



THE CINEMA MUSEUM

By Dave Locke

Over the last two and a half years I have spent a lot of my spare time helping at the Cinema museum in Kennington South London. This is housed in the Masters House, part of an old Victorian Lambeth Workhouse in which Charlie Chaplin resided

for a short time as a 9 year old child when his mother faced destitution. The Museum is a charitable organisation founded in 1986, and the contents range from items relating to film production, film exhibition and to the experience of cinema going. Film and equipment of all gauges, posters, costumes, carpets, books, periodicals, seats, etc - etc and just about any type of Cinema related artefacts.

This is an incredible Aladdin's treasure trove and a place that must be visited by any one with an interest in films, or the history of the cinema.



OPEN WEEKENDS 27-28 JUNE and 19-20 SEPT 2009



For the first time an open weekend was held at the end of June 2009, during which time we had over 300 visitors come through the doors.

The weekend contained an exhibition about Chaplin by Anna Odrich including a 6 metre high pattern for a commemorative statue celebrating Charlie Chaplin's connections to Kennington and the Master's House which we occupy. This pattern was created by Anna and volunteer George Parnell and is prominent in the centre of the large exhibition hall. Anna is working to find out local opinion about having the figure created in steel and erected in central Kennington, also how to raise the necessary finance and explore the planning issues. Throughout the weekend many visitors joined guided tours with Anna Odrich, and attended illustrated talks by film archivist David Cleveland on rescuing home movies, and the history of the various film gauges. Film costume



designer Hazel Pethig talked about her work on the Monty Python films and Blackadder and the recent film Photographing Fairies, and Jenny Hammerton gave an edible talk on "The recipes of the stars". With Grant Lobban's assistance I managed the Museums screening room over the whole weekend with great success, including a special Chaplin silent shorts show which was

superbly accompanied live on the Piano and Mellatron by Tom Bell.

This picture shows some of the helpers for the weekend - many of them were dressed in commissionaire's uniforms or usherette's outfits from the collection, which all added to the fun.

After the enormous success of this weekend a second event was held in September - tied in with London's Open House weekend. This was another successful



event - but without the earlier talks, and throughout which I ran a mixed bag of shorts in the screening room that visitors could dip in and out of. On the Sunday we had a visit from film director Terry Gilliam who came to be interviewed for TV about his



latest film. He was also filmed talking to Ronald Grant whilst he was shown around the building as part of a new documentary being made about the museum. Totally fascinated by what he had seen, he then sat for about ten minutes watching the wartime shorts I was showing - before rushing off for another TV interview.

HOME MOVIE DAY 17 OCT 2009

The seventh Annual International Home Movie Day took place on 17th October in over 14 countries and at numerous venues in each. It was held at two in the UK, at Bradford in the National Media Museum, and at the Cinema Museum in Kennington. Despite the Ealing Film Collectors Convention being on the same day this was a huge success. The first people arrived with their films 10 minutes after the opening, and they didn't stop coming until after 4pm. We had far too many films to presented, showing selections from each person and overrunning past the closing time of 5pm. In the afternoon film archivist David Cleveland did another talk on the history of amateur film making and home movie gauges. I ran the film clips and it was very popular. Several rolls of Super 8 were shot during the day, which will be



encoded and put online and then shown at next year's event. Screens were set up and people's films shown all over the building, some in the corridors. There were lots of standard 8, super 8, 9.5, and 16mm, and films on all sorts of subjects, many shot by people's fathers or grandfathers and being seen by their owners for the first time. Late in the afternoon we were privileged to show some

of film star Phyllis Calvert's home movies presented by her grandson Thomas Dyton. The final films shown included 9.5mm scenes of Crystal Palace in 1936 – filmed a few days after the great exhibition building burnt down. It was a lot of hard work for all concerned, but a most enjoyable day.