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## **BFI expands free national access to film heritage** **Coming soon: four new Mediatheques**

Even more people will be able to access the extraordinary films of the BFI National Archive, with the launch of two new Mediatheques this year and the announcement of partnerships to set up two others.

The first BFI Mediatheque to be launched outside England will open in **Wrexham, Wales**, at the refurbished public Library, in March; in a partnership with Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, a further Mediatheque will open in the spring at **Newcastle's Discovery Museum**; and the BFI has announced partnerships with **Birmingham** City Council and **Manchester** City Council to set up Mediatheques in 2013. The latter two form part of multi-million pound Library regeneration and build projects in each of the cities.

The new Mediatheques are the latest stage in an ongoing roll out programme by the BFI to provide access to the BFI National Archive in every nation and region of the UK. They follow the remarkable success of the three other Mediatheques that the BFI has opened since 2007 – at BFI Southbank in London; at QUAD in Derby; and at the Central Library in Cambridge. To date, over 85,000 people have enjoyed a visit to one of these BFI Mediatheques.

A Mediatheque is an ever expanding digital jukebox, where you can sit alone or with others to browse and watch a wealth of complete films and TV programmes from the BFI National Archive entirely free of charge. There are over 1500 titles currently available and most of the material has not been widely seen since it was first shown or was previously available only to archival researchers. Over 85% of all Mediatheque titles have never been released on DVD or online and this is the only way for members of the public to enjoy them.

Amanda Nevill, Director of the BFI, said: *"Film provides such a tantalising view of how the people of Britain lived and worked and played over the past century or more. The public is clamouring to see it and it is the job of the BFI to look after the national collection of archive film and television and make it more widely and easily available to everyone, regardless of where they live.*

*We always said when we opened our first Mediatheque at BFI Southbank in London that our aim was to replicate it in every nation and region of the UK and we are several steps closer to achieving that aim now. By the summer, we will have opened our fourth Mediatheque outside London, giving more people across the UK the chance to experience and enjoy unprecedented access to their national film and television heritage."*

There is something for everyone in the Mediatheque – there are more than 50 themed collections including a celebration of cutting-edge British fashion; *The Book Group*, where you can compare screen adaptations of British literary favourites; incredibly rare home movies filmed by ex-pats in India and Tibet; a tribute to Britain's favourite female comedians; 100 years of black British histories; sex education films through the ages; a century of Jewish representation on British screens; and *Pandora's Box*, home of archive oddities and esoterica – the cult films of tomorrow. New collections are added regularly to the Mediatheques, giving visitors an ever growing selection of remarkable film and television material to choose from.

At the heart of each new Mediatheque is a story told in moving images of the people, places and history of that nation or region – a collection of regional material taken from the national collection cared for by the BFI, and from regional film archives.

It is through its partnerships with local venues and working with the film archives in each nation/region that the BFI is able to increase public access to the finest moving image material in

the BFI National Archive and give people the chance to enjoy specially curated collections which reflect over a century of life in the local area.

Cllr Bob Dutton, Lead Member for Communities and Performance, Wrexham Council, said:  
"Wrexham Library is proud to lead the way with the BFI Mediatheque as it will be the first such centre in Wales. This is a fantastic opportunity for people to see rare films and TV programmes, along with many old favourites, many of which are unavailable to view anywhere else – and they'll be able to view this material in brand new surroundings. I'm also pleased that the BFI Mediatheque will house a wealth of archive material and film relevant to Wales, much of which has not been seen for many years."

Iain Watson, assistant director of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, said:  
"When the BFI Mediatheque opens at Discovery Museum this spring, it will give people in the North East access to more than 1500 titles – feature film, television programme and home movie material, including many titles which are especially relevant to the region over the years. This is a fantastic facility to have at Discovery Museum."

Brian Gambles, Assistant Director for Culture and Head of Libraries at Birmingham City Council said:  
"This collaboration with the British Film Institute is the first in a series of key partnerships that will allow the Library of Birmingham to provide a world class service when it opens in 2013. We are delighted to be selected as a venue for the BFI Mediatheque, providing library users with a vital resource offering access to one of the world's largest film archives. We look forward to the creation of a new collection that will highlight the Midlands' proud history and culture in association with our partners at the BFI, Media Archive of Central England (MACE) and Screen West Midlands."

Councillor Mike Amesbury, Executive Member for Culture and Leisure at Manchester City Council, said:  
"We're delighted that the people of Manchester, and the city's visitors, will have the opportunity to see so many rare film and television titles at the BFI Mediatheque. The BFI Mediatheque is a great example of the state-of-the-art services that will soon be on offer in Manchester Central Library, which is poised for extensive refurbishment."

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## **PRESS CONTACT**

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## **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

**\*\*\* PICTURE DESK \*\*\***

**A selection of images for journalistic use in promoting BFI Mediatheques can be found at [www.image.net](http://www.image.net) under BFI /BFI Mediatheque**

## **Interviews**

BFI Director Amanda Nevill and BFI Mediatheque Curator Simon McCallum are available for interview.

## **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.

For further information see: [www.bfi.org.uk/mediatheque](http://www.bfi.org.uk/mediatheque)

### **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](http://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](http://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](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/leisure/libraries/online/bfi_media.htm)

### **The BFI National Archive**

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. The BFI promotes understanding and appreciation of Britain's rich film and television heritage and culture.

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.