

Working with Historic Film and Images



Presenting Your Research: Interpretation and Exhibitions
UCL Dig Where We Stand Training Event
11 May 2013

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Overview



- Why might you want to work with film and images?
- Accessing film
- Interpreting film and images
- Further resources



Working with Film and Images



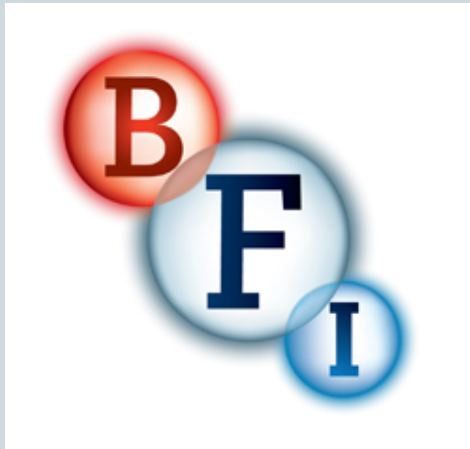
- Why might you want to work with film and images?
 - History of cinema
 - Film as social and cultural history
 - ✦ Documents of important events
 - ✦ Records of daily life



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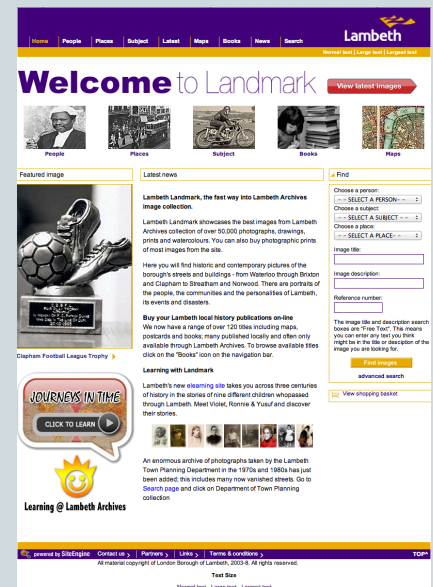
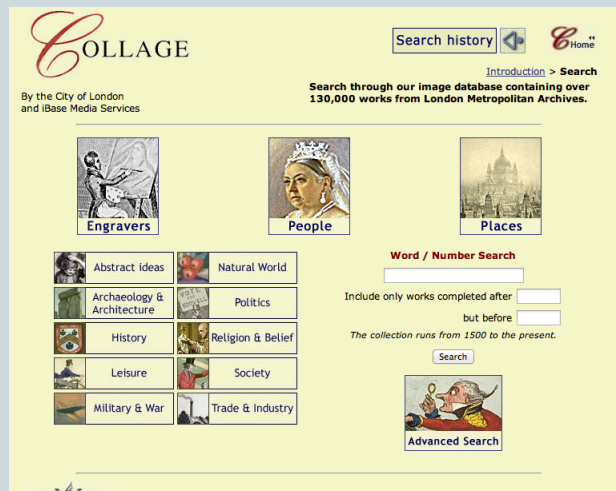
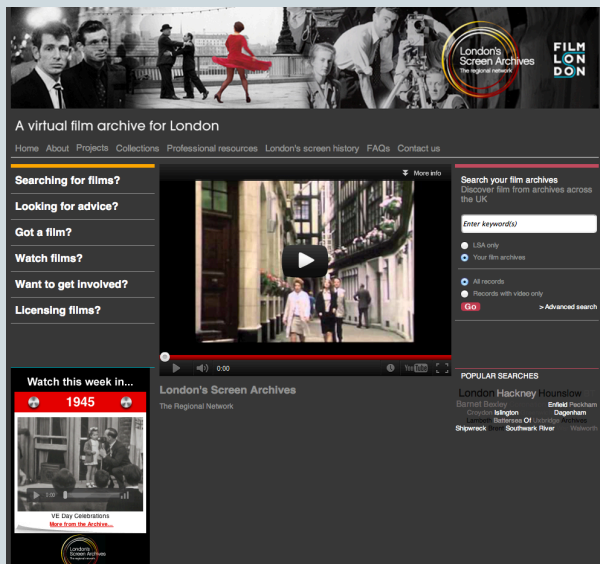


- Accessing film – where to go?
 - Physical archives
 - ✦ National & regional film archives
 - ✦ Local archives
 - ✦ Specialist archives & museums



Working with Film and Images

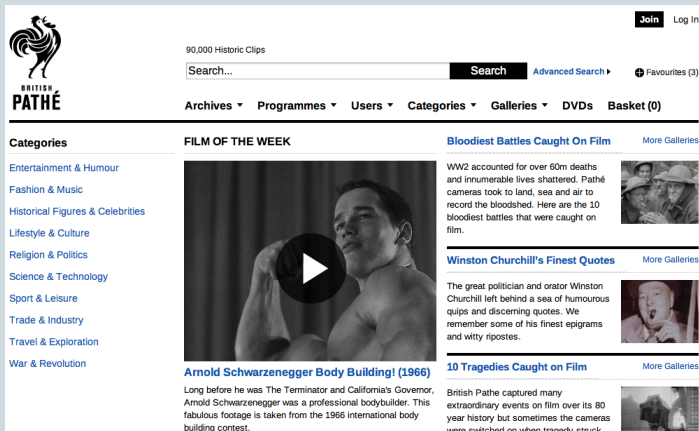
- Accessing film – where to go?
 - Online archives and image collections
 - ✦ BFI YouTube channel, London Screen Archives
 - ✦ Collage database, local archive websites, History Pin



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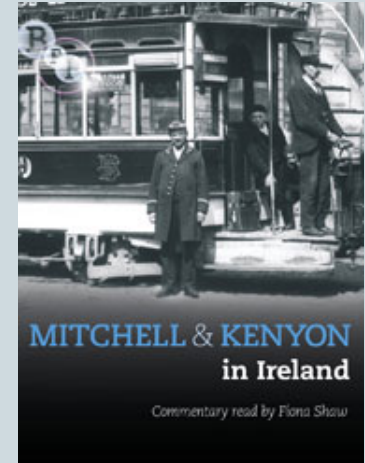
- Accessing film – where to go?
 - Commercial & educational distribution sources
 - ✦ British Pathé, Independent Cinema Office (ICO)
 - DVDs, e.g. BFI archive releases



The screenshot shows the British Pathé website. At the top left is the British Pathé logo, featuring a rooster. Below it, there's a search bar with "90,000 Historic Clips" and a "Search" button. To the right of the search bar are links for "Join", "Log In", and "Favourites (3)". Below the search bar is a navigation menu with "Archives", "Programmes", "Users", "Categories", "Galleries", "DVDs", and "Basket (0)". On the left side, there's a "Categories" list including "Entertainment & Humour", "Fashion & Music", "Historical Figures & Celebrities", "Lifestyle & Culture", "Religion & Politics", "Science & Technology", "Sport & Leisure", "Trade & Industry", "Travel & Exploration", and "War & Revolution". The main content area is titled "FILM OF THE WEEK" and features a large video player showing a man's face. Below the video player is the title "Arnold Schwarzenegger Body Building! (1966)" and a description: "Long before he was The Terminator and California's Governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger was a professional bodybuilder. This fabulous footage is taken from the 1966 international body building contest." To the right of the video player, there are two sections: "Bloodiest Battles Caught On Film" and "Winston Churchill's Finest Quotes".



The screenshot shows the Independent Cinema Office (ICO) website. At the top is the ICO logo. Below it is a navigation menu with "Home", "About", "Film Programming", "Consultancy", "Training", "ICO Films", "Screening Days", "Artists' Moving Image", "Advice & Info", "Jobs", "FAQs", and "Blog". The main content area is titled "Independent Cinema Office" and features a large image of a film still. Below the image is the title "Babelom" and a description: "Paul Bustin's debut feature-length film is a fascinating meditation on the cities of the future." To the right of the image is a section titled "Our main activities are:" with a list of bullet points: "Film booking and programming for cinemas", "Training and events for cinemas, festivals and film society staff", "Distribution of films that would not otherwise find a UK audience", and "Consultancy and providing advice to cinemas, festivals and film societies in the UK". Below this list is a section titled "ICO recommends this month" with three film thumbnails: "Mother", "Borderlines Film", and "Classic Film". At the bottom of the page is a footer with contact information: "Independent Cinema Office, 3rd Floor, Kentworth House, 79-81 Margaret Street, London W1H 5TA, 020 7326 1122 / 020 7326 7121 E: info@independentcinemaoffice.org.uk, Registered in England and Wales, Company 5325162, ICO is a registered charity No. 1100593, Site map | Privacy Policy | Disclaimer, Follow us on Twitter, and logos for MEDIA, EUROPA CINEMAS, and European Fairtrade." data-bbox="437 511 727 863"/>

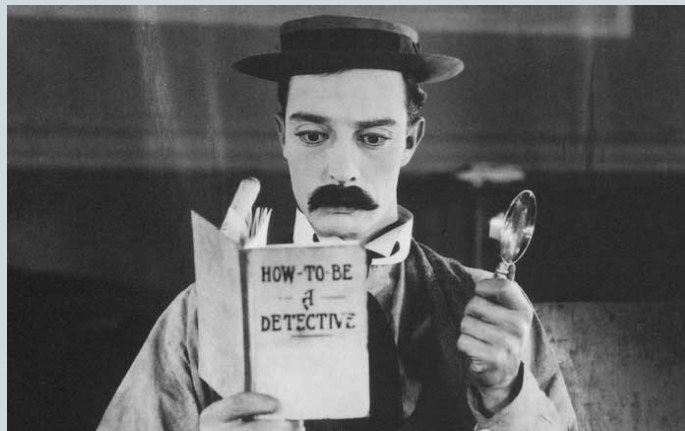


The movie poster for "MITCHELL & KENYON in Ireland" features a black and white photograph of a vintage car with several people standing around it. The title "MITCHELL & KENYON in Ireland" is prominently displayed in a serif font. Below the title, it says "Commentary read by Fiona Shaw".

Interpretation



- Questions to ask of a film and/or image
 - What type of film is it?
 - Who made it, when, and why?
 - What can we tell about how it was shot and edited?
 - Who was it made for?
 - What kind of 'intentional' and 'unintentional' evidence does it provide?



Interpretation



- What type of film is it?
 - Material type: 35mm, 16mm, VHS, digital, etc.
 - Genre: home movie, news film, fiction film, documentary, 'actuality', etc.

Video: Panoramic View of the
Morecambe Sea Front (Mitchell &
Kenyon, 1901)
To watch go to BFI YouTube channel:
<http://youtu.be/KLRQ8ElrEoU>

Interpretation



- Who made it, when, and why?
 - Who?
 - ✦ Amateur or professional
 - ✦ Government or commercial sponsors
 - Why?
 - ✦ To commemorate an event
 - ✦ To report news
 - ✦ For political/propaganda purposes



Interpretation



- What can we tell about how it was shot and edited?
 - Is the camera moving or static?
 - Do the events look ‘staged’?
 - How many shots are there? Are they in a logical order?
 - Are there any added captions or soundtrack?
 - How do they influence the nature of the film?

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Interpretation



- Who was it made for?
 - Personal/family viewing or commercial audience
 - Any evidence for how it might have been understood/enjoyed at the time?
- ✦ Supporting documentation
- ✦ Magazine or newspaper reviews
- ✦ Records of screenings



Try the BFI Reubens Library at the BFI Southbank or your local archive

Interpretation



- What kind of ‘intentional’ and ‘unintentional’ evidence does it provide?
 - Special occasions or daily practices
 - Lost people and places
 - Changing habits and fashions
 - Social attitudes, cultural tastes
 - What people considered educating, entertaining, or worth recording

Further resources



- **Online:**
 - National Archives: Focus on Film
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/focuson/film/>
 - History Matters: Making Sense of Film
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/film/intro.html>
 - Open University: Film as a Historical Source
<http://www.open.edu/openlearn/body-mind/film-historical-source>