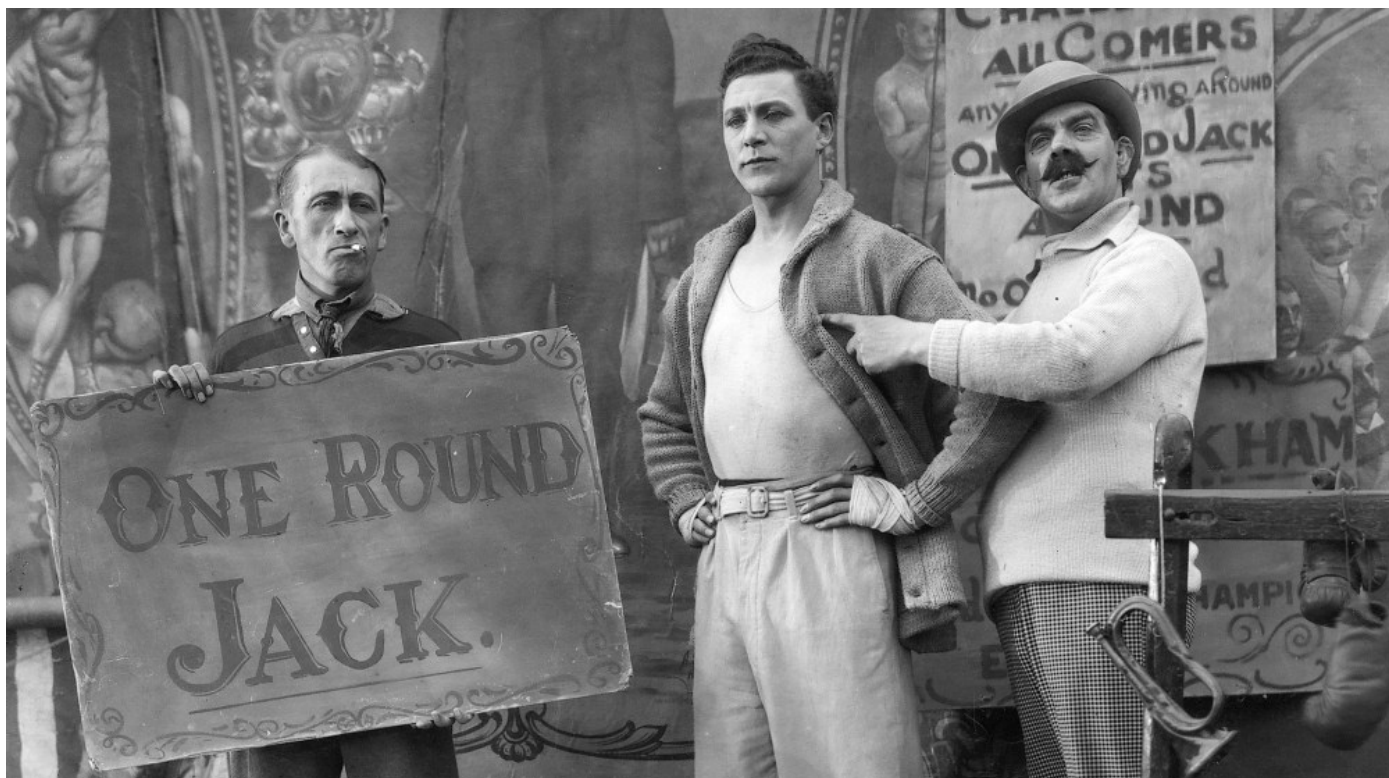


THE 8TH ANNUAL  
KENNINGTON BIOSCOPE  
**SILENT FILM WEEKEND**



APRIL 5TH-6TH, 2025

SATURDAY	
10.00	BOY WOODBURN (UK 1922)
11.45	BLAZING A TRAIL: FIVE ACTRESSES FROM THE SILENT SCREEN
1.15	LUNCH
2.00	REVOLUTIONSHOCHZEIT/THE LAST NIGHT (GERMANY 1920)
4.00	NASTY WOMEN: BREAKING PLATES & SMASHING THE PATRIARCHY
5.45	THE YELLOW LILY (US 1920)
7.00	DINNER
8.00	THE RING (UK 1927)

SUNDAY	
10.00	THE SEA URCHIN (UK 1926)
11.45	RESTORATIONS AND DISCOVERIES
1.15	LUNCH
2.00	DIE STRASSE/THE STREET (GERMANY 1923)
3.50	FOCUS ON BIOGRAPH
5.45	IF I WERE SINGLE (US 1927)
7.00	DINNER
8.00	THE TRAIL OF '98 (US 1920)

MUSICIANS: Neil Brand, Costas Fotopoulos, Cyrus Gabrysch, Stephen Horne, Meg Morley, Colin Sell & Ashley Valentine.

Programme curated by Tony Fletcher, Dave Glass and Bob Geoghegan.  
Notes edited by Glenn Mitchell. Design and layout by Matthew Ross.

With thanks to the Kennington Bioscope Team and to our many contributors: Neil Alcock, Christopher Bird, Kevin Brownlow, Liz Cleary, Bryony Dixon, Michelle Facey, Tony Fletcher, Bob Geoghegan, Dave Glass, Glenn Mitchell, Lawrence Napper, Dave Peabody, Kelly Robinson, Tony Saffrey, John Sweeney, Amran Vance. Thanks also to David Lavelli, and of course to our projectionist Phil Clark and The Cinema Museum's team of volunteers.



# BOY WOODBURN (UK 1922)

George Clark Productions. Released 8<sup>th</sup> May 1922.

Directed by Guy Newall. Scenario: Guy Newall.

**Cast:** Ivy Duke ("Boy" Woodburn), Guy Newall (Jim Silver), A. Bromley Davenport (Old Matt Woodburn), Mary Rorke (Ma Woodburn), Cameron Carr (Jaggers), Douglas Munro (Joses), John Alexander ("Monkey" Brand), Charles Evemy (Albert Edward), Eric Grey (Jerry), James Guidery (Stanley).

*Boy Woodburn* is a charming, if slight, drama set in the world of horse training and steeplechase racing, adapted from the novel by Alfred Ollivant, most famous for *Owd Bob*, which would also be filmed, in 1924. The racing drama became a perennially popular story for novels and films, with its opportunities for beautiful scenery, scheming rivalry between trainers and thrilling finales. Its simple appeal would never be the stuff of high art but the sheer number of racing films down the years, from *Come On George!* (1939) and *Champions* (1984) to *Seabiscuit* (2004) demonstrate that there are plenty of legs left in the genre.

*Boy Woodburn* is a bit like an early version of *National Velvet*, starring Ivy Duke as 'Boy', a young girl with ambitions to win the Grand National, with the horse she hand-reared from a colt. Riding is in her blood, as the daughter of a racing horse trainer. An extra frisson is given by the scandalous implication that a girl jockey might ride in the big race, in an era (only ending in 1977) when this was forbidden. The other obstacles to her progress arise from the fierce rivalry inherent in the world of racing, where fortunes are made or lost on the big races, engendering the dastardly schemes of doping and nobbling. Alongside this basic format is a romance with neighbouring horse fancier, Jim Silver, played as his usual 'strong silent' type by the director Guy Newall.

Critics and reviewers of the film were unanimous in their praise of the well photographed locations on the glorious Sussex downs but were disappointed in the filming of the final race. Presumably this is stock footage filmed at the actual Aintree event. George Clark Films were often under-funded but to stage a blow by blow, horse on horse, racing sequence, as described in the novel, would probably have been beyond the means of even the major filmmaking companies in Britain. That same underfunding and tiny London studio in Ebury Street did at least oblige the producers to focus on exterior shooting in their films, which would turn out to be an advantage. Guy Newall, the clever actor, writer, director and driving force behind the George Clark films was one of the great hopes of the British Film industry of the 1920s and produced some of the most interesting and best acted dramas of the decade. The company fell foul of the financial and economic difficulties in the British industry at this time and Newall never quite fulfilled his potential.

Another niggle of the *Bioscope* critic was the 'careless' use of obscure Sussex dialect, principally by Boy's father, which audiences couldn't hope to understand. Interestingly the use of Cumbrian dialect in Ollivant's *Owd Bob*, adapted for the screen by Henry Edwards in 1924, was seen as a major selling point, even in America. But about the performances there were no doubts. Guy Newall and Ivy Duke, who would marry a year later, had natural chemistry. They were both fine actors with considerable experience but would really shine in their roles together. The character roles were all admirably played, with A. Bromley Davenport bringing a taste of old Sussex as Matt Woodburn and Jim Alexander particularly good as the jockey, "Monkey".

The nitrate print was acquired by the BFI National Archive sometime in the 1950s and duplicated in the 1990s. This is only its second public screening since originally released.

Bryony Dixon

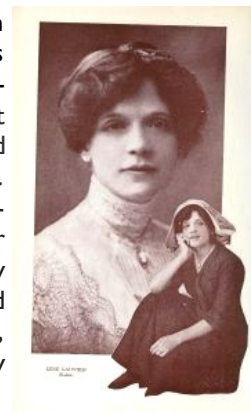


## BLAZING A TRAIL: FIVE ACTRESSES OF THE EARLY SILENT SCREEN

*Profiling a quintet of some of the most influential women in early cinema. Presented by Dave Peabody.*

### GENE GAUNTIER: B. MAY 1885 (KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI) – D. DECEMBER 1966 (MEXICO) (AGE 81)

A true pioneer of the motion picture industry, Gene Gauntier worked as a writer, director, and actress in films from mid 1906 to 1920. She wrote screenplays for 42 films, performed in 87 films and is credited as the director of *The Grandmother*. The first "Kalem Girl" was the pre-eminent figure at the Kalem Film Manufacturing Company working for them variously in the USA, Ireland and the Far East. Gene wrote the script and acted the part of the Virgin Mary in the Company's feature length *From The Manger to the Cross*, filmed in authentic locations in both Egypt and Palestine. The film would prove both controversial and profitable. In December 1912 she left Kalem to form the Gene Gauntier Feature Players Company, a decision enthusiastically hailed by the *Moving Picture World* noting that she was popular "the world over". Gene would later write, "In addition to playing the principal parts, I also wrote, with the exception of a bare half-dozen, every one of the pictures in which I appeared. I picked locations, supervised sets, passed on tests, co-directed with Sidney Olcott". After her adventuresome motion picture career, in 1919 she became a journalist, working as the film and drama critic for the *Kansas City Post*. In 1928 Gene would publish her autobiography appropriately titled "Blazing The Trail".



### THE LAD FROM OLD IRELAND (1910 – Sidney Olcott) with Sidney Olcott, Gene Gauntier, Jane Wolfe, J.P McGowan, Robert G. Vignola, Laurene Santley (Ph: George K. Hollister) (Script: Gene Gauntier) (12mins 15 secs).

The film was the first ever production by an American movie studio to be filmed on location outside of the United States. Filming took place around Cork and Killarney in Ireland and in New York City. As well as directing, Sydney Olcott takes the lead role as "The Lad". Two other cast members J.P. McGowan (an Election agent) and Robert G. Vignola (man in Campaign office) would also become directors. Also in the Kalem touring company is Jane Wolfe who has a small part as a New York socialite.

### JANE WOLFE: MARCH 1875 (ST. PETERSBURG, PENN.) – MARCH 1958 (GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA) (AGE 83)



As a young girl, Wolfe went to New York City to pursue a career in the theatre but soon became involved with acting in the fledgling motion picture industry. She made her debut in 1910 at the age of 35 with Kalem in *A Lad from Old Ireland* under the direction of Sidney Olcott. In 1911, Wolfe was part of the Kalem Company's crew in New York City who relocated to the company's new production facilities in California. Her distinctive features and the fact that she was an excellent actress meant that she rarely lacked work. Wolfe went on to become one of the leading character actors of the decade, appearing in more than one hundred films including an important role in the 1917 film *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*. In 1919, at the age of 43, Wolfe began a correspondence with British occultist Aleister Crowley which would lead to her turning her back on acting so as to become a follower of Crowley's religious order Thelema. She would join Crowley at his Abbey of Thelema at Cefalu, Sicily, living there from 1920 until 1923. Wolfe returned to California and, starting in 1937, taught Dramatics and Speech Development on the evening theatrical course in Pasadena. From 1938 Wolfe served as a chairman of the Cultural Arts Programme of Los Feliz Women's Club, chairman of the Drama Section of the same club.

### THE MEXICAN JOAN OF ARC (1911 – George Melford) with Jane Wolfe, Carlyle Blackwell, Alice Joyce (11mins 40secs).

Filmed in Glendale, California by the Kalem Company, Melford's use of casting, costumes and location, create a convincing picture of a fictional tale set during the Mexican revolution. Jane Wolfe is a commanding figure as the widowed wife who swears an oath of vengeance against her husband's executioner.

### LAURA SAWYER: FEBRUARY 1885 (IRON COUNTY, MISSOURI) – SEPTEMBER 1970 (MATAWAN, NEW JERSEY) (AGE 85).

Sawyer began her career on stage with the Otis Skinner theatrical company and performed in Shakespeare's plays for two years. She joined the Edison Studios while still in her early twenties. She almost immediately found stardom at Edison and remained with the studio until 1913. Her most memorable performance during the period was probably playing the title role in *The Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter* (1912). Over her tenure with his film studio Thomas Edison was said to have considered Sawyer as his favourite actress. She later joined the Famous Players Film Company where she played Kate Kirby in the detective films *Chelsea 7750*, *An Hour Before Dawn* and *The Port of Doom*, all released in 1913, and was praised for her performance in *The Daughter of the Hills*, also produced in 1913. In 1914, she starred with Betty Harte in *A Woman's Triumph* where they played roles as sisters of widely different temperament. Sawyer's last known film appearance was in *The Daughter of the People*, produced by the Dyreda Art Film Corporation in 1915.



LAURA SAWYER  
Photoplay Star

## **A ROMANCE OF THE CLIFF DWELLERS (1911 – J. Searle Dawley) with Laura Sawyer, Herbert Prior, James Gordon (14mins 50secs)**

Filmed mostly on location at the historic Manitou Cliff Dwellings, Colorado, dating back 800 to 1000 years old, J. Searle Dawley fashions a dramatic story of primitive love. Laura Sawyer is an Indian girl who by spurning the rough advances of an undesired suitor places her true love, and herself, in mortal danger. Some sources have credited Edwin S. Porter as the director but... Porter had left Edison in 1909. Dawley was born in Colorado, attended college in Denver, not far from the Manitou site, so it can be assumed that he knew of the Dwellings. Laura Sawyer was a mainstay of Dawley's unit, travelling with him on locations as disparate as Bermuda and British Columbia. Of the 80 films that Laura appeared in, only a handful were not directed by Dawley.

## **ETHEL GRANDIN: MARCH 1894 (NEW YORK, NEW YORK) – SEPTEMBER 1988 (LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA) (AGE 94)**



Ethel appeared in over 100 shorts and feature films. She began her acting career on stage appearing with Joseph Jefferson in *Rip Van Winkle*. Acting in Chauncey Olcott's theatre company alongside Mary Pickford's sister Lottie and her association with the Pickford family prompted her to enter the film industry soon after Mary did. When Thomas Ince, then a director at Carl Laemmle's Independent Motion Picture (IMP) Company, left New York for California in 1911, he took Grandin with him as his lead actress and Ray Smallwood as his cinematographer. Smallwood and Grandin married the following year and worked together on many productions throughout her career. They remained married from 1912 until his death in 1964. Ethel experienced most of her success in the 1910s in films such as *The Invaders* (1912) and *Traffic in Souls* (1913). She made a brief comeback in the 1920s with a major part in *A Tailor-Made Man* (1922), but that was her final year of acting.

## **THE INVADERS (1912 – Francis Ford) (Producer: Thomas H. Ince) (Ph: Ray C. Smallwood) (Scenario: C. Gardner Sullivan) with Francis Ford, Ethel Grandin, Ann Little, William Eagle Shirt (10mins extract.)**

Partly a story of the fate of two daughters played against the backdrop of a Sioux uprising against the incursion of their tribal lands. Ethel plays the daughter of Colonel James Bryson (Francis Ford) who signs a treaty with the Sioux Chief (played by real life Oglala Sioux Indian William Eagle Shirt who appeared in a dozen films between 1912 and 1917 and is credited with writing two of them). Ann Little (a regular Thomas Ince performer) is the Chief's daughter who tries, with fatal consequence, to alert the cavalry at the Fort of the impending Indian attack after the treaty has been broken. During the thick of battle each girls fate is played out. Professor Scott Simon of University of California - Davis, wrote of *The Invaders* "... it manages to dramatize quite complexly the conflicts and guilts of American history. The result is arguably the first great Western".

## **ANNA Q. NILSSON: MARCH 1888 (YSTAD, SWEDEN) – FEBRUARY 1974 (SUN CITY, CALIFORNIA) (AGE 85)**

A Swedish-American actress who achieved success in American silent movies. In 1907, Nilsson was named "Most beautiful woman in America". The noted cover artist, Penrhyn Stanlaws, chose her as one of his models which led to her feature role in the Kalem Motion Picture Company's 1911 film *Molly Pitcher*. She stayed at the Kalem studio for several years, ranked behind its top star Alice Joyce, before branching out to other production companies. Films of special note are *Regeneration* (1915) *Seven Keys to Baldpate* (1917), *Soldiers of Fortune* (1919), *The Toll Gate* and *The Luck of the Irish* (both 1920), and *The Lotus Eater* (1921). In the 1920s, she freelanced successfully for Paramount, First National and many other studios and reached a peak of popularity just before the advent of talkies. In 1926 she was named Hollywood's most popular woman, in 1928 she set a record for fan mail, some 30,000 letters per month, and in that year Joseph P. Kennedy brought her to his newly formed film company RKO Radio Pictures. With the introduction of sound films, Nilsson's career went into a sharp decline, although she continued to play small, often uncredited parts in films into the 1950s. Between 1930 and 1950, she participated in 39 sound films in smaller roles. She played the role of the Swedish immigrant mother of Loretta Young in *The Farmer's Daughter* (1947). Her best known performance in a sound film is arguably her turn as herself, referred to as one of Swanson's "waxworks" in *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), where she has one line. Nilsson has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6150 Hollywood Boulevard for her contribution to motion pictures. She was the first Swedish-born actress to receive such an honour.



## **THE CONFEDERATE IRONCLAD (1912 – Kenean Buel) with Guy Coombs, Anna Q. Nilsson, Miriam Cooper (15mins 39secs).**

Kalem made a speciality of short films depicting the Civil War of which *The Confederate Ironclad* was one of the best and boldest. Anna Q. Nilsson had already appeared in several of Kalem's Civil War pictures before leaping into action in *The Confederate Ironclad* in which she plays the Northern girl spy opposite Miriam Cooper's Southern Belle. Kalem released the film to co-inside with the 50th anniversary of the famous battle between two ironclad warships, the USS Monitor and the Confederate ship Merrimack.

\*Kalem had about two dozen piano scores published in 1912–1913, to be sold to theatres for 25 cents apiece. The score for *The Confederate Ironclad*, composed by Walter Cleveland Simon (1884–1958), is one of the only two in the series for which the film also survives intact.

## REVOLUTIONSHOCHZEIT/THE LAST NIGHT (GERMANY 1928)

**Terra Film. Released 4<sup>th</sup> October 1928.**

**Directed by Anders-Wilhelm Sandberg. Written by Norbert Falk, Robert Liebmann, Sophus Michaëlis (play). Cinematography: Christen Jørgensen, Hans Scheib. Art director: Hans Jacoby. Filmed at Marienfelde Studios, Berlin.**

**Cast: Diomira Jacobini (Alaine), Gösta Ekman (Marc-Anton), Karina Bell (Leontine), Walter Rilla (Ernest), Fritz Kortner (Montaloup), Paul Henckels (Prosper) and Ernst Behmer.**

Rarely seen and, for many, a neglected masterpiece, the costume drama *Revolutionshochzeit* was adapted from the 1909 novel by Danish writer Sophus Michaëlis and directed by fellow-Dane A. W. Sandberg. Produced and distributed by the German company Terra Film, it was shot at their Marienfelde Studios in Berlin with sets designed by the noted art director Hans Jacoby. A clue to the story lies in the German-language title, which translates to 'revolution wedding'; in 1792, a French aristocrat finds herself confronted with the choice of either standing with her peers or becoming a revolutionary. Starring in this truly international production are Italian actress Diomira Jacobini, legendary Swedish stage actor Gösta Ekman and one of director Sandberg's regular players, Karina Bell, who was again from Denmark. Also in the cast are Austrian-born Fritz Kortner and the German actors Walter Rilla, Paul Henckels and Ernst Behmer. The copy being screened is by kind courtesy of the Danish Film Institute.

**Glenn Mitchell**

"The film is based on a popular novel by Sophus Michaelis, already brought to the screen in 1914 by August Blom; in 1937 Hans H. Zerlett made a third version. *Revolutionshochzeit* was made in the sphere of an international production that reunited the Germans, Danes, Swedes and Italians, by Anders-Wilhelm Sandberg (1887-1938), the prolific Danish director of adventure films during the silent era and author of a delicate *Klovnen* (1916), highlighted by Valdemar Psilander's performance. He directed several adaptations of novels by Dickens (*The Little Dorrit*, *Great Expectations*, *David Copperfield*, *Our Mutual Friend*) with which Nordisk, after the world war, sought in vain to reconquer the international market.



Raul Quattrocchi wrote in *Kines* (n.10 of March 17th, 1929): 'First and foremost we admire the courage of the scriptwriter and the producer for making this film without hesitation. We say this because the film does not have a happy ending, and because it truly deserves the most unconditional eulogy and the sincerest admiration to make such a film in an epoch where scriptwriters and producers prefer to satisfy the public with cheap effects. The conclusion of *Revolutionshochzeit* is therefore dramatic; but it is a drama that pushes the limits of humanity; it is based on a dramaticism that almost seems deliberate. In fact, it almost seems that the author had it coloured on purpose with violently darkened contrasts, as though to protest against the prevailing tendency of the happy ending. He did well, even if the equilibrium of the film was in part lost. *Revolutionshochzeit* is, substantially, an excellent film. Montaloup's figure – that would have to be the expression of the danger of the revolutionary period that the film illustrates- is observed from a point of view that is perhaps too optimistic, but in compensation it is eminently rendered by Fritz Kortner. Between the actors – the good and the excellent ones – Diomira Jacobini is the least convincing”.

**Vittorio Martinelli – Il Cinema Retrovato**

# NASTY WOMEN: BREAKING PLATES AND SMASHING THE PATRIARCHY

World Premiere of the new Nasty Women full programme, *Breaking Plates and Smashing The Patriarchy*. Presented by Michelle Facey.



The World Premiere of a raucous new programme from the Physical TV Company, who gave us *Cinema's First Nasty Women* (as seen in an online KB presentation during 2022). *Breaking Plates and Smashing the Patriarchy* is the second in the Nasty Women series, a programme of rollicking shorts that takes inspiration from the freedom of the first years of cinema to bring a boundary-smashing brawl and a creative revolution for women to the screen.

**BREAKING PLATES** (2024, 25 min). *dir/ Karen Pearlman, w/ Violette Ayad, Richard James Allen, Emma Watkins, Julie-Anne Long, Jadzea Allen and Karen Pearlman.*

*Breaking Plates*, written and directed by Karen Pearlman and produced by Richard James Allen for The Physical TV Company, is a collaboration with the curators of *Cinema's First Nasty Women*. It is an outcome of the French and German International Screendance Residency project. Co-Producer: La Briqueterie-CDCN du Val-de-Marne. Associate Producer: La Place de la Danse – CDCN Toulouse / Occitanie. Its production received support from numerous sources, including Macquarie University and Museums of History NSW.

Curated by Maggie Hennefeld, Laura Horak, and Elif Rongen-Kaynakçi, and produced for video by Bret Wood, *Cinema's First Nasty Women* is a partnership of Kino Lorber, Le Giornate del Cinema Muto, Women Film Pioneers Project, Eye Filmmuseum, FIC-Silente, and Carleton University. The following films are featured:

**THE NERVOUS KITCHEN MAID** [Victoire a ses nerfs] (1907, 3 min). [Pathé Frères](#).

**ROSALIE'S PHONOGRAPH** [Rosalie et son Phono] (1911, 4 min). [Pathé Frères](#). Directed by Romeo Bosetti. Cast: Sarah Duhamel.

**MARY JANE'S MISHAP** (George Albert Smith, 1903, 4 min). G. A. Smith. Cinematography: George Albert Smith. Cast: Laura Bayley.

**ZOÉ'S MAGIC UMBRELLA** [Zoé et le parapluie miraculeux] (Romeo Bosetti, 1913, 4 min). [Pathé Frères](#). Cast: Little Chrysia.

**LÉONTINE PULLS THE STRINGS** [Les ficelles de Léontine] (1910, 7 min). [Pathé Frères](#).

**HYPNOTIZING THE HYPNOTIST** (Laurence Trimble, 1911, 7 min). Vitagraph. Cast: Florence Turner, Charles Kent, Kate Price.

**CUNÉGONDE THE COACHWOMAN** [Cunégonde femme cochère] (1913, 6 min). Lux. Cast: Little Chrysia.

**THE BOY DETECTIVE** (Wallace McCutcheon, 1908, 5 min). Biograph. Cast: Robert Harron, Edward Dillon.

**LOVE AND SCIENCE** [Amour et Science] (1912, 14 min). Éclair. Writer: M.J. Roche. Cast: Émile Dehelly, Renée Sylvaire.

**THE MAIDS' STRIKE** [La grève des bonnes] (Charles-Lucien Lépine, 1906, 7 min). [Pathé Frères](#).

## THE YELLOW LILY (USA 1928)

**First National Pictures. Released 20<sup>th</sup> May 1928.**

**Produced by Ned Marin. Directed by Alexander Korda. Story and adaptation: Lajos Biró. Continuity: Bess Meredyth. Cinematography: Lee Garmes. Editor: Harold Young. Art Director: Max Parker. Costumes: Max Rée. Titles: Garrett Graham.**

**Cast: Billie Dove (Judith Peredy), Clive Brook (Alexander, Archduke of Andania), Gustav von Seyffertitz (Kinkeline), Nicholas Soussanin (Eugene Peredy), Jane Winton (Lona, an actress), Marc McDermott (Archduke Peter), Eugenie Besserer (Archduchess Isabella), Charles Puffy (Mayor).**



Although known primarily as a maker of British films, Hungarian-born Alexander Korda spent four years working at First National in Hollywood (following a stint in Berlin) before relocating to London. His first American film, *The Stolen Bride* (1927) was the first of four Korda films starring Billie Dove. In this and other respects it was something of a template for *The Yellow Lily*, in which she is co-starred with British actor Clive Brook, who plays an amorous Archduke. Dove plays the sister of a village doctor (Nicholas Soussanin), to whom the Archduke's spurned lover (Jane Winton) is taken after a feigned suicide attempt; the Archduke's attention is drawn instead to the attractive newcomer. Also in the cast are German actor Gustav von Seyffertitz, as the Archduke's head of household; Edison veteran Marc McDermott as the Archduke's father; French-American actress Eugenie Besserer as his mother; and Korda's fellow-Hungarian Charles Puffy (real name Huszár Pufi), who aside from feature roles of this type also starred in a long run of 'Bluebird Comedies' for Universal.

**Glenn Mitchell**

*Further notes, from biographers of Korda, contemporaneous trade press and Studio press releases.*

Alexander Korda sailed for the US in December 1926. One of his biographers, Karol Kulik (1975), observed that by the end of 1927 Korda's enthusiasm for Hollywood was already waning: "He was too cynical to take the system and his press clippings seriously, and yet too serious-minded to revel in the absurdity of the whole milieu. He felt an outsider even in the émigré community, and his primary concern was to amass a quick fortune and leave Hollywood soon as possible." After just two films - *The Stolen Bride* was followed by the well-received *The Private Life of Helen of Troy* (1927), starring Korda's Hungarian wife Maria - it appeared that "Korda had already been typecast as a director of 'actresses' and 'foreign locales' by the studio executives". Kulik dismissed *The Yellow Lily* as "no more than a carbon copy" of *The Stolen Bride*, which was also set in Hungary and similarly dealt with love across the classes.

A press release widely picked up by newspapers prior to *The Yellow Lily's* release asserted the "fact [...] that all costumes and properties were imported from Hungary for the sake of realism and accuracy in backgrounds", while "six Hungarian technical experts" supplemented Korda's regular production crew. Written by Korda's friend and compatriot Lajos Biró, *The Yellow Lily*, which had been produced as a stage play first in Europe and then subsequently in New York in 1924, perhaps had greater claim to true Hungarian flavour than *The Stolen Bride*, which was penned by the US-born producer-screenwriter Carey Wilson, and about which Korda's earlier biographer Paul Tabori (writing in 1959) relates the following anecdote:

As the tale goes, [Korda] was called into a conference and asked: "You are Hungarian, aren't you? Well, we're going to make a Hungarian picture all about gypsies. There's a butler in it and we think he ought to wear a military uniform and click his heels and bow. Is that right?" Again legend has it that Korda said yes and got the job. The star was Billie Dove. To add a touch of verisimilitude, Korda had the butler kneel and kiss her feet.

[...] If this ever happened, the First National executives must have considered it a 'masterly touch'. And [Korda] was quite capable of doing such a thing - with his tongue in his cheek.

Contrary to Kulik, Tabori found *The Yellow Lily* to be "a small but really excellent picture", with Korda displaying "a genius for making things look good":

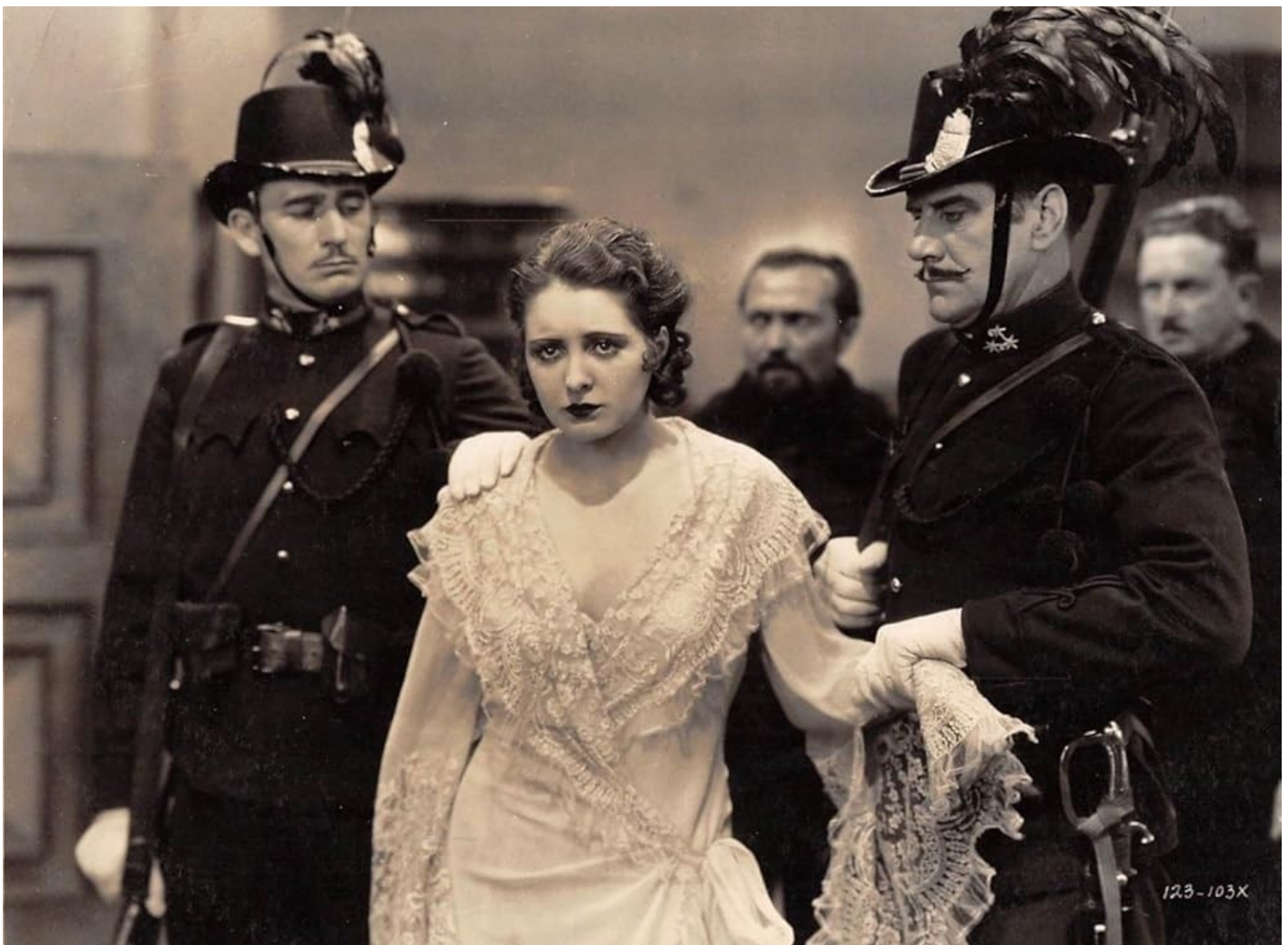
He ordered some half-pillars for the biggest set, put in an imitation tapestry (sacking, daubed over), a few large cande-

labra and floor-covering made up to look like Persian carpets - and it resulted in the most luxurious-looking room. Everybody who saw the picture thought that [Korda] must have spent a million dollars - which, of course, he could never have afforded.

Trade papers of the time concur: *Kinematograph Weekly* commented that the “[p]alaces are on the lavish scale in size and settings”, while *The Bioscope* described the production as “lavishly and realistically staged” and the ball scene “an outstanding feature”.

Despite the input of cinematographer Lee Garmes, early in his long and distinguished career, and the boast of First National’s press release that the film would be enhanced by a “new system of individual incandescent lighting”, with each actor “followed throughout the action by a single light beam, especially adjusted to photograph that player most successfully”, Karol Kulik judged the film “technically unimpressive”, with poor lighting and a lack of camera movement. However, he felt that the film was at least in part redeemed by the acting of Clive Brook “who is perfectly cast as the as heartless Archduke, the suave seducer”. According to Paul Tabori, Clive Brook had been anxious to play the male lead but Korda had initially been doubtful. Brook asked him to let him make some wardrobe tests in the dazzling Hungarian uniforms – ‘and when the director saw him, he smiled and said: “You are right, you will be very good.”’

*Liz Cleary*





## THE RING (UK 1927)

**British International Pictures. Released 1st October 1927.**

**Directed by Alfred Hitchcock. Produced by John Maxwell. Written by Alfred Hitchcock, Eliot Stannard (uncredited). Cinematography: Jack E. Cox.**

**Cast: Carl Brisson ('One-Round' Jack Sander), Lillian Hall-Davis (Mabel), Ian Hunter (Bob Corby), Forrester Harvey (James Ware), Harry Terry (Showman), Gordon Harker (Jack's Trainer), Charles Farrell (Second - uncredited), Clare Greet (Fortune Teller - uncredited), Tom Helmore (uncredited), Minnie Rayner (Boxing Contestant's Wife - uncredited), Brandy Walker (Spectator - uncredited), Billy Wells (Boxer - uncredited).**



*The Ring*, just five films into Hitchcock's career (and not yet 30 years old), is not a distinctly Hitchcockian title, however it doesn't look noticeably out of place in his oeuvre in the way that, for instance, *Mr and Mrs Smith* (29 films in) does; although what a screwball par excellence! Auteur approaches can often be accused of ignoring those films that don't fit the canon as well as overlooking the contribution made by collaborators, and the industrial/cultural context that a director was working in. *The Ring*, however, is as much a product of British International Pictures (BIP) and its star director of photography, Jack Cox, as it is from the mind of this creative genius.

In an interview with Peter Bogdanovich, *The Ring* was one of the few films Hitchcock appeared to enjoy talking about when pressed about his silent filmmaking career. He recounted an anecdote about cameraman Claude McDonnell failing to turn up to set, and being told Cox would be his replacement. Hitchcock claimed Cox wasn't a principal cameraman and that he "taught him photography". This is an outrageous claim! Cox was very experienced, having worked in the industry long before Hitchcock. He had been under contract for some time at Stoll, probably the largest and most successful studio during the 1920s, and shot some of their most elaborate productions across a range of genres and alongside important directors including Maurice Elvey, arguably the most accomplished British director of this period. At Stoll, Cox would have crossed paths with Hitchcock's future wife Alma Reville. Indeed Charlotte Chandler quotes Hitchcock as saying that he met Cox in 1923 there. Reville had asked him to shoot some inserts for a film she was editing. When the crew broke for lunch Hitchcock walked on stage and looked through the camera viewfinder; "A voice behind me said, "That's my job. You stick to what's in front of it."

Cox's cinematography drew critical praise throughout the 1920s and he was frequently mentioned by name in reviews. Cox left Stoll after hearing his wages were to be reduced and went freelance demonstrating his versatility with two extraordinary films: *Blighty* (1927) for Gainsborough Pictures and *Hindle Wakes* (1927) for Gaumont-British Picture Corporation. The reviews of *Hindle Wakes* all drew attention to the photography by William Shenton and Cox, as effective in conveying atmosphere and the impressions and thrills of Blackpool Pleasure Beach. The sequence at the fair is imaginatively shot, simulating the feeling of being on the rides by mounting the camera on them. A reviewer for *Kinematograph Weekly* exalted "the camera angles and dissolving impressions [as] equal to the best Germany has given us".

Both Hitchcock and Walter Mycroft (then scenario editor and literary adviser at BIP and whose idea *The Ring* was based on) were heavily influenced by German cinema and if they wanted to emulate E.A. Dupont's *Variété* (1925) with its extravagant subjective camera shots, Cox's experience would have made him an appealing collaborator. *The Ring* is a virtuoso production, foregrounding both the talent of the crew and the extensive equipment BIP had amassed; it positively pulsates with light and shade. For instance, in a night sequence at the fairground campsite, Hitchcock builds suspense by cutting cleverly between three evocatively-lit spaces in which fairground boxer Jack Sander (played by Carl Brisson, an actual light weight boxing champion and Greta Garbo's real life object of desire!) is being persuaded by a promoter to join him and professional boxer Bob Corby (Ian Hunter). Meanwhile Mabel (Hitch's then fave actress Lillian Hall-Davis), Jack's girlfriend, is being seduced by Bob. All this action is observed by a fortune teller spying from her caravan. Light streams in from her window and glows from the fireplace. A close-up of Jack clasping the promoter's hand is delicately cross dissolved with Bob's hands moving a snake bracelet up Mabel's arm, both points of action "sealing the deal."

Point of view shots, imitating a character's vision, are used frequently along with trick shots and superimpositions, often to reveal inner turmoil. A scene at a raucous house party finds a perfect visual equivalent for the anguish Jack is experiencing internally. The climactic fight between Bob and Jack is a virtuoso piece of filmmaking, not dissimilar from Scorsese's *Raging Bull* fight



sequences. The sequence incorporates a moving camera, dynamic framings, close ups, long shots and superimpositions to dizzying effect. It is incredibly impressionistic; almost *avant-garde*. It bears comparison to the films of Hans Richter which were shown at The Film Society in London, a popular destination for filmmakers. Hitchcock proudly recalled to François Truffaut that one of the more elaborate sequences in the film received a round of applause at its première.

There is an argument that because sound films were delayed in coming to Europe, its late silent films developed stylistic features to an extreme that was not possible in the US. The energy devoted to reaching a wider market accelerated this trend in Britain. Cinematography and editing were often given particular attention by the filmmakers at BIP. Many contemporary critics delighted in cinematic spectacles based upon the creative use of the camera's potential. However some bemoaned the loss of dramatic values. *Close Up* wrote of *The Ring* that: "If the director had been a little less busy demonstrating that the British studios are the best in the world, he might have given us a little characterisation". Yet this is exactly what BIP wanted – a product that would promote the studio; establish its reputation abroad. The opportunities afforded Hitchcock at the studio in the late 1920s demonstrate that BIP played as significant a role in his career as his previous work under Michael Balcon at Gainsborough Studios.

Hitchcock was often silent about the debt he owed his British collaborators, and recognition of Reville's contribution, for instance, to his career was long overdue. Cox and Hitchcock were kindred spirits. They both delighted in exploring the camera's capabilities and were often overheard having discussions about trick effects. Cox would go on to shoot all of Hitchcock's BIP films and would recall Hitchcock as his favourite director. Hitchcock's collaboration with Cox in Britain helped him formulate a distinct visual language that he would take with him to the US.

At BIP, Cox was the highest paid cameraman, receiving £100 a week, more than most directors. He would continue to have an illustrious career in the industry, influencing many British cameramen including Ronald Neame, Jack Cardiff and Bryan Langley. Langley, who was Cox's assistant on several films told me that despite having numerous continental "star cameramen" at BIP, "Cox was the king of cameramen".

**Kelly Robinson**



## THE SEA URCHIN (UK 1926)

Gainsborough Pictures. Released 11th January 1926.

Produced by Michael Balcon. Directed by Graham Cutts.

**Cast:** Betty Balfour (Fay Wynchbec), George Hackathorne (Jack Trebarrow), W. Cronin Wilson (Rivoli), Haidee Wright (Minnie Wynchbec), Marie Wright (Mary Wynchbec), Cecil Morton York (Sir Trevor Trebarrow), Clifford Heatherley (Sullivan), Irene Tripod (matron), A.G. Poulton (janitor).

John Hastings Turner's comedy play was a perfect vehicle to adapt to the screen for Betty Balfour, hoping to extend her repertoire beyond the lovable tragi-comic Cockney character 'Squibs', which had made her the most popular female film star in Britain in the early 1920s. *The Sea Urchin* (retitled *The Cabaret Kid* for the US) offered her the same happy/sad plot opportunities to showcase her gamine charm as 'Fay' the rebellious inmate of an orphanage. She is 'rescued' from this by a friend of her dead father, the oily Sullivan, played by the magnificent Clifford Heatherley, who has been tasked with delivering her to her aunts in Cornwall. Instead, he elects to use her as youthful eye-candy in his Paris nightclub. Her chance meeting with a young pilot who crashes his miniature plane into a street market where she is shopping, marks the beginning of long chase to evade a sinister stalker, Rivoli, by sea (naturally allowing Balfour to look cute in male clothes) on the way home to Cornwall where it transpires Fay's family and Jack's have an ancient grudge.



Graham Cutts, at the height of his popularity, directed it with energy although the balance between the main plot and the over-long nightclub scenes was mentioned by several critics. He also shot a fancy high-speed taxi ride in impressionistic style which impressed but wasn't well integrated stylistically. But the performances carry the film along its unlikely route. Balfour carries the film but George Hackathorne, visiting from the US, is very charming as Jack, and the aunts, admirably played by Haidee and Marie Wright could be straight out of 'Cranford' or Dickens, as one reviewer noted. The film seems to have gone down well in Europe where Balfour was always popular as the *Bioscope* reviewer says "in that type of sparkling and sophisticated comedy in which she has no equals". In the following years she was to make several films in France and Germany including for talented directors like Marcel L'Herbier and Louis Mercanton.

NFT Film Bulletin - Oct/Nov 94 - review: "A polished early Gainsborough production that takes Betty Balfour through some varied locations in a bright story zipping from the Paris cabaret to Cornwall, and from light romance to full melodrama. A typical happy/sadstarring role for Balfour and a fine example of the neglected Graham Cutts' astute direction. (Plus a sequence from what survives of the film that saw Betty Balfour's debut and rapid stardom, *Nothing Else Matters*)."

**Bryony Dixon**



## RESTORATIONS AND DISCOVERIES

### LITTLE MICKEY GROGAN (USA 1927)

*Film Booking Offices of America. Released 27th December, 1927.*

*Directed by James Leo Meehan. Screenplay: Dwight Cummins, Dorothy Yost, Charles Kerr.*

*Story: Arthur Guy Empey. Cinematography: Allen G. Siegler. Editor: Dwight Cummins, Edward Schroeder.*

*Cast: Frankie Darro (Mickey Grogan), Lassie Lou Ahern (Susan Dale), Jobyna Ralston (Winifred Davidson), Carroll Nye (Jeffrey Shore), William Scott (Al Nevers), Vadim Uraneff (Crooked), Don Bailey (Truant Officer), Crauford Kent (Mr. Cabel), Eugene Jackson (Dancing Boy - Uncredited), Mary Gordon (Landlady - Uncredited), Bert Roach (Intimidated Man - Uncredited).*



Eric Grayson, on video, will present the UK premiere of his restoration of the 1927 comedy-drama *Little Mickey Grogan*, based on the stories written by Arthur Guy Empey. It was directed by James Leo Meehan and stars Frankie Darro, Lassie Lou Ahern and Jobyna Ralston (remembered today chiefly as leading lady to Harold Lloyd). The film was long unavailable until an appeal was made in 2015 by former child actress Lassie Lou Ahern (by then 95 years old) for the recovery of this, her final silent film. A French-language 35mm nitrate print was located in the archives of Lobster Films in Paris. The English text was reconstructed with the aid of a script Ahern had kept ever since the film's production.

**Glenn Mitchell**

### THE LONE INDIAN (USA 1921, 14 min).

*Post Nature Pictures, Directed by Clyde E. Elliott, Photographed by Horace C. Saimleld.*

Restored from a 35mm tinted and toned nitrate print by Archive Film Agency. The film was shot at Lake St. John, Northern Quebec. It shows the practice in some Canadian Indian tribes of exiling a youth in the wilderness until he can survive well enough to take his place as a qualified man of the tribe.

## EARLY DISCOVERIES

Last year Joshua Cattermole brought us a real treasure-trove of early film finds and this year yet again we have another selection of lost and found films from the Saffrey collection. Although they were very shrunk and fragile and had to be scanned at one frame a second, they look remarkably clear because, again, we are working from the original nitrate prints. Sadly, some of the films were cut up and included in a 1940s compilation film but these have now all been digitally put back into their original order, but it is still work in progress.

We screened last year what we thought was the only surviving film from the 1902 series *On a Japanese Battleship, H.I.J.M.S. Asama* and yet two more have turned up.

“God Save The King! In 1901 Edward VII became King of Great Britain, and the Empire was to celebrate. In July 1902 a great naval review was to be held at Spithead to honour the new King. Present were ships from a variety of nations throughout the world: included was the battleship *Asama*, all the way from the Empire of Japan. To showcase these visitors from the Far East the camera operators of the Warwick Trading Company went aboard and filmed the Japanese sailors in a variety of exercises and activities. These included gun drills, wrestling, sword fighting and fencing.” (Joshua Cattermole 2024 notes)

Last year we also featured new discoveries of some Robert W. Paul films and again two more have turned up. Of these, *His Mother's Portrait, Or, The Soldier's Vision* is one of the most tantalising of the lost Boer War films. *Plucked From the Burning* was also the subject of Paul's last film in 1909.

These two exciting new restorations highlight how Paul's Animatograph Works was at the forefront of filming familiar dramatic scenes at the turn of the century. Both date from mid-1900, a year in which the studio produced a remarkable 115 titles. Many of these were 'actualities', but *Plucked from the Burning* and *His Mother's Portrait* are fully dramatized, with elaborate sets and costumed actors...*Plucked from the Burning* (March 1900), seems to be the very first example of what came to be known as 'fire rescue' subjects.

**Ian Christie**

## THE FILMS:

**(POLICE CHASE)** (c1900, 132ft - 2mins 11 secs) Burglar fights with police photographer who he changes clothes with and takes the camera. The photographer and others give chase. He is eventually caught by an open gate. Tony Fletcher has suggested that the film may have been produced in the North of England by Mitchell and Kenyon. This unidentified three-shot film has similarities to the 1905 film *The Burglar: Or, The Hue and Cry*, directed by Alf Collins for Gaumont but the burglar in this case is caught by a dog.

**PLUCKED FROM THE BURNING** (March 1900, 74ft – 2mins 14secs) *Robert W. Paul*. Fireman rescues mother and child just before the ceiling falls (two shots). (Denis Gifford – British Film Catalogue). The mother may be Ellen Paul.

**HIS MOTHER'S PORTRAIT, OR, THE SOLDIERS'S VISION** (July 1900, 82ft – 1min 21secs) *Robert W. Paul*. Wounded soldier dreams of mother whose framed miniature deflected bullet from heart. According to Denis Gifford the film was directed by Lewin Fitzhamon.

**MOUNT PILATUS RAILWAY**. Series: SWITZERLAND no. 2 of 4. (December 1900 - catalogue, 42ft - 42 secs) *Pc: Warwick Trading Company*. Phantom ride on the electric railway along a steep mountain side. Mount Pilatus is the steepest railway in the world. (This amber print has severe deterioration). This was probably filmed by F. Ormiston-Smith. A longer version (125ft.) was issued by Charles Urban in July 1905. In 1900 Urban was managing director of W.T.C.

**PANORAMA OF LAKE OF LUCERNE**. Series: SWITZERLAND no. 4 of 4. (December 1900 - catalogue, 73ft - 1 min 13 secs) *Pc: Warwick Trading Company*. (WTC. stamp on the film) Shots of the lake with a steep mountain backdrop and hotels near lake edge. This was again probably filmed by F. Ormiston-Smith. A longer version (125ft.) was issued by Urban in 1905.

**THE WATERFRONT OF NEW YORK**. (November 1901 - catalogue, 68ft - 1 min 7 secs) *Pc: Warwick Trading Company*. View showing the New York piers from 2 to 6. Probably filmed by Charles Urban himself. Denis Gifford stated that it was photographed from the N.D.L. Tender "POLUX".

**(THE BURGLAR AND THE CHILD)** (c1900, 49ft—49secs) Unidentified.  
A child whose mother has died helps burglar hide his swag in the bedroom.

**JACK TAR'S GUN DRILL** also: **MANUAL AT ARMS BY BLUEJACKETS**. Series: **ON A JAPANESE BATTLESHIP, H.I.J.M.S. ASAMA** No. 2. (July 19, 1902, 54ft - 54secs) *Pc: Warwick Trading Company*. Sailors' rifle exercise on deck.

**JAPANESE WRESTLING MATCH**. Series: **ON A JAPANESE BATTLESHIP, H.I.J.M.S. ASAMA** No. 9. (July 19, 1902, 47ft - 47 secs) *Pc: Warwick Trading Company*. Two sailors wrestle on ship's deck.

**THE KIDDIES AND THE RABBITS** also **CHILDREN AND RABBITS** (August 20th 1904, 95ft - 1 min 35 secs)  
*Pc: Warwick Trading Company. Dir: Archibald Brown*. Three girls play and freed rabbits in front of cage.

**For further information go to Ian Christie's blog at:**

<https://paulsanimatographworks.wordpress.com/>

# DIE STRASSE: DER FILM EINER NACHT/THE STREET (GERMANY 1923)

**Stern-Film. Released 29th November 1923.**

**Produced and directed by Karl Grune. Writers: Karl Grune, Julius Urigß. Cinematography: Karl Hasselmann. Story: Karl Mayer.**

**Cast: Eugen Klöpfer (a middle-aged man), Lucie Höflich (the wife of the middle-aged man), Anton Edthofer (a pimp), Aud Egede-Nissen (a harlot), Max Schreck (a blind man), Leonhard Haskell (a gentleman from the provinces), Sascha (the child), Hans Trautner (a fellow).**

Among his surviving works – of which, concerning the earlier examples, there are sadly too few - *The Street* is considered the most notable film of Vienna-born director Karl Grune, who later worked extensively in Britain. *The Street* has been called an expressionistic nightmare, a complex blend of two story strands within the dangerous context of an intimidating cityscape prone to sometimes bizarre metamorphosis, created by Grune with art director Karl Görgé. The leading cast are Eugen Klöpfer, Lucie Höflich, Anton Edthofer, Aud Egede-Nissen and Max Schreck (of *Nosferatu* fame).

**Glenn Mitchell**



“Just as stylized as the acting are the film’s decor and buildings, made entirely in the studio. Karl Görgé (1872- 1933) constructed them in reduced perspective. An article in the newspaper *B.Z. am Mittag* (15.7.1923) described the three-dimensional models: “The road was built on the E.F.A. site in Steglitz, 75 metres long. Of course, it should give the viewer the impression of a much longer street. It begins at the front with a skyscraper 26 metres high (with a lighted café, ballroom, etc.), and then shrinks in height and width to very small three-dimensional house models, creating the illusion of considerable distance through their differences in size. This mathematical, very precisely calculated technique is again a completely new step in German film.” The sets were designed by the painter Ludwig Meidner (1884- 1966), famous for expressive portraits and apocalyptic city visions. In his essay “Anleitung zum Malen von Großstadtbildern” [An Introduction to Painting Big Cities] in: *Kunst und Künstler*, XII, 1914, Meidner wrote: “A street does not consist of tonal values, but is a bombardment of hissing rows of windows, whizzing beams of light among vehicles of all kinds, and thousands of bouncing balls, fragments of people, billboards, and booming, shapeless masses of colour.” Cinematographer Karl Hasselmann (1883-1966) tried to visualize the chaos to which the petty bourgeois of the framing story feels exposed, using multiple exposures and image rotations, helping to realize the vision that Karl Grune emphasized in interviews: “I first see the milieu and then approach the dramatic motif. Developing my new film *Die Straße*, I saw – yes, I saw – at first only the optical noise of a cosmopolitan street, its gleaming, glittering, its fever.” (Karl Grune: “Film, nicht Literatur!” [Film, not Literature!], *Der Filmbote*, Nr. 44, 3.11.1923)”

**Taken from the programme notes of “Die Strasse” premiere in 2023 for the Munich restoration centenary screening at the ‘Le Giornate del Cinema Muto’ Pordenone.**



## FOCUS ON BIOGRAPH



A further programme of comedies spotlighting a specific studio, presented by Dave Glass and Glenn Mitchell. The subject this time is one of the earliest established film companies, Biograph, usually associated more with the dramas of D.W. Griffith than with its comedy output. Too often their films have been seen at a disadvantage, often in mediocre transfers taken from the paper prints deposited with the Library of Congress as an early means of registering copyright. Today's presentation is, in most instances, the premiere of new restorations by the Film Preservation Society, by kind courtesy of Tracey Goessel. These copies, from 35mm camera negative, offer the first chance to appreciate the films properly since their initial release more than 110 years ago. The films will be preceded by a short video about the restoration work.

American Biograph, or simply 'the Biograph company', began in 1895 as 'American Mutoscope and Biograph' (a British end soon followed). W.K.L. Dickson, who had essentially created Edison's moving-picture apparatus, broke away to form a new partnership with fellow-inventors Herman Casler and Harry Marvin, in association with businessman Elias Koopman. Because Edison held the patents for the formats Dickson had himself devised, Dickson avoided infringement by effectively re-inventing the technology, using negatives 68mm wide and without perforations - as opposed to the standard 35mm perforated film - and taken at a much higher frame rate (the resultant high quality almost resembles high-definition video, albeit in monochrome). From these could be produced prints in both 68mm and 35mm, as well as individual printed sequential cards that could be viewed as movies in Mutoscope ('What the Butler Saw' type) machines. By the end of 1903 compromises had been reached that enabled Biograph to produce films in the regular 35mm format.

Their productions had at this time consisted primarily of actuality footage and single-scene staged films but from this point moved increasingly towards narrative drama. Former stage director Wallace 'Old Man' McCutcheon had joined them in 1897 and, interrupted by a two-year stint with Edison during 1905-7, had by 1908 become Biograph's senior director. It was at that time that McCutcheon bought a script from a newcomer to the studio, D.W. Griffith, a former stage actor and erstwhile playwright who, like McCutcheon, had recently worked for Edison. Soon after, McCutcheon became ill and when his son, Wallace McCutcheon Jr., proved to be an unequal successor, manager Harry Marvin gave the job to Griffith. Today's films begin with the sixth subject Griffith is known to have directed for Biograph (while also appearing within the cast), *A Deceived Slumming Party*.

Already with Griffith's repertory company was the Canadian-born Mack Sennett, formerly a minor player on the Broadway stage - and ex-boilermaker - who, as did most of the company, also functioned variously as scene-shifter and general dogsbody. Again in common with some of the other players, Sennett began to supplement his income by scriptwriting; today's second film, *Monday Morning in a Coney Island Police Court*, is believed to have been the first film written by Sennett. It was also the screen debut of Dell (or Del) Henderson, a fellow-Canadian who takes the lead in another of today's films, *Her Pet*. Henderson would sometimes continue to work with Sennett in later years and spent time as a director. He is now remembered chiefly for his roles in late 20s M-G-M features such as *The Crowd*, *The Patsy* and *Show People*, some of the W.C. Fields comedies of the mid-30s and work at Hal Roach between 1929 and 1936. Sennett later recalled having first been encouraged to submit screenplays by yet another Canadian, Mary Pickford, who had been making extra money in the same fashion, but *Monday Morning* predates her arrival at the studio by seven months. A former child actress, Pickford became known as 'The Biograph Girl' (a soubriquet previously applied to Florence Lawrence until her departure for rival studio IMP), before breaking down the barrier that prevented players' own names being used for billing. Mary Pickford appears today in *Getting Even*, released a mere five months after her first screen test for Griffith. Her cross-dressing leading man (spoiler alert!) is Billy Quirk, known also for his work at Solax, Gem and Vitagraph.

Sennett observed and absorbed all of Griffith's film-making techniques (also those of his brilliant cameraman, Billy Bitzer), making a point of walking everywhere with him and asking questions, in effect learning how to direct without Griffith being aware of his role as tutor. Their aims were, however, quite dissimilar: despite making a number of light comedies and injecting notes of humour into otherwise serious subjects, Griffith favoured drama while Sennett was drawn to comedy. 'I discovered he was not so fascinated by comedy as I was,' Sennett later recalled, 'and he went into silences when I brought up my favorite people, policemen. I never succeeded in convincing Mr. Griffith that cops were funny.' Sennett remembered having made an impact as 'a Parisian dude' in one of today's films, *Father Gets in the Game*, but it seems likely he had conflated it in his memory with another item in the present programme, *The French Duel*. In this, Sennett is costumed to resemble, or at least recall, French Pathé star Max Linder, as he had been in *The Curtain Pole*, directed by Sennett under Griffith's guidance. *The Curtain Pole* reflects Sennett's later admission to having been influenced by Pathé's early French comedies, complete with their communal street chases. Sennett later claimed he was given a chance to direct when Frank Powell (yet another Canadian!), Biograph's second-top director and at that time a specialist in comedy, was absent owing to illness.

Production had until then been based at Biograph's studio in New York, at 11 East 14<sup>th</sup> Street. In January 1910, Sennett went along when Griffith and company visited California in order to find authentic western locations for a film version of the novel *Ramona*, and at the same time investigate the reported advantages of filming in this consistently sunnier part of the country. (Griffith and Biograph made what is believed to be the first film shot in Hollywood, *In Old California*.) The western setting is seen to great effect in *The Tourists*, starring Mabel Normand, a Biograph actress with whom Sennett had begun a relationship (the unhappy *denouement* to which is commemorated in the musical *Mack and Mabel*). Perhaps their most famous collaboration at Biograph is 1912's *A Dash Through the Clouds*, stylistically a template for the Keystone comedies that Sennett would begin to

produce on leaving Biograph later that year. His eventual Biograph ensemble - Mabel Normand, Fred Mace and Charlie Murray – would, with the addition of Ford Sterling, form the nucleus of the early Keystone.

Griffith in turn left Biograph in 1913 and the studio ceased active production three years later. Representing the studio's late comedy output in today's programme is 1914's *The Mystery of the Milk*, written (and reportedly directed) by William E. Wing, with Biograph veteran actor, writer and director Edward Dillon in the lead role. Connections were to continue between some of the main Biograph talents, as when in July 1915 Griffith entered into a partnership with Sennett and producer Thomas H. Ince in the ill-fated Triangle Film Corporation. An altogether more successful grouping took place in 1919, when Mary Pickford – by then one of the biggest names in the industry – joined her former mentor Griffith, future second husband Douglas Fairbanks and Charlie Chaplin as the co-founders of United Artists.

**Glenn Mitchell**

## A DECEIVED SLUMMING PARTY

Released 31<sup>st</sup> July 1908. Directed by D.W. Griffith.

CAST: Edward Dillon (Guide), D. W. Griffith (Reginald Wittington), George Gebhardt, Mack Sennett (policeman).

## MONDAY MORNING IN A CONEY ISLAND POLICE COURT

Released 4<sup>th</sup> September 1908. Directed by D.W. Griffith. Written by Mack Sennett.

CAST: John R. Cumpson, Harry Solter, Edward Dillon, Mack Sennett (as Clarence the cop).

## FATHER GETS IN THE GAME

Released 10<sup>th</sup> October 1908. Written and directed by D.W. Griffith.

CAST: Mack Sennett (Wilkins), Harry Solter (his son), George Gebhardt (Prof. Dyem).

## THE CURTAIN POLE (EXTRACT)

Released 15<sup>th</sup> February 1909. Written and directed by Mack Sennett and D.W. Griffith.

CAST: Mack Sennett, Florence Lawrence, Harry Solter.

## THE FRENCH DUEL

Released 10<sup>th</sup> May 1909. Directed by D.W. Griffith. Written by Mary Pickford and D.W. Griffith.

CAST: John R. Cumpson (Leon Martinel), Arthur V. Johnson (Gaston Tortoni), Charles Avery (Alphonse de Signoles), Florence Lawrence, Mack Sennett.

## GETTING EVEN

Released 13<sup>th</sup> September 1909. Written and directed by D.W. Griffith.

CAST: Billy Quirk, Mary Pickford, James Kirkwood.

## HER PET

Released 14<sup>th</sup> December 1911. Directed by Mack Sennett.

CAST: Dell Henderson (husband), Grace Henderson (wife).

A print from the Saffrey collection.

## THE TOURISTS

Released 5<sup>th</sup> August 1912. Directed by Mack Sennett.

CAST: Mabel Normand, Charles West.

## MYSTERY OF THE MILK

Released 5<sup>th</sup> January 1914. Written and possibly directed by William E. Wing.

CAST: Edward (Eddie) Dillon (cop), Clara T. Bracy, Kate Bruce, Charles Avery.

A print from the Saffrey collection.

## A DASH THROUGH THE CLOUDS

Released 24<sup>th</sup> June 1912. Directed by Mack Sennett.

CAST: Mabel Normand, Dell Henderson, Fred Mace, Philip Orin Parmalee ('Slim', the pilot).

Print from a private source.



**Top: *The Curtain Pole*.**

**Above: *Getting Even***



# IF I WERE SINGLE (USA 1927)

Warner Brothers. Released 17<sup>th</sup> December 1927.

Produced by Darryl F. Zanuck. Directed by Roy Del Ruth.

Writers: Robert Lord, Joseph Jackson. Based on the story "Two-Time Marriage" by Jack Townley. Cinematography: Edwin B. DuPar. Editor: Ralph Dawson.

**Cast: May McAvoy (May Howard), Conrad Nagel (Ted Howard), Myrna Loy (Joan Whitley), George Beranger (Claude).**

*If I Were Single* is a romantic comedy directed by Roy Del Ruth, who was initially a writer then director for Mack Sennett (as was his elder brother, Hampton Del Ruth). By the 1930s he was the second highest paid director in Hollywood, his credits including the 1931 version of *The Maltese Falcon*, comedies and dramas with James Cagney and musicals such as *Broadway Melody of 1936*. Based on the story *Two-Time Marriage* by Jack Townley, *If I Were Single* was originally released with synchronised music and sound effects, but the discs are not known to have survived. It was remade as a talkie in 1930 under the title *Divorce Among Friends*. This earlier version of the tale, about a rich girl trying to break up a couple's marriage while the wife enjoys a flirtation of her own, stars May McAvoy (remembered now for the 1925 version of *Ben-Hur* and pioneering part-talkie *The Jazz Singer*), Conrad Nagel and Myrna Loy, some years before her association with William Powell in the *Thin Man* series.

Glenn Mitchell

May McAvoy was born at the turn of the century on September 8, 1899 in New York City. Her beauty was such that she dropped out of high school at the age of 17 to star in her first film *Hate*. Her well-to-do family owned and operated a large livery stable situated where the Waldorf-Astoria now stands. She initially wanted to be a teacher but became intrigued with show business after watching a friend rehearse a show at a nearby vaudeville theatre. A model whose first job was a commercial for Domino Sugar, she moved into extra work in films and received her first major break with *The Devil's Garden* (1920) co-starring Lionel Barrymore. Stardom was hers, however, as the lead in *Sentimental Tommy* (1921), which led to a Paramount contract. An unassuming brunette, her petite frame and sweet-natured looks belied a surprisingly feisty, independent nature. When Cecil B. DeMille put a halt on her career in 1923 as punishment for refusing a role that required partial nudity, May assertively bought out her contract and freelanced for the next six years.

<https://greatentertainersarchives.blogspot.com/2013/07/may-mcavoy-her-silence-was-golden.html>

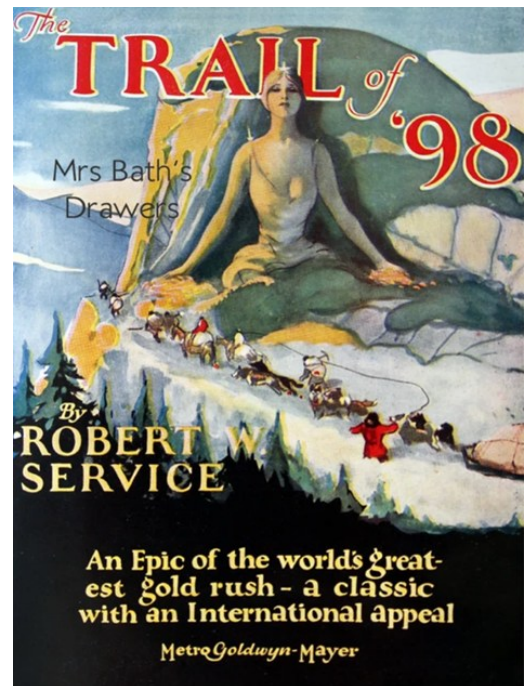


## THE TRAIL OF '98 (US 1928)

**Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Released 20<sup>th</sup> March 1928.**

**Produced and directed by Clarence Brown. Writers: Joseph Farnham, Benjamin Glazer, Waldemar Young. Based on the novel *The Trail of '98* by Robert W. Service. Cinematography: John F. Seitz. Editor: George Hively. Art Department: Cedric Gibbons, Merrill Pye.**

**Cast: Dolores del Río (Berna), Ralph Forbes (Larry), Karl Dane (Lars Petersen), Harry Carey (Jack Locasto), Tully Marshall (Salvation Jim), George Cooper (Samuel Foote - The Worm), Russell Simpson (Old Swede), Emily Fitzroy (Mrs. Bulkey), Tenen Holtz (Mr. Bulkey), Cesare Gravina (Henry Kelland - Berna's Grandfather), Doris Lloyd (Locasto's procurer), E. Alyn Warren (Engineer), Johnny Downs (Mother's boy - John Down), Ray Hallor (Brother Jim), Ray Gallagher (Brother Joe), Francis Ford (Gold Commissioner's assistant - uncredited), Roscoe Karns (Man on ship - uncredited), Jacques Tourneur (Extra - uncredited). Future comedian Lou Costello, at that time a stuntman at M-G-M, reportedly doubled for both Harry Carey and, when driving a wagon, Dolores del Río.**



'Trail of '98 was probably one of the most disastrous pictures of that era, because we lost four men in one scene, in which we only recovered two of the bodies,' remembered stuntman Paul Malvern.

Director Clarence Brown had hoped for a much easier picture. After *Flesh and the Devil*, he turned down *The Wind* due to the obviously strenuous conditions required to shoot it, and worried that it might end up as a flop anyway: 'People just don't like wind!' With *Trail of '98* he hoped to be able to deliver something that would rival the enormous success of King Vidor's *The Big Parade*.

Robert Service's novel had been considered by the Goldwyn Studio in 1921, when a reader's report warned that it would need to be toned down due to elements of rape and illegitimacy. Despite Brown's original big hopes for the film, the studio didn't cast major stars as the leads, and Brown's first choice of John Gilbert starred in *Twelve Miles Out* instead. Brown decided that his lead, Ralph Forbes, was 'the lousiest leading man that ever lived' and noted that the makeup department had to glue additional chest hair onto him to look convincing.

He told Kevin Brownlow: 'I look back on my second M-G-M film, *Trail of '98*, with mixed emotions. It wasn't too hot. Story-wise, directionwise, and actingwise I was never too happy with it. John Seitz was my cameraman he was one of the greatest. Harry Carey was wonderful in it, but I had a lousy leading man. I was a year making it, and I lost twenty pounds. It was my toughest assignment. To duplicate the Chilkoot Pass we used a location at the Great Divide, about sixty miles outside Denver, 11,600 feet with temperatures as low as sixty below zero. And I had to have two thousand extra people up there - from a town like Denver! But we got it. We duplicated the Chilkoot Pass. Old sourdoughs who saw the picture thought it was the real thing. When we came to the scenes with the two thousand people climbing up the Chilkoot Pass, we built a track parallel to their route and built a sled for our cameras. We lashed three cameras to the sled, with three different lenses. At the top was a power windlass, which could be controlled by signals from the camera, so that we were able to follow people up, stop, go back, and take close-ups of the incidents that happened on the way up. We went to Alaska to do the rapids scenes, and we lost three men up there. When I left Denver, part of the company stayed behind, A large section of snow fell and two of three more men were killed. It was a tough picture. Oh God, it was tough.'

For the premiere, at the Astor in New York, a process called the 'Fantom Screen' was used, where parts of the film were shown at twice the normal size, similar to the process used for parts of *Old Ironsides* and *Wings*. Despite this, the picture flopped. Photoplay magazine initially praised it, saying '*The Trail of '98* is that dream of all megaphone wielders: a purely director's picture. It has tremendous interest as Brown pictures it, this last stand of roystering, hard-fisted pioneer America,' but later went onto admit that 'Clarence Brown crashed up against his first big disappointment.'

**Christopher Bird**