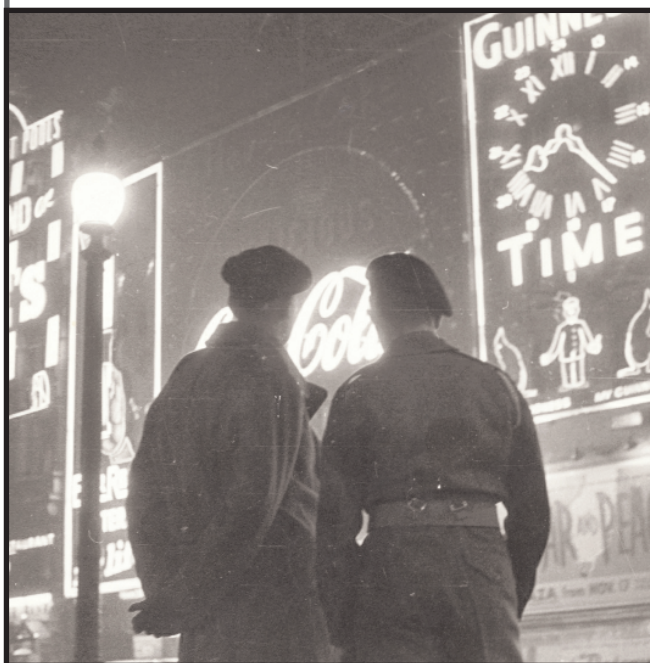




Adventures In the Mediatheque

Personal Selections of Films



**A BFI Southbank /
University of the
Third Age
Shared Learning
Project**

Photographs on Cover

Top: *In Rural Maharashtra* (1940)

Middle: *Together* (1956) showing Director Lorenza Mazzetti

Bottom: *Nice Time* (1957)

Production & Layout

Sean Matthews, 2008

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INTRODUCTION

With such a vast selection of films available it can be very difficult for the novice user to know where to start. To assist with this, a team of six members of London branches of the University of the Third Age (U3A) decided (with BFI staff support) to each make a personal selection of films and write about them. We have called our collection of personal views "Adventures In The Mediatheque". This was carried out as part of a U3A/BFI Shared Learning Project. With no prior experience of the Mediatheque we have followed our interests and each member of the team has selected films on topics of our choice.

There is a section for each chosen topic which contains a list of relevant films that we thought were worth looking at and to which we have added our personal views of each film. We hope these films will intrigue and engage you as they did us. There is so much to see about everyday life in the last century in these films (including a great deal not intended by the filmmakers) that many of them are worth viewing more than once.

The team hope that if you find one (or more) of the topics of interest to you, you will use this document to get you started quickly on your first visit to the Mediatheque. You can do this by choosing films to view prior to your visit. When you arrive you may then follow the guidance on page 11 in order to run your selected films. Our experience is that after you've watched two or three films you begin to understand what an excellent resource you have at your disposal. After that it's a case of enjoying the film riches in this Aladdin's cave.

Although the only Mediatheque is in London at present, the BFI intend to expand it to other areas of the country. The next Mediatheque's are planned for Derby later in 2008, and Cambridge in 2009.

For details on opening times and how to select and view films see How To Use The Mediatheque To Find A Film From This Selection on page 11. BFI staff are very willing to help with any questions or problems you may have.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The staff of the BFI Southbank have been extremely helpful to the six members of the Shared Learning Project team. We particularly want to thank David Somerset, Joanna Van der Meer, Wendy Earle, and Simon McCallum, for all their advice, assistance, and supply of information to us often at times when they were under pressure to sort out other peoples problems.



The shared learning project, 'Adventures in the Mediatheque' was supported by the City Bridge Trust.

A LIST OF THE BFI MEDIATHEQUE COLLECTIONS

The Mediatheque is organised into separate collections of films, but any film can be individually selected. The list below provides information on the current collections as at July 2008. New collections will be added to the Mediatheque system regularly.

A list of all the films available to view on the Mediatheque system can be seen at www.bfi.org.uk/whatson/bfi_southbank/all_mediatheque_films

Anarchy in the UK

From Johnny Rotten to Gizzard Puke, this celebration of punk brings you the players, the fans and the satirists.

Beautiful Things

Queer lives in Britain. Join the Mediatheque on its odyssey to a time and place before Graham Norton.

Before Midnight—a Portrait of India on Film, 1899-1947

An extraordinary collection of rarely seen home movies, documentaries and dramas exploring life in India prior to Independence.

Black Britain

A hundred years of Black British stories, histories and representation on film and TV. From the fleeting appearances of Black Edwardians to the BBC's provocative *Shoot the Messenger* (2006).

Bombs at Teatime

Tea drinking, rationing and the Blitz... Welcome to the 1940s.

Brit Chic

Celebrate 60 years of cutting edge couture with a new collection inspired by post-war British fashion.

Building the South Bank

A look at this iconic stretch of the Thames marking the London Festival of Architecture 2008.

The Book Group

The essential guide to British literary favourites as seen on screen. Includes *Wuthering Heights*, *Rebecca*, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, *The Magic Toyshop* and *Dracula*.

The Box of Delights

The Mediatheque's treasure trove for children and families.

Channel 4 Anniversary

Welcome to a time before Big Brother: the first day of broadcasting on Channel 4.

Double The Trouble, Twice The Fun

The representation of sexuality for those with physical and learning disabilities

Essentially British

What is being British all about? Stiff upper lips? Saucy seaside-postcard humour? Morris dancing? Find out in this collection that take us from Glasgow to Stonehenge, hockey sticks to the hijab.

Exodus: Remembering Slavery

Marking the 200th anniversary of the Anti-Slave Trade Act, this collection explores one of the most shameful episodes in Britain's past—its role in the Atlantic slave trade.

Hope and Glory

A 150th anniversary celebration of the life and work of the great English composer, Sir Edward Elgar.

Housewives' Choice

Travel back to an era in which housewives had good reason to be desperate with this collection exploring the lives of British housewives from the '20s to the '50s.

The Joy of Sex Education

How did films help our parents and grandparents to discover where babies came from or the perils of STDs?

London Calling

From Alf Garnett to London Zoo, this is an unrivalled guide to the capital for Londoners and visitors alike. Here are the icons, the hidden corners, the familiar neighbourhoods, enabling you to explore the city past and present.

On Your Bike!

Britain's love affair with the bicycle.

Out of the Archive

Exploring the work of the BFI National Archive and the challenges faced by curators and archivists.

Pandora's Box

The Mediatheque's regular dip into the world of the odd, the esoteric, the delightful and the downright dangerous.

Play for Today

The start of the Mediatheque's marathon retrospective of the BBC's landmark drama slot—the true National Theatre of the 1970s.

The Promised Land

A survey of domestic architecture in Britain since the 1930s, shaped by turbulent times and interpreted by our filmmakers.

Raphael—Changing Lives in the Himalayan Foothills

The work of the charity dedicated to improving the lives of some of India's most disadvantaged. Includes a rarely seen documentary made by David Lean.

Reality Bites

The rich and surprisingly diverse history of the British documentary, from its roots in the brief 'actuality' films of the Victorian period to the cutting-edge digital productions of today. Complements the Mediatheque's collection of over 300 non-fiction films.

Santa's Grotto

A festive treat to warm the hearts of sentimental traditionalists and bitter cynics alike.

The Search for Shangri La

To mark His Holiness the Dalai Lama's visit to the UK this collection of very rarely seen films provides a vivid portrait of life in Tibet prior to the Chinese occupation of 1950.

Silent Britain

Journey back to a time before 'talkies'. The Mediatheque rounds up the surviving landmarks of the British silent feature film, with more to come.

The Summer of Love

It's time to kick off your Birkenstocks, wear flowers in your hair and remember how Britain marked the Summer of Love.

The Truth About Love

The Mediatheque gets amorous in time for St Valentine's Day.

How To Use The Mediatheque To

– Find A Film From The Selection

– In This Document

1. LOCATION OF THE MEDIATHEQUE

The Mediatheque is within the BFI Southbank complex underneath Waterloo Bridge and next to the Royal National Theatre.

The address is **BFI Southbank, Belvedere Road, South Bank, London SE1 8XT**

The nearest Underground stations are Waterloo, Embankment or Charing Cross.

2. OPENING TIMES FOR THE MEDIATHEQUE

At the time of writing (July 2008) the Mediatheque is open on:

– Wednesday to Sunday **11 am to 8 pm**

– Tuesday **1 pm to 8 pm**

The Mediatheque is closed on Mondays except for Bank Holidays.

3. BOOKING A VIEWING SESSION

It is possible to turn up on the day and if there are viewing stations available you will be allocated one for a maximum of two hours. There is no charge.

Alternatively you can book a viewing session by phoning **020 7928 3535**

4. ON ARRIVAL AT THE MEDIATHEQUE

[To use the viewing station as described below, you need to be familiar with the method of typing numbers and letters into a computer using a keyboard and also with the method of using a mouse to position a pointer on the screen over a command and selecting the command by clicking the mouse.]

4.1 Check in with the Mediatheque attendant who will tell you which viewing station to use and give you a piece of paper with a number on it and a pair of headphones. Take the paper and headphones to the viewing station, sit down, and make yourself comfortable. Plug the headphones into the socket near the keyboard on the viewing station.

4.2 You will see a space on the screen facing you into which you should type the number on the piece of paper which the attendant gave you, using the keyboard. Then use the mouse to click the pointer on "Start" which is displayed on the screen.

5. SELECTING A FILM TO VIEW ON THE VIEWING STATION

5.1 A new screen display will appear with a number of boxes on it with command words inside the box. Examples of the command words are "BACK", "LOGOUT". Select the command "Detailed Search" and click the left hand mouse button.

5.2 Find a box on the screen with the word "TITLE" alongside it. Move the mouse pointer into this box and click using the left hand mouse button. Type the name of the film (as it is given in this document) in which you are interested into the box. Then use the mouse to move the pointer into a box alongside the "Title" box which has the word "SEARCH" inside it.

- 5.3 When the pointer is in the "SEARCH" box, click the left hand mouse button One or more titles will appear on the screen—one of the titles will be the one you previously typed into the box in the previous paragraph. Move the mouse pointer onto the title which you previously typed in and click again using the left hand mouse button.
- 5.4 Other titles will disappear from the screen and only the title you typed in will be seen on the screen. One or more paragraphs about the film will now appear on the screen and there will also be a box with "WATCH" inside it. You may want to read the paragraph(s) before deciding whether to watch the film. If you do want to watch the film, use the mouse to move the pointer into the "WATCH" box and click using the left hand mouse button. The film will now appear on the screen and the soundtrack (if the film has one) can be heard on the headphones.

6. STOPPING A FILM WHICH IS RUNNING ON A VIEWING STATION

- 6.1 If you don't take any action, a film will run through from beginning to end. This guide gives the duration of each film so that you can plan how to use your allocated time (up to two hours) on the viewing station most effectively.
- 6.2 There is no "Stop" button to terminate a film once it has started running. If you wish to terminate it you have the following options:

a) There are two small arrows at the bottom of the screen pointing to the right. If you move the mouse pointer over the right most arrow an advice message will appear "Move forward 10 minutes". If you click using the left hand mouse button on this arrow the film will jump forward 10 minutes. By successively clicking it, the film can be made to keep jumping forward until it has finished . The other arrow pointing to the right will move the film forward by 1 minute if you click using the left hand mouse button.

b) Alternatively a film can be terminated by selecting another (shorter) film to replace the film you are currently viewing. To do this, successively click the box at the top of the screen which has "BACK" inside it until the screen at the beginning of step 5.2 above is displayed. The procedure from 5.2 to 5.4 can then be used to select a new film which when it starts running will replace the the film already running.

7. FINISHING A SESSION ON THE VIEWING STATION

- 7.1 When you want to finish or your allocated time has expired, click the box with the word "LOGOUT" in it. The screen display will change to that which was displayed at the beginning of step 4.2 above.
- 7.2 Unplug the headphones and return them to the attendant.

8. POINTS TO REMEMBER

- 8.1 The above instructions may appear to be complicated to begin with but our experience is that it does not take long to become familiar with them if you have previously used a computer. So please persevere because it is worth it.
- 8.2 The Mediatheque attendants are willing to help people to get started but remember they have to deal with new arrivals, and assist other people so they may not be able to spend as much continuous time with you as you might wish.
- 8.3 Don't panic if you experience a problem with the system, there may be a gremlin in the system. In this case speak to a Mediatheque attendant who will assist you as necessary.

Novels, Short Stories, and their Authors

A selection made by Drena Irish

INTRODUCTION: ROUND IN CIRCLES

One of the most popular groups in the U3A is the book circle. The BFI Mediatheque provides the opportunity to view a steadily increasing variety of adaptations of novels, classic and contemporary, made for the big screen or television. For many, a filmed version of a beloved book can never match up to the magic of the author's work even if the author has been responsible for or at least involved in the screenplay. Indeed this seemingly simple transition may never have been the director's intention. However the reason the book circle is so popular is that it gives people the chance to interact with a text in an entirely new way, discovering, through the interpretation of others, exciting and different aspects of the narrative and characterisation that might otherwise have been missed.

Here are just some of the authors' works available to view, some with a selection of supporting documentaries:

EMILY BRONTE 1818–1848

Wuthering Heights (1962) **93 min**

This BBC TV film starring Claire Bloom, Keith Michell, Ronald Howard, Frank Crawshaw, June Thorburn, Jean Anderson, David McCallum and Patrick Troughton dispenses with most of the novel's second half but remains one of the most successful of the numerous adaptations which have been made. Surprisingly it is a remake of a 1953 live TV version and was shot entirely in studio. It is in black and white with a PG rating. The novel itself was published in 1847 under the pseudonym Ellis Bell.

Wuthering Heights (1967) **180 min**

Again a BBC production with a PG rating, this time in four parts, starring Angela Scoular, Ian McShane, John Tate, Gretel Davis, John Garrie and William Marlowe. A number of characters are omitted from this adaptation and the sequence of events altered.

Wuthering Heights (1970) **104 min**

This three star MGM PG rated feature film stars Timothy Dalton, Anna Calder-Marshall, Harry Andrews, Pamela Brown, Judy Cornwell and James Cossins. It also uses only the first half of the book and leaves out certain characters but was shot on authentic location which gives it a very atmospheric feel. However it is generally felt to be far too genteel.

Wuthering Heights (1978) **250 min**

Time for the BBC to try again, this time in 5 parts. A large amount of original dialogue is used in this version and it doesn't shy away from the hysteria and savagery of the original. It received a 12 and over viewing rating and stars Kay Adsheed, Ken Hutchison and John Duttine.

Wuthering Heights (1998) **113 min**

An ITV production starring Orla Brady, Robert Cavanah, Peter Davison, Crispin Bonham-Carter and Matthew MacFadyen. This six parter encompasses the full breadth of the novel and pays minute attention to period detail.

The Brontes Lived Here (1973) **15 min**

Margaret Drabble explores Haworth and life at the Parsonage and on the moors, especially the imaginative games the Bronte children played. BBC TV.

Emily Bronte at Haworth—a Personal Impression (1973) **25 min**

Beryl Bainbridge looks at the triumphs and tragedies that shaped the author's life, the role of home and childhood in writing *Wuthering Heights* and her constant close proximity to death. BBC TV.

The Bronte Business (1977) **30min**

Joan Bakewell looks at the Bronte trail and interviews visitors at Haworth. BBC TV.

The Bronte Connection (1979) **50 min**

A docudrama in which Mary Butterfield puts the case that characters in *Wuthering Heights* were based on the Heaton family who lived near the Parsonage at Ponden Hall and a local sixteenth century man, Henry Casson. ITV.

In Search of Emily Bronte (2003) **24 min**

Chris Smith attempts to dispel some of the myths surrounding Emily Bronte and examines the place of *Wuthering Heights* in popular culture.

JOHN BUCHAN 1875–1940

The 39 Steps (1935) **87 min**

This black and white five star film says more about Hitchcock's direction than the 1915 novel it is based on. There is much artistic licence in the set pieces. It stars Robert Donat, Madeleine Carroll, Peggy Ashcroft and John Laurie. U rated.

ANGELA CARTER 1940–1992

The Magic Toyshop (1987) **107 min**

An ITV production of the 1967 novel, which the author adapted herself, successfully captures its atmosphere. It stars Tom Bell, Caroline Milmoe, Kilian McKenna and Gareth Bushill and is recommended for over 15 viewing only.

Festival View '87 With Angela Carter (1987) **50 min**

The author's guide to the Edinburgh festival where *The Magic Toyshop* enjoyed a limited screening. BBC TV.

Off The Page: Angela Carter (1987) **23 min**

The author reads from several of her novels and short stories, discusses her love of medieval literature, the 'pact' between author and reader and the influences on her work. C4.

Angela Carter's Curious Room (1992) **50 min**

Made just before her death from cancer, the author discusses the influence of childhood, Shakespeare and popular culture on her work. The programme also contains clips from film adaptations of her work and specially filmed scenes from her classic novels. BBC TV.

CHARLES DICKENS 1812–1870

A Christmas Carol (1901) **4 min**

This incomplete black and white silent film is the earliest surviving Dickens adaptation. Naturally it has had to be condensed but remains true to the spirit of the book—no pun intended! U rated.

A Christmas Carol (1977) **58 min**

A BBC production starring Michael Hordern, John Le Mesurier, Zoe Wanamaker and Christopher Biggins. It also is a condensed version so focuses on the set pieces of the 1843 novel. U rated.

***The Only Way* (1926) 130 min**

This black and white silent adaptation of *A Tale of Two Cities* is a filmed version of a famous stage play which premiered in 1899. It stars John Martin-Harvey and Mary Brough. The novel dates from 1859. U rated.

***Oliver Twist* (1948) 116 min**

Starring Robert Newton, Alec Guinness and John Howard Davies, this PG rated black and white film is deemed to be the finest screen adaptation of this or any Dickens novel. Written in 1837, its Victorian illustrations were used as a guide in set and costume making to bring the book to life. There are some episode and character omissions but they are justifiable simplifications. Even though some of the author's ferocity of assault upon cruelty and viciousness is missing, the film nevertheless caused riots in Germany and was initially banned in the USA being judged anti-semitic.

DAPHNE DU MAURIER 1907–1989***Rebecca* (1979) 215 min**

A BBC four part series starring Joanna David, Jeremy Brett and Anna Massey. It is faithful to the original but fleshes out some sequences, especially the honeymoon in Venice and Rebecca's funeral. PG rated.

***Rebecca* (1997) 194 min**

This more lavish ITV two parter also sticks largely to the plot but poetic licence was used in rewriting some of the dialogue, adding new scenes and having Rebecca actually appear. It stars Emilia Fox (interestingly Joanna David's daughter), Charles Dance, Diana Rigg, Faye Dunaway and Geraldine James and carries a 12 rating.

***Let's Pretend—The Make Believe World of Daphne Du Maurier* (1977) 38 min**

Cliff Michelmore interviews Dame Daphne aged 70 at home in her beloved Cornwall. Directed by her son Christian it explores her life and work through archive footage and film extracts. U rated.

***Daphne Du Maurier—A Loving Spirit* (1997) 60 min**

To mark the launch of the Du Maurier Festival in Fowey, this West Country TV programme has Alison Johns interviewing Charles Dance, Ruth Rendell, P D James and the author's three children.

***Daphne Du Maurier—The Loving Spirit* (1993) 52 min**

Her first novel gives the title to the programme, which delves into the author's complex relationships with both men and women. Virginia McKenna reads extracts from her diaries and her biographer Margaret Drabble also makes a contribution. PG rated.

E(DWARD) M(ORGAN) FORSTER 1879–1970***A Passage to India* (1965) 110 min**

Up to this point the author had banned all film adaptations of his work but after the success of the stage show of his 1922-4 novel the BBC was given permission to film crucial scenes on location which opened the whole story up. It stars Sybil Thorndike, Zia Mohyeddin, Virginia McKenna, Cyril Cusack and Saeed Jaffrey and is in black and white with a PG rating.

***Obelisk* (1977) 30 min**

A BBC adaptation of the author's 1939 short story starring Peter Sallis and Rosemary Martin.

***A Room with a View* (1985) 110 min**

The celebrated Merchant-Ivory version of the 1908 novel stars Helena Bonham-Carter, Maggie Smith, Denholm Elliott, Daniel Day-Lewis, Simon Callow, Judi Dench and Rupert Graves. The Ruth Prawer Jhabvala script is deemed witty and erudite whilst the detached American direction cuts to the quick of British manners of the time. It merits four stars and is PG rated.

L(ESLIE) P(OLES) HARTLEY 1895–1972

The Go-Between (1971) **116 min**

This four star adaptation of the 1953 novel has a cast including Julie Christie, Alan Bates, Michael Redgrave, Michael Gough and Edward Fox. Harold Pinter's screenplay is much under-rated but highlights the thought-provoking expose of the British class system of the book. PG rated.

BARRY HINES 1939–

Kes (1969) **113 min**

Scripted by the author this five star film is an authentic adaptation and effectively uses both professional actors and amateurs. It stars David Bradley, Brian Glover and Colin Welland. PG rated.

M(ARY) M(ARGARET) KAYE 1908–2004

Far Pavilions (1984) **315min**

A three part TV adaptation of the epic novel of British India written in 1978, it has of necessity had to omit much of the earlier part of the story, whilst remaining faithful to the rest. Starring Ben Cross, Christopher Lee, Omar Sharif, Rossano Brazzi and John Geilgud. PG rated.

HANIF KUREISHI 1954–

The Buddha of Suburbia (1993) **240 min**

Adapted by the author, this four part BBC programme stars Naveen Andrews, Roshan Seth, Brenda Blethyn and John McEnery. As you would expect, the screenplay follows the chronology of the book closely but does omit certain marginal characters and events. An added bonus, for me at least, is the score of specially written songs by David Bowie who went to the same school as the author. The book won the Whitbread Award for the best first novel in 1990 but caused uproar with the then daring approach it had to race and gay sex, mysticism and family strife. 18 and over viewing.

Hanif Kureishi–Black and White in Colour (1991) **40 min**

The author offers opinions on race in British film and TV to Isaac Julien and Colin MacCabe, namely that there is a lack of visibility for black and Asian actors. Have things changed? PG rated, in two parts.

Hanif Kureishi (2003) **48 min**

In this ITV South Bank Show, the author talks to Melvyn Bragg about his childhood and the influences on his life and work. In three parts.

PAUL SCOTT 1920–1978

Alien Sky (1956) **98 min**

One of the earliest surviving TV dramas, this black and white, BBC programme was adapted by the author from his 1953 story. It stars Stephen Murray, Roger Delgado, Zia Moyyeddin and Hugh McDermott. PG rated.

The Jewel in the Crown (1984) **780 min**

An ITV adaptation of the 1966 novel in 14 parts. It stars Peggy Ashcroft, Charles Dance, Saeed Jaffrey, Geraldine James, Art Malik, Judy Parfitt and Tim Piggott-Smith. Like the novel, it convincingly captures the British-Indian mindset with its volatile mix of racism, class, sex and sexuality. For viewers of 15 and over.

ALAN SILLITOE 1928–

Saturday Night and Sunday Morning (1960) **89min**

The novel, written in 1958, was part of the socially realistic, 'angry' movement. The five star black and white film damps down the belligerence of the book but nonetheless has an authentic feel. Starring Albert Finney, Shirley Anne Field, Rachel Roberts, Hilda Baker and Norman Rossington it was awarded a PG rating.

BRAM STOKER 1847–1912

Nosferatu: Eine Symphonie des Grauens (1922) **63 min**

This four star black and white (tinted) silent film was the first in a long line of portrayals of Dracula, second only to Sherlock Holmes in popularity. Made by F W Murnau in defiance of the author's estate, his widow sued the film company and all prints were ordered to be destroyed. Fortunately, this order was never carried out. PG rated, the writer, Henrik Galan, was not completely faithful to the 1897 novel. He introduces a plague theme with rats arriving on the boat with the vampire, changes characters' names or omits them altogether and moves the whole of the English action to Germany with the Czech Republic standing in for Transylvania.

Dracula (1958) **82 min**

Arguably the definitive adaptation, this five star 12A rated Hammer horror film stars Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing, Michael Gough and Melissa Striblin. It also uses Germanic-looking locations.

Dracula (1968) **80 min**

A three part made for TV in black and white version, starring Denholm Elliott, Corin Redgrave, Joan Hickson and Susan George. PG rated, it contains interesting deviations from the novel.

Count Dracula (1977) **150 min**

This BBC two part adaptation is one of the most faithful, using almost all of the original characters. Rated 15 it stars Louis Jordan, Frank Finlay, Judi Bowker and Susan Penhaligon.

Dracula (1993) **50 min**

ITV's South Bank Show presented by Melvyn Bragg explores the effect of Victorian paranoia over immigration and syphilis, with its consequent madness. It also looks at the erotic aspects of the novel. Chris Frayling, Daniel Farson (Stoker's great-nephew), Gary Oldman and Francis Ford Coppola are among the interviewees. Rated 12.

Dracula (2006) **90 min**

Another 15 rated BBC adaptation starring Marc Warren, Sophia Myles and David Suchet. It is loyal to the original but has a fresh twist. Syphilis is put firmly back to the forefront, with its implications for HIV and AIDS.

Dracula–Nightmare: The Birth of Horror (1996) **50 min**

A BBC PG rated programme in which Chris Frayling examines the novel's sources.

In Search of Dracula with Jonathan Ross (1996) **52 min**

A lighthearted look at the phenomenon, focussing on the erotic. Stephanie Beacham, Sadie Frost, Richard E. Grant, Grace Jones, Christopher Lee, Gary Oldman and Jack Palance contribute. PG rated.

JEANETTE WINTERSON 1959–

Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit (1990) **165 min**

A 15 rated BBC programme starring Geraldine McEwan, Celia Imrie, Pam Ferris and Peter Gordon. Adapted by the author, it caused a furore with its content which includes exorcism, religious fervour and lesbian sex.

Land and River Transport

A selection of films by Alan Hooper

INTRODUCTION

This section highlights 30 films which were made between 1898 and 1971. The films show what changes have happened in the different modes of transport (and in places, peoples lives etc.) over that period. It's easy to forget those changes when caught up in the bustle of 21st century life but to see the authentic views of previous times contained in this selection of Mediatheque films brings the past vividly to life whether or not the viewer knew the period first hand.

You may ask "How do I know that they are authentic views?" I don't, but film 'trickery' is much easier to identify in films of earlier periods than it is in those of today so I'm fairly confident that many of them are authentic views. However there are exceptions—see the comments on *Night Mail*

It's not just the mechanics of transport that I find fascinating in these films, it's what they show of the sociological environment that also interests me. For example who travelled by bus, tram, and train? What sort of clothes did they wear? By looking closely you can begin to answer these questions. Some of the commentaries seem to me very patronizing particularly those aimed at children and teenagers, such those aiming to improve cycling skills. Such an approach would almost certainly alienate 21st century youth. Another interesting aspect for me is the information (eg maps, advertisements) which is visible on trains or the sides of buses and vans.

I hope you derive as much pleasure as I did from watching some (or all) of these films. Having them accessible to the public in the BFI Mediatheque provides a wonderful opportunity for everyone to share this unique resource.

TRAIN RELATED FILMS

Short Films Showing Trains Or Train Related Locations

View From An Engine Front—Ilfracombe (1898) **4 min.** Silent, Black & White

This was possibly a novelty film for early audiences who may have seen it in a fairground tent or as part of a tour of local village halls. It shows a continuous train movement through the countryside along a curving track and ends when the train pulls into a station—Ilfracombe? It was probably filmed from a footplate of an engine. The camera would have been hand wound by the person operating it and as it's continuous they would probably have had an aching arm by the end of the journey. The number of possible routes as the train approaches the terminus means that the signalling arrangements are fairly complex for that time.

Scenes At Piccadilly Circus & Hyde Park Underground Stations (1931) **7 min.** Silent, Black & White

The camera seems to have been set up to record various views of the two stations. There is no indication of who made this film, possibly it was made by the Underground Electric Railway Company for a study of passenger behaviour. There are no views of platforms, only escalators and booking halls. This film offers a glimpse into a past time when fashion and design were so different and yet the process of moving people appears to have changed very little.

Night Mail (1936) **25 min.** Sound, Black & White. GPO Film Unit

This well known documentary about overnight mail trains where the post is sorted as it travels is photographed in luminous black and white that captures the magic of steam propelled trains. However some of it is not as authentic as it looks; the workers sorting the mail were filmed in a mock up train interior in a studio and were

asked to sway as the camera panned past them. W H Auden's poetry and Benjamin Britten's music add the finishing touch to a perfect film for the transport enthusiast.

Snow (1963) **8 min.** Sound, Colour. British Transport Film Unit

This film will interest both the transport enthusiast and the film enthusiast. It uses beautiful images of trains moving through the snow-laden countryside in the severe winter of 1963. The soundtrack consists of rhythmic sounds made entirely by percussive instruments and the images have been edited to match these sounds. This poetic film has been highly acclaimed and was nominated for an Oscar.

Metroland (1973) **50 min.** Sound, Colour

John Betjeman's affectionate celebration of the Metropolitan Railway and how the railway encouraged the development of areas adjacent to its stations and track. The early film taken from the front of a train is the most interesting feature of this nostalgic film.

A Foot Hill Town—Darjeeling (1937) **9 min.** Sound, Black & White

The first 3 minutes of this film show the railway with its trains which ran to Darjeeling in 1937. The remainder of this educational film (which has a rather patronizing commentary) shows Government House and other sights of Darjeeling.

Feature Films With Train Related Sequences Or Themes

Underground (1928) **80 min.** Silent, Black & White

This film contains a series of stories about people who travel on the London Underground railway and their interaction with each other. Many of the scenes appear to have been filmed in real locations either on the railway or in the streets above. For the former there are scenes inside the cars (the map appears to be of the Northern Line), on platforms, and near escalators. One scene has been filmed on an open-topped B type bus. I think it is worth watching the complete film. It was directed by Anthony Asquith, the son of the famous Liberal Prime Minister.

The Boy Who Turned Yellow (1972) **55 min.** Sound, Colour

This film was made by the Children's Film Foundation for children to see at Saturday morning matinees. About 20 minutes into the film there is a short sequence of about 4 minutes filmed at Chalk Farm (Northern Line) on the platform, and on a 1938 Tube car.

Northwest Frontier (1959) **129 min.** Sound Colour

An old fashioned adventure film in which Kenneth More has to transport a young Indian prince to safety by train during a rebellion of Muslim tribesmen in 1905. An enjoyable film for those who enjoy a Boys' Own Paper type of story but nothing very significant for the train enthusiast.

ROAD TRANSPORT RELATED FILMS

Short Films Showing Buses And Trams And Their Related Locations

Blackfriars Bridge (1896) **1 min.** Silent Black & White

A stationary camera was set up on the bridge for this film and records horse drawn buses and carts as well as pedestrians crossing the river.

Panorama of Ealing from a Moving Tram (1901) **1 min.** Silent Black & White

This film was taken from the front of a tram. It starts as the tram is travelling along the Uxbridge Road in the Ealing Broadway area towards Shepherds Bush. Some of the buildings shown are still there in 2008. I found the clothes worn by the people interesting particularly the ladies fashions.

Old London Street Scenes (1903) **3 min.** Silent Black & White

Another film when the camera was set up to record short scenes of well-known London locations. These include Hyde Park Corner, Parliament Square, Charing Cross Station, Pall Mall, The Strand, and Victoria Embankment. It shows dense traffic consisting mostly of horse drawn carts and buses with the occasional motor car. It can be watched again and again to absorb the wealth of detail of a bygone age shown in this fascinating film.

London Street Scenes Of The 1920s **4 min.** Silent Black & White

More street scenes! This time it's the 1920s and we can watch traffic at St. Pauls, Oxford Street, and Westminster. Motor buses (B and K types) frequently pass the camera.

Hoxton—Saturday 3rd July Britannia Theatre (1920) **6 min.** Silent Black & White

It's not clear what the significance of this date was, but the film shows crowds in the streets outside the theatre and in the surrounding area. Trams and carts pass by while the camera records the scene. Perhaps someone will be stirred to research the local papers for this date and discover what was happening.

The Elephant Will Never Forget (1953) **10 min.** Sound Black & White

A film made by the British Transport Film Unit which is a fond farewell to the disappearance of trams from London streets. There was disagreement between the film's director John Krish and its producer Edgar Anstey because the latter felt the tone of the film was too sentimental. There is certainly a feeling of regret that trams will no longer be seen and it makes the older viewer nostalgic for the rattling, uncomfortable vehicles. There's even a music hall song about them on the soundtrack! Be ready to rush off to the Transport for London Museum in Covent Garden to see once again one of these monsters of the road.

Films Involving Bicycles And Cycling

Ladies On Bicycles (1899) **1 min.** Silent, Black and White

Victorian ladies showing their slalom cycling skills in a film made by the pioneer film maker Cecil Hepworth. The location has not been identified.

Flying The Foam And Some Fancy Diving (1906) **2 min.** Silent, Black & White

Stunt cycling at the end of Brighton Pier with the cyclists diving into the sea while a crowd watches the event.

Fat Man On A Bicycle (1914) **3 min.** Silent

Comedian Fred Evans tries to teach a large man to ride a bicycle. Every possibility for the man to fall off the cycle is used. The film is one of a series made at this time in which Evans played a character called Pimple. The humour seems very basic after 90 years but its reported popularity had the audiences rolling about when it was new. Perhaps it needs to be seen with an audience. It appears to have been filmed in a London suburban street.

Cycling The Channel (1929) **1 min.** Silent

This is an item from a Topical Budget newsreel which shows a hydrocycle that allows the rider to cycle across water. It's not clear whether this is across the Channel.

How A Bicycle Is Made (1945) **14 min.** Sound, Black & White

A young boy visits his father at the bicycle factory where he is given a brief history of the bicycle followed by a detailed, technical view of how a bicycle is manufactured. Presumably the film was made for educational purposes and has a formal, turgid commentary and no music. Perhaps of interest to anyone interested in manufacturing practice in 1945 but a bit too detailed for more general audiences.

Ballad Of The Battered Bicycle (1947) **10 min.** Sound, Black & White

A cautionary tale narrated by Stanley Holloway about three boys who show off when they are cycling. Fairly

entertaining but with basic effects, which was probably intended for showing to boys as a warning of what could happen if they didn't cycle sensibly. Appears to be filmed in London suburban streets.

Betcher (1971) **13 min.** Colour, Sound

Features Keith Chegwin as a child demonstrating his cycling abilities. The film was made to promote the National Cycling Proficiency Scheme and appears to be filmed in London suburban streets. It provides a contrast to *Ballad Of the Battered Bicycle* (see previous film) since 24 years later this film was probably trying to reach a similar type of audience. I found the film mildly interesting from a sociological point of view but unless you're interested in Keith Chegwin (is anyone interested in Keith Chegwin apart from his mother?) there is little else to recommend it.

RIVER TRANSPORT FILMS

Films Showing The RiverThames

Colour On The Thames (1935) **8 min.** Sound

An early colour film (the colour process has the unusual name of Gasparcolor!) which shows scenes along the River Thames in 1935. There are views of Docklands, The Pool of London, Richmond, and the Thames Estuary. The visuals show the different moods of the river and are accompanied only by rather sombre orchestral music. I found this an interesting film which is worth watching for an unusual view of this period of the Thames.

Pool Of London (1950) **85 min.** Sound, Black & White

A feature film made by Ealing Film Studios in a documentary style with a large proportion filmed on location in and around the Pool of London and Dockland locations. The film is a thriller which I expected to creak but despite some occasional ham acting I became absorbed by the story. The locations are a bonus and add to the realistic style of the film. It brings home to the viewer how much has changed in this area of London in both the physical environment and in the way of life. I cannot remember seeing this film before; if you are in the same position and can spare 85 minutes I recommend taking time to watch it.

TRANSPORT RELATED FILMS ON GENERAL TOPICS

British Transport Film Unit Productions

This Year—London (1951) **25 min.** Sound Black & White

The film follows a shoe factory works outing from Leicester to London. The visit was supposedly recorded as it happened. The workers travel by train to St Pancras and then board a coach for a siteseeing tour of London. They travel to Hampton Court where they take a river boat along the Thames through Teddington Lock and back to central London. They split up for the evening to enjoy the nightlife of the capital before catching the train back to Leicester. The film gives a fascinating glimpse of London more than 50 years ago, and of a type of outing that no longer takes place. It's enjoyable if you can ignore the patronising commentary supposedly by one of the workers but almost certainly spoken by an actor.

Capital Visit (1955) **20 min.** Sound, Colour

Another visit to London, this time it's children on a 3 day school journey during which they visit all the tourist sites (Buckingham Palace, Tower of London etc) as well as Heathrow, Windsor, and Runnymede. They also take a boat trip on the Thames to Greenwich. I didn't find this film as interesting as *This Year—London*.

A Desperate Case (1958) **10 min.** Sound, Black & White

A film which firstly shows how not to pack your suitcase and then gives authoritative advice on how it should be packed. All the voices are provided by actor Maurice Denham. The film is amusing until the culprit is taken to a "suitcase" court when I felt it became silly.

Terminus (1961) **30 min.** Sound, Black & White

A celebration of London's Waterloo station on a busy day. The film concentrates on the people who work there and the travellers passing through by observing them as little incidents unfold. We see a group of prisoners handcuffed together, a little boy who has lost his mother, a soldier parting from his loved one. We think we are watching reality but in fact we are watching scenes being acted out in front of the camera. The film was directed by John Schlesinger for British Transport films and won a Golden Lion Award at the Venice Film Festival. Schlesinger was offered a feature film to direct as a result of this film. He went on to make some outstanding feature films such as *Billy Liar* and *Midnight Cowboy*. *Terminus* is worth watching for its view of a mainline station in 1961 and for entertainment which stands up very well after nearly 50 years.

Other Films

The World's First Caterpillar Track (1908) **6 min.** Silent, Black & White

This film was made to promote a petrol driven caterpillar track vehicle by its manufacturers. The vehicle is shown traversing clay, mud, soft sand, marshy land, and streams with no difficulty. The titles are in German which makes one wonder if the vehicle was also of German manufacture or possibly the film was made to promote a British product in Germany. A Caterpillar Track was later used in the design for the tanks which were developed during the First World War and which first went into battle in 1916. Perhaps the tank designers had seen this film.

The Open Road (1927) **60 min.** Silent, Colour

This shows a journey made by the film maker around the British Isles in a Vauxhall D-type car. Made for the cinema it used a colour process which was not completely successful and limited the extent of its exhibition in 1927. The film has now been restored to the colour form originally intended and gives a fascinating insight into the Britain of the 1920s. As I started viewing it my first reaction was that it looked too modern (it was reminiscent of the period detective stories which television produces so well) but as it progressed I realised that it was possible to see detail of the period which I had missed in the black and white films of the time. Towards the end there are views of familiar London landmarks which your eyes search to try and spot what has changed and what is the same.

Cabbages and Cuppas

A selection by Lyn Perry of films on food and drink

CABBAGES AND CUPPAS; FOOD & DRINK IN THE BFI MEDIATHEQUE

We all do it more than once every day of our lives—and often in public too. Eating and drinking is the truly universal human activity and how food and drink is produced, bought and consumed, by who, how and where has long been an interest of mine. Given the number of cooking programmes on TV these days, M&S ‘food porn’, Guinness arthouse quality advertising, and Cooking in the Danger Zone combining food and politics it seems I am not alone.

Sadly there are no Philip Harben (truly democratic explanation of the physical and chemical processes), ‘Gallop Gourmet’ Kerr, sublime snob Fanny Craddock or even amiable drunk Keith Floyd examples in the Mediatheque but there are many other delights from 1904 to 1998. I’m afraid you can’t take a cuppa in with you but settle back with me and let your mouth water.

Many of the shorter films were produced for showing in cinemas before the main feature. Sitting through endless car (and other) commercials and fingerwagging public safety shorts only too familiar from TV in a cinema last week, how I longed for the return of Pathe Newsreels with their stirring music and uplifting commentary and the Look At Life short documentaries on interesting topics from home and abroad that nationalised industries used to produce as a public service.

DIGGING FOR BRITAIN: FOOD PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

The earliest film in my selection *Day In The Hayfields* (1904) **3 min** is a wonderfully evocative contemporary glimpse of long gone English rural life with horse drawn ploughs, men reaping and making hayricks and children playing in the fields as the harvest is brought in—no health and safety concerns in those days, but then not a lot of dangerous machinery either. *This Was England* (1935) **21min** offers a history of Suffolk farming from a horse ploughing in the snow and hand threshing to the latest (for the time) machine tractors. The world of 1904 is now history.

British audiences’ appetite for nostalgia and exotic locations (not to mention colonial triumphalism and smug superiority) in the 1920s and 1930s was satisfied by documentaries showing happy natives only too delighted to beaver away to produce cash crops for export. Never any sight or mention of the plantation owners though, the impression is the locals pocket the proceeds of their labours—did audiences really swallow that?

Wonderful Fruit Of The Tropics (1914) **5 min**—what an impact this gorgeously hand tinted short roaming through the banana and tropical fruit plantations in India must have had. *Punjab Village* (1925) **13min** must also have been a revelation to British audiences with its views of traditional mustard oil production, sheep and bullock raising and bread making—but perhaps this rural life was still familiar from parents or grandparents.

Dance Of The Harvest (1935) **8 min** showing rice production in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) has a toe curling commentary pointing out the “primitive superstition” of the village celebration while *Life In Hunza* (1937) **8 min**, silent filmed in what is now North Pakistan features apricot wine production and fertility rites (I wonder how long it took to stamp those out after Partition?) in addition to the more usual rural activities.

Gardens Of The Orient (1936) **10 min** is an illuminating contemporary view of tea production in India and Ceylon. We do get to see the effects of British colonialism—all positive, of course. The workers are happy because they are paid and “if anyone is ill through eating too much curry”, then a modern hospital has been provided to make sure they get back picking those leaves pdq. Contemporary audiences would have been reassured by

the "modern factories" equipped with up to date British machinery where the tea is processed under conditions of "scrupulous cleanliness" for shipping to the hygiene-conscious (see *Another Case Of Poisoning* and *Good Housewife In Her Kitchen* in the Public Information section below for the real story) British public.

One Family (1930) **49 min**, an unusually long promo from the Empire Marketing Board sources ingredients for a Xmas pudding from the 'Dominions', focussing on idyllic orange groves and vineyards in pre-apartheid South Africa. By contrast with the Indian set films, there don't seem to be many black people in this part of the world at all, just 'kith and kin' enjoying the abundance of a subtropical climate where the fruit seems to just drop off the trees (maybe the Africans are out of sight shaking them) ready for shipping to Britain to make those puds.

In Rural Maharashtra (1940) **12 min** is interesting as an Indian production following the pattern of "smiling people" grinding corn at dawn, sowing, ploughing, reaping, threshing, getting married etc with the addition of surprising giant cauliflowers and clearly very well nourished and attractive professional actors. The apogee of this style of film must be *Hillmen Go To War* (1944) **10 min** filmed in Himachal Pradesh. No, I didn't know where it is either, Wikipedia tells me north west India. Not only are these villagers delighted to farm tea and spuds for the Mother Country in her time of need—the narrator urges them to save the money to tide them over as the orders will dry up when the war ends—leaving them with a subsistence diet of "country bread" made from strained chestnut pulp (imagine what Hugh Fearnley-Worsitt could do with that) but the men queue up in their droves to volunteer for infantry service! Gets them something different to eat I suppose...

One aspect of food production continuous to this day in Britain is fishing. My earliest example of the politics of food production and consumption *Oyster Fishing At Whitstable* (1920) **6 min** made in the USA is notable for its counterpointed scenes of ordinary blokes fishing in cold, hard conditions and overweight toffs scoffing the product. *Drifters* (1929) **60 min**, an outstanding example of John Grierson's brilliant documentaries, follows the North Sea herring fishermen and features extraordinary close quarters action footage—you need a souwester, wellies and sick bag for this one, you really feel you're riding the swells on those boats. An oddity from Moholy-Nagy (uncategorisable Hungarian Bauhaus modernist photographer/designer, pronounced Moley Naj) *Lobsters* (1936) **16 min** is notionally about Sussex fishermen but really an opportunity to show stunning, state of the art underwater photography. Nice score by Arthur Benjamin and the useful factoid that three million lobsters were eaten annually in England—that's a lot of toffs going at it with a will—add interest.

Finally in this section, Lindsey Anderson's marvellous study of Covent Garden market *Every Day Except Christmas* (1957) **40 min** showing the process of picking, packing and transporting fruit and veg from all over England overnight to arrive at the market within 12 hours. Not too many food miles run up in those days. Filmed in cinema verite style with no voiceover this is an evocative picture of the market I remember when I first came to London just before it closed. Fags permanently glued to lower lips, not a white coat, hat, welly or health inspector in sight, just grubby blokes (and one woman) working hard among the bustle, noise and mess and enjoying tea and sandwiches in the onsite greasy spoon caff.

NOW HEAR THIS: PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

It's always a joyful experience being lectured and/or patronised by public information films although I'm not sure how many more traffic accidents (not to mention graphic VD/wear a condom exhortations) I can stand at the cinema. In the 1940s they worried more about slack food preparation and warming the pot.

An early example of how to keep women busy and useful in the home *Hints and Hobbies No 12* (1926) **12 min** shows (9 minutes in) how to produce a hideously twirly decorated cake with cochineal colouring and a piping bag. A reminder of the time when 'shop bought' cakes were the sign of a seriously deficient and lazy homemaker.

Mr English At Home (1940) **27 min** was produced by the Colonial Film Unit to remind the world what we were

fighting for: an iconic portrait of a middle class semi-detached suburban day. Mum washes, shops in independent grocers, butchers and greengrocers, cooks and presents two square meals at a table with improbably good china. Dad and the kids just eat and drink lots of tea. There is no sound, image is all.

Another morale booster is *Countrywomen* (1941) **14 min**, a look at the work of the Women's Institute which after showing how village shops work and home grown veg is produced—considered essential information for evacuees—turns surprisingly and wonderfully militant. These women sell jam all over the country in an organised national effort (so much for male management gurus) and suddenly start urging everyone to vote—"we're stronger as a group and there are a lot of things we want changed". Sad to think many probably ended up as Horlicks housewives—see the Advertising section below.

Two Cooks and a Cabbage (1941) **6 min**—what a little wartime gem this is. Gran lets the girls make a cabbage lunch (yum!) while the boys play. Grans lived in lovely country cottages in those days with alarming giant cabbages growing in the garden and young (actually probably older than they look, they're dressed and behave like 10 year olds but are big) girls heaved pans of boiling water about and wielded sharp knives with no one turning a hair. An interesting wartime cookery lesson in how not to destroy essential vitamins by drowning in water and over boiling—and a reminder that grans used to be seen as wise old elders whose advice was obeyed without question. Those were the days. But then gran was probably only 50 but looked and acted very very old...

Teamaking Tips (1941) **10 min** shows a white coated male boffin laying down the law on teamaking to turbanned canteen ladies who look suitably unimpressed and carry on dishing up gallons in the background as he gibbers on. The clear message is that tea is essential to the war effort and subject to Ministry directives like everything else. I was all agog to learn the scientific truth about the 'warmed pot', imagining some essential chemical flavour release explanation. Disappointingly it's just to keep the brew hot, redundant in these days of central heating and global warming, not that anybody but me makes leaf tea anymore...

What a Life (1948) **12 min** is a quite unclassifiable curio shot in a weird expressionist style. A couple of blokes driven to the brink of despair by years of rationing make a suicide pact in a pub. Well you would, wouldn't you? Who made this film? Who was it for? Was it ever shown to the public? Was it meant to be morale boosting in some perverse way? We need to know! It has the same bizarre atmosphere as some of the Powell and Pressburger offerings of the time eg the deeply creepy *Canterbury Tales*.

Another Case of Poisoning (1949) **14 min** sadly had no soundtrack when I viewed it. I would have loved to hear the hospital consultant berating a prostrate bedridden patient about his sloppy food hygiene habits. However an early scene depicting bored factory girls dipping fingers into and sneezing and shaking hair over the cream buns on a conveyor belt is a delight. The male factory hand contributes by leaving his fag perched on the edge of a pallet of them. *The Good Housewife In Her Kitchen* (1949) **9 min** starts off with a lesson about fridge storage for different food types. As if suddenly realising maybe not too many people had fridges then, the film launches into some bizarre DIY storage tips—milk in flower pots and biscuit tin bread bins. Nice to have got hold of biscuits in 1949 I expect.

More recently *Fatty Issues* (1990) **5 min** is a charming animated short lampooning dieters' excuses—"take off 6lbs for the nightie", "peanuts are fruit", an interesting jump from decades of not enough food to too much.

Drinking for England (1998) **50 min** is a brilliant documentary using poetry and song, observation and interviews to profile heavy drinkers of both sexes and all classes, showing the manifold attractions of boozing. A rare honest portrait, these folk enjoy drinking too much for the approval of today's health police!

TIME TO SPEND: ADVERTISING

There are some wonderfully surprising ads to enjoy here, very different from today's slick promos and from the usual suspects trotted out as historical examples.

Sam Goes Shopping (1939) **6 min** features Stanley Holloway (spot him again in *Brief Encounter* below—Settings: Café) and Terry-Thomas enjoying the cornucopia of canned goods in full Technicolor available in the Co-op at the time to a soundtrack of Stanley's ghastly trademark doggerel verse. I was relieved we were spared Cyril Fletcher.

Surprisingly perhaps, Horlicks commissioned some groundbreaking adverts. *Love On The Range* (1939) **6 min** is a fabulous 'puppetoon' by the famous Hungarian animator George Pal who was enjoying himself so much he barely mentions the product. Lurid Technicolor, an operatic sequence and action chases as the Woodentops meet the Wild West—the briefly shoehorned in message is that Horlicks provides the frenetic energy. We wish.

Horlicks later produced a couple of Bergmanesque (save yourself interminable hours watching *Scenes From A Marriage*, you get much the same effect from the following 5 minutes) offerings as part of the postwar 'bully/guilt trip the ladies back into the home' movement. *An Englishman's Home* (1946) **2 min** sums up the male middle class domestic ideal of "peace and comfort", being "home and free" with pipe, candles on the dining table and a lovely hot cup of Horlicks after a hard day in the office served up by the stay at home wife. The lack of gin in this household probably accounts for the extraordinary *Turning Point* (1951) **3 min**. After yet another tiff, hubby walks out. Wife, acknowledging her failure to provide 'peace and comfort' consults the doctor—who 'prescribes' Horlicks to remedy her poor sleep and tiredness. Cheapskate hubby rewards his newly Stepfordised wife with a 'second honeymoon' in the pouring rain—she pronounces it 'cosy' instead of stuffing his smug pipe down his throat. Who needs drugs? Or satisfying lives for women? Marriage saved by Horlicks! You couldn't make it up...

Going Shopping With Elizabeth Allan: Harrods (1955) **8 min** is a rare surviving example of the admag—an early ITV equivalent of editorial advertising where an ad is thinly disguised as documentary. Poorly paid BBC presenters traded on their trustworthy reputations to flog merchandise on the new commercial channels. Elizabeth introduces the "ordinary housewife" to Harrods, an odd juxtaposition of caviar and coffee, truffles and Tetley tea bags served in porcelain, along with Tupperware and other "up to the minute" lines. Fascinating glimpses of the famous Food Hall, well stocked drinks section and racks of fur coats encouraged us all to take the bus to South Ken and spend, spend, spend now rationing was finally over.

Factory (1959) **1 min** is a fascinating Schweppes short with Benny Hill playing all roles in a tonic water factory and a glimpse of what a brilliant mimic and comic genius he was. Pity he's remembered chiefly for tired old sexist material—a salutary lesson to performers not to outstay their time. Finally who could resist a rousing chorus of *What We Want Is Watneys* (1959) **1 min**, featuring a bright young Michael Caine and other uniformed conscripts in the days when the British Tommy and weak, pasteurised gassy beer were seen as both benign and popular?

TIME FOR TEA: SOCIAL EVENTS

Of course eating and drinking means much more than sustenance—otherwise we'd all have been on astronaut food pills for years. Where, how and with whom we eat and drink is central to our lives and identities.

At Home

Welcome To Britain (1943) **60 min** is for me the highlight of the Mediatheque, being both intentionally and often unintentionally hilarious. Produced for US soldiers coming to Britain during WW2 this is extraordinarily revealing of the attitudes of the time. Burgess Meredith (Joker in the Batman TV series) shows the GIs how not

to wind up the locals—inadvertently anyway. Speaking politely and quietly to any passing yokel—and this is a remarkably rural England—will invariably result in an invite to tea. Stationmasters can't wait to put the kettle on (32 min in) and in a wonderfully contrived 'anti-racist' section (33 min in) a bemused looking black GI is cornered by a little old lady on the grounds they're "both from Birmingham, what a co-incidence, you must come for tea!"

However, taking up the invite is fraught with etiquette pitfalls. Burgess greedily tucks into a lavish (ham sandwiches, cakes etc) tea (19 min in) while his hosts look on appalled as he guzzles through their weekly rations in minutes in the initial 'how not to be a gallumphing yank buffoon' section. Rerun in a suitably polite and appropriate manner his behaviour would be worthy of Lady Windermere. See below for a very valuable universal timeless lesson in how not to get beaten up in a British pub—show suitably submissive behaviour towards the local alpha males basically. It also helps to be below average height.

Return To Life (1960) **29 min** is a remarkably sympathetic early documentary showing the lives of asylum seekers in a British refugee camp. Tea drinking forms a central social ritual and the English food provided in the camp adds to the immigrants' sense of alienation and despair—there is nothing familiar to comfort them in this spartan environment. A single orange is presented as a gift. However the final comment is that however bleak it seems, the camp provides safety and adequate nourishment for the child who "once tucked his daily bread under his shirt".

Abigail's Party (1977) **100 min** directed by Mike Leigh is a ghastly reminder of the days when party food consisted of crisps, nuts and sticks of cheese and pineapple cubes. Of course drinking and smoking in gargantuan quantities was the norm then and the whole point of such parties as I recall.

Black Christmas (1977) **50 min** directed by Stephen Frears shows Afro-Caribbeans in Birmingham spending the sort of fraught Christmas day with family misunderstandings, rows and recriminations to the backdrop of Cliff et al's latest seasonal singles 'enjoyed' by the rest of us. This almost unbearably poignant and powerful drama starts with Christmas cake making in the kitchen—"you're putting rum and wine in it?" asks the suitably impressed/appalled white neighbour, "it looks lovely, what's it called?" The cool response—"a cake"—speaks volumes. A standard turkey dinner with all the trimmings is served up—there's even a rack of Schwartz herbs and spices in the kitchen—but there's also rice and greens. A painful scene in the kitchen highlights the centrality of food in personal identity—"don't you miss our kind of food and our drinks?" and the permanent dilemmas arising from living in different cultures.

Al Fresco

Tottenham . . . Tea Fights (1919) **8 min** features a children's street party, presumably to celebrate the end of WW1. How people thronged in these early films and yet there is no sense of crowding or threat.- the street is a safe outside space. The few adults on view are paying no attention to the children who are allowed to enjoy themselves untrammelled. Even at a children's party tea is served in proper cups and saucers. Compare with *Empire Road episode 1, Street Party* (1978) **28 min**. The first episode of this brilliant series of dramas about Afro-Caribbean and Asian immigrants/black British in Birmingham—up with Coronation Street or East Enders yet only 16 episodes screened before it sank without trace—culminates in a street party notable for its low attendance and lack of exuberance. Is this because it was organised by the wellmeaning white liberal schoolteacher on expected lines—ice cream and balloons—or because the inhabitants of Empire Road don't want to draw the attention of racists? However, the final scene of the conga line to a steel band rendition of Viva Espana is inspired.

For something completely different, how about *Scenes At His Excellency The Viceroy's Garden Party At Belvedere [Calcutta]* (1926) **6 min**? Afternoon tea on the lawn but top hats and tails for gents, frocks and hats

for ladies are de rigueur. Nicely served on proper china at tables too, no milling about. Not a lot of Indian guests in evidence. Close observation reveals a pecking order of cakes, the higher ranking guests getting more choice. No fancy cream cake confections here, probably impractical in the heat, but the sort of plain, lumpy, homemade offerings I remember without too much nostalgia. Good to see the colonial ruling class grinning, gurning and preening before the camera just like the rest of us would—'hello mum'!

Lunch Hour (1933) **8 min** shows an interesting glimpse of City of London workers repairing to the eateries consistent with their station in life—top hats in one direction, cloth caps in another.

Holiday (1957) **18 min** is a luridly coloured run through the outdoor delights of Blackpool. All the favourite treats of a traditional British summer seaside holiday are here, candyfloss, shellfish (including oysters in those days), rock, hot dogs, and some intriguing specialties—"Pablo's whopper", a huge slab of ice cream between wafers (do they still do these? Or are they too messy?) and (unlikely but true) the pub sign advertising "champagne on draught". I wonder what nasty ersatz fizz it was? I suspect Babycham, one sip of which was guaranteed to dissolve every tooth in your head. The EU of course has put a stop to all that.

What a joy it is to see *Royal Family* (1969) **110 min** again. How bitterly they must rue this first public revelation of life with the Windsors,. Cherish the barbecue scene (28 min in). HRH The Queen pops into the local store in Balmoral with an intensely irritating young princeling in tow. "Have you gort any bullseyes?" she asks and collects supplies like any other wifey doing the messages. Meanwhile, like any other family (well, maybe they've got just a bit more space—and where have all the servants gone?) roles are assigned by the lochside. Philip and Anne light the barbie and grill the meat. And the heir to the throne? Well he does girly stuff with salad and mixes the dressing. Can't even get that right—"too oily" says his mum.

Comic Strip—Five Go Mad in Dorset (1982) **30 min**, the first, and in my view, the best of the series has a lot of fun with Enid Blyton type 1950s meal clichés, starting with a huge slap up cream tea complete with aunty on the gin. Picnics feature large—"ham and turkey sandwiches, heaps of tomatoes and hardboiled eggs, bags of lettuce and LASHINGS of ginger beer". Robbie Coltrane is glorious in drag as the sinister rouged keeper of a general store where essential supplies of ice cream cones and chocolate cake are procured to sustain the intrepid adventurers.

OUT AND ABOUT: SETTINGS

Cafe

Noel Coward's themes of passion, duty, restraint and convention in *Brief Encounter* (1945) **86 min** are played out in daytime tea and lunch venues, notably a railway refreshment room where the doomed—the protagonists are married to other people—affair begins and ends. Milk comes from jugs, sugar from an open container and buns knocked onto the floor are dusted off and put right back on sale again—robust times! Spirits are available (a stiff brandy for 10d—about 4p)—but only in licensing hours. It will take a long time to forget the frustration of those long afternoons when (until quite recently) alcohol was locked up under the counter.

Lunch at the local Lyons (20 mins in)—soup, smoking and a string quartet is "natural and innocent" but a week later a posher lunch (waiters not 'nippies', potted palms) shows Celia Johnson's descent on the slippery slope to debauchery—she drinks champagne. At lunchtime too. Celia's moral downfall (to temptation, she doesn't succumb) is signalled by hatless flight to a pub (1hr 8 min in)—unheard of for an unaccompanied 'respectable' woman then—for a stiff drink, although even here "we close in a few minutes, you know". What a fabulous film this is—David Lean directed—a worthy candidate for one of the best British films ever.

I have a great affection for *Expresso Bongo* (1960) **111min**. Six years later, as a skint teenager in suburban south Birmingham, the opening of an expresso bar was a lifeline. Warm and cheap, it was the only place under-

18s could go to while away the endless tedious hours until we could leave brum for somewhere more exciting. We were spared Cliff and the Shads but the exotic Gaggia coffee machine was a source of wonder. The late 50s Soho cafes in the film look very familiar with Coke, Pepsi, weak frothy coffee and a Suncrush orange fountain. The 'teenagers' are way too old though and I don't recall any impresarios dropping in on us at Selly Oak. The Soho delis were Jewish then, with salt beef on rye and lox and bagels on offer, hard to find now.

Pub

Welcome to Britain (1943) **60 min** should be on the National Curriculum for its concise pub scene (6 mins in). The loudmouth GI barges in, interrupts and shouts, patronises and offends with blithe insouciance. How we long for the Highlanders to retaliate to a gibe about skirts but no, our folk are restrained and reserved and apply subtle pursed lips and cold shouldering only. Burgess then shows us how it should be done—lessons we could all profit from today. Friendly without familiarity, interested without nosiness, generous without patronage, his bravura dodging of the Scylla and Charybdis level arcane protocols of the English pub soon has the locals eating out of his hand—in a suitably low key fashion, they don't get too excited, he's not handing out chocolate, nylons or corned beef after all.

I couldn't resist including *It Always Rains On Sunday* (1947) **92 min** as encapsulating perfectly the funereal, captive quality of the 'day of rest' Sundays of the 1950s that haunt me still. Googie Withers is an improbably gorgeous working class housewife living in a dismal back to back in London's East End. Every Sunday is timetabled according to pub opening hours; the two hours when hubby is having his lunchtime pint and the precise time he'll be back for his meat and two veg lunch. So she knows exactly the window of opportunity she has to hide her ex boyfriend (currently bad boy on the run who finds refuge in her Anderson shelter) and ruminate on the dullness of marriage and screaming boredom of existence in general. A wonderful film.

24 year old Albert Finney gives a terrific performance as disaffected Nottingham factory hand Arthur Seaton in *Saturday Night And Sunday Morning* (1960) **89 min**, scripted by Allan Sillitoe, directed by Karel Riesz and with a score by John Dankworth. "Don't let the bastards grind you down", "Spend your money and enjoy yourself" and "What I'm out for is a good time, all the rest is propaganda" is his philosophy and pubs are his natural habitat. After a quick cooked tea at his mam's, it's off to the city for a heroic drinking session—"ee that lad's had 8 pints already!". "you get thirsty working at a machine all week". Table service and an Adam Faith cover band are on offer, together with older customers belting out Lily Of Laguna. Arthur drinks a sailor under the table, pours beer over a customer and rounds off the evening by falling down the stairs, a contented smile on his face, oblivion achieved. This film is about young and old forced to cohabit the same cramped and limited universe. Arthur wants more out of life but by the end his future seems set in the same mould—but without the boozing. His wage will be needed for a mortgage. His fiancée has her eye on a new-build semidetached house, an improvement on the older generation's back to back terraces and the only achievable aspiration in sight.

Withnail And I (1987) **108 min** set in 1969 stars Richard E Grant (his finest hour) as a young unemployed actor and monstrous drunk. Tall, gaunt and wild eyed—looking eerily like *Son of Nosferatu*—he rampages north from Camden Town to scrounge booze and lodgings from Uncle Monty (a show stopping performance from Richard Griffiths—I forgive him The History Boys on the strength of this) and terrorise the rural population around Penrith in this hilarious and iconoclastic road movie. Again, much of the humour derives from the desperate need to dodge the strictures of afternoon closing. After squeezing in "quadruple whiskies and another pair of pints" (1hr 4 mins in) as last orders is rung in the pub, Withnail (and companion, narrator 'I') repair to the local tea room and order tea and cake as the genteel elderly clientele look on aghast. Refused service—"we're closing"—and after Withnail protests—told "you're drunk", Withnail declaims in his best southern drama school tones "we want the finest wines known to humanity, we want them here and we want them now!" to no avail. This is one of those films that description can't do justice to, it really has to be seen and what a treat it is. Forget Easy Rider, this is the film about the end of the '60s dream.

Restaurant

One of my life's regrets is not going to Billy Butlin's revolving restaurant at the top of the BT Tower in London before it closed without notice when the IRA bombing campaign targeted London sights in the 1970s. *Eating High* (1966) **9 min** offers some consolation. The experience counts for more than the food—of which we hear little, soup 'n' steak from a kitchen run by a Spanish chef. In case audiences thought the whole concept a bizarre waste of money, it is emphasised that the Germans, French, Germans, Dutch, Germans (oh and the Germans) all have these tower top restaurants so we'd better make sure we've got one too. The challenges of service on a moving floor and storage facilities 36 floors down are fully detailed. In true British fashion the tiny lifts are totally inadequate for the purpose. Just as well I didn't go, looks way too smart for me with frocks, hats, suits and ties. Unnamed celebrities and royals are alleged to be regulars.

What a revelation *Goodness Gracious Me Episode 1—Going For An English* (1998) **30 min** was when it appeared—confident, cheeky and very very funny. So "what do you do on a Friday night in Bombay, tanked up on lassis?" Go for an English of course! (10 mins in). It's all here—"what's the blandest thing on the menu", "bring us some rolls and that fancy stuff—butter is it?" and "gammon steak, leave off the crap—[pineapple rings]". The young waiter is sexually harassed by the women and humiliated by the men—"what's your name?" "James" "well, Jaymas...". A magic, iconic comedy.

Noted Eel And Pie Houses (1975) **45 min** is an interesting record of a form of London indigenous cuisine now almost totally vanished as an everyday eating experience. The markets at Smithfield, Covent Garden and Billingsgate—still in central locations then—supplied the fish and meat for this odd seeming (to non Londoners anyway) combination of 'surf 'n' turf'—the pies being meat pies with mash and alarmingly radioactive looking green 'liquor', allegedly parsley sauce. The eels swam live in big plastic buckets in the window to demonstrate freshness—I remember gazing with appalled fascination at them in Cookes in Dalston, East London, now alas yet another Chinese restaurant, although the original Victorian tiled interior remains. An unregenerated Broadway Market (also Hackney, E London) has a Cookes for the workers while Sheekeys (lobsters and oysters) is for the posh. Essex resorts such as Leigh-on-Sea cater to the Londoners' love of seafood.

Institution—soup kitchen, mental hospital, prison

Christmas Day In The Workhouse (1914) **15 min** is an astonishing (for its time) hard hitting bit of agitprop. The poor face starvation unless they enter the virtual prison of the workhouse where the glummiest and meanest looking Christmas dinner is shown while the toffs come to watch and smugly congratulate themselves on their philanthropy. Terrific stuff.

I remember the impact *Edna The Inebriate Woman* (1971) **90 min** making on its first TV showing, not least for the revelation that Patricia Hayes (known primarily for minor 'stooge' roles in Hancock's Half Hour and other comedy shows) was a very accomplished actress. Her sustained depiction of irascible and unpredictable Edna as she descends from soup kitchen to homeless hostel to mental hospital and eventually prison is a tour de force. This is not a depressing film—and there's not a lot of drinking in it either, it's really about homelessness, survival and sheer grit. Edna is a fiercely independent character making the best of her unpromising circumstances. Institutional food before convenience catering looks pretty good too—no Turkey Twizzlers here. The ham sandwiches from the Irish soup kitchen are top notch bread doorsteps and thick cut ham, the kipper Edna throws disgustedly to the floor at the mental hospital is miles from today's boil in the bag offerings and afternoon tea in her prison cell is nicely served with tray and china cups and saucers. "Nice doings here" says Edna ruminatively. Indeed.

A Mix of Music

A selection of films by Jeanne Cozens

INTRODUCTION

With my own personal interest in the music used in film I explored a few aspects of music that I could discover at Mediatheque. Music is incorporated to add effect, emotional impact and for its relevance to the story line and the final presentation of the film.

POPULAR MUSIC IN FILM

Music had invariably been used as an accompaniment to the old silent films—to add emphasis to the pictures and the written word on the screen. This was often a useful introduction and employment for young budding composers and pianists, who improvised as the film went along.

This led me to look at the musicals which began in film in 1928 and were often derived from stage musical shows and light operetta. These films could incorporate many acts from the music halls. The advent of the original talkie films in the 1920s led eventually to the first musical *Lights of New York* made by Warner Brothers in 1928 followed by *Broadway Melody* in 1929 and also in that year came the light operetta film *The Desert Song*—which by then was largely in colour.

These musicals were often just a vehicle for existing popular stage stars so the slight story lines were largely irrelevant. However many films of the 30s reflected the social problems of the times eg unemployment, poverty and poor housing conditions.

Say It With Flowers (1934) **71 min**

This was a Cockney musical featuring a flower seller and others in a local market. It also included an Old Kent Road music hall. Working class Londoners were portrayed with moving sincerity though a few of the cockney accents seemed a little variable! *Valse des Fleurs* was the background to the flower packers in a nursery as they prepared for Spitalfields market. The atmosphere of the market came through. There were common birds in cages for sale, rabbits for 1s 6d., Kippers 3d. a pair, blood oranges and HP sauce. The stall holders (some in bowler hats!) were talking about the "bareleg craze". There were even match and bootlace sellers with their trays and a poster on the wall saying—**MONEY DOESN'T MATTER**—at a time when it evidently did.

The moral of the film was to show the collective community support of the local people for a flower seller at a time of crisis, when she was out of work from sickness—after 30 years in the market.

A large part of the film (made in Twickenham Film Studios) featured music hall acts put on to raise money for the flower seller. This brought on a Pearly King and Queen tap dancing and several music hall performers towards the end of their careers—*Florrie Forde*, *Marie Kendall*, *Charles Coborn* and *Kearney & Browning*. The songs were all popular music hall numbers such as *Down at the Old Bull and Bush*, *Knock 'em Down the Old Kent Road*, *Pack Up Your Troubles In Your Old Kit Bag* and *It's a Long Way To Tipperary*. Maybe the film audience joined in!

Sing As We Go (1934) **80 min**

Based on a J B Priestley story, this film, made in the same year and based in Lancashire, was one of several films made with *Gracie Fields* in the 1930s. She had made her professional debut in variety in 1910 at the age of twelve and appeared in her first revue at the age of seventeen. Her popularity peaked in the late 30s. *Sally in Our Alley* was her first film in 1931.

Following the closure of the cotton mill due to cheap foreign competition, *Gracie* is seen cycling to Blackpool in

search of work. She did in fact work in a local cotton mill in her teens. The cast includes local mill workers and Blackpool holidaymakers as extras. The film shows the funfair rides, Blackpool Tower, a circus, dance hall and even a beauty contest with 30s swimsuits beside an outdoor pool. After a succession of short term jobs, the mill finally reopens and she is given the job of Welfare Officer. All this is accompanied by several of her popular songs throughout the film. But it does give a portrayal of the British working class with a degree of humour and affection.

London Town (1946) **93 min**

Throughout the second World War Hollywood made many musicals and in 1946 there was an attempt to emulate this with a British musical called *London Town*. The cast featured Sid Field and a very young Petula Clark (aged 13) who appeared in a series of British films as a child star from the end of WW2 through to the early 1950s. It also introduced Kay Kendall in her first major part.

It was a strange studio-made film which achieved little success despite scenes that included a giant white grand piano played by about a dozen pianists and even Tessie O'Shea singing Any Old Iron. Sid Field performed his golf sketch with Jerry Desmond on a stage in the studio—the sort of act he would have done on a theatre stage on tour. The script and story line were somewhat unconvincing.

CLASSICAL MUSIC IN FILM

Edward Elgar

By contrast and by using the Detailed Search option on screen I explored the life and music of Edward Elgar, a very British composer.

Hope and Glory (1984) **79 min** Colour

This is a Granada TV documentary which gives a comprehensive insight into the man and his music. It includes contemporary footage from the turn of the 19th/20th centuries reflecting personal lifestyle and family. It shows Elgar working with the teenage Yehudi Menuhin who played Elgar's violin concerto together with extracts of the young Simon Rattle playing Elgar's music and Willard White singing in *Gerontius*.

Elgar (1962) **55 min** Black and White

Ken Russell's rhapsodic docudrama made for the BBC's Monitor programme, shows some remarkable photography of the young 'Elgar' riding over the Malvern Hills on his pony. As well as family history this shows many historical facets of the time—London traffic, old buses and cabs, the Royal Opera House and other old photographs. It also featured the patriotic aspects of Elgar's music—the Hope and Glory marches and the Imperial March—often played by the bands in Royal and State processions. There is also some World War 1 newsreel footage of soldiers at the Front.

Elgar—Fantasy on a Bicycle (2002) **50 min**

Russell also made a follow-on film for the South Bank Show in September 2002. This time the 'composer' is seen riding a bicycle. This tours aspects of the Malvern area and shows the Elgar birthplace and Museum. It is interesting to see the changing level of morality and maybe censorship since his 1962 film as it comments on Elgar's possible extramarital affairs with young musicians, something which might not have been acceptable previously.

Elgar's 10th Muse (1996) **50 min**

This is a programme made for Channel 4 Without Walls series. *Elgar's 10th Muse*—another docudrama, with some historical inaccuracies, about his supposed romantic attachment to the young Hungarian violinist Jelly D'Aranyi, starring Edward Fox as Elgar with the younger Andrew Davis conducting. Strangely, despite the story line focusing on a violinist, the accompanying music was Elgar's Cello concerto.

Priestley and Friends at Home (1932) **8 min** Black and White

This short silent film—an informal home movie of artistic friends—includes J M Barrie, H G Wells and George Bernard Shaw as well as Elgar. It also includes a children's party.

Elgar and Shaw (1932) **12 min** Black and White

This home footage was made by Harold Brook who was Elgar's publisher and the director of Novello. It shows parts of the Three Choirs Festivals of 1929, 1930 and 1932, held at Worcester Cathedral. It gives glimpses of Ralph Vaughan Williams and Sir Walford Davis amongst other literary and musical friends, outside the cathedral.

Master of the King's Music (1931) **3 min**

This film, made in November 1931, part of a Pathetone Newsreel, shows Elgar conducting *Land of Hope and Glory* and was played by the London Symphony Orchestra of the time. This was to record the opening ceremony of EMI's new Abbey Road recording studio and shows some of the early recording studio and its equipment. I wonder how Elgar would have felt about the famous Beatles recordings made here decades later!

Most of these documentaries focus on musical performances but it is fascinating to see the live concerts and the concert halls of the 1920s and 1930s.

The Dream of Gerontius (1979) **60 min**

There is half of a splendid performance of Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* with Dame Janet Baker in her prime singing with the Halle Orchestra and the Huddersfield Choir, conducted by James Loughran. This shows the Town Hall, Huddersfield, in all its glory.

Jacqueline du Pre and the Elgar Cello Concerto (1967) **70 min**

This was originally filmed in B/W in 1962 when she was 22, before she developed multiple sclerosis. It was updated in 1967, partly in colour and shows her musical development as a child, leading into her professional and personal life as an adult. John Barbarolli made a notable recording with the Halle orchestra and the young Jacqueline du Pre playing the cello. He was very impressed with her performance and her approach to the work. The film, made for the BBC Allegro programme, includes a complete performance of the concerto played by the New Philharmonia orchestra conducted by Daniel Barenboim.

Classical Music in Feature Films

Brief Encounter (1945) **86 min**

Rachmaninov's 2nd Piano Concerto plays over the opening credits of this film and recurs at significant moments in the story about an illicit though restrained love affair. The music, heard as part of a radio broadcast, acts as a flashback, recalling intimate details in the affair of Celia Johnson with Trevor Howard, from their chance meeting at the railway station to their eventual parting.

The Ladykillers (1955) **97 min**

This famous comedy, one of the series of Ealing Studio films of that era, also has music as part of the plot. The gang of thieves, posing as unlikely chamber music players, use their instrument cases to stash the cash at one stage in the film. All this under the cover of Boccherini's Minuetto from the String Quintet played on an ancient record player! This atmospheric film was shot around the King's Cross and Camden Town areas with particular emphasis on the noisy trains and gloomy railway bridges, amplified by the black and white film.

MUSICAL ODDITIES IN FILM

Fiddlers' All (1941) **9 min**

Subtitled A Musical Test For Violin Lovers, this is a form of 'guess the tune' film. The music is played by Mantovani, Stanelli and Campoli with orchestral accompaniment, together with some elaborate staging. It is difficult to imagine who the audience would be for this type of film!

Bow Bells (1955) **14 min**

This short film gives a snapshot of the East End—in Black and White—to a background of music hall numbers featuring Billingsgate fish market, Tic Tac men at the dog track, West Ham motor bike speedway, Tower Bridge with the working river boats and a medley of aspects of East End street life in the 1950s.

WORLD MUSIC IN FILM

Grove Carnival (1981) **19 min**

This was actually filmed at the Notting Hill Carnival of 1980 and vividly demonstrates the exuberant enjoyment of Caribbean culture at that time with steel bands, reggae and imaginative costumes, floats and staging.

Territories (1984) **26 min**

Interestingly, the same steel band music is utilised to convey an alternative message. Following on the infamous street clashes of the 1960s and 70s, this film was made to emphasise the political and social struggle against the perceived injustices to the immigrant communities at around the same period as the previous film. This is portrayed against the background of Carnival.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

We are almost never away from music in some form, from the modern plague of ring tones on mobile phones to musac in stores and transport. In the depths of the country we can hear bird song. The motifs in certain films instantly recall powerful emotions. Think of the terrors of *Jaws*. Alternatively total silence can be used to great effect. After a tragic ending the final credits are rolled through in ominous silence in *No Country For Old Men*.

Music is an endless subject in so many forms of the media from brass bands in *Brassed Off* to the sound of the zither in *The Third Man*. Through the best part of the last century music has developed from being an additional external component of film to the focal point it can be today.

Composers, who improvised in the early days, went on to produce commissioned work for major films such as Shostakovich for *King Lear* and *Hamlet*. Contemporary composers have even developed their own musical genre in film and/or stage music (John Williams, Leonard Bernstein) whilst others have had their concert music

adapted and amalgamated into film or indeed have developed the original film music into full blown concert pieces such as Vaughan Williams' *Sinfonia Antarctica* (1953) developed from the film *Scott of the Antarctic* (1947).

Many types of music are being preserved and recorded through film and video giving an added visual dimension to their work. All of this additional exposure helps to preserve music for future enjoyment for everyone. The BFI Mediatheque adds to the promotion and enlarges that enjoyment.

By giving some detail in particular areas of this free resource I hope to inspire many more people to investigate and make use of all the aspects that this medium can provide for the enjoyment of music.

Fashion, Design, and Manufacturing

Through The Decades

A personal film selection by Brenda Smith

INTRODUCTION

My first visit to the BFI Mediatheque was overwhelming. It was a bit like going to the library to pick a book with no idea of what to look for. So I just picked something I knew from the television. However the Mediatheque is more than a collection of films and television programmes it is a visual history of our country and its culture. Once I realised this I used the search tools incorporated in the system to search by year through the films currently available and then my fun really began.

I wanted to see for myself the fashions, designs and if possible manufacturing through the decades. I started with a trip down Ealing High Street and wandered through the 1900s and on to the 1920s, meandered through the 1930s, 40s, and 50s. I now invite you to take part in my personal journey, for this is what it turned out to be. It is a brief dip into my grandparents', parents' and my lives in and around London with an eye on my particular interests.

1901–1929 SHORT DOCUMENTARY FILMS

This period looks at my grandparent's era; they would have strolled down a street very similar to the one shown in the first film:

Panorama of Ealing from a Moving Tram (1901) **1 min**

A tram ride through Ealing at its most appealing.

This film seems to have been shot over a holiday period, everybody is so elegantly and formally dressed. A man on a bicycle wears a jacket, smart trousers and a straw hat whilst the ladies have long skirts, long sleeved blouses and are carrying umbrellas to protect themselves from the sun.

Petticoat Lane (1903) **3 min**

Sunday morning in the East End market.

I often visit Petticoat Lane and thought this film would be a good place to see the fashions of the time. However it came as a complete shock to see mostly men and boys shopping in the lane and nearly all wearing the flat cap and garb of the working man.

Making Christmas Crackers (1910) **6 min**

Factory workers demonstrate the manufacture of crackers, and a family receives a Christmas surprise.

This was a delight to watch. It shows how labour intensive manufacturing was at the time. Watch out for the design of the paper hats.

Trafalgar Square Riot (1913) **1 min**

A suffragette procession in Trafalgar Square causes a riot.

Although very much in the vogue of street parades and scenes filmed at this time this does have a short scene showing Mrs Emmeline Pankhurst being arrested. I had read so much about the suffragettes that to see Mrs Pankhurst was amazing. But what really brings it home is the realization that my grandparents may not have been able to vote.

***Cosmopolitan London* (1924) 13 min**

Discover a 'hidden' London of the 1920s.

This film shows how diverse the population of London was. This diversity still exists today. The film gives an overview of the shops, housing and general appearance of the time.

1901–1929 FULL LENGTH FEATURE FILMS

I then looked to see what my grandparents might have seen in the cinema. This was a bit tricky as so many films from this era have been lost but here are a few that can be seen in the Mediatheque. As with all the feature films I mention I only scrolled through the films to look at the costume and design of the sets but all these films have such a wealth of culture and couture I have every intention of viewing each film in its entirety.

***The Lure of Crooning Water* (1920) 105 min**

Sun-dappled pastoral romance starring the golden couple of '20s British cinema.

A London actress collapses on stage and is sent by her doctor to stay in the country with a farmer and his wife. But when she starts an affair with the farmer, the idyllic life at 'Crooning Water' is threatened with tragedy. The golden couple mentioned above were Guy Newall and Ivy Duke.

***Hindle Wakes* (1927) 116 min**

Lancashire's cotton workers decamp to Blackpool for their annual taste of freedom.

For one week a year the Lancashire cotton mills shut down, this was known as the Wakes week. This then is the story of one girl's week, her romance with the boss's son and refusal to marry him.

1930–1944 SHORT DOCUMENTARY FILMS

This was my parents' era, they lived through the depression and then WW2. I just could not imagine what that was like but the films held in the Mediatheque go along way to showing how it was! It was not all doom and gloom.

***Scenes at Piccadilly Circus and Hyde Park Underground Stations* (1931) 7min**

Magical, slightly surreal record of the London Underground.

Like my mother before me I traveled the London Underground for most of my working life and found this film not only interesting for its slant on the fashion of the 1930s but also on the etiquette of the travelers. I saw that it really hasn't changed. There was and still is the pretence of being total unaware of fellow passengers!

***Colour on the Thames* (1935) 8 min**

A rare glimpse of 1930s London in colour. The Thames has never looked lovelier.

I was drawn into this film initially because I thought it would show some aspects of clothing, of which there is only a very small insight. A few children and a beautifully dressed woman at the beginning of the film, followed by men unbelievably formally dressed to work on a tug boat. But in all fairness it was the number of ships and boats on the river and in the London docks that held my attention. These were the hustling bustling London Docks and river that I remember as a very young child and that my parents grew up around. Not the beautifully but mostly tranquil refurbished sites of today.

***England Home and Beauty* (1976) 37 min**

Whimsical evocation of our 1930s design heyday.

Although not made in the 1930s this is a truly wonderful look at the 1930s style in everything from cars, homes, pottery to furniture etc. The commentary is rather flat with a middle England accent which somehow fits the 1930s. Be patient as the opening scenes do tend to concentrate on the exterior of urban houses which are still very common these days. I loved this film because it covered a period of design that I have always admired with its angles, bold colours and freshness that still shines today. This was the period of design in which my parents married and which influenced them throughout their lives.

1930–1944 FULL LENGTH FEATURE FILMS

I then searched the Mediatheque to see what films my parents may have seen during this time: I know for instance that my mother saw *The Wizard of Oz* and *Gone with the Wind* and both films are shown on television. However there is many a gem that is not shown regularly as you will see below.

First A Girl (1935) **93 min**

A hard-up girl pretends to be a female impersonator to make ends meet.

Jessie Mathews (one of our almost forgotten great actors) stars as Elizabeth, a delivery girl, who dreams of being a music hall singer but fails in her first audition. She stands in for an actor friend, Victor, when he gets a female part in a music hall number and finds himself voiceless. A Woman posing as man posing as woman! This film was remade as *Victor Victoria* in 1982 and starred Julie Andrews

Sweeney Todd, The Demon Barber of Fleet Street (1936) **68 min**

The City's menfolk risk a dangerously close shave in Mr Todd's barbershop.

This film is such fun with the long forgotten, actor Tod Slaughter, even his name conjures up the right impression. See how this compares with the modern version -this is not a musical.

1945–1950 SHORT DOCUMENTARY FILMS

This was the era of my early childhood—my memories of this time are mixed. It was a dull time with everything painted brown. Shops were pretty bare and toys were second hand. But there was always plenty to do and of course there were the cinemas and they were everywhere.

How a Bicycle is Made (1945) **14 min**

The recipe for the perfect bike.

The film has a flat middle England commentary but this does not detract from a good overview of making a bicycle from the design stage onwards.

My brother was a keen cyclist. He spent much of his youth either racing or in the nearest cycle shop helping to build racing bikes.

A Diary for Timothy (1946) **38 min**

What does the future hold for Timothy, born on the fifth anniversary of the start of WW2?

I picked this particular film because I was born in 1946 and it gives an overview of what my parents went through during the WWII. It covers some of the clothes and furniture of the time. It is however based round a fairly well to do family and does not address the everyday families' hopes for the future.

1945–1950 FULL LENGTH FEATURE FILMS

These are a few of the full length films available on the Mediatheque from this era; they also give a good indication of the fashion and the dowdiness of the time. It was a time waiting to be repaired and it shows.

Hue and Cry (1946) **82 min**

A group of schoolboys uncover a dastardly scam. When the police won't listen, it's time to take matters into their own hands.

A gang of street boys foil a master crook who sends commands for robberies by cunningly altering a comic strip's wording each week, unknown to writer and printer. The first of the Ealing comedies this film was made in and around London and starred Alistair Sim as the writer and Jack Warner as a baddie. It gives a good overview of the clothes and conditions just after the war whilst being a cracking good yarn.

It Always Rains on Sunday (1947) **92 min**

A housewife's life is complicated when her ex-lover, an escaped violent criminal, comes to her for shelter. Stars Jack Warner and Googie Withers.

The events of a wet Sunday unfold in the pubs, homes, and markets of the East End. While petty criminals and the police play cat-and-mouse, various love affairs start and stop.

1950–1960 SHORT DOCUMENTARY FILMS

These were my school years and the time I was first allowed to visit the cinema on my own. I have to admit that I mostly went to see horror films with occasional Elvis or Cliff Richard vehicles.

Capital Visit (1955) **20 min**

A party of plummy-voiced school children spend an action-packed 3 days in London.

This film brought back such memories. For a start the traffic in the fifties was so much lighter than today. Seeing the clothes and school uniforms had a particular impact on me. The children take a trip down the river Thames and visit the Maritime Museum in Greenwich. I did the very same trip with my school at virtually the same time.

1950–1960 FULL LENGTH FEATURE FILMS

I scrolled through the Mediatheque looking for films that I had actually seen in the cinema at the time of their release and here a few.

Dracula (1958) **82 min**

Lee and Cushing battle it out in Hammer's landmark adaptation, newly restored by the BFI.

After Jonathan Harker attacks *Dracula* (Christopher Lee) at his castle the vampire travels to a nearby city where he preys on the family of Harker's fiancée. The only one who may be able to protect them is Dr van Helsing (Peter Cushing), student of vampires, who is determined to destroy Dracula whatever the cost.

Many vampire films were made before and after this one but for me Christopher Lee was the best. He had the most amazing ability to ooze menace.

Expresso Bongo (1960) **111 mins**

Cliff Richard gyrates his way through Soho's strip clubs and coffee bars.

Johnny Jackson (Laurence Harvey), a sleazy talent agent, discovers teenager Bert Rudge (Cliff Richard) singing in a coffee house. Johnny starts him on the road to stardom. The deal they cut however is highly exploitative of the young singer and their relationship soon begins to go bad.

This film shows much of the fashion of the time and the long forgotten coffee bars that were around in the fifties. They were just a tad different to the ones of today as you will see.

And Finally

My time rapidly ran out in the Mediatheque and I know that I have missed many a great film but I will be returning to make even more trips into the past. I hope you enjoy your visits to the Mediatheque as much as I have.

Iconic Buildings and Landmarks

Scale the heights in this selection by Brenda Kidd

INTRODUCTION

I have always been interested in different architectural styles both old and new. To try and understand how and why they evolved in their own unique way has always fascinated me. The word 'icon' itself is used more frequently now with reference to religion, famous people and even computers amongst others. The phrase 'iconic building' for me refers to a building which has been ascribed symbolic meanings beyond the building itself. What makes an iconic building? Is it the design, the style, the construction, the location, its purpose, or a mixture of all these and more?

The Mediathèque has a wide range of interesting films and I have chosen those which show iconic buildings both old and new, as well as famous landmarks which appeal to me in different ways, both personal and objective. Some of the buildings have a film devoted specifically to them while others can be seen as part of a rich background. The joy of research is that it often takes us down a path we had not meant to follow, but richly reward us when we reach the end. Here are some films I would heartily recommend.

LONDON

Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee (1897) **14 min.** Silent, Black & White (BFI)

This film was made to celebrate Victoria's 60th year on the throne. It covered the preparations in the beginning with Mr Brown leading the Queen and her dogs in her carriage. It then filmed the huge processional route through Westminster and Southwark. It was the media event of the decade and despite the fixed camera positions, the scale of the event is clearly visible. Unfortunately I could not recognise any iconic buildings and landmarks through the heads of people and the flanks of horses. The footage was quite jerky, grainy and the images are unclear so people are scarcely recognisable other than by their dress and position in the proceedings. Nevertheless it is still an amazing film showing the troops from the Empire, hundreds of visitors and thousands of the Queen's subjects.

Old London Street Scenes (1903) **3 min.** Silent, Black & White (BFI)

Iconic buildings and landmarks including Big Ben, Parliament Square, Charing Cross Station, Pall Mall, The Strand and Victoria Embankment provide a wonderful backdrop for the busy traffic in Edwardian London. You have to look carefully to spot them but I found myself following the camera which is concentrating on the traffic and the passengers balanced precariously on open-top buses and the people crossing the road risking life and limb!

London Street Scenes—Trafalgar Square (1910) **1 min.** Silent, Black & White

A 180 degree panorama of Trafalgar Square is captured by a hand-held camera. It pans across the front of the National Gallery to St Martin's in the Field, South Africa House and the start of the Strand. It is made all the more magnificent with the fountains splashing and the horse-drawn carriages passing along the cobbled streets.

London Street Scenes (1920) **4 min.** Silent, Black & White (BFI)

The streets are crowded with horse-drawn cabs, vans, open-top double-decker buses and rag-and-bone carts, all narrowly missing policemen who are attempting to direct the traffic. Glimpses of St Pauls and Big Ben can be seen in the background through wonderful grey footage. Superimposed film shows a kaleidoscope of images increasing the feeling of hustle and bustle in the city. By contrast the early morning shows Regent Street crowd-free and the splendour of John Nash's buildings can be seen.

This Year—London (1951) **25 min.** Sound, Black & White (British Transport Film, BFI)

A work's outing from a shoe factory in Leicester to see the sights of post-war London. Two narrators with a musical accompaniment give a lively commentary as they visit all the classic sights during the day ending with the 'glittering' West End at night. This is an affectionate but rather quaint sketch of pleasure and enjoyment at that time and is quite different from the day trips abroad and 'employee bonding' that take place today.

Brief City—The Story of London's Festival Buildings (1952) **19 min.** Sound, Black & White (Film Images of London Ltd)

I was given a Festival of Britain Commemorative coin in 1951 which is still in my collection today. A Festival was held in Britain which celebrated the history, tradition and arts of this country. Twenty seven acres of bomb sites and slums were cleared which enabled the exhibition to be built on the south bank of the Thames. I was delighted to find this film which is a tribute to the creative vision of the Festival, combining 'pioneering design, postcard vulgarity, simple pleasures and was a blueprint for the future'. Some of the 8.5 million people who visited it in 1951 can be seen enjoying the unusual architecture, statues, water features and even dancing in their overcoats at night. A 'dome' which was erected was very similar to another dome which was built later to celebrate the millennium. This nostalgic and happy film shows how people recovering from the war were enjoying the hope of a better future.

A Queen Is Crowned (1953) **44 min.** Sound, Colour (Granada Int. Media)

Cinemas could not compete with the BBC's ground-breaking live coverage of the coronation. Instead they offered a glorious technicolour film narrated by Sir Laurence Olivier with a script that could have been written by Shakespeare (since they used many of the bard's words in any case). It was a far cry from my own memories of the coronation when on a wet and windy day we all huddled around the one television in our street which had a huge magnifier over the screen. This was something completely different and I was looking for famous buildings this time. I was not disappointed. Balmoral, Corfe, Edinburgh and Caernarvon Castles were shown in their glory to the words of Jerusalem sung by a choir. After that the iconic buildings are seen one after the other and I felt a 'spot the famous building' competition emerging all accompanied by grand, pompous music. The magnificent interior of Westminster Abbey, Pall Mall, and Buckingham Palace to the music of I vow to thee my country had me cheering with the crowds. The pomp and circumstance in a postwar Britain, with a beautiful new queen gave us all hope for the future. It is good to reflect and with 55 years of hindsight, see how we have become the Britain of today.

The Elephant Will Never Forget (1953)

This film is a tribute to London trams the week before they were taken out of service. The focus of the camera is on the trams themselves but the Elephant and Castle, Big Ben and Westminster Bridge stand proudly in the background. Mists and night shots enhance the documentary spoken in tones of nostalgia and regret while the streets resonate with Auld Lang Syne sung by thousands.

Capital Visit (1955) **20 min.** Sound, Colour (BFI)

This is a nostalgic British Transport Film where famous landmark and iconic buildings make a perfect backdrop for a group of school children who are experiencing a three day trip to London. St Paul's Cathedral and the Tower of London are seen with many others in glorious Technicolor. The children have a good knowledge of London, expressing their comments and opinions in perfect English accents. The script is clever and polite, accompanied by lyrical music from lush strings. If the commentary and music are surplus to requirements, use the volume control and enjoy the buildings!

Nice Time (1957) **7 min.** Sound, Black & White (BFI)

Has Piccadilly Circus ever looked so bleak? This film ignores the sentiment of love depicted by Eros from his statue and unromantically shows a much darker side of social life. Filmed over twenty five Saturday nights and edited to look like one night. The iconic statue itself looks very good when lit up at night and looks over young

people, sailors, prostitutes and people (shock horror- kissing in public!) enjoying their Saturday night. The soundtrack is very appropriate with different types of music for different people and situations. By the end the streets are empty with very little rubbish and the statue stands supreme again. It has surely seen far 'bleaker' Saturday nights since then.

Eating High (1966) **9 min.** Sound, Colour (Granada International Media Ltd)

The Post Office Tower (now known as the BT Tower) has been one of London's most visible icons since the mid 60s. It is 188 metres high (three times the height of Nelson's column) and was once the tallest building in Britain. The Tower had public viewing galleries but the most famous attraction was the Top of the Tower cordon bleu rotating restaurant, taking 23 minutes to complete each rotation. In the film diners are seen being served with what was then really special food, although quite commonplace today, completely unaware of the logistics involved in running the restaurant and the organisation of the kitchens. It is also compared favourably with other rotating restaurant towers in Stuttgart, West Berlin, Rotterdam and of course Paris. In 1980 it was closed for security reasons and is no longer open to the general public.

England Home and Beauty (1976), **37 min.** Sound, Colour (Arts Council England)

This is an Art Deco treasure trove. Images of Britain's contribution to the decade's iconography unashamedly celebrate high style and aesthetics. It was felt that houses, cars, fashion, furniture, china, beauty both of nature and things made by man helped to make lives fuller, happier and more intense. The wonderful footage, the lively commentary, a tinkling piano and music throughout help to create the perfect atmosphere. This is a must for Art Deco lovers.

The London Story (1986) **15min.** Sound, Colour (BFI)

This wry and unusual film is a musical comedy set against a backdrop of famous locations. The opening sequence freeze-frames in images, the beauty and strength of Whitehall's architecture while later footage shows the splendour of Big Ben and Westminster, culminating with the magic of the Thames at night. Sally Potter the director shows a very British trio—a glamorous spy, a public servant who likes to open doors and a functionary who likes briefcases. A hand-held camera is used for interviews making them seem more realistic. I enjoyed the humour, especially the bike-riding, the scene at the ice-rink and their dance on the embankment. The powerful music of Prokofiev playing throughout was very effective. I thought this was a fun, intriguing and delightful film.

Sundial (1991) **2 min.** Sound, Colour (Bow Visions)

The Sundial or One Canada Square was built in the late 1980s as part of the development of London's Dockland. This footage shows a day in Docklands from sunrise to sunset. It is presented as straight actuality but is compressed in time through cuts and changes in vantage points. There are some wonderful shots of the building in sunshine and shade. Throughout the film there are everyday sounds from the different areas such as voices of children, traffic noise and machines at work although none of them can be seen. They help to create the atmosphere while the focus is maintained on the building, besides which all else literally falls into its shadow.

New Styles of Architecture (1993), **26 min.** Sound, Black & White, Colour, (Channel 4)

Narrated by Alan Bennett, this documentary looks at architecture after World War 1. Decaying housing left over from the previous century was being replaced by low-rise estates. It contrasts International Modernism with Art Deco and neo-Tudor. Footage in both black and white and colour, showing houses of all different styles in their splendour, is interposed with comments and explanations from experts. While many worked in the new Art Deco style factories and shops they were happy to retreat to the comfort and security of their own more traditional style homes. The building programme was interrupted by the war and a new iconic building emerged, the Anderson air-raid shelter!

London (1994), **85 min.** Sound, Colour (BFI)

Some of the most beautiful and iconic buildings are seen as a background to Patrick Keiller's film about modern London. After seven years at sea the narrator returns to the city in the early 90s. He feels that he is endangered by the threat of terrorist bombs, crumbling finances and anti-European thought. Plus ça change! In the mode of Holmes and Watson a quintessentially English narration is provided. Landmark buildings are seen but not described and are incidental to the story and the message conveyed. Wealth is contrasted with poverty and the low, monotone voice expresses sadness and disappointment. I found this very interesting and thought-provoking.

Borderline (2005) **5 min.** Sound, Colour (Alex Chandon)

This is a most unusual film showing London in the style of Escher being turned upside down and inside out. The South Bank is featured with deranged shots and the viewer tries to recognise the famous locations while trying to maintain their equilibrium. Cars drive along the roof of Waterloo Bridge. The Thames runs across the top of the screen as a watery sky with people 'Free Running' along the sides of buildings and jumping off into the unknown. Cars travel down a road which ends in the river Thames. The background music played by The Dash Poets is rather disquieting, helping us to suspend our disbelief and challenge our ideas of normality. This is new film technology at its best and this creative, ingenious short film is riveting.

Peter Ackroyd's London (2004) **144 min.** Sound, Colour (BBC)

Based on his book *London—A Biography* Peter Ackroyd presents three programmes packed with facts and stories about London during the last 2000 years. Images of the past and present provide a backdrop while he walks through the streets of the capital. Cameras film buildings and narrow lanes while archive footage is projected onto the walls of the buildings. It offers insight into the enduring appeal of London from its Roman origins, to the City through to the suburbs, with many buildings shown in vibrant colour. Surviving plague, fire, war, violence and devastation, London stands proud with some of the best and most magnificent iconic buildings in the world. Give yourself enough time to absorb the information and the visual impact.

COUNTRYWIDE

Stonehenge—Panorama of the Ancient Druidical Remains (1900) **1 min.** Silent, Black & White (BFI)

This ancient British icon is shown in footage from a hand-held camera in the days before it was invaded by coach parties. Hundreds of panoramas were made in the early days of film and visiting the British icons became more popular as leisure time increased during the Victorian era. As the camera pans across the huge stones a policeman comes into view showing the scale of the stones. Later a woman is seen standing quite erect, complete with long skirt and hat. It's a far cry from the jean-wearing visitors today with their audio guides.

Any Man's Kingdom (1956) **22 min.** Sound, Colour (BFI)

British Transport made many films to promote tourism, turning potentially dull travelogues into fine cinema. I was instinctively drawn back to a film about Northumberland, my homeland and was not disappointed. I was swept away by the wonderful photography, the music which is alternately warm and sinister, but by the dialogue in particular. The wide sandy beaches are shown where the holidaymaker is described as a "whale from Tyneside which comes to breathe and blow". Dunstanburgh Castle, "blown by the Viking wind" stands proud as does Bamburgh Castle which when "Rome was gone, kept the Saxon shore safe". They talk about Longstone Lighthouse as Grace Darling's Tower which "surveys the sea" and watches the old cars taking visitors across the causeway to Lindisfarne, the Holy Island. Northumberland is an area of contrasts and the bloody Battle of Flodden Field in 1513 is commemorated with a monument and the comment "out of the strong came forth sweetness". No not a tin of Tate and Lyle golden syrup but an expansive view of the Cheviot Hills with heavenly sirens singing in the background. Hadrian's Wall, the "last gasp and grasp of Rome" and "after the Wall, the Fall" sees visitors scrambling over it. There is a lot more, but go to the Mediatheque and see it for yourself. You will not be disappointed.

Holiday (1957) **70 min.** Sound, Colour (British Transport Film)

Blackpool Tower is the most famous iconic building in Lancashire. In 1889 the Mayor of Blackpool visited the Great Paris Exhibition and was so impressed by the Eiffel Tower that he commissioned a similar tower to be built in Blackpool. Blackpool Tower rises to a height of 158m and was opened to the general public in 1894. I was always very impressed by the Tower in my youth on our frequent visits to Blackpool for holidays and the Illuminations. I wanted to find some footage about Blackpool Tower and this film shows a day in the life of Blackpool where the visitors are determined to enjoy their holiday. They can be seen dancing on the pier, complete with gloves and handbags, essential fashion accessories of the time. Blackpool Tower is glimpsed in the distance with all the street illuminations at its feet. The music changes with the different activities, ranging from roller-coaster rides to eating ice cream cones. How easily we were pleased in those days! At the end the Tower is seen in the setting sun, lit up in all its glory.

Byker Wall (1988) **10 min.** Sound, Colour (BBC Building Sites)

Beatrix Campbell explores a 20th century 'walled city' with enthusiasm and praise for the council estate designed by Ralph Erskine. It is a replacement for Newcastle's back-to-back slums, having as a prototype the walled cities of our distant past and is one of the best examples of modern council housing. The 'Wall' is built as a fortress against the motorway and has brilliant shots showing its height and width, accompanied by powerful music. The houses are built into the 'Wall' and where they once had a view of their neighbour's backyard they now have free access to the sky and views of the city. It contains a fifth of Newcastle's total number of trees with 3500 flower beds. Both private and public spaces merge together with no graffiti and little damage. It is described as "monumental and modest, light-hearted and loveable". I wonder what it is like today?

Coming from Newcastle I always have a natural affinity with anything from the north east. I left before the Byker Wall was constructed and have seen it many times from the outside but this gave me a very special bird's eye view from the inside. A must for all real Geordies!

ICONIC BUILDINGS USED AS LOCATIONS IN FEATURE FILMS

Many films used London as their location, either using the actual streets or their reconstruction in a film studio.

84 Charing Cross Road (1987), **75 min.** Sound, Colour

True story of a transatlantic business correspondence about used books that developed into a close friendship lasting over two decades.

Locations: Buckingham Palace, Trafalgar Square, Westminster, White Hart Lane Stadium

Blackmail (1929) **82 min.** Sound, Black & White

Manslaughter, blackmail and an epic chase through the British Museum make Hitchcock's first sound film a success.

Building Featured: British Museum

Expresso Bongo (1960) **111 min.** Sound, Black & White

An unscrupulous small-time Soho agent exploits a rock 'n' roll star but is rivalled by a mature US singer who attempts to use him to revive her flagging career. Cliff Richards models himself on the great Elvis Presley and takes several steps up the ladder of success.

Locations: Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane; Old Compton Street, Soho; Victoria Palace Theatre

Les Bicyclettes de Belsize (1968) **29 min.** Sound, Colour

Similar to *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* except it is set in Hampstead. Beautiful shots of Hampstead and a dreamy theme tune make this film quite magical.

Location: Hampstead

Passport to Pimlico (1949) **84 min.** Sound, Black & White

As a result of wartime bombing an ancient parchment is discovered showing that the Pimlico section of London belongs to Burgundy and is indeed French. The residents decide to take advantage of this, elect a Mayor (Stanley Holloway) and impose border controls. This is a charming whimsical comedy.

Locations: Piccadilly, Westminster Bridge, Whitehall

Seven Days to Noon (1950) **94 min.** Sound, Black & White

An English scientist is working on atomic research and upset by the ramifications of his work constructs his own bomb. He threatens to blow up London within one week if they do not suspend the research. As London is evacuated they close in on him. Carefully photographed set pieces in actual locations add authenticity.

Locations: Natural History Museum, 10 Downing St, Tower Bridge, Westminster Bridge

The Blue Lamp (1949) **84 min.** Sound, Black & White

This was an immensely popular British crime film concentrating on the lives of several London policemen, resulting in the hugely successful series *Dixon of Dock Green* starring Jack Warner.

Location: White City Stadium

The Day the Earth Caught Fire (1961) **98 min.** Sound, Black & White with tinted features

British reporters suspect an international cover-up of a global disaster in progress and they're right.

Locations: Battersea Fun Fair, Chelsea Bridge, Fleet Street, Trafalgar Square, Westminster

The Long Good Friday (1980) **114 min.** Sound, Colour

A prosperous English gangster is about to close a lucrative deal when his empire starts to fall apart after a series of mysterious bombings over the Easter weekend. This film set a new standard in the classic crime film genre and made Bob Hoskins an international star.

Locations: Harbour Exchange Square, Isle of Dogs; Paddington Station; Savoy Hotel, Strand; St Katharine's Dock, Wapping

The Servant (1963) **112 min.** Sound, Black & White

An aristocrat (James Fox) moves to London and hires a manservant (Dirk Bogarde), who gradually imposes his own ideas and authority in the house. The master is eventually dominated by the servant and the tables are turned as he becomes ruled by his own 'employee'. A chilling and unnerving story played out by two superb actors.

Locations: Chiswick House, St Pancras station

Victim (1961) **100 min.** Sound, Black & White

Dirk Bogarde plays a lawyer who agrees to defend an old friend. The lawyer had once been the male lover of his client and becomes the victim of a blackmail plot. This was considered as daring a film as had ever been made in England at a time when homosexuality was a criminal offence.

Locations: Cambridge Circus, Hyde Park, Trafalgar Square

LONDON USED AS A LOCATION FOR FEATURE FILMS

London was used as a location for the following films, either for the entire film or for just a section of it.

Beautiful Thing (1996)
The Boy Who Turned Yellow (1972)
Brief Encounter (1945)
Carry On Constable (1960)
Do I Love You? (2002)
The Elephant Man (1980)
Fingersmith (2005)
Hue and Cry (1946)
It Always Rains on Sunday (1947)
Leo the Last (1970)
My Beautiful Laundrette (1985)
Nighthawks (1978)
Peeping Tom (1960)
Pool of London (1951)
Pressure (1975)
Priest (1994)
A Room With a View (1985)
S.W.A.L.K. aka Melody (1970)
Sapphire (1959)
The Small World of Sammy Lee (1963)
Sparrows Can't Sing (1963)
This Happy Breed (1944)
Villain (1971)

I was inspired by the Mediatheque because there are so many interesting films to see. Go and find out for yourselves and be well rewarded for the journey.

Cinema, Film Making and Films

Films on this topic selected by Alan Hooper

INTRODUCTION

It's not surprising that the Mediatheque has a lot to interest the cinema and film enthusiast. In this section I have highlighted twenty-five such films. I think there are many more to find, particularly feature length films. So after considering this selection do some hunting yourself and then write up your choice for the benefit of other enthusiasts.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS TRAILERS

Christmas Greetings Trailers 1937 and 1938 **5 min.** Black & White

The stars are brought out to give their Christmas greetings to the cinema audiences of 1937 and 1938. They include Will Hay, Ginger Rogers, George Formby, Carol Lombard and Gary Cooper. It is noticeable that Gary Cooper was reading his lines from a prompt card because after each sentence his eyes return to the same point to read the next sentence.

Christmas Message From Mr Oscar Deutsch (1939) **4 min.** Black & White

Oscar Deutsch was the founder and owner of the Odeon chain which he had built up to 275 cinemas by his death in 1941 at the age of 48. His widow sold the chain to J Arthur Rank. Here he reads an appeal to his patrons to support the War Comforts Fund while visuals show the services personnel who (presumably) will benefit from the money collected "by making life easier for serving men". The name Odeon was claimed to stand for "Oscar Deutsch Entertains Our Nation".

ABC Christmas and New Year Greetings (1946) **3 min.** Black & White

Pretty uninspiring greetings film involving Norman Shelley as Father Christmas. ABC was one of the rival cinema chains to the Odeons. The other rival was Gaumont British.

SATURDAY MORNING CHILDREN'S CINEMA CLUBS

Odeon National Cinema Club—Singalong Trailer (1943) **1 min.** Black & White

This shows the words of the Club song which was probably shown every week during a community singing interlude. Two lines of the words have a black band covering them.

Tom's Ride (1944) **11 min.** Black & White

Tom desperately wants a bike and finds a wallet with money which could make his dream a reality, but will he do the honourable thing? A story with a moral to influence the behaviour of the young people in the early 1940s. The film features a Saturday morning Cinema Club so this was probably where it hit its target audience. The film was shot on location but I couldn't identify the place.

SCREEN TESTS

Audrey Hepburn's Screen Test (1952) **5 min.** Colour

These screen tests were carried out for a film which was never made. Audrey Hepburn plays the role of a shop assistant in a dress shop or material shop at the expensive end of the spectrum. A soundtrack for the tests was not produced (or hasn't survived) so it's not immediately obvious what is happening in the scenes. It is interesting in that it gives an insight into the way in which screen tests were conducted. Audrey Hepburn gives the impression that she is a pleasant attractive young lady, but she doesn't shine with star quality here.

The tests used a British colour process called Dufaychrome which, if what is seen in the Mediatheque is accurate, did not produce a very pleasing colour image on the screen.

Blackmail Test Take (1929) **1 min.** Black & White

A film which links to an interesting piece of film history. The sound era arrived in Britain while Alfred Hitchcock was shooting the silent film *Blackmail* for British International Pictures so the company decided to re-shoot many of the scenes with sound. This film is the test of the leading lady Anny Ondra in which she talks to Hitchcock to assess her ability to deliver her lines. She was German and her thick accent made her voice unsuitable for sound films. To solve the problem, the English actor Joan Barry spoke the dialogue standing just outside the framed scene using her own microphone while Miss Ondra mimed the words. *Blackmail* is available to view in the Mediatheque.

ON FILM MAKING

Shooting Stars (1928) **80 min.** Silent, Black & White

This silent film is a satire on the British film industry and was the first film to be directed by Anthony Asquith. Asquith was the son of the Liberal Prime Minister and his film career stretched from 1928 to 1964. This film concerns the husband and wife acting team of Mae Feather and Julian Gordon who are torn apart when he discovers that she is having an affair with the screen comedian Andy Wilks. It walks a fine line between comedy and tragedy and has been said to be one of the few classic silent films produced in Britain.

Silent Britain (2006) **90 min**

This is a three part documentary about the early years of silent films made in Britain. Matthew Sweet shows that it wasn't just a few, easily dismissed comedies, but many high quality films including some very popular comedies and some fine dramas. Several excerpts of the previous entry in this section (*Shooting Stars*) are included. It shows how the art and even the language of film was developed by the pioneers working in Britain.

Cut It Out: A Day In The Life Of A Censor (1925) **20 min.** Silent, Black & White

This film is described as "Michael Balcon presents an Adrian Brunel Burlesque" and seems to be intended to satirise the film censor. I found it very laboured and not very funny, in fact it looked like a film made by amateurs with a very slow pace. A few scenes were reminiscent of a very early Monty Python sketch in that they showed somewhat silly humour but unlike Monty Python, I didn't laugh.

FILM PEOPLE DOING UNUSUAL THINGS

Another World By Sean Connery (1962) **5 min.** Black & White

A rather uneasy Sean Connery makes an appeal in behalf of the Royal National Institute for the Blind. This was probably made after his success in the first Bond film *Dr No*.

Chance Encounter (1978) **17 min.**

David Lean discusses his involvement with the Indian charity Raphael.

LITTLE KNOWN FEATURE FILMS

Together (1956) **52 min.** Black & White

This film features the experiences of two deaf young men. The story is set in the East End of London with the Thames as a backdrop. It was filmed at real locations including Butlers Wharf and a street market which is possibly Petticoat Lane. The British Film Institute's Experimental Film Fund financed the production. Amongst the names on the credits are Lindsay Anderson as editor and Walter Lassally who was one of the cinematographers.

In many ways the film seems to be a forerunner of the British New Wave of films with realistic working class settings; there appears to be a mixture of actors and local people, particularly local children. The black and white photography matches the rather austere settings and there is an interesting use of sound in that there are periods of complete silence when both of the deaf men are featured. The way in which children are used and the voices of children singing nursery rhymes on the soundtrack are reminiscent of "A Taste Of Honey"

which was made 5 years later. Walter Lassally was the cinematographer for that film.

Together seems to me to be an important step in the development of the British New Wave in the late 1950's and deserves to be more widely known. I recommend you view it.

Pool Of London (1950) **85 min.** Sound, Black & White

I have already recommended this film in the "River Transport" section but for the film enthusiast it's also worth viewing. An Ealing Studios production, directed by Basil Dearden (who directed *The Blue Lamp*), it's the story of a ship which docks near London Bridge. It shows how the crew spend their weekend ashore which includes an attempt at smuggling and a romance between a black seaman and a white girl. We also glimpse the operations of the river police.

The cast includes Bonar Colleano, an actor almost completely forgotten after his early death, Leslie Phillips in an early role, and 1950's British film regulars James Robertson Justice, Alfie Bass, Victor Maddern.

ANIMATED FILMS

The Mediatheque has a selection of animated films of which I recommend the following seven. They are listed in chronological order.

The Road To Health (1938) **12 min.** Sound, Black & White

This Gaumont British Instructional film was made for the British Social Hygiene Council to advise the British public to keep to the straight and narrow when it comes to morals. It starts with a live-action lecture on venereal disease given by someone reminiscent of Ronnie Barker lecturing in *The Two Ronnies* (I began to wonder if this film was a spoof—but it's not!). It then goes into an animated sequence for which the artwork and animation technique are very basic. The whole tone is pompous and patronizing but is probably an indication of the public attitude to sexual health matters in 1938. This film is an important piece of social history but I find it difficult not to be amused by its quaintness.

Love On The Range (1939) **6 min.** Sound, Colour

This cartoon was a surprise because it was British, an advert for Horlicks, and was made by George Pal, a Hungarian who worked in Germany, then came to England, and migrated to Hollywood in 1941. He developed the use of stop-motion animated puppets which are used in this film—a sort of Woodentops meet the Wild West with opera thrown in for good measure. Pal continued with animated films in Hollywood and won an Oscar for his work in 1943. When animation became too expensive in 1948 he directed feature films.

Six Little Jungle Boys (1945) **9 min.** Sound, Black & White

A cartoon film made by Halas and Batchelor for the War Office to advise soldiers stationed in the Far East on health care. The film covers the range from looking after their feet to avoiding venereal disease. Quite a contrast in approach to *The Road To Health*.

Charley In New Town (1948) **8 min.** Sound, Colour

A cartoon film made by Halas and Batchelor for the Central Office of Information. It explains the thinking behind the planning of New Towns and illustrates how this is put into practice. Another piece of interesting social history which is well made and entertaining.

Ginger Nutts Christmas Circus (1949) **7 min.** Sound, Colour

This cartoon was the first one made by GB Animation a British studio which was started by David Hand, an ex-Disney employee, with financial backing from J Arthur Rank. Unfortunately the studio was not a success and closed 3 years after it started. The cartoon is enjoyable and has a professional quality, but is not outstanding. However it does make one wish that the studio had prospered.

Mary's Birthday (1951) **10 min.** Sound, Colour

This is a public information cartoon made by Lotte Reiniger which provides a guide to elementary hygiene. One wonders whether the target audience was children, adults, or children and adults. For those familiar with Lotte Reiniger's black and white shadow cartoons, this is a very different type with much more detail and a good use of colour. It makes an unsavoury subject entertaining and attractive.

Fatty Issues (1990) **5 min.** Sound, Colour

A cartoon in which a woman agonises about going on a diet. A very entertaining film which everyone will enjoy but particularly those who have ever tried to diet.

FILMS WORTH VIEWING

The four films in this section are difficult to categorise, but nevertheless I think they are worth viewing. I explain why I think that below.

Sundial (1991) **1 min.** Colour

This is worth viewing because it is so simple but produces an unusual result. It consists of a succession of shots in which the Canary Wharf tower is in the centre of everyone. I found the effect of this to be fascinating.

Crewe Hospital Procession and Pageant (1907) **11 min.** Silent, Black & White

A film with dancing bears, cross dressers, and black faced performers, it is from another age. There is an essay about the film on the mediatheque system called *Out of the Archive—Making Sense of Spectacle*.

The Londoners (1939) **37 min.** Sound, Black & White

This film was made to celebrate the formation of the London County Council (LCC) in 1889. It reconstructs the grim life of many Londoners 50 years previously where cesspools, homelessness, and prostitution were very common. It depicts the poor education many children received and shows a teacher being physically assaulted by her pupils. The film then turns into a piece of advertising (or propaganda?) for the LCC, taking the viewer through the good

works which have been implemented in order to improve the life of Londoners at the lower end of the pay scale. I found some of it a bit ponderous, but the 1939 view of education and leisure pursuits is interesting. The film includes an address by Herbert Morrison then LCC leader, who was soon to become a government minister in WW2.

Out To Play (1936) **10 min.** Sound, Black & White

This shows children playing in London parks and streets in 1936. It implies that the children shown are following their own instincts in what they do. But when one considers the way it has been filmed and edited it leads to the conclusion that there must have been considerable direction of the children's activities by the filmmaker.

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