

Virtual Q&A with Ken Loach



Ken Loach is one of the world's most prestigious film makers, having directed during the past 60 years 27 feature films for the cinema in addition to 10 Wednesday plays and other dramas for TV. He has won 16 awards at the Cannes Film Festival, more than any other director. His film *Kes* was voted the seventh greatest British film of the 20th century in a British Film Institute poll.

Loach turned down an OBE in 1977. In an interview, published in March 2001, he said: "It's all the things I think are despicable: patronage, deferring to the monarchy and the name of the British Empire, which is a monument of exploitation and conquest. I turned down the OBE because it's not a club you want to join when you look at the villains who've got it."

He is a particularly prolific maker of documentary films, for good reason. As he said: "There were things we wanted to say head on and not wrapped up in fiction... things that should be said as directly as one can say them... The dangers of Thatcherism just felt so urgent that I thought that doing a fictional piece for TV, which would take a year to get commissioned and at least another year to make, was just too slow... Documentaries can tackle things head on, and you can make them faster than dramas, too - though, with hindsight, it's just as hard, if not harder, to get them transmitted."

Indeed, several of his documentaries have roused the wrath of censors, as his uncompromising left wing political views have been at odds with the more right wing establishments of the post Thatcher years. Two of them remain untransmitted to this day. One of them was so abhorred by the charity that commissioned it that the charity concerned attempted – fortunately unsuccessfully – to have the negative destroyed. Loach has commented: "Working people are allowed on television so long as they fit the stereotypes that producers have of them. Workers can appear pathetic in their ignorance and poverty, apathetic to parliamentary politics, or aggressive on the picket line. But let them make a serious political analysis based on their own experiences and in their own language, then keep them off the air."

Riff-raff will be the second Ken Loach film we have screened in St John's Place, following *I, Daniel Blake* in 2017. It will assuredly not be the last.

Come and see Ken Loach via Zoom link at St John's Place, Lower Bemerton, Salisbury, SP2 9NP, on Wednesday 5 October. Doors will open at 17.15 and close at 17.45. Tickets, price £10, will be available at the door or in advance via Eventbrite on <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/virtual-q-a-with-ken-loach-tickets-413688231637>. Ken Loach will take questions from 18.00 to 19.00 and introduce his film *Riff-raff*. Refreshments, not included in the ticket price, will be served from 19.00, and the film will begin at 19.30. It should be over by 21.10.