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## BFI opens first Mediatheque outside England

The people of Wrexham and North Wales will now be able to watch, completely for free, more than 1500 films and television programmes cherry picked from the BFI National Archive.

Included in these are 100 titles that place a spotlight on Wales – curated in partnership with the National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales (NSSAW).

All of these titles will be available in a BFI Mediatheque that is set to open at the newly refurbished Wrexham Library on 22 March – and on that day, the launch event for the new-look Library will be officially opened by **Gavin and Stacey** writer and star **Ruth Jones**.

This is the first BFI Mediatheque to open outside of England, and is the latest stage in an ongoing roll out programme by the BFI to provide access, in every nation and region of the UK, to the wonderful films and television programmes held in BFI National Archive. It is through its partnerships with local venues that the BFI is able to increase public access to the finest moving image material in the BFI National Archive.

Earlier this year, the BFI announced the imminent launch of two new Mediatheques in Wrexham and Newcastle and partnerships to set up two others in Birmingham and Manchester. These announcements 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.

It is through its partnerships with local venues that the BFI is able to increase public access to the finest moving image material in the BFI National Archive.

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.*

*We are really thrilled to be part of the newly refurbished Wrexham Library, and to be able to offer more people the chance to enjoy the fantastic collections we look after in the BFI National Archive.”*

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.

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 a new Mediatheque is a specially curated collection of film and TV material which gives people the chance to discover a unique story of their region or nation on screen. These collections are curated in partnership with other archives.

***Through the Dragon’s Eye*** is a collection of archive film and television material curated by the BFI in collaboration with the National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales (NSSAW). It comprises 100 titles – including a rich mix of documentaries, home movies, fiction films and television – offering an enormous range of depictions of Wales.

From 1898 views of Conway, Holyhead and Rhyl through to *Gavin and Stacey* in Barry, the collection spans over a century of history and culture, industry and progress. From the North to South, from the borders to the coast, this is a new opportunity to see the Welsh nation as it appears on film and television.

A dashing young Richard Burton stars in ***The Last Days of Dolwyn*** (1949). We meet the people of the valley in a 70s episode of Welsh language soap ***Pobol y Cwm***. There’s a chance to revisit the cult classic children’s television serial ***The Owl Service*** (1969), and to rock out to the alternative music scene of South Wales in ***John Peel’s Sounds of the Suburbs*** (1999).

This collection is dedicated to the late David Berry, author of *Wales and the Cinema: The First Hundred Years* and a passionate advocate of Welsh film and television.

Cllr Bob Dutton OBE, 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.”*

Ian Lucas, MP for Wrexham, said: *“The BFI Mediatheque in Wrexham will give local people and visitors the opportunity to access films about Wales specially curated from the BFI National Archive and the National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales. As well as this, lovers of all kinds of film will be able to experience the magic of the BFI National Archive. As a film fan, I felt like a child on Christmas morning when I first used the Mediatheque – and I am sure others will feel the same. I am very proud that it is coming to Wrexham.”*

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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 Acting BFI Mediatheque Curator James Taylor are available for interview.

### **Clips**

Selected clips available for broadcast by arrangement.

### **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.

