



THE CINEMA MUSEUM

NEWSLETTER

Since the last newsletter we have several new Patrons, and they are now—Lindsay Anderson, individualistic film and theatre director whose films include 'This Sporting Life', 'O Lucky Man' and 'Britannia Hospital'; The Rt Hon Gerald Kaufman M.P., a 'self-confessed' filmgoer, defender of civil rights and author of a book of movie reminiscences, 'My Life on the Silver Screen'; Ken Loach TV and film director whose films include 'Cathy Come Home', 'Kes' and 'Fatherland'. Leslie Megahey is a writer and director of drama and documentary films for BBC TV. Recent programmes include 'Artists and Models', 'Rodin' and 'The Last Moguls' (Golan and Globus). Michael Powell, legendary director of films including 'Black Narcissus', 'The Red Shoes', and 'Peeping Tom';



Thelma Schoonmaker, film editor best known for her work on Martin Scorsese films notably 'Taxi Driver', 'Raging Bull' and his latest, 'The Color of Money'; John Schlesinger, film director whose work includes: 'Midnight Cowboy', 'Sunday Bloody Sunday', and 'The Falcon and the Snowman'; and Liam O'Leary, the noted Irish archivist and author of books on Rex Ingram and the silent cinema. At present he is writing a book on the history of Irish film.

The Management Committee currently consists of Malcolm Billingsley, Tony Fletcher, Ronald Grant, Edith Head, Martin Humphries, Chris Knowles, Linda Polan and Richard Napper—General Manager of The Gate Cinema Notting Hill.

Our regular film shows have continued and over the past year we have shown a wide variety of work including films featuring Joan Crawford, Anna Neagle, Buck



Jones, Peter Finch, Kay Kendall, Michael Redgrave, Colleen Moore, Robert de Niro, Richard Barthelmess, Loretta Young, Tab Hunter, Rock Hudson. Directors included Alfred Hitchcock, Roman Polanski, John Frankenheimer, Bernard Vorhaus, Fritz Lang, Carol Reed, as well as Michael Powell, Lindsay Anderson, Martin Scorsese and others.

Because of our very limited seating we are not able to accommodate all those who wish to come. With our *Friends of the Cinema Museum* we hope to be able to ensure that all supporters of the Museum are able to attend at least 3 or 4 shows during the course of the year.



Ken Loach

Liam O'Leary

Our two most recent patrons

A small party of Friends from the Museum visited The Bakelite Museum in East Dulwich. We were all overwhelmed by the extraordinary array of plastic based items that Patrick Cook—founder and curator—has collected. Because the art-deco flat the museum occupied was to be rehabilitated and re-let by the local council Patrick dismantled the museum the week following our visit and since then it has been in storage awaiting a new home. At this time Patrick lent us a polished aluminium and black vitriolite art-deco paybox from a Bristol cinema to be cared for until his Museum is properly housed.

Paul Francis has deposited hundreds of prints of his photos of cinemas and we are planning an exhibition of these as soon as we can arrange it.



Flashback, the award-winning TV production company, borrowed stills and display frames for Fifties Features—a TV series about women in films in the 1950's shown on Channel 4.



In August we showed an early British talkie, 'Love's Old Sweet Song', starring



John Stuart. We were very pleased to have Jonathan and Jan Croall, his son and daughter in law, view the film with us. Jonathan who is interested in his father's work had not seen this one before. John Stuart's (real name John Croall) first film was in 1920 and this 1933 production was his 73rd film. He continued appearing in films until shortly before his death in 1979. His last screen appearance was in 1978 in 'Superman', his 161st feature film.

Frontroom Productions, makers of 'Maevie', 'Acceptable Levels', 'Ursula and Glenys', 'Intimate Strangers' and 'Skin' came and videoed Martin, Ronald and film collector David Gillespie for the initial stages of a proposed television programme based at the Museum.



It was a great shock to find that the slightly faded but immaculate Rex Haslemere, which Ronald had visited shortly before, had closed and was already half-demolished. It was an exceptionally well maintained example of a stylish 1930's cinema which had a great many of its original features remaining. Moves had been made locally to have the building listed as of architectural and historic interest but without success. Many people felt that this activity may have contributed to the speed at which the cinema was closed and the wreckers brought in. A frantic race against time followed and Ronald managed to buy several items for the Museum from the owner and the contractors. They included the still-frames and display cases, the complete set of 'ocean liner' style front doors, some of the silverware and cutlery (all monogrammed Rex) and the chromium furniture from the cinema cafe. In some cases these items were rescued under the very noses of the bulldozers in difficult and dangerous conditions.

Ronald was greatly helped by Andy Walsh who gamely struggled with him to get a Kalee 11 projector and Western Electric 3A Soundhead down five flights of stairs from the projection room, across flooded landings, in freezing conditions through the site into the van. Richard Napper gave spontaneously of his limited time to dismantle and bring back the doors and cafe furniture in the van generously lent for the day by Patrick Cook of the Bakelite Museum. Ronald photographed and shot some film of the demolition.



Thanks to Frank Hillier who alerted us that a Granada cinemas 'cartwheel' type chandelier was lying ready to be broken up in the foyer of the partly destroyed Welling Granada. Ronald, Richard Napper and five workmen managed to get it into a van and with some difficulty, the chandelier, 7ft across squeezed into the museum's store.

On the 24th March 1986 the nearby Ritzy Cinema (now the only working cinema in Brixton) celebrated the 75th anniversary of its opening as The Electric Pavilion on 24 March 1911. The Museum put on an exhibition covering its history and that of the other former Brixton



cinemas as well as a display of our future plans for the Museum. We decorated the foyer with old star portraits, film posters, and advertising material concerning the original opening. Terry Smith, Tony Fletcher and Diane Peltier wore uniforms from the Museum's collection which came originally from the Donald's cinema circuit in Aberdeen. Martin and Ronald modelled



recently acquired uniforms from the Rex Haslemere. Ronald projected some trailers from the 50s, which brought the house down, and the silent film programme. This was a series of early shorts and F W Murnau's 'Sunrise' accompanied live by Richard McLaughlin's 'Cine Chimera', six musicians improvising. The evening was free to all Ritzy patrons who enjoyed a glass of wine whilst looking at the exhibition and the films. There was a full house and much interest shown in the exhibition.

Several committee members and well wishers turned out to help including an enthusiastic friend of the Archive, Francis Howard-Gwynne. At one time relief manager of the Palladium cinema (now the Fridge nightclub) opposite he used to play the mighty Wurlitzer organ there to packed houses. Now aged eighty he especially enjoyed the silent film programme. Everyone agreed it was a very enjoyable event.

Ronald was asked by the CTA, of which he is a member, if he would organise on their behalf a visit to the cinemas of Brix-



ton. This took place on the afternoon of Sunday April 20th and started at the Ritzy, took in the former Palladium, followed by a walk up Brixton Hill to see the remaining frontage of the 1911 Pyke's Cinematograph Theatre now a tent and tarpaulin shop, the site of the Theatre de Luxe in Acre Lane, the Electric Theatre and the Promenade Picture Palace in Atlantic Road, the Pleasureland Picture Hall in Station Road and the Duke of York's/Gaiety now an LEB showroom in Brixton Road. Everyone was very impressed with the partial restoration of the Brixton Astoria, now the Academy rock venue. The tour finished at 5pm in the former Empress Theatre now a Granada bingo hall. The



Foyer of Granada, Welling, with 'cartwheel' type chandelier.

tour was well attended with a turn out of over 90 people. This, combined with the research that he did for the Ritz's anniversary, has inspired Ronald to produce a booklet covering the history of cinema in the area. He and Tony Fletcher are now working on this.

The media continue to use the Archive for reference and research in connection with programmes and articles about films and personalities. As this is our principal source of income for the moment it will remain separate from, but available to, the Museum and continue to be housed in the same building.

The museum lent some props for 'Waiting To Leave' a play directed by Brix-



ton actor and Friend of the Museum Okon Ubangâ-Jones. The play which had a London tour was about two usherettes accidentally locked in a cinema overnight.

In September Ronald and Martin visited Aberdeen. On their last visit in 1982 they had passed over a number of items which this time were purchased. In the end it added up to a full van load including two photographic enlargers given to the Museum by the Aberdeen filmmaker Ron Miller. A large number of 16mm films were also purchased. Ronald spent some time in Glasgow and re-established contact with Janet McBain at The Scottish Film Archive. She would like prints from the negatives showing Aberdeen cinemas



donated to us by Jim Brooks and offered to supplement our photographic record of Scottish cinemas. Whilst there he enjoyed the generous hospitality of Ronald Singleton of the cinema family and he took the opportunity to take a photo-record of the Singleton circuit of cinemas, now on bingo.

At a sale in the Hippodrome Wisbech, formerly the old Town Hall, a number of showcases, several hundred advertising lantern slides and 14,000 feet of 16mm film which included coming attraction trailers for over 150 films, were acquired by the Archive for the Museum.



Tony Fletcher visited the silent film festival 'I Pionieri del Cinema Scandinavo 1896-1918' in Pordenone, Italy from September 29th to October 4th on behalf of the Museum and had a fantastic time. He saw over 100 films from Denmark and Sweden made between 1906 and 1918. Tony says he can tell a Nordisk film blind-



Cinema House, Skene Terrace, Aberdeen, in the 1930's.

Courtesy Jim Brooks.

fold. As a result of the visit we are now in contact with a number of overseas Archives. Tony and Ronald have started the mammoth job of putting Graham Head's collection and other film material onto video. We have already sent a tape with copies of two silent films to the Danish Film Museum. We have decided to join Domitor, a new organisation to promote the study of early film.

In October we were hosts to some members of the Harry Roy Society who

The Harry Roy

Appreciation Society



asked us to show for them a feature film starring Harry Roy and his Band. In return they made a donation of £40 to the Museum.

Ronald interviewed James Falconer who for many years wrote the Projectionists Page in the ABC News, the house journal of ABC cinemas. James talked on tape about his working life as a cinema projectionist.

Tony Fletcher similarly recorded George Hoare, the archivist of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane who had been a projectionist at the time sound films were introduced and a manager with Stoll Moss Theatres for nearly 50 years. He also talked about his early days in Brixton, and his memories



of Renée Adorée and her family. This is the third of a series of Oral History tapes which will be transcribed and made available for research purposes.

The feasibility study suggested by Lambeth Council, which was underwritten by the late lamented GLC, has now been completed by Peter Jenkinson of Weybridge Museum and URBED. We are currently using this to help us in our search for permanent premises and for fundraising.

We regret the passing of the GLC and would like to thank Illyd Harrington, J.P., Ken Livingstone, Bob Crossman, Andy Harris and Alan Tomkins for their goodwill and support of the project. As well as Mike Bright, former Lambeth Councillor, for his support.

Recorded Cinemas, the new owners of the Gate Cinema Notting Hill borrowed and photographed some programmes from its time as The Embassy to display in the foyer at the cinema's reopening after be-



ing thoughtfully redecorated and refurbished.

We have had several groups and individual students visit to research, video and photograph items in the Museum and study material from our film collection held on video.



On the afternoon of Sunday 10 May we held a benefit for the Museum. The owners of Brixton's Ritzy Cinema very generously let us have the cinema without charge. There was a party for invited guests followed by a screening of assorted film pieces from our archive entitled 'Collector's Items'. To the party were invited all of our Friends, supporters and people from the film industry both before and behind the cameras. On the stage, video monitors showed telecined extracts from the film collection whilst the guests ate and drank. They were later joined by a good house who turned out on a sunny Sunday afternoon in response to extensive editorial coverage in local and national newspapers and a prime evening spot on TV news (which resulted in a stream of phone calls that evening). An enthusiastic and exuberant audience adored the old serials, vintage trailers and ancient ads reeled off over the next couple of hours. It was a splendid afternoon with marvellous food, and people gave generously in response to an excellent presentation by Martin Humphries on the hopes and needs of the Museum. We raised just over £700. Thanks to everyone who bought a ticket or put money (including two £50 notes) in the bucket.

From the Ritzy we would like to thank Pat and Andy Foster; Clare Binns, Sally Stamp, Terry Smith, Suzanne Janssen, Philippa Peckham and David Kirkup. For making the benefit possible we'd especially like to thank Andy Walsh who spent a whole day preparing the delicious food, Elizabeth Burton, Jim Kearley, Shirley Lanstone, David Newlyn-Gale, Edward Harbour, Simon Cornish, Fred Goodland, Ralph Copeman, Ken Brown, Peter Haigh, David Gillespie, Audie Philip, Tony Saffrey, Pete Freer and Karen, Laura, Savat, Richard and Tony from the Oval House Photographic Workshop for all the time, energy and labour spent on making the event such a splendid success.



We are most appreciative for the many donations, especially from the following people: Michelle Garet, Thorn EMI Video, Tony Fletcher, Chris Knowles, Linda Polan, Robert Smith and Frontroom Productions, Keith Howes and BFY staff, Simon Rigge (Sheldrake Press), Paul Oremland (Kinesis Films), Michael Powell, Annie Ballard, Janet McBain, Bill Thornycroft, David Newlyn-Gale, Richard Napper, Dave Smith, Andy Garner, Penny Ashbrook, Clare Beavan, Peter Haig, John Cresswell, George Rait, Ernie Rankin, Keith Farbridge, Mr Pue, J. Sainsbury p.l.c., and especial thanks to Audie Philip for his regular packets of presscuttings for our files.

Thanks also to: Peter Spanton, Johnny Laws, Simon Olding, Morag Barton, Anthony Lipman, Ian Wall, John MacGregor, Pat & Andy Foster, George Rimmington, Roy Potter, Peter Jenkinson, Nick Falk, Robin Jones, Nigel Hawker, Alan Clark, Mike Perrot, Jim Kiwanuka, Rajeyasingam.

The
Picturegoer
ONE SHILLING MONTHLY

In spite of careful checking we regret that in the last newsletter the photographs of the Towcester cinema very kindly lent by Shirley Hind, librarian of the Architects Journal, were in error credited to the Architectural Association. Sorry.

The Cinema Museum is financially supported by the London Borough of Lambeth.

Raleigh Hall
1-3 Effra Road
London SW2 01-737 3208