



100's OF UNSEEN FILMS ABOUT LIFE IN THE MIDLANDS REVEALED FOR THE FIRST TIME

BRITAIN ON FILM LAUNCHES ON BFI PLAYER

BFI Player: <http://player.bfi.org.uk/britain-on-film>

Facebook www.facebook.com/BritishFilmInstitute

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Embargoed until 12.30pm, Tuesday 7th July 2015

The BFI today launches **Britain on Film**, a new project that reveals hidden histories and forgotten stories of people and places from the key film and TV archives of the UK, including the Media Archive for Central England (MACE). There is a wealth of material in the collection that explores the changing cityscapes of the Midlands to the region's rural landscapes and films that illustrate the vibrant multicultural population of the area.

From today the archive goes digital on **BFI Player**, giving everybody in the UK free¹ access to 1,000²s of film and TV titles about where they live, grew up, went to school, their family, friends - or any subject of interest. By 2017, thanks to National Lottery-funding, and the support of the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, 10,000 film and TV titles from 1895 to the present day will be digitised. The public can get involved with the project via Twitter and Facebook, with a campaign launching today that sees 60 films from all over the UK released over 60 days, and special screenings, events and partnerships across the UK. Also announced today is a newly-commissioned film from Penny Woolcock, using this archive material.

Culture Minister Ed Vaizey said *"Britain on Film is a fantastic initiative and I congratulate the BFI and the national and regional archives on the huge amount of work they have put into creating a truly remarkable project. I'm particularly delighted that Britain on Film will be reaching the British public in so many different ways this summer all over the UK, and encourage everyone to check it out online via the BFI Player."*

Through the project, Britain on Film curators have found extraordinary footage of ordinary people from across the collections. This newly accessible film and TV footage presents a

¹ Over 90% of the film and TV content is free

² 2,500 film and TV titles will be available on 7th July 2015

Britain that is vibrant, diverse and eccentric whilst shining a light on issues and situations that affect every generation.

Highlights in the Midlands archives include:

- ***Evidence*** (1935), the first film used as evidence in a British court of law showing footage of an illegal betting ring operating in Chesterfield Market, Derbyshire. One of the earliest examples of CCTV.
- ***Great Hucklow Jubilee Film*** (1935), English author and playwright L. du Garde Peach's delightful home movie footage of small village celebrations for HM King George V's Silver Jubilee. Peach is probably best remembered as the author of over 30 works in the *Adventure from History* series published by Ladybird Books from 1957 to 1974.
- ***The Saturday Men*** (1963), a celebration of the beautiful game and a rare insight into footballers before their salaries were in the millions. Bobby Robson, David Burnside and Stuart Williams are among the professional football players interviewed in this engaging portrait of West Bromwich Albion FC.
- ***Old Market Square*** (1951), showing a day in the life and look at the history of Nottingham Old Market Square. It was made as part of Nottingham's Festival of Britain celebrations, nearly 25 years after the great civic upheaval that saw the city's centuries' old market and annual Goose Fair ousted from the square for a new Council House.
- ***Skegness Welcomes You to Britain's Brightest Holiday Spot*** (1951), a wonderful nostalgic view of the Lincolnshire resort.
- ***The Bottom of the List*** (1968), a hard-hitting *World in Action* documentary looking at the education and housing situation of the very large immigrant population in Wolverhampton in the late 1960s.
- ***The Bull Ring Shopping Centre*** (1965), a bright and breezy promotional tour of Brum's original mega-mall.
- ***Balsall Heath Slum*** (1971), showing the effects of 'slum' housing on the lives of local residents following a report by the housing and homelessness charity Shelter's report of Vincent Crescent in Balsall Heath, Birmingham.

- **Cheltenham Mods and Rockers** (1965), ATV reports from Cheltenham following several nights of disturbances between the 'greasers' and their sworn rivals the mods.
- **Asian Girls Festival** (1981), from self defence to dance and printing to the latest in fashion design: Leicester's first festival for Asian girls aims to shatter stereotypes.
- **Doorstep Paintings** (1976), showing the practice of decorating doorsteps for the Hindu festival of Diwali, and efforts by Leicester City Council to encourage the whole community to take part in the festivities .
- **The Jah People** (1981) discover the way of life for the Rastafari community, the 'Jah people' of Handsworth, Birmingham.
- **Time for Heroes** (1985), focusing on a young Labour councillor Ian Wise who works full time in the local tea factory but also works tirelessly in representing the people of his ward of Halmer End, Staffordshire.

This newly accessible film and TV footage presents a Britain that is vibrant, diverse and eccentric, whilst shining a light on issues and situations that affect every generation. Many of these films have never - or rarely - been seen and can now be searched for by specific UK locations through BFI Player's ground-breaking new **Film and TV Map of the UK**, which also enables people to share films with their family, friends and communities.

Through **Britain on Film** a moving and intimate portrait of the diversity of British life is revealed by professional and amateur footage showing vanished landscapes, urban and rural communities, historic traditions and folklore, people at work, at play and British characters in all their unique glory. Newsreels, advertisements, home movies, forgotten TV shows, and films by government departments all offer surprising insights into British life in the 20th century.

Robin Baker, Head Curator, BFI said *'For 120 years cameras have captured almost every aspect of life in the UK on film, but too often these have been inaccessible to all but the most determined researchers. Now Britain on Film is transforming access to films from the UK's archives and making them available, no matter where you live'*

Heather Stewart, Creative Director, BFI adds *'The emotional power of film is huge and Britain on Film has the ability to touch everyone in the UK. It's vital that the UK's film and TV archives – Britain's national collection – can be enjoyed by everyone. Britain on Film changes the film and TV archive landscape forever. We have now created a way for the British public to discover and engage with their heritage like never before.'*

The unprecedented scale of this project is a testament to the collaborative effort and skills of the BFI National Archive and the regional and national archives of the UK.”

James Patterson, Director, MACE said *‘The Media Archive for Central England (MACE) is delighted to be working with our colleagues in the film archives across the UK to contribute to this great project. The extraordinary diversity of landscape, community and culture in the Midlands and the richness of its history and the way it has changed over the past 120 years is uniquely reflected in film. Britain on Film is a brilliant new platform for engaging with the nation’s film heritage and presents a new opportunity to explore even more of MACE’s extensive collection for everyone to enjoy’.*

Britain on Film is a result of the BFI National Archive and the UK’s thirteen national and regional screen archives and rights holders joining forces to bring these films together with a major programme of curation and digitisation that started in 2012 and continues until the end of 2017.

UK WIDE ACTIVITY

Britain on Film will be reaching the British public in many different ways this summer all over the UK:

- **Luna Cinema** and the BFI are launching a screening programme of feature films and bespoke Britain on Film packages in five stunning **National Trust** locations throughout the UK including Hardwick Hall, Chesterfield, Derbyshire from late August to October.
- Birmingham highlights will be shown on large, digital out of home at **The Screen @ New Street**, throughout August thanks to a new partnership with **Ocean Outdoor**. The Britain on Film trailer will be running on- screen today.
- Those arriving or departing the UK by air will be inspired by Britain as it once was with a new **BFI channel on British Airways in-flight entertainment**, launching this July and featuring Britain on Film footage.
- From August, **Caffè Nero** will have viewing pods in 10 coffee houses across the UK for customers to kick back and view the footage, as well as providing ‘Britain on Film’ branded coffee cups.

BRITAIN ON FILM AND EDUCATION

- **Make Film - Greatest Generation** is a UK-wide filmmaking project organised by the education charity Into Film, BFI, BBC Learning and the British Council. The project invites children aged 7-11 to record interviews with members of the wartime generation and combine the footage with Britain on Film archive clips to create their own short documentaries. For information visit www.intofilm.org
- From 14 July until 30 September **BFI Future Film** are calling for **Instagram** users to share their photos and videos that showcase the diversity of places and people in the *Britain on Film Instagram* competition #BritainOnInstagram around four themes;

Britain's got Flare (LGBT Britain), *Arrivals* (celebrating Britain's migrant community), *Fiesta* (festivals and carnivals) and *Action Sports on Location*.

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 (2013-17). 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. 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 £15million funding from the National Lottery and the additional support of the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

ENDS

Press contacts:

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Film and TV titles and the Britain on Film Trailer can be viewed and downloaded via Panther - for access to please contact Caroline.jones@bfi.org.uk

Images via – [www.image.net/britain on film](http://www.image.net/britain-on-film)

Regional press releases and press contacts can be found at www.bfi.org.uk

Britain on Film online elsewhere

- Britain On Film will be hosted on the BFI's YouTube channel, Facebook and Twitter so audiences can find and experience it in the easiest way possible
- BFI curators will be writing features highlighting important films and themes on the BFI website. Their expertise will add 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

Scottish Screen 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

NOTES TO EDITORS

About the BFI

The BFI is the lead organisation 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 Greg Dyke.

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. bfi.org.uk/Britain-on-film

About the BFI Film Audience Network

The BFI Film Audience Network (FAN) is a ground-breaking initiative that gives audiences across the UK the opportunity to see a diverse range of films in a cinema setting. For filmmakers, getting films onto cinema screens is a highly competitive business, particularly for specialised films which includes archive, documentary, independent and foreign language films. The BFI FAN aims to change this.

- With £8.7 million of Lottery funding over four years (2013-2017) BFI has set up partnerships with nine lead organisations (Film Hubs) to work full-time with cinema exhibitors, film festivals, educators, film societies, community venues, film archives and other organisations in their regions or nations to boost audiences for film across the UK.
- The Film Hubs, which drive audience engagement locally, work together with the BFI at a UK-wide level to grow audiences for British independent and specialised film. They currently comprise: Broadway, Nottingham and Cambridge Film Trust; Chapter, Cardiff; HOME, Manchester; Film London; Queen's Film Theatre, Belfast; Regional Screen Scotland; the University of Brighton; Showroom Sheffield and National Media Museum, Bradford; and Watershed, Bristol. These organisations and their partners form the BFI FAN.
- The Film Hub for Central East (Cambridge Film Trust & Broadway Cinema, Nottingham) has secured funding as part of the BFI's Programming Development Fund to administer and coordinate more than 80 screening events across all UK Film Hubs including film from the regional archives to engage with a wider audience in a number of venues.



About the Media Archive for Central England (MACE)

The Media Archive for Central England (MACE) is based at the University of Lincoln is the screen archive for the Midlands in the UK and seeks to preserve the moving images of the East and West Midlands and provide affordable public access to this material. The area stretches from the fens around the Wash, north to the Lincolnshire Wolds, west across the Derbyshire Peak to the Marches and back across the shire counties of Warwick, Leicester and Northampton and encompasses the country's industrial heartland. Our unique and accessible collections are constantly being developed to reflect the places, history, people and culture of this diverse swathe of England.

About the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation aims to improve the quality of life for people and communities throughout the UK both now and in the future. We do this by funding the charitable work of organisations with the ideas and ability to achieve positive change. We are happy to be supporting Britain on Film – a significant, UK-wide film archive project, which will make titles from the BFI National Archive and national and regional screen archives available to the British public, offering a unique opportunity for insight and reflection on places, communities and histories throughout the UK.

The Foundation is one of the largest independent grant-makers in the UK. We make grants of £30 - £35 million annually towards a wide range of work within the arts, children and young people, the environment and social change. We also operate a £26 million Finance Fund which invests in organisations that aim to deliver both a financial return and a social benefit.

www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk

