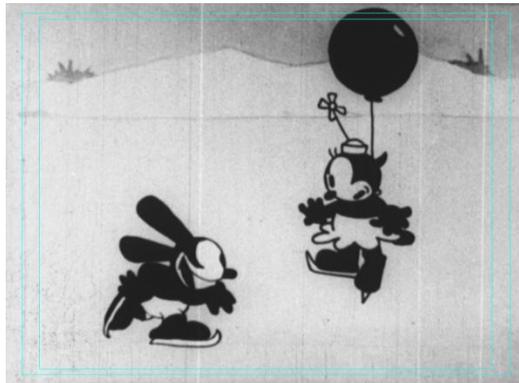


**LOST DISNEY FILM DISCOVERED
IN BFI NATIONAL ARCHIVE:**

OSWALD THE LUCKY RABBIT in *SLEIGH BELLS* (1928)

**WALT DISNEY ANIMATION STUDIOS' RESTORATION IN WORLD PREMIERE
SCREENING EVENT FEATURING A SELECTION OF THE STUDIOS' HOLIDAY
SHORTS INCLUDING THIS YEAR'S ACCLAIMED SHORT, *FROZEN FEVER*, AT BFI
SOUTHBANK**



*A scene from Sleigh Bells (1928): Oswald the Rabbit skates towards his wife, Ortensia the cat.
(c) Walt Disney Animation Studios Ltd.*

London, 3rd November 2015. Embargoed until 6pm. The BFI National Archive and Walt Disney Animation Studios are pleased to announce the rediscovery of a rare, long-lost, Walt Disney animated film *Sleigh Bells* (1928) featuring the first ever Disney character, Oswald the Lucky Rabbit, a long-eared precursor to Mickey Mouse. The world premiere of the new restoration of the film by Walt Disney Animation Studios will take place at BFI Southbank on 12 December 2015 as part of a programme **It's A Disney Christmas: Seasonal Shorts**, screening other festive Disney gems from the 1930's to the present day.

Oswald the Lucky Rabbit was invented by Walt Disney in 1927 and was loved for his mischievous and rebellious personality. A number of other films do survive but *Sleigh Bells* has been, until now, a lost film, unseen since its original release. The animation in the film was accomplished by Walt Disney and Ub Iwerks, both of whom went on to create the character of Mickey Mouse, following a contractual disagreement with Universal, for whom they had created the Oswald films.

The print of *Sleigh Bells* (1928) was preserved in the collections of the BFI National Archive. The exciting re-discovery was made by a researcher browsing the online catalogue of the BFI National Archive's holdings. Walt Disney Animation Studios have taken this unique surviving film print and created both a new preservation print and digital copies. The film has a running time of approximately 6 minutes.

Robin Baker, Head Curator, BFI National Archive said, "What a joyful treat to discover a long-lost Walt Disney film in the BFI National Archive and to be able to show *Sleigh Bells* to a whole new audience 87 years after it was made. The restoration of this film will introduce many audiences to Disney's work in the silent period – it clearly demonstrates the vitality and imagination of his animation at a key point in his early career. We thank Walt Disney for working with us and are thrilled to present the world premiere of this restored version here in London at BFI Southbank."

Andrew Millstein, President of Walt Disney Animation Studios, which oversaw the restoration, added, "We're thrilled to be collaborating with the BFI National Archives in the restoration of the 'lost' Oswald short, '*Sleigh Bells*,' and to be sharing this delightful animated discovery with audiences in the UK as part of this special Disney holiday programme. The Oswald shorts are an important part of our Studios' history, and we have been working with film archives and private collectors all around the world to research the missing titles. We are grateful to Katrina Stokes, Robin Baker, and their associates at the BFI for helping us locate and preserve '*Sleigh Bells*.'"

Notes to Editors: BFI SOUTHBANK LISTING:

IT'S A DISNEY CHRISTMAS: SEASONAL SHORTS - 12th December 2015

TRT 90min. U (suitable for all ages)

There has always been a special connection between Walt Disney and Christmas, so what better way to prepare for the yuletide season than by watching some of the best Disney shorts from the 1930s to the present day?

Our special programme includes the world premiere of the newly restored Oswald the Rabbit film *Sleigh Bells* (1928), missing for decades and recently discovered by the BFI and restored by Walt Disney Animation Studios, alongside gems such as *Mickey's Good Deed* (1932), *Night Before Christmas* (1933), *The Art of Skiing* (1941), *Pluto's Christmas Tree* (1952), *Mickey's Christmas Carol* (1983), *Prep and Landing: Operation Secret Santa* (2010) and *FrozenFever* (2015).

TICKETS FROM WWW.BFI.ORG.UK/SOUTHBANK

Under 16s £4, adults £11.75,
concs £9.20. Combo ticket offer:

1 adult + 1 child £10

(Members pay £1.50 less)

CLIP: A clip from *Sleigh Bells* can be ordered via Panther Online after 10.30pm this evening:-

<http://panther4.dmsukltd.com>

Login: guest.pol@dmsukltd.com

Password: Letmein1

If you have any problems ordering the clip, please email panther4@dmsukltd.com or call 0845 055 9021 and a member of the team will be happy to help.

STILLS:

**A selection of images for journalistic use can be found at www.image.net under
BFI UK Publicity > BFI > BFI National Archive >Sleigh Bells**

About the BFI

The BFI is the lead organisation for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK - investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

The BFI is a Government arm's-length body and distributor of Lottery funds for film. The BFI serves a public role which covers the cultural, creative and economic aspects of film in the UK. It delivers this role:

- As the UK-wide organisation for film, a charity core funded by Government
- By providing Lottery and Government funds for film across the UK
- By working with partners to advance the position of film in the UK.

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter. The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Greg Dyke.

About the BFI National Archive

The BFI National Archive was founded in 1935 and has grown to become the one of the largest and most important collections of film and television in the world with over 180,000 films and 750,000 television programmes. For over 80 years the BFI has been an international leader in film preservation and guardian of Britain's unparalleled film and TV heritage. The BFI is an innovator in presenting films to audiences in new and dynamic ways, from cinemas to film festivals, outdoor events to online video-on-demand. At the heart of all its activities is the BFI's central aim to ensure that everyone in the UK has access to the widest possible range of film and their own film heritage.

That heritage includes all time great British directors Alfred Hitchcock, David Lean and Powell and Pressburger; and the rich vein of documentary filmmaking, in which Britain led the world, including the lyrical work of Humphrey Jennings. The archive also boasts a significant collection of filmmakers' papers as well as extensive stills, posters and production and costume designs along with original scripts, press books and related ephemera.

Expert teams undertake the time-consuming and complex task of restoring films at the BFI John Paul Getty Jr Conservation Centre in Hertfordshire. The BFI's most precious film materials are kept in optimum conditions in the world-leading Master Film Store in Warwickshire.

Press contact:

**Brian Robinson, Communications Manager, Archive & Heritage, BFI,
Tel +44 (0) 207 957 8940**