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Programme Information

What’s Next

Natasha Sayee, Newton Emerson (above) and David Booth return to BBC Radio Ulster on Sunday, April 29 at 1.30pm with a new series of the weekly magazine programme What’s Next, which explores the science of our rapidly changing world. The series will feature interviews with local innovators and global thinkers. Repeated on Thursday nights at 7.30pm. bbc.co.uk/radioulster

New this week

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In partnership, the BBC, JISC and the British Universities Film and Video Council (BUFVC), today (Thursday, April 19) announce the launch of Chronicle, a project to make BBC Northern Ireland’s television news from the 1960s and 1970s available to the academic community online.

The audio-visual archives of the BBC contain a wealth of material gathered since it was founded in the 1920s but it remains largely inaccessible, held on film or videotape and managed to serve the needs of programme-makers within the BBC.

Chronicle, makes part of that archive available to UK higher and further education by digitising news and current affairs programmes from BBC Northern Ireland’s vaults. This gives teachers, students and researchers the chance to explore and immerse themselves in the events over an important period (1963-1976) of Northern Ireland’s history, delivering a rich and contextual experience from a political, historical and cultural perspective.

After several years of informal collaboration between the BBC and JISC, today also marks the start of a new partnership as the two organisations sign a Memorandum of Understanding, to support the promotion of their common purposes, especially with regard to education, learning and culture. Signed by Caroline Thomson, BBC Chief Operating Officer, and Executive Secre-
tary, Professor Martyn Harrow at the New Broadcasting House and managed by a joint steering committee, the MOU will enable the two organisations to develop their joint interest in encouraging the creation and use of a wide range of audio visual and cultural assets to support education, research and public use.

Chronicle will provide Authenticated Users with access to digitised copies of news and current affairs material covering Northern Ireland and ‘The Troubles’, along with web-based tools allowing it to be searched, viewed and annotated.

Other advantages of this project are considerable, not least as there exists very little audiovisual content, covering Northern Ireland historically, politically or culturally during the sixties and seventies in any depth, even though a number of organisations and academics have indicated a ‘significant need’ for such materials. Additionally, there was a strong archival need to digitise the material from the period: between 1963 and 1981 news material was recorded on 16mm film and a significant proportion of this footage is now in need of preservation while coverage from 1981 onward was recorded on Beta or Digibeta tape and at much less risk of deterioration.

The project has also been shaped by an Academic Steering Group made up of scholars from participating institutions (University of Westminster, Queen’s University Belfast, the University of Ulster, St Mary’s University College and Royal Holloway University of London) who are reviewing the academic value of the project as it runs.

Martin Doherty, Department of Social and Historical Studies, University of Westminster says: “The value of the BBC Northern Ireland News footage cannot be overstated. Access to this corpus of materials means that at the same time as fostering understanding and appreciation of ‘The Troubles’ within education, the academy is also given the opportunity to build on this through new avenues of research using innovative techniques.”

Caroline Thomson, Chief Operating Officer, BBC says: “The BBC is committed to making the best possible use of its enormous archive, and this project is an important step forward in finding ways to use archive material to serve both the academic community and the BBC’s broader public purposes. We are very excited to be able to share this significant collection, not only because of the light it will shed on recent history but because we will be able to apply the expertise gained to other archive-related activities across the BBC.”

Martyn Harrow, Executive Secretary, JISC says: “Partnerships like this one with the BBC are extremely important to us. We are able to share our respective knowledge, skills and resources for the ‘common good’ of British creativity, ingenuity and economic growth. Working together shows how archive content can be ‘opened up’ for the benefit of higher and further education which in the case of this project means it provides the opportunity for rich content to be embedded into teaching, learning and research.”

Luís Carrasqueiro, Chief Executive British Universities Film & Video Council (BUFVC) says: “I am delighted that this unique collection – which has not been seen since broadcast – will be available for learning and research. Television news is arguably the most dominant medium informing and reflecting public opinion. This news cover-

age is essential in understanding the history of Northern Ireland: including the Troubles but also fashion, architecture, journalism, religion, sports, and daily life. The BUFVC has worked for more than 60 years in placing the moving image alongside text as a scholarly asset, this new resource is yet another step in that direction.”

Notes to editors:

BBC:

The BBC Archive is one of the largest multimedia archives in the world, held in 27 locations across the UK. As well as close to a million hours of TV and radio programmes it also holds six million still photographs, over four million items of sheet music and over half-a-million documents and records.

It is recognised that some of the materials within Chronicle may be considered historically and politically sensitive and the collection has been made available according to BBC editorial guidelines.

For information on the archive please contact Georgia Phillips Partnerships Delivery Manager BBC on tel: 0208 576 9890.

JISC:

JISC is the UK technology consortium for education and research providing leadership, advice and guidance. For more information visit www.jisc.ac.uk and view more resources put online by JISC at http://www.jisc-content.ac.uk/explore-themes. For media enquiries please contact press@jisc.ac.uk
BBC Northern Ireland’s ‘Hume’ documentary wins New York Festivals Award

The one-hour biographical documentary, made by independent production company Below The Radar, was shown on BBC One Northern Ireland in September last year. The programme won the Gold World Medal in the Biography/Profiles category.

BBC Northern Ireland’s ‘Hume’ documentary won a prestigious award at the 2012 New York Festivals International Television & Film Awards held in Las Vegas on Tuesday night (April 17).

The programme profiled John Hume, who retired in 2004, and gave local audiences a multi-dimensional view of the subject, making use of interviews with a range of contributors including former Taoisigh, senior Irish diplomats, John Major and Tony Blair, Bono, George Mitchell and former Irish President, Mary McAleese.

Below the Radar’s hour-long documentary traced the life of this internationally-renowned political figure from the poverty of his early days to the signing of the historic Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.

Peter Johnston, Director BBC Northern Ireland said:

“It’s always a great acknowledgement and recognition of the high standards we set ourselves when we win awards – especially at an international level such as this considering the calibre of nominees. Congratulations must go to Below The Radar who made the documentary – and of course appreciation and thanks to John Hume and his wife Pat for allowing us such fantastic access.

“We always aim to provide our audiences with a range of content that reflects and represents all aspects of life in Northern Ireland and this award is also a reflection of the professionalism and dedication of all our programme makers.”