

TIME	SESSION	ROOM
9.00-9.20	REGISTRATION	K2.31
9.30 – 11am	EARLY INVENTORS & SCIENTISTS	K2.31
9.30 – 9.50	1. Ian Christie – The Tarnished Myth of British Precedence	
9.50 – 10.10	2. Peter Domankiewicz – William Friese-Greene and the Art of Collaboration	
10.10 – 10.30	3. Elizabeth Watkins – Scientific Photography and the Fantastic in Polar Expedition Films: Reading the Notebooks of Fred Gent	
10.45 – 11.30	COFFEE	K4U.12
11.30 – 1pm	THE TRADE IN THE 1910s	K2.31
11.30 – 11.50	4. Andrew Shail – The UK Film Market, 1907-1912	
11.50 – 12.10	5. Lucie Dutton – From Glib-Smooth-Tongued Travellers to Cabbages: Maurice Elvey and British Distribution in the 1910s	
12.10 – 12.30	6. Neil Parsons – American movie-maker Harold Shaw as an agent of British Influence 1916-1920	
12.45 – 2pm	LUNCH	
2.00 – 3.30	WARTIME AND AFTERWARDS	
2.00 – 2.20	7. Chris Grosvenor – ‘Wake Up!’: British Cinema, the Outbreak of War, and the Voluntary Recruiting Movement, 1914-1916	
2.20 – 2.40	8. Ellen Cheshire – The Lads of the Village: From Stage to screen to court	
2.40 – 3.00	9. Christina Hink – <i>Wonderful London</i> in the 1920s	
3.00 – 3.20	10. Llewella Chapman – Government Policy on Filming at Hampton Court Palace, 1910-1930	
3.30 – 4pm	COFFEE	K4U.12
4.00 – 6pm	TOWARDS SOUND	K2.31
4.00 – 4.20	11. John Izod – Arthur Dulay and John Grierson: fitting <i>Drifters</i> (1929)	
4.20 – 4.40	12. Geoff Brown – Did Britain Really Invent Film Sound?	
4.40 – 5.00	13. Nyasha Sibanda – Sound Arrives at the Tudor 1927-1931	
5.00 – 5.20	14. Laraine Porter – Elstree melodies and ‘the charm of the English voice’: musical moments in early British talkies	
5.20 – 6pm	15. CLOSING REMARKS	

ABSTRACTS

1. Ian Christie – The Tarnished Myth of British Precedence

The Boultings' film 1951 *The Magic Box* marked the climax of the canonisation William Friese Greene as the neglected pioneer of moving pictures, on the basis of a biography by Muriel Forth that claimed he had achieved a projectable result by 1890. The fact that the memorable scene where Robert Donat invites a bemused Laurence Olivier to witness his triumph was demonstrably fictitious did much to discredit Friese-Greene's actual achievements. But it also obscured the real basis of the incident – an anecdote told by Robert Paul, based on what he and Birt Acres achieved in February 1895, when they succeeded in running their first film on a Paul Kinetoscope. This presentation argues that attributing the incident correctly, and tracing how it was subsequently misrepresented, has wider implications for reassessing the historiography of early British film and Paul's place in it.

2. Peter Domankiewicz - William Friese Green and the Art of Collaboration

William Friese-Greene was a significant pioneer of moving pictures and yet there has been no re-assessment of his contribution since his reputation was rubbished by Brian Coe sixty years ago, in writings which were limited in their research and profoundly misleading in their conclusions. He essentially painted Friese-Greene as a fraud and a fool, claiming that anything worthwhile he achieved was actually the work of others. I will argue that this is an outdated way of looking at the process of invention which, in the late 19th and early 20th century, often consisted of the person with the higher place in society and/or the most wealth being the one who took the credit for an invention. This was the case with other motion picture pioneers, such as Edison, Marey and Le Prince. Friese-Greene broke the mould by willingly and freely acknowledging the process of collaboration. This different attitude sprang from his relatively humble background as a self-educated outsider from the provinces.

Not all his experiences of collaboration were happy ones, however. By tracing his work with John Rudge, Mortimer Evans, Frederick Varley and on his own, I shall delineate the process which led to the creation of a series of motion picture cameras and projection devices in the period 1888-1891, well before The Lumiere Brothers, Robert Paul or Birt Acres. His work preceded the arrival of the Kinetoscope and his attitude towards Edison encapsulates both Friese-Greene's openness and the naivety which would be his downfall. The talk will include the first screening in the UK in 20 years of Friese-Greene's 1891 film of King's Road in London.

3. Elizabeth Watkins - Scientific Photography and the Fantastic in Polar Expedition films: reading the notebooks of Fred Gent

The exhibition of early 1900s nonfiction expedition films combined still and moving images with scripted lectures, forming a 'presentational aesthetic' (Dixon) that interlaced technology, science and institutional practices. Polar expeditions led by Scott, Mawson and Shackleton experimented with photography and film to supplement established modes of scientific documentation, however, these materials were also used in expedition narratives intended for public education and popular entertainment. Recent studies have noted the interleaving of techniques associated with fiction film with the nonfiction genres – travel (Musser) and educational films (Peterson) – including the design of colours to be viewed sensuously (Yumibe) refiguring the differentiation of nonfiction and fantasy. The potential of spectacle, editing and colour design in nonfiction film offers a context for an analysis of the relationship between scientific photography, expedition newsreels and the narrative forms

produced for public exhibition. Thus, this paper examines the influence of Fred Gent as General Manager for Gaumont (Sydney) on the interpretation and circulation of expedition films, from the selection of camera equipment to the handling of prints, lecture rights and exhibition of work by expedition photographers – Herbert Ponting and Frank Hurley (Turnour; Dixon) – and explorers, Mawson. An analysis of Gent's notebooks, which are annotated with photographs, references to the production of exploration films, alongside expedition correspondence, details the interpretation of nonfiction film and photography for public exhibition. Beyond the actuality format of newsreels, the use of applied colour (tinting, toning), photographic techniques (superimposition, dissolves) and intertitles combined commercial interests with the instructions of Ponting and Hurley. If the technologies and institutions that were integral to a modern reconceptualization of human subjectivity, indicate that perception could no longer be conceived as unmediated access to the world (Crary), then the blurring of techniques associated with fiction and nonfiction film hint at uncertainty between photography as scientific objectivity and its interpretation (colour, intertitles, scripts) as the elaboration of perception. Science and art imbricate institutions, technologies and practices of commercial film, national expeditions and scientific commissions mediating Polar landscapes and expedition narratives for public exhibition.

4. Andrew Shail – The UK Film Market 1907-1912

I have vexed attendees at previous British Silent Film Festival Symposia with only passing mentions of a database of just under 19,000 films that appeared on the UK film market between 1907 and the end of 1912 that I and a research assistant recently compiled from contemporary trade publications. This paper will present a set of statistical analyses of this (admittedly incomplete) database to illuminate some of the long-term changes that both films and business practice underwent across this six-year period which we already associate with such major changes as the beginning of the Edwardian cinema boom and the rise of a menu of film-specific modes of narrativity. Phenomena observable amongst these more than 12,000,000 feet of negatives include a) the drastic rise in both the number of production companies issuing films in the UK and the total amount of negative footage that they were collectively pouring onto the market, b) the struggle amongst the increasingly oligopolistic US film production industry to challenge French companies for the position of principal supplier of films to the UK market, c) Pathé Frères' success as leading the industry, by example, into instigating a release date system, d) general changes in mean *and* mode film length and the significant differences between national patterns in both of these, e) shifts in the relative proportion of factual and fiction filmmaking being issued to the market, f) production companies clearly deeming certain genres in both of these filmmaking fields to be the most profitable, and g) the tenacity of trick filmmaking. There will, as ever, be charts, graphs and surprises.

5. Lucie Dutton – From Glib-Smooth-Tongued Travellers to Cabbages: Maurice Elvey and British Film Distribution in the 1910s

During the 1910s, the film distribution firms or “renters” became increasingly powerful arbiters of public taste in films, actors and directors. The majority of films shown on British screens were American in origin: my analysis of cinema advertising in Derby in 1915 indicates that 70% of films shown were American and just 21% were British. For a director like Maurice Elvey, therefore, developing good relationships with the renters was essential to building a career. From the days of *Motograph* in 1913, when their regional representatives attempted to interest picture house managers to ‘invitation exhibitions’ of their films, to the elaborate trade show staged by International Exclusives for *Nelson* in 1918 when the film was sold for the record sum of £15,000, much of Elvey's early filmmaking was shaped by distributors, rather than production companies. He benefitted from the change away from film sales depending on what he described as ‘glib smooth-tongued travellers’ to the contested introduction of the “exclusive” system and the growing powers of the renting firms to influence both exhibition and production. As he later explained, ‘I as the producer produce the cabbage, the wholesaler delivers it to the market, to the shopkeeper or the stallkeeper, which is the

cinema, and the wholesaler is in the middle. And he controls everything.' This paper will explore how firms like the Ideal Film Renting Company, Jury's Imperial Pictures, and Apex Films helped shape some of Elvey's most important films of the 1910s.

6. Neil Parsons - American movie-maker Harold Shaw as an agent of British influence 1916-20

There was nothing new about British influencing of overseas public opinion through drama films in the 1940s. The lesson should have been learnt in 1900, and it was certainly learnt in the Great War. After Boer rebellion threatened the pro-Allied regime in South Africa, prestigious pro-British liberal American director Harold Shaw (1877-1926) from London Films was persuaded to go to South Africa and make a pro-Boer epic (*Winning a Continent/ De Voortrekkers*, 1916) with its intended anti-British sting removed. Thereafter he scripted a pro-Empire Anglo-Zulu war epic (*The Symbol of Sacrifice*, 1918) from which he removed any anti-Zulu sting, but was so frustrated by his 'neutral' American employer I.W. Schlesinger that he broke away to make his own movie (*The Rose of Rhodesia*, 1918) that suggested an alternative Anglo-Rhodesian liberality that could quell threatened black rebellion. Returning to financially-troubled London Films after the war, Shaw directed run-of-the mill films until he was persuaded to film the script of 'flamboyant' British intelligence chief Basil Thompson—an anti-Bolshevik romance about Lenin (renamed Lenoff). *The Land of Mystery* (1920), filmed in Lithuania, was shown week after week in London, led to questions being raised in Parliament, and was described in *The Bioscope* as having 'caused more discussion than any British film of the last five years.'

7. Chris Grosvenor - 'Wake Up!': British Cinema, the Outbreak of War, and the Voluntary Recruiting Movement, 1914-1916

Over the last four years of centenary commemorations for the First World War, much academic attention has been given to British filmmaking in this period; notably the impact and influence of official documentary features produced by the War Office, such as *The Battle of the Somme* (1916) and *The Battle of the Ancre and the Advance of the Tanks* (1917). Whilst these films are of the utmost importance to our understanding of the cinema's role during wartime, and how the medium of film was utilised by the British government for propagandist ends, this paper draws attention to an earlier period of filmmaking. Prior to the introduction of conscription in January 1916, the British film industry and trade became actively engaged in the challenges of recruiting a volunteer army, long before the War Office finalised its own committee for war-related film production in late 1915. Examining how the cinema was immediately utilised as a platform for recruitment campaigning and propaganda, targeting the much-needed demographic of young men who were often thought to be 'shirking' their wartime duty in cheap places of entertainment, this paper showcases how the medium was put to use by a nation in the midst of monumental social and cultural upheaval. Foregrounding the general practices, methods and campaigning outcomes of the exhibition sector, attention is also given to the short-lived trend of 'invasion films' such as *If England Were Invaded* (Durrant, 1914), *An Englishman's Home* (Batley, 1914), and *Wake Up! Or, A Dream of Tomorrow* (Cowen, 1914), which were released almost immediately after the declaration of war. Such films, I argue, readily highlight how the medium of film was used to render and propagate sensationalist and provocative imagery in the hope of prompting audience members to enlist.

8. Ellen Cheshire - Lads of the Village: from stage to screen to court

In 2017 the Kings Theatre Portsmouth received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to run a project looking at the role the theatre played during the First World War. Little did we realise that the Theatre had played such an important role. By being paired with academics from Kent and Portsmouth universities we discovered through the Great War Theatre project that due to its location in a busy naval port, the Kings Theatre had premiered a number of WW1 propaganda plays, which then went on to theatrical runs in London and to tour the country. With this in mind, we applied for and were awarded a grant from the Arts Council of England to re-stage one of these plays, a Musical Melodrama, *Lads of the Village* (1917)

written by Chris Harris and Valentine (Book and Lyrics) and James W Tate (Music).

With access to the original script, and having seen the community production at the Kings Theatre, in this paper I will discuss the play (1917 and 2017) including its use of film and its adaptation to the screen in 1919, with a screenplay by Kenelm Foss, directed by Harry Lorraine and the 1921 copyright case.

This paper will fall into three key areas:

- 1) A brief overview of the HLF and ACE funded projects at the Kings Theatre: 'Theatre at War' and 'Lost Plays of World War One'.
- 2) The Lads of Village (1917) play
- 3) The Lads of the Village (1919) film and subsequent legal case (1921).

9. Christina Hink: Between Tradition and Modernity: London of the 1920s

London of the 1920s was a growing and thriving capital city. With a population of over seven million, the metropolis was in the process of rapidly modernising, although this was not without its discontents. Harry B. Parkinson and Frank Miller's 1924 travelogue series *Wonderful London* provides unparalleled visual insight into this quickly changing city. Shown in cinemas throughout Britain, the films show a thriving 1920s metropolis whilst taking viewers on a cinematic exploration of the capitol city. Specifically, I will examine the history, content and form of two of the surviving twelve films – *London Old and New* and *London's Sunday*. Together, the two films expose both explicit and implicit tensions existing in contemporary society. I will argue that London as presented in these two shorts was a city simultaneously historical and modern; rural and urban; mundane and magical. In conclusion, this presentation will show that London of the 1920s existed somewhere between modernity and tradition.

10. Llewella Chapman – 'This sort of sham is to be deprecated': Government policy on filming at Hampton Court Palace, 1910 – 1930

This paper will trace the foundations behind the government's approach towards filmmaking and the production of film at locations under their control, and will focus on the case study of Hampton Court Palace. From 1851, the British government became responsible for the management of this site in an arrangement of the Crown Lands Act, where the government maintained the site on behalf of the reigning monarch 'in right of Crown'. The early film policy applied at this site was designed jointly by the Office of Works and the Lord Chamberlain's Office, and this paper will map the developments of this site's film policy between 1910 until 1930.

I will draw upon documents held within the National Archives, which reveal the relationship between the government and filmmakers who wished to use Hampton Court Palace as a backdrop for their films. These papers demonstrate the opinions of those working in government departments in charge of determining who and what were allowed to film at this site. They also reveal how the film policy relating to Hampton Court Palace adapted and changed in correlation with broader government policies relating to British filmmaking more generally, for example the Cinematograph Films Act 1927, and how new film technologies, in particular the coming of synchronised sound, affected the ways that filmmakers wished to make use of the site, and which created complications for the those working at Hampton Court Palace in relation to the scale of film production requested. This paper will analyse key film projects, both realised and unrealised, including *Royal England: The Story of the Empire's Throne* (1911) and *Hampton Court Palace* (1926), as well as wider cultural events such as the British Film Weeks of 1924. This will help to understand how the government approached allowing filmmakers access to the site, and how rigid their stance was toward film production on location.

11. John Izod – Arthur Dulay and John Grierson: fitting *Drifters* (1929)

This paper arises from an unexpected discovery among materials held in the Grierson Archive at the University of Stirling, a serendipitous moment which triggered investigation. The document in question drew attention to *Drifters*, first screened to audiences at the end of 1929, as located in the short-lived period when British cinemas were midway through the technological transition between the silent and sound modes.

The significant feature of the document is that it registered alternative means by which cinemas could furnish musical accompaniment to *Drifters* at a time when some picture houses owned or rented sheet music for an orchestra; others had turntables; while yet others employed a lone pianist. Dulay's single sheet encompassed these alternatives by recommending –

1. Specific sheet music titles (including names of composers and publishers) for performance by a pianist or an orchestra. 2. Specific catalogued discs for amplified reproduction on non-synchronous phonograph turntables operated in pairs. This system could cover in houses where an orchestra had been dismissed, or play recorded sound effects. 3. Non-specific recommendations to skilled improvisers to play un-scored music that complemented (or “fitted”) the tempo and mood of each scene as cued by *Drifter's* on-screen title cards.

Despite Grierson's enthusiasm for introducing recorded sound as an integral component of cinema, he commented on the fitting of his film (referring specifically to sound on disc) that, “Here and there a score gets under a sequence and makes it six times bigger, but just as often its pulse-beat is not the pulse-beat of the film.”

We shall see how Dulay strove to accommodate both Grierson the filmmaker and the diverse means of accompanying it required to meet the needs of cinemas at a time when firstly, the nascent British documentary did not have the means to produce films made with synchronised sound; and secondly, British picture houses had not installed standardised sound-on-film projection systems.

12. Geoff Brown - DID BRITAIN REALLY INVENT FILM SOUND?

Just at the time when American talkies began to appear in British cinemas in 1928, hustling Britain's film industry towards its own talkie revolution, sentences began to appear in the general and trade press recalling the photographic achievements in 1889 of William Friese-Greene, later generously dubbed “the father of all films”, and the subsequent advances towards film sound made in the 20th century's early decades by other pioneers with British birth certificates – or, failing that, British connections. The names rolled out by patriotic film critics like G. A. Atkinson (*Daily Express*) included Cecil Hepworth and Francis Thomassin (among the numerous purveyors of sound on disc) and, more pertinent to the industry's future commercial developments, those who developed sound on film, including Eugène Lauste (who was French), Lee de Forest (American), and the authentically British, and eccentric, Harry Grindell-Matthews. Alongside Friese-Greene, the photographer Eadweard Muybridge was also dug up as part of the flag-waving effort to Anglicize a world industry just as American talkie voices and American sound systems began their invasion of British studios and cinemas.

This presentation, drawing on print sources of the period and later signs of the times like the romanticized Friese-Greene film biography *The Magic Box* (1951), will not attempt to solve the question of “who came first”, partly because one obvious answer is “Does it really matter?” What matters most in any field is the creative use of new technology, not any niceties of timing. Instead, it will firmly place these claims for Britain's supremacy in the context of the late 1920s' robust anti-American sentiment, and pursue the irony of cinema's forefathers, fathers and experimenters being exhumed and celebrated just when much of their handiwork was either forgotten or being systematically replaced.

13. Nyasha Sibanda – Sound Arrives at the Tudor, 1927-1931: Programmes, Attendance, Graphs

The ledgers of the Tudor Cinema in Leicester have already been the subject of some considerable study, particularly by Steve Chibnall in his work on quota film production and exhibition, and by Guy Barefoot, who provides a detailed and helpful overview of the nature of the records and some of the revelations they contain. The Tudor was situated in Leicester's West End, a thriving working class district less than a mile from the city centre; it took its name from the nearby Tudor Road, a major tributary connecting the local community to the centre of town. It was built in 1914 with 975 seats, expanded to 1,250 in the 1920s. The Tudor faced competition from newly opening super cinemas in and around the city centre during the 1920s and 1930s, but like most neighbourhood cinemas in Britain during this time, its audience was both local and loyal.

This paper aims to shed new light on the coming of sound as experienced by provincial, independent British cinemas. It takes the Tudor as a case study, whose financial records provide an important and revealing window into audience behaviour and programming during the final years of silent cinema, and the first years of sound.

14. Laraine Porter - Elstree melodies and 'the charm of the English voice': musical moments in early British talkies.

As British silent cinema made the transition to sound, film producers were convinced that audiences wanted to hear their stars sing rather than talk. The massive success in British cinemas of early American talkies, *The Jazz Singer* (1927) and its follow-up *The Singing Fool* (1928) seemed to be proof that popular, working class audiences were drawn to music and song rather than dialogue. Anxious to capitalise on their massive investment in sound equipment, film producers and exhibitors needed to see a quick financial return to pay off their debts and sought to please popular tastes despite intellectual and critical disdain from the likes of *Close Up* magazine. But the writers of *Close Up* were not the target audience and from the mid-1920s, musical performance had been the mainstay of hundreds of British Phonofilms, with six produced at Elstree in August 1929 alone.

This presentation will look at British cinema's initial response to the apparent demand for all-singing and dancing films, from the insertion of musical moments in early British talkies like the inclusion of the 'pop song' 'Miss Up to Date' in *Blackmail* (1929) to fully-fledged revues like *Elstree Calling* (1930), to 'putting on a show' and backstage musicals like *Harmony Heaven* (1930) and *Raise the Roof* (1930) that attempted to offer homespun versions of American successes like *Broadway Melody* (1929). Even non-singing stars like Carl Brisson and Madeleine Carroll were expected to break into song in Thomas Bentley's *The American Prisoner* (1929) as links to record companies and the possibility of lucrative music sell-through were incentives to include musical moments. This presentation will consider the ways in which producers both attempted to forge a unique British musical style during the period 1929-1931, while simultaneously emulating popular American formulas. It also posits that the British musical helped delineate and democratise popular cultural tastes, culminating in the early talkies of Gracie Fields and questions why the early sound period saw a flowering of the British musical that was not sustained beyond the 1930s.

“You and I and my Gondola” - Billy Merson

In 1926 Billy Merson made approx. twelve Phonofilms at Clapham of which five are known to survive. “You and I and My Gondola” (In My Gondola!) was written by Merson as a parody of poems by Robert Service, Kipling and others.

1926 was the year when Merson tried to change his career away from being a Music Hall performer to a more serious artist. He had begun the year in a review 'Palladium Pleasures' which included a Harry Lauder Burlesque (which was also made into a Phonofilm). In November, Merson opened his own production: “My Son John”, with music by Oscar Strauss, at the Shaftsbury Theatre. Merson was trying to emulate Jack Buchanan and hoped to follow it up by playing Richard III.

John Citizen's Lament – Charles Paton

In December 1927 Charles Paton was appearing in a panto “The Queen of Hearts” at the Lyceum in which he played the knave. The character of John Citizen was based on a cartoon strip by Strube in the Daily Express. Paton also made a silent short, in the same character, which was directed by Widgely Newman. The song 'If Your Face wants to Laugh, Well Let It' was written by George Barclay for his wife, Kate Carney and arranged as a fox-trot by Ray Noble.

Paton appeared in several hundred British films often in small character roles. He is probably remembered best for playing Anny Ondra's father in “Blackmail”. He died in 1970, aged 96 years.

“The Nightingale's Courtship” - The Plattier Brothers

The Phonofilm was arranged and produced by Robert J. Cullen towards the end of 1926. The Plattier Brothers had performed “The Nightingale's Courtship” at the London Coliseum in January 1926 and at the Victoria Palace in June and December. In January 1927 they returned to the London Coliseum.

“Dandy George and Rosie”

Dandy George was born Albert George Spink in 1869. In 1899, he began his Music Hall act with Rosie, a jack russell. The Phonofilm was probably produced in the USA, since I have found no record of Spink performing in Britain during the Phonofilm years. Spink's first wife was the contortionist Ena Bertoldi who had made two films in 1894 in Edison's Black Maria.

“A Doggy Ditty” - George Jackley

Like several performers in today's programme, George Jackley's Phonofilm would now be considered politically incorrect – with jokes about his wife and mother-in-law, somewhat similar to the humour of Les Dawson. Jackley was the principal comedian in pantos at the Lyceum Theatre in 1925 and 1929 and played Buttons in Cinderella in 1927 at the Palladium and at the Empire Theatre, Bristol in 1928.

In October 1927 he was touring in “Stop, Look, Who's There?” in which he probably sang the song 'Everybody's Going to the Dogs', which had been published by Feldman in July. It was written by James Walsh and Val Watson.

“Teddy Elben with the Phonofilm Cabaret Girls in a Song Scena 'He Walked Right In'”

Very little is known about Teddy Elben, a Jewish stereotypical performer, who made three Phonofilms at the end of 1926, two of which were directed by Robert Cullen and one by Bertram Phillips. In August 1926 he sang 'He Walked Right In' on Radio Cardiff. The Phonofilm advertises 'The New Black Bottom Dance' and ends with 'The Varsity Rag'(?).

N.B. As in a number of the Phonofilms the sound track has some damage and one of the intertitles would today be considered racist.

“Hal Jones, the Famous Lancashire Comedian in a Song Scena 'Swistles'”

Hal Jones is best remembered for his connection with the 'Splinters Concert Party' (along with Reg Noble). Three sound 'Splinters' features were produced between 1929 and 1938.

In 1927 Jones made two Phonofilms - “Canoodling” directed by Widgey Newman, which features a song from 'Splinters' and 'Swistles' which is a parody on Nestle's milk.

“Jack Hodges in Three Numbers”

Jack Hodges made two Phonofilms – a song scena entitled 'To See If My Dreams Come True' and one featuring three songs – 'High Up in the Hills', 'O Sole Mio' and 'Hee I Did Laugh'.

In 'O Sole Mio', he plays a musical saw.

Jack Hodges appeared mainly in reviews and pantos and is probably best remembered today for introducing 'The Raspberry Song'.

“Coney Island Six in Syncopation and Song”

The Phonofilm was probably made in the summer of 1927 around the time that Lawrence Wright (Horatio Nicholls) had Phonofilms made of a number of his performers who were appearing at his three summer shows. The Coney Island Six were in “Sensations of 1927” at Onchan Head, Douglas, Isle Of Man for the summer season. In the Phonfilm they play six numbers – 'Please Tell Me How Many Times', 'Bye, Bye, Blackbird', 'The Black Bottom', 'Where Did You Get Those Eyes', 'Ain't She Sweet' and 'Persian Market'.

The jazz band under Fred Spreadbury had played at the Lido Club in Newman Street in November 1926. During 1927 they became a Music Hall turn. After the Isle Of Man season finished the band appeared at the Palladium in September in 'Jazz It and Footing It', and in December they appeared at the Finsbury Park Empire. Possible musicians in the band are Fred Spreadbury (piano), Eddie Leslie (sax), Ronnie Thomas (trumpet) and Neville Bishop (Charleston).

Most of the American jazz musicians left Britain by the end of 1929 when tougher immigration laws came into place, while, at around the same time, in the USA, there was a relaxation of Prohibition Laws.

I would like to thank Alex Gleeson and Janice Healey for their help with information in compiling these notes.

Ships that Pass in the Night

(Percy Nash, 1922)

Directed by Percy Nash for Screen Plays

Adapted from the novel by Beatrice Harraden

Photography by Sidney L. Eaton

CAS

Francis Roberts	-	Robert Allisten
Filippi Dowson	-	Bernadine Holme
Irene rooke	-	Mrs Esther Allistn
Daisy Markham	-	Mrs Einifred Reffold
Arthur Vezin	-	Mr Reffold

‘Robert Allitsen, a young architect, is compelled by his health to give up his work and enter a sanatorium in Switzerland, where he makes the acquaintance of Bernadine, a bookseller’s niece, who is also seeking a cure. Known as ‘the disagreeable man’ for his selfishness and misanthropy, Robert is gradually softened by Bernadine, who sevotes much of her time to a dying man, neglected by his pleasure loving wife. Shortly after Bernadine’s return to London, Robert’s mother dies and he also is called to England...

A melancholy tale of sick folk and their thwarted ambitions is this clever version of Beatrice Harraden’s novel, adapted and produced by Percy Nash. The interest of the picture consist in skilfully drawn character studies rather than in plot, of which there is very little. The genuine Swiss snow settings (made at Davos Platz) against which most of the action passes add an element of pictorial novelty and charm.

The Love story of an embittered man, robbed of his career by ill-health, and an ailing girl, who meet each other at a Swiss *kurhaus*, is the subject of this film... Artistically [the] tragic ending to a very sombre tale is well justified, but one fears that it will make the picture seem oppressively gloomy to many audiences. Apart from a few rather bitter laughs at the egoism and rudeness of the hero, there is virtually no comedy relief. The two main incidents in the action...

both serve to accentuate the general atmosphere of sorrow and suffering. Save as examples of the misery of life, they are, indeed, irrelevant to the story.

Particularly clever and natural performances are given by Francis Roberts and Filippi Dowson as the ill-fated lovers whose curious but very human characters are drawn with real psychological insight.

Another excellent piece of work is Arthur Vezin's study of the dying husband whose last lonely days are brightened by Bernadine's sympathy.

Despite its lack of plot and its pessimistic tone, *Ships that Pass in the Night* is so uncommonly well produced that it holds one's sympathy throughout. It is scarcely a picture for popular houses, but better class audiences should be attracted by its sensitive, intensely human characterisation. Whatever its value as entertainment, it is undoubtedly an artistic success.'

(Bioscope 29 Sept 1921, p. 59.)

'There is a lack of inspiration in the production of this faded romance which makes it mediocre and commonplace. It is too dreary a theme to be perpetuated on the screen, and the lack of vivid emotion gives the appearance of monotony. It might have been possible to elaborate the philosophy of the influence passing lives have on each other in a mystical and artistic manner, but no such attempt is here made....

Points of Appeal: The quaint, old fashioned atmosphere which pervades the book has been successfully preserved, though possibly this was quite unintentional. A sentimental theme, morbid and religious, will always attract adherents, and this film will prove no exception.'

(Kineweekly 29 Sept 1921, p. 49.)

The Marquis of Bolibar [AKA The Betrayal] (Walter Summers, 1928)

Directed by Walter Summers for British Instructional Films

Produced by H. Bruce Woolfe

Adapted from the novel by Leo Perutz

CAST

Elissa Landi - Francoise-Marie/La Monita

Michael Cogan - Lt. Donop

Hurbert Carter - Col Bellay

Carl Harbord - Lt. Gunther

Jerrold Robertshaw - The Marquis of Bolibar

Cecil Barry, Evelyn Roberts, Gerald Pring, Charles Emerald, Hector Abbas

‘Faultlessly acted, attractively staged and beautifully photographed, *Bolivar* is a meritorious offering of British producers, notable in that it fetures Elissa Landi who, in a double role does even better than in *Underground*. The film introduces an excellent combination of picturesque scenes in sleepy, sunny Spain, and first-rate military thrills, fights, intrigue and romance in the days of Napoleon.’ *Thanet Advertiser*, 16/8/1929, p. 11

‘THE FILM SOCIETY: The main film on Sunday [at the New Gallery, London] was *Bolivar*, directed by Walter Summers. This is the first time the Society has shown a feature-length British film, partly because the best British films have been widely shown in the ordinary way. *The Marquis of Bolibar* was booked for pre-release at a West End theatre, but the proprietors of the theatre started in the meantime to run talking films, which were so successful that they preferred to pay forfeit rather than revert to silence. Thus the Society felt justified in taking the film up.

In adapting Leo Perutz’s novel of the Peninsula War, Mr Summers undertook a very difficult task, and I do not think he has altogether succeeded with it. The ‘Wandering Jew’ theme, which played an important part in the novel, has been excised altogether, but even so the film remains too complex, too crowded. In order to keep up with

the complex plot, the action has to be driven forward rather jerkily, and so many scenes are alike in photographic tone that mind and eye are both fatigued.' *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* 7/5/1929, p. 8

'This dramatic page culled from the annals of the Peninsular War is based on a novel by Leo Perutz. It is another fine example of British screen-craft, and again we owe it to Walter Summers. He is here in more romantic mood but that curious undercurrent of inexorable fate which makes itself felt in *The Lost Patrol* is even more evident in *Bolibar*. The tragically ironical story of love and war plays around and in the besieged city of Bolibar, which is in the hands of the Hessians serving under the French flag. The picturesque old Marquis of Bolibar has made his way to the Anglo-Spanish camp, where he arranges three signals to be sent from within the town to the besieging troops without. Though the Marquis is caught and shot, the Hessian officers themselves, caught in the net of a love-intrigue in rivalry with their own Colonel are the blind instruments destined to release those signals. The plot is so intricate – wheels within wheels; and it needed the imagination, the skill, and the courage of a Walter Summers to weave the threads into a smoothly fascinating pattern. Mr Summers successfully suggests the required atmosphere by his lighting, his settings, the composition of his groups. Every detail is considered and has its bearing on the plot. As in *The Lost Patrol* the ensemble is of greater importance than individual performances. It is therefore impossible to single out one actor from an excellent cast. The only female part of importance is in the hands of Elissa Landi, who plays with charm and intelligence but lacks the driving force that would have lifted her big scenes above mere piquancy.' *The Sketch* 26/6/1929, p. 82.

THE TRAVELLER AND THE TEMPLE OF KNOWLEDGE (Chapter 6 of 'Ships that Pass in the Night'*) by BEATRICE HARRADEN

COUNTLESS ages ago a Traveller, much worn with journeying, climbed up the last bit of rough road which led to the summit of a high mountain. There was a temple on that mountain. And the Traveller had vowed that he would reach it before death prevented him. He knew the journey was long, and the road rough. He knew that the mountain was the most difficult of ascent of that mountain chain, called "The Ideals." But he had a strongly-hoping heart and a sure foot. He lost all sense of time, but he never lost the feeling of hope.

"Even if I faint by the way-side," he said to himself, "and am not able to reach the summit, still it is something to be on the road which leads to the High Ideals."

That was how he comforted himself when he was weary. He never lost more hope than that; and surely that was little enough.

And now he had reached the temple.

He rang the bell, and an old white-haired man opened the gate. He smiled sadly when he saw the Traveller.

"*And yet another one,*" he murmured. "What does it all mean?"

The Traveller did not hear what he murmured.

"Old white-haired man," he said, "tell me; and so I have come at last to the wonderful Temple of Knowledge. I have been journeying hither all my life. Ah, but it is hard work climbing up to the Ideals."

The old man touched the Traveller on the arm. "Listen," he said gently. "This is not the Temple of Knowledge. And the Ideals are not a chain of mountains; they are a stretch of plains, and the Temple of Knowledge is in their centre. You have come the wrong road. Alas, poor Traveller!"

The light in the Traveller's eyes had faded. The hope in his heart died. And he became old and withered. He leaned heavily on his staff.

"Can one rest here?" he asked wearily.

"No."

"Is there a way down the other side of these mountains?"

"No."

"What are these mountains called?"

"They have no name."

"And the temple—how do you call the temple?"

"It has no name!"

"Then I call it the Temple of Broken Hearts," said the Traveller.

And he turned and went. But the old white-haired man followed him.

"Brother," he said, "you are not the first to come here, but you may be the last. Go back to the plains, and tell the dwellers in the plains that the Temple of True Knowledge is in their very midst; any one may enter it who chooses, the gate is not even closed. The Temple has always been in the plains, in the very heart of life, and work, and daily effort. The philosopher may enter, the stone-breaker may enter. You must have passed it every day of your life; a plain, venerable building, unlike your glorious cathedrals."

"I have seen the children playing near it," said the Traveller. "When I was a child I used to play there. Ah, if I had only known! Well, the past is the past."

He would have rested against a huge stone, but that the old white-haired man prevented him.

"Do not rest," he said. "If you once rest there, you will not rise again. When you once rest, you will know how weary you are."

"I have no wish to go farther," said the Traveller. "My journey is done; it may have been in the wrong direction, but still it is done."

"Nay, do not linger here," urged the old man. "Retrace your steps. Though you are broken-hearted yourself, you may save others from breaking their hearts. Those whom you meet on this road, you can turn back. Those who are but starting in this direction you can bid pause and consider how mad it is to suppose that the Temple of True Knowledge should have been built on an isolated and dangerous mountain. Tell them that although God seems hard, He is not as hard as all that. Tell them that the Ideals are not a mountain range, but their own plains, where their great cities are built, and where the corn grows, and where men and women are toiling, sometimes in sorrow and sometimes in joy."

"I will go," said the Traveller.

And he started.

But he had grown old and weary. And the journey was long; and the retracing of one's steps is more toilsome than the tracing of them. The ascent, with all the vigour and hope of life to help him, had been difficult enough; the descent, with no vigour and no hope to help him, was almost impossible.

So that it was not probable that the Traveller lived to reach the plains. But whether he reached them or not, still he had started.

And not many Travellers do that.

*NB this chapter is unique in the novel in offering a story 'outside' of the main narrative.

WRITERS IN THEIR HOMES

The Author of "Ships that Pass in the Night."



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Miss Beatrice Harraden, whose last story, *Katherine Frensham*, has met with the success that attends all this writer's books, was born in Hampstead, and has lived there for the greater part of her life—apart from travel, particularly in California. Her most famous book, *Ships that Pass in the Night*, has sold in countless thousands, but a very considerable success has attended all her other works, including *Hilda Strafford*, *The Fowler*, and the novel which has just commanded an enormous sale. This picture was taken by our photographer at Miss Harraden's home in South Hampstead.

