



Left to right top: *Latest News* (1904), *Mildred* (1960), *Bonzo the Dog* (1925), *Dinosaurs and Things* (1981)
 Left to right bottom: *Tuftly Playing Near the Road* (1973), *Super Natural Gas* (1975), *The United Kingdom* (1994), *Giro the Germ* (1927)

BFI presents a new history of British Animation with an animated portrait of a nation online and in cinemas

BFI Player: Animated Britain, a collection of over 300 films from across the UK

In UK wide cinemas: Archive Remasters, a curated three-part history of an animated century

Includes the earliest surviving British animated film Latest News (1904), a celebration of female animators, and fanfares the significant contribution of Britain's flourishing DIY scene

****Animated Britain available via BFI Player <https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/collection/animated-britain> ****

Animated Britain trailer: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NYK99q7BUUpFYBskQD8HL5eUMTIYnnNfa/view>

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For immediate release: 26 January 2018, London

Since the early 1900s a disparate array of artists in Britain, from across the UK, have drawn, sculpted, snipped, stamped, posed, clicked and scratched their art into celluloid life. Sitting squarely at the centre of a year-long BFI-wide focus on animation in venue, online and on release, and coinciding with the release of *Early Man*, Nick Park's latest animated feature for Aardman and Studiocanal, the **BFI** today reveals **new access** to unprecedented collections of archive animation, **online and in cinemas**. These films cast the evolution of British animation in a new light, frame by painstaking frame, ranging from the earliest experiments to the latest pioneering contemporary features made by UK animation studios today for Aardman, Wes Anderson, Tim Burton and others.

Drawn from both the **BFI National Archive** and **Regional and National Film Archive Partners** across the UK, **Animated Britain** is a **new online collection of over 300 films**, surveying a stunningly rich century-long history of British animation, **made available for free via BFI Player**. From the earliest pioneers and the birth of British animation with *Latest News's* animated titles in 1904, to some of the best known, award-winning names in commercial and independent animation including works by **Halas & Batchelor**, **Bob Godfrey**, **George Dunning**, **Cosgrove Hall** and **Larkins Studio**, this landmark collection highlights the extraordinary creative variety in domestic production across the UK.

From the most distinctive and individual of films to the ongoing exploits of popular characters such as **Bonzo the Dog**, **The Clangers**, **Charley the Cat** and **Tuftly**, to a focus on the key contributions and thematic concerns of female artists such as **Alison De Vere**, **Nancy Hanna**, **Vera Linnecar** and **Sheila Graber** as well as developments made by television broadcasters and animation schools which have all helped shape the face of British animation today.

Providing a wider framework to trace this new history of British animation on the big screen, **Archive Remasters** is a complementary **three-part cinema programme of 35 newly remastered classic animations** drawn from the **BFI National Archive's** unique animation collection. Ranging from **1909 to 1993** these curated packages present key works alongside unexpected surprises of little known or rarely seen early examples of British Animation for a genre-hopping, whistle-stop tour of the 20th century. Included is ***Animated Doll and Toy Town Circus (c1912)***, a stop-motion experiment believed to have been filmed using the two-colour Kinemacolor film process **and a strong contender for title of the world's earliest surviving colour animation**. Currently previewing at BFI Southbank presented by BFI Animation Curator Jez Stewart, (screening on 20 February, 1 March and 4 March) the **Archive Remasters** packages will be available for UK wide cinema bookings from April.

As well as celebrating industry leaders, innovators and independent spirits, ***Animated Britain*** also takes in home hobbyists bitten by the animation bug, with a wealth of films representing amateur talent from across the UK. Best known for her adaptations of Rudyard Kipling's Just So Stories, such as ***Cat That Walked By Himself*** (1983), the films of the internationally celebrated animator from South Shields, **Sheila Graber**, are presented from the **North East Film Archive**. Inspired by fantasy animation legend **Ray Harryhausen**, with whom he worked under his supervision, **Jon Coley's** creative mix of stop motion and live action includes ***Dinosaurs and Things*** (1981) and ***The Feline Fun*** (1986) held in the collections of the **East Anglian Film Archive**. The late talented animator **Paul Berry** joined the Cosgrove Hall studio in Manchester after studying at Wolverhampton Polytechnic. Later Oscar nominated for his short horror ***The Sandman*** (1991), his early humorous stop-motion animated films are held by the **North West Film Archive at Manchester Metro University**, including ***Short Tribute From Blues To You*** (1989) his quirky claymation tribute to musical icons such as Jimi Hendrix and Michael Jackson. A prolific member of the Cardiff Amateur Cine Society, Ian Malcolm's films held by the **National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales**, includes hand drawn titles such as ***Animal Alphabet*** (1967) and his Gilliam-esque cut out, ***ABZ on Sport*** (1967).

Spanning government-commissioned public information films, wartime propaganda, commercials for popular brands such as **Guinness, Horlicks, Cadbury's, Shell** and **BP**, children's television series, political satire, adult fantasy, avant garde experiments and artists' moving image, these dizzyingly diverse online and cinema resources fanfare British animation's unique and inventive contribution to the art form, serving up a history ripe for rediscovery.

Animated Britain is presented as part of **Unlocking Film Heritage** with thanks to **National Lottery funding** and the support of the **Esmée Fairbairn Foundation**. International audiences can also explore a selection of these films via a playlist on the BFI's YouTube channel.

A free exhibition from the BFI National Archive Special Collection, **British Animation** goes on display at **BFI Southbank's Mezzanine Gallery** from 26 January to 8 April, showcasing the artwork and industry behind some of British animation's most enduring classics including materials from Britain's first animated feature ***Animal Farm***, the pioneering work of Lotte Reiniger, ***Yellow Submarine*** director George Dunning and ***Captain Pugwash*** creator John Ryan. In addition the recently relaunched **Mediatheque** at BFI Southbank has **expanded its popular animation collection** for viewers to explore in venue.

[Highlights from Animated Britain \(UFH\) and BFI Archive Remasters:](#)

Animated Britain (UFH)

Latest News (1904) the earliest known date-verified British film found with stop-motion animated intertitles.

John Bull's Sketch Book (1915) featuring a remarkable recreation of the German naval bombing raid on Scarborough on 16 December 1914, and character animation light years ahead of their time.

Bonzolino – Bonzo Broadcasted (1925) One of the defining icons of 1920s Britain, George Studdy's beloved canine capers were backed by a wealth of tie-in merchandising long before the days of the studio giants.

Giro the Germ Episode 1 (1927) The Health and Cleanliness Council were early adopters of animation for public information needs, with their creation of animated character, Giro the germ.

Love on the Range (1939) 'Puppetoon' Western to advertise Horlicks, based on a script by future Ealing director Alexander Mackendrick.

Robinson Charley (1948) One of seven Charley films made by Halas & Batchelor for the Central Office of Information to explain key policies of the post-war Labour government including the Marshall Plan.

The Wardrobe (1958) (also in Archive Remasters) Canadian George Dunning came to the UK and teamed up with John Coates to start their company TV Cartoons making commercials and off-beat art shorts. A decade later they produced *Yellow Submarine* (1968).

Mildred (1960) Comic cartoon for BP Directed by Richard Lester (*A Hard Day's Night*) with Nancy Hanna and Vera Linnekar from the innovative Larkins Studio.

Plain Man's Guide to Advertising (1962) Coming of age in the midst of the counter-cultural movements of the late 1960s, Bob Godfrey playfully nibbles the hand that feeds him. Best known later for *Roobarb* and *Henry's Cat*, Godfrey was Oscar-nominated for his sex comedy *Kama Sutra Rides Again* (1971), after Stanley Kubrick personally paired it with *A Clockwork Orange* in cinemas.

Superted (1975) Stop motion pilot for an unrealised children's series, wholly unconnected with the much-loved 1980s Sirlol series of the same name, made by Cosgrove Hall just before production started on *Chorlton and the Wheelies* (1976).

Super Natural Gas (1975) British Gas sponsored short is the origin for cult children's TV classic *Willo the Wisp*, featuring the Kenneth Williams as the voice of offshore natural gas.

The Toys Will Be Toys (1988) Sheila Graber's work included commissions from Tate Gallery, Tyne Tees TV and the BBC, *The Toys Will Be Toys* is a playful subversion of gender stereotyping.

Honestly it's the Story of My Life (1990) Graduate film from Sarah Ann Kennedy, best known today as the voice of Miss Rabbit in *Peppa Pig* and Nanny Plum in *Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom*, Kennedy was the creator of Channel 4's cult 1990s animation *Crapston Villas*.

The United Kingdom (1994) Halas & Batchelor came up with an idea to represent the 12 member states of the European Union in 1993. Only two of the 12 animated films (one for each country) for *Know your Europeans* were completed. Bob Godfrey's hilarious contribution on behalf of the UK stands as a tantalising glimpse of what might have been.

BFI National Archive – Archive Remasters

Animated Doll and Toy Town Circus (1912) uses the Kinemacolor process and stop-motion filming to bring toys to life, in what could well be the world's oldest surviving colour animation.

Experimental Animation 1933 Avant-garde monkey business from the New Zealand-born artist Len Lye, produced two years before his polychromatic explosion, *A Colour Box* (1935).

Fox Hunt (1936) This Technicolor follow-up to the modernist masterpiece *Joie de Vivre* (1934) is little seen and ripe for rediscovery. Hector Hoppin and Anthony Gross worked with Alexander Korda's London Films on this beautifully choreographed delight.

Adolf's Busy Day (1940) Architect turned animator Lawrence Wright brings Herr Hitler down a peg or two in this comic propaganda cartoon.

Do It Yourself Cartoon Kit (1959) An irreverent but affectionate poke at the pretensions of the industry, enlivened by Bob Godfrey's offbeat humour.

Automania 2000 (Halas and Batchelor, 1963) A satirical swipe at the relentless pursuit of scientific progress with colourful modern visuals. This witty film was the first British animation to be nominated for an Academy Award.

Transformer (1968) All aboard the psychedelic steam engine! After building the iconic 60s visuals for *Yellow Submarine* (1968), Heinz Edelmann, Charlie Jenkins and Alison De Vere set up their own company, producing this stunning promo short for the Cambridge Animation Festival.

Ubu (1978) This groundbreaking animation brought Geoff Dunbar to the attention of Paul McCartney with whom he would collaborate on various projects, most famously *Rupert and the Frog Song* (1984). His earlier film *Lautrec* (1974) bringing the sketchbooks of Henri Toulouse-Lautrec to life, is also included in Animated Britain.

Mr Pascal (1979) Alison De Vere's long career in animation had a remarkable twilight with a series of staggering short films of quiet charm and astonishing depth. Mr Pascal is a spiritual tale that goes beyond religion to show faith in the value of small gestures of human kindness.

Clothes (1988) Osbert Parker's lively short sees clothes pick themselves up and strut their stuff. Originally edited on analogue video this new version goes back to the original film, giving an already vibrant work a new lease of life.

Britannia (1993) Pitch perfect political satire leaps out from Joanna Quinn's remarkable pencil drawn animations in this concise history of the British Empire, which sees the British bulldog let off the leash before being brought to heel.

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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 and is part of the BFI's Unlocking Film Heritage programme (2013-18). Unlocking film heritage for everyone in the UK to enjoy is a key strategic priority for the BFI, and Britain on Film is the public launch of a vast programme of work, which has been ongoing for over three years. 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.

Unlocking Film Heritage and Britain on Film are 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.

UEA's 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>