

FIAF report 2010

In 2010 the BFI National Archive celebrated its 75th anniversary. We marked this milestone in the following ways:

- Launch of a major fundraising campaign to restore Hitchcock's surviving silent films by 2012 - www.bfi.org.uk/saveafilm.html
- Creation of online resource about 'lost' British feature films - www.bfi.org.uk/nationalarchive/news/mostwanted
- 2-month season of screenings, debates and presentations of materials from and about the Collections at BFI Southbank including the annual Ernest Lindgren Memorial Lecture.

Acquisitions

The following key paper collections were acquired in 2010:

Ken Annakin, director (1914-2009) - working papers; Jack Clayton, director (1921-1995) - scripts, working papers, correspondence; Ralph Cooper, publicist (1913-1996) - correspondence, working papers, diaries; Peter Coulson, editor – scripts; Sir David Cunynghame, producer (1905-1978) - additional papers; Deborah Kerr, actor (1921-2007) - scrapbook on Merle Oberon; Peter Le Page, production designer – sketches, stills, production notes; Richard Lester, director (b. 1932) - scripts, working papers, correspondence; Jonathan Lewis, producer, director (b.1949) - working papers and scripts; Matthew Nathan, filmmaker (1907-1990) - correspondence, scripts and contracts; Peter Noble, producer, screenwriter, critic (1917-1997) – scrapbooks; Catherine O'Brien, publicist (1916-2005) - correspondence, working papers, publicity materials, scrapbooks; Peter Pickering, director, screenwriter, editor (b. 1924) - working papers; Michael Relph, producer, director, screenwriter, art director (1915-2004) - correspondence and scripts; Simon Relph, producer, director (b. 1940) - additional papers; Mark Shivas, producer (1938-2008) - additional papers; Michael Stringer (1924-2004), production designer – sketches, stills and screenplays; Peter Wollen, academic, filmmaker (b. 1938) - working papers, scripts.

Key film acquisitions included the following:

The Halas and Batchelor collection - historically Britain's most important animation company; the work of artist filmmaker Steve McQueen; original negatives for Jean-Luc Godard's *British Sounds* (1969); masters and production materials for eight of Nick Broomfield's documentary features, as part of a joint remastering and preservation project; original negatives for animated films produced by the Leeds Animation Workshop; a collection of films from the National Savings Committee (1930s-1960s); selected films from leading industrial films producer, Cresswell Film Unit. Additionally, the BFI acquired a significant number of contemporary British short films and features.

Television:

4,942 off-air recordings of British TV programmes were made for preservation and access in accordance with agreements with Ofcom and BBC.

Progress and problems in the field of preservation

As part of the government-funded Screen Heritage UK (SHUK) project a suite of new film lab equipment was installed at the BFI Conservation Centre, comprising a 4K digital scanner with wet gate, digital restoration and grading tools, a wet gate contact printer and an HFE film cleaning machine. This combination of state of the art archive lab equipment, chosen through a rigorous evaluation and procurement process, provides a new workflow which is sympathetic to both preservation and contemporary restoration needs. The conservation team received intensive training from the manufacturers and all of the equipment was put to immediate use, increasing efficiency, quality and providing improved care for the collections.

A new role of Digital Operations Specialist, was created to address the growing preservation and access challenges brought about by digital technology. Workflows and processes are being developed

to support acquisition of born digital materials and a standardised approach to digital migration and preservation is forming. The Preservation Engineering team have worked to develop mechanisms to handle data within open-source structures, eventually committing to LTO tape for preservation.

Two other major aspects of the SHUK programme – the creation of a Master Film Store (MFS) and the Collections Information Database (see below) - presented huge demands to ensure that collections care and business continuity are maximised through the creation of an entirely new sub-zero temperature and low humidity storage vault at the Gaydon site in Warwickshire and a bespoke database and workflow system. Following extensive consultation, both within and outside the BFI to define design and use criteria, building works began for the MFS during the autumn. An intensive legacy data cleaning and migration programme was run and workflows mapped and tested to ensure that the new CID system is ready for adoption during 2011, when we face the considerable task of moving all master film materials into sub-zero storage during the autumn.

Cataloguing, documentation and research

As part SHUK the BFI has procured a new collections management system from the supplier Adlib to replace its Technical Records Database. The new Collections Information Database (CID) also integrates the previously standalone filmographic database (SIFT/BID) and the separate subject indexing system (SIDX) to create a holistic catalogue of all BFI archive holdings within one database for the first time.

The CID data structure is fully hierarchical, linking filmographic ‘work’ records to various ‘manifestations’ through to ‘item’ level and carriers. This structure is based on the newly ratified CEN European Standard prEN15907 for *Film identification – Enhancing interoperability of metadata – Element sets and structure*.

As of February 2011, all filmographic work records (over 800,000) and technical item records (over 1.3 million) were in the new database; the linking between the previously separate datasets is well underway.

The joint datasets will allow combined searching across all fields to interrogate collections data in powerful and sophisticated ways previously impossible to achieve. It will also provide flexible reporting and data-export functionalities to facilitate clearer auditing and presentation of archive outputs and achievements.

Adlib are also working closely with Archive staff to develop a bespoke workflow module that will manage and monitor all archive business processes, including bookings and request management, location and movement control with full barcoding functionality; the ultimate ambition is for the elimination of paper work as far as possible.

Launch of the new CID system to BFI staff is planned for April 2011; plans to integrate further BFI collections and for online public access are underway.

The following major research projects took place during 2010:

- Post-War British documentary.
- British shipbuilding on film.
- World travelogues made pre-1914.
- Adelphi Films.
- Chinese cinema and films about China.
- Home movies and amateur film.

Film showings, exhibitions and publications

The Archive organised major cinema programmes at BFI Southbank and elsewhere:

- Boom Britain – retrospective of the post-war British documentary. As well as a film season, this major project resulted in a large number of new restorations, a DVD box set, a book and online resources.
- A Day in the Life: Four Films by John Krish – theatric release and touring (DVD forthcoming) of recently restored documentaries. Won the Evening Standard Film Award for Best Documentary.
- Alberto Cavalcanti retrospective including restorations and re-releases of *Went the Day Well?* (1942) and *They Made Me a Fugitive* (1947).
- Deborah Kerr retrospective.
- Dangerous Beauty – screenings of nitrate film prints.
- BFI Most Wanted - season of screenings of films previously believed to be 'lost'.
- The Second Coming: contemporary British TV writers.
- Launch of 'Projecting the Archive' – screening of 2 rarely seen (not available on DVD) British feature films each month. Screenings introduced by a curator.
- A Night in Victorian and Edwardian London (surviving films from the period).
- Restoration of *Alice in Wonderland* (Cecil Hepworth/Percy Stow, 1903) in cinemas across UK; 1,000,000+ views on YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zeIXfdogJbA>
- Premiere of BFI restoration of *The Great White Silence* (Herbert Ponting, 1924) at London Film Festival with performance of new score by Simon Fisher Turner. TV documentary about film and restoration made by Discovery. Theatric and DVD release in 2011.
- *1910* – review of films from 1910 at Cinema Ritrovato and BFI Southbank.
- British Silent Film Festival - the BFI continued its programming and organisational support of the festival.

The following titles from the Archive were released on DVD and/or Blu-ray in 2010:

Adelphi Collection: *Is Your Honeymoon Really Necessary?* (Maurice Elvey, 1953) + *My Wife's Lodger* (Marice Elvey, 1952); *Black Jack* (Ken Loach, 1979); *Bronco Bullfrog* (Barney Platts-Mills, 1969); COI Collection Vol. 1: *Police and Thieves* (14 films); COI Collection Vol. 2: *Design for Today* (17 films); COI Collection Vol. 3: *Armed Forces* (23 films); COI Collection Vol. 4: *Stop! Look! Listen!* (27 films); *Chaplin Keystone Collection* (24 films); *The Edge of the World* (Michael Powell, 1937); *Five Have a Mystery to Solve* (Ernest Morris, 1964); *Five on a Treasure Island* (Gerald Landau, 1957); *Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush* (Clive Donner, 1968); *Loving Memory* (Tony Scott, 1970); *The Party's Over* (Guy Hamilton, 1963); *The Pleasure Girls* (Gerry O'Hara, 1965); *Secrets of Nature* – Vol. 1 (19 films); *Shadows of Progress: the post war British documentary* (32 films); *Silent Scream* (David Hayman, 1989); *Small Time/Where's the Money Ronnie?* (Shane Meadows, 1996); *That Kind of Girl* (Gerry O'Hara, 1963); *A Zed & Two Noughts* (Peter Greenaway, 1985)

Exhibitions of material from the collection s were presented:

- The Red Shoes
- Shadows of Progress: post-war documentary filmmakers
- 75 years of the BFI National Archive
- Deborah Kerr
- Katherine Hepburn and Spencer Tracey
- Sergei Paradjanov

A wide range of materials was loaned to international museums and galleries.

Restorations

The following film restorations were completed in 2010:

Alice in Wonderland (Cecil Hepworth/Percy Stow, 1903), *Butterfly Dance* (1913), *The Great White Silence* (Herbert Ponting, 1924), *Love on the Dole* (John Baxter, 1941), *Went the Day Well?* (Alberto Cavalcanti, 1942), *Lord Siva Danced* (Sarah Erulkar, 1948), *La Famille Martin* (Kay Mander, 1948), *Festival* (Derek York, 1951), *Out of True* (Philip Leacock, 1951), *Forward a Century* (J B Napier-Bell, 1951), *Living City* (John Barnes, 1952), *Guilty Chimneys* (Gerard Bryant, 1954), *Bow Bells* (Anthony Simmons, 1954), *Birthday* (Guy Bretton, 1954), *Foothold on Antarctica* (Derek Williams, 1956), *There Was a Door* (Derek Williams, 1957), *Care of St Christophers* (James Ritchie, 1959), *They Took Us to the Sea* (John Krish, 1961), *Time to Heal* (Derrick Knight, 1963), *Portrait of Queenie* (Michael Orram, 1964), *Faces of Harlow* (Derrick Knight, 1964), *Today in Britain* (Peter Hopkinson, 1964), *I Think They Call Him John* (John Krish, 1964), *The Big Job* (Gerald Thomas, 1965), *And Then There Was One* (Eric Marquis, 1965), *Time Out of Mind* (Eric Marquis, 1968), *Picture to Post* (Sarah Erulkar, 1969), *The Shetland Experience* (Derek Williams, 1977).

Budgetary matters, relations with government authorities

As the UK's National Collection of moving image heritage material the BFI convened a group – known as UK Sound and Vision Collections – of other National organisations with an interest in audiovisual materials. These include the BBC, the British Library, The National Archives, Imperial War Museum, the National Media Museum, the National Libraries of Scotland and Wales and National Museums Northern Ireland. The group is working on a map of collections and collecting responsibilities across the UK, standards for digital preservation and metadata, the potential for shared technical solutions for digitisation, capture and access, and other matters such as business models and rights. The group has written to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, to alert the Minister for Film of the group's remit and aims.

International relations (FIAF and others)

The Archive borrowed elements from the following archives and organisations to enable key restorations: Cinémathèque de Toulouse, Douris Corporation, EYE Film Institute, George Eastman House, Royal Belgian Film Archive. Among the international archives to which the BFI loaned materials were Bundesarchiv and Cineteca del Comune di Bologna.