

1914-18 The Great War and the Shaping of the 20th Century

DD Home Entertainment DVD, 5 hours 40 minutes, £14.99 from 0870 060 0286 or www.ddhe.co.uk

The Great War has been chronicled many times – with focuses varying from the narrow to the all-encompassing. This is one of the more comprehensive offerings, approaching the material from a political and military standpoint. It points out that the war marked several world firsts – the first use of chemical weapons; first mass bombardment of civilians, the century's first attempted



British trenches on the Western Front – soldiers wait to go 'over the top'

genocide (of the Armenians), which inspired a certain Corporal Hitler to implement his 'final solution'.

The footage illustrating the effects of the war on ordinary people hardly needs any commentary. What comes across is that every nation participating thought that it was doing the right thing, influencing popular attitudes and explaining why our grandparents sang and were cheered as they went to war.

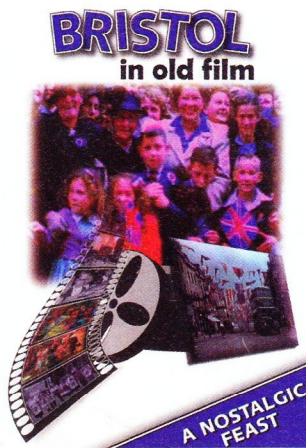
Bristol in Old Film

Video by Design DVD, 142 minutes, £12.99 from 01978 366 060 or www.videobydesign.co.uk

This film is presented in three distinct parts. It first looks at Bristol between the wars, giving fascinating glimpses of the city

during that decade of peace. It then looks at life in and around the city during the Second World War. Finally it looks at post-war Bristol, captured by the film-makers during the 1950s and 1960s. Each section features archive film, now preserved at the Bristol Record Office.

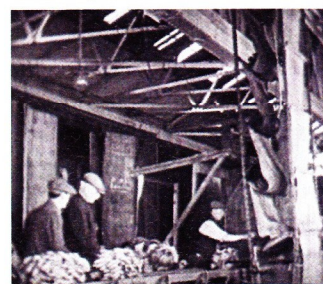
The programmes cover a lot of history – predominantly telling the story of the port of Bristol's 1930s heyday – it was the biggest municipal-owned port in the country, despite the city docks' inaccessibility via eight miles of silt-laden river – and the local industries that preserved the city's prosperity when the port faltered.



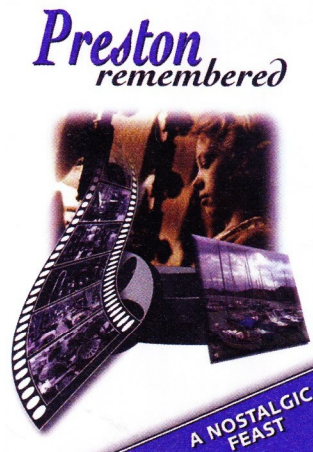
It also looks at: the pageantry that expressed civic pride; organised leisure; George VI's coronation; war preparations and the Blitz; the American connection; new flats and the ring-road – but no mention of sherry! Also featured is an ahead-of-its-time municipal nursery in the 1930s, where self-reliant pre-school children served their own lunch – rather progressive for its day!

There are plenty of faces on display and lots of references to local streets and buildings that will help you get your bearings during the many scenes of slum

Unloading bananas at Bristol Docks



clearance and redevelopment. Many of the themes shown here are true of many places in the 20th century. It might easily be about anywhere in Britain, making this a valuable source for understanding how your parents and grandparents lived wherever they made their home.



Preston remembered

Video by Design DVD, 62 minutes, £12.99 from 01978 366 060 or www.videobydesign.co.uk

Written by local historian Dr David Hunt and incorporating interviews with local characters, this video looks at Preston's recent past to examine what effect the last 100 years has had on its citizens. Topics include Preston Dock; King Cotton; the First World War; suburbia between the wars; entertainments and sport; the Second World War; and Preston's redevelopment.

Preston was originally 'Priest's Town', "full of attorneys, notaries and proctors". Notable local achievements include Arkwright's water frame and the development of the cotton industry, with Horrockses producing up to 600 miles of fabric a week.

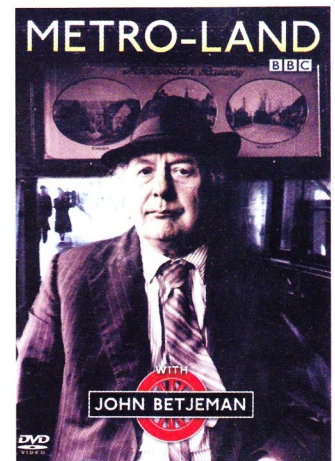
Cotton manufacture was superseded by import and export, the Albert Edward Dock being at one time the largest single dock basin in the world – despite being 16 miles from the sea. Local engineering gave the world the Dick Kerr (or 'Preston') tram, also the English Electric Company; and the Lancashire Steam Wagon Company, later to metamorphose into Leyland Motors, the largest all-British car and bus manufacturer.

There are lots of pictures of faces at work and at leisure, including seaside outings and ballroom dancing.

Metro-Land

DD Home Entertainment DVD, 49 minutes, £10.99 from 0870 060 0286 or www.ddhe.co.uk

'Metro-Land' was the name given by the Metropolitan Railway to the development of its trackside area as it cut through north west London into Middlesex, Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire. The railway – the first to use steam trains underground – set up a separate company to develop housing and shops near the stations along the Metropolitan's line, to the mutual advantage of trains and residents.



This film, made in 1973 by John Betjeman, celebrates these communities and their distinctive architecture. In his inimitable style, he uses modern and archive footage to contrast the old and new ways of life, providing useful atmosphere for family and local historians alike. Being Betjeman, local buildings abound, from Victorian to 'Moderne'.

Starting from Baker Street, the electric train takes in the leafy and newly-colonised counties, stopping at Neasden, Wembley, Pinner, Moor Park and Quanton Road among other places. At each stop, the architecture and residential life is duly recorded.

You also get extra footage showing the 1946 crash at Northwood, the Metropolitan Line Centenary Parade at Neasden in 1963, and various steam train events. There's also a 24-page illustrated booklet.