

COVENTRY CATHEDRAL: EXPLORING REFLEXIVITY IN A COLLAGE FILM

John Wyver 
University of Westminster
j.wyver@westminster.ac.uk

Abstract: Employing an extensive and diverse range of archival material, *Coventry Cathedral: Building for a New Britain* chronicles the planning and construction in the 1950s and early 1960s of a modernist replacement for the medieval cathedral almost entirely destroyed in 1940. Drawing on a breadth of archival elements from a wide range of sources, the production team sought to develop a reflexive screen language that acknowledged the materialities of these elements, highlighted the production processes that created them, and located them in a screen language of spatial montage and distinctive graphics. Centred on a close reading of the opening sequence, the article explores the ways in which the film worked to develop William Wees' conception of collage 'to invest found footage with new meanings'. Those meanings in this case included the idea of the construction of the film as an allegory of the construction of the cathedral and the reconstruction of post-war Britain.

Keywords: archive, BBC, compilation film, collage film, appropriation film, Coventry Cathedral, documentary, post-war Britain

Coventry Cathedral: Building for a New Britain is a 74-minute film documentary written and directed by the author and produced with a close team of colleagues. It was commissioned and funded by BBC Arts to mark Coventry's year as the United Kingdom's '**Capital of Culture**' in 2021. The film chronicles the planning and construction in the 1950s and early 1960s of a modernist replacement for the medieval cathedral almost entirely destroyed during a German bombing raid in 1940. Designed by Basil Spence and consecrated in 1962, the **new building** was the focus of intense public interest and came to be seen as a key symbol of national reconstruction after the Second World War.

A rich variety of archive film and television was available for the production of the film, which draws together this material, along with original footage of the cathedral today and audio-only interviews, in a frame of elaborate graphics. That the archive is so diverse, having been shot on 8mm, 16mm and 35mm film, in monochrome and colour, as well as recorded on early black-and-white videotape, is a consequence of the cathedral's construction during a period when the production of cinema news magazines and sponsored documentaries for non-theatrical distribution continued alongside, from the 1950s onwards, the rapid development of factual programming and outside broadcasts (OBs) for television.

The story of the cathedral featured frequently in editions of newsreels and local news footage, television documentaries and OBs, as well as in a corporate film made by the builders, material commissioned by the cathedral, and amateur footage. The breadth of the available archive, including other broadcast documentaries about Coventry

more generally, also allows the construction story to be set against the social and cultural history of the city and, more generally, of post-war Britain.

The histories of the cathedral and of modern Coventry were intimately entwined with the history of the post-war media world. Our intention in the film was to foreground the construction story through film and television, while stressing that the moving image traces did not offer transparent access to the past. In this, the film does not operate according to standard practice for the majority of archive-based films produced for television. This article first outlines the principles that came to underpin the documentary, before offering a close reading of the opening sequence and, more briefly, of other sequences, so as to illuminate these imperatives.

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Coventry Cathedral is a contribution to the extended tradition and extensive canon of what critics have variously called 'compilation films', 'appropriation films' and 'collage films'. In his foundational text *Recycled Images*, first published in 1993, William Wees recognised that collage and appropriation had elements in common, but he proposed a crucial distinction between them. He wrote that they 'part company over the way they respond to media-as-reality. Collage is critical, appropriation is accommodating. Collage probes, highlights, contrasts; appropriation accepts, levels, homogenizes'.¹ Moreover, as Wees further detailed, 'Montage/collage seems to me the most effective means of exposing the social and political implications of found footage'.²

Coventry Cathedral amplifies these ideas, drawing attention to and questioning the specificities of the archival elements with a distinctive reflexive approach. Throughout, the film highlights the historicities, materialities and particularities of each archival image and sound element and foregrounds the production processes of their creation. One example of this is that, while they would most likely be omitted from a more conventional film, here glitches, imperfections and evidence of damage are retained, both from the moments of the archival elements' making and from their histories since.

Many of the archival elements are also played at length, in their original form, and so given more time than is usual in a television documentary to register their individual presence, and not be simply subsumed as illustrative material for meanings imposed by new narration. The archival fragments are treated as integral and core elements, carrying their own potentially ambiguous or disruptive meanings.

The production team understood these processes of re-presenting the archival elements as treating them with what was spoken of as 'respect'. In doing so, the intention was to focus and strengthen what Jaimie Baron in *The Archive Effect* identified as 'temporal disparity' in a collage or in what they prefer to call an appropriation film. Temporal disparity, Baron wrote, is 'the perception by the viewer of an appropriation film of a "then" and a "now" generated within a single text'.³

In addition, for Baron, 'the documents recontextualised in appropriation films seem in excess of the appropriation filmmaker's intentions... they carry traces of another intention with them and seem to resist, at least to some degree, the intentions that the appropriation filmmaker – by argument or design – imposes upon them'.⁴ The production team's hope was that treating the archival elements with recognised respect would, in part, enhance their resistance to the film's dominant narrative, and in so doing enrich the viewing experience.

Employing custom graphics in an original way, the documentary also operates with a screen language that makes extensive use of spatial montage, with multiple components marshalled in split-screen presentations. In doing so, *Coventry Cathedral* breaks fundamentally with what Anne Friedberg identified as 'the cinematic century's... dominant form for the moving image [which] was, with striking consistency, a single image in a single frame'.⁵ Film, Friedberg argued, extended the deep-seated understanding in western systems of representation of the frame as a window into a world beyond. She traced this metaphor back to the 1435 treatise on painting and perspective by Leon Battista

Alberti who ‘famously instructed the painter to “regard” the rectangular frame of the painting as an open window’. This transparent window has been the implicit metaphor for almost all moving images ever since.⁶

In contrast, spatial montage employs multiple images, which may be of different sizes and proportions, juxtaposed on a screen at the same time. ‘This juxtaposition by itself’, theorist Lev Manovich noted, ‘of course does not result in montage; it is up to the filmmaker to construct a logic that determines which images appear together, when they appear, and what kind of relationships they enter into with one another’.⁷

The complex screen language of *Coventry Cathedral* was developed with director of photography and editor **Todd MacDonald**, as well as with graphic designer **Ian Cross**, and consultant **Helen Wheatley**. Our collaborative processes were largely intuitive, and it has been primarily in retrospect that we have recognised the application of Wees’s, Friedberg’s and Baron’s ideas. By means of a close reading of the opening sequence and with illustrations from framegrabs elsewhere in the film, this next section of this article explores these concerns in the shaping of the documentary.

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The pre-title sequence of the film, which runs at 3 minutes 56 seconds, briefly outlines the history of Coventry’s cathedral and presents the building as it is today, as well as introducing the film’s distinctive presentation of archival elements, including its prominent graphics and its use of multiple moving images displayed simultaneously within the overall frame.



Video 1. The pre-title sequence for *Coventry Cathedral: Building for a New Britain* (2021).

Coventry Cathedral begins with an analogue and clearly historical graphic of a clock ticking down the seconds to 3.15. Since the film’s first broadcast presentation on BBC Four was scheduled to start at 9pm, this shot was intended, at least at that moment, as a jolt of disorientation. Featuring a 1960s BBC logo, the clock is also the first of a number of graphics grounded in the archive. The first frames are accompanied by audio distortion recognisable as a tape recorder getting up to speed. This moment of dissonance draws attention to the materiality of the recording, which runs into the start of the BBC’s live OB of the new cathedral’s consecration service on 23 May 1962.

From *Coventry Cathedral*’s first moment the centrality of moving image media to the story is established, along with the way in which this lives on in the archive, charged as it is by the imperfection of the audio. A comparable moment is included later in the film when Princess Elizabeth is seen visiting Coventry in May 1948 to inaugurate the new shopping centre. The event was filmed by both the BBC’s *Newsreel* strand and by British Pathé, and the latter source has the day’s rushes available for viewing and licensing. There is a point during filming when the operator rapidly changes the lens being used, and the slippage through an out-of-focus image reflexively reveals the production process (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Lens change 'glitch' included from newsreel rushes of Princess Elizabeth visiting Coventry, May 1948.

The first cut (at 00:07) in *Coventry Cathedral's* pre-title sequence preserves the 1962 handover to the OB, which like the clock and much of the footage shown later, is presented in the original 4:3 screen ratio. With this, the first 'pillar box' graphic fills the space on either side of the original frame as it now appears within today's 16:9 widescreen. Recurring with multiple variations throughout the film, the patterns of these graphics were derived by Ian Cross from the stone and other building materials within the cathedral, or on occasion abstracted from archival images. Each framing was individually designed to respond to the colouring and density of the pictorial element that it accompanies. Moreover, these and the other graphical elements throughout the film drew on a mid-century modern design language developed to complement the period of the cathedral's construction.

The recorded monochrome image that tilts down uncertainly from the summit of the surviving medieval tower has the milky blacks and dull whites, together with the visible scanning lines, of electronic camera images. At the same time it carries subtle surface crackling betraying that the shots were preserved as a recording to film. The materiality of the archive, even after its journey through digital formats and post-production, is retained.

Other formats featured in the documentary are 16mm and 35mm film, with varying degrees of grain and 'noise' visible, as well as 8mm amateur footage. The colour palettes and intensities vary considerably, but although post-production tools were available to smooth out the differences, we largely set these aside. As much as was possible when mastering to a digital format for finishing, the frames are transmitted with the hues and the textures of the originals.

Accompanying the tilt within the sequence is a narrating voice that is instantly located in history by a formal, remote tone quite distinct from the approachable demotic ubiquitous in documentaries today. The effect is enhanced with the subsequent introduction of the metropolitan and upper middle-class, as well as for at least older viewers instantly recognisable, intonation of commentator Richard Dimbleby.

At 00:22, as the OB recording mixes from the ruin to the new cathedral, the first of many captions identifying the source of the archive animates on. In addition to the title of the production from which the shots come, this includes the producing entity and original transmission date. These quietly elegant captions acknowledge the archival source, and at the same time, by recognising the gap between that source and the current use, contribute to the documentary's reflexivity.

This self-awareness continues with the panning shot (from 00:37) of people seated in stands outside the cathedral preparing to watch the service on monitors relaying the transmission. Shots of production and, as here, reception technologies recur throughout *Coventry Cathedral* to focus the attention of viewers on the creation and viewing of the original elements. Examples later in the film include a split screen frame of a shot of a BBC OB camera at the laying of the foundation stone in 1956 (Figure 2) and the glimpse of a photographer with a hand-held camera seen between the bride and her father, Basil Spence (Figure 3).

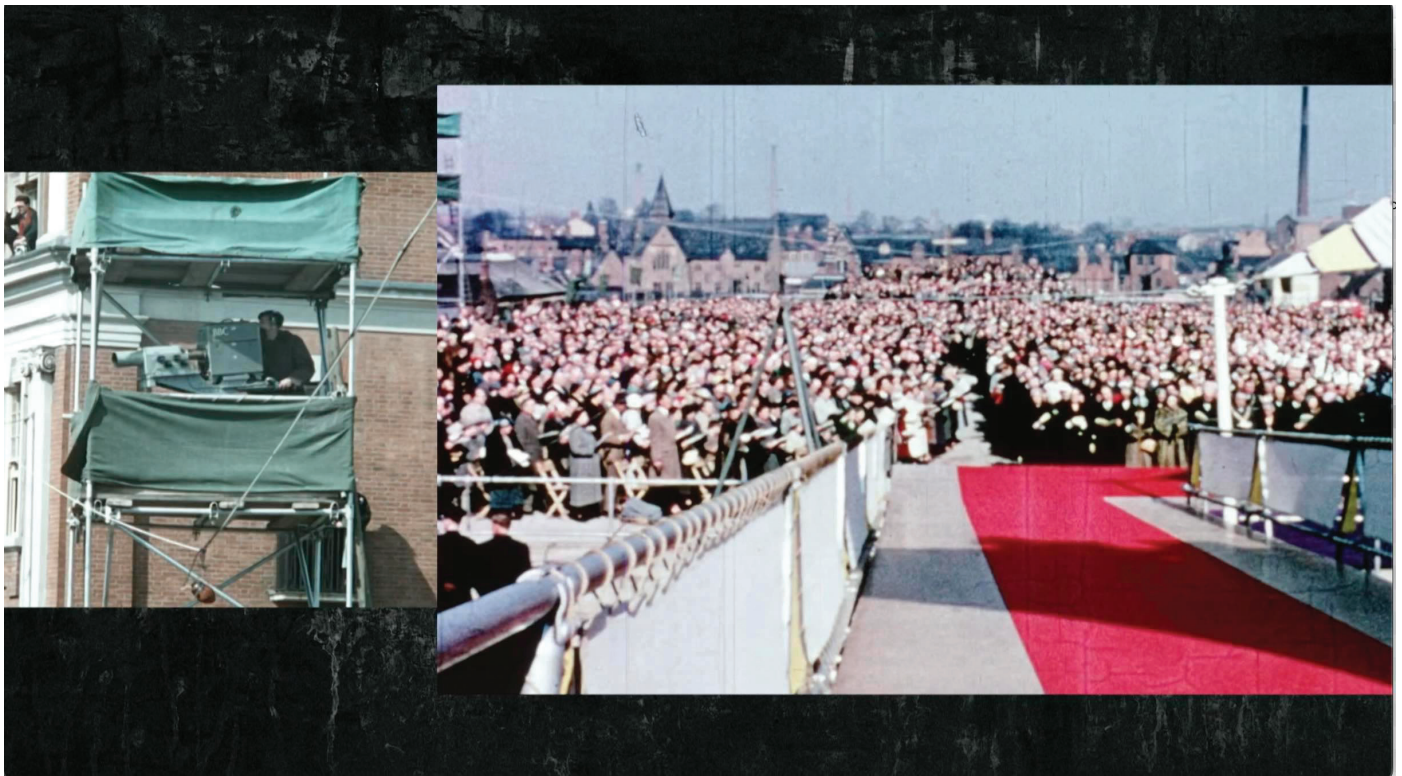


Figure 2. Spatial montage screen shot showing, left, BBC television camera and operator.

Many of the vibrant colour fragments (such as the one of the red chequered blanket at 00:53 which lasts barely 3 seconds in the rushes) come from one of the discoveries during the production of our film. They were shot by local architect and filmmaker Barnard Reyner who was commissioned by the cathedral to document its construction. In addition to the assembly that he created for screening to local groups in the years after the building's completion, we were able to access the original rushes which had been kept by his daughter in her attic. We arranged for these to be scanned, and subsequently professionally archived, and we integrated numerous shots from them into the documentary.

The brief scenes here introduce crowds as one of the key motifs of the film. Later there are crowds welcoming Princess Elizabeth to Coventry in 1948, celebrating the laying of the Foundation Stone in 1956, attending a wedding held in the crypt in 1959, watching the installation of the cathedral's spire (Figure 4), and then again at the Consecration (Figure 5).



Figure 3. Local filmmaker Barnard Reyner glimpsed between father and bride.



Figure 4. Crowds watching the installation of the cathedral spire by helicopter.



Figure 5. Crowds outside the cathedral on Consecration Day.

The archival excess of faces, coats, hats, postures speaks poignantly and vividly of the times, and is revealing about class, prosperity and politics in ways never intended by the original filmmakers.

At 00:49, as Dimbleby continues to speak about the watching crowd, the presentational device of a split screen is introduced, with two differently-sized images, one monochrome and one colour, located on a graphical ground within the overall frame. Combinations of multiple images, most often in pairs but on occasion with three simultaneous elements, recur frequently throughout the film to the extent that to a significant degree this becomes the dominant style of the documentary, insistently stressing an overall reflexivity.

With a brief colour archive shot of the cathedral's exterior, the film transitions (01:19) to art historian Kenneth Clark standing before Jacob Epstein's sculpture 'St Michael's Victory over the Devil'.⁸ The shot then pulls back and widens to reveal the nave exterior. Drawn from *Out of Burning*, an outside broadcast recording made by the regional commercial television company ATV, the texture of the shot contrasts with (at 01:36) a wide shot of the cathedral in 4:3 with faded colour, and then two further 16:9 exteriors, shot in 2021, which resolve on a detail of the Epstein.

By this point the voice of the first interviewee, architectural historian **Louise Campbell**, is heard on the soundtrack, along with an initial music cue. Unidentified in this rapid montage, she and others are credited with contributor captions in the body of the film, but none of these commentators are shown in vision, since we wanted to keep the visual focus on the cathedral and on the city of Coventry.

These new elements of commentary, including recordings of architect **Anthony Blee** and his wife Gillian, Basil Spence's daughter, and John Witcombe, Dean of Coventry, provide historical and contemporary context, complementing and contrasting with the inclusion of extensive elements of the audio of participants in and commentators on the construction process, including Dimbleby, Clark and Spence.

At 01:57 the pre-title sequence cuts to a monochrome detail of the Epstein, and then to a shot of two young men looking up at it, before their gaze is returned by St Michael. From 02:01 another female voice, Gillian Blee, Basil Spence's daughter, accompanies a montage of shots (each with a different 'pillar box' patterning) of the city of Coventry and its population, introducing the film's themes of housing, immigration, consumerism, education and the threat of nuclear war. Each of these shots come from two BBC film documentaries made as the city entered the 1960s: *Coventry Kids* (1960), directed by Philip Donnellan, with music by Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger, and *Target City* (1961), reported by Robert Reid. Elsewhere in the documentary other BBC news and documentary footage provided comparable, often very brief, contextual images.

The variety and density of the images was primarily made possible by the BBC's then recently introduced Archive Search and Digital Archive capabilities. With much, although very far from all, of the BBC's image and sound archives digitised, and to some degree indexed and/or automatically transcribed, it is possible to search for sequences and shots rapidly across a wide range of programmes, to view these online from low-res copies, and then automatically order hi-res versions of sequences identified by timecodes. These hi-res elements are also delivered online within hours.

As we were making *Coventry Cathedral*, the ease of this process felt transformative, at least when compared to older systems which involved viewing initially physical and later digital time-coded copies before ordering files, or prior to that film or tape sequences, for transfer. Later in the film there is a two-second shot of Conservative housing minister David Eccles in the mid-1950s (Figure 6).



Figure 6. The briefest of glimpses of Conservative housing minister David Eccles.

His expensive suit and patrician manner makes an immediate and telling contrast with the shots of run-down houses in Coventry, but we would not have had the time or capacity to track down and secure this image without the BBC's digital systems.

In contrast to such brief fragments, the body of the film includes a number of extended extracts, perhaps the most notable of which is drawn from a Nazi newsreel that claims to have been shot in the skies above Coventry on the night of the bombing raid that destroyed the medieval cathedral. This sequence, a section of which is incorporated uncut at 1 minute 12 seconds without embellishment (apart from subtitles in English), is from an edition of the German newsreel *Die Deutsche Wochenschau*. The high resolution digital scan that we used was licenced from [the Russian archive Net-Film](#), and it is deeply and distinctively marked by historical traces of deterioration of the original (Figure 7).

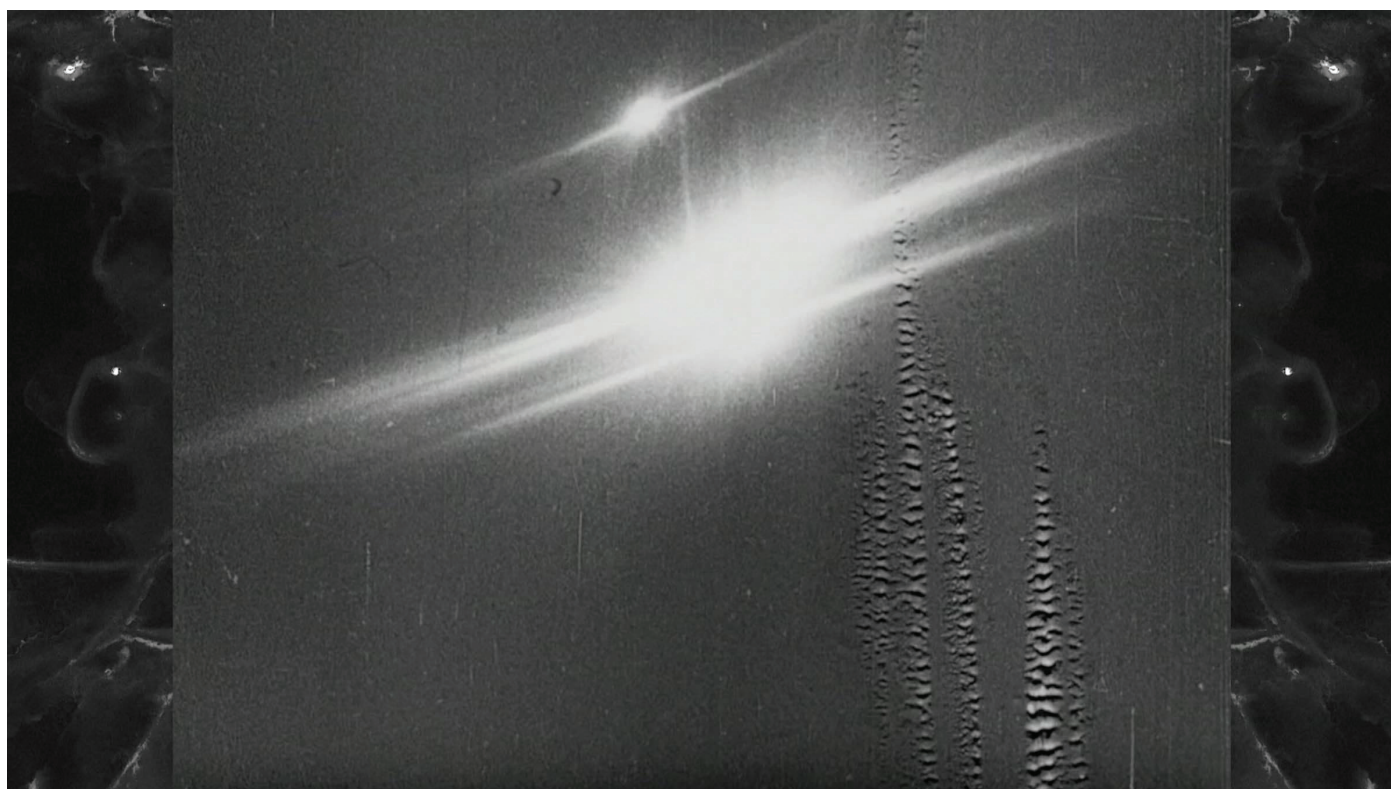


Figure 7. Nazi newsreel shot above Coventry with visible evidence of damage to the film stock.

By featuring it in this way, at exceptional length (at least when compared to the cutting rate of most television documentaries) and as a badly damaged print, the fragment underlines the reflexivity of use.

At 02:22 this cuts to a travelling shot moving past the cathedral during construction, accompanied again by Dimpleby's voice, before further details of the building as it is today, so linking part and present. Dimpleby's voice gives way to the documentary's own (minimal) narration, spoken by Coventry musician Pauline Black, which is introduced for the first time at 02:46.

Our preference would have been to create the film without additional narration, but from the start of production its inclusion was a compromise that, on the basis of past experience, we assumed to be necessary for the fulfilment of a television commission. The use of a narrator was never explicitly demanded by the BBC, but there was, as there always is, extensive discussion about whose voice this should be, what qualities they would bring, and whether their name would contribute to the profile of the film.

The conclusion of the pre-title sequence begins with the 16:9 frame filled by a further split screen of two images, showing the consecration service and its programme book. This is followed by full-frame 4:3 images with side graphics of [Anthony Blee](#) at a drawing board, and then the building during construction, and then others, both monochrome

and colour, from the past and from 2021. At 03:17 is the first split screen shot with three inset shots, which are, inevitably, reduced, and placed against a graphical ground with coloured geometric elements also set on the ground.

Our use of split screen followed from work by myself, Todd MacDonald and Ian Cross on an earlier archive-based documentary, *Drama Out of a Crisis: A Celebration of Play for Today* (2020). Our interest in this form had been stimulated, at least in part, by the enforced widespread use of ZOOM and similar systems during COVID-19 lockdowns. We saw that this was quickly being adopted for screen performance and narratives, such as 'From us, for you: Beethoven Symphony No.9' (2020) from Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra and *Initial Lockdown Meeting* (2020) from the cast of the BBC comedy series *W1A*, both created in the early months of the lockdowns imposed by COVID-19.

Split screen sequences in films appear from the first years of cinema, and especially in the 1960s in a series of visual spectacles such as *Grand Prix* (1966) and *The Thomas Crown Affair* (1968) conceived in part to respond to the challenge of television. But where split-screen techniques had been used in feature films it was often as an attention-attracting special effect, but in a pre-digital production world it remained rare because the necessary optical effects were time-consuming and expensive.

From the 1980s on digital editing and compositing systems offered new possibilities which began to be exploited by independent filmmakers like Peter Greenaway and Mike Figgis, as well as in television news and sports coverage, and notably in the drama series *24* (2001-10). The use of split screens, however, continued to be rare in documentaries, where the unacknowledged assumption appeared to continue the idea that the single image in a single frame offered a privileged access to authenticity.

Our interest in breaking with this was in part to enrich the visual experience of *Coventry Cathedral*. We had a wealth of archival material on which to draw, and we wished to feature as much of this as possible. At the same time, these shots, set within design templates, contribute to the reflexivity of the film, highlighting the range of their sources and prompting the viewer to reflect on their archival status. And we also wanted to employ split screen to suggest connections between images within the frame as well as between consecutive frames. We discovered in the Reyner rushes, for example, three brief shots of Black workers building the cathedral. Such shots did not feature in Reyner's own assembly, and nor, despite the involvement of Caribbean workers being recognised, were there any comparable images in any of the other archival elements. To showcase them, we included them in spatial montages tying them closely to the construction process, but also to the impact of immigration to the city and its culture, notably its music, more broadly (Figure 8).

To achieve the split screen sequences in a manageable production time frame, Ian Cross designed a number of templates for the multiple shots. These not only paired integral elements within the 16:9 widescreen, but also overlaid images, as at 03:37 and 03:40 in the pre-title sequence, and also frequently selecting and presenting details from their original frames. This latter practice can be seen in the shots of craftsmen at work at 03:17 and the left-hand image featuring Kenneth Clark at 03:34.

Working in this way exposed a fundamental tension in the production process. In engaging with the wide range of archival elements, we operated with an idea of respect for their original form. We introduced the 'pillar box' graphics so that we could feature at full height sequences originally shot in a 4:3 ratio, rather than as is all too common in contemporary television documentaries cutting off the top and bottom of shots so as to fill a 16:9 frame, just as it was inconceivable that we would apply any form of colorisation to monochrome footage. Yet we were quite prepared to select shot details to insert into split screen templates, and where necessary to overlay shots within the overall frame.

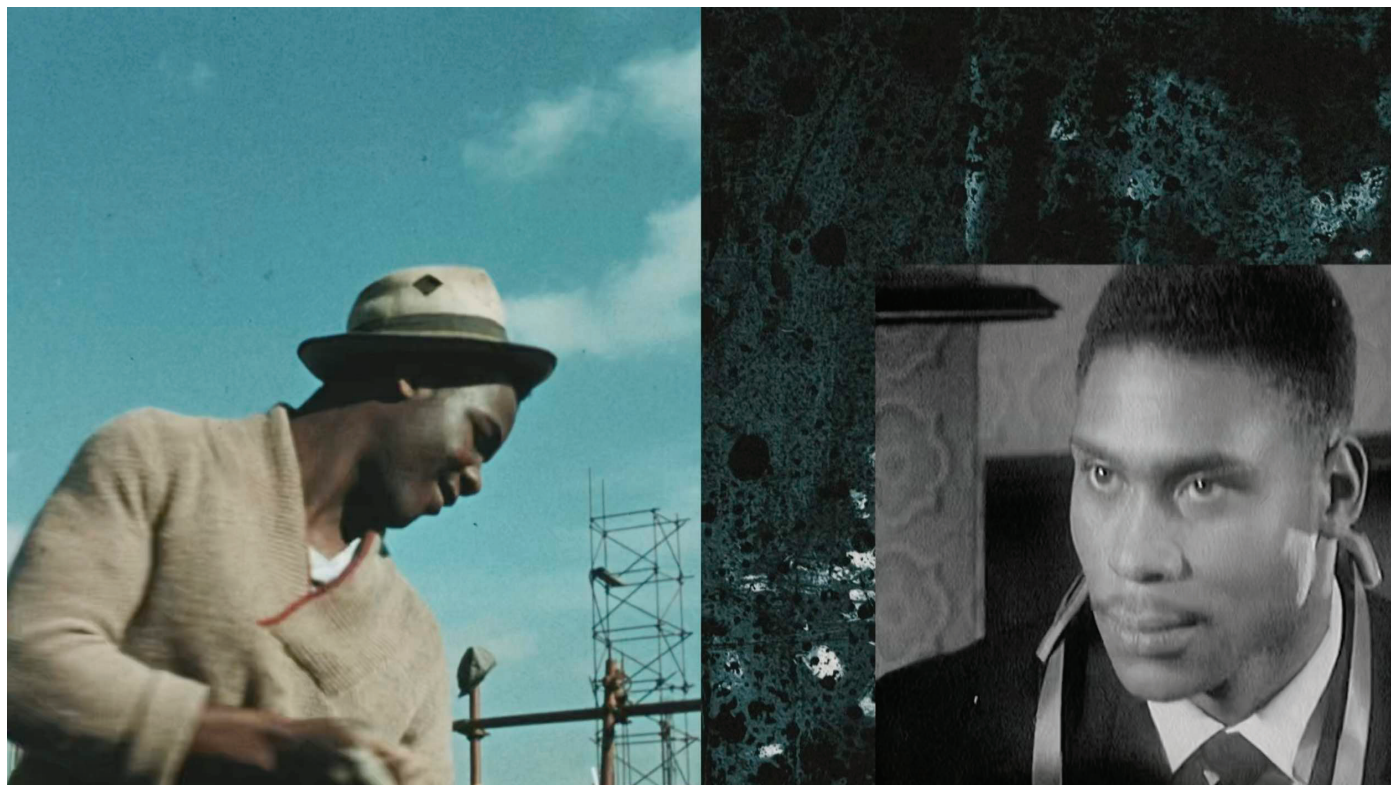


Figure 8. Construction worker and musician, illustrating the impact of immigration on Coventry.

The complex digital post-production crystallised an awareness that the archival images had no originary or 'authentic' material existence. Each one had been transferred from negatives or positive prints, or from earlier iterations of video formats, to tape and then, or sometimes directly, into digital file formats. Our own processes also inevitably involved, as broadcast production demanded, elements of colour 'correction', even if these were slight and even if we avoided radical processes of grading. Indeed in the digital post-production environment, where we worked in Premiere for the offline cut, and then re-made this for importing into Resolve for finishing, image quality was always fluid and never 'fixed'.

We came to recognise that the possibility of respecting archival integrity was a chimera, and yet at the same time we embraced the apparent contradiction of holding to certain fundamentals outlawing colourisation and respecting, frequently but not in every instance, original frame ratios. Emphasising the materiality of the images meant that we highlighted the inevitable instability of the recorded images and sounds, and hence their malleability. In doing so, we aimed to make the status of the various archival elements both visible and comprehensible.

Returning for a final time to the pre-credit sequence, the rapidly edited conclusion of the pre-title sequence establishes by combining multiple split screen frames with singles a further key aspect of the documentary's reflexivity, explicitly paralleling the construction of the cathedral and the editing of the film. The blocks of stone and glass and metal in the construction process are echoed by the images and graphical elements set across a grid within the film's frame. The shots build the film in the spatial montages of the split screens and in the more conventional temporal montage of shots following shots. This sense of construction, element by element, is capped in the animation of a cascade of geometric elements coming together for a conclusion of the typographic title flanked by two metonymic images, of Epstein's 'St Michael' and Graham Sutherland's vast tapestry, standing in for the completed structure (Figure 9).



Figure 9. Title card at the endpoint of an animated 'construction' sequence.

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The film was well-received by a small number of television critics, but while elements of the archive were commented on there was no specific engagement with the distinctive presentation. In the *Daily Mail* (10 June 2021), Christopher Stevens wrote, 'Though it amounted to 75 minutes of ancient footage... this was a marvellous, compelling example of how old TV can tell a story.' The closest that a mainstream critic came to an acknowledgement of the self-reflexive strategies was in a *Daily Telegraph* preview (7 June 2021) by Gabriel Tate: 'Just like his *Drama Out of a Crisis* film on *Play for Today*, writer/director John Wyver here shows a more creative way forward for BBC Four as an archive channel'.

The critic offered no further detail about what that 'creative way forward' might be, and since then the realisation of BBC Four as an 'archive channel' has largely meant the re-running of drama and documentary programming from the archive, complemented at times by straightforward anecdotal introductions by production personnel. Despite receiving proposals from the author and from other programme makers, the channel has not funded further creative engagements with the riches of the BBC's and other archival resources.

At the same time, re-presenting the archival elements within the broadcast documentary unquestionably prompted strong affective responses for people in and around Coventry, as was evidenced by a radio interview with DJ Richard Williams in the week after the first broadcast.

It's fair to say that [the film's] gone absolutely bonkers across Coventry... Like you've got the precinct in the '60s and if you pause that screen and you're from Coventry and you've got relations then you might spot them. Then there's two thousand people who are outside the cathedral for the consecration... You can see so many faces.⁹

Such responses provided the clearest evidence of what Jaimie Baron identified as the 'excess' of the archival elements and their resistance to the explicit intentions of the filmmakers, qualities which we were pleased to embrace in the production of the film as a whole. The 'excess' of the faces, together with the clothes and accessories of the people of Coventry, at the consecration service, in the modernist shopping precinct, in a nightclub in the city, and watching the spire being placed by helicopter on the roof of the almost-completed cathedral, complements and echoes the materialities of the footage to locate the whole in a rich and complex and ambiguous post-war history.



Video 2. Installing the new spire of Coventry Cathedral by helicopter, 26 April 1962.

Sitting late in the film, the sequence of the installation of the spire is perhaps the film's clearest use of reflexive strategies, including the materialities of the archive, graphics and spatial montage, to offer an allegory of technology, modernity and community contributing to the triumph of post-war reconstruction in Britain. As William Wees suggested, collage is used 'in reflexive ways to invest found footage with new meanings'.

Such is the strategy of the film as a whole, to highlight and interweave archival images and sounds of the cathedral's construction, of the rebuilding of Coventry, and of the media age of the 1950s and early 1960s, to offer a new way of knowing the histories of post-war Britain and of the future potential those histories held for the future.

In the context of British television at least, *Coventry Cathedral* is a rare example of a film that resists Anne Friedberg's idea of the dominant form for the moving image of a single image in a single frame, that self-consciously embraces Jaime Baron's archive effect, and employs innovative production and presentation strategies for the self-reflexive use of archival elements.

The respect granted by the film to each visual and aural historical component; the use of split-screens and spatial montage, combined with distinctive graphics; the highlighting within the film of the materiality and malleability of the archive; and the internal showcasing of production processes, all contribute to that self-reflexivity, and in doing so to the creation of new meanings from the historical elements.

Regrettably, such is the impoverishment of arts and historical documentary programming in British television, we have been unable to secure funding for projects that were proposed to develop further these ideas and processes.

Note that ethics approval was not required for this article.

Endnotes

1. William C. Wees, *Recycled Images: The Art and Politics of Found Footage Films* (New York: Anthology Film Archives, 1993), 46–7.
2. Wees, *Recycled Images*, 4.
3. Jaimie Baron, *The Archive Effect: Found Footage and the Audiovisual Experience of History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 17.
4. Baron, *The Archive Effect*, 25.
5. Anne Friedberg, *The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 2.
6. For an extended discussion and a number of counter examples, see John Wyver, “The screen language of lockdown: connection and choice in split-screen performance”, in Gemma Kate Allred, Benjamin Broadribb and Erin Sullivan, eds., *Lockdown Shakespeare: New Evolutions in Performance and Adaptation* (London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2022), 23–44.
7. Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 322.
8. Kenneth Clark was a prominent public figure, having been director of the National Gallery before the Second World War, the first chairman of the Arts Council of Great Britain, and the first chairman of the Independent Television Authority. He was also familiar as a television presenter of arts programmes for commercial television and would later write and present the BBC’s landmark documentary series *Civilisation* (1969).
9. Quoted in Helen Wheatley, *Television/Death* (Edinburgh University Press, 2024), 246.

Biography

John Wyver is a writer and producer with the independent production company Illuminations, and Professor of the Arts on Screen, University of Westminster. His broadcast arts documentaries and screen adaptations of dance and theatre have been honoured with a BAFTA Award, an International Emmy, and a Peabody. He is the author of *Vision On: Film, Television and the Arts in Britain* (2007), *The Royal Shakespeare Company on Screen: A Critical History* (2019) and *Magic Rays of Light: The Early Years of Television in Britain* (2026).