



Left to right top: *Psyche's Wedding* (1920), *A Nigerian Wedding in Cornwall* (1964), *Colonial Wedding* (1930),
 Middle: *The Royal Wedding* (1923), *Cornish Wedding* (1964), *Five Weddings* (1940)
 Bottom: *Arranged Marriage* (1983), *Marriage of Miss Rossalyn Weinbaum to Mr A. Goide* (1923), *Tiger Bay & The Rainbow Club* (1960)

The big day has arrived and everyone is invited BFI celebrates a multitude of marriages on film

Wedding Bells collection showcases multicultural Britain and features 4 royal weddings and fabulous fashions from across the decades

*****Wedding Bells* available via BFI Player <https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/collection/wedding-bells> ****

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From royal nuptials, including **Princess Elizabeth and Philip Mountbatten** (1947), **King George VI and Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon** (the Queen Mother) (1923) and **Princess Mary and Viscount Lascelles** (1922), and lavish society weddings, among them **Violet Asquith, the Prime Minister's daughter's marriage to Maurice Bonham Carter** (Helena Bonham Carter's grandfather) (1915) to more modest but no less joyful celebrations, the BFI's latest online collection, ***Wedding Bells***, captures a century of wedding day jitters and excitement, laughter and tears **now available for free via BFI Player**, digitised as part of the **National Lottery-funded Britain on Film** project in partnership with the national and regional archives with the support of the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

As the world's media focuses its lens on the public pageantry of the upcoming royal wedding, this unique film collection features happy couples from all corners of the UK and all walks of life, coming together to cement their union. From the **earliest film in the collection**, Sir Edward Stafford Howard's marriage to Lady Catherine Meriel Cowell Stepney in Llanelli, ***Stepney Wedding*, 1911**, *The National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales (NSSAW)*, to Mrs Gwen Davies's intimate home movie ***Rol's Wedding - Capel Ebeneser, Y Ffor*, 1986**, *NSSAW* of her son Rowland's wedding to Bethan Williams, each film is a personal memento of a couple's special day.

Often filmed on precious family cine cameras, the collection also includes professionally commissioned films on 16mm and 35mm, cinema newsreels, current affairs magazine programmes plus an independently

produced wedding-themed feature drama, *The Best Man*, 1986, *Northern Ireland Screen Digital Film Archive*. **Wedding Bells** charts changing social mores as well as fluctuating hemlines. While many of the films capture centuries-old wedding day ceremonies and symbols including the traditional wedding feast and cake, bridal bouquets, confetti and the 'just wed' send-off, no two celebrations are quite the same. One bride even swaps the white limo for a traction engine, *A Traction Wedding*, 1977, *South West Film and Television Archive (SWFTA)*.

Reflecting multicultural Britain in the 20th century, **Wedding Bells** includes multi faith ceremonies with examples of Jewish, Sikh and Muslim unions; *Marriage of Miss Rossalyn Weinbaum to Mr A. Goide*, 1923; *Sikh Wedding in Exeter*, 1971, *SWFTA*; *Arranged Marriage*, 1983, *Media Archive for Central England (MACE)* as well as diverse celebrations in Cardiff's Tiger Bay, *Tiger Bay and the Rainbow Club – 1*, 1960, *NSSAW*, Redruth, *A Nigerian Wedding in Cornwall*, 1964, (*SWFTA*) and even Cornish language wedding vows, *Cornish Wedding*, 1964, (*SWFTA*.)

The collection also charts the changing fashions over the decades, with a colourful look at wedding attire from the 1920s onwards. Elegantly dressed couples in their finest and impeccably turned out guests who sometimes steal the limelight - including military weddings, ingenious wartime fashion on the ration, fabulous hats, arresting hairstyles as well as national dress.

The featured films are drawn from the collections of the BFI National Archive and Regional and National Film and Television Archive Partners across the UK. They showcase UK-wide weddings from Plymouth and Dorset to Canterbury, Norfolk, Birmingham, Cardiff, Nottingham, Whitby, Tyneside, Derry/Londonderry and more, and even as far afield as Shanghai. The collection includes contributions from the East Anglian Film Archive, London Screen Archives, Media Archive for Central England, National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales, North East Film Archive, North West Film Archive at Manchester Metropolitan University Northern Ireland Screen Digital Film Archive, South West Film and Television Archive, Yorkshire Film Archive and the Wessex Film and Sound Archive.

Collection highlights include:

Asquith Wedding (1915, BFI National Archive) The marriage of Violet Asquith, the Prime Minister's daughter, to Maurice Bonham Carter (Helena Bonham Carter's grandfather) who was the Prime Minister's Private Secretary.

War Time Weddings (1915, BFI National Archive) Felicity Tree, daughter of legendary theatrical actor-manager Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, married Captain Geoffrey Cory-Wright in this wartime ceremony.

Psyche's Wedding (1920, South West Film and Television Archive) Bright Young Things turn it out at this fashionable society wedding where the bride is offered a bouquet of wheat sheaves from the summer harvest, representing fertility.

Marriage of Miss Rossalyn Weinbaum to Mr A. Goide (1923, BFI National Archive) The wedding party arrives at London's Central Synagogue on Great Portland Street, which was destroyed in a bombing raid in 1941 and later rebuilt in 1958.

The Royal Wedding (1923, BFI National Archive) Topical Budget newsreel coverage of the wedding of King George VI and Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon (the Queen Mother) with 19 cameramen capturing every angle.

Colonial Wedding (1930, Screen Archive South East) The car gets the 'Just Married' treatment at an expat wedding in Shanghai.

Five Weddings – Cardiff and area (1940, National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales) 5 gold rings, 4 sunny days, 3 long white dresses, 2 kilts and uniforms and a ceremony in Llandaff Cathedral. A bumper wedding bonanza and a snapshot of wartime nuptials.

The Wedding of Thelma and Danny, 11th August 1946 (North West Film Archive) A glamorous, sophisticated post-war wedding at the United Synagogue on Cheetham Hill Road in Manchester, including the Jewish wedding ceremony, couple's first dance and wedding reception.

Here Comes the Bride (1948, North East Film Archive) A wonderfully sophisticated take on the wedding film crafted by a Tyneside musician for his brother and stylish bride, Robert Lawson and Mary Elsie Beeby, showcasing post-war fashions at a time when clothes were still rationed (Clothes rationing ended on 15 March 1949).

The Wedding of Peter and Judith Elliott (1956, London Screen Archives) Elegantly dressed guests hold on to their hats at this windy wedding in Pinner, a gem for fashion and wedding aficionados alike.

Tiger Bay and the Rainbow Club – 1 (1960, National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales) Weddings feature in this portrait of the thriving, multi-cultural community of Tiger Bay in Cardiff.

A Nigerian Wedding in Cornwall (1964, South West Film and Television Archive) a young couple swap their British wedding attire before changing into national dress for the reception.

Cornish Wedding (1964, South West Film and Television Archive) The Cornish language underwent a revival in the 20th century; here a couple exchange their vows in Cornish, keeping their customs and culture alive.

Sikh Wedding in Exeter (1971, South West Film and Television Archive) a Sikh couple celebrate their blissful union and a procession on the streets, including the arrival of the groom on horseback in ceremonial dress.

Arranged Marriage (1983, Media Archive for Central England) an episode of magazine show 'Here and Now' about arranged weddings in the Muslim community, and a traditional ceremony in Birmingham.

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ABOUT BRITAIN ON FILM AND UNLOCKING FILM HERITAGE

Britain on Film is one of the largest and most complex archival projects ever undertaken by the BFI unlocking film heritage for everyone in the UK to enjoy. Britain on Film was the result of a vast digitisation programme of work, bringing together a partnership with Regional and National Film Archives and rights holder collections across the UK. This work has included a sophisticated programme of data capture, cataloguing, copying to archival standards, meticulous preservation of original materials, thorough searching of archives across the country, new state-of-the-art equipment and digital storage facilities and the transfer of films to the BFI's online video platform, BFI Player.

Britain on Film was made possible with thanks to £15 million funding from the National Lottery and the additional support of the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

BRITAIN ON FILM ONLINE ELSEWHERE

- Selections from Britain On Film are hosted on the BFI's YouTube channel, Facebook and Twitter, so audiences can find and experience it in the easiest way possible
- BFI and regional and national film archive curators have written features highlighting important films and themes on the BFI website. Their expertise adds context and provide new ways in for the British public to find films that illuminate the places they know and love
- Join the conversation at **#BritainOnFilm**

Britain on Film is a project from the BFI National Archive and the UK's Regional and National Film Archives

ABOUT THE REGIONAL AND NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVES

The English Regional Film Archives and other National Film Archives (listed below) hold significant collections of film and video material specifically relevant to their regions or hold dedicated collections such as Imperial War Museums, preserved in specialised storage facilities and made widely available for education, research, communities and the wider public.

East Anglian Film Archive
Imperial War Museums

London's Screen Archives
Media Archive for Central England at the University of Lincoln
North East Film Archive
North West Film Archive at Manchester Metropolitan University
Northern Ireland Screen Digital Film Archive
National Library of Scotland Moving Image Archive
Screen Archive South East
South West Film & Television Archive
National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales
Wessex Film and Sound Archive
Yorkshire Film Archive

ABOUT THE BFI

The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK - investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

The BFI is a Government arm's-length body and distributor of Lottery funds for film. The BFI serves a public role which covers the cultural, creative and economic aspects of film in the UK. It delivers this role:

- As the UK-wide organisation for film, a charity core funded by Government
- By providing Lottery and Government funds for film across the UK
- By working with partners to advance the position of film in the UK.

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter.

The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger CBE.

ABOUT THE BFI NATIONAL ARCHIVE

The BFI National Archive was founded in 1935 and has grown to become the one of the largest and most important collections of film and television in the world with over 180,000 films and 750,000 television programmes. For over 80 years the BFI has been an international leader in film preservation and guardian of Britain's unparalleled film and TV heritage. The BFI is an innovator in presenting films to audiences in new and dynamic ways, from cinemas to film festivals, outdoor events to online video-on-demand. At the heart of all its activities is the BFI's central aim to ensure that everyone in the UK has access to the widest possible range of film and their own film heritage.

That heritage includes all time great British directors Alfred Hitchcock, David Lean and Powell and Pressburger; and the rich vein of documentary filmmaking, in which Britain led the world, including the lyrical work of Humphrey Jennings. The archive also boasts a significant collection of filmmakers' papers as well as extensive stills, posters and production and costume designs along with original scripts, press books and related ephemera.

Expert teams undertake the time-consuming and complex task of restoring films at the BFI John Paul Getty Jr Conservation Centre in Hertfordshire. The BFI's most precious film materials are kept in optimum conditions in the world-leading Master Film Store in Warwickshire.

ABOUT BFI PLAYER

BFI Player is a ground-breaking video on demand service which offers a uniquely diverse range of films, from the latest releases to the rarest silent cinema classics, giving UK audiences a rich and rewarding digital film experience. The Britain on Film collections are accessible through the BFI Player. <http://player.bfi.org.uk/britain-on-film>