

In this feature in each issue we look at past winners of National Heritage's Museum of the Year Award and what has happened to them since.

Opening in June 1983, as a branch of the Science Museum, the remit of the National Museum of Photography, Film & Television, as it was until a year ago, was the art and science of images and image making.

Its director was a photography scholar, Colin Ford (who was to go on to be director of the National Museums and Galleries of Wales), and he believed that by understanding how images are made, you appreciate the ideas being expressed and the intentions and skills of the image makers.

Its creation was part of a government policy to plant outstations of national collections in the regions, and it followed the success of the National Railway Museum in York. Bradford was seen as a key population centre, with 14.5 million people living within a two hour journey, and the decision has been justified with a million visitors a year establishing it as the most visited national museum outside London.

It had hands-on displays as well as key exhibitions, such as of Yousuf Karsh's photographic portraits, and in 1984 it opened Britain's biggest



# National Media Museum, Bradford

screen, the first IMAX in the country.

In 1986 two innovative interactive television galleries were introduced, giving visitors the opportunity actually to operate cameras on a studio set with programmed sound and lighting, to use vision mixers and even to read a news item from an autocue. Two years later it was chosen as the Museum of the Year.

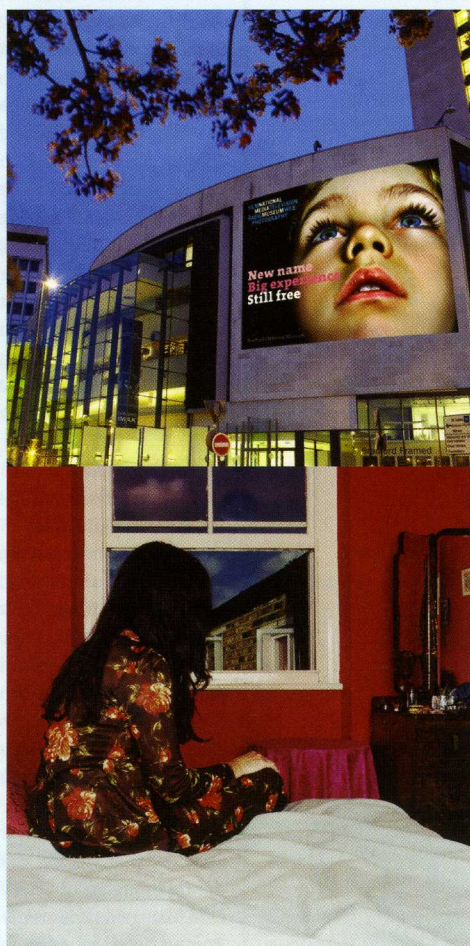
Since then there have been many developments, including having the first ever live broadcasting studio in a museum, converting the theatre next door into a 300 seat cinema enabling it to stage film festivals and premiere viewings, and in 1999 opening a new building, fronted by a glass atrium soaring the full height of the structure, with 25% more exhibition space than before.

Last year a new £3 million interactive television gallery was added, called Experience TV and containing many of the objects that make up the story of TV, from John Logie Baird's original equipment, to a Jim'll Fix It badge and Wallace & Gromit.

But also last year, the National Museum of Photography, Film & Television became the simpler National Media Museum to reflect the rapidly changing media world, launching Media Matters, a national search for the UK's most iconic media moments.

The new name was devised partly to reflect how quickly communication technologies are developing and evolving, and how different media are blurring.

There's been an explosion in digital photogra-



phy, so that you can watch TV on a mobile phone now, and movies on your laptop.

So, says the present director Colin Philpott, a former BBC journalist, more developments are planned to reflect not only the technological changes but "important and influential aspects of our national life and identity, to make sure these dramatic changes are chronicled, recorded and interpreted".

One new gallery will respond to contemporary media issues on a day-by-day basis, and another will be a virtual gallery covering the unfolding history of the internet.

There will be more events to showcase trends and developments, and Experience TV is being updated to reflect new consumer choices in TV.

Photography is not to be neglected, with a new position of Chair of Photography, and young contemporary photographers being supported through a series of bursaries. In partnership with the University of Bradford the museum has a fellowship scheme for outstanding working photographers, and this winter's major exhibition is devoted to one of them, Sarah Jones. The existing photography gallery is also to be revamped.

A new film heritage gallery will reflect the rich story of the development of film, particularly of British film, and an often overlooked media genre will get close attention with a gallery devoted to radio.

The electronic media have become the leading currents affairs monitors since 1988 for most of us, so another gallery treatment will look at news gathering, and at advertising.