FOCAL INTERNATIONAL AWARDS IN ASSOCIATION WITH AP ARCHIVE

And the winner is...

Leading lights of the archive industry came together in London last week for the eighth Focal International Awards, celebrating the best work from 20 countries. By Adrian Pennington

Focal International received 233 submissions from 20 countries for the eighth year of its awards, which promote and reward the best use of library archive and stock footage.

Three jurors, each specialising in a particular genre, whittled submissions down to three per category, with final nominations put to the vote among Focal members.

"Finding a piece of archive is hard enough but, once you track it down, you then have the minefield of clearing rights, not just to use the overall footage, but obtaining licences from third parties including audio or image rights associated within it," explains juror Kate Griffiths.

One criteria that counts against shortlisting is the radio test, explains juror Jerry Kuehl. "If you turn the TV set to the wall, so all you can hear is the soundtrack, and the programme still makes perfect sense, what you have is a radio programme, not a TV programme. In addition, the programme should have a coherent structure and not just be one clip after another. Finally, the novelty of the archive material is something that should be rewarded."

Griffiths says budgets are also considered. "Researchers making ingenious use of the archive they can afford on a small production budget are noted. Working within limited budgets is often the hardest part of the job."

Best Use of Footage in an Arts Production

WINNER Cinema Komunisto, Dribbling Pictures

Sources Filmske Novosti – Yugoslav Newsreels; Jugoslovenska Kinoteka – Yugoslav Cinematheque; Radio Television Serbia; Ina; British Pathé

Serbian director Mila Turajlic’s documentary uses rare clips sourced from more than 300 films from Avala Film Studios, to reveal how President Josip Tito helped form the federal state of Yugoslavia.

Turajlic, who was her own chief researcher, found a star interviewee in Tito’s personal projectionist, who showed the dictator a film every night for 30 years. Archive from Yugoslav Newsreels was digitally scanned and restored for the first time, providing a precious look into a country that no longer exists.

"Meticulously created over four years by a filmmaker with a huge amount of patience," judged juror Ann Williams. "Turajlik has traced and scoured mountains of mostly forgotten feature film, as well as rarely seen archive from film sets and Tito’s private screenings, to recreate the history of Yugoslavia."

"It must have been very difficult to find prints and get permission to use them, especially when the people and archives she was tracking now reside in the different countries that once made up Yugoslavia," adds fellow juror Mark Tinkler. "The result is eye-opening, considering that these films were rotting away in vaults."

Nominees A Thousand Encores: The Ballets Russes In Australia, Flaming Star Films; A Boattload Of Wild Irishmen, LMDG/Brightspark Studios/University of Lincoln

The Jane Mercer Footage Researcher of the Year Award

WINNER Phil Clark, assistant producer, BBC

Phil Clark beat off strong competition for his sterling and patient work on BBC documentaries The Great British Outdoors, Blackpool On Film and Paws, Claws And Videotape.

Caroline Wright, executive editor, BBC Entertainment, commends Clark’s forensic attention to detail, which comes with an imaginative, creative flair. "He can turn his hand to any subject and the end result is always surprising, meticulous and with a sly sense of fun," she says. "His other essential skill is in negotiating the complex world of contracts and clearances."

Juror Christine Whitaker adds: "The key to a good researcher is the ability to find new material that takes the programme on further than the producer ever imagined."

Clark’s own criteria includes having a good general knowledge of, and personal contacts with, the major libraries, as well as ideas about where to look for less obvious sources – such as regional libraries and film transfers from programmes that have never been repeated.

"Trying to find fresh material, even of overly familiar subject matter, and not settling for the obvious shots that are often recycled is important," he says. "As is awareness of the cost and clearance implications, and not offering material to the edit that is unaffordable or unclearable."

Nominees Elizabeth Klinck (Reel Injun); Jacqui Edwards (9/11: State Of Emergency); Paul Bell (Senna)
I wanted to break all the preconceptions of an antiques show. No teapots, brown furniture or mum’s old crockery. Claudia Lewis, Behind The Scenes, page 30

**Best Use of Footage in an Entertainment or Drama Production**

**WINNER** The Great British Outdoors, BBC Entertainment

**Sources** BFI National Archive, British Movietone News, British Pathé, Huntley Film Archive, Manx National Archives

Billed as ‘mud, midges, barbed wire – why do Brits love the great outdoors?’, BBC4’s nostalgic look at the whacky side of outdoor life featured wall-to-wall archive from a number of disparate sources.

“Building archive shows like these require a constant back and forth between the researchers, who are looking for quirky and rarely seen clips, and the guide commentary that writers then pen a script to,” explains producer/director Elaine Shepherd. “If the writers come up with something funny then we may want to find a clip to illustrate that; conversely, if our researcher digs up unusual material, we need to alter the script to fit. By using the quirky parts of Pathé or Movietone reels, these shows are an archive view of the world, rather than a purely factual take on the past.”

**Nominees** Alan Davies: Teenage Revolution, Oxford Film & TV; Wallace And Gromit’s World Of Invention, BBC

---

**Best Use of Sports Footage**

**WINNER** One Night In Turin, New Black Films

**Sources** Fifa, ITN Source, BBC Sport, BBC Motion Gallery, BSkyB

A feature-length doc telling the inside story of England’s Italia 90 World Cup campaign, famous for Gazza’s tears.

Around 70% of the picture is from private or commercial archives and 30% was specially shot re-creation. Producer Victoria Gregory and director James Erskine used only contemporary material, “to maintain the narrative and the audience’s feeling of watching it in the moment,” explains Gregory. “Because the characters are real people, it was essential to the emotional impact of the film that real footage was used.”

According to juror Stephen Khan: “It took a different perspective on a story that we all probably lived through, with an approach to narrative that prevented it from becoming hackneyed.”

“Sports archives are seen as either very specialised or overly complicated in terms of rights, and we are keen to prove that, with a little bit of concentration, this need not be the case.”

**Nominees** Alex Higgins: The People’s Champion, BBC Sport; Shoulder To Shoulder (Gualainn Le Gualainn), Fastnet Films

---

**Best Use of Wildlife and Natural History Footage**

**WINNER** A Place Without People, Anemon Productions

**Sources** Kintner Collection; University of Pennsylvania; Bild Archiv Okapia/Christian Grzimek; Library of Congress; Nara

Greek producer Anemon conceived this film about how the local population of Tanzania had been evicted to make way for the creation of world-famous nature reserves – Serengeti and the Ngorongoro crater.

The jury says the team “unearthed a lot of extremely rare footage and, while not a perfect film, it made for uncomfortable viewing.”

---

**Best Archive Restoration or Preservation Title**

**WINNER** The Great White Silence, BFI, Deluxe Digital

A record of Captain Scott’s doomed 1910 expedition to the South Pole was made by expedition photographer Herbert Ponting, who re-edited his footage into a remarkable feature in 1924. The final film was tinted to express lighting effects but has lain dormant since the 1940s. The restored version will have a theatrical run beginning 20 May and Blu-ray release in June (UK) complete with a new score.

“The BFI National Archive [custodian of the expedition negatives] has returned to the original negatives and early nitrate prints and, using that information, almost like archaeologists, restored the film’s beauty,” says Leming. “They used photochemical processes and digital techniques to restore the sophisticated tints and tones, and to achieve a consistency of image throughout.”

According to BFI film conservation manager Kieron Webb, they first had to identify the original negative pieces and physically repair them.
them before scanning to create a 2K digital master at Deluxe Digital London. The conform of the scans and colour correction was performed in Baselight.

“The film’s 250 intertitles had to be digitally recreated since where they existed in film rolls, the frames were not long enough to be readable,” says Webb. “No colour print had survived but we were able to recreate the tints and tones faithfully thanks to the written colour instructions printed between certain shots.”

Nominees Bridge On The River Kwai, Sony Pictures Entertainment; Metropolis 27/10, Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung/Alpha-Omega Digital

Best Use of Footage in Factual Productions
From 70 applicants, the jury whittled the list down but couldn’t split the remaining nine any further, so Focal gave three awards in this category, each of equal standing.

Winner Dissidents, Zadig Productions
Ruth Zyliberman’s film retraces the careers of Polish, Hungarian and Czech dissidents who defied the communist regimes and whose efforts finally led to liberty.

“Each country under the former Soviet Union was unique in its approach to documentation, presenting unique challenges of archive access,” says juror Ann Williams. “There has clearly been very patient research and an equally fine job in explaining how these citizens lived their secret lives in the face of tightly controlled government structures.”

Focal International Awards
WINNER First Passion (Première Passion)
Vivement Lundi!

Shot in Palestine in 1912 by Sidney Olcott, From The Manager To The Cross was the first feature film taken from the Gospels. First Passion unearths this film and, through an investigation that visits Jerusalem, London, Nantes and New York, brings to life the era in which it was made. The second French winner of the factual category sourced a quarter of its archive footage from Lobster Films.

“The main challenge was finding archive material about the shoot itself,” explains director Philippe Baron. “I found only a dozen stills, mainly in a private archive in California, and two books related to the shoot: the memoirs of the lead actor and the testimony of the scriptwriter. With those few elements I did an archeologist’s work, trying to understand and rebuild the true adventure of Olcott’s film.”

Focal International Awards
Best Use of Footage in a Factual Production
Dissidents Zadig Productions
First Passion (Première Passion) Vivement Lundi!, Lobster Films, Blink Productions
Reel Injun Resolution Pictures, International

Best Use of Footage in an Entertainment or Drama Production
The Great British Outdoors BBC Entertainment

Best Use of Footage in an Arts Production
Cinema Komunisto Dribbling Pictures

Best Use of Footage in an Arts Production Featuring Music
Arena: Johnny Mercer – The Dream’s on Me BBC Arena, Rhapsody Productions

Best Use of Wildlife and Natural History Footage
A Place Without People Anemom Productions

Best Use of Sports Footage
One Night in Turin New Black Films

Best Use of Footage in a Short Production
Dust Stylus Films

Best Use of Footage on Non-Television Platforms
Europa Film Treasures Lobster Films

Best Use of Footage in a Home Entertainment Release
Firebird And Other Legends / A Thousand Encores: The Ballets Russes in Australia Flaming Star Films, ABC TV, ABC Commercial, Screen Australia, Film Victoria

Best Use of Footage in a Cinema Release
The Great White Silence (1924) Commissioned by the BFI, Restoration by Deluxe Digital

Winner Reel Injun, Resolution Pictures International

Best Archive Restoration or Preservation Project
The Chaplin Keystone Project Commissioned by Lobster Films under the aegis of the Chaplin Estate/Association Chaplin, Restoration by BFI, Cineteca di Bologna, Lobster Films

Best Archive Restoration or Preservation Title
The Great White Silence (1924) Commissioned by the BFI, Restoration by Deluxe Digital

The Jane Mercer Footage Researcher of the Year Award
Phil Clark The Great British Outdoors; Blackpool On Film; Paws, Claws and Videotape

Footage Library Employee of the Year
Jenny Coan Clips & Footage

Footage Library of the Year
Clips & Footage

Lifetime Achievement Award
John Herron