



BFI Mediatheque opens at Newcastle's Discovery Museum

1800 films and TV programmes available for free

13 July 2010

10/44

The BFI's hugely popular Mediatheque is launching at Newcastle's Discovery Museum this month, meaning that visitors can now view more than 1,800 films and television programmes from the BFI National Archive, free of charge.

The Mediatheque is a digital jukebox of film and television programmes from the BFI's unparalleled collections. With 85% of its content unavailable to view anywhere else, new content is added regularly and there are now over 1,800 titles available to browse and view – ranging from the lesser known and newly rediscovered through to well-loved classics. This fascinating treasure trove of moving image will be open to any visitor at the Discovery Museum; from students, researchers, local historians, children and families, pensioners and any fan of film and TV in the area.

To mark the opening of this important cultural resource, the BFI has collaborated with the Northern Region Film and Television Archive to create a unique new collection of films and TV programmes about the North East. **North by North East** includes football matches featuring the region's teams from the early 1900s, historic records of events including the Bamburgh Fete, the Durham Miners' Gala and much more.

Liz Rees, chief archivist, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, explains:

*"The BFI Mediatheque includes feature films, documentaries, TV programmes, artists' film and video and home movies stretching from the earliest days of cinema to the present. Classics from British film and TV - including **Brief Encounter**, **The Wicker Man**, **Monty Python** and the **Play for Today** series - sit alongside a wealth of historically important and rarely seen films which reflect life in Britain over more than a century.*

"All this and more is available for anyone to view free of charge at Discovery Museum."

BFI Director Amanda Nevill says:

"Film provides such a tantalising view of how the people of Britain lived, worked and played over the past century or more. The public has a real appetite to see more 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. This is 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 Discovery Museum and to be able to offer more people the chance to enjoy the fantastic collections we look after in the BFI National Archive.”

Newcastle-born writer Lee Hall (*Billy Elliot, The Pitmen Painters*), said,

“The mediatheque is one of the greatest things the BFI have ever done. Putting so much of the world's greatest archive at your fingertips AND doing it for free is simply amazing... You can then watch your pick of thousands and thousands of hours worth of amazing footage. Home movies of Jesmond Dene in the 1920s, full length feature films, cult TV shows from the 60s and 70s and much, much more besides...It's got a brilliant selection of film material about the North East and I defy anyone browsing through this material not to be amazed and moved by seeing how our region has changed... I can't recommend a visit highly enough. It's about the most fun you can have by yourself for free.”

The BFI Mediatheque will be open seven days a week and visitors can drop in or book a time slot in person or by calling (0191) 277 2248. Visitors can watch as many titles as they like and around 85% of the content of the BFI Mediatheque is unavailable on DVD or online.

As well as material from the North East, there are also more than 50 specially curated collections on a wide range of themes, including a celebration of British fashion; incredibly rare home movies filmed in India and Tibet; children's films and TV programmes; and a century of Jewish representation on British screens. The BFI Mediatheque also allows viewers to search for specific items of interest. New material is added regularly.

The opening of the new Mediatheque coincides with **Long Live Film: Celebrating 75 Years of the BFI National Archive**, a two-month celebration of the world's most significant archive of the moving image.

Mediatheque curators, Simon McCallum and Alex Davidson are available for interview by arrangement.

bfi.org.uk/mediatheque

twmuseums.org.uk/discovery

- ENDS -

Media contacts:

At Discovery Museum:
Emma Pybus
Tel: (0191) 277 2309
emma.pybus@twmuseums.org.uk

At BFI:
Brian Robinson
Tel: (020) 7957 8940
brian.robinson@bfi.org.uk

Notes to editors:

The digitisation of BFI Mediatheque content was made possible by the generous support of the HLF.

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

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).

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

The BFI Mediatheque @ Wrexham Library

The Mediatheque is on the ground floor of this recently refurbished Library. Wrexham Library is an exciting cultural venue offering an extensive collection of fiction and non-fiction books, multi-media resources, a community art gallery and a new study and learning centre. Opening times are 9am-7pm (4pm on Saturday, closed on Sundays).

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.

Highlights of Long Live Film: Celebrating 75 Years of the BFI National Archive include:

BFI Most Wanted

A national campaign to find 75 'Lost' films and a look at some of the BFI National Archive's recent discoveries

Dangerous Beauty: The Joy of Nitrate Film

A rare opportunity to savour the delights of original nitrate prints on the big screen for the first time in ten years

Alberto Cavalcanti

A landmark retrospective of a much-loved director famed for his work at the GPO Film Unit and Ealing studios, and nationwide theatrical release of **Went the Day Well?** (1942) and **They Made Me a Fugitive** (1947) – newly restored by the BFI National Archive

Rescue the Hitchcock 9

A nationwide campaign to rescue nine of **Hitchcock**'s classic silent films, announced on the 30th anniversary of his death

The Miners' Hymns at BRASS: Durham International Festival

Experimental artist and filmmaker **Bill Morrison** sets archival footage to a new score by internationally acclaimed Icelandic musician and composer **Jóhann Jóhannsson**, with their new collaborations **The Miners' Hymns**

bfi.org.uk/archive75

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.

***** PICTURE DESK *****

A selection of images for journalistic use in promoting BFI Mediatheques can found at www.image.net under BFI / BFI Mediatheque