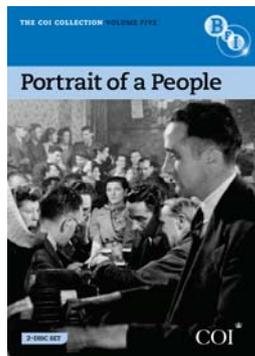


DVD press release



The COI Collection: Volume Five Portrait of a People

The latest instalment in the BFI's dedicated DVD series celebrating the films made by the Central Office of Information proudly looks at Britain and its people, and examines what it means to be British. The release coincides with the recent announcement that the COI will close its doors next year.

Promoting an idealised notion of Britain has often been at the forefront of COI film production. From encouraging immigration to re-defining the nation, the titles on *Portrait of a People* are by turns affectionate, humorous, informative and stirring. Together, they paint a fascinating and revealing portrait of the inhabitants of the country spanning nearly 25 years.

Among the highlights on this volume are: *Come Saturday* (1949), a lovingly shot picture of the English at play; *Oxford* (1958), a look at the traditions of Oxford University; *Dateline Britain: Look at London* (1958), in which actor and broadcaster Bernard Braden takes us on a tour of London; *The Poet's Eye* (1964), how Britain and its people inspired Shakespeare; and *Opus* (1967), a provocative look at what's new and shocking in contemporary British art, fashion and design from Don Levy (*Herostratus*). [See page 2 for complete film listing.](#)

As well as being distributed overseas, some of the films on these discs were also intended for the home audience. Circulated via the COI's Central Film Library (CFL), they were loaned out for screenings in Britain's village halls, at Women's Institute meetings, at Young Farmers' clubs, in schools and colleges, at film clubs, in the work place, in cinemas and more latterly on television. The COI also employed mobile film units (in the shape of vans) to bring its offerings to far flung places throughout the land. In this way, the image of a prosperous, creative and above all enduring nation was touted, courtesy of the COI, to its own population.

Special features

- *Shown By Request* (1947, 18 mins); the work of the COI's Central Film Library (CFL) is explored in this 1940s documentary
- Illustrated 26-page booklet containing film notes and essays

Interview opportunities

BFI experts can talk or write about these films. The COI can be contacted directly.

About the COI

Established in 1946, the COI was a successor to the wartime Ministry of Information and was responsible for producing thousands of films that celebrated Britain, its people and their achievements. The COI film collection is preserved by the BFI National Archive in collaboration with COI and The National Archives (TNA).

Release date: 18 July 2011

RRP: £19.99 / cat. no. BFIVD921 / E

UK / 1947 - 1970 / b&w, and colour / English, optional hard-of-hearing subtitles / 291 mins / DVD-9 x 2 / original aspect ratio 1.33:1 / Dolby Digital mono audio (320 kbps)
BFI DVDs are available from all good DVD retailers; by mail order from the BFI Filmstore
Tel: 020 7815 1350 or online at www.bfi.org.uk/filmstore

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Tel: (020) 7957 4759 or e-mail jill.reading@bfi.org.uk

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Disc One

Come Saturday (1949)
Local Newspaper (1952)
An English Village (1956)
Oxford (1958)
Dateline Britain: Look at London (1958)
Looking at Britain: National Parks (1961)
Special feature: Shown by Request (1947)

Disc Two

Moslems in Britain – Cardiff (1961)
Looking at Britain: Industrial Town (1962)
John Turner MP (1962)
The Poet's Eye (1964)
Speaking of Britain (1967)
Opus (1967)
Portrait of a People – Impressions of Britain (1970)

About the BFI

The BFI is the lead body 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
- Investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

1 July 2011