

The film *The Theory of Everything* is about to be released worldwide and tipped to be an Oscar-winning success. It is based on the life of Stephen Hawking, the world-famous theoretical physicist, who studied at Cambridge University, and continues to teach at the Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics. Cambridge, then, has a large part to play in this new movie, serving as a beautiful backdrop to Professor Hawking's life.

But this is not a one-off - Cambridge often has a starring role on the screen. Here, we'll take a look at just a few examples of the city and local areas becoming a film set.

### **Chariots of Fire (1981)**

The multi-award winning *Chariots of Fire* has been ranked 19<sup>th</sup> in the British Film Institute's Top 100 films of all time! It is based on the true lives of two athletes in the 1924 Olympics, and whilst the famous scene involving running around the court of Trinity College was not actually filmed there, there are plenty of shots of other areas of Cambridge, like Gonville and Caius College and Senate House.

### **Sylvia (2003)**

Given how many famous Cambridge alumnae there are, it's unsurprising that there are a number of biographical films about their lives. *Sylvia* is about the life of American poet Sylvia Plath. The opening scenes see her cycling over the cobbles of Trinity Lane, and the beginning of the movie is all about the meeting of Sylvia and British poet Ted Hughes in Cambridge. There are lots of lovely shots of the couple punting, but it does take some liberties with Cambridge colleges - Sylvia enters Clare College but appears in St John's...

### **The King's Speech (2010)**

Cambridge has many links with royalty as you'll see from [our previous blog](#), so it makes sense that Ely Cathedral should stand in as Westminster Cathedral for King George VI's coronation scene. Cambridge also features in *Elizabeth* (1998) starring Cate Blanchett. When Walter Raleigh throws his cloak over a puddle for the famous monarch to walk over, they are outside St John's College, and when Elizabeth's barge sails down the Thames, it was actually filmed on the River Cam!

### **Television**

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You can also find Cambridge on the small screen – *Porterhouse Blues* (1987) was a TV series about a fictional college filmed mainly at Sidney Sussex College. A more recent example is *Granchester*, a new detective show about the nearby village.

And of course, whilst the movies weren't filmed in Cambridge, the whole of this ancient university city feels like it's straight from the Harry Potter films!

If you want to feel like a film star next summer, join us at [Reach Cambridge](#).

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