

BAFTA CHAIRMAN'S SCREENING

## CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF CUTTING EDGE

Thursday 15 May 2014, BAFTA, 195 Piccadilly, London W1J 9LN



In 1989, co-founders **John Willis** and **Peter Moore** devised a new documentary strand for Channel 4 called *Cutting Edge*. It was conceived as a portrait of modern Britain, a window into the politics, personalities, social trends, even oddities of real life and as its bold title suggests, these would be daring, brave, ambitious films, bringing real life stories directly into the homes of its viewers.

**W**e wanted *Cutting Edge* to have a clear and coherent sense of purpose," says Willis, "so we decided that the series would add up to a journey through contemporary Britain. It was planned to be deliberately provocative and mischievous but also entertaining. We wanted large numbers

of people to see modern British life as it was. Channel 4 was lucky to have Peter Moore as the first editor as he was born to be a mischief maker. Twenty-five years later Emma Cooper shares much of that same spirit."

A quarter of a century later, winning a raft of awards and taking in dramatic changes in the social and political

landscapes of Britain, *Cutting Edge* is still doing what it first set out to do; making compelling films with arresting stories at their heart. *Cutting Edge* continues to be the home to many of today's most talented film makers: Molly Dineen (*The Pick, The Shovel And The Open Road*, 1991), Paul Greengrass (*Coppers*, 1992), Paul Watson (*The Home*, 1996), Dominic Savage (*The Outsiders*, 1998), Jessica Versluys (*Katie: My Beautiful Face*, 2009), Daisy Asquith (*I Heart One Direction*, 2013) and Sue Bourne (*Fabulous Fashionistas*, 2013) to name but a very few, and offers fertile ground for new and aspiring programme makers. We're delighted to celebrate this iconic series with our panel of very special guests as well as past documentary makers joining us in the audience.



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## JOHN WILLIS

John Willis started his career at Yorkshire Television where he directed a string of award winning documentaries, including the BAFTA-winning *Johnny Go Home* (1976). He's also the recipient of four other BAFTA nominations. In 1983 John became Controller of Factual Programmes at Channel 4 and later, in 1993, Director of Programmes. Under his tenure Channel 4 enjoyed unprecedented success with titles such as *Trainspotting*, *Four Weddings And A Funeral*, *Cutting Edge*, *The Big Breakfast*, *Father Ted* and *True Stories*. From Channel 4 John moved to United Productions and then to the BBC as Director of Factual and Learning and during this time the phenomenally successful *Planet Earth* was born. In 2006 John joined Mentorn where he's currently Chief Executive and in 2012 John became Chairman of BAFTA.

## BRIAN HILL

Brian began his career in BBC Education as a researcher on social action programmes before producing and directing a number of independent films for production companies in London. He has been executive and series producer on a long list of programmes and series including the BAFTA-winning *Make Me Normal*, *Care Houses* and the BBC series *Make Me Honest*. Brian won two BAFTAs in 2003; the Flaherty Documentary Award for his musical documentary *Feltham Sings* and Best New Director for *Falling Apart*. He's also been nominated for three BAFTAs, including *Cutting Edge: The Club*. Brian is now managing director of Century Films, an award-winning, UK-based independent production company.

## EMMA COOPER

Emma Cooper began her career at the BBC as a religion and ethics researcher before moving across to the Documentaries Development Unit in 2003 where she went on to series produce and direct all of Louis Theroux's output from 2008, including *Louis Theroux: A Place for Paedophiles* and *Miami Mega-Jail* where he gained unprecedented and exclusive access to the complete jail and court system of Miami County. Since 2011 Emma has been commissioning editor in documentary at Channel 4. She is responsible for the *Cutting Edge* strand (recent films include *The Murder Workers*, *The Fried Chicken Shop*, *My Tattoo Addiction*) and the series *Liberty* and *How To Get A Council House*.

## PETER MOORE

From 1989–1999 Peter was Head of Documentaries at Channel 4 where he launched *Cutting Edge* and commissioned the feature-length documentary series *True Stories* which supported original work from international filmmakers (including Errol Morris, Nick Broomfield, Fred Wiseman and Kim Longinotto). He executive produced the feature documentary *638 Ways To Kill Castro* (Channel 4, 2006) and hired Sir Alan Sugar in 2005 (against the prevailing view at the BBC) for the role of CEO in the British series of *The Apprentice*, which won a BAFTA. Previously he helped transform Jamie Oliver from a celebrity chef into a social campaigner with Channel 4's series *Jamie's Kitchen* which won a Grierson prize. For the last three years Peter has been the executive producer of Channel 4's hit documentary series *One Born Every Minute*. He is currently working for Raw TV.

*With special thanks to Jasper Hone, Programme Co-ordinator, Channel 4 Documentaries.*

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## BAFTA HERITAGE SCREENINGS

BAFTA Heritage Screenings are a series of quarterly film screenings and on-stage interviews which celebrate British film and TV classics and the great film and TV professionals who made them.

