

BFI REPLAY

60 YEARS OF SCREEN STORIES,
DIGITISED AND PRESERVED FOR YOU

Welcome guide

How to get the best
from BFI Replay

For use by Library Staff & General Public

For more information:

<https://www.bfi.org.uk/about-replay>
replay@bfi.org.uk

From the British Film Institute (BFI) National Archive
and partner UK Regions and Nations Film Archives.

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Welcome to BFI Replay

BFI Replay is a new, free-to-access, digital archive from the BFI (British Film Institute). It's an online learning and research platform that hosts thousands of digitised videos and television programmes from the collections of the BFI National Archive and partner UK Regions and Nations Film Archives.

To access the platform simply click on the **BFI Replay icon** on the library's PC desktop or enter replay.bfi.org.uk into the web browser.

The videos span six decades, from the 1960s to the 2010s, offering a glimpse into Britain's past, its people and places; recording and revealing an era of rapid social, industrial, political and technological change.

BFI Replay is available widely across the UK in public lending libraries - the Replay Libraries Network - the only place where the public can see assembled all this amazing material, the result of one of the UK's largest mass video digitisation programmes.

<https://www.bfi.org.uk/bfi-national-archive/replay-libraries-network>

What's unique about BFI Replay?

Exclusively available in UK public lending libraries, it's a free resource for library users to browse and enjoy, or to research and study, with thousands of videos - some familiar and memorable, others rare and unseen for decades.

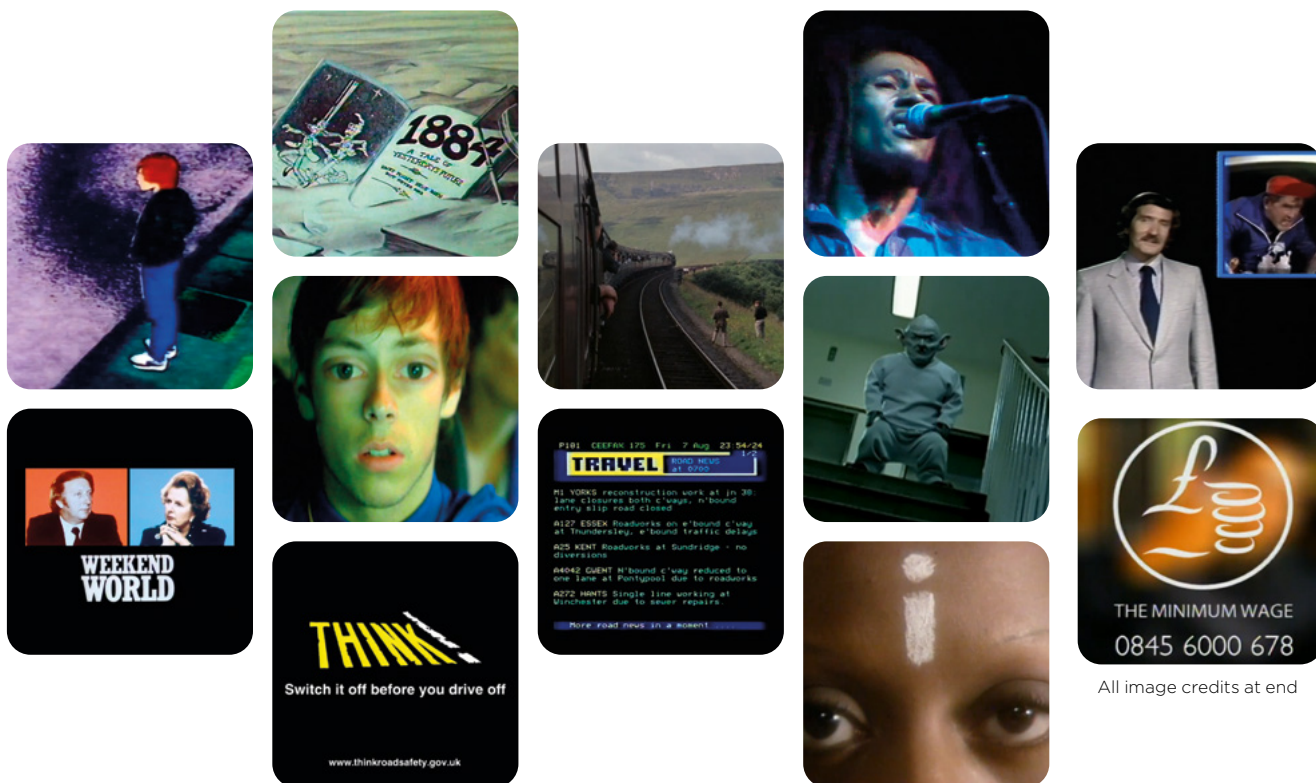
To access the platform simply click on the **BFI Replay icon** on the library PC desktop or enter <https://replay.bfi.org.uk/> into the web browser.

BFI Replay provides access to 1000s of precious videotapes through the meticulous replay and digitisation of collections from across the UK, lovingly collected and cared for by archivists for over half a century but now at great threat of technology obsolescence.

The content, preserved from these original videotapes, uncovers stories from across the UK, its history and its people. Vividly captured in over 60 years of film, television and video from all corners of the UK - what we, our parents and carers, grandparents and communities watched.

All of the titles have been drawn from the vaults of the BFI National Archive and partner UK Regions and Nations Film Archives.

BFI Replay is a unique resource giving democratic access for the public to the nation's archive moving image heritage. A living digital archive that will grow and evolve as newly digitised content continues to be added.



All image credits at end

Getting started

To get started simply click on the **BFI Replay icon** on the library PC desktop or enter <https://replay.bfi.org.uk/> into the web browser.

BFI Replay takes you on a journey into the past through archive film, television and video all without leaving your local library. Specially curated collections from across the UK explore the events, developments and people of bygone decades – and offers a chance to see what we, our parents and carers, and grandparents were watching – giving everyone an experience of life from the 1960s through to 2010s.

Voyage into screen history, uncovering classics and forgotten gems from TV yesteryear, as well as adverts, government films, community videos and memories from the world of movies and beyond. Watch the world as we knew it from the people and communities who made it.

Jump straight in and explore our specially curated collections

With thousands of videos to choose from, it can be difficult to know the best place to start.

Four themes have been created to uncover the past:

- **The Time Machine**
- **The Making of Us**
- **Screen Stories**
- **Closer to Home**

Presenting stories about Britain, its history and its people, as vividly captured in some 60 years of film, television and video. Each theme offers a variety of collections exploring: historical eras and events (The Time Machine), the shared experiences and memories that shaped who we are today (The Making of Us), a journey into screen history – big screen and small – including classic and familiar titles, and others unseen for decades (Screen Stories), and collected together in one place – stories from the breadth of Britain's regions and nations moving image archives (Closer to Home).

Whether you are interested in content related to your region, a wallow in TV nostalgia, some thought-provoking public information films or just a dip into decades past, let BFI Replay be your guide – all from the comfort of your local library. **Explore some of the collections under our four themes.**

You can jump straight in and **search** using **keywords** such as **place, theme, interest** or **genre**.

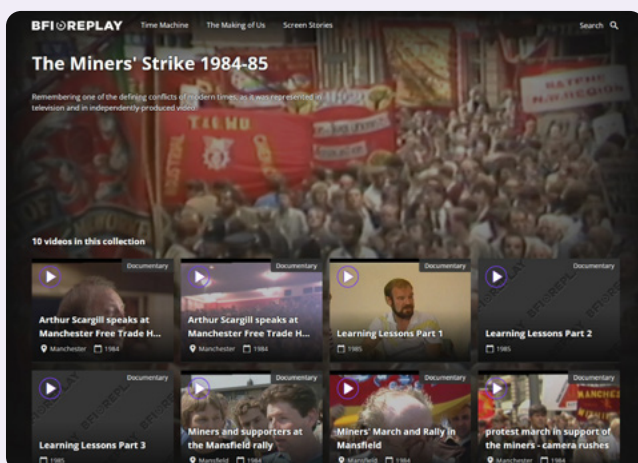
The Time Machine

Take a journey into the past through archive film, television and video. Here you can peel back the years, exploring the events, developments, fashions and people of decades past.

Collection highlights include:

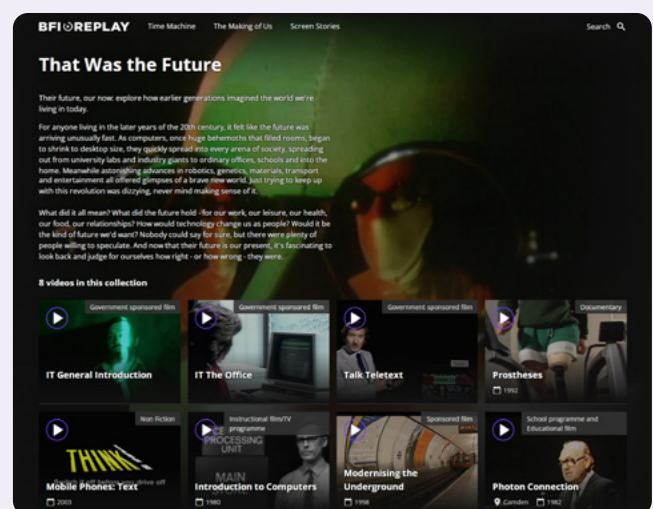
The Miners' Strike 1984-85

Exploring one of the defining conflicts of modern times as it was represented in television and in video beyond the mainstream.



That Was the Future

Their future, our now: how earlier generations imagined the world we're living in today.



That Was the 1980s

A look back at a decade of striking contrasts and seismic change, which did much to shape who we are today.

The Making of Us

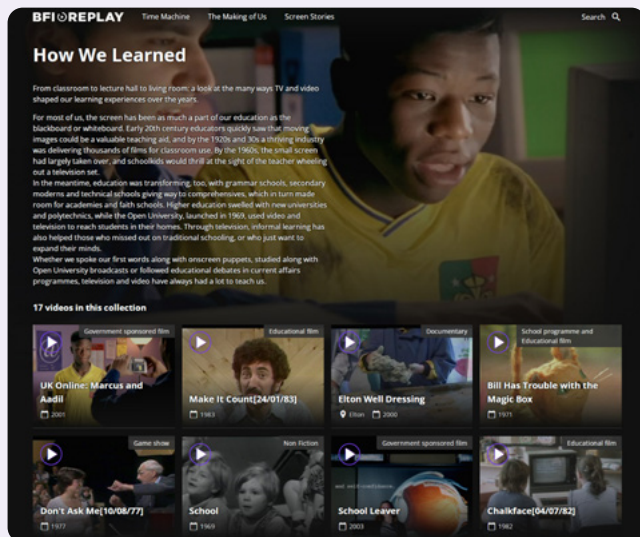
Times change, and so do we. Here you'll find features and collections exploring our shared memories through archive film, television and video. The collections reveal what we ate, what we wore, and how we worked, learned, travelled and shopped. And, just maybe, they can help to explain how we became what we are today.

Collection highlights include:

How We Learned

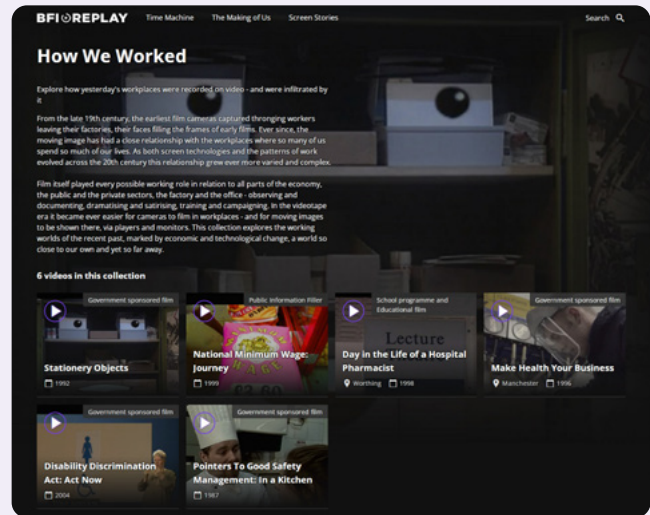
From classroom to lecture hall to living room: a look at the many ways TV and video shaped our learning experiences over the years.

For most of us, the screen has been as much a part of our education as the blackboard or whiteboard. Whether we spoke our first words along with onscreen puppets, studied along with dedicated broadcasts or videos, or followed educational debates in current affairs programmes, television and video have always had a lot to teach us.



How We Worked

From the late 19th century, the earliest film cameras captured thronging workers leaving their factories, their faces filling the frames of early films. Ever since, the moving image has had a close relationship with the workplaces where so many of us spend so much of our lives. This collection explores the working worlds of the recent past, marked by economic and technological change, a world so close to our own and yet so far away.



Keeping London Moving

Go behind the scenes of 50 years of London transport with this selection from the London Transport Museum's video collection.



London's Screen Archives/London Transport Museum

The Workers Film Association

Explore the diverse and exciting work of the WFA, a Manchester institution for over 40 years, training generations of filmmakers and producing videos out of an old Edwardian warehouse in Hulme.



Screen Stories

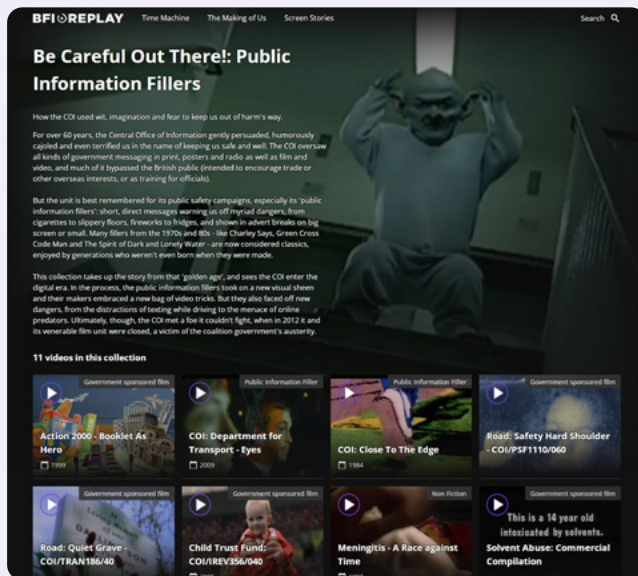
In an age dominated by screens, it's easy to forget that, for entertainment, there were once just two: the cinema screen and the TV. Here you can voyage into screen history, uncovering classics and forgotten gems from TV yesteryear, adverts, government films, filmmaker interviews... and much more besides.

Collection highlights include:

Be Careful Out There!: Public Information Films

How the government's Central Office of Information used wit, imagination and fear to keep us out of harm's way. For over 60 years, the Central Office of Information gently persuaded, humorously cajoled and even terrified us in the name of keeping us safe and well.

Highlights include the 'Gremlins' adult literacy and numeracy campaign – plus innovative, effective and often shocking messages warning us of both familiar dangers (road safety, smoking, fireworks) and new ones (solvent abuse, texting while driving, internet predators).

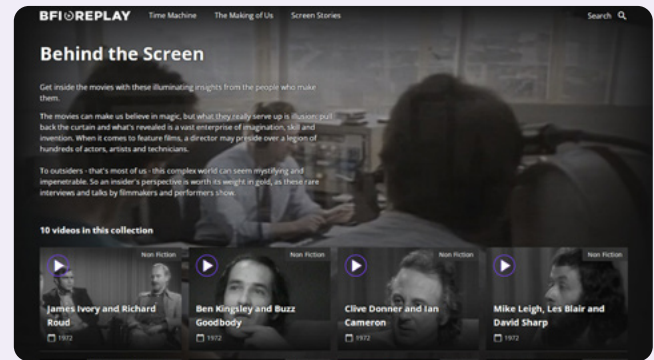


Behind the Screen

Get inside the movies with these illuminating insights from the people who make them.

The movies can make us believe in magic, but what they really serve up is illusion: pull back the curtain and what's revealed is a vast enterprise of imagination, skill and invention.

To outsiders – that's most of us – this complex world can seem mystifying and impenetrable. So an insider's perspective is worth its weight in gold, as these rare interviews and talks by filmmakers and performers show.



Camera is ours: women documentary filmmakers

Most leading documentary filmmakers in Britain today are women – a stark contrast with feature film directors who, despite some progress in recent years, are still overwhelmingly male. But prominence in documentary wasn't handed to women on a plate: a debt of thanks is due to the determination and resourcefulness of previous generations of women to seize the camera and film their own stories.

Multicultural TV

This collection covers programming that emerged from specialist multicultural and Black broadcasting units.

The tradition of social documentaries framed early (often racist) representations of Black people on television. Documentaries on the BBC in the 1950s took their cues from documentarians who focused on social issues within a domestic setting. Early programming on Race in Britain was discursively framed around the concept of cultural difference as a social problem.

A multicultural Britain was forebodingly cast as an oncoming social issue. Only at the behest of campaigning by the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination (established in 1965) did the programming introduced begin to frame Asian and later Black Britons as part of British society and cater directly to their needs. The earliest examples were programmes broadcast by the BBC Apna Hi Ghar Samajhiye (1965) and Nai Zindagi Naya Jeevan (New Life), which helped improve the English skills of recent Asian migrants.



Closer to Home

Film and TV can take us to distant lands - real or imaginary. But they can also bring us stories from our own cities, towns, villages or neighbourhoods.

Here you'll find collections spanning the breadth of Britain's regions and nations, drawn from the digitised holdings of moving image archives across the UK. The collections bring together films, videos and programmes made by, for or about people near you, as well as places, issues and events.

The films in this theme will grow and change as new work is added and surfaced on the platform.

Below are some of the highlights:

Midlands

Here you'll find expertly curated collections of films, television programmes and videos made for and about the East and West Midlands and its people, all put together by Media Archive for Central England (MACE) using digitised materials from its vaults.

MACE is the strategic lead organisation for screen heritage for the East and West Midlands regions. An independent charity based at University of Lincoln, MACE preserves and makes accessible a collection of more than 100,000 historic moving images representative of the diverse cultures and histories of communities throughout the heart of England from the Lincolnshire coast to the Welsh border.



Hare Krishna festival in July 1982 from ITV Central News (Media Archive for Central England)

Wales

Here you'll find expertly curated collections of films, television programmes and videos made for and about Wales and its people, all put together by the National Library of Wales Screen and Sound Archive (NLWSSA) using digitised materials from its vaults.

Established in 2001, the National Library of Wales Screen and Sound Archive holds an unrivalled collection of films, TV and radio broadcasts, video tapes and sound recordings relating to Wales and the Welsh, from 1898 to the present day. The collection spans multiples formats and genres, both professional and amateur.



Gritty Production / National Library of Wales Screen and Sound Archive

South East England

Here you'll find expertly curated collections of films, television programmes and videos made for and about South East England and its people, all put together by Screen Archive South East (SASE) using digitised materials from its vaults.

Screen Archive South East serves the South East of England and is part of the University of Brighton. It collects and preserves screen material that captures varied aspects of life, work and experience from the nineteenth century to the present. The collection is available for research, screenings and creative use.



London's Screen Archives / London Community Video Archive

London

Here you'll find expertly curated collections of films, television programmes and videos made for and about London and its people, all put together by London's Screen Archives (LSA) using digitised materials from its vaults.

London's Screen Archives is a network of over 65 organisations with a collective vision – to preserve and share London's history on film. The network is managed by Film London and we work with our partners to digitise, preserve, and offer access to their moving image collections.

Some ways to use BFI Replay in the library

This guide is intended to provide a simple introduction to using BFI Replay and how to get the best from it in your library.

Use the BFI Replay Activity Packs to support workshops,

- share knowledge and experiences between generations,
- find out more about the place you live or where you were born,
- discover how politics, ideology and the small screen has shaped our lives,
- develop research and digital literacy skills,
- start discussions with local groups on place and community,
- support & start discussions with a book group, e.g. on politics, history, national events or even hobbies,
- inspire memories with a Reading Friends group or create activities around,
- support group activities around dementia and memory boxes.
- aid research for history groups and researchers,
- help school groups explore how we learned,
- assist students with research across all curriculum areas, including literacy and social history,
- complement English language and literacy classes,
- introduce young people to their local archives and how to access them,
- inspire creative responses from students, whether by writing a piece inspired by the titles on BFI Replay or curating their own Collection based on their local area.

The BFI National Archive and Regions and Nations Archive partners will begin to provide regular updates on new content as it is added and produce toolkits to support the use of the platform.

Do contribute any ideas you want to share on how you have been using the platform.

Email: replay@bfi.org.uk

Frequently Asked Questions

What is videotape?

BFI Replay provides access to 1000s of precious videotapes through the meticulous replay and digitisation of collections from across the UK, lovingly collected and cared for by archivists over half a century but now at great threat of technology obsolescence.

Many of the titles have been drawn from within the vaults of the BFI National Archive and partner UK Regions and Nations Film Archives.

Videotapes comprise very special formulations of polyester carrier and magnetic coatings which contain the magnetic patterns that decode into both pictures and sound. The earliest videotape format in wide use was 2 inch Quadraplex, an American invention by Ampex, introduced in 1956.

The BFI Lottery-funded mass national digitisation programme has identified dozens of different videotape format types, which span both professional and amateur use from the early 1960s to around 2010.

Videotapes were recorded using both analogue and digital recording systems, utilising more cumbersome reel to reel video tape recorders (VTRs) in the earlier days before the advent of more commonly encountered videocassette recorders (VCRs) and camcorders.



With advances in technology and the digital file revolution, videotape has moved past its original uses (acquisition recording, editing, and broadcast playback) and is now pretty much the preserve of archives and personal collections.

The death of tape for video recording was predicted as early as 1995, when the Avid nonlinear editing system was demonstrated storing video clips on hard disks. Yet videotape was still used extensively, especially by consumers, up until about 2004, when DVD-based digital camcorders became affordable at consumer level and domestic computers incorporated large enough hard drives to store an acceptable amount of video.

Why does the quality of the sound and image in the video vary?

The history of video tape recording spans some 60 years and its legacy covers a very wide range of technical specifications; everything from the most prestigious broadcast television productions, right through to amateur camcorder footage. With such diversity of technologies, methods of recording sound and uses over many decades, it is to be expected that the quality of video recordings varies enormously and in some cases there may be incomplete sound and inconsistencies which are not normally experienced when viewing professionally made programmes.

Why don't all the videos have subtitles/audio-description?

At present we are not able to provide subtitles or audio description due to the vast amount of titles on the platform. There may, however, be some content provided by archives with closed captions already in place. The BFI Replay service is under continual development and our policy on subtitles, closed captions and speech to text technologies will be reviewed as the service develops.

Why are there no age restrictions on BFI Replay?

BFI Replay features thousands of television programmes, documentaries, government films and videos from the past.

Our editorial policy is not to censor. We have provided the material (and have carefully selected as much as is possible) leaving the viewer to choose what they watch. We believe in the historical/social/contextual value of sharing this content.

Some of the content on BFI Replay may contain language or images that may not be suitable for younger viewers, especially very young children. Libraries, parents and guardians are advised to exercise their discretion.

Why may some material be considered offensive or upsetting?

As content spans several decades, some videos include language and attitudes – including racist, ableist, sexist, homophobic or transphobic attitudes – that may have been common or widely tolerated at the time but are unacceptable today. Other videos may include content that is justifiable in context (for example, images of medical procedures) but may nevertheless be upsetting or triggering for some.

The BFI and the Regions and Nations Film Archive partners take our role as guardians and curators of our screen heritage very seriously,

and have devoted many hundreds of hours to viewing archival material to ensure selection of the most interesting, entertaining and historically valuable content.

We have taken careful steps to exclude wholly unacceptable material from the platform, and to identify and label any sensitive material with appropriate content and/or trigger warnings. However, the BFI and our partners have not been able to view everything and therefore can't guarantee that all such sensitive content may have been identified.

How do I report content?

We take concerns about offensive or upsetting content seriously. We encourage users to report anything they consider inappropriate using the **'Report this Content'** link.

Why are some titles only available in Welsh or another language other than English?

While most of the content on BFI Replay is in the English language, there are some titles from both BFI and regions and nations archives that are not. Unless provided by the original broadcaster, it has not been possible to create subtitles or closed captions for these.

Content provided which are in the Welsh language will generally have the Welsh title as the preferred title displayed next to the video. An English equivalent title may also be present in the underlying data which will enable users to discover content which may also be known by their English title.

Is BFI Replay accessible in university/higher education/specialist libraries?

At present the BFI Replay service is only made available in UK public lending libraries.

Can you use BFI Replay for public screenings in a library?

No. BFI Replay is for an individual users use only. Screening a film to a public audience requires a specific non-theatrical licence from the rights holder, local distributor or the source archive of the film; you can find more general information about the licences you need here [independentcinemaoffice.org.uk/advice-support/what-licences-do-i-need/](https://www.independentcinemaoffice.org.uk/advice-support/what-licences-do-i-need/) Any enquiries about screening a title that is on BFI Replay should be directed to the source archive in the first instance which is credited on the platform.

For more information relating to the above:

Website: <https://www.bfi.org.uk/about-replay>

Email: replay@bfi.org.uk

BFI Replay partners

Replay Libraries Network

UK Public Libraries are our key partners and the reason BFI Replay was developed.

Our 'Replay Libraries Network', a small group of library services, from across the UK have been key in developing and testing the platform.

The platform is a living digital archive that will grow as newly digitised content continues to be added; and as libraries and the public engage and respond to the content on the platform.

UK Regions and Nations Film Archives

The English Regional Film Archives and National Film Archives of Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland are responsible for the care of many of the UK's most significant film and videotape collections alongside the BFI National Archive. These public access film archives hold significant collections of film and video material relevant to their regions; or hold dedicated collections such as in the Imperial War Museums, preserved in specialised storage facilities and made widely available for education, research and public enjoyment.

The UK Regions and Nations Film Archives have worked in close partnership with the BFI National Archive on the development and design of BFI Replay. To ensure that over 100,000 fragile videotapes are digitised and safely preserved for future generations and now, through BFI Replay, making sure as many as possible can be seen and enjoyed by the public.

Both the BFI and our partners take our role as guardians and curators of our screen heritage very seriously, and have devoted hours to viewing archival material to ensure selection of the most interesting, entertaining and historically valuable content.

Thousands of hours of digitised videotape footage have been painstakingly researched, reviewed and described by knowledgeable curators and archivists from across the UK.

Reading Agency

The Reading Agency is a national charity that works every day towards a world where everyone is reading their way to a better life.

About the BFI

The BFI believes society needs stories. Film, television and the moving image bring them to life, helping us to connect and understand each other better. The BFI shares the stories of yesterday, searches for the stories of today, and shapes the stories of tomorrow.

As a cultural charity governed by Royal Charter – and the UK's lead organisation for film, television and the moving image – our mission is to:

- **Support creativity and actively seek out the next generation of UK storytellers**
- **Grow and care for the BFI National Archive, the world's largest film and television collection**
- **Offer the widest range of UK and international moving image culture through our programmes and festivals – delivered online and in venue**
- **Use our knowledge to educate and deepen public appreciation and understanding of screen culture**
- **Work with Government and industry to ensure the continued growth of the UK's screen industries**

By focussing on the diversity of our audiences, expanding our work to embrace television and games, reframing the public's relationship with the BFI's archive collections, investing in the growth of our digital platforms and working with industry to deliver long-term strategies for education and skills, we will transform access to screen culture, learning and jobs.

Why are there only some titles on Replay?

As with many film/television archives, the BFI and the Regions and Nations Archives do not own the intellectual property rights to the majority of its collections. In order to make them available on BFI Replay significant work has been carried out to research titles and collections, identify and locate rights holders and obtain their permissions.

The BFI has identified hundreds of different rights holders from public service broadcasters and production companies, brands, charities, educational institutions and individual filmmakers, negotiating agreements so that the collections can be viewed and enjoyed on BFI Replay.

BFI National Archive

The BFI looks after one of the largest and most important collections of film and television in the world. Its teams of experts ensure that the collection is preserved and developed for future generations and made widely accessible to today's audiences.



A world leader in film preservation and guardian of the UK's film and TV heritage, the BFI is an innovator in presenting its archive to audiences in new and dynamic ways. From cinemas to festivals, outdoor events to video-on-demand services, ensuring access to our shared film heritage is central to the organisation's activities.

bfi.org.uk/bfi-national-archive

BFI Reuben Library

Our library at BFI Southbank, in London, is available to everyone, free of charge. It holds one of the world's largest collections of printed material about film, television and the moving image which the BFI has been collecting since 1934.



The collection is international in scope with emphasis on British screen industries, past and present, and much of the collection is unique to the BFI. You can consult our collection database online at collections-search.bfi.org.uk/web

The library has a year round events programme featuring a range of speakers, talks, and panel discussions, covering all manner of topics from Animation and Documentary to Artists' Moving Image and Film History.

Open Tuesday to Saturday 11:00-19:00 you can find out more on our website:

bfi.org.uk/bfi-reuben-library

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For more information:

Website: <https://www.bfi.org.uk/about-replay>

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THE
READING
AGENCY

