stars as the world's naughtiest schoolgirl in *Cringe Hill*, an episode of **Andrew Davies'** anarchic post-punk comedy.

Jim'll Fix It (1986)

Influential Saturday teatime hit. Viewers' dreams come true with the help of **Terry Wogan** and **Midge Ure**, plus a touching fix-it for veteran actor **Peter Cushing**.

Take Two (1988)

Phillip Schofield presents a behind-the-scenes look at his own Saturday morning show *Going Live!*

Knightmare (1988)

This sword-and-sorcery game show was at the cutting edge of computer graphics, though video games were later blamed for a decline in traditional children's TV in the 90s.

NOTES TO EDITORS

What is a Mediatheque?

A Mediatheque is a place to enjoy a wealth of film and TV from the BFI National Archive, totally free, at the click of a mouse. Most (85%) are not available on DVD, and a Mediatheque is the only place you can enjoy many of these hidden gems. The Mediatheque offers a window on the collections of the BFI National Archive, the most significant film and television archive in the world. The Mediatheque allows unprecedented access to our film and television heritage. You can watch as much or as little as you like at a Mediatheque: sit back and enjoy an entire feature film or take a look at fondly remembered television shows; use the database to search on a variety of subjects or browse to discover unexpected delights among the 1500+ available titles.

The Mediatheque @ BFI Southbank, London

The BFI Southbank Mediatheque is open daily Tuesday 13.00 - 20.00; Wednesday - Sunday 12.00 - 20.00. Book in advance for a viewing station which can seat between one to four people, or simply turn up. Book for as little as 15 minutes or as much as two hours. Tel: 020 7928 3535 or simply turn up. Research what you'd like to view in advance at www.bfi.org.uk/mediatheque

The BFI Mediatheque @ QUAD, Derby

QUAD Arts Centre hosts a gallery, cinema, BFI Mediatheque and café bar in the centre of Derby. The BFI Mediatheque is free for anyone to use, though you must be a member to use the facility. Membership is free and available from the QUAD Box office. The BFI Mediatheque @ QUAD is open daily. You can just drop in but if you would like a specific time slot it is advisable to book in advance via the QUAD Box office. Opening times are 11:00am – 8:00pm (Sundays 12 noon - 8:00pm). For more information please visit www.derbyquad.co.uk/bfi-mediatheque

The BFI Mediatheque @ Central Library, Cambridge

This BFI Mediatheque can be found on the third floor of Central Library, Cambridge, and is open seven days a week, and is free for anyone to use. Cambridgeshire's flagship public library is an exciting cultural venue offering an extensive collection of fiction and non-fiction, music and film, a high-tech learning centre and world renowned archive – The Cambridgeshire Collection. Central Library hosts exhibitions, author talks, workshops and educational events for both adults and children. For more information please visit http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/leisure/libraries/online/bfi_media.htm

There's more to discover about film and television through the BFI. Our world-renowned archival collections, cinemas, festivals, films, publications and learning resources are here to inspire you.
www.bfi.org.uk